South Carolina
STATE LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

Henry D. McMaster, Governor
Mark A. Keel, Chief

P.O. Box 21398
Columbia, South Carolina
29221-1398

WWW.SLED.SC.GOV
(803) 737-9000

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 2026

Renée Wunderlich
Director of Public Information

SLED CHARGES FLORENCE COUNTY MAN WITH FOUR COUNTS OF THREATENING THE LIFE, PERSON OR FAMILY OF A PUBLIC OFFICIAL

The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) charged Willie Joe Sanders Jr., 57, with four counts of Threatening the Life, Person or Family of a Public Official on Thursday, January 22, 2026. The Florence County Sheriff's Office requested the SLED investigation.

Details can be found in the attached warrants.

Sanders Jr. was booked into the Marion County Detention Center.

The case will be prosecuted by the 12th Circuit Solicitor's Office.

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SLED news releases are published on SLED's website: www.sled.sc.gov
For media inquiries, please email SLED's Public Information Office: pio@sled.sc.gov

ARREST WARRANT

2026A2110200072

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Florence

THE STATE 2026-00181

against

Willie Joe Sanders, Jr

Address: [redacted]

Lake City, SC 29560-2830

Phone: SSN: [redacted]

Sex: M Race: B Height: 5 7 Weight: 144

DL State: SC DL #: [redacted]

DOB: [redacted]1969 Agency ORI #: SCLED0000

Prosecuting Agency: State Law Enforcement Division

Prosecuting Officer: Leigh M Manley - S01610

Offense: Threat / Threatening life, person or family of public official, teacher, principal

Offense Code: 0541

Code/Ordinance Sec: 16-03-1040(A)

This warrant is CERTIFIED FOR SERVICE in the

[ ] County/ [ ] Municipality of

. The accused is to be arrested and brought before me to be dealt with according to the law.

(L.S.)

Signature of Judge

Date:

RETURN

A copy of this arrest warrant was delivered to defendant Willie Sanders Jr on 1/22/2026

Signature of Constable/Law Enforcement Officer

RETURN WARRANT TO:

General Sessions Court
181 North Irby Street, Suite 1100
Florence, SC 29501

ORIGINAL ORIGINAL ORIGINAL ORIGINAL

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of)
Florence)

AFFIDAVIT

ORIGINAL

Form Approved by S.C. Attorney General April 21, 2003 SCCA 518

Personally appeared before me the affiant Leigh M Manley who being duly sworn deposes and says that defendant Willie Joe Sanders, Jr did within this county and state on or about 1/ 7/2026 violate the criminal laws of the State of South Carolina (or ordinance of [X] County/ [ ] Municipality of Florence) in the following particulars:

DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Threat / Threatening life, person or family of public official, teacher, principal

I further state that there is probable cause to believe that the defendant named above did commit the crime set forth and that probable cause is based on the following facts:

On January 7, 2026, Willie Joe Sanders did, within the County of Florence, commit the offense of Threatening the Life of a Public Official (16-3-1040), to wit: Sanders did knowingly and willfully convey threats towards [redacted] The threats were communicated to Florence Police Department (FPD) Officers during a call for service at 900 East Cheves Street, Florence.

Signature of Affiant

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of)
Florence)

Affiant's Address P. O. Box 21398
Columbia, SC 29221-
Affiant's Telephone (803)896-7000

ARREST WARRANT

TO ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER OF THIS STATE OR MUNICIPALITY OR ANY CONSTABLE OF THIS COUNTY:

It appearing from the above affidavit that there are reasonable grounds to believe that on or about 1/ 7/2026 defendant Willie Joe Sanders, Jr did violate the criminal laws of the State of South Carolina (or ordinance of [X] County/ [ ] Municipality of Florence) as set forth below:

DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Threat / Threatening life, person or family of public official, teacher, principal

Having found probable cause and the above affiant having sworn before me, you are empowered and directed to arrest the said defendant and bring him or her before me forthwith to be dealt with according to law. A copy of this Arrest Warrant shall be delivered to the defendant at the time of its execution, or as soon thereafter as is practicable

Sworn to and subscribed before me on 1/ 8/2026 6:14 PM

(L.S.)

Signature of Issuing Judge

Jerry F. Rivers

Judge Code: 7339

Judge's Address 180 North Irby Street (MSC-W)
Florence, SC 29501-
Judge's Telephone (843)665-0031

Issuing Court: [X] Magistrate [ ] Municipal [ ] Circuit

ORIGINAL ORIGINAL ORIGINAL ORIGINAL

Addendum:

FPD body-worn camera recordings captured Sanders stating the following, among others: "[redacted], I'm coming for you boy. You got my brother, boy. You got the corpse." "My brother won't be dying in vain [redacted]." "[redacted] you won't get away with this crime boy. I'm coming to get you boy. You killed my brother." "You might as well kill me[redacted]. You gonna have a blue light parade, boy. You gonna have a blue light parade, [redacted]." "This gonna be televised man because [redacted] you won't get away, boy. Y'all gonna have a blue light parade." Y'all gonna have a blue light parade. Country Club where you at? You better tie your damn [redacted] up. Your [redacted] too, you son of a bitch."

01/08/2024.
6:14Pm

ARREST WARRANT

2026A2110200073

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Florence

THE STATE 2026-00181

against

Willie Joe Sanders, Jr

Address: [redacted]

Lake City, SC 29560-2830

Phone: SSN: [redacted]

Sex: M Race: B Height: 5 7 Weight: 144

DL State: SC DL #: [redacted]

DOB: [redacted]1969 Agency ORI #: SCLED0000

Prosecuting Agency: State Law Enforcement Division

Prosecuting Officer: Leigh M Manley - S01610

Offense: Threat / Threatening life, person or family of public official, teacher, principal

Offense Code: 0541

Code/Ordinance Sec: 16-03-1040(A)

This warrant is CERTIFIED FOR SERVICE in the [ ] County/ [ ] Municipality of

. The accused is to be arrested and brought before me to be dealt with according to the law.

(L.S.)

Signature of Judge

Date:

RETURN

A copy of this arrest warrant was delivered to defendant Willie Sanders Jr. on 1/22/2026

Signature of Constable/Law Enforcement Officer

RETURN WARRANT TO:

General Sessions Court
181 North Irby Street, Suite 1100
Florence, SC 29501

ORIGINAL ORIGINAL ORIGINAL ORIGINAL

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of)
Florence)

AFFIDAVIT

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DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Threat / Threatening life, person or family of public official, teacher, principal

I further state that there is probable cause to believe that the defendant named above did commit the crime set forth and that probable cause is based on the following facts:

On January 7, 2026, Willie Joe Sanders did, within the County of Florence, commit the offense of Threatening the Life of a Public Official (16-3-1040), to wit: Sanders did knowingly and willfully convey threats towards [redacted] The threats were communicated to Florence Police Department (FPD) Officers during a call for service at 900 East Cheves Street, Florence.

Signature of Affiant

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of)
Florence)

Affiant's Address P. O. Box 21398
Columbia, SC 29221-

Affiant's Telephone (803)896-7000

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DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Threat / Threatening life, person or family of public official, teacher, principal

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Issuing Court: [X] Magistrate [ ] Municipal [ ] Circuit

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01/08/2024
6:14PM

ARREST WARRANT

2026A2110200074

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Florence

THE STATE 2026-00181

against

Willie Joe Sanders, Jr

Address: [redacted]

Lake City, SC 29560-2830

Phone: SSN: [redacted]

Sex: M Race: B Height: 5 7 Weight: 144

DL State: SC DL #: [redacted]

DOB: [redacted]1969 Agency ORI #: SCLED0000

Prosecuting Agency: State Law Enforcement Division

Prosecuting Officer: Leigh M Manley - S01610

Offense: Threat / Threatening life, person or family of public official, teacher, principal

Offense Code: 0541

Code/Ordinance Sec: 16-03-1040(A)

This warrant is CERTIFIED FOR SERVICE in the [ ] County/ [ ] Municipality of _____. The accused is to be arrested and brought before me to be dealt with according to the law.

(L.S.)

Signature of Judge

Date:

RETURN

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Signature of Constable/Law Enforcement Officer

RETURN WARRANT TO:

General Sessions Court
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[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of)
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DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Threat / Threatening life, person or family of public official, teacher, principal

I further state that there is probable cause to believe that the defendant named above did commit the crime set forth and that probable cause is based on the following facts:

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Signature of Affiant

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of)
Florence)

Affiant's Address P. O. Box 21398
Columbia, SC 29221-

Affiant's Telephone (803)896-7000

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DESCRIPTION OF OFFENSE: Threat / Threatening life, person or family of public official, teacher, principal

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01/08/2024
6:14PM

ARREST WARRANT

2026A2110200075

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[X] County/ [ ] Municipality of

Florence

THE STATE 2026-00181

against

Willie Joe Sanders, Jr

Address: [redacted]

Lake City, SC 29560-2830

Phone: SSN [redacted]

Sex: M Race: B Height: 5 7 Weight: 144

DL State: SC DL #: [redacted]

DOB: [redacted]1969 Agency ORI #: SCLED0000

Prosecuting Agency: State Law Enforcement Division

Prosecuting Officer: Leigh M Manley - S01610

Offense: Threat / Threatening life, person or family of public official, teacher, principal

Offense Code: 0541

Code/Ordinance Sec: 16-03-1040(A)

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[ ] County/ [ ] Municipality of

_____ The accused is to be arrested and brought before me to be dealt with according to the law.

(L.S.)

Signature of Judge

Date:

RETURN

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Signature of Constable/Law Enforcement Officer

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Issuing Court: [X] Magistrate [ ] Municipal [ ] Circuit

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