

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF NEW HANOVER

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
FILE NO. 26CV001055-640

IN THE MATTER OF:

CUSTODIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT
AGENCY RECORDING SOUGHT BY:
Friends of Public Radio, Inc. d/b/a WHQR
Public Media,

Petitioner

ORDER

THIS CAUSE coming on for hearing on Petitioner Friends of Public Radio, Inc. d/b/a WHQR Public Media's (WHQR) request for law enforcement agency recordings held in the custody of the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office and the Wilmington Police Department was heard before the Superior Court for New Hanover County on September 8, 2026. After consideration of the arguments, materials, and review of the subject recordings *in camera*, the Court finds as follows:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On November 25, 2025, Corey Rayshaun Temoney had an interaction with law enforcement that led to his arrest.
2. Cell phone video of the interaction between Mr. Temoney and law enforcement circulated on social media.
3. WHQR reported on the incident on April 24, 2026, with a piece entitled: *What we've learned about the arrest of Corey Temoney, police use of force, and providing accountability*. The news piece was directed by Aaleah McConnell and Benjamin Schachtman, with an interview of Mr. Temoney.
4. The WHQR piece illustrated different narratives between law enforcement and Mr. Temoney and other bystander witnesses at the scene.
5. Because the cell phone videos on social media were incomplete, and in an effort to report fully on

the incident, WHQR sought to obtain the body camera footage from the officers present.

6. On February 13, 2026, Petitioner filed a Petition for Release of Custodial Law Enforcement Agency Recording and served the petition on Wilmington Police Department Chief Ryan Zuidema and District Attorney Jason Smith.
7. A hearing was held on May 18, 2026, where Petitioner, attorney Daniel Thurston for the City of Wilmington, and attorney Karen Richards for New Hanover County appeared.
8. At the May 18, 2026, hearing, Ms. Richards objected to release of the recordings because an officer with the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office was depicted on the recordings and the petition had not been served on the Sheriff's Office as required.
9. The Court continued the hearing to allow Petitioner the opportunity to perfect service on the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office
10. A subsequent hearing was held on September 8, 2026, to argue the merits of the petition, and the Court took the matter under advisement to review the materials and review the recordings *in camera*.
11. The Court conducted an *in camera* review of the recordings on September 19, 2026.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

General Statute § 132-1.4A(g) governs this particular type of petition for law enforcement recordings and requires this court to apply all of the standards enumerated.

1. Whether release is necessary to advance a compelling public interest.

WHQR is a local news media organization. It has already reported on the incident and conducted interviews of Mr. Temoney. Also, because cell phone videos of the incident only show a portion of the law enforcement interaction, there is a compelling public interest that the public at large have the full picture of what transpired between Mr. Temoney and law enforcement. Therefore, this standard does apply to this petition.

2. Whether the recording contains information that is otherwise confidential or exempt

from disclosure or release under State or federal law.

The recordings may contain personally identifying information on Mr. Temoney and the second individual who was arrested with him. However, those portions that mention any personally identifying information can be redacted.

3. Whether the person requesting release is seeking to obtain evidence to determine legal issues in a current or potential court proceeding.

This standard does not apply as WHQR is not requesting the recordings for current or potential court proceedings.

4. Whether release would reveal information regarding a person that is of a highly sensitive personal nature.

The recordings do show another individual being arrested who is not Mr. Temoney. That individual is in no way involved with the incident between law enforcement and Mr. Temoney, was not a part of or involved in the reporting piece conducted by WHQR, and therefore, the second individual would have an interest in having his likeness and arrest remain confidential. Furthermore, there were other bystanders who are shown on the recordings who are likewise not a part of the news piece nor a part of the petition. However, those portions mentioned here can be easily redacted so as to blur or otherwise remove entirely the individuals portrayed in the recordings.

5. Whether release may harm the reputation or jeopardize the safety of a person.

The Court believes that the reputation of both the law enforcement officers involved and Mr. Temoney could be harmed by release of the recordings. However, the Court does not believe that there is a significant safety concern to either law enforcement or Mr. Temoney.

6. Whether release would create a serious threat to the fair, impartial, and orderly administration of justice.

The criminal action against Mr. Temoney was resolved through a judgment entered on December

11, 2025. Therefore, the law enforcement recordings no longer hold any evidentiary value, and without any future criminal trial proceeding regarding this incident, there would be no serious threat to the fair, impartial, and orderly administration of justice.

7. Whether confidentiality is necessary to protect either an active or inactive internal or criminal investigation or potential internal or criminal investigation.

As was mentioned above, there is no longer an active criminal investigation regarding Mr. Temoney. Furthermore, neither Ms. Richards nor Mr. Thurston indicated to the Court that there is an active or inactive internal or potential internal criminal investigation regarding the law enforcement officers involved. Therefore, the Court must assume that there is not.

8. Whether there is good cause shown to release all portions of a recording.

It goes without saying that “the freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty.” 1776 Virginia Declaration of Rights. Whether one agrees with the type of reporting or not, the press provides an important function of shedding a light on government functions that are not always easily accessible to the public at large. Here, WHQR has shown that the story on which they have already reported needs additional clarification that only the law enforcement recordings can provide. Therefore, there is good cause shown to release all portions of the recordings.

Therefore, based on the statutorily enumerated standards above, the Court finds that there are significant reasons to release the law enforcement recordings.

Wherefore, it is **ORDERED, ADJUDGED, and DECREED** that the Petition for law enforcement recordings is granted with the following exceptions:

1. Any image, voice, or personally identifying information of the second individual arrested, who is not Mr. Temoney, shall be redacted, blurred, or distorted so that he is not identifiable in any way.
2. Any image of any bystander who is not Mr. Temoney shall be blurred.
3. Any personally identifying information of Mr. Temoney such as address, date of birth, etc.

shall be redacted.

Both the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office and the Wilmington Police Department shall provide Petitioner with a copy of the recordings within two weeks from the date of this order.

Ordered this 21st day of September 2026.

9/21/2026 3:42:18 PM



The Honorable Ricardo Jensen
Superior Court Judge Presiding