

CHIEF OF STAFF AND PROSECUTION
ROBERT J. KNOCHEL

CHIEF OF LITIGATION AND
PROSECUTOR TRAINING
GEORGE R. HUFFMAN

ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEYS
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WILLIAM C. BARRETT
CAROLYN A. LEWIS
CARLY JO "CJ" WINSHIP
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OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NINETEENTH CIRCUIT COURT DISTRICT
JACKSON, GEORGE & GREENE COUNTIES



CHIEF INVESTIGATOR
JUSTIN F. GRAFTON

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR
SHANDRA HOLLIMAN

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR
AMANDA ANDERSON

PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION DIRECTOR
MELANI J. SMITH

GRAND JURY COORDINATOR
HANNA GRAFTON

ANGEL MYERS MCILRATH
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
July 29, 2026
VIA EMAIL

Gary Bufkin, Esq.
Carol Bufkin


Re: In Re: Death Investigation of Nolan Wells

Dear Mr. Bufkin:

I understand that Nolan Wells' family is conducting its own investigation and that the family wishes for witnesses, documents, recordings, digital media, expert opinions, and other information developed through those efforts to be presented to the Grand Jury. In furtherance of that process, please provide my office with the names and contact information of any witnesses the family wishes to have presented, together with copies of any reports, recordings, photographs, digital media, writings, or other materials the family requests to be submitted to the Grand Jury. Please ensure that all digital evidence and media is in its native format (with metadata) and original form. Dr. Mitchell will have an opportunity to review materials needed to complete his evaluation in advance of his grand jury testimony. We will work out those logistics once the investigation is complete.

I have considered your request of my office to share information. There is no legal authority for a prosecutor to share information publicly or with civil counsel during an active investigation pending grand jury. As I have explained, we have a process, procedure and rules we follow in death investigations and it is not appropriate to deviate from them in this matter.

I also want to reiterate a concern I previously shared with you. The widespread dissemination of unverified information has resulted in hundreds of threats, harassment, intimidation and attempts at intimidation of witnesses, law enforcement, uninvolved individuals with same or similar names as witnesses, and public officials. My staff and I have advised Mr.



Gary Bufkin, Esq.

July 29, 2026

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and Mrs. Wonsley to report any threats, harassment or attempts of intimidation they receive. Any such reports will be thoroughly investigated, but they cannot be investigated if not reported.

Many of the threats, harassment, and efforts of intimidation that we are aware of reference information shared directly or indirectly by the Ben Crump team. Mr. Crump has publicly taken the position that he has and will continue to share information related to this matter without regard to its source or verification. I know you understand that information shared publicly by attorneys carries significant weight with the public. I also know that you understand the foreseeable consequences when unverified or inaccurate information is amplified, particularly in a matter that has generated this level of public attention. The Mississippi Rules of Professional Conduct provide guidance in these matters. I kindly ask that you, as local counsel, review these rules with your out-of-state counterparts.

I look forward to receiving the information gathered in your independent investigation. My Victim Assistance Coordinator continues to be available to Mr. and Mrs. Wonsley should they need assistance or grief support. Nolan's family and friends remain in my prayers.

Kind Regards,



Angel Myers Mellrath
District Attorney

AMM/cwr

Cc: Mr. and Mrs. Wonsley (via U.S. Mail)

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OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NINETEENTH CIRCUIT COURT DISTRICT
JACKSON, GEORGE & GREENE COUNTIES



ANGEL MYERS MCILRATH
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

August 12, 2026
VIA EMAIL

CHIEF INVESTIGATOR
JUSTIN F. GRAFTON

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR
SHANDRA HOLLIMAN

VICTIM ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR
AMANDA ANDERSON

PRE-TRIAL DIVERSION DIRECTOR
MELANI J. SMITH

GRAND JURY COORDINATOR
HANNA GRAFTON

Gary Bufkin, Esq.
Carroll Bufkin, PLLC



Re: In Re: Death Investigation of Nolan Wells

Dear Mr. Bufkin:

I received your letter dated August 9, 2026, indicating that someone would be in contact with my office soon to discuss the examination of Nolan's phone and Dr. Mitchell completing his investigation. Last night, I received a letter concerning Nolan's phone from attorney Ahmad Smith via email. Smith's letter was contemporaneously released to the media under circumstances of which I am not aware. My office and the investigative team have been waiting since our July 15, 2026, meeting for your team member, Eric Hertz, to contact us to arrange for this examination. During that meeting, Mr. Hertz was provided with the contact information of the investigator who would coordinate the examination. Likewise, Mr. Hertz represented to me in the meeting that he would initiate communication with law enforcement concerning this matter. We have remained available to facilitate this examination. As you know, the State has never had possession of Nolan's phone and access to it is controlled entirely by Mr. and Mrs. Wonsley.

The FBI is assisting in this investigation and has agreed to conduct the examination of Nolan's phone. If Mr. and Mrs. Wonsley still consent to examination of Nolan's phone, the phone must be delivered to the FBI by 9:00 am on Friday, August 14, 2026. We can also arrange for an agent to collect the phone from Mr. and Mrs. Wonsley before Friday. I will provide the FBI TFO's name and cell phone number to you by separate email.



I want to ensure the Grand Jury considers all information, including information gathered during your independent investigation. The only information derived from the family's investigation of which the State is aware is what has been presented at press conferences and shared by Mr. Crump on social media. Attorney Liza Park stated in a July 30, 2026, press conference that the family's legal team is receiving one hundred tips per day. Additionally, statements made on behalf of the family indicate that your investigation has led to videos, pictures and other digital evidence being received. There have also been representations made to the public that the family has retained audio engineers and other experts in this matter. If anyone on your team believes that your investigation has revealed any evidence relevant to criminal conduct concerning the death of Nolan Wells, you should provide that information to my office so that we can review it, follow-up if needed, and present this information to the Grand Jury when it convenes.

Please provide the names and contact information of any witnesses, together with copies of any reports, recordings, photographs, digital media, writings, or other materials the family and their legal team requests be submitted to the Grand Jury. Please ensure that all digital evidence and media is in its native format (with metadata) and original form. I ask that you provide this information within ten days of this letter. This ten-day period to provide information is not intended to limit the family from providing additional information after that date should additional information become available. Rather, it is intended to ensure that the information presently available is provided to my office in sufficient time for it to be meaningfully reviewed and followed up on prior to presentation to the Grand Jury.

I would like Dr. Mitchell to testify before the Grand Jury. I understand from the autopsy report released by Mr. Crump during the July 30, 2026, press conference that Dr. Mitchell has identified additional information and evidence he would like to review before reaching a final conclusion. As I have previously advised, this information and evidence will be made available to him in his capacity as an expert in forensic pathology. Please provide his direct contact information and I will work directly with him to ensure he has access to what he needs to reach his final opinion.

I am also aware of public statements and social media reports concerning alleged threats and intimidation directed towards members of Nolan's family. From the outset, I have personally instructed the family to report any threats and intimidation efforts to law enforcement and provided information of where and how to make any reports. My office has subsequently repeated that request directly to the family, and I have communicated that request to you. We will not tolerate threats or intimidation of any individual in this case. As of the date of this letter, however, no specific threats or intimidation efforts have been reported in order for an investigation to ensue. Once again, I strongly encourage the family to report to law enforcement any threats, intimidation efforts or other communications they believe constitute criminal conduct.



August 13, 2026

Angel Myers McIlrath
Office of the District Attorney, Nineteenth Circuit District

Re: Nolan Wells

Dear District Attorney McIlrath:

Thank you for your correspondence dated August 12, 2026. As Mississippi counsel for the Nolan Wells family, A.R. Smith Law will serve as the primary point of contact for the legal team so that communications with your office can be coordinated efficiently.

We agree that examination of Nolan's phone was discussed during the July 15th meeting and that our team undertook to follow up concerning that process. During that discussion, however, we agreed to a jointly coordinated forensic examination of the phone that would include the use of the Digital Forensics Lab at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College as well as possible FBI involvement. Subsequent correspondence with your office reflected our continued willingness to proceed through a mutually agreeable procedure. Additionally, Mr. Hertz contacted you on July 25th, while traveling abroad, and indicated that he would reconnect upon his return. Accordingly, our prior correspondence with your office should not be understood to suggest that our legal team had been unwilling to facilitate a forensic examination of the phone.

To date, Nolan's parents remain willing to facilitate an appropriate forensic examination of Nolan's phone, including FBI involvement, according to our agreement on July 15th. However, your letter sent to Eric Hertz on August 12th at 12:51pm ET set a deadline for the Wonsleys to deliver the phone to your office by August 14th at 9am. This is not practicable for a number of reasons.

First, the date and time you proposed provided less than 48 hours' notice. Moreover, the Wonsleys were outside Mississippi when your letter was sent and are not scheduled to return until after the deadline you unilaterally imposed. Second, the parties never agreed to simply deliver the phone to your office. Instead, the agreement was that we would set a mutually agreeable date and time for the phone to be examined together by your office's forensic professional(s), our forensic professional(s) and possibly the FBI as well. Third, the parties have not yet agreed upon a forensic protocol addressing, at a minimum, the scope and method of the examination, chain of custody, preservation of the forensic extraction, access to resulting forensic data, treatment of information outside the agreed scope, retention of the extraction, and return of the device. We are prepared to promptly address those logistics so that the examination can proceed while preserving the integrity of the



evidence and the interests of all concerned. Please send us your proposed protocol as soon as possible. As soon as that protocol is agreed on, we will be able to schedule the forensic examination of phone immediately.

With respect to the independent investigation, the legal team has reviewed the tips received and has followed up with persons whose information appeared relevant. At present, that process has not identified additional witnesses whom the legal team reasonably believes possess information germane to potential criminal activity that warrants referral to your office. We continue to follow up and vet these potential witnesses. At present the family is not requesting that any additional document, recording, photograph, digital media, report, or other material in the legal team's possession be submitted to the Grand Jury. This response should not be understood as a representation concerning privileged, confidential, attorney work-product, expert, or other protected materials, nor as undertaking a continuing production obligation beyond what the law requires.

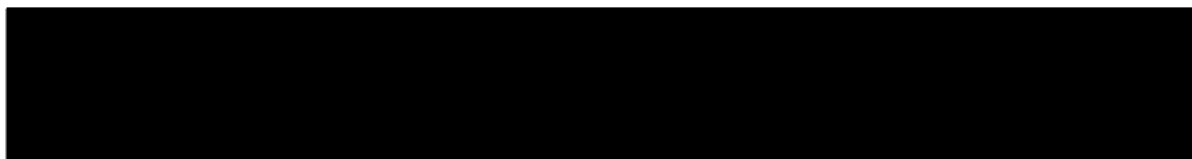
Regarding Dr. Mitchell, we appreciate that you will make available Nolan's body parts that were not previously sent to Dr. Mitchell. As reflected in your July 29th correspondence, your office previously stated that Dr. Mitchell would have an opportunity to examine Nolan's complete body in advance of any Grand Jury testimony. At this time, Dr. Mitchell requests that you provide 3 available dates in which he can examine the body parts that he was not able to access. We are prepared to move that process forward promptly through counsel.

Thank you for following up with us regarding the threats and/or intimidation against Nolan's family. We have collected that information from the family and will be sending that information to your office in the near future.

The family and legal team remain committed to a careful and complete investigation of the circumstances surrounding Nolan's death. We believe the most productive path forward is focused, documented cooperation on matters that will materially advance that investigation while preserving the integrity of the evidence and the legal rights and obligations of everyone involved.

Cordially,

Ahmad R. Smith
Ahmad R. Smith
A.R. SMITH LAW, PLLC



phone should be delivered to FBI TFO [REDACTED] on Wednesday, August 19, 2026, at 9:00 am outside the MCI lab located at Building 33 on the MGCCC Harrison County Campus. Please provide all passcodes or passwords for the cell phone to FBI TFO [REDACTED]

Since you have agreed to the MCI laboratory location, I presume you are aware that the MCI lab does not allow individuals who are not current law enforcement officers to be inside the lab. My understanding is that your legal and investigative team is comprised of former FBI and CIA agents who are presumably familiar with standard extraction protocols. The FBI will perform the cell phone extraction with consent from Mr. and Mrs. Wonsley in accordance with its standard operating procedure and training.

If Mr. and Mrs. Wonsley, or their legal team, want the FBI examination of Nolan's cell phone to be included in this investigation and presented to the Grand Jury, the phone should be provided to the FBI on Wednesday, August 19, 2026, as outlined above. Otherwise, your team continues to have the capability to extract the cell phone for your own purposes, and I will advise the Grand Jury of the family's decision. If a forensic examination has already been conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Wonsley's legal team, or if you chose to conduct an independent extraction, we request a copy of that report be provided within ten days.

There have been serious threats, intimidation, and harassment of Dr. Turner and the Mississippi Forensics Laboratory staff. In light of these safety concerns and considering that you have released all of your correspondence publicly, I am not comfortable arranging for Dr. Mitchell's grand jury travel and examination of evidence through your legal team. If Mr. and Mrs. Wonsley wish for Dr. Mitchell to testify before the Grand Jury, I will work directly with Dr. Mitchell to accommodate that request and to ensure he has access to what he needs to finalize his opinion. Moreover, there is no legal authority for attorneys, other than prosecutors, to interpose themselves in an investigation pending a grand jury review. Please provide direct contact information for Dr. Mitchell. Otherwise, I will accept that Mr. and Mrs. Wonsley have chosen not to move forward with this particular matter. The autopsy report released by Mr. Crump will be presented to the Grand Jury, regardless of cooperation from Mr. and Mrs. Wonsley.

In your August 17, 2026, letter you stated that your independent investigation has revealed no evidence germane to criminal activity. Mr. Hertz represented in our first meeting that he had witnesses he wanted us to reach out to and information he did not believe we had. Thank you for confirming that nothing in your possession contains evidence of a criminal act with respect to the death of Nolan Wells. If you come into possession of evidence of a crime, I ask that you immediately provide that to investigators.