

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
 COUNTY OF RICHLAND)
)
 Marie Assa'ad-Faltas,)
)
 Applicant,)
)
 v.)
 State of South Carolina,)
)
 Respondent.)

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
 FOR THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Case No.: 2019-CP-40-2217

**ORDER DENYING APPLICANT'S
 MOTION TO RECONSIDER OR IN
 THE ALTERNATIVE NEW TRIAL**

2023 APR 10 PM 4:14
 RICHLAND COUNTY
 FILED

This matter is before the Court by way of Applicant's "Motion to Reconsider or in the Alternative New Trial," filed on March 7, 2023. After consideration, the motion is **DENIED**.

Procedural History

This PCR application arises from an order finding Applicant in contempt of court. On October 13, 2010, the City of Columbia Municipal Court issued an order limiting Applicant's contact with the Municipal Court and the City of Columbia's City Attorney's Office. On March 28, 2011, a Rule to Show Cause was issued against Applicant for violating the order. Applicant appeared *pro se*. After taking testimony, the Honorable Marian O. Hanna sentenced Applicant to ten days in jail for one count of contempt of court and fifteen days in jail on a second count.¹

On March 30, 2011, Applicant filed a *pro se* notice of appeal in the circuit court (2011-CP-40-2111). Thereafter, on April 8, 2011, the South Carolina Supreme Court issued an order prohibiting Applicant from filing *pro se* actions in South Carolina courts.² Applicant's appeal was set for a hearing on September 16, 2011, and Applicant appeared *pro se*. Due to the South Carolina Supreme Court's order prohibiting Applicant from proceeding *pro se*, the circuit court granted

¹ In her application, Applicant asserts she has served this time.

² Applicant appealed that order to the United States Supreme Court, which denied her petition for writ of certiorari on November 14, 2011.

DCH
p. 10/6

Applicant an additional thirty days to obtain counsel before ruling on her appeal. On November 1, 2011, the circuit court issued an order dismissing Applicant's appeal for failure to prosecute.

On December 1, 2011, Applicant attempted to file a notice of appeal in the South Carolina Supreme Court. The following day, the Clerk of the South Carolina Supreme Court notified Applicant by letter that her appeal had not been accepted due to the prohibitions of the Supreme Court's April 8, 2011 order.^{3,4}

On July 11, 2013—more than twenty months after the circuit court dismissed her circuit court appeal and more than nineteen months after the South Carolina Supreme Court rejected her notice of appeal—Applicant filed a motion requesting appointment of counsel to perfect her appeal of the circuit court's denial of relief. On November 8, 2017, the circuit court issued an order denying Applicant's motion for appointment of counsel. Applicant filed a motion for partial reconsideration on November 9, 2017; that motion was denied by Order dated December 23, 2020. Applicant appealed that order to the South Carolina Supreme Court (2021-000049); the appeal was dismissed on August 31, 2022, and the remittitur was sent October 13, 2022.

³ Applicant "resubmitted" her notice of appeal on January 3, 2014. By letter dated February 21, 2014, the Clerk notified Applicant that her resubmitted notice of appeal would not be accepted.

⁴ On April 5, 2011, Applicant filed a petition for writ of habeas corpus in the United States District Court – District of South Carolina. The District Court denied the petition without prejudice due to Applicant's failure to exhaust state remedies, and the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed Applicant's appeal of that denial on April 30, 2012. Assa'ad-Faltas v. City of Columbia, 472 Fed. Appx. 203 (2012). On August 6, 2012, Applicant filed a second petition for writ of habeas corpus in the Federal District Court challenging an October 2010 contempt proceeding; in her application, she avers that habeas petition is relevant to this proceeding. The District Court dismissed her second habeas petition without prejudice on September 11, 2012, and the Fourth Circuit declined to issue a certificate of appealability on June 6, 2013.

DCB
8/2/26

Current Application

Applicant filed the current application for PCR on April 22, 2019, alleging her conviction was obtained in violation of her constitutional rights and she continues to suffer the consequences of the conviction for the following reasons:

1. "Complete denial of jury trial"
 - a. "SC's municipal courts are creatures of statute [that] limits their jurisdiction to petty criminal offenses. That very statute guarantees criminal defendants in SC's municipal courts the right to trial by jury no matter how petty the offense. I demanded trial by jury in writing before the City of Columbia's motion for a rule to show cause was heard against me. But CMC's Marion Oneida Hana [sic] ("Marion") denied me that right because she not [sic] educated at all on that said right exists. The entire 28 march 2011 hearing is dominated by Marion yelling uncontrollably and banging and literally hammering with her gavel but not letting me quote the law to her. Indeed, she actually said that she is holding me in contempt because I quoted the law to her or tried to."
2. "Complete denial of trial counsel"
 - a. "I usually like to represent myself. But my prior experience with Marion left me convinced that she behaves very differently when under eyes from when able to isolate a person she wants to torture. I clearly demanded a lawyer as I am entitled to one even in contempt matters under Ex parte Jackson, 381 S.C. 253, 672 S.E.2d [sic] (SC App. [sic] 2009); but Marion refused to appoint one for me."
3. "Complete denial of appellate counsel"
 - a. "When I appeared before Judge Barber on 16 September 2011, I advised him (and he so documented in 22 September 2011 ORDER) that I had contacted at least four private lawyers to represent me but they refused due to my inability to pay them. Judge Barber knew of my entitlement to state-appointed appellate counsel but did not even offer me one. That prejudiced me because at the time, I was not allowed to advocate pro se at all but I had many meritorious appeal issues, all of which I had preserved at CMC (which has no civil jurisdiction) and in my appellate pleadings filed before I was denied self-representation. I could have won my appeal if heard on its merits."
4. "Per Robinson v. California, 370 U.S. 660, 667 (1962), criminalization of my legal and constitutionally-protected conduct violates the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Eighth Amendment was made applicable to the states by the U.S. Supreme Court in Timbs v. Indiana, 586 U.S. ___ (decided 20 February 2019).

DCB
1376

This PCR is timely filed within one year of the Timbs decision per § 17-24-45(B), SC Code of Laws.”

a. “Inability to stand (due to my severe knee pain) when Marion entered the courtroom is not a crime. Marion violated the Eighth Amendment by holding me in contempt for that and for my resistance to testifying against myself in violation of my Fifth Amendment rights. The 28 March 2011 and 6 April 2011 transcripts of proceedings in CMC, on file in 2011-CP-40-02111, graphically prove the State’s (through CMC) violation of my constitutional rights. Complete CMC-made audio recordings of both court days are also available and prove that, [sic] on 28 March 2011, I was [sic] spoke politely and behaved properly throughout the whole hearing. I was not even allowed to be in the courtroom on 6 April 2011 even though I was in a holding cell in the courthouse building and had been transported there at great physical pain to me.”

5. “After-discovered evidence of actual innocence. This PCR is timely filed within one year of the most recent discovery of evidence per § 17-24-25(B), SC Code of laws.”

a. “Marion wrote and self-published a second so-called novel which more amply betrays her morbid hatred of all people, particularly females smarter and prettier than Marion, and her fantasies to shoot females and/or cause them to be ‘locked up’ in psychiatric hospitals. Marion offered to waive my fine if I submitted to psychiatric examination. Review of other transcripts and of her treatment of her own mother-in-law proves Marion’s fixations and her true goal in holding me in contempt: to extort me to undergo psychiatric examination, solely to satisfy her morbid lusts, not because I did anything even remotely resembling contempt.”

6. “Through no fault of mine, the transcript of 16 September 2011 hearing before SC Circuit Court Judge Barber was lost or destroyed. I have a constitutional right to said transcript under Chessman v. Teets, 350 U.S. 3 (1955).”

a. “In May-August 2016, I duly contacted SC Court Administration to obtain the transcript of the 16 September 2011 hearing, which must be kept for five years; but I received in writing confirmation that the court reporter (Ms. L. Coconut Pantsari) who was assigned to that court that day cannot find her recording of the transcript of my hearing.”

Respondent filed a return moving to dismiss this application pursuant to the statute of limitations.

On November 16-17, 2022, an evidentiary hearing convened before the Honorable D. Craig

Brown. Applicant was represented by Timothy L. Griffith, Esquire. Assistant Attorney General

DCB
11/17/22

Danielle Dixon represented Respondent. Despite being notified by this Court on November 2, 2022, that she would be required to appear in-person at this hearing, Applicant failed to attend.⁵ In her absence, Mr. Griffith did not have any witnesses to call or any other evidence to present. Based on Applicant's failure to attend and submit any evidence or testimony to support the allegations in her application, this Court found Applicant failed to meet her burden of proof. This Court further found this action was barred by the statute of limitations. On February 8, 2023, this Court issued an order of dismissal. On March 3, 2023, Applicant served a copy of her "Motion to Reconsider or in the Alternative New Trial" on Respondent.

[Continued on next page]

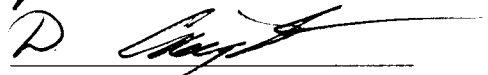
⁵ Applicant likewise did not attend her other PCR hearing scheduled for November 16, 2022 (2019-CP-40-112) or either of her PCR hearings scheduled for November 17, 2022 (2019-CP-40-2218, -2219). She did, however, attend the November 18, 2022 hearing in Austin Woods Apartments v. Marie Assa'ad-Faltas (2018-CP-40-963), in which she was permitted to proceed pro se. The Undersigned, who was vested with exclusive jurisdiction of all these cases pursuant to a September 15, 2020 order issued by the Supreme Court of South Carolina, finds Applicant did not have an apparent health condition that prevented her from attending court on November 18, 2022.

PCB
1-576

Denial of Applicant's Motion

In her Motion to Reconsider, Applicant contends this Court “had and should have considered a Judgment on the voluminous Pleadings.” After reviewing Applicant’s motion and this Court’s order of dismissal, this Court finds Applicant’s argument is without merit. This Court’s order of dismissal found Applicant failed to present any evidence to support the allegations in her application and amendment, and thus failed to meet her burden of proof. This Court further found Applicant’s application was barred by the statute of limitations. Applicant has not alleged any argument was overlooked or misapprehended by this Court. Further, Applicant is not requesting an alteration or amendment to the Order; rather, Applicant is asking this Court to reconsider its ruling and grant Applicant post-conviction relief. This Court sees no basis to reconsider its ruling; thus, this Court finds this motion should be denied in full.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 6 day of April, 2023.


D. CRAIG BROWN
Presiding Judge
Fifth Judicial Circuit

Florence, South Carolina

DCB
p. 6 of 6