

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF NEWBERRY

Jeffrey Glenn McCoy, #359097,  
Applicant,

v.

State of South Carolina,  
Respondent.

) IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
) FOR THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

) Case No.: 2017-CP-36-00587

) **ORDER OF DISMISSAL**

NEWBERRY CP/GS COURT  
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**SC Court of Appeals**

This matter comes before the Court by way of an application for post-conviction relief (“PCR”) filed by Jeffrey Glenn McCoy (“Applicant”) on November 3, 2017, and amended on November 6, 2024. The Court convened an evidentiary hearing into the matter on March 31, 2025, at the Greenwood County Courthouse. Applicant was present at the hearing and represented by Charlie J. Johnson, Esquire. Zachary W. Jones, of the South Carolina Attorney General’s Office, represented Respondent.

After reviewing all records and evidence before the Court, this Court finds Applicant has not met his burden of proof in this matter. Therefore, the Court finds Applicant is not entitled to post-conviction relief and denies and dismisses this application with prejudice. The Court finds as follows:

**I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

Applicant is currently incarcerated in the South Carolina Department of Corrections (“SCDC”). Applicant was indicted at the August 2012 term of the Newberry County Grand Jury for safecracking (2012-GS-36-872); five counts of second degree burglary (violent) (2012-GS-36-874, -877, -878, -882, -883); grand larceny (2012-GS-36-884); two counts of petit larceny (2012-

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GS-36-879, -880); and possession of burglary tools (2012-GS-36-881). Applicant was represented by Charles Verner, Esquire. On April 22, 2013, Applicant underwent a trial before the Honorable Frank Addy, Jr., and a jury and was subsequently found guilty on all counts. Judge Addy sentenced Applicant to fifteen years imprisonment for safecracking, ten years consecutive for one count of second degree burglary (violent), ten years concurrent for each of the remaining four counts of second degree burglary (violent), five years concurrent for grand larceny, five years concurrent for possession of burglary tools, and thirty days concurrent for each count of petit larceny.

Applicant filed a notice of appeal, and an appeal was perfected by Appellate Defender Laura Caudy. In an unpublished opinion, the South Carolina Supreme Court affirmed Applicant's convictions and sentences. *State v. Jeffrey McCoy*, 2015-UP-136 (S.C. Sup. Ct. filed March 11, 2015). The remittitur was sent April 10, 2015.

Applicant filed his first PCR application on November 2, 2015. A hearing was held on Wednesday, June 7, 2017, before the Honorable G. Thomas Cooper, Jr., at the Laurens County Courthouse. Applicant was not present but was represented by Carson Henderson, Esquire. At the time of the hearing, Applicant was incarcerated in the Tennessee Department of Corrections. Counsel for Applicant and Respondent informed the Court that they agreed to dismiss the application without prejudice while Applicant completes his sentence in Tennessee. An Order of Dismissal Without Prejudice was signed on June 26, 2017, and filed July 3, 2017.

**Factual Summary**

On the morning of May 27, 2012, Officer Justin Weaver of the City of Newberry Police Department began checking property at Wilson Shopping Center in Newberry. (R. p.114, line 19-R. p.115, line 8.) He discovered a hole in the cinder block on the back of the Check Into Cash store, found the door unsecure, and called for backup. (R.p.115, lines 9-17.) He and his backup

officer entered the building, smelled burning metal, and noticed the safe had several cut marks on it. (R.p.115, lines 18-24.) Weaver saw two grinders on the floor next to the safe and a couple of pry bars nearby. (R.p.116, lines 1-3.) After checking the other four businesses in the center, he realized their doors were unsecure and that holes had been knocked in the walls between the stores. (R.p.116, lines 7-20.) Weaver also observed that electrical wiring at the rear of each business had been cut, apparently in an attempt to disable alarms and camera systems. (R.p.120, lines 17-21; p.125, lines 12-17; p.126, lines 24-25; p.127, lines 14-20; p.128, lines 22-24; p.129, lines 7-15; p.130, lines 8-21; p.134, lines 14-17). Officer Weaver contacted key holders from each of the businesses and ascertained that numerous cell phones were missing from Boost Mobile and multiple gold dollar coins and rolls of stamps had been stolen from Regional Finance. (R.p.209, lines 3-20).

The following night, Officer Boris Alvarado was patrolling the nearby Bear Village shopping center in response to the burglaries from the previous night. (R.p.142, line 1-R.p.143, line 3; R. p.147, lines 3-8.) He began checking doors of the businesses and noticed an open storage unit. (R.p.143, lines 6-18.) As he walked toward it to investigate, he saw Applicant kneeling behind an air conditioning unit. (R.p.143, line 18-R.p.144, line 2; R.p.146, lines 13-20.) He asked him to identify himself, radioed in Applicant's name and date of birth, and found out he was from Tennessee. (R.p.146, line 21-R.p.147, line 25.) Officer Desiree Busko arrived to assist Alvarado as backup. (R.p.147, lines 18-21). When Busko arrived, she noticed tools on the ground by the air conditioning unit where Applicant had been kneeling. (R.p.148, lines 3-7). Officer Alvarado observed that multiple telephone boxes on the back side of the Bear Village shops appeared to have been opened and some of the wires inside appeared to have been cut. (R.p.154, line 11-p.155, line 3; p.156, line 17-p.157, line 13; p.213, lines 17-21). Officer Randy Malloy discovered

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a vehicle with a Tennessee tag in a nearby parking lot and determined it belonged to Applicant (R.p.29, lines 18-22.) Through the windows of the car, Officer Malloy could see a bag with tools including grinders, saw blades, and extension cords. (R.p.166, lines 3-9). He also observed a "large amount" of coins, including gold dollars, in the vehicle's center console. (R.p.166, lines 12-15). A hotel key was also visible in plain view in the console of the vehicle. (R.p.45, line 22-p.46, line 4; p.47, lines 12-25.) The room number on the hotel key was 125. (R.p.171, lines 12-13).

At that time, Officer Busko began checking local hotels to see if Applicant was registered as a guest and discovered he had checked in to room 125 of the Budget Inn. (R.p.51, line 17-p.52, line 20.) She watched the hotel room until a search warrant was obtained, at which time officers searched the room. (R.p.52, line 21-p.53, line 12.) Inside, officers discovered approximately 70 cell phones, multiple tools including grinders, and a pair of Fila tennis shoes. (R.pp.188-92). The sole of the left shoe matched a footwear impression found on a metal plate that had come off the safe at the Check Into Cash. (R.p.219, line 22-p.220, line 7; p.302, lines 1-10). The cell phones were still in boxes with "Boost Mobile" written on them. (R.p.216, line 22-p.217, line 9). Applicant was subsequently arrested and charged with safecracking, five counts of second-degree burglary (violent), grand larceny, two counts of petit larceny, and possession of burglary tools. (R.pp.371-94).

**Present Application**

Applicant commenced this PCR action on November 3, 2017. Applicant attached a 42-page handwritten "Appendix" raising allegations of ineffective assistance of counsel labeled A through Z, A-1 through Z-1, and A-2 through C-2, most of which were split into multiple numbered subparts.

On November 6, 2024, Applicant filed an amended application raising the following issues:

1. Applicant was denied his Sixth Amendment right to effective assistance of Counsel when Trial Counsel failed to object to the Opening and Closing Statements of the Solicitor.
2. Applicant was denied his Sixth Amendment right to effective assistance of Counsel when Trial Counsel failed to request a Batson Charge.
3. Applicant was denied his Sixth Amendment right to effective assistance of Counsel when Trial Counsel failed to object to the testimonies of State witnesses Desiree Busko, Kevin Goodman, Charles Count and Harld Mally, and to impeach their trial testimony.
4. Applicant was denied his Sixth Amendment right to effective assistance of Counsel when Trial Counsel failed to object to the introduction of state's exhibits #1, #7, #8, #9, #10 (A-R), #11, #13, #14, #17, #18, #19 and #20.
5. Applicant was denied his right to due process under Article I, Section 3 of the South Carolina Constitution elicited false testimony concerning the change of the Identification of the location of the Aerial Photo of the Shops at Bearville.

An evidentiary hearing was held on April 1, 2025. At that hearing, Applicant proceeded on the following four allegations of ineffective assistance of counsel:

1. For failing to challenge the testimony of the State's expert in footwear examination and comparison;
2. For failing to adequately address the fact that DNA evidence found at the crime scene was not used at trial;
3. For failing to adequately challenge the State's misidentification of aerial photographs;
4. For failing to challenge the warrantless search of Applicant's automobile.

**II. FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

This Court has reviewed the testimony presented at the evidentiary hearing, observed the witnesses presented at the hearing, and weighed the testimony accordingly. Before the Court are Applicant's records from the South Carolina Department of Corrections, the transcript of Applicant's trial, the records of the Newberry County Clerk of Court regarding the subject convictions, Applicant's appellate records, and the original and amended applications for post-conviction relief. This Court has reviewed the records submitted to it by the parties, the legal

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arguments made by the attorneys, and the pleadings. Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 17-27-80, this Court makes the following findings based upon all of the probative evidence presented:

**Ineffective Assistance of Counsel, Generally**

Applicant has raised four allegations of ineffective assistance of counsel during his trial. The Court finds each of these allegations to be meritless.

Because this is a PCR action, Applicant bears the burden of proving the allegations in his application. *Butler v. State*, 286 S.C. 441, 334 S.E.2d 813 (1985). Applicant must prove his factual allegations by a preponderance of the evidence. Rule 71.1(e), SCRCP.

Where the application alleges ineffective assistance of counsel as a ground for relief, the applicant must prove that "counsel's conduct so undermined the proper functioning of the adversarial process that [it] cannot be relied upon as having produced a just result." *Strickland v. Washington*, 466 U.S. 668, 686 (1984); *Butler*, 286 S.C. at 442, 334 S.E.2d at 814.

In evaluating allegations of ineffective assistance of counsel, the reviewing court applies the two-pronged test outlined in *Strickland*. First, Applicant must prove that counsel's performance was deficient. *Strickland*, 466 U.S. at 686; *Cherry v. State*, 300 S.C. 115, 117, 386 S.E.2d 624, 625 (1989). Under this prong, the court measures an attorney's performance by its "reasonableness under prevailing professional norms." *Cherry*, 300 S.C. at 117, 386 S.E.2d at 625 (quoting *Strickland*, 466 U.S. at 690). The Court, in determining deficiency, must affirmatively entertain the range of possible reasons counsel may have had for proceeding as they did. *Cullen v. Pinholster*, 563 U.S. 170, 196 (2011); *Harrington v. Richter*, 562 U.S. 86, 109-10 (2011). "The Sixth Amendment guarantees reasonable competence, not perfect advocacy judged with the benefit of hindsight." *Yarborough v. Gentry*, 540 U.S. 1, 6 (2003); see also *Murphy v. Davis*, 901 F.3d 578, 592 (5th Cir. 2018) ("[C]ounsel's performance need not be optimal to be reasonable.").

Rather, Counsel's performance, even if "far from exemplary," will only be found deficient if "no competent lawyer" would have acted the same way. *Dunn v. Reeves*, 594 U.S. 731, 739 (2021).

Second, counsel's deficient performance must have so prejudiced the applicant that "there is a reasonable probability that, but for counsel's unprofessional errors, the result of the proceeding would have been different." *Cherry*, 300 S.C. at 117-18, 386 S.E.2d at 625. "This does not require a showing that counsel's actions 'more likely than not altered the outcome,' but the difference between *Strickland*'s prejudice standard and a more-probable-than-not standard is slight and matters 'only in the rarest case.'" *Harrington*, 562 U.S. at 111-12 (quoting *Strickland*, 466 U.S. at 697). "The likelihood of a different result must be substantial, not just conceivable." *Id.* at 112. "The prejudice analysis requires the court deciding the ineffectiveness claim to consider the totality of the evidence before the judge or jury." *United States v. Basham*, 789 F.3d 358, 371-72 (4th Cir. 2015) (quoting *Elmore v. Ozmint*, 661 F.3d 783, 858 (4th Cir. 2011)).

In some cases, overwhelming evidence of guilt will preclude a finding of prejudice. "A reasonable probability of a different result does not exist when there is overwhelming evidence of guilt." *Hillerby v. State*, 431 S.C. 323, 333, 847 S.E.2d 500, 505 (Ct. App. 2020) (citing *Geter v. State*, 305 S.C. 365, 367, 409 S.E.2d 344, 346 (1991)). For evidence to be "overwhelming," such that it categorically precludes a finding of prejudice, the evidence must include something conclusive, such as a confession, DNA evidence demonstrating guilt, or a combination of physical and corroborating evidence so strong that the *Strickland* standard of "a reasonable probability . . . the factfinder would have had a reasonable doubt" cannot possibly be met. *Smalls v. State*, 422 S.C. 174, 191, 810 S.E.2d 836, 845 (2018).

The Court finds the evidence in this case meets the standard articulated in *Smalls*. Here, Applicant was essentially caught red-handed in the act of perpetrating a burglary behind the Bear

Village shopping center; he was found kneeling behind an air conditioning unit with a number of tools in his possession, near electrical boxes that had been forced open. These circumstances matched the circumstances of the multiple burglaries committed the previous night, at another shopping center less than a mile away, where the culprit had sabotaged electrical boxes at the rear of the businesses before stealing valuables, including every phone in the Boost Mobile store, and attempting to break into a safe with multiple pry bars and grinding tools. Law enforcement tracked down the hotel room rented by Applicant and found dozens of the stolen cell phones inside, still in the Boost Mobile packaging, as well as additional tools, including grinders like those used in the attempted safecracking.

This evidence was extremely damning; the Court finds there was “a combination of physical and corroborating evidence so strong that the *Strickland* standard . . . cannot possibly be met.” *Smalls*, 422 S.C. at 191, 810 S.E.2d at 845. The evidence Applicant challenges in his PCR application—the shoe print from the crime scene matching the tennis shoe found in his hotel room, and the stolen property and additional tools found in Applicant’s truck—was also strong, but was merely cumulative to the other substantial evidence that conclusively established Applicant’s guilt. Even if Counsel had performed deficiently in every way Applicant alleges, there can be no “reasonable probability” of a different result in light of this overwhelming evidence.

Because a showing of prejudice is required to succeed on an ineffective assistance claim, Applicant’s failure to prove prejudice is dispositive of this PCR action, and there is no need to evaluate the deficiency prong of the ineffective assistance analysis. *See Strickland*, 466 U.S. at 697 (“If it is easier to dispose of an ineffectiveness claim on the ground of lack of sufficient prejudice . . . that course should be followed.”). Nevertheless, for the sake of completeness, the Court will address Applicant’s specific allegations of ineffectiveness:

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### Footwear Impression Testimony

Applicant alleges Counsel was ineffective for failing to challenge the State's expert as to whether the sole of the Fila tennis shoe matched the impression found on the metal plate that came off the safe at the crime scene. This allegation is meritless.

A metal plate was found at the scene of the attempted safecracking at the Check Into Cash business; it was determined to be a part of the safe that had been broken off during the burglary. Law enforcement noticed a shoe print on the metal plate when they examined the crime scene.

At trial, the State called Captain Charles Counts as an expert in, among other things, footwear examination and comparison. Counts testified that he compared the sole of the Fila tennis shoes found in Applicant's hotel room to the footwear impression found on the metal plate, and he determined that the shoe print on the plate matched the sole of the left Fila tennis shoe.

Applicant complains Counsel should have objected to this testimony because the shoe print on the plate did not match the shoe found at the hotel. In support of this argument, Applicant refers to the testimony of Captain Counts regarding the difference between two-dimensional and three-dimensional footwear impressions. (R.pp.291-92). Applicant claims the shoe print at the crime scene was a three-dimensional impression, while the shoe print presented at trial was two-dimensional.

This claim is not supported by the trial transcript. Counts clearly testified that a two-dimensional impression is "where the hard sole of the foot picks up residue such as dirt and dust and leaves an impression on the ground of the outsole of that footwear," while a three-dimensional impression is "where the hard sole of the foot goes into a soft substrate and leaves a foot track." (R.p.291). Counts then explained that stepping on a sheet of metal, like the one in this case, would leave a two-dimensional impression. (R.p.292, lines 7-10). Clearly, the shoe print on the metal

plate found at the crime scene was a two-dimensional impression. Applicant is simply mistaken in claiming that the shoe print at the crime scene was three-dimensional. While Counts used multiple different methods to visualize the comparison between the shoe print found at the scene and the soles of the shoes found at the hotel, the Court finds that Applicant has not identified any material discrepancy that was not adequately explained at trial. Therefore, the Court finds counsel was not deficient for failing to object on this ground, and there is no reasonable likelihood that the result of the trial would have been different if Counsel had objected.

**DNA Evidence**

Applicant alleges Counsel was ineffective for not challenging the State's failure to introduce evidence of the DNA found at the crime scene. This allegation is meritless.

Applicant claims there was DNA found by law enforcement at the crime scene, but the State did not attempt to introduce any DNA evidence at his trial. Applicant speculates that the DNA evidence could have exonerated him by proving that somebody else committed the crime; however, Applicant has not presented this purportedly exculpatory DNA evidence to the Court. In addition, Applicant admitted he discussed this issue with Counsel, and Counsel told him the DNA evidence probably would not be processed for three to five years.

The burden is on Applicant to introduce evidence at the PCR hearing to substantiate his allegations. Without evidence, there is no reason to believe that the DNA collected the scene would have exonerated Applicant; it is just as likely to have further inculpated Applicant, and the fact that the State did not introduce it at trial is easily explained by the desire to avoid unnecessary delay in prosecuting this otherwise open-and-shut case. For these reasons, the Court finds Applicant has not met his burden of proving either deficiency or prejudice as to this allegation.

**Aerial Photographs**

Applicant alleges Counsel was ineffective for failing to object when the State incorrectly referred to the exhibit number for an aerial photograph of the Wilson Shopping Center when discussing a photograph of the Bear Village shopping center. Applicant claims this was a deliberate attempt by the solicitor to confuse the jury, so that the jury would think the shopping center where Applicant was arrested was the same shopping center that had been burglarized the night before. This allegation is meritless.

Applicant refers to an exchange reflected in the record where the solicitor referred to certain exhibits with the incorrect exhibit numbers. (R.p.153, lines 7-17; p.154, lines 11-12; p.163, line 19-p.164, line 8; p.183, lines 5-10). However, the record reflects that Counsel pointed out these errors, and the solicitor agreed to correct the exhibit numbers. (R.p.153, lines 7-17; p.183, line 14-p.185, line 10). The Court finds Counsel responded appropriately under the circumstances.

In addition, the Court notes that, during closing argument, the solicitor carefully explained to the jury the fact that the burglary and safecracking had happened at the Wilson Shopping Center, while Applicant was apprehended at the nearby Bear Village the following night: "I hope that wasn't too confusing that we were dealing with these *two different* incident locations. . . . Shops on Wilson are these that we've talked about so exhaustively. That happens on *the night of the 26<sup>th</sup>*. Mr. Alvarado is patrolling Bear Village *the next night*. I hope all this was clear to y'all." (R.pp.325-26) (emphasis added). This refutes Applicant's claim that the solicitor was deliberately attempting to mislead the jury into conflating Bear Village with the Shops at Wilson. Rather, the Court finds the incorrect exhibit numbers were simply minor clerical errors, which were not likely to confuse the jury and which Counsel swiftly noticed and corrected on the record.

For these reasons, the Court finds Counsel was not deficient as to this allegation, nor was Applicant prejudiced.

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**Lack of Search Warrant**

Finally, Applicant challenged the warrantless search of his truck. However, Applicant testified that Counsel attempted to suppress the evidence obtained pursuant to that search, and the issue was preserved for appeal and ruled on by the court of appeals. Applicant even acknowledged that Counsel and Applicant's appellate lawyer handled the issue as well as they could. Applicant clarified that he was challenging the court of appeals' decision on this issue, rather than the performance of Counsel.

S.C. Code Ann. section 17-27-20(B) expressly states PCR "is not a substitute for . . . direct review of the sentence or conviction." A PCR application cannot assert any issues that were raised, or could have been raised, at trial or on direct appeal. *Drayton v. Evatt*, 312 S.C. 4, 8, 430 S.E.2d 517, 520 (1993). Therefore, the Court finds this claim is not cognizable in a PCR action.

In addition, this Court lacks the authority to overrule the court of appeals on a point that has already been decided against Applicant. For these reasons, this Court finds this allegation meritless.

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**III. CONCLUSION**

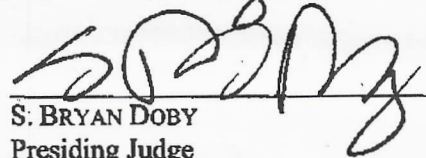
Based on all the foregoing, this Court finds and concludes that Applicant has not established any constitutional violations or deprivations that would require this Court to grant his application. Therefore, this application for post-conviction relief must be denied and dismissed with prejudice.

This Court notifies the Applicant that he must file and serve a notice of appeal within thirty (30) days from the receipt by counsel of written notice of entry of judgment to secure the appropriate appellate review. See Rule 203, SCACR. Pursuant to *Austin v. State*, 305 S.C. 453, 409 S.E.2d 395 (1991), Applicant has a right to an appellate counsel's assistance in seeking review of the denial of PCR. Rule 71.1(g), SCRCP, provides that if Applicant wishes to seek appellate review, PCR counsel must serve and file a notice of appeal on Applicant's behalf. Applicant's attention is directed to Rule 243, SCACR, for appropriate procedures for appeal.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:**

1. That the Application for Post-Conviction Relief be denied and dismissed with prejudice; and
2. The Applicant be remanded to the custody of the South Carolina Department of Corrections.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED this 23 day of July, 2025.

  
 S. BRYAN DOBY  
 Presiding Judge  
 Eighth Judicial Circuit

Bishopville, South Carolina

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF NEWBERRY  
IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS FOR THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

JEFFREY G. MCCOY, #355188

Applicant,

v.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,


Respondent.

**AFFIDAVIT OF SERVICE**

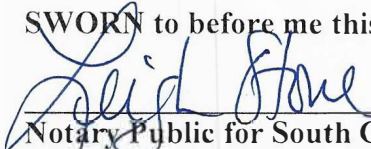
The undersigned hereby certifies that a true copy of the filed Order of Dismissal has been served upon the applicant by mailing one copy in the United States mail, postage prepaid, addressed to:

**Christopher F. Gibbs, Esquire  
Gibbs Law Firm LLC  
1304 Boundary Street  
Beaufort, SC 29902**

This 4<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2025.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Zilcia Williams  
Legal Assistant for Respondent

SWORN to before me this 4<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2025.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public for South Carolina.  
My Commission Expires:

*May 16, 2029*