

ORIGINAL

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE COURT OF APPEALS

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Appeal from Spartanburg County
Roger L. Couch, Circuit Court Judge

FEB 26 2016
SC Court of Appeals

THE STATE,

RESPONDENT,

V.

CLARENCE KEITH THOMAS,

APPELLANT

APPELLATE CASE NO. 2015-002508

ANDERS BRIEF OF APPELLANT

ROBERT M. PACHAK
Appellate Defender

South Carolina Commission on Indigent Defense
Division of Appellate Defense
PO Box 11589
Columbia, SC 29211-1589
(803) 734-1343

ATTORNEY FOR APPELLANT

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STATEMENT OF ISSUE ON APPEAL

Whether appellant was denied a preliminary hearing?

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On July 23, 2014, appellant pled guilty to shop lifting in Spartanburg County. He was sentenced to two (2) years suspended on eighteen (18) months probation. On August 7, 2014, he was served with a probation violation arrest warrant. On November 20, 2015, a probation revocation hearing was held before the Honorable Roger L. Couch. Appellant's suspended sentence was revoked and he was ordered to serve his two (2) year original sentence. He was represented by Suzanne White, Esquire.

This appeal follows.

ARGUMENT

Appellant was denied a preliminary before his probation was revoked.

In 1972 the United States Supreme Court handed down the opinion of Morrissey v. Brewer, 408 U.S. 471, 92 S. Ct. 2593 setting forth minimal due process requirements for the revocation of parole. The Court noted that “revocation deprives an individual... of the conditional liberty properly dependent on observance of special parole restrictions.” 408 U.S. at 480, 92 S. Ct. at 2600. The Court went on to write that there must be an orderly process before a liberty protection is terminated. 408 U.S. at 482, 92 S. Ct. at 2601. First, the Court dealt with the parolee’s arrest and the need for a preliminary hearing. The Court stated:

Due process would seem to require that some minimal inquiry be conducted at or reasonably near the place of the alleged parole violation or arrest and as promptly as convenient after arrest while information is fresh and sources are available. Cf. Hyser v. Reed, 115 U.S. App. D.C. 254, 318 F.2d 225 (1963). Such an inquiry should be seen as in the nature of a ‘preliminary hearing’ to determine whether there is probable cause or reasonable ground to believe that the arrested parolee has committed acts that would constitute a violation of parole conditions. Cf. Goldberg v. Kelly, 397 U.S., at 267-271, 90 S. Ct. at 1020-1022, 25 L.Ed2d 287.

408 U.S. at 484, 92 S. Ct. at 2602

With respect to the preliminary hearing before this officer, the parolee should be given notice that the hearing will take place and that its purpose is to determine whether there is probable cause to believe he has committed a parole violation. The notice should state what parole violations have been alleged. At the hearing the parolee may appear and speak in his own behalf; he may bring letters, documents, or individuals who can give relevant information to the hearing officer.

408 U.S. at 486-487, 92 S. Ct. at 2603.

With respect to the revocation hearing the Court wrote:

We cannot write a code of procedure; that is the responsibility of each State. Most States have done so by legislation, others by judicial decision usually on due process grounds. Our task is limited to deciding the minimum requirements of due process. They include (a) written notice of the claimed violations of parole; (b) disclosure to the parolee of evidence against him; (c) opportunity to be heard in person and to present witnesses and documentary evidence; (d) the right to confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses (unless the hearing officer specifically finds good cause for not allowing confrontation); (e) a 'neutral and detached' hearing body such as a traditional parole board, members of which need not be judicial officers or lawyers; and (f) a written statement by the factfinders as to the evidence relied on and reasons for revoking parole. We emphasize there is no thought to equate this second stage of parole revocation to a criminal prosecution in any sense. It is a narrow inquiry; the process should be flexible enough to consider evidence including letters, affidavits, and other material that would not be admissible in an adversary criminal trial.

408 U.S. at 488 – 489, 92 S.C. at 2604.

In Gagnon v. Scarpelli, 411, U.S. 778, 93 S. Ct. 1756 (1973) the Court made the same procedures set out in Morrissey applicable to probation revocations. A short time later the Court held that due process is violated when the state revokes probation with no evidence that probation was violated. Douglas v. Burden, 412 U.S. 430, 93 S. Ct. 2199 (1973). Then in Bearden v. Georgia, 466 U.S. 660, 103 S. Ct. 2064 (1983) the Court held that the State can not revoke a defendant's probation because he is too poor to pay a fine. A probation violation has to be willful. The South Carolina Supreme Court a short time later also held the probation could not be revoked "solely" on the ground that one on probation failed to pay fines or to make restitution (emphasis in original). Barlet v. State, 288 S.C.

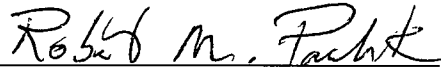
481, 343 S.E.2d 620 (1986). The judge has to make a finding “on the record that the probationer failed to make a bona fide effort to pay.” Id.

In appellant’s case he was served with a probation violation arrest warrant. The warrant has a place to fill out about when a preliminary hearing was held. That space is blank indicating that no preliminary hearing was held. As noted above probation should not be revoked without the benefit of a preliminary hearing.

CONCLUSION

The decision to revoke appellant's probation should be revoked

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert M. Pachak". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Robert M. Pachak
Appellate Defender

ATTORNEY FOR APPELLANT

This 26th day of February, 2016.

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PETITION TO BE RELIEVED AS COUNSEL

Counsel for Clarence Keith Thomas states:

1. He is Appellate Defender for the South Carolina Office of Appellate Defense, and was appointed to represent appellant.
2. He has reviewed the record of appellant's trial before Judge Roger L. Couch, which was held on November 20, 2015, and, in his opinion, the appeal is without legal merit sufficient to warrant a new trial.
3. He has, pursuant to Anders v. California, 386 U.S. 738, 87 S.Ct. 1396 (1967), briefed an arguable legal issue which arose during the course of the trial.

WHEREFORE, he asks the Court to relieve him as counsel for Clarence Keith Thomas.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert M. Pachak
Appellate Defender

ATTORNEY FOR APPELLANT

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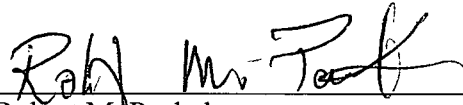
**DESIGNATION OF MATTER TO BE
INCLUDED IN RECORD ON APPEAL**

Appellant proposes the following be included in the Record on Appeal:

- (1) Entire Trial Transcript
- (2) True-billed indictment(s);
- (3) Probation Revocation Arrest Warrant

I certify that this designation contains no matter which is irrelevant to this appeal.

February 26th, 2016



Robert M. Pachak
Appellate Defender

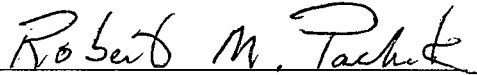
South Carolina Commission on Indigent Defense
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PO Box 11589
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(803) 734-1343

Attorney for Appellant

CERTIFICATE OF COUNSEL

The undersigned certifies that to the best of my ability this Anders Brief of Appellant complies with Rule 211(b), SCACR, and the April 15, 2014 order from the South Carolina Supreme Court entitled "Revised Order Concerning Personal Identifying Information and Other Sensitive Information in Appellate Court Filings."

February 26, 2016



Robert M. Pachak
Appellate Defender

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned attorney hereby certifies that a true copy of the Anders Brief of Appellant and Designation of Matter and Record on Appeal in the above referenced case has been served upon Matthew Buchanan, Esquire, at the South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole & Pardon Services, PO Box 50666, Columbia, SC 29250; and a copy of the Anders Brief of Appellant and Designation of Matter and Record on Appeal have been served on Clarence Keith Thomas, #328525 at McCormick Correctional Institution, on this 26th day of February, 2016.

Robert M. Pachak
Robert M. Pachak
Appellate Defender

ATTORNEY FOR APPELLANT

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me
this 26th day of February, 2016.

Kevin Mudd (L.S.)
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission Expires: July 3, 2023.