

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS

Speagle v. State of Illinois

Speagle · No. 3:26-CV-552-NJR · Decided May 8, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois dismissed Billy A. Speagle’s 28 U.S.C. § 2254 habeas petition as untimely under the one-year statute of limitations in 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d). The court concluded that Speagle’s state-court judgment became final in 2013 and that later state proceedings did not make the federal petition timely. The court also denied a certificate of appealability.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Nancy J. Rosenstengel
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
DECIDED	May 8, 2026
DOCKET	3:26-CV-552-NJR
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 dismissed at preliminary review as untimely under the federal habeas statute of limitations.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	At preliminary review under Rule 4 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases, the court must dismiss the petition if it plainly appears from the petition and attached exhibits that the petitioner is not entitled to relief. Federal habeas review under 28 U.S.C. § 2254(a) is limited to custody in violation of the Constitution or laws of the United States.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	Billy A. Speagle v. State of Illinois

TOPICS

- federal habeas corpus
- statute of limitations
- post-conviction relief
- motions to dismiss
- criminal procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Federal habeas corpus

Post-conviction relief

Criminal procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Speagle's § 2254 petition was barred by the one-year statute of limitations in 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d).
2. Whether the state post-conviction proceedings tolled the federal limitations period sufficiently to make the April 27, 2026 petition timely.
3. Whether a certificate of appealability should issue after dismissal on procedural grounds.

HOLDINGS

1. The petition was time-barred because Speagle's state-court judgment became final on September 21, 2013, and he did not file the federal habeas petition until April 27, 2026, well after expiration of the one-year limitations period under 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d)(1)(A).
2. Dismissal was required under Rule 4 because it plainly appeared from the petition that Speagle was not entitled to federal habeas relief.
3. A certificate of appealability was denied because Speagle did not make a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right and reasonable jurists would not debate the procedural ruling.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Federal habeas review serves as “a guard against extreme malfunctions in the state criminal justice systems, not a substitute for ordinary error correction through appeal.””

“The conduct of the Defendant was always a crime no matter how the statute is titled.”

“Federal habeas corpus is not the equivalent of another round of appellate review of state court proceedings.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Speagle pleaded guilty in Illinois state court on August 21, 2013, to aggravated criminal sexual abuse and aggravated child pornography and received consecutive prison and mandatory supervised release terms. Judgment was entered on August 22, 2013, and he did not pursue a direct appeal. He filed a state post-conviction petition in 2014 but withdrew it in 2015, and he later challenged the conviction as based on a repealed statute. He was confined at the Rushville Treatment and Detention Center while awaiting proceedings on a sexually violent person commitment petition.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Speagle pleaded guilty in Illinois state court in 2013 and did not file a direct appeal. He filed a state post-conviction petition in 2014, later withdrew it, and filed a later state habeas petition challenging the validity of his conviction; the Illinois appellate court dismissed the appeal as untimely and the Illinois Supreme Court denied

leave to appeal. He then filed this § 2254 petition in the Southern District of Illinois, which dismissed the petition under Rule 4 and denied a certificate of appealability.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Harrington v. Richter, 562 U.S. 86, 102-03 (2011)
- Jackson v. Virginia, 443 U.S. 307, 332 n.5 (1979) (Stevens, J., concurring)
- United States v. Fleming, 676 F.3d 621, 625 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Tennard v. Dretke, 542 U.S. 274, 282 (2004)
- Slack v. McDaniel, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000)
- Sherman v. Quinn, 668 F.3d 421, 424 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Abuelyaman v. Illinois State University, 667 F.3d 800, 807-08 (7th Cir. 2011)
- Elustra v. Mineo, 595 F.3d 699, 707-08 (7th Cir. 2010)
- Blue v. Hartford Life & Accident Insurance Co., 698 F.3d 587, 598 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Carlson v. CSX Transportation, Inc., 758 F.3d 819, 826 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Martinez v. Trainor, 556 F.2d 818, 819-20 (7th Cir. 1977)

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