

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH
CAROLINA

Lance L. Miles, Jr. v. Donnie Stonebreaker

Miles · No. 5:24-cv-6046-BHH · Decided January 20, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of South Carolina adopts the Magistrate Judge’s report and recommendation, grants the respondent’s motion for summary judgment, and denies Lance L. Miles, Jr.’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2254. The court also denies a certificate of appealability.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of South Carolina
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Bruce H. Hendricks
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of South Carolina
DECIDED	January 20, 2026
DOCKET	5:24-cv-6046-BHH
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Petitioner sought federal habeas relief under 28 U.S.C. § 2254. After a magistrate judge recommended granting Respondent's summary-judgment motion and denying the petition, the district court reviewed the recommendation for clear error because no objections were filed.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	In the absence of specific objections to a magistrate judge's report and recommendation, the district court reviews the recommendation for clear error rather than conducting de novo review.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Lance L. Miles, Jr. v. Donnie Stonebreaker

TOPICS

- federal habeas corpus
- summary judgment
- post-conviction relief
- appellate procedure
- standard of review

PRACTICE AREAS

- federal habeas corpus
- post-conviction relief
- civil procedure
- appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the magistrate judge's recommendation to grant Respondent's motion for summary judgment and deny the § 2254 petition contained clear error when no party filed specific objections.
2. Whether Petitioner was entitled to a certificate of appealability under 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c).

HOLDINGS

1. When no specific objections are filed, the district court reviews the magistrate judge's report and recommendation for clear error rather than conducting de novo review.
2. Respondent's motion for summary judgment was granted and Petitioner's § 2254 habeas petition was denied.
3. A certificate of appealability was denied because Petitioner failed to make the required substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“in the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must ‘only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation.’” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The opinion concerns Petitioner's application for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2254. Respondent moved for summary judgment, and Petitioner opposed the motion. The district court did not identify the underlying state-court facts in this order; it adopted the magistrate judge's analysis after finding no clear error.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Respondent moved for summary judgment on March 28, 2025. The magistrate judge issued a Roseboro notice, Petitioner responded, and Respondent replied. On December 30, 2025, the magistrate judge recommended granting summary judgment and denying the § 2254 petition. With no objections filed, the district court reviewed the Report for clear error, adopted it, granted summary judgment, denied the petition, and denied a certificate of appealability.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Roseboro v. Garrison, 528 F.2d 309 (4th Cir. 1975)
- Mathews v. Weber, 423 U.S. 261 (1976)
- Diamond v. Colonial Life & Accident Insurance Co., 416 F.3d 310, 315 (4th Cir. 2005)
- Miller-El v. Cockrell, 537 U.S. 322, 336 (2003)

- Slack v. McDaniel, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000)
- Rose v. Lee, 252 F.3d 676, 683 (4th Cir. 2001)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
 Lance L. Miles, Jr.,)) Petitioner,)) Civil Action No. 5:24-cv-6046-BHH v.)) ORDER Donnie
 Stonebreaker,)) Respondent.) _____) This matter is before the
 Court upon Petitioner Lance L. Miles, Jr.'s ("Petitioner") petition for a writ of habeas corpus
 pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254.

On March 28, 2025, Respondent filed a motion for summary judgment (ECF No. 25), and the matter was referred to a United States Magistrate Judge for preliminary determinations in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 636(b) and Local Civil Rule 73.02(B)(2), D.S.C.

The Magistrate Judge issued an order pursuant to *Roseboro v. Garrison*, 528 F.2d 309 (4th Cir. 1975), advising Petitioner of the dismissal procedures and the possible consequences if he failed to respond to the motion. (ECF No. 26.) Petitioner filed a response in opposition to Respondent's motion for summary judgment on July 10, 2025, and Respondent filed a reply on July 17, 2025.

(ECF Nos. 36, 39.) On December 30, 2025, the Magistrate Judge issued a report and recommendation ("Report"), outlining the issues and recommending that the Court grant Respondent's motion for summary judgment and deny this § 2254 petition. (ECF No. 47.) Attached to the Magistrate Judge's Report was a notice advising the parties of the right to file written objections to the Report within fourteen days of being served with a copy.

To date, no objections have been filed. The Magistrate Judge makes only a recommendation to the Court. The recommendation has no presumptive weight, and the responsibility to make a final determination remains with the Court. *Mathews v. Weber*, 423 U.S. 261 (1976).

The Court is charged with making a de novo determination only of those portions of the Report to which specific objections are made, and the Court may accept, reject, or modify, in whole or in part, the recommendation of the Magistrate Judge, or recommit the matter to the Magistrate Judge with instructions. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).

In the absence of specific objections, the Court reviews the matter only for clear error. See *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Accident Ins. Co.*, 416 F.3d 310, 315 (4th Cir. 2005) (stating that "in the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must 'only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation.'") (quoting Fed.

R. Civ. P. 72 advisory committee's note). Here, because no objections have been filed, the Court has reviewed the record, the applicable law, and the recommendations of the Magistrate Judge for

clear error. After review, the Court finds no clear error and agrees with the Magistrate Judge's careful and thorough analysis.

Accordingly, the Court adopts and specifically incorporates the Magistrate Judge's Report (ECF No. 47), and the Court grants Respondent's motion for summary judgment (ECF No. 25) and denies this § 2254 petition. IT IS SO ORDERED. /s/Bruce H. Hendricks United States District Judge January 20, 2026 Charleston, South Carolina 2 CERTIFICATE OF APPEALABILITY The governing law provides: (c)(2) A certificate of appealability may issue... only if the applicant has made a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right. (c)(3) The certificate of appealability... shall indicate which specific issue or issues satisfy the showing required by paragraph (2).

28 U.S.C. § 2253(c). A prisoner satisfies the standard by demonstrating that reasonable jurists would find this Court's assessment of his constitutional claims debatable or wrong and that any dispositive procedural ruling by the district court is likewise debatable. See *Miller-El v. Cockrell*, 537 U.S. 322, 336 (2003); *Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000); *Rose v. Lee*, 252 F.3d 676, 683 (4th Cir.2001).

Here, the Court finds that the legal standard for the issuance of a certificate of appealability has not been met. Therefore, a certificate of appealability is denied. 3