

7TH CIR.

Roberto Mata v. Tyrone Baker

No. 20-3151, 7th Cir. (July 19, 2023)

SUMMARY

The Seventh Circuit held that a habeas petitioner procedurally defaulted his ineffective assistance of trial counsel claim when the Illinois Appellate Court applied the state’s waiver doctrine, finding the claim could have been raised on direct appeal—an adequate and independent state procedural ground barring federal review. The court also found the petitioner’s separate claim of ineffective assistance of appellate counsel was procedurally defaulted because he failed to raise it in his petition for leave to appeal to the Illinois Supreme Court, and thus could not serve as cause to excuse the default. The ruling affirms the district court’s denial of habeas relief under 28 U.S.C. § 2254.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	7th Cir.
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Brennan; Hamilton; Jackson-Akiwumi
JURISDICTION	Federal
DECIDED	July 19, 2023
DOCKET	20-3151
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Appeal from the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, denial of habeas petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2254.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	When reviewing a district court’s ruling on a habeas corpus petition, we review the district court’s factual findings for clear error and rulings on issues of law de novo.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published
PARTIES	Roberto Mata v. Tyrone Baker

TOPICS

- habeas corpus
- ineffective assistance
- waiver
- appellate procedure
- preservation of error

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Mata procedurally defaulted his ineffective assistance of trial counsel claim by failing to raise it on direct appeal, and whether the Illinois Appellate Court's waiver determination was an adequate and independent state ground barring federal habeas review.
2. Whether Mata's ineffective assistance of appellate counsel claim was procedurally defaulted for failure to exhaust state remedies.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"A state law procedural ground satisfies the independence prong when 'the court actually relied on the procedural bar as an independent basis for its disposition of the case.'" (at 9)

"A state ground is 'adequate' if it is 'firmly established and regularly followed.'" (at 9)

"We have repeatedly held that '[a] finding of waiver by [an Illinois] postconviction court is enough to establish an adequate and independent state ground.'" (at 9-10)

"Because Mata did not include his claim for ineffective assistance of appellate counsel in his petition for leave to appeal, he procedurally defaulted the claim." (at 15)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

In the early morning of March 16, 2002, Mata fired shots at Adrian Padilla, Sandar Mosqueda, and Edwin Delgado, killing Padilla and Mosqueda and injuring Delgado. Chicago police officers arrested Mata that evening, and the following day Mata agreed to give a videotaped statement after being advised of his Miranda rights multiple times. In the statement, Mata explained he fired in self-defense after seeing his friend being attacked. Before trial, defense counsel moved to suppress the confession alleging coercion, but the trial court only ruled on the search warrant portion, and counsel did not pursue the suppression of the confession. At trial, the State played the videotaped confession, and Mata testified in his own defense claiming self-defense. The jury found Mata guilty of two counts of first-degree murder and one count of aggravated battery with a firearm. On direct appeal, the Illinois Appellate Court rejected Mata's claim that trial counsel was ineffective for failing to impeach a witness. In state postconviction proceedings, Mata claimed trial counsel was ineffective for failing to pursue the motion to suppress his confession. The Illinois Appellate Court found the claim waived because it could have been raised on direct appeal, and also rejected his ineffective assistance of appellate counsel claim.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Mata was convicted in Illinois state court of first-degree murder and aggravated battery. He filed a pro se postconviction petition claiming ineffective assistance of trial counsel for failing to pursue suppression of his videotaped confession. The Illinois Circuit Court summarily denied, the Illinois Appellate Court affirmed on waiver grounds, and the Illinois Supreme Court denied leave to appeal. Mata then sought federal habeas relief, which the district court denied. This appeal followed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

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