

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Granval G. Hunter-Harrison, Jr. v. M. Atchley

Hunter-Harrison v. Atchley · No. 2:20-cv-0592-WBS-CKD P · Decided September 30, 2025

SUMMARY

The document contains findings and recommendations in a federal habeas corpus proceeding under 28 U.S.C. § 2254. The court recommends denying petitioner Granval Hunter-Harrison’s remaining ineffective-assistance-of-counsel claim, concluding that counsel reasonably advised him to accept an earlier plea offer and that the state court’s rejection of the claim was not unreasonable under Strickland and AEDPA standards. The document was issued by a United States magistrate judge and permits the parties to file objections.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	September 30, 2025
DOCKET	2:20-cv-0592-WBS-CKD P
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Findings and recommendations on the remaining claim in a state prisoner’s first amended petition for a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2254.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, relief is unavailable on a claim adjudicated on the merits in state court unless the state decision was contrary to, or involved an unreasonable application of, clearly established Supreme Court law, or was based on an unreasonable determination of the facts under 28 U.S.C. § 2254(d). State factual findings are presumed correct absent clear and convincing evidence under § 2254(e)(1). Ineffective-assistance claims are governed by Strickland v. Washington, and federal habeas review asks whether there is any reasonable argument that counsel satisfied Strickland’s deferential standard.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Granval G. Hunter-Harrison, Jr. v. M. Atchley

TOPICS

federal habeas corpus

post-conviction relief

ineffective assistance

plea bargaining

right to counsel

PRACTICE AREAS

federal habeas corpus

criminal procedure

constitutional law

post-conviction relief

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether trial counsel provided ineffective assistance during plea negotiations by misleading petitioner about the strength of the prosecution's case and the viability of a defense, causing petitioner to reject a more favorable plea offer.
2. Whether the California courts unreasonably applied *Strickland v. Washington* in rejecting petitioner's ineffective-assistance claim.

HOLDINGS

1. Petitioner failed to establish ineffective assistance of counsel because the record supported a reasonable conclusion that counsel advised him to accept the more favorable plea offer, and petitioner rejected that advice despite being aware of the evidence and the completed defense investigation.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The determination to be made is not whether counsel acted reasonably but "whether there is any reasonable argument that counsel satisfied Strickland's deferential standard."" (Analysis, at 1-2)

"Petitioner's claim fails because the record reflects a reasonable argument that counsel satisfied Strickland's deferential standard." (Analysis, at 5-8)

"Petitioner's sole remaining claim in the first amended petition—claim two asserting effective assistance of counsel—is without merit." (Conclusion, at 1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

After a dispute over ownership of a motorbike, petitioner fired at least eight shots at a truck containing the motorbike while the victims were driving it away. Police recovered shell casings, found a bullet hole in the truck, and obtained surveillance video recording petitioner firing the gun. Petitioner rejected a plea offer of 20 years and 8 months and later pleaded no contest to two assault charges in exchange for a stipulated sentence of 27 years and 4 months. He claimed counsel misled him about the strength of the case, a possible self-defense theory, and further investigation concerning ownership of the motorbike.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Petitioner challenged his 2017 Sacramento County Superior Court judgment after pleading no contest to two assault charges and admitting firearm-use allegations and a strike allegation. The California Court of Appeal modified the judgment to conform to the plea and otherwise affirmed, and the California Supreme Court denied review. In federal court, claims one and two of the original petition were dismissed as state-law claims, the case

was stayed for exhaustion, and claims one and three through six of the first amended petition were later dismissed as untimely. The remaining ineffective-assistance claim alleged that counsel's advice caused petitioner to reject a more favorable plea offer. The magistrate judge recommended denying habeas relief.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The findings and recommendations were to be submitted to the assigned district judge under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b) (1). The parties were given fourteen days to file objections.

CASES CITED

- People v. Harrison-Hunter, No. C084771, 2018 WL 1516640 (Cal. Ct. App. Mar. 28, 2018)
- People v. Wende, 25 Cal. 3d 436 (1979)
- Houston v. Lack, 487 U.S. 266 (1988)
- Rhines v. Weber, 544 U.S. 269 (2005)
- Wilson v. Corcoran, 562 U.S. 1 (2010)
- Estelle v. McGuire, 502 U.S. 62 (1991)
- Park v. California, 202 F.3d 1146 (9th Cir. 2000)
- Greene v. Fisher, 565 U.S. 34 (2011)
- Stanley v. Cullen, 633 F.3d 852 (9th Cir. 2011)
- Williams v. Taylor, 529 U.S. 362 (2000)
- Maxwell v. Roe, 606 F.3d 561 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Marshall v. Rodgers, 569 U.S. 58 (2013)
- Parker v. Matthews, 567 U.S. 37 (2012)
- Carey v. Musladin, 549 U.S. 70 (2006)
- Price v. Vincent, 538 U.S. 634 (2003)
- Lockyer v. Andrade, 538 U.S. 63 (2003)
- Chia v. Cambra, 360 F.3d 997 (9th Cir. 2004)
- Schriro v. Landrigan, 550 U.S. 465 (2007)
- Harrington v. Richter, 562 U.S. 86 (2011)
- Yarborough v. Alvarado, 541 U.S. 652 (2004)
- Hibbler v. Benedetti, 693 F.3d 1140 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Taylor v. Maddox, 366 F.3d 992 (9th Cir. 2004)
- Hurles v. Ryan, 752 F.3d 768 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Lambert v. Blodgett, 393 F.3d 943 (9th Cir. 2004)
- Perez v. Rosario, 459 F.3d 943 (9th Cir. 2006)

- Nunes v. Mueller, 350 F.3d 1045 (9th Cir. 2003)
- Delgadillo v. Woodford, 527 F.3d 919 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Frantz v. Hazey, 533 F.3d 724 (9th Cir. 2008) (en banc)
- Cullen v. Pinholster, 563 U.S. 170 (2011)
- Robinson v. Ignacio, 360 F.3d 1044 (9th Cir. 2004)
- Edwards v. Lamarque, 475 F.3d 1121 (9th Cir. 2007) (en banc)
- Barker v. Fleming, 423 F.3d 1085 (9th Cir. 2005)
- Johnson v. Williams, 568 U.S. 289 (2013)
- Reynoso v. Giurbino, 462 F.3d 1099 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Nulph v. Cook, 333 F.3d 1052 (9th Cir. 2003)
- People v. Marsden, 2 Cal. 3d 118 (1970)
- Burt v. Titlow, 571 U.S. 12 (2013)
- Wilson v. Sellers, 584 U.S. 122 (2018)
- Turner v. Duncan, 158 F.3d 449 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Martinez v. Ylst, 951 F.2d 1153 (9th Cir. 1991)