

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO  
WESTERN DIVISION

JOHN ELLIOTT, :  
 :  
 Plaintiff, : Case No. 3:07cv479  
 :  
 vs. : JUDGE WALTER HERBERT RICE  
 :  
 COMMISSIONER OF SOCIAL SECURITY, :  
 :  
 Defendant. :

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DECISION AND ENTRY REJECTING REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE (DOC. #10) IN THEIR ENTIRETY; PLAINTIFF'S OBJECTIONS TO SAID JUDICIAL FILING (DOC. #11) SUSTAINED; JUDGMENT TO BE ENTERED IN FAVOR OF PLAINTIFF AND AGAINST DEFENDANT COMMISSIONER, VACATING COMMISSIONER'S DECISION THAT PLAINTIFF WAS NOT DISABLED AND, THEREFORE, NOT ENTITLED TO BENEFITS UNDER THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT; MAKING NO FINDING AS TO WHETHER DEFENDANT WAS DISABLED WITHIN THE MEANING OF SAID ACT; AND REMANDING THE CAPTIONED CAUSE TO THE DEFENDANT COMMISSIONER, UNDER SENTENCE FOUR OF 42 U.S.C. SECTION 405(g), FOR FURTHER PROCEEDINGS CONSISTENT WITH THIS OPINION; TERMINATION ENTRY

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Plaintiff has brought this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) to review a decision of the Defendant Commissioner denying Plaintiff's application for Social Security disability benefits. On September 3, 2008, the United States Magistrate Judge filed a Report and Recommendations (Doc. #10), recommending that the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act be affirmed. Based upon a thorough de

de novo review of this Court's file, including the Administrative Transcript (filed with Defendant's Answer at Doc. #4), and a thorough review of the applicable law, this Court rejects the aforesaid Report and Recommendations in their entirety and, in so doing, orders the entry of judgment in favor of the Plaintiff and against the Defendant Commissioner, concluding that the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act was not supported by substantial evidence. The Plaintiff's Objections to said judicial filing (Doc. #11) are sustained. Accordingly, the decision of the Defendant Commissioner that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act is vacated.

In reviewing the Commissioner's decision, the Magistrate's task is to determine if that decision is supported by "substantial evidence." 42 U.S.C. § 405(g). Under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C), this Court, upon objections being made to the Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendations, is required to make a de novo review of those recommendations of the report to which objection is made. This de novo review, in turn, requires this Court to re-examine all the relevant evidence, previously reviewed by the Magistrate, to determine whether the findings of the Secretary [now Commissioner] are supported by "substantial evidence." Lashley v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 708 F.2d 1048, 1053 (6th Cir. 1983); Gibson v. Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, 678 F.2d 653, 654 (6th Cir. 1982). This Court's sole function is to determine whether the record as a

whole contains substantial evidence to support the Commissioner's decision. The Commissioner's findings must be affirmed if they are supported by "such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion." Richardson v. Perales, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971), citing Consolidated Edison Company v. NLRB, 305 U.S. 197, 229 (1938); Landsaw v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 803 F.2d 211, 213 (6th Cir. 1986). Substantial evidence means such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion. Richardson, *supra*, at 401; Ellis v. Schweicker, 739 F.2d 245, 248 (6th Cir. 1984). Substantial evidence is more than a mere scintilla, but only so much as would be required to prevent a directed verdict (now judgment as a matter of law) against the Commissioner if this case were being tried to a jury. Foster v. Bowen, 853 F.2d 483, 486 (6th Cir. 1988); NLRB v. Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company, 306 U.S. 292, 300 (1939). To be substantial, the evidence "must do more than create a suspicion of the existence of the fact to be established... [I]t must be enough to justify, if the trial were to a jury, a refusal to direct a verdict when the conclusion sought to be drawn from it is one of fact for the jury." LeMaster v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 802 F.2d 839, 840 (6th Cir. 1986), quoting NLRB v. Columbian Enameling and Stamping Company, *supra*.

In determining whether the Commissioner's findings are supported by substantial evidence, the Court must consider the record as a whole. Hephner v. Mathews, 574 F.2d 359 (6th Cir. 1978); Ellis, *supra*; Kirk v. Secretary of Health and

Human Services, 667 F.2d 524, 536 (6th Cir. 1981); Houston v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 736 F.2d 365 (6th Cir. 1984); Garner v. Heckler, 745 F.2d 383 (6th Cir. 1984). However, the Court may not try the case de novo, resolve conflicts in evidence or decide questions of credibility. Garner, supra. The findings of the Commissioner of Social Security and proceedings on Claimant's application for social security disability benefits are not subject to reversal merely because there exists in the record substantial evidence to support a different conclusion. Buxton v. Halter, Commissioner of Social Security, 246 F.3d 762 (6th Cir. 2001). If the Commissioner's decision is supported by substantial evidence, it must be affirmed, even if the Court as a trier of fact would have arrived at a different conclusion. Elkins v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 658 F.2d 437, 439 (6th Cir. 1981).

In addition to the foregoing, in ruling as aforesaid, this Court makes the following, non-exclusive, observations:

1. In ordering a remand for further proceedings, this Court agrees with the Plaintiff that "[t]he Magistrate Judge failed to address the fact that the Commissioner used the wrong standard of law to evaluate Mr. Elliott's claim under Listing 12.05C. Administrative Law Judge Padilla confused issues concerning the validity of the IQ testing. He misread Mr. Elliott's school records. He applied the

wrong standards to assess Mr. Elliott's level of adaptive functioning. The Magistrate Judge's analysis is not a substitute for that of the Commissioner."

2. Remand for further proceedings, rather than for an award of benefits, is proper herein, given that all factual issues have yet to be resolved and the record does not adequately establish Plaintiff's entitlement to benefits. Faucher v. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 17 F.3d 171, 176 (6<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1994).

3. On remand, the Defendant Commissioner, through the Administrative Law Judge, is ordered to re-evaluate the Plaintiff's claim under Listing 12.05C, using the correct standard of law, coupled with a thorough and accurate review of the Plaintiff's school records, leading to a re-assessment of Plaintiff's level of adaptive functioning and determining anew whether he is disabled within the meaning of the Social Security Act.

WHEREFORE, based upon the aforesaid, this Court rejects the Report and Recommendations of the United States Magistrate Judge (Doc. #10) in their entirety, having concluded that the Commissioner's decision that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits under the Social Security Act was not supported by substantial evidence. Plaintiff's Objections to said judicial filing (Doc. #11) are overruled. Judgment will be ordered entered in favor of the Plaintiff and against the Defendant Commissioner, vacating the decision of the Defendant Commissioner that Plaintiff was not disabled and, therefore, not entitled to benefits

under the Social Security Act; making no finding as to the Plaintiff's disability within the meaning of said Act; and remanding the captioned cause, pursuant to Sentence Four of 42 U.S.C. Section 405(g), for further proceedings pursuant to this decision.

The captioned cause is hereby ordered terminated upon the docket records of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Western Division, at Dayton.

March 30, 2009

/s/ Walter Herbert Rice  
WALTER HERBERT RICE, JUDGE  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

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