

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
SOUTHERN DIVISION**

RONNIE ODELL PARKER,	:	
AIS 162167,	:	
	:	
Petitioner,	:	
	:	
vs.	:	CA 10-0016-WS-C
	:	
LOUIS BOYD,	:	
	:	
Respondent.	:	

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Ronnie Odell Parker, a state prisoner presently in the custody of the respondent, has petitioned this Court for federal habeas corpus relief pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254. This matter has been referred to the undersigned for the entry of a report and recommendation pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and Local Rule 72.1(c). It is recommended that the instant petition be dismissed as time barred under the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act's one-year limitations provision contained in 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d).

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. According to the allegations gleaned from the petition for writ of habeas corpus filed January 11, 2010, Parker entered a guilty plea to

larceny in the Circuit Court of Clarke County, Alabama on October 14, 1976 and was sentenced to a one-year term of imprisonment. (Doc. 1, at 1-2)

2. Parker did not appeal his conviction or sentence nor did he collaterally attack same until 2007. (*See id.* at 1-3) Petitioner's collateral attack, not surprisingly, proved unsuccessful. (*See id.* at 3-5)

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. A district court has the power under Rule 4 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases "to examine and dismiss frivolous habeas petitions prior to any answer or other pleading by the state." *Kiser v. Johnson*, 163 F.3d 326, 328 (5th Cir. 1999). Rule 4 provides, in pertinent part, that "[i]f it plainly appears from the petition and any attached exhibits that the petitioner is not entitled to relief in the district court, the judge must dismiss the petition and direct the clerk to notify the petitioner." 28 U.S.C. foll. § 2254, Rule 4.

2. The Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 ("AEDPA") was enacted on April 24, 1996 and, pertinent to this case, added a new subdivision to 28 U.S.C. § 2244 providing for a one-year period of limitations within which state prisoners must file their habeas corpus petitions pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254. *Wilcox v. Florida Dept. of Corrections*, 158 F.3d 1209, 1210 (11th Cir. 1998).

(d)(1) A 1-year period of limitation shall apply to an application for a writ of habeas corpus by a person in custody pursuant to the judgment of a State court. The limitation period shall run from the latest of—

(A) the date on which the judgment became final by the conclusion of direct review or the expiration of the time for seeking such review;

(B) the date on which the impediment to filing an application created by State action in violation of the Constitution or laws of the United States is removed, if the applicant was prevented from filing by such State action;

(C) the date on which the constitutional right asserted was initially recognized by the Supreme Court, if the right has been newly recognized by the Supreme Court and made retroactively applicable to cases on collateral review; or

(D) the date on which the factual predicate of the claim or claims presented could have been discovered through the exercise of due diligence.

(2) The time during which a properly filed application for State post-conviction or other collateral review with respect to the pertinent judgment or claim is pending shall not be counted toward any period of limitation under this subsection.

28 U.S.C. § 2244(d).

3. Subsections (B), (C), and (D) of § 2244(d)(1) clearly do not apply to petitioner's case and therefore, the timeliness of Parker's petition must be calculated under § 2244(d)(1)(A) based upon the date on which his larceny conviction became final. *See Jackson v. Secretary for the Dept. of*

Corrections, 292 F.3d 1347, 1349 (11th Cir. 2002) (“Because Jackson did not assert that a government-created impediment to his filing existed, that he based his claims on a right newly recognized by the Supreme Court, or that the facts supporting his claims could not have been discovered through due diligence before the filing of this petition, the statute of limitations must be measured from the remaining trigger, which is the date on which his conviction became final.”). “For prisoners whose convictions became final prior to the effective date of the AEDPA, the one-year statute of limitations instituted by the AEDPA began to run on its effective date, i.e., April 24, 1996.” *Guenther v. Holt*, 173 F.3d 1328, 1331 (11th Cir. 1999) (citations omitted), *cert. denied*, 528 U.S. 1085, 120 S.Ct. 811, 145 L.Ed.2d 683 (2000). This rule from *Guenther* is applicable in this case since Parker’s conviction became final, on or about November 25, 1976, when his appeal period expired. Rule 4(a), Ala.R.App.P.; *Symanowski v. State*, 606 So.2d 171 (Ala. Crim. App. 1992); *see Bridges v. Johnson*, 284 F.3d 1201, 1202 (11th Cir. 2002) (“Bridges pled guilty to terroristic threats, aggravated assault and stalking charges, and was sentenced to 26 years’ imprisonment on November 12, 1996. He did not appeal his convictions and sentences, but he did request that his sentence be reviewed by a sentence review panel, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 17-10-6. . . . As

provided in 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d)(1)(A), his judgment became final on the date that the time for seeking direct review expired; this date was not affected by his application for sentence review, because an application for sentence review is not a part of the direct appeal process under Georgia law. . . . Accordingly, Bridges' judgment of conviction became final on December 21, 1996, the date on which his 30-day right to appeal the November 21, 1996 judgment expired."); *Tinker v. Moore*, 255 F.3d 1331, 1332 & 1333 (11th Cir. 2001) ("Tinker was convicted on the robbery charge, and on January 29, 1997, the Third District Court of Appeal affirmed his conviction. . . . The mandate issued on February 14, 1997. . . . Under Florida law, a judgment against a criminal defendant becomes final upon issuance of the mandate on his direct appeal. . . . Tinker's mandate issued on February 14, 1997, and thus he had until February 13, 1998, to file his § 2254 petition, absent tolling of the limitations period."), *cert. denied*, 534 U.S. 1144, 122 S.Ct. 1101, 151 L.Ed.2d 997 (2002). Accordingly, Parker's limitations period commenced on April 24, 1996 and expired on April 23, 1997, *see Guenther, supra*, 173 F.3d at 1331, more than twelve years before he filed the instant § 2254 application.

4. Parker is unable to take advantage of the tolling provision built into § 2244(d), 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d)(2) ("The time during which a properly

filed application for State post-conviction or other collateral review with respect to the pertinent judgment or claim is pending shall not be counted toward any period of limitation under this section.”); *Guenther, supra*, 173 F.3d at 1331 (““The time during which a properly filed application for State post-conviction or other collateral review with respect to the pertinent judgment or claim is pending shall not be counted toward any period of limitation in [subsection (d)].””); *cf. Coates v. Byrd*, 211 F.3d 1225, 1227 (11th Cir. 2000) (“We agree with the Tenth and Fifth Circuits that the time during which a petition for writ of certiorari is pending, or could have been filed, following the denial of collateral relief in the state courts, is not to be subtracted from the running of time for 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d)(1) statute of limitations purposes.”), *cert. denied*, 531 U.S. 1166, 121 S.Ct. 1129, 148 L.Ed.2d 995 (2001), because he filed no state collateral attacks on his conviction and sentence during his one-year limitations period and his 2007 collateral attack certainly did not toll his limitations period. *See Webster v. Moore*, 199 F.3d 1256, 1259 (11th Cir.) (“Under § 2244(d)(2), even ‘properly filed’ state-court petitions must be ‘pending’ in order to toll the limitations period. A state-court petition like Webster’s that is filed following the expiration of the limitations period cannot toll that period because there is no

period remaining to be tolled.”), *cert. denied*, 531 U.S. 991, 121 S.Ct. 481, 148 L.Ed.2d 454 (2000); *Singleton v. Upton*, 2008 WL 410367, *1 (S.D. Ga. 2008) (“[A] state habeas petition filed after the one-year AEDPA statute of limitations expires cannot toll the statute of limitations because there is no time left to toll.”). In fact, petitioner makes no argument that § 2244(d)(2) is applicable in this case. (*See* Doc. 1, at 13)

5. The Eleventh Circuit has clearly embraced the doctrine of equitable tolling with regard to the one-year limitations period at issue: “Equitable tolling is to be applied when “extraordinary circumstances” have worked to prevent an otherwise diligent petitioner from timely filing his petition.’ . . . Thus, the petitioner must show both extraordinary circumstances and due diligence in order to be entitled to equitable tolling.” *Diaz v. Secretary for the Dept. of Corrections*, 362 F.3d 698, 700-701 (11th Cir. 2004) (citation omitted). “Section 2244 is a statute of limitations, not a jurisdictional bar. Therefore, it permits equitable tolling ‘when a movant untimely files because of extraordinary circumstances that are both beyond his control and unavoidable even with diligence.’” *Steed v. Head*, 219 F.3d 1298, 1300 (11th Cir.2000) (citation omitted). Thus, the one-year limitations provision need not be equitably tolled unless there is evidence that “extraordinary circumstances”

beyond petitioner's control made it impossible for him to file his petition on time. *See Miller v. New Jersey State Dept. of Corrections*, 145 F.3d 616, 618-619 (3rd Cir. 1998) (“[E]quitable tolling is proper only when the ‘principles of equity would make [the] rigid application [of a limitation period] unfair.’ . . . Generally, this will occur when the petitioner has ‘in some extraordinary way . . . been prevented from asserting his or her rights.’ . . . The petitioner must show that he or she ‘exercised reasonable diligence in investigating and bringing [the] claims.’ . . . Mere excusable neglect is not sufficient.”); *Calderon v. United States District Court for the Central District of California*, 128 F.3d 1283, 1288 (9th Cir. 1997) (“Equitable tolling will not be available in most cases, as extensions of time will only be granted if ‘extraordinary circumstances’ beyond a prisoner’s control make it impossible to file a petition on time.”), *cert. denied*, 522 U.S. 1099, 118 S.Ct. 899, 139 L.Ed.2d 884 (1998) and *cert. denied sub nom. Beeler v. Calderon*, 523 U.S. 1061, 118 S.Ct. 1389, 140 L.Ed.2d 648 (1998).

6. In this case, petitioner has not established that the instant habeas corpus petition was timely filed nor has he established that extraordinary circumstances and due diligence counsel equitable tolling of the limitations period. *See Spottsville v. Terry*, 476 F.3d 1241, 1245 (11th Cir. 2007) (“The

burden of establishing entitlement to this extraordinary remedy plainly rests with the petitioner[.]’”). Petitioner makes no argument that he was ignorant of the one-year limitations period.¹ It is apparent to the undersigned that nothing other than petitioner’s own lack of due diligence is responsible for the untimeliness of the filing of the instant petition. This is simply not one of those rare cases in which principles of equitable tolling can save petitioner from AEDPA’s one-year limitations period.

7. Pursuant to Rule 11(a) of the Rules Governing § 2254 Cases, the undersigned recommends that a certificate of appealability in this case be denied. 28 U.S.C. foll. § 2254, Rule 11(a) (“The district court must issue or deny a certificate of appealability when it enters a final order adverse to the applicant.”). The habeas corpus statute makes clear that an applicant is entitled to appeal a district court’s denial of his habeas corpus petition only where a circuit justice or judge issues a certificate of appealability. 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(1). A certificate of appealability may issue only where “the applicant has made a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right.” 28 U.S.C. § 2243(c)(2). Where, as here, a habeas petition is being denied on procedural grounds without reaching the merits of the underlying

¹ Instead, he simply argues that he was illegally convicted and falsely imprisoned on a plea of guilty to larceny. (Doc. 1, at 13)

constitutional claims, “a COA should issue [only] when the prisoner shows . . . that jurists of reason would find it debatable whether the petition states a valid claim of the denial of a constitutional right and that jurists of reason would find it debatable whether the district court was correct in its procedural ruling.” *Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 484, 120 S.Ct. 1595, 1604, 146 L.Ed.2d 542 (2000); see *Miller-El v. Cockrell*, 537 U.S. 322, 336, 123 S.Ct. 1029, 1039, 154 L.Ed.2d 931 (2003) (“Under the controlling standard, a petitioner must ‘sho[w] that reasonable jurists could debate whether (or, for that matter, agree that) the petition should have been resolved in a different manner or that the issues presented were “adequate to deserve encouragement to proceed further.””). Inasmuch as a district court can raise *sua sponte* the AEDPA statute of limitations, *Jackson, supra*, 292 F.3d at 1349, within the context of Rule 4, *Johnson v. Chase*, 2006 WL 2949442, *1 (S.D. Ga. 2006) (“Federal district courts are empowered pursuant to Rule 4 to raise the AEDPA’s statute of limitation *sua sponte* and dismiss those actions that are time barred.”), a reasonable jurist could not conclude either that this Court is in error in dismissing the instant petition or that Parker should be allowed to proceed further, *Slack, supra*, 529 U.S. at 484, 120 S.Ct. at 1604 (“Where a plain procedural bar is present and the district court is correct to invoke it to

dispose of the case, a reasonable jurist could not conclude either that the district court erred in dismissing the petition or that the petitioner should be allowed to proceed further.”).

CONCLUSION

The Magistrate Judge recommends that Ronnie Odell Parker’s petition for writ of habeas corpus, filed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254, be dismissed as time barred under the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act’s one-year limitations provision contained in 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d). Petitioner is not entitled to a certificate of appealability and, therefore, he is not entitled to appeal *in forma pauperis*.

The instructions which follow the undersigned’s signature contain important information regarding objections to the report and recommendation of the Magistrate Judge.

DONE this the 21st day of January, 2010.

s/WILLIAM E.CASSADY
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

**MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURAL RIGHTS AND
RESPONSIBILITIES FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATION, AND
FINDINGS CONCERNING NEED FOR TRANSCRIPT**

1. **Objection.** Any party who objects to this recommendation or anything in it must, within fourteen (14) days of the date of service of this document, file specific written objections with the Clerk of this court. Failure to do so will bar a *de novo* determination by the district judge of anything in the recommendation and will bar an attack, on appeal, of the factual findings of the Magistrate Judge. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C); *Lewis v. Smith*, 855 F.2d 736, 738 (11th Cir. 1988); *Nettles v. Wainwright*, 677 F.2d 404 (5th Cir. Unit B, 1982)(*en banc*). The procedure for challenging the findings and recommendations of the Magistrate Judge is set out in more detail in SD ALA LR 72.4 (June 1, 1997), which provides that:

A party may object to a recommendation entered by a magistrate judge in a dispositive matter, that is, a matter excepted by 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(A), by filing a ‘Statement of Objection to Magistrate Judge’s Recommendation’ within ten days² after being served with a copy of the recommendation, unless a different time is established by order. The statement of objection shall specify those portions of the recommendation to which objection is made and the basis for the objection. The objecting party shall submit to the district judge, at the time of filing the objection, a brief setting forth the party’s arguments that the magistrate judge’s recommendation should be reviewed *de novo* and a different disposition made. It is insufficient to submit only a copy of the original brief submitted to the magistrate judge, although a copy of the original brief may be submitted or referred to and incorporated into the brief in support of the objection. Failure to submit a brief in support of the objection may be deemed an abandonment of the objection.

A magistrate judge's recommendation cannot be appealed to a Court of Appeals; only the district judge's order or judgment can be appealed.

2. **Transcript (applicable Where Proceedings Tape Recorded).** Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915 and FED.R.CIV.P. 72(b), the Magistrate Judge finds that the tapes and original records in this case are adequate for purposes of review. Any party planning to object to this recommendation, but unable to pay the fee for a transcript, is advised that a judicial determination that transcription is necessary is required before the United States will pay the cost of the transcript.

² Effective December 1, 2009, the time for filing written objections was extended to “14 days after being served with a copy of the recommended disposition[.]” Fed.R.Civ.P. 72(b)(2).