

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 17-7074**

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff - Appellee,

v.

JOSEPH MATTHEW PENNIX, a/k/a Duke,

Defendant - Appellant.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the District of Maryland, at Baltimore.  
J. Frederick Motz, Senior District Judge. (1:96-cr-00289-JFM-1; 1:16-cv-01262-JFM)

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Submitted: March 29, 2018

Decided: April 2, 2018

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Before AGEE and DIAZ, Circuit Judges, and HAMILTON, Senior Circuit Judge.

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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Joseph Matthew Pennix, Appellant Pro Se. David Ira Salem, Assistant United States Attorney, OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY, Greenbelt, Maryland, for Appellee.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Joseph Matthew Pennix seeks to appeal the district court's order denying relief on his 28 U.S.C. § 2255 (2012) motion. The order is not appealable unless a circuit justice or judge issues a certificate of appealability. 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(1)(B) (2012). A certificate of appealability will not issue absent "a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right." 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(2) (2012). When the district court denies relief on the merits, a prisoner satisfies this standard by demonstrating that reasonable jurists would find that the district court's assessment of the constitutional claims is debatable or wrong. *Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000); see *Miller-El v. Cockrell*, 537 U.S. 322, 336-38 (2003). When the district court denies relief on procedural grounds, the prisoner must demonstrate both that the dispositive procedural ruling is debatable, and that the motion states a debatable claim of the denial of a constitutional right. *Slack*, 529 U.S. at 484-85.

We have independently reviewed the record and conclude that Pennix has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, we deny a certificate of appealability and dismiss the appeal. We dispense with oral argument because the facts and legal contentions are adequately presented in the materials before this court and argument would not aid the decisional process.

*DISMISSED*