

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 16-7314**

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff - Appellee,

v.

JAMES J. SAUNDERS, JR.,

Defendant - Appellant.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, at Danville. Jackson L. Kiser, Senior District Judge. (4:01-cr-30083-JLK-5; 4:15-cv-80839-JLK-RSB)

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Submitted: January 17, 2017

Decided: January 20, 2017

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Before NIEMEYER, TRAXLER, and KING, Circuit Judges.

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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James J. Saunders, Jr., Appellant Pro Se. Jean Barrett Hudson, Assistant United States Attorney, Charlottesville, Virginia, Donald Ray Wolthuis, Assistant United States Attorney, Roanoke, Virginia, for Appellee.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

James J. Saunders, Jr., 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 Saunders has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, we deny a certificate of appealability, deny Saunders' motion for the appointment of counsel, 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