

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 17-6201**

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff - Appellee,

v.

JOHN THOMAS HIPPS,

Defendant - Appellant.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina, at Greensboro. Catherine C. Eagles, District Judge. (1:15-cr-00118-CCE-1; 1:16-cv-01207-CCE-LPA)

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Submitted: June 20, 2017

Decided: June 23, 2017

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Before SHEDD, WYNN, and DIAZ, Circuit Judges.

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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John Thomas Hipps, Appellant Pro Se. Terry Michael Meinecke, Angela Hewlett Miller, Assistant United States Attorneys, Greensboro, North Carolina, for Appellee.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

John Thomas Hipps seeks to appeal the district court's order adopting the magistrate judge's report and recommendation and 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 Hipps 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*