

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 17-7385**

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff - Appellee,

v.

DENNIS L. GIL BERNARDEZ, a/k/a Negro, a/k/a Big Homie, a/k/a Dobre, a/k/a Pando,

Defendant - Appellant.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, at Alexandria. Liam O'Grady, District Judge. (1:09-cr-00216-LO-1; 1:16-cv-01289)

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Submitted: May 17, 2018

Decided: May 18, 2018

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

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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John Louis Machado, LAW OFFICE OF JOHN MACHADO, Washington, D.C., for Appellant. Patricia Marie Haynes, OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY, Alexandria, Virginia, for Appellee.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Dennis L. Gil Bernardez 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 Bernardez has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, we deny Bernardez's motion for appointment of counsel, 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*