

UNPUBLISHED

**UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT**

No. 22-7314

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff - Appellee,

v.

ROBERT JAMES TURNER, a/k/a Robert James Branham,

Defendant - Appellant.

Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, at
Alexandria. Leonie M. Brinkema, District Judge. (1:96-cr-00374-LMB-1)

Submitted: January 17, 2023

Decided: January 20, 2023

Before KING and THACKER, Circuit Judges, and TRAXLER, Senior Circuit Judge.

Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

Robert James Turner, Appellant Pro Se.

Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Robert James Turner has noted an appeal from the district court's order denying his motion to dismiss indictment. Turner's motion was, in substance, a successive 28 U.S.C. § 2255 motion. The denial of this motion is not appealable in the absence of a certificate of appealability. 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(1)(B). 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). When the district court denies relief on the merits, a prisoner satisfies this standard by demonstrating that reasonable jurists could find the district court's assessment of the constitutional claims debatable or wrong. *See Buck v. Davis*, 580 U.S. 100, ___, 137 S. Ct. 759, 773-74 (2017). 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. *Gonzalez v. Thaler*, 565 U.S. 134, 140-41 (2012) (citing *Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000)).

Turner's motion challenged the validity of his conviction and should have been construed as a successive § 2255 motion.* *See Gonzalez v. Crosby*, 545 U.S. 524, 531-32 (2005); *United States v. Winestock*, 340 F.3d 200, 207 (4th Cir. 2003). In the absence of pre-filing authorization from this Court, the district court lacked jurisdiction to hear Turner's successive § 2255 motion. *See 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(3)*. Accordingly, we deny a certificate of appealability and dismiss the appeal.

* The district court denied relief on Turner's initial § 2255 motion on the merits in 1999.

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

FILED: January 20, 2023

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

No. 22-7314, US v. Robert Turner
1:96-cr-00374-LMB-1

NOTICE OF JUDGMENT

Judgment was entered on this date in accordance with Fed. R. App. P. 36. Please be advised of the following time periods:

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI: The time to file a petition for writ of certiorari runs from the date of entry of the judgment sought to be reviewed, and not from the date of issuance of the mandate. If a petition for rehearing is timely filed in the court of appeals, the time to file the petition for writ of certiorari for all parties runs from the date of the denial of the petition for rehearing or, if the petition for rehearing is granted, the subsequent entry of judgment. See Rule 13 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of the United States; www.supremecourt.gov.

VOUCHERS FOR PAYMENT OF APPOINTED OR ASSIGNED

COUNSEL: Vouchers must be submitted within 60 days of entry of judgment or denial of rehearing, whichever is later. If counsel files a petition for certiorari, the 60-day period runs from filing the certiorari petition. (Loc. R. 46(d)). If payment is being made from CJA funds, counsel should submit the CJA 20 or CJA 30 Voucher through the CJA eVoucher system. In cases not covered by the Criminal Justice Act, counsel should submit the Assigned Counsel Voucher to the clerk's office for payment from the Attorney Admission Fund. An Assigned Counsel Voucher will be sent to counsel shortly after entry of judgment. Forms and instructions are also available on the court's web site, www.ca4.uscourts.gov, or from the clerk's office.

BILL OF COSTS: A party to whom costs are allowable, who desires taxation of costs, shall file a Bill of Costs within 14 calendar days of entry of judgment. (FRAP 39, Loc. R. 39(b)).

PETITION FOR REHEARING AND PETITION FOR REHEARING EN

BANC: A petition for rehearing must be filed within 14 calendar days after entry of judgment, except that in civil cases in which the United States or its officer or agency is a party, the petition must be filed within 45 days after entry of judgment. A petition for rehearing en banc must be filed within the same time limits and in the same document as the petition for rehearing and must be clearly identified in the title. The only grounds for an extension of time to file a petition for rehearing are the death or serious illness of counsel or a family member (or of a party or family member in pro se cases) or an extraordinary circumstance wholly beyond the control of counsel or a party proceeding without counsel.

Each case number to which the petition applies must be listed on the petition and included in the docket entry to identify the cases to which the petition applies. A timely filed petition for rehearing or petition for rehearing en banc stays the mandate and tolls the running of time for filing a petition for writ of certiorari. In consolidated criminal appeals, the filing of a petition for rehearing does not stay the mandate as to co-defendants not joining in the petition for rehearing. In consolidated civil appeals arising from the same civil action, the court's mandate will issue at the same time in all appeals.

A petition for rehearing must contain an introduction stating that, in counsel's judgment, one or more of the following situations exist: (1) a material factual or legal matter was overlooked; (2) a change in the law occurred after submission of the case and was overlooked; (3) the opinion conflicts with a decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, this court, or another court of appeals, and the conflict was not addressed; or (4) the case involves one or more questions of exceptional importance. A petition for rehearing, with or without a petition for rehearing en banc, may not exceed 3900 words if prepared by computer and may not exceed 15 pages if handwritten or prepared on a typewriter. Copies are not required unless requested by the court. (FRAP 35 & 40, Loc. R. 40(c)).

MANDATE: In original proceedings before this court, there is no mandate. Unless the court shortens or extends the time, in all other cases, the mandate issues 7 days after the expiration of the time for filing a petition for rehearing. A timely petition for rehearing, petition for rehearing en banc, or motion to stay the mandate will stay issuance of the mandate. If the petition or motion is denied, the mandate will issue 7 days later. A motion to stay the mandate will ordinarily be denied, unless the motion presents a substantial question or otherwise sets forth good or probable cause for a stay. (FRAP 41, Loc. R. 41).

FILED: January 20, 2023

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(1:96-cr-00374-LMB-1)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Plaintiff - Appellee

v.

ROBERT JAMES TURNER, a/k/a Robert James Branham

Defendant - Appellant

J U D G M E N T

In accordance with the decision of this court, a certificate of appealability is denied and the appeal is dismissed.

This judgment shall take effect upon issuance of this court's mandate in accordance with Fed. R. App. P. 41.

/s/ PATRICIA S. CONNOR, CLERK

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
Alexandria Division

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	
)	
v.)	
)	1:96cr374 (LMB)
ROBERT JAMES TURNER,)	
)	
Defendant.)	

ORDER

Acting pro se, defendant Robert James Turner (“defendant” or “Turner”) has filed a Motion to Dismiss Indictment for Lack of Jurisdiction (“Motion”) in which he argues that his murder conviction should be vacated because the Court did not have jurisdiction over the murder, which occurred at the Lorton Reformatory Correctional Complex in Lorton, Virginia. In its opposition the government correctly points out that during his trial defendant stipulated that the Court had jurisdiction over the Lorton facility and that defendant raised the exact same issue in a second motion to vacate under 28 U.S.C. §2255. The Fourth Circuit affirmed the dismissal of that second §2255 motion and denied issuing a certificate of appealability, which means it found that the motion did not make out a violation of any of defendant’s constitutional rights.

Given the background cited by the government and the unassailable fact that the Lorton facility was within the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States and, therefore, within the jurisdiction of this court, a fact which was often established by judicial notice, there is no merit to defendant’s Motion. Accordingly, it is hereby

ORDERED that the Motion [Dkt. No. 88] be and is DENIED.


To appeal this decision, defendant must file a written notice of appeal with the Clerk of the Court within fourteen (14) days of the date of entry of this Order. A notice of appeal is a

short statement indicating a desire to appeal, including the date of the order defendant wants to appeal. Defendant need not explain the grounds for appeal until so directed by the court of appeals. Failure to file a timely notice of appeal waives defendant's right to appeal this decision.

The Clerk is directed to forward copies of this Order to defendant, Robert James Turner, pro se, and counsel of record.

Entered this 31st day of October, 2022.

Alexandria, Virginia

/s/ 
Leonie M. Brinkema
United States District Judge