

[DO NOT PUBLISH]

In the
United States Court of Appeals
For the Eleventh Circuit

No. 24-12069

Non-Argument Calendar

RONALD TAI YOUNG MOON, JR.,

Petitioner-Appellant,

versus

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Respondent-Appellee.

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Northern District of Alabama
D.C. Docket Nos. 2:23-cv-08035-ACA,
2:19-cr-000324-ACA-HNJ-1

Before ROSENBAUM, ABUDU, and MARCUS, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:

Ronald Moon, a federal prisoner proceeding *pro se* on appeal, appeals the denial of his 28 U.S.C. § 2255 motion to vacate. We granted a certificate of appealability (“COA”) to determine whether the district court violated *Clisby v. Jones*, 960 F.2d 925, 936 (11th Cir. 1992) (*en banc*), when it failed to address Moon’s claim that his appellate counsel rendered ineffective assistance by not arguing that his sentence was unreasonable.¹ Moon also raises on appeal various arguments outside the scope of his COA and asks us to expand the COA to include all of the claims he brought in his original motion to vacate. In response, the government argues that there is no basis to expand the COA, but concedes that the district court committed *Clisby* error by misconstruing Moon’s ineffective-assistance claim as an effort to overcome procedural default. Instead, says the government, the district court should have construed it as a freestanding claim that his appellate counsel rendered ineffective assistance by failing to argue that his sentence was unreasonable. After careful review, we vacate and remand so that the district court can consider Moon’s ineffective-assistance-of-appellate-counsel claim.

¹ In *Clisby*, our Court held *en banc* that district courts must resolve all claims for relief raised in a habeas motion, regardless of whether habeas relief is granted or denied. *See* 960 F.2d at 935–36.

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In reviewing a district court's denial of a motion to vacate under § 2255, we review legal conclusions *de novo* and findings of fact for clear error. *Stoufflet v. United States*, 757 F.3d 1236, 1239 (11th Cir. 2014). We review *de novo* the legal question of whether the district court violated *Clisby* by failing to address a claim. *See Dupree v. Warden*, 715 F.3d 1295, 1298–99 (11th Cir. 2013). The scope of our review is limited to the issues enumerated in the COA. 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c); *McKay v. United States*, 657 F.3d 1190, 1195 (11th Cir. 2011).

As we've noted, under *Clisby*, a district court must resolve all claims for relief raised in a § 2255 motion, regardless of whether relief is granted or denied. *See* 960 F.2d at 935–36; *Rhode v. United States*, 583 F.3d 1289, 1291 (11th Cir. 2009). A claim for relief is "any allegation of a constitutional violation." *Clisby*, 960 F.2d at 936. When a district court does not address all constitutional claims in a habeas petition or motion to vacate, we "will vacate the district court's judgment without prejudice and remand the case for consideration of all remaining claims." *Id.* at 938.

Here, the law is clear that the scope of our review is limited to the question enumerated in the COA -- that is, whether the district court committed *Clisby* error by denying Moon's § 2255 motion without directly addressing his claim that he was denied effective assistance of appellate counsel because his counsel failed to challenge the reasonableness of his sentence. 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c); *McKay*, 657 F.3d at 1195. Thus, to the extent Moon seeks to argue the merits of his ineffective-assistance claim or raise additional

issues beyond this claim, we lack jurisdiction to consider these arguments as outside the scope of our review. 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c); *McKay*, 657 F.3d at 1195. Moreover, to the extent Moon asks us to expand the scope of his COA to include all of the issues he raised in his § 2255 motion, he essentially is requesting that we reconsider our earlier order denying his motion for reconsideration, which is not permitted under our rules. *See* 11th Cir. Rule 27-3 (“[A] party may not request reconsideration of an order disposing of a motion for reconsideration previously filed by that party.”).

As for the issue enumerated in the COA, however, we agree with the parties that the district court committed *Clisby* error when it construed Moon’s ineffective-assistance claim as an attempt to anticipate the government’s procedural default defense rather than as a standalone claim of ineffective assistance of counsel. *Clisby*, 960 F.2d at 935–36; *Rhode*, 583 F.3d at 1291. In his § 2255 motion, Moon expressly argued that his appellate counsel rendered ineffective assistance by failing to argue that his 360-month sentence was unreasonable on direct appeal. Although Moon raised this argument as a subclaim of his claim that his sentence was unreasonable, there is no indication that he intended to raise the claim as a preemptive attempt to overcome procedural default rather than as a freestanding constitutional claim. Nevertheless, the district court treated Moon’s claim as an attempt to anticipate and overcome the government’s procedural default defense. In so doing, the district court failed to address Moon’s ineffective-assistance-of-appellate-counsel claim as a standalone constitutional claim, in violation of *Clisby*. *Clisby*, 960 F.2d at 935–36.

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Accordingly, we vacate the district court's judgment without prejudice so that it can consider Moon's claim of ineffective assistance of appellate counsel. *Id.* at 938.

VACATED AND REMANDED.

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT

ELBERT PARR TUTTLE COURT OF APPEALS BUILDING
56 Forsyth Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

David J. Smith
Clerk of Court

For rules and forms visit
www.ca11.uscourts.gov

June 25, 2025

MEMORANDUM TO COUNSEL OR PARTIES

Appeal Number: 24-12069-JJ

Case Style: Ronald Moon, Jr. v. USA

District Court Docket No: 2:23-cv-08035-ACA

Secondary Case Number: 2:19-cr-00324-ACA-HNJ-1

Opinion Issued

Enclosed is a copy of the Court's decision issued today in this case. Judgment has been entered today pursuant to FRAP 36. The Court's mandate will issue at a later date pursuant to FRAP 41(b).

Petitions for Rehearing

The time for filing a petition for panel rehearing or rehearing en banc is governed by 11th Cir. R. 40-2. Please see FRAP 40 and the accompanying circuit rules for information concerning petitions for rehearing. Among other things, a petition for rehearing must include a Certificate of Interested Persons. See 11th Cir. R. 40-3.

Costs

No costs are taxed.

Bill of Costs

If costs are taxed, please use the most recent version of the Bill of Costs form available on the Court's website at www.ca11.uscourts.gov. For more information regarding costs, see FRAP 39 and 11th Cir. R. 39-1.

Attorney's Fees

The time to file and required documentation for an application for attorney's fees and any objection to the application are governed by 11th Cir. R. 39-2 and 39-3.

Appointed Counsel

Counsel appointed under the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) must submit a voucher claiming compensation via the eVoucher system no later than 45 days after issuance of the mandate or the filing of a petition for writ of certiorari. Please contact the CJA Team at (404) 335-6167 or

cja_evoucher@ca11.uscourts.gov for questions regarding CJA vouchers or the eVoucher system.

Clerk's Office Phone Numbers

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CM/ECF Help Desk:	404-335-6125	Cases Set for Oral Argument:	404-335-6141

OPIN-1 Ntc of Issuance of Opinion

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT

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56 Forsyth Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

David J. Smith
Clerk of Court

For rules and forms visit
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August 25, 2025

MEMORANDUM TO COUNSEL OR PARTIES

Appeal Number: 24-12069-JJ

Case Style: Ronald Moon, Jr. v. USA

District Court Docket No: 2:23-cv-08035-ACA

Secondary Case Number: 2:19-cr-00324-ACA-HNJ-1

The enclosed order has been entered on petition(s) for rehearing.

See Rule 41, Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure, and Eleventh Circuit Rule 41-1 for information regarding issuance and stay of mandate.

Clerk's Office Phone Numbers

General Information:	404-335-6100	Attorney Admissions:	404-335-6122
Case Administration:	404-335-6135	Capital Cases:	404-335-6200
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REHG-1 Ltr Order Petition Rehearing

In the
United States Court of Appeals
For the Eleventh Circuit

No. 24-12069

RONALD TAI YOUNG MOON, JR.,

Petitioner-Appellant,

versus

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Respondent-Appellee.

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Northern District of Alabama
D.C. Docket No. 2:23-cv-08035-ACA

ON PETITION(S) FOR REHEARING AND PETITION(S) FOR
REHEARING EN BANC

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Order of the Court

24-12069

Before ROSENBAUM, ABUDU, and MARCUS, Circuit Judges.

PER CURIAM:

The Petition for Rehearing En Banc is DENIED, no judge in regular active service on the Court having requested that the Court be polled on rehearing en banc. FRAP 40. The Petition for Rehearing En Banc is also treated as a Petition for Rehearing before the panel and is DENIED. FRAP 40, 11th Cir. IOP 2.

APPENDIX D:

Memorandum Opinion (Habeas) (N.D. Ala. June 18, 2024)

See attached document

Appendix D

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
SOUTHERN DIVISION**

RONALD TAI YOUNG MOON, JR.,

Movant,

v.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Respondent.

Case No.: 2:23-cv-08035-ACA

MEMORANDUM OPINION

Movant Ronald Tai Young Moon, Jr., filed a 28 U.S.C. § 2255 motion to vacate sentence, asserting three claims: (1) the government's failure to present sufficient evidence to support his convictions violated his right to due process ("Claim One"); (2) the jury's access during deliberations to evidence that had been excluded violated his right to due process ("Claim Two"); and (3) his sentence is excessive and unreasonable ("Claim Three"). (Doc. 1-1 at 4-7; doc. 1 at 18-47). The court **WILL DENY** Dr. Moon's § 2255 motion because Claims One and Two are procedurally defaulted and Claim Three is not cognizable. The court also **WILL DENY** Dr. Moon a certificate of appealability.

I. BACKGROUND

In 2019, a grand jury indicted Dr. Moon on charges of production of child pornography, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2251(a), (e), and possession of child

pornography, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2252A(a)(5)(B), (b)(2). *United States v. Moon*, case no. 19-324, doc. 1 (N.D. Ala. May 29, 2019).¹ “Child pornography” is defined in relevant part as “any visual depiction . . . of sexually explicit conduct, where . . . the production of such visual depiction involves the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct.” 18 U.S.C. § 2256(8). “Sexually explicit conduct,” in its turn, is defined as the “lascivious exhibition of the anus, genitals, or pubic area of any person.” *Id.* § 2256(2)(A)(v).

Dr. Moon’s charges arose from videos recorded using a camera hidden in a bathroom at his house. *See United States v. Moon*, 33 F.4th 1284, 1290–91 (11th Cir. 2022). Dr. Moon quickly moved to dismiss the indictment or, alternatively, for a pretrial determination of the legal standard to be used in determining whether the materials he produced or possessed depicted a “lascivious exhibition of the . . . public area.” (*Moon* doc. 38). The court granted in part the motion for a pretrial determination of the legal standard, requiring the parties to submit proposed jury instructions and briefs. (*Moon* doc. 64).

In October 2019, the grand jury issued a superseding indictment, charging Dr. Moon with two counts of production or attempted production of child pornography, in violation of § 2251(a), (e), two counts of attempted production of

¹ The court cites documents from Dr. Moon’s criminal proceeding as “*Moon* doc. ____.”

child pornography, in violation of § 2251(a), (e), and two counts of possession of child pornography, in violation of § 2252A(a)(5)(B). (*Moon* doc. 84).

Before trial, Dr. Moon moved in limine to exclude as irrelevant and prejudicial “videos that contain family videos, television recordings, adult voyeurism, and legal pornography.” (*Moon* doc. 113). At the final pretrial conference, the government explained that it would be submitting VHS tapes. (*Moon* doc. 141 at 9). The government numbered each VHS tape so that one would be Exhibit 1, the next would be Exhibit 2, and so on. (*Id.*). But instead of playing the VHS tapes on a television, the government planned to play clips from digitized versions of the tapes. (*Id.*). The government labeled the complete digitized version of Exhibit 1 as Exhibit 1A, and so on. (*Id.*). And because the government did not intend to play the recordings in full, the government excerpted specific clips from the tapes and labeled those clips as Exhibit 1A1, 1A2, and so on. (*Id.*).

During trial, the court admitted Exhibits 1 through 40 (the physical videotapes) in full. (*Moon* doc. 135 at 64). The court also admitted the thumb drive, which contained the digitized versions of twelve of the tapes (Exhibits 1A–11A and 13A). (*Id.* at 85; *see also* *Moon* doc. 144 at 1–20). The government, in response to Dr. Moon’s objections to some of the clips it had intended to admit separately, removed a number of the clips from the thumb drive and agreed not to play those

clips for the jury. (See, e.g., *Moon* doc. 135 at 120–21 (agreeing to remove Exhibits 3A2, 11A7–11A9, and 13A14–13A19); *see also* *Moon* doc. 144 at 5, 14–15, 19)).

During deliberations, the jury sent out a note asking to “examine [the] tapes.” (*Moon* doc. 125). The court gave the jury the thumb drive, which contained Exhibits 1A–11A and 13A as well as select clips the government had played for it. (*See Moon* doc. 139 at 92–93).

The jury found Dr. Moon guilty of all charges. (*Moon* doc. 127). The court sentenced Dr. Moon to 360 months’ imprisonment on Counts One and Two, 240 months’ imprisonment on Counts Three and Four, and 120 months’ imprisonment on Counts Five and Six, with all sentences to run concurrently. (*Moon* doc. 180 at 2).

Dr. Moon appealed, arguing that the court erred by: (1) closing the courtroom at times, in violation of his Sixth Amendment right to a public trial; (2) denying a motion for a *Franks* hearing; (3) denying a motion for the undersigned to recuse; and (4) declining to give some of his requested jury instructions on the meaning of “lascivious exhibition.” *Moon*, 33 F.4th at 1298–1301. The Eleventh Circuit affirmed in a published opinion. *Id.* at 1302. The Court held, for the first time, that a defendant can waive the right to a public trial even though violation of the public-trial right is a “structural error” that entitles a defendant to “automatic reversal

regardless of the error's actual effect on the outcome," *id.* at 1298–1300 (quotation marks omitted). And in this case, the Eleventh Circuit found waiver. *Id.* at 1300.

Dr. Moon then filed this § 2255 motion setting out his three claims. (*Moon* doc. 197; *see also* docs. 1, 1-1). He attached an affidavit from the attorney who represented him during sentencing and on appeal. (Doc. 1-2). Counsel attests he did not make a strategic or tactical decision not to raise the sufficiency of the evidence or the reasonableness of the sentence on appeal even though he believed both issues were meritorious. (*Id.* ¶¶ 7, 10).

II. DISCUSSION

Dr. Moon asserts three claims of error during his trial and sentencing: Claim One is that insufficient evidence supports his convictions, Claim Two is that the jury had access to excluded evidence during its deliberations, and Claim Three is that his sentence was unreasonably long. (Doc. 1-1 at 4–7). Apparently predicting the government's defense of procedural default, he also asserts that ineffective assistance of counsel is the reason he did not raise these claims in his direct appeal. (*Id.*; *see also* doc. 1 at 18, 33–47).

1. Claim One

In **Claim One**, Dr. Moon asserts that the government failed to present sufficient evidence to support his convictions because the videotapes do not demonstrate sexual activity and the footage was not sexual in nature. (Doc. 1-1 at 4;

doc. 1 at 5–11, 18–32). The government asserts that this claim is not cognizable and is, in any event, procedurally defaulted because Dr. Moon could have raised it on direct appeal. (Doc. 4 at 7–8).

As an initial matter, the court declines to deny the claim as not cognizable. The precedent finding claims of insufficiency of evidence non-cognizable is *Forrester v. United States*, which held that a “contention question[ing] only the sufficiency of the evidence to sustain [the movant]’s conviction . . . is not a contention cognizable on a collateral motion under § 2255.” 456 F.2d 905, 907 (5th Cir. 1972).² But after *Forrester*, the United States Supreme Court held, in a case brought under 28 U.S.C. § 2254, that “it is clear that a state prisoner who alleges that the evidence in support of his state conviction cannot be fairly characterized as sufficient to have led a rational trier of fact to find guilt beyond a reasonable doubt has stated a federal constitutional claim.” *Jackson v. Virginia*, 443 U.S. 307, 321 (1979). Whether *Jackson* abrogates *Forrester* is unanswered in this circuit.

In any event, even if the claim is cognizable, it is procedurally defaulted. “Under the procedural default rule, a defendant generally must advance an available challenge to a criminal conviction or sentence on direct appeal or else the defendant is barred from presenting that claim in a § 2255 proceeding.” *Lynn v. United States*,

² In *Bonner v. City of Prichard*, 661 F.2d 1206, 1209 (11th Cir. 1981) (en banc), the Eleventh Circuit adopted as binding precedent all decisions of the former Fifth Circuit handed down before October 1, 1981.

365 F.3d 1225, 1234 (11th Cir. 2004). Dr. Moon’s challenge to the sufficiency of the evidence was available when he filed his direct appeal. (See, e.g., *Moon* doc. 137 at 6–8; *Moon* doc. 132 at 6) (arguing, before judgment was entered, that the government had not presented sufficient evidence). Claim One is therefore procedurally defaulted. *See Lynn*, 365 F.3d at 1234.

Dr. Moon contends that the procedural default should be excused because appellate counsel’s failure to assert the argument on appeal was ineffective assistance. (Doc. 1 at 5, 33–34; doc. 1-1 at 4–5; doc. 9 at 1). A § 2255 movant can avoid a procedural default by showing “cause for not raising the claim of error on direct appeal and actual prejudice from the alleged error.” *Lynn*, 365 F.3d at 1234 (emphasis omitted). Ineffective assistance can constitute cause and prejudice excusing a default. *See Brown v. United States*, 720 F.3d 1316, 1333 (11th Cir. 2013) (“Constitutionally ineffective assistance of counsel can constitute cause In order to do so, however, the claim of ineffective assistance must have merit.”) (quotation marks omitted). The court therefore turns to whether appellate counsel provided ineffective assistance when he failed to raise the sufficiency of the evidence supporting Dr. Moon’s convictions.

To prevail on a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel, Dr. Moon must demonstrate both that (1) his counsel’s performance fell below an objective standard of reasonableness and (2) he suffered prejudice because of that deficient

performance. *Strickland v. Washington*, 466 U.S. 668, 687 (1984). To show deficient performance, the movant “must show that counsel made errors so serious that counsel was not functioning as the ‘counsel’ guaranteed the defendant by the Sixth Amendment.” *Griffith v. United States*, 871 F.3d 1321, 1329 (11th Cir. 2017) (quotation marks omitted). To establish prejudice, the movant “must show that there is a reasonable probability that, but for counsel’s unprofessional errors, the result of the proceeding would have been different.” *Strickland*, 466 U.S. at 694. This standard applies to claims of ineffective assistance of appellate counsel as well as ineffective assistance of trial counsel. *Brooks v. Comm’r, Ala. Dep’t of Corr.*, 719 F.3d 1292, 1300 (11th Cir. 2013).

Dr. Moon asserts in a conclusory manner that counsel performed deficiently because, according to appellate counsel’s affidavit, his failure to raise the issue on direct appeal was not a strategic choice. (Doc. 1 at 33–34; *see also* doc. 1-2 ¶ 7). But whether counsel performed deficiently is not a subjective analysis dependent on what counsel was thinking; it is an objective analysis. *See Strickland*, 466 U.S. at 687–88 (“When a convicted defendant complains of the ineffectiveness of counsel’s assistance, the defendant must show that counsel’s representation fell below an *objective* standard of reasonableness.”) (emphasis added); *Chandler v. United States*, 218 F.3d 1305, 1315 (11th Cir. 2000) (en banc) (“The reasonableness of a counsel’s performance is an objective inquiry.”); *see also Gissendaner v. Seaboldt*, 735 F.3d

1311, 1330 n.4 (11th Cir. 2013) (“[B]ecause *Strickland*’s standard for deficient performance is an objective one, trial counsel’s hindsight assessment of the adequacy of his penalty phase investigation is entitled to little, if any, weight.”); *Jennings v. McDonough*, 490 F.3d 1230, 1247 (11th Cir. 2007) (“The *Strickland* standard of objective reasonableness does not depend on the subjective intentions of the attorney, judgments made in hindsight, or an attorney’s admission of deficient performance.”).

The proper question “is not whether counsel’s choices were strategic, but whether they were reasonable.” *Roe v. Flores-Ortega*, 528 U.S. 470, 481 (2000). The court must find that counsel’s choices were reasonable unless “no competent counsel would have taken the action that his counsel did take.” *Chandler*, 218 F.3d at 1315. In this case, appellate counsel elected to focus the appeal on whether the court committed structural error—an error that would automatically result in reversal without a showing of prejudice—by closing the courtroom at times. *See Moon*, 33 F.4th at 1298. Although Dr. Moon had not objected when the court closed the courtroom, a defendant’s ability to waive a structural error was unclear at the time. *See id.* at 1298–99. Indeed, Dr. Moon’s appeal resulted in a published opinion from the Eleventh Circuit answering that question. *Id.* at 1299. Dr. Moon raised several other issues as well, including the propriety of the jury instructions on what “lascivious exhibition” means. *See id.* at 1301–02.

Despite Dr. Moon's attorney's concession that he did not subjectively make a strategic choice to drop Dr. Moon's challenge to the sufficiency of the evidence, a competent attorney could have elected to pursue the arguments Dr. Moon's appellate counsel pursued instead of the sufficiency argument. *See Chandler*, 218 F.3d at 1315. This compels the conclusion that appellate counsel did not perform deficiently. *See Griffith*, 871 F.3d at 1329 (requiring that a § 2255 movant attempting to show deficient performance "show that counsel made errors so serious that counsel was not functioning as the 'counsel' guaranteed the defendant by the Sixth Amendment").

Because Dr. Moon cannot establish that appellate counsel provided ineffective assistance by failing to raise the sufficiency of the evidence on direct appeal, he has not shown cause excusing his procedural default. The court **WILL DENY** Claim One as procedurally defaulted.

2. Claim Two

In Claim Two, Dr. Moon asserts that the jury's access to evidence that had been excluded at trial was a denial of due process. (Doc. 1 at 11–16, 34–38). Specifically, the jury had access to the thumb drive containing the full digitized versions of twelve of the videotapes. (*Id.*). And although the government removed from the thumb drive some of the excerpted clips (Exhibits 3A2, 11A7, 11A8, 11A9, 13A14, 13A16, 13A17, 13A18, and 13A19), it did not remove the clips from the full

digitized versions (Exhibits 3A, 11A, and 13A), so the jury could still view the parts of the recordings that the government had agreed not to show. (Doc. 1 at 11, 14–15, 34). The government asserts that this claim is not cognizable and is, in any event, procedurally defaulted because Dr. Moon could have raised it on direct appeal. (Doc. 4 at 12–13).

As with Claim One, the court declines to address the cognizability of Claim Two. The Eleventh Circuit has held that “a non-constitutional error that may justify reversal on direct appeal does not generally support a collateral attack on a final judgment unless the error (1) could not have been raised on direct appeal and (2) would, if condoned, result in a complete miscarriage of justice.” *Lynn*, 365 F.3d at 1232–33 (citation omitted). Dr. Moon’s claim is one of trial error couched as constitutional error. (See doc. 1 at 34–38). Whether the trial error rises to the level of constitutional error is not adequately briefed by either party. (See *id.*; doc. 4 at 12–13; doc. 9). The court therefore will not address it but will instead consider whether the claim is procedurally defaulted.

The claim is procedurally defaulted because Dr. Moon could have asserted, on direct appeal, that the jury had access to excluded evidence during its deliberations. See *Lynn*, 365 F.3d at 1234. Dr. Moon contends that trial counsel’s ineffective assistance should excuse the default. (Doc. 9 at 2; *see also* doc. 1 at 38–39; doc. 1-1 at 6). Specifically, Dr. Moon contends that trial counsel should have

examined the evidence before the court gave it to the jury because, had he done so, he would have seen that excluded evidence was among the evidence given to the jury. (Doc. 1 at 38–39). The government responds that counsel did not provide ineffective assistance because the entirety of Exhibits 3A, 11A and 13A were admitted, even if some of the excerpted clips were not. (Doc. 4 at 20–21; *see also id.* at 2–3).

Trial counsel did not provide ineffective assistance by failing to inspect the contents of the thumb drive. The court admitted the full versions of Exhibits 1A–11A and 13A. (*Moon* doc. 135 at 85; *see also Moon* doc. 144 at 1–20). Even if counsel had inspected the thumb drive and objected to giving the jury access to Exhibits 1A–11A and 13A, the court would have overruled that objection. Accordingly, counsel did not perform deficiently by failing to inspect the thumb drive, and any failure to inspect the thumb drive did not prejudice Dr. Moon. *See, e.g., Denson v. United States*, 804 F.3d 1339, 1342 (11th Cir. 2015) (“Failing to make a meritless objection does not constitute deficient performance.”). Ineffective assistance of trial counsel does not excuse Dr. Moon’s procedural default of Claim Two. The court therefore **WILL DENY** Claim Two as procedurally defaulted.

3. Claim Three

In Claim Three, Dr. Moon asserts that his sentence is excessive and unreasonable. (Doc. 1-1 at 7; doc. 1 at 16–17, 40–47). The government asserts that

this claim is not cognizable and is, in any event, procedurally defaulted because Dr. Moon could have raised it on direct appeal. (Doc. 4 at 15–16).

The court agrees that Claim Three is not cognizable in a § 2255 motion. In *Spencer v. United States*, the en banc Eleventh Circuit explained that “[s]ection 2255 does not provide a remedy for every alleged error in conviction and sentencing.” 773 F.3d 1132, 1138 (11th Cir. 2014) (en banc). A district court may not review a claim that the “‘sentence was imposed in violation of the laws of the United States or is otherwise subject to collateral attack’ . . . unless the claimed error constitutes a fundamental defect which inherently results in a complete miscarriage of justice.” *Id.* (quoting 28 U.S.C. § 2255(a)) (cleaned up). And “[a] substantively unreasonable sentence does not result in a complete miscarriage of justice if that sentence is less than the statutory maximum sentence Congress has enacted.” *Id.* at 1143 (quotation marks omitted).

The statutory maximum for Dr. Moon’s four production offenses was thirty years, *see* 18 U.S.C. § 2251(e), and the maximum for his two possession offenses was ten years, *see id.* § 2252A(a)(5)(B). The court sentenced Dr. Moon to 360 months’ imprisonment on two of the production counts, 240 months’ imprisonment on the other two production counts, and 120 months’ on the possession counts. (*Moon* doc. 180 at 2). These sentences are not above the applicable statutory maximums. (*See id.*). His sentences have not resulted in a complete miscarriage of

justice. *See Spencer*, 773 F.3d at 1143. The court therefore **WILL DENY** this claim on the ground that it is not cognizable under § 2255.

III. CERTIFICATE OF APPEALABILITY

Rule 11 of the Rules Governing § 2255 Cases requires the court to “issue or deny a certificate of appealability when it enters a final order adverse to the applicant.” Rules Governing § 2255 Cases, Rule 11(a). The court may issue a certificate of appealability “only if the applicant has made a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right.” 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(2). To make such a showing, a movant “must demonstrate that reasonable jurists would find the district court’s assessment of the constitutional claims debatable or wrong,” or “that the issues presented were adequate to deserve encouragement to proceed further.”

Miller-El v. Cockrell, 537 U.S. 322, 336, 338 (2003) (quotation marks omitted). This court finds that Dr. Moon has not satisfied either standard. The court **WILL DENY** a certificate of appealability.

IV. CONCLUSION

The court **WILL DENY** Dr. Moon’s § 2255 motion in part as procedurally defaulted and in part as non-cognizable. The court **WILL DENY** a certificate of appealability.

DONE and ORDERED this June 18, 2024.



ANNEMARIE CARNEY AXON
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

APPENDIX E:

Grants Denial of COA (11th Cir. Oct. 24, 2024)

See attached document

Appendix E

**Additional material
from this filing is
available in the
Clerk's Office.**