

IN THE SUPREME COURT
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

2025 ND 165

Chad Ron Rugland,

Petitioner and Appellant

v.

State of North Dakota,

Respondent and Appellee

No. 20250117

Appeal from the District Court of Grand Forks County, Northeast Central
Judicial District, the Honorable M. Jason McCarthy, Judge.

AFFIRMED.

Per Curiam.

Kiara C. Kraus-Parr, Grand Forks, N.D., for petitioner and appellant; on brief.

Andrew C. Eyre, Assistant State's Attorney, and Andrea Rud, under the Rule on
Limited Practice of Law by Law Students, Grand Forks, N.D., for respondent and
appellee; on brief.

Rugland v. State
No. 20250117

Per Curiam.

[¶1] Chad Rugland appeals from an order denying his postconviction relief application entered after an evidentiary hearing. Rugland argues the district court erred in determining he failed to establish he received ineffective assistance of counsel prior to pleading guilty, and not allowing him to withdraw his guilty plea. Findings of fact made in a postconviction relief proceeding will not be disturbed on appeal unless clearly erroneous. *Jung v. State*, 2024 ND 94, ¶ 6, 6 N.W.3d 853. “The district court has discretion in deciding whether circumstances establish a manifest injustice, necessitating the withdrawal of a guilty plea; we review the court’s decision for abuse of discretion.” *Hersha v. State*, 2025 ND 51, ¶ 2, 18 N.W.3d 632 (citing *Belyeu v. State*, 2024 ND 133, ¶ 7, 9 N.W.3d 648). After reviewing the record, we conclude the district court did not clearly err in finding Rugland failed to establish his counsel’s performance fell below an objective standard of reasonableness under prong one of the *Strickland* test. *Samaniego v. State*, 2024 ND 187, ¶ 9, 12 N.W.3d 827 (“Courts need not address both prongs of the *Strickland* test, and if a court can resolve the case by addressing only one prong it is encouraged to do so.”). The court did not abuse its discretion by not allowing Rugland to withdraw his guilty plea. We summarily affirm under N.D.R.App.P. 35.1(a)(2) and (4).

[¶2] Jon J. Jensen, C.J.
Daniel J. Crothers
Lisa Fair McEvers
Jerod E. Tufte
Douglas A. Bahr