

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 16-7441**

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CHRISTOPHER EARL COTTRELL,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

HAROLD W. CLARKE,

Respondent - Appellee.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, at Richmond. Henry E. Hudson, District Judge. (3:16-cv-00200-HEH-RCY)

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Submitted: February 16, 2017

Decided: February 22, 2017

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Before GREGORY, Chief Judge, DUNCAN, Circuit Judge, and HAMILTON, Senior Circuit Judge.

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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Christopher Earl Cottrell, Appellant Pro Se. Victoria Lee Johnson, OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF VIRGINIA, Richmond, Virginia, for Appellee.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Christopher Earl Cottrell seeks to appeal the district court's order denying relief on his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (2012) petition. The order is not appealable unless a circuit justice or judge issues a certificate of appealability. See 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(1)(A) (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 petition 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 Cottrell has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, we deny Cottrell's motion for a transcript at government expense, deny his motion for 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