

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 12-7730**

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ROBERT EDWARD LEE SHELL,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

HAROLD CLARKE, Director, Virginia Department of Corrections,

Respondent - Appellee.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the Western  
District of Virginia, at Roanoke. Glen E. Conrad, Chief  
District Judge. (7:11-cv-00363-GEC-RSB)

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Submitted: March 20, 2013

Decided: April 1, 2013

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Before MOTZ, GREGORY, and SHEDD, Circuit Judges.

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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Robert Edward Lee Shell, Appellant Pro Se. Eugene Paul Murphy,  
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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.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:

Robert Edward Lee Shell seeks to appeal the district court's order denying relief on his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (2006) petition. The order is not appealable unless a circuit justice or judge issues a certificate of appealability. 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(1)(A) (2006). 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) (2006). 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 Shell has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, we deny a certificate of appealability, deny leave to proceed in forma pauperis, and dismiss the appeal. We also deny Shell's motions seeking the appointment of counsel and leave to amend his informal brief. 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