

**UNPUBLISHED**

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS  
FOR THE FOURTH CIRCUIT

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**No. 22-7423**

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ELAN BELL-VENEY,

Petitioner - Appellant,

v.

SHELBY SEARLS, Superintendent, Huttonsville Correctional Center,

Respondent - Appellee.

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Appeal from the United States District Court for the Northern District of West Virginia, at  
Wheeling. John Preston Bailey, District Judge. (5:22-cv-00232-JPB-JPM)

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Submitted: October 4, 2023

Decided: October 10, 2023

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Before THACKER and HEYTENS, Circuit Judges, and MOTZ, Senior Circuit Judge.

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Dismissed by unpublished per curiam opinion.

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Sherman Luis Lambert, Sr., Shepherdstown, West Virginia, for Appellant. Lindsay Sara  
See, OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF WEST VIRGINIA, Charleston, West  
Virginia, for Appellee.

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Unpublished opinions are not binding precedent in this circuit.

PER CURIAM:

Elan Bell-Veney seeks to appeal the district court's order denying relief on his 28 U.S.C. § 2254 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). 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, 115-17 (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 petition 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)).

We have independently reviewed the record and conclude that Bell-Veney has not made the requisite showing. Accordingly, we deny 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*