

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
ALABAMA

Devin Brandis Pugh v. Choctaw County, Alabama

Pugh v. Choctaw County · No. 1:25-296-TFM-MU · Decided January 6, 2026

SUMMARY

A magistrate judge recommends dismissal without prejudice of Devin Brandis Pugh’s action against Choctaw County, Alabama for failure to prosecute and failure to comply with an order directing him to file an amended complaint. The recommendation relies on Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b), the court’s inherent authority, and Eleventh Circuit precedent, and informs the parties of their right to object within fourteen days.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Alabama
WRITING FOR THE COURT	P. Bradley Murray
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Alabama
DECIDED	January 6, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-296-TFM-MU
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Report and recommendation by a magistrate judge recommending dismissal without prejudice of Plaintiff's civil-rights action for failure to prosecute and failure to comply with a court order.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A district court may dismiss an action sua sponte for failure to prosecute or failure to comply with a court order; dismissal is generally not an abuse of discretion when a litigant disregards an order after being forewarned.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

TOPICS

- default
- pleadings
- civil procedure
- remedies

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action should be dismissed without prejudice because Plaintiff failed to prosecute the case and failed to comply with the court's order to file an amended complaint.

HOLDINGS

1. Dismissal without prejudice was warranted because Plaintiff failed to comply with the court's order and failed to prosecute the action after receiving a specific warning that noncompliance would result in dismissal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A *“court may dismiss a claim if the plaintiff fails to prosecute it or comply with a court order.”*” (at 1)

“The court's authority to dismiss an action sua sponte for lack of prosecution is considered a fundamental power of the court.” (at 1)

“Courts are vested with the inherent authority “to manage their own affairs so as to achieve the orderly and expeditious disposition of cases.”” (at 1)

“Rule 41(b) authorizes a district court to dismiss a complaint for failure to prosecute or failure to comply with a court order or the federal rules.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff filed a complaint against Choctaw County, Alabama, which the court found deficient on initial review. The court directed him to file an amended complaint on the required form, restate the relevant allegations, and explain how he was personally harmed by Defendant. Despite being served with the order and warned of dismissal, Plaintiff neither filed an amended complaint by the deadline nor communicated with the court.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff's complaint was transferred to the Southern District of Alabama on July 21, 2025, and the action was referred to Magistrate Judge P. Bradley Murray. After an initial review, the court ordered Plaintiff on November 25, 2025, to file an amended complaint on the court's form and warned that failure to do so by January 2, 2026, would result in a recommendation of dismissal without prejudice. Plaintiff did not file an amended complaint or otherwise communicate with the court, leading to this recommendation.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Equity Lifestyle Prop., Inc. v. Fla. Mowing & Landscape Serv., Inc., 556 F.3d 1232, 1240 (11th Cir. 2009)
- Link v. Wabash R.R., 370 U.S. 626, 630-31 (1962)
- Saint Vil v. Perimeter Mortg. Funding Corp., 715 F. App'x 912, 915 (11th Cir. 2017)

- *Betty K Agencies, Ltd. v. M/V Monada*, 432 F.3d 1333, 1337 (11th Cir. 2005)
- *Moon v. Newsome*, 863 F.2d 835, 837 (11th Cir. 1989), cert. denied, 493 U.S. 863 (1989)
- *Frith v. Curry*, 812 F. App'x 933, 934-35 (11th Cir. 2020)
- *Freeze v. Sec'y, Dep't of Children & Families*, 825 F. App'x 606, 610 (11th Cir. 2020)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA SOUTHERN DIVISION DEVIN BRANDIS PUGH,)) Plaintiff,)) vs.) CIVIL ACTION: 1:25-296-TFM-MU) CHOCTAW COUNTY, ALABAMA,)) Defendant.) REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION On July 21, 2025, Devin Pugh's complaint against Choctaw County, Alabama was transferred to this Court. (Docs. 25, 26). It was then referred to the undersigned Magistrate Judge for appropriate action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1) and S.D.

Ala. GenLR 72(a)(2)(R). (Doc. 27). Upon review of this action's proceedings, it is RECOMMENDED that this action be DISMISSED without prejudice for Plaintiff's failure to prosecute and to comply with the Court's order.

The Court conducted an initial review of Plaintiff's complaint, and on November 25, 2025, entered an order explaining to Plaintiff the problems with his filing and instructing him on how to cure the deficiencies. (Doc. 28). Plaintiff was instructed that his amended complaint would replace his original complaint and, therefore, that he should not refer to his original complaint but should restate all relevant information in the amended complaint, including how he was personally harmed by Defendant.

(Id.). Plaintiff was warned that failure to comply with the Court's order by January 2, 2026 would result in a recommendation that his action be dismissed without prejudice. (Id.). On November 25, 2025, Plaintiff was mailed a copy of the Order, his original complaint, and a form for a pro se civil complaint.

To date, Plaintiff has not filed an amended complaint on the Court's form, nor communicated with the Court in any manner. A "court may dismiss a claim if the plaintiff fails to prosecute it or comply with a court order." *Equity Lifestyle Prop., Inc. v. Fla. Mowing & Landscape Serv., Inc.*, 556 F.3d 1232, 1240 (11th Cir. 2009).

The court's authority to dismiss an action sua sponte for lack of prosecution is considered a fundamental power of the court. *Link v. Wabash R.R.*, 370 U.S. 626, 630 (1962). Courts are vested with the inherent authority "to manage their own affairs so as to achieve the orderly and expeditious disposition of cases." *Id.* at 630-31.

Moreover, "Rule 41(b) authorizes a district court to dismiss a complaint for failure to prosecute or failure to comply with a court order or the federal rules." *Saint Vil v. Perimeter Mortg. Funding*

Corp., 715 F. App'x 912, 915 (11th Cir. 2017) (internal quotation marks omitted)). Accord *Betty K Agencies, Ltd. v. M/V Monada*, 432 F.3d 1333, 1337 (11th Cir. 2005) (recognizing the two sources of a court's authority to sua sponte dismiss an action are its inherent powers and Rule 41(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure).

Due to Plaintiff's failure to comply with the Court's order and to prosecute this action, it is RECOMMENDED that this action be DISMISSED without prejudice, as no lesser sanction will suffice to address Plaintiff's willful conduct. *Moon v. Newsome*, 863 F.2d 835, 837 (11th Cir. 1989) (dismissal for disregarding an order after a litigant has been forewarned is generally not an abuse of discretion), cert. denied, 493 U.S. 863 (1989); see *Frith v. Curry*, 812 F. App'x 933, 934-35 (11th Cir.

2020) (affirming an action's dismissal when an inmate, who had been warned that failure to comply would result in his action's dismissal for failure to prosecute, did not respond to the court's order and did not pay the partial filing fee even though he filed his signed consent form); *Freeze v. Sec'y, Dep't of Children & Families*, 825 F. App'x 606, 610 (11th Cir.

2020) (affirming the dismissal without prejudice of the complaint for failure to follow court orders to amend his complaint). NOTICE OF RIGHT TO FILE OBJECTIONS A copy of this report and recommendation shall be served on all parties in the manner provided by law. Any party who objects to this recommendation or anything in it must, within fourteen (14) days of the date of service of this document, file specific written objections with the Clerk of this Court.

See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b); S.D.ALA. GenLR 72(c). The parties should note that under Eleventh Circuit Rule 3-1, “[a] party failing to object to a magistrate judge’s findings or recommendations contained in a report and recommendation in accordance with the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1) waives the right to challenge on appeal the district court’s order based on unobjected-to factual and legal conclusions if the party was informed of the time period for objecting and the consequences on appeal for failing to object.

In the absence of a proper objection, however, the court may review on appeal for plain error if necessary in the interests of justice.” 11th Cir. R. 3-1. To be specific, an objection must identify the specific finding or recommendation to which objection is made, state the basis for the objection, and specify the place in the Magistrate Judge’s report and recommendation where the disputed determination is found.

An objection that merely incorporates by reference or refers to the briefing before the Magistrate Judge is not specific. DONE and ORDERED this 6th day of January, 2026. /s/ P. BRADLEY MURRAY UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

