

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
VIRGINIA, ROANOKE DIVISION**

Randall Lee Stacel v. Chatham Jail, et al.

Stacel · No. 7:25CV00723 · Decided March 31, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia screened Randall Lee Stacel's pro se civil rights action under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e). The court dismissed without prejudice the claims against Chatham Jail and Chatham, Virginia, because they are not persons subject to suit under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, while claims against Sgt. Worley and Officer Johnson remained.

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT ee □□ □□□□ VA FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA FILED ROANOKE DIVISION March 31, 2026 LAURA A. AUSTIN, CLERK By: /s/ M. Poff RANDALL LEE STACEL,) mee Plaintiff, Case No. 7:25CV00723 V. OPINION AND ORDER CHATHAM JAIL, et al., JUDGE JAMES P. JONES Defendants. Randall Lee Stacel, Pro Se Plaintiff.

The plaintiff, a former inmate proceeding pro se, has filed a civil rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, alleging that the defendants used excessive force against him when he was incarcerated. Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e), which governs in forma pauperis proceedings, the court has a mandatory duty to screen initial filings. *Eriline Co. S.A. v. Johnson*, 440 F.3d 648, 656 (4th Cir.

2006). A pro se complaint must be construed liberally. See *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520-21 (1972). However, even under this less stringent standard, pro se claims are subject to sua sponte dismissal “at any time” if the court determines that the complaint “fails to state a claim on which relief may be granted.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii). Stacel presents his claims under § 1983, a statute that permits an aggrieved party to file a civil action against a person for actions taken under color of state law that violated his constitutional rights.

Cooper v. Sheehan, 735 F.3d 153, 158 (4th Cir. 2013). Stacel names several defendants, including Chatham Jail and Chatham, Virginia. However, such entities are not “persons” who are subject to suit under § 1983. See *Will v. Michigan Dep’t of State Police*, 491 U.S. 58 (1989) (concluding that the State, governmental entities that are considered “arms of the state,” and officials acting in their official capacities, are not “persons” subject to suit under § 1983”).

Accordingly, Stacel's claims against Chatham Jail and Chatham, Virginia, must be summarily dismissed and only claims against Sgt. Worley and Officer Johnson will remain at this time. For

the foregoing reasons, it is ORDERED that Stacel's claims against Chatham Jail and Chatham, Virginia are DISMISSED without prejudice for failure to state a claim on which relief may be granted under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) and the Clerk shall terminate those defendants on the docket in the case.

ENTER: March 31, 2026 /s/ JAMES P. JONES Senior United States District Judge

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