

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
VIRGINIA**

Roger L. Compton, Jr. v. L.S. Crews, et al.

Compton · No. 7:26-cv-00214 · Decided June 3, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia dismissed Roger L. Compton Jr.'s pro se 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action following screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. The court held that requests for release must be pursued through habeas corpus rather than § 1983 and that damages claims barred by *Heck v. Humphrey* could not proceed absent invalidation of the underlying conviction or sentence.

OPINION

CLERK'S OFFICE U.S. DIST. COUR AT HARRISONBURG, VA FILED IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT June 03, 2026 FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA | auRA A. AUSTIN, CLERK DEPUTY CLERK ROGER L. COMPTON, JR.,) Plaintiff,) Civil Action Nos. 7:26-cv-00214) Vv.)) By: Elizabeth K. Dillon L.S. CREWS, et al.,) Chief United States District Judge Defendants.) MEMORANDUM OPINION Plaintiff Roger L. Compton, a Virginia inmate proceeding pro se, has filed this civil rights action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

(See Compl., Dkt. No. 1; Am. Compl., Dkt. No. 7.) This matter is before the court for review pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. For the reasons stated below, the court concludes Compton's complaint must be dismissed. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a), the court must conduct an initial review of a "complaint in a civil action in which a prisoner seeks redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity." A complaint is subject to dismissal if it is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. § 1915A(b)(1), (2); see also 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2).

Pleadings of self-represented litigants are given a liberal construction and held to a less stringent standard than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers. *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007) (per curiam). Liberal construction does not mean, however, that the court can ignore a clear failure in pleadings to allege facts setting forth a claim cognizable in a federal district court.

See *Weller v. Dep't of Social Servs.*, 901 F.2d 387, 391 (4th Cir. 1990). Compton alleges that he is currently at the Lynchburg Adult Detention Center. He has sued a county deputy sheriff, a Commonwealth Attorney, a judge, and his criminal defense attorney. Compton alleges that Deputy Crews issued an arrest warrant against him for assault and strangulation. Plaintiff was alleged to

have hit and strangled someone, but plaintiff claims that the victim's injuries were due to a seizure.

Compton claims that he is innocent and is wrongfully detained. Compton was told that he is "staying here the entire 3 yrs 10 months." (Am. Compl. 6.) He asks for \$200 a day from July 11, 2025, to his release, in addition to \$200,000 for pain and suffering. Compton also requests that the defendants be disbarred and terminated from their positions. (Id. at 8.)

To the extent that Compton is seeking his release from prison, a § 1983 action is not the correct vehicle for such a pursuit. A civil rights § 1983 case challenges the conditions of plaintiff's confinement, and a habeas corpus matter challenges the legality of that confinement. See *Wilkinson v. Dotson*, 544 U.S. 74, 78 (2005) (summarizing the distinctions between § 1983 and habeas actions).

Further, under *Heck v. Humphrey*, 512 U.S. 477 (1994), Compton cannot obtain damages without first proving that his "conviction or sentence has already been invalidated." Id. at 487. Based on the foregoing, the court will issue an appropriate order dismissing this action for failure to state a claim. Entered: June 3, 2026. /s/ Elizabeth K. Dillon Elizabeth K. Dillon Chief United States District Judge