

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

John Kell Finney v. Hudson Farms, et al.

Finney · No. Civil Action No. 23-2537 (JXN)(JSA) · Decided March 6, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of New Jersey denied pro se Plaintiff John Kell Finney’s motion to reopen a case under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 60(b). The court concluded that the motion did not establish extraordinary circumstances, identify a proper Rule 60 basis, or cure the deficient pleadings previously dismissed with prejudice.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Xavier Neals
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of New Jersey
DECIDED	March 6, 2026
DOCKET	Civil Action No. 23-2537 (JXN)(JSA)
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se plaintiff moved under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 60(b) to reopen the case and introduce new evidence after the court dismissed his Second Amended Complaint with prejudice.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Relief from a final judgment under Rule 60(b) is available only in limited circumstances and extraordinary circumstances; the decision whether to grant such relief is discretionary.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district-court memorandum opinion; precedential status is not established in the source.
PARTIES	John Kell Finney v. Hudson Farms, et al.

TOPICS

- motion for reconsideration
- pleadings
- motions to dismiss
- civil procedure
- child custody

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- civil rights
- family law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff established grounds under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 60(b) warranting relief from the final judgment dismissing his Second Amended Complaint with prejudice.
2. Whether purportedly new evidence warranted reopening the case when Plaintiff had not identified a valid Rule 60(b) subsection, shown extraordinary circumstances, or cured the deficiencies in his pleadings.

HOLDINGS

1. A party seeking relief from a final judgment under Rule 60(b) must establish one of the rule's limited grounds and, in any event, extraordinary circumstances; Plaintiff's cursory motion did not satisfy that requirement.
2. Rule 60(b) may not be used as a substitute for an appeal or to relitigate matters already decided.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Only in cases “evidencing extraordinary circumstances” will courts grant relief under Rule 60(b).”
(Discussion)

“It appears that Plaintiff is attempting impermissibly to use Rule 60 as a substitute for an appeal of this Court’s final dismissal of the pleadings.” (Discussion)

“Plaintiff fails to provide “extraordinary circumstances justifying the reopening of a final judgment.””
(Discussion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff's action arose from state proceedings involving a child-custody dispute. Despite repeated opportunities and directives to identify specific claims, defendants, and alleged misconduct, Plaintiff submitted pleadings that the court characterized as sprawling, unclear, cursory, and incoherent. After the Second Amended Complaint was dismissed with prejudice, Plaintiff sought to reopen the case to present purported new evidence, but he did not identify a valid Rule 60(b) ground or cure the fundamental deficiencies in his pleadings.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed this action in May 2023 concerning state proceedings involving a child-custody dispute. The court initially dismissed the Complaint without prejudice under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B), granted leave to amend, and gave Plaintiff multiple opportunities to file a comprehensible amended pleading. After Plaintiff's proposed Second Amended Complaint still failed to identify intelligible claims, defendants, and alleged misconduct, the magistrate judge recommended dismissal with prejudice. No objections were filed, and the district court adopted the recommendation and dismissed the action with prejudice on February 7, 2025. Plaintiff then moved to reopen under Rule 60(b), and the district court denied the motion and ordered the file closed.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- *Gonzalez v. Crosby*, 545 U.S. 524, 528 (2005)
- *McDaniel v. Occupational Safety and Health Admin.*, No. 24-10006, 2025 WL 3707322, at *2 (D.N.J. Dec. 22, 2025)
- *Edwards v. New Jersey*, No. 22-2396, 2023 WL 3932848, at *2 (D.N.J. June 9, 2023)
- *Stradley v. Cortez*, 518 F.2d 488, 493 (3d Cir. 1975)
- *Shukla v. Richardson*, No. 19-18117, 2025 WL 2458307, at *3 (D.N.J. Aug. 26, 2025)
- *Kupersmit v. IRS/CIR*, No. 19-17580, 2021 WL 2322849, at *1 (D.N.J. June 7, 2021)
- *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 129 S.Ct. 1937, 1950, 173 L.Ed.2d 868 (2009)
- *Rhett v. New Jersey State Superior Ct.*, 260 F. App'x 513 (3d Cir. 2008)

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