

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
TEXAS, HOUSTON DIVISION

Terrance Phillips v. Oramadike, et al.

Civil Action No. H-25-01143 · No. H-25-01143 · Decided December 16, 2025

SUMMARY

The Southern District of Texas dismissed Terrance Phillips’s pro se civil action without prejudice for want of prosecution after an order for a more definite statement was returned as undeliverable. The court found that Phillips failed to maintain a current address as required by the local rules and advised that relief could be sought under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 60(b) upon a proper showing.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas, Houston Division
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas, Houston Division
DECIDED	December 16, 2025
DOCKET	H-25-01143
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se prisoner civil-rights action dismissed sua sponte without prejudice for want of prosecution after the plaintiff failed to maintain a current address and failed to respond to an order for a more definite statement.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A district court may sua sponte dismiss an action for failure to comply with a court order or for failure to prosecute under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) and its inherent authority to manage its docket.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- motion for a more definite statement
- prisoners rights

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- prisoner civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court could dismiss the action sua sponte for want of prosecution after the plaintiff failed to maintain a current address and failed to comply with an order for a more definite statement.
2. Whether dismissal without prejudice was appropriate under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) and the court's inherent docket-management authority.

HOLDINGS

1. A district court may sua sponte dismiss an action for want of prosecution when a pro se plaintiff fails to provide a current valid address and thereby fails to comply with a court order and pursue the action.
2. The action was dismissed without prejudice for want of prosecution, subject to possible relief upon a proper Rule 60(b) showing.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Therefore, under the inherent powers necessarily vested in a district court to manage its own affairs, this Court determines that dismissal for want of prosecution is appropriate.” (at 1)

“Accordingly, based on the foregoing, the Court ORDERS that this case is DISMISSED without prejudice for want of prosecution.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Phillips was confined at the Harris County Jail when he filed the action. The court directed him to provide a more definite statement, but the order was returned because there was no such number associated with the address Phillips had supplied. Phillips did not provide a current, valid address as required by the Southern District of Texas local rules and therefore did not receive or comply with the court's order.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Phillips filed a civil action while confined at the Harris County Jail. The court issued an order for a more definite statement on October 10, 2025, but the order was returned as undeliverable on December 8, 2025, because the address provided by Phillips was invalid. After Phillips failed to provide a current address or otherwise pursue the action, the court dismissed the case without prejudice for want of prosecution.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Slack v. McDaniel, 529 U.S. 473, 489 (2000)
- Larson v. Scott, 157 F.3d 1030 (5th Cir. 1998)

OPINION

Phillips

PER CURIAM.

Southern District of Texas

ENTERED

December 16, 2025 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT voiranoen athan Ochsner, Clerk

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

HOUSTON DIVISION

TERRANCE PHILLIPS, §

SPN 02854962, §

Plaintiff, § §

VS. § CIVIL ACTION NO. H-25-01143

§ ORAMADIKE, et al., § § Defendants. §

ORDER OF DISMISSAL WITHOUT PREJUDICE

At the time Terrance Phillips (SPN 02854962) filed this civil action, he was confined at the Harris County Jail. On October 10, 2025, the Court sent Phillips an Order for a More Definite Statement. Doc. No. 11. On December 8, 2025, the Court's Order for a More Definite Statement was returned to sender, with a notation that there was "no such number" associated with the address that Phillips had provided to the Court. Doc. No. 12. Phillips has not provided the Court with a current, valid address as required by Rule 83.4 of the Local Rules for the Southern District of Texas, Houston Division. Under that rule, a pro se litigant is responsible for keeping the Clerk advised in writing of his current address. The Court will only send notices to the address on file. The plaintiff has clearly failed to provide the Court with an accurate, current address. 1/2 The plaintiff's failure to pursue this action leads the Court to conclude that he lacks due diligence. Therefore, under the inherent powers necessarily vested in a district court to manage its own affairs, this Court determines that dismissal for want of prosecution is appropriate. See FED. R. Civ. P. 41(b); Slack v. McDaniel, 529 U.S. 473, 489 (2000) (stating that "[t]he failure to comply with an order of the court is grounds for dismissal with prejudice"); Larson v. Scott, 157 F.3d 1030 (5th Cir. 1998) (noting that a district court may sua sponte dismiss an action for failure to comply with any court order). The plaintiff is advised, however, that relief from this Order may be granted upon a proper showing by filing a motion under Rule 60(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure within 30 days of this Order. At a minimum, a proper showing under Rule 60(b) includes full compliance with the Court's previous notices or orders, including submitting a completed response to the Court's Order for a More Definite Statement and providing a current, valid address pursuant to the Local Rules. Accordingly, based on the foregoing, the Court ORDERS that this case is DISMISSED without prejudice for want of prosecution. SIGNED on this | G ~ of December 2025.

ANDREW S. HANEN

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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