

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA, FORT WAYNE DIVISION

Tanaisa Weeks v. Hersh Berger, et al.

Weeks · No. 1:25-CV-677-GSL-JEM · Decided December 19, 2025

SUMMARY

The court strikes Tanaisa Weeks’s prisoner complaint because it is confusing, fails to clearly identify each defendant’s conduct, and appears to assert unrelated claims in a single action. The court grants Weeks until January 23, 2026, to file an amended complaint and cautions that failure to respond may result in dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, Fort Wayne Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Gretchen S. Lund
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, Fort Wayne Division
DECIDED	December 19, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-CV-677-GSL-JEM
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A pro se prisoner filed a complaint asserting claims against twenty-five defendants. The court struck the complaint and granted leave to amend.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion
PARTIES	Tanaisa Weeks v. Hersh Berger, et al.

TOPICS

- pleadings
- joinder
- civil procedure
- prisoners rights

PRACTICE AREAS

- Civil procedure
- Prisoner civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint complied with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8's requirement for a short, plain, and straightforward statement of the claims.
2. Whether the complaint improperly joined unrelated claims against different defendants.
3. Whether the complaint should be stricken with leave to amend.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint did not satisfy Rule 8 because it was confusing, failed to identify clearly what each defendant allegedly did, and did not separate claims and events into a straightforward pleading.
2. The complaint could not proceed in its existing form because it appeared to assert unrelated claims against different defendants; unrelated claims must be pursued in separate lawsuits.
3. The court struck the complaint while allowing Weeks until January 23, 2026, to file an amended complaint that complies with the pleading and joinder requirements.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Tanaisa Weeks, a prisoner proceeding without counsel, filed a complaint naming twenty-five defendants. The complaint used ambiguous references such as “them” and “they,” did not clearly associate specific allegations with specific defendants, and combined multiple incidents, including incidents involving a tablet, a food tray, and medical records. The court found that the claims did not all appear related and that the pleading did not clearly explain the basis for liability against each defendant.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Weeks filed a prisoner civil-rights complaint. The district court found that the complaint was confusing, failed to clearly identify each defendant's alleged conduct, did not present claims and events in separate paragraphs, and appeared to combine unrelated claims. The court struck the complaint, allowed Weeks to file an amended complaint by January 23, 2026, and warned that failure to respond would result in dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- George v. Smith, 507 F.3d 605, 607 (7th Cir. 2007)
- United States ex rel. Garst v. Lockheed-Martin Corp., 328 F.3d 374, 378 (7th Cir. 2003)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA FORT WAYNE
DIVISION TANAISA WEEKS, Plaintiff, v. CAUSE NO. 1:25-CV-677-GSL-JEM HERSH
BERGER, et al., Defendants. OPINION AND ORDER Tanaisa Weeks, a prisoner without a

lawyer, filed a confusing, difficult-to-read complaint. ECF 1. Weeks says she is suing twenty-five defendants, but rather than using extra pages to list them in separate boxes as the instructions on the Prisoner Complaint form require, she forced the names into the three preprinted boxes making it difficult to read what she had written.

In the Claims and Facts section of the complaint, the instructions told her to “Write a short and plain statement telling what each defendant did wrong,” but frequently she describes events making allegations against “them” or “they” without naming a specific defendant.

The complaint provides many narrative facts but does not separate claims and events into separate paragraphs and clearly state why she believes she has a claim against each defendant. It appears not all the claims are related.

For example, it is unclear how the tablet incident on November 23, 2025, with Officer Becker is related to the tray incident on December 8, 2025, with Officer Trausch is related to the medical records incident on December 10, 2025, with Nurse Laurie. There are other examples, but these illustrate the principle that “unrelated claims against different defendants belong in different suits,” *George v. Smith*, 507 F.3d 605, 607 (7th Cir.

2007). Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8 “requires parties to make their pleadings straightforward[.]” *United States ex rel. Garst v. Lockheed-Martin Corp.*, 328 F.3d 374, 378 (7th Cir. 2003). Weeks must file an amended complaint.

To do so, she needs to write this cause number on a Pro Se 14 (INND Rev. 2/20) Prisoner Complaint form which is available from her law library. He needs to write the word “Amended” on the first page above the title “Prisoner Complaint” and send it to the court after it is properly completed.

The amended complaint must clearly explain what each defendant did or did not do which violated Weeks’ rights and makes that defendant financially liable to her. The amended complaint must contain only related claims. If Weeks wants to pursue other claims, they must be in separate lawsuits.

For these reasons, the court: (1) STRIKES the complaint (ECF 1), but it will remain part of the record and accessible to the public; (2) GRANTS Tanaisa Weeks until January 23, 2026, to file an amended complaint; and (3) CAUTIONS Tanaisa Weeks if she does not respond by the deadline, this case will be dismissed under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A without further notice.

SO ORDERED on December 19, 2025 /s/Gretchen S. Lund JUDGE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT