

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
MISSOURI, SOUTHEASTERN DIVISION**

Jamie Jones v. Sgt. Unknown Harris

Jones v. Harris · No. 1:25-cv-00093-JAR · Decided December 16, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri grants Jamie Jones leave to proceed in forma pauperis but dismisses his 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action without prejudice under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B). The court concludes that Jones failed to allege a causal connection between Sergeant Harris and the alleged assault by Jones’s cellmate and failed to plead facts supporting municipal liability based on a county policy, custom, or failure to train or supervise. The court denies the pending motions for appointment of counsel and a second in forma pauperis motion as moot and finds that an appeal would not be taken in good faith.

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
SOUTHEASTERN DIVISION JAMIE JONES,) Plaintiff, v No. 1:25-cv-00093-JAR SGT.
UNKNOWN HARRIS, Defendant, MEMORANDUM AND ORDER Plaintiff Jamie Jones, a
civilly committed detainee at the Metropolitan St. Louis Psychiatric Center, brings this action
under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against Sergeant “Unknown” Harris of the Cape Girardeau County
Sheriff’s Department.

(ECF No. | at 2). Jones seeks monetary damages arising from an alleged assault by his cellmate in
April 2024. fd. at 3. He moves for appointment of counsel (ECF Nos, 2, 4) and for leave to
proceed in forma pauperis (ECF Nos. 3, 5).

The Court grants Jones leave to proceed in forma pauperis but dismisses this action for the reasons
set forth below. The Court denies Jones’s motions for appointment of counsel as moot. I. Standard
Because Jones is proceeding in forma pauperis, his complaint is subject to initial review under 28
U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). That provision requires the Court to dismiss a complaint if it is frivolous or
malicious, fails to state a claim on which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief against a
defendant who is immune from such relief.

To sufficiently state a claim for relief, a complaint must plead more than “legal conclusions” and
“{t]hreadbave recitals of the elements of a cause of action supported by mere conclusory
statements.” Ashcroff v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (citing Bell Ail. Corp. v. Twombly, 550
U.S. 544, 555 (2007)). A plaintiff must demonstrate a plausible claim for relief, which requires
more than a “mere possibility of misconduct.” /d. at 679. “A claim has facial plausibility when the

plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the Court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” /d. at 678 (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 556).

When reviewing a complaint filed by a self-represented person under § 1915, the Court accepts the well-pleaded facts as true, *White v. Clark*, 750 F.2d 721, 722 (8th Cir. 1984), and liberally construes the complaint, *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007); *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972). A “liberal construction” means that if the essence of an allegation is discernible, the district court should construe the complaint in a way that permits the claim to be considered within the proper legal framework.

Solomon v. Petray, 795 F.3d 777, 787 (8th Cir. 2015). Even so, self-represented plaintiffs must allege facts that, if true, state a claim for relief as a matter of law. *Martin v. Aubuchon*, 623 F.2d 1282, 1286 (8th Cir. 1980).

The Court need not assume unalleged facts. *Stone v. Harry*, 364 F.3d 912, 914-15 (8th Cir. 2004) (refusing to supply additional facts or to construct a legal theory for the self-represented plaintiff).
II. Discussion Jones sues Sergeant Harris in his official capacity only. (ECF No. | at 2). He alleges that his cellmate assaulted him in April 2024 and that he later filed a police report. /d. at 3.

Jones further states that “they remove[d] him from the cell.” /d. Beyond this, the complaint references “Cape County Sheriff Dept” and “Mental and Physical,” but provides no additional factual context, *Jd. Jones’s* complaint fails to state a plausible claim for relief under § 1983. He alleges only that his cellmate assaulted him and that, after he made a police report, authorities removed the cellmate from the cell.

Liability under § 1983, however, requires a causal link between a defendant’s own actions and the alleged constitutional violation. See *Madewell v. Roberts*, 909 F.2d 1203, 1208 (8th Cir. 1990). Jones does not allege that Harris personally participated in the assault, knew of a substantial risk of harm beforehand, or acted with deliberate indifference to Jones’s safety.

Additionally, as noted above, Jones sues Harris in his official capacity only. An official-capacity claim is treated as a claim against the governmental entity itself. *White v. Jackson*, 865 F.3d 1064, 1075 (8th Cir. 2017).

Accordingly, to prevail on his official-capacity claim, Jones must establish that Cape Girardeau County itself is liable for the alleged misconduct. /d. To do so, Jones must demonstrate that the alleged constitutional violations resulted from (1) an official county policy, (2) an unofficial custom, or (3) a deliberately indifferent failure to train or supervise, *Mick v. Raines*, 883 F.3d 1075, 1079 (8th Cir.

2018); see also *Monell v. Dep’t of Soc. Servs. of City of New York*, 436 U.S. 658, 690 (1978). Jones does not allege facts plausibly showing that a policy, custom, or failure to train or supervise

by Cape Girardeau County caused the alleged constitutional violation. Even liberally construed, his allegations therefore do not support a plausible inference of county liability.

See *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678. III. Conclusion For the foregoing reasons, the Court grants Jones's motion to proceed in forma pauperis (ECF No. 3) and dismisses this action for failure to state a plausible claim to relief under § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i).

Accordingly, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Jones's motion to proceed in forma pauperis (ECF No. 3) is GRANTED. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Jones's second motion to proceed in forma pauperis (ECF No. 5) is DENIED as moot. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Jones's motions for appointment of counsel (ECF Nos. 2, 4) are DENIED as moot. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this action is DISMISSED without prejudice under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i).

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that an appeal from this dismissal would not be taken in good faith. A separate Order of Dismissal accompanies the Memorandum and Order. Dated this 16th day of December, 2025. WANE HOW UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE