

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS, ROCK ISLAND DIVISION

John Wagner v. Hill Correctional Center, et al.

Wagner · No. 4:25-cv-04203-MMM · Decided May 18, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois grants John Wagner leave to amend but denies his request for appointed counsel and motions for preliminary injunctive relief. Following merit review under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court dismisses the amended complaint for misjoinder of unrelated claims and allows 28 days to file a compliant amended complaint. The court also finds the requested injunctive relief moot because Wagner is no longer housed at Hill Correctional Center.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois, Rock Island Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Michael M. Mihm
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois, Rock Island Division
DECIDED	May 18, 2026
DOCKET	4:25-cv-04203-MMM
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se prisoner civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983; the court conducted merit review of the amended complaint and ruled on motions for leave to amend, appointment of counsel, preliminary injunctive relief, and an order.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On § 1915A screening, the court accepted factual allegations as true and liberally construed them in Plaintiff's favor, while disregarding conclusory statements and labels and assessing whether the pleading stated a plausible claim. For appointment of counsel, the court applied the two-part Pruitt inquiry. For preliminary injunctive relief, the court applied the likelihood-of-success, inadequate-remedy-at-law, irreparable-harm, and balancing-of-harms standards, subject to the PLRA's limitations.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE

Unpublished federal district court order; precedential status not stated in the opinion.

TOPICS

joinder

injunctions

prisoners rights

section 1983

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

prisoner civil rights

injunctive relief

appointment of counsel

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff's claims against numerous defendants concerning retaliation, medical care, failure to protect, and mental-health treatment were properly joined in one prisoner complaint.
2. Whether Plaintiff was entitled to appointment of counsel when he had not shown a reasonable effort to obtain counsel for this specific lawsuit.
3. Whether Plaintiff was entitled to preliminary injunctive relief requiring medical treatment, including whether his transfer from Hill Correctional Center made the request moot.

HOLDINGS

1. The amended complaint was improperly joined because it combined unrelated claims against unrelated defendants that did not arise from the same transaction, occurrence, or series of related transactions.
2. The motion for appointment of counsel was denied because Plaintiff did not demonstrate a reasonable attempt to obtain counsel for this specific lawsuit; he could renew the motion after making such an effort.
3. The motions for preliminary injunction were denied because Plaintiff had not established entitlement to extraordinary relief and, in any event, his request for relief concerning Hill Correctional Center was moot after his transfer to Lawrence Correctional Center.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The complaint is dismissed for misjoinder of claims. Plaintiff is allowed 28 days to file an amended complaint. He must choose what claim or properly joined claims he wants to pursue in this lawsuit."

"A preliminary injunction is "an extraordinary and drastic remedy, one that should not be granted unless the movant, by a clear showing, carries the burden of persuasion.""

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff, formerly incarcerated at Hill Correctional Center and then incarcerated at Lawrence Correctional Center, alleged several unrelated categories of conduct, including retaliatory transfer, deficient medical care, wheelchair and heart-condition treatment, failure to protect, cell placement, and mental-health treatment. The alleged events occurred primarily at Hill beginning in August 2025. Plaintiff sought appointment of counsel and preliminary injunctive relief requiring medical treatment.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a § 1983 action concerning alleged retaliation, medical care, failure to protect, and mental-health treatment at Hill Correctional Center. The court granted the later motion for leave to amend, denied or found moot several other motions, screened the amended complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, dismissed it for misjoinder, and allowed 28 days to file a compliant amended complaint.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Plaintiff was allowed 28 days to file an amended complaint selecting one claim or properly joined claims. Separate and unrelated incidents may be pursued in separate lawsuits. If Plaintiff did not replead, or if the new pleading did not correct the joinder problems, the action would be dismissed.

CASES CITED

- *Pruitt v. Mote*, 503 F.3d 647, 655 (7th Cir. 2007)
- *Turley v. Rednour*, 729 F.3d 645, 649 (7th Cir. 2013)
- *Alexander v. United States*, 721 F.3d 418, 422 (7th Cir. 2013)
- *Mitchell v. Kallas*, 895 F.3d 492, 502-03 (7th Cir. 2018)
- *Wheeler v. Wexford Health Sources, Inc.*, 689 F.3d 680, 683 (7th Cir. 2012)
- *Owens v. Godinez*, 860 F.3d 434, 436 (7th Cir. 2017)
- *Morris v. Kulhan*, 745 F. App'x 648, 649 (7th Cir. 2018)
- *Mazurek v. Armstrong*, 520 U.S. 968, 972 (1997)
- *Winter v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc.*, 555 U.S. 7, 24 (2008)
- *Foodcomm International v. Barry*, 328 F.3d 300, 303 (7th Cir. 2003)
- *Incredible Technologies, Inc. v. Virtual Technologies, Inc.*, 400 F.3d 1007, 1011 (7th Cir. 2005)
- *Westefer v. Neal*, 682 F.3d 679, 683 (7th Cir. 2012)
- *Maddox v. Love*, 655 F.3d 709, 716 (7th Cir. 2011)

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