

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

Ronnie Keith Brooking v. Central Virginia Regional Jail, et al.

Brooking · No. 7:25-cv-00048 · Decided January 28, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia dismissed Ronnie Keith Brooking’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)(1). The court held that the complaint failed to state a claim against the jail and other defendants and dismissed the action after Brooking failed to file an amended complaint addressing previously identified deficiencies.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Thomas T. Cullen
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia
DECIDED	January 28, 2026
DOCKET	7:25-cv-00048
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se prisoner civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 dismissed at the screening stage under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)(1) after plaintiff failed to amend his complaint.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Statutory screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; the complaint must be dismissed if it fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court memorandum opinion
PARTIES	Ronnie Keith Brooking v. Central Virginia Regional Jail, CVRJ Authority, Administrative Staff of CVRJ, Three individual officers at CVRJ

TOPICS

- section 1983
- prisoners rights
- civil rights
- pleadings
- government liability

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil rights
- prisoner litigation
- federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against the Central Virginia Regional Jail, which is not a person subject to suit under the statute.
2. Whether the complaint stated plausible § 1983 claims against the remaining defendants when it failed to allege each defendant's personal involvement.
3. Whether dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)(1) was appropriate after plaintiff failed to amend the deficient complaint.

HOLDINGS

1. A jail is not a person within the meaning of § 1983 and therefore cannot be liable under that statute.
2. A § 1983 complaint must allege facts showing each defendant's personal involvement in the asserted constitutional violation; the complaint failed to do so and therefore stated no plausible claim against the remaining defendants.
3. The court must dismiss a prisoner's complaint that fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; dismissal was warranted because the original complaint remained deficient and plaintiff failed to file an amended complaint.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Ronnie Keith Brooking, proceeding pro se, filed a prisoner civil-rights complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against the Central Virginia Regional Jail, the CVRJ Authority, CVRJ administrative staff, and three individual officers. The complaint did not identify what each defendant personally did to violate Brooking's rights. After the court identified these deficiencies and ordered an amended complaint, Brooking failed to file one within the prescribed period.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a § 1983 complaint against the Central Virginia Regional Jail, related entities and staff, and individual officers. The court advised him that the jail was not a person subject to suit under § 1983 and that the complaint failed to allege each defendant's personal involvement, then ordered him to file an amended complaint within 30 days. Plaintiff did not amend, and the court dismissed the action for failure to state a claim.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- *Perdue v. Penalosa*, 38 F.3d 1213, 1213 (4th Cir. 1994)
- *Trulock v. Freeh*, 275 F.3d 391, 402 (4th Cir. 2001)

- Wilcox v. Brown, 877 F.3d 161, 170 (4th Cir. 2017)

OPINION

CLERK'S OFFICE U.S. DIST. COURT AT ROANOKE, VA FILED IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT □□□□ FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA py. (A.B ROANOKE DIVISION OEPUTY CLERK RONNIE KEITH BROOKING,)) Plaintiff,) Case No. 7:25-cv-00048) v.) MEMORANDUM OPINION } CENTRAL VIRGINIA REGIONAL _) By: | Hon. Thomas T. Cullen JAIL, et al,) United States District Judge) Defendants.) Plaintiff Ronnie Keith Brooking, proceeding pro se, filed a ctvil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against Defendants Central Virginia Regional Jail (‘CVRJ’), CVRJ Authority, Administrative Staff of CVRJ, and three individual officers at CVRJ.

(See Compl. [ECF No. 1].) On December 18, 2025, the court advised Plaintiff that a jail is not a “person” subject to suit under § 1983, see *Perdue v. Penalosa*, 38 F.3d 1213, 1213 (4th Cir. 1994), that liability under § 1983 is personal and requires factual detail about each defendant’s personal involvement, and that his complaint failed to state a claim for which relief could be granted.

(See Order, Dec. 18, 2025 [ECF No. 13].) The court ordered Plaintiff to file an amended complaint within 30 days that corrected the deficiencies identified and cautioned Plaintiff that failure to amend could result in dismissal of his complaint. (*Id.* at 3.) More than 30 days have elapsed, and Plaintiff has not filed an amended complaint.

Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court has an obligation to screen prisoner filings and dismiss any complaint that “fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)(1). As noted above, Plaintiff may not pursue a § 1983 claim against a jail because a jail is not a “person” within the meaning of the statute. See *Perdue*, 38 F.3d at 1213.

Additionally, Plaintiff’s complaint fails to state plausible claims against each of the other Defendants because he has not identified what each Defendant did to violate his rights. See *Trulock v. Freeh*, 275 F.3d 391, 402 (4th Cir. 2001); *Wilcox v. Brown*, 877 F.3d 161, 170 (4th Cir. 2017).

Accordingly, Plaintiff has not stated a claim for relief against any Defendant. Because Plaintiff’s original complaint fails to state a claim for which relief may be granted and because Plaintiff did not file an amended complaint correcting this deficiency, the court will dismiss this action under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)(1).

The Clerk is directed to forward a copy of this Memorandum Opinion and accompanying Order to Plaintiff. ENTERED this 28th day of January, 2026. /s/ Thomas T. Cullen _____
HON. THOMAS T. CULLEN UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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