

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS

Joshua S. Headrick v. Jerod Gott

Headrick v. Gott · No. 25-cv-00180-JPG · Decided February 4, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois orders the Clerk to enter default against Defendant Jerod Gott under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 55(a) after he failed to respond to the First Amended Complaint. The Court directs Plaintiff to move for default judgment by February 24, 2026, and warns that failure to do so may result in dismissal for failure to prosecute or comply with a court order.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
WRITING FOR THE COURT	J. Phil Gilbert
DECIDED	February 4, 2026
DOCKET	25-cv-00180-JPG
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	On sua sponte review, the district court ordered the Clerk to enter default against Defendant Gott after he failed to answer or otherwise plead in response to the First Amended Complaint, and ordered Plaintiff to move for default judgment.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Sua sponte review of the record; no separate appellate standard of review was stated.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential district court order
PARTIES	Joshua S. Headrick v. Jerod Gott

TOPICS

- default
- default judgment
- pleadings
- prisoners rights
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- prisoner civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether default should be entered against a defendant who, after service and an extended deadline, failed to plead or otherwise defend.
2. Whether the Prison Litigation Reform Act permitted Defendant to avoid responding and thereby avoid entry of default after the Court specifically ordered him to file a reply.

HOLDINGS

1. Default must be entered against Defendant Gott because he failed to plead or otherwise defend after being served and given an extended deadline to respond.
2. Defendant could not rely on 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(g) to avoid default because the Court specifically ordered him to file a reply or other appropriate responsive pleading.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provide that the Clerk of Court must enter default against a defendant who has failed to plead or otherwise defend.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Defendant Jerod Gott was served with the lawsuit on November 4, 2025, and his answer was due November 25, 2025. After the Court sua sponte extended the deadline to January 5, 2026, Gott still had not moved, answered, or otherwise pleaded in response to the First Amended Complaint.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Court screened Plaintiff's Complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A and directed Defendant to file an appropriate responsive pleading. Defendant's waiver of service was returned unexecuted, he was later served, and he failed to respond by the original or extended deadline. The Court therefore directed entry of default under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 55(a) and set a deadline for Plaintiff to seek default judgment under Rule 55(b).

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Vinning v. Walks, 2009 WL 839052, at *1 n.2 (S.D. Ill. Mar. 31, 2009)