

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA

Jonathan N. Lane v. Scott Straub, Kimberly Martinez, and Ethan
Gonzales

Lane · No. 3:25-CV-1026-PPS-AZ · Decided December 15, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana screened Jonathan N. Lane’s pro se prisoner complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. The court concluded that the complaint did not state a claim based on the alleged lack of probable cause, double-jeopardy theory, or the absence of allegations against two defendants, but granted Lane until January 30, 2026, to file an amended complaint.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Philip P. Simon
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
DECIDED	December 15, 2025
DOCKET	3:25-CV-1026-PPS-AZ
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A pro se prisoner filed a civil-rights complaint alleging an unlawful arrest, improper criminal charges, and claims against two defendants who were not mentioned in the factual allegations. The district court screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, found that it failed to state a claim, and granted leave to amend.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court must review the merits of a prisoner complaint and dismiss it if it is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished, nonprecedential district court opinion
PARTIES	Jonathan N. Lane v. Scott Straub, Kimberly Martinez, Ethan Gonzales

TOPICS

pleadings

civil procedure

probable cause

fourth amendment

double jeopardy

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

criminal procedure

constitutional law

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Lane stated a constitutional claim that Detective Straub arrested him without probable cause.
2. Whether charging Lane with multiple crimes during the first prosecution violated the Double Jeopardy Clause.
3. Whether Lane stated claims against Martinez and Gonzales when the complaint contained no allegations concerning them.
4. Whether Lane should be granted leave to amend the deficient complaint.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint failed to state a claim for unlawful arrest because it did not explain why the witness statement about church damage and the video of Lane climbing a fence and attempting to break into the church were not reasonably trustworthy information supporting probable cause.
2. The Double Jeopardy Clause does not apply merely because multiple charges are filed during a defendant's first trial; it prohibits retrial following an acquittal.
3. A complaint fails to state a claim against defendants who are named in the caption but are not mentioned in the claims and facts.
4. Lane was granted leave to file an amended complaint because the defects might be curable and amendment would not necessarily be futile at this early stage.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Police officers have probable cause to arrest an individual when the facts and circumstances within their knowledge and of which they have reasonably trustworthy information are sufficient to warrant a prudent person in believing that the suspect had committed an offense.”

“The Double Jeopardy clause prohibits retrials following acquittals.”

“The usual standard in civil cases is to allow defective pleadings to be corrected, especially in early stages, at least where amendment would not be futile.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Lane, a prisoner proceeding without counsel, alleged that Detective Scott Straub arrested him based on a probable-cause affidavit that lacked evidence tying him to an offense. The affidavit stated that the arrest was based on damage to a church and video showing Lane climbing a fence and attempting to break into the church. Lane also alleged that charging him with multiple crimes arising from one criminal act violated double jeopardy, but he did not explain how the alleged charges implicated a constitutional violation. Although Lane named

Kimberly Martinez and Officer Ethan Gonzales as defendants, he made no factual allegations concerning either of them.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Lane filed a prisoner complaint alleging that Detective Straub arrested him without probable cause and that charging him with multiple crimes violated double jeopardy. He also named Martinez and Gonzales without alleging facts connecting them to the asserted claims. The district court concluded that the complaint did not state a claim against any defendant, granted Lane until January 30, 2026, to file an amended complaint, and cautioned that the action would be dismissed under § 1915A if he failed to respond.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007)
- Mustafa v. City of Chicago, 442 F.3d 544, 547 (7th Cir. 2006)
- Richardson v. United States, 468 U.S. 317, 323-24 (1984)
- Tobey v. Chibucos, 890 F.3d 634, 647 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Abu-Shawish v. United States, 898 F.3d 726, 738 (7th Cir. 2018)

OPINION

Lane

PER CURIAM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

SOUTH BEND DIVISION

JONATHAN N. LANE,

Plaintiff,

v. CAUSE NO. 3:25-CV-1026-PPS-AZ

SCOTT STRAUB, KIMBERLY

MARTINEZ, ETHAN GONZALES,

Defendants.

OPINION AND ORDER

Jonathan N. Lane, a prisoner without a lawyer, filed a complaint alleging he was wrongly arrested and charged with several crimes in Fort Wayne, Indiana. [DE 1]. “A document filed pro se is to be liberally construed, and a pro se complaint, however inartfully pleaded, must be held to less stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers.” Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007) (quotation marks and citations omitted). Nevertheless, under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court

must review the merits of a prisoner complaint and dismiss it if the action is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief against a defendant who is immune from such relief. Lane alleges Detective Scott Straub arrested him based on a probable cause affidavit he filed which had “no evidence that I committed offense.” [DE 1 at 2]. The probable cause affidavit filed in State v. Lane, 02D05-2512-F5-453 (Allen Superior Court filed December 1, 2025), says the arrest was based on damage to a church and video of Lane climbing a fence and attempting to break into the church.¹ “Police officers have probable cause to arrest an individual when the facts and circumstances within their knowledge and of which they have reasonably trustworthy information are sufficient to warrant a prudent person in believing that the suspect had committed an offense.” *Mustafa v. City of Chicago*, 442 F.3d 544, 547 (7th Cir. 2006). Lane does not discuss or explain why the witness statement about damage to the church combined with video of him climbing a fence and attempting to break into the church were not reasonably trustworthy information for Detective Straub to prepare the probable cause affidavit and arrest him. Lane also alleges Detective Straub violated Double Jeopardy by charging him with multiple crimes for one criminal act. The Double Jeopardy clause prohibits retrials following acquittals. *Richardson v. United States*, 468 U.S. 317, 323-24 (1984). It has no applicability to how many charges are filed during the first trial. Lane sues Kimberly Martinez and Officer Ethan Gonzales, but he makes no mention of them in the Claims and Facts section. This complaint does not state a claim against them or Detective Straub. If Lane believes he can state a claim based on (and consistent with) the events described in this complaint, he may file an amended complaint because “[t]he usual standard in civil cases is to allow defective pleadings to be corrected, especially in early stages, at least where amendment would not be futile.” ¹ I am taking judicial notice of the electronic docket of the State court, available at <https://public.courts.in.gov/mycase/>. See *Fed. R. Evid.* 201 and *Tobey v. Chibucos*, 890 F.3d 634, 647 (7th Cir. 2018). In the spirit of N.D. Ind. L.R. 7-1(f), a copy of the Probable Cause Affidavit is attached. Though Indiana attorneys can access it at mycase.IN.gov, it is not publicly available online. *Abu-Shawish v. United States*, 898 F.3d 726, 738 (7th Cir. 2018). To file an amended complaint, he needs to write this cause number on a Pro Se 14 (INND Rev. 2/20) Prisoner Complaint form which is available from his 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 he properly completes the form. For these reasons, the court:

(1) GRANTS Jonathan N. Lane until January 30, 2026, to file an amended complaint; and

(2) CAUTIONS Jonathan N. Lane if he does not respond by the deadline, this case will be dismissed under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A without further notice because the current complaint does not state a claim for which relief can be granted. SO ORDERED. ENTERED: December 15, 2025. /s/ Philip P. Simon

PHILIP P. SIMON, JUDGE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

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