

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

Matanzo v. St. Charles County Jail, et al.

Matanzo · No. 4:26-cv-00063-ACL · Decided May 11, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri granted Karlo A. Matanzo’s application to proceed in forma pauperis but dismissed his § 1983 complaint without prejudice for failure to state a claim. The court held that the St. Charles County Jail and St. Charles County Court were not suable entities and that the allegations did not establish municipal liability against St. Charles County under Monell.

CASE DETAILS

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COURT                 | United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, Eastern Division                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| WRITING FOR THE COURT | Stephen N. Limbaugh, Jr.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| JURISDICTION          | United States District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, Eastern Division                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| DECIDED               | May 11, 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| DOCKET                | 4:26-cv-00063-ACL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| DISPOSITION           | dismissed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| PROCEDURAL POSTURE    | A self-represented pretrial detainee sought leave to proceed in forma pauperis under 28 U.S.C. § 1915. On initial screening, the district court dismissed the complaint without prejudice for failure to state a claim.                                                                                                                                                           |
| STANDARD OF REVIEW    | Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2), an in forma pauperis complaint must be dismissed if it is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim. The court applies the Rule 12(b)(6)-type plausibility standard, accepts well-pleaded factual allegations as true, gives a pro se complaint liberal construction, and does not accept conclusory allegations or supply facts not pleaded. |
| PRECEDENTIAL VALUE    | unpublished                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

## PARTIES

Karlo A. Matanzo v. St. Charles County Jail, St. Charles County Court, et al.

## TOPICS

section 1983   prisoners rights   municipal liability   eleventh amendment immunity   civil procedure

## PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights   prisoner civil rights   municipal liability   federal civil procedure

## QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether St. Charles County Jail and St. Charles County Court are suable entities under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
2. Whether the complaint states a § 1983 claim against St. Charles County under a municipal-policy, custom, or failure-to-train-or-supervise theory.
3. Whether the complaint was subject to dismissal on initial review under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2).

## HOLDINGS

1. A county jail is not a distinctly suable legal entity under § 1983.
2. A state circuit court is not a suable entity under § 1983 and is protected from such suits by state immunity under the Eleventh Amendment.
3. The complaint fails to state a § 1983 claim against St. Charles County because it does not allege facts showing that a constitutional violation resulted from an official policy, unofficial custom, or deliberately indifferent failure to train or supervise.
4. The complaint must be dismissed without prejudice because it is legally frivolous and fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

## KEY QUOTATIONS

*“An action fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted if it does not plead “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.””* (Legal Standard on Initial Review)

*“The only two defendants named in this case are not suable entities under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.”* (Discussion)

## FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Matanzo, a pretrial detainee at the St. Charles County Jail, alleged several grievances, including denial of a 10% bond, delay in receiving a medically necessary device, inadequate medical care, threats from another inmate, blacked-out windows, and unspecified “cord issues.” He also alleged that a spider bit him and that he was taken to an emergency room 13 hours after developing a fever. He sought monetary damages and a bond reduction, but named only St. Charles County Jail and St. Charles County Court as defendants.

## PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Matanzo filed a § 1983 complaint against St. Charles County Jail and St. Charles County Court and moved to proceed without prepayment of filing fees. The court granted in forma pauperis status, screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2), and dismissed the action without prejudice because the named defendants were not suable entities and the allegations did not establish municipal liability.

## DISPOSITION

dismissed

## CASES CITED

- Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 328 (1989)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009)
- Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972)
- Solomon v. Petray, 795 F.3d 777, 787 (8th Cir. 2015)
- Martin v. Aubuchon, 623 F.2d 1282, 1286 (8th Cir. 1980)
- Stone v. Harry, 364 F.3d 912, 914-15 (8th Cir. 2004)
- McNeil v. United States, 508 U.S. 106, 113 (1993)
- McLean v. Gordon, 548 F.3d 613, 618 (8th Cir. 2008)
- Ketchum v. City of West Memphis, Ark., 974 F.2d 81, 82 (8th Cir. 1992)
- Owens v. Scott Cty. Jail, 328 F.3d 1026, 1027 (8th Cir. 2003)
- De La Garza v. Kandiyohi Cty. Jail, 18 Fed. Appx. 436, 437 (8th Cir. 2001)
- Mildfelt v. Circuit Court of Jackson Cty., Mo., 827 F.2d 343, 345 (8th Cir. 1987)
- Harris v. Missouri Court of Appeals, Western Dist., 787 F.2d 427, 429 (8th Cir. 1986)
- Monell v. Dep't of Soc. Servs. of City of New York, 436 U.S. 658, 690 (1978)
- Kelly v. City of Omaha, Neb., 813 F.3d 1070, 1075 (8th Cir. 2016)
- Mick v. Raines, 883 F.3d 1075, 1079 (8th Cir. 2018)
- Marsh v. Phelps Cty., 902 F.3d 745, 751 (8th Cir. 2018)

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