

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
ALABAMA, EASTERN DIVISION

Candace Alexander v. Jameka Scales, et al.

Alexander · No. 1:25-cv-980-CLM · Decided December 18, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Alabama dismisses Candace Alexander’s pro se claims against family members without prejudice for lack of subject-matter jurisdiction. The court concludes that the complaint does not state a valid federal claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and that diversity jurisdiction is absent because the parties are not completely diverse. The court also directs the Clerk to terminate the pending motions and send the order to the pro se parties.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Corey L. Maze
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, Eastern Division
DECIDED	December 18, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-980-CLM
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se plaintiff brought claims for civil conspiracy, emotional harassment, malicious abuse of process, and procedural misconduct. The defendants moved to dismiss, and the court dismissed the action without prejudice for lack of subject matter jurisdiction.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the complaint in the light most favorable to Alexander and drew all inferences in her favor when determining whether subject matter jurisdiction existed.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; memorandum opinion from a federal district court, with metadata indicating unknown precedential status.
PARTIES	Candace Alexander v. Jameka Scales, Corey Bennett, Patrick Bennett, Vickie Bennett

TOPICS

subject matter jurisdiction

section 1983

motions to dismiss

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil procedure

Federal jurisdiction

Civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint established federal-question jurisdiction through a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
2. Whether the complaint established diversity jurisdiction over Alexander's state-law claims.
3. What disposition was required because the court lacked subject matter jurisdiction.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint did not establish a valid federal claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 because the defendants were private family members and were not alleged to be federal officers or state actors acting under color of law; therefore, federal-question jurisdiction was absent.
2. The complaint did not establish diversity jurisdiction because Alexander did not reside in a different state from all of her family members, and the required complete diversity was absent.
3. When a federal court lacks subject matter jurisdiction, it must dismiss the action without prejudice.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“[O]nce a federal court determines that it is without subject matter jurisdiction, the court is powerless to continue.” (Discussion)

“In sum, Alexander fails to invoke the court’s federal question or diversity jurisdiction. So the court lacks subject matter jurisdiction over Alexander’s case. Therefore, the court must DISMISS this case WITHOUT PREJUDICE.” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Alexander sued her mother, sister, and brothers based primarily on statements allegedly made about her in telephone messages. She asserted that the defendants violated her rights under color of law and also pleaded claims under various states' laws. The court found that the defendants were private family members rather than federal officers and that Alexander did not reside in a different state from all of them.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Alexander filed a pro se complaint against family members and asserted federal and state-law claims. The defendants moved to dismiss. The district court determined that the complaint did not establish federal-question or diversity jurisdiction and dismissed the case without prejudice, directing the clerk to terminate the pending motions.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Univ. of S. Ala. v. Am. Tobacco Co., 168 F.3d 405, 409 (11th Cir. 1999)
- Bell v. Birmingham Bd. of Educ., No. 23-10118, 2023 WL 7325499, at *1 (11th Cir. Nov. 7, 2023)
- Lanfear v. Home Depot, Inc., 679 F.3d 1267, 1275 (11th Cir. 2012)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA EASTERN DIVISION CANDACE ALEXANDER, Plaintiff, v. Case No. 1:25-cv-980-CLM JAMEKA SCALES, et al., Defendants. MEMORANDUM OPINION Pro se plaintiff Candace Alexander sues her brothers, Corey and Patrick Bennett, her mother, Vickie Bennett, and her sister, Jameka Scales, all of whom are also pro se, for civil conspiracy, emotional harassment, malicious abuse of process, and procedural misconduct.

(Doc. 1, p. 1). Alexander has a number of pending miscellaneous motions before the court. (Docs. 10, 11, 13, 16, 30). And the Defendants have all moved to dismiss the claims against them. (Docs. 26, 27, 28, 29). As explained below, the court DISMISSES this case WITHOUT PREJUDICE because the court lacks jurisdiction. DISCUSSION Federal courts have limited jurisdiction.

Univ. of S. Ala. v. Am. Tobacco Co., 168 F.3d 405, 409 (11th Cir. 1999). They are empowered to hear cases “raising federal questions or cases involving diverse citizens where the amount in controversy exceeds \$75,000.” Bell v. Birmingham Bd. of Educ., No. 23- 10118, 2023 WL 7325499, at *1 (11th Cir. Nov. 7, 2023) (citations omitted). “[O]nce a federal court determines that it is without subject matter jurisdiction, the court is powerless to continue.” Univ. of S. Ala., 168 F.3d at 410.

So if the court determines that it lacks subject matter jurisdiction, it must dismiss this case. See Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(h)(3). The court has reviewed Alexander’s complaint in the light most favorable to her and drawing all inferences in her favor. See Lanfear v. Home Depot, Inc., 679 F.3d 1267, 1275 (11th Cir. 2012). That being said, the court cannot identify any valid federal claim in Alexander’s complaint.

In a nutshell, Alexander sues her family for things they said about her in phone messages. Alexander says these acts violate 42 USC §1988 because they violated her rights under color of law. (Doc. 1, pp. 26, 28, 30, 31, 83). But Alexander’s family members are not federal officers, so she has no valid claim under 42 USC §1983.

Accordingly, the court has no federal question jurisdiction over her claims. See 28 USC §1331. While Alexander also pleads claims under various states’ laws, Alexander does not reside in a

different state than all of her family members. So the court also lack diversity jurisdiction over Alexander's state law claims. See 28 USC §1332. CONCLUSION In sum, Alexander fails to invoke the court's federal question or diversity jurisdiction.

So the court lacks subject matter jurisdiction over Alexander's case. Therefore, the court must DISMISS this case WITHOUT PREJUDICE. Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(h)(8). Because the court lacks jurisdiction over this case, the court DIRECTS the Clerk of Court to terminate (Docs. 10, 11, 18, 16, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30). And the court DIRECTS the Clerk of Court to send a copy of this order to all pro se parties at their addresses of record.

DONE and ORDERED on December 18, 2025. COREY'L. MAZE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE