

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
WISCONSIN

Nate A. Lindell v. Ashley Suprise

Lindell v. Suprise · No. 23-cv-805-amb · Decided January 22, 2026

SUMMARY

The court addresses late pretrial filings submitted by a nonparty on behalf of the incarcerated, self-represented plaintiff by email. It declines to accept the filings through the nonparty and email, and orders the plaintiff to mail any pretrial filings and responses by January 29, 2026, while directing defense counsel to provide the order and attachments electronically to prison officials for distribution.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Anita Marie Boor
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin
DECIDED	January 22, 2026
DOCKET	23-cv-805-amb
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The court addressed plaintiff's late pretrial submissions, which were transmitted by email by a nonparty purportedly acting as plaintiff's agent.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown
PARTIES	Nate A. Lindell v. Ashley Suprise

TOPICS

civil procedure

pleadings

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil procedure

Federal courts

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

- Whether a nonlawyer may file motions or other submissions in federal court on behalf of a self-represented litigant.

2. Whether the court would accept pretrial submissions transmitted by email rather than filed through an authorized filing method.
3. Whether plaintiff should be permitted to submit his late pretrial filings by mail.

HOLDINGS

1. A nonlawyer may not represent another party in federal court, including by filing motions or other submissions on that party's behalf.
2. The court would not accept plaintiff's pretrial filings submitted by email; plaintiff was required to mail submissions for docketing.
3. Plaintiff was permitted to mail any pretrial filings he wanted the court to consider, along with any response to defendant's pretrial filings, by January 29, 2026.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“parties in federal court must litigate their cases “personally or by counsel.”” (unpaginated)

“For good reason, non-lawyers cannot represent others, including by filing motions” (unpaginated)

“This court does not allow the filing of submissions by email, so both Burton and Lindell should refrain from doing so.” (unpaginated)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Nate A. Lindell is incarcerated and represents himself. His pretrial filings were due January 15, 2026, but the court received them by email on January 21 from Brianna Burton, a nonparty whom Lindell identified as his agent. The submission attributed the delay to a failed USB drive and a seven-day cell-confinement sanction. Lindell's institution did not participate in electronic filing, but he had previously mailed filings to the court and was capable of doing so.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff's pretrial filings were due January 15, 2026. On January 21, a nonparty emailed the court purportedly on plaintiff's behalf, attaching the filings and a motion for leave to file late. The court rejected the attempted email and nonlawyer filing method, but allowed plaintiff to mail any pretrial filings and any response to defendant's filings by January 29, 2026.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Lewis v. Lenc-Smith Mfg. Co., 784 F.2d 829, 830–31 (7th Cir. 1986)
- Georgakis v. Ill. State Univ., 722 F.3d 1075, 1077 (7th Cir. 2013)

OPINION

Nate A. Lindell v. Ashley Surprise

PER CURIAM.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

NATE A. LINDELL,

Plaintiff, OPINION and ORDER v. 23-cv-805-amb

ASHLEY SUPRISE,

Defendant. Plaintiff's pretrial filings were due on January 15, 2026. The court received an email on January 21, 2026 sent by non-party Brianna Burton purportedly on behalf of plaintiff that attaches plaintiff's pretrial filings. Also attached is a motion for leave to file these submissions late, explaining that plaintiff's USB drive failed and he received a conduct report for allegedly disruptive behavior that resulted in a sanction of cell confinement for seven days. Plaintiff has stated that Burton is his agent, but parties in federal court must litigate their cases "personally or by counsel." 28 U.S.C. § 1654. For good reason, non-lawyers cannot represent others, including by filing motions, *Lewis v. Lenc-Smith Mfg. Co.*, 784 F.2d 829, 830–31 (7th Cir. 1986), even if the non-attorney is a concerned citizen, *Georgakis v. Ill. State Univ.*, 722 F.3d 1075, 1077 (7th Cir. 2013). Beyond these important points, Burton and plaintiff have already been warned that the court does not accept filings by email—either to the helpdesk email or the chambers' generic email. See Dkt. 95 at 2 in Case No. 23-cv-811-jdp ("This court does not allow the filing of submissions by email, so both Burton and Lindell should refrain from doing so."). Attached to this order are the attachments received from Burton. Plaintiff is representing himself and is incarcerated, but he is an experienced litigator in this court who has shown himself capable of filing his own submissions. See, e.g., Dkts. 4, 5, 7, & 8. Although his current institution does not participate in the e-filing program, he is still able to mail his submissions to the court. See, e.g., Dkts. 16, 33, 76, & 95. Plaintiff is therefore ORDERED to mail copies of any pretrial filings he would like the court to consider, and any response to defendant's pretrial filings, by January 29, 2026 for docketing. To avoid mail delay, defense counsel is ORDERED to send prison officials an electronic copy of this order and attachments for immediate distribution to plaintiff. SO ORDERED. Entered January 22, 2026. BY THE COURT: /s/

ANITA MARIE BOOR

Magistrate Judge