

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF IDAHO

Shapiro v. Campanelli

Case No. 1:25-cv-00701-DCN · No. 1:25-cv-00701-DCN · Decided January 30, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Idaho denied John Shapiro’s application to proceed in forma pauperis because it lacked sufficient detail regarding his financial circumstances. The court dismissed his complaint with prejudice as frivolous and insufficiently supported by factual allegations concerning an alleged conspiracy and Fourteenth Amendment violations.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Idaho
WRITING FOR THE COURT	David C. Nye
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Idaho
DECIDED	January 30, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00701-DCN
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	On initial review of a pro se civil-rights complaint filed with an application to proceed in forma pauperis, the district court denied pauper status and dismissed the complaint with prejudice.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Initial statutory screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2); the court considered whether the complaint was frivolous, malicious, failed to state a claim, or sought relief from an immune defendant.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- pleadings
- section 1983
- fourteenth amendment

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- civil rights
- constitutional law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Shapiro established that he was unable to pay the filing fee and therefore qualified to proceed in forma pauperis.
2. Whether the complaint stated a plausible constitutional claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
3. Whether the action could be dismissed with prejudice as frivolous under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i).

HOLDINGS

1. The application to proceed in forma pauperis was properly denied because it did not state the facts of Shapiro's poverty with sufficient particularity, definiteness, and certainty to establish indigency.
2. The complaint failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted because it contained only conclusory allegations of conspiracy and a Fourteenth Amendment violation, without facts showing a plausible cause of action.
3. The action was frivolous and had to be dismissed with prejudice because it was a duplicative lawsuit containing no substantive claims or supporting facts.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Shapiro’s Complaint does not provide any information to support his claim.” (Analysis § IV.B)

“It is not the Court’s responsibility to investigate generalized and unsubstantiated grievances; it is Shapiro’s responsibility to provide facts and specific legal claims the Court can review for plausibility.” (Analysis § IV.B)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Shapiro alleged, in conclusory terms, that Campanelli conspired with others and violated his Fourteenth Amendment rights, seeking one million dollars in damages. His complaint provided no factual details concerning the alleged conspiracy or constitutional violation. In support of his in forma pauperis application, he reported \$1,000 in monthly wages and \$1,000 in monthly expenses but supplied little information about his employer, housing, assets, debts, or other support.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

John Shapiro filed a complaint alleging that Joy Campanelli conspired with others and violated his Fourteenth Amendment rights, together with an application to proceed in forma pauperis. The district court conducted the required screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2), denied the application for insufficient financial detail, and dismissed the complaint with prejudice as frivolous and for failure to state a plausible claim.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Rice v. City of Boise City, 2013 WL 6385657, at *1 (D. Idaho Dec. 6, 2013)

- *Adkins v. E.I. DuPont de Numours & Co.*, 335 U.S. 331, 339 (1948)
- *United States v. McQuade*, 647 F.2d 938, 940 (9th Cir. 1981)
- *Jefferson v. United States*, 277 F.2d 723, 725 (9th Cir. 1960)
- *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122, 1129 (9th Cir. 2000)
- *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 677-78 (2009)
- *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544 (2007)
- *Resnick v. Hayes*, 213 F.3d 443, 447 (9th Cir. 2000)
- *Pena v. Gardner*, 976 F.2d 469, 471 (9th Cir. 1992)
- *Jackson v. Carey*, 353 F.3d 750, 758 (9th Cir. 2003)
- *Cato v. United States*, 70 F.3d 1103, 1105 n. 2 (9th Cir. 1995)
- *Wooten v. D.C. Metro. Police Dep 1*, 129 F.3d 206 (D.C. Cir. 1997)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF IDAHO JOHN SHAPIRO, Case No. 1:25-cv-00701-DCN Plaintiff, INITIAL REVIEW ORDER v. JOY CAMPANELLI, Defendant. I. INTRODUCTION Before the Court is Plaintiff John Shapiro’s Complaint (Dkt. 2) and Application for Leave to Proceed in Forma Pauperis (Dkt. 1).

Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915, the Court must review Shapiro’s request to determine whether he is entitled to proceed in forma pauperis— which permits civil litigants to proceed without prepayment of the filing fee or to pay the filing fee over time. *Rice v. City of Boise City*, 2013 WL 6385657, at *1 (D. Idaho Dec. 6, 2013).

The Court must also undertake an initial review of Shapiro’s Complaint to ensure it meets the minimum required standards. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). For the reasons below, the Court DENIES Shapiro’s application to proceed in forma pauperis. Additionally, after a review of the Complaint, the Court must DISMISS the case WITH PREJUDICE. II. BACKGROUND Shapiro is suing Joy Campanelli for alleged violations of his constitutional rights.

See generally Dkt. 2. Shapiro alleges Campanelli conspired with others and violated his Fourteenth Amendment rights. He demands one (1) million dollars from Campanelli as damages for the alleged constitutional violations. Shapiro does not provide any factual information in his complaint, however, he seeks to proceed in forma pauperis, citing his income and monthly expenses are the same amount.

Dkt. 1. III. LEGAL STANDARD A. Application for Leave to Proceed in Forma Pauperis “[A]ny court of the United States may authorize the commencement, prosecution or defense of any suit, action or proceeding, civil or criminal,... without prepayment of fees or security therefor.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(1).

In order to qualify for in forma pauperis status, a plaintiff must submit an affidavit that includes a statement of all assets he possesses and indicates that he is unable to pay the fee required. The affidavit is sufficient if it states that the plaintiff, because of his poverty, cannot “pay or give security for the costs” and still be able to provide for himself and dependents “with necessities of life.” *Adkins v. E.I.*

DuPont de Numours & Co., 335 U.S. 331, 339 (1948). The affidavit must “state the facts as to affiant’s poverty with some particularity, definiteness and certainty.” *United States v. McQuade*, 647 F.2d 938, 940 (9th Cir. 1981) (internal quotation marks omitted) (quoting *Jefferson v. United States*, 277 F.2d 723, 725 (9th Cir. 1960)). B. Sufficiency of Complaint The Court is required to screen complaints that are brought by litigants who seek in forma pauperis status.

See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2); see also *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122, 1129 (9th Cir. 2000) (“[S]ection 1915(e) applies to all in forma pauperis complaints, not just those filed by prisoners”). The Court must dismiss a plaintiff’s complaint, or any portion thereof, if it: (1) is frivolous or malicious; (2) fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted; or (3) seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.

See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i-iii). To state a claim upon which relief can be granted, a plaintiff’s complaint must include facts sufficient to show a plausible claim for relief. See *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 677-78 (2009) (citing *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544 (2007)).

The plaintiff cannot simply recite the elements of a cause of action and try to support that recitation with mere conclusory statements. *Id.* at 678. During this initial review, courts generally construe pro se pleadings liberally, giving pro se plaintiffs the benefit of any doubt. See *Resnick v. Hayes*, 213 F.3d 443,447 (9th Cir. 2000). Even so, plaintiffs—whether represented or not—have the burden of articulating their claims clearly and alleging facts sufficient to support review of each claim.

Pena v. Gardner, 976 F.2d 469, 471 (9th Cir. 1992). Additionally, if amending the complaint would remedy the deficiencies, plaintiffs should be notified and provided an opportunity to amend. See *Jackson v. Carey*, 353 F.3d 750, 758 (9th Cir. 2003). IV. ANALYSIS A. Application to Proceed in Forma Pauperis The Court has reviewed Shapiro’s Application and finds that it lacks the “particularity, definiteness, and certainty” required to establish his poverty.

Shapiro utilized the Administrative Office of the Court’s generic in forma pauperis form, but he provided such sparse information that there is almost no insight into his actual financial situation. Dkt. 1. The only income Shapiro claims is \$1,000 per month in wages but indicated he “CANNOT STATE” the name and address of his employer. *Id.* He claims he has \$20 in cash or a checking account, no assets, and no outstanding debts.

Id. Shapiro claims expenses totaling \$1,000 a month (\$800 in food, \$200 in transportation). Id. The Court has serious concerns about the veracity of Shapiro's application due to its sheer impracticability, which has left the Court with more questions than answers. Shapiro does not state whether he pays housing expenses such as rent and utilities. He lists "NA" in debts or financial obligations and claims he does not receive any income from any other sources.

Put bluntly, it is unclear how Shapiro is surviving when he earns \$1,000 each month from an employer that he cannot state, and spends \$1,000 each month on food and transportation, not including basic necessities of life such as housing, without any kind of additional income or assistance.

The Court does not mean to be insensitive to Shapiro's circumstances. But without more information clarifying what support Shapiro has received, it is unable to grant his request to proceed in forma pauperis at this time.

Accordingly, his Motion is DENIED. What's more, as explained below, the Court must dismiss Shapiro's case with prejudice because it is frivolous. Because of that, the Court will not grant Shapiro leave to amend his in forma pauperis request. B. Sufficiency of Complaint Shapiro's Complaint alleges that, based on information and belief, Campanelli conspired with others and those actions violated his Fourteenth Amendment rights.

Dkt. 2. Shapiro demands one (1) million dollars from Campanelli. Id. Shapiro's Complaint does not provide any information to support his claim. Shapiro's Complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted because it does not contain any detailed facts illustrating a plausible cause of action. Shapiro failed to provide any information regarding how Campanelli allegedly conspired with others, and while Shapiro claims Campanelli violated his Fourteenth Amendment rights, he fails to provide any details about events that would constitute a violation.

It is not the Court's responsibility to investigate generalized and unsubstantiated grievances; it is Shapiro's responsibility to provide facts and specific legal claims the Court can review for plausibility. Without more details about what allegedly transpired between Shapiro and Campanelli, the Court cannot analyze whether there has been a plausible violation of his Fourteenth Amendment rights.¹ Moreover, this is not Shapiro's first rodeo.

He has filed multiple lawsuits across the county.² Each is virtually identical to the instant action, and most have been dismissed as frivolous. Under § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i), a district court may dismiss an action if it finds the filing is frivolous or malicious. Duplicative lawsuits filed by a plaintiff proceeding in forma pauperis 1 Shapiro's Complaint is, quite literally, two sentences long.

Dkt. 2, at 1. ² See, e.g., Shapiro v. Campanelli, Case No. 6:25-cv-02340-AA (D. Oregon Jan 14, 2026); Case No. 1:24-cv-02535, at 3 & n.1 (S.D. Ind. Dec. 16, 2025); Case No. 5:25-cv-143 (W.D. Va. Dec. 11, 2025); Case No. 1:25-cv-530 (D.N.H. Dec. 12, 2025); Case No. 3:25-cv-354

(N.D. Miss. Dec. 12, 2025); Case No. 3:25-cv- 1025 (W.D. Wis. Dec. 12, 2025); Case No. 2:25-cv-1220 (E.D.

Tex. Dec. 15, 2025); Case No. 1:25-cv-373 (E.D. Tenn. Dec. 15, 2025); Case No. 2:25-cv-13861 (D.S.C. Dec. 15, 2025); Case No. 5:25-cv-1517 (W.D. Okla. Dec. 15, 2025); Case No. 3:25-cv-3395 (C.D. Ill. Dec. 15, 2025); Case No. 1:25-cv-671 (D.R.I. Dec. 15, 2025); Case No. 3:25-cv-735 (D. Nev. Dec. 15, 2025); Case No. 1:25-cv-737 (S.D.W.V. Dec. 15, 2025); Case No. 2:25-cv-159 (N.D.

Ga. Dec. 16, 2025)); Case No. 3:25-cv-30209 (D. Mass. Dec. 12, 2025); 1:25- cv-00294 (D. Wy. Dec. 15, 2025); 4:25-cv-679 (N.D. Okla. Dec. 15, 2025); 4:25-cv-01416 (N.D. Tex. Dec. 15, 2025); 3:25-cv-00199 (M.D. Ga. Dec. 15, 2025); 8:25-cv-00722 (D. Neb. Dec. 16, 2025); 1:25-cv-1252 (D.N.M. Dec. 16, 2025); 2:25-cv-02139 (N.D. Ala. Dec. 16, 2025); 2:25-cv-00159 (S.D.

Ga. Dec. 16, 2025); 5:25-cv-04122 (D. Kan. Dec. 16, 2025); 3:25-cv-00414 (S.D. Tex. Dec. 16, 2025); 3:25-cv-06134 (W.D. Wash. Dec. 16, 2025); 3:25-cv-01452 (M.D. Tenn. Dec. 16, 2025); 1:25-cv-00045 (D. Guam Dec. 17, 2025). pauperis may qualify as frivolous or malicious. See *Cato v. United States*, 70 F.3d 1103, 1105 n. 2 (9th Cir.1995).

Because Shapiro has filed multiple duplicative lawsuits, each lacking any substantive claims or facts, the Court finds the instant action must likewise be dismissed with prejudice as frivolous.? V. CONCLUSION Shapiro has not sufficiently proved his indigency and the Court will not waive the filing fee in this case. Additionally, the Court finds that Shapiro’s Complaint is frivolous and, therefore, DISMISSES the Complaint WITH PREJUDICE.

Shapiro may not amend his Complaint or his in forma pauperis application. VI. ORDER 1. Shapiro’s Application for Leave to Proceed In Forma Pauperis (Dkt. 1) is DENIED. 2. Shapiro’s Complaint (Dkt. 2) is DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE. 3. This case is CLOSED. aa DATED: January 30, 2026 Ill)) Sao Pe eg David C. Nye SR ICT OI Chief U.S. District Court Judge 3 To the extent it becomes necessary, the Court would also note any appeal of this Order would not be taken in good faith.

28 U.S.C § 1915(a)(3). See *Wooten v. D.C. Metro. Police Dep 1*, 129 F.3d 206 (D.C. Cir. 1997) (“The purpose of § 1915(a)(3) is not simply to deter, but to preclude prisoners (and nonprisoners) from taking appeals in forma pauperis when they attempt to do so in bad faith.”).

MEMORANDUM DECISION AND ORDER - 6