

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS

Charles Samuel Hartzol, III v. Matthew Major

Hartzol v. Major · No. 3:24-cv-01935-GCS · Decided February 9, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois dismissed Plaintiff Charles Samuel Hartzol, III’s action with prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) for failure to respond to a summary judgment motion and a show-cause order. The court closed the case and explained the deadlines and procedures for seeking reconsideration under Rule 59(e) or appealing to the Seventh Circuit.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Gilbert C. Sison
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
DECIDED	February 9, 2026
DOCKET	3:24-cv-01935-GCS
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The court dismissed the action with prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) after Plaintiff failed to respond to Defendant's summary-judgment motion, failed to comply with an order directing a response, and failed to respond to a show-cause order.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A district court may dismiss an action for failure to prosecute or failure to comply with court orders under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b), but must consider the plaintiff's warning, the frequency and egregiousness of the noncompliance, the effect of delay on the court's calendar, and prejudice to the defendant.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	Charles Samuel Hartzol, III v. Matthew Major

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- summary judgment
- motion for reconsideration
- appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

prisoner civil rights

appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action should be dismissed with prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) because Plaintiff failed to prosecute and failed to comply with court orders.
2. What deadlines and procedural options Plaintiff had for seeking reconsideration or appealing the judgment.

HOLDINGS

1. Dismissal with prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) was warranted because Plaintiff repeatedly failed to respond to the summary-judgment motion and court orders, including a show-cause order, after receiving a warning that noncompliance could result in dismissal.
2. Plaintiff could seek review through a timely Rule 59(e) motion or appeal to the Seventh Circuit, subject to the applicable filing deadlines and requirements stated by the court.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“In dismissing a case for lack of prosecution, dismisses a suit ‘immediately after the first problem, without exploring other options or saying why they would not be fruitful.’”

“Accordingly, the Court DISMISSES with prejudice this action pursuant to Rule 41(b).”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff failed to respond to Defendant's motion for summary judgment despite an order directing him to respond by December 30, 2025. Plaintiff also failed to respond to a subsequent show-cause order warning that failure to respond could result in dismissal. The court noted that allowing the case to remain pending would impair the efficient handling of its docket.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Defendant filed a motion for summary judgment on October 28, 2025. After Plaintiff failed to respond, the court ordered him to respond by December 30, 2025, and later issued a show-cause order warning that the case could be dismissed for failure to prosecute. Plaintiff did not respond to either order or to the summary-judgment motion, so the court dismissed the action with prejudice, closed the case, and directed the clerk to enter judgment.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Sroga v. Huberman, 722 F.3d 980, 982 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Johnson v. Chicago Board of Education, 718 F.3d 731, 732-733 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Kruger v. Apfel, 214 F.3d 784, 786-787 (7th Cir. 2000)
- James v. McDonald's Corp., 417 F.3d 672, 681 (7th Cir. 2005)
- Elustra v. Mineo, 595 F.3d 699, 707 (7th Cir. 2010)
- Talano v. Northwestern Medical Faculty Foundation, Inc., 273 F.3d 757, 760 (7th Cir. 2001)
- Blue v. Hartford Life & Accident Insurance Co., 698 F.3d 587, 598 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Carlson v. CSX Transportation, Inc., 758 F.3d 819, 826 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Martinez v. Trainor, 556 F.2d 818, 819-820 (7th Cir. 1977)
- Sherman v. Quinn, 668 F.3d 421, 424 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Abuelyaman v. Illinois State University, 667 F.3d 800, 807 (7th Cir. 2011)

OPINION

FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS CHARLES SAMUEL HARTZOL, III,))
Plaintiff,)) vs.) Case No. 3:24-cv-01935-GCS) MATTHEW MAJOR,))) Defendant.)
MEMORANDUM & ORDER SISON, Magistrate Judge: On October 28, 2025, Defendant filed a
motion for summary judgment. (Doc. 61).

As a result of Plaintiff's failure to respond to the motion for summary judgment, the Court, on November 9, 2025, directed Plaintiff to respond to the motion on or before December 30, 2025. (Doc. 64). The Court also warned Plaintiff that the failure to respond may result in the Court dismissing the case for failure to prosecute. Id. As of January 13, 2026, Plaintiff did not respond to the motion for summary judgment.

Hence, the Court issued a Show Cause Order directing Plaintiff to Show Cause in writing why his case should not be dismissed for failure to prosecute. (Doc. 68). As of this date, Plaintiff has not responded to the Show Cause Order and has not responded to the motion for summary judgment. Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) provides that "[i]f the plaintiff fails to prosecute or to comply with these rules or a court order, a defendant may move to dismiss the action or any claim against it." In dismissing a case for lack of prosecution, dismisses a suit 'immediately after the first problem, without exploring other options or saying why they would not be fruitful.'" Sroga v. Huberman, 722 F.3d 980, 982 (7th Cir.

2013) (quoting Johnson v. Chicago Bd. of Educ., 718 F.3d 731, 732-733 (7th Cir. 2013)). The Seventh Circuit has suggested that in addition to warning the plaintiff, the court must consider essential factors such as "the frequency and egregiousness of the plaintiff's failure to comply with other deadlines, the effect of the delay on the court's calendar, and the prejudice resulting to the defendants." Id. (citing Kruger v. Apfel, 214 F.3d 784, 786-787 (7th Cir.

2000)). Here, Plaintiff failed to follow Court Orders by failing to respond to the Court's Show Cause Order dated January 13, 2026, (Doc. 68), and the Court's Order dated December 9, 2025, ordering Plaintiff to respond to the summary judgment motion. (Doc. 64).

The Court has 147 cases on its docket, and if the Court permits this case to drag on further waiting for Plaintiff to respond, it will detrimentally impact the efficient and timely handling of its other cases. Accordingly, the Court DISMISSES with prejudice this action pursuant to Rule 41(b). See FED. R. CIV. PROC. 41(b); see generally *James v. McDonald's Corp.*, 417 F.3d 672, 681 (7th Cir.

2005). The case is CLOSED, and the Clerk of Court is DIRECTED to enter judgment accordingly. In an abundance of caution, and noting Plaintiff's pro se status, the Court informs Plaintiff as follows. Plaintiff has two means of contesting this order: he may either request this Court review this order, or he may appeal the order to the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals. to alter or amend the judgment under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 59(e).

Plaintiff must file the motion within twenty-eight (28) days of the entry of judgment; the deadline cannot be extended. See FED. R. CIV. PROC. 59(e); 6(b)(2). The motion must also comply with Rule 7(b)(1) and state with sufficient particularity the reason(s) that the Court should reconsider the judgment. See *Elustra v. Mineo*, 595 F.3d 699, 707 (7th Cir. 2010); *Talano v. Northwestern Medical Faculty Foundation, Inc.*, 273 F.3d 757, 760 (7th Cir.

2001). See also *Blue v. Hartford Life & Acc. Ins. Co.*, 698 F.3d 587, 598 (7th Cir. 2012) (stating that a party must establish either manifest error of law or fact, or that newly discovered evidence precluded entry of judgment in order to prevail on a Rule 59(e) motion) (citation and internal quotation marks omitted). So long as the Rule 59(e) motion is in proper form and timely submitted, the 30- day clock for filing a notice of appeal will be tolled.

See FED. R. APP. PROC. 4(a)(4). The clock will start anew once the undersigned rules on the Rule 59(e) motion. See FED. R. APP. PROC. 4(a)(1)(A), (a)(4), (a)(4)(B)(ii). However, if the Rule 59(e) motion is filed outside the 28-day deadline or "completely devoid of substance," the motion will not toll the time for filing a notice of appeal; it will expire 30 days from the entry of judgment.

Carlson v. CSX Transp., Inc., 758 F.3d 819, 826 (7th Cir. 2014); *Martinez v. Trainor*, 556 F.2d 818, 819– 820 (7th Cir. 1977). Again, this deadline can be extended only on a written motion by Plaintiff showing excusable neglect or good cause.

In contrast, if Plaintiff chooses to go straight to the Seventh Circuit, he must file a notice of appeal from the entry of judgment or order appealed from within 30 days. See FED. R. APP. PROC. 4(a)(1)(A) (emphasis added).

The deadline can be extended for a short time only if Plaintiff files a motion showing excusable neglect or good cause for missing the deadline and asking for an extension of time. See FED. R. App. PRoc. 4(a)(5)(A), (C). See also *Sherman v. Quinn*, 668 F.3d 421, 424 (7th Cir. 2012) (explaining the good cause and excusable neglect standards); *Abuelyaman v. Illinois State University*, 667 F.3d 800, 807 (7th Cir.

2011) (explaining the excusable neglect standard). Plaintiff may appeal to the Seventh Circuit by filing a notice of appeal in this Court. See FED. R. App. PRoc. 3(a). The current cost of filing an appeal with the Seventh Circuit is \$605.00.

The filing fee is due at the time the notice of appeal is filed. See FED. R. Proc. 3(e). If Plaintiff cannot afford to pay the entire filing fee up front, he must file a motion for leave to appeal in forma pauperis (“IFP motion”). See FED. R. APP. PROC. 24(a)(1).

The IFP motion must set forth the issues Plaintiff plans to present on appeal. See FED. R. App. Proc. 24(a)(1)(C). IT IS SO ORDERED. DATED: February 9, 2026. Digitally signed by Bass, 7026.02.09 13:10:33 -06'00' GILBERTC.SISON United States Magistrate Judge Page 4 of 4