

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF
MASSACHUSETTS

Sharon-Shawn A. Bell v. Herb Chambers, et al.

Bell v. Chambers · No. 25-CV-13738-AK · Decided April 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts dismissed Sharon-Shawn A. Bell's amended complaint against Herb Chambers Lincoln of Norwood and its employees. The court held that Bell failed to state a claim under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act or 42 U.S.C. § 1983, while dismissing any state-law claims without prejudice.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Angel Kelley
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts
DECIDED	April 16, 2026
DOCKET	25-CV-13738-AK
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se plaintiff proceeding in forma pauperis filed an amended complaint after the court ordered her to amend following an earlier determination that federal-question and diversity jurisdiction were deficient. The district court screened the amended complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) and dismissed the action.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2), the court screened the in forma pauperis complaint and could dismiss it if frivolous, malicious, failed to state a claim, or sought relief from an immune defendant. The court also reviewed subject-matter jurisdiction sua sponte and applied the Rule 8(a)(2) and plausibility standards from Twombly and Iqbal.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	Sharon-Shawn A. Bell v. Herb Chambers, et al.

TOPICS

subject matter jurisdiction

civil procedure

ada / disability

public accommodations discrimination

section 1983

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

Americans with Disabilities Act

consumer protection

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the amended complaint stated a claim under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act based on the dealership's refusal to conduct the vehicle buyback at a location convenient to Bell.
2. Whether the amended complaint stated a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 based on the dealership and its employees' alleged conduct.
3. Whether the action should be dismissed under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) for failure to state a federal claim and whether any state-law claims should remain in federal court.

HOLDINGS

1. Bell failed to state a Title III ADA claim because she did not identify a disability, did not allege that she was unable to travel to the dealership because of a disability, and did not explain how the absence of a requested accommodation denied her dealership services.
2. Bell failed to state a § 1983 claim because the dealership and its employees were private actors and the amended complaint did not allege conduct fairly attributable to the State or action under color of state law.
3. The action was dismissed because the amended complaint failed to state a claim arising under federal law upon which relief could be granted; the dismissal was without prejudice to Bell's state-law claims.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The dismissal is without prejudice as to any state law claims, which Bell may litigate in the appropriate state court should she choose to do so.” (Section III)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

In October 2025, Bell purchased a used vehicle from the dealership that she alleged turned out to be a “Lemon.” The dealership delivered the vehicle to her home to collect payment, but allegedly required her to bring the title to the Norwood dealership to complete a buyback and refused to conduct the transaction at a Boston Registry of Motor Vehicles office. Bell alleged that the dealership was not accessible by the MBTA and that transportation by Uber or Lyft would cost approximately \$200, but she did not identify a disability or explain how the dealership's conduct denied her services because of a disability.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Bell sued Herb Chambers Lincoln of Norwood Dealership and its employees concerning the purchase and attempted return of a used automobile. On January 15, 2026, the court concluded that Bell had failed to state a

federal claim and that diversity of citizenship did not appear to exist, and it permitted her to file an amended complaint. After reviewing the amended complaint, the court dismissed the federal claims and dismissed the action without prejudice as to any state-law claims.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- McCulloch v. Velez, 364 F.3d 1, 5 (1st Cir. 2004)
- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555, 557, 570 (2007)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- G. v. Fay Sch., 931 F.3d 1, 9 (1st Cir. 2019)
- Cruz-Arce v. Mgmt. Admin. Servs. Corp., 19 F.4th 538, 543 (1st Cir. 2021)
- Lugar v. Edmondson Oil Co., 457 U.S. 922, 937 (1982)

OPINION

Chambers

PER CURIAM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

)

SHARON-SHAWN A. BELL,)

) Plaintiff,)) v.) Civil Action No. 25-CV-13738-AK) HERB CHAMBERS, et al.,)) Defendants.

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ORDER

KELLEY, D.J. In this action, Sharon-Shawn Bell, who is representing herself, claims that Herb Chambers Lincoln of Norwood Dealership and its employees (collectively, the “Dealership”) violated state and federal law with regard to her purchase of a used automobile and her subsequent attempts to return the car. On January 15, 2026, the Court entered an order in which it concluded that it lacked subject matter jurisdiction over this action because (1) Bell had failed to state a claim under federal law upon which relief could be granted; and (2) there did not appear to be diversity of citizenship between the parties. The Court ordered Bell to file an amended complaint if she wished to proceed with this action. [Dkt. 9]. Bell has filed an Amended Complaint. [Dkt. 13]. Upon review of the pleading, the Court DISMISSES this action.

I. CLAIMS IN THE AMENDED COMPLAINT

In the Amended Complaint, Bell invokes the Court’s federal question subject matter jurisdiction. [Id. at 2]. She identifies Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (“§ 1983”) as the federal laws at issue. Id.1 Bell alleges that, in October 2025, the Dealership

sold her a used vehicle that turned out to be a “Lemon.” According to Bell, the Dealership employee was “willing to deliver the ‘LEMON’ vehicle” to her at her home address using the dealership’s “customer courtesy pickup” in order to pick up payment for the vehicle. [Id. at 9]. However, when Bell sought to return the car after discovering it was a “Lemon,” the dealership did not “offer[] the customer courtesy pick-up for the buy back.” [Id. at 8]. Bell alleges that the Dealership refused to meet her at a downtown Boston office of the Registry of Motor Vehicles to start the buy back process, despite her request to do so. [Id. at 7]. Through an email from its manager, the Dealership told Bell: We cannot repurchase your vehicle until you bring the title into the dealership. We will not transact your refund at any other place other than the Lincoln Dealership in Norwood, once you receive your title. My suggestion is if you don’t have the title yet, you should call the RMV and check on it, as it was printed on November 5th. [Id. at 8]. Bell claims that the Dealership violated the ADA by requiring her to return the car to Dealership in Norwood, “which is NOT on the MBTA ‘T’ line.” [Id.] Bell represents a round trip from her home to the Dealership by Uber or Lyft would cost her approximately \$200. [Id.]. Bell also identifies M.G.L. ch. 90, § 7N1/2 as a federal law. [Dkt. 13 at 2]. However, that is a 1state statute.

II. REVIEW OF THE COMPLAINT

Because Bell is proceeding in forma pauperis, her Complaint is subject to review by the Court before requiring Defendants to respond. The Court may dismiss the action if it is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary damages from a defendant who is immune from such relief. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). In addition, the Court has an obligation to inquire sua sponte into its own jurisdiction. See *McCulloch v. Velez*, 364 F.3d 1, 5 (1st Cir. 2004) Under federal law, a complaint must include a “a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). In evaluating whether a complaint states a claim upon which relief may be granted, the Court considers only “well- pleaded” factual allegations. In other words, factual allegations that consist merely of “labels and conclusions” are not credited. *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007). Similarly, “‘naked assertion[s]’ devoid of ‘further factual enhancement’” do not suffice. *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (alteration in original) (quoting *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 557). Further, the well-pleaded facts, accepted as true, must “state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.” *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678 (quoting *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 570) (internal quotation marks omitted). Upon careful review of the amended complaint, the Court concludes that Bell has failed to state a claim arising under federal law upon which relief may be granted. The Dealership is subject to Title III of the ADA, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by private entities that provide “public accommodations.” See 42 U.S.C. § 12182 (a) (“No individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation by any person who owns, leases (or leases to), or operates a place of public accommodation.”). For purposes of the ADA, a “disability” is defined as a “physical or

mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” 42 U.S.C. § 12102(1)(A). In the context of Title III of the ADA, “discrimination” includes “a failure to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford . . . goods [and] services [being offered]” and “a failure to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded [or] denied services . . . unless the entity can demonstrate that taking such steps would . . . result in an undue burden.” 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(i),(ii). Bell has failed to state a violation of Title III of the ADA because she does not identify her disability. In addition, she does not allege how, without a reasonable accommodation for that disability, she would be denied the services of the Dealership. Bell does claim that it would be a burden on her to travel to the Dealership because it is not accessible by public transportation and a driving service would be expensive. But she does not allege that she is unable to travel to the Dealership “on the basis of [her] disability.” Further, Bell does not identify any relief that would be available under Title III of the ADA. Monetary damages are not available under Title III of the ADA, see *G. v. Fay Sch.*, 931 F.3d 1, 9 (1st Cir. 2019), and Bell does not ask that the Dealership be required to provide her transportation to the Dealership or be willing to conduct the “buy back” transaction at a location convenient for Bell. Finally, Bell cannot state a claim under § 1983 under the alleged facts. Section 1983 allows a plaintiff to bring a claim against a person acting “under color” of state law who violated the plaintiff’s federal rights. 42 U.S.C. § 1983. A person acts “under color” of state law when their conduct can be “fairly attributable to the State.” *Cruz-Arce v. Mgmt. Admin. Servs. Corp.*, 19 F.4th 538, 543 (1st Cir. 2021) (quoting *Lugar v. Edmondson Oil Co.*, 457 U.S. 922, 937

(1982)). “In the mine-run of cases,” the “state action” required for a § 1983 claim “will derive from the conduct of government actors, that is, government” *Id.* Here, none of the defendants— a car dealership and its employees—were acting under color of state law.

III. CONCLUSION

In accordance with the foregoing, the Court DISMISSES this action. The dismissal is without prejudice as to any state law claims, which Bell may litigate in the appropriate state court should she choose to do so. SO ORDERED. Dated: April 16, 2026 /s/ Angel Kelley Hon. Angel Kelley
United States District Judge