

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA

Christie B. Jordan v. AT&T, et al.

Jordan · No. 3:25-cv-00071 · Decided December 1, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania dismissed Christie B. Jordan’s pro se prisoner civil rights action against AT&T and other defendants with prejudice. Applying Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) and the six Poulis factors, the court concluded that Plaintiff failed to prosecute, failed to comply with orders requiring an amended complaint, and did not state a plausible federal claim.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Stephanie L. Haines
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania
DECIDED	December 1, 2025
DOCKET	3:25-cv-00071
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pro se prisoner civil-rights action dismissed sua sponte with prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) for failure to prosecute and failure to comply with court orders.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	For dismissal under Rule 41(b), the court weighed the six Poulis factors, considering the strong policy favoring decisions on the merits. In assessing the merits factor, the court applied the Rule 12(b)(6) plausibility standard rather than a summary-judgment standard.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished and nonprecedential
PARTIES	Christie B. Jordan v. AT&T, UPMC Altoona, Google, Inc. USA, Elon Musk

TOPICS

- motions to dismiss
- civil procedure
- section 1983
- civil rights

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

prisoner litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action should be dismissed under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) for failure to prosecute and failure to comply with court orders.
2. Whether the Poulis factors supported dismissal with prejudice.
3. Whether the asserted claims were sufficiently meritorious under the Rule 12(b)(6) pleading standard to weigh against dismissal.

HOLDINGS

1. A district court has authority to dismiss an action sua sponte when a litigant fails to prosecute or comply with a court order, provided the court exercises caution and gives the plaintiff an opportunity to explain the noncompliance.
2. Dismissal with prejudice was warranted because the balance of the Poulis factors favored dismissal.
3. Jordan's claims lacked sufficient merit because the pleadings did not state a plausible federal claim or a constitutional violation.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“a district court has authority to dismiss an action sua sponte if a litigant fails to prosecute or to comply with a court order.”

“dismissals with prejudice or defaults are drastic sanctions, termed ‘extreme’ by the Supreme Court, and that they “must be a sanction of last, not first, resort.””

“Cases should be decided on the merits barring substantial circumstances in support of the contrary outcome.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Jordan filed a pro se prisoner civil-rights complaint against AT&T, UPMC Altoona, Google, Inc. USA, and Elon Musk, alleging assault with bioweapons, identity theft, kidnapping, and defamation. The court found the initial complaint deficient and gave her an opportunity to amend. Jordan did not timely amend; instead, she submitted a filing listing various alleged violations without sufficient factual or legal support. The court concluded that she failed to state a plausible federal claim and failed to comply with the court's amendment and show-cause orders.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Jordan initiated the action on March 6, 2025, and was later granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis. The court screened the complaint, dismissed it without prejudice for failure to state a claim, and granted leave to amend. After Jordan failed to file an amended complaint by the deadline, the court issued an order to show cause; her subsequent filing did not cure the pleading deficiencies or explain her failure to comply. The court applied the Poulis factors and dismissed the action with prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519, 520-21 (1972)
- Brown v. O'Rourke, No. 17-85, 2018 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 132671, at *18 (W.D. Pa. Aug. 6, 2018)
- Strader v. U.S. Bank National Ass'n, No. 17-684, 2018 WL 741425, at *5 n.8 (W.D. Pa. Feb. 7, 2018)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Fantone v. Latini, 780 F.3d 184, 193 (3d Cir. 2015)
- Qadr v. Overmyer, 642 F. App'x 100, 102-03 (3d Cir. 2016)
- Adams v. Trustees of the N.J. Brewery Emps.' Pension Tr. Fund, 29 F.3d 863, 869-76 (3d Cir. 1994)
- Briscoe v. Klaus, 538 F.3d 252, 258, 262-63 (3d Cir. 2008)
- Poulis v. State Farm Fire & Casualty Co., 747 F.2d 863, 866-69 (3d Cir. 1984)
- Anthony Hildebrand v. County of Allegheny, Hildebrand v. Allegheny County, 923 F.3d 128, 132-38 (3d Cir. 2019)
- National Hockey League v. Metropolitan Hockey Club, Inc., 427 U.S. 639, 643 (1976)
- Emerson v. Thiel College, 296 F.3d 184, 190 (3d Cir. 2002)
- Scarborough v. Eubanks, 747 F.2d 871, 875-76 (3d Cir. 1984)
- Ware v. Rodale Press, Inc., 322 F.3d 218, 222 (3d Cir. 2003)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)
- Fowler v. UPMC Shadyside, 578 F.3d 203, 213 (3d Cir. 2009)
- Covington v. International Ass'n of Approved Basketball Officials, 710 F.3d 114, 117-18 (3d Cir. 2013)
- Thompson v. Real Estate Mortgage Network, 748 F.3d 142, 147 (3d Cir. 2014)
- Dluhos v. Strasberg, 321 F.3d 365, 369 (3d Cir. 2003)
- Taylor v. Books A Million, Inc., 296 F.3d 376, 378 (5th Cir. 2002)
- Riddle v. Mondragon, 83 F.3d 1197, 1202 (10th Cir. 1996)