

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Elmore v. McLean

Civil Action No. 25-2246 (UNA) (D.D.C. Dec. 31, 2025) · No. Civil Action No. 25-2246 (UNA) · Decided December 31, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Columbia grants Matthew Robert Elmore’s application to proceed in forma pauperis but dismisses his pro se civil complaint and the action without prejudice. The court concludes that the complaint fails to satisfy Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a) because it does not establish a jurisdictional basis or provide sufficient factual allegations to notify the defendant of the claims.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Columbia
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Ana C. Reyes
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Columbia
DECIDED	December 31, 2025
DOCKET	Civil Action No. 25-2246 (UNA)
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court reviewed the plaintiff's application to proceed in forma pauperis and his pro se civil complaint.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the pro se complaint under the less stringent pleading standards applicable to pro se litigants while requiring compliance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, including Rule 8(a).
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published district court memorandum opinion
PARTIES	Matthew Robert Elmore v. Karen Jordan McLean

TOPICS

- pleadings
- subject matter jurisdiction
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- pleading standards
- federal jurisdiction
- pro se litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the pro se complaint satisfied Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)'s requirements for stating the grounds for jurisdiction, showing entitlement to relief, and demanding relief.
2. Whether the complaint should be dismissed without prejudice because it failed to identify a jurisdictional basis and failed to provide fair notice of the claims.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint did not satisfy Rule 8(a) because it failed to state a basis for the court's jurisdiction and did not provide enough factual information to put the defendant on notice of the claim or claims against her.
2. Dismissal of the complaint and civil action without prejudice was warranted.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“As drafted, this complaint falls far short of Rule 8(a)’s minimal pleading standard.” (at 2)

“Missing is a basis for this Court’s jurisdiction. And the complaint’s single factual allegation fails to put Defendant on notice of the claim(s) against her.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The plaintiff filed a complaint on a preprinted form. The Statement of Claim section was blank, and the complaint sought \$7 million plus an additional \$5 million based on an allegation that the defendant made him see a psychiatrist or other mental-health doctor while he was staying with her. The complaint did not identify a basis for federal jurisdiction or otherwise explain the claim being asserted.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The plaintiff submitted a pro se complaint and an application to proceed in forma pauperis. The district court granted the in forma pauperis application but dismissed the complaint and the civil action without prejudice because the pleading failed to identify a jurisdictional basis and did not provide fair notice of the claims.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972)
- Jarrell v. Tisch, 656 F. Supp. 237, 239 (D.D.C. 1987)
- Brown v. Califano, 75 F.R.D. 497, 498 (D.D.C. 1977)

OPINION

Elmore v. McLean

PER CURIAM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MATTHEW ROBERT ELMORE,)

) Plaintiff,)) v.) Civil Action No. 25-2246 (UNA))

KAREN JORDAN MCLEAN,)

) Defendant.)

MEMORANDUM OPINION

This matter is before the Court on review of plaintiff's application to proceed in forma pauperis and pro se civil complaint. The Court GRANTS the application and, for the reasons stated below, DISMISSES the complaint and this civil action without prejudice. The Court has reviewed plaintiff's complaint, keeping in mind that complaints filed by pro se litigants are held to less stringent standards than are applied to formal pleadings drafted by lawyers. See *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972). Even pro se litigants must comply with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. *Jarrell v. Tisch*, 656 F. Supp. 237, 239 (D.D.C. 1987). Rule 8(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires that a complaint contain a short and plain statement of the grounds upon which the Court's jurisdiction depends, a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief, and a demand for judgment for the relief the pleader seeks. Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a). The purpose of the minimum standard of Rule 8 is to give fair notice to the defendants of the claim being asserted such that they might prepare a responsive answer and an adequate defense and determine whether the doctrine of res judicata applies. *Brown v. Califano*, 75 F.R.D. 497, 498 (D.D.C. 1977). 1 Plaintiff submits his complaint on a preprinted form. The "Statement of Claim" section is blank. See Compl. at 4. Aside from a demand for \$7 million," id., Plaintiff appears to demand an additional \$5 million because Defendant "made [him] go to a crazy doctor while staying with her," id. at 3. As drafted, this complaint falls far short of Rule 8(a)'s minimal pleading standard. Missing is a basis for this Court's jurisdiction. And the complaint's single factual allegation fails to put Defendant on notice of the claim(s) against her. An Order consistent with this Memorandum Opinion is issued separately. DATE: December 31, 2025 /s/

ANA C. REYES

United States District Judge 2