

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA, INDIANAPOLIS DIVISION

Hunter Alexander v. John Doe, et al.

Alexander v. Doe · No. 1:26-cv-00007-JPH-MJD · Decided May 6, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana dismissed Hunter Alexander’s prisoner civil-rights complaint with prejudice for failure to state a claim. The court concluded that the complaint did not adequately allege personal involvement by the warden or IDOC Commissioner and that unnamed medical-provider defendants could not remain as placeholders. The court also denied Alexander’s motion for appointed counsel and directed entry of final judgment.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Indianapolis Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	James Patrick Hanlon
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Indianapolis Division
DECIDED	May 6, 2026
DOCKET	1:26-cv-00007-JPH-MJD
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court screened a pro se prisoner's civil-rights complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A and dismissed it with prejudice for failure to state a claim.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b), the court must dismiss claims that are frivolous or malicious, fail to state a claim, or seek monetary relief from an immune defendant. In evaluating whether a complaint states a claim, the court applies the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) standard and asks whether the complaint contains sufficient factual matter to state a facially plausible claim.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order
PARTIES	Hunter Alexander v. John Doe, et al.

TOPICS

motions to dismiss

pleadings

section 1983

prisoners rights

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

prisoner civil rights

constitutional law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against the warden and IDOC Commissioner where it did not allege their personal involvement in the asserted constitutional violations.
2. Whether claims against unnamed health-care-provider defendants stated a claim where the plaintiff did not name specific defendants and merely reserved their identities for discovery.
3. Whether the court was required to provide a pro se plaintiff an opportunity to amend or respond to an order to show cause before dismissal.

HOLDINGS

1. The claims against the warden and IDOC Commissioner failed to state a claim because the complaint did not allege that either official was personally involved in the alleged constitutional violations.
2. The claims against the unnamed health-care providers failed to state a claim because Alexander did not name specific medical professionals as defendants and merely identified anonymous defendants whose identities were to be discovered.
3. The court could dismiss the complaint with prejudice without providing an opportunity to amend or show cause because Alexander was subject to a filing restriction barring him from filing papers in civil non-habeas actions in the court for two years and until payment of outstanding filing fees.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face." (Section I)

"Individual liability under § 1983 ... requires personal involvement in the alleged constitutional deprivation." (Section III)

"it is pointless to include [an] anonymous defendant [] in federal court; this type of placeholder does not open the door to relation back under Fed. R. Civ. P. 15, nor can it otherwise help the plaintiff." (Section III)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Alexander, an Indiana Department of Correction inmate, alleged that he was subjected to intrusive searches and degrading conditions at the Reception Diagnostic Center. He also alleged inadequate diabetic care, placement on an upper range despite related medical problems, unhygienic cell conditions, denial of a phone call for more than 30 days, and lost legal mail. He named the facility warden, the IDOC Commissioner, and unnamed health-care providers, but did not allege personal involvement by the warden or Commissioner and did not identify the medical defendants.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Alexander filed the complaint on January 2, 2026, naming the warden of the Reception Diagnostic Center, the Indiana Department of Correction Commissioner, and unnamed health-care providers as defendants. The court screened the complaint, denied Alexander's motion for appointment of counsel, dismissed the action with prejudice, and directed entry of final judgment.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Schillinger v. Kiley, 954 F.3d 990, 993 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Cesal v. Moats, 851 F.3d 714, 720 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Colbert v. City of Chicago, 851 F.3d 649, 657 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Wudtke v. Davel, 128 F.3d 1057, 1060 (7th Cir. 1997)
- Luevano v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., 722 F.3d 1014, 1022 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Watts v. Kidman, 42 F.4th 755, 764 (7th Cir. 2022)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA INDIANAPOLIS DIVISION HUNTER ALEXANDER,)) Plaintiff,)) v.) No. 1:26-cv-00007-JPH-MJD) JOHN DOE, et al.,)) Defendants.) ORDER SCREENING AND DISMISSING COMPLAINT AND DIRECTING ENTRY OF FINAL JUDGMENT Plaintiff Hunter Alexander, an Indiana Department of Correction ("IDOC") inmate, has flooded this Court with frivolous lawsuits.

Dkt. 20 at 1. His persistence in filing frivolous cases resulted in a filing restriction, which prevents him from filing papers in civil non-habeas actions for two years and until he pays his outstanding filing fees. Id. at 4–6. Mr. Alexander filed this complaint on January 2, 2026, before the filing restriction was issued. Dkt. 2.

In this Order, the Court screens and dismisses the complaint in this action and directs the entry of final judgment. I. Screening Standard When screening a complaint, the Court must dismiss any portion that is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim for relief, or seeks monetary relief against a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b).

To determine whether the complaint states a claim, the Court applies the same standard as when addressing a motion to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6). See Schillinger v. Kiley, 954 F.3d 990, 993 (7th Cir. 2020).

Under that standard, a complaint must include "enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face." *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007). "A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged."

Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009). The Court construes pro se complaints liberally and holds them to a "less stringent standard than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers." *Cesal v. Moats*, 851 F.3d 714, 720 (7th Cir. 2017). II.

The Complaint Mr. Alexander names three "John Doe" defendants: the warden of the Reception Diagnostic Center ("RDC"), the IDOC Commissioner, and "Health Care Providers." Dkt. 2 at 1. Mr. Alexander provides no facts in his complaint but refers to a narrative in a separate filing.

The Court understands the narrative to be page 4 of his motion for counsel. See dkt. 3 at 4. Mr. Alexander states that upon his arrival at RDC on August 1, 2025, he was strip-searched and required to shower in front of a camera, but he was not allowed to file a Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) complaint. He experienced multiple searches that he found degrading.

Also, Mr. Alexander is diabetic. He complained to RDC correctional and medical staff that he was not receiving a diabetic diet and that, as a result, he was having blurry vision and nerve pain in his feet. Despite this, correctional staff placed him on an upper range where he had to climb stairs. Mr. Alexander also alleges that he was subjected to unhygienic conditions in his cell but was not provided proper cleaning supplies.

Finally, Mr. Alexander alleges that he was not allowed to make a phone call for over 30 days, and staff at Pendleton Correctional facility lost his legal mail. Mr. Alexander seeks damages. III. Dismissal of the Complaint The complaint must be dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Mr. Alexander could potentially have claims about his medical care at RDC, overly intrusive searches of his body, or conditions of his confinement.

But to be liable, a defendant must be personally involved in the alleged violation. Mr. Alexander does not allege that the warden of RDC or commissioner of the IDOC was aware of his various issues. See *Colbert v. City of Chicago*, 851 F.3d 649, 657 (7th Cir. 2017) ("Individual liability under § 1983 ... requires personal involvement in the alleged constitutional deprivation.") (internal quotation omitted).

Accordingly, all claims against the warden and commissioner are dismissed for failure to state a claim. Mr. Alexander named a few medical professionals in his supplement, but he did not name them as defendants in his complaint. Rather, he simply listed "Health Care Providers John Doe" and said that the identities of the defendants were "to be discovered." Dkt.

2 at 1-2. These claims are dismissed for failure to state a claim because "it is pointless to include [an] anonymous defendant [] in federal court; this type of placeholder does not open the door to relation back under Fed. R. Civ. P. 15, nor can it otherwise help the plaintiff." *Wudtke v. Davel*, 128 F.3d 1057, 1060 (7th Cir. 1997) (internal citations omitted).

Bringing suit against unnamed, or "John Doe," defendants in federal court is generally disfavored by the Seventh Circuit. In almost all cases where a plaintiff is proceeding pro se, the plaintiff should be provided an opportunity to amend his complaint or show cause why the case should not be dismissed. See *Luevano v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.*, 722 F.3d 1014, 1022 (7th Cir.

2013) ("Without at least an opportunity to amend or to respond to an order to show cause, an IFP applicant's case could be tossed out of court without giving the applicant any timely notice or opportunity to be heard to clarify, contest, or simply request leave to amend."). Such a step is unnecessary here because Mr. Alexander is not allowed to file papers in this Court for two years.

Dkt. 20. Accordingly, this case is dismissed with prejudice for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Final judgment consistent with this Order shall now issue. Further, because this action is being dismissed, Mr. Alexander's motion for counsel, dkt.

[3], is denied. See *Watts v. Kidman*, 42 F.4th 755, 764 (7th Cir. 2022) (explaining that courts must be careful stewards of the limited resource of volunteer lawyers). IV. Conclusion This case is dismissed with prejudice for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Mr. Alexander's motion for counsel, dkt.

[3], is denied. Final judgment consistent with this Order shall now issue. In light of the filing ban issued on April 23, 2026, the only filing the Court will accept in this case is a Notice of Appeal. See dkt. 20 at 6. If Mr. Alexander files an appeal in this matter, he is reminded that the cost to file an appeal is \$605.00. SO ORDERED. Date: 5/6/2026 ands Pat tanlove James Patrick Hanlon United States District Judge Southern District of Indiana Distribution: HUNTER ALEXANDER 201044 PENDLETON - CF PENDLETON CORRECTIONAL FACILITY Electronic Service Participant — Court Only