

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA, HAMMOND DIVISION

John Shapiro v. Joy Campanelli

Shapiro · No. 2:25-CV-564-GSL-APR · Decided February 2, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana denied John Shapiro’s motion to proceed in forma pauperis on appeal. The court concluded that the underlying complaint, which alleged a Fourteenth Amendment violation without supporting facts, was frivolous and lacked merit.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, Hammond Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Gretchen S. Lund
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
DECIDED	February 2, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-CV-564-GSL-APR
DISPOSITION	denied
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved for permission to appeal in forma pauperis after the district court denied his initial motion to proceed in forma pauperis and determined that his complaint failed to plausibly state a claim.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A motion to proceed on appeal in forma pauperis should be denied when no reasonable person could suppose that the appeal has some merit.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	John Shapiro v. Joy Campanelli

TOPICS

- appellate procedure
- civil rights
- fourteenth amendment
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- civil rights
- appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Shapiro should be permitted to take an appeal in forma pauperis when the underlying complaint consists only of a conclusory legal allegation and lacks factual support.
2. Whether the proposed appeal was taken in good faith under Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 24(a)(3) and 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3).

HOLDINGS

1. A party may not proceed on appeal in forma pauperis when the proposed appeal is frivolous and without merit; because no reasonable person could suppose that Shapiro's appeal had some merit, the motion was denied.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A motion to proceed on appeal in forma pauperis should be denied if no “reasonable person could suppose that the appeal has some merit.””

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Shapiro filed a complaint alleging only that, on information and belief, Campanelli conspired with others in violation of his Fourteenth Amendment rights and demanding \$1 million. The complaint contained no supporting factual allegations. The district court concluded that the complaint failed to plausibly state a claim and later determined that an appeal from that ruling would be frivolous.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On December 16, 2025, Shapiro filed a complaint alleging, in conclusory terms, that Campanelli conspired with others to violate his Fourteenth Amendment rights and demanding \$1 million. The court denied his initial motion to proceed in forma pauperis because the complaint lacked sufficient factual allegations to state a plausible claim. Shapiro then sought permission to appeal in forma pauperis, which the court denied because the proposed appeal was frivolous and without merit.

DISPOSITION

denied

CASES CITED

- Walker v. O’Brien, 216 F.3d 626, 632 (7th Cir. 2000)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA HAMMOND
DIVISION JOHN SHAPIRO, Plaintiff, v. Case No. 2:25-CV-564-GSL-APR JOY CAMPANELLI,
Defendant. OPINION AND ORDER This matter is before the Court on the Motion for Permission
to Appeal in Forma Pauperis [DE 5-6] filed by Plaintiff, John Shapiro, on January 5, 2026.

For the reasons set for the below, the Motion [DE 5-6] is DENIED. Background On December 16, 2025, Plaintiff filed his Complaint [DE 1] against Defendant, Joy Campaelli. The allegations of the Complaint, in its entirety, are as follows: 1. Upon information and belief, Defendant conspired with others, which violated Fourteenth Amendment Rights. 2. Plaintiff demands \$1 Million against Defendant.

[DE 1]. On the same date, Plaintiff filed a Motion to Proceed in Forma Pauperis [DE 2]. The Court denied that motion because, even when construed liberally and in Plaintiff's favor, the Complaint fails to plausibly state a claim for relief. See [DE 3]. Since Plaintiff's Complaint lacked merit, the Court did not address his financial position. See [Id.]. Plaintiff is now seeking to appeal this Court's decision and in doing so, is requesting to proceed in forma pauperis.

[DE 5-6]. Discussion Under Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 24(a)(3), a party who "was determined to be financially unable to obtain an adequate defense in a criminal case, may proceed on appeal in forma pauperis without further authorization" unless the district court certifies the appeal is not taken in good faith, or finds the party is not otherwise entitled to proceed in forma pauperis.

See also 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3) (instructing that "[a]n appeal may not be taken in forma pauperis if the trial court certifies in writing that it is not taken in good faith"). A motion to proceed on appeal in forma pauperis should be denied if no "reasonable person could suppose that the appeal has some merit." *Walker v. O'Brien*, 216 F.3d 626, 632 (7th Cir.

2000). Plaintiff's Complaint, as described above, is a single legal conclusion devoid of any facts. Accordingly, the claim that he is seeking to appeal is frivolous and without merit. Therefore, the Court finds that he is not entitled to an appeal in forma pauperis. Conclusion For the foregoing reasons, Plaintiff's Motion for Permission to Appeal in Forma Pauperis [DE 5-6] is DENIED.

SO ORDERED. ENTERED: February 2, 2026 /s/ GRETCHEN S. LUND Judge United States District Court