

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
GEORGIA, MACON DIVISION

Grady Taylor, Jr. v. Investigator Trey Burgamy, et al.

Taylor v. Burgamy · No. 5:25-cv-484-MTT-ALS · Decided January 8, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia denies pro se prisoner Grady Taylor, Jr.'s motion for appointment of counsel in his 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action. The Court grants his motion to proceed in forma pauperis, orders payment of an initial partial filing fee of \$33.64, and directs monthly deductions from his inmate account until the filing fee is paid.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, Macon Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Alfreda L. Sheppard
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia, Macon Division
DECIDED	January 8, 2026
DOCKET	5:25-cv-484-MTT-ALS
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A prisoner proceeding pro se under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 moved for leave to proceed in forma pauperis and for appointment of counsel at the outset of the action.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the exceptional-circumstances standard governing appointment of counsel in civil-rights cases and the statutory prisoner IFP filing-fee requirements under 28 U.S.C. § 1915.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order
PARTIES	Grady Taylor, Jr. v. Investigator Trey Burgamy, et al.

TOPICS

prisoners rights

section 1983

civil rights

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether exceptional circumstances justified appointing counsel for the prisoner plaintiff in this § 1983 action.
2. Whether Plaintiff qualified to proceed in forma pauperis and, if so, what initial partial filing fee and installment-payment obligations applied under the Prison Litigation Reform Act.

HOLDINGS

1. A district court may appoint counsel for an indigent civil-rights plaintiff only when exceptional circumstances justify doing so, and Plaintiff's case did not present such circumstances.
2. Plaintiff may proceed in forma pauperis, but he must pay the full filing fee through the PLRA's installment process, including an initial partial filing fee of \$33.64.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Appointment of counsel is “instead a privilege that is justified only by exceptional circumstances, such as where the facts and legal issues are so novel or complex as to require the assistance of a trained practitioner.””

“Plaintiff, “like any other litigant[], undoubtedly would [be] helped by the assistance of a lawyer, but [his] case is not so unusual” that appointed counsel is necessary.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Grady Taylor, Jr. is a prisoner at Jefferson County Correctional Institution in Louisville, Georgia, who filed a pro se civil-rights complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. He asserted that he could not afford counsel, that imprisonment would impair his ability to litigate, that trial might involve conflicting testimony, and that he had unsuccessfully sought counsel. His account certification showed average monthly deposits of \$168.19 during the approximately two and a half months preceding the complaint.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a civil-rights complaint and applications to proceed in forma pauperis and for appointed counsel. The district court denied appointed counsel, granted IFP status, ordered payment of an initial partial filing fee of \$33.64 and subsequent monthly installments, and withheld service of process pending further order.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Mallard v. U.S. Dist. Ct. for S. Dist. of Iowa*, 490 U.S. 296, 310 (1989)

- Taylor v. Pekarol, 760 F. App'x 647, 651 (11th Cir. 2019)
- Poole v. Lambert, 819 F.2d 1025, 1028 (11th Cir. 1987)
- DeJesus v. Lewis, 14 F.4th 1182, 1204-05 (11th Cir. 2021)
- Ulmer v. Chancellor, 691 F.2d 209, 213 (5th Cir. 1982)
- Bass v. Perrin, 170 F.3d 1312, 1320 (11th Cir. 1999)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
 MACON DIVISION GRADY TAYLOR, JR.,: Plaintiff,: v.: Case No. 5:25-cv-484-MTT-ALS
 INVESTIGATOR TREY: BURGAMY, et al.,: Defendants.:
 _____ ORDER Pro se Plaintiff Grady Taylor, Jr., a prisoner at
 Jefferson County Correctional Institution in Louisville, Georgia, filed a civil rights complaint
 brought under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

(Doc. 1). He also moved for leave to proceed without prepayment of the filing fee pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a) and to appoint counsel. (Docs. 2, 3). For the reasons set forth below, Plaintiff's motion to appoint counsel is DENIED.

However, as it appears Plaintiff is unable to pay the cost of commencing this action, his application to proceed in forma pauperis ("IFP") is GRANTED. I. Motion for appointment of counsel In support of his motion to appoint counsel Plaintiff asserts that he cannot afford to hire counsel, his imprisonment will limit his ability to litigate the case, a trial will likely involve conflicting testimony, and he has unsuccessfully attempted to obtain a lawyer.

(Doc. 3, at 1). A district court "may request an attorney to represent any person unable to afford counsel."¹ The statute, however, does not provide any funding to pay attorneys for their representation or authorize courts to compel attorneys to represent an indigent party in a civil case. See Mallard v. U.S. Dist. Ct. for S. Dist. of Iowa, 490 U.S. 296, 310 (1989); Taylor v. Pekarol, 760 F. App'x 647, 651 (11th Cir.

2019) (citations omitted) (stating that the district court has no "inherent power" to compel counsel to represent a civil litigant and § 1915(e)(1) provides no such authority). 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(1). There is, however, "no absolute constitutional right to the appointment of counsel" in a § 1983 lawsuit. Poole v. Lambert, 819 F.2d 1025, 1028 (11th Cir. 1987) (citations omitted).

Appointment of counsel is "instead a privilege that is justified only by exceptional circumstances, such as where the facts and legal issues are so novel or complex as to require the assistance of a trained practitioner." Id. (citations omitted).

In determining whether a case presents extraordinary circumstances, the Court considers (1) the type and complexity of the case; (2) whether the plaintiff is capable of adequately presenting his

case; (3) whether the plaintiff is in a position to adequately investigate the case; (4) whether the evidence “will consist in large part of conflicting testimony so as to require skill in the presentation of evidence and in cross examination”; and (5) whether the appointment of counsel would be of service to the parties and the court “by sharpening the issues in the case, shaping the examination of witnesses, and thus shortening the trial and assisting in a just determination.” The District Court may also inquire into whether the plaintiff has made any effort to secure private counsel.

DeJesus v. Lewis, 14 F.4th 1182, 1204-05 (11th Cir. 2021) (quoting *Ulmer v. Chancellor*, 691 F.2d 209, 213 (5th Cir. 1982)). The Court has considered Plaintiff’s motion and—after applying the factors set forth above—concludes that appointed counsel is not justified. Plaintiff has demonstrated the ability to litigate his case, including filing pleadings and motions sufficiently setting out his contentions to allow review by this Court.

Plaintiff’s case is not complex. Additionally, at this early stage in the litigation, it is unclear if the case will proceed to trial. Thus, there is no basis to conclude that counsel will be needed for the presentation of evidence or cross examination of witnesses. Plaintiff, “like any other litigant[], undoubtedly would [be] helped by the assistance of a lawyer, but [his] case is not so unusual” that appointed counsel is necessary.

Bass v. Perrin, 170 F.3d 1312, 1320 (11th Cir. 1999). Accordingly, Plaintiff’s motion to appoint counsel (Doc. 3) is DENIED. Should it later become apparent that legal assistance is required to avoid prejudice to Plaintiff’s rights, the Court, on its own motion, will consider assisting him in securing legal counsel at that time. Consequently, there is no need for Plaintiff to file additional requests for counsel.

II. Motion to Proceed In Forma Pauperis As noted above, Plaintiff’s motion to proceed in forma pauperis (Doc. 2) is GRANTED. However, even if a prisoner is allowed to proceed IFP, he must pay the full amount of the \$350.00 filing fee in installments based on funds in the prisoner’s account. When a prisoner has funds in his account, he must pay an initial partial filing fee of twenty percent of the greater of (1) the average monthly deposits to the prisoner’s account, or (2) the average monthly balance in the prisoner’s account for the six month period immediately preceding the filing of the complaint.

28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). A review of Plaintiff’s account certification shows his average monthly deposits for the two and a half months that he was incarcerated before he filed the complaint equaled \$168.19. (Doc. 2-1, at 2-17). Twenty percent of \$168.19 is \$33.64.

Accordingly, it is ORDERED that Plaintiff pay an initial partial filing fee of \$33.64. Following payment of the initial partial filing fee, money will be deducted from Plaintiff’s account until the filing fee (\$350.00) is paid in full as set forth in § 1915(b) and explained below. It is accordingly

DIRECTED that the Clerk of Court forward a copy of this ORDER to the business manager of the facility in which Plaintiff is incarcerated so that withdrawals from his account may commence as payment towards the filing fee.

The district court's filing fee is not refundable, regardless of the outcome of the case, and must therefore be paid in full even if the Plaintiff's complaint (or any part thereof) is dismissed prior to service. A. Directions to Plaintiff's Custodian It is ORDERED that the warden of the institution wherein Plaintiff is incarcerated, or the sheriff of any county wherein he is held in custody, and any successor custodians, each month cause to be remitted to the Clerk of this Court twenty percent (20%) of the preceding month's income credited to Plaintiff's account at said institution until the \$350.00 filing fee has been paid in full.

In accordance with the provisions of the Prison Litigation Reform Act ("PLRA"), Plaintiff's custodian is hereby authorized to forward payments from the prisoner's account to the Clerk of Court each month until the filing fee is paid in full, provided the amount in the account exceeds \$10.00. It is further ORDERED that collection of monthly payments from Plaintiff's trust fund account shall continue until the entire \$350.00 has been collected, notwithstanding the dismissal of Plaintiff's lawsuit or the granting of judgment against him prior to the collection of the full filing fee.

B. Plaintiff's Obligations Upon Release Plaintiff should keep in mind that his release from incarceration/detention does not release him from his obligation to pay the installments incurred while he was in custody. Plaintiff remains obligated to pay those installments justified by the income in his prisoner trust account while he was detained. If Plaintiff fails to remit such payments, the Court authorizes collection from Plaintiff of any balance due on these payments by any means permitted by law.

Plaintiff's Complaint may be dismissed if he is able to make payments but fails to do so or if he otherwise fails to comply with the provisions of the PLRA. III. Conclusion In conclusion, Plaintiff's motion to appoint counsel (Doc. 3) is DENIED, but his motion to proceed in forma pauperis (Doc. 2) is GRANTED, and Plaintiff is ORDERED to pay an initial partial filing fee of \$33.64.

While Plaintiff's custodian is ordered to make subsequent payments on Plaintiff's behalf, Plaintiff should note that it is HIS RESPONSIBILITY to pay the initial partial filing fee. Thus, Plaintiff must make arrangements with the appropriate official to ensure that the initial partial filing fee is paid in accordance with this Order. Plaintiff shall have FOURTEEN (14) DAYS from the date shown on this Order to pay the required initial partial filing fee to the Clerk of Court.

Thereafter, Plaintiff's custodian shall remit monthly payments as set forth above. Plaintiff's failure to pay the initial partial filing fee will result in the dismissal of this action. Plaintiff shall keep the

Court informed of any future address change and his failure to do so may result in the dismissal of this action. There will be no service of process in this case upon any Defendant until further order of the Court.

SO ORDERED, this 8th day of January, 2026. s/ ALFREDA L. SHEPPARD UNITED STATES
MAGISTRATE JUDGE