

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS

Ronald M. Van Pelt v. Jon M. Uraski, Charles W. Heck, Bradley A.
Kirkman

Van Pelt v. Uraski · No. 3:23-cv-01656-GCS · Decided May 26, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois dismissed Ronald M. Van Pelt’s action with prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) for failure to prosecute and failure to comply with court orders. The court directed the Clerk to enter judgment and explained the deadlines and procedures for seeking reconsideration or appealing to the Seventh Circuit.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Gilbert C. Sison
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
DECIDED	May 26, 2026
DOCKET	3:23-cv-01656-GCS
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court dismissed the action with prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) for failure to prosecute and failure to comply with court orders.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A district court may dismiss an action for failure to prosecute or failure to comply with court orders, but the Seventh Circuit requires consideration of alternatives to dismissal and factors including the frequency and egregiousness of noncompliance, effects on the court's calendar, and prejudice to defendants.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; memorandum and order from the United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois.
PARTIES	Ronald M. Van Pelt v. Jon M. Uraski, Charles W. Heck, Bradley A. Kirkman

TOPICS

civil procedure

summary judgment

appellate procedure

motion for reconsideration

standard of review

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

prisoner civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action should be dismissed with prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) because Plaintiff failed to prosecute the case and failed to comply with multiple court orders.
2. What deadlines and procedural options applied to a potential Rule 59(e) motion and appeal from the judgment.

HOLDINGS

1. Dismissal with prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) was warranted because Plaintiff repeatedly failed to comply with court orders and failed to prosecute the action.
2. A timely Rule 59(e) motion in proper form tolls the time for filing a notice of appeal, while an untimely or completely insubstantial motion does not.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“when it dismisses a suit ‘immediately after the first problem, without exploring other options or saying why they would not be fruitful.’” (at 1)

“Accordingly, the Court DISMISSES with prejudice this action pursuant to Rule 41(b).” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff stopped participating in the case after a mediation session in July 2025. He failed to respond to Defendants' motion for summary judgment, the court's order directing him to respond, and a subsequent show-cause order. The court noted that allowing the case to continue would detrimentally affect the efficient handling of the court's more than 160 other cases.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Defendants filed a motion for summary judgment on November 7, 2025. Plaintiff did not respond, did not comply with the court's January 20, 2026 order directing a response, and did not respond to the court's March 10, 2026 show-cause order. The court dismissed the action with prejudice, closed the case, and directed the clerk to enter judgment.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Sroga v. Huberman, 722 F.3d 980, 982 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Johnson v. Chicago Board of Education, 718 F.3d 731, 732-733 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Kruger v. Apfel, 214 F.3d 784, 786-787 (7th Cir. 2000)
- James v. McDonald's Corp., 417 F.3d 672, 681 (7th Cir. 2005)
- Elustra v. Mineo, 595 F.3d 699, 707 (7th Cir. 2010)
- Talano v. Northwestern Medical Faculty Foundation, Inc., 273 F.3d 757, 760 (7th Cir. 2001)
- Blue v. Hartford Life & Accident Insurance Co., 698 F.3d 587, 598 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Carlson v. CSX Transportation, Inc., 758 F.3d 819, 826 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Martinez v. Trainor, 556 F.2d 818, 819-820 (7th Cir. 1977)
- Sherman v. Quinn, 668 F.3d 421, 424 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Abuelyaman v. Illinois State University, 667 F.3d 800, 807 (7th Cir. 2011)

Retrieved from lawtools.ai · <https://lawtools.ai/cases/federal/united-states-district-court-for-the-southern-district-of-il/2026/ronald-m-van-pelt-v-jon-m-uraski-charles-w-heck-bradley-a-uz3c1qbx>