

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
WISCONSIN

Benedicta Fowlkes v. NBA/WNBA

Fowlkes · No. 26-CV-733 · Decided April 30, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin grants Benedicta Fowlkes’s motion to proceed in forma pauperis. Applying 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2), the court concludes that the complaint is frivolous and fails to present a credible federal claim. The court recommends dismissing the action with prejudice and directs assignment to a district judge because the parties have not consented to magistrate-judge jurisdiction.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
WRITING FOR THE COURT	William E. Duffi
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
DECIDED	April 30, 2026
DOCKET	26-CV-733
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The court granted the plaintiff's motion to proceed in forma pauperis and screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). The magistrate judge recommended that the complaint and action be dismissed with prejudice and directed the Clerk to randomly assign the matter to a district judge because all parties had not consented to magistrate-judge jurisdiction.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2), the court screened the complaint for frivolousness, failure to state a claim, and claims seeking monetary relief from an immune defendant. For failure to state a claim, the court applied the standards governing a motion to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), including Rule 8(a)(2)'s plausibility and fair-notice requirements.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Benedicta Fowlkes v. NBA/WNBA

TOPICS

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PRACTICE AREAS

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in forma pauperis screening

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Fowlkes qualified to proceed in forma pauperis.
2. Whether the complaint was frivolous or failed to state a claim under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2).
3. Whether the complaint should be dismissed with prejudice without granting leave to amend because amendment would be futile.
4. Whether the magistrate judge could finally resolve the action without the consent of all parties.

HOLDINGS

1. Fowlkes lacked the financial resources to prepay the fees and costs associated with the action, so her motion to proceed in forma pauperis was granted.
2. The complaint was frivolous because its allegations were clearly baseless, fanciful, irrational, and delusional and did not present a credible cause of action.
3. The complaint failed to allege facts supporting a federal claim or a credible cause of action, even when liberally construed.
4. Leave to amend was unnecessary because any amendment would be futile in light of the baseless allegations; dismissal with prejudice was recommended.
5. Because not all parties had consented to magistrate-judge jurisdiction, the magistrate judge could not finally resolve the case and instead issued a recommendation to a district judge.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A claim is legally frivolous when it lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact.” (Analysis, § 1)

“Fowlkes’s complaint is difficult to understand and checks each box for fanciful, irrational, and delusional.”
(Analysis, § 3)

“Because Fowlkes’s allegations are baseless, any amendment would be futile.” (Conclusion, § 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Fowlkes alleged that NBA/WNBA defendants had harassed her since birth, attempted to claim her good looks, interfered with her employment and education, and caused her health and appearance to deteriorate. She sought tens or hundreds of millions of dollars, several honorary degrees, restoration of her health and looks, and return of a ranch home in Glendale. The court found the allegations fanciful, irrational, delusional, and lacking a credible cause of action.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Benedicta Fowlkes filed a civil action against NBA/WNBA and moved to proceed without prepaying the filing fee. The court found that she lacked the financial resources to prepay the fees and costs, granted the motion, and conducted the required statutory screening. The court concluded that the complaint was frivolous and failed to allege a credible federal cause of action, recommended dismissal with prejudice, and advised the parties of the procedure for objecting under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1) and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 72(b).

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Denton v. Hernandez, 504 U.S. 25, 31-33 (1992)
- Adkins v. E. I. DuPont de Nemours & Co., 335 U.S. 331, 342 (1948)
- Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 324-25 (1989)
- Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007)
- Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976)
- DeWalt v. Carter, 224 F.3d 607, 611 (7th Cir. 2000)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009)
- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)
- Conley v. Gibson, 355 U.S. 41, 47 (1957)
- International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 150, AFL-CIO v. Ward, 563 F.3d 276, 280 (7th Cir. 2009)
- Turner/Ozanne v. Hyman/Power, 111 F.3d 1312, 1316 (7th Cir. 1997)
- Bogie v. Rosenberg, 705 F.3d 603, 608 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Coleman v. Labor & Indus. Review Comm'n, 860 F.3d 461, 475 (7th Cir. 2017)

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