

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLORADO

Civil Action No. 13-cv-00541-BNB

SOLOMON BOWENS,

Plaintiff,

v.

STERLING CORRECTIONAL FACILITY, and
THE WARDEN, in his individual capacity, Sterling Correctional Facility,

Defendants.

ORDER DIRECTING PLAINTIFF TO FILE AMENDED COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, Solomon Bowens, currently is incarcerated at the Denver Van Cise-Simonet Detention Center. He has filed *pro se* a Prisoner Complaint (ECF No. 7) pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 for money damages that is not on the Court-approved Prisoner Complaint form. He complains he is being denied prescription medication for multiple sclerosis. Mr. Bowens has been granted leave to proceed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915.

The Court must construe Mr. Bowens' complaint liberally because he is not represented by an attorney. See *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520-21 (1972); *Hall v. Bellmon*, 935 F.2d 1106, 1110 (10th Cir. 1991). However, the Court should not be an advocate for a *pro se* litigant. See *Hall*, 935 F.2d at 1110. For the reasons stated below, Mr. Bowens will be directed to file an amended complaint.

Mr. Bowens is suing an improper party. Mr. Bowens may not sue the Sterling Correctional Facility for money damages. The State of Colorado and its entities are

protected by Eleventh Amendment immunity. See *Will v. Michigan Dep't of State Police*, 491 U.S. 58, 66 (1989); *Meade v. Grubbs*, 841 F.2d 1512, 1525-26 (10th Cir. 1988). "It is well established that absent an unmistakable waiver by the state of its Eleventh Amendment immunity, or an unmistakable abrogation of such immunity by Congress, the amendment provides absolute immunity from suit in federal courts for states and their agencies." *Ramirez v. Oklahoma Dep't of Mental Health*, 41 F.3d 584, 588 (10th Cir. 1994), overruled on other grounds by *Ellis v. University of Kansas Med. Ctr.*, 163 F.3d 1186 (10th Cir. 1998). The State of Colorado has not waived its Eleventh Amendment immunity, see *Griess v. Colorado*, 841 F.2d 1042, 1044-45 (10th Cir. 1988), and congressional enactment of § 1983 did not abrogate Eleventh Amendment immunity, see *Quern v. Jordan*, 440 U.S. 332, 340-345 (1979). The Eleventh Amendment applies to all suits against the state and its agencies, regardless of the relief sought. See *Higginbotham v. Okla. Transp. Comm'n*, 328 F.3d 638, 644 (10th Cir. 2003).

The amended complaint also must comply with the pleading requirements of Rule 8 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The twin purposes of a complaint are to give the opposing parties fair notice of the basis for the claims against them so that they may respond and to allow the Court to conclude that the allegations, if proven, show that the plaintiff is entitled to relief. See *Monument Builders of Greater Kansas City, Inc. v. American Cemetery Ass'n of Kansas*, 891 F.2d 1473, 1480 (10th Cir. 1989). The requirements of Fed. R. Civ. P. 8 are designed to meet these purposes. See *TV Communications Network, Inc. v. ESPN, Inc.*, 767 F. Supp. 1062, 1069 (D. Colo. 1991), *aff'd*, 964 F.2d 1022 (10th Cir. 1992). Rule 8(a) provides that a complaint "must contain

(1) a short and plain statement of the grounds for the court's jurisdiction, . . . (2) a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief; and (3) a demand for the relief sought." The philosophy of Rule 8(a) is reinforced by Rule 8(d)(1), which provides that "[e]ach allegation must be simple, concise, and direct." Taken together, Rules 8(a) and (d)(1) underscore the emphasis placed on clarity and brevity by the federal pleading rules. Prolix, vague, or unintelligible pleadings violate Rule 8.

Generally, Mr. Bowens fails to provide "a generalized statement of the facts from which the defendant may form a responsive pleading." *New Home Appliance Ctr., Inc., v. Thompson*, 250 F.2d 881, 883 (10th Cir. 1957). For the purposes of Rule 8(a), "[i]t is sufficient, and indeed all that is permissible, if the complaint concisely states facts upon which relief can be granted upon any legally sustainable basis." *Id.*

Mr. Bowens must present his claims in a manageable and readable format that allows the Court and the defendants to know what claims are being asserted and to be able to respond to those claims. Mr. Bowens must allege, simply and concisely, his specific claims for relief, including the specific rights that allegedly have been violated and the specific acts of each defendant that allegedly violated his rights. The general rule that *pro se* pleadings must be construed liberally has limits and "the Court cannot take on the responsibility of serving as the litigant's attorney in constructing arguments and searching the record." *Garrett v. Selby Connor Maddux & Janer*, 425 F.3d 836, 840 (10th Cir. 2005).

In the amended complaint he will be directed to file, Mr. Bowens must assert personal participation by each named defendant. See *Bennett v. Passic*, 545 F.2d 1260, 1262-63 (10th Cir. 1976). To establish personal participation, Mr. Bowens must

show how each named individual caused the deprivation of a federal right. See *Kentucky v. Graham*, 473 U.S. 159, 166 (1985). There must be an affirmative link between the alleged constitutional violation and each defendant's participation, control or direction, or failure to supervise. See *Butler v. City of Norman*, 992 F.2d 1053, 1055 (10th Cir. 1993). A defendant may not be held liable on a theory of respondeat superior merely because of his or her supervisory position. See *Pembaur v. City of Cincinnati*, 475 U.S. 469, 479 (1986); *McKee v. Heggy*, 703 F.2d 479, 483 (10th Cir. 1983). A supervisor is only liable for constitutional violations he or she causes. See *Dodds v. Richardson*, 614 F.3d 1185, 1211 (10th Cir. 2010).

Mr. Bowens may use fictitious names, such as "John or Jane Doe," if he does not know the real names of the individuals who allegedly violated his rights. However, if Mr. Bowens uses fictitious names he must provide sufficient information about each defendant so that he or she can be identified for purposes of service.

A decision to dismiss a complaint pursuant to Rule 8 is within the trial court's sound discretion. See *Atkins v. Northwest Airlines, Inc.*, 967 F.2d 1197, 1203 (8th Cir. 1992); *Gillibeau v. City of Richmond*, 417 F.2d 426, 431 (9th Cir. 1969). The Court finds that the complaint does not meet the requirements of Fed. R. Civ. P. 8 and D.C.COLO.LCivR 10.1. Mr. Bowens will be given an opportunity to cure the deficiencies in his complaint by submitting an amended complaint that asserts appropriate claims, states them clearly and concisely in compliance with Fed. R. Civ. P. 8, and alleges specific facts that demonstrate how each named defendant personally participated in the asserted constitutional violations.

Accordingly, it is

ORDERED that Plaintiff, Solomon Bowens, **within thirty (30) days from the date of this order**, file an amended complaint that complies with this order. It is

FURTHER ORDERED that the amended complaint shall be titled “Amended Prisoner Complaint,” and shall be filed with the Clerk of the Court, United States District Court for the District of Colorado, Alfred A. Arraj United States Courthouse, 901 Nineteenth Street, A105, Denver, Colorado 80294. It is

FURTHER ORDERED that Mr. Bowens shall obtain the Court-approved Prisoner Complaint form (with the assistance of his case manager or the facility’s legal assistant), along with the applicable instructions, at www.cod.uscourts.gov, and use that form in submitting the amended complaint. It is

FURTHER ORDERED that, if Mr. Bowens fails to file an amended complaint that complies with this order within the time allowed, the complaint and the action will be dismissed without further notice.

DATED May 20, 2013, at Denver, Colorado.

BY THE COURT:

s/ Boyd N. Boland
United States Magistrate Judge