

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
VALDOSTA DIVISION

ARTHUR GOULD,
Plaintiff,
vs.
Commissioner BRIAN OWENS;
Warden WILLIAM DANFORTH;
Deputy Warden PHILBIN;
Deputy Warden ORR;
Counselor D. WATERS;
C. MOORE; LESA SHOE;
Counselor COOPER;
Officer SKINNER;
Defendants.
CIVIL ACTION NO.: 7:10-CV-95 (HL)
PROCEEDINGS UNDER 42 U.S.C. § 1983
BEFORE THE U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE
ORDER & RECOMMENDATION

Plaintiff ARTHUR GOULD, a prisoner at Central State Prison in Macon, Georgia, has filed a pro se civil rights complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

Plaintiff also sought leave to proceed without prepayment of the \$350.00 filing fee or security therefor pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a). In an Order dated September 9, 2010, the Court granted his motion to proceed in forma pauperis. Plaintiff is nevertheless obligated to pay the full filing fee, as is directed later in this Order and Recommendation. The Clerk of Court is directed to send a copy of this Order and Recommendation to the business manager of Central State Prison.

I. STANDARD OF REVIEW

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a), a federal court is required to conduct an initial screening of a prisoner complaint "which seeks redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of

a governmental entity.” Section 1915A(b) requires a federal court to dismiss a prisoner complaint that is: (1) “frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted”; or (2) “seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.”

A claim is frivolous when it appears from the face of the complaint that the factual allegations are “clearly baseless” or that the legal theories are “indisputably meritless.” *Carroll v. Gross*, 984 F.2d 392, 393 (11<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1993). A complaint fails to state a claim when it does not include “enough factual matter (taken as true)” to “give the defendant fair notice of what the . . . claim is and the grounds upon which it rests[.]” *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555-56 (2007) (noting that “[f]actual allegations must be enough to raise a right to relief above the speculative level,” and that the complaint “must contain something more . . . than . . . a statement of facts that merely creates a suspicion [of] a legally cognizable right of action”) (internal quotations and citations omitted); *see also Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1949 (2009) (explaining that “threadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action, supported by mere conclusory statements, do not suffice”).

In making the above determinations, all factual allegations in the complaint must be viewed as true. *Brown v. Johnson*, 387 F.3d 1344, 1347 (11<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2004). Moreover, “[p]ro se pleadings are held to a less stringent standard than pleadings drafted by attorneys and will, therefore, be liberally construed.” *Tannenbaum v. United States*, 148 F.3d 1262, 1263 (11<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1998).

In order to state a claim for relief under § 1983, a plaintiff must allege that: (1) an act or omission deprived him of a right, privilege, or immunity secured by the Constitution or a statute of

the United States; and (2) the act or omission was committed by a person acting under color of state law. *Hale v. Tallapoosa County*, 50 F.3d 1579, 1581 (11<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1995). If a litigant cannot satisfy these requirements, or fails to provide factual allegations in support of his claim or claims, then the complaint is subject to dismissal. *See Chappell v. Rich*, 340 F.3d 1279, 1282-84 (11<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2003) (affirming the district court's dismissal of a § 1983 complaint because the plaintiff's factual allegations were insufficient to support the alleged constitutional violation). *See also* 28 U.S.C. 1915A(b) (dictating that a complaint, or any portion thereof, that does not pass the standard in § 1915A "shall" be dismissed on preliminary review).

## ***II. STATEMENT AND ANALYSIS OF CLAIMS***

Plaintiff has submitted a recast complaint that complies with the Court's October 15, 2010 Second Order to Recast. In this complaint, plaintiff alleges that on July 21, 2009 he was "attack[ed] and assaulted with a knife by another prisoner." Plaintiff states the other inmate "took the iron gate and slam[med] it on . . . plaintiff (sic) right hand" and then stabbed plaintiff with a knife. Plaintiff maintains that Officer Skinner watched the attack and did nothing to help plaintiff.

Plaintiff states that he was taken to a hospital following the attack and was treated for various injuries. Plaintiff explains that he has permanent damage to the finger that was stabbed and broken and that another finger had to be partially amputated

According to plaintiff, "he had complained (sic) to prison officials at the prison concerning his safety" for months prior to the assault. Plaintiff alleges that immediately before the attack, he advised dormitory officer White (not named as a defendant) that he needed protection. Apparently

officer White had plaintiff fill out an “emergency grievance” and submit a written statement. Additionally, it appears that officer White notified Counselors Water and Cooper regarding plaintiff’s safety concerns. Plaintiff states that he spoke personally with Counselors Waters and Cooper about these same concerns and Counselor Waters informed Deputy Warden Philbin and Grievance Coordinator Moore. Plaintiff alleges that Warden Dansforth and Mental Health Director Lesa Shoe knew that he needed and had requested protection, but ignored his requests. In relation to Commissioner Brian Owens, plaintiff states as follows: “All stabbing and assault and abuse be (sic) investigated by the Warden and the Commissioner in plaintiff (sic) case, it was ignore (sic).” While it is unclear, the Court must construe plaintiff’s complaint liberally and will assume that plaintiff is trying to say that he informed Commissioner Owens of his safety concerns and that Commissioner Owens ignored him.

Plaintiff has named nine (9) defendants in the heading of his recast complaint. However, in the body of his complaint, plaintiff never mentions one of these defendants—Deputy Warden Orr. “Section 1983 requires proof of an affirmative causal connection between the actions taken by a particular person under color of state law and the constitutional deprivation.” *LaMarca v. Turner*, 995 F.2d 1526, 1538 (11th Cir. 1993) (internal quotation marks and citations omitted). The Eleventh Circuit has held that a district court properly dismisses a defendant when a prisoner, other than naming the defendant in the caption of the complaint, fails to state any allegations that connect the defendant with any alleged constitutional violation. *Douglas v. Yates*, 535 F.3d 1316, 1322 (11th Cir. 2008) (citing *Pamel Corp. v. P.R. Highway Auth.*, 621 F.2d 33, 36 (1st Cir. 1980))

(“While we do not require technical niceties in pleading, we must demand that the complaint state with some minimal particularity how overt acts of the defendant caused a legal wrong.”)). Thus, in the absence of an allegation of any connection between Defendant Orr and any alleged unconstitutional deprivation or act, plaintiff fails to state a claim for relief against this defendant.

It is therefore **RECOMMENDED** that defendant Deputy Warden John Doe Orr be **DISMISSED** from this action.

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1), plaintiff may serve and file written objections to this recommendation with the district judge to whom this case is assigned within fourteen (14) days after being served a copy of this Order.

In relation to the remaining defendants shown in the heading of plaintiff’s complaint, it has long been a rule that prison officials violate the Eighth Amendment if they are deliberately indifferent to a substantial risk of harm to an inmate. *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825 (1984). The law regarding deliberate indifference as it applies to the duty of prison officials to protect inmates from assault by their fellow prisoners was clearly established in *Farmer*. “First, the deprivation alleged must be, objectively, ‘sufficiently serious’.” *Id.* at 834. (citations omitted). Second, the prison official must have acted with “deliberate indifference” to this sufficiently serious deprivation. *Id.*

Using this standard and construing plaintiff’s complaint liberally, the Court cannot, at this stage in the litigation, find that plaintiff’s claims against defendants Owens, Danforth, Philbin, Waters, Moore, Shoe, Cooper, and Skinner are frivolous. Therefore, this action shall go forward

against these eight defendants.

It is hereby **ORDERED** that service be made against these defendants and that they file a Waiver of Reply, an Answer, or such other response as may be appropriate under Rule 12 of the FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE, U.S.C. § 1915, and the *Prison Litigation Reform Act*.

**Defendants are reminded of the duty to avoid unnecessary service expenses, and of the possible imposition of expenses for failure to waive service pursuant to Rule 4(d).**

**DUTY TO ADVISE OF ADDRESS CHANGE**

During the pendency of this action, all parties shall at all times keep the clerk of this court and all opposing attorneys and/or parties advised of their current address. Failure to promptly advise the Clerk of any change of address may result in the dismissal of a party's pleadings filed herein.

**DUTY TO PROSECUTE ACTION**

Plaintiff is advised that he must diligently prosecute his complaint or face the possibility that it will be dismissed under Rule 41(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure for failure to prosecute. Defendants are advised that they are expected to diligently defend all allegations made against them and to file timely dispositive motions as hereinafter directed. This matter will be set down for trial when the court determines that discovery has been completed and that all motions have been disposed of or the time for filing dispositive motions has passed.

**FILING AND SERVICE OF MOTIONS, PLEADINGS, DISCOVERY AND CORRESPONDENCE**

It is the responsibility of each party to file original motions, pleadings, and correspondence with the Clerk of court; to serve copies of all motions, pleadings, discovery, and correspondence upon opposing parties or counsel for opposing parties if they are represented; and to attach to said original motions, pleadings, and discovery filed with the Clerk a certificate of service indicating who

has been served and where (i.e., at what address), when service was made, and how service was accomplished (i.e., by U.S. Mail, by personal service, etc.). The Clerk of Court will not serve or forward copies of such motions, pleadings, discovery and correspondence on behalf of the parties.

#### **DISCOVERY**

Plaintiff shall not commence discovery until an answer or dispositive motion has been filed on behalf of the defendants from whom discovery is sought by the plaintiff. The defendants shall not commence discovery until such time as an answer or dispositive motion has been filed. Once an answer or dispositive motion has been filed, the parties are authorized to seek discovery from one another as provided in the FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE. The deposition of the plaintiff, a state/county prisoner, may be taken at any time during the time period hereinafter set out provided prior arrangements are made with his custodian. **Plaintiff is hereby advised that failure to submit to a deposition may result in the dismissal of his lawsuit under Rule 37 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.**

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that discovery (including depositions and interrogatories) shall be completed within 90 days of the date of filing of an answer or dispositive motion by the defendant (whichever comes first) unless an extension is otherwise granted by the court upon a showing of good cause therefor or a protective order is sought by the defendants and granted by the court. This 90-day period shall run separately as to each plaintiff and each defendant beginning on the date of filing of each defendant's answer or dispositive motion (whichever comes first). The scheduling of a trial may be advanced upon notification from the parties that no further discovery is contemplated or that discovery has been completed prior to the deadline.

Discovery materials shall not be filed with the Clerk of Court. No party shall be required to respond to any discovery not directed to him or served upon him by the opposing counsel/party. The undersigned incorporates herein those parts of the **Local Rules** imposing the following

limitations on discovery: except with written permission of the court first obtained, INTERROGATORIES may not exceed TWENTY-FIVE (25) to each party, REQUESTS FOR PRODUCTION OF DOCUMENTS AND THINGS under Rule 34 of the FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE may not exceed TEN (10) requests to each party, and REQUESTS FOR ADMISSIONS under Rule 36 of the FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE may not exceed FIFTEEN (15) requests to each party. No party shall be required to respond to any such requests which exceed these limitations.

#### **REQUESTS FOR DISMISSAL AND/OR JUDGMENT**

Dismissal of this action or requests for judgment will not be considered by the court absent the filing of a separate motion therefor accompanied by a brief/memorandum of law citing supporting authorities. Dispositive motions should be filed at the earliest time possible, but in any event no later than thirty (30) days after the close of discovery unless otherwise directed by the court.

#### **DIRECTIONS TO CUSTODIAN OF PLAINTIFF**

Following the payment of the required initial partial filing fee or the waiving of the payment of same, 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, shall 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 provisions of the *Prison Litigation Reform Act*, 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 AND DIRECTED 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.

**PLAINTIFF'S OBLIGATION TO PAY FILING FEE**

Pursuant to provisions of the *Prison Litigation Reform Act*, in the event plaintiff is hereafter released from the custody of the State of Georgia or any county thereof, he shall remain obligated to pay any balance due on the filing fee in this proceeding until said amount has been paid in full; plaintiff shall continue to remit monthly payments as required by the *Prison Litigation Reform Act*. Collection from the plaintiff of any balance due on the filing fee by any means permitted by law is hereby authorized in the event plaintiff is released from custody and fails to remit payments. In addition, plaintiff's complaint is subject to dismissal if he has the ability to make monthly payments and fails to do so.

**ELECTION TO PROCEED BEFORE THE  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

Under Local Rule 72, all prisoner complaints filed under provisions of 42 U.S.C. § 1983 are referred to a full-time United States Magistrate Judge for this district for consideration of all pretrial matters. In addition, 28 U.S.C. § 636(c)(1) authorizes and empowers full-time magistrate judges to conduct any and all proceedings in a jury or nonjury civil matter and to order the entry of judgment in a case upon the written consent of all the parties. Whether the parties elect to proceed before a magistrate judge or retain their right to proceed before a U.S. district judge is strictly up to the parties themselves.

After the filing of responsive pleadings by the defendants, the Clerk of court is directed to provide election forms to the parties and/or to their legal counsel, if represented. Upon receipt of the election forms, each party shall cause the same to be executed and returned to the Clerk's Office within fifteen (15) days. Counsel may execute election forms on behalf of their clients

provided they have such permission from their clients. However, counsel must specify on the election forms on whose behalf the form is executed.

**SO ORDERED and RECOMMENDED**, this 2nd day of November, 2010.

*s/THOMAS Q. LANGSTAFF*  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

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