

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

MICHAEL VELASQUEZ, Inmate)	
#K53666,)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
vs.)	CIVIL NO. 06-824-WDS
)	
RUANN TANNER, ROGERE. WALKER,)	
JR., and JOSE DELGALTO,)	
)	
Defendants.)	

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

STIEHL, District Judge:

Plaintiff, an inmate in the Tamms Correctional Center, brings this action for deprivations of his constitutional rights pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

IN FORMA PAUPERIS

This action is first before the Court on Plaintiff's motion to proceed *in forma pauperis* (Doc. 2). The Court finds that Plaintiff, an inmate currently incarcerated in the Tamms Correctional Center, is indigent and unable to pay the full filing fee in advance; therefore, leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* is **GRANTED**. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b), **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that Plaintiff shall pay the **\$350.00 filing fee** applicable to this civil action as follows:

1. Plaintiff shall pay an initial partial filing fee of **\$ 30.95**. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). The agency having custody of Plaintiff is **DIRECTED** to transmit this amount from Plaintiff's prison trust fund account to the Clerk of Court upon receipt of this Memorandum and Order.
2. Plaintiff shall make monthly payments of 20% of the preceding month's income credited to Plaintiff's prison trust fund account until the filing fee is paid in full.

3. The agency having custody of Plaintiff shall forward payments from Plaintiff's account to the Clerk of this Court each time the amount in the account exceeds \$10 until the filing fee is paid. Payments shall be mailed to: Clerk of the Court, United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois, P.O. Box 249, East St. Louis, Illinois 62202.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that if judgment is rendered against Plaintiff, and the judgment includes the payment of costs under Section 1915, Plaintiff will be required to pay the full amount of the costs, notwithstanding that his application to proceed *in forma pauperis* has been granted. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(f)(2)(A).

The Clerk is **DIRECTED** to mail a copy of this Memorandum and Order to Plaintiff and to the Trust Fund Officer at the Tamms Correctional Center ***upon entry of this Memorandum and Order.***

THRESHOLD REVIEW

This case is now before the Court for a preliminary review of the complaint pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, which provides, in pertinent part:

- (a) **Screening.**— The court shall review, before docketing, if feasible or, in any event, as soon as practicable after docketing, a complaint in a civil action in which a prisoner seeks redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity.
- (b) **Grounds for Dismissal.**— On review, the court shall identify cognizable claims or dismiss the complaint, or any portion of the complaint, if the complaint—
 - (1) is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim on which relief may be granted; or
 - (2) seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.

28 U.S.C. § 1915A. An action or claim is frivolous if “it lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact.” *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989). Upon careful review of the complaint and any supporting exhibits, the Court finds that none of the claims in the complaint may be dismissed

at this point in the litigation.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

Plaintiffs, an inmate at Tamms Correctional Center, the highest state security prison in Illinois, brings this action alleging denial of due process in the procedures used to keep him indefinitely confined in administrative segregation. He seeks damages and injunctive relief.

In brief, Plaintiff, an alleged gang member, states that Defendants determined that he was a gang member without providing him any process regarding that determination. As a result of the classification as a gang member, he was transferred to Tamms. Further, Defendants have kept him in administrative segregation indefinitely without any type of meaningful review of the continued placement in administrative segregation specifically or at Tamms generally. Plaintiff states that every 90 days Defendants do conduct an administrative “review” of his placement, but that review is a “sham” that never results in any changes despite good behavior. Plaintiff states that the procedures are designed to continuously confine him without any meaningful review or without providing him any information regarding his security status. His requests for a hearing or for further documentation regarding his placement have been denied. The only relief he has been offered is for him to renounce his gang affiliation. Plaintiff claims that his indefinite confinement in administrative segregation and at Tamms imposes an atypical and significant hardship in relation to the ordinary incidents of prison life, that it violates state law, and that, in essence, it punishes him for past disciplinary infractions without due process of law.

LEGAL STANDARDS

When a plaintiff brings an action under § 1983 for procedural due process violations, he must show that the state deprived him of a constitutionally protected interest in “life, liberty, or property”

without due process of law. *Zinerman v. Burch*, 494 U.S. 113, 125 (1990). An inmate has a due process liberty interest in being in the general prison population only if the conditions of his or her confinement impose “atypical and significant hardship...in relation to the ordinary incidents of prison life.” The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals has adopted an extremely stringent interpretation of *Sandin*. In this Circuit, a prisoner in disciplinary segregation at a state prison has a liberty interest in remaining in the general prison population only if the conditions under which he or she is confined are substantially more restrictive than administrative segregation at the most secure prison in that state. *Wagner v. Hanks*, 128 F.3d 1173, 1175 (7th Cir. 1997). If the inmate is housed at the most restrictive prison in the state, he or she must show that disciplinary segregation there is substantially more restrictive than administrative segregation at that prison. *Id.* In the view of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, after *Sandin* “the right to litigate disciplinary confinements has become vanishingly small.” *Id.* Indeed, “when the entire sanction is confinement in disciplinary segregation for a period that does not exceed the remaining term of the prisoner’s incarceration, it is difficult to see how after *Sandin* it can be made the basis of a suit complaining about a deprivation of liberty.” *Id.*

However, the Supreme Court recently determined that state inmates have a liberty interest under the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment in avoiding placement at the state’s “supermax” prison. *See Wilkinson v. Austin*, 545 U.S. 209 (2005). Based on *Wilkinson*, the Seventh Circuit determined that the conditions at Tamms, the Illinois “supermax” prison, may pose an atypical and significant hardship in relation to the ordinary incidents of prison life. *See Westefer v. Snyder*, 422 F.3d 570, 589-90 (7th Cir. 2005) (finding that the differences between the conditions at Tamms and the conditions at the Ohio State Penitentiary (analyzed in *Wilkinson*) are not “so

qualitatively different as to require a different characterization of the facility for purposes of due process analysis under *Wilkinson*").

Based on these recent opinions and Plaintiff's allegations, the Court cannot dismiss this claim at this point in the litigation.

DISPOSITION

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Plaintiff shall complete and submit a USM-285 form for *Defendants Tanner, Walker, and Delgato* within **THIRTY (30) DAYS** of the date of entry of this Memorandum and Order. The Clerk is **DIRECTED** to send Plaintiff 3 USM-285 forms with Plaintiff's copy of this Memorandum and Order. **Plaintiff is advised that service will not be made on a defendant until Plaintiff submits a properly completed USM-285 form for that defendant.**

The Clerk is **DIRECTED** to prepare Form 1A (Notice of Lawsuit and Request for Waiver of Service of Summons) and Form 1B (Waiver of Service of Summons) for *Defendants Tanner, Walker, and Delgato*. The Clerk shall forward those forms, USM-285 forms submitted by Plaintiff, and sufficient copies of the complaint to the United States Marshal for service.

The United States Marshal is **DIRECTED**, pursuant to Rule 4(c)(2) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, to serve process on *Defendants Tanner, Walker, and Delgato* in the manner specified by Rule 4(d)(2) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Process in this case shall consist of the complaint, applicable forms 1A and 1B, and this Memorandum and Order. For purposes of computing the passage of time under Rule 4(d)(2), the Court and all parties will compute time as of the date it is mailed by the Marshal, as noted on the USM-285 form.

With respect to former employees of Illinois Department of Corrections who no longer can be found at the work address provided by Plaintiff, the Department of Corrections shall furnish the

Marshal with the Defendant's last-known address upon issuance of a court order which states that the information shall be used only for purposes of effectuating service (or for proof of service, should a dispute arise) and any documentation of the address shall be retained only by the Marshal. Address information obtained from I.D.O.C. pursuant to this order shall not be maintained in the court file, nor disclosed by the Marshal.

The United States Marshal shall file returned waivers of service as well as any requests for waivers of service that are returned as undelivered as soon as they are received. If a waiver of service is not returned by a defendant within **THIRTY (30) DAYS** from the date of mailing the request for waiver, the United States Marshal shall:

- Request that the Clerk prepare a summons for that defendant who has not yet returned a waiver of service; the Clerk shall then prepare such summons as requested.
- Personally serve process and a copy of this Order upon the defendant pursuant to Rule 4 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and 28 U.S.C. § 566(c).
- Within ten days after personal service is effected, the United States Marshal shall file the return of service for the defendant, along with evidence of any attempts to secure a waiver of service of process and of the costs subsequently incurred in effecting service on said defendant. Said costs shall be enumerated on the USM-285 form and shall include the costs incurred by the Marshal's office for photocopying additional copies of the summons and complaint and for preparing new USM-285 forms, if required. Costs of service will be taxed against the personally served defendant in accordance with the provisions of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(d)(2) unless the defendant shows good cause for such failure.

Plaintiff is **ORDERED** to serve upon defendant or, if appearance has been entered by counsel, upon that attorney, a copy of every further pleading or other document submitted for consideration by this Court. He shall include with the original paper to be filed with the Clerk of the Court a certificate stating the date that a true and correct copy of any document was mailed to defendant or his counsel. Any paper received by a district judge or magistrate judge which has not

been filed with the Clerk or which fails to include a certificate of service will be disregarded by the Court.

Defendants are **ORDERED** to timely file an appropriate responsive pleading to the complaint, and shall not waive filing a reply pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(g).

Pursuant to Local Rule 72.1(a)(2), this cause is **REFERRED** to a United States Magistrate Judge for further pre-trial proceedings.

Further, this entire matter is hereby **REFERRED** to a United States Magistrate Judge for disposition, as contemplated by Local Rule 72.2(b)(2) and 28 U.S.C. § 636(c), *should all the parties consent to such a referral.*

Plaintiff is under a continuing obligation to keep the Clerk and each opposing party informed of any change in his whereabouts. This shall be done in writing and not later than seven (7) days after a transfer or other change in address occurs.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED: November 6, 2006

s/ WILLIAM D. STIEHL
DISTRICT JUDGE