

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
SOUTHEASTERN DIVISION**

SHIRLEY JEAN MCVAY,)
)
 Plaintiff,)
)
 v.) No. 1:15-CV-35-SNLJ
)
 JOHN C. SPIELMAN, et al.,)
)
 Defendants.)
)
)

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

This matter is before the Court on review of plaintiff's amended complaint [Docs. #10 and #11]. For the reasons set forth below, the Court will dismiss this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B), the Court must dismiss a complaint filed in forma pauperis if the action is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. An action is frivolous if it "lacks an arguable basis in either law or fact." Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 328 (1989). An action is malicious if it is undertaken for the purpose of harassing the named defendants and

not for the purpose of vindicating a cognizable right. *Spencer v. Rhodes*, 656 F. Supp. 458, 461-63 (E.D.N.C. 1987), aff'd 826 F.2d 1059 (4th Cir. 1987). An action fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted if it does not plead "enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face." *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007).

To determine whether an action fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, the Court must engage in a two-step inquiry. First, the Court must identify the allegations in the complaint that are not entitled to the assumption of truth. *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1950-51 (2009). These include "legal conclusions" and "[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action [that are] supported by mere conclusory statements." *Id.* at 1949. Second, the Court must determine whether the complaint states a plausible claim for relief. *Id.* at 1950-51. This is a "context-specific task that requires the reviewing court to draw on its judicial experience and common sense." *Id.* at 1950. The plaintiff is required to plead facts that show more than the "mere possibility of misconduct." *Id.* The Court must review the factual allegations in the complaint "to determine if they plausibly suggest an entitlement to relief." *Id.* at 1951. When faced with alternative explanations for the alleged misconduct, the Court may exercise its judgment in determining whether plaintiff's conclusion is the most plausible or whether it is more likely that no misconduct occurred. *Id.* at 1950-52.

Moreover, in reviewing a pro se complaint under § 1915(e)(2)(B), the Court must give the complaint the benefit of a liberal construction. *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972). The Court must also weigh all factual allegations in favor of the plaintiff, unless the facts alleged are clearly baseless. *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 32 (1992).

The Amended Complaint

Plaintiff, an inmate at the Women’s Eastern Reception Diagnostic Center, seeks monetary relief in this 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action against John C. Spielman (a Judge), Conner Henson (the Dunklin County Jail Supervisor), and Bob Holder (the Dunklin County Sheriff). Plaintiff alleges that Henson issued an arrest warrant “without a seal on it,” Judge Spielman failed to sign the warrant, and defendants failed to timely bring plaintiff before Judge Spielman.

Discussion

Plaintiff brings this action against defendants Spielman, Henson, and Holder in their official capacities. See *Egerdahl v. Hibbing Community College*, 72 F.3d 615, 619 (8th Cir. 1995) (where a complaint is silent about defendant’s capacity, Court must interpret the complaint as including official-capacity claims); *Nix v. Norman*, 879 F.2d 429, 431 (8th Cir. 1989). Naming a government official in his or her official capacity is the equivalent of naming the government entity that employs

the official. *Will v. Michigan Dep't of State Police*, 491 U.S. 58, 71 (1989). To state a claim against a municipality or a government official in his or her official capacity, plaintiff must allege that a policy or custom of the government entity is responsible for the alleged constitutional violation. *Monell v. Dep't of Social Services*, 436 U.S. 658, 690-91 (1978). The instant amended complaint does not contain any allegations that a policy or custom of a government entity was responsible for the alleged violations of plaintiff's constitutional rights. As a result, the amended complaint is legally frivolous and fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

As additional grounds for dismissing this action, the Court notes that the amended complaint is legally frivolous as to Judge John Spielman, because he is "entitled to absolute immunity for all judicial actions that are not 'taken in a complete absence of all jurisdiction.'" *Penn v. United States*, 335 F.3d 786, 789 (8th Cir. 2003) (quoting *Mireles v. Waco*, 502 U.S. 9, 11-12 (1991)); see also *Stump v. Sparkman*, 435 U.S. 349, 355-57 (1978). Moreover, to the extent that plaintiff is attempting to bring claims against Henson and Holder in their supervisory capacities, the Court notes that the respondeat superior theory is inapplicable in § 1983 suits. See *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1948 (2009); see also *Madewell v. Roberts*, 909 F.2d 1203, 1208 (8th Cir. 1990) (liability under § 1983 requires a

causal link to, and direct responsibility for, the alleged deprivation of rights); Martin v. Sargent, 780 F.2d 1334, 1338 (8th Cir. 1985) (claim not cognizable under § 1983 where plaintiff fails to allege defendant was personally involved in or directly responsible for incidents that injured plaintiff); Boyd v. Knox, 47 F.3d 966, 968 (8th Cir. 1995) (respondeat superior theory inapplicable in § 1983 suits).

For these reasons, this action will be dismissed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

Accordingly,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Clerk shall not issue process or cause process to issue, because the amended complaint is legally frivolous and fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

A separate Order of Dismissal shall accompany this Memorandum and Order.

Dated this 29th day of April, 2015.



UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE