

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

JOHNCHEZE L. SMITH,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
v.	)	No. 4:15-CV-416-TCM
	)	
CITY OF ST. LOUIS, et al.,	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	

**OPINION, MEMORANDUM AND ORDER**

This matter is before the Court on the application of Johncheze L. Smith (No. 11961) for leave to commence this action without payment of the required filing fee. After reviewing plaintiff’s financial information, the Court will grant the motion and assess an initial partial filing fee of \$8.67. In addition, and for the reasons set forth below, the Court will dismiss this action as legally frivolous.

**28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1)**

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1), a prisoner bringing a civil action in forma pauperis is required to pay the full amount of the filing fee. If the prisoner has insufficient funds in his prison account to pay the entire fee, the Court must assess and, when funds exist, collect an initial partial filing fee of 20 percent of the greater of (1) the average monthly deposits in the prisoner's account; or (2) the average monthly balance in the prisoner's account for the prior six-month period.

*See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). After payment of the initial partial filing fee, the prisoner is required to make monthly payments of 20 percent of the preceding month's income credited to the prisoner's account. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). The agency having custody of the prisoner will forward these monthly payments to the Clerk of Court each time the amount in the prisoner's account exceeds \$10, until the filing fee is fully paid. *Id.*

A review of plaintiff's inmate account statement indicates an average monthly deposit of \$43.33 and an average monthly account balance of \$17.59. Plaintiff has insufficient funds to pay the entire filing fee. Accordingly, the Court will assess an initial partial filing fee of \$8.67, which is 20 percent of plaintiff's average monthly deposit.

### **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, 51-52.

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 Complaint**

Plaintiff, an inmate at the St. Louis City Justice Center, seeks relief in this 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action against defendants City of St. Louis, Rick Noble (a police detective), and “2 Unknown Police Officers.” Plaintiff alleges that defendants violated his Fourth, Sixth, Eighth, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendment rights when they illegally arrested him at his home without probable cause or a warrant. In addition to monetary damages, plaintiff asks this Court to dismiss all pending state criminal charges against him and/or “exclu[de] all evidence as fruit of illegal seizures.”

### **Discussion**

After carefully reviewing plaintiff's allegations, the Court concludes that the complaint is legally frivolous. Plaintiff is suing Detective Rick Noble and the two unknown police officers in their official capacities as St. Louis City police officers. *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, such as defendant City of St. Louis, or a government official in his or her official capacity, a 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). Legal conclusions and threadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action that are supported by mere conclusory statements are not entitled to the assumption of truth. *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 129 S. Ct. at 1950-51. The instant complaint does not contain any non-conclusory allegations that a policy or custom of a government entity was responsible for the alleged violations of plaintiff's constitutional rights. As such, the Court will dismiss this action as legally frivolous and for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted as to all defendants.

In accordance with the foregoing,

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED** that plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed in forma pauperis [Doc. #2] is **GRANTED**.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that plaintiff shall pay an initial partial filing fee of \$8.67 within thirty (30) days from the date of this order. Plaintiff is instructed to make his remittance payable to "Clerk, United States District Court," and to include upon it: (1) his name; (2) his prison registration number; (3) the case number; and (4) that the remittance is for an original proceeding.

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

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED** that all remaining pending motions are **DENIED** as moot.

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

Dated this 23rd day of April, 2015



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HENRY EDWARD AUTREY  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE