

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

SHAWN BAILEY,

Plaintiff,

v.

BRITNEY COFFMAN, et al.,

Defendants.

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No. 4:15CV00968 ERW

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

Plaintiff, a prisoner, seeks leave to proceed in forma pauperis in this civil action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 for excessive force. Having reviewed plaintiff’s financial information, the Court assesses a partial initial filing fee of \$17, which is twenty percent of his average monthly deposit. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b).

Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e), the Court is required to dismiss a complaint filed in forma pauperis if it is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. To state a claim for relief under § 1983, a complaint must plead more than “legal conclusions” and “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action [that are] supported by mere conclusory statements.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1949 (2009). A plaintiff must demonstrate a plausible claim for relief, which is more than a “mere possibility of misconduct.”

Plaintiff alleges that on December 23, 2014, defendants Henson, Coffman, and Reed, all correctional officers, assaulted him while he was in handcuffs by pushing him into a wall and onto the ground. And he says that on January 9, 2015, defendant Brouk sprayed him with pepper spray for no reason while he was in his cell. Plaintiff claims that both Coffman and Brouk filed false charges against him resulting in his placement in administrative segregation.

Plaintiff did not specify whether he is suing defendants in their official or individual capacities. Where a “complaint is silent about the capacity in which [plaintiff] is suing defendant, [a district court must] interpret the complaint as including only official-capacity claims.” *Egerdahl v. Hibbing Community College*, 72 F.3d 615, 619 (8th Cir. 1995); *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 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 complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

Because plaintiff is proceeding pro se, and because his claims against defendants appear to have merit, the Court will allow him to file an amended complaint. Plaintiff shall have thirty days from the date of this Order to file an amended complaint. Plaintiff is warned that the filing of an amended complaint replaces the original complaint, and so he must include each and every one of his claims in the amended complaint. *E.g., In re Wireless Telephone Federal Cost Recovery Fees Litigation*, 396 F.3d 922, 928 (8th Cir. 2005). In order to sue defendants in their individual capacities, plaintiff must specifically say so in the complaint. If plaintiff fails to file an amended complaint within thirty days, the Court will dismiss this action without prejudice.

Accordingly,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that plaintiff's motion to proceed in forma pauperis [ECF No. 2] is **GRANTED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the plaintiff must pay an initial filing fee of \$17 within thirty (30) days of 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 plaintiff must file an amended complaint within thirty (30) days from the date of this Order.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk is directed to send plaintiff a prisoner civil rights complaint form.

So Ordered this 26th day of June, 2015.



E. RICHARD WEBBER
SENIOR UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE