

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

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LEWIS ENGLISH,

Plaintiff,

v.

BOARD OF FREEHOLDERS and  
CAMDEN COUNTY JAIL,

Defendants.

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HONORABLE JEROME B. SIMANDLE

Civil Action  
No. 16-6272 (JBS-AMD)

**OPINION**

APPEARANCES:

Lewis English, Plaintiff Pro Se  
601 Riverview Road  
Pennsauken, NJ 08110

**SIMANDLE, Chief District Judge:**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Plaintiff Lewis English seeks to bring a civil rights complaint pursuant to the 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against the Board of Freeholders and the Camden County Jail ("CCJ"). Complaint, Docket Entry 1.

At this time, the Court must review the complaint, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2) to determine whether it should be dismissed as frivolous or malicious, for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or because it seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. For the reasons set forth below, the Court will dismiss the

complaint with prejudice for failure to state a claim and because it is time-barred. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(b)(ii).

## **II. BACKGROUND**

Plaintiff alleges that he was detained in the CCJ at some unspecified time in 2012. Complaint § III. He further alleges that he was forced to sleep on the floor of his cell because of overcrowding, and that the Freeholders did not comply with the administrative code for overcrowding. *Id.*

## **III. STANDARD OF REVIEW**

Section 1915(e)(2) requires a court to review complaints prior to service in cases in which a plaintiff is proceeding *in forma pauperis*. The Court must *sua sponte* dismiss any claim that is frivolous, is malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. This action is subject to *sua sponte* screening for dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B) because Plaintiff is proceeding *in forma pauperis*.

To survive *sua sponte* screening for failure to state a claim, the complaint must allege "sufficient factual matter" to show that the claim is facially plausible. *Fowler v. UPMS Shadyside*, 578 F.3d 203, 210 (3d Cir. 2009) (citation omitted). "A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct

alleged." *Fair Wind Sailing, Inc. v. Dempster*, 764 F.3d 303, 308 n.3 (3d Cir. 2014) (quoting *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678). "[A] pleading that offers 'labels or conclusions' or 'a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do.'" *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Plaintiff seeks relief from CCJ for allegedly unconstitutional conditions of confinement. However, the complaint is barred by the statute of limitations.

New Jersey's two-year limitations period for personal injury governs § 1983 actions in federal court.<sup>1</sup> See *Wilson v. Garcia*, 471 U.S. 261, 276 (1985); *Dique v. N.J. State Police*, 603 F.3d 181, 185 (3d Cir. 2010). The accrual date of a § 1983 action is determined by federal law, however. *Wallace v. Kato*, 549 U.S. 384, 388 (2007); *Montanez v. Sec'y Pa. Dep't of Corr.*, 773 F.3d 472, 480 (3d Cir. 2014). "Under federal law, a cause of action accrues when the plaintiff knew or should have known of

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<sup>1</sup> "Although the running of the statute of limitations is ordinarily an affirmative defense, where that defense is obvious from the face of the complaint and no development of the record is necessary, a court may dismiss a time-barred complaint sua sponte under § 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) for failure to state a claim." *Ostuni v. Wa Wa's Mart*, 532 F. App'x 110, 111-12 (3d Cir. 2013) (per curiam).

the injury upon which the action is based." *Montanez*, 773 F.3d at 480 (internal quotation marks omitted).

Plaintiff states he was detained at CCJ in 2012. The allegedly unconstitutional conditions of confinement at CCJ would have been immediately apparent to Plaintiff at the time of his detention; therefore, the statute of limitations for Plaintiff's claims expired, at the latest, sometime in 2014. Plaintiff filed this case too late and it will be dismissed. As there are no grounds for equitable tolling of the statute of limitations,<sup>2</sup> the complaint will be dismissed with prejudice. *Ostuni v. Wa Wa's Mart*, 532 F. App'x 110, 112 (3d Cir. 2013) (per curiam) (affirming dismissal with prejudice due to expiration of statute of limitations).

#### V. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated above, the complaint is dismissed with prejudice for failure to state a claim. An appropriate order follows.

October 31, 2016

Date

s/ Jerome B. Simandle

JEROME B. SIMANDLE

Chief U.S. District Judge

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<sup>2</sup> Equitable tolling "is only appropriate '(1) where the defendant has actively misled the plaintiff respecting the plaintiff's cause of action; (2) where the plaintiff in some extraordinary way has been prevented from asserting his or her rights; or (3) where the plaintiff has timely asserted his or her rights mistakenly in the wrong forum.'" *Omar v. Blackman*, 590 F. App'x 162, 166 (3d Cir. 2014) (quoting *Santos ex rel. Beato v. United States*, 559 F.3d 189, 197 (3d Cir. 2009)).