

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

CORNELL L. GARNETT,

Plaintiff,

v.

CAMDEN COUNTY JAIL; GLOUCESTER
COUNTY JAIL,

Defendants.

HONORABLE JEROME B. SIMANDLE

Civil Action
No. 16-7132 (JBS-AMD)

OPINION

APPEARANCES:

Cornell L. Garnett, Plaintiff Pro Se
1037 Langham Ave.
Camden, NJ 08103

SIMANDLE, Chief District Judge:

I. INTRODUCTION

Plaintiff Cornell L. Garnett seeks to bring a civil rights complaint pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against the Camden County Jail ("CCJ") and Gloucester County Jail ("GCJ"). 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. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(b)(ii).

II. BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleges that he was confined in the CCJ from 1995 to 2013 and states that he has been "going back and forth to the County Jail for traffic violations and other offenses."

Complaint § III. He states: "During the periods of incarceration I have slept on the floor for days or even sometimes months, by a toilet where fellow inmates urinated frequently urine used to splash out the toilet onto my blanket and mattress in which was not washed or replaced. Shoulder and back pains still exist from sleeping on thin mattresses, warts was developed in the head from the unsanitary environment. Skin rash has also been a continuous problem since taking showers in the county jail." *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). "[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 monetary damages from CCJ and GCJ for allegedly unconstitutional conditions of confinement. Primarily, the complaint must be dismissed as the CCJ and GCJ are not "state actors" within the meaning of § 1983. See *Crawford v. McMillian*, 660 F. App'x 113, 116 (3d Cir. 2016) ("[T]he prison is not an entity subject to suit under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.") (citing *Fischer v. Cahill*, 474 F.2d 991, 992 (3d Cir. 1973)). Accordingly, the claims against CCJ and GCJ must be dismissed with prejudice.

Generally, "plaintiffs who file complaints subject to dismissal under [§ 1915] should receive leave to amend unless amendment would be inequitable or futile." *Grayson v. Mayview State Hosp.*, 293 F.3d 103, 114 (3d Cir. 2002). This Court denies leave to amend at this time as Plaintiff's complaint is barred by the statute of limitations, which is governed by New Jersey's two-year limitations period for personal injury.¹ 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 the injury upon which the action is based." *Montanez*, 773 F.3d at 480 (internal quotation marks omitted). Plaintiff states the events giving rise to his claims occurred from 1995 to 2013. The allegedly unconstitutional conditions of confinement at CCJ or GCJ would have been immediately apparent to Plaintiff at the time of his

¹ "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*).

detention; therefore, the statute of limitations for Plaintiff's claims expired, at the latest, in 2015. As there are no grounds for equitable tolling of the statute of limitations,² 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.

February 24, 2017
Date

s/ Jerome B. Simandle
JEROME B. SIMANDLE
Chief U.S. District Judge

² 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)).