

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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WILLIAM JONES, *pro se*, :
:
Plaintiff, :
:
-against- :
:
THE NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT; :
ANDREW CUOMO, Attorney General of the :
State of New York, :
:
Defendants. :
-----X

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER
10-CV-3198 (DLI)

DORA L. IRIZARRY, U.S. District Judge:

Plaintiff William Jones, currently incarcerated at Rikers Island, filed this *pro se* action on July 7, 2010. Plaintiff’s request to proceed *in forma pauperis* pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a) is granted. For the reasons discussed below, plaintiff is granted thirty (30) days from the entry date of this Order, *i.e.*, until November 5, 2010, to file an amended complaint. The issuance of a summons and service of the instant complaint are held in abeyance pending the filing of an amended complaint. Should plaintiff fail to replead in a timely manner, and/or the amended complaint fails to correct the deficiencies of the instant complaint or otherwise fails to satisfy pleading or jurisdictional requirements, the complaint will be dismissed with prejudice.

DISCUSSION

In reviewing plaintiff’s complaint, the court is mindful that, “a *pro se* complaint, however inartfully pleaded, must be held to less stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers.” *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007). Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, a district court “shall review, before docketing, if feasible or, in any event, as soon as practicable after docketing, a complaint in a civil action in which a prisoner seeks redress from a governmental entity or employee

of a governmental entity.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. Upon review, a district court shall dismiss a prisoner complaint *sua sponte* if the complaint is “frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief.” *Id.* § 1915A (b).

Pursuant to Rule 8 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, plaintiff must provide a short, plain statement of claim against each defendant named so that they have adequate notice of the claims against them. *See Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 129 S.Ct. 1937, 1949 (2009) (Rule 8 “demands more than an unadorned, the-defendant-unlawfully-harmed-me accusation.”). Plaintiff must provide facts sufficient to allow each defendant to have a fair understanding of what the plaintiff is complaining about and to know whether there is a legal basis for recovery. *See Twombly v. Bell*, 425 F.3d 99, 106 (2d Cir. 2005) (defining “fair notice” as “that which will enable the adverse party to answer and prepare for trial, allow the application of res judicata, and identify the nature of the case so that it may be assigned the proper form of trial.”) (quoting *Simmons v. Abruzzo*, 49 F.3d 83, 86 (2d Cir. 1995)); *Ricciuti v. New York City Transit Auth.*, 941 F.2d 119, 123 (2d Cir. 1991).

Plaintiff’s complaint contains absolutely no facts, allegations or legal theories to support his claim that various New York Penal Law statutes are unconstitutional, nor does the complaint explain how those statutes harmed him, or how the defendants are involved in this matter. Therefore, defendants are unable to respond meaningfully to the complaint. While plaintiff’s complaint could thus be dismissed, plaintiff is granted thirty (30) days from the date of this Order, *i.e.*, until November 5, 2010, to file an amended complaint. The amended complaint must be captioned as an “Amended Complaint,” name all individual defendants in the caption, and bear the same docket number as this Order. The amended complaint must also comply with Rule 8(a) of the Federal Rules

of Civil Procedure. Plaintiff must name as proper defendants those individuals who have some personal involvement in the actions he alleges in the amended complaint and provide the dates and locations for each relevant event. If plaintiff does not know the names of the individuals, he may identify each of them as John Doe or Jane Doe. To the best of his ability, plaintiff must also set forth a legal basis to support his claims. Plaintiff is further directed to state if he has a pending state court criminal action, and the current status of those proceedings.

All further proceedings shall be stayed for thirty (30) days, but not later than November 5, 2010. If plaintiff fails to amend his complaint by November 5, 2010, as directed by this Order, and/or the amended complaint fails to correct the deficiencies of the instant complaint or otherwise fails to satisfy pleading or jurisdictional requirements, the complaint will be dismissed with prejudice. For the convenience of plaintiff, and in light of his *pro se* status, instructions on how to amend a complaint are attached to this Order. The issuance of a summons and service of the instant complaint are held in abeyance pending the filing of an amended complaint. The court certifies pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915 (a)(3) that any appeal from this order would not be taken in good faith and therefore *in forma pauperis* status is denied for purpose of an appeal. *See Coppedge v. United States*, 369 U.S. 438, 444-45 (1962).

SO ORDERED.

/s/
DORA L. IRIZARRY
United States District Judge

Dated: Brooklyn, New York
October 6, 2010

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
PRO SE OFFICE
U.S. COURTHOUSE
225 CADMAN PLAZA EAST
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11201

HOW TO AMEND YOUR COMPLAINT

If you have forgotten to state an important matter in your complaint, you discover something new after you filed your complaint, you want to add a defendant, or you want to insert the true name of a “John Doe” defendant, you may be able to file an amended complaint. An amended complaint does not just add to the first complaint. Once you file an amended complaint it entirely replaces your original complaint.

Amendments to a complaint are governed by Rule 15(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Rule 15(a) provides that:

A party may amend the party’s pleading **once** as a matter of course at any time before a responsive pleading is served or, if the pleading is one to which no responsive pleading is permitted and the action has not been placed upon the trial calendar, the party may so amend it at any time within 20 days after it is served. Otherwise a party may amend the party’s pleading only by leave of court or by written consent of the adverse party; and leave shall be freely given when justice so requires. A party shall plead in response to an amended pleading within the time remaining for response to the original pleading or within 10 days after service of the amended pleading, whichever period may be the longer, unless the court otherwise orders.

This means that if the defendant has not yet filed an answer to your complaint, you can file one amended complaint without permission of the Court. If the defendant has filed a motion to dismiss but has not filed an answer, you are still entitled to file one amended complaint without permission. (You are only permitted to file one amended complaint before defendant files an answer; if you wish to file a second amended complaint before defendant files an answer, you must obtain defendant’s consent or you must obtain permission from the Court). However, if the defendant has already filed his answer to your complaint, you must get written consent from the defendant or permission of the Court before amending your complaint. If the defendant agrees in writing that you can file an amended complaint, you must ask the judge to write “So Ordered” on the written consent, indicating that the judge has approved the consent. If the defendant does not give you written consent, you can ask permission from the Court by filing a motion to amend the complaint and including a copy of the proposed amended complaint with your motion papers. Instructions for preparing a motion are attached and are available separately.

If you file an amended complaint. It **must** be captioned as an “**Amended Complaint.**”

FILING AND SERVING THE AMENDED COMPLAINT

SERVICE OF THE AMENDED COMPLAINT BEFORE THE ORIGINAL COMPLAINT HAS BEEN SERVED

If you decide to amend your complaint before defendant has been served with your original complaint and summons, you should serve the amended complaint on defendant and file the original amended complaint with the Pro Se Office as follows:

1. Make copies of your amended complaint.
2. Keep one copy for your own records.
3. File the original of your amended complaint with the Pro Se Office.
4. If you have not added new defendants in your amended complaint, use the summons that was originally issued by the Court.
5. Have a copy of the summons and a copy of the amended complaint served on each defendant by someone who is over eighteen and is not a party to the action. The original summons with the seal of the court embossed on it must be returned to the Court, so do not serve the original summons on any defendant.
6. Have the person who serves the summons and amended complaint on each defendant complete an affidavit or affirmation of service of process form.
7. Make a copy of the affidavit or affirmation of service of process and keep it for your own records.
8. Attach the original affidavit or affirmation of service to the original summons.
9. File the original summons and the affidavit or affirmation of service of process with the Pro Se Office.

SERVICE OF THE AMENDED COMPLAINT AFTER THE ORIGINAL COMPLAINT HAS BEEN SERVED ON ALL DEFENDANTS

If you decide to amend your complaint after the defendant has been properly served with your original complaint and summons (and you have not added any new defendants in your amended complaint), you should take the following steps:

1. Make copies of your amended complaint.

2. Keep one copy for your own records.
3. Send a copy of your amended complaint to the attorney for each defendant by ordinary first-class mail.
4. Complete an affidavit or affirmation of service of process form stating that the amended complaint was mailed to each defendant.
5. Make a copy of the affidavit or affirmation of service of process and keep it for your own records.
6. File the original amended complaint and your original affidavit or affirmation of service of process with the Pro Se Office.

DELIVERY OF THE AMENDED COMPLAINT AFTER THE ORIGINAL COMPLAINT HAS BEEN SERVED ON SOME DEFENDANTS BUT NOT ON OTHERS

If you decide to amend your complaint after some defendants have been served with your original complaint and summons but before other defendants have been served (or you have added new defendants in your amended complaint), you should take the following steps:

1. Make copies of your amended complaint.
2. Keep one copy for your own records.
3. Send a copy of your amended complaint by ordinary first-class mail to each defendant who has already been served.
4. Complete an affidavit or affirmation of service of process form stating that the amended complaint and summons was mailed to each defendant.
5. Make a copy of the affidavit or affirmation of service of process and keep it for your own records.
6. File the original amended complaint and original affidavit or affirmation of service of process with the Pro Se Office.
7. If you have not added new defendants in your amended complaint, you must serve the amended complaint on the defendant who has not yet been properly served. If you have added new defendants, the Court will issue an amended summons which must be served with the amended complaint. If you are adding defendants, you must bring this to the attention of the Pro Se Writ Clerk.

8. Have a copy of the amended summons and a copy of the amended complaint served pursuant to Rule 4 of the Federal Rules on any defendant who was not previously served with the original complaint.
9. Have the person who served the amended summons and the amended complaint to each of the new defendants complete an affidavit or affirmation of service of process form.
10. Make a copy of the affidavit or affirmation of service of process.
11. Attach the affidavit or affirmation of service of process to the amended summons.
12. File the original amended summons and the original affidavit or affirmation of service of process with the Pro Se Office.

If you have questions regarding any of the procedures listed above, please contact the Pro Se Office at 718-613-2665.

**Tara D. Hunter-Hicks
and
Ralph Vega, Jr.
Pro Se Writ Clerks**

**Attn: Pro Se Office
United States District Court
for the Eastern District of New
York
225 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, NY 11201**

8:30AM - 5:00PM

(718) 613-2665