

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN**

ROBERT PHONEPRASITH and A.P.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

DAVID A. CLARKE, JR.,

Defendant.

Case No. 17-CV-970-JPS

ORDER

Plaintiff Robert Phoneprasith, who is incarcerated at Dodge Correctional Institution, proceeds in this matter *pro se*. He filed a complaint alleging that Defendant violated his constitutional rights. (Docket #1). This matter comes before the court on Plaintiff's petition to proceed without prepayment of the filing fee (*in forma pauperis*). (Docket #2). Plaintiff has been assessed and paid an initial partial filing fee of \$23.78. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1).

The court shall screen complaints brought by prisoners seeking relief against a governmental entity or an officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). The court must dismiss a complaint or portion thereof if the prisoner has raised claims that are legally "frivolous or malicious," that fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or that seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. *Id.* § 1915A(b).

A claim is legally frivolous when it lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact. *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 31 (1992); *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989); *Hutchinson ex rel. Baker v. Spink*, 126 F.3d 895, 900 (7th Cir. 1997). The court may, therefore, dismiss a claim as frivolous where

it is based on an indisputably meritless legal theory or where the factual contentions are clearly baseless. *Neitzke*, 490 U.S. at 327. “Malicious,” although sometimes treated as a synonym for “frivolous,” “is more usefully construed as intended to harass.” *Lindell v. McCallum*, 352 F.3d 1107, 1109-10 (7th Cir. 2003) (citations omitted).

To state a cognizable claim under the federal notice pleading system, the plaintiff is required to provide a “short and plain statement of the claim showing that [he] is entitled to relief[.]” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). It is not necessary for the plaintiff to plead specific facts and his statement need only “give the defendant fair notice of what the . . . claim is and the grounds upon which it rests.” *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007) (quoting *Conley v. Gibson*, 355 U.S. 41, 47 (1957)). However, a complaint that offers mere “labels and 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 *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555). To state a claim, a complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, “that is plausible on its face.” *Id.* (quoting *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 570). “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.” *Id.* (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 556). The complaint’s allegations “must be enough to raise a right to relief above the speculative level.” *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555 (citation omitted).

In considering whether a complaint states a claim, courts should follow the principles set forth in *Twombly* by first, “identifying pleadings that, because they are no more than conclusions, are not entitled to the assumption of truth.” *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 679. Legal conclusions must be supported by factual allegations. *Id.* If there are well-pleaded factual

allegations, the court must, second, “assume their veracity and then determine whether they plausibly give rise to an entitlement to relief.” *Id.*

To state a claim for relief under 42 U.S.C. Section 1983, a plaintiff must allege that: 1) he was deprived of a right secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States; and 2) the deprivation was visited upon him by a person or persons acting under color of state law. *Buchanan-Moore v. County of Milwaukee*, 570 F.3d 824, 827 (7th Cir. 2009) (citing *Kramer v. Village of North Fond du Lac*, 384 F.3d 856, 861 (7th Cir. 2004)); see also *Gomez v. Toledo*, 446 U.S. 635, 640 (1980). The court is obliged to give the plaintiff’s *pro se* allegations, “however inartfully pleaded,” a liberal construction. See *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007) (quoting *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976)).

Plaintiff’s complaint presents claims regarding denial of visitation for his child and inadequate law library access while he was incarcerated in the Milwaukee County Jail. See *generally* (Docket #1). Without addressing the merits of the claims, two initial problems are apparent. First, Plaintiff has named his daughter, A.P., as a co-plaintiff. The Court has used her initials because it is not clear whether she is a minor. Even if she were an adult, A.P. did not sign the complaint, and thus cannot be a plaintiff in this action. See Fed. R. Civ. P. 11(a). Second, since the filing of his complaint, Plaintiff has offered motions to amend or supplement his pleading. (Docket #8 and #10). Piecemeal amendments to a pleading are not permitted; Plaintiff’s complaint must be contained in one complete document. The motions will be denied.

The Court will permit Plaintiff the opportunity to correct these deficiencies in his pleading. If he chooses to offer an amended complaint, Plaintiff must do so no later than **September 6, 2017**. The amended

complaint supersedes the prior complaint and must be complete in itself without reference to the original complaint. See *Duda v. Bd. of Educ. of Franklin Park Pub. Sch. Dist. No. 84*, 133 F.3d 1054, 1056-57 (7th Cir. 1998). In *Duda*, the Seventh Circuit emphasized that in such instances, the “prior pleading is in effect withdrawn as to all matters not restated in the amended pleading[.]” *Id.* at 1057 (citation omitted); see also *Pintado v. Miami-Dade Housing Agency*, 501 F.3d 1241, 1243 (11th Cir. 2007) (“As a general matter, [a]n amended pleading supersedes the former pleading; the original pleading is abandoned by the amendment, and is no longer a part of the pleader’s averments against his adversary.”) (quoting *Dresdner Bank AG, Dresdner Bank AG in Hamburg v. M/V OLYMPIA VOYAGER*, 463 F.3d 1210, 1215 (11th Cir. 2006)). If an amended complaint is received, it will be screened pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.

Accordingly,

IT IS ORDERED that the plaintiff’s motion for leave to proceed without prepayment of the filing fee (*in forma pauperis*) (Docket #2) be and the same is hereby **GRANTED**;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that on or before **September 6, 2017**, the plaintiff shall file an amended pleading curing the defects in the original complaint as described herein;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Plaintiff’s motions for leave to amend the complaint (Docket #8 and #10) be and the same are hereby **DENIED**;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the agency having custody of the prisoner shall collect from his institution trust account the balance of the filing fee by collecting monthly payments from the plaintiff’s prison trust account in an amount equal to 20% of the preceding month’s income

credited to the prisoner's trust account and forwarding payments to the Clerk of Court each time the amount in the account exceeds \$10 in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). The payments shall be clearly identified by the case name and number assigned to this action. If the plaintiff is transferred to another institution, county, state, or federal, the transferring institution shall forward a copy of this Order along with plaintiff's remaining balance to the receiving institution;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a copy of this order be sent to the officer in charge of the agency where the inmate is confined; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, pursuant to the Prisoner E-Filing Program, the plaintiff shall submit all correspondence and case filings to institution staff, who will scan and e-mail documents to the Court. If the plaintiff is no longer incarcerated at a Prisoner E-Filing institution, he will be required to submit all correspondence and legal material to:

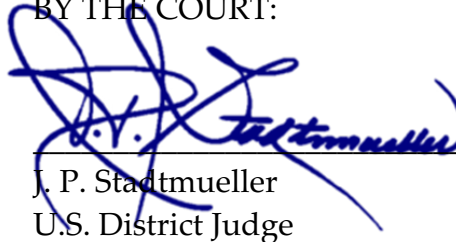
Office of the Clerk
United States District Court
Eastern District of Wisconsin
362 United States Courthouse
517 E. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

PLEASE DO NOT MAIL ANYTHING DIRECTLY TO THE COURT'S CHAMBERS. It will only delay the processing of the matter.

The plaintiff is further advised that failure to make a timely submission may result in the dismissal of this action for failure to prosecute. In addition, the parties must notify the Clerk of Court of any change of address. Failure to do so could result in orders or other information not being timely delivered, thus affecting the legal rights of the parties.

Dated at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, this 16th day of August, 2017.

BY THE COURT:



J. P. Stadtmueller
U.S. District Judge