

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

<b>PRESTON DENT,</b>	:	<b>Civil No. 1:21-CV-1814</b>
	:	
<b>Plaintiff</b>	:	
	:	<b>(Judge Rambo)</b>
<b>v.</b>	:	
	:	<b>(Magistrate Judge Carlson)</b>
	:	
<b>SAMIRA RANDOLPH,</b>	:	
	:	
<b>Defendant</b>	:	

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

**I. Statement of Facts and of the Case**

This matter has been referred to us for further consideration of the case following the dismissal of the plaintiff’s initial *pro se* complaint. The plaintiff, who alleged that he is a resident of Oberlin, Pennsylvania, sued the defendant, who lives in Steelton, Pennsylvania, asserting that the defendant “will cause my life hell,” and “is praying to destroy me and stop me from making money.” (Doc. 1). Thus, the gravamen of Dent’s complaint was a claim of defamation and other state law torts brought by one Pennsylvania resident against another Pennsylvania resident. We conditionally granted the plaintiff leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* and directed that the lodged *pro se* complaint be deemed filed. However, we found that the complaint as drafted failed to state a claim upon which relief can be granted in federal court since it did not implicate the court’s federal question jurisdiction and

on the face of the complaint there was no diversity of citizenship. Therefore, we recommended that the court dismiss this complaint without prejudice to the plaintiff attempting to file an amended complaint in this court or attempting to file this action in the appropriate Court of Common Pleas. (Doc. 6).

On November 23, 2021, the district court adopted this recommendation, ordered Dent to file an amended complaint within 20 days if wished to try to maintain this case in federal court. The district court then remanded this case back to us for further consideration. (Docs. 7 and 8). The deadline for action on Dent's part has now passed and the plaintiff has not filed an amended complaint as he was directed to do by the district court. On these facts, it is recommended that this federal case now be dismissed with prejudice. Of course, Dent remains free to pursue this state law claim in state court if he chooses to do so.

## **II. Discussion**

While our initial screening analysis called for dismissal of this action, the Court provided the plaintiff a final opportunity to further litigate this matter by endeavoring to promptly file a proper amended complaint. Having concluded that this *pro se* complaint was flawed, we followed this course recognizing that in civil rights cases *pro se* plaintiffs often should be afforded an opportunity to amend a complaint before the complaint is dismissed in its entirety, see Fletcher-Hardee Corp. v. Pote Concrete Contractors, 482 F.3d 247, 253 (3d Cir. 2007), unless it is

clear that granting further leave to amend would be futile, or result in undue delay.

Alston v. Parker, 363 F.3d 229, 235 (3d Cir. 2004).

Thus, in this case, the plaintiff was given this opportunity to further amend his complaint, but has now forfeited this opportunity through his inaction. In this situation, where a wholly deficient complaint is dismissed without prejudice but the *pro se* plaintiff fails to timely amend the complaint, it is well within the court's discretion to dismiss the complaint with prejudice given the plaintiff's refusal to comply with court directives. Indeed, this precise course was endorsed by the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Pruden v. SCI Camp Hill, 252 F. App'x 436, 438 (3d Cir. 2007). In Pruden, the appellate court addressed how district judges should exercise discretion when a *pro se* plaintiff ignores instructions to amend a complaint. In terms that are equally applicable here the court observed that:

The District Court dismissed the complaint without prejudice and allowed [the *pro se* plaintiff] twenty days in which to file an amended complaint. [The *pro se* plaintiff] failed to do so. Because [the *pro se* plaintiff] decided not to amend his complaint in accordance with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, we conclude that the District Court did not abuse its discretion when it dismissed [the *pro se* plaintiff's] complaint with prejudice. See In re Westinghouse Securities Litigation, 90 F.3d 696, 704 (3d Cir.1996). The District Court expressly warned [the *pro se* plaintiff] that the failure to amend his complaint would result in dismissal of the action with prejudice. "[I]t is difficult to conceive of what other course the court could have followed." Id. (quoting Spain v. Gallegos, 26 F.3d 439, 455 (3d Cir.1994)).

Pruden v. SCI Camp Hill, 252 F. App'x 436, 438 (3d Cir. 2007).

Therefore, consistent with the prior practice of this court, it is recommended that the complaint now be dismissed with prejudice as frivolous without further leave to amend. See, e.g., Wicks v. Barkley, 3:12-CV-02203, 2013 WL 5937066 (M.D. Pa. Nov. 4, 2013)(Mariani, J.); Davis v. Superintendent, SCI Huntingdon, 3:12-CV-01935, 2013 WL 6837796 (M.D. Pa. Dec. 23, 2013)(Mariani, J.).

### **III. Recommendation**

Accordingly, for the foregoing reasons, IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Plaintiff's complaint be dismissed with prejudice as frivolous for failure to state a claim and this case be closed.

The Parties are further placed on notice that pursuant to Local Rule 72.3:

Any party may object to a magistrate judge's proposed findings, recommendations or report addressing a motion or matter described in 28 U.S.C. § 636 (b)(1)(B) or making a recommendation for the disposition of a prisoner case or a habeas corpus petition within fourteen (14) days after being served with a copy thereof. Such party shall file with the clerk of court, and serve on the magistrate judge and all parties, written objections which shall specifically identify the portions of the proposed findings, recommendations or report to which objection is made and the basis for such objections. The briefing requirements set forth in Local Rule 72.2 shall apply. A judge shall make a de novo determination of those portions of the report or specified proposed findings or recommendations to which objection is made and may accept, reject, or modify, in whole or in part, the findings or recommendations made by the magistrate judge. The judge, however, need conduct a new hearing only in his or her discretion or where required by law, and may consider the record developed before the magistrate judge, making his or her own determination on the basis of that record. The judge may also receive further evidence, recall witnesses or recommit the matter to the magistrate judge with instructions.

Submitted this 17<sup>th</sup> day of December 2021.

*S/Martin C. Carlson*

Martin C. Carlson

United States Magistrate Judge