

MAY 27 2025

David J. Smith
Clerk

CONFIDENTIAL

Before the Chief Judge of the
Eleventh Judicial Circuit

Judicial Complaint No. 11-25-90081

ORDER

An individual has filed a Complaint against a United States magistrate judge under the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act of 1980, 28 U.S.C. §§ 351–364, and the Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings of the Judicial Conference of the United States.

Background

The record establishes that a pseudonymous plaintiff filed a civil complaint against one defendant. The Subject Judge entered an order directing the plaintiff to file an amended complaint naming herself as the plaintiff or a motion for leave to proceed under a pseudonym. The plaintiff then filed, among other things, a motion to recuse the Subject Judge, which the Subject Judge denied. The presiding district judge entered an order dismissing the plaintiff's complaint as a shotgun pleading. The plaintiff's appeal was clerically dismissed for want of prosecution.

Complaint

Complainant alleges the Subject Judge “violated judicial can[on]s,” violated her due process rights, made her “suffer,” “catered to a convicted felon,” violated a ruling issued by this Court, violated the Americans with Disabilities Act, retaliated against her, and “basically said that I don’t matter.” She alleges the Subject Judge “used” the United States Marshals to “gaslight me and basically tell me not to come to the courthouse” and to intimidate and silence her. She also alleges the Subject Judge delayed taking action in the above-described case.

Next, Complainant alleges the Subject Judge “had a private lunch in chamber[s] with lawyers only no public no pro[se] only allowed lawyers that may go before her, which is a violation of judicial can[on]s.” She states that the Subject Judge may have had private communications and exchanged telephone numbers with those lawyers, but that she “can’t prove that.” She contends the lunch was improper and called the Subject Judge’s impartiality into question. She attached a screenshot from a website of a chapter of the Federal Bar Association about a “Chambers Lunch” with the Subject Judge. The website stated, “Chambers Lunches are small-group lunches intended to facilitate meaningful interaction between judges in the [division of a certain district] and members of the [chapter of the Federal Bar Association].” The website also states the event was free to attend for members of the Federal Bar Association and that tickets were limited.

Discussion

Judicial-Conduct Rule 4(b)(1) provides in part that “[c]ognizable misconduct does not include an allegation that calls into question the correctness of a judge’s ruling, including a failure to recuse.” The Commentary on Rule 4 explains the rationale for this rule as follows:

Rule 4(b)(1) tracks the Act, 28 U.S.C. § 352(b)(1)(A)(ii), in excluding from the definition of misconduct allegations “[d]irectly related to the merits of a decision or procedural ruling.” This exclusion preserves the independence of judges in the exercise of judicial authority by ensuring that the complaint procedure is not used to collaterally call into question the substance of a judge’s decision or procedural ruling. Any allegation that calls into question the correctness of an official decision or procedural ruling of a judge — without more — is merits-related.

Furthermore, Judicial-Conduct Rule 4(b)(2) provides that cognizable misconduct does not include “an allegation about delay in rendering a decision or ruling, unless the allegation concerns an improper motive in delaying a particular decision or habitual delay in a significant number of unrelated cases.” The “Commentary on Rule 4” states that “a complaint of delay in a single case is excluded as merits-related.”

The Complaint fails to present a basis for a finding of misconduct. To the extent Complainant’s allegations concern the substance of the Subject Judge’s official actions, findings, rulings, and

orders in the above-described case, the allegations are directly related to the merits of the Subject Judge's decisions or procedural rulings. Judicial-Conduct Rule 11(c)(1)(B). Complainant's remaining claims are based on allegations lacking sufficient evidence to raise an inference that the Subject Judge acted with an illicit or improper motive, was biased or otherwise not impartial, or otherwise engaged in misconduct. Judicial-Conduct Rule 11(c)(1)(D).

With respect to Complainant's claim that the Subject Judge improperly had lunch in her chambers with attorneys, this claim is also based on allegations lacking sufficient evidence to raise an inference that the Subject Judge engaged in misconduct. Canon 4A(1) of the Code of Conduct for United States Judges notes that a judge may engage in extrajudicial activities and may "speak, write, lecture, teach, and participate in other activities concerning the law, the legal system, and the administration of justice." *See also Guide to Judiciary Policy*, Vol. 2B, Ch. 2, Advisory Opinion No. 93, "Extrajudicial Activities Related to the Law" (noting that "judicial participation in law-related activities is actively encouraged").

For these reasons, this Complaint is **DISMISSED**.

/s/ William H. Pryor Jr.
Chief Judge