

SEP 30 2022

David J. Smith  
Clerk

CONFIDENTIAL

Before the Chief Judge of the  
Eleventh Judicial Circuit

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Judicial Complaint No. 11-22-90114

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**ORDER**

An individual has filed a Complaint against a United States district 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 shows that in August 2022 Complainant filed in the district court a “Motion for a Stay Pending Appeal” that named multiple defendants and included various documents. The same day, a Clerk’s Notice was entered on the docket instructing Complainant to pay the filing fee within 24 hours. A few days later, the Subject Judge issued an order stating Complainant initiated the case without paying the filing fee or filing a motion to proceed *in forma pauperis*, stated the clerk had notified Complainant of the

deficiency and advised him to pay the fee within 24 hours, and directed Complainant to either pay the fee or file a motion to proceed *in forma pauperis* before August 19, 2022.

On August 17, 2022, Complainant moved to recuse the Subject Judge on the ground that he was under investigation by this Court and the United States Attorney General's Office, that the Subject Judge lied under oath by stating Complainant had been notified of his failure to pay the fee, and that he had submitted a motion to proceed with the case initiation documents. On August 22, 2022, the Subject Judge entered an order dismissing the case without prejudice due to Complainant's failure to pay the fees or to file a motion to proceed *in forma pauperis*. The Subject Judge noted that he had carefully reviewed the docket and concluded that no motion to proceed *in forma pauperis* had been filed.

### **Complaint**

Complainant contends the Subject Judge should have recused himself from the case because he is under investigation by this Court and the United States Attorney General. He also alleges the Subject Judge lied under oath by stating Complainant was notified of his failure to pay the fee and to file a motion to proceed, and he asserts that he submitted a motion to proceed *in forma pauperis* with the case initiation documents. He attached documents to his Complaint.

## 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.

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, rulings, findings, 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 lied or otherwise engaged in misconduct. Judicial-Conduct Rule 11(c)(1)(D). For these reasons, this Complaint is **DISMISSED**.

/s/ William H. Pryor Jr.  
Chief Judge