UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

STEPHEN CUMMINGS,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff,	)	
	)	
v.	)	Civil Action No. 1:26-cv-02302 (UNA)
	)	
	)	
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *et al*.,	)	
	)	
Defendants.	)	

MEMORANDUM OPINION

Currently before the Court is Plaintiff's *pro se* Complaint, ECF No. 1, and Application for Leave to Proceed *in forma pauperis*, ECF No. 3. The Court grants Plaintiff's IFP Application, and for the reasons discussed below, it dismisses this matter without prejudice.

Plaintiff, a resident of New York, sues the Department of Justice, director James Cameron, Lightstorm Entertainment Inc., NewsCorp LLC, Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., Viacom Inc., Paramount Pictures Film Corp., Paramount Home Entertainment Inc., Sony Inc. (USA), and Sony Pictures Film Corp. The prolix Complaint totals 95 pages and presents rambling allegations rooted in Plaintiff's belief in a widespread government and media conspiracy to harm him emotionally and physically, to commit copyright infringement, and to use, without consent, his name, likeness, image, words, photographs, ideas, history, and more, associated with the movie "Titanic," which Plaintiff contends is based on his true life story. He seeks damages and equitable relief.

Pro se litigants must comply with the Federal and Local Rules of Civil Procedure. *See Jarrell v. Tisch*, 656 F. Supp. 237, 239–40 (D.D.C. 1987). Rule 8(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires complaints to contain "(1) a short and plain statement of the grounds for the court's jurisdiction [and] (2) a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is

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entitled to relief." Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a); *see Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678–79 (2009); *Ciralsky v. CIA*, 355 F.3d 661, 668–71 (D.C. Cir. 2004). The Rule 8 standard ensures that defendants receive fair notice of the claim being asserted so that they can prepare a responsive answer and an adequate defense and determine whether the doctrine of *res judicata* applies. *Brown v. Califano*, 75 F.R.D. 497, 498 (D.D.C. 1977). When a pleading "contains an untidy assortment of claims that are neither plainly nor concisely stated, nor meaningfully distinguished from bold conclusions, sharp harangues and personal comments [,]" it does not fulfill the requirements of Rule 8. *Jiggetts v. D.C.*, 319 F.R.D. 408, 413 (D.D.C. 2017), *aff'd sub nom*. *Cooper v. D.C.*, No. 17-7021, 2017 WL 5664737 (D.C. Cir. Nov. 1, 2017). Put differently, "[a] confused and rambling narrative of charges and conclusions . . . does not comply with the requirements of Rule 8." *Cheeks v. Fort Myer Constr. Corp*., 71 F. Supp. 3d 163, 169 (D.D.C. 2014) (cleaned up).

The instant Complaint falls within this category. It is neither short nor plain, *see* Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a), its allegations cannot be described as simple, concise, or direct, *see* Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(d)(1), and the paragraphs are not limited to a single set of circumstances, *see* Fed. R. Civ. P. 10(b). And, as presented, the Complaint is simply "too unwieldy to proceed." *See Spence v. U.S. Dep't of Vet. Affairs*, No. 19-cv-1947, 2022 WL 3354726, at *11 (D.D.C. Aug. 12, 2022), *aff'd*, 109 F.4th 531 (D.C. Cir. 2024). "Courts have often dismissed complaints that contain bloated and disorganized allegations such as this for violations of Rule 8." *Id*. (citing *Unfoldment, Inc. v. Dist. of Columbia*, No. 07-cv-1717, 2007 WL 3125236, at *1–2 (D.D.C. Oct. 24, 2007) (dismissing 61-page complaint); *Ciralsky v. CIA*, 355 F.3d 661, 668–71 (D.C. Cir. 2004) (affirming dismissal without prejudice of 61-page complaint and striking of 119-page complaint); *Nichols v. Holder*, 828 F. Supp. 2d 250, 253–54 (D.D.C. 2011) (dismissing 140-page complaint because it was "prolix, redundant, [and] bloated with unnecessary detail," falling far short of Rule 8(d)'s

requirement that each allegation be "simple, concise, and direct"); *Brown v. Califano*, 75 F.R.D. 497, 499 (D.D.C. 1977) (finding that the complaint failed to comply with Rule 8(a) and because it was "outrageously long-winded and redundant, and hides the substance of its claims within its prolixity. Defendants should not be forced to spend time and energy in attempting to decipher Hamrick's utterly confusing and lengthy pleading.")).

To be clear, it "is not merely the length . . . that warrants dismissal for violating Rule 8; the disorganized and convoluted nature of the allegations counsel that result as well." *Spence*, 2022 WL 3354726, at *12 (citing *Nichols*, 828 F. Supp. 2d at 252) ("[U]necessary prolixity in a pleading places an unjustified burden on the court and the party who must respond to it because they are forced to select the relevant material from a mass of verbiage.")) (cleaned up). Here, Plaintiff's allegations are frivolous on their face, lacking a basis in law or fact. *See Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 33 (1992) (a court shall dismiss a complaint "when the facts alleged rise to the level of the irrational or the wholly incredible."); *Crisafi v. Holland*, 655 F.2d 1305, 1307–08 (D.C. Cir. 1981) (a court shall dismiss a complaint when it "postulates events and circumstances of a wholly fanciful kind.").

For all of these reasons, the Complaint, ECF No. 1, and this case, are dismissed without prejudice. Plaintiff's pending Motions, ECF Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, are all denied as moot. A separate Order accompanies this Memorandum Opinion.

TREVOR N. McFADDEN
United States District Judge

Date: November 2, 2026