

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

FILED

FEB - 3 2010

Clerk, U.S. District and
Bankruptcy Courts

Cathy Reis,

Plaintiff,

v.

Fannie Mae et al.,

Defendants.

Civil Action No.

10 0189

MEMORANDUM OPINION

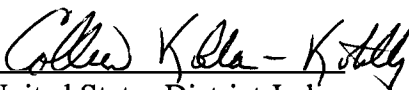
Plaintiff Cathy Reis has filed an application to proceed in forma pauperis and a pro se complaint. The application will be granted and the complaint will be dismissed without prejudice.

A complaint filed by a pro se litigant is held to a lesser standard than is a formal pleading drafted by a lawyer, *see Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972), but even a pro se complaint must meet the minimum standards set by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, *Jarrell v. Tisch*, 656 F. Supp. 237, 239 (D.D.C. 1987). Rule 8(a) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure requires that a complaint contain a short and plain statement of the grounds upon which the court's jurisdiction depends, a short and plain statement showing that the pleader is entitled to relief, and a demand for judgment for the relief the pleader seeks to obtain. Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a). The purpose of the minimum standard of Rule 8 is to give fair notice to the defendants of the claim being asserted, sufficient to prepare a responsive answer and an adequate defense, and to determine whether the doctrine of res judicata applies. *Brown v. Califano*, 75 F.R.D. 497, 498 (D.D.C. 1977).

The two-page complaint refers to a patent dispute. Some of the events alleged in the complaint occurred more than a decade ago, and none occurred within the past six years. The complaint is not sufficiently clear that the court can discern the factual basis for the plaintiff's claims against which parties. As drafted, Joel Pressman, Hal Hewell, and the Hewell Law Firm are listed in the caption as "third party defendants," and it is not clear from the complaint whether the plaintiff intends to sue them in this action. The plaintiff alludes to other cases arising out of the same events, and identifies several of them in a list of related cases filed with her complaint. The complaint submitted to this court, however, is not sufficiently clear with respect to what is in dispute to allow this court to determine whether some or all of the claims presented in this complaint are barred by the doctrine res judicata. Accordingly, the complaint will be dismissed without prejudice for failure to comply with Rule 8 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

A separate order accompanies this memorandum opinion.

Date: Jan. 24, 2010


United States District Judge