In the United States District Court
For the Southern District of Georgia
Brunswick Division

Sean Christopher Thomas,	*	
	*	
Plaintiff,	*	CIVIL ACTION NO.: CV 226-21
	*	
	*	
v.	*	
	*	
Appling County Sheriff Office et al.,	*	
	*	
Defendants.	*	

ORDER REGARDING ASSIGNMENT OF CASE TO A UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

United States Magistrate Judges have expertise in handling cases like this one. In the Court's experience, cases like this one can be resolved more efficiently if the case is assigned to a Magistrate Judge. Magistrate Judges in this District can exercise full jurisdiction over such cases, but only if all parties consent to proceed before a Magistrate Judge.

If all parties consent, the Court will assign this case to a Magistrate Judge. 28 U.S.C. § 636(c). The Magistrate Judge will conduct all proceedings in the case, including trial and entry of judgment. If any party does not consent, the Court will not assign the case to a Magistrate Judge. Each party is

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free to withhold consent to the assignment, and no party will suffer any consequences from withholding consent.

The Clerk of Court shall attach to this Order the Court's form entitled "Statement Regarding Assignment of Case to a United States Magistrate Judge."[1] Each party must fill out and return this form to the Court.[2] Plaintiff (and any Defendant who has already appeared in this case) must complete, sign, and return this form within **14 days of the date of this Order.** Any Defendant who has not yet appeared must complete, sign, and return this form within **14 days of the Defendant's appearance in the case.**[3] Any party which fails to return its Statement Regarding Assignment by these deadlines may face sanctions.

The parties' Statements Regarding Assignment will be filed on the docket in a restricted manner to protect the voluntariness of the parties' consent. Only the filing party and the office of the Clerk of Court may access the filing.

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[1] This form is also available on the Court's website at: www.gasd.uscourts.gov/Judge-Wood-Civil-Cases.

[2] Pro se parties can mail the executed Statement Regarding Assignment to the Clerk of Court, and the Clerk will file it. Attorneys can use the Court's electronic case filing system to file the Statement, using the CM/ECF event titled "Statement Regarding Assignment of Case to United States Magistrate Judge" located under Civil Events→Other Filings→Other Documents.

[3] If any party later appearing in the case does not consent to the Magistrate Judge assignment, the Court will then remove that assignment and assign the case to a District Judge.

To be clear, if any party **does not consent** to this case being assigned to a Magistrate Judge, the Court will still refer pre-trial matters to a Magistrate Judge. The Court will refer non-dispositive, pre-trial matters to a Magistrate Judge for a ruling and will refer all dispositive motions to a Magistrate Judge for a recommendation. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(a), (b).

SO ORDERED, this 4 day of March, 2026.

HON. LISA GODBEY WOOD, JUDGE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA

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STATEMENT REGARDING ASSIGNMENT OF CASE TO A UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

COMES NOW, Sean Christopher Thomas, a party or parties in the above-styled case and hereby shows this Honorable Court as follows:

1.

The above-named party (or parties) understands the Court has designated the United States Magistrate Judges of this District to exercise plenary jurisdiction over this type of case. Accordingly, if all parties consent to this matter being assigned to a Magistrate Judge, the Court will assign this case to a Magistrate Judge, who will thereafter conduct any and all

proceedings in this matter, including any trial and entry of final judgment pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(c).

2.

The above-named party (or parties) understands any and all parties are free to withhold consent and insist this matter not be assigned to a Magistrate Judge. If any party does not consent, the Court will not assign this case to a Magistrate Judge, and no party will suffer any substantive consequences from withholding consent. However, assignment to a Magistrate Judge typically allows for a case to be resolved more expeditiously. Thus, if any party withholds consent, it may take longer for the case to be resolved.

3.

The above-named party (or parties) has also been advised and understands, even if any party does not consent to this case being assigned to a Magistrate Judge, the Court will refer all pretrial matters to a Magistrate Judge in the following manner:

A. Under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(A), even if the parties do not consent and the case is not assigned to a Magistrate Judge, the Court will refer any and all non-dispositive, pre-trial matters to a Magistrate Judge for a determination.[1] The district

[1] Non-dispositive pretrial matters include all pre-trial motions except for the following motions: motions for injunctive relief, for judgment on the pleadings, for summary judgment, to dismiss or to permit maintenance of a class action, to dismiss for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, and to involuntarily dismiss

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judge will only reconsider the Magistrate Judge's decision on any non-dispositive, pre-trial matter if the decision is clearly erroneous or contrary to law.

B. Under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B), even if the parties do not consent and the case is not assigned to a Magistrate Judge, the Court will refer all dispositive motions to a Magistrate Judge for a recommendation. As to any such dispositive motions, the Magistrate Judge will submit a Report and Recommendation to the District Judge with proposed findings of fact and recommendations for disposition. The District Judge will then make a de novo determination of those portions of the Report and Recommendation to which any party objects, and the District Judge may accept, reject, or modify, in whole or in part, the findings and recommendations made by the Magistrate Judge.

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an action. These excepted motions are hereinafter referred to as "dispositive motions."

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

☐ The above-named party (or parties) hereby consents to the Court assigning this case to a United States Magistrate Judge. The above-named party (or parties) understands, if all parties consent, the Magistrate Judge will conduct any and all proceedings in this matter, including any trial and entry of final judgment.

☐ The above-named party (or parties) does not consent to this matter being referred to a United States Magistrate Judge. The above-named party (or parties) understands the Court will not assign this case to a Magistrate Judge for final disposition, but the Court will still refer all pretrial matters to a Magistrate Judge in the manner described herein.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20___.

_____

Signature of the Above-Named Party if Proceeding Pro Se or Counsel for the Above-named Party or Parties if Represented

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