

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Jane Doe v. Tea Dating Advice, Inc.

Doe v. Tea Dating Advice · No. 25-cv-06559-TSH · Decided August 6, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California grants Jane Doe permission to proceed under a pseudonym in a putative class action concerning the alleged failure to protect users’ private information. The Court concludes that the need to preserve privacy in a sensitive and highly personal matter outweighs the preliminary risk of prejudice to the defendant and that anonymity does not presently impair the public interest in open proceedings.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Thomas S. Hixson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	August 6, 2025
DOCKET	25-cv-06559-TSH
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff filed a putative class action under a pseudonym and moved for permission to proceed pseudonymously.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the Ninth Circuit's balancing test for pseudonymous litigation, weighing the plaintiff's need for anonymity against prejudice to the defendant and the public's interest in knowing the party's identity.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- class actions
- pleadings

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- privacy and data security
- class action procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff should be permitted to proceed under a pseudonym in a putative class action involving allegedly compromised private information.
2. Whether the need for anonymity outweighed potential prejudice to Defendant and the public interest in knowing Plaintiff's identity at the preliminary stage of the litigation.

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiff may proceed under the pseudonym Jane Doe because the need to preserve her privacy in a sensitive and highly personal matter outweighs the risk of prejudice to Defendant at this preliminary stage.
2. Plaintiff was not required to obtain leave to proceed anonymously before filing the anonymous pleading.
3. Permission to proceed under a pseudonym at the preliminary stage does not preclude Defendant from later seeking disclosure of Plaintiff's true name.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The normal presumption in litigation is that parties must use their real names.” (at 1)

“The Court must determine the precise prejudice at each stage of the proceedings to the opposing party, and whether proceedings may be structured to mitigate that prejudice.” (at 2)

“Accordingly, the Court shall permit Plaintiff to proceed under a pseudonym.” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleges that Defendant's mobile application failed to protect users' private information, including photographs, government-identification information, posts, and chats, from hackers. Plaintiff sought to maintain her anonymity because of the sensitive and highly personal nature of the claims. The court found that anonymity was necessary to preserve Plaintiff's privacy and that her identity did not appear central to the issues concerning Defendant's data-security practices.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Jane Doe filed a putative class action alleging that Tea Dating Advice, Inc. failed to protect users' private information from hackers. The district court granted permission for Plaintiff to proceed under a pseudonym at the preliminary stage of the litigation, while recognizing that disclosure could later be required.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Doe v. Kamehameha Schools/Bernice Pauahi Bishop Estate, 596 F.3d 1036, 1042-43 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Does I through XXIII v. Advanced Textile, 214 F.3d 1058, 1067-69, 1072 (9th Cir. 2000)

- Doe v. UNUM Life Ins. Co. of Am., 164 F. Supp. 3d 1140, 1144 (N.D. Cal. 2016)
- Doe v. Penzato, 2011 WL 1839569, at *1 (N.D. Cal. May 13, 2011)
- Jane Roes 1-2 v. SFBSC Mgmt., LLC, 77 F. Supp. 3d 990, 993 (N.D. Cal. 2015)
- Doe 1 v. GitHub, Inc., 672 F. Supp. 3d 837, 853, 855 (N.D. Cal. 2023)
- Doe v. County of El Dorado, 2013 WL 6230342, at *5 (E.D. Cal. Dec. 2, 2013)
- Doe v. NFL Enters., LLC, 2017 WL 697420, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Feb. 22, 2017)

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