

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA

Angelo Reynolds v. Bryce Browning, et al.

Reynolds · No. 2:25-cv-00168-JPH-MG · Decided February 9, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana screened Angelo Reynolds's amended 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint concerning an inmate assault, alleged failure to protect, retaliation, and medical care at Wabash Valley Correctional Facility. The court dismissed claims against several defendants, including Centurion Health, and allowed specified First and Eighth Amendment claims to proceed against other defendants. The order also directed service of process and provided a deadline for any motion to reconsider omitted claims.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana
WRITING FOR THE COURT	James Patrick Hanlon
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana
DECIDED	February 9, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-cv-00168-JPH-MG
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening of a prisoner's amended complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A before service of process.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court must dismiss claims that are frivolous or malicious, fail to state a claim, or seek monetary relief from an immune defendant. The court applies the Rule 12(b)(6) pleading standard, accepting factual allegations as true and construing the pro se complaint liberally.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Angelo Reynolds v. Bryce Browning, Frank Vanihel, Everado Angeles-Mora, John Allen, Timothy Leffler, Centurion Health, John VanVleet, Dr. Samuel Byrd, Jane Tomas, Sara Bedwell, Makayla Willis

TOPICS

section 1983

prisoners rights

civil rights

pleadings

motions to dismiss

PRACTICE AREAS

constitutional civil rights

prisoner civil rights

federal civil procedure

constitutional torts

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the amended complaint stated a plausible § 1983 claim against Centurion Health without identifying a policy, practice, custom, or final-decisionmaker action causing the alleged constitutional injury.
2. Whether the amended complaint adequately alleged personal involvement by Sara Bedwell and Sgt. Everado Angeles-Mora.
3. Whether allegations that Nurse Makayla Willis performed a poor stitch-up, without more, stated an Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claim rather than negligence.
4. Which First and Eighth Amendment claims were sufficiently plausible to proceed past screening.

HOLDINGS

1. A private corporation performing essential services for prisoners may be treated as a municipality for § 1983 purposes, but a plaintiff must identify a policy, practice, custom, or final-decisionmaker action and allege a causal link to the constitutional deprivation. Because Reynolds identified no Centurion policy, practice, or custom that caused his injury, all claims against Centurion were dismissed.
2. Individual liability under § 1983 requires personal involvement and a causal connection between the defendant and the alleged constitutional misconduct. The claims against Sara Bedwell and Sgt. Everado Angeles-Mora were dismissed because the amended complaint did not sufficiently allege that either personally engaged in unconstitutional conduct.
3. Negligence, even gross negligence, is insufficient to support a § 1983 deliberate-indifference claim under the Eighth Amendment. Reynolds's allegations that Nurse Willis performed a poor attempt to stitch his wound alleged at most negligence, and the amended complaint indicated that Dr. Byrd—not Willis—made the final treatment decision; therefore, the claims against Willis were dismissed.
4. The amended complaint plausibly stated claims that could proceed against the identified defendants: First Amendment retaliation against Leffler; Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference to safety against Leffler based on calling Reynolds a snitch and encouraging inmate attacks; Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect claims against Leffler, Vanihel, Allen, and VanVleet; Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference to safety against Browning for failing to intervene in the assault; and Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference to medical needs against Browning, Tomas, and Byrd.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged."

“individual liability under § 1983 . . . requires personal involvement in the alleged constitutional deprivation.”

“requires more than negligence or even gross negligence; a plaintiff must show that the defendant was essentially criminally reckless, that is, ignored a known risk.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Reynolds, a prisoner at Wabash Valley Correctional Facility, alleged that while housed in a segregation unit he filed grievances and was called a snitch by Lt. Timothy Leffler, who allegedly encouraged other inmates to attack him. Two inmates later assaulted Reynolds, stabbing him in the face, and he alleged that Officer Bryce Browning failed to intervene and sent an incorrect emergency signal. Reynolds further alleged inadequate treatment of his facial wound and that officers failed to obtain additional medical care after he lost consciousness.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Reynolds filed a § 1983 action asserting 25 purported causes of action against 26 defendants. The court dismissed the original complaint for violating Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 18 and 20 but granted leave to amend. After screening the amended complaint, the court dismissed all claims against Centurion Health, Sara Bedwell, Sgt. Everado Angeles-Mora, Nurse Makayla Willis, and other terminated defendants, while allowing specified First and Eighth Amendment claims to proceed against several defendants and directing service of process.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Schillinger v. Kiley, 954 F.3d 990, 993 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Cesal v. Moats, 851 F.3d 714, 720 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Williamson v. Curran, 714 F.3d 432, 436 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Kadamovas v. Stevens, 706 F.3d 843, 844 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Lisby v. Henderson, 74 F.4th 470, 472 (7th Cir. 2023)
- Dean v. Wexford Health Sources, Inc., 18 F.4th 214, 235 (7th Cir. 2021)
- Monell v. Department of Social Services, 436 U.S. 658 (1978)
- Levy v. Marion County Sheriff, 940 F.3d 1002, 1010 (7th Cir. 2019)
- Colbert v. City of Chicago, 851 F.3d 649, 657 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Gonzalez v. McHenry County, Illinois, 40 F.4th 824, 828 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Huber v. Anderson, 909 F.3d 201, 208 (7th Cir. 2018)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA TERRE HAUTE DIVISION ANGELO REYNOLDS,)) Plaintiff,)) v.) No. 2:25-cv-00168-JPH-MG) BRYCE BROWNING, et al.,)) Defendants.) ORDER SCREENING AMENDED COMPLAINT AND DIRECTING FURTHER PROCEEDINGS Plaintiff Angelo Reynolds is a prisoner currently incarcerated at Wabash Valley Correctional Facility ("Wabash Valley").

He filed this civil action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, which originally alleged 25 purported causes of action against 26 defendants. Dkt. 1. The Court screened and dismissed the original complaint for violating Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 18 and 20 but gave Mr. Reynolds the opportunity to file an amended complaint. Dkt. 15. He has done so. Dkt. 16.

Because the plaintiff is a "prisoner," this Court must screen the amended complaint before service on the defendants. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a), (c). I. Screening Standard When screening a complaint, the Court must dismiss any portion that is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim for relief, or seeks monetary relief against a defendant who is immune from such relief.

28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b). To determine whether the complaint states a claim, the Court applies the same standard as when addressing a motion to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6). See *Schillinger v. Kiley*, 954 F.3d 990, 993 (7th Cir. 2020).

Under that standard, a complaint must include "enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face." *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007). "A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged."

Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009). The Court construes pro se complaints liberally and holds them to a "less stringent standard than pleadings drafted by lawyers." *Cesal v. Moats*, 851 F.3d 714, 720 (7th Cir. 2017). II.

The Amended Complaint Mr. Reynolds attached 66 pages of exhibits to his amended complaint. Although the Court may consider documents attached to a complaint, it is a plaintiff's burden to plead a short and plain statement of the claim. Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2); *Williamson v. Curran*, 714 F.3d 432, 436 (7th Cir. 2013). These exhibits appear to be evidence in support of the claims alleged in his amended complaint.

To consider the exhibits at this point would circumvent the "simple and plain statement requirement" of Rule 8(a)(2) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and impose an unjustified burden on the Court. The Court will not sift through these documents and try to discern their potential relevance at the pleading stage. *Kadamovas v. Stevens*, 706 F.3d 843, 844 (7th Cir.

2013) (stating that attachments to a complaint may be stricken). Mr. Reynolds's factual allegations are accepted as true at the pleading stage. See *Lisby v. Henderson*, 74 F.4th 470, 472 (7th Cir. 2023). The amended complaint names as defendants (1) Officer Bryce Browning; (2) former Wabash Valley Warden Frank Vanihel; (3) Sgt. Everado Angeles-Mora; (4) John Allen; (5) Lt.

Timothy1 Leffler; (6) Centurion Health; (7) John VanVleet; (8) Dr. Samuel Byrd; (9) Officer Jane Tomas; (10) Sara Bedwell; and (11) Nurse Makayla Willis. Between May 31 and October 23, 2024, Mr. Reynolds was housed in Wabash Valley's SCU. During that time, Mr. Reynolds filed several grievances about conditions in the SCU. Lt. Leffler called Mr. Reynolds a "snitch" in front of other inmates and encouraged them to throw feces and hot water on him.

Mr. Reynolds also communicated in writing to Warden Vanihel about Lt. Leffler's statements but received no response. Mr. Allen and Mr. VanVleet, internal affairs officers at Wabash Valley, also failed to respond to Mr. Reynolds's complaints and threats against him. Two days after being released back into general population, two inmates attacked Mr. Reynolds, including stabbing him in the face.

Officer Browning did not attempt to intervene in this assault; instead, he called an emergency signal that erroneously directed Wabash Valley personnel to the other side of the prison. Lt. Leffler and Sgt. Angeles-Mora eventually came to take Mr. Reynolds to medical after cuffing him. While taking him there, Lt. Leffler joked that Mr. Reynolds had been "fucked up good," and "that didn't take long," and that's what Mr. Reynolds deserved "for putting all them grievances in on him."

Dkt. 16 at 2. When he arrived at medical, Nurse Willis apologized for medical being confused because of Officer Browning's incorrect emergency signal. Nurse Willis and Dr. Byrd treated Mr. Reynolds's open cheek wound by, among other things, 1 Mr. Reynolds originally indicated that Lt. Leffler's first name was John. attempting to stitch it closed.

However, even though the wound continued bleeding profusely, Dr. Byrd refused to provide any more treatment and told Mr. Reynolds that the wound should heal on its own. Lt. Leffler and Sgt. Angeles- Mora then escorted Mr. Reynolds back to his cell, with Lt. Leffler apparently joking about the fact that Mr. Reynolds's face wound was still bleeding.

After being in his cell for about an hour and still bleeding profusely from his face and mouth, Mr. Reynolds was beginning to feel dizzy. Mr. Reynolds's cellmate repeatedly attempted to get Officer Tomas to seek additional medical attention for Mr. Reynolds, but she refused, even though she saw the profuse bleeding. Eventually, Mr. Reynolds lost consciousness, falling and hitting his head on the ground.

Even after Officer Tomas and Officer Browning saw Mr. Reynolds on the ground unconscious, they did not attempt to get additional medical treatment for him. Mr. Reynolds's cellmate had to

call the Wabash Valley tipline asking for medical assistance. Sgt. Angeles-Mora then immediately came and called for medical assistance after seeing Mr. Reynolds.

After Mr. Reynolds regained consciousness and after cuffing him and threatening to spray him with mace if he did stop fighting back, Officer Browning, Sgt. Angeles-Mora, and a third officer took Mr. Reynolds to a unit medical room.

The nurse in the unit medical room directed that Mr. Reynolds be taken to the main medical office, where Dr. Byrd, Nurse Willis, and Ms. Bedwell were present. Nurse Willis was instructed, presumably by Dr. Byrd, to start Mr. Reynolds on an IV, remove the poorly-done stitches, and pack the face wound with gauze. Mr. Reynolds then had to be taken to an outside hospital, where he received adequate treatment of his face wound.

III. Discussion of Claims Applying the screening standard to the factual allegations in the amended complaint, certain claims are dismissed while other claims shall proceed as submitted. First, private corporations acting under color of state law—including those that contract with the state to provide essential services to prisoners—are treated as municipalities for purposes of Section 1983 and can be sued when their actions violate the Constitution.

Dean v. Wexford Health Sources, Inc., 18 F.4th 214, 235 (7th Cir. 2021) (citing *Monell v. Dep't of Soc. Servs.*, 436 U.S. 658 (1978)). To state a Monell claim, the plaintiff must identify an action taken by the municipality and allege a causal link between the municipality's action and the deprivation of federal rights. *Dean*, 18 F.4th at 235. "A municipality 'acts' through its written policies, widespread practices or customs, and the acts of a final decisionmaker."

Levy v. Marion Co. Sheriff, 940 F.3d 1002, 1010 (7th Cir. 2019). Mr. Reynolds has not identified any policy, practice, or custom of Centurion's that caused him injury. All claims against Centurion are dismissed. Second, "individual liability under § 1983... requires personal involvement in the alleged constitutional deprivation." *Colbert v. City of Chicago*, 851 F.3d 649, 657 (7th Cir.

2017) (internal quotation omitted). "The plaintiff must demonstrate a causal connection between (1) the sued officials and (2) the alleged misconduct." *Id.* For a public official to be individually liable for a subordinate's constitutional violation, the official must both "(1) know about the conduct and (2) facilitate, approve, condone, or turn a blind eye toward it."

Gonzalez v. McHenry County, Ill., 40 F.4th 824, 828 (7th Cir. 2022). Here, there are insufficient allegations that either Ms. Bedwell or Sgt. Angeles-Mora personally engaged in any conduct that harmed Mr. Reynolds. At most, Ms. Bedwell was present when Mr. Reynolds was being treated the second time by Dr. Byrd and Nurse Willis.

As for Sgt. Angeles-Mora, he was the officer who eventually and speedily sought medical attention for Mr. Reynolds when he passed out in his cell. Sgt. Angelo-Mora also was present and

assisting on some occasions when escorting Mr. Reynolds back and forth to his cell, but there are insufficient allegations that Sgt. Angeles-Mora engaged in any unconstitutional conduct on those occasions.

All claims against Ms. Bedwell and Sgt. Angeles- Mora are dismissed. Third, negligence is not sufficient to support a § 1983 claim based on alleged deliberate indifference in violation of the Eighth Amendment. See *Huber v. Anderson*, 909 F.3d 201, 208 (7th Cir. 2018) (deliberate indifference "requires more than negligence or even gross negligence; a plaintiff must show that the defendant was essentially criminally reckless, that is, ignored a known risk.") (cleaned up).

The allegations against Nurse Willis are that she did a poor job attempting to stitch up his face wound. This alleges, at most, negligence on her part, which is insufficient to state an Eighth Amendment claim. Also, the allegations indicate that Dr. Byrd, not Nurse Willis, had the final say on whether Mr. Reynolds required more or better medical treatment when he was sent back to his cell.

All claims against Nurse Willis are dismissed. The claims that shall proceed are the following: • First Amendment retaliation claims against Lt. Leffler. • Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference to safety claims against Lt. Leffler for calling Mr. Reynolds a "snitch" in front of other inmates. • Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect claims against Lt. Leffler, former Warden Vanihel, Mr. Allen, and Mr. VanVleet. • Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference to safety claims against Officer Browning for failing to take action to stop the assault on Mr. Reynolds. • Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference to medical needs claims against Officer Browning, Officer Tomas, and Dr. Byrd.

This summary of claims includes all of the viable claims identified by the Court. All other claims have been dismissed. If the plaintiff believes that additional claims were alleged in the complaint, but not identified by the Court, he shall have through March 2, 2026, in which to file a motion to reconsider the screening order. IV. Conclusion and Service of Process The clerk is directed to terminate Everado Angeles-Mora, Makayla Willis, Jane Bedwell, Centurion Health, John Fischer, Richard Yarber, Jane Wadhwan, Natash English, Ashely Moseley, John Mallot, John Pickett, John Dugger, Michael Ellis, John Hiatt, John Payne, Jane Riggs, Jane Moody, John Gilstrap, and Jane Meeks as defendants on the docket.

The clerk is directed to change the name of defendant "John Leffler" to "Timothy Leffler." The clerk is directed pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 4(c)(3) to issue process to defendants Timothy Leffler, Frank Vanihel, John Allen, John VanVleet, Bryce Browning, Jane Tomas, and Dr. Samuel Byrd in the manner specified by Rule 4(d). Process shall consist of the amended complaint filed on November 18, 2025, dkt.

[16], applicable forms (Notice of Lawsuit and Request for Waiver of Service of Summons and Waiver of Service of Summons), and this Order. Defendant Dr. Byrd is identified as an employee of Centurion. A copy of this Order and the process documents shall also be served on Centurion electronically. Centurion is ORDERED to provide the full name and last known home address of any defendant who does not waive service if they have such information.

This information shall be filed ex parte. The clerk is directed to serve the Indiana Department of Correction and Centurion employees electronically. Nothing in this Order prohibits the filing of a proper motion pursuant to Rule 12 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. SO ORDERED. Date: 2/9/2026 Sjamnu Pataick Hanbor James Patrick Hanlon United States District Judge Southern District of Indiana Distribution: Electronic service to Indiana Department of Correction: Officer Bryce Browning Lt.

Timothy Leffler John Allen John VanVleet Officer Jane Tomas Former Warden Frank Vanihel (All at Wabash Valley Correctional Facility) Electronic service to Centurion Dr. Samuel Byrd ANGELO REYNOLDS 228386 WABASH VALLEY - CF Wabash Valley Correctional Facility 6908 S. Old US Hwy 41 CARLISLE, IN 47838