

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS

Demetrius Flowers v. SGT. Bernard, C/O Garcia, SGT. Delmon, C/O
Quatters

Flowers · No. 24-cv-1538-DWD · Decided January 7, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois ruled on defendants’ motion for summary judgment concerning exhaustion of administrative remedies under the Prison Litigation Reform Act. The court granted the motion as to Garcia, finding the claims against him unexhausted, but denied it as to Dillman and Quertermous, holding that grievance K19-0424-0797 sufficiently exhausted claims concerning cleaning supplies and medical attention. The court allowed the action to proceed against Bernard, Dillman, and Quertermous and dismissed the claim against Garcia without prejudice.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
WRITING FOR THE COURT	David W. Dugan
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois
DECIDED	January 7, 2026
DOCKET	24-cv-1538-DWD
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action alleging unconstitutional conditions of confinement and deliberate indifference. Defendants moved for summary judgment on the affirmative defense that Plaintiff failed to exhaust administrative remedies under the Prison Litigation Reform Act.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is proper when there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. In a prisoner-exhaustion dispute, the court may resolve contested factual issues after an evidentiary hearing, but no hearing is required when no genuine factual dispute exists and the issue is purely legal.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

PARTIES

Demetrius Flowers v. SGT. Bernard, C/O Garcia, SGT. Delmon, C/O Quatters

TOPICS

summary judgment

prisoners rights

section 1983

affirmative defenses

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

prisoner civil rights

constitutional law

summary judgment

administrative exhaustion

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff exhausted his administrative remedies for his conditions-of-confinement claim against Garcia.
2. Whether grievance K19-0424-0797 sufficiently exhausted Plaintiff's claim against Dillman and Quertermous even though it did not name or describe them individually.
3. Whether Defendants were entitled to summary judgment on the PLRA exhaustion defense.

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiff failed to exhaust Claim 4 against Garcia because grievance K19-0424-0797 mentioned Garcia only as a person present during an incident and did not substantively connect him to the allegations asserted in the amended complaint.
2. Grievance K19-0424-0797 was sufficient to exhaust Claim 4 against Dillman and Quertermous concerning the denial of cleaning supplies and medical attention after the gallery unrest.
3. Summary judgment was granted in part as to Garcia and denied in part as to Dillman and Quertermous.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The exhaustion requirement is an affirmative defense, which the defendants bear the burden of proving.”
(Conclusions of Law, A. Legal Standards)

“The primary requirement is that a grievance contain enough information to put the prison on clear notice that unnamed defendants were involved.” (Conclusions of Law, B. Analysis)

“Claim 4 may proceed against Defendants Bernard, Dillman, and Quertermous, and Claim 4 will be dismissed without prejudice against Defendant Garcia.” (Disposition)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Flowers, an Illinois inmate, alleged that while housed in segregation at Shawnee Correctional Center from April 4 through May 22, 2024, he endured mold, human-waste contamination, a window drilled shut, exposure to mace, and denial of recreation, cleaning supplies, and medical attention. He submitted several grievances, including grievance K19-0424-0797 concerning flooding, human waste, cleaning supplies, and medical attention after cellhouse unrest. That grievance mentioned Garcia only as a person struck by urine during an incident, but

described unnamed officers who refused to identify themselves and denied cleaning supplies and medical assistance.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed the action on June 20, 2024, and an amended complaint on October 1, 2024. The Court permitted an Eighth Amendment conditions-of-confinement or deliberate-indifference claim to proceed against the defendants. After discovery concerning exhaustion, Defendants moved for summary judgment. The Court granted the motion as to Garcia, denied it as to Dillman and Quertermous, granted Bernard's motion to withdraw the affirmative defense, and allowed the claim to proceed against Bernard, Dillman, and Quertermous.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Apex Digital, Inc. v. Sears, Roebuck & Co., 735 F.3d 962, 965 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Tolan v. Cotton, 572 U.S. 650, 656 (2014)
- Pavey v. Conley, 544 F.3d 739, 740, 742 (7th Cir. 2008)
- Wilborn v. Ealey, 881 F.3d 998, 1004 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Walker v. Harris, 2021 WL 3287832, at *1 (S.D. Ill. 2021)
- Miller v. Wexford Health Source, Inc., 2017 WL 951399, at *2 (S.D. Ill. 2017)
- Pozo v. McCaughtry, 286 F.3d 1022, 1024-1025 (7th Cir. 2002)
- Crouch v. Brown, 27 F.4th 1315, 1320 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Ross v. Blake, 578 U.S. 632, 642 (2016)
- Wallace v. Baldwin, 55 F.4th 535, 539 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Dole v. Chandler, 438 F.3d 804, 809 (7th Cir. 2006)
- Gooch v. Young, 24 F.4th 624 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Perttu v. Richards, 605 U.S. 460 (2025)
- Jones v. Bock, 549 U.S. 199, 217 (2007)
- Jackson v. Esser, 105 F.4th 948, 960 (7th Cir. 2024)