

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Guillory v. Pfeiffer

Guillory · No. 1:22-cv-01336-JLT-SKO (PC) · Decided August 22, 2025

SUMMARY

The document contains Findings and Recommendations from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California following screening of Jovan R. Guillory’s second amended 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint. The magistrate judge recommends allowing an Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim to proceed against Correctional Officer Alcantar, dismissing the remaining claims, and dismissing defendants Christian Pfeiffer, E. Stark, and N. Montanez. The recommendations were issued with a 14-day objection deadline.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sheila K. Oberto
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	August 22, 2025
DOCKET	1:22-cv-01336-JLT-SKO (PC)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Findings and recommendations following screening of a prisoner’s second amended complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The complaint was screened under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A to determine whether it was frivolous, malicious, failed to state a claim, or sought monetary relief from an immune defendant. For pleading sufficiency, the court accepted factual allegations as true, construed the pro se prisoner’s allegations liberally, and applied the plausibility standard under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a), Ashcroft v. Iqbal, and Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Jovan R. Guillory v. Christian Pfeiffer, J. Alcantar, N. Montanez, E. Stark

TOPICS

prisoners rights

section 1983

pleadings

procedural due process

civil rights

PRACTICE AREAS

prisoner civil rights

constitutional law

federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the second amended complaint stated a cognizable Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against Alcantar.
2. Whether the complaint stated Eighth Amendment excessive-force or failure-to-train and supervisory-liability claims against Montanez, Stark, or Pfeiffer.
3. Whether the complaint stated an Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claim concerning medical care after Guillory's injuries.
4. Whether the complaint stated a Fourteenth Amendment procedural-due-process claim based on the prison disciplinary proceeding.

HOLDINGS

1. Liberally construed and accepting its factual allegations as true, the second amended complaint stated a cognizable Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against Alcantar because it alleged that Alcantar orchestrated the altercation and used force maliciously, unnecessarily, and without a good-faith effort to maintain security.
2. The complaint failed to state claims against Montanez, Stark, or Pfeiffer because it did not adequately allege their personal participation, a causal connection, an unconstitutional policy or custom, or facts supporting a failure-to-train claim.
3. The complaint failed to state a deliberate-indifference claim against any defendant.
4. The complaint failed to state a due-process claim because it did not allege that any of the minimum procedural protections required in a prison disciplinary proceeding were denied, and the record contained some evidence supporting the disciplinary decision.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"A correctional officer engages in excessive force in violation of the Cruel and Unusual Punishments Clause if he (1) uses excessive and unnecessary force under all the circumstances, and (2) "harms an inmate for the very purpose of causing harm," and not "as part of a good-faith effort to maintain security."" (at 4)

"To maintain an Eighth Amendment claim based on medical care in prison, a plaintiff must first "show a serious medical need by demonstrating that failure to treat a prisoner's condition could result in further significant injury or the unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain. Second, the plaintiff must show the defendants' response to the need was deliberately indifferent."" (at 10)

"Prison disciplinary proceedings are not part of a criminal prosecution, and the full panoply of rights due a defendant in such proceedings does not apply."" (at 13)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Guillory alleged that on March 21, 2020, after an exchange of derogatory or profane words, inmate Barnett was released from an upper tier and assaulted him. Guillory alleged that Correctional Officer Alcantar orchestrated the altercation and discharged a weapon, striking Guillory in the eye, face, or head and causing serious facial injuries and continuing headaches, vision problems, cognitive symptoms, and psychological trauma. He also alleged that follow-up medical care and reconstructive procedures did not occur and that Lieutenant Montanez, Associate Warden Stark, and Warden Pfeiffer were responsible for supervisory, training, or disciplinary matters. Guillory further alleged that Montanez found him guilty of a disciplinary violation arising from the incident.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The court previously found that Plaintiff had failed to state a claim and gave him the option to proceed only on an Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against Defendant Alcantar, amend, or voluntarily dismiss. Plaintiff filed a second amended complaint naming Alcantar, Montanez, Stark, and Pfeiffer, and later filed a request to proceed on the excessive-force claim. The magistrate judge recommended that the action proceed only against Alcantar on the excessive-force claim and that all other claims and the other named defendants be dismissed, subject to objections and review by the assigned district judge.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The magistrate judge recommended that the action proceed only on the Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against Alcantar; that all remaining claims be dismissed; and that Pfeiffer, Stark, and Montanez be dismissed. The recommendations were to be submitted to the assigned district judge under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C), subject to objections within 14 days.

CASES CITED

- *Balistreri v. Pacifica Police Department*, 901 F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1990)
- *Swierkiewicz v. Sorema N.A.*, 534 U.S. 506, 512-13 (2002)
- *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 676-78 (2009)
- *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555, 570 (2007)
- *Hebbe v. Pliler*, 627 F.3d 338, 342 (9th Cir. 2010)
- *Bruns v. National Credit Union Administration*, 122 F.3d 1251, 1257 (9th Cir. 1997)
- *Doe I v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.*, 572 F.3d 677, 681 (9th Cir. 2009)
- *Rizzo v. Goode*, 423 U.S. 362, 373-75 (1976)
- *Johnson v. Duffy*, 588 F.2d 740, 743 (9th Cir. 1978)
- *Simmons v. Navajo County, Arizona*, 609 F.3d 1011, 1020-21 (9th Cir. 2010)
- *Castro v. County of Los Angeles*, 833 F.3d 1060, 1070 (9th Cir. 2016)

- Jones v. Williams, 297 F.3d 930, 934 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Taylor v. List, 880 F.2d 1040, 1045 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Corales v. Bennett, 567 F.3d 554, 570 (9th Cir. 2009)
- Starr v. Baca, 652 F.3d 1202, 1205-06 (9th Cir. 2011)
- Redman v. County of San Diego, 942 F.2d 1435, 1446 (9th Cir. 1991)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 834-35, 847 (1994)
- Waggy v. Spokane County Washington, 594 F.3d 707, 713 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Fayle v. Stapley, 607 F.2d 858, 862 (9th Cir. 1979)
- Ivey v. Board of Regents, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982)
- Kay v. Ehrler, 499 U.S. 432, 435 (1991)
- Whitley v. Albers, 475 U.S. 312, 319, 328 (1986)
- Gordon v. Faber, 800 F. Supp. 797, 800 (N.D. Iowa)
- Battle v. Anderson, 564 F.2d 388, 395 (10th Cir. 1977)
- Hoard v. Hartman, 904 F.3d 780, 788 (9th Cir. 2018)
- Hudson v. McMillian, 503 U.S. 1, 6-7 (1992)
- Hartman v. CDCR, 707 F.3d 1114, 1129-30 (9th Cir. 2013)
- Estelle v. Gamble, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976)
- Peralta v. Dillard, 744 F.3d 1076, 1081-82 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Jett v. Penner, 439 F.3d 1091, 1096 (9th Cir. 2006)
- McGuckin v. Smith, 974 F.2d 1050, 1059-60 (9th Cir. 1992)
- WMX Technologies, Inc. v. Miller, 104 F.3d 1133 (9th Cir. 1997) (en banc)
- Wilhelm v. Rotman, 680 F.3d 1113, 1122 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Colwell v. Bannister, 763 F.3d 1060, 1066 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Toguchi v. Chung, 391 F.3d 1051, 1057, 1060 (9th Cir. 2004)
- Gibson v. County of Washoe, Nevada, 290 F.3d 1175, 1188 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Wolff v. McDonnell, 418 U.S. 539, 556, 563-71 (1974)
- Sandin v. Conner, 515 U.S. 472, 483-84 (1995)
- Walker v. Sumner, 14 F.3d 1415, 1420 (9th Cir. 1994)
- Koenig v. Vannelli, 971 F.2d 422, 423 (9th Cir. 1992) (per curiam)
- Real v. Walls, 471 U.S. 491, 495 (1985)
- Mitchell v. Dupnik, 75 F.3d 517, 525 (9th Cir. 1996)
- Superintendent v. Hill, 472 U.S. 445, 455-57 (1985)
- Toussaint v. McCarthy, 926 F.2d 800, 802-03 (9th Cir. 1991)
- Bostic v. Carlson, 884 F.2d 1267, 1269-70 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Jancsek III v. Oregon Board of Parole, 833 F.2d 1389, 1390 (9th Cir. 1987)
- Cato v. Rushen, 824 F.2d 703, 705 (9th Cir. 1987)
- Burnsworth v. Gunderson, 179 F.3d 771, 774 (9th Cir. 1999)

- Wilkerson v. Wheeler, 772 F.3d 834, 839 (9th Cir. 2014)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 9 EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA 10 11 JOVAN R. GUILLORY, Case No.: 1:22-cv-01336-JLT-SKO (PC) 12
Plaintiff, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO DISMISS CERTAIN CLAIMS AND 13
v. DEFENDANTS FOLLOWING SCREENING OF PLAINTIFF’S SECOND AMENDED 14
CHRISTIAN PFEIFFER, et al., COMPLAINT 15 Defendants. 14-DAY OBJECTION
DEADLINE 16 17 Plaintiff Jovan R. Guillory is proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis in this
civil rights 18 action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

19 I. INTRODUCTION 20 On April 16, 2024, the Court issued its Second Screening Order,
finding Plaintiff had 21 failed to state a claim upon which relief could be granted. (Doc. 15.)
Plaintiff was directed to do 22 one of the following: (1) notify the Court in writing that he did not
wish to file a second amended 23 complaint and was willing to proceed only on the Eighth
Amendment excessive force claim 24 against Defendant Alcantar; or (2) file a second amended
complaint curing the deficiencies 25 identified by the Court; or (3) file a notice of voluntary
dismissal.

(Id. at 15.) 26 Following an extension of time, on May 20, 2024, Plaintiff filed a second amended
27 complaint. (Doc. 18.) 1 On August 18, 2025, Plaintiff filed a document titled “Motion: To
Proceed with the 2 Applauded Funds Against CO Alcantar, ‘Eight Amendment Excessive Force
Claim.’” (Doc. 19.) 3 II. SCREENING REQUIREMENT 4 The Court is required to screen
complaints brought by prisoners seeking relief against a 5 governmental entity or an officer or
employee of a governmental entity.

28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). 6 The Court must dismiss a complaint or portion thereof if the complaint is
frivolous or malicious, 7 fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary
relief from a defendant 8 who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b).

The Court should dismiss a complaint if 9 it lacks a cognizable legal theory or fails to allege
sufficient facts to support a cognizable legal 10 theory. See *Balistreri v. Pacifica Police Dep’t*, 901
F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1990). 11 III. PLEADING REQUIREMENTS 12 A. Federal Rule of Civil
Procedure 8(a) 13 “Rule 8(a)’s simplified pleading standard applies to all civil actions, with
limited 14 exceptions.” *Swierkiewicz v. Sorema N.A.*, 534 U.S. 506, 513 (2002).

A complaint must contain 15 “a short and plain statement of the claims showing that the pleader is
entitled to relief.” Fed. R. 16 Civ. P. 8(a)(2). “Such a statement must simply give the defendant fair
notice of what the 17 plaintiff’s claim is and the grounds upon which it rests.” *Swierkiewicz*, 534
U.S. at 512 (internal 18 quotation marks & citation omitted).

19 Detailed factual allegations are not required, but “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a 20 cause of action, supported by mere conclusory statements, do not suffice.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 21 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (citing *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)). Plaintiff must 22 set forth “sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to ‘state a claim that is plausible on its face.’” 23 *Id.* (quoting *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 570).

Factual allegations are accepted as true, but legal 24 conclusions are not. *Id.* (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555). 25 The Court construes pleadings of pro se prisoners liberally and affords them the benefit of 26 any doubt. *Hebbe v. Pliler*, 627 F.3d 338, 342 (9th Cir. 2010) (citation omitted).

However, “the 27 liberal pleading standard... applies only to a plaintiff’s factual allegations,” not his legal 1 of a civil rights complaint may not supply essential elements of the claim that were not initially 2 pled,” *Bruns v. Nat’l Credit Union Admin.*, 122 F.3d 1251, 1257 (9th Cir. 1997) (internal 3 quotation marks & citation omitted), and courts “are not required to indulge unwarranted 4 inferences.” *Doe I v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.*, 572 F.3d 677, 681 (9th Cir.

2009) (internal quotation 5 marks & citation omitted). The “sheer possibility that a defendant has acted unlawfully” is not 6 sufficient to state a cognizable claim, and “facts that are merely consistent with a defendant’s 7 liability” fall short. *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678 (internal quotation marks & citation omitted). 8 B. Linkage and Causation 9 Section 1983 provides a cause of action for the violation of constitutional or other federal 10 rights by persons acting under color of state law.

See 42 U.S.C. § 1983. To state a claim under 11 section 1983, a plaintiff must show a causal connection or link between the actions of the 12 defendants and the deprivation alleged to have been suffered by the plaintiff. See *Rizzo v. Goode*, 423 U.S. 362, 373-75 (1976).

The Ninth Circuit has held that “[a] person ‘subjects’ another to the 14 deprivation of a constitutional right, within the meaning of section 1983, if he does an affirmative 15 act, participates in another’s affirmative acts, or omits to perform an act which he is legal required 16 to do that causes the deprivation of which complaint is made.” *Johnson v. Duffy*, 588 F.2d 740, 17 743 (9th Cir.

1978) (citation omitted). 18 C. Supervisory Liability 19 Liability may not be imposed on supervisory personnel for the actions or omissions of 20 their subordinates under the theory of respondeat superior. *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 676-77; see e.g., 21 *Simmons v. Navajo Cnty., Ariz.*, 609 F.3d 1011, 1020-21 (9th Cir. 2010) (plaintiff required to 22 adduce evidence the named supervisory defendants “themselves acted or failed to act 23 unconstitutionally, not merely that subordinate did”), overruled on other grounds by *Castro v. 24 C’nty of Los Angeles*, 833 F.3d 1060, 1070 (9th Cir.

2016); Jones v. Williams, 297 F.3d 930, 934 25 (9th Cir. 2002) (“In order for a person acting under color of state law to be liable under section 26 1983 there must be a showing of personal participation in the alleged rights deprivation: there is 27 no respondeat superior liability under section 1983”). 1 knew of the violations and failed to act to prevent them.” Taylor v. List, 880 F.2d 1040, 1045 (9th 2 Cir.

1989). “The requisite causal connection may be established when an official sets in motion a 3 ‘series of acts by others which the actor knows or reasonably should know would cause others to 4 inflict’ constitutional harms.” Corales v. Bennett, 567 F.3d 554, 570 (9th Cir. 2009). Accord 5 Starr v. Baca, 652 F.3d 1202, 1205-06 (9th Cir. 2011) (supervisory liability may be based on 6 inaction in the training and supervision of subordinates).

7 Supervisory liability may also exist without any personal participation if the official 8 implemented “a policy so deficient that the policy itself is a repudiation of the constitutional 9 rights and is the moving force of the constitutional violation.” Redman v. Cty. of San Diego, 942 10 F.2d 1435, 1446 (9th Cir. 1991) (citations & quotations marks omitted), abrogated on other 11 grounds by Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825 (1970).

12 To prove liability for an action or policy, the plaintiff “must... demonstrate that his 13 deprivation resulted from an official policy or custom established by a... policymaker possessed 14 with final authority to establish that policy.” Waggy v. Spokane County Washington, 594 F.3d 15 707, 713 (9th Cir.2010). When a defendant holds a supervisory position, the causal link between 16 such defendant and the claimed constitutional violation must be specifically alleged.

See Fayle v. 17 Stapley, 607 F.2d 858, 862 (9th Cir. 1979). Vague and conclusory allegations concerning the 18 involvement of supervisory personnel in civil rights violations are not sufficient. See Ivey v. 19 Board of Regents, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982). 20 IV. DISCUSSION 21 A. Plaintiff’s Second Amended Complaint 22 Plaintiff names Correctional Officer J. Alcantar, Correctional Lieutenant N. Montanez, 23 Associate Warden E. Stark, and Warden Christian Pfeiffer, employed at Kern Valley State Prison, 24 as defendants in this action.

(Doc. 18 at 1-2.) He seeks monetary damages, attorney’s fees¹ and 25 costs of suit. (Id. at 9-10.) 26 27 1 Plaintiff, who is proceeding pro se, is not entitled to attorney’s fees. Kay v. Ehrler, 499 U.S. 432, 435 (1991). 1 B. Plaintiff’s Claims 2 Claim One 3 Plaintiff’s first claim is titled “Eighth and Fourteenth Excessive Use of Force/Retaliation 4 Deliberate Indifference Violation(s).” (Doc.

18 at 3.) The Court construes Plaintiff’s claim to 5 assert Eighth Amendment excessive force claims against all named defendants. 6 Factual Allegations 7 Plaintiff contends that on March 21, 2020, he engaged in an exchange of derogatory or 8 profane words with an unidentified individual or individuals before being allowed to proceed to 9 his assigned building following a medical appointment.

(Doc. 18 at 3.) Later that evening, 10 Defendant Alcantar, a “gun-tower control official,” released Inmate Barnett from the upper tier of 11 the building. (Id. at 4.) When Barnett descended to the lower tier where Plaintiff is housed, 12 Barrett assaulted him without warning. (Id.) Plaintiff contends a fist fight ensued although he 13 “was not the aggressor,” and he was shot in the “in his eye, face/head” by Alcantar.

(Id.) Plaintiff 14 states that Alcantar “orchestrated the physical altercation” between him and Barnett, and Alcantar 15 “directly, overtly/covertly, actively participated in the assault/attack” by discharging a round from 16 his weapon. (Id. at 3-4.) 17 Plaintiff received outside medical treatment for “severe facial and structural damage of the 18 eyes and forehead.” (Doc.

18 at 4.) Plaintiff suffers from excruciating and debilitating headaches, 19 cognitive disorientation, trauma and PTSD. (Id.) Plaintiff further contends Defendants Pfeiffer 20 and Stark are directly responsible “for the post-duty assignments of correctional custody staff ... 21 under California Code of Regulation section 3380.” (Id.) He also contends “John Doe 1,”² a 22 “correctional custody supervisor,” and Defendant Montanez “were instrumental in the treatment, 23 training and discipline, of all under such assignment.” (Id.)

24 Plaintiff States an Excessive Force Claim Against Defendant Alcantar 25 “[T]he unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain on prisoners constitutes cruel and 26 unusual punishment” in violation of the Eighth Amendment. *Whitley v. Albers*, 475 U.S. 312, 328 27 2 Plaintiff did not name any “John Doe” or “Jane Doe” as a defendant in his second amended complaint.

(See Doc. 18 at 1-2.) 1 (1986) (internal quotation marks & citation omitted). As courts have succinctly observed, 2 “[p]ersons are sent to prison as punishment, not for punishment.” *Gordon v. Faber*, 800 F. Supp. 3 797, 800 (N.D. Iowa) (quoting *Battle v. Anderson*, 564 F.2d 388, 395 (10th Cir. 1977)) (citation 4 omitted). “Being violently assaulted in prison is simply not part of the penalty that criminal 5 offenders pay for their offenses against society.” *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 834 (1994) 6 (internal quotation marks & citation omitted).

7 A correctional officer engages in excessive force in violation of the Cruel and Unusual 8 Punishments Clause if he (1) uses excessive and unnecessary force under all the circumstances, 9 and (2) “harms an inmate for the very purpose of causing harm,” and not “as part of a good-faith 10 effort to maintain security.” *Hoard v. Hartman*, 904 F.3d 780, 788 (9th Cir.

2018). In other 11 words, “whenever prison officials stand accused of using excessive physical force ..., the core 12 judicial inquiry is ... whether force was applied in a good-faith effort to maintain or restore 13 discipline, or maliciously and sadistically to cause harm.” *Hudson v. McMillian*, 503 U.S. 1, 6–7 14 (1992).

In making this determination, courts may consider “the need for application of force, the 15 relationship between that need and the amount of force used, the threat reasonably perceived by 16

the responsible officials, and any efforts made to temper the severity of a forceful response.” Id. 17 at 7. Courts may also consider the extent of the injury suffered by the prisoner.

Id. However, the 18 absence of serious injury is not determinative. Id. 19 Liberally construing the second amended complaint and accepting all facts as true, 20 Plaintiff states a cognizable Eighth Amendment excessive force claim against Defendant 21 Alcantar. Plaintiff contends Alcantar orchestrated the physical altercation between he and Barnett, 22 inferring Alcantar’s use of force in deploying his weapon was excessive and unnecessary, for the 23 purpose of causing harm, and in the absence of a good faith effort to maintain security.

Hudson, 24 503 U.S. at 6-7; Hoard, 904 F.3d at 788. Here, even liberally construing the second amended 25 complaint and accepting all facts as true, Plaintiff fails to state a claim against any other named 26 defendant. 27 First, while Plaintiff contends Defendants Pfeiffer, Stark, and Montanez are liable for 1 in or directed the violation, or knew of and failed to prevent it.

Taylor, 880 F.2d at 1045. Plaintiff 2 also fails to sufficiently demonstrate a causal link concerning the constitutional deprivation was 3 the result of any official policy or custom. Waggy, 594 F.3d at 713; Fayle, 607 F.2d at 862. 4 Plaintiff’s vague and conclusory allegations are insufficient to state a claim against these 5 individuals. Ivey, 673 F.2d at 268.

Plaintiff also failed to name “John Doe” as a defendant in his 6 second amended complaint. 7 To the extent Plaintiff intended to assert an Eighth Amendment failure to train claim 8 against any named supervisory defendant, he again, fails to do so. See *Clement v. Gomez*, 298 9 F.3d 898, 905 (9th Cir. 2002) (quoting *City of Canton, Ohio v. Harris*, 489 U.S. 378, 390 (1989)); 10 *Canell v. Lightner*, 143 F.3d 1210, 1213 (9th Cir.

1998); *Connick v. Thompson*, 563 U.S. 51, 62 11 (2011). Vague and conclusory references are insufficient to state a claim. *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 678. 12 As the Court found in its Second Screening Order, Plaintiff fails to plausibly allege any failure to 13 train claims. Waggy, 594 F.3d at 713; Fayle, 607 F.2d at 862; Ivey, 673 F.2d at 268. Further, it is 14 clear Plaintiff is unable to cure the previously identified deficiencies concerning this claim.

15 Therefore, granting Plaintiff further leave to amend would be futile. *Hartman v. CDCR*, 707 F.3d 16 1114, 1129-30 (9th Cir. 2013) (affirming dismissal of first amended complaint and finding leave 17 to amend futile where complaint’s allegations belied plaintiff’s entitlement to relief). 18 In sum, Plaintiff states a plausible Eighth Amendment excessive force claim against 19 Defendant Alcantar only and the Court will recommend this action proceed on Plaintiff’s 20 excessive force claim only against Defendant Alcantar. 21 Claim Two 22 Plaintiff’s second claim is titled “Eighth and Fourteenth Amendment Deliberate 23 Indifference.” (Doc.

18 at 6.) The Court construes Plaintiff’s second cause of action to assert 24 Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference to serious medical needs. 25 Factual Allegations 26 Plaintiff contends he

was shot in the “face head/eye” during a coordinated attack by 27 3 This recommendation appears to satisfy Plaintiff’s August 18, 2025, request to proceed on his Eighth Amendment excessive force claim against Alcantar.

(See Doc. 19.) 1 Defendant Alcantar. (Doc. 18 at 6.) When Plaintiff returned from the hospital “with a number of 2 bandages and head/eye dressings,” he was to have follow-up and after care appointments “that 3 caused the Plaintiff to need some reconstructive facial and eye [surgical] procedures.” (Id.) But 4 the appointments “never took place and/or were cancel/set aside due to the” pandemic, as Plaintiff 5 was advised by medical personnel “John Doe 2 and Jane Doe 1.” (Id.)

6 Plaintiff states he “suffered bone fractures, deformities, ecchymosis over the eye, 7 headaches, blurred vision, sleep deprivation/psychological trauma” that persists. (Doc. 18 at 6.) 8 Plaintiff contends he was “untreated” by “John Doe 4 and mental health Jane Doe 4 personnel” 9 and “laid dormant for a long period of time” without treatment. (Id. at 6-7.)

Appointments – both 10 inside and outside the facility – were “disregarded or missed altogether,” including consultations 11 with plastic surgeons and ophthalmologists. (Id. at 7.) Despite numerous health care grievances, 12 “John Doe 4” continues “deny outside medical consultation.” (Id.) 13 Plaintiff Fails to State a Deliberate Indifference Claim 14 Prison officials violate the Eighth Amendment if they are “deliberate[ly] indifferen[t] to [a 15 prisoner’s] serious medical needs.” *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 104 (1976). “A medical need 16 is serious if failure to treat it will result in “significant injury or the unnecessary and wanton 17 infliction of pain.”” *Peralta v. Dillard*, 744 F.3d 1076, 1081-82 (9th Cir.

2014) (quoting *Jett v. 18 Penner*, 439 F.3d 1091, 1096 (9th Cir. 2006) (quoting *McGuckin v. Smith*, 974 F.2d 1050, 1059 19 (9th Cir. 1992), overruled on other grounds by *WMX Techs., Inc. v. Miller*, 104 F.3d 1133 (9th 20 Cir. 1997) (en banc)). 21 To maintain an Eighth Amendment claim based on medical care in prison, a plaintiff must 22 first “show a serious medical need by demonstrating that failure to treat a prisoner’s condition 23 could result in further significant injury or the unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain.

Second, 24 the plaintiff must show the defendants’ response to the need was deliberately indifferent.” 25 *Wilhelm v. Rotman*, 680 F.3d 1113, 1122 (9th Cir. 2012) (quoting *Jett*, 439 F.3d at 1096 26 (quotation marks omitted)). 27 As to the first prong, indications of a serious medical need “include the existence of an 1 treatment; the presence of a medical condition that significantly affects an individual’s daily 2 activities; or the existence of chronic and substantial pain.” *Colwell v. Bannister*, 763 F.3d 1060, 3 1066 (9th Cir.

2014) (citation & internal quotation marks omitted); accord *Wilhelm*, 680 F.3d at 4 1122; *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122, 1131 (9th Cir. 2000) (“Examples of serious medical needs 5 include ‘[t]he

existence of an injury that a reasonable doctor or patient would find important and worthy of comment or treatment; the presence of a medical condition that significantly affects an individual's daily activities; or the existence of chronic and substantial pain").

As to the second prong, deliberate indifference is "a state of mind more blameworthy than negligence" and "requires 'more than ordinary lack of due care for the prisoner's interests or safety.'" Farmer, 511 U.S. at 835 (1994) (quoting Whitley, 475 U.S. at 319). Deliberate indifference is shown where a prison official "knows that inmates face a substantial risk of serious harm and disregards that risk by failing to take reasonable measures to abate it." Id. at 13847.

In medical cases, this requires showing: (a) a purposeful act or failure to respond to a prisoner's pain or possible medical need and (b) harm caused by the indifference. Wilhelm, 680 F.3d at 1122 (quoting Jett, 439 F.3d at 1096). "A prisoner need not show his harm was substantial; however, such would provide additional support for the inmate's claim that the defendant was deliberately indifferent to his needs." Jett, 439 F.3d at 1096, citing McGuckin, 974 F.2d at 1060.

Deliberate indifference is a high legal standard. *Toguchi v. Chung*, 391 F.3d 1051, 1060 (9th Cir. 2004). "Under this standard, the prison official must not only 'be aware of the facts from which the inference could be drawn that a substantial risk of serious harm exists,' but that person 'must also draw the inference.'" Id. at 1057 (quoting Farmer, 511 U.S. at 837). "If a prison official should have been aware of the risk, but was not, then the official has not violated the Eighth Amendment, no matter how severe the risk." Id. (quoting *Gibson v. County of Washoe*, 25 Nevada, 290 F.3d 1175, 1188 (9th Cir.

2002)). To prevail on a deliberate-indifference claim, a plaintiff must also show that harm resulted from a defendant's wrongful conduct. Wilhelm, 680 F.3d at 1122; see also Jett, 439 F.3d at 1096; 1 based on delay in treatment must show delay led to further injury). 2 Liberally construing the second amended complaint and accepting all facts as true, 3 Plaintiff fails to allege a cognizable deliberate indifference to serious medical needs claim against 4 any defendant.

Plaintiff meets the first prong of the deliberate indifference test by asserting he continues to suffer from the injuries he sustained after the March 21, 2020, incident. Colwell, 763 F.3d at 1066. Plaintiff, however, fails to meet the second prong of the deliberate indifference test. 7 Significantly, Plaintiff has not named any "John Doe" or "Jane Doe" defendant in his second 8 amended complaint.

(See Doc. 18 at 1-2; see also fn. 2, ante.) Additionally, while Plaintiff alleges 9 these individuals failed to respond to his pain and medical need, he again fails to allege any facts 10 establishing

that the harm was caused by indifference. Wilhelm, 680 F.3d at 1122. Plaintiff's 11 assertions are broad, vague, and conclusory and insufficient to state a claim upon which relief can 12 be granted.

Iqbal, 556 U.S. at 678; Swierkiewicz, 534 U.S. at 512. 13 In sum, Plaintiff fails to allege plausible Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference to 14 serious medical needs claims. Because Plaintiff's second amended complaint is deficient for the 15 same or similar reasons as those set forth in the Court's prior screening order (Doc. 15 at 11-14), 16 and because Plaintiff has failed to remedy those deficiencies, Plaintiff cannot cure his pleadings 17 and, thus, that leave to amend would be futile.

See Hartman, 707 F.3d at 1129-30. Therefore, the 18 Court will recommend dismissal of this claim. 19 Claim Three 20 Plaintiff's third claim for relief is titled "First, Fifth, Eighth and Fourteenth Amendment 21 Due Process Deliberate Indifference." (Doc. 18 at 8.)

The Court construes Plaintiff's claim to 22 assert a due process violation under the Fourteenth Amendment. 23 Factual Allegations 24 Plaintiff states he was found guilty of a disciplinary violation following the incident 25 involving Alcantar by Defendant Montanez. (Doc. 18 at 8.) He states Montanez "is not only the 26 program institutional prison facility lieutenant but the [supervisor] of" Alcantar and that "it was 27 fitting that" he "would find the Plaintiff guilty of a rule infraction." (Id.)

Plaintiff contends that as 1 Plaintiff Fails to Allege a Due Process Violation 2 The Due Process Clause protects prisoners from being deprived of liberty without due 3 process of law. Wolff v. McDonnell, 418 U.S. 539, 556 (1974).

To state a cause of action for 4 deprivation of due process, a plaintiff must first establish the existence of a liberty interest for 5 which the protection is sought. "States may under certain circumstances create liberty interests 6 which are protected by the Due Process Clause." Sandin v. Conner, 515 U.S. 472, 483-84 (1995). 7 Liberty interests created by state law are generally limited to freedom from restraint which 8 "imposes atypical and significant hardship on the inmate in relation to the ordinary incidents of 9 prison life." Id. at 484.

10 "Prison disciplinary proceedings are not part of a criminal prosecution, and the full 11 panoply of rights due a defendant in such proceedings does not apply." Wolff, 418 U.S. at 556. 12 With respect to prison disciplinary proceedings, the minimum procedural requirements that must 13 be met are: (1) written notice of the charges; (2) at least 24 hours between the time the prisoner 14 receives written notice and the time of the hearing, so that the prisoner may prepare his defense; 15 (3) a written statement by the fact finders of the evidence they rely on and reasons for taking 16 disciplinary action; (4) the right of the prisoner to call witnesses and present documentary 17 evidence in his defense, when permitting him to do so would not be unduly hazardous to 18

institutional safety or correctional goals; and (5) legal assistance to the prisoner where the 19 prisoner is illiterate or the issues presented are legally complex.

Id. at 563-71. Confrontation and 20 cross examination are not generally required. Id. at 567. As long as the five minimum Wolff 21 requirements are met, due process has been satisfied. Walker v. Sumner, 14 F.3d 1415, 1420 (9th Cir. 1994). 23 “When prison officials limit a prisoner’s right to defend himself they must have a 24 legitimate penological interest.” Koenig v. Vannelli, 971 F.2d 422, 423 (9th Cir.

1992) (per 25 curiam) (concluding that prisoners do not have a right to have an independent drug test performed 26 at their own expense). The right to call witnesses may legitimately be limited by “the penological 27 need to provide swift discipline in individual cases... [or] by the very real dangers in prison life 1 Real, 471 U.S. 491, 495 (1985); see also Mitchell v. Dupnik, 75 F.3d 517, 525 (9th Cir.

1996); 2 Koenig, 971 F.2d at 423; Zimmerlee v. Keeney, 831 F.2d 183, 187-88 (9th Cir. 1987) (per 3 curiam). 4 “[T]he requirements of due process are satisfied if some evidence supports the decision by 5 the prison disciplinary board....” Hill, 472 U.S. at 455; see also Touissaint v. McCarthy, 926 F.2d 6 800, 802-03 (9th Cir. 1991); Bostic v. Carlson, 884 F.2d 1267, 1269-70 (9th Cir.

1989); Jancsek, 7 III v. Oregon Bd. of Parole, 833 F.2d 1389, 1390 (9th Cir. 1987); Cato v. Rushen, 824 F.2d 703, 8 705 (9th Cir. 1987); see especially Burnsworth v. Gunderson, 179 F.3d 771, 774-74 (9th Cir. 9 1999) (where there is no evidence of guilt may be unnecessary to demonstrate existence of liberty 10 interest.)

The relevant inquiry is whether “there is any evidence in the record that could support 11 the conclusion reachedas [t]he Federal Constitution does not require evidence that logically 12 precludes any conclusion but the one reached by the disciplinary board.” Hill at 455-57. 13 Liberally construing the second amended complaint and accepting all facts as true, 14 Plaintiff fails to allege a due process violation.

As found in the Court’s first and second screening 15 orders, Plaintiff fails to allege that the minimum procedural requirements were not met during the 16 disciplinary proceeding. Plaintiff alleges no facts to indicate any of the Wolff factors were not 17 met. Wolff, 418 U.S. at 563-71; Walker, 14 F.3d 1415, 1420 (9th Cir. 1994). Additionally, as 18 previously noted in the Court’s prior screening orders, there is “some evidence [that] supports the 19 decision by the prison disciplinary board....” Hill, 472 U.S. at 455.

20 Because Plaintiff’s second amended complaint is deficient for the same reasons set forth 21 in the Court’s prior screening orders (Doc. 11 at 7-8 & Doc. 15 at 8-10), and Plaintiff has again 22

failed to remedy those deficiencies, Plaintiff cannot cure his pleadings and leave to amend would be futile. See *Hartman*, 707 F.3d at 1129-30.

Thus, the Court will recommend dismissal of this claim. C. Screening Summary For the foregoing reasons, the Court will recommend this action proceed only on Plaintiff's Eighth Amendment excessive force claim against Defendant Alcantar, all other claims. V. ORDER AND RECOMMENDATION 2 This Court HEREBY ORDERS the Clerk of the Court to terminate from the docket "J.

Montecino" and "C. Xiaddle" as those individuals are not named in Plaintiff's second amended complaint. 5 For the reasons stated above, the Court HEREBY RECOMMENDS that: 6 1. This action PROCEED only on Plaintiff's Eighth Amendment excessive force claim against Defendant Alcantar; 8 2. Any remaining claims in the second amended complaint be DISMISSED; 9 and 10 3.

Named defendants Christian Pfeiffer, E. Stark, and N. Montanez be DISMISSED from the action. 12 These Findings and Recommendations will be submitted to the United States District Judge assigned to this case, pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1). Within 14 days after being served with a copy of these Findings and Recommendations, a party may file written objections with the Court.

Local Rule 304(b). The document should be captioned, "Objections to Magistrate Judge's Findings and Recommendations" and shall not exceed fifteen (15) pages without leave of Court and good cause shown. The Court will not consider exhibits attached to the Objections.

To the extent a party wishes to refer to any exhibit(s), the party should reference the exhibit in the record by its CM/ECF document and page number, when possible, or otherwise reference the exhibit with specificity. Any pages filed in excess of the fifteen (15) page limitation may be disregarded by the District Judge when reviewing these Findings and Recommendations under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C).

A party's failure to file any objections within the specified time // 24 // 25 // 26 // 27 4 No "John Doe" or "Jane Doe" appears on the docket for this action. 1 may result in the waiver of certain rights on appeal. *Wilkerson v. Wheeler*, 772 F.3d 834, 839 (9th Cir. 2014). 3 IT IS SO ORDERED. 4 5 Dated: August 22, 2025 /s/ Sheila K. Oberto. UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27