

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PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential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)

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