

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
WASHINGTON

John Valda Rice v. Melissa Andrewjeski, et al.

Rice · No. 2:23-CV-00087-SAB · Decided February 23, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Washington granted Defendants’ motion for summary judgment in John Valda Rice’s prisoner civil-rights action alleging Eighth Amendment violations involving medical care and access to ice. The court held that the defendants were entitled to qualified immunity and that the record did not support a finding of deliberate indifference or deprivation of the minimal civilized measure of life’s necessities. The court also denied Plaintiff’s motions to effectuate service and suppress evidence, entered judgment for Defendants, and directed that the case be closed.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Washington
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Stanley A. Bastian
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Washington
DECIDED	February 23, 2026
DOCKET	2:23-CV-00087-SAB
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff, a state prisoner proceeding pro se, brought an action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 alleging Eighth Amendment violations. Defendants moved for summary judgment. Plaintiff also moved to effectuate service and to suppress evidence.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is appropriate when there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court may not weigh evidence or assess credibility and must believe the nonmovant's evidence and draw justifiable inferences in the nonmovant's favor. The court also applied the two-prong qualified-immunity inquiry: whether the defendant violated a constitutional right and whether that right was clearly established.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

PARTIES

John Valda Rice v. Melissa Andrewjeski, Cole, Daniels, Jawili, Lybbert, Monahan, Quarles, Ririe, Turner

TOPICS

summary judgment

qualified immunity

prisoners rights

section 1983

constitutional law

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

prisoner civil rights

constitutional law

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether defendants were entitled to summary judgment on Rice's Eighth Amendment medical-care claim.
2. Whether defendants were entitled to qualified immunity because the alleged conduct did not violate a constitutional right and, in any event, the asserted rights were not clearly established.
3. Whether Rice's motion to effectuate service should be denied as moot after judgment was entered.
4. Whether Rice's motion to suppress evidence should be denied for failure to show a compelling reason to seal the records.

HOLDINGS

1. Defendants were entitled to summary judgment because Rice failed to show that the challenged conduct deprived him of the minimal civilized measure of life's necessities or that defendants acted with deliberate indifference. At most, the evidence could establish negligence, which does not constitute an Eighth Amendment violation.
2. Defendants were entitled to qualified immunity because the alleged isolated denials of ice, and the alleged failures to provide additional testing, an additional mattress, a particular brace, or particular treatment, were not conduct that existing precedent clearly established as violating the Eighth Amendment.
3. Rice's motion to effectuate service was denied as moot after the court entered judgment for defendants.
4. The motion to suppress evidence was denied because Rice did not show a compelling reason to seal the records.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Summary judgment is appropriate "if the movant shows that there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law."" (at 2)

"A right is clearly established when it is sufficiently clear that every reasonable official would have understood that what he is doing violates that right." (at 7)

"At best, Plaintiff's allegations, if believed by a jury, would show that Defendants engaged in mere negligence in diagnosing or treating his medical condition." (at 8)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Rice, a Washington prisoner, alleged that prison officials violated the Eighth Amendment by denying him ice on several occasions and by failing to provide particular medical testing, equipment, or treatment for hip and knee complaints. Medical personnel examined him, recommended or provided various treatments and devices, ordered imaging, and referred him to an orthopedic specialist. The court found no evidence that the isolated denials of ice caused harm or involved a serious medical need, no evidence of deliberate indifference in the treatment of his knee and hip pain, and no evidence that the superintendent or assistant secretary personally participated in the alleged incidents.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Rice initially filed a lengthy complaint and a motion for a temporary restraining order in the Western District of Washington in March 2023. The action was transferred to the Eastern District of Washington; the court ordered service on the Eighth Amendment claims and dismissed the other claims without prejudice. After Rice filed a Third Amended Complaint, defendants moved for summary judgment. The court granted summary judgment for defendants, denied the service motion as moot, denied the motion to suppress, entered judgment for defendants, and directed the clerk to close the file.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 248, 250, 255 (1986)
- *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 323, 325 (1986)
- *Smith v. Univ. of Wash. Law Sch.*, 233 F.3d 1188, 1193 (9th Cir. 2000)
- *Hansen v. United States*, 7 F.3d 137, 138 (9th Cir. 1993)
- *Las Vegas Sands, LLC v. Neheme*, 632 F.3d 526, 532-33 (9th Cir. 2011)
- *Soremekun v. Thrifty Payless, Inc.*, 509 F.3d 978, 984 (9th Cir. 2007)
- *Jones v. Blanas*, 393 F.3d 918, 923 (9th Cir. 2004)
- *Devereaux v. Abbey*, 263 F.3d 1070, 1074 (9th Cir. 2001)
- *Tsao v. Desert Palace, Inc.*, 698 F.3d 1128, 1138 (9th Cir. 2012)
- *McGuckin v. Smith*, 974 F.2d 1050, 1059 (9th Cir. 1992)
- *Hallett v. Morgan*, 296 F.3d 732, 744 (9th Cir. 2002)
- *Gibson v. Cnty. of Washoe, Nevada*, 290 F.3d 1175, 1187-88 (9th Cir. 2002)
- *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 837, 839 (1994)
- *Calloway v. Adams*, No. 1:11-CV-01281-RRB, 2014 WL 5454193, at *10 (E.D. Cal. Oct. 27, 2014), *aff'd*, 624 F. App'x 605 (9th Cir. 2015)
- *Ilsung v. Mobert*, No. 1:10-CV-02070-AWI, 2015 WL 893357, at *6 (E.D. Cal. Mar. 2, 2015), report and recommendation adopted, No. 1:10-CV-2070-AWI-MJS, 2015 WL 1387951 (E.D. Cal. Mar. 25, 2015)

- Medrano Ortiz v. Solomon, No. 5:15-CT-3251-FL, 2019 WL 1245779, at *7 (E.D.N.C. Mar. 18, 2019), aff'd sub nom. Ortiz v. Solomon, 778 F. App'x 236 (4th Cir. 2019)
- Derello v. Stickley, 631 F. Supp. 3d 758 (D. Ariz. 2022)
- Scott v. Quigley, 2025 WL 1368637 (D. Nev. 2025)
- Ashcroft v. al-Kidd, 563 U.S. 731, 735 (2011)
- Mitchell v. Forsyth, 472 U.S. 511, 526 (1985)
- Carley v. Aranas, 103 F.4th 653, 659, 661 (9th Cir. 2024)
- Rivas-Villegas v. Cortesluna, 595 U.S. 1, 6 (2021)

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