

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA, SOUTH BEND DIVISION

Lopez v. Schnaible, et al.

Lopez v. Schnaible, No. 3:25-CV-513-CCB-SJF (N.D. Ind. Apr. 15, 2026) · No. 3:25-CV-513-CCB-SJF ·
Decided April 15, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana denied Michael Lopez’s emergency motions for preservation of evidence and a temporary restraining order, a preliminary injunction, and expedited consideration. The court held that the defendants’ duty to preserve relevant evidence had already attached, and that the requested GPS-monitoring injunction was unrelated to the Fourth Amendment claims in the complaint. The request for expedited consideration was denied as moot.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, South Bend Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Cristal C. Brisco
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
DECIDED	April 15, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-CV-513-CCB-SJF
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff sought emergency relief through motions for preservation of evidence and a temporary restraining order, a preliminary injunction removing his GPS monitor, and expedited consideration of the preliminary-injunction motion. The district court denied the first two motions and denied the expedited-consideration motion as moot.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A preliminary injunction or temporary restraining order requires a clear showing of irreparable harm, inadequacy of traditional legal remedies, and some likelihood of success on the merits, followed by balancing of the harms and consideration of the public interest.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district-court opinion with no reporter or neutral citation identified in the source

PARTIES

Michael Lopez v. Matt Schnaible, Bremen Police Department,
Individual police officers

TOPICS

injunctions civil procedure evidence civil rights constitutional law

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil procedure Civil rights Constitutional law Injunctive relief Evidence preservation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether a temporary restraining order was necessary to require defendants to preserve evidence relating to the traffic stop and detention.
2. Whether the court could issue a preliminary injunction requiring removal of Lopez's GPS ankle monitor when that relief was substantively unrelated to the Fourth Amendment claims in the complaint.
3. Whether the motion for expedited consideration should be denied as moot after denial of the preliminary-injunction motion.

HOLDINGS

1. A temporary restraining order was unnecessary because the duty to preserve relevant evidence had already attached when litigation commenced, and destruction of evidence despite that duty could subject defendants to sanctions.
2. The court would not grant injunctive relief concerning conduct substantively unrelated to the Fourth Amendment claims arising from the traffic stop because the scope of injunctive relief is limited to the case or controversy before the court.
3. The motion for expedited consideration was moot because the court had already denied the underlying motion for a preliminary injunction.
4. A movant seeking a preliminary injunction or temporary restraining order must make a clear showing of irreparable harm, inadequacy of traditional legal remedies, and some likelihood of success on the merits; if those threshold elements are shown, the court balances the relevant harms and considers whether the public interest warrants denial.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Preliminary relief “is an extraordinary and drastic remedy, one that should not be granted unless the movant, by a clear showing, carries the burden of persuasion.””

“The Court will not grant injunctive relief outside the scope of the case or controversy before it.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Lopez alleged that police officers violated his Fourth Amendment rights by demanding his driver's license, detaining him, and searching his car during a traffic stop. He sought compensatory damages for wrongful arrest, search, and seizure. He later alleged that evidence from the stop might be deleted or overwritten and sought an order requiring its preservation, as well as an injunction removing his GPS ankle monitor, which was unrelated to the traffic-stop claims.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Lopez filed a pro se civil-rights complaint alleging Fourth Amendment violations arising from a traffic stop, detention, and search of his vehicle, seeking compensatory damages. Before defendants answered, he filed three emergency motions. The district court concluded that a preservation order was unnecessary because the duty to preserve had already attached, that the requested GPS relief was unrelated to the claims in the complaint, and that expedited consideration was moot after denial of the preliminary-injunction motion.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Mazurek v. Armstrong, 520 U.S. 968, 972 (1997)
- Camelot Banquet Rooms, Inc. v. United States Small Bus. Admin., 14 F.4th 624, 628 (7th Cir. 2021)
- Ezell v. City of Chi., 651 F.3d 684, 694 (7th Cir. 2011)
- Mayberry v. Neal, No. 3:24 C 187, 2025 WL 2679752, at *1 (N.D. Ind. Sep. 18, 2025)
- Trask-Morton v. Motel 6 Operating L.P., 534 F.3d 672, 681 (7th Cir. 2008)
- J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, N.A. v. McDonald, 760 F.3d 646, 653 (7th Cir. 2014)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT NORTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA SOUTH BEND DIVISION MICHAEL LOPEZ, Plaintiff, v. Case No. 3:25-CV-513-CCB-SJF MATT SCHNAIBLE, et al., Defendants. OPINION AND ORDER Before the Court are Plaintiff Michael Lopez's Emergency Motion for Preservation of Evidence and Temporary Restraining Order, Emergency Motion for Preliminary Injunction, and Emergency Motion for Expedited Consideration of Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Injunction.

(ECF 9; ECF 10; ECF 11). The Court denies all of these motions for the following reasons. On June 16, 2025, Mr. Lopez filed a pro se complaint against the Bremen Police Department and multiple individual officers. (ECF 1).

In the complaint, he alleges that the police officers violated his Fourth Amendment rights when they demanded his driver's license, detained him, and searched his car. He seeks compensatory damages for wrongful arrest, search, and seizure. Defendants have not yet answered the complaint.

On April 14, 2026, Mr. Lopez filed three emergency motions: (1) an emergency motion for preservation of evidence and temporary restraining order, (ECF 9), (2) an emergency motion for a preliminary injunction, (ECF 10), and (3) an emergency motion for expedited consideration of Mr. Lopez's motion for preliminary injunction, (ECF 11). Preliminary relief "is an extraordinary and drastic remedy, one that should not be granted unless the movant, by a clear showing, carries the burden of persuasion." *Mazurek v. Armstrong*, 520 U.S. 968, 972 (1997) (internal quotation marks omitted).

A party seeking a preliminary injunction must first show that "(1) they will suffer irreparable harm in the absence of an injunction, (2) traditional legal remedies are inadequate to remedy the harm, and (3) they have some likelihood of success on the merits." *Camelot Banquet Rooms, Inc. v. United States Small Bus. Admin.*, 14 F.4th 624, 628 (7th Cir. 2021).

If the movant can show these elements, the Court then "weighs the factors against one another, assessing whether the balance of harms favors the moving party or whether the harm to the nonmoving party or the public is sufficiently weighty that the injunction should be denied." *Ezell v. City of Chi.*, 651 F.3d 684, 694 (7th Cir. 2011).

The standard for a temporary restraining order is the same. See *Mayberry v. Neal*, No. 3:24 C 187, 2025 WL 2679752, at *1 (N.D. Ind. Sep. 18, 2025). Mr. Lopez first seeks a temporary restraining order requiring Defendants to preserve all evidence related to his traffic stop and detention. (ECF 9 at 2).

In support, he alleges on information and belief that Defendants maintain policies under which body camera and dash camera footage may be deleted, overwritten, or otherwise destroyed after a limited retention period. But Mr. Lopez does not need a temporary restraining order to prevent the destruction of this evidence. All parties to litigation have a duty to preserve relevant evidence.

See Fed. R. Civ. P. 37(e). And they risk sanctions should they destroy evidence when they know, or should know, litigation is imminent. *Trask-Morton v. Motel 6 Operating L.P.*, 534 F.3d 672, 681 (7th Cir. 2008). Here, litigation has actually commenced, and the duty to preserve evidence has already attached to Defendants. A temporary restraining order is unnecessary, and the Court will not impose it.

This motion is denied. Next, Mr. Lopez seeks a preliminary injunction relieving him from GPS monitoring. (ECF 10). In support, he argues that he is likely to succeed upon the merits of his underlying case and that GPS monitoring subjects him to ongoing constitutional harm. But the ongoing harm Mr. Lopez asks the Court to enjoin is substantively unrelated to the Fourth Amendment claims in his complaint.

In his motion, Mr. Lopez asks the Court to order the removal of his GPS ankle monitor. His complaint, on the other hand, raises Fourth Amendment claims stemming from alleged wrongful

arrest, search, and seizure during a traffic stop.

The Court will not grant injunctive relief outside the scope of the case or controversy before it. J.P. Morgan Chase Bank, N.A. v. McDonald, 760 F.3d 646, 653 (7th Cir. 2014) (“[C]ourts limit the scope of injunctive relief to the case or controversy actually before them.”). This motion is denied. Lastly, Mr. Lopez seeks expedited review of his motion for preliminary injunction.

(ECF 11). In support, he does little more than summarize the argument he made in his motion for preliminary injunction. Because the Court has already denied the motion for preliminary injunction, this motion for expedited review is denied as moot.

For these reasons, the Court DENIES Mr. Lopez’s emergency motion for a temporary restraining order directing preservation of evidence, (ECF 9), and his emergency motion for a preliminary injunction, (ECF 10). It further DENIES AS MOOT his emergency motion for expedited consideration. (ECF 11). SO ORDERED on April 15, 2026. /s/Cristal C. Brisco CRISTAL C. BRISCO, JUDGE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT