

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
NORTH CAROLINA, CHARLOTTE DIVISION

Marcus Antonio Satterfield v. Avery Mitchell Correctional
Institution, et al.

Satterfield · No. 3:25-cv-00977-MR · Decided January 12, 2026

SUMMARY

This memorandum of decision and order addresses the initial review of Marcus Antonio Satterfield’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 prisoner complaint under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2) and 1915A. The court allowed an individual-capacity Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against Defendant Matthan Hicks and an individual-capacity First Amendment retaliation claim against Defendants Landon Brown and Loren Aldrige to proceed, while dismissing the remaining claims and defendants.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of North Carolina, Charlotte Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Martin Reidinger
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of North Carolina, Charlotte Division
DECIDED	January 12, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-cv-00977-MR
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Initial review of a pro se prisoner's complaint filed under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 while proceeding in forma pauperis, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2) and 1915A.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2) and 1915A, the court reviews a prisoner's complaint to determine whether it is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant. The court accepts well-pleaded allegations as true and gives a pro se plaintiff the benefit of every reasonable inference, but does not accept conclusory allegations unsupported by specific facts.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

PARTIES

Marcus Antonio Satterfield v. Avery Mitchell Correctional Institution, Richard Ellis, Matthan Hicks, Danny Strafford, Landon Brown, Loren Aldrige, Derrick E. Fox, Robert B. Bullis, FNU Crow, North Carolina Department of Adult Correction

TOPICS

section 1983 prisoners rights first amendment due process civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights litigation prisoner litigation constitutional law federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated a nonfrivolous individual-capacity Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against Hicks.
2. Whether the complaint stated Eighth Amendment claims against Strafford and Ellis based on verbal harassment, a threat, or failure to protect Satterfield from Hicks's alleged use of force.
3. Whether NCDAC and AMCI were suable persons under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
4. Whether official-capacity claims for damages were barred because state officials are not persons under § 1983 and are protected by Eleventh Amendment immunity.
5. Whether the complaint stated a First Amendment retaliation claim against Brown and Aldrige.
6. Whether the alleged denial or interference with grievance procedures stated a constitutional claim.
7. Whether claims based on allegedly false disciplinary charges were barred by Heck v. Humphrey and Edwards v. Balisok.
8. Whether the allegations stated a procedural or substantive due process claim arising from prison disciplinary proceedings.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint stated a nonfrivolous individual-capacity Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against Hicks, which could proceed beyond initial review.
2. The complaint failed to state an Eighth Amendment claim against Strafford and Ellis based on verbal harassment, a threat, or their alleged presence during Hicks's use of force.
3. NCDAC and AMCI were not persons subject to suit under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, so the claims against them were dismissed with prejudice.
4. The official-capacity claims against the state officials did not survive initial review and were dismissed.
5. The complaint stated a nonfrivolous individual-capacity First Amendment retaliation claim against Brown and Aldrige, which could proceed beyond initial review.

6. The complaint failed to state a § 1983 claim based on denial of access to or interference with prison grievance procedures.
7. The claim based on allegedly false disciplinary charges appeared barred by Heck because Satterfield did not allege that the disciplinary convictions had been reversed or otherwise invalidated.
8. The complaint failed to state a due process claim because it contained vague and conclusory allegations and did not identify the defendant responsible or allege deprivation of the procedural protections required by Wolff.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Taking Plaintiff’s allegations as true and giving him the benefit of every reasonable inference, Plaintiff’s excessive force claim against Defendant Hicks survives initial review as not clearly frivolous.” (at 1)

“In sum, Plaintiff’s individual capacity Eighth Amendment excessive force claim against Defendant Hicks and Plaintiff’s First Amendment individual capacity retaliation claim against Defendants Brown and Aldrige survive initial review.” (at 1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Satterfield, a North Carolina prisoner, alleged that on July 21, 2023, correctional officer Matthan Hicks twisted his wrist, handcuffed him, and injured his shoulder while other officers were present. He also alleged that officers verbally threatened or harassed him, that supervisors ignored his complaints, and that Brown and Aldrige later falsified documents or caused him to be placed in isolation in retaliation for his complaints. The complaint further alleged false disciplinary charges, denial or interference with grievances, and an institutional custom of excessive force and falsified documentation.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Satterfield filed the action on December 9, 2025, alleging constitutional violations arising from events at Avery/Mitchell Correctional Institution. On initial review, the court allowed an individual-capacity Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against Matthan Hicks and an individual-capacity First Amendment retaliation claim against Landon Brown and Loren Aldrige to proceed. The court dismissed all other claims and defendants and directed the clerk to begin waiver-of-service procedures for the surviving defendants.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 327-28 (1989)
- Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519, 520 (1972)
- Weller v. Department of Social Services, 901 F.2d 387 (4th Cir. 1990)
- American Manufacturers Mutual Insurance Co. v. Sullivan, 526 U.S. 40, 49-50 (1999)
- Health & Hospital Corp. of Marion County v. Talevski, 599 U.S. 166, 143 S. Ct. 1444 (2023)

- Will v. Michigan Department of State Police, 491 U.S. 58, 71 (1989)
- Fox v. Harwood, 2009 WL 1117890, at *1 (W.D.N.C. Apr. 24, 2009)
- Allen v. Cooper, No. 1:19-cv-794, 2019 WL 6255220, at *2 (M.D.N.C. Nov. 22, 2019)
- Ballenger v. Owens, 352 F.3d 842, 844-45 (4th Cir. 2003)
- Williamson v. Stirling, 912 F.3d 154, 171 (4th Cir. 2019)
- Vinnedge v. Gibbs, 550 F.2d 926, 928 (4th Cir. 1977)
- Whitley v. Albers, 475 U.S. 312, 319-21 (1986)
- Williams v. Benjamin, 77 F.3d 756, 761 (4th Cir. 1996)
- Wilkins v. Gaddy, 559 U.S. 34, 38 (2010)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 833-34 (1994)
- De'Lonta v. Angelone, 330 F.3d 630, 634 (4th Cir. 2003)
- Ford v. Hooks, 2024 WL 3260902, at *4 (4th Cir. July 2, 2024)
- Parrish ex rel. Lee v. Cleveland, 372 F.3d 294, 302-03 (4th Cir. 2004)
- Grayson v. Peed, 195 F.3d 692, 695 (4th Cir. 1999)
- Wilson v. United States, 332 F.R.D. 505, 520 (S.D. W. Va. 2019)
- Adams v. Rice, 40 F.3d 72, 74-75 (4th Cir. 1994)
- Booker v. South Carolina Department of Corrections, 855 F.3d 533, 540-41 (4th Cir. 2017)
- Thompson v. Commonwealth of Virginia, 878 F.3d 89, 110 (4th Cir. 2017)
- Patton v. Kimble, 717 F. App'x 271, 272 (4th Cir. 2018)
- Martin v. Duffy, 977 F.3d 294, 299 (4th Cir. 2020)
- Gowen v. Winfield, 130 F.4th 162, 173 (4th Cir. 2025)
- Heck v. Humphrey, 512 U.S. 477, 485-87 (1994)
- Edwards v. Balisok, 520 U.S. 641, 646-47 (1997)
- Moskos v. Hardee, 24 F.4th 289 (4th Cir. 2022)
- Wolff v. McDonnell, 418 U.S. 539, 556, 564-71 (1974)
- Morrissey v. Brewer, 408 U.S. 471, 488 (1972)
- Baxter v. Palmigiano, 425 U.S. 308, 322-23 & n.5 (1976)
- Brown v. Braxton, 373 F.3d 501, 505-06 (4th Cir. 2004)
- Superintendent, Massachusetts Correctional Institution v. Hill, 472 U.S. 445, 455 (1985)
- Simpson v. Welch, Simpson v. Welch, 900 F.2d 33, 35 (4th Cir. 1990)
- Dickson v. Microsoft Corp., 309 F.3d 193, 201-02 (4th Cir. 2002)

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