

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Redick III v. County of Tuolumne

Case No. 1:25-cv-00453-KES-EPG (E.D. Cal. May 6, 2025) · No. 1:25-cv-00453-KES-EPG · Decided May 6, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California screened Stanley E. Redick III’s pro se and in forma pauperis complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915 and concluded that it failed to state cognizable claims. The court discussed deficiencies under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8, Younger abstention, lack of state action, and judicial and prosecutorial immunity. The court directed the Clerk to add “Defense Counsel” as a defendant and gave Plaintiff 30 days either to file a First Amended Complaint or to notify the court that he wished to stand on the existing complaint.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Erica P. Grosjean
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	May 6, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-00453-KES-EPG
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening order in a pro se and in forma pauperis action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The magistrate judge determined that the complaint failed to state cognizable claims and directed plaintiff either to file a first amended complaint or to stand on the complaint for findings and recommendations to a district judge.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2), the court must dismiss an in forma pauperis action that is frivolous, fails to state a cognizable claim, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant. The complaint must satisfy Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2) and contain sufficient factual matter to state a plausible claim for relief.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential district-court screening order

PARTIES

Stanley E. Redick, III v. County of Tuolumne, Judge Kevin M. Seibert, Laura Craig, Defense Counsel, Doe Defendants

TOPICS

section 1983 civil rights pleadings injunctions federalism

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil procedure Civil rights Federal courts Constitutional law Remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint satisfied Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a) and stated plausible claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
2. Whether Younger abstention required dismissal or otherwise precluded federal intervention in plaintiff's ongoing state-court proceedings.
3. Whether plaintiff could pursue § 1983 claims against defense counsel absent allegations establishing state action or a specific conspiracy with state officials.
4. Whether judicial immunity barred claims against the state-court judge and prosecutorial immunity barred claims against the prosecutor.
5. Whether plaintiff should be granted leave to amend.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint failed to comply with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a) because it relied on conclusory assertions and did not provide sufficient factual allegations or identify how each defendant personally participated in a constitutional violation.
2. Younger abstention applied because the complaint concerned ongoing state judicial proceedings, implicated important state interests, provided an adequate opportunity to raise constitutional challenges in state court and on appeal, and sought relief that would enjoin or practically interfere with those proceedings.
3. The complaint failed to state a § 1983 claim against defense counsel because counsel's alleged performance of traditional legal services did not constitute action under color of state law, and plaintiff alleged no specific facts supporting a conspiracy with state officials.
4. Judicial immunity barred plaintiff's claims against Judge Seibert for acts taken in a judicial capacity, and prosecutorial immunity barred claims against Craig for acts undertaken as an advocate in initiating and presenting the prosecution.
5. Plaintiff was granted thirty days to file a first amended complaint curing the identified deficiencies or to notify the court that he wished to stand on the complaint.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Younger abstention is appropriate when: (1) there is an ongoing state judicial proceeding; (2) the proceeding implicates important state interests; (3) there is an adequate opportunity in the state proceedings to raise constitutional challenges; and (4) the requested relief seeks to enjoin or has the practical effect of enjoining the ongoing state judicial proceeding.” (p. 6)

“Within thirty (30) days from the date of service of this order, Plaintiff shall either: a. File a First Amended Complaint; or b. File a notice stating that he wants to stand on his complaint.” (p. 13)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged that Judge Kevin M. Seibert continued presiding over his state-court proceedings despite being named as a defendant and allegedly disqualified. He also alleged that prosecutor Laura Craig maliciously pursued theft charges arising from a 2018 arrest and that defense counsel, county officials, and unidentified defendants engaged in procedural misconduct. The complaint sought damages, declaratory relief, and an injunction requiring structural reforms and preventing further judicial or prosecutorial misconduct.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a § 1983 complaint on March 21, 2025, challenging alleged misconduct in ongoing California state-court proceedings and seeking damages, declaratory relief, and injunctive relief. Because plaintiff proceeded in forma pauperis, the court screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). The court found deficiencies under Rule 8, Younger abstention, the state-action requirement, and judicial and prosecutorial immunity, but granted thirty days to amend.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555, 570 (2007)
- Doe I v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., 572 F.3d 677, 681 (9th Cir. 2009)
- Hebbe v. Pliler, 627 F.3d 338, 342 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Starr v. Baca, 652 F.3d 1202, 1216 (9th Cir. 2011)
- Younger v. Harris, 401 U.S. 37, 43, 53 (1971)
- Page v. King, 932 F.3d 898, 901-02 (9th Cir. 2019)
- Arevalo v. Hennessy, 882 F.3d 763, 765 (9th Cir. 2018)
- Aiona v. Judiciary of State of Hawaii, 17 F.3d 1244, 1248 (9th Cir. 1994)
- Gilbertson v. Albright, 381 F.3d 965, 968, 975 (9th Cir. 2004)
- Aaron v. O'Connor, 914 F.3d 1010, 1017 (6th Cir. 2019)
- Hart v. Falls, No. CV 22-7282-CJC(E), 2023 WL 12007128, at *3-4 (C.D. Cal. Jan. 18, 2023)

- Peterson v. Contra Costa County Superior Court, No. C03-5534 MMC (PR), 2004 WL 443457, at *1 (N.D. Cal. Mar. 2, 2004)
- Jennings v. Leach, No. EDCV 21-00209 JVS (PVC), 2021 WL 12140262, at *2 (C.D. Cal. Mar. 9, 2021)
- Graham v. Connor, 490 U.S. 386, 393-94 (1989)
- Baker v. McCollan, 443 U.S. 137, 144 n.3 (1979)
- Chapman v. Houston Welfare Rights Organization, 441 U.S. 600, 618 (1979)
- Hall v. City of Los Angeles, 697 F.3d 1059, 1068 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Crowley v. Nevada, 678 F.3d 730, 734 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Anderson v. Warner, 451 F.3d 1063, 1067 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Long v. County of Los Angeles, 442 F.3d 1178, 1185 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Marsh v. County of San Diego, 680 F.3d 1148, 1158 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Polk County v. Dodson, 454 U.S. 312, 325 (1981)
- Campbell v. Geragos, No. 1:10-CV-02231-LJO-GBC (PC), 2010 WL 5244677, at *1 (E.D. Cal. Dec. 9, 2010)
- Tower v. Glover, 467 U.S. 914, 920 (1984)
- Ting v. United States, 927 F.2d 1504, 1512 (9th Cir. 1991)
- United Steelworkers of America v. Phelps Dodge Corp., 865 F.2d 1539, 1540-41 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Burns v. County of King, 883 F.2d 819, 821 (9th Cir. 1989)
- Lacey v. Maricopa County, 693 F.3d 896, 937 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc)
- Brown v. Duran, No. CIV S-11-0930 WBS, 2011 WL 4088697, at *2 (E.D. Cal. Sept. 13, 2011)
- Miller v. Davis, 521 F.3d 1142, 1145 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Mireles v. Waco, 502 U.S. 9, 9, 11-12 (1991)
- Boutros v. Tan, No. 2:13-CV-1306-MCE-CMK, 2013 WL 12073446, at *4 (E.D. Cal. Sept. 6, 2013)
- Forrester v. White, 484 U.S. 219, 227-29 (1988)
- Stump v. Sparkman, 435 U.S. 349, 356-60 (1978)
- Bradley v. Fisher, 80 U.S. (13 Wall.) 335, 351 (1872)
- Shutt v. McVittie, 225 F.3d 663, 2000 WL 735166 (9th Cir. 2000)
- Weldon v. Kapetan, No. 1:17-CV-01536-LJO-SKO, 2018 WL 2127060, at *4 (E.D. Cal. May 9, 2018)
- Milstein v. Cooley, 257 F.3d 1004, 1008 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Middleton v. Santa Barbara Police Department, No. CV 15-09818-SVW (AGR), 2016 WL 6902098, at *8 n.10 (C.D. Cal. July 11, 2016)
- Fenters v. Yosemite Chevron, No. CV-F-05-1630 OWW/DLB, 2006 WL 2016536, at *10 (E.D. Cal. July 17, 2006)
- Fitzpatrick v. Gates, No. CV0004191GAFAJWX, 2001 WL 630534, at *5 (C.D. Cal. Apr. 18, 2001)
- Lopez v. Smith, 203 F.3d 1122, 1126-30 (9th Cir. 2000)
- George v. Smith, 507 F.3d 605, 607 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Lacey v. Maricopa County, 693 F.3d 896, 907 n.1 (9th Cir. 2012) (en banc)

