

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
LOUISIANA

Daniel Lee Beckley v. Marc E. Johnson, Stephen J. Windhorst, and
John J. Molaison, Jr.

Beckley · No. No. 24-766-BAJ-SDJ · Decided February 11, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana adopted a Magistrate Judge's Report and Recommendation and dismissed Daniel Lee Beckley's 42 U.S.C. § 1983 claims against Louisiana appellate judges with prejudice. The court concluded that the requested relief would effectively require habeas relief unavailable under § 1983 and that amendment would be futile because a successive habeas petition would be subject to dismissal. The dismissal was also counted as a strike under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g).

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Brian A. Jackson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana
DECIDED	February 11, 2026
DOCKET	No. 24-766-BAJ-SDJ
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court reviewed a magistrate judge's report and recommendation in a prisoner civil-rights action, considered Plaintiff's objection and request to amend, approved and adopted the report, and dismissed the claims with prejudice at the screening stage.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court independently considered the complaint, report and recommendation, and objection in conducting the statutory screening review and determining whether the complaint stated a claim or sought legally available relief.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion
PARTIES	Daniel Lee Beckley v. Marc E. Johnson, Stephen J. Windhorst, John J. Molaison, Jr.

TOPICS

federal habeas corpus

section 1983

prisoners rights

motion to amend

fourteenth amendment

PRACTICE AREAS

prisoner civil rights

federal habeas corpus

civil procedure

constitutional law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Beckley's requested relief was available through a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action.
2. Whether Beckley should be allowed to amend his complaint to seek reconstruction of the appellate record and a hearing concerning prejudice.
3. Whether the claims should be dismissed with prejudice under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B) and 1915A.
4. Whether the dismissal should count as a strike under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g).

HOLDINGS

1. A § 1983 action cannot provide the injunctive relief Beckley sought, including reversal of his conviction, a new trial, or comparable relief directed at obtaining review or alteration of his conviction; such relief must be pursued through a habeas petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2254.
2. Leave to amend was properly denied as futile because the proposed relief remained unavailable under § 1983 and any amendment consistent with the alleged facts would be subject to dismissal as a successive habeas petition.
3. The claims were dismissed with prejudice under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B) and 1915A for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.
4. The dismissal counts as a strike against Beckley under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g).

KEY QUOTATIONS

“because any amendment consistent with the facts alleged would be subject to dismissal” (at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Beckley is incarcerated at Louisiana State Penitentiary and proceeded without counsel. He sued three judges of the Louisiana Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit under § 1983, alleging violations of equal protection and a right to judicial review under the Louisiana Constitution. He sought relief that would require reversal of his conviction, a new trial, or reconstruction of the appellate record and a prejudice hearing. He had previously filed a habeas petition concerning the matter, and that petition had been dismissed with prejudice.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Beckley, an incarcerated pro se plaintiff, filed a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action against three Louisiana appellate judges, seeking injunctive relief that included reversal of his conviction and a new trial. The magistrate judge recommended dismissal with prejudice under the prisoner-screening statutes for legal frivolousness and failure

to state a claim. The district court overruled or rejected the objection, denied amendment as futile, adopted the report, dismissed the claims with prejudice, and counted the dismissal as a strike under § 1915(g).

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Wiggins v. Louisiana State University—Health Care Services Division, 710 Fed. Appx. 625, 627 (5th Cir. 2017)

OPINION

Beckley

PER CURIAM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

MIDDLE DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

DANIEL LEE BECKLEY (#728916) CIVIL ACTION

VERSUS

MARC E. JOHNSON, ET AL. NO. 24-766-BAJ-SDJ

RULING AND ORDER

Plaintiff, an incarcerated person at Louisiana State Penitentiary who is representing himself without assistance of counsel, filed this lawsuit pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against Defendants Marc E. Johnson, Stephen J. Windhorst, and John J. Molaison, Jr., all judges at the Louisiana Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. (Doc. 1). Plaintiff alleges that Defendants have interfered with Plaintiffs constitutional right to equal protection of the laws under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and his right to judicial review under the Louisiana Constitution. (/d.). Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief, including reversal of his conviction and a new trial. (Id.). Pursuant to the screening provisions of 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B) and 1915A, the Magistrate Judge has now issued a Report and Recommendation (Doc. 19, the “Report”), recommending that the Court dismiss Plaintiffs claims, with prejudice, as legally frivolous and for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. Plaintiff timely filed an objection. (Doc. 20). Plaintiffs objection, however, fails to address the underlying jurisdictional issue that this Court has no power to grant the injunctive relief he seeks under § 1983. (Doc. 19 at 4). Plaintiff seeks leave to amend the relief requested in his Complaint. (Doc. 20 at 3-4). However, the relief Plaintiff would request upon amendment, “ordering that the appellate record in Plaintiffs direct appeal be reconstructed and a hearing be conducted to determine if Plaintiff suffered any prejudice by the missing portions of the record,” still constitutes relief that the Court cannot grant under § 1983 and would be more appropriately requested through a habeas petition pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254. Ud.). As the Report notes, Plaintiff has filed a previous habeas petition in this matter, which was dismissed

with prejudice. (Doc. 19 at n. 21). As such, allowing Plaintiff to amend his complaint would be futile “because any amendment consistent with the facts alleged would be subject to dismissal” as a successive habeas petition. (/d.). *Wiggins v. Louisiana State University—Health Care Services Division*, 710 Fed. Appx. 625, 627 (5th Cir. 2017). After careful consideration of the Complaint (Doc. 1), the Report (Doc. 19), and Plaintiff's Objection (Doc. 20), the Court APPROVES the Report and ADOPTS it as the Court's opinion in this matter. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that Plaintiffs claims against all Defendants are DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e) and 1915A for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Court will consider this dismissal as a strike against Plaintiff pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g). Baton Rouge, Louisiana, this 11th day of February, 2026

JUDGE BRIAN A. JACKSON
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA