

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF HAWAII

Shuang Chen and Jianfei Ye v. City & County of Honolulu, Honolulu Police Department, Lorraine Iwamasa, and Unnamed Male Detective

Civ. No. 26-00054 JMS-WRP · No. Civ. No. 26-00054 JMS-WRP · Decided June 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Hawaii grants the Honolulu Police Department’s motion to dismiss claims arising from the alleged mishandling of a sexual-assault investigation. The court dismisses the due-process, evidence-tampering, obstruction, and derivative relief claims without leave to amend, while allowing amendment of the equal-protection, Monell, negligence, and possible intentional-infliction-of-emotional-distress claims. The court also dismisses claims against the similarly situated detective sua sponte and permits amendment by July 16, 2026.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Hawaii
WRITING FOR THE COURT	J. Michael Seabright
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Hawaii
DECIDED	June 16, 2026
DOCKET	Civ. No. 26-00054 JMS-WRP
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs proceeding pro se sued municipal and individual defendants under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and state law. The Honolulu Police Department moved to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), and the court also dismissed claims against nonmoving Defendant Lorraine Iwamasa sua sponte because she was similarly situated to HPD.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court accepts nonconclusory factual allegations as true, sets aside conclusory allegations, generally confines review to the complaint, and determines whether the allegations plausibly show an entitlement to relief. Pro se pleadings are liberally construed but must provide defendants fair notice of the alleged wrongdoing.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order; nonprecedential

PARTIES

Shuang Chen, Jianfei Ye v. City & County of Honolulu, Honolulu
Police Department, Lorraine Iwamasa, Unnamed Male Detective

TOPICS

motions to dismiss section 1983 equal protection municipal liability due process

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure civil rights constitutional law municipal law torts

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiffs' exhibits could be considered as part of the complaint under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 10(c) or the incorporation-by-reference doctrine.
2. Whether the complaint plausibly alleged a Fourteenth Amendment due process claim based on an allegedly inadequate or deliberately mishandled criminal investigation and the failure to prosecute or protect Chen.
3. Whether the complaint plausibly alleged a Fourteenth Amendment equal protection claim based on discriminatory failure to investigate.
4. Whether the complaint plausibly alleged municipal liability under Monell.
5. Whether the court should exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the state-law negligence claim after dismissing all federal claims.
6. Whether evidence tampering and obstruction of justice stated an independent civil claim.
7. Whether requests for injunctive relief, declaratory relief, and punitive damages were independent causes of action.

HOLDINGS

1. The exhibits submitted by Plaintiffs were not part of the complaint under Rule 10(c) and were not properly incorporated by reference, so the court would not consider them in deciding the motion to dismiss.
2. The complaint failed to state a due process claim because Plaintiffs did not allege deprivation of a cognizable life, liberty, or property interest caused by the alleged investigative misconduct.
3. The complaint failed to state an equal protection claim because it did not allege that Defendants failed to investigate because of Chen's race, national origin, or membership in another protected class.
4. The complaint failed to state a Monell claim because it did not plausibly allege an underlying violation of a federal right, although leave to amend was granted because Plaintiffs might allege facts supporting an equal protection violation.
5. The court declined to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the negligence claim after dismissing all claims within its original federal-question jurisdiction.

6. The claim labeled evidence tampering and obstruction of justice was dismissed without leave to amend because Plaintiffs acknowledged that no standalone civil tort supported it.
7. Requests for injunctive relief, declaratory relief, and punitive damages were not independent causes of action and were dismissed as derivative requests for relief.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“But police officers have “no affirmative obligation to investigate a crime in a particular way.”” (PageID.3)

“The Due Process Clause did not obligate Defendants to investigate the alleged assault in any particular way, to prosecute the alleged assailant, or to protect Chen from further injury.” (PageID.3)

“The application advocated by Plaintiffs here would be untethered from the doctrine’s purpose.”
(PageID.215)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff Shuang Chen alleged that she was sexually assaulted by a Navy servicemember and reported the assault to the Honolulu Police Department. She alleged that Detective Lorraine Iwamasa mishandled the investigation by leaking evidence, transferring jurisdiction to the Navy, altering case records, and falsely representing that the case had been sent for prosecutorial review. The Navy investigation was allegedly closed shortly after the transfer, without charges, and Chen alleged resulting psychological injury. Plaintiffs also alleged that HPD policies and practices contributed to the handling and transfer of the investigation.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed the complaint on February 4, 2026. HPD moved to dismiss on April 9, 2026; Plaintiffs filed an opposition and HPD filed a reply. The court decided the motion without a hearing, granted dismissal of all claims, granted partial leave to amend, and ordered that an amended complaint be filed by July 16, 2026 or the action would be automatically dismissed.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

No remand. Plaintiffs may amend only as to the § 1983 equal protection claim, the Monell claim, and state-law negligence and/or intentional infliction of emotional distress claims. They may not assert new claims or name new defendants. The amended complaint must attribute actions to particular defendants and specify which claims are asserted against which defendants. Plaintiffs may not name the City and County of Honolulu separately from HPD. The amended complaint was due July 16, 2026; failure to file would result in automatic dismissal.

CASES CITED

- Fisher v. Kealoha, 869 F. Supp. 2d 1203, 1214 (D. Haw. 2012)

- Epstein v. Washington Energy Co., 83 F.3d 1136, 1140 (9th Cir. 1996)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 677-80 (2009)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Starr v. Baca, 652 F.3d 1202, 1216 (9th Cir. 2011)
- Marder v. Lopez, 450 F.3d 445, 448 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Eldridge v. Block, 832 F.2d 1132, 1137 (9th Cir. 1987)
- Brazil v. U.S. Department of Navy, 66 F.3d 193, 199 (9th Cir. 1995)
- Schmitt v. Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of Washington, 965 F.3d 945, 960 (9th Cir. 2020)
- Lopez v. Smith, 203 F.3d 1122, 1127 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc)
- Carolina Casualty Insurance Co. v. Team Equipment, Inc., 741 F.3d 1082, 1086 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Crowe v. Lynch, 2009 WL 250913, at *1 n.3 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 30, 2009)
- Scutt v. UnitedHealth Insurance Co., 2022 WL 787992, at *3 (D. Haw. Mar. 15, 2022)
- Mora v. City of Chula Vista, 2021 WL 1165054, at *7 (S.D. Cal. Mar. 26, 2021)
- Galvan v. Yates, 2006 WL 1495261, at *4 (E.D. Cal. May 24, 2006)
- United States v. Ritchie, 342 F.3d 903, 908 (9th Cir. 2003)
- Khoja v. Orexigen Therapeutics, Inc., 899 F.3d 988, 1002 (9th Cir. 2018)
- Peck v. Miney, 2021 WL 11096404, at *1 (D. Nev. Dec. 28, 2021)
- Cicalla v. Rogers, 2021 WL 4065534, at *2 (E.D. Cal. Sept. 7, 2021)
- American Manufacturers Mutual Insurance Co. v. Sullivan, 526 U.S. 40, 49-50 (1999)
- Devereaux v. Abbey, 263 F.3d 1070, 1075 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Meachum v. Fano, 427 U.S. 215, 224 (1976)
- Oviatt ex rel. Waugh v. Pearce, 954 F.2d 1470, 1474 (9th Cir. 1992)
- Costanich v. Department of Social & Health Services, 627 F.3d 1101, 1110-11 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Linda R.S. v. Richard D., 410 U.S. 614, 619 (1973)
- DeShaney v. Winnebago County Department of Social Services, 489 U.S. 189, 195, 198-202 (1989)
- Martinez v. City of Clovis, 943 F.3d 1260, 1271 (9th Cir. 2019)
- Patel v. Kent School District, 648 F.3d 965, 971-72 (9th Cir. 2011)
- Barren v. Harrington, 152 F.3d 1193, 1194 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Elliot-Park v. Manglona, 592 F.3d 1003, 1008 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Monell v. Department of Social Services, 436 U.S. 658, 694 (1978)
- Dougherty v. City of Covina, 654 F.3d 892, 900 (9th Cir. 2011)
- City of Los Angeles v. Heller, 475 U.S. 796, 799 (1986)
- Quintanilla v. City of Downey, 84 F.3d 353, 356 (9th Cir. 1996)
- Acri v. Varian Associates, Inc., 114 F.3d 999, 1001 (9th Cir. 1997) (en banc)
- Gaspar v. Bank of America, N.A., 2010 WL 4226466, at *8 (D. Haw. Oct. 18, 2010)
- Manant v. United States, 2011 WL 1103828, at *3 (D. Haw. Mar. 22, 2011)
- Gibson v. City of Portland, 165 F.4th 1265, 1289 (9th Cir. 2026)

- Char v. Tresch, 2023 WL 7090397, at *5 (D. Haw. Oct. 26, 2023)
- Silverton v. Department of Treasury, 644 F.2d 1341, 1345 (9th Cir. 1981)

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