

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Elghembri v. White

Elghembri · No. 24-cv-02773-WHO (PR) · Decided October 6, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California dismissed Ahmed Mohamed Elghembri’s § 1983 action without prejudice under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A for failure to state a claim. The court held that allegations against an unnamed psychiatrist were insufficient and that allegations against psychologist Dr. White were conclusory and lacked specific details about deficient treatment. The court permitted Elghembri to move to reopen and file an amended complaint if he can cure the identified deficiencies.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	William H. Orrick
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	October 6, 2025
DOCKET	24-cv-02773-WHO (PR)
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening of a prisoner's first amended 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court must screen a prisoner's complaint and dismiss claims that are frivolous, malicious, fail to state a claim, or seek monetary relief from an immune defendant. The court liberally construes pro se pleadings and applies the plausibility standard under Ashcroft v. Iqbal and Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court order; precedential status is not established in the source.

TOPICS

- section 1983
- prisoners rights
- cruel and unusual punishment
- pleadings
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the first amended complaint stated a plausible claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 for violation of the Eighth Amendment based on allegedly inadequate prison mental-health care.
2. Whether allegations against an unnamed psychiatrist and conclusory allegations against a psychologist and supervisors satisfied federal pleading standards.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint failed to state a plausible Eighth Amendment claim because it did not allege specific facts showing deliberate indifference or identify what medically necessary treatment was sought, required, denied, or inadequately provided.
2. The claim against the unnamed psychiatrist could not proceed because a complaint cannot be served against an unnamed defendant and the allegations did not establish deliberate indifference.
3. The allegations against Dr. White and unnamed supervisors were insufficient because they were conclusory and lacked specific factual details about the alleged misconduct and treatment deficiency.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“This federal civil rights action is *DISMISSED* for failure to state a claim for relief.” (at 1)

“This federal civil rights action is *DISMISSED* (without prejudice) for failure to state a claim for relief.” (at 3)

“A “complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to ‘state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.’”” (at 1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Elghembri, a prisoner at San Quentin State Prison, alleged that inmates and staff frequently yelled obscenities at him, causing mental-health distress. He alleged that an unnamed chief psychiatrist failed to meet with him during his five years at the prison and that Dr. White, his assigned psychologist, provided inadequate mental-health care. The amended complaint did not identify the psychiatrist, specify the treatment he sought or required, describe the treatment White provided, or explain specifically how White's treatment was deficient.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Elghembri initially alleged that prison mental-health personnel failed to provide adequate care. The court dismissed the original complaint and instructed him to identify defendants directly involved in his treatment and provide specific details about the treatment sought and denied. After reviewing the first amended complaint, the court dismissed the action without prejudice for failure to state a claim, entered judgment for defendants, and closed the file, while permitting a motion to reopen accompanied by a further amended complaint if plaintiff could cure the identified deficiencies.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- *Balistreri v. Pacifica Police Dep't*, 901 F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1988)
- *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555, 556, 570 (2007)
- *Clegg v. Cult Awareness Network*, 18 F.3d 752, 754-55 (9th Cir. 1994)
- *West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988)

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