

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Leonard Scarbrough v. City of Sacramento Sheriff’s Department, et
al.

Scarbrough · No. 2:25-cv-1897-CKD P · Decided November 21, 2025

SUMMARY

The court grants Leonard Scarbrough’s application to proceed in forma pauperis and screens his prisoner civil rights complaint. The order finds cognizable excessive-force claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against Deputies Gonzalez and Rozo, but finds no other claims adequately stated against the remaining defendants. Plaintiff is permitted either to proceed on the identified claims or to file an amended complaint within 30 days.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Carolyn K. Delaney
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	November 21, 2025
DOCKET	2:25-cv-1897-CKD P
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Prisoner civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 screened under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. The court granted plaintiff leave to proceed in forma pauperis and found cognizable excessive-force claims against Deputies Gonzalez and Rozo, while declining to recognize the other claims as currently pleaded.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Mandatory screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; the court must dismiss claims that are frivolous or malicious, fail to state a claim, or seek monetary relief from an immune defendant.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district court screening order with no reporter citation
PARTIES	Leonard Scarbrough v. City of Sacramento Sheriff’s Department, Chief Deputy Sergeant Jim Cooper, Deputy Sheriff Gonzalez, Deputy Sheriff Rozo

TOPICS

section 1983 prisoners rights civil rights municipal liability civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

prisoner civil rights constitutional torts municipal liability federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated cognizable constitutional excessive-force claims against Deputies Gonzalez and Rozo.
2. Whether the complaint stated a personal-liability or supervisory-liability claim against Sergeant Cooper.
3. Whether the complaint adequately pleaded failure-to-train or municipal-liability claims against the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department.
4. Whether the complaint stated a Bane Act claim without alleging compliance with California's Government Claims Act.
5. Whether plaintiff satisfied the requirements to proceed in forma pauperis.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint stated cognizable excessive-force claims against Deputies Gonzalez and Rozo. The applicable constitutional provision depends on whether plaintiff was a convicted inmate or a pretrial detainee: the Eighth Amendment applies to a convicted inmate, while the Fourteenth Amendment applies to a pretrial detainee.
2. The complaint did not state an excessive-force claim against Sergeant Cooper because it failed to allege facts showing his personal involvement, and a supervisor cannot be held liable solely because of a supervisory position.
3. The complaint did not state failure-to-train or municipal-liability claims because its conclusory allegations did not adequately allege deliberate indifference, a policy, custom, or practice, or a pattern of similar constitutional violations that was the moving force behind the alleged deprivation.
4. The complaint did not state a Bane Act claim because it did not allege compliance with California's Government Claims Act.
5. Plaintiff satisfied the requirements to proceed in forma pauperis, and the motion was granted.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Plaintiff may proceed on the excessive force claims against these defendants or plaintiff may file an amended complaint under the guidelines set forth below." (at 1)

"If plaintiff chooses to proceed on the claims stated, the court will construe the choice as a request to voluntarily dismiss the additional claims and defendants pursuant to Rule 41(a)(1)(i) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure." (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged that deputies at the Sacramento County Jail repeatedly used force against him, including slamming him to the ground, twisting his arm and ankle, placing a knee in his back, and using handcuffs in a manner that injured his wrist. He further alleged that Deputy Rozo slammed him to the ground and chipped his tooth, while Deputy Gonzalez twisted his arm during separate incidents. Plaintiff also alleged that Sergeant Cooper and the Sheriff's Department failed to train deputies and that the defendants violated California's Bane Act.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff, a jail inmate proceeding without counsel, filed a complaint alleging excessive force, failure to train, municipal liability, and violations of California's Bane Act. The matter was referred to the magistrate judge under Local Rule 302. On screening, the court granted in forma pauperis status, permitted plaintiff either to proceed on the excessive-force claims against Gonzalez and Rozo or to file an amended complaint, and required an election within thirty days.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Hudson v. McMillian, 503 U.S. 1, 6-7 (1992)
- Graham v. Connor, 490 U.S. 386, 395 n.10 (1989)
- Simmons v. Navajo County, 609 F.3d 1011, 1020-21 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Rodriguez v. County of Los Angeles, 891 F.3d 776, 798 (9th Cir. 2018)
- City of Canton v. Harris, 489 U.S. 378, 388 (1989)
- Dougherty v. City of Covina, 654 F.3d 892, 900 (9th Cir. 2011)
- Monell v. Department of Social Services, 436 U.S. 658, 694 (1978)
- Hyde v. City of Willcox, 23 F.4th 863, 875 (9th Cir. 2022)
- Mohsin v. California Department of Water Resources, 52 F. Supp. 3d 1006, 1017 (E.D. Cal. 2014)
- Noll v. Carlson, 809 F.2d 1446, 1448-49 (9th Cir. 1987)
- George v. Smith, 507 F.3d 605, 607 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Loux v. Rhay, 375 F.2d 55, 57 (9th Cir. 1967)