

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
ARKANSAS, EL DORADO DIVISION

Raymond Douglas Hardy v. Captain Lisa Worley and Sheriff Ricky
Roberts

Hardy · No. 1:26-cv-01019 · Decided June 5, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Arkansas adopted a magistrate judge’s Report and Recommendation and dismissed Raymond Douglas Hardy’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action without prejudice. The court concluded that Hardy’s allegations concerning interference with legal mail did not establish a constitutional violation, an official-capacity policy or custom, or an actual injury supporting an access-to-the-courts claim.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Arkansas, El Dorado Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	John Thomas Shepherd
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Arkansas, El Dorado Division
DECIDED	June 5, 2026
DOCKET	1:26-cv-01019
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Review of a magistrate judge's report and recommendation following preservice screening of a prisoner civil-rights complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	De novo review applies to portions of a magistrate judge's report and recommendation to which timely and specific objections are made; portions without specific objections are reviewed for clear error. Pro se objections are liberally construed.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	district court order; precedential status unknown
PARTIES	Raymond Douglas Hardy v. Captain Lisa Worley, Sheriff Ricky Roberts

TOPICS

section 1983

prisoners rights

first amendment

civil procedure

motions to dismiss

PRACTICE AREAS

prisoner civil rights

federal civil procedure

constitutional law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Hardy's objections to the magistrate judge's report and recommendation required de novo review or demonstrated error warranting rejection of the recommendation.
2. Whether Hardy stated a constitutional claim based on the alleged opening or answering of mail sent to a federal district court.
3. Whether Hardy stated an official-capacity claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 by alleging that a policy, procedure, or custom caused the constitutional violation.
4. Whether Hardy stated a First Amendment access-to-the-courts claim by alleging actual injury to a nonfrivolous and arguably meritorious underlying legal claim.

HOLDINGS

1. Timely and specific objections trigger de novo review, while portions of a report and recommendation to which no specific objections are made are reviewed for clear error; Hardy's objections did not engage with the recommendation or demonstrate factual or legal error.
2. The complaint failed to state a constitutional claim because Hardy did not allege that the mail opened or answered by the defendants was privileged legal mail.
3. Hardy failed to state official-capacity claims because he did not allege facts establishing that a policy, procedure, or custom of the Union County Detention Center caused the alleged constitutional violation.
4. Hardy failed to state an access-to-the-courts claim because he did not allege that the defendants' actions prevented him from litigating a nonfrivolous and arguably meritorious claim concerning his sentence or conditions of confinement and resulted in an actual injury.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Generally, “objections must be timely and specific” to trigger de novo review.” (Discussion)

“the hindrance of a nonfrivolous and arguably meritorious underlying legal claim” (Discussion n.1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Hardy, an inmate at the Union County Detention Center, alleged that Captain Worley opened or answered mail addressed to a federal district court and that Sheriff Roberts was implicated because the mail was returned on Union County letterhead. He sought monetary damages and other relief, asserting official-capacity claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. He did not allege that the mail was privileged legal mail, that a policy or custom caused the alleged violation, or that the defendants' conduct caused an actual injury to a nonfrivolous legal claim.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Hardy filed a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint alleging that Captain Lisa Worley and Sheriff Ricky Roberts interfered with his legal mail and asserting official-capacity claims. Magistrate Judge Spencer G. Singleton recommended dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)(1). Hardy filed timely objections, but the district court concluded that the objections did not identify factual or legal error, adopted the recommendation in full, and dismissed the action without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Anderson v. Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Soc’y, 308 F. Supp. 3d 1011, 1015 (N.D. Iowa 2018)
- Thompson v. Nix, 897 F.2d 356, 358-59 (8th Cir. 1990)
- Hudson v. Gammon, 46 F.3d 785, 786 (8th Cir. 1995)
- Grinder v. Gammon, 73 F.3d 793, 795 (8th Cir. 1996)
- Gardner v. Howard, 109 F.3d 427, 430 (8th Cir. 1997)
- Gorman v. Barch, 152 F.3d 907, 914 (8th Cir. 1998)
- Hartsfield v. Nichols, 511 F.3d 826, 831 (8th Cir. 2008)

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