

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA

Parris Davon Edward Tillotson v. Frank Vanihel, Yarber, Jones,
Trimmer, Emily Enriquez, Coss, 7 Unknown Officers

Tillotson v. Vanihel · No. 2:25-cv-00530-JRO-MJD · Decided March 30, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana screens and dismisses Parris Davon Edward Tillotson’s prisoner civil-rights complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. The court concludes that the alleged slip-and-fall, medical-care allegations, claims against unnamed officers, and supervisory-liability allegations fail to state a claim under the Eighth Amendment or 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The plaintiff is ordered to show cause by April 17, 2026, why judgment should not issue.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Justin R. Olson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana
DECIDED	March 30, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-cv-00530-JRO-MJD
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Prisoner civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 screened under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A before service. The court dismissed the complaint for failure to state a claim and directed the plaintiff to show cause why judgment should not issue.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) plausibility standard during screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, accepting factual allegations as true and construing the pro se complaint liberally.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district-court order; precedential status not designated in the source.
PARTIES	Parris Davon Edward Tillotson v. Frank Vanihel, Yarber, Jones, Trimmer, Emily Enriquez, Coss, 7 Unknown Officers

TOPICS

prisoners rights

section 1983

cruel and unusual punishment

motions to dismiss

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

prisoner civil rights

constitutional torts

federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated an Eighth Amendment claim against Officers Jones and Trimmer based on the alleged failure to prevent Tillotson's fall.
2. Whether the complaint stated an Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claim against Nurses Coss and Enriquez based on their responses to Tillotson's pain and injuries.
3. Whether the complaint stated a claim against the seven unknown officers where no facts identified their participation in the alleged wrongdoing.
4. Whether the complaint stated a § 1983 claim against Warden Vanihel and Lieutenant Yarber based only on their supervisory positions and an alleged failure to train.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint failed to state an Eighth Amendment claim against Officers Jones and Trimmer because it alleged, at most, negligence in escorting Tillotson across the wet floor, not subjective awareness of a substantial risk of serious harm.
2. The complaint failed to state an Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claim against Nurses Coss and Enriquez because Coss reasonably deferred to the treating physician and Enriquez responded reasonably by obtaining further medical assistance.
3. The claims against the seven unknown officers failed because the complaint contained no factual allegations identifying any unnamed officer's participation in the alleged constitutional deprivation.
4. The claims against Warden Vanihel and Lieutenant Yarber failed because the complaint alleged no facts showing their personal wrongdoing and § 1983 does not impose respondeat superior liability.
5. The complaint was dismissed for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted under the prisoner-screening statute, subject to Tillotson's opportunity to show cause before judgment is entered.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“When screening a complaint, the Court must dismiss any portion that is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim for relief, or seeks monetary relief against a defendant who is immune from such relief.” (Section I)

“The complaint does not allege that Officers Jones and Trimmer were subjectively aware that the water on the floor posed any danger.” (Section III)

“Negligence is not sufficient to state either an Eighth Amendment conditions of confinement claim or a deliberate indifference to a serious medical need claim.” (Section III)

“It is well established that there is no respondeat superior liability under § 1983.” (Section III)

“Without at least an opportunity to amend or to respond to an order to show cause, an IFP applicant’s case could be tossed out of court without giving the applicant any timely notice or opportunity to be heard to clarify, contest, or simply request leave to amend.” (Section IV)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

On October 19, 2023, Officers Jones and Trimmer escorted Tillotson from a shower to his cell while his hands were restrained behind his back. He allegedly slipped on dirty sewer water, fell backward onto the restraints, and suffered pain in his wrists, back, and body; no warning sign was present. Nurse Coss initially concluded that nothing was wrong after consulting a physician, while Nurse Enriquez later recognized his severe pain, contacted the physician, and arranged for an outside EMT to evaluate and transport him.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Tillotson filed the action on October 27, 2025, alleging that prison officers caused him to fall while restrained and that nurses failed to provide adequate medical care. The district court screened the complaint before service, found no viable Eighth Amendment or other § 1983 claim against any defendant, dismissed the complaint, and allowed Tillotson through April 17, 2026, to show cause why judgment should not be entered.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Schillinger v. Kiley, 954 F.3d 990, 993 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Cesal v. Moats, 851 F.3d 714, 720 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Lisby v. Henderson, 74 F.4th 470, 472 (7th Cir. 2023)
- Balle v. Kennedy, 73 F.4th 545, 552 (7th Cir. 2023)
- Sinn v. Lemmon, 911 F.3d 412, 419 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Dobbey v. Miller, 730 F. App'x 375, 378 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Giles v. Godinez, 914 F.3d 1040, 1051 (7th Cir. 2019)
- Huber v. Anderson, 909 F.3d 201, 208 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Reck v. Wexford Health Sources, Inc., 27 F.4th 473, 485 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Colbert v. City of Chicago, 851 F.3d 649, 657 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Wolf-Lillie v. Sonquist, 699 F.2d 864, 869 (7th Cir. 1983)
- Gayton v. McCoy, 593 F.3d 610, 622 (7th Cir. 2010)
- Horshaw v. Casper, 910 F.3d 1027, 1029 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Luevano v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., 722 F.3d 1014, 1022 (7th Cir. 2013)

