

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Ronald Eugene James v. Richardson, et al.

James v. Richardson · No. 2:23-CV-0853-DC-DMC-P · Decided March 5, 2025

SUMMARY

The court addressed Ronald Eugene James’s motions concerning access to the Sacramento County Main Jail law library. The court denied relief against non-party jail staff but granted the motions insofar as it confirmed that James is a pro se prisoner proceeding in forma pauperis for purposes of law-library access.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Dennis M. Cota
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	March 5, 2025
DOCKET	2:23-CV-0853-DC-DMC-P
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A pro se prisoner plaintiff moved for relief concerning access to the Sacramento County Main Jail law library while his § 1983 action was pending. The magistrate judge granted the motions only to the extent of confirming the plaintiff's status as a prisoner proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Injunctive relief requires a showing of a likelihood of irreparable injury and a likelihood of success on the merits; relief cannot ordinarily be directed against nonparties.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district court order with no reported citation
PARTIES	Ronald Eugene James v. Richardson, Powell, Almed, Banks

TOPICS

- section 1983
- prisoners rights
- injunctions
- civil rights
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court could order nonparty Sacramento County jail staff to provide Plaintiff preferred law-library access.
2. Whether Plaintiff was entitled to injunctive relief based on his asserted law-library-access problems.
3. Whether the court could confirm Plaintiff's status as a prisoner proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis for purposes of access to the jail law library.

HOLDINGS

1. The court could not grant relief in the form of an order directing nonparty jail staff to provide Plaintiff law-library access.
2. Plaintiff did not demonstrate the likelihood of irreparable injury or success on the merits necessary for injunctive relief.
3. The court granted Plaintiff's motions to the limited extent of confirming that he is a prisoner proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis for purposes of access to the jail law library.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“While the Court is unable to grant Plaintiff relief in the form of an order directing non-party jail staff to grant Plaintiff law library access” (2)

“the Court will by this order grant Plaintiffs motions to the extent the Court confirms that Plaintiff is a prisoner proceedings pro se and in forma pauperis.” (2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Ronald Eugene James is a prisoner proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis in a § 1983 action. He alleged that nonparty staff at the Sacramento County Main Jail were not providing him preferred law-library-use privileges associated with his status. His pending claims concerned retaliation and medical deliberate indifference against other defendants.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The district judge previously ordered the action to proceed on the first amended complaint as to a retaliation claim against Powell and Almed and a medical deliberate-indifference claim against Richardson and Banks, dismissing all other claims and defendants. Defendants answered, and the case was scheduled for further proceedings. Plaintiff then filed motions concerning law-library access, which the court resolved by order.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Zenith Radio Corp. v. Hazeltine Research, Inc., 395 U.S. 100 (1969)
- Stormans, Inc. v. Selecky, 586 F.3d 1109 (9th Cir. 2009)

OPINION

(PC) James v. Sacramento County Sheriff Dept.

PER CURIAM.

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8 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

9 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

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11 RONALD EUGENE JAMES, No. 2:23-CV-0853-DC-DMC-P

12 Plaintiff, 13 v. ORDER 14 RICHARDSON, et al., 15 Defendants. 16 17 Plaintiff, a prisoner
proceeding pro se, brings this civil rights action pursuant to 18 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Pending before
the Court are Plaintiff’s motions regarding law library access. 19 See ECF No. 23 and 38. 20 On
November 12, 2024, the District Judge issued an order directing that this action 21 proceed on the
first amended complaint on Plaintiff’s Claim I for retaliation against Defendants 22 Powell and
Almed, and Plaintiff’s Claim IV for medical deliberate indifference against 23 Defendants
Richardson and Banks. See ECF No. 29. All other claims and defendants were 24 dismissed. See
id. Defendants filed their answer on January 7, 2025, see ECF No. 32, and the 25 case has been
scheduled, see ECF No. 34. 26 / / / 27 / / / 28 / / /] In the pending motions, Plaintiff states that
non-party staff at the Sacramento 2 || County Main Jail is not affording him preferred law library
use privileges incident to his status as 3 || a prisoner proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis. See
ECF Nos. 23 and 38. While the Court is 4 | unable to grant Plaintiff relief in the form of an order
directing non-party jail staff to grant 5 | Plaintiff law library access, see Zenith Radio Corp. v.
Hazeltine Research, Inc., 395 U.S. 100 6 || (1969), and injunctive relief would otherwise be
inappropriate because Plaintiff has not 7 || demonstrated either the likelihood of irreparable injury
or success on the merits of his underlying 8 | claims, see Stormans, Inc. v. Selecky, 586 F.3d 1109
(9th Cir. 2009), the Court will by this order 9 | grant Plaintiffs motions to the extent the Court
confirms that Plaintiff is a prisoner proceedings 10 || pro se and in forma pauperis. 11 Accordingly,
IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Plaintiff’s motions, ECF Nos. 23 12 || and 38, are granted insofar
as the Court confirms, for purposes of access to the jail law library, 13 || that Plaintiff a prisoner
proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis. 14 15 | Dated: March 4, 2025 SS GC

16 DENNIS M. COTA

17 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

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