

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS, ROCK ISLAND DIVISION

Travis Rule v. Bryan, et al.

Rule v. Bryan · No. 4:25-cv-04095-MMM · Decided January 20, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois conducted a merit review of Travis Rule’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint. The court found that the complaint stated an Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect claim against Defendant Bryan, terminated Defendants Baker and Hughes, and denied Plaintiff’s motion for appointed counsel with leave to renew. The court also granted limited service-related relief and issued instructions concerning service, discovery, address changes, medical-record authorization, and scheduling.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois, Rock Island Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Michael M. Mihm
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois, Rock Island Division
DECIDED	January 20, 2026
DOCKET	4:25-cv-04095-MMM
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Merit review of a pro se incarcerated plaintiff’s complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, together with motions for service of process and appointment of counsel.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	At merit review under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court accepted factual allegations as true and liberally construed them in the plaintiff’s favor, while requiring sufficient factual matter to state a facially plausible claim.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district court order.
PARTIES	Travis Rule v. Bryan, et al.

TOPICS

section 1983

prisoners rights

civil rights

service of process

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

prisoner litigation

federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated an actionable § 1983 Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect claim against Bryan.
2. Whether the complaint stated claims against Director Hughes and Warden Baker without allegations of their personal involvement.
3. Whether Plaintiff was entitled to court assistance in obtaining volunteer counsel.
4. Whether service of process should be attempted by the court.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint stated a claim against Bryan because the allegations plausibly showed that he knew of and disregarded an excessive risk to Plaintiff's health or safety.
2. The complaint did not state claims against Hughes or Baker because it did not allege their individual involvement in the events at issue.
3. The motion for counsel was denied with leave to renew because Plaintiff had not shown a reasonable attempt to obtain counsel and had not indicated that he was effectively prevented from doing so.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A prison official is liable for failing to protect an inmate from another prisoner only if the official ‘knows of and disregards an excessive risk to inmate health or safety[.]’”

“The most that the Court may do is to ask for volunteer counsel.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff was incarcerated at Hill Correctional Center on August 16, 2024, was seriously mentally ill and suicidal, and was under the supervision of Defendant Bryan. Plaintiff alleges that he requested a crisis team, Bryan refused, Bryan allowed him to obtain fire-starting materials, and Bryan left his post for several hours. Plaintiff then set fire to himself and suffered injuries.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a § 1983 complaint against correctional-facility personnel and moved for service of process and court assistance in obtaining counsel. The court screened the complaint, found an Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect claim against Bryan, dismissed Baker and Hughes from the action for lack of alleged individual involvement, granted service to the extent the court would attempt service, and denied the motion for counsel with leave to renew.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Turley v. Rednour, 729 F.3d 645, 649 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Alexander v. United States, 721 F.3d 418, 422 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Gevas v. McLaughlin, 798 F.3d 475, 480 (7th Cir. 2015)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 837 (1994)
- Pruitt v. Mote, 503 F.3d 647, 653-55 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Jackson v. County of McLean, 953 F.2d 1070, 1071 (7th Cir. 1992)

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