

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA**

Matthew Nicholson v. Warden

Nicholson v. Warden · No. 2:25-cv-05898-SVW-SK · Decided August 6, 2025

OPINION

Matthew Nicholson v. Warden

PER CURIAM.

CIVIL MINUTES – GENERAL

Case No. 2:25-cv-05898-SVW-SK Date: August 6, 2025 Title Matthew Nicholson v. Warden
Present: The Honorable: Steve Kim, United States Magistrate Judge Connie Chung n/a Deputy
Clerk Court Reporter / Recorder Attorneys Present for Petitioner: Attorneys Present for
Respondent: None present None present Proceedings: (IN CHAMBERS) ORDER TO SHOW
CAUSE Petitioner Matthew Nicholson appears to be a convicted inmate seeking habeas relief. But
in the petition filed here, he asserts—with no elaboration—that his confinement violates due
process even though he is “unsure what crimes [he] was convicted of.” (ECF 1 at 4–5). What’s
more, he invokes both 28 U.S.C. § 2254 (which applies to state prisoners) and 28 U.S.C. § 2255
(which applies to federal prisoners), so it is unclear whether petitioner is in state or federal
custody. (ECF 1). Finally, the petition references an “attached letter” but nothing of the kind is
attached to his petition. (ECF 1 at 4–5, 7, 18–23, 27). While the court must liberally construe pro
se pleadings, it cannot “engage in a tenuous analysis in order to attempt to identify and make
sense of” a petition. *Hines v. Napolitano*, 2007 WL 2859745, at *1 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 26, 2007). A
petition that leaves both the court and respondent guessing as to the grounds asserted is subject to
dismissal. See, e.g., *Hernandez v. Montgomery*, 2020 WL 5875025, at *1 (C.D. Cal. July 6, 2020).
And while a habeas petitioner may adequately plead “an otherwise ambiguous claim by making
‘clear and repeated’ references to an appended supporting brief that presents the claim with
sufficient particularity,” *Barnett v. Duffey*, 621 F. App’x 496, 497 (9th Cir. 2015), there is nothing
attached to the petition here that could serve that purpose. For these reasons, petitioner is
ORDERED TO SHOW CAUSE within 14 days of this order why his petition should not be
dismissed for failure to state any grounds for relief. See Rule 4 of Rules Governing Section 2254
 (“If it plainly appears from the

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petition . . . that the petitioner is not entitled to relief in the district court, the judge must dismiss
the petition and direct the clerk to notify the petitioner); see also L.R. 72- 3.2 (summary dismissal
of habeas petition authorized when “it plainly appears from the face of the petition” that

“petitioner is not entitled to relief”). Petitioner may discharge this order by voluntarily dismissing this petition without prejudice using the attached Form CV-09y. Alternatively, petitioner may file an amended petition invoking the proper jurisdictional grounds and laying out the operative facts and legal theories in support of any requested habeas relief. Petitioner is warned that failure to timely respond as ordered may lead to the immediate closing of this case with no further notice for lack of prosecution and noncompliance with court orders. See Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b); L.R. 41-1; see also L.R. 41- 6 (requiring pro se litigants to keep court timely apprised of any change in record address). IT IS SO ORDERED.