

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA, SOUTH BEND DIVISION

Steven George Bodnar v. Bryan English, et al.

Bodnar · No. 3:25-CV-1002-CCB-AZ · Decided December 12, 2025

SUMMARY

The court screened Steven George Bodnar’s prisoner civil-rights complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. It permitted him to proceed against Warden Bryan English in his official capacity for permanent injunctive relief concerning protection from attacks by other inmates, while dismissing the remaining claims and defendants. The court also construed the complaint as including a motion for preliminary injunctive relief and ordered a response addressing Bodnar’s safety measures.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, South Bend Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Cristal C. Brisco
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana, South Bend Division
DECIDED	December 12, 2025
DOCKET	3:25-CV-1002-CCB-AZ
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Prisoner civil-rights complaint screened under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A before service of process.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, the court reviews a prisoner complaint and dismisses it if it is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant. The court accepts well-pleaded factual allegations as true and liberally construes a pro se complaint, but conclusory allegations and speculation are insufficient to state a claim.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	Steven George Bodnar v. Bryan English, Ertel, Wise, I. Ivers, Aaron Smith, Engle, Heishman, Dalton Haney, Tracy Warden, Angle, K. Murry, William Wilson, Donald Emerson, Christina Regal, Elisa

TOPICS

prisoners rights section 1983 cruel and unusual punishment injunctions pleadings

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights constitutional law prisoner litigation civil procedure injunctive relief

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Bodnar stated an Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect claim sufficient to proceed under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.
2. Whether Bodnar's generalized and speculative allegations concerning possible future harm from inmates and ICE detainees stated a constitutional claim.
3. Whether Bodnar stated claims against supervisory officials, departments, health-care entities, and other defendants without allegations of their personal involvement or an unconstitutional policy.
4. Whether the warden could be sued in his official capacity for prospective injunctive relief concerning Bodnar's safety.

HOLDINGS

1. A prisoner states an Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect claim when the allegations plausibly show that officials were deliberately indifferent to a specific, credible, and imminent risk of serious harm; Bodnar's series of attacks and threats plausibly supported limited prospective relief concerning his return to general population.
2. Generalized fears that an ICE detainee, an inmate with a different security classification, or an inmate who may pose a greater security threat could cause harm do not, without more, establish a specific, credible, and imminent risk of serious harm.
3. A defendant cannot be held liable under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 solely because of supervisory status or because the plaintiff sent the defendant a general request for help; liability requires personal participation in the constitutional violation.
4. A warden is a proper official-capacity defendant for prospective injunctive relief when the warden is responsible for carrying out the injunction.
5. A department or health-care operations entity that is not a suable person, and a private company performing a public function absent allegations that its own policy caused the constitutional violation, cannot be held liable under § 1983.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Eighth Amendment imposes a duty on prison officials “to take reasonable measures to guarantee the safety of the inmates.”” (opinion text)

“The defendant “must both be aware of facts from which the inference could be drawn that a substantial risk of serious harm exists, and he must also draw the inference.”” (opinion text)

“Thus, the court will permit him to proceed against Warden English in his official capacity for permanent injunctive relief only.” (opinion text)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Bodnar, housed at the Miami Correctional Facility, alleged repeated conflicts with gang-affiliated inmates, an assault, threats, exposure to feces and urine, and several denied requests for protective custody. He alleged that some officers disclosed a protection request to inmates and that officials failed to respond adequately to requests for separation or transfer. He also alleged that his cellmate and other inmates harmed or threatened him, but many allegations were speculative, lacked specific facts, or were not linked to particular defendants. Because Bodnar was scheduled to return from restrictive housing to general population, the court found a plausible prospective safety concern sufficient to allow limited injunctive-relief claims against the warden.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Bodnar, an incarcerated person proceeding without counsel, filed a lengthy complaint with exhibits alleging that prison officials failed to protect him from inmate assaults, threats, and unsafe conditions. The court screened the complaint, granted leave to proceed against Warden Bryan English in his official capacity for permanent injunctive relief concerning protection from attacks by other inmates, dismissed all other claims and specified defendants, construed the complaint as including a motion for preliminary injunction, and ordered service and a response concerning Bodnar's safety.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 832, 837 (1994)
- Haley v. Gross, 86 F.3d 630, 640 (7th Cir. 1996)
- Gevas v. McLaughlin, 798 F.3d 475, 481 (7th Cir. 2015)
- Grieveson v. Anderson, 538 F.3d 763, 777 (7th Cir. 2008)
- Burks v. Raemisch, 555 F.3d 592, 594, 596 (7th Cir. 2009)
- George v. Smith, 507 F.3d 605, 609 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Gonzalez v. Feinerman, 663 F.3d 311, 315 (7th Cir. 2011)
- Brooks v. Ross, 578 F.3d 574, 580 (7th Cir. 2009)
- Henderson v. Wall, No. 20-1455, 2021 WL 5102915, at *1 (7th Cir. Nov. 3, 2021)
- Monell v. Department of Social Services of the City of New York, 436 U.S. 658 (1978)

