

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA

Shadavian Yard-Daniel v. Lloyd Arnold, Commissioner of IDOC

Yard-Daniel · No. 2:25-cv-00107-JPH-MJD · Decided June 15, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana denied Shadavian Yard-Daniel's petition for a writ of habeas corpus challenging an Indiana prison disciplinary conviction and sanctions. The court held that the proceedings satisfied due process, that the evidence supported the original and modified charges, and that the action should be dismissed with prejudice.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana
WRITING FOR THE COURT	James Patrick Hanlon
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana
DECIDED	June 15, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-cv-00107-JPH-MJD
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Federal habeas corpus petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2254 challenging an Indiana prison disciplinary conviction, sanctions, and appellate modification of the charge.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the prison-disciplinary due-process standard requiring advance notice, a limited opportunity to present evidence and call witnesses before an impartial decision-maker, a written explanation of the decision, and some evidence supporting the finding. The court would not reweigh the evidence once some evidence supported the disciplinary conviction.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court order; precedential status not designated.
PARTIES	Shadavian Yard-Daniel v. Lloyd Arnold, Commissioner of IDOC

TOPICS

- federal habeas corpus
- prisoners rights
- procedural due process
- due process
- evidence

PRACTICE AREAS

federal habeas corpus

prison disciplinary proceedings

constitutional due process

post-conviction relief

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Yard-Daniel was denied due process because his lay advocate did not speak during the disciplinary hearing.
2. Whether Yard-Daniel had a constitutional right to assert self-defense in the prison disciplinary proceeding.
3. Whether the disciplinary hearing officer was impermissibly biased and therefore denied Yard-Daniel an impartial decision-maker.
4. Whether the conduct report and video provided some evidence supporting the disciplinary conviction and the modified charge.
5. Whether Yard-Daniel's double-jeopardy claim was procedurally defaulted because he failed to raise it on administrative appeal.

HOLDINGS

1. A prisoner is not constitutionally entitled to a lay advocate at a disciplinary hearing absent illiteracy or unusual complexity, and Yard-Daniel showed neither circumstance.
2. Inmates do not have a constitutional right to assert self-defense as a defense in a prison disciplinary proceeding.
3. General allegations that a disciplinary hearing officer has a reputation for falsely convicting inmates do not overcome the presumption of honesty and integrity or establish unconstitutional bias.
4. The conduct report and video constituted some evidence supporting the disciplinary conviction, and Yard-Daniel's admission that he took a swipe at another inmate supplied sufficient evidence for the modified attempt-based charge.
5. Yard-Daniel's double-jeopardy claim was procedurally defaulted because he conceded that he failed to raise it on administrative appeal.
6. The court could consider the remaining claims on the merits rather than further analyze exhaustion.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The due process requirement is satisfied with: 1) the issuance of at least 24 hours advance written notice of the charge; 2) a limited opportunity to call witnesses and present evidence to an impartial decision-maker; 3) a written statement articulating the reasons for the disciplinary action and the evidence justifying it; and 4) "some evidence in the record" to support the finding of guilt." (Section I)

"The "some evidence" standard is much more lenient than the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard." (Section III.D)

"There was no arbitrary action in any aspect of the charge, disciplinary proceedings, or sanctions involved in the events identified in this action, and there was no constitutional infirmity in the proceeding which entitles

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

On December 1, 2024, Officer Bailey reported observing Yard-Daniel throw multiple closed-fist strikes at other incarcerated individuals during a large fight. Yard-Daniel received notice of the charge, requested video evidence, and was provided a lay advocate. The disciplinary hearing officer reviewed the conduct report and video, found him guilty, and imposed a 45-day loss of earned credit time plus a suspended one-step credit-class demotion. On appeal, the charge was modified to conspiracy, attempt, or aiding or abetting battery, while the sanctions remained unchanged.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Yard-Daniel was found guilty in an Indiana Department of Correction disciplinary proceeding of battery against an incarcerated individual and received a 45-day loss of earned credit time and a suspended one-step credit-class demotion. On administrative appeal, the charge was modified to conspiracy, attempt, or aiding or abetting battery, without changing the sanctions. He then filed this federal habeas action. The district court denied the petition and dismissed the action with prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Ellison v. Zatecky, 820 F.3d 271, 274 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Scruggs v. Jordan, 485 F.3d 934, 939 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Rhoiney v. Neal, 723 F. App'x 347, 348 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Superintendent, Mass. Corr. Inst. v. Hill, 472 U.S. 445, 454-56 (1985)
- Wolff v. McDonnell, 418 U.S. 539, 558, 563-67, 570 (1974)
- Washington v. Boughton, 884 F.3d 692, 698 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Wilson-El v. Finnan, 263 F. App'x 503, 506 (7th Cir. 2008)
- Miller v. Duckworth, 963 F.2d 1002, 1004 (7th Cir. 1992)
- Jones v. Cross, 637 F.3d 841, 848-49 (7th Cir. 2011)
- Piggie v. Cotton, 342 F.3d 660, 666-67 (7th Cir. 2003)
- Perotti v. Marberry, 355 F. App'x 39, 43 (7th Cir. 2009)
- Withrow v. Larkin, 421 U.S. 35, 47 (1975)
- Eads v. Hanks, 280 F.3d 728, 729 (7th Cir. 2002)
- Moffat v. Broyles, 288 F.3d 978, 981 (7th Cir. 2002)
- Eichwedel v. Chandler, 696 F.3d 660, 675 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Webb v. Anderson, 224 F.3d 649, 652 (7th Cir. 2000)

OPINION

YARD-DANIEL

PER CURIAM.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

TERRE HAUTE DIVISION

SHADAVIAN YARD-DANIEL,)

) Petitioner,)) v.) No. 2:25-cv-00107-JPH-MJD) LLOYD ARNOLD Commissioner of IDOC,))
Respondent.)

ORDER DENYING PETITION FOR WRIT OF HABEAS CORPUS

AND DIRECTING ENTRY OF FINAL JUDGMENT

Shadavian Yard-Daniel's petition for a writ of habeas corpus seeks relief from his conviction and sanctions in prison disciplinary case ISF 24-12-3257. For the following reasons, his petition is denied, and this action is dismissed with prejudice. I. Overview Prisoners in Indiana custody may not be deprived of good-time credits or of credit-earning class without due process. *Ellison v. Zatecky*, 820 F.3d 271, 274 (7th Cir. 2016); *Scruggs v. Jordan*, 485 F.3d 934, 939 (7th Cir. 2007); see also *Rhoiney v. Neal*, 723 F. App'x 347, 348 (7th Cir. 2018). The due process requirement is satisfied with: 1) the issuance of at least 24 hours advance written notice of the charge; 2) a limited opportunity to call witnesses and present evidence to an impartial decision-maker; 3) a written statement articulating the reasons for the disciplinary action and the evidence justifying it; and 4) "some evidence in the record" to support the finding of guilt. *Superintendent, Mass. Corr. Inst. v. Hill*, 472 U.S. 445, 454 (1985); see also *Wolff v. McDonnell*, 418 U.S. 539, 563-67 (1974). II. Disciplinary Proceeding On December 1, 2024, at approximately 22:14, Officer Bailey called a signal 10-10 in 12 North A-Side Cube 2 "due to a massive fight involving multiple offenders." Dkt. 10-1 (Conduct Report). Officer Bailey observed Mr. Yard-Daniel "throwing multiple closed fist strikes at other offenders." *Id.* The officer's verbal commands to stop fighting were ignored. *Id.* He identified Mr. Yard-Daniel by using the facility camera, past experience, and DELTA (the offender information system). *Id.* On December 13, a screening officer notified Mr. Yard-Daniel of the charge of "battery against an incarcerated individual" and provided him with a copy of the conduct report and the notice of disciplinary hearing (screening report) Dkt. 10-2. Mr. Yard-Daniel pleaded not guilty and did not request any witnesses. *Id.* He requested a lay advocate, and one was appointed. Dkt. 10-3. He also requested video evidence. Dkt. 10-2. On December 19, disciplinary hearing officer (DHO) M. Hilliard prepared a written report stating that he "review[ed] footage of an incident that occurred on 12/01/24 at approximately 22:15 in 12 North A-Side Cube 2. I observed 1/1 Yard-Daniel, Shadavian #228315 throwing closed fist strikes during a massive fight." Dkt. 10-5. At the hearing, Mr. Yard-Daniel pleaded not guilty but did not make a statement. Dkt. 10-4. After considering the conduct report and video footage, DHO Hilliard found Mr. Yard-Daniel guilty of code 212, battery against an incarcerated individual. *Id.* DHO Hilliard sanctioned

Mr. Yard-Daniel with a 45- day loss of earned credit time and a suspended one-step demotion in credit class. *Id.* On appeal, the appeal review officer modified the charge from B-212, battery against an incarcerated individual, to B-240/212, conspiracy/attempting/aiding or abetting battery against an incarcerated individual, but she did not modify the sanctions. Dkt. 10-8. This habeas action followed.

III. Discussion Mr. Yard-Daniel's claims are discerned as: 1) he was denied effective assistance of his lay advocate; 2) he was denied the "mitigating circumstances of self-defense"; 3) he was denied an impartial decisionmaker; 4) Officer Bailey was not present at the altercation and lied on the conduct report; 5) there was insufficient evidence to support the modified charge; and 6) double jeopardy. Dkt. 1 at 3. Mr. Yard-Daniel concedes that he failed to raise his claim of double jeopardy on appeal. Dkt. 1 at 3. This claim is therefore procedurally defaulted and will not be considered. To the extent the respondent contends that additional claims were not raised on appeal, the Court finds it more efficient to consider the claims on the merits than to further consider the issue of exhaustion. See *Washington v. Boughton*, 884 F.3d 692, 698 (7th Cir. 2018).

A. Lay Advocate Mr. Yard-Daniel first argues that he was denied an effective lay advocate because the advocate did not speak during the hearing. This claim fails because "due process does not require that prisons appoint a lay advocate for a disciplinary hearing unless 'an illiterate inmate is involved ... or where the complexity of the issue makes it unlikely that the inmate will be able to collect and present the evidence necessary for an adequate comprehension of the case.'" *Wilson-El v. Finnan*, 263 F. App'x 503, 506 (7th Cir. 2008) (quoting *Wolff*, 418 U.S. at 570); see also *Miller v. Duckworth*, 963 F.2d 1002, 1004 (7th Cir.1992). Here, Mr. Yard-Daniel is not illiterate, nor does he contend that the issues are overly complex.

B. Self-Defense While Mr. Yard-Daniel contends that he acted in self-defense, that defense does not apply in disciplinary actions. See *Jones v. Cross*, 637 F.3d 841, 848 (7th Cir. 2011) ("inmates do not have a constitutional right to raise self-defense as a defense in the context of prison disciplinary proceedings"). This claim fails.

C. Impartial Decisionmaker Mr. Yard-Daniel asserts that the DHO has a reputation for "falsely convicting inmates." Dkt. 1 at 3. He argues that compared with other inmates, he was sanctioned "biasly and falsely." *Id.* As noted above, inmates facing disciplinary charges have a due process right to be heard by an impartial decision-maker. Hearing officers "are entitled to a presumption of honesty and integrity" absent clear evidence to the contrary. *Piggie v. Cotton*, 342 F.3d 660, 666 (7th Cir. 2003); *Perotti v. Marberry*, 355 F. App'x 39, 43 (7th Cir. 2009) (citing *Withrow v. Larkin*, 421 U.S. 35, 47 (1975)). Indeed, "the constitutional standard for impermissible bias is high," and hearing officers "are not deemed biased simply because they presided over a prisoner's previous disciplinary proceeding" or because they are employed by the IDOC. *Piggie*, 342 F.3d at 666. Instead, hearing officers are impermissibly biased when, for example, they are "directly or substantially involved in the factual events underlying the disciplinary charges, or in the investigation thereof." *Id.* at 667. Another possible example of bias is if the DHO were found to have an intimate relationship with a crucial witness in the case. See *Eads vs. Hanks*, 280 F.3d 728, 729 (7th Cir. 2002). However, none of those circumstances are

alleged here. Mr. Yard-Daniel's general allegations concerning the DHO's "reputation" are not clear evidence of bias. Therefore, the presumption that the DHO was not biased prevails. D. Some Evidence Mr. Yard-Daniel next challenges the adequacy of the conduct report and sufficiency of the evidence to support the modification of the charge on appeal. Dkt. 1 at 3. He argues that Officer Bailey was not present at the time of the fight and therefore must have lied on the conduct report. Id. In a prison disciplinary proceeding, the "hearing officer's decision need only rest on 'some evidence' logically supporting it and demonstrating that the result is not arbitrary." Ellison, 820 F.3d at 274. The "some evidence" standard is much more lenient than the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard. Moffat v. Broyles, 288 F.3d 978, 981 (7th Cir. 2002). "[T]he relevant question is whether there is any evidence in the record that could support the conclusion reached by the disciplinary board." Hill, 472 U.S. at 455–56 (emphasis added); see also Eichwedel v. Chandler, 696 F.3d 660, 675 (7th Cir. 2012) (same). Once the Court finds "some evidence" supporting the disciplinary conviction, the inquiry ends. Jones, 637 F.3d at 849. The Court may not "reweigh the evidence underlying the hearing officer's decision" or "look to see if other record evidence supports a contrary finding." Rhoiney, 723 F. App'x at 348 (citing Webb v. Anderson, 224 F.3d 649, 652 (7th Cir. 2000)). Mr. Yard-Daniel did not argue at his hearing that the reporting officer did not witness the fight, so the only evidence the DHO considered was the conduct report and the video. Dkt. 10-4 . The Court cannot now entertain a claim, i.e., reweigh the evidence, that the reporting officer did not, in fact, witness the fight. The conduct report and video evidence reviewed by the DHO were sufficient to satisfy the evidentiary threshold. On appeal, the offense was modified to a "conspiracy or attempt" to batter another inmate, B-240/212. Dkt. 10-8. Although Mr. Yard-Daniel rejects any claim that he conspired with anyone else, he admits in his appeal that he did take a swipe at another inmate. Dkt. 10-6. Thus, he cannot dispute that he attempted to commit a battery against another inmate. The evidence is sufficient to support the modified charge. IV. Conclusion "The touchstone of due process is protection of the individual against arbitrary action of government." Wolff, 418 U.S. at 558. There was no arbitrary action in any aspect of the charge, disciplinary proceedings, or sanctions involved in the events identified in this action, and there was no constitutional infirmity in the proceeding which entitles Mr. Yard-Daniel to the relief he seeks. Accordingly, Mr. Yard-Daniel's petition for a writ of habeas corpus must be denied and the action dismissed with prejudice. Judgment consistent with this Order shall now issue. SO ORDERED. Date: 6/15/2026 vd Pak Ai James Patrick Hanlon United States District Judge Southern District of Indiana Distribution:

SHADAVIAN YARD-DANIEL

228315

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