

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Coffer v. Dugan

Coffer · No. 25-cv-03251-EKL · Decided October 9, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California granted Plaintiff Jonathan Christopher Coffer's motion for voluntary dismissal under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(a)(1). The civil rights action was dismissed without prejudice because the notice of dismissal satisfied the rule's requirements.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Eumi K. Lee
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	October 9, 2025
DOCKET	25-cv-03251-EKL
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved for voluntary dismissal of his civil rights action before the filing of an answer or motion for summary judgment.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Jonathan Christopher Coffer v. Sierra Promise Dugan

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- civil rights
- prisoners rights

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- civil rights
- prisoner civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

- Whether plaintiff satisfied the requirements for voluntary dismissal under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(a)(1).
- Whether the dismissal should be without prejudice.

HOLDINGS

1. A plaintiff has an absolute right to voluntarily dismiss an action by filing a notice of dismissal before the adverse party serves an answer or a motion for summary judgment, and Coffey's notice satisfied Rule 41(a)(1).
2. The dismissal was without prejudice because plaintiff did not otherwise state that it should be with prejudice.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A plaintiff has the absolute right to dismiss his or her action by filing a notice of dismissal “at any time before service by the adverse party of an answer or of a motion for summary judgment.”” (at 1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff Jonathan Christopher Coffey, a state prisoner proceeding pro se, filed a civil rights lawsuit against Sierra Promise Dugan. Before service of an answer or motion for summary judgment, Coffey filed a motion seeking voluntary dismissal.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Jonathan Christopher Coffey, a state prisoner proceeding pro se, filed a civil rights lawsuit and then moved for voluntary dismissal on August 28, 2025. The district court granted the dismissal under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(a)(1) and dismissed the action without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- *Humphreys v. United States*, 272 F.2d 411, 412 (9th Cir. 1959)