

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
MISSOURI, SOUTHERN DIVISION

Lashon Hudson v. Arthur Hobbs, et al.

Hudson v. Hobbs · No. 6:25-cv-03382-MDH · Decided April 30, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri addresses Defendants’ motion to dismiss claims arising from the stabbing death of a prisoner at the South Central Correctional Center. The court holds that the complaint plausibly alleges Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference failure-to-protect claims against Cindy Roach and Arthur Hobbs, and denies dismissal as to them. The court grants dismissal without prejudice as to Warden Ladonna Buckner based on Plaintiff’s concession.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Southern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Douglas Harpool
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri, Southern Division
DECIDED	April 30, 2026
DOCKET	6:25-cv-03382-MDH
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 alleging that prison officials were deliberately indifferent to a substantial risk that her incarcerated son would be assaulted and killed. Defendants moved to dismiss, including on qualified-immunity grounds.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a motion to dismiss, the court accepted well-pleaded factual allegations as true, drew reasonable inferences in favor of the nonmoving party, and determined whether the complaint stated a plausible claim for relief. Legal conclusions and threadbare recitals of the elements were not accepted as true.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order
PARTIES	Lashon Hudson v. Arthur Hobbs, Cindy Roach, Ladonna Buckner

TOPICS

section 1983

prisoners rights

cruel and unusual punishment

qualified immunity

motions to dismiss

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

prisoner litigation

constitutional law

federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint plausibly alleged that Cindy Roach was deliberately indifferent to a substantial risk of serious harm to Michael Hudson in violation of the Eighth Amendment.
2. Whether the complaint plausibly alleged that Arthur Hobbs was deliberately indifferent to a substantial risk of serious harm to Michael Hudson in violation of the Eighth Amendment.
3. Whether the claims against Ladonna Buckner should be dismissed without prejudice based on Plaintiff's concession that she could not adequately oppose dismissal at that stage.
4. Whether Defendants were entitled to qualified immunity at the motion-to-dismiss stage.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint plausibly alleged that Roach knew of a substantial and ongoing risk of serious harm to Hudson, including prior assaults and requests for transfer or protective custody, and failed to respond reasonably. The motion to dismiss the claims against Roach was therefore denied.
2. The complaint plausibly alleged that Hobbs knew of an ongoing conflict, prior attacks, and a specific impending fatal fight involving Hudson, yet failed to report the threat or take protective action. The motion to dismiss the claims against Hobbs was therefore denied.
3. The claims against Buckner were dismissed without prejudice because Plaintiff voluntarily conceded that she could not adequately oppose dismissal at that stage.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“To establish an Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect claim, the Plaintiff must show that the prison officials were deliberately indifferent to a substantial risk of serious harm.” (Analysis § I)

“A complaint must contain factual allegations that, when accepted as true, are sufficient to state a claim of relief that is plausible on its face.” (Standard of Review)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Michael Hudson was incarcerated at the South Central Correctional Center and housed in Housing Unit 6, where members of a prison security threat group allegedly had harassed and assaulted him. His mother and Hudson allegedly asked Cindy Roach to investigate the threats and move him to protective custody or another housing unit, but Roach allegedly took no action. On the day of the fatal assault, Arthur Hobbs allegedly knew of the ongoing conflict, prior attacks, and a specific warning that Hudson would be involved in a fatal fight, yet allegedly neither reported the threat nor took protective measures. Hudson was later stabbed fourteen times by another prisoner and died.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The case was before the district court on Defendants' motion to dismiss. Plaintiff opposed dismissal as to Arthur Hobbs and Cindy Roach but conceded that her claims against Ladonna Buckner could be dismissed without prejudice. The court denied the motion as to Hobbs and Roach and granted it as to Buckner.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Zutz v. Nelson, 601 F.3d 842, 848 (8th Cir. 2010)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Coons v. Mineta, 410 F.3d 1036, 1039 (8th Cir. 2005)
- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 545, 555 (2007)
- Bordeaux v. Bicknase, 76 F.4th 780, 784 (8th Cir. 2023)
- Young v. Selk, 508 F.3d 868, 872 (8th Cir. 2007)
- Nelson v. Shuffman, 603 F.3d 439, 446 (8th Cir. 2010)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI SOUTHERN DIVISION LASHON HUDSON,)) Plaintiff,)) v.) Case No. 6:25-cv-03382-MDH) ARTHUR HOBBS, et al.,)) Defendants.) ORDER Before the Court is Defendants Arthur Hobbs, Cindy Roach, and Ladonna Buckner's (collectively "Defendants") Motion to Dismiss. (Doc. 9). Defendants filed Suggestions in Support (Doc.

10) and Plaintiff filed Suggestions in Opposition (Doc. 14). Defendants have failed to reply and the time to do so has elapsed. The motion is now ripe for adjudication on the merits. For the reasons stated herein, Defendants' Motion to Dismiss is GRANTED IN PART AND DENIED IN PART. BACKGROUND This case arises out of the death of Michael Hudson, a prisoner in the custody of the Missouri Department of Corrections and housed at the South Central Correctional Center ("SCCC") in Licking, Missouri.

Plaintiff LaShon Hudson is the mother of Michael Hudson and a resident of the State of Missouri. Defendant Arthur Hobbs was employed as a Correctional Officer at SCCC and was the supervising officer in Housing Unit 6 ("HU6"). Defendant Cindy Roach was employed as a case manager at the facility and was responsible for the offenders incarcerated in Housing Unit 6.

Defendant Ladonna M. Buckner was employed as the Warden of SCCC. All Defendants are sued in their individual capacity. Plaintiff states that Michael Hudson was incarcerated at SCCC and housed in HU6. Plaintiff alleges that multiple offenders in HU6 are members of a "security threat

group” or “STG,” commonly known as a prison gang. Plaintiff states that it was well known in the facility by correctional officers and other prison staff that Mr. Hudson had been antagonized and harassed by STG.

Plaintiff alleges that a hit had been placed on Mr. Hudson by the leader of STG, Offender Baker. Plaintiff further alleges that Mr. Hudson was attacked by several STG gang members while in the yard. After learning about these attacks, Plaintiff started reach out to staff members, including Defendant Cindy Roach, to try and get her son placed in protective custody.

Plaintiff alleges Defendant Roach did not act, investigate nor move Mr. Hudson to a different housing unit. On December 15, 2023, it is alleged that Defendant Hobbs had heard from prisoners that there would be a fight between the STG and individuals not affiliated with the gang. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant Hobbs had personal knowledge that members of the STG physically attacked Mr. Hudson in the week before the assault.

Further, Plaintiff alleges that Defendant Hobbs had been informed on the day of the assault by another officer, Kenneth Hunt, that Mr. Hudson was going to be involved in a fatal fight with an STG member that day. Plaintiff states that Defendant Hobbs received this information well before the attack and did not report the specific threat nor took any action to protect Mr. Hudson.

It is further alleged that on December 15, 2023, Defendant Hobbs designated Adrienne McCane as the housing unit control room officer in HU6. That same day Officer McCane allegedly falsely documented the security checks as complete in all wings of HU6 on the chronological log, even though the checks had never been completed. Mr. Hudson was ultimately assaulted on the floor of HU6 by offender Kevon Lee and was stabbed fourteen times with a homemade knife.

As a direct result of this assault, Mr. Hudson died. Plaintiff brings her Complaint alleging three counts under 42 U.S.C. § 1983: Count I - Deliberate Indifference in Violation of the Eighth Amendment Right to Be Free Cruel and Unusual Punishment against Defendant Roach; Count II - Deliberate Indifference in Violation of the Eighth Amendment Right to be Free from Cruel and Unusual Punishment against Defendant Hobbs; and Count III - Deliberate Indifference in Violation of the Eighth Amendment Right to be Free from Cruel and Unusual Punishment against Defendant Buckner.

Defendants bring their current motion seeking to dismiss Plaintiff’s Complaint arguing that Plaintiff fails to allege any involvement by Defendants in the circumstances directly causing Mr. Hudson’s death. Defendants also argue that they are entitled to qualified immunity.

The Court will evaluate whether dismissal is appropriate for each Defendant. STANDARD OF REVIEW A complaint must contain factual allegations that, when accepted as true, are sufficient to state a claim of relief that is plausible on its face. *Zutz v. Nelson*, 601 F.3d 842, 848 (8th Cir. 2010) (citing *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)).

The Court “must accept the allegations contained in the complaint as true and draw all reasonable inferences in favor of the nonmoving party.” *Coons v. Mineta*, 410 F.3d 1036, 1039 (8th Cir. 2005) (internal citations omitted).

The complaint’s factual allegations must be sufficient to “raise a right to relief above the speculative level,” and the motion to dismiss must be granted if the complaint does not contain “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.” *Bell Atl. Corp v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 545 (2007). Further, “the tenet that a court must accept as true all of the allegations contained in a complaint is inapplicable to legal conclusions.

Threadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action, supported by mere conclusory statements, do not suffice.” *Ashcroft*, 556 U.S. at 678 (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555). ANALYSIS I. Defendant Roach Defendants argue that no controlling authority is sufficiently similar to place Defendants on notice that their conduct was unlawful, and Plaintiff never alleges with particularity that Defendants acted far beyond the bounds of their official duties.

Thus, Defendants argue that they are entitled to qualified immunity. Defendants further argue that Plaintiff never alleges any bona fide threat reported to Defendants and alleges only that at some point the alleged gang placed an alleged hit on Mr. Hudson. Plaintiff argues that the Complaint alleges that both Mr. Hudson and the Plaintiff directly alerted Defendant Roach to the threat to Mr. Hudson’s safety and requested that he be moved.

Plaintiff asserts that these warnings placed Defendant Roach on notice of a specific and ongoing danger to an inmate under her supervision. Plaintiff alleges that Defendant Roach did not act on those requests and did not investigate the threat. Plaintiff further alleges that Defendant Roach kept Hudson in HU6 despite prior gang assaults, direct requests for transfer and protection, and her awareness of an ongoing threat to his safety.

To establish an Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect claim, the Plaintiff must show that the prison officials were deliberately indifferent to a substantial risk of serious harm. *Bordeaux v. Bicknase*, 76. F.4th 780, 784 (8th Cir. 2023) (citing *Young v. Selk*, 508 F.3d 868, 872 (8th Cir. 2007)). That is, the defendants “actually kn[ew] of the substantial risk [of serious harm] and fail[ed] to respond reasonably to it.” *Nelson v. Shuffman*, 603 F.3d 439, 446 (8th Cir.

2010) (citation omitted). Taking the allegations as true for the purpose of a motion to dismiss, the Court finds that Plaintiff has raised a right to relief above a speculative level as to Defendant Roach. Plaintiff’s Complaint alleges: After learning about previous attacks by gang members, Plaintiff Hudson started reaching out to staff members, including Defendant Cindy Roach, to try and get her son placed in protective custody.

Defendant Roach did not act or investigate the requests. Following the previous assaults, [Mr.] Hudson asked Defendant Roach, the Case Manager of HU6, to move him to a different housing

unit. Defendant Roach kept Hudson in HU6 despite the various attacks by the gang on Hudson, Hudson's request to be moved, and knowledge of the continued threat on Hudson by the gang.

(Complaint ¶¶ 26-28). Plaintiff further alleges that: Defendant Roach was responsible for Hudson's safety. Defendant Roach was aware that Hudson had requested a transfer from that Housing Unit because of a legitimate and immediate threat to his safety. Defendant Roach deliberately disregarded Hudson's and his mother's requests to be transferred and, by failing to investigate his motivations for transfer, was indifferent to the safety risks to Hudson necessitating a unit transfer.

Upon information and belief, Defendant Roach knew that Hudson was under a substantial risk of bodily harm, up to and including, fatal harm by other inmates in his housing unit. Defendant Roach knew that Hudson had been assaulted in the week prior to his fatal assault. (Complaint ¶¶ 61-64).

The Complaint demonstrates that Defendant Roach was aware of previous assaults on Mr. Hudson, and that there were at least two requests to move Mr. Hudson to a different housing unit. The Complaint states no investigation was done and no action was taken by Defendant Roach to prevent further assaults to Mr. Hudson. Further, the Eighth Circuit has clearly outlined the necessary elements as to an Eighth Amendment failure to protect claim that applies to members of the SCCC.

At this stage of the litigation, this is enough to continue the claims of Plaintiff against Defendant Roach. For the reasons stated, Defendants' Motion to Dismiss Defendant Roach is DENIED. II. Defendant Hobbs The Defendants raise the same arguments as to Defendant Roach as they do to Defendant Hobbs.

The Plaintiff argues that the Complaint alleges that Officer Kenneth Hunt told Defendant Hobbs on the morning of December 15, 2023, that Mr. Hudson would be involved in a fatal fight with a member of the gang that day. Plaintiff alleges that warning came before the assault took place. Plaintiff argues that Defendant Hobbs did not report the warning up the chain of command nor did he take any protective measures or notify Control Room Officer McCane of the threat.

Plaintiff states the Complaint alleges that Defendant Hobbs had prior knowledge of the threat to Mr. Hudson, that he personally knew about the ongoing conflict between Hudson and the gang, and knew members of the gang had physically attacked Hudson in the week before the assault. Taking the allegations as true for the purpose of a motion to dismiss, the Court finds that Plaintiff has raised a right to relief above a speculative level as to Defendant Hobbs.

Plaintiff's Complaint alleges: After the morning meal on the day of the assault, Sergeant Hobbs had heard from prisoners that there would be a fight between the STG and individuals not affiliated with the gang. Sergeant Hobbs had personal knowledge of the ongoing conflict between

Hudson and the STG members. Sergeant Hobbs had personal knowledge that members of the STG physically attacked Hudson in the week before the assault.

Sergeant Hobbs had been informed on the day of the assault by another officer, Kenneth Hunt, that Hudson was going to be involved in a fatal fight with an STG member that day. Sergeant Hobbs received this information well before Hudson was assaulted and killed. Sergeant Hobbs neither reported this specific threat of assault against Hudson higher up the chain of command nor took any action to protect Hudson.

Upon information and belief, Sergeant Hobbs failed to inform the HU6 assigned control room officer, Officer Adrienne McCane, of the immediate threat to Hudson's safety. Sergeant Hobbs did not take action to move Hudson into protective custody or another housing unit. (Complaint ¶¶ 29-36).

The Complaint demonstrates that Defendant Hobbs had prior knowledge of the conflict between STG and Mr. Hudson as well as the prior assaults. Defendant Hobbs was allegedly aware of the impending assault that day and it is claimed he did nothing to prevent it nor alerted anyone who could have prevented the assault and ultimate death of Mr. Hudson. Further, the Eighth Circuit has clearly outlined the necessary elements as to an Eighth Amendment failure to protect claim that applies to members of the SCCC.

At this stage of the litigation, this is enough to continue the claims of Plaintiff against Defendant Hobbs. For the reasons stated, Defendants' Motion to Dismiss Defendant Hobbs is DENIED. III. Defendant Buckner Plaintiff states that she does not have sufficient evidence at this stage of the litigation to adequately oppose dismissal of the claims asserted against Defendant Ladonna Buckner.

Thus, Plaintiff concedes she does not oppose dismissal of those claims without prejudice. As Plaintiff has voluntarily agreed to dismiss her claims against Defendant Ladonna Buckner at this time, the Court will grant Defendants' Motion to Dismiss as Defendant Ladonna Buckner.

For the reasons stated, Defendants' Motion to Dismiss Defendant Ladonna Buckner is GRANTED. Defendant Ladonna Buckner is hereby dismissed from the case without prejudice. CONCLUSION For the reasons stated above, Defendants' Motion to Dismiss is GRANTED IN PART AND DENIED IN PART.

To the extent that Defendants seek dismissal of the claims against Defendants Cindy Roach and Arthur Hobbs, their motion is DENIED. To the extent that Defendants seek dismissal of the claims against Defendant Ladonna Buckner, it is GRANTED. Defendant Ladonna Buckner is hereby dismissed from the case without prejudice. IT IS SO ORDERED. DATED: April 30, 2026 /s/ Douglas Harpool DOUGLAS HARPOOL UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

