

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
WASHINGTON

Daniella Katalin Melegh v. John Does 1-10

Melegh · No. 2:25-cv-01535-JHC · Decided January 23, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Washington dismissed Daniella Katalin Melegh’s pro se complaint without prejudice under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B). The court concluded that the complaint’s allegations of warrantless surveillance were conclusory and failed to identify a defendant or provide sufficient factual detail to state a Fourth Amendment Bivens claim, while granting leave to amend within 14 days.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Washington
WRITING FOR THE COURT	John H. Chun
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Washington
DECIDED	January 23, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-cv-01535-JHC
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Sua sponte screening of a pro se complaint filed by a plaintiff seeking to proceed in forma pauperis.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B), the court must dismiss an in forma pauperis complaint sua sponte if it is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim, or seeks damages from an immune defendant. A complaint must satisfy Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2) and contain sufficient factual matter to state a plausible claim, while pro se pleadings are construed liberally.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court order; precedential status is unknown.
PARTIES	Daniella Katalin Melegh v. John Does 1-10

TOPICS

- motions to dismiss
- pleadings
- civil rights
- constitutional law
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil procedure

Constitutional law

Civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated a claim sufficient to survive screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).
2. Whether the pro se complaint adequately pleaded a Fourth Amendment Bivens claim against the unidentified defendants.

HOLDINGS

1. The complaint failed to state a claim because it provided only bare and conclusory allegations of surveillance and did not include specific facts showing that Plaintiff was entitled to relief.
2. The complaint did not adequately plead a Bivens claim because it failed to identify any individual alleged to have committed the wiretapping or provide factual details concerning the alleged surveillance.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A complaint filed by any party that seeks to proceed in forma pauperis (IFP) under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a) is subject to screening.” (at 1)

“Threadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action, supported by mere conclusory statements, do not suffice.” (at 1)

“Even under a liberal construction of the Complaint, Plaintiff fails to state a claim for relief.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged that defendants identified only as John Does 1-10, described as federal agents or contractors, engaged in warrantless surveillance, including cameras in a bathroom, wiretapping, and interception of electronic communications. The complaint contained no additional factual allegations, did not identify any particular person who allegedly committed the wiretapping, and provided no details about the alleged surveillance.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a complaint against unidentified federal agents or contractors alleging warrantless surveillance and seeking relief under the Fourth Amendment through a Bivens action. The district court screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B), dismissed it without prejudice for failure to state a claim, and granted leave to amend within 14 days.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

No remand. Plaintiff was granted leave to file a timely amended complaint within 14 days of the Order. If she files an amended complaint that does not meet pleading standards, the matter will be dismissed with prejudice.

CASES CITED

- Lopez v. Smith, 203 F.3d 1122, 1126-27 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)
- Hebbe v. Pliler, 627 F.3d 338, 342 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Bretz v. Kelman, 773 F.2d 1026, 1027 n.1 (9th Cir. 1985) (en banc)
- Bivens v. Six Unknown Fed. Narcotics Agents, 403 U.S. 388 (1971)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 5 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 6 WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE 7 DANIELLA KATALIN MELEGH, CASE NO. 2:25-cv-01535-JHC 8 Plaintiff,
ORDER 9 v. 10 JOHN DOES 1-10, 11 Defendants. 12 13 This matter comes before the Court sua
sponte on pro se Plaintiff Daniella Katalin 14 Melegh's Complaint. Dkt. # 5. 15 A complaint filed
by any party that seeks to proceed in forma pauperis (IFP) under 28 16 U.S.C. § 1915(a) is subject
to screening.

See Lopez v. Smith, 203 F.3d 1122, 1126–27 (9th Cir. 17 2000) (en banc). If a court determines
that a complaint filed under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a) is 18 frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim, or
seeks damages from defendants immune from such 19 relief, the court must dismiss the case sua
sponte. Id.; see also 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

To 20 adequately state a claim, a complaint must include “a short and plain statement of the claim
21 showing that the pleader is entitled to relief.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). A plaintiff need not 22
provide detailed factual allegations, but “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of 23
action, supported by mere conclusory statements, do not suffice.” Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 24 1
662, 678 (2009) (citing Bell Atl.

Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)). Still, when the 2 || plaintiffis pro se, a court must
“construe the pleadings liberally and afford the petitioner the 3 benefit of any doubt.” Hebbe v.
Pliler, 627 F.3d 338, 342 (9th Cir. 2010) (quoting Brerz v. 4 || Kelman, 773 F.2d 1026, 1027 n.1
(9th Cir.1985) (en banc)). 5 Even under a liberal construction of the Complaint, Plaintiff fails to
state a claim for 6 ||Telief.

The Complaint does not include any specific facts that show that Plaintiff is entitled to the 7 ||relief
she seeks. The Complaint states only that the Defendants, named only as “John Does 1- 8 10” and
described as “federal agents/Contractors,” have “engaged in warrantless surveillance, 9 including
cameras in the bathroom, wiretapping, and interception of electronic communications.” 10 || Dkt.
#5 at 1.

There are no other factual allegations in the complaint. The complaint says it 11 claims relief under the Fourth Amendment via a Bivens action, but it does not identify any 12. || person acting under cover of law who allegedly committing the wiretapping. See *Bivens v. Six Unknown Fed. Narcotics Agents*, 403 U.S. 388 (1971). Nor does the complaint provide any 14 || details of the alleged surveillance beyond a bare allegation that it is occurring.

15 Accordingly, the Court DISMISSES Plaintiff's Complaint, Dkt. # 5, without prejudice 16 || under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(11).. The Court GRANTS Plaintiff leave to amend, if she 17 || wishes, within 14 days of the filing of this Order. If Plaintiff files a timely amended complaint 1g || and it does not meet the pleading standards, the Court will dismiss the matter with prejudice.

19 Dated this 23rd day of January, 2026. otha Cbne 1 John H. Chun United States District Judge
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