

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
MICHIGAN, SOUTHERN DIVISION

Williams v. Melvin, Blalock, and Winter

Williams · No. 2:23-cv-12868 · Decided March 9, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan adopted a magistrate judge’s Report and Recommendation because neither party filed timely objections. The court granted defendants’ motion for summary judgment and dismissed with prejudice the prisoner civil rights claims arising from an alleged strip-search.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Brandy R. McMillion
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan
DECIDED	March 9, 2026
DOCKET	2:23-cv-12868
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought a pro se prisoner civil-rights action alleging constitutional violations during a strip-search. Defendants moved for summary judgment. A magistrate judge recommended granting the motion, and the district court adopted the recommendation after neither party filed objections.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	When no party timely objects to a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation, the district court is released from its duty to conduct an independent review of the matter. The court may accept the recommendation without expressing views on the merits of the magistrate judge's conclusions.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown
PARTIES	Henry Williams v. Antonio Melvin, Andrew Blalock, Robert Winter

TOPICS

summary judgment

prisoners rights

civil rights

constitutional law

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

constitutional law

civil rights

prisoner litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the district court was required to independently review the magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation when neither party timely objected.
2. Whether the court should adopt the unobjected-to recommendation to grant defendants' motion for summary judgment.
3. Whether all claims should be dismissed with prejudice after summary judgment was granted.

HOLDINGS

1. A party's failure to timely object to a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation releases the district court from its duty to independently review the matter and permits the court to accept the recommendation without expressing views on the merits of the magistrate judge's conclusions.
2. Failure to timely object to a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation forfeits the party's further right to appeal the recommended disposition.
3. The magistrate judge's recommended disposition was adopted, defendants' motion for summary judgment was granted, and all claims were dismissed with prejudice.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The failure to object to an R&R releases the Court from its duty to independently review the matter.”

“Similarly, failure to object to an R&R forfeits any further right to appeal.”

“IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all claims in this action are DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Williams, a pro se prisoner, alleged that Sergeant Antonio Melvin, Officer Andrew Blalock, and Officer Robert Winter violated his constitutional rights during a strip-search. Defendants moved for summary judgment, asserting among other grounds that Williams could not establish Sergeant Melvin's personal involvement, that the Fourth Amendment did not apply to searches relating to a legitimate penological interest, and that the defendants were shielded from civil damages for discretionary conduct. The opinion did not independently resolve the merits of those allegations because neither party objected to the magistrate judge's recommended disposition.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Williams filed this prisoner civil-rights action against three correctional officers. Defendants moved for summary judgment on grounds including lack of personal involvement, the asserted inapplicability of the Fourth

Amendment to searches conducted for a legitimate penological interest, and qualified immunity. Magistrate Judge Anthony P. Patti issued a Report and Recommendation on February 9, 2026, recommending that the motion be granted. Neither party objected within the prescribed period, so the district court adopted the recommended disposition, granted summary judgment, and dismissed all claims with prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Thomas v. Arn, 474 U.S. 140, 149 (1985)
- Ivey v. Wilson, 832 F.2d 950, 957-58 (6th Cir. 1987)
- Berkshire v. Dahl, 928 F.3d 520, 530 (6th Cir. 2019)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN SOUTHERN DIVISION HENRY WILLIAMS, Case No. 2:23-cv-12868 Plaintiff, Hon. Brandy R. McMillion v. United States District Judge ANTONIO MELVIN, ANDREW Hon. Anthony P. Patti BLALOCK, and ROBERT WINTER United States Magistrate Judge Defendants. _____/ ORDER ADOPTING RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION OF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION (ECF NO. 31), GRANTING DEFENDANTS' MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT (ECF NO. 26) Plaintiff Henry Williams ("Williams") filed this pro se prisoner civil rights case against Sergeant Antonio Melvin, Officer Andrew Blalock, and Officer Robert Winter (collectively, "Defendants").

See generally ECF Nos. 1, 6. Williams alleges that Defendants violated his constitutional rights during a strip-search. ECF No. 6. This matter was originally assigned to the Honorable Mark Goldsmith, but reassigned to the undersigned in April, 2024. See Administrative Order 24-AO-007.

The case was referred to Magistrate Judge Anthony P. Patti for all pretrial matters. ECF No. 17. On May 29, 2025, Defendants moved for summary judgment based on Williams's failure to prove any personal involvement of Sergeant Melvin, because the Fourth Amendment does not apply in the context of searches relating to a legitimate penological interest, and government officials performing discretionary functions are shielded from civil damages.

See generally ECF No. 26. On February 9, 2026, Magistrate Judge Patti issued a Report and Recommendation ("R&R") recommending that the Court grant Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment. ECF No. 31. At the end of the R&R, the Magistrate Judge advised the parties that to seek review of his recommendation, they had to file specific objections with the Court within 14 days of service of the R&R.

Id. at PageID.196-197. As of the date of this Order, March 9, 2026—31 days since the Magistrate Judge issued the R&R—neither party has filed objections to the R&R or contacted the Court to ask for more time to file objections.

The failure to object to an R&R releases the Court from its duty to independently review the matter. See *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140, 149 (1985); see also *Ivey v. Wilson*, 832 F.2d 950, 957-58 (6th Cir. 1987) (explaining that a party’s failure to timely object to a report and recommendation allows a court to accept the recommendation “without expressing any views on the merits of the magistrate’s conclusions”).

Similarly, failure to object to an R&R forfeits any further right to appeal. See *Berkshire v. Dahl*, 928 F.3d 520, 530 (6th Cir. 2019) (recognizing that a party forfeits their right to appeal by failing to timely file objections to an R&R).

Accordingly, because neither party objected to the R&R, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Magistrate Judge’s recommended disposition of Defendants’ Motion is ADOPTED. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Defendants’ Motion for Summary Judgment (ECF No. 26) is GRANTED. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all claims in this action are DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE. IT IS SO ORDERED. Dated: March 9, 2026 s/Brandy R. McMillion Detroit, Michigan HON. BRANDY R. MCMILLION United States District Judge