

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF MAINE

Seth Carey v. Maine State Police et al.

Carey · No. 2:25-cv-00385-SDN · Decided March 13, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Maine adopts and affirms a magistrate judge’s recommendation to dismiss Seth Carey’s complaint against the Maine State Police, the Rumford Police Department, prosecutors, and individual officers. The court concludes that the Rooker-Feldman doctrine bars challenges to the state protection-from-abuse proceeding and that the claims also fail on sovereign immunity, prosecutorial immunity, municipal liability, pleading, and injunctive-relief grounds. The court overrules Carey’s objections and dismisses the complaint.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Maine
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Stacey D. Neumann
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Maine
DECIDED	March 13, 2026
DOCKET	2:25-cv-00385-SDN
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff objected to a magistrate judge's recommended decision recommending dismissal of the complaint. The district judge conducted de novo review, overruled the objection, adopted and affirmed the recommended decision, and dismissed the complaint.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	De novo review of the magistrate judge's recommended decision and objections.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; federal district court order
PARTIES	Seth Carey v. Maine State Police, Rumford Police Department, District Attorney of Hancock and Washington Counties, Robert Granger, Other named individual defendants

TOPICS

- motions to dismiss
- subject matter jurisdiction
- section 1983
- eleventh amendment immunity
- injunctions

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

constitutional law

civil rights

federal jurisdiction

remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Rooker-Feldman doctrine barred Carey's federal challenge to the state-court protection-from-abuse order.
2. Whether the Maine State Police was immune from suit under the Eleventh Amendment.
3. Whether prosecutorial immunity barred the claim against the district attorney in his professional capacity.
4. Whether the complaint adequately alleged municipal liability under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against the City of Rumford based on allegations concerning the Rumford Police Department.
5. Whether the complaint adequately alleged specific unconstitutional conduct by the individual defendants and otherwise satisfied the plausibility pleading standard.
6. Whether Carey was entitled to injunctive relief concerning state proceedings or enforcement of criminal laws.

HOLDINGS

1. The Rooker-Feldman doctrine barred Carey's challenge to the state-court protection-from-abuse order because the state proceeding had been litigated and upheld on appeal.
2. The Maine State Police, as a Maine state agency, was immune from suit in federal court under the Eleventh Amendment absent waiver.
3. Prosecutorial immunity barred Carey's claim against Robert Granger in his professional capacity as a district attorney.
4. The complaint failed to state a Section 1983 claim against the Rumford Police Department, construed as a claim against the City of Rumford, because it did not allege facts establishing that a municipal policy or custom caused a constitutional violation.
5. The complaint failed to state a plausible claim for relief because it did not allege specific conduct by the individual defendants connecting them to a violation of Carey's federal or constitutional rights and instead relied on conclusory and speculative assertions.
6. Carey was not entitled to injunctive relief because the facts alleged provided no legal basis for federal intervention in the state's management of its affairs.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“there is no justification for invading the State’s latitude to manage its affairs” (ECF No. 6 at 5)

“Although Carey alleges many facts, he does not connect them to the named defendants and instead seeks to relitigate a PFA proceeding that is unreviewable in this Court under the Rooker-Feldman doctrine.” (ECF No. 6 at 6)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Carey's claims arose from a state-court protection-from-abuse proceeding and accompanying investigation, which he alleged involved false statements, defamation, and malicious prosecution. He alleged that the proceeding resulted in violations of his constitutional rights, damage to his reputation, and loss of his law license. The state-court PFA decision was litigated and upheld on appeal.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Carey filed a federal complaint asserting constitutional claims under the Fourth, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments and state-law claims arising primarily from a state protection-from-abuse proceeding, related investigation, and the loss of his law license. On November 7, 2025, the magistrate judge recommended dismissal on Rooker-Feldman, sovereign-immunity, prosecutorial-immunity, municipal-liability, pleading, and injunctive-relief grounds. Carey objected, but the district court found that his objection identified no specific legal error and adopted and affirmed the recommendation in its entirety.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Gilbert v. Me. Dep't of Health & Hum. Servs., 778 F. Supp. 3d 239, 261 (D. Me. 2025)
- Monell v. New York City Department of Social Services, 436 U.S. 658, 691 (1978)
- Rooker-Feldman doctrine
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly; Ashcroft v. Iqbal

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF MAINE SETH CAREY,)) Plaintiff,)) v.
) 2:25-cv-00385-SDN) MAINE STATE POLICE et al.,)) Defendants.) ORDER In this matter, Plaintiff Seth Carey brings numerous claims arising from the Fourth Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments, as well as state tort and statutory law. Mr. Carey has sued various entities for the alleged violation of his constitutional rights, including the Maine State Police, the Rumford Police Department, the District Attorney of Hancock and Washington Counties, and several individual officers in their professional capacities with multiple state and city agencies.

Mr. Carey's claims arise generally from a state court's adverse decision in a protection from abuse ("PFA") proceeding and the subsequent loss of his law license. On November 7, 2025, the Magistrate Judge recommended dismissing Mr. Carey's complaint on multiple procedural and jurisdictional grounds, as well as for the overall failure to state a plausible claim for relief.

ECF No. 5. Mr. Carey subsequently objected to the Recommended Decision. ECF No. 6. I have reviewed and conducted a de novo review of the Magistrate Judge's Recommended Decision. For

the following reasons, I AFFIRM the Recommended Decision and DISMISS the complaint. DISCUSSION In his complaint, Mr. Carey alleges he was “completely falsely accused, defamed and maliciously prosecuted by Defendants” in connection with a state court PFA proceeding and accompanying investigation.

See ECF No. 1 at 1, 5–7. With respect to the PFA proceeding, Mr. Carey discusses numerous allegedly false statements made by the victim in the PFA case, which he asserts led to the violation of his constitutional rights, the loss of his professional career as an attorney, and diminished reputation. See *id.* at 5– 6.

In her Recommended Decision, the Magistrate Judge recommends dismissing Mr. Carey’s complaint on numerous grounds. As a primary matter, the state court’s PFA decision was litigated and upheld on appeal. ECF No. 1 at ¶ 72.

Accordingly, as the Magistrate Judge held, the Rooker-Feldman doctrine bars Mr. Carey’s challenge to the PFA order. ECF No. 6 at 2. Regardless of the Rooker-Feldman doctrine, however, Mr. Carey has failed to state a plausible claim against any Defendant based on numerous procedural and jurisdictional deficiencies.

First, Mr. Carey’s claim against the Maine State Police (“MSP”) fails because the MSP is a Maine State agency and thus immune from suit under the Eleventh Amendment. *Id.* at 2–3; see *Gilbert v. Me. Dep’t of Health & Hum. Servs.*, 778 F. Supp. 3d 239, 261 (D. Me. 2025) (finding that “absent waiver” of Eleventh Amendment sovereign immunity, “neither a State nor its agencies acting under its control may be subject to suit in federal court” (quotation modified)).

Second, the doctrine of prosecutorial immunity bars Mr. Carey’s claim against Defendant Robert Granger in his professional capacity as a District Attorney. See ECF No. 6 at 3. Third, Mr. Carey has failed to state a claim against the Rumford Police Department, which the Magistrate Judge appropriately liberally construed as a complaint against the City of Rumford, because he has failed to allege sufficient facts to establish municipal liability under Section 1983.

Id. at 3–4; see *Monell v. New York City Dept. of Social Servs.*, 436 U.S. 658, 691 (1978) (holding municipalities can not be liable under Section 1983 “unless action pursuant to official municipal policy of some nature caused a constitutional tort”). Fourth, regarding claims against the remaining named Defendants, Mr. Carey has critically failed to allege specific conduct by individual defendants, other than conclusory statements, that would violate his federal or constitutional rights.

ECF No. 6 at 4–5. Fifth, regarding Mr. Carey’s request for injunctive relief against state proceedings and the enforcement of certain criminal laws, the Magistrate found that, under the facts alleged by Mr. Carey, “there is no justification for invading the State’s latitude to manage its affairs” and no legal basis for injunctive relief. See *id.* at 5.

Finally, for any remaining claims, Mr. Carey has failed to satisfy the Twombly/Iqbal pleading standard by failing to allege sufficient facts to state a plausible claim against any Defendant. *Id.* at 6 (“Although Carey alleges many facts, he does not connect them to the named defendants and instead seeks to relitigate a PFA proceeding that is unreviewable in this Court under the Rooker-Feldman doctrine.”).

Upon my de novo review of the record, I affirm the Magistrate Judge’s conclusion that Mr. Carey has failed to allege adequate facts to support a claim for relief for any counts alleged in his complaint. Although Mr. Carey has filed an objection to the Magistrate Judge’s Recommended Decision, he does not identify any specific errors in the Magistrate’s legal reasoning or conclusions, aside from general assertions that the Magistrate “chose to ‘cherry-pick’” a handful of counts to “fit her narrative” and “mischaracterize[d] the genesis of the lawsuit and legal claims against the Defendants.” ECF No. 6 at 1, 2.

Mr. Carey’s objection is further devoid of any legal authority to support any of his arguments or claims and instead only restates conclusory and speculative allegations against Defendants. After de novo review, I find the Magistrate Judge’s Recommended Decision is well-reasoned and supported by the entire record before the Court.

Accordingly, for the reasons stated in her opinion, I adopt and affirm the Magistrate Judge’s Recommended Decision in its entirety. CONCLUSION For the foregoing reasons, and for those already explained in the Magistrate Judge’s Recommended Decision, Mr. Carey’s objection, ECF No. 6, is OVERRULED.

The Recommended Decision, ECF No. 5, is ADOPTED and AFFIRMED in its entirety. Accordingly, Mr. Carey’s complaint, ECF No. 1, is DISMISSED. SO ORDERED. Dated this 13th day of March, 2026. /s/ Stacey D. Neumann UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE