

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Chestra v. Brodie

No. 2:24-cv-02376-CKD (E.D. Cal. May 23, 2025) · No. 2:24-cv-2376-CKD · Decided May 23, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California screens Robert Chestra’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint concerning alleged deductions from his inmate trust account. The court concludes that the alleged unauthorized deprivation of property does not state a Fourteenth Amendment due process claim because California provides an adequate post-deprivation remedy, and that no private cause of action exists for extortion. The magistrate judge recommends dismissal without leave to amend and directs the clerk to assign a district judge.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Carolyn K. Delaney
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	May 23, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-cv-2376-CKD
DISPOSITION	remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A pro se state prisoner brought a fee-paid action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 alleging that unauthorized deductions were made from his inmate trust account and asserting due process and extortion claims. The magistrate judge screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A and issued findings and recommendations that the complaint be dismissed without leave to amend.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; the complaint must be dismissed if it is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished, nonprecedential magistrate judge findings and recommendations

TOPICS

- section 1983
- procedural due process
- prisoners rights
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

prisoner civil rights

constitutional law

federal civil procedure

remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether alleged unauthorized deductions from a state prisoner's inmate trust account stated a Fourteenth Amendment procedural due process claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
2. Whether the plaintiff could maintain a private civil extortion claim against the defendants under federal criminal statutes.
3. Whether amendment would be futile such that dismissal should occur without leave to amend.

HOLDINGS

1. The alleged random and unauthorized deprivation of plaintiff's property did not state a procedural due process claim because California provides an adequate post-deprivation remedy through the Government Claims Act.
2. Plaintiff failed to state a civil extortion claim because he had no private cause of action against the defendants under the criminal extortion statutes.
3. Dismissal without leave to amend was appropriate because amendment would be futile.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Neither the negligent nor intentional deprivation of property states a due process claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 if the deprivation was random and unauthorized." (at 2)

"In this instance, amendment would be futile because plaintiff cannot state a due process claim based on the unauthorized deprivations alleged." (at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff, a California state prisoner, alleged that deductions continued to be taken from his inmate trust account for filing fees associated with *Chestra v. Raman*, No. 15-CV-00560-VC, even though the deductions identified a different case-number suffix that plaintiff claimed did not exist. He alleged that prison trust-office personnel ignored his assertion that the fee had been paid and that defendants denied or rejected his grievance and appeal. He asserted Fourteenth Amendment due process and extortion claims and sought damages and injunctive relief.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff alleged that prison officials continued deducting funds from his inmate trust account for a purported filing-fee obligation associated with a nonexistent case-number variant. After plaintiff pursued an administrative grievance and appeal, he filed this § 1983 action seeking damages and injunctive relief. The magistrate judge concluded that the complaint failed to state a claim, recommended dismissal without leave to amend, and directed assignment of a district judge; the recommendation was subject to objections within 14 days.

DISPOSITION

remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

No remand to a lower court was ordered. The magistrate judge recommended that the complaint be dismissed without leave to amend and that the Clerk close the case, subject to review by the assigned district judge after any objections.

CASES CITED

- Parratt v. Taylor, 451 U.S. 527, 535-44 (1981)
- Hudson v. Palmer, 468 U.S. 517, 533 (1984)
- Zimmerman v. City of Oakland, 255 F.3d 734, 738 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Zinermon v. Burch, 494 U.S. 113, 128 (1990)
- Barnett v. Centoni, 31 F.3d 813, 816-17 (9th Cir. 1994) (per curiam)
- Del Elmer; Zachay v. Metzger, 967 F. Supp. 398, 403 (S.D. Cal. 1997)
- Abcarian v. Levine, 972 F.3d 1019, 1026 (9th Cir. 2020)
- McKeague v. Matsuura, No. CIV 08-00571 ACK KSC, 2009 WL 89112, at *1 (D. Haw. Jan. 12, 2009)
- United States v. Nixon, 418 U.S. 683, 693 (1974)
- Lopez v. Smith, 203 F.3d 1122, 1130-31 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc)
- Cato v. United States, 70 F.3d 1103, 1105-06 (9th Cir. 1995)
- Klamath-Lake Pharm. Ass'n v. Klamath Med. Serv. Bureau, 701 F.2d 1276, 1293 (9th Cir. 1983)
- Martinez v. Ylst, 951 F.2d 1153 (9th Cir. 1991)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AN AI ASSISTANT

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