

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Keni Mae Meyer v. County of Sonoma, et al.

Meyer · No. 24-cv-09056-HSG · Decided December 30, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California granted Defendants’ motion to dismiss Keni Mae Meyer’s First Amended Complaint. The court held that Meyer failed to plausibly allege constitutional, Monell, privacy, trespass, or intentional-infliction-of-emotional-distress claims arising from alleged drone surveillance in March 2023 and an animal-services officer’s visit to her property in February 2024. The court dismissed the action without leave to amend and directed the Clerk to enter judgment for Defendants and close the case.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Haywood S. Gilliam, Jr.
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	December 30, 2025
DOCKET	24-cv-09056-HSG
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants moved under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) to dismiss Plaintiff's First Amended Complaint alleging constitutional, municipal-liability, state constitutional privacy, trespass, and intentional-infliction-of-emotional-distress claims.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the Court accepts factual allegations as true and construes the pleadings in the nonmoving party's favor, but disregards conclusory allegations, unwarranted factual deductions, and unreasonable inferences. The complaint must contain sufficient factual matter to state a facially plausible claim for relief. At the pleading stage, qualified immunity is proper when the complaint does not allege facts showing violation of a clearly established constitutional right.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	district court order; precedential status not specified

PARTIES

Keni Mae Meyer v. County of Sonoma, Tennis Wick, Tyra Harrington, Todd Hoffman, Ryan Sharp, Jesse Cablk, Cris Martinez

TOPICS

motions to dismiss

qualified immunity

section 1983

municipal liability

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

constitutional law

civil rights

municipal liability

torts

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the First Amended Complaint plausibly alleged a constitutional or other legally cognizable claim arising from the March 2023 drone surveillance.
2. Whether the individual Defendants involved in the alleged drone surveillance were entitled to qualified immunity.
3. Whether the First Amended Complaint plausibly alleged municipal liability under Monell based on Sonoma County's drone program.
4. Whether the allegations concerning Martinez's February 2024 entry and observations stated a claim for an unlawful search, trespass, or related relief.
5. Whether the case should be dismissed without leave to amend after Plaintiff failed to cure deficiencies previously identified by the Court.

HOLDINGS

1. The First Amended Complaint failed to allege sufficient facts connecting any individual Defendant to the March 2023 drone surveillance or showing that the alleged surveillance constituted actionable unconstitutional conduct.
2. The individual Defendants allegedly involved in the drone surveillance were entitled to qualified immunity because Plaintiff did not show that the alleged conduct violated a constitutional right that was clearly established at the time.
3. The First Amended Complaint failed to state a claim for municipal liability under Monell.
4. The First Amended Complaint failed to state a claim based on Martinez's February 2024 entry and observations.
5. Dismissal without leave to amend was appropriate because Plaintiff had already received an opportunity to amend and failed to cure deficiencies previously identified by the Court.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"To determine whether an officer is entitled to qualified immunity, the Court must consider whether (1) the officer's conduct violated a constitutional right and (2) that right was clearly established at the time of the incident." (at 9)

“A municipality cannot be held liable under § 1983 on a respondeat superior theory.” (at 11)

“The Court therefore DISMISSES the case against Defendants without leave to amend.” (at 14)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged that Sonoma County used a drone to surveil her property on March 23, 2023, without a warrant, consent, or exigent circumstances. She also alleged that County animal-services officer Cris Martinez entered through an open security gate in February 2024, approached the house, looked briefly into an open garage and front windows, and stated that he was investigating unlicensed dogs, an allegedly unpermitted kennel, and the health of a horse. Plaintiff asserted claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, including Fourth and Fourteenth Amendment claims and municipal liability, as well as California privacy, trespass, and intentional-infliction-of-emotional-distress claims.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed the action in December 2024. The Court previously granted Defendants' first motion to dismiss, dismissed all claims in the original complaint, and granted leave to amend. Plaintiff filed a First Amended Complaint, but the Court concluded that the amended allegations remained deficient and granted the renewed motion to dismiss. The case was dismissed without leave to amend, judgment was directed in favor of Defendants, and the Clerk was ordered to close the case.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- *Mendiondo v. Centinela Hospital Medical Center*, 521 F.3d 1097, 1104 (9th Cir. 2008)
- *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)
- *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- *Manzarek*, 519 F.3d at 1031
- *In re Gilead Sciences Securities Litigation*, 536 F.3d 1049, 1055 (9th Cir. 2008)
- *Sprewell v. Golden State Warriors*, 266 F.3d 979, 988 (9th Cir. 2001)
- *Monell v. New York City Department of Social Services*, 436 U.S. 658, 691 (1978)
- *Horton v. City of Santa Maria*, 915 F.3d 592, 602-03 (9th Cir. 2019)
- *AE v. County of Tulare*, 666 F.3d 631, 637 (9th Cir. 2012)
- *Pearson v. Callahan*, 555 U.S. 223, 232, 236 (2009)
- *Keates v. Koile*, 883 F.3d 1228, 1234-35 (9th Cir. 2018)
- *City and County of San Francisco v. Sheehan*, 575 U.S. 600, 611 (2015)
- *Plumhoff v. Rickard*, 572 U.S. 765, 778-79 (2014)
- *Ashcroft v. al-Kidd*, 563 U.S. 731, 741-42 (2011)
- *Florida v. Jardines*, 569 U.S. 1, 3, 5-9 (2013)

- *Kyllo v. United States*, 533 U.S. 27, 34-37 (2001)
- *Payton v. New York*, 445 U.S. 573, 583-90 (1980)
- *Florida v. Riley*, 488 U.S. 445, 447-51 (1989)
- *San Jose Charter of Hells Angels Motorcycle Club v. City of San Jose*, 402 F.3d 962, 971-76 (9th Cir. 2005)
- *United States v. Allen*, 813 F.3d 76, 80-89 (2d Cir. 2016)
- *United States v. Almeida-Perez*, 549 F.3d 1162, 1169-72 (8th Cir. 2008)
- *United States v. Perea-Rey*, 680 F.3d 1179, 1187-88 (9th Cir. 2012)
- *United States ex rel. Robinson Rancheria Citizens Council v. Borneo*, 971 F.2d 244, 248 (9th Cir. 1992)
- *Ramirez v. Galaza*, 334 F.3d 850, 860 (9th Cir. 2003)
- *Zucco Partners, LLC v. Digimarc Corp.*, 552 F.3d 981, 990 (9th Cir. 2009), as amended (Feb. 10, 2009)

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