

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Rayon Jones v. F. Ruiz, et al.

Case No. 25-cv-06050-CRB (PR) · No. 25-cv-06050-CRB (PR) · Decided January 29, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California screens Rayon Jones’s First Amended Complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. The court finds an arguably cognizable Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against correctional officers F. Ruiz and M. Lupo, dismisses Warden Kelly Santoro based on the absence of respondeat superior liability, and orders service and an expedited dispositive-motion schedule.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Charles R. Breyer
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	January 29, 2026
DOCKET	25-cv-06050-CRB (PR)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening of a pro se prisoner's First Amended Complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, resulting in service of the excessive-force claim against two correctional officers and dismissal of the warden from the action.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Preliminary screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; pro se pleadings are liberally construed, and the complaint must be dismissed if it is frivolous, malicious, fails to state a claim, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Rayon Jones v. F. Ruiz, M. Lupo, Kelly Santoro

TOPICS

- prisoners rights
- police misconduct
- section 1983
- service of process
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

prisoner litigation

constitutional law

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the First Amended Complaint stated a cognizable claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 for excessive force in violation of the Eighth Amendment against Ruiz and Lupo.
2. Whether the complaint stated a § 1983 claim against Warden Santoro based solely on her supervisory position.
3. What service and case-management procedures should govern the surviving claims.

HOLDINGS

1. The allegations, liberally construed, stated an arguably cognizable § 1983 claim that Ruiz and Lupo used excessive force in violation of the Eighth Amendment.
2. The complaint failed to state a § 1983 claim against Santoro based solely on her responsibility as warden for the actions or omissions of subordinate officers.
3. A prisoner complaint seeking redress from governmental officers must be screened under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A, and claims that are not subject to dismissal under that statute may proceed to service.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Whenever prison officials stand accused of using excessive force in violation of the Eighth Amendment, the core judicial inquiry is whether force was applied in a good-faith effort to maintain or restore discipline, or maliciously and sadistically to cause harm.” (Opinion text at lines 8-15)

“there is no liability under § 1983 solely because one is responsible for the actions or omissions of another.” (Opinion text at lines 19-22)

“Generally, summary judgment must be granted when there is no genuine issue of material fact – that is, if there is no real dispute about any fact that would affect the result of your case, the party who asked for summary judgment is entitled to judgment as a matter of law, which will end your case.” (Opinion text at lines 15-18 of the summary-judgment notice)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Rayon Jones, an incarcerated person at Salinas Valley State Prison, alleged that on May 30, 2024, correctional officers F. Ruiz and M. Lupo became angry after a video settlement conference related to a prior § 1983 action. Jones alleged that, after she asked to speak with the captain, the officers grabbed her, slammed her to the ground, and injured the right side of her head and ear. Jones also named Warden Kelly Santoro based on her position as warden.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff, a prisoner proceeding pro se, filed a First Amended Complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 alleging that correctional officers used excessive force against her. The district court conducted preliminary prisoner-

complaint screening, found an arguably cognizable Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against F. Ruiz and M. Lupo, dismissed Warden Kelly Santoro based solely on her supervisory role, and ordered service and an expedited schedule for dispositive motions.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Balistreri v. Pacifica Police Department*, 901 F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1990)
- *West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988)
- *Hudson v. McMillian*, 503 U.S. 1, 6-7 (1992)
- *Taylor v. List*, 880 F.2d 1040, 1045 (9th Cir. 1989)
- *Woods v. Carey*, 684 F.3d 934, 935 (9th Cir. 2012)
- *Stratton v. Buck*, 697 F.3d 1004, 1008-09 (9th Cir. 2012)
- *Wyatt v. Terhune*, 315 F.3d 1108, 1120 n.14 (9th Cir. 2003)
- *Albino v. Baca*, 747 F.3d 1162, 1166 (9th Cir. 2014) (en banc)
- *Rand v. Rowland*, 154 F.3d 952, 962-63 (9th Cir. 1998) (en banc)

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