

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF  
NEW YORK

Prinell Paul v. Deputy Sheriff Sergeant Eric Johnson, et al.

Paul · No. 9:24-CV-1464 (GTS/ML) · Decided December 2, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of New York denied Prinell Paul's motion for a preliminary injunction in his 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action arising from his confinement at the Onondaga County Justice Center. The court held that Paul had not shown irreparable harm, a likelihood of success or sufficiently serious questions on the merits, entitlement to transfer to a facility of his choosing, or a basis for injunctive relief against nonparties or through an impermissible obey-the-law injunction.

CASE DETAILS

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COURT                 | United States District Court for the Northern District of New York                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| WRITING FOR THE COURT | Glenn T. Suddaby                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| JURISDICTION          | United States District Court for the Northern District of New York                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| DECIDED               | December 2, 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| DOCKET                | 9:24-CV-1464 (GTS/ML)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| DISPOSITION           | denied                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| PROCEDURAL POSTURE    | Plaintiff moved for a preliminary injunction seeking transfer from the Onondaga County Justice Center and an order restraining defendants from further assaults, threats, intimidation, false reports, or sending inmates to attack him. The court denied the motion.                                                                                                                        |
| STANDARD OF REVIEW    | A preliminary injunction requires irreparable harm and either a likelihood of success on the merits or sufficiently serious questions going to the merits with the balance of hardships tipping decidedly toward the movant. A mandatory injunction altering the status quo requires an even higher showing. Irreparable harm must be actual and imminent rather than remote or speculative. |
| PRECEDENTIAL VALUE    | unpublished district court decision                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| PARTIES               | Prinell Paul v. Deputy Sheriff Sergeant Eric Johnson, Hanauer, Apples, Whitmore, Burns, Jarvis, Lee, Sanderson, Bryant                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## TOPICS

injunctions

prisoners rights

section 1983

civil rights

civil procedure

## PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

prisoner litigation

injunctive relief

federal civil procedure

## QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Paul established irreparable harm sufficient to warrant a preliminary injunction.
2. Whether Paul demonstrated a likelihood of success on the merits, or sufficiently serious questions going to the merits with the balance of hardships tipping decidedly in his favor.
3. Whether the court could grant injunctive relief against individuals who were not parties to the action.
4. Whether Paul had a right to be transferred to and confined in a particular correctional facility.
5. Whether the requested order prohibiting future assaults and other unlawful conduct constituted an impermissible obey-the-law injunction.

## HOLDINGS

1. A plaintiff seeking preliminary injunctive relief must show that the threatened injury is actual and imminent, not remote or speculative, and cannot rely solely on past conduct or a generalized fear of possible future harm.
2. A movant who provides no concrete facts supporting the requested relief fails to establish either a likelihood of success on the merits or sufficiently serious questions warranting preliminary injunctive relief.
3. The court may not grant interlocutory injunctive relief over individuals who are not parties over whom it has personal jurisdiction, absent circumstances authorized by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(d)(2).
4. An inmate has no constitutional right to be confined in a particular prison or correctional facility.
5. A request that defendants simply be enjoined from committing future assaults or other unlawful conduct is an impermissible or disfavored obey-the-law injunction.

## KEY QUOTATIONS

*“Preliminary injunctive relief “is an extraordinary and drastic remedy, one that should not be granted unless the movant, by a clear showing, carries the burden of persuasion.””* (at 2)

*““A showing of irreparable harm is the single most important prerequisite for the issuance of a preliminary injunction.””* (at 4)

*“Finally, to the extent that plaintiff requests that the Court enjoin defendants from “further assault,” this request amounts to no more than an obey-the-law injunction that is not favored.”* (at 6)

## FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Paul was incarcerated at the Onondaga County Justice Center when he filed this § 1983 action. In his motion, he stated that he feared for his life and sought transfer to Jamesville Jail, as well as an order prohibiting further assaults, threats, intimidation, false reports, and attacks by other inmates. The court found that the motion supplied no concrete facts showing imminent harm or supporting the requested relief.

#### PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Paul filed a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint concerning his confinement at the Onondaga County Justice Center and was granted in forma pauperis status. The court dismissed the original complaint without prejudice under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B) and 1915A(b), permitted amendment, and later accepted the amended complaint and directed several defendants to answer excessive-force and failure-to-intervene claims. After defendants answered, Paul moved for preliminary injunctive relief; the court denied the motion.

#### DISPOSITION

denied

#### CASES CITED

- Moore v. Consol. Edison Co. of New York, Inc., 409 F.3d 506, 510 (2d Cir. 2005)
- Mazurek v. Armstrong, 520 U.S. 968, 972 (1997)
- Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Indians v. New York State Dep't of Fin. Servs., 769 F.3d 105, 110 (2d Cir. 2014)
- Lynch v. City of N.Y., 589 F.3d 94, 98 (2d Cir. 2009)
- Cacchillo v. Insmed, Inc., 638 F.3d 401, 406 (2d Cir. 2011)
- Citigroup Global Mkts., Inc. v. VCG Special Opportunities Master Fund Ltd., 598 F.3d 30, 35 & n.4 (2d Cir. 2010)
- Jolly v. Coughlin, 76 F.3d 468, 482 (2d Cir. 1996)
- N.Y. ex rel. Schneiderman v. Actavis PLC, 787 F.3d 638, 660 (2d Cir.), cert. dismissed sub nom. Allergan PLC v. N.Y. ex. rel. Schneiderman, 136 S. Ct. 581 (2015)
- Candelaria v. Baker, No. 00-CV-0912, 2006 WL 618576, at \*3 (W.D.N.Y. Mar. 10, 2006)
- Allen v. Brown, No. 96-CV-1599 (RSP/GJD), 1998 WL 214418, at \*4 (N.D.N.Y. Apr. 28, 1998)
- Fisher v. Goord, 981 F. Supp. 140, 167 (W.D.N.Y. 1997)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 846-47 (1994)
- Doctor's Associates, Inc. v. Reinert & Duree, P.C., 191 F.3d 297, 302-03 (2d Cir. 1999)
- United States v. Regan, 858 F.2d 115, 120 (2d Cir. 1988)
- In re Rationis Enterprises, Inc. of Panama, 261 F.3d 264, 270 (2d Cir. 2001)
- Bisnews AFE (Thailand) Ltd. v. Aspen Research Group Ltd., 437 Fed. App'x 57, 58 (2d Cir.)
- Faiveley Transport Malmo AB v. Wabtec Corp., 559 F.3d 110, 118 (2d Cir. 2009)
- Garcia v. Arevalo, No. 93-CV-8147, 1994 WL 383238, at \*2 (S.D.N.Y. June 27, 1994)
- Haden v. Hellinger, No. 9:14-CV-0318, 2016 WL 589703, at \*1 (N.D.N.Y. Feb. 11, 2016)
- Batalla Vidal v. Nielsen, 279 F. Supp. 3d 401, 434 (E.D.N.Y. 2018)

- Covino v. Patrisi, 967 F.2d 73, 77 (2d Cir. 1992)
- Southerland v. N.Y.C. Hous. Auth., No. 10-CV-5243, 2011 WL 73387, at \*3 (E.D.N.Y. Jan. 7, 2011)
- Meachum v. Fano, 427 U.S. 215, 229 (1976)
- Olim v. Wakinekona, 461 U.S. 238, 248-49 (1983)
- Montanye v. Haymes, 427 U.S. 236, 243 (1976)
- McFadden v. Solfaro, Nos. 95-CV-1148, 95-CV-3790, 1998 WL 199923, at \*10 (S.D.N.Y. Apr. 23, 1998)
- S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc. v. Clorox Co., 241 F.3d 232, 240 (2d Cir. 2001)

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