

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA

Lavelle Malone v. MacKenzie Mallott, et al.

Malone · No. 3:24-CV-162 · Decided December 17, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana granted defendants’ motion for summary judgment in Lavelle Malone’s pro se action alleging that correctional officers subjected him to an unconstitutional strip search. The court held that the search was conducted pursuant to legitimate institutional security interests and that Malone presented insufficient evidence of an unreasonable or maliciously motivated search under the Fourth or Eighth Amendments. The court alternatively held that the defendants were entitled to qualified immunity, denied their motion to strike, and directed entry of judgment in their favor.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Andrew P. Rodovich
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
DECIDED	December 17, 2025
DOCKET	3:24-CV-162
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought an action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against correctional officers in their individual capacities for monetary damages based on an allegedly unconstitutional strip search. Defendants moved for summary judgment and separately moved to strike a later filing by Malone. The court granted summary judgment, denied the motion to strike, and directed entry of judgment for defendants.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is proper when there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court construed the facts and reasonable inferences in Malone's favor but held that he could not rely on unsupported allegations or denials. The court also reviewed qualified immunity under the two-part inquiry whether the plaintiff showed a constitutional violation and whether the right was clearly established.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown
PARTIES	Lavelle Malone v. MacKenzie Mallott, Sonney Ornelas, James Watson

TOPICS

summary judgment qualified immunity prisoners rights civil rights constitutional law

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights prisoner litigation constitutional law federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether defendants were entitled to summary judgment on Malone's Fourth and Eighth Amendment claims arising from the November 9, 2023 strip search.
2. Whether Malone produced sufficient evidence that the search was unreasonable, maliciously motivated, unrelated to institutional security, or intended to harass and humiliate him.
3. Whether defendants were entitled to qualified immunity even if the strip search could be viewed as violating Malone's Fourth or Eighth Amendment rights.
4. Whether defendants' motion to strike Malone's later statement of material facts should be granted.

HOLDINGS

1. Summary judgment was proper because Malone presented no evidence from which a reasonable jury could find that the strip search was unreasonable in manner, place, or purpose. The undisputed evidence showed that it was conducted as part of a routine mass search serving legitimate institutional safety and security interests.
2. Summary judgment was proper because Malone did not produce evidence that the strip search was maliciously motivated, unrelated to institutional security, or totally without penological justification. His allegations of derogatory comments and humiliation, without evidence of a malicious and unjustified search, were insufficient.
3. Defendants were entitled to qualified immunity because Malone identified no clearly established law providing that derogatory comments made during an otherwise legitimate strip search violate the Fourth or Eighth Amendment, and he presented no evidence supporting his assertion that defendants acted with a punitive or retaliatory motive.
4. The motion to strike was denied because the later filing contained no new information that would affect disposition, and the court could consider both Malone's initial response and later statement in deciding summary judgment.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Summary judgment is therefore warranted in favor of Defendants.”

“In summary, even when viewing the facts in the light most favorable to Malone, no reasonable jury could conclude the strip search performed by Defendants on November 9, 2023, violated Malone’s Fourth or Eighth Amendment rights.”

“Alternatively, even if a reasonable jury could find a constitutional violation, summary judgment remains proper in favor of Defendants because they are entitled to qualified immunity.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

On November 9, 2023, Miami Correctional Facility conducted a mass search of K-house to locate contraband and maintain institutional safety and security. Malone and other inmates were escorted to N-house, where correctional staff conducted strip searches in shower stalls; video showed Malone being escorted by Ornelas and Watson, entering a stall, remaining concealed from the camera during the search, and exiting approximately two minutes later. Malone alleged that officers pointed pepper-ball guns and Tasers at him, searched him to punish inmates for acting up, and made derogatory comments during the search. The video did not show defendants pointing weapons at Malone, and Malone offered no specific evidence that the search lacked a legitimate penological purpose or was motivated by retaliation or harassment.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Malone proceeded pro se against correctional officers MacKenzie Mallott, Sonney Ornelas, and James Watson concerning a strip search at Miami Correctional Facility on November 9, 2023. The parties consented to proceed before a United States Magistrate Judge under 28 U.S.C. § 636(c). Defendants moved for summary judgment; after Malone responded, he filed a motion to strike defendants' statement of material facts and later filed a statement of material facts in dispute. The court considered both of Malone's filings, denied the motion to strike, granted defendants' motion for summary judgment, directed entry of judgment, and closed the case.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242, 248 (1986)
- Ogden v. Atterholt, 606 F.3d 355, 358 (7th Cir. 2010)
- Goodman v. National Security Agency, Inc., 621 F.3d 651, 654 (7th Cir. 2010)
- Springer v. Durflinger, 518 F.3d 479, 484 (7th Cir. 2008)
- Henry v. Hulett, 969 F.3d 769, 779, 781, 783 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Hudson v. Palmer, 468 U.S. 517, 526-27 (1984)
- Bell v. Wolfish, 441 U.S. 520, 547 (1979)
- Jones v. Anderson, 116 F.4th 669, 678 (7th Cir. 2024)
- Whitman v. Nesic, 368 F.3d 931, 934-35 (7th Cir. 2004)
- King v. McCarty, 781 F.3d 889, 897 (7th Cir. 2015)

- Turner v. Safley, 482 U.S. 78, 89-91 (1987)
- Gabrielle M. v. Park Forest-Chicago Heights School District 163, 315 F.3d 817, 822 (7th Cir. 2003)
- Sommerfield v. City of Chicago, 863 F.3d 645, 649 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Lisle v. Welborn, 933 F.3d 705, 719 (7th Cir. 2019)
- DeWalt v. Carter, 224 F.3d 607, 612 (7th Cir. 2000)
- Calhoun v. DeTella, 319 F.3d 936, 939 (7th Cir. 2003)
- Alvarado v. Litscher, 267 F.3d 648, 652 (7th Cir. 2001)
- Walker v. Benjamin, 293 F.3d 1030, 1037 (7th Cir. 2002)
- Dockery v. Blackburn, 911 F.3d 458, 466 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Siebert v. Severino, 256 F.3d 648, 654-55 (7th Cir. 2001)
- Plumhoff v. Rickard, 572 U.S. 765, 778-79 (2014)