

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Barnaba v. County of San Diego

Barnaba · No. 23-cv-01622-AJB-SBC · Decided July 24, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of California partially granted and partially denied Defendants’ motion to dismiss the Second Amended Complaint. The court dismissed several individual defendants without prejudice because Plaintiffs added them rather than substituting them for previously unidentified Doe defendants, but allowed Plaintiff A.N.Y.’s claim for interference with familial association to proceed. The court permitted Plaintiffs to substitute the dismissed defendants for Doe defendants or seek leave to add them under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 15.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Anthony J. Battaglia
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of California
DECIDED	July 24, 2025
DOCKET	23-cv-01622-AJB-SBC
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants moved under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) to dismiss portions of Plaintiffs' Second Amended Complaint. The court granted the motion in part, dismissing five individual defendants without prejudice, and denied it in part as to Plaintiff A.N.Y.'s interference-with-familial-association claim.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court tests the legal sufficiency of the complaint, assumes the truth of well-pleaded factual allegations, and construes them in the light most favorable to the plaintiff. Legal conclusions and conclusory recitations of claim elements are not entitled to that assumption.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown

TOPICS

- motions to dismiss
- motion to amend
- pleadings
- civil procedure
- due process

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

constitutional law

municipal liability

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiffs improperly added six individual defendants to the Second Amended Complaint without substituting them for Doe defendants or obtaining consent or leave to amend.
2. Whether Plaintiff A.N.Y. sufficiently alleged a constitutionally protected parent-child relationship to state a claim for interference with familial association under the Fourteenth Amendment.

HOLDINGS

1. Plaintiffs impermissibly added the individual defendants as new defendants rather than substituting them for Doe defendants, and because Plaintiffs did not obtain consent or leave to amend to add new defendants, the individual defendants were dismissed without prejudice.
2. A.N.Y.'s allegations that he was very close with his father, enjoyed his love and company, and visited his father's home multiple times per week were sufficient at the pleading stage to support a reasonable inference of consistent involvement in his father's life and participation in child-rearing activities, and therefore stated a claim for interference with familial association.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Accordingly, because Plaintiffs did not seek, and were not granted, leave to amend the complaint to add new defendants, the Court DISMISSES the Individual Defendants from the SAC. The dismissal is WITHOUT PREJUDICE” (Discussion § III.A)

“Accepting these facts as true and construing them the light most favorable to Plaintiff A.N.Y., the Court finds it reasonable to infer that the amount and quality of time the minor spent at his father’s home amount to “consistent involvement in a child’s life and participation in child-rearing activities” that merit constitutional protection.” (Discussion § III.B)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Chaz Guy Young-Villasenor died on May 5, 2022, while incarcerated as a pretrial detainee at the San Diego County Central Jail, allegedly from an overdose of methamphetamine and/or fentanyl. Plaintiffs asserted federal civil-rights claims and state-law claims for wrongful death, negligence, and failure to provide immediate medical care. Plaintiff A.N.Y. alleged that he was very close with his father, enjoyed his love and company, and visited him multiple times per week at his father's home.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed a Second Amended Complaint after the court previously granted in part and denied in part a motion to dismiss the First Amended Complaint. The prior order permitted Plaintiffs to identify certain Doe defendants and amend their familial-relationship claim. Defendants challenged Plaintiffs' addition of individual defendants and the sufficiency of A.N.Y.'s amended familial-association allegations. The court dismissed the individual defendants without prejudice but sustained A.N.Y.'s claim.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Navarro v. Block, 250 F.3d 729, 731 (9th Cir. 2001)
- Cahill v. Liberty Mutual Insurance Co., 80 F.3d 336, 337-38 (9th Cir. 1996)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)
- Wheeler v. City of Santa Clara, 894 F.3d 1046, 1057-58 (9th Cir. 2018)
- Lehr v. Robertson, 436 U.S. 248, 256-58 (1983)

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