

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
INDIANA

Steven George Bodnar v. Bryan English, et al.

Bodnar · No. 3:25-CV-1002-CCB-AZ · Decided January 15, 2026

SUMMARY

The court denied Steven George Bodnar’s requests for an extension, stay, subpoenas, appointed counsel, an amended-complaint form, and various forms of injunctive or investigative relief. The court denied preliminary injunctive relief, concluding that Bodnar had not shown a reasonable likelihood of success or likely irreparable harm concerning his safety at the correctional facility. The court also clarified that the defendant need not respond to the amended complaint until it has been screened.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Cristal C. Brisco
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana
DECIDED	January 15, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-CV-1002-CCB-AZ
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A pro se prisoner sought preliminary and permanent injunctive relief under the Eighth Amendment based on alleged risks of attack by other inmates. While the case was pending, he filed motions for an extension of time, a stay, subpoenas or production orders, appointment of counsel, an amended-complaint form, additional safety-related relief, and referral of alleged perjury. The district court denied the motions, denied preliminary injunctive relief, deferred screening of the amended complaint, and clarified that no answer was required until screening was complete.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Preliminary injunctive relief requires a clear showing that the movant is likely to succeed on the merits, likely to suffer irreparable harm without relief, that the balance of equities favors relief, and that an injunction is in the public interest. Mandatory preliminary injunctions are reviewed particularly cautiously. Requests for appointed counsel under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(1) are evaluated under the reasonable-attempt-to-obtain-counsel and competence-and-complexity inquiries.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion
PARTIES	Steven George Bodnar v. Bryan English, et al.

TOPICS

injunctions discovery dispute motion to amend prisoners rights civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil procedure Prisoner civil rights Constitutional law Federal courts Remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Bodnar was entitled to a preliminary injunction requiring additional protection from attacks by other inmates.
2. Whether Bodnar's motion for appointment of counsel should be granted under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(1).
3. Whether Bodnar's requests for a stay, subpoenas, or court orders compelling production of evidence were premature or otherwise deficient.
4. Whether Bodnar required leave or a court form to file an amended complaint at this stage.
5. Whether a private litigant may compel a criminal investigation or prosecution of an alleged perjurer.
6. Whether the defendant was required to answer the amended complaint before it was screened.

HOLDINGS

1. Bodnar was not entitled to a preliminary injunction because he failed to show a reasonable likelihood of success on his Eighth Amendment claim and failed to show likely irreparable harm. Housing him in a single-person cell with a staff escort whenever he was outside his cell, pending transfer, satisfied the Eighth Amendment's requirement that prison officials take reasonable measures to ensure inmate safety.
2. The motions were denied because discovery had not yet commenced, the requested information appeared to be within the defendant's possession or control, and the subpoena request was premature and impermissibly vague.
3. The motion for appointed counsel was denied because Bodnar had not demonstrated a reasonable effort to obtain counsel and the court could not yet evaluate the case's difficulty or his ability to litigate it before screening the amended complaint. He could renew the request after making the specified efforts and after screening.
4. The motion for an amended-complaint form was denied because the clerk's office had no such form and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 15(a) permitted Bodnar to amend once as a matter of course at that stage without court approval.
5. The motion to file perjury charges was denied because a private citizen has no judicially cognizable interest in the prosecution or nonprosecution of another and no constitutional right to compel a police investigation.

6. The defendant was not required to respond to the amended complaint until the court screened it and ordered a response to any claims allowed to proceed.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Holding Bodnar in a single person cell with a staff escort any time he is outside of his cell, until such time as he can be transferred, complies with the Eighth Amendment.” (Opinion and Order, section "Bodnar’s Request for a Preliminary Injunction")

“A plaintiff seeking a preliminary injunction must establish that he is likely to succeed on the merits, that he is likely to suffer irreparable harm in the absence of preliminary relief, that the balance of equities tips in his favor, and that an injunction is in the public interest.” (Opinion and Order, section "Bodnar’s Request for a Preliminary Injunction")

“There is no right to court-appointed counsel in federal civil litigation.” (Opinion and Order, section "Bodnar’s Request for Counsel")

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Bodnar, an Indiana prisoner, alleged that he faced attacks and other safety risks from inmates at Miami Correctional Facility. After he requested protective custody, prison officials granted it and placed him in a single-person cell with a staff escort whenever he left his cell, pending transfer to another facility. Bodnar nevertheless cited prior incidents, including bodily fluids being thrown at him, an allegedly improper cell placement, and concerns about shower-cage locks, and argued that these measures remained inadequate.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Bodnar initiated the action and sought emergency preliminary injunctive relief. The court expedited screening and service on Warden English, who responded with documentation showing that Bodnar had been placed in protective custody and housed in a single-person cell with staff escort pending transfer. Bodnar filed a reply, an amended complaint, and multiple motions. The court ruled on those motions in this Opinion and Order while deferring screening of the amended complaint.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Olson v. Morgan, 750 F.3d 708, 711 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Pruitt v. Mote, 503 F.3d 647, 649, 654 (7th Cir. 2007)
- Jackson v. County of McLean, 953 F.2d 1070, 1073 (7th Cir. 1992)
- Bracey v. Grondin, 712 F.3d 1012, 1016 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Romanelli v. Suliene, 615 F.3d 847, 852 (7th Cir. 2010)
- Mazurek v. Armstrong, 520 U.S. 968, 972 (1997)

- Winter v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., 555 U.S. 7, 20, 22 (2008)
- Illinois Republican Party v. Pritzker, 973 F.3d 760, 762-63 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Mays v. Dart, 974 F.3d 810, 818 (7th Cir. 2020)
- Westefer v. Neal, 682 F.3d 679 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Grieveson v. Anderson, 538 F.3d 763, 777 (7th Cir. 2008)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 832 (1994)
- Linda R.S. v. Richard D., 410 U.S. 614, 619 (1973)
- United States v. Palumbo Bros., Inc., 145 F.3d 850, 865 (7th Cir. 1998)
- Rossi v. City of Chicago, 790 F.3d 729, 735 (7th Cir. 2015)

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