

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Kameron L. Walker v. Jeff Lynch, et al.

Walker v. Lynch · No. 2:24-cv-02345 SCR P · Decided May 22, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California grants Kameron L. Walker’s application to proceed in forma pauperis and screens his prisoner civil rights complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. The court finds a cognizable Eighth Amendment excessive force claim against Correctional Officers Cofer, Banish, and Jones, but not against Sergeant Elizarraras or Warden Lynch, and gives Walker the option to proceed on the cognizable claims or file an amended complaint.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sean C. Riordan
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	May 22, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-cv-02345 SCR P
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening order in a pro se state-prisoner civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, addressing the application to proceed in forma pauperis and whether the complaint stated cognizable claims under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court screened the prisoner complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A and assessed whether the allegations, accepted as true and construed in the plaintiff's favor, were frivolous, failed to state a claim, or sought relief from an immune defendant. For failure-to-state-a-claim purposes, the complaint was required to contain enough factual matter to make the claim facially plausible.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished and nonprecedential district-court order
PARTIES	Kameron L. Walker v. Jeff Lynch, et al.

TOPICS

prisoners rights

section 1983

civil rights

damages

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

prisoner civil rights

constitutional torts

federal civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Walker qualified to proceed in forma pauperis under 28 U.S.C. § 1915.
2. Whether the complaint stated a cognizable Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against Officers Cofer, Banish, and Jones.
3. Whether the complaint adequately linked Sergeant Elizarraras to the alleged constitutional violation.
4. Whether the complaint stated a claim against Warden Lynch under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 despite the absence of allegations of personal participation, direction, or knowledge and failure to prevent the alleged force.

HOLDINGS

1. Walker demonstrated that he could not afford to pay the entire filing fee, so the court granted his application to proceed in forma pauperis and required payment of the statutory filing fee through the inmate-account installment process.
2. The complaint stated a cognizable Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against Cofer, Banish, and Jones.
3. The complaint did not state a cognizable claim against Elizarraras because it alleged only that he sent another officer to intimidate Walker and ensure that he returned to his cell, without facts showing participation in the attack or that he set in motion acts he knew or reasonably should have known would cause constitutional injury.
4. The complaint did not state a cognizable excessive-force claim against Warden Lynch because the allegation that the attack occurred under his direct authority was insufficient to establish personal participation, direction, or knowledge coupled with a failure to prevent the violation.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“whenever prison officials stand accused of using excessive physical force in violation of the Cruel and Unusual Punishments Clause, 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.” (at 4)

“A supervisor is only liable for constitutional violations of his subordinates if the supervisor participated in or directed the violations, or knew of the violations and failed to act to prevent them. There is no respondeat superior liability under § 1983.” (at 5)

“After selecting an option from the two options listed below, plaintiff must return the attached Notice of Election form to the court within 21 days from the date of this order” (at 6)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Walker alleged that on July 3, 2024, at California State Prison-Sacramento, Officers Cofer and Jones escorted him toward a cell while he was handcuffed. After Jones nudged him forward and Walker took a step back, Cofer pushed and pulled him, Banish punched the back of his neck and forced him into a wall, and Jones grabbed his legs, causing him to fall headfirst. Walker alleged that he was knocked unconscious and suffered a swollen head and a gash, and sought \$90,000 in damages.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Walker filed a complaint alleging that correctional officers used excessive force against him and an application to proceed in forma pauperis. The court granted in forma pauperis status, found a cognizable Eighth Amendment excessive-force claim against Cofer, Banish, and Jones, and found no cognizable claims against Elizarraras and Lynch. The court gave Walker 21 days to elect either to proceed against the three correctional officers or to file an amended complaint.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325, 327 (1989)
- *Jackson v. Arizona*, 885 F.2d 639, 640 (9th Cir. 1989)
- *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555-57, 570 (2007)
- *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 93-94 (2007)
- *Scheuer v. Rhodes*, 416 U.S. 232, 236 (1974)
- *Benavidez v. County of San Diego*, 993 F.3d 1134, 1144 (9th Cir. 2021)
- *Monell v. Department of Social Services*, 436 U.S. 658, 694 (1978)
- *Rizzo v. Goode*, 423 U.S. 362, 370-71 (1976)
- *Starr v. Baca*, 652 F.3d 1202, 1207-08 (9th Cir. 2011)
- *Whitley v. Albers*, 475 U.S. 312, 319 (1986)
- *Hudson v. McMillan*, 503 U.S. 1, 7 (1992)
- *Hughes v. Rodriguez*, 31 F.4th 1211, 1221 (9th Cir. 2022)
- *Taylor v. List*, 880 F.2d 1040, 1045 (9th Cir. 1989)
- *Ivey v. Board of Regents*, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982)
- *Arnold v. International Business Machines Corp.*, 637 F.2d 1350, 1355 (9th Cir. 1981)
- *Johnson v. Duffy*, 588 F.2d 740, 743 (9th Cir. 1978)
- *Loux v. Rhay*, 375 F.2d 55, 57 (9th Cir. 1967)
- *Lacey v. Maricopa County*, 693 F.3d 896, 928 (9th Cir. 2012)

