

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
KENTUCKY, CENTRAL DIVISION

Shannon Garland v. Everett Jones, et al.

Garland v. Jones · No. 5:25-cv-00441-DCR · Decided February 9, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky screens Shannon Garland’s pro se 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint arising from a vehicle accident during inmate transport. The court permits an Eighth Amendment claim concerning alleged reckless driving and failure to use a seatbelt to proceed against Officer Everett “Danny” Jones, while dismissing the claims against Officer Kristen Grimes, Warden Abigail Caudill, and Commissioner Cookie Crews.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky, Central Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Danny C. Reeves
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky, Central Division
DECIDED	February 9, 2026
DOCKET	5:25-cv-00441-DCR
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening of a pro se prisoner civil-rights complaint under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2) and 1915A before service of process.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	At the screening stage, the court accepted nonconclusory factual allegations as true and liberally construed the claims in the plaintiff's favor, while dismissing claims that were frivolous or malicious, failed to state a claim, or sought monetary relief from an immune defendant.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court memorandum opinion and order; generally nonprecedential.
PARTIES	Shannon Garland v. Everett Jones, Kristen Grimes, Abigail Caudill, Cookie Crews, Kentucky Department of Corrections

TOPICS

prisoners rights

section 1983

cruel and unusual punishment

civil procedure

service of process

PRACTICE AREAS

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Garland's allegations that Jones drove recklessly while Garland was not wearing a seatbelt stated a plausible Eighth Amendment claim sufficient to require service of process.
2. Whether allegations that Grimes failed to secure Garland with a seatbelt stated an Eighth Amendment claim.
3. Whether Garland exhausted administrative remedies as to his claim that Warden Caudill delayed sending him to a hospital.
4. Whether Garland stated a plausible claim against Commissioner Crews based on the denial of a grievance appeal or supervisory authority.

HOLDINGS

1. Allegations that an officer drove recklessly, including while intoxicated and texting, while transporting an inmate without a seatbelt stated a plausible Eighth Amendment claim at the pre-service screening stage.
2. An allegation that Grimes failed to ensure Garland was wearing a seatbelt, without allegations of the kind of culpable misconduct required for deliberate indifference, stated only negligence and was insufficient to establish an Eighth Amendment violation.
3. Garland failed to exhaust administrative remedies because he did not identify Caudill or complain about her conduct in his grievance, as required by the applicable grievance procedures.
4. Garland failed to state a plausible claim against Crews because he alleged no conduct by her, and neither denial of a grievance appeal nor supervisory authority independently established liability.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“However, “allegations of reckless driving while transporting an inmate without a seatbelt” can support an Eighth Amendment claim.” (at 4)

“In addition to evident pleading insufficiency, neither the denial of his inmate grievance appeal nor her supervisory authority are plausible bases upon which to ground liability.” (at 5)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

While transporting Garland from Northpoint Training Center to a medical appointment, Officer Everett Jones allegedly rear-ended another vehicle after an abrupt traffic stop. Garland alleged that Jones was intoxicated and texting while driving and that he was not secured by a seatbelt; he later complained of back pain and facial marks. Garland also asserted claims against Officer Kristen Grimes, Warden Abigail Caudill, and Commissioner

Cookie Crews based on the lack of a seatbelt, delayed medical treatment, grievance handling, and supervisory responsibility.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Garland, an inmate at Northpoint Training Center, filed a pro se complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and was granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis. The court screened the complaint before service, dismissed the claims against Kristen Grimes, Abigail Caudill, and Cookie Crews with prejudice, and directed service on Everett Jones.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Hill v. Lappin, 630 F.3d 468, 470-71 (6th Cir. 2010)
- Davis v. Prison Health Services, 679 F.3d 433, 437-38 (6th Cir. 2012)
- Scott v. Becher, 736 F. App'x 130, 133-34 (6th Cir. 2018)
- Jabbar v. Fischer, 683 F.3d 54, 58-59 (2d Cir. 2012)
- Brown v. Fortner, 518 F.3d 552, 561 (8th Cir. 2008)
- Groce v. Smith, No. 3:15-CV-823, 2015 WL 4743818, at *2 (M.D. Tenn. Aug. 10, 2015)
- Williams v. Prisoner Transportation Services, LLC, No. 3:19-CV-599, 2020 WL 7027506, at *10 (M.D. Tenn. Nov. 30, 2020)
- Pasha v. Payton, No. 5:18-CV-595-DCR, 2020 WL 1970608, at *6 (E.D. Ky. Apr. 24, 2020)
- Marshall v. Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, No. 2:14-CV-338, 2017 WL 1316942, at *8 (S.D. Ohio Apr. 10, 2017)
- Eaves v. Ballard, No. 5:17-CV-111-KKC, 2018 WL 6613784, at *3 (E.D. Ky. Dec. 17, 2018)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 677 (2009)
- Crawford v. Tilley, 15 F.4th 752, 761 (6th Cir. 2021)

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