

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Christopher G. Valencia v. Samantha Medina, et al.

No. 1:22-cv-00569 GSA (PC) (E.D. Cal. Aug. 30, 2025) · No. No. 1:22-cv-00569 GSA (PC) · Decided
September 2, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California screened Christopher G. Valencia’s second amended complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. The court found viable Eighth Amendment claims against Sergeant Samantha Medina for failure to protect and deliberate indifference to serious medical needs arising from alleged exposure to chemical gas, and ordered service of the complaint.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Gary S. Austin
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	September 2, 2025
DOCKET	No. 1:22-cv-00569 GSA (PC)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening of a state prisoner’s second amended complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court screened the prisoner complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A and applied the Rule 8(a)(2) and plausibility standards, accepting factual allegations as true but not accepting legal conclusions or unwarranted inferences.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential screening order; precedential status unknown
PARTIES	Christopher G. Valencia v. Samantha Medina, et al.

TOPICS

- section 1983
- prisoners rights
- cruel and unusual punishment
- service of process
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the second amended complaint plausibly alleged an Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect claim against Sergeant Medina.
2. Whether the second amended complaint plausibly alleged an Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference-to-serious-medical-need claim against Sergeant Medina.
3. Whether the allegations labeled as torture stated a separate claim or were properly considered together with the deliberate-indifference claim.

HOLDINGS

1. The second amended complaint stated a viable Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect claim because it alleged that Plaintiff was confined and unable to escape chemical-gas exposure, that Medina knew of the exposure and Plaintiff's resulting distress, and that she failed to take reasonable measures to assist or remove him.
2. The second amended complaint stated a viable Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claim because it alleged that Medina knew Plaintiff was suffering from chemical-gas exposure, burning eyes and skin, and breathing problems, yet intentionally refused to provide or summon medical assistance or decontamination.
3. The court treated the torture allegations in Claim Three together with the deliberate-indifference allegations in Claim Two because the claims were based on virtually the same facts and the torture allegations ultimately amounted to a deliberate-indifference-to-serious-medical-need claim.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"For these reasons, Plaintiff has stated a viable Eighth Amendment failure to protect claim against Defendant Medina." (at 13)

"Plaintiff has also stated a viable Eighth Amendment deliberate indifference to serious medical need claim against Defendant Medina." (at 13)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff, an incarcerated person at California State Prison–Corcoran, alleged that on March 19, 2022, CN gas released on a nearby prison yard spread into the locked and caged yard where he was confined. He alleged that Sergeant Medina failed to evacuate or assist him, leaving him exposed to the gas for approximately twenty minutes despite his requests for help. He further alleged that Medina refused to summon medical aid or arrange decontamination, and that he remained without medical treatment for four days while suffering respiratory problems and burning eyes and skin.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed this § 1983 civil-rights action after paying the filing fee and submitted a second amended complaint against Sergeant Samantha Medina. The matter was referred to a United States Magistrate Judge under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and Local Rule 302. On screening, the court found viable Eighth Amendment failure-to-protect and deliberate-indifference-to-serious-medical-need claims and ordered the complaint served.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)
- Whitaker v. Tesla Motors, Inc., 985 F.3d 1173, 1176 (9th Cir. 2021)
- Doe I v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., 572 F.3d 677, 681 (9th Cir. 2009)
- Moss v. United States Secret Service, 572 F.3d 962, 969 (9th Cir. 2009)
- Wilder v. Virginia Hospital Ass'n, 496 U.S. 498, 508 (1990)
- Graham v. Connor, 490 U.S. 386, 393-94 (1989)
- West v. Atkins, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988)
- Ketchum v. Alameda County, 811 F.2d 1243, 1245 (9th Cir. 1987)
- Jones v. Williams, 297 F.3d 930, 934 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Ortez v. Washington County, State of Oregon, 88 F.3d 804, 809 (9th Cir. 1996)
- Taylor v. List, 880 F.2d 1040, 1045 (9th Cir. 1989)
- DeShaney v. Winnebago County Department of Social Services, 489 U.S. 189, 199-200 (1989)
- Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 832-37, 842, 844-45, 847 (1994)
- Frost v. Agnos, 152 F.3d 1124, 1128 (9th Cir. 1998)
- Wilson v. Seiter, 501 U.S. 294, 297 (1991)
- Hearn v. Terhune, 413 F.3d 1036, 1040 (9th Cir. 2005)
- Hudson v. McMillian, 503 U.S. 1, 8 (1992)
- Jett v. Penner, 439 F.3d 1091, 1096 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Wilhelm v. Rotman, 680 F.3d 1113, 1122 (9th Cir. 2012)
- Lemire v. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 726 F.3d 1062, 1081 (9th Cir. 2013)
- Simmons v. Navajo County, 609 F.3d 1011, 1017-18 (9th Cir. 2010)