

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS, ROCK ISLAND DIVISION

Juan Manzanares v. Michael Oslanzi and City of Spring Valley,
Illinois

Manzanares · No. 4:25-cv-04151-SLD-RLH · Decided April 24, 2026

SUMMARY

The court denied defendants’ motion to dismiss a complaint alleging Fourth Amendment excessive force under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, Illinois battery, and indemnification claims. The court held that video exhibits attached to the motion were not properly considered under the incorporation-by-reference doctrine because they were not referenced in the complaint, and it declined to convert the motion into one for summary judgment. The court also denied defendants’ motion for leave to file a reply and deemed their motion to file under seal moot.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois, Rock Island Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sara Darrow
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois, Rock Island Division
DECIDED	April 24, 2026
DOCKET	4:25-cv-04151-SLD-RLH
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants moved under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) to dismiss the complaint, moved for leave to file a reply, and moved for leave to file certain video exhibits under seal. The district court denied the motion to dismiss and the motion for leave to file a reply, declined to consider the video exhibits or convert the motion into one for summary judgment, and deemed the sealing motion moot.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court accepts well-pleaded allegations as true, draws reasonable inferences in the plaintiff’s favor, and determines whether the allegations plausibly establish an entitlement to relief. Matters outside the pleadings generally may not be

considered unless an applicable exception applies or the court converts the motion to one for summary judgment under Rule 12(d).

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE

unknown

TOPICS

motions to dismiss

civil procedure

section 1983

police misconduct

qualified immunity

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

constitutional law

torts

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether defendants' motion to dismiss could be resolved by considering video exhibits that were not attached to or referenced in the complaint.
2. Whether the court should convert the Rule 12(b)(6) motion into a motion for summary judgment under Rule 12(d).
3. Whether defendants' motion for leave to file a reply should be granted.
4. Whether the motion to dismiss should be granted on defendants' arguments concerning statutory immunity, legal justification, excessive force, and qualified immunity.

HOLDINGS

1. The court could not consider the videos under the incorporation-by-reference doctrine because the complaint did not reference them, and the plaintiff objected to their consideration.
2. The court declined to convert the motion to dismiss into a motion for summary judgment and excluded the video exhibits from consideration.
3. The motion to dismiss was denied because defendants' arguments for dismissal depended on video footage that the court declined to consider.
4. Leave to file a reply was denied because defendants' proposed arguments concerning the video exhibits and plaintiff's response did not involve new or unexpected issues.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

On February 22, 2025, Spring Valley police arrested Juan Manzanares and transported him in a police vehicle driven by Michael Oslanzi. At a hospital, Oslanzi allegedly placed Manzanares in a headlock, pulled him from the vehicle by his handcuffs, and caused him to land on his shoulder. Manzanares alleged a torn rotator cuff and injuries to his hands and wrists requiring surgery and physical therapy, along with lost wages, medical expenses, and physical and emotional pain.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Manzanares filed a complaint alleging a Fourth Amendment excessive-force claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against Michael Oslanzi, an Illinois battery claim against the City of Spring Valley, and an Illinois indemnification claim against the City. Defendants attached seven videos to their motion to dismiss and argued that the videos established statutory immunity, legal justification, objective reasonableness, and qualified immunity. The court concluded that the videos were outside the narrow incorporation-by-reference exception, declined to convert the motion to summary judgment because discovery could provide additional factual context, denied the motion to dismiss, and directed defendants to answer within fourteen days.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Indep. Tr. Corp. v. Stewart Info. Servs. Corp., 665 F.3d 930, 934 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Shefts v. Petrakis, No. 10-cv-1104, 2011 WL 5930469, at *8 (C.D. Ill. Nov. 29, 2011)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 679 (2009)
- Geinosky v. City of Chicago, 675 F.3d 743, 745 n.1 (7th Cir. 2012)
- Rosenblum v. Travelbyus.com Ltd., 299 F.3d 657, 661 (7th Cir. 2002)
- Fin. Fiduciaries, LLC v. Gannett Co., Inc., 46 F.4th 654, 663 (7th Cir. 2022)
- Levenstein v. Salafsky, 164 F.3d 345, 347 (7th Cir. 1998)
- Avitia v. City of Chicago, No. 23 CV 15957, 2024 WL 2274101, at *4 (N.D. Ill. May 20, 2024)
- Esco v. City of Chicago, 107 F.4th 673, 678 (7th Cir. 2024)
- Zahareas v. Raoul, No. 23 C 3423 (N.D. Ill. Nov. 21, 2025)
- Johnson v. City of Atlanta, 107 F.4th 1292, 1300 (11th Cir. 2024)
- Gen. Elec. Cap Corp. v. Lease Resol. Corp., 128 F.3d 1074, 1080–81 (7th Cir. 1997)
- Nutrien Ag Sols., Inc. v. Consol. Grain & Barge Co., No. 4:21-cv-04091-SLD-JEH, 2022 WL 673700, at *3 (C.D. Ill. Mar. 7, 2022)

OPINION

Manzanares
PER CURIAM.
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
ROCK ISLAND DIVISION
JUAN MANZANARES,)
) Plaintiff,)) v.) Case No. 4:25-cv-04151-SLD-RLH)
MICHAEL OSLANZI and CITY OF)
SPRING VALLEY, ILLINOIS)
) Defendants.)

ORDER

Before the Court are Defendants Michael Oslanzi and City of Spring Valley, Illinois's motion for leave to file under seal, ECF No. 11, motion to dismiss, ECF No. 12, and motion for leave to file a reply, ECF No. 14. For the reasons that follow, Defendants' motion to dismiss and motion for leave to file a reply are DENIED and their motion for leave to file under seal is MOOT.

BACKGROUND¹

On February 22, 2025, Plaintiff Juan Manzanares was arrested by officers from the Spring Valley Police Department. Manzanares was handcuffed in the front of his body and placed in the backseat of a Spring Valley law enforcement vehicle driven by Oslanzi. Before taking Manzanares to Bureau County Jail, Oslanzi drove Manzanares to the hospital for medical clearance. At the hospital, "in an apparent attempt to escort [Manzanares] from the backseat of [Oslanzi's] SUV . . . Oslanzi put [Manzanares] into a headlock, grabbed [him] by his handcuffs, and violently pulled [him] out of [the] SUV by the handcuffs, causing [him] to land on the 1 When ruling on a motion to dismiss, a court must take all of the complaint's well-pleaded allegations as true and view them in the light most favorable to the plaintiff. *Indep. Tr. Corp. v. Stewart Info. Servs. Corp.*, 665 F.3d 930, 934 (7th Cir. 2012). Unless otherwise noted, the facts set forth are taken from the Complaint, ECF No. 1. pavement, unprotected, onto his left shoulder." Compl. 2, ECF No. 1. As a result, Manzanares suffered a torn rotator cuff and injuries to his hands and wrists. He required shoulder surgery and extensive physical therapy to recover. He could not continue working as a machinist and suffered damages including physical and emotional pain, lost wages, and medical bills. Manzanares's complaint brings three counts: Fourth Amendment excessive force under § 1983 against Oslanzi; battery under Illinois law against Spring Valley; and indemnification under Illinois law against Spring Valley. Compl. 3–5. Defendants jointly filed a motion to dismiss all counts under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6). See generally *Mot. Dismiss*. They attach seven videos to their motion to dismiss, see *Mot. Dismiss Exs. B–H*, ECF Nos. 12-2 to 12-8, and move for leave to file four of the video exhibits under seal, see generally *Mot. Leave File Under Seal*. Defendants also move for leave to file a reply, *Mot. Leave File Reply*, to which Manzanares has not responded.

DISCUSSION

I. Motion for Leave to File Reply "A reply to the response is only permitted with leave of Court." Civil LR 7.1(B)(3). "Typically, reply briefs are permitted if the party opposing a motion has introduced new and unexpected issues in his response to the motion, and the Court finds that a reply from the moving party would be helpful to its disposition of the motion" *Shefts v. Petrakis*, No. 10-cv-1104, 2011 WL 5930469, at *8 (C.D. Ill. Nov. 29, 2011). Here, Defendants request leave to file a reply to (1) argue that the video exhibits attached to their motion to dismiss can properly be considered by the Court and (2) address Manzanares's arguments in response to the video exhibits. *Mot. Leave File Reply* ¶ 5. However, none of the arguments raised by Manzanares in his response should have been unexpected. See generally *Resp.*, ECF No. 13. As

such, Defendants' motion for leave to file a reply is DENIED. II. Motion to Dismiss a. Legal Standard A court can dismiss a complaint if it fails to state a claim upon which relief can be granted. Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(b)(6). In determining whether such a claim has been stated, a court should consider the complaint's well-pleaded factual allegations and "determine whether they plausibly give rise to an entitlement to relief." *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 679 (2009). In addition to the allegations in the complaint itself, a court can consider "documents attached to the complaint, documents that are critical to the complaint and referred to in it, and information that is subject to proper judicial notice" when ruling on a motion to dismiss. *Geinosky v. City of Chicago*, 675 F.3d 743, 745 n.1 (7th Cir. 2012). The court must accept all well-pleaded allegations in the complaint as true and draw all reasonable inferences in favor of the plaintiff. *Indep. Tr. Corp. v. Stewart Info. Servs. Corp.*, 665 F.3d 930, 934–35 (7th Cir. 2012). b. Analysis In their motion, Defendants raise several arguments for why Manzanares's complaint should be dismissed.² First, they argue that his battery and indemnification claims are barred by statutory immunity under the Illinois Tort Immunity Act because Oslanzi was engaged in law enforcement activities during the events at issue and the video exhibits "establish as a matter of law that . . . Oslanzi's actions do not rise to willful and wanton conduct." *Id.* at 7–10. Next, Defendants argue that the battery and indemnification claims must be dismissed because the 2 The Court also notes that the proper heading for motions to dismiss based on affirmative defenses is a Rule 12(c) motion rather than a 12(b)(6) motion, "since an affirmative defense is external to the complaint." *Brownmark Films, LLC v. Comedy Partners*, 682 F.3d 687, 690 n.1 (7th Cir. 2012). videos show that Oslanzi's contact with Manzanares was legally justified given Manzanares's resistance. *Id.* at 10–11. Turning to the excessive force claim, Defendants assert that it "must be dismissed because the videos establish that the force used was objectively reasonable under the circumstances." *Id.* at 11–13. Finally, Defendants argue that Oslanzi is entitled to qualified immunity, asserting that "the videos show [Manzanares] was resisting removal from the vehicle and disobeyed . . . commands to exit the vehicle," and so, "[a]bsent case law at the time that would establish beyond debate that this was a constitutional violation," it was not clearly established that Oslanzi's actions violated Manzanares's constitutional rights. *Id.* at 13–15 (quotation marks omitted). The video exhibits are integral to all of Defendants' arguments. As such, if the Court decides that it cannot or will not consider the exhibits, the motion must be denied. The Court will now determine whether to consider the exhibits. "As a general rule, on a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court may consider only the plaintiff's complaint." *Rosenblum v. Travelbyus.com Ltd.*, 299 F.3d 657, 661 (7th Cir. 2002). "If . . . matters outside the pleadings are presented to and not excluded by the court, the motion [to dismiss] must be treated as one for summary judgment under Rule 56." Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(d). The incorporation-by-reference doctrine "is an exception under which a court may consider documents that are (1) referenced in the plaintiff's complaint, (2) concededly authentic, and (3) central to the plaintiff's claim." *Fin. Fiduciaries, LLC v. Gannett Co., Inc.*, 46 F.4th 654, 663 (7th Cir. 2022). This exception is "narrow" and "is not intended to grant litigants license to ignore the distinction

between motions to dismiss and motions for summary judgment.” *Levenstein v. Salafsky*, 164 F.3d 345, 347 (7th Cir. 1998). Rather, it “prevents a plaintiff from avoiding dismissal by omitting facts or documents that undermine his case.” *Fin Fiduciaries*, 46 F.4th at 663. When documents attached to a motion to dismiss do not fit this narrow exception, a court has “complete discretion” to either consider the extra material and convert the motion to one for summary judgment or exclude the extra material. 5C Wright & Miller’s Federal Practice & Procedure § 1366 (3d ed. Apr. 2021 Update); see also *Levenstein*, 164 F.3d at 347. Defendants argue that the video footage should be considered under a recent “extension” of the incorporation-by-reference doctrine, under which they allege courts consider video footage “not referred to or attached to the complaint at the motion to dismiss stage if the document is (1) central to the plaintiff’s claims; and (2) undisputed, meaning that its authenticity is not reasonably challenged.” Mot. Dismiss. 2–6. Manzanares opposes consideration of the footage, arguing that the incorporation-by-reference doctrine does not apply. Resp. 2–6. The Court agrees with Manzanares—Defendants misstate the law, and the complaint does not reference any of these video exhibits. Defendants rely on several cases to support their argument that these videos should be considered, but their reliance on these cases is misplaced for several reasons. First, both cited opinions from within the Seventh Circuit still require the exhibits be referenced in the complaint, although Defendants try to bypass that element of the courts’ analyses. In *Avitia v. City of Chicago*, No. 23 CV 15957, 2024 WL 2274101 (N.D. Ill. May 20, 2024), the court described the incorporation-by-reference doctrine as “permit[ting] the [c]ourt to consider materials outside the pleadings in a ruling on a 12(b)(6) motion when the materials are referenced in the plaintiff’s complaint.” *Id.* at *4 (emphasis added). Similarly, *Esco v. City of Chicago*, 107 F.4th 673 (7th Cir. 2024), stated that courts “may examine exhibits, including video exhibits, attached to the complaint, or referenced in the pleading if they are central to the claim.” *Id.* at 678 (emphasis added). Second, the complaints in both cases reference information of which the plaintiffs did not have personal knowledge and that was contained within the exhibits in question. The complaint in *Esco* “did not attach video from the body-worn cameras, but he relied on it for the allegations in his complaint that the officers ‘can be heard on body-worn camera discussing the fact that [the plaintiff] was not the individual they saw with the gun.’” *Esco*, 107 F.4th at 678. And the complaint in *Avitia* “references conversations that the officers had outside of his presence that were captured by the footage.” *Avitia*, 2024 WL 2274101, at *4. In this case, Manzanares’s complaint makes no explicit reference to any video exhibits. Compare Compl., with *Esco*, 107 F.4th at 678. Additionally, Manzanares’s complaint does not include any implicit reference to video exhibits by including factual allegations of incidents that occurred outside of his presence but of which he is aware due to some other type of documentation. Compare Compl., with *Avitia*, 2024 WL 2274101, at *4. Third, none of the plaintiffs in Defendants’ cited cases within the Seventh Circuit objected to the courts’ consideration of the exhibits. See *Avitia*, 2024 WL 2274101, at *4; *Esco*, 107 F.4th at 678 (“[The plaintiff] concedes that the district court could consider the video from the body-worn cameras, as [he] referenced it in his complaint and

according to [him], it was ‘dispositive of the issue of probable cause.’”). Similarly, the plaintiff in *Zahareas v. Raoul*, No. 23 C 3423 (N.D. Ill. Nov. 21, 2025), requested the court consider the video footage at the motion to dismiss stage. See *Zahareas Mot. Dismiss Hr’g Tr.* 50:8–17, *Mot. Dismiss Ex. A*, ECF No. 12-13 (“[The plaintiff’s] response brief also asks the Court to consider the video footage.”). And fourth, Defendants also cite *Johnson v. City of Atlanta*, 107 F.4th 1292, 1300 (11th Cir. 2024); see *Mot. Dismiss 3*, to support their interpretation of the incorporation-by-reference doctrine, but *Johnson* is not persuasive—Seventh Circuit case law is clear about the requirements for exhibits 3 The Court can take judicial notice of court proceedings when considering a motion to dismiss. *Gen. Elec. Cap Corp. v. Lease Resol. Corp.*, 128 F.3d 1074, 1080–81 (7th Cir. 1997). As such, it considers the *Zahareas Motion to Dismiss Hearing Transcript*. to be considered under the incorporation-by-reference doctrine. In short, the videos Defendants attached to their motion are not mentioned or referenced in any way in the Complaint, see generally *Compl.*, and *Manzanares* objects to their consideration, *Resp.* 2–6. As such, the narrow incorporation-by-reference doctrine does not apply in this case. The Court must now decide whether to exercise its discretion and convert this motion into one for summary judgment. See *Levenstein*, 164 F.3d at 347; see also 5C *Wright & Miller’s Federal Practice & Procedure* § 1366 (3d ed. Nov. 2025 Update) (“[The court’s] discretion generally will be exercised on the basis of the district court’s determination of whether the proffered material—and the resulting conversion from the Rule 12(b) (6) and Rule 56 procedure—is likely to facilitate the disposition of the action.” (collecting cases)). The Court exercises its discretion to decline to convert the motion to dismiss to one for summary judgment; discovery may provide additional factual context that will be helpful to the Court.⁴ Because Defendants’ arguments all rest on video footage the Court is not considering, their motion to dismiss is DENIED. See, e.g., *Nutrien Ag Sols., Inc. v. Consol. Grain & Barge Co.*, No. 4:21-cv- 04091-SLD-JEH, 2022 WL 673700, at *3 (C.D. Ill. Mar. 7, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, Defendants Michael Oslanzi and City of Spring Valley, Illinois’s motion to dismiss, ECF No. 12, and motion for leave to file a reply, ECF No. 14, are DENIED. Because the Court declines to consider Defendants’ exhibits B through H, ECF Nos. 12-2 to 12-8, Defendants’ motion for leave to file under seal, ECF No. 11, is MOOT and so the exhibits remain under seal. 4 *Manzanares* asserts that “[t]he record in this case needs to be developed.” *Resp.* 10. Defendants exclusively argue that the exhibits they attach to the motion to dismiss can properly be considered under the incorporation-by- reference doctrine, so they make no argument about whether the Court should convert their motion to a summary judgment motion, see generally *Mot. Dismiss*. Defendants are DIRECTED to file an answer to the Complaint, ECF No. 1, within fourteen days. See Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(a)(4)(A). Entered this 24th day of April, 2026. s/ Sara Darrow

SARA DARROW

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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