

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Enrique Javier Campos v. West County Detention Facility, et al.

Campos · No. 25-cv-06190-RMI · Decided October 24, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California dismissed Enrique Javier Campos’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint concerning alleged harassment, medication checks, and use of a flashlight by a jail deputy. The court held that the allegations did not state a cognizable constitutional claim, that the detention facility was not a proper § 1983 defendant, and that participation in the grievance process was insufficient. The dismissal was with leave to amend within 28 days.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Robert M. Illman
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	October 24, 2025
DOCKET	25-cv-06190-RMI
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A pro se pretrial detainee filed an action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The district court screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A and dismissed it for failure to state a cognizable constitutional claim, granting leave to amend.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Preliminary screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; the complaint must state a plausible claim for relief under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2), and pro se pleadings are liberally construed.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court order; generally nonprecedential outside the case.
PARTIES	Enrique Javier Campos v. West County Detention Facility, et al.

TOPICS

- section 1983
- prisoners rights
- due process
- pleadings
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

prisoner civil rights

constitutional law

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the complaint stated a cognizable Fourteenth Amendment conditions-of-confinement or excessive-force claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
2. Whether the jail facility could be sued as a person under § 1983.
3. Whether allegations that supervisors participated only in the grievance process stated a § 1983 claim.
4. Whether dismissal should be with leave to amend.

HOLDINGS

1. A pretrial detainee challenging conditions of confinement must allege facts showing that the conditions amounted to punishment in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The allegations that Deputy Bailly shined a light in Plaintiff's face and checked whether he took his medication did not state a constitutional violation.
2. A pretrial detainee asserting excessive force must allege that the force purposely or knowingly used against him was objectively unreasonable. The complaint did not state such a claim based on the alleged flashlight use.
3. A jail is not a person within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and therefore cannot be sued under that statute.
4. Allegations that officials merely participated in or denied a grievance do not, without more, state a constitutional violation. A defendant must have personally participated in or directed the underlying violation.
5. The complaint was dismissed with leave to amend because Plaintiff could potentially state a claim by alleging additional facts concerning conduct that amounted to punishment, lacked a legitimate purpose, or constituted unreasonable force.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"To constitute punishment, a government action must (i) harm a detainee and (ii) be intended to punish him."
(Order at 2)

"Denying a grievance is not in and of itself a constitutional violation." (Order at 3)

"Defendants are only liable under section 1983 if they personally participated in or directed a violation of Plaintiff's rights." (Order at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff, a pretrial detainee at the Contra Costa County jail, alleged that Deputy Bailly yelled at him while shining a flashlight in his face, harassed him, ordered him to approach, and accused him of concealing or snorting medication. Sergeants Paisan, Smally, and Shepard responded through the grievance process, stating

that Baily's conduct was permitted or appropriate under jail policy. Plaintiff sought damages and an order requiring Baily to stay away from him.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Campos filed a civil-rights complaint concerning conduct by jail personnel and sought damages and a stay-away order against one deputy. The court conducted the required preliminary screening, found that the allegations did not state a constitutional violation, and dismissed the complaint with leave to amend within twenty-eight days.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Balistreri v. Pacifica Police Department, 901 F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1990)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555, 570 (2007)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 679 (2009)
- West v. Atkins, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988)
- Bell v. Wolfish, 441 U.S. 520, 535 n.16, 539 (1979)
- Houston v. Maricopa County, 116 F.4th 935, 940 (9th Cir. 2024)
- Kingsley v. Hendrickson, 576 U.S. 389, 397 (2015)
- James v. Rowlands, 606 F.3d 646, 653 n.3 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Ferdik v. Bonzelet, 963 F.2d 1258, 1262 (9th Cir. 1992)

OPINION

Campos
PER CURIAM.

1 2 3

4 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

5 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

6 7 ENRIQUE JAVIER CAMPOS, Case No. 25-cv-06190-RMI 8 Plaintiff,

ORDER OF DISMISSAL WITH LEAVE

9 v. TO AMEND

10 WEST COUNTY DETENTION

FACILITY, et al., 11 Defendants. 12 13 Plaintiff, a pretrial detainee in Contra Costa County jail proceeding pro se, filed a civil 14 rights complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. He is granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis by 15 separate order.

16 DISCUSSION

17 1. Standard of Review 18 Federal courts must engage in a preliminary screening of cases in which prisoners seek 19 redress from a governmental entity, or from an officer or employee of a

governmental entity. 28 20 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). In its review, the court must identify any cognizable claims and dismiss any 21 claims which are frivolous, malicious, fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or 22 seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. *Id.* at § 1915A(b)(1), (2). 23 Pleadings submitted by pro se parties must be liberally construed. *Balistreri v. Pacifica Police* 24 Dep’t, 901 F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1990). 25 Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2) requires only “a short and plain statement of the 26 claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief.” While specific facts are not necessary, the 27 statement needs to give the defendant fair notice of the nature of the claim and the grounds upon 1 detailed factual allegations in a complaint, the complaint must do more than recite elements of a 2 cause of action and state conclusions; rather, a plaintiff must state factual allegations sufficient to 3 raise the entitlement to relief “above the speculative level.” *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 4 U.S. 544, 555 (2007). A complaint must proffer “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is 5 plausible on its face.” *Id.* at 570. The Supreme Court has explained the standard this way: “While 6 legal conclusions can provide the framework of a complaint, they must be supported by factual 7 allegations . . . [and] [w]hen there are well-pleaded factual allegations, a court should assume their 8 veracity and then determine whether they plausibly give rise to an entitlement to relief.” *Ashcroft* 9 *v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 679 (2009). 10 To state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege two essential elements: 11 (1) that a right secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States was violated, and (2) that 12 the alleged deprivation was committed by a person acting under the color of state law. *West v. 13 Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988). 14 2. Legal Claims 15 Plaintiff alleges as follows: Deputy Baily yelled at him with a flashlight in his face on June 16 26, 2025, and constantly harasses him, making the module environment fearful and unpleasant. 17 Deputy Baily also demanded that Plaintiff approach him and accused Plaintiff of cheeking or 18 snorting his meds. Sergeants Paisan and Smally wrote on a grievance response that Deputy 19 Baily’s actions were appropriate under jail policy, and Sergeant Shepard wrote that there is no 20 policy but Deputy Baily’s actions were allowed during count. Plaintiff seeks damages and a stay 21 away from Deputy Baily. 22 Plaintiff has not stated a cognizable claim for violation of his constitutional rights. When a 23 pretrial detainee challenges conditions of his confinement, the proper inquiry is whether the 24 conditions amount to punishment in violation of the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth 25 Amendment. See *Bell v. Wolfish*, 441 U.S. 520, 535 n.16 (1979). “To constitute punishment, a 26 government action must (i) harm a detainee and (ii) be intended to punish him.” *Houston v. 27 Maricopa County*, 116 F.4th 935, 940 (9th Cir. 2024). If a particular condition or restriction of 1 more, amount to punishment. See *Bell*, 441 U.S. at 539. To prove an excessive force claim under 2 section 1983, a pretrial detainee must show that the “force purposely or knowingly used against 3 him was objectively unreasonable.” *Kingsley v. Hendrickson*, 576 U.S. 389, 397 (2015). 4 Shining a light in Plaintiff’s face and checking if he took his medicine do not rise to the 5 level of a constitutional violation. Plaintiff may choose to file an amended complaint explaining 6 in more detail what other conduct Defendant Baily has

committed towards him that amounted to 7 punishment and did not serve a legitimate purpose, or that constituted unreasonable use of force. 8 Plaintiff cannot sue the jail itself under section 1983 as the jail is not a “person” within the 9 meaning of the law. Plaintiff’s allegations against Defendants Paisan, Smally, and Shepard are 10 insufficient to state a claim because he alleges only that they participated in the grievance process. 11 Denying a grievance is not in and of itself a constitutional violation. Defendants are only liable 12 under section 1983 if they personally participated in or directed a violation of Plaintiff’s rights. 13 See *James v. Rowlands*, 606 F.3d 646, 653 n.3 (9th Cir.2010). If Plaintiff chooses to file an 14 amended complaint, he should only name as defendants anyone who personally participated in or 15 directed a violation of his constitutional rights.

16 CONCLUSION

17 1. The complaint is DISMISSED with leave to amend in accordance with the standards set 18 forth above. The amended complaint must be filed within twenty-eight (28) days of the date this 19 order is filed, and it must include the caption and civil case number used in this order and the 20 words “AMENDED COMPLAINT” on the first page. Because an amended complaint completely 21 replaces the original complaint, Plaintiff must include in it all the claims he wishes to present. See 22 *Ferdik v. Bonzelet*, 963 F.2d 1258, 1262 (9th Cir. 1992). Plaintiff may not incorporate material 23 from the original Complaint by reference. Failure to amend within the designated time will result 24 in dismissal of this case. 25 2. It is Plaintiff’s responsibility to prosecute this case. Plaintiff must keep the court 26 informed of any change of address by filing a separate paper with the clerk, headered “Notice of 27 Change of Address,” and must comply with the court’s orders in a timely fashion. Failure to do so

1 Procedure 41(b).

2 IT IS SO ORDERED. 3 Dated: October 24, 2025 5

RSBERT M. ILLMAN

6 United States Magistrate Judge 7 8 9 10 11 12 © 15 16 = 17 Z 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28