

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
MICHIGAN, SOUTHERN DIVISION

Kevin Bowman, Jr. v. Kent County, et al.

Bowman · No. 1:25-cv-1807 · Decided February 24, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan denies Kevin Bowman, Jr.’s motion concerning Kent County Court Services and adopts the magistrate judge’s reports and recommendations. The court dismisses the federal civil-rights claims with prejudice and the state-law claims without prejudice, finding Eleventh Amendment immunity, insufficiently specific allegations, and failure to establish municipal liability or lack of probable cause.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan, Southern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Paul L. Maloney
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Michigan, Southern Division
DECIDED	February 24, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-cv-1807
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court reviewed a magistrate judge's initial and supplemental reports and recommendations recommending dismissal of the federal claims for failure to state a claim. The court also considered Plaintiff's motion to dismiss Kent County Court Services as a defendant and his objections to the supplemental report.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The district court conducts de novo review of portions of a magistrate judge's report and recommendation to which specific objections are made under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1) and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 72(b)(3). Nonspecific objections do not entitle a party to de novo review.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district court order

PARTIES

Kevin Bowman, Jr. v. Kent County, Kent County Court Services,
Other defendants

TOPICS

section 1983 eleventh amendment immunity government liability pleadings civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure civil rights constitutional law municipal liability

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff's nonspecific objections required de novo review of the magistrate judge's reports and recommendations.
2. Whether Plaintiff could withdraw Kent County Court Services as a defendant through an amended complaint without filing a proposed amended complaint as required by the local rules.
3. Whether the federal civil-rights claims were adequately pleaded against the defendants.
4. Whether Kent County Court Services, Kent County, and its employees were immune or otherwise not subject to liability on the pleaded claims.
5. Whether the federal claims should be dismissed with prejudice and the state-law claims without prejudice.

HOLDINGS

1. Only specific objections to a magistrate judge's report and recommendation require de novo review under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1) and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 72(b)(3). Plaintiff's objections were insufficiently specific.
2. Plaintiff could not withdraw Kent County Court Services by seeking leave to amend without filing a proposed amended complaint as required by Western District of Michigan Local Civil Rule 5.7(f).
3. Kent County Court Services, as a branch of the court system, enjoys Eleventh Amendment immunity from Plaintiff's claims; the Eleventh Amendment also provided a defense for Kent County and its employees on the due-process and Sixth Amendment claims as pleaded.
4. Plaintiff failed to state viable federal civil-rights claims because he did not allege specific facts showing how each defendant's conduct caused the alleged violations, did not plead a basis for municipal liability against Kent County, and did not allege facts establishing lack of probable cause for his Fourth Amendment malicious-prosecution claim.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The court ADOPTS the reports and recommendations (ECF Nos. 7 and 9) and dismisses the federal claims with prejudice and the state law claims without prejudice.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleged that the defendants violated his civil rights, including rights relating to due process, the Sixth Amendment, and malicious prosecution under the Fourth Amendment. He did not allege with particularity what each defendant did, did not plead facts supporting municipal liability against Kent County, and did not allege facts showing a lack of probable cause for his malicious-prosecution claim. Kent County Court Services was identified as a branch of the court system and was held immune under the Eleventh Amendment.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff proceeded without counsel after receiving leave to proceed. The magistrate judge recommended dismissing the federal causes of action, and a supplemental report reached the same recommendation after Plaintiff filed an amended complaint adding a defendant. Plaintiff moved to dismiss Kent County Court Services and filed objections, but the district court found the objections nonspecific, denied the motion, adopted both reports and recommendations, dismissed the federal claims with prejudice, and dismissed the state-law claims without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- 806 F.2d 636, 637 (6th Cir. 1986) (per curiam)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN SOUTHERN DIVISION KEVIN BOWMAN, JR.,) Plaintiff,)) No. 1:25-cv-1807 -v-)) Honorable Paul L. Maloney KENT COUNTY,,) Defendants.)) ORDER Plaintiff Kevin Bowman, Jr., acting without the assistance of counsel, alleges the defendants violated his civil rights. Plaintiff requested and the Magistrate Judge granted leave to proceed.

The Magistrate Judge reviewed the complaint and issued a report recommending the court dismiss the federal causes of action for failure to state a claim (ECF No. 7). Plaintiff filed an amended complaint adding a defendant and the Magistrate Judge issued a supplemental report with the same recommendation (ECF No. 9). Plaintiff then filed a motion to dismiss the new defendant (ECF No. 12) and objections (ECF No. 14).

The court will deny Plaintiff's motion to dismiss, will adopt the R&Rs and will close this lawsuit. After being served with a report and recommendation (R&R) issued by a magistrate judge, a party has fourteen days to file written objections to the proposed findings and recommendations. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b)(2). A district court judge reviews de novo the portions of the R&R to which objections have been filed.

28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b)(3). Only those objections that are specific are entitled to a de novo review under the statute., 806 F.2d 636, 637 (6th Cir. 1986) (per curiam). A. Motion to Dismiss New Defendant (ECF No. 12) In the supplemental R&R, the Magistrate Judge recommends dismissing the new defendant, Kent County Court Services (KCCS).

As a branch of the court system, KCCS enjoys immunity under the Eleventh Amendment. Plaintiff moves to withdraw KCCS as a defendant and proposes allowing him to file an amended complaint. The court DENIES Plaintiff's motion to withdraw KCCS as a defendant by way of amended complaint. Plaintiff relies on Rule 15(a)(2), which allows a plaintiff to file an amended complaint with leave of the court.

But the Local Rules require Plaintiff to file a proposed amended complaint when seeking leave to amend the complaint. W.D. Mich. LCivR 5.7(f). Plaintiff did not file a proposed amended complaint. The court notes that Rule 41(a) permits a party to dismiss an action but does not permit a plaintiff to dismiss individual defendants or claims. B. Report and Recommendations (ECF No. 7 and 9) In the initial R&R (ECF No. 7), the Magistrate Judge recommended dismissing Plaintiff's federal claims with prejudice.

Generally, Plaintiff failed to allege what each defendant did with particularity. For his due process claim and Sixth Amendment claim, the Eleventh Amendment provides a defense for Kent County and its employees. Plaintiff failed to allege facts to support a municipal liability claim against Kent County. Plaintiff failed to demonstrate a lack of probable cause for his Fourth Amendment malicious prosecution claim.

Plaintiff did not file any specific objections to the initial R&R. In the supplemental R&R (ECF No. 9), the Magistrate Judge concludes the Eleventh Amendment precludes Plaintiff's claim against KCCS. Plaintiff filed objections to the supplemental R&R (ECF No. 13).

The court has carefully reviewed the objections. Plaintiff's arguments and reasoning fail to specifically address the findings, conclusions and recommendations in the two R&Rs. KCCS enjoys Eleventh Amendment immunity. Plaintiff did not allege specific facts to show how each defendant's conduct gave rise to the causes of action.

The allegations do not establish a basis for holding Kent County liable under. Accordingly, the court DENIES Plaintiff's motion to dismiss Kent County Court Services (ECF No. 12). The court ADOPTS the reports and recommendations (ECF Nos. 7 and 9) and dismisses the federal claims with prejudice and the state law claims without prejudice. IT IS SO ORDERED. Date: February 24, 2026 /s/ Paul L. Maloney Paul L. Maloney United States District Judge