

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Bouligny v. Ruiz

Bouligny · No. 2:24-CV-2069-DMC-P · Decided July 2, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of California screens Plaintiff Wadrick Bouligny’s first amended 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint. The court concludes that the complaint states a plausible Eighth Amendment claim against correctional officers O. Ruiz and E. Alamillo, dismisses the claims against CDCR as barred by Eleventh Amendment immunity, and finds no alleged causal involvement by warden R. St. Andre. Plaintiff is granted 30 days to file a second amended complaint addressing the defects.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Dennis M. Cota
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	July 2, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-CV-2069-DMC-P
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening of a prisoner's first amended complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A in a § 1983 civil-rights action.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Mandatory screening under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A; the court assesses whether the complaint is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim, or seeks monetary relief from an immune defendant, while applying the pleading requirement of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2).
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential

TOPICS

- prisoners rights
- section 1983
- eleventh amendment immunity
- pleadings
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- prisoner civil rights
- constitutional law
- federal civil procedure
- disability rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the amended complaint stated a plausible Eighth Amendment claim against correctional officers who allegedly failed to secure Plaintiff's wheelchair during prison transport.
2. Whether CDCR was immune from suit under the Eleventh Amendment.
3. Whether the amended complaint adequately alleged a causal connection between warden St. Andre and the alleged constitutional deprivation.
4. Whether Plaintiff should receive leave to amend the deficient claims.

HOLDINGS

1. The amended complaint stated a plausible Eighth Amendment claim against Defendants Ruiz and Alamillo based on the allegation that they knowingly failed to secure Plaintiff and his wheelchair during transport, resulting in serious physical injury.
2. CDCR is immune from suit in federal court under the Eleventh Amendment because it is a state agency responsible for corrections and incarceration; the claim against CDCR was dismissed with prejudice.
3. The amended complaint failed to state a claim against warden St. Andre because it did not allege facts showing his personal participation, direction, policy implementation, knowledge, or other causal role in the alleged constitutional violation.
4. Plaintiff was entitled to leave to file a second amended complaint because the deficiencies identified by the court might be cured by amendment, except for the claim against immune defendant CDCR.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A supervisor is only liable for the constitutional violations of subordinates if the supervisor participated in or directed the violations.” (Discussion B)

“A supervisory defendant may also be liable where he or she knew of constitutional violations but failed to act to prevent them.” (Discussion B)

“Because it is possible that the deficiencies identified in this order may be cured by amending the complaint, except as to Defendant CDCR, which is immune from suit as explained above, Plaintiff is entitled to leave to amend.” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff, a prisoner who alleges permanent wheelchair confinement, was transported by wheelchair to a prison medical facility on January 26, 2024. He alleges that correctional officers Ruiz and Alamillo refused to secure his wheelchair, after which the vehicle turned, causing him to be thrown into its metal interior, rendered unconscious, and transported by air to a medical center. The amended complaint also named CDCR and warden St. Andre but alleged no specific conduct by St. Andre.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a prisoner civil-rights action and then filed a first amended complaint as of right under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 15. The court screened the amended complaint, found a plausible Eighth Amendment claim against correctional officers Ruiz and Alamillo, dismissed the claim against CDCR with prejudice because of Eleventh Amendment immunity, and granted leave to amend the claims against warden St. Andre.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Olivas v. Nevada ex rel. Dep't of Corr.*, 856 F.3d 1281, 1282 (9th Cir. 2017)
- *McHenry v. Renne*, 84 F.3d 1172, 1177 (9th Cir. 1996)
- *Kimes v. Stone*, 84 F.3d 1121, 1129 (9th Cir. 1996)
- *Brooks v. Sulphur Springs Valley Elec. Coop.*, 951 F.2d 1050, 1053 (9th Cir. 1991)
- *Lucas v. Dep't of Corr.*, 66 F.3d 245, 248 (9th Cir. 1995) (per curiam)
- *Taylor v. List*, 880 F.2d 1040, 1045 (9th Cir. 1989)
- *Alabama v. Pugh*, 438 U.S. 781, 782 (1978) (per curiam)
- *Hale v. Arizona*, 993 F.2d 1387, 1398-99 (9th Cir. 1993) (en banc)
- *Redman v. County of San Diego*, 942 F.2d 1435, 1446 (9th Cir. 1991) (en banc)
- *Starr v. Baca*, 633 F.3d 1191, 1209 (9th Cir. 2011)
- *Fayle v. Stapley*, 607 F.2d 858, 862 (9th Cir. 1979)
- *Mosher v. Saalfeld*, 589 F.2d 438, 441 (9th Cir. 1978)
- *Ivey v. Board of Regents*, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982)
- *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 676 (2009)
- *Lopez v. Smith*, 203 F.3d 1122, 1126, 1131 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc)
- *Ferdik v. Bonzelet*, 963 F.2d 1258, 1262 (9th Cir. 1992)
- *Ellis v. Cassidy*, 625 F.2d 227 (9th Cir. 1980)
- *May v. Enomoto*, 633 F.2d 164, 167 (9th Cir. 1980)
- *Johnson v. Duffy*, 588 F.2d 740, 743 (9th Cir. 1978)