NONPRECEDENTIAL DISPOSITION
To be cited only in accordance with FED. R. APP. P. 32.1

United States Court of Appeals

For the Seventh Circuit
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Submitted December 2, 2022*
Decided December 6, 2022

Before

DAVID F. HAMILTON, *Circuit Judge*

MICHAEL B. BRENNAN, *Circuit Judge*

CANDACE JACKSON-AKIWUMI, *Circuit Judge*

No. 22-1828

KENNETH CHAMBERS,
Plaintiff-Appellant,

v.

STATE OF INDIANA, et al.,
Defendants-Appellees.

Appeal from the United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Indianapolis Division.

No. 1:22-cv-00492-TWP-MJD

Tanya Walton Pratt,
Chief Judge.

O R D E R

Kenneth Chambers appeals the dismissal of his suit under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against the State of Indiana, a judge, prosecutors, and others for lack of jurisdiction. Although our reasoning differs slightly, we agree with the district court that some of

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* We have agreed to decide the case without oral argument because the briefs and record adequately present the facts and legal arguments, and oral argument would not significantly aid the court. FED. R. APP. P. 34(a)(2)(C).

Chambers's claims fall outside of federal subject-matter jurisdiction, while the rest fail on the merits. We therefore affirm the judgment as modified.

The operative complaint alleges as follows: Chambers was held in contempt of state court, arrested by court deputies on orders of a state judge, prosecuted, and incarcerated three times (in 2017, 2020, and 2021) for failing to pay child support and related offenses. According to Chambers, the arresting deputies cinched his handcuffs "extremely tightly." He has sued the State of Indiana, a presiding state judge, prosecutors, and the arresting deputies for unlawful arrest, excessive force, falsifying evidence in the state-court proceedings, and race discrimination. He alleges that Indiana punishes "hundreds of innocent Black and Hispanic fathers" in a child-support system that "fools the public." Finally, he asserted supplemental state-law claims.

The district court dismissed the suit. Initially, it ruled that Chambers's complaint failed because judicial, prosecutorial, and sovereign immunities blocked many of its claims. Also, it reasoned, Chambers lacked standing for any "general grievance about government." Lastly, the court ruled that his remaining allegations about the arrests were too conclusory. The court granted Chambers leave to cure these defects with an amended complaint. When Chambers filed an amended complaint that was nearly identical to the original, the district court dismissed the suit "for lack of jurisdiction."

Chambers appeals, contending that the district court had jurisdiction over his claims that the defendants violated his constitutional rights by wrongly arresting and prosecuting him, by using a "simulated and deceptive judicial process" to punish people, and by discriminating against African Americans generally. We review the dismissal de novo. *Berger v. Nat'l Collegiate Athletic Ass'n*, 843 F.3d 285, 289 (7th Cir. 2016).

First, the district court did not have jurisdiction to address any claim challenging the outcome of Chambers's contempt and child-support proceedings in state court. Under the *Rooker-Feldman* doctrine, a federal district court may not review and overturn state-court judgments, including the ones against Chambers. *See Rooker v. Fid. Tr. Co.*, 263 U.S. 413, 416 (1923); *D.C. Ct. of Appeals v. Feldman*, 460 U.S. 462, 482–87 (1983); *see also Exxon Mobil Corp. v. Saudi Basic Indus. Corp.*, 544 U.S. 280, 291–92 (2005); *Harold v. Steel*, 773 F.3d 884, 885, 887 (7th Cir. 2014).

Likewise, the district court did not have jurisdiction to consider Chambers's generalized allegation that Indiana has a practice of punishing innocent people, uses a "simulated and deceptive" judicial process, and racially discriminates. A "generally

available grievance about government" does not confer standing to sue in federal court. *Gill v. Whitford*, 138 S. Ct. 1916, 1923 (2018) (quoting *Lance v. Coffman*, 549 U.S. 437 (2007)); *see also Freedom from Religion Found., Inc., v. Lew*, 773 F.3d 815, 819 (7th Cir. 2014) (citing *Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife*, 504 U.S. 555, 573–74 (1992)).

That brings us to Chambers's individual claims that the defendants conspired to arrest and charge him without probable cause and with excessive force. Although he has standing to bring these claims, we agree with the district court that judicial and prosecutorial immunity bar Chambers's claims against the judge and prosecutors. *See, e.g.*, *Myrick v. Greenwood*, 856 F.3d 487, 488 (7th Cir. 2017) (judge in a child-custody case entitled to immunity); *Imbler v. Pachtman*, 424 U.S. 409, 427–29 (1976) (prosecutors are immune for prosecutorial activities). These claims fail on the merits, though, not jurisdictional grounds. The claims against the State of Indiana also fail on the merits, although not because of sovereign immunity, but because the state is not a "person" under § 1983. *Will v. Mich. Dep't of State Police*, 491 U.S. 58, 64 (1989).

The claims that Chambers brings against the arresting officers also fail on the merits. Chambers contends that officers unlawfully arrested him. "Probable cause is an absolute defense to a section 1983 claim for wrongful arrest." *Lyberger v. Snider*, 42 F.4th 807, 811 (7th Cir. 2022). Chambers refutes any contention of the lack of probable cause by alleging that the defendants executed a judge's order to arrest him for contempt. Judicial orders to arrest supply probable cause: they are "presumptively valid," and "[a] deputy should only disobey a judicial officer's order when to his knowledge and belief the order constitutes an unacceptable error indicating gross incompetence or neglect of duty." *Wollin v. Gondert*, 192 F.3d 616, 624 (7th Cir. 1999) (internal quotations and citation omitted). Chambers has not alleged any facts to overcome that presumption.

Finally, Chambers has not alleged facts to support an excessive-force claim about tight handcuffs. This court has "on occasion" ruled that overly tight handcuffs may reflect excessive force, but these rare cases "were hardly based on overly tight handcuffs alone." *Tibbs v. City of Chicago*, 469 F.3d 661, 666 (7th Cir. 2006). Instead, claims about overly tight handcuffs generally require assertions of serious injuries. *Id.* (discussing *Payne v. Pauley*, 337 F.3d 767 (7th Cir. 2003), and *Herzog v. Village of Winnetka*, 309 F.3d 1041 (7th Cir. 2002)). Chambers alleged vaguely that the handcuffs caused "injuries." But when the district court ordered him to cure this vague allegation by giving the defendants fair notice of the injuries he suffered and who caused them, *see Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 677–78 (2009), he did not do so. Therefore, the court properly rejected the claim. *See Chapman v. Yellow Cab Coop.*, 875 F.3d 846, 848–49 (7th Cir. 2017).

Because the district court lacked jurisdiction over some of Chambers's claims, and the others fail on the merits, the judgment is AFFIRMED as modified.