

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

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CHERRIE HAZLETT and TONY HAZLETT,

NO. CIV 2:12-01782 WBS DAD

Plaintiffs,

V.

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER RE:
MOTION TO DISMISS

TERRY DEAN, CHRISTOPHER VON KLEIST, JASON BRAMSON, CHRIS BOYLES, KELLY HAIGHT, STEVEN HISCOCK, TIM RYAN, S.J. JOHNSON, J.S. SOKSODA, and Z.L. LOPETEGUY,

Defendants.

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Plaintiffs Cherrie and Tony Hazlett brought this action against school employees and police officers arising from their arrest and prosecution for truancy and forgery. Defendants Von Kleist, Bramson, Boyles, Haight, Hiscock, and Ryan, (together, "school defendants"), as well as defendant Dean, now seek dismissal under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b) (6) for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted.

1 In its January 30, 2013 Order, the court granted in
2 part and denied in part both the police defendants' and school
3 defendants' motions to dismiss the First Amended Complaint
4 ("FAC"). (Docket No. 31.) The court held, in relevant part,
5 that plaintiffs' § 1983 claims based upon a violation of their
6 Fourth Amendment right to be free from unreasonable search and
7 arrest without probable cause against the school defendants were
8 untimely because the claims accrued at the time of the arrest,
9 but that the same claims against defendants Dean, Johnson,
10 Soksoda, and Lopeteguy were timely since those defendants were
11 arguably peace officers subject to tolling under California
12 Government Code section 945.3. (Jan. 30, 2013 Order at 2.)
13 Plaintiffs were granted leave to amend. (*Id.* at 3.)

14 In their Second Amended Complaint ("SAC"), plaintiffs
15 bring two separate claims for violations of § 1983. (Docket No.
16 32.) The first claim, brought against all defendants, is
17 subtitled "Malicious Prosecution" and alleges that defendants
18 provided "materially false misleading [sic] and incomplete
19 information and/or omitting material information to the
20 prosecuting agency for the purpose of having Plaintiffs
21 prosecuted for forgery, a felony" when defendants "did not and in
22 good faith could not believe Plaintiffs to be guilty of the crime
23 alleged." (SAC ¶¶ 25-26.) Plaintiffs maintain that defendants
24 "engaged in this malicious conduct with the purpose of depriving
25 Plaintiffs of their Constitutional Rights to be free of unlawful
26 seizure and the right to due process under the Fourth and
27 Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution." (*Id.* ¶
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1 27.)¹

2 The school defendants and Dean now move to be dismissed
3 from the first claim for violation of § 1983 for failure to state
4 a claim upon which relief can be granted under Rule 12(b) (6).
5 (Docket No. 34.)

6 Section 1983 provides a cause of action against any
7 person who, under the color of state law, deprives another of any
8 right, privilege, or immunity secured by the Constitution and
9 laws of the United States. 42 U.S.C. § 1983. "Section 1983 'is
10 not itself a source of substantive rights,' but merely provides
11 'a method for vindicating federal rights elsewhere conferred.'"
12 Albright v. Oliver, 510 U.S. 266, 271 (1994) (quoting Baker v.
13 McCollan, 443 U.S. 137, 144 n.3 (1979)). In the Ninth Circuit,
14 "[i]n order to prevail on a § 1983 claim of malicious
15 prosecution, a plaintiff 'must show that the defendants
16 prosecuted [him] with malice and without probable cause, and that
17 they did so for the purpose of denying [him] equal protection or
18 another specific constitutional right.'" Awabdy v. City of
19 Adelanto, 368 F.3d 1062, 1066 (9th Cir. 2004) (quoting Freeman v.
20 City of Santa Ana, 68 F.3d 1180, 1189 (9th Cir. 1995)) (emphasis
21 added).

22 The crux of plaintiffs' § 1983 claim is that they were
23 arrested and prosecuted without probable cause. To the extent
24 they base the claim upon an alleged deprivation of their
25 Fourteenth Amendment right to substantive due process, the

26
27 ¹ Plaintiffs bring a separate § 1983 claim against
28 defendants Dean, Johnson, Soksoda, and Lopeteguy which appears to
rely on the same facts and constitutional deprivations in the
first claim but does not allege "malicious prosecution."

1 Supreme Court has said that "where a particular Amendment
2 'provides an explicit textual source of constitutional
3 protection' against a particular sort of government behavior,
4 'that Amendment, not the more generalized notion of "substantive
5 due process," must be the guide for analyzing these claims.'" Albright, 510 U.S. at 274 (plurality) (quoting Graham v. Connor,
6 490 U.S. 386, 395 (1989)). When a plaintiff asserts the right to
7 be free from arrest and prosecution without probable cause,
8 "substantive due process, with its 'scarce and open-ended'
9 'guideposts,' can afford him no relief." Id. at 275 (plurality)
10 (internal citation omitted). The Ninth Circuit in Awabdy
11 confirmed that "[t]he principle that Albright establishes is that
12 no substantive due process right exists under the Fourteenth
13 Amendment to be free from prosecution without probable cause."
14 Awabdy, 368 F.3d at 1069 (citing Albright, 510 U.S. at 268, 271
15 (plurality) (further citations omitted)).

17 Plaintiffs appear to rely on Bretz v. Kelman, 773 F.2d
18 1026 (9th Cir. 1985) in support of their claim. (Pls.' Opp'n at
19 2-4 (Docket No. 35)). To the extent Bretz ever stood for the
20 proposition that a § 1983 "malicious prosecution" claim based
21 upon deprivation of the Fourteenth Amendment right to substantive
22 due process is available for conspiracy to arrest and prosecute a
23 plaintiff without probable cause, any such reading is foreclosed
24 by Albright. Thus, plaintiffs' first § 1983 claim based on
25 deprivation of their Fourteenth Amendment right to substantive
26 due process will be dismissed.

27 As for plaintiffs' § 1983 "malicious prosecution" claim
28 based upon a denial of their Fourth Amendment right to be free

1 from seizure, the Supreme Court "ha[s] never explored the
2 contours of a Fourth Amendment malicious-prosecution suit under §
3 1983." Wallace v. Kato, 549 U.S. 384, 390 n.2 (2007); see also
4 Becker v. Kroll, 494 F.3d 904, 913 (10th Cir. 2007)
5 (characterizing analysis of § 1983 "malicious prosecution" claims
6 based on the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments as wading in "murky
7 waters"). Plaintiffs' opposition brief fails to cite a
8 controlling case in support of their claim, if such a claim even
9 exists. Awabdy, cited at length by plaintiffs in their brief,
10 involved § 1983 claims based upon intent to deprive the plaintiff
11 of his First Amendment right to free speech, Fourteenth Amendment
12 right to equal protection, and Thirteenth Amendment right to be
13 free from slavery, not any Fourth Amendment violations. See
14 Awabdy, 368 F.3d at 1068-70. Furthermore, plaintiffs' opposition
15 brief only asserts that "[d]eprivation of liberty, under color of
16 law, supports the § 1983 cause of action," an argument which, as
17 discussed above, fails in the wake of Albright. (Pls.' Opp'n at
18 7.)

19 Evaluating plaintiffs' claims under the standards laid
20 out in Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662 (2009), and Bell Atlantic
21 Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544 (2007), plaintiffs fail to offer
22 any plausible support for a § 1983 "malicious prosecution" claim
23 based upon intent to deprive plaintiffs of a Fourth Amendment
24 right to be free from arrest without probable cause, thus
25 plaintiffs' first claim against defendants Terry Dean, Chris Von
26 Kleist, Jason Bramson, Chris Boyles, Kelley Haight, Steve
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1 Hiscock, and Tim Ryan will be dismissed.²

2 While leave to amend must be freely given, the court is
3 not required to permit futile amendments. See DeSoto v. Yellow
4 Freight Sys., Inc., 957 F.2d 655, 658 (9th Cir. 1992); Reddy v.
5 Litton Indus., Inc., 912 F.2d 291, 296-97 (9th Cir. 1990); Rutman
6 Wine Co. v. E. & J. Gallo Winery, 829 F.2d 729, 738 (9th Cir.
7 1987); Klamath-Lake Pharm. Ass'n v. Klamath Med. Serv. Bureau,
8 701 F.2d 1276, 1293 (9th Cir. 1983). On two separate occasions
9 plaintiffs have been granted leave to amend their pleadings to
10 properly state a § 1983 claim against defendants. (Docket Nos.
11 22, 31.) The court must therefore assume that further amendment
12 would be futile, and will not grant plaintiffs leave to amend a
13 third time.

14 IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that defendants' motion to
15 dismiss be, and the same hereby is, GRANTED. Plaintiffs' first
16 claim for violation of § 1983 is hereby dismissed with prejudice
17 as against defendants Terry Dean, Chris Von Kleist, Jason
18 Bramson, Chris Boyles, Kelley Haight, Steve Hiscock, and Tim
19 Ryan.

20 DATED: April 22, 2013

21 
22 WILLIAM B. SHUBB
23 UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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26 ² To the extent plaintiffs' first claim for relief can be
27 based on the deprivation of any other constitutional right, the
28 SAC similarly fails to state a claim upon which relief can be
granted.