UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

DAVID GASTON WILKES,

Plaintiff,

v.

L. T. HUNTER, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 16-cv-02401-JD

ORDER OF DISMISSAL WITH LEAVE TO AMEND

Plaintiff, a detainee, has filed a pro se civil rights complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. He has been granted leave to proceed in forma pauperis.

DISCUSSION

STANDARD OF REVIEW

Federal courts must engage in a preliminary screening of cases in which prisoners seek redress from a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). In its review, the Court must identify any cognizable claims, and dismiss any claims which are frivolous, malicious, fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. *Id*. at 1915A(b)(1),(2). Pro se pleadings must be liberally construed. *Balistreri v. Pacifica Police Dep't*, 901 F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1990).

Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 8(a)(2) requires only "a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief." Although a complaint "does not need detailed factual allegations, . . . a plaintiff's obligation to provide the 'grounds' of his 'entitle[ment] to relief' requires more than labels and conclusions, and a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do. . . . Factual allegations must be enough to raise a right to relief above

the speculative level." *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007) (citations omitted). A complaint must proffer "enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face." *Id*. at 570. The United States Supreme Court has explained the "plausible on its face" standard of *Twombly*: "While legal conclusions can provide the framework of a complaint, they must be supported by factual allegations. When there are well-pleaded factual allegations, a court should assume their veracity and then determine whether they plausibly give rise to an entitlement to relief." *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 679 (2009).

To state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege that: (1) a right secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States was violated, and (2) the alleged deprivation was committed by a person acting under the color of state law. *West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988).

LEGAL CLAIMS

Plaintiff presents several claims against the San Francisco Department of Probation and many members of the San Francisco Sheriff's Department. "The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment commands that no State shall 'deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws,' which is essentially a direction that all persons similarly situated should be treated alike." *City of Cleburne v. Cleburne Living Center*, 473 U.S. 432, 439 (1985) (quoting *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202, 216 (1982)); *Thornton v. City of St. Helens*, 425 F.3d 1158, 1168 (9th Cir. 2005) (evidence of different treatment of unlike groups does not support an equal protection claim).

Local governments are "persons" subject to liability under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 where official policy or custom causes a constitutional tort, *see Monell v. Dep't of Social Servs.*, 436 U.S. 658, 690 (1978); however, a city or county may not be held vicariously liable for the unconstitutional acts of its employees under the theory of respondeat superior, *see Board of Cty. Commr's. of Bryan Cty. v. Brown*, 520 U.S. 397, 403 (1997); *Monell*, 436 U.S. at 691. To impose municipal liability under § 1983 for a violation of constitutional rights resulting from governmental inaction or omission, a plaintiff must show: (1) that the plaintiff possessed a constitutional right of which he or she was deprived; (2) that the municipality had a policy; (3) that this policy amounts to deliberate indifference to the plaintiff's constitutional rights; and (4) that the policy is the moving

force behind the constitutional violation. *See Plumeau v. School Dist. #40 County of Yamhill*, 130 F.3d 432, 438 (9th Cir. 1997).

To properly plead a claim under *Monell*, it is insufficient to allege simply that a policy, custom, or practice exists that caused the constitutional violations. *AE v. County of Tulare*, 666 F.3d 631, 636-37 (9th Cir. 2012). Pursuant to the more stringent pleading requirements set forth in *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 129 S. Ct. 1937, 1952 (2009), and *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 553-56 (2007), a plaintiff suing a municipal entity must allege sufficient facts regarding the specific nature of the alleged policy, custom or practice to allow the defendant to effectively defend itself, and these facts must plausibly suggest that plaintiff is entitled to relief. *AE*, 666 F.3d at 636-37 (citing *Starr v. Baca*, 652 F.3d 1202, 1216 (9th Cir. 2011)). Proof of random acts or isolated incidents of unconstitutional action by a non-policymaking employee are insufficient to establish the existence of a municipal policy or custom. *See Rivera v. County of Los Angeles*, 745 F.3d 384, 398 (9th Cir. 2014).

"Within the prison context, a viable claim of First Amendment retaliation entails five basic elements: (1) An assertion that a state actor took some adverse action against an inmate (2) because of (3) that prisoner's protected conduct, and that such action (4) chilled the inmate's exercise of his First Amendment rights, and (5) the action did not reasonably advance a legitimate correctional goal." *Rhodes v. Robinson*, 408 F.3d 559, 567-68 (9th Cir. 2005) (footnote omitted). *Accord Pratt v. Rowland*, 65 F.3d 802, 806 (9th Cir. 1995) (prisoner suing prison officials under § 1983 for retaliation must allege that he was retaliated against for exercising his constitutional rights and that the retaliatory action did not advance legitimate penological goals, such as preserving institutional order and discipline); *Barnett v. Centoni*, 31 F.3d 813, 816 (9th Cir. 1994) (per curiam) (same).

In order to establish a free exercise violation, a prisoner must show a defendant burdened the practice of his religion without any justification reasonably related to legitimate penological interests. *See Shakur v. Schriro*, 514 F.3d 878, 883-84 (9th Cir. 2008). A prisoner is not required to objectively show that a central tenet of his faith is burdened by a prison regulation to raise a viable claim under the Free Exercise Clause. *Id*. at 884-85.

Section 3 of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), provides: "No government shall impose a substantial burden on the religious exercise of a person residing in or confined to an institution, as defined in section 1997 [which includes state prisons, state psychiatric hospitals, and local jails], even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, unless the government demonstrates that imposition of the burden on that person (1) is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest; and (2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest." 42 U.S.C. § 2000cc-1(a). The statute applies "in any case" in which "the substantial burden is imposed in a program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance." 42 U.S.C. § 2000cc-1(b)(1).

Plaintiff states that he was sentenced to probation but was denied access to housing, jobs and other services by the San Francisco Department of Probation. He states that he was denied these things due to his race and because he suffers from mental illness. He also argues that while he was being held in San Francisco County Jail, deputies retaliated against him due to his prior lawsuit in 1999. He also states that deputies refused to transport him to an outside social services program. He also contends that jail deputies violated his religious rights by not allowing him to bring a Christian cross into the jail. Plaintiff seeks injunctive relief and money damages against the Department of Probation, various probation officers, the County Jail and several deputies.

Federal Rule Civil Procedure 18(a) provides: "A party asserting a claim to relief as an original claim, counterclaim, cross-claim, or third-party claim, may join, either as independent or as alternate claims, as many claims, legal, equitable, or maritime as the party has against an opposing party." "Thus multiple claims against a single party are fine, but Claim A against Defendant 1 should not be joined with unrelated Claim B against Defendant 2." *George v. Smith*, 507 F.3d 605, 607 (7th Cir. 2007). "Unrelated claims against different defendants belong in different suits[.]" *Id*.

It is true that Fed. R. Civ. P. 20(a) provides that "[p]ersons . . . may be joined in one action as defendants if: (A) any right is asserted against them jointly, severally, or in the alternative with respect to or arising out of the same transaction, occurrence, or series of transactions or occurrences; and (B) any question of law or fact common to all defendants will arise in the

action." However, "[a] buckshot complaint that would be rejected if filed by a free person – say, a suit complaining that A defrauded the plaintiff, B defamed him, C punched him, D failed to pay a debt, and E infringed his copyright, all in different transactions – should be rejected if filed by a prisoner." *Id*. at 607.

In this action plaintiff has presented unrelated claims against many different defendants. The complaint will be dismissed with leave to amend. Plaintiff should focus the amended complaint on related incidents and he must identify the specific actions of the defendants and describe how they violated his constitutional rights with respect to the legal standards set forth above. General allegations without sufficient support are insufficient.

CONCLUSION

1. The complaint is **DISMISSED** with leave to amend. The amended complaint must be filed within **twenty-eight (28) days** of the date this order is filed and must include the caption and civil case number used in this order and the words AMENDED COMPLAINT on the first page. Because an amended complaint completely replaces the original complaint, plaintiff must include in it all the claims he wishes to present. *See Ferdik v. Bonzelet*, 963 F.2d 1258, 1262 (9th Cir. 1992). He may not incorporate material from the original complaint by reference. Failure to amend within the designated time will result in the dismissal of this case.

2. It is the plaintiff's responsibility to prosecute this case. Plaintiff must keep the Court informed of any change of address by filing a separate paper with the clerk headed "Notice of Change of Address," and must comply with the Court's orders in a timely fashion. Failure to do so may result in the dismissal of this action for failure to prosecute pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b).

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: September 8, 2016

JAMES DONATO
United States District Judge

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

DAVID GASTON WILKES,

Plaintiff,

v.

L. T. HUNTER, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 16-cv-02401-JD

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that I am an employee in the Office of the Clerk, U.S. District Court, Northern District of California.

That on September 8, 2016, I SERVED a true and correct copy(ies) of the attached, by placing said copy(ies) in a postage paid envelope addressed to the person(s) hereinafter listed, by depositing said envelope in the U.S. Mail, or by placing said copy(ies) into an inter-office delivery receptacle located in the Clerk's office.

David Gaston Wilkes
9670 Empire Road
Oakland, CA 94603

Dated: September 8, 2016

Susan Y. Soong
Clerk, United States District Court

By:_____
Nikki D. Riley, Deputy Clerk to the
Honorable JAMES DONATO

United States District Court
Northern District of California