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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

ERIC CHATMAN,
CDCR #BD-5474,

Plaintiff,

vs.

APTS BEHIND INDOOR SWAP MEET,
et al.,

Defendant.

Case No.: 3:18-cv-01606-MMA-WVG

ORDER:

**1) DENYING MOTIONS TO
PROCEED IN FORMA PAUPERIS
AND TO APPOINT COUNSEL AS
BARRED BY 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g)**

[Doc. Nos. 2, 3]

AND

**(2) DISMISSING CIVIL ACTION
WITHOUT PREJUDICE FOR
FAILURE TO PAY FILING FEE
REQUIRED BY 28 U.S.C. § 1914(a)**

ERIC CHATMAN (“Plaintiff”), a prisoner incarcerated at Salinas Valley State Prison in Soledad, California, and proceeding *pro se*, has filed a Complaint alleging he was assaulted at “apts” and “treated very bad at car dealerships” on a form provided by the Judicial Council of California. *See* Compl., Doc. No. 1. Plaintiff has also filed a Motion to Proceed *In Forma Pauperis* (“IFP”) pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a) (Doc. No.

1 2), together with a Motion to Appoint Counsel (Doc. No. 3).

2 **I. Motion to Proceed IFP**

3 A. Standard of Review

4 “All persons, not just prisoners, may seek IFP status.” *Moore v. Maricopa County*
5 *Sheriff’s Office*, 657 F.3d 890, 892 (9th Cir. 2011). Prisoners like Plaintiff, however,
6 “face ... additional hurdle[s].” *Id.*

7 Specifically, in addition to requiring prisoners to “pay the full amount of a filing
8 fee,” in “monthly installments” or “increments” as provided by 28 U.S.C.

9 § 1915(a)(3)(b), *Bruce v. Samuels*, ___ U.S. ___, 136 S. Ct. 627, 629 (2016); *Williams v.*
10 *Paramo*, 775 F.3d 1182, 1185 (9th Cir. 2015), the Prison Litigation Reform Act
11 (“PLRA”) amended section 1915 to preclude the privilege to proceed IFP:

12 . . . if [a] prisoner has, on 3 or more prior occasions, while
13 incarcerated or detained in any facility, brought an action or
14 appeal in a court of the United States that was dismissed on the
15 grounds that it is frivolous, malicious, or fails to state a claim
16 upon which relief can be granted, unless the prisoner is under
imminent danger of serious physical injury.

17 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g). “This subdivision is commonly known as the ‘three strikes’
18 provision.” *Andrews v. King*, 398 F.3d 1113, 1116 n.1 (9th Cir. 2005).

19 “Pursuant to § 1915(g), a prisoner with three strikes or more cannot proceed IFP.”
20 *Id.*; *see also Andrews v. Cervantes*, 493 F.3d 1047, 1052 (9th Cir. 2007) (hereafter
21 “*Cervantes*”) (under the PLRA, “[p]risoners who have repeatedly brought unsuccessful
22 suits may entirely be barred from IFP status under the three strikes rule[.]”). The
23 objective of the PLRA is to further “the congressional goal of reducing frivolous prisoner
24 litigation in federal court.” *Tierney v. Kupers*, 128 F.3d 1310, 1312 (9th Cir. 1997).
25 “[S]ection 1915(g)’s cap on prior dismissed claims applies to claims dismissed both
26 before and after the statute’s effective date.” *Id.* at 1311.

27 “Strikes are prior cases or appeals, brought while the plaintiff was a prisoner,
28 which were dismissed on the ground that they were frivolous, malicious, or failed to state

1 a claim,” *Andrews*, 398 F.3d at 1116 n.1 (internal quotations omitted), “even if the
2 district court styles such dismissal as a denial of the prisoner’s application to file the
3 action without prepayment of the full filing fee.” *O’Neal v. Price*, 531 F.3d 1146, 1153
4 (9th Cir. 2008). When courts “review a dismissal to determine whether it counts as a
5 strike, the style of the dismissal or the procedural posture is immaterial. Instead, the
6 central question is whether the dismissal ‘rang the PLRA bells of frivolous, malicious, or
7 failure to state a claim.’” *El-Shaddai v. Zamora*, 833 F.3d 1036, 1042 (9th Cir. 2016)
8 (quoting *Blakely v. Wards*, 738 F.3d 607, 615 (4th Cir. 2013)).

9 Once a prisoner has accumulated three strikes, he is prohibited by section 1915(g)
10 from pursuing any other IFP civil action or appeal in federal court unless he alleges he is
11 facing “imminent danger of serious physical injury.” See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g); *Cervantes*,
12 493 F.3d at 1051-52 (noting § 1915(g)’s exception for IFP complaints which “make[] a
13 plausible allegation that the prisoner faced ‘imminent danger of serious physical injury’
14 at the time of filing.”).

15 B. Application to Plaintiff

16 The Court has reviewed Plaintiff’s Complaint and finds that it contains no
17 “plausible allegations” to suggest he “faced ‘imminent danger of serious physical injury’
18 at the time of filing.” *Cervantes*, 493 F.3d at 1055 (quoting 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g)).
19 Plaintiff’s claims are insufficient to plausibly show ongoing or “imminent” danger of any
20 serious physical injury, they also fail as a matter of law to support any viable federal
21 claim for relief and are plainly frivolous. See *Ouzts v. Maryland Nat’l Ins. Co.*, 505 F.2d
22 547, 550 (9th Cir. 1974) (“[P]urely private conduct, no matter how wrongful, is not
23 within the protective orbit of section 1983.”); *Vey v. Clinton*, 520 U.S. 937, 937 (1997)
24 (denying pro se litigant IFP status based on alleged civil rights and RICO violations by
25 U.S. President and private citizens as “patently frivolous.”).

26 And while Defendants typically carry the burden to show that a prisoner is not
27 entitled to proceed IFP, *Andrews*, 398 F.3d at 1119, “in some instances, the district court
28 docket may be sufficient to show that a prior dismissal satisfies at least one on the criteria

1 under § 1915(g) and therefore counts as a strike.” *Id.* at 1120.

2 A court may take judicial notice of its own records, *see Molus v. Swan*, Civil Case
3 No. 3:05-cv-00452–MMA-WMc, 2009 WL 160937, *2 (S.D. Cal. Jan. 22, 2009) (citing
4 *United States v. Author Services*, 804 F.2d 1520, 1523 (9th Cir. 1986)); *Gerritsen v.*
5 *Warner Bros. Entm’t Inc.*, 112 F. Supp. 3d 1011, 1034 (C.D. Cal. 2015), and ““may take
6 notice of proceedings in other courts, both within and without the federal judicial system,
7 if those proceedings have a direct relation to matters at issue.”” *Bias v. Moynihan*, 508
8 F.3d 1212, 1225 (9th Cir. 2007) (quoting *Bennett v. Medtronic, Inc.*, 285 F.3d 801, 803
9 n.2 (9th Cir. 2002)); *see also United States ex rel. Robinson Rancheria Citizens Council*
10 *v. Borneo, Inc.*, 971 F.2d 244, 248 (9th Cir. 1992).

11 Thus, this Court takes judicial notice that Plaintiff, Eric Chatman, identified as
12 CDCR Inmate #BD-5474, has had at least four prior prisoner civil actions dismissed in
13 this district alone on the grounds that they were frivolous, malicious, or failed to state a
14 claim upon which relief may be granted.

15 They are:

16 1) *Chatman v. Toyota of Escondido, et al.*, Civil Case No. 3:17-cv-01853-BAS-
17 JLB (S.D. Cal. Nov. 8, 2017) (Order Granting Motion to Proceed IFP and Dismissing
18 Civil Action for Failing to State a Claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) and
19 without leave to amend) (Doc. No. 18) (“strike one”);

20 2) *Chatman v. Cush Acura, et al.*, Civil Case No. 3:17-cv-01852-WQH-JLB
21 (S.D. Cal. Nov. 21, 2017) (Order Granting Motion to Proceed IFP and Dismissing Civil
22 Action for Failing to State a Claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) and without
23 leave to amend) (Doc. No. 20) (“strike two”);

24 3) *Chatman v. Super 8 Motel, et al.*, Civil Case No. 3:17-cv-02517-DMS-JMA
25 (S.D. Cal. Feb. 15, 2018) (Order Denying Motion to Proceed IFP and Dismissing Civil
26 Action for Failing to State a Claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) and without
27 leave to amend) (Doc. No. 6) (“strike three”); and

28 4) *Chatman v. Super 8 Motel Co., et al.*, Civil Case No. 3:18-cv-00213-BAS-

1 NLS (S.D. Cal. Feb. 20, 2018) (Order Granting Motion to Proceed IFP and Dismissing
2 Civil Action for Failing to State a Claim pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) and
3 without leave to amend) (Doc. No. 6) (“strike four”).¹

4 Accordingly, because Plaintiff has, while incarcerated, accumulated more than
5 three “strikes” pursuant to § 1915(g), and he fails to make a plausible allegation that he
6 faced imminent danger of serious physical injury at the time he filed his Complaint, he is
7 not entitled to the privilege of proceeding IFP in this action. *See Cervantes*, 493 F.3d at
8 1055; *Rodriguez v. Cook*, 169 F.3d 1176, 1180 (9th Cir. 1999) (finding that 28 U.S.C.
9 § 1915(g) “does not prevent all prisoners from accessing the courts; it only precludes
10 prisoners with a history of abusing the legal system from continuing to abuse it while
11 enjoying IFP status”); *see also Franklin v. Murphy*, 745 F.2d 1221, 1231 (9th Cir. 1984)
12 (“[C]ourt permission to proceed IFP is itself a matter of privilege and not right.”).

13 **II. Motion to Appoint Counsel**

14 In addition, Plaintiff has filed a Motion to Appoint Counsel pursuant to 28 U.S.C.
15 § 1915(e)(1) (Doc. No. 3).

16 However, a motion to appoint counsel pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(1)
17 necessarily depends upon Plaintiff’s ability to proceed IFP. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(1)
18 (“The court may request an attorney to represent any person unable to afford counsel.”).
19 It requires that Plaintiff has been determined eligible to proceed pursuant to the IFP
20 statute due to indigence, is within “the sound discretion of the trial court[,] and is granted
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23 ¹ Plaintiff has also been denied leave to proceed IFP pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g) in several subsequent
24 cases: *Chatman v. Cush Honda, et al.*, S.D. Cal. Civil Case No. 3:18-cv-00414-JLS-KSC (March 26, 2018
25 Order) (Doc. No. 5); *Chatman v. Super 8 Motel Corp., et al.*, S.D. Cal. Civil Case No. 3:18-cv-00436-
26 CAB-RBB (March 19, 2018 Order) (Doc. No. 6); *Chatman v. Liquor Store, et al.*, S.D. Cal. Civil Case
27 No. 3:18-cv-00563-GPC-JMA (May 14, 2018 Order) (Doc. No. 8); *Chatman v. Ferrari Newport, et al.*,
28 S.D. Cal. Civil Case No. 3:18-cv-00655-CAB-MDD (May 15, 2018 Order) (Doc. No. 6); *Chatman v.*
Beverly Hills Lamborghini, et al., S.D. Cal. Civil Case No. 3:18-cv-00668-DMS-JMA (April 16, 2018
Order) (Doc. No. 3); *Chatman v. Citibank Corp., et al.*, S.D. Cal. Civil Case No. 3:18-cv-00748-LAB-
AGS (April 23, 2018 Order) (Doc. No. 3); and *Chatman v. Chatman*, S.D. Cal. Civil Case No. 3:18-cv-
00835-CAB-PCL (June 4, 2018 Order) (Doc. No. 5).

1 only in exceptional circumstances.” *Agyeman v. Corr. Corp. of Am.*, 390 F.3d 1101, 1103
2 (9th Cir. 2004). Because Plaintiff has failed to allege the presence of exceptional
3 circumstances here, and is not entitled to proceed IFP pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g) in
4 this case, he is also not entitled to the appointment of counsel under § 1915(e)(1).

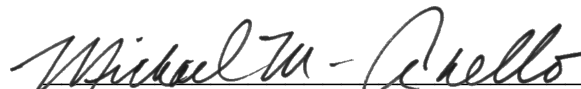
5 **III. Conclusion**

6 For the reasons discussed, the Court:

- 7 1) **DENIES** Plaintiff’s Motions to Proceed IFP (Doc. No. 2) and to Appoint
8 Counsel (Doc. No. 3) as barred by 28 U.S.C. § 1915(g);
9 2) **DISMISSES** this civil action without prejudice for failure to pay the full
10 statutory and administrative \$400 civil filing fee required by 28 U.S.C. § 1914(a);
11 3) **CERTIFIES** that an IFP appeal from this Order would be frivolous and
12 therefore, would not be taken in good faith pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3); and
13 4) **DIRECTS** the Clerk of Court to enter judgment and close the file.

14 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

15 DATE: July 18, 2018

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17 HON. MICHAEL M. ANELLO
18 United States District Judge
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