

HONORABLE RONALD B. LEIGHTON

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
 WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
 AT TACOMA

MICHAEL MCCALL and ARTHUR WEST,

Plaintiff,

v.

INTERCITY TRANSIT, EVE JOHNSON,  
 MARTIN THIES, JOE BAKER, MARY  
 DEAN, TOM GREEN, ED HILDRETH,  
 KAREN ROGERS, SANDRA ROMERO,  
 TOM BJORGEN, BJORGEN BAUER,  
 BJORGEN, PLLC,

Defendants.

Case No. CV10-5564 RBL

ORDER GRANTING DEFENDANTS'  
 MOTION FOR SUMMARY  
 JUDGMENT  
 [Dkt. #27]

THIS MATTER comes before the Court on Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment [Dkt. #27] on all claims against them. For the following reasons, the motion is GRANTED.

**I. FACTS**

This case arises out of an altercation between Plaintiff Michael McCall and the employees of Intercity Transit. On July 1, 2010, McCall was asked to exit an Intercity Transit bus by its driver at the Lacey Transit Center in Olympia, Washington, because of his incessant use of profanity. McCall refused and claimed he had the right to say anything he wanted. When he was blocked from boarding another bus, he became verbally aggressive toward Transit City employees and "[got] up near their faces." [Def. Mot., Dkt. #27, at p. 4]. Operations Supervisor

1 John Lucas issued a 365-day exclusion notice to McCall due to the belief that McCall's behavior  
2 would turn violent.

3 On July 7, McCall called James Merrill, the Operations Director responsible for Intercity  
4 Transit's exclusion notice appeal hearings. Merrill was leaving for a scheduled vacation and  
5 forwarded the message to Phillip Early, the Fixed Route Manager, who returned McCall's phone  
6 call. McCall neither answered nor returned Early's call. When Merrill returned from his  
7 vacation, he found a document from McCall containing a request for a hearing and a request for  
8 public records under the Washington Public Records Act (PRA), RCW 42.56. Merrill returned  
9 McCall's phone call, but McCall never called back. Plaintiff Arthur West submitted an identical  
10 public records request on July 29. Both West and McCall's PRA requests were processed and  
11 the documents were made available on August 3. McCall did not pick up his documents.

12 Plaintiffs West and McCall claim that AWC violated their First and Fourteenth  
13 Amendment rights, conspired to violate those rights, violated the Washington Public Records  
14 Act, falsely arrested and imprisoned them, and generally acted negligently. The Defendants  
15 respond that none of these claims are supported by fact or law. At issue is whether there is any  
16 genuine question of material fact in any claim raised by the Plaintiffs which would preclude  
17 Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment as a matter of law.

## 18 **II. SUMMARY JUDGMENT STANDARD**

19 Summary judgment is appropriate when, viewing the facts in the light most favorable to  
20 the nonmoving party, there is no genuine issue of material fact which would preclude summary  
21 judgment as a matter of law. Once the moving party has satisfied its burden, it is entitled to  
22 summary judgment if the non-moving party fails to present, by affidavits, depositions, answers to  
23 interrogatories, or admissions on file, "specific facts showing that there is a genuine issue for  
24 trial." *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 324 (1986). "The mere existence of a scintilla of  
25 evidence in support of the non-moving party's position is not sufficient." *Triton Energy Corp. v.*  
26 *Square D Co.*, 68 F.3d 1216, 1221 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1995). Factual disputes whose resolution would not  
27 affect the outcome of the suit are irrelevant to the consideration of a motion for summary  
28 judgment. *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 248 (1986). In other words,

1 “summary judgment should be granted where the nonmoving party fails to offer evidence from  
2 which a reasonable [fact finder] could return a [decision] in its favor.” *Triton Energy*, 68 F.3d at  
3 1220.

### 4 **III. DISCUSSION**

5 Even in the light most favorable to the Plaintiffs, there is no evidence from which a  
6 reasonable jury could return a verdict in Plaintiffs’ favor on any claim.

#### 7 **A. Intercity Transit did not violate McCall’s right to free speech as a matter of law.**

8 Plaintiffs claim that Defendants violated Plaintiff McCall’s First Amendment right when  
9 he was denied access to Intercity Transit buses on the basis of his speech. Defendant argues that  
10 McCall was not unconstitutionally excluded. The First Amendment right to free speech excludes  
11 obscene, lewd, and fighting words. *Chaplinsky v. N.H.*, 315 U.S. 568, 571 (1942). McCall’s  
12 exclusion pursuant to Intercity policy for incessant use of aggressive language does not violate  
13 his First Amendment rights.  
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15 Even if McCall’s profanity was protected speech, Intercity Transit may enforce  
16 reasonable speech restrictions within their property. A public bus system is a nonpublic fora,  
17 unintended for public discourse. *Lehman v. Shaker Heights*, 418 U.S. 298, 303–04, 94 S. Ct.  
18 2714 (1974). Defendants may therefore place reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on  
19 speech on their buses. *Id.* The Intercity Transit Rules of Conduct do exactly that, prohibiting  
20 obscene language as well as any harassing behavior inciting a “breach of peace.” [Merrill Decl.,  
21 Dkt. #9, at p. 1]. Defendants applied their Rules in excluding McCall from the bus, and the  
22 exclusion was reasonable. McCall’s language created an offensive and unsafe environment for  
23 drivers and passengers, and undermined Intercity Transit’s purpose to provide safe and effective  
24 public transportation.  
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1 Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment on the Plaintiffs' First Amendment claim is  
2 GRANTED, and the claim is DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE.

3 **B. Plaintiffs' Fourteenth Amendment claim is unsupported.**

4 Plaintiffs claim that Defendants violated their Fourteenth Amendment right to  
5 transportation. Defendants respond that Plaintiffs cannot support this claim with fact or law.  
6 The Fourteenth Amendment protects a citizen's right to remain in a public place, and to move  
7 from one place to another. *Chicago v. Morales*, 527 U.S. 41, 53–54, 119 S. Ct. 1849 (1999).  
8 Neither Plaintiff offers any evidence or argument to support the claim that they were  
9 unconstitutionally denied these rights. McCall was not unconstitutionally denied transportation;  
10 he was reasonably excluded for a temporary period because of his distracting and unsafe  
11 behavior. Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment on the Plaintiffs' Fourteenth Amendment  
12 claim is GRANTED, and the claim is DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE.  
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15 **C. Plaintiffs' §1985 and §1986 claims are unsupported.**

16 Plaintiffs allege that Intercity Transit conspired to violate their constitutional rights. To  
17 properly bring a claim under 42 U.S.C. §1985 and §1986, a plaintiff must allege that the  
18 defendant conspired to deprive him of his First or Fourteenth Amendment rights. Because both  
19 Plaintiffs' First and Fourteenth Amendment claims are without merit, these claims are meritless  
20 as well. Defendants' Motion for Summary Judgment on the Plaintiffs' §1985 and §1986 claims  
21 are GRANTED, and the claims are DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE.  
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24 **D. Plaintiffs' negligence claims are unsupported.**

25 Plaintiffs' negligence theory is unclear, but seems to rely on the public duty doctrine.  
26 Plaintiff West alleges that Defendants' counsel has shown "deliberate indifference" and thereby  
27 violated a "clearly established duty of conscientious service to the public." [Decl. of Pl. West,  
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1 Dkt. #37, at p. 3–4]. But a public entity must exercise a duty of care when it owes that duty “to  
2 the injured plaintiff,” not to the public in general. *Obsborn v. Mason County*, 157 Wn.2d 18, 27,  
3 134 P.3d 197 (2006). The negligence claim is therefore without merit, the Defendants’ Motion  
4 for Summary Judgment is GRANTED, and the claim is DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE.

5 **E. Plaintiffs’ false arrest and imprisonment claims are unsupported.**

6 To establish a false imprisonment or false arrest claim, a plaintiff must show that the  
7 defendant restrained him without legal authority, or that his right to personal liberty was  
8 otherwise violated. *Bender v. Seattle*, 99 Wn.2d 582, 591, 664 P.2d 492 (1983). Plaintiffs show  
9 neither, and fail to address the claim completely in their response to Defendants’ Summary  
10 Judgment Motion. Defendants’ Motion for Summary Judgment on the Plaintiffs’ false arrest and  
11 imprisonment claims are GRANTED, and those claims are DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE.

12 **F. Plaintiffs’ Public Records Act claims have no basis in fact.**

13 Under the Washington State Public Records Act, RCW 45.56, state agencies must  
14 respond to a citizen’s request for public records. Plaintiff West claims that Defendants “failed to  
15 respond fully” to his request for public records in violation of the PRA, and accuses the  
16 Defendants of “silent withholding” and “destroying” documents. [Decl. of Pl. West, Dkt. #37, at  
17 p. 3]. Plaintiff McCall claims that the Defendants committed a “blatant and cold blooded act of  
18 spoliation of material evidence.” [Pl. McCall’s Reply, Dkt. #35, at p. 5]. But Plaintiffs provide  
19 no evidence to show that AWC withheld or purposefully destroyed any document. Intercity  
20 Transit responded to the requests in a reasonable amount of time, and made the records available  
21 to both West and McCall. Defendants’ Motion for Summary Judgment on the Plaintiffs’ PRA  
22 claims are GRANTED, and the claims are DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE.  
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