

NONPRECEDENTIAL DISPOSITION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 June 20, 2025*

Decided August 26, 2026

Before

DAVID F. HAMILTON, *Circuit Judge*

MICHAEL Y. SCUDDER, *Circuit Judge*

CANDACE JACKSON-AKIWUMI, *Circuit Judge*

No. 24-2631

JOHN A. HAWKINS,
Plaintiff-Appellant,

v.

NATHAN ANGLE, et al.,
Defendants-Appellees.

Appeal from the United States District
Court for the Northern District of Indiana,
South Bend Division.

No. 3:23-CV-695-JD-AZ

Jon E. DeGuilio,
Judge.

ORDER

John Hawkins (who prefers Hawkins-el), an Indiana prisoner, challenges the dismissal of his complaint alleging due process violations in connection with disciplinary hearings at which he was sanctioned with restitution. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The district court dismissed the complaint for failure to state a claim. We affirm.

* 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).

I.

The following facts are drawn from Hawkins-el's complaint and publicly available court records of which we may take judicial notice.¹ On the morning of April 22, 2022, Hawkins-el got into an altercation with a sergeant and a correctional officer. He was charged with two counts of battery that became the subject of separate disciplinary hearings. At each hearing, the disciplinary officer found Hawkins-el guilty and entered restitution sanctions against him—one for up to \$50,000 and one for up to \$1,000. The hearing officer prepared separate requests for remittance related to the restitution, and a team manager signed Hawkins-el's name to them. On June 22, the warden granted Hawkins-el new hearings (for reasons not reflected in the record). Despite the warden's ruling, the restitution sanctions were applied to Hawkins-el's trust accounts, presumably to reflect Hawkins-el's \$51,000 debt to the institution. Hawkins-el contested the sanctions, filing grievances to remove them based on the warden's decision that new hearings needed to be held. But the sanctions remained on his account.

In August, disciplinary officer Nathan Angle held two rehearings—one relating Hawkins-el's battery of the sergeant and one relating to his battery of the officer. At the former, Angle reviewed the sergeant's report, which described an incident where Hawkins-el struck the sergeant in the face multiple times, bloodying his eye; shoved the sergeant into a wall; and resisted an officer who had intervened by pinning her to a bed until the sergeant subdued him with a chemical agent. The report included the sergeant's request for restitution for medical expenses to cover injuries that necessitated outside treatment. Angle found Hawkins-el guilty of battery and assessed "up to \$50,000 for medical expenses" based on the "extreme pain" caused.

A week later, at the rehearing related to the officer's battery, Angle reviewed a report completed by an investigator who reviewed video footage of the altercation and interviewed the correctional officer. According to this report, the video showed that the officer intervened once Hawkins-el attacked the sergeant, and the officer stated later that she suffered a facial or scalp contusion and laceration on her lip. The investigator

¹ To piece together gaps in the narrative that Hawkins-el recounts in his complaint, we—like the district court—take judicial notice of documents filed in his habeas cases that relate to the disciplinary hearings at hand. *See Hawkins-el v. Vanihel*, 2:22-CV-550-JRS-MKK (S.D. Ind. May 8, 2024); *Hawkins-el v. Vanihel*, 1:22-CV-2331-SEB-CSW (S.D. Ind. Nov. 29, 2023).

also noted that the sergeant and the officer were sent to a hospital for serious injuries. Angle found Hawkins-el guilty of this battery and sanctioned him with up to \$1,000 for medical expenses.

In August 2023, Hawkins-el filed his lawsuit alleging that correctional staff (including Angle) denied him due process at his disciplinary hearings in violation of his rights under the Fourteenth Amendment. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1983. He asserted that Angle assessed \$51,000 in restitution without supporting medical records, that the placement of sanctions in that amount on his trust account prompted Angle at the rehearing to re-sanction him with the same restitution amount, and that the team manager committed fraud by writing his name on the requests for remittance.

The district court screened the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A and dismissed it for failure to state a claim. As the court explained, the requirements of due process are satisfied if “some evidence” supports the prison disciplinary decision, and here the conduct reports alone provided sufficient evidence for the restitution sanctions, especially since the officers’ injuries were documented as serious enough to need outside medical treatment. As for the charge of Angle’s bias, the court found no evidence to suggest that his awareness of the prior restitution sanctions influenced his rulings on rehearing. Finally, the court dismissed as implausible Hawkins-el’s claims of fraud against the team manager who allegedly signed Hawkins-el’s name on the remittance slips; the slips do not purport to contain forged signatures, the court pointed out, because the team manager specifically wrote “Unable to sign” in the offender signature box below a printed version of Hawkins-el’s name.

II.

On appeal, Hawkins-el first argues that the district court impermissibly considered the documents filed in his habeas cases when rendering its decision. But district courts may take judicial notice of matters of public record that are not subject to reasonable dispute. *See* FED. R. EVID. 201; *Fosnight v. Jones*, 41 F.4th 916, 922 (7th Cir. 2022). The court here properly took notice of the documents filed as part of court records in other litigation brought by Hawkins-el and used their contents to assess the information presented at his disciplinary hearings.

Hawkins-el next challenges the district court’s determination that the restitution amounts were supported by sufficient evidence. Key evidence that is unaccounted for, he contends, are the officers’ medical bills, to which he says he is entitled under the

Disciplinary Code for Incarcerated Adults, number 02-04-101, and has been denied despite repeated requests.

The district court rightly concluded that the evidence was sufficient to support the restitution amounts Angle assessed against Hawkins-el to pay for medical treatment. Due process requires only “some evidence” to support prison discipline that deprives a prisoner of a protected interest (like money in his trust account). *See Superintendent Mass. Corr. Inst. Walpole v. Hill*, 472 U.S. 445, 447 (1985). The evidence must bear some indicia of reliability but need cross only this “meager” threshold. *Scruggs v. Jordan*, 485 F.3d 934, 941 (7th Cir. 2007). The conduct reports—both of which detail the severity of the injuries and confirm that the staff needed outside treatment—meet this standard. The sergeant’s report states that Hawkins-el struck him in the head several times causing his left eye to bleed and creating double-vision. And the investigator’s report states that the officer was seen after the altercation bending at the waste and appearing like she could not breathe, and that she had lacerations. *See Wilson v. Castaneda*, 143 F.4th 814, 819 (7th Cir. 2025) (conduct reports confirming that injured inmate was sent to outside hospital for treatment, albeit not so precise as to specify a restitution figure, were “some evidence” to support restitution award), *cert. denied*, 224 L. Ed. 2d 499 (Apr. 20, 2026).

Finally, Hawkins-el challenges the district court’s determination that Angle was not biased by the presence of the restitution sanctions on his trust account at the time of the rehearing. In Hawkins-el’s view, the sanctions signaled his guilt to Angle and influenced Angle to reimpose restitution sanctions in the same amount. But adjudicators are entitled to a presumption of honesty and integrity, and Angle’s knowledge of the outcome of Hawkins-el’s previous disciplinary hearings is not sufficient to support allegations of bias. *See Piggie v. Cotton*, 342 F.3d 660, 666 (7th Cir. 2003); *see also Liteky v. United States*, 510 U.S. 540, 551 (1994) (judges not biased by what they learn in earlier proceedings).

AFFIRMED

JACKSON-AKIWUMI, *Circuit Judge*, concurring. Because I am bound by this court’s precedent, I concur. That said, for the reasons I explained in my dissent in *Wilson v. Castaneda*, I believe this court is once again misapplying the “some evidence” standard articulated by the Supreme Court in *Superintendent, Mass. Corr. Inst., Walpole v. Hill*, 472 U.S. 445 (1985). *See* 143 F.4th 814, 820–23 (7th Cir. 2025) (Jackson-Akiwumi, J., dissenting). Here, as in *Wilson*, a prison has imposed restitution as a sanction for injuries

an inmate caused others to suffer. The estimated restitution amount—a tremendous sum—is purportedly tied to the victims’ medical expenses. But the prison provides no evidence showing how it estimated the amount Hawkins-El must pay. There is no link between the estimated restitution amount he owes and the injuries he inflicted on the victims.

Due process calls for more. I continue to read *Hill* as requiring prisons to provide “some evidence” connecting the estimated restitution to the estimated cost of a victim’s medical services. Nevertheless, because *Wilson* is controlling, I concur in the judgment.