

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

In the
United States Court of Appeals
For the Seventh Circuit

No. 22-2870

ANTONIO M. SMITH,

Plaintiff-Appellant,

v.

JOHN KIND, *et al.*,

*Defendants-Appel-
lees.*

Appeal from the United States District Court for the
Eastern District of Wisconsin.

No. 2:18-cv-01569-PP – **Pamela Pepper**, *Chief
Judge.*

ARGUED DECEMBER 6, 2024 – DECIDED MAY 30, 2025

Before HAMILTON, SCUDDER, and LEE, *Circuit
Judges.*

SCUDDER, *Circuit Judge*. Nearly 50 days into a hunger strike, Antonio Smith refused a correctional officer's order to exit his cell for a daily wellness check. So for three days, officers entered Smith's cell, assisted him into a wheelchair, and transported him to the prison's health unit—all without incident. But perhaps frustrated by the noncompliance, Captain Jay Van Lanen changed course on day four by resorting to pepper spray for the extraction, knowing that Smith had a medical contraindication to the spray. Smith reacted to the spray by gasping for breath for about eight minutes, only then to find himself placed naked in a cold cell for the next 23 hours. Because we conclude that a jury could find that both actions—using pepper spray and housing Smith in the frigid cell—lacked a legitimate penological purpose and thus violated the Eighth Amendment, we disagree with the district court's grant of summary judgment for the defendants on that ground. But in the end, troubled though we are by what Smith endured, the principle of qualified immunity leads us to affirm.

I

A

At the summary judgment stage, we view the facts in the light most favorable to the nonmoving party, here Antonio Smith. See *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 255 (1986). By his telling, the situation unfolded as follows.

In October 2017 Smith began a prolonged hunger strike to protest prison conditions at Green Bay Correctional Institution in Wisconsin. Pursuant to prison policy, Smith had reported to the prison's health unit for 45 days, each time declining to submit to a wellness check. On day 46, however, he declined to leave

his cell, believing that prison policy allowed a nurse to come to him. A nurse did indeed go to Smith's cell that day to document his refusal to submit to the wellness check.

The following day correctional officers once again directed Smith to leave his cell to go to the health unit. Having received authorization to use force to gain Smith's compliance, a correctional officer entered the cell with a taser drawn as Smith lay prone on his bed in a so-called "surrendering ritual"—hands behind his back, legs crossed at the ankles, and facing the wall. An extraction team followed closely behind and placed Smith in handcuffs and leg restraints before sitting him in a mobile restraint chair, essentially a wheel-chair, which allowed them to transport him to the health unit. Smith continued to refuse orders to leave his cell, so the team followed this same procedure the next day. And when Smith refused for the fourth time, a new correctional officer, Captain Jay Van Lanen, took charge of the extraction and repeated the same process.

But on November 28, 2017, when Smith refused to walk to the health unit for the fifth time, the process changed again. For reasons not clear in the record, the officers elected to videotape this extraction. So although we continue to view genuine factual disputes in favor of Smith, we will defer to the video footage if it "firmly settles a factual issue." *Horton v. Pobjecky*, 883 F.3d 941, 944 (7th Cir. 2018).

Captain Van Lanen gathered a four-man extraction team outside the restrictive housing unit where Smith was housed. He stated that the extraction techniques used the previous three days were no longer suitable. Elaborating, Van Lanen said that Smith had "an extensive violent history with assigning hits on

the streets to have people killed, assault[ing] within the prison system, and assault[ing] in general throughout his prison career.” Smith had also grown accustomed to the previous extraction method, Van Lanen observed, and the team had no way of knowing whether he had a weapon in his cell. Finally, Van Lanen explained that, because Smith was on a hunger strike, it was important to observe whether he could walk to the health unit, rather than be wheeled in a restraint chair. On that basis, he believed it necessary to alter their approach for this extraction, adding that, although Smith had a medical contraindication to pepper spray, Security Director John Kind had authorized its use.

Donning full tactical gear, the extraction team entered the housing unit and approached Smith’s cell. Lying on his bed, Smith removed his blanket to allow the officers to see his full body and assumed the so-called surrendering ritual. For five minutes, Captain Van Lanen urged Smith to come to the cell door. Smith ignored the instruction.

Van Lanen then informed Smith of his intent to use pepper spray to gain compliance and reminded him about his contraindication to the spray. When Smith did not budge, Van Lanen deployed a burst of the spray through his cell window, immediately triggering Smith’s asthma. The video shows that, for eight minutes, Smith had difficulty breathing, seemed disoriented, and was drooling, coughing, spitting, and moaning. While Smith continued to gasp for air, Van Lanen ordered him to remove his clothes and comply with a strip search. Although he struggled to compose himself, Smith obeyed the order.

After handcuffing Smith, still naked, the extraction team covered his genitals with a towel. They then

helped him to his feet and walked with him down the hallway to the health unit where he refused a shower and wellness check. Instead of returning Smith to his cell, as done the three previous days, the officers placed him in a “control cell” used for disruptive inmates. Van Lanen informed Smith he could request a shower and soap at any time and said he would return to discuss “clothing and stuff.” This discussion occurred around noon on November 28.

Smith offered evidence that the control cell was very cold the night of November 28. By his account, the heating vent blew air equivalent to the outside temperature, which, during his stay in the cell, ranged from 25 to 57 degrees Fahrenheit. All the while, the control cell had no mattress or bedding, and Smith no clothes. And although Captain Van Lanen’s past practice involved placing a smock, clothing, and other permitted property in a security box attached to the cell regardless of whether an inmate requests such items, he did not do so for Smith.

Three and a half hours after being placed in the cell, Smith requested clothing, bedding, and a mattress from Lieutenant Timothy Retzlaff. He also complained of the cold and asked to be moved to a warmer cell. Retzlaff informed Smith that he needed to check with Captain Van Lanen. Twelve hours later, another officer approached Smith and proposed an offer: if Smith submitted to future medical evaluations, he could have a smock; if not, he would remain naked and cold. Smith declined the offer.

Smith continued waiting for Lieutenant Retzlaff to return with word from Captain Van Lanen. But word never came. So day turned to night. And night turned to day. And 23 hours after Van Lanen placed him in the control cell, there Smith remained, naked

and freezing. He described his time in the cell as painful, adding that he could not sleep and spent most of the 23 hours on his feet.

B

In time Smith invoked 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and filed a complaint in federal court alleging that various correctional officers violated his constitutional rights. After screening, the district court allowed him to proceed on his Eighth Amendment excessive force claims against Captain Van Lanen for using pepper spray and Security Director John Kind for authorizing its use; an Eighth Amendment conditions-of-confinement claim against Van Lanen and Lieutenant Retzlaff stemming from Smith's night in the control cell; and an Eighth Amendment excessive force claim against officers Alexander Bonis, John Diedrick, and Cole Meyer for alleged misconduct during their escort of Smith to the health unit following the use of pepper spray. The defendants moved for summary judgment on each claim, and the district court, seeing no Eighth Amendment violations, granted their motion in its entirety.

Smith now appeals.

II

Summary judgment is appropriate when there is “no genuine dispute as to any material fact,” and the moving party is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(a). In reviewing the district court's summary judgment ruling, we proceed on “a clean slate, drawing all reasonable inferences from the record in favor of [Smith] as the non-movant.” *Xiong v. Bd. of Regents of Univ. of Wis. Sys.*, 62 F.4th 350, 353 (7th Cir. 2023).

Smith alleges three Eighth Amendment violations. A viable Eighth Amendment claim contains both an objective and subjective component. See *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 825, 834 (1994). The objective component requires Smith to show that the officers' actions were "objectively 'harmful enough' to establish a constitutional violation." *Hudson v. McMillian*, 503 U.S. 1, 8 (1992) (quoting *Wilson v. Seiter*, 501 U.S. 294, 303 (1991)). As for the subjective component, Smith must establish that the defendants "acted wantonly and with a sufficiently culpable state of mind." *Lunsford v. Bennett*, 17 F.3d 1574, 1579 (7th Cir. 1994) (citing *Wilson*, 501 U.S. at 297).

The defendants urge us to affirm the district court's ruling that they acted at all times in good faith, without wantonness and within constitutional bounds. They also invite us to affirm on the alternative ground of qualified immunity. We travel the latter path.

"The doctrine of qualified immunity" is an affirmative defense that "shields officials from civil liability so long as their conduct 'does not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known.'" *Mullenix v. Luna*, 577 U.S. 7, 11 (2015) (quoting *Pearson v. Callahan*, 555 U.S. 223, 231 (2009)). Once a defendant raises the defense, "it becomes the plaintiff's burden to defeat it." *Jewett v. Anders*, 521 F.3d 818, 823 (7th Cir. 2008).

To overcome qualified immunity, Smith must clear two hurdles. First, he must show that the officers violated his constitutional rights. Second, he must demonstrate that those rights were clearly established at the time of the violation. See *Pearson*, 555 U.S. at 232. Courts have discretion to begin with the

second step to refrain from ruling on potentially difficult constitutional questions. See *id.* at 236. This approach, the Supreme Court has explained, aligns with principles of constitutional avoidance and can save “substantial expenditure of scarce judicial resources on difficult questions that have no effect on the outcome of the case.” *Id.* at 236–37.

But skipping the first question has its drawbacks. Continued avoidance of constitutional questions, the Supreme Court likewise has recognized, stunts the development of constitutional precedent. See *id.* at 236 (recognizing that following “the two-step procedure promotes the development of constitutional precedent and is especially valuable with respect to questions that do not frequently arise in cases in which a qualified immunity defense is unavailable”); *Camreta v. Greene*, 563 U.S. 692, 704–06 (2011) (observing that constitutional avoidance “sometimes does not fit the qualified immunity situation because it threatens to leave standards of official conduct permanently in limbo” and explaining that “constitutional determinations” in qualified immunity cases are “self-consciously designed” to “establish[] controlling law and prevent[] invocations of immunity in later cases”).

This downside is especially evident when we look to the demanding standard for showing that a right is “clearly established”: a plaintiff must point to “existing precedent” that puts the “statutory or constitutional question beyond debate”—no doubt a monumental task if there is little constitutional precedent to consider. *Ashcroft v. al-Kidd*, 563 U.S. 731, 741 (2011). Recognizing that both approaches have a proper time and place, the Supreme Court leaves it to the “sound discretion” of the lower courts to determine the order of decision. See *Pearson*, 555 U.S. at 236.

We exercise that discretion here to consider the first prong and resolve whether Smith demonstrated a constitutional violation for each of his three claims. Doing so allows us to clarify Eighth Amendment law in our circuit and establish future constitutional boundaries to what, if Smith’s account is taken as true, we see as a serious and disproportionate correctional response to an inmate’s noncompliance with an officer’s directives. See *Camreta*, 563 U.S. at 705 (explaining that the purpose of allowing courts the discretion to reach the constitutional question is “to promote clarity—and observance—of constitutional rules”).

A

1

We begin with Smith’s Eighth Amendment excessive force claims arising from the use of pepper spray. Smith advances this claim against Captain Van Lanen, the correctional officer who deployed the spray and led the cell-extraction efforts, as well as John Kind, the Green Bay prison’s Security Director. Because Smith has provided no evidence that Kind acted with wantonness in authorizing Van Lanen’s use of force to facilitate his extraction, we affirm the district court’s grant of summary judgment in Kind’s favor. The analysis for Van Lanen is not so straightforward, however.

Captain Van Lanen does not dispute that his use of pepper spray satisfies the objective harm component of Smith’s Eighth Amendment claim. So we consider only whether he acted with the requisite intent-wantonness. See *Wilson*, 501 U.S. at 302. “Wantonness,” the Supreme Court has explained, “does not have a fixed meaning but must be determined with ‘due regard for differences in the kind of conduct

against which an Eighth Amendment objection is lodged.” *Id.* (quoting *Whitley v. Albers*, 475 U.S. 312, 320 (1986)). Experience shows that excessive force claims often arise in contexts where correctional officers are required to act “in haste, under pressure, and frequently without the luxury of a second chance,” such as in quelling a riot or other disturbance. *Whitley*, 475 U.S. at 320. Correctional officers “must balance the threat unrest poses to inmates, prison workers, administrators, and visitors against the harm inmates may suffer if guards use force.” *Hudson*, 503 U.S. at 6.

Recognizing the difficulty of balancing these competing concerns, the Supreme Court has held that Eighth Amendment excessive force claims require a “very high state of mind”: a correctional officer’s use of force only qualifies as “unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain” if it is applied not “in a good-faith effort to maintain or restore discipline,” but “maliciously and sadistically to cause harm.” *Wilson*, 501 U.S. at 302; *Hudson*, 503 U.S. at 6.

Because direct evidence of intent rarely exists, several factors inform whether “the use of force could plausibly have been thought necessary, or instead evinced such wantonness with respect to the unjustified infliction of harm as is tantamount to a knowing willingness that it occur.” *Whitley*, 475 U.S. at 321. Those factors include examining the need for force, the threat posed by the inmate as reasonably perceived by the responsible official, the relationship between the need for force and the amount of force used, and any efforts made to temper the severity of a forceful response. See *id.*; see also *Hudson*, 503 U.S. at 7. Applying these factors, we conclude that a reasonable jury could infer that Captain Van Lanen’s deployment

of pepper spray into Smith's cell under the circumstances presented here was malicious and sadistic.

We, of course, recognize that correctional officers have broad leeway to exercise force when a situation presents a threat to immediate safety. See *Whitley*, 475 U.S. at 321 (explaining that deference to prison administrators "carries special weight" when the "ever-present potential for violent confrontation and conflagration" ripens into *actual* unrest and conflict" (citation omitted) (quoting *Jones v. N.C. Prisoners' Lab. Union, Inc.*, 433 U.S. 119, 132 (1977)); *Lewis v. Downey*, 581 F.3d 467, 477 (7th Cir. 2009) (observing that aggressive behavior "increases the need for force and often poses a threat to the security officers"). But viewing the facts in Smith's favor, as we must, a jury could find that he posed no such threat at the time Captain Van Lanen deployed pepper spray into his cell.

Remember, foremost, that officers had entered Smith's cell to facilitate his extraction for three straight days before Captain Van Lanen chose to resort to pepper spray. Each of those extractions proceeded without incident in the same routine way, and nothing in the record suggests that Smith acted aggressively toward correctional officers or threatened violence in the future. To be sure, in the pre-extraction meeting, Van Lanen stated that Smith had a history of assaultive behavior while in prison. But the summary judgment record contains no documented instances of Smith engaging in any violence while incarcerated. And Smith, for his part, insists that he had no history of violence while incarcerated.

But even on the generous assumption that Van Lanen's perception that Smith had a history of violent behavior was reasonable, see *McCottrell v. White*, 933

F.3d 651, 668–69 (7th Cir. 2019), on this record we have a hard time seeing his decision to change course—to shift from entering Smith’s cell without incident to using pepper spray to which Smith had a medical contraindication—as justified. For starters, if Smith had a reputation of being assaultive on the day Van Lanen used pepper spray, then he surely had that reputation the day before. Van Lanen, however, offered no explanation for why Smith’s alleged past behavior did not deter him from entering Smith’s cell the previous day. So we are puzzled as to what prompted Van Lanen to discontinue a successful extraction method in favor of one that he knew could cause complications for Smith’s health.

Nor can we lose sight of the bigger picture: a four-man extraction team donned full tactical gear and faced a single, unarmed inmate, lethargic after reportedly starving himself for more than 50 days. See *Lewis*, 581 F.3d at 477 (considering that an inmate “was merely lying on his bunk, weak and sluggish from more than ten days without food” when analyzing a correctional officer’s need for force); see also *Abbott v. Sangamon County*, 705 F.3d 706, 727 (7th Cir. 2013) (discussing the “general proposition” that using pepper spray on a subdued subject is excessive).

Captain Van Lanen also attempted to justify his resort to pepper spray by suggesting that Smith may have had a weapon. But here too we see, and Van Lanen has identified, no evidence supporting that speculation: Smith was in restrictive housing, had not used or threatened to use a weapon during previous extractions, and his hands were visible and empty at all times. Van Lanen has likewise failed to explain why his concern about Smith harboring a weapon suddenly developed – he extracted Smith from his cell

without pepper spray and without incident just the day before.

Still, we recognize that an immediate threat to safety is not the only circumstance in which a correctional officer can appropriately use force. The Supreme Court has emphasized many times over that correctional officers receive special deference in their approach to restoring or maintaining order and discipline. See, e.g., *Bell v. Wolfish*, 441 U.S. 520, 547 (1979); *Whitley*, 475 U.S. at 322; *Hudson*, 503 U.S. at 6. That deference applies not only to materialized threats to prison order and inmate misconduct, like fighting or rioting, but also to preventative measures intended to avoid future disturbances. See *Whitley*, 475 U.S. at 322.

We applied this same principle to reverse a district court's determination that prison officials' use of mace on inmates who repeatedly refused orders to exit their cells violated the Eighth Amendment. See *Soto v. Dickey*, 744 F.2d 1260, 1271 (7th Cir. 1984). The correctional officers in *Soto*, like here with Smith, issued what seemed like non-emergency directives to inmates locked in their cells. See *id.* at 1265–67. But the similarities between the two cases end there.

Many of the inmates in *Soto* had well-known and documented histories of assaulting prison guards and other inmates. See *id.* at 1265. The events leading to the use of pepper spray often involved situations where inmates prone to throwing items (like meal trays) at guards refused to turn over the objects. See *id.* at 1265–66. Put simply, it gives analogy a bad name to see the inmates in *Soto* as like Smith, who was 50 days into a hunger strike and had no demonstrated history of violence within the prison. And while correctional officials entered Smith's cell three

days in a row without incident, the maximum-security prison in *Soto* had developed its policy of using pepper spray as the first response to an inmate's refusal to leave his cell after careful analysis and consideration of the unit's history of disruption and the inmates' past use of makeshift weapons. See *id.* at 1262–65, 1267.

Captain Van Lanen nevertheless insists that, like the guards in *Soto*, he was justified in using pepper spray once Smith refused his orders because “[i]nmates cannot be permitted to decide which orders they will obey, and when they will obey them.” *Id.* at 1267. At that level of generality, we agree—inmates may not pick and choose which orders to obey. But an inmate's passive disobedience, without more, does not in and of itself authorize unrestrained or extreme escalation of force. See *Treats v. Morgan*, 308 F.3d 868, 872–73 (8th Cir. 2002) (“Not every instance of inmate resistance justifies the use of force, and use of pepper spray will not be justified every time an inmate questions orders or seeks redress for an officer's actions.” (citations omitted)). Instead, we consider an inmate's disobedience, along with the surrounding “facts and circumstances,” to determine whether a particular use of force was necessary. *Soto*, 744 F.2d at 1270. Here, several factors—particularly Smith's weakened condition and the history of peaceful and successful extractions on three preceding days—could lead a reasonable jury to find that Van Lanen's use of pepper spray was unnecessary.

Our conclusion that the need for Van Lanen to resort to pepper spray was relatively low informs the corollary analysis of the relationship between the need for force and the amount of force used. If there was little need for force, then even a small amount of

force may be disproportionate. See *McCottrell*, 933 F.3d at 667 (“Obviously, if there was *no* need for the warning shots, then those shots were significantly disproportionate to the need for force.”).

Many inmates may experience pepper spray as a relatively minor use of force. See *Soto*, 744 F.2d at 1262 (“Without exception, the institutional officials and officers were of the opinion that the use of mace was much more humane and effective than a flesh to flesh confrontation with an inmate.”); see also *Roberson v. Torres*, 770 F.3d 398, 406–07 (6th Cir. 2014) (explaining that whether use of pepper spray is preferable to a physical altercation depends on the circumstances). And courts, including ours, have sanctioned the use of pepper spray on noncompliant inmates. See, e.g., *Soto*, 744 F.2d at 1270; *Staples v. Gerry*, 923 F.3d 7, 17–18 (1st Cir. 2019).

But Smith was not the typical inmate. See *Segrain v. Duffy*, 118 F.4th 45, 61 (1st Cir. 2024) (explaining that the “type of physical reaction an incarcerated person has to the pepper spray” matters in an Eighth Amendment excessive force analysis). Not only was he 50 days into a hunger strike, but he also had a documented history of asthma, making the resort to pepper spray all the more dangerous. See *Garvin v. Armstrong*, 236 F.3d 896, 898 (7th Cir. 2001) (“Asthma, depending upon its degree, can be a serious medical condition.”). Captain Van Lanen knew of this danger.

In the final analysis, based on Smith’s version of events, we conclude that a reasonable jury could find in his favor on the excessive force claim against Captain Van Lanen. The evidence supports a “reliable inference” that Van Lanen knew that Smith—on the verge of starvation, with no documented history of

violence while incarcerated—posed no credible threat to officer safety or prison administration. *Whitley*, 475 U.S. at 322. From there a jury could determine that Van Lanen’s opting for a method of force that he knew Smith had a medical contraindication to was so disproportionate to the risks that it could not “plausibly have been thought necessary” and “instead evinced such wantonness with respect to the unjustified infliction of harm as is tantamount to a knowing willingness that it occur.” *Id.* at 321.

2

Having determined that a jury could find that Van Lanen violated Smith’s constitutional rights, we move to the second prong of the qualified immunity analysis: whether that right was clearly established. See *Pearson*, 555 U.S. at 232. It is on this prong that Smith falls short. The fact intensive inquiry that led us to conclude that Van Lanen’s actions violated his right to be free from excessive force precludes us from determining at the requisite level of specificity that the constitutional violation was clearly established enough as to put Van Lanen on notice.

State correctional officers are immune from liability for conduct that “does not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known.” *Kisela v. Hughes*, 584 U.S. 100, 104 (2018) (per curiam) (quoting *White v. Pauly*, 580 U.S. 73, 78–79 (2017) (per curiam)). For a law to be clearly established, “existing precedent must have placed the statutory or constitutional question beyond debate.” *White*, 580 U.S. at 79 (quoting *Mullenix*, 577 U.S. at 12); see *Sabo v. Erickson*, 128 F.4th 836, 844 (7th Cir. 2025) (en banc). Put differently, save for the “rare ‘obvious’” violation, Smith must identify a case that “every reasonable

official would interpret ... to establish the particular rule” he seeks to apply. *District of Columbia v. Wesby*, 583 U.S. 48, 63 (2018) (quoting *Brosseau v. Haugen*, 543 U.S. 194, 199 (2004) (per curiam)).

Smith cannot clear this high bar. Returning our attention to *Soto*, he contends that Captain Van Lanen violated his clearly established right by using “mace or other chemical agents in quantities greater than necessary.” 744 F.2d at 1270. But the Supreme Court has cautioned courts against reasoning from broad principles when considering whether a right is clearly established for qualified immunity purposes. See *Kisela*, 584 U.S. at 104. Especially in excessive force cases, where “it is sometimes difficult for an officer to determine how the relevant legal doctrine ... will apply to the factual situation the officer confronts,” correctional officers are entitled to qualified immunity “unless existing precedent ‘squarely governs’ the *specific* facts at issue.” *Id.* (emphasis added) (quoting *Mullenix*, 577 U.S. at 308–09); see also *Smith v. Finkley*, 10 F.4th 725, 742 (7th Cir. 2021) (observing that specificity is “particularly important” in excessive force cases, “as it can be difficult to determine how the law will apply to a factual situation”).

After examining the specific facts before us, we cannot conclude that a reasonable correctional officer would have known that using pepper spray to extract Smith from his cell violated the Eighth Amendment. Indeed, in *Soto*—the only controlling case Smith relies on—we held that the correctional officer *could* deploy pepper spray on non-compliant inmates. See 744 F.2d at 1270–71. No other precedent from our court or the Supreme Court addresses circumstances close enough to those here to defeat qualified immunity.

Nor does Smith’s documented medical contraindication to pepper spray change the outcome. While a close call, we do not view Smith’s account of what transpired here, though very concerning, as falling within that narrow category of cases where the constitutional violation is so severe and blatant as to be obvious. See *Hope v. Pelzer*, 536 U.S. 730, 738 (2002) (holding that correctional officers were not entitled to qualified immunity for handcuffing an inmate to a hitching post for seven hours in extreme heat because “the Eighth Amendment violation was obvious”); *Taylor v. Riojas*, 592 U.S. 7, 8–9 (2020) (per curiam) (reversing a court of appeals’s decision that granted correctional officers qualified immunity for housing an inmate in a sewage-filled, frigidly cold cell for four days because any reasonable officer would know such conditions offend the Eighth Amendment).

We therefore affirm the district court’s grant of summary judgment for Captain Van Lanen on Smith’s Eighth Amendment excessive force claim.

B

1

We next consider whether the conditions Smith faced during his 23 hours in the control cell violated the Eighth Amendment. Here too we conclude that a jury could find in Smith’s favor.

The Constitution allows restrictive and even harsh conditions of confinement. See *Rhodes v. Chapman*, 452 U.S. 337, 347 (1981). What the Constitution does not allow, however, is a deprivation “of the minimal civilized measure of life’s necessities.” *Id.* A prison official who denies an inmate an “identifiable human need such as food, warmth, or exercise,” *Wilson*, 501 U.S. at 304, “violates the Eighth Amendment upon

exhibiting ‘deliberate indifference to a substantial risk of serious harm to an inmate,’” *Thomas v. Blackard*, 2 F.4th 716, 719 (7th Cir. 2021) (quoting *Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 828). To succeed on his Eighth Amendment claim, then, Smith must show that Lieutenant Retzlaff and Captain Van Lanen denied him a human need and did so with deliberate indifference.

Because warmth is one such need, “prisoners have a right to protection from extreme cold.” *Dixon v. Godinez*, 114 F.3d 640, 642 (7th Cir. 1997). Whether an inmate’s exposure to cold rises to a constitutional level depends on “the severity of the cold; its duration; whether the prisoner has alternative means to protect himself from the cold; the adequacy of such alternatives; as well as whether he must endure other uncomfortable conditions as well as cold.” *Id.* at 644. This fact-intensive inquiry “will often be peculiarly appropriate for resolution by the trier of facts.” *Id.* at 643.

Smith spent almost 24 hours in a cell equivalent to the temperature outside. And despite the temperature reaching below freezing at night, he was left naked—given no clothes, no bedding, and no way to protect himself from the cold. See *Wilson*, 501 U.S. at 304 (observing that a low cell temperature at night plus failure to issue blankets can combine to create unconstitutional conditions of confinement). Smith explained that the extreme cold he experienced overnight caused him pain and prevented sleep. On these facts, Smith has done enough to create a genuine dispute of material fact as to whether these conditions meet the “constitutionally necessary minimum protection against severe cold.” *Dixon*, 114 F.3d at 644.

The question then becomes whether Smith has presented evidence that Captain Van Lanen and Lieutenant Retzlaff acted with deliberate indifference.

This requires us to determine if a reasonable jury could conclude that the two defendants had actual knowledge that Smith faced “a substantial risk of serious harm” to his health or safety and, if so, what steps they took to respond to that risk. *Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 847.

Beginning with Captain Van Lanen, a few observations lead us to conclude that a reasonable juror could find that he was deliberately indifferent to Smith’s exposure to extreme cold. *First*, he placed Smith naked in a cold cell surely knowing that it was November 28 in Green Bay, Wisconsin when the temperature would (and did) drop below freezing. Van Lanen did so with full awareness of Smith’s weakened state and pepper spray-induced asthma attack. *Second*, Van Lanen chose not to follow his usual practice of making a smock and bedding available to Smith in the control cell. Nor did he ever return to the cell that night to discuss clothing, even though he promised Smith he would do so.

Viewing these facts in the light most favorable to Smith, a juror could reasonably conclude that Van Lanen was aware of the risk of serious harm to Smith—left naked in a frigid cell overnight—but did nothing, making him deliberately indifferent to that risk. *Id.* at 842 (“Whether a prison official had the requisite knowledge of a substantial risk is a question of fact subject to demonstration in the usual ways, including inference from circumstantial evidence, and a factfinder may conclude that a prison official knew of a substantial risk from the very fact that the risk was obvious.” (citation omitted)); see also *id.* at 842 (“[I]t is enough that the official acted or failed to act despite his knowledge of a substantial risk of serious harm.”).

The analysis is even more straightforward for Lieutenant Retzlaff. Smith asked Retzlaff to provide him with clothes and bedding or move him to a warmer cell. Retzlaff did neither. A jury could therefore infer that he was deliberately indifferent to the serious health risk arising from Smith's exposure to extreme cold.

2

Again though, when it comes to defeating a qualified immunity defense, establishing a constitutional violation is only one step, not the finish line. Smith must also show that the conditions of the control cell were unconstitutional "beyond debate." *Ashcroft*, 563 U.S. at 741. It is at this step that Smith's claim again falls short.

Our case law is clear on the general proposition that inmates have a well-established constitutional right to protection from extreme cold. See, e.g., *Henderson v. DeRobertis*, 940 F.2d 1055, 1059 (7th Cir. 1991). But this statement sweeps too broadly for qualified immunity purposes. To overcome the officers' immunity defense, Smith needs to show that the specific conditions he faced in the control cell were unconstitutional.

Once we view the situation at the appropriate level of particularity, we can locate no case that "squarely governs" Van Lanen's or Retzlaff's conduct. *Brosseau*, 543 U.S. at 201. Before today, we had never held it unconstitutional on closely analogous facts to house an inmate in a cell that ranged in temperature from 25 to 57 degrees over a 23-hour period without clothes or a way to keep warm.

To be sure, Smith points us to a number of cases where we determined that cold cell conditions violated

an inmate's Eighth Amendment rights. But the temperature in those cases was more extreme, see, *e.g.*, *Henderson*, 940 F.2d at 1057 (four days of subzero temperature); *Del Raine v. Williford*, 32 F.3d 1024, 1031 (7th Cir. 1994) (temperature reached 50 degrees below zero during an inmate's strip search), or the duration extended far beyond 23 hours, see, *e.g.*, *Lewis v. Lane*, 816 F.2d 1165, 1166, 1171 (7th Cir. 1987) (cell temperature was around 53 degrees for two months). And while we credit the pain and extreme discomfort Smith says he experienced, we cannot conclude that this constitutional violation was so "obvious" as to avoid the need to point to a closely analogous case. *Wesby*, 583 U.S. at 63 (quoting *Brosseau*, 543 U.S. at 199).

That leaves us to affirm the district court's grant of summary judgment for Van Lanen and Retzlaff on Smith's conditions-of-confinement claim.

C

Smith's final claim concerns the escort from his cell to the health unit after the pepper spray incident. He contends that members of the extraction team—Alexander Bonis, John Diedrick, and Cole Meyer—exercised excessive force by placing him in chokeholds and bending his wrists. We agree with the district court's conclusion that Smith's characterization of his escort is "contradicted by the record, so that no reasonable jury could believe it." *Scott v. Harris*, 550 U.S. 372, 380 (2007).

Video footage of the extraction confirms that the officers did not behave maliciously while escorting Smith. Because he had difficulty sustaining his own weight, two officers supported Smith by his arms. And despite Smith's assertion otherwise, the video shows

no dragging, chokeholds, or other misconduct. There being no violation of the Eighth Amendment, we affirm the district court's grant of summary judgment for the defendants on this claim.

* * *

For these reasons, we AFFIRM the district court's grant of summary judgment for the defendants on each of Smith's claims.

HAMILTON, *Circuit Judge*, concurring in part and dissenting in part. I agree with most of the analysis and holdings in Judge Scudder's opinion for the court. I agree that a jury could find that defendant Van Lanen violated the Eighth Amendment by using the pepper spray against plaintiff Smith, at least where Van Lanen knew of plaintiff's special vulnerability to that weapon, but that Van Lanen is entitled to qualified immunity on that claim. I also agree that, given the video evidence, we must affirm summary judgment on plaintiff's excessive force claim based on the guards' moving plaintiff to the control cell.

I also agree with the majority's holding that plaintiff offered evidence that would allow a jury to find that defendants Van Lanen and/or Retzlaff imposed conditions of confinement on plaintiff that violated his Eighth Amendment rights. Plaintiff has provided evidence that the defendants intentionally placed him and left him for hours in a cold cell without clothing or blankets or other protection. The majority's holding that a jury could find this deliberate exposure of a prisoner to extreme cold without protection to have been cruel and unusual punishment is clear and important. And the majority wisely chooses to use our discretion to decide step one of the qualified immunity analysis—the merits of the claims—on both the pepper spray claim and the conditions of confinement claim.

I. *Qualified Immunity and Deliberate Exposure to Cold*

With respect, however, I must dissent from the majority's decision to affirm summary judgment for defendants Van Lanen and Retzlaff on the claim for deliberate exposure to cold based on the defense of qualified immunity. The majority reaches that

conclusion by applying what the Supreme Court has called “a rigid, overreliance on factual similarity.” *Hope v. Pelzer*, 536 U.S. 730, 742 (2002). As the majority explains here: “Before today, we had never held it unconstitutional on closely analogous facts to house an inmate in a cell that ranged in temperature from 25 to 57 degrees over a 23-hour period without clothes or a way to keep warm.” Ante at 21. That observation is literally correct but certainly should not be decisive. It loses sight of the long-established and more general standard for qualified immunity: whether a reasonable official in the defendant’s position would have understood that his actions were unlawful. E.g., *Ziglar v. Abbasi*, 582 U.S. 120, 152 (2017); *Hope*, 536 U.S. at 739; *Saucier v. Katz*, 533 U.S. 194, 206 (2001); *Anderson v. Creighton*, 483 U.S. 635, 640 (1987); *Manery v. Lee*, 124 F.4th 1073, 1080 (7th Cir. 2025); *Doxtator v. O’Brien*, 39 F.4th 852, 863 (7th Cir. 2022).

Prisoners have a well-established right not to be subjected to extreme cold, at least without protection from it. For purposes of summary judgment and this appeal, we must assume that these defendants deliberately placed a prisoner “in a cell that ranged in temperature from 25 to 57 degrees over a 23-hour period without clothes or a way to keep warm.” Ante at 21. As the majority opinion explains, several pieces of evidence—including defendant Van Lanen’s typical practice of providing inmates with a smock, his failure to return to discuss clothing with Smith, and the Green Bay weather in late November—would allow a reasonable jury to infer that Van Lanen, Retzlaff, or both were deliberately indifferent to plaintiff Smith’s unprotected exposure to the cold. I respectfully submit that it should have been obvious to a reasonable prison official that such conditions violate a prisoner’s

right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment.

The Supreme Court and our court have long recognized that where the constitutional violation is sufficiently obvious, a plaintiff need not always point to a case that is factually on all fours. *Hope*, 536 U.S. at 740–41; *Ashcroft v. al-Kidd*, 563 U.S. 731, 741 (2011) (collecting cases and explaining: “We do not require a case directly on point, but existing precedent must have placed the statutory or constitutional question beyond debate.”); *Schimandle v. Dekalb County Sheriff’s Office*, 114 F.4th 648, 655 (7th Cir. 2024) (plaintiff need not point to an “identical case”); *Lopez v. Sheriff of Cook County*, 993 F.3d 981, 988 (7th Cir. 2021) (“The prong-two clearly-established-law assessment does not require a case with identical factual circumstances, lest qualified immunity become absolute immunity.”), citing *Kisela v. Hughes*, 584 U.S. 100, 104 (2018). Plaintiff has offered evidence that defendants chose to punish his misconduct by, in effect, refrigerating him—naked and unprotected—for hours. Plaintiff’s evidence is that Van Lanen or Retzlaff or both deliberately exposed him to that cold for purposes of “control.” That last word is a euphemistic way of saying they deliberately subjected him to a practice widely recognized in law as a form of torture to coerce him to change his behavior.

The proper question for qualified immunity is whether a reasonable prison official would have understood it to be unlawful to deliberately expose a naked prisoner to cold conditions in an effort to coerce different behavior. I think the answer is obviously yes. That is the answer based on elementary notions of human decency and dignity. And the answer does not

depend on exactly how cold it was or exactly how many hours the prisoner suffered.

If more specific support is needed for the proposition that it is obviously unconstitutional to deliberately subject a naked prisoner to temperatures equivalent to and colder than a refrigerator, I offer that support in three forms. First, United States law and international covenants to which the United States is a party recognize that deliberately subjecting a prisoner to extreme cold is a form of torture. This means that the actions alleged here could be found to have violated both United States and international law. Second, a good deal of prior case law deals with prison officials trying to manage when prison heating systems break down or when poor maintenance of prison buildings makes them difficult to heat adequately. The general principles applied in those cases should have made it obvious that *deliberately* subjecting a naked prisoner to extreme temperatures is beyond the pale of arguably tolerable conduct. A third form of support is the complete absence of any attempt here, by defendants or the majority opinion, to argue how an official in this situation might have thought this deliberate refrigeration of a naked human being could have been permissible.

II. *The Law and Practice of Torture*

Federal law makes it a crime for a person to engage in torture outside the United States. Torture Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2340 & 2340A. Torture is defined as “an act committed by a person acting under the color of law specifically intended to inflict severe physical or mental pain or suffering (other than pain or suffering incidental to lawful sanctions) upon another person within his custody or physical control.” § 2340(1). The United Nations Convention Against Torture and

Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (most familiar to our court from immigration cases and widely known as the CAT), to which the United States is a party, defines torture as:

any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.

United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment art. 1, Dec. 10, 1984, S. Treaty Doc. No. 100–20, 1465 U.N.T.S. 113–14; see also 8 C.F.R. § 208.18(a)(1) (incorporating a very similar definition into domestic law for asylum purposes); Torture Victim Protection Act of 1991, 106 Stat. 73 § 3(b)(1), note following 28 U.S.C. § 1350 (defining torture in similar terms in statute creating private right of action against torturers).

Deliberately exposing a naked prisoner to extreme cold as asserted here easily fits within both definitions. For the reasons explained in the majority opinion, a jury could find that the defendants “specifically intended to inflict severe physical or mental pain or suffering” on plaintiff Smith while he was in their

custody. 18 U.S.C. § 2340(1). A jury could likewise find that plaintiff was placed in the literally freezing control cell, in order to punish him for an act he committed, “with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity” in violation of the CAT.

The torture definitions in both the Torture Act and the CAT exclude pain and suffering inflicted as part of “lawful sanctions,” but to my knowledge, there is no plausible claim here of any explicit or implicit authority in law to deliberately expose naked Wisconsin prisoners to extreme cold as part of their sentences. Defendants have not tried to argue here that they were authorized by law to deliberately refrigerate a naked prisoner. The defendants have argued instead that plaintiff has the facts wrong, but that is a matter for trial rather than summary judgment.

Extensive international authorities make the point that these general definitions of torture encompass deliberate use of extreme cold to cause pain and suffering. The United Nations Committee Against Torture monitors implementation of the CAT. It has long explained that “using cold air to chill” can amount to torture under the Convention. Rep. of the U.N. Committee Against Torture, *Israel* (“*Report on Israel*”), U.N. GAOR, 52nd Sess., Supp. No. 44 at 38 ¶ 257, U.N. Doc. A/52/44 (Sept. 10, 1997). The same Committee Against Torture also adopted a similar finding from a local human rights body regarding practices in Mexico, explaining that torture in prison included “being undressed and kept in a freezing, air-conditioned room for days at a time.” U.N. Committee Against Torture, 30th Sess., *Report on Mexico* at 35–36 ¶ 165, U.N. Doc. CAT/C/75 (May 26, 2003). More generally, the United Nations Special Rapporteur of

the Commission on Human Rights observed in 2004: “The jurisprudence of both international and regional human rights mechanisms is unanimous in stating” that interrogation methods including “using cold air to chill” violate the “prohibition of torture and ill treatment.” U.N. Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, *Torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment*, ¶ 17, U.N. Doc. A/59/324 (Sept. 1, 2004), quoting *Report on Israel*, *supra*, at ¶ 257.

United States case law on the *deliberate* use of cold against prisoners is, thankfully, relatively sparse, but the available case law clearly indicates it can be a form of torture and that courts virtually take for granted the fact it is unlawful.¹ In *Lhanzom v. Gonzales*, 430 F.3d 833 (7th Cir. 2005), for instance, this court remanded a person’s claim for relief under the Convention Against Torture based on State Department reports documenting torture of Chinese prisoners in Tibet, including “electric shocks, exposure to cold, and severe beating.” *Id.* at 848–49, citing U.S. Department of State, *2005 Country Report on Human*

¹ Members of this court had no difficulty finding that conduct including deliberate exposure of detainees to cold air could amount to torture in *Vance v. Rumsfeld*, 701 F.3d 193, 205–06 (7th Cir. 2012) (en banc) (Wood, J., concurring in the judgment); *id.* at 213 (Hamilton, J., dissenting). The *Vance* majority did not disagree, but did not decide the issue only because the defense in that case did not even try to dispute whether the conduct alleged, including “prolonged exposure to cold,” amounted to torture. *Id.* at 196 (en banc majority); see also *Vance v. Rumsfeld*, 653 F.3d 591, 597, 610–11 (7th Cir. 2011) (vacated panel opinion) (noting that the plaintiffs’ cells were kept “intolerably cold” and that such conditions were clearly unlawful).

Rights Practices: China (March 8, 2006) (<https://perma.cc/39K2-Z35H>).

Several other cases support the principle. In *Al Shimari v. CACI Premier Technology, Inc.*, 300 F. Supp. 3d 758 (E.D. Va. 2018), the plaintiffs had been prisoners at the infamous Abu Ghraib complex operated by the United States in Iraq. Plaintiffs offered evidence that U.S. military contractors had subjected them to a range of abuses that amounted to torture, including “using cold air to chill.” *Id.* at 781–82 (internal quotation marks omitted); see also *id.* at 764, 769, 770 (describing conduct in that case, including deliberately imposed cold). The court carefully reviewed United States and international law and allowed some claims to go forward on the theory that the defendants purposefully aided violations of international law by facilitating abuses that amounted to torture and/or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. See, e.g., *id.* at 777–82 (determining jurisdiction under torture statutes). It explained that “international law and domestic executive and military sources ... clearly identify the abuse experienced by plaintiffs as torture.” *Id.* at 781.²

² Courts and executive agencies have likewise characterized as torture the use of cold water in interrogation and/or confinement. See, e.g., *In re Estate of Marcos Human Rights Litigation*, 910 F. Supp. 1460, 1463 (D. Hawaii 1995) (characterizing as torture the practice of forcing a “detainee while wet and naked to sit before an air conditioner often while sitting on a block of ice”); U.S. Department of State, *2005 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Egypt* (March 8, 2006) (<https://perma.cc/8T3X-3NJF>) (torture practices included “dousing victims with cold water”); U.S. Department of State, *2004 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Yemen* (Feb. 28, 2005) (<https://perma.cc/35NF-V9PX>).

Similarly, in *Cicippio v. Islamic Republic of Iran*, 18 F. Supp. 2d 62 (D.D.C. 1998), a group of former political hostages brought claims alleging torture by Iranian officials. One plaintiff was kept chained on a balcony for an entire winter, during which he developed frostbite on his hands and feet. *Id.* at 66. The court ruled that he had been “tortured” as defined by an old version of the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1605(e) (1997), and entered default judgment for the plaintiffs. *Id.* at 69.

Weighed against these authorities, which are only a sample of a broad international literature on the law and practice of torture, I have found no contrary authorities suggesting that deliberate exposure of a prisoner, especially a naked prisoner, to extreme cold is an accepted and lawful means of punishment. In other words, I find no legal foundation for a prison official in these defendants’ circumstances to have believed his actions could have been lawful.

I am not suggesting that conditions of confinement falling short of torture are acceptable under the Eighth Amendment. But our qualified immunity analysis should recognize actionable violations, without qualified immunity, when officials deliberately impose conditions that amount to torture. See *Padilla v. Yoo*, 678 F.3d 748, 763 & n.10 (9th Cir. 2012) (stating that “the unconstitutionality of torturing a United States citizen was ‘beyond debate’ by 2001” and collecting authorities for the principle).

While leaving an inmate wet *and* cold is distinct from just cold, these authorities further support the idea that a reasonable official should have known it is unlawful to place a naked inmate in freezing or near-freezing conditions.

III. *Broken Furnaces and Drafty Prisons*

A more extensive body of case law concerns prison heating systems that failed in cold weather or drafty prison buildings that were difficult to keep humanely warm in cold weather. The majority cites several of these cases. See ante at 21, citing *Del Raine v. Williford*, 32 F.3d 1024, 1031 (7th Cir. 1994); *Henderson v. DeRobertis*, 940 F.2d 1055, 1059 (7th Cir. 1991); *Lewis v. Lane*, 816 F.2d 1165, 1171 (7th Cir. 1987). It nonetheless concludes that they do not control the outcome here because they do not show that it is unlawful to “house an inmate in a cell that ranged in temperature from 25 to 57 degrees over a 23-hour period without clothes or a way to keep warm.” Ante at 21.

Respectfully, that conclusion misses the point of the cases that is most relevant here. We made clear decades ago in these cases that when a prisoner is being subjected to temperatures like those alleged here—for any reason, including without fault of prison officials—prison officials have a duty to take corrective measures, such as providing extra protective clothing and bedding and repairing heating systems or buildings within a reasonable time. See, e.g., *Henderson*, 940 F.2d at 1059–61 (qualified immunity reversed when prison heating system malfunctioned and defendants took four days to fix it; collecting cases for principle that constitution requires prisoners to “be provided with adequate heat and shelter”); *Lewis*, 816 F.2d at 1171 (vacating summary judgment when plaintiffs provided evidence that defendants maintained cell block between 52 and 54 degrees for several months).

The Supreme Court made the same point more than thirty years ago, writing as self-evident that “a low cell temperature at night combined with a failure

to issue blankets” may establish an Eighth Amendment violation. *Wilson v. Seiter*, 501 U.S. 294, 304 (1991). More recent decisions from this court have reaffirmed the point. See, e.g., *Hill v. Nicholson*, 829 F. App’x 141, 142 (7th Cir. 2020) (plaintiff stated Eighth Amendment claim when officers let him take only cold showers and his cell block was “extremely cold”); *Budd v. Motley*, 711 F.3d 840, 843 (7th Cir. 2013) (“[W]e have observed that jails must meet minimal standards of habitability. This includes adequate bedding and protection from cold, both of which were allegedly lacking here.”); *Antonelli v. Sheahan*, 81 F.3d 1422, 1433 (7th Cir. 1996) (reversing dismissal when prison officials failed to provide blankets despite “extremely cold indoor air temperature”).

Those cases did not draw bright lines based on exactly how cold was too cold or exactly how long the cold conditions lasted. They did make clear that prison officials have a duty under the United States Constitution to respond quickly with protective clothing and bedding. The broken-furnace/drafty-cell cases cannot reasonably be read as offering any support for the cruel idea that a prison official could *deliberately* subject a naked and unprotected prisoner to extreme cold for any length of time.

We recognized that point in *Gillis v. Litscher*, 468 F.3d 488 (7th Cir. 2006), a case with facts extraordinarily similar to this case. In *Gillis*, Wisconsin prison officials left an inmate naked in his cell—without clothing, bedding, or a mattress—for five days as part of a “Behavioral Modification Program.” *Id.* at 489–90. The cell’s vent blew cold air, and the prisoner said that he had to walk around his cell for 14 hours a day just to stay warm. *Id.* at 490. We found that the plaintiff had created an issue of fact sufficient to get his Eighth

Amendment claim past summary judgment. We specifically addressed the intentional nature of the defendants' conduct, explaining that some evidence in the record indicated that the prison officials used Behavioral Modification Programs "as a way to deal with inmates without regard" for Wisconsin law. *Id.* at 494. We also rejected the defendants' qualified immunity defense, explaining tersely that it was well-established that "denial of shelter, heat, and hygiene items implicated an inmate's constitutional rights." *Id.* at 495.

Gillis helps show why qualified immunity is inappropriate here. In this case, as in *Gillis*, prison officials altered the conditions of confinement to motivate a change in inmate behavior. In both cases, the change involved a denial of clothing and prolonged exposure to cold air. The deliberate choice by prison officials to expose inmates to chilling conditions was then—and is still now—a clear violation of the Eighth Amendment.

Gillis is a rare case because, as noted, case law on *deliberate* exposure of unprotected prisoners to cold is thankfully sparse. But our case law makes unequivocally clear that prisoners have a right to adequate heat. Similarly, the *Lhanzom*, *Al Shimari*, and *Cicippio* cases discussed above all recognized deliberate exposure of a prisoner to extreme cold as a form of torture. And *Gillis* made clear that cold conditions cannot be constitutionally used as part of prison discipline.

IV. *The Absence of a Counter-Theory*

My third form of support comes from the absence of any theory, from these defendants or from the majority opinion, as to how these defendants might

reasonably have thought they could lawfully refrigerate a naked human being for hours.

One might respond that the burden to defeat qualified immunity is on the plaintiff, not the defendant. That's true as a matter of law. But it is equally true that the plaintiff need not always come forward with case law showing that the same or even closely analogous conduct has been held unlawful where the violation is obvious. The canonical case on this point is *Hope v. Pelzer*, where the Supreme Court reversed a grant of qualified immunity despite the absence of closely analogous case law. 536 U.S. at 744–46. The violation was so “obvious” that the unlawfulness of the punishment should have been apparent to a reasonable prison official. *Id.* at 741.

The plaintiff in *Hope* was an Alabama prisoner who had allegedly engaged in misconduct while on a chain-gang road crew. As punishment, he had his shirt removed, was shackled to a post in a painful position, and was left in the Alabama sun for seven hours with very little water. The Supreme Court held that the illegal character of that punishment was sufficiently obvious that qualified immunity was not available. *Id.*

The Court of Appeals in *Hope* had reasoned, much like the majority opinion here, that qualified immunity applied unless plaintiff could show a finding of a constitutional violation in a previous case on facts “materially similar’ to Hope’s situation.” *Id.* at 739, quoting *Hope v. Pelzer*, 240 F.3d 975, 981 (11th Cir. 2001). The Supreme Court said this “rigid gloss” on the qualified immunity standard was “not consistent with our cases.” *Id.* It explained that the contours of an asserted constitutional right “must be sufficiently clear that a reasonable official would understand that

what he is doing violates that right. This is not to say that an official action is protected by qualified immunity unless the very action in question has previously been held unlawful....” *Id.*, quoting *Anderson*, 483 U.S. at 640.

The ruling in *Hope* was not a simple “we know it when we see it” reaction to disturbing facts. The Court took care to look at other cases and administrative actions concerning the Alabama practice of shackling prisoners uncomfortably in the heat as punishment, finding that the defendants had ample notice that the practice was not permissible under the law. 536 U.S. at 741–45. The signals in those cases and administrative actions were similar to the signals relevant here, from both the “cold as torture” authorities and the broken-furnace and drafty-cell cases.

We do not need a case exactly on point to reject the qualified immunity defense here, at least on the facts we must treat as true on appeal. While I am pleased to join most of the majority opinion, including its important holding that the alleged intentional exposure to cold was sufficient to violate the Eighth Amendment, I respectfully dissent from the portion of the opinion and judgment affirming summary judgment on the conditions of confinement claim based on qualified immunity.

APPENDIX B

**UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE SEVENTH CIRCUIT**

Everett McKinley Dirksen
United States Courthouse
Room 2722 - 219 S. Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60604



Office of the Clerk
Phone: (312) 435-5850
www.ca7.uscourts.gov

FINAL JUDGMENT

May 30, 2025

Before

DAVID F. HAMILTON, *Circuit Judge*
MICHAEL Y. SCUDDER, *Circuit Judge*
JOHN Z. LEE, *Circuit Judge*

No. 22-2870	ANTONIO M. SMITH, Plaintiff – Appellant v. JOHN KIND, et al., Defendants - Appellees
Originating Case Information:	
District Court No.: 2:18-cv-01569-PP Eastern District of Wisconsin District Judge Pamela Pepper	

We **AFFIRM** the district court's grant of summary judgment for the defendants on each of Smith's claims, with costs, in accordance with the decision of this court entered on this date.

39a

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christopher Conway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "C".

Clerk of Court

APPENDIX C

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

ANTONIO MARQUES
SMITH,

Plaintiff,

v.

JOHN KIND, JAY VAN
LANEN, TIMOTHY
RETZLAFF, ALEXANDER
BONIS, JOHN DIEDRICK,
and COLE MEYER,

Case No. 18-cv-
1569-pp

Defendants.

**ORDER GRANTING DEFENDANTS' MOTION
FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT (DKT. NO. 32)
AND DISMISSING CASE**

Plaintiff Antonio Marques Smith, who is confined at the Wisconsin Secure Program Facility and who is representing himself, filed an amended complaint alleging that the defendants violated his constitutional rights. Dkt. No. 9 at 3. The court screened the amended complaint under 28 U.S.C. §1915A and allowed the plaintiff to proceed on Eighth Amendment excessive force claims against defendant Jay Van Lanen for using an incapacitating agent on the plaintiff to gain compliance from him to leave his cell; against defendants Alexander Bonis, John Diedrick and Cole Meyer for the way they escorted the plaintiff

to the nurse's station and a cell in control status; and against defendant John Kind, for authorizing the use of force (Dkt. No. 10 at 12-14); and an Eighth Amendment conditions-of-confinement claim against defendants Van Lanen and Timothy Retzlaff for the conditions of the cell while the plaintiff was in control status (Dkt. No. 10 at 14-15). The defendants have filed a motion for summary judgment. Dkt. No. 32.

I. Procedural History

The plaintiff filed a forty-five-page complaint against twenty-two named defendants and some Doe defendants, alleging excessive force in violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments, retaliation in violation of the First Amendment, violations of the Equal Protection Clause and deliberate indifference. Dkt. No. 1. The court screened the complaint and concluded that it violated Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 18 and 20 because it brought unrelated claims against unrelated defendants in a single lawsuit. Dkt. No. 8. The court gave the plaintiff the opportunity to file an amended complaint. *Id.* at 7.

In the amended complaint, the plaintiff alleged that over the course of four days, fifteen defendants violated his First, Fourth, Eighth and Fourteenth Amendment rights. Dkt. No. 9. He alleged that he had advised the prison that he was on a hunger strike. *Id.* at 3. The plaintiff alleged that four days in a row, various defendants used physical force to remove him from his cell for the purpose of taking him to see the prison nurse, even though he presented in a submissive position, lying on his stomach with his hands behind his back and his ankles crossed. *Id.* at 4-6. He asserted that on the fourth day, defendants used incapacitating agents on him despite knowing that he had asthma, used choke holds on him and choke-dragged

him into a cell. *Id.* at 6. Finally, he alleged that some of the defendants had placed him naked into a cold cell for over twenty-four hours and that others issued, and had him found guilty of, a false conduct report. *Id.* at 7.

The court did not allow the plaintiff to proceed against the defendants who'd been involved in the cell removals on the first three days. Dkt. No. 10 at 10-12. The court concluded that prison administrators had a right to force an incarcerated person to take nourishment if his hunger strike placed him at serious risk of injury or death, that the plaintiff had alleged the use of only minimal force and that he had not identified any injury he suffered because of that force. *Id.* The court also dismissed the nurse practitioner whom the plaintiff had sued for allegedly taking a nasal swab, noting that because he was on a hunger strike, the plaintiff did not have a constitutional right to refuse life-saving treatment. *Id.* at 12. It dismissed the plaintiff's claims regarding the allegedly false conduct report. *Id.* at 15-16.

The court found, however, that “the events of November 28”—the fourth day—were different. *Id.*

. . . There the plaintiff alleges that defendant Van Lanen discovered that using incapacitating agents would trigger the plaintiff's asthma. Dkt. No. 9 at ¶9. The plaintiff alleges that Van Lanen told him he was tired of having to forcibly restrain the plaintiff to take him to the nurse's station, and that defendant Kind had authorized Van Lanen to escalate by using the incapacitating agents. *Id.* According to the plaintiff, once he put himself into a submissive position (signaling that he was not going to come out of the cell of his own volition),

Van Lanen deployed the incapacitating agent.
Id.

The plaintiff has alleged that Van Lanen had a malicious and sadistic purpose behind the use of the incapacitating agent to force the plaintiff from his cell—avoiding having to restrain and transport the plaintiff. The plaintiff may proceed on an Eighth Amendment excessive force claim against Van Lanen. He may also proceed on an Eighth Amendment excessive force claim against the three officers who extracted the plaintiff from the cell after Van Lanen deployed the incapacitating agent—Bonis, Diedrick and Meyers. The plaintiff sufficiently alleged a sadistic and malicious purpose when they used a choke hold while he was having trouble breathing; when they made him walk fully nude to the nurse's station, even though he was in a weakened state and suffering an asthma attack; when Van Lanen directed Diedrick to put the plaintiff in a chokehold and when Diedrick yanked the plaintiff's head back and choked him during [the nurse's] examination; and when they choke-dragged him to another cell after his examination. *Id.* at ¶¶10-15.

The plaintiff also may proceed on an Eighth Amendment claim for excessive force under a theory of supervisor liability against defendant Kind for the November 28 use of the incapacitating agent.

* * * *

The plaintiff alleged that Kind knew about and authorized Van Lanen's plan to use incapacitating agents.

Id. at 12-14.

Finally, the court allowed the plaintiff to proceed on a conditions-of-confinement claim against Van Lanen and Retzlaff based on his allegations about being placed in a cold cell in winter without bedding, clothing or hygiene items for twenty-four hours. *Id.* at 14.

The plaintiff alleges that he had just been sprayed with an incapacitating agent, was having an asthma attack and was weak from his hunger strike when Van Lanen placed him on "control status," which he asserts means he was denied bedding, clothing and hygiene items to clean off the incapacitating agent. Dkt. No. 9 at ¶15. He alleges that he asked Retzlaff for help, but that after stating that he would talk with Van Lanen, Retzlaff disappeared and never returned. *Id.* At this stage, the plaintiff sufficiently states an Eighth Amendment conditions of confinement claim against Van Lanen and Retzlaff.

Id. at 14-15.

These are the claims the defendants answered and the claims on which they seek summary judgment—Eighth Amendment excessive force and conditions-of-confinement claims relating to the extraction of the plaintiff from his cell on November 28, 2017.

II. Facts¹

The plaintiff was confined in the restrictive housing unit, also known as segregation, at Green Bay Correctional Institution during the events described in the complaint. Dkt. No. 51 at ¶1.

The plaintiff has a history of hunger strikes dating back to 2016. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶10; Dkt. No. 38 at ¶8. His medical records show that in July 2017, he had engaged in a hunger strike during which he refused medical monitoring on a couple of occasions. Dkt. No. 37-1 at 19-20.

In his verified amended complaint, the plaintiff alleged that on October 6, 2017, he “put Green Bay Correctional Institution . . . health service department on notice[] that he was engaged in a hunger strike protest against the conditions of his confinement, and use/misuse and abuse of Solitary Confinement.” Dkt. No. 9 at 3. *See also*, Dkt. No. 37-1 at 18 (Hunger Strike Initial Assessments form, indicating date of notification as “10-6-17”).

On October 10, 2017, Nurse Practitioner Peters (not a defendant) conducted the “initial assessment of hunger strike” for the plaintiff. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶11; Dkt. No. 38 at ¶9; Dkt. No. 37-1 at 18. Peters says the plaintiff was classified as “emergent” (which means refusal of fluids for twenty-four hours or food for seventy-two hours) and noted that he had asthma that was controlled, that he was alert, that he was oriented and that he refused a complete physical assessment. *Id.* At that time, Peters did not see evidence of serious debilitation secondary to lack of nutrition; the plan for

¹ The court includes only material, properly supported facts in this section. See Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(c).

treating the plaintiff was to “initiate [a] hunger strike care plan.” *Id.* At that time, the plaintiff refused a complete physical assessment, a systems review or labs.² Dkt. No. 37-1 at 18.

The defendants provided a blank copy of Department of Corrections Form DOC-3452. Dkt. No. 37-3 at 4. The form—which has information directed to the incarcerated person and a space for that person to sign and date—reads as follows:

Not eating food or drinking fluids is unhealthy and may cause short term or long term illness up to and including death.

Not eating or drinking anything may cause death in just a few days.

Drinking fluids and not eating is less dangerous, but can lead to serious illness if continued for days.

Body reactions to starving include: loss of body fluids, dizziness, lightheadedness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, tiredness, sluggishness, irritability, weight loss, low blood sugar, slow heart rate and low blood pressure.

Starving can result in heart damage, kidney damage, and death. Depending on the length

² The defendants state in their proposed findings of fact that the plaintiff “had regularly refused treatment,” dkt. no. 34 at ¶12; the placement of this finding implies that the plaintiff had been refusing medical treatment prior to October 10, 2017. The medical records cited in the findings, however, do not cover the weeks prior to October 10, 2017; they start on that date and cover the period through February 23, 2018. Dkt. No. 37-1 at 1-18.

of starvation, damage to the heart and kidneys may be permanent.

Restarting eating and drinking after a period of starvation must be done with caution because if not done appropriately, serious medical complications can occur including sudden death. Contact the Health Services Staff for assistance.

Staff will observe your weight, temperature, pulse, blood pressure and breathing. You will be examined for signs and symptoms of starvation, mental illness, and to determine whether or not you are able to make decisions and manage your affairs.

If you are found to be at risk of death or other serious adverse effects due to starvation, legal measures may be taken to allow forced examination by health care providers, forced feeding, forced fluids and hospitalization.

*Id.*³

The medical records show that between June 10, 2017 and November 24, 2017—a period of forty-six days—the plaintiff refused medical monitoring (a hunger strike evaluation). Dkt. No. 37-1 at 12-17. In November 2017, there was no court order in effect requiring forced medical evaluations or forced feeding of the plaintiff. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶18; Dkt. No. 51 at ¶18. The defendants say that in November 2017 (some three or so weeks into the plaintiff's hunger strike) the plaintiff still was required to go to the Health Services

³ As best the court can tell, the record does not contain a copy of this document signed by the plaintiff.

Unit (HSU) to refuse medical treatment. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶19. The plaintiff denies this and states that because he was in segregation and unwilling to report to his on-site appointment to refuse a hunger strike evaluation, Department of Correction (DOC) policy and Green Bay segregation practices provided that staff should come to see him face-to-face at his cell with a DOC-322-Refusal of Recommended Health Care form. Dkt. No. 50 at ¶19.

Under DOC, Division of Adult Institutions Policy 500.30.54, Informed Consent and Right to Refuse Treatment, “[a]ll Division of Adult Institution facilities shall ensure all examinations, treatments and procedures are governed by informed consent practices which support the ethical principles of an inmate patient’s right to information and knowledge about healthcare, invasive procedures, and more importantly allows the inmate patient to make an informed decision to consent or refuse the recommended health care intervention.” Dkt. No. 37-2 at 1, Ex. 1006-001. The policy also provides:

Inmate patients are required to report to an appointment for any refusal of health care. For inmate patients unable or unwilling to report to their on-site appointment site (e.g., in segregation or observation status), the ACP or nurse shall see the inmate patient face-to-face to complete the DOC-3220 – Refusal of Recommended Health Care, and file in the Medical Chart, Consents/Refusals Section.

Dkt. No. 37-2 at 11, Ex. 1006 – 011. It provides that an incarcerated patient who refuses care “shall be considered for discussion at multidisciplinary team meetings to reevaluate the treatment plan.” *Id.*

On November 24, 2017—forty-six days into the plaintiff’s hunger strike and four days before the date of the incident at issue in the case—the plaintiff was unwilling to report to an on-site appointment for a hunger strike evaluation. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶24. A nurse came to see the plaintiff at his cell with a DOC-3220 Refusal of Recommended Health Care form, which the plaintiff refused to sign. *Id.*

The plaintiff alleges that on November 25 and 26, 2017, Kind authorized a use of force to remove the plaintiff from his cell because he was unwilling to report to an on-site appointment for a hunger strike evaluation.⁴ *Id.* at ¶26. On those dates, a cell extraction team entered the plaintiff’s cell while he lay prone on his bed in the “surrendering ritual” with his hands behind his back, legs crossed at his ankles and face turned to the wall. *Id.* at ¶27. A lieutenant entered the plaintiff’s cell with his taser drawn, followed by the cell extraction team officers who placed handcuffs and leg restraints on the plaintiff, secured him in a restraint chair and escorted him to the nurse’s station to submit to a hunger strike evaluation. *Id.* at ¶¶28-29. The plaintiff refused treatment and staff returned him to his cell. *Id.* at ¶¶29-30. Staff did not use incapacitating agents, electronic control devices or compliance holds during the November 25-26 cell extractions. *Id.* at ¶30.

The plaintiff alleges that on November 27, 2017, Captain Baumann (not a defendant) authorized a use of force to remove the plaintiff from his cell because

⁴ The defendants do not dispute this proposed finding of fact, but the incident report Van Lanen prepared implies that Kind authorized the use of force on November 28, 2017. Dkt. No. 35-1 at 2.

the plaintiff was not willing to report to an on-site medical appointment for a hunger strike evaluation. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶31. Van Lanen entered the plaintiff's cell with his taser drawn and the cell extraction team followed him. *Id.* at ¶33. The cell extraction took place in the same way it did on November 25 and 26; staff restrained the plaintiff and took him to the HSU in the restraint chair, the plaintiff refused treatment from the nurse and staff returned the plaintiff to his cell. *Id.* at ¶¶33-36. Staff did not use incapacitating agents, electronic control devices or compliance holds during the November 27 cell extraction.⁵ *Id.* at ¶36.

On November 28, 2017, the date of the incident at issue, Van Lanen told the plaintiff that he would be required to come out of his cell and report to the Health Services Unit (HSU) for a wellness check. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶21. After the plaintiff had refused Van Lanen's request multiple times, Van Lanen assembled an extraction team to remove the plaintiff from his cell. *Id.* Officer Charles Gulley operated a video camera for the extraction team.⁶ *Id.* at ¶23. Prior to the extraction, Van Lanen summarized on the video why the team was going to extract the plaintiff, indicating that the plaintiff was on hunger strike, needed

⁵ At screening, the court did not allow the plaintiff to proceed on any claims related to the allegations from the November 25, 26 and 27, 2017 cell extractions. Dkt. No. 10 at 11-12. The defendants respond to the plaintiff's proposed findings of fact relating to these dates by asserting what happened on these dates is immaterial to the allegations on which the court allowed the plaintiff to proceed. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶¶27-36.

⁶ The defendants submitted the approximately thirty-five-minute video footage of the incident. Dkt. No. 36-1, Ex. 1004.

to report to HSU and had refused to leave his cell as he had done the last four days. *Id.* at ¶24; Ex. 1004. Van Lanen stated that the plaintiff had “an extensive violent history with assigning hits on the streets to have people killed, assaulting within the prison system and assaulting in general throughout his prison career.” Ex. 1004 at 00:27-00:38. Van Lanen stated that Kind had been apprised of the situation; he also explained that the plaintiff was

very aware of our tactics of entering the cell. He has his neighbors on his right and left side telling him the things we are doing when we’re standing outside that cell to enter that cell, now it’s become a risk of entering that cell as Mr. Smith does have his property in that cell. He has been positioning himself on the bed but I’m unable to see if he has any weapons made or things like that. So this is Day 5 so Mr. Smith is thinking that we’re going to [unintelligible] to get him out of his cell. I’m going to try to get Mr. Smith to come to the door and cuff up; that’s an important part of the wellness check is to walk

....

Id. at 00:48-1:29.

Van Lanen stated that the plaintiff had demonstrated the day before that he could walk, but that he refused to do so. *Id.* at 1:30-2:45. Van Lanen said that the extraction team would take all safety precautions for staff and that they would take the plaintiff out of the cell to go to HSU for the wellness check. *Id.* He stated that the plaintiff had a contraindication to incapacitating agents and that Kind had authorized the use of incapacitating agents and electronic control

devices. *Id.* Van Lanen concluded that the team would not use the restraint chair because the plaintiff was physically capable of walking and that they would hopefully gain verbal compliance from the plaintiff to walk to the HSU. *Id.*

The extraction team walked to the plaintiff's cell and Van Lanen ordered the plaintiff to come to his door so officers could take him to the HSU. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶27; Ex. 1004 at 02:44 to 03:41. Van Lanen repeated this command many times and advised the plaintiff that, if he did not comply, officers could use incapacitating agents to gain his compliance. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶28; Ex. 1004 at 03:41 to 04:21. The plaintiff was lying on his side, covered with a blanket and sheet, when he was awakened by Van Lanen's knock on the cell door. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶54. The plaintiff uncovered himself and went into a prone position on his stomach in the surrendering ritual; he put his hands behind his back, crossed his legs at the ankles and turned his face toward the nearest wall. *Id.*

The plaintiff refused to answer, so Van Lanen directed Gulley to record the cell through the cell window and asked Team Leader Officer Alex Bonis to ask the plaintiff to comply. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶29; Ex. 1004 at 04:21 to 04:40. Van Lanen again advised the plaintiff that they would have to employ incapacitating agents if he did not come to the door, and Van Lanen described the physical effects that the incapacitating agents would have on the plaintiff. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶30; Ex. 1004 at 04:57 to 05:10. Van Lanen asked the plaintiff to comply so that officers would not be forced to issue him a conduct report for his actions and warned the plaintiff that if officers had to use incapacitating agents, they would have to conduct a strip search before removing him from his cell. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶31;

Ex. 1004 at 05:10 to 05:50. The first time the plaintiff moved after going into the surrendering ritual was to cover his face with a blanket when the cell door trap was opened. Dkt. No. 51 at ¶57; Ex. 1004 at 6:04.

Van Lanen tried multiple times to gain verbal compliance without using force, but the plaintiff covered his face to nullify any incapacitating agent officers might use. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶32; Ex. 1004 at 06:00 to 07:00. Van Lanen warned the plaintiff that his property could get damaged if officers used the incapacitating agent. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶33; Ex. 1004 at 07:00 to 07:25. The plaintiff sat up on the bed, covered his property, laid back down on his bed and covered his face with a blanket. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶34; Ex. 1004 at 7:45 to 08:20. Van Lanen gave the plaintiff several more opportunities to comply, but the plaintiff did not do so; at this point, Van Lanen determined that further verbal communication attempts were futile. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶35; Ex. 1004 at 08:20 to 08:40.

Van Lanen showed the plaintiff the “Mark IX OC Phantom Fogger” and gave the plaintiff further opportunities to comply. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶36. The plaintiff refused and covered his face with bed linen. *Id.* Van Lanen sprayed a Mark IX controlled burst into the plaintiff’s cell. *Id.*; Ex. 1004 at 08:40 to 08:50.⁷ Officers secured the cell’s trap door, and Van Lanen ordered the plaintiff to comply with a strip search, which the incarcerated person performs himself. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶37. Bonis took over verbal communication. *Id.*; Ex. 1004 at 08:50 to 09:00.

⁷ The video shows that the single burst was momentary, but several more minutes passed before the plaintiff came to the cell door.

The plaintiff had an adverse reaction to the chemical agents, which resulted in him having an asthma attack from a pre-existing medical condition that had caused a contraindication alert to be placed in his medical file, which Van Lanen knew about before he used the chemical agent. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶60, Ex. 1004 at 8:45 to 18:00. For a few minutes, the plaintiff moved around on the floor of the cell, groaning and coughing; at one point, he sat on the end of the bed, rolled onto his back with his feet in the air, then rolled back to a sitting position and onto the floor. Ex. 1004 at 8:45 to 18:00. After a few minutes, the plaintiff complied with Bonis's repeated orders to perform the strip search, removed his clothes and presented himself to be handcuffed before the cell door was opened. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶38; Ex. 1004 at 14:10 to 16:20. Officers secured the plaintiff in handcuffs and opened the cell door. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶39; Ex. 1004 at 16:50 to 17:45. The plaintiff exited the cell completely naked. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶61; Ex. 1004 at 18:10.

According to the defendants, the plaintiff attempted to use "dead weight tactics" (while in a sitting position) and kept his legs directly out in front of him. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶40; Ex. 1004 at 17:50 to 20:00. The defendants state that after the plaintiff refused multiple directives to stand up and comply, Van Lanen instructed staff to apply compliance holds to the plaintiff's "hands area" to gain compliance and safely bring his legs back to apply leg restraints. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶41. Ex. 1004 at 20:00 to 20:45. The defendants also state that staff applied compression holds and the plaintiff moved his legs safely under his body to allow leg restraint application. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶42; Ex. 1004 at 20:45 to 21:15. According to the plaintiff, he did not use dead weight tactics or refuse directives; he asserts that he was in a medically weakened condition and

could not move into the position at the requested speed. Dkt. No. 50 at ¶¶40-41. He states that Van Lanen and the officers ignored his medical condition caused by the chemical agents as they applied more force to his wrists. *Id.*; Smith Decl. at ¶42; Ex. 1004 at 18:11 to 21:15.

Staff placed a clean towel around the plaintiff's groin area for decency. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶43; Ex. 1004 at 21:15 to 21:30. The towel did not cover the plaintiff's buttocks, and his buttocks remained exposed during the escort past other incarcerated persons and staff. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶64.

According to the defendants, the plaintiff continued attempting to use deadweight tactics by keeping his legs locked under his buttocks, forcing staff to support his body weight. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶44. Van Lanen asked the plaintiff multiple times to stand up straight and walk, as he had just done at the cell door for the strip search, to minimize the possibility of staff injuries. *Id.*; Ex. 1004 at 21:30 to 21:47. Van Lanen explained to the plaintiff that if he did not comply, staff would need to secure his head and arms with escort holds. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶45. The plaintiff refused to acknowledge or comply. *Id.* Van Lanen ordered staff to secure the plaintiff's arms and apply compliance holds on the plaintiff's hands so the staff member directly behind him could safely secure his head to walk him backwards.⁸ *Id.*; Ex. 1004 at 21:47 to 22:08. As staff positioned themselves in preparation to apply

⁸ According to the plaintiff, he was not using deadweight tactics; he says he could not move at the speed and in the manner demanded by Van Lanen and the officers because he was weakened from the asthma attack and had yet to recover his strength to fully support his own weight. Dkt. No. 50 at ¶¶44-45.

the head hold, the plaintiff stated, “alright, alright I’ll walk.” Dkt. No. 34 at ¶46. Van Lanen had staff reposition themselves to escort the plaintiff. *Id.*; Ex. 1004 at 22:08 to 22:30.

The plaintiff began walking but he bent forward at the waist, which put pressure on the shoulder and back areas of the officers who were holding his arms during the escort. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶47. Van Lanen continued to ask the plaintiff to straighten up while walking. *Id.*; Ex. 1004 at 22:30 to 25:30. The plaintiff states that he leaned forward because he lacked strength to fully support his own weight. Dkt. No. 50 at ¶47.

As they arrived in the “core area,” Van Lanen offered the plaintiff a decontamination shower, which the plaintiff refused. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶48; Ex. 1004 at 25:30 to 25:43. Van Lanen directed staff to escort the plaintiff to the HSU nurse station for medical evaluation. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶49. Nurse Lemens and Nurse Practitioner Peters offered the plaintiff a medical evaluation. *Id.*; Ex. 1004 at 25:45 to 27:00. The plaintiff refused medical evaluation, but Peters thought that he may have been in respiratory distress and asked him to raise his head; the plaintiff refused. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶50; Ex. 1004 at 27:00 to 27:15. Van Lanen asked Peters if she needed the plaintiff’s head raised to evaluate the situation, and she said she did. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶51; Ex. 1004 at 27:15 to 27:25. Van Lanen directed staff to secure the plaintiff’s head for the evaluation. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶52. Peters determined that the plaintiff was not in respiratory distress so he could return to a cell. *Id.*; Ex. 1004 at 27:25 to 28:00.

The plaintiff’s version of this is different. He asserts that Van Lanen directed Bonis to put the plaintiff “into another tactical chokehold,” and that Bonis “aggressively yanked Smith’s head backwards by his

neck, and held the tactical chokehold longer than necessary.” Dkt. No. 59 at ¶60. The video does not support the plaintiff’s assertions; it shows an officer briefly lifting the plaintiff’s head—one hand on his forehead, the other on his chin—Peters briefly looking at the plaintiff’s nose while the plaintiff yelled, “I don’t want it! I don’t want it! I don’t want it!” and Van Lanen telling the plaintiff that they were just trying to wipe his nose. Ex. 1004 at 23:15 to 28:00.

Officers escorted the plaintiff from the HSU nurse station to cell 302 and placed him on controlled separation status. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶53; Ex. 1004 at 28:00 to 30:30. When the plaintiff arrived at cell 302, he was assisted to his knees and staff removed the modesty towel attached to his restraints. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶71; Ex. 1004 at 29:30 to 30:30. Staff removed his leg restraints, and the plaintiff entered the cell completely naked. *Id.* Officers provided the plaintiff with a cell that included a working toilet and water, and lighting for up to twelve hours of reading. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶55. The parties dispute other conditions of the cell. According to the defendants, the cell was clean and had adequate ventilation with heat. *Id.* According to the plaintiff, cell 302 was “unsanitary” and the ventilation system did not provide adequate heat. Dkt. No. 50 at ¶55.

Van Lanen informed the plaintiff that he could have a decontamination shower and soap at any time. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶56. Van Lanen also told the plaintiff that he would be back to talk to him about clothing and other items. *Id.*; Ex. 1004 at 31:25 to 31:35. After staff secured the plaintiff in cell 302, Van Lanen had staff report to the core area for debrief, and he briefed the camera on the extraction. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶57; Ex. 1004 at 31:36 to 34:10.

According to the defendants, after completing the camera debrief, Van Lanen went to the plaintiff's cell and explained what he would need to do to come off control status. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶58. The defendants state that the plaintiff was walking around the cell, refused to listen to Van Lanen's explanation of how to come off control and stated that he would make staff suit up every day until they got a court order for him. *Id.* at ¶59. According to the plaintiff, Van Lanen did not come to speak with him after he completed the debrief. Dkt. No. 50 at ¶58. The plaintiff also states that he did not need to hear how to come off control status because he was familiar with control status policy. *Id.* at ¶59.

Van Lanen placed the plaintiff into controlled restrictive housing, also known as controlled separation status. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶73. When incarcerated persons are placed on control status, all their clothes are taken away for their own safety and they are offered security linen (a smock/kilt) for privacy reasons.⁹ Dkt. No. 34

⁹ The plaintiff denies this fact because he says the policy states that incarcerated persons shall be provided with clothing consistent with the level of risk, and that Van Lanen did not articulate the risk the plaintiff posed in control status that warranted him not to be provided with clothing versus a smock/kilt in any document. Dkt. No. 50 at ¶60. The plaintiff states that in accordance with policy, he should have had all his normal clothing because no one alleged that he posed a risk to himself or staff. *Id.* The plaintiff cites to Wis. Admin. Code §DOC 303.74. That section states in part that a "security supervisor may order into controlled separation any inmate in segregated status who exhibits disruptive, destructive, or out of control behavior." Wis. Admin. Code §DOC 303.74(1). It also states, "(a) The institution shall provide inmates in controlled separation all of the following: 1. Clean mattress. 2. Sufficient light by which to read at least 12

at ¶60. Incarcerated persons can always ask for hygiene items, and they will be provided by the staff; these are not entered on the DOC-112 (Observation of Inmate) form. *Id.* at ¶61.

According to the defendants, the plaintiff was offered a smock, a security mat, soap and toilet paper and he refused to accept any property; he was informed that he could have the property whenever he wanted. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶62. According to the plaintiff, Van Lanen and Retzlaff did not offer him a smock, security mat, soap, toilet paper or any property items. Dkt. No. 50 at ¶62; Dkt. No. 59 at ¶¶77-81. During a security round check of incarcerated persons around 3:30 p.m. on November 28, 2017, Retzlaff spoke with the plaintiff. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶82. The plaintiff requested from Retzlaff a smock, clothing, security mat/mattress, bedding, soap, toilet paper and cleaning supplies or to be moved to a clean cell. *Id.* at ¶84. The plaintiff also told Retzlaff that the vent inside the cell was blowing out cold air and he needed to be moved to warmer cell. *Id.* Retzlaff told the plaintiff that he wanted to speak with Van Lanen before giving him property or moving him. *Id.* at ¶¶85-86. Retzlaff did not return to speak with the plaintiff nor did he provide the plaintiff with property he requested or move him to a clean and warm cell. *Id.* at ¶87.

hours per day. 3. Sanitary toilet and sink. 4. Adequate ventilation and heating. 5. Clothing consistent with the level of risk. 6. Essential hygiene supplies. 7. Nutritionally adequate meals.” Wis. Admin. Code §DOC 303.74(2)(a). Finally, it provides: “(b) While an inmate is acting in a disruptive manner, the institution shall maintain close control of all property in subd. (a) 1. [Clean mattress], 5. [Clothing], and 6. [Meals].” Wis. Admin. Code §DOC 303.74(2)(b).

At 3:41 a.m. on November 29, 2017, Lieutenant Wickman (not a defendant) offered the plaintiff a smock contingent on the plaintiff agreeing to not refuse to exit his cell to see HSU staff to be evaluated for his hunger strike, but the plaintiff refused to accept that condition. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶¶92-93.

The plaintiff was placed into control status on November 28, 2017 at 12:00 p.m. or 12:15 p.m. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶63. Officers checked on the plaintiff every thirty minutes and noted his activities. *Id.* at ¶64; Dkt. No. 37-4. The observation record indicates that the plaintiff spoke to both Retzlaff and Wickman at the door of the cell. Dkt. No. 37-4 at 2. It shows that at various times during the next approximately twenty-three hours, staff observed the plaintiff standing, standing by the door, sitting on the bed and talking to staff. Dkt. No. 37-2 at 3-5. Staff removed the plaintiff from control status at 11:00 a.m. on November 29, 2017. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶65. The total time spent in control status was about twenty-three hours. *Id.* at ¶66.

The plaintiff provided Green Bay historical weather data showing a high temperature of 57° and a low temperature of 25° on November 28 and 29, 2017, during the time the plaintiff was on control status. Dkt. No. 50 at ¶100. The defendant provided historical weather data showing that the high was 57° and the low was 39°. Dkt. No. 39-4 at 1. The plaintiff says that he was in a steel cell completely naked with a vent that produced cold air and asserts that he was extremely cold. Dkt. No. 50 at ¶68.

As discussed above, Van Lanen stated on the video that one of the reasons for putting together an extraction team to remove the plaintiff from his cell was his assaultive behavior within the prison system. Van Lanen repeated this in the incident report he wrote the day after the extraction, explaining that on November 28th, he'd talked to the plaintiff about the need to conduct a cell search and a wellness check, but that "[a]fter several attempts [he] felt verbal communication was exhausted." Dkt. No. 35-1 at 2. Van Lanen explained that he'd contacted Kind and expressed concerns for the plaintiff's wellness, as well as concern that "[the plaintiff] is aware of the past four days of entering the cell the same way and the other offenders on the wing informing [the plaintiff] of our positioning." *Id.* Van Lanen expressed concern for the safety of the staff "if we had to enter the cell as [the plaintiff] has an assaultive history with having great bodily harm done to people on the streets while incarcerat[ed] and [the plaintiff's] violent history." *Id.* He explained that Kind authorized the use of force, "not limited to Incapacitating agents, Electronic control devices or enter the cell if needed." *Id.* Van Lanen also explained that he'd contacted a nurse in the health services unit and learned that the plaintiff had a "contra indication to Incapacitating agents." *Id.*

The plaintiff disputes that Van Lanen had any information that the plaintiff had ever assaulted any incarcerated person or staff member at Green Bay or any other prison. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶44. The plaintiff provided Van Lanen's responses to the plaintiff's requests for admission. Dkt. No. 56-1 at 114-131. That document contains the following requests and responses:

17. Admit that [the plaintiff] have no record while housed as an inmate within the Department of Corrections/Division of Adult Institutions for assaults against an employee.

Response: DENY. Plaintiff's history of disruptive conduct, group resistance, threats, sexual conduct and unpredictable behavior were a concern for staff safety. Continued refusal to comply with staff directives causing staff to enter the cell displays behavior leading up to a set up for assaultive behavior. At the time of the incident on 11-28-17, VanLanen lacked knowledge as to Plaintiff's behavior at other Institutions.

18. Admit that [the plaintiff] have no record while housed as an inmate within the Wisconsin Department of Corrections Division of Adult Institutions for an assault against an inmate.

Response: After reasonable inquiry, Defendant VanLanen lacks sufficient knowledge or information to be able to ADMIT or DENY this request.

19. Admit that on November 28, 2017 you (Jay Van Lanen) didn't have any confirmed information that [the plaintiff] had ever ass[a]ulted anyone other than has alleged crimes to which he had been convicted of.

Response: ADMIT but ALLEGE Plaintiff's history of disruptive conduct, group resistance, threats, sexual conduct and

unpredictable behavior were a concern for staff safety.

Continued refusal to comply with staff directives causing staff to enter the cell displays behavior leading up to a set up for assaultive behavior.

Id. at 118-119.

III. Analysis

A. Summary Judgment Standard

“The court shall grant summary judgment if the movant shows that there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(a); *see also Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 248 (1986); *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 324 (1986); *Ames v. Home Depot U.S.A., Inc.*, 629 F.3d 665, 668 (7th Cir. 2011). “Material facts” are those under the applicable substantive law that “might affect the outcome of the suit.” *See Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 248. A dispute over “material fact” is “genuine” if “the evidence is such that a reasonable jury could return a verdict for the nonmoving party.” *Id.*

A party asserting that a fact cannot be, or is, genuinely disputed must support the assertion by:

(A) citing to particular parts of materials in the record, including depositions, documents, electronically stored information, affidavits or declarations, stipulations (including those made for purposes of the motion only), admissions, interrogatory answers, or other materials; or

(B) showing that the materials cited do not establish the absence or presence of a

genuine dispute, or that an adverse party cannot produce admissible evidence to support the fact.

Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(c)(1). “An affidavit or declaration used to support or oppose a motion must be made on personal knowledge, set out facts that would be admissible in evidence, and show that the affiant or declarant is competent to testify on the matters stated.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 56(c)(4).

Summary judgment is proper “against a party who fails to make a showing sufficient to establish the existence of an element essential to that party’s case, and on which that party will bear the burden of proof at trial.” *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. at 322. To survive a motion for summary judgment, a non-moving party must show that sufficient evidence exists to allow a jury to return a verdict in its favor. *Brummett v. Sinclair Broad. Grp., Inc.*, 414 F.3d 686, 692 (7th Cir. 2005).

When considering a motion for summary judgment, the court “draw[s] all reasonable factual inferences in the light most favorable to . . . the party that did not move for summary judgment.” *Watters v. Homeowners’ Ass’n at Preserve at Bridgewater*, No. 19-3499, 2022 WL 4128529, at *1 (7th Cir. Sept. 12, 2022) (citation omitted).

B. Discussion

1. Excessive Force Claims

“After incarceration, only the “unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain” constitutes cruel and unusual punishment forbidden by the Eighth

Amendment.” *Ingraham v. Wright*, 430 U.S. 651, 670 (1977) (quoting *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 103 (1976)). “What is necessary to establish an ‘unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain,’ . . . varies according to the nature of the alleged constitutional violation.” *Hudson v. McMillian*, 503 U.S. 1, 5 (1992) (quoting *Whitley v. Albers*, 475 U.S. 312, 320 (1986)). In cases involving the use of excessive force, the question is “whether force was applied in a good-faith effort to maintain or restore discipline, or maliciously and sadistically to cause harm.” *Id.* at 7. Factors for courts to consider in determining whether the use of force was wanton and unnecessary include “the need for an application of force, the relationship between that need and the amount of force used, the threat ‘reasonably perceived by the responsible officials,’ and ‘any efforts made to temper the severity of a forceful response.’” *Id.* (quoting *Whitley*, 475 U.S. at 321).

Not “every malevolent touch by a prison guard gives rise to a federal cause of action.” 503 U.S. at 9. “The use of *de minimis* force, so long as it ‘is not of a sort repugnant to the conscience of mankind,’ is not of Eighth Amendment concern.” *Lewis v. Downey*, 581 F.3d 467, 475 (7th Cir. 2009) (quoting *Hudson*, 503 U.S. at 9-10). On the other hand, there is no requirement that a plaintiff must allege a “significant injury” to state an excessive force claim. *Wilkins v. Gaddy*, 559 U.S. 34, 37 (2010) (citing *Hudson*, 503 U.S. at 7). “When prison officials maliciously and sadistically use force to cause harm, contemporary standards of decency always are violated. This is true whether or not significant injury is evident.” *Hudson*, 503 U.S. at 9. “A court should not recreate the disapproved ‘significant injury’ requirement by classifying all consequences it deems ‘insignificant’ as *de minimis* harms.” *Guitron v. Paul*, 675 F.3d 1044, 1046 (7th Cir. 2012).

A judgment of imprisonment strips a prisoner of th[e] right to be let alone, and many other interests as well. *See Hudson v. Palmer*, 468 U.S. 517 . . . (1984). Custodians must be able to handle, sometimes manhandle, their charges, if a building crammed with disgruntled people who disdain authority (that’s how the prisoners came to be there, after all) is to be manageable. When a physical injury occurs as the result of force applied in the course of prison operations . . . , the courts should approach the matter as *Whitley* and *Hudson v. McMillian* direct, rather than trying to classify injuries as *de minimis*.

Id.

Because “[i]njury and force . . . are only imperfectly correlated,” it is the force “that ultimately counts.” *Wilkins*, 559 U.S. at 38. Put another way, “pain, not injury, is the barometer by which we measure claims of excessive force.” *Lewis*, 581 F.3d at 475 (citing *Hudson*, 503 U.S. at 9). “What matters—and what will generally be the decisive factor in cases such as this—is the mindset of the individual applying the force.” *Id.* at 476.

In evaluating the state of mind of the person applying the force, a court must consider the circumstances in which the force was applied. Prisons, like jails, “are dangerous places, and it is without rational dispute that security officials are justified in maintaining decorum and discipline among inmates to minimize risks to themselves and other prisoners.” *Lewis*, 581 F.3d at 476 (citing *Bell v. Wolfish*, 441 U.S. 520, 546 (1979)). Given that, the Seventh Circuit has explained the importance of incarcerated persons following orders:

Orders given must be obeyed. Inmates cannot be permitted to decide which orders they will obey, and when they will obey them Inmates are and must be required to obey orders. When an inmate refuse[s] to obey a proper order, he is attempting to assert his authority over a portion of the institution and its officials. Such refusal and denial of authority places the staff and other inmates in danger.

Lewis, 581 F.3d at 476-77 (quoting *Soto v. Dickey*, 744 F.2d 1260, 1267 (7th Cir. 1984)).

When an order is given to an inmate there are only so many choices available to the correctional officer. If it is an order that requires action by the institution, and the inmate cannot be persuaded to obey the order, some means must be used to compel compliance, such as a chemical agent or physical force. While [some have] suggested that rather than seek to enforce orders, it was possible to leave the inmate alone if he chooses not to obey a particular order, and wait him out, experience and common sense establish that a prison cannot be operated in such a way.

Discipline in a maximum security correctional institution no doubt is difficult, but it is essential if the prison is to function and provide for the case, safety and security of the staff and inmates. Services to provide food, clothing, health, medical, cleaning, laundry and all other services would come to end without discipline. Mob rule would take over. There would not, and could not, be any protection for staff or inmates.

Soto, 744 F.2d at 1267.

“Prison administrators . . . should be accorded wide-ranging deference in the adoption and execution of policies and practices that in their judgment are needed to preserve internal order and discipline and to maintain institutional security.” *Hudson*, 503 U.S. at 6 (internal citations and quotations omitted.) *See also Soto*, 744 F.2d at 1269 (according prison officials wide-ranging deference to adopt and execute policies “needed to preserve internal order and discipline”). “[P]rison guards may use chemical sprays when reasonably necessary to subdue recalcitrant prisoners, for orders must be obeyed, and there are only so many choices available to correctional officers when inmates refuse.” *Kervin v. Barnes*, 144 F. App’x 551, 552 (7th Cir. 2005) (citing *Soto*, 744 F.2d at 1267; *Stringer v. Rowe*, 616 F.2d 993, 998 (7th Cir. 1980)).

In the case of a hunger strike, prison administrators have additional obligations. The Seventh Circuit has held that while “[f]ree people who are sane have a liberty interest in refusing life-saving treatment . . . and likewise in refusing to eat,” incarcerated persons either “don’t have such an interest, or it is easily overridden.” *Freeman v. Berge*, 441 F.3d 543, 546 (7th Cir. 2006).

The reasons are practical. (No longer does one hear that prisoners must not be allowed to evade punishment by killing themselves and thus “cheating the gallows.”) If prisoners were allowed to kill themselves, prisons would find it even more difficult than they do to maintain discipline, because of the effect of a suicide in agitating the other prisoners. Prison officials who let prisoners starve

themselves to death would also expose themselves to lawsuits by the prisoners' estates. Reckless indifference to the risk of a prisoner's committing suicide is a standard basis for a civil rights suit. E.g., *Boncher ex rel. Boncher v. Brown County*, 272 F.3d 484 (7th Cir 2001).

* * * * *

So at some point in [the appellant's] meal-skipping the prison doctors would have had a duty and certainly a right to step in and force him to take nourishment. Knowing this, the prison has a policy of requiring a prisoner who has skipped all his meals for three consecutive days to be inspected by employees of the prison's health service to make sure he isn't seriously endangering his health.

Id. at 547.

The defendants argue that the force they used on November 28, 2017 was a good-faith attempt to get the plaintiff to comply with the order to come to the door of his cell, rather than a malicious and sadistic attempt to cause the plaintiff harm. The record evidence fully supports this argument. The plaintiff had been on a hunger strike for almost fifty days. In the four days prior to November 28, 2017, he had refused to leave his cell to go to the wellness check appointment, forcing officers to enter his cell and take him to the appointments (and when he arrived at the appointments, the plaintiff had refused the wellness checks). On November 28, 2017, the plaintiff refused for a fifth day to go to the appointment. The video shows that the defendants—particularly Van Lanen

and Bonis—tried repeatedly to get the plaintiff to come to the cell door on his own. After Van Lanen told the plaintiff that he needed to come to the cell door, Van Lanen and then Bonis repeated the order over and over. They explained to him the consequences of his failure to comply with the order—they could be forced to use incapacitating agents, they could be forced to write the plaintiff a conduct report, if sprayed the plaintiff would have to undergo a strip search and be put on control status, that the spray could damage the plaintiff's property. Van Lanen told the plaintiff that he was aware that the plaintiff had a medical contraindication for incapacitating spray and told the plaintiff—several times—that he did not want to be forced to use the spray. Van Lanen described the physical effects of incapacitating agents on a person's body. The only effect of any of this ordering, pleading, persuading and reasoning was to cause the plaintiff to put his bed linens over his face and to cover up his property.

Eventually, the defendants released a single, swift burst of incapacitating agent through the meal trap in the cell door. The plaintiff reacted to the incapacitating agent by moving to the floor, coughing, groaning, moving around on the floor and the bed. But it took him several minutes to comply with orders to remove his clothes and come to the cell door. Bonis and Van Lanen repeatedly told the plaintiff that the sooner he removed his clothes and came to the door, the sooner the discomfort would be over with and he could get a shower.

Eventually, the plaintiff removed his clothes and came to the door. He turned around and put his hands through the trap to be cuffed. The officers then opened the cell door, restrained the plaintiff's legs and

positioned a towel over his groin area. It appears from the video that the plaintiff was not making efforts to support himself; he and the defendants dispute whether he was deliberately making himself a dead weight so that it would be harder for officers to restrain him and take him to the health services staff. Either way, Van Lanen reacted only by repeatedly advising the plaintiff to stand up, so that the officers would not be forced to make him walk backward or to use compliance holds. Van Lanen warned the plaintiff when he was going to direct officers to use compliance holds; at least once, as officers were positioning themselves to apply a head hold, the plaintiff obviated the need for the hold by agreeing that he would walk. The officers supported the plaintiff's weight all the way down the hall to the health services unit. They supported him during the brief interaction with the health services staff; as the court has noted, at one point, one officer held the plaintiff's head by the forehead and chin so that the nurse could inspect his nose (and so that Van Lanen could wipe it). The video shows no chokeholds, no dragging the plaintiff by the neck.

Nothing in the almost thirty-five-minute video of the November 28, 2017 incident shows any evidence of malicious or sadistic behavior by any of the officers involved. Van Lanen and Bonis tried multiple forms of reasoning to convince the plaintiff to follow the order to come to the cell door of his own volition. Only when several forms of reasoning failed did they utilize one burst of incapacitating spray and compliance holds on the plaintiff's legs (to apply restraints) and his arms (to move him down the hallway). *See Scott v. Harris*, 550 U.S. 372, 380-81 (2007) (where a reliable videotape clearly captures an event in dispute and blatantly contradicts one party's version of the event

so that no reasonable jury could credit that party's story, the court should not adopt that party's version of the facts for the purpose of ruling on motion for summary judgment). After viewing the video, no reasonable jury could conclude that the defendants acted maliciously and sadistically, rather than with the level of force necessary to get the plaintiff to comply with their reasonable orders.

The plaintiff's argument goes beyond the assertion that officers maliciously used an incapacitating agent, chokeholds and other malicious force to remove him from the cell. He contends that the decision to require him to come to his cell door so that he could walk to the HSU to refuse treatment was unreasonable and against DOC policy. The plaintiff believes that DOC policy required HSU staff to come to his cell "face-to-face" so he could refuse treatment, because he was in segregation and unwilling to leave his cell. Policy 500.30.54, §VIII(L) says that an incarcerated person who refuses treatment must report to an appointment to do so. Dkt. No. 37-2 at 11. It says that for those incarcerated patients who are unable or unwilling to report to the appointment site, the advanced care provider or nurse "shall see the inmate patient face-to-face" to fill out the refusal of care form. *Id.* The policy does not explicitly prevent security staff from requiring an incarcerated person to walk to the HSU to refuse treatment. But even if Van Lanen's decision to require the plaintiff to walk to the HSU violated DOC policy, a violation of prison policy does not equate to a violation of the plaintiff's constitutional rights. See *Williams v. Mierzejewski*, 401 F. App'x 142, 144 (7th Cir. 2010) ("Prison procedures themselves are not substantive liberty or property interests that are protected by due process, see *Shango v. Jurich*, 681 F.2d 1091, 1100-01 (7th Cir. 1982), and a violation of state

laws or regulations is not a basis for a federal civil rights suit, *see Guajardo-Palma v. Martinson*, 622 F.3d 801, 806 (7th Cir. 2010); *Domka v. Portage Cnty., Wis.*, 523 F.3d 776, 784 (7th Cir. 2008”).

The plaintiff asserts that because on previous days when he’d refused to go to the wellness appointment either an HSU staff member had come to the cell or he had been removed from the cell without the use of incapacitating agents or electronic devices or compliance holds, the decision to do something different on November 28, 2017 was unreasonable and thus involved excessive force. He implies that the defendants should have continued sending an HSU staff member to the cell door, or continued entering his cell and removing him via the restraint chair, indefinitely and thus avoided using the incapacitating agent. But Van Lanen explained in the video, and in his incident report, his concerns with following that course of conduct. He believed—accurately or inaccurately—that the plaintiff had a history of problematic behavior. On the video and in the report he referenced assaults in prison; in the discovery responses he referenced “disruptive” and “unpredictable” behavior. The plaintiff had learned over the previous four days the staff’s routine for removing him from his cell, with help from his neighbors to the right and left of him. Van Lanen was concerned that entering the plaintiff’s cell, where the plaintiff had his property, was becoming more and more risky for staff given the plaintiff’s familiarity with the routine. And, as Van Lanen noted, the plaintiff’s ability, or lack of ability, to walk was part of the wellness check.

More to the point, as an incarcerated person, the plaintiff did not have the authority to dictate how the prison staff should maintain security and order. The

plaintiff was required to comply with Van Lanen's and Bonis's orders to come to his cell door, whether he agreed with their orders or their reasoning. Van Lanen and Bonis gave him multiple chances to do so and advised him of the consequences of his failure to comply. Once it was clear that the plaintiff was not going to comply of his own volition, he did not get to choose how the officers gained his compliance, nor did he have a constitutional or other right to insist that they ignore his refusal to comply. Chemical agents may be used against prisoners who refuse to follow orders, although such force should not be "exaggerated or excessive" and should generally follow "adequate warning[s]." *Soto*, 744 F.2d at 1270-71.

Nor does the fact that Van Lanen knew that the plaintiff had a contraindication to incapacitating agents show that the defendants used excessive force against him. Van Lanen told the plaintiff that he knew about the contraindication. He (and Bonis) provided the plaintiff with multiple opportunities to avoid being subjected to the incapacitating agent. The plaintiff could have complied with the order to come to the cell door and avoided being exposed to the spray, presumably avoiding the ensuing asthma attack. After the asthma attack, when the officers took him to the nursing station, the plaintiff refused examination and treatment, shouting repeatedly that he didn't want it. Van Lanen's telling the plaintiff that he knew of the contraindication was not malicious and sadistic; it was an effort to get the plaintiff to comply with Van Lanen's orders without forcing Van Lanen

to use the spray that could (and did) cause an asthma attack.¹⁰

Kind approved the use of an incapacitating agent based on the information Van Lanen provided. There is no evidence that Kind acted maliciously or sadistically. Van Lanen used the incapacitating agent (after giving the plaintiff multiple warnings and opportunities to comply with his orders) to gain the plaintiff's compliance with his orders, not to maliciously and sadistically harm him; the video demonstrates that Van Lanen and Bonis were trying to *avoid* having to use the spray and avoid harming the plaintiff. The court will grant the defendants' motion for summary judgment as to the plaintiff's excessive force claims against Kind and Van Lanen.

Bonis, Diedrick, Meyer and Van Lanen worked together to restrain the plaintiff and escorted him to the HSU, then to his cell in control status. The video demonstrates that the defendants exhibited patience and professionalism while restraining the plaintiff and escorting him down the hallway. Although the plaintiff states that officers used chokeholds, the video does not support this assertion. After viewing the video, a reasonable fact finder could not conclude that the defendants used excessive force in restraining the plaintiff, escorting him to the HSU or while he was in the HSU. The court will grant the defendants' motion

¹⁰ "Asthma, depending on its degree, can be a serious medical condition." *Garvin v. Armstrong*, 236 F.3d 896, 898 (7th Cir. 2001). While the video reflects the plaintiff coughing and groaning, and with spit coming out of his mouth, there is no indication that he was unable to breathe during the incident.

for summary judgment on the plaintiff's excessive force claim against Bonis, Diedrick and Meyer.¹¹

2. *Conditions of Confinement Claim*

To establish a constitutional violation with respect to prison living conditions, the plaintiff must be able to demonstrate that both: (1) the conditions were so adverse that they deprived him “of the minimal civilized measure of life’s necessities” (the objective prong) and (2) the defendant acted with deliberate indifference with respect to the conditions (the subjective prong). *Townsend v. Fuchs*, 522 F.3d 765, 773 (7th Cir. 2008) (quoting *Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 832, 834 (1994)). The necessities of life include “reasonably adequate ventilation, sanitation, bedding, hygienic materials, and utilities.” *Gray v. Hardy*, 826 F.3d 1000, 1005 (7th Cir. 2016) (quoting *Lewis v. Lane*, 816 F.2d 1165, 1171 (7th Cir. 1987)). Although “extreme

¹¹ The plaintiff has asserted that he was walked down the cell block hallway naked in front of other inmates and staff. This is not a claim of excessive force, but a strip search may violate the Eighth Amendment “if it is ‘conducted in a harassing manner intended to humiliate and cause psychological pain.’” *May v. Trancoso*, 412 F. App’x 899, 902-03 (7th Cir. 2011) (quoting *Mays v. Springborn*, 575 F.3d 643, 649 (7th Cir. 2009)). There is no evidence that the strip search, or the walk down the cell block hallway, was conducted to harass or humiliate the plaintiff or to cause him psychological pain. Had he complied with Van Lanen’s order to come to the cell door and to walk with the officers to the HSU staff, the plaintiff would not have been required to take his clothes off or to walk naked down the hallway. He was required to remove his clothes because they were contaminated with the incapacitating agent. And although the plaintiff was naked for the walk from his cell to the medical staff, the defendants provided him with a towel to cover his groin area and were grouped tightly around his sides and rear as the group moved down the hallway.

deprivations are required,” *Delaney v. DeTella*, 256 F.3d 679, 683 (7th Cir. 2001), and “routine discomfort[s]” are not enough to state a conditions of confinement claim, *Hudson*, 503 U.S. at 9, “[s]ome conditions . . . may establish an Eighth Amendment violation in combination when each alone would not do so,” and other conditions that may not be sufficiently serious for a short period of time “can become an Eighth Amendment violation . . . if endured over a significant time.” *Gray*, 826 F.3d at 1005 (citations omitted). “Deliberate indifference . . . means that the official knew that the inmate faced a substantial risk of serious harm, and yet disregarded that risk by failing to take reasonable measures to address it.” *Townsend*, 522 F.3d at 773. Establishing that an official acted negligently is not enough to show a constitutional violation. “Instead, the inmate must show that the official received information from which the inference could be drawn that a substantial risk existed, and that the official actually drew the inference.” *Id.*

The defendants contend that the plaintiff’s conditions of confinement claim fails as a matter of law. Dkt. No. 33 at 19. They assert that Van Lanen offered the plaintiff a smock, security mat, soap and toilet paper but that the plaintiff refused to accept any property; they say that the plaintiff was informed that he could have the property whenever he wanted. Dkt. No. 34 at ¶62. The plaintiff denies that Van Lanen offered him a smock, security mat, soap, toilet paper or any property items. Dkt. No. 50 at ¶62; Dkt. No. 59 at ¶¶77-81.

Van Lanen placed the plaintiff in the cell at around 12:30 p.m. on November 28. Dkt. No. 37-4 at 2. Around 3:30 p.m. the same day, the plaintiff requested from Retzlaff a smock, clothing, security

mat/mattress, bedding, soap, toilet paper and cleaning supplies or to be moved to a clean cell. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶84. The plaintiff also told Retzlaff that the vent inside the cell blew cold air and he needed to be moved to a warmer cell. *Id.* Retzlaff told the plaintiff that he wanted to speak with Van Lanen before giving him property or moving him. *Id.* at ¶¶85-86. Retzlaff did not return to speak with the plaintiff on November 28, 2017, nor did he provide the plaintiff with property he requested or move him to a different cell. *Id.* at ¶87.

About twelve hours later—at 3:41 p.m. on November 29—another officer offered the plaintiff a smock on the condition that he not refuse to leave his cell to see HSU staff to be evaluated for his hunger strike, but the plaintiff did not accept the smock. *Id.* at ¶¶92-93.

The plaintiff was in the cell for twenty-two hours and forty-five minutes. Dkt. No. 37-4 at 1. He provided the court with declarations from three other persons incarcerated at Green Bay, attesting to cold temperatures. Dkt. No. 53 (declaration of William Jones); Dkt. No. 54 (declaration of Michael Henderson, attesting that it was very cold in the cells on the night of November 28, 2017); Dkt. No. 55 (declaration of Tommie Carter, attesting that it was very cold in the cells the night of November 28, 2017). One of those individuals also attested that the cell had not been cleaned after the last person had vacated it. Dkt. No. 55 at ¶12.

The inmate observation form has a place on the first page for the identification of “initial property” and any property changes. Dkt. No. 37-4 at 1. Under “initial property,” someone has marked the boxes for “Suicide-resistant clothes” and “Security mat.” *Id.* The form indicates that a member of the security staff marked those boxes. *Id.* There is no indication that

there was any property change while the plaintiff was in the cell. The plaintiff points out that in discovery, Van Lanen said it was his practice to put a security smock or clothing in the red security box attached to the lower trap of a cell if an inmate refuses or declines clothing, but that Van Lanen did not do that on November 28, 2017. Dkt. No. 59 at ¶¶80-81 (citing Dkt. No. 39-3 at 4-5).

The plaintiff has raised a genuine issue of material fact as to whether the conditions in his cell while he was on control status deprived him of the minimal civilized measure of life's necessities. According to the plaintiff, he "was completely nude, had no mattress, bedding, toilet paper, soap, washcloth, and the cell had poor ventilation that did not produce warmth, and it was unclean." Dkt. No. 49 at 31. The defendants assert that the plaintiff was offered some of these items but refused them, and that it wasn't extremely cold when the plaintiff was in the cell. The Seventh Circuit has held that an incarcerated person who alleged that he had been exposed to extreme cold for eighteen hours with no access to clothing arguably presented a genuine issue of material fact as to "whether the duration and severity of the cold in [his] cell was serious enough to implicate the Eighth Amendment." *Flores v. O'Donnell*, 36 F. App'x at 204, 206-07 (7th Cir. 2002). If the plaintiff was naked in an extremely cold cell for almost twenty-three hours, without clothing, bedding and hygiene items, that could amount a constitutional violation.

But a reasonable factfinder could not conclude that Van Lanen or Retzlaff knew the plaintiff was at a substantial risk of serious harm. Before Van Lanen placed the plaintiff in the control cell, he offered the plaintiff a shower (to clean off the contaminating

spray); the plaintiff refused the shower and refused treatment from HSU staff. Van Lanen put the plaintiff in a cell that had running water and a toilet. About three hours later, the plaintiff asked Retzlaff for property items including clothing and a mattress, told Retzlaff he was cold and that the vent in his cell blew cold air and asked to be moved to a clean cell. Retzlaff told the plaintiff he would ask Van Lanen, but Retzlaff never returned. About twelve hours after that, Lieutenant Wickman offered the plaintiff a smock, which the plaintiff refused because Wickman conditioned it on the plaintiff agreeing to not refuse to exit his cell to see HSU staff. It is undisputed that during the plaintiff's twenty-three hours on control status, staff checked on him every thirty minutes; several noted that he talked with them. Dkt. No. 37-4. The plaintiff has not averred that he asked any of the officers who checked on him for clothing or soap, told them he was cold or requested medical attention.¹² Nor does the plaintiff state that he changed his mind about accepting Wickman's conditional offer of a smock.

The plaintiff encourages the court to deduce from the fact that Van Lanen and Retzlaff did not follow up with him that they intentionally subjected him to being naked in a cold, dirty cell with no hygiene items for twenty-three hours. Dkt. No. 49 at 31. Given the fact that immediately after the extraction incident, Van Lanen offered the plaintiff a shower and took him to see medical staff, and that the observation form indicates that the plaintiff was given suicide-resistant

¹² While the defendants state that inmates can always ask for hygiene items, dkt. no. 34 at ¶61, they do not state whether the plaintiff could have been provided clothing or bedding while on control status.

clothing and a security mat, the evidence does not fully support this deduction. But even viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the plaintiff and assuming that Van Lanen and Retzlaff both knew the cell was very cold, knew it was dirty and knew that the plaintiff had changed his mind about washing, the plaintiff has not alleged a constitutionally cognizable harm resulting from their actions.

A plaintiff must do more than “demonstrate a triable fact with respect to the conditions he faces; he must also show that he suffered some cognizable harm from [those conditions], and that the [defendant’s] deliberate indifference caused that harm.” *Gray*, 826 F.3d at 1006. The plaintiff alleges that he lost sleep that night, dkt. no. 49 at 31, and he says that standing on his feet,¹³ completely nude with cold air coming in for twenty-three hours “undoubtedly caused [him] pain,” dkt. no. 49 at 32. Lost sleep and discomfort, or speculative pain, does not rise to the level of a constitutionally recognizable injury. Two of the incarcerated persons who provided declarations indicated that when they first tried to speak to the plaintiff while he was in controlled separation, he asked them to give him a minute because he was in pain from the asthma attack caused by the chemical spray. Dkt. No. 54 at ¶10; Dkt. No. 55 at ¶8. But Van Lanen took the plaintiff to the medical staff; he could have asked for examination and treatment for the asthma attack but insisted—repeatedly and loudly—that he did not want it.

¹³ The observation sheet indicates that there was a bed in the cell, because some of the officers who checked on the plaintiff described him as sitting on the bed. Dkt. No. 37-4 at 3.

The plaintiff has not demonstrated that Van Lanen and Retzlaff were deliberately indifferent to a serious risk of harm. The court will grant summary judgment in their favor on the conditions-of-confinement claim.

IV. Conclusion

The court **GRANTS** the defendants' motion for summary judgment. Dkt. No. 32.

The court **DISMISSES** this case. The clerk will enter judgment accordingly.

This order and the judgment to follow are final. A dissatisfied party may appeal this court's decision to the Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit by filing in this court a notice of appeal within thirty days of the entry of judgment. *See* Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure 3, 4. This court may extend this deadline if a party timely requests an extension and shows good cause or excusable neglect for not being able to meet the thirty-day deadline. *See* Fed. R. App. P. 4(a)(5)(A).

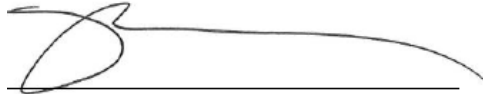
Under limited circumstances, a party may ask this court to alter or amend its judgment under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 59(e) or ask for relief from judgment under Fed. R. Civ. P. 60(b). Any motion under Fed. R. Civ. P. 59(e) must be filed within twenty-eight days of the entry of judgment. The court cannot extend this deadline. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(b)(2). Any motion under Fed. R. Civ. P. 60(b) must be filed within a reasonable time, generally no more than one year after the entry of the judgment. The court cannot extend this deadline. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(b)(2).

The court expects parties to closely review all applicable rules and determine, what, if any, further action is appropriate in a case.

83a

Dated in Milwaukee, Wisconsin this 23rd day of
September, 2022.

BY THE COURT:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'P' followed by a long, horizontal, slightly curved line extending to the right.

HON. PAMELA PEPPER

**Chief United States Dis-
trict Judge**

APPENDIX D

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

ANTONIO MARQUES
SMITH,

Plaintiff,

v.

JOHN KIND, JAY VAN
LANEN, TIMOTHY
RETZLAFF, ALEXANDER
BONIS, JOHN DIEDIRCK,
COLE MEYER, SCOTT M.
ECKSTEIN, STEVE
SCHUELER, CPT. CUSH-
ING, LT. KOEHLER, SGT.
DUPONT, SGT. FRIDEL,
SGT. ROZMARYNOSKI, CO
GOMM, CO JOHNSON, CO
GULLEY, CO BOWMAN,
CO MCDONOUGH, CO
YANG, SUSAN PETERS,
JEAN LUTSEY, KATHY
LEMENS, JOHN AND
JANE DOE ADMINISTRA-
TORS, LT. LARSON, and
JANE DOE NURSE,

Defendants.

**JUDGMENT IN A
CIVIL CASE**

Case No. 18-cv-
1569-pp

Jury Verdict. This case came before the court for a trial by jury. The parties have tried the issues, and the jury has rendered its verdict.

Decision by Court. This case came before the court, the court has decided the issues, and the court has rendered a decision.

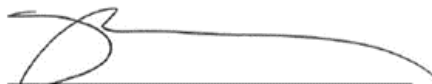
THE COURT ORDERS AND ADJUDGES that the plaintiff's complaint, filed under 42 U.S.C. §1983 and alleging that the defendants violated his civil rights, is **DISMISSED**.

THE COURT ORDERS that the motion for summary judgment filed by defendants Kind, Van Lanen, Retzlaff, Bonis, Diedirck and Meyer is **GRANTED**. Dkt. No. 32. The other defendants were previously dismissed.

THE COURT ORDERS that this case is **DISMISSED**.

Approved and dated in Milwaukee, Wisconsin this 23rd day of September, 2022.

BY THE COURT:



HON. PAMELA PEPPER
Chief United States District Judge

GINA M. COLLETTI
CLERK OF THE COURT

s/ Cary Biskupic

(by) Deputy Clerk

APPENDIX E

United States Court of Appeals
For the Seventh Circuit
Chicago, Illinois 60604

September 2, 2025

Before

DAVID F. HAMILTON, *Circuit Judge*

MICHAEL Y. SCUDDER, *Circuit Judge*

JOHN Z. LEE, *Circuit Judge*

No. 22-2870

ANTONIO M. SMITH,
Plaintiff-Appellant,

Appeal from the United
States District Court for
the Eastern District of
Wisconsin.

v.

No. 2:18-cv-01569-PP

JOHN KIND, *et al.*,
Defendants-Appellees.

Pamela Pepper, *Chief*
Judge.

O R D E R

Plaintiff-appellant filed a petition for rehearing and rehearing en banc on July 9, 2025. No judge in regular active service has requested a vote on the petition for rehearing en banc. Judges Scudder and Lee voted to deny panel rehearing; Judge Hamilton voted

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to grant panel rehearing. Accordingly, the petition for rehearing en banc is DENIED.