1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	Matt Adams Glenda M. Aldana Madrid Leila Kang NORTHWEST IMMIGRANT RIGHTS PROJE 615 Second Avenue, Suite 400 Seattle, WA 98104 (206) 957-8611 John Midgley ACLU OF WASHINGTON FOUNDATION 901 Fifth Avenue, Suite 630 Seattle, WA 98164 (206) 624-2184 ext. 290 UNITED STATES DISTE	RICT COURT
10	EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON	
11 12	GABRIEL GOMEZ MACIEL,	
13	Plaintiff, vs.	No
1415	MYLISSA COLEMAN, in her official and individual capacities; CITY OF SPOKANE,	COMPLAINT
16	Defendants.	
17	INTRODUCTION	
18 19	1. This lawsuit arises from a Spokane police officer's unlawful seizure	
20	of the victim of a car accident, solely to facilitate civil immigration enforcement.	
21	2. On August 24, 2014, Plaintiff Gabriel Gomez Maciel ("Mr. Gomez")	
22	was driving to church when his pickup truck was unexpectedly struck by a minivan	
23	that failed to yield to the right of way.	
	COMPLAINT - 1	NORTHWEST IMMIGRANT RIGHTS PROJECT 615 Second Avenue, Suite 400 Seattle, WA 98104

- 3. Defendant Mylissa Coleman, a police officer for Defendant City of Spokane, was called to the scene of the accident. But rather than simply investigating the car accident, Defendant Coleman initiated contact with the United States Border Patrol to inquire whether the agency had any interest in Mr. Gomez, the accident's victim. Upon information and belief, Defendant Coleman initiated contact with Border Patrol based solely on Mr. Gomez's Latino race and ethnicity.
- 4. Defendant Coleman took possession of Mr. Gomez's driver's license, seizing him and requiring him to remain at the scene of the accident while she conducted her investigation. Mr. Gomez thus remained at the scene, despite being in significant pain.
- 5. Other than to request certain documentation related to her accident investigation, Defendant Coleman did not ask Mr. Gomez any questions. Even though Mr. Gomez was injured, Defendant Coleman did not ask Mr. Gomez whether he needed medical assistance.
- 6. After issuing a citation to the driver at fault and returning his documents, thereby concluding her accident investigation, Defendant Coleman prolonged her seizure of Mr. Gomez by holding on to his valid driver's license and other documents until Border Patrol arrived at the scene.
- 7. Defendant Coleman lacked the reasonable suspicion or probable cause of a crime that was necessary to continue seizing Mr. Gomez. Not only was he the

victim of the accident, but Mr. Gomez has no criminal history and there were no arrest warrants for him.

- 8. Defendant Coleman transferred custody of Mr. Gomez to Border Patrol when they later arrived at the scene. Border Patrol subsequently transferred Mr. Gomez to the Tacoma immigration detention center, where he remained detained for approximately one month.
- 9. Mr. Gomez suffered substantial physical, emotional, and economic harm as a result of the unlawful seizure by Defendant Coleman.
- 10. Mr. Gomez brings this action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983; and article I, section 7 of the Constitution of the State of Washington, to vindicate his rights.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 11. This action arises under the Constitution and laws of the United States, including 42 U.S.C. § 1983, and the Constitution of the State of Washington. This Court has jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 (federal question), 1343 (civil rights), and 1367 (supplemental jurisdiction).
- 12. Venue is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b), as a substantial part of the events giving rise to Mr. Gomez's claims occurred in the Eastern District of Washington.
- 13. Declaratory relief is authorized under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201, 2202, and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 57.

PARTIES

- 14. Plaintiff Gabriel Gomez Maciel is a longtime resident of Spokane County, Washington. He is Latino.
- 15. At all times relevant to this action, Mr. Gomez was a "person within the jurisdiction" of the United States for the purposes of 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
- 16. At all times relevant to this action, Mr. Gomez was a "person" for the purposes of the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution.
- 17. Defendant Mylissa Coleman was, at all times relevant to this action, a law enforcement officer employed by the City of Spokane as an officer of the Spokane Police Department.
- 18. At all times relevant to this action, Defendant Coleman was a person acting under color of state or local law.
 - 19. Defendant Coleman is sued in her individual and official capacities.
- 20. Defendant City of Spokane is a municipal corporation and first-class city organized under the laws of the State of Washington. One division within Defendant City of Spokane is the Spokane Police Department, which employs

police officers to, among other things, enforce local and state laws, and which establishes policies for and supervises Spokane police officers.¹

- 21. At all times relevant to this action, Defendant City of Spokane employed Defendant Coleman as a police officer and authorized her to act as its agent.
- 22. At all times relevant to this action, Defendant City of Spokane was a person acting under color of state or local law.

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

A. The Car Accident and the Accident Investigation

- 23. On the morning of Sunday, August 24, 2014, Mr. Gomez was driving his pickup truck on North Crestline Street in Spokane, Washington, on his way to church.
- 24. North Crestline Street is a four-lane, two-way street. Mr. Gomez had the right of way and was driving within the speed limit.

The terms "City of Spokane" and "Spokane Police Department" are used interchangeably throughout the complaint—i.e. City of Spokane refers to the Spokane Police Department and vice versa.

- 25. Around 8:30 a.m., as Mr. Gomez passed by East Rowan Avenue, a cross street, a minivan crashed into the front of the passenger side of his pickup truck, causing his pickup truck to skid several feet until coming to a stop.
 - 26. The crash caused Mr. Gomez to feel a strong blow to his upper body.
- 27. As the airbags popped out and pressed against Mr. Gomez's seatbelt, he felt a deep pain in his chest.
- 28. Driving the minivan that hit Mr. Gomez's pickup truck was Steven McKinney, a white man.
- 29. After exiting their respective vehicles, Mr. McKinney apologized to Mr. Gomez and informed him that he had called the police.
- 30. A short while later, a police officer—upon information and belief, a Spokane Police Department officer—arrived on the scene.
- 31. Upon information and belief, Mr. McKinney informed that officer that he—not Mr. Gomez—had been at fault for the accident.
- 32. At around 8:51 a.m., a second police officer—Defendant Coleman—arrived at the intersection where the accident occurred.
- 33. Upon information and belief, the first officer left the scene shortly after Defendant Coleman arrived.
- 34. Also around the time Defendant Coleman arrived, an officer from the Spokane Police Department called a tow truck to retrieve Mr. Gomez's totaled

pickup truck from the roadway. At around the same time, upon information and belief, a Spokane police officer checked Mr. Gomez's name in the standard National Crime Information Center ("NCIC") database.

- 35. When Defendant Coleman approached Mr. Gomez and Mr. McKinney, she addressed both drivers in English, and requested their driver's license, car registration, and proof of insurance.
- 36. Mr. Gomez provided Defendant Coleman with the requested documents, all of which were valid and unexpired.
- 37. Defendant Coleman returned to her car—a vehicle belonging to the Spokane Police Department—with documents from both Mr. Gomez and Mr. McKinney.
 - 38. Mr. Gomez did not have any outstanding arrest warrants.
 - 39. In fact, Mr. Gomez has no criminal history.
- 40. Defendant Coleman had no reason to believe that Mr. Gomez had committed a crime or otherwise engaged in criminal activity, or that he had committed a traffic violation. Indeed, the NCIC database revealed no entries for Mr. Gomez.
- 41. Yet unbeknownst to Mr. Gomez, Defendant Coleman contacted or had others in the Spokane Police Department contact the United States Border Patrol to inquire whether Border Patrol had "any interest" in Mr. Gomez. And

some time after initiating contact with Border Patrol, Defendant Coleman learned that Border Patrol agents were en route.

- 42. Upon information and belief, Defendant Coleman extended the time period required to investigate the accident by initiating communications with Border Patrol and waiting for their response before completing the accident investigation.
- 43. Upon information and belief, Defendant Coleman did not initiate an inquiry as to whether Border Patrol had "any interest" in Mr. McKinney or take any steps to determine Mr. McKinney's immigration status.
- 44. Defendant Coleman did not acknowledge Mr. Gomez during his seizure, even though he was the victim of a car accident that totaled his pickup.
- 45. Defendant Coleman did not ask Mr. Gomez whether he needed medical assistance.
- 46. Defendant Coleman did not ask Mr. Gomez any questions about the accident.
- 47. Defendant Coleman did not ask Mr. Gomez any questions about his birthplace or immigration status.
- 48. Around fifteen minutes after taking the drivers' documents, Defendant Coleman stepped out of her vehicle and returned Mr. McKinney's documents.

- 49. While returning Mr. McKinney's documents, Defendant Coleman conversed with him in a friendly manner, asking him various questions about the circumstances of the accident.
- 50. Defendant Coleman issued Mr. McKinney a citation for violating RCW 46.61.190, for failing to yield the right of way at an intersection.

B. Extension of Mr. Gomez's Seizure to Investigate His Potential Undocumented Presence in the United States

- 51. When Defendant Coleman returned Mr. McKinney's documents and cited him, all accident related tasks had been completed. An accident report had been completed, the parties had exchanged the necessary information, and a tow truck had been called to remove Mr. Gomez's pickup truck from the roadway.

 Mr. Gomez's presence was no longer required at the scene of the accident.
- 52. Upon information and belief, when she completed her accident investigation, Defendant Coleman lacked reasonable suspicion or probable cause to believe that Mr. Gomez had committed or was in the process of committing a crime. At this point, Defendant Coleman should have returned his documents, which would have terminated the seizure.
- 53. Instead, Defendant Coleman continued to maintain control of his documents, including his driver's license. As a result, Mr. Gomez did not feel free to, and indeed was not free to, leave the scene.

- 54. Mr. Gomez sat down on a rock on the side of the road and waited for Defendant Coleman to return his documents.
- 55. At around 10:15 a.m.—approximately one hour and 25 minutes after Defendant Coleman first made contact with Mr. Gomez—two Border Patrol agents arrived at the scene, where Mr. Gomez and Defendant Coleman still remained.
 - 56. One of the Border Patrol agents first spoke with Defendant Coleman.
- 57. The Border Patrol agent then approached Mr. Gomez. After interrogating Mr. Gomez for around fifteen minutes, the Border Patrol agent handcuffed Mr. Gomez, and placed him in a Border Patrol vehicle.
- 58. Defendant Coleman returned Mr. Gomez's documents to him only after Mr. Gomez was placed in the Border Patrol vehicle.
- 59. Mr. Gomez observed that Defendant Coleman was smirking in a mocking manner when returning his documents to him.
 - 60. Mr. Gomez felt ashamed and humiliated by Defendant Coleman.
- 61. Upon information and belief, Defendant Coleman seized Mr. Gomez and reported him to and held him for Border Patrol solely because of his Latino race and ethnicity, or on the basis of national origin, or both.
- 62. Upon information and belief, Defendant Coleman acted with intent to discriminate.

- 63. Mr. Gomez was not charged or accused of any traffic infraction or criminal offense by Defendants.
- 64. Mr. Gomez was taken by Border Patrol to a detention facility in Colville, Washington. The following day, he was transported by immigration authorities to a jail in Yakima County, Washington.
- 65. After staying at Yakima County Jail for one night, Mr. Gomez was taken to the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington.
- 66. Each time he was transported between the detention facilities,
 Mr. Gomez was handcuffed and shackled at his ankles.
- 67. While being detained and transported by immigration authorities for two days, Mr. Gomez continued to experience pulsing chest pain from the car accident.
- 68. After arriving at the Northwest Detention Center, Mr. Gomez was placed in removal proceedings before the immigration court.
- 69. Around a month later, Mr. Gomez was released under a bond amount of \$7,000.
 - 70. Mr. Gomez's immigration court proceedings are still pending.
- 71. Mr. Gomez was unable to work during his month-long detention by immigration authorities. He had been employed as a laborer at a plant nursery in

Spokane since 2012, working Monday through Saturday and earning around \$12.50 per hour.

- 72. Due to the loss of income, Mr. Gomez was unable to support his family members. Mr. Gomez was regularly providing financial assistance to his sister and elderly father.
- 73. During his detention by immigration authorities, Mr. Gomez continued to feel substantial chest and shoulder pain due to the accident. Yet he did not receive adequate medical care for his pain and injury while in immigration detention.
- 74. Mr. Gomez suffered significant emotional distress as a result of his encounter with Defendant Coleman in August 2014.
- 75. As a result of his encounter with Defendant Coleman, Mr. Gomez continues to feel nervous and scared each time he sees a police vehicle or officer. He fears that even if he does nothing wrong, he could again be targeted and discriminated against by police officers.

C. Spokane Police Department Policies and Training

76. In 2012, the Ninth Circuit clearly established that state and local law enforcement officers violate the Fourth Amendment to the United States

Constitution when they initiate or prolong a seizure solely to investigate whether an individual is unlawfully present in the United States. *Melendres v. Arpaio*, 695

F.3d 990, 1001 (9th Cir. 2012) ("While the seizures of the named plaintiffs based on traffic violations may have been supported by reasonable suspicion, any extension of their detention must be supported by additional suspicion of criminality. Unlawful presence is not criminal.").

- 77. At the time of Mr. Gomez's seizure, it was clearly established that the same is true under article I, section 7 of the Constitution of the State of Washington. On August 16, 2013, the Pierce County Superior Court of Washington found that it was a violation of article I, section 7 of the Washington constitution for local law enforcement officers to prolong a traffic stop solely to inquire about an individual's immigration status. The court clarified that this was the case even if those officers have the legal authority to seize the individual for an offense they are authorized to enforce, but have decided not to seize the individual for that offense. *See Ramirez-Rangel v. Kitsap County*, No. 12-2-09594-4, 2013 WL 6361177, at *2 (Wash. Super. Ct. Aug. 16, 2013).
- 78. Indeed, following the Piece County Superior Court's decision in *Ramirez-Rangel*, the ACLU of Washington ("ACLU-WA") and Northwest Immigrant Rights Project ("NWIRP") sent a letter to local law enforcement agencies across the state advising these agencies of the decision.
- 79. On or about November 11, 2013, the two organizations sent the advisory letter to the Spokane Police Department.

- 80. On April 1, 2014, Timothy B. Schwering, the Director of Strategic Initiatives of the Spokane Police Department, contacted the ACLU-WA and NWIRP to request feedback on the department's "immigration policy."
- 81. On April 2, 2014, NWIRP responded to Mr. Schwering's email, providing feedback and clarifying, inter alia, that "there is no authority for a police officer to detain someone in order to allow [Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE")] to investigate a case" and sending him a copy of the Pierce County Superior Court's order in *Ramirez-Rangel v. Kitsap County*.
- 82. On April 3, 2014, Mr. Schwering replied to NWIRP, stating, "We've made the recommended changes to our policy," and requesting further feedback.
- 83. On April 17, 2014, NWIRP responded to Mr. Schwering stating that the latest changes addressed the concerns previously noted.
- 84. At the time of the car accident and Mr. Gomez's seizure, the Spokane Police Department had written policies instructing officers not to engage in immigration enforcement activities absent exceptional circumstances. Specifically, and consistent with the Fourth Amendment and article I, section 7, the policies in place at the time of the seizure forbade officers from stopping or detaining "persons solely [to] determin[e] immigration status." *See* Spokane Police Dep't, *Policy Manual* § 422.7 (Apr. 9, 2013), available at https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/police/accountability/police-policy-manual-03-26-13.pdf. The policy

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noted that Spokane police officers were not authorized to "arrest foreign nationals for undocumented presence" because "[f]ederal courts have consistently held that undocumented presence is not a crime but a federal civil violation only enforceable by federal officers." *Id*.

- 85. Nevertheless, the Spokane Police Department had policies at the time of the seizure that allowed Spokane police officers to prolong a detention to allow Border Patrol agents to arrive and investigate civil immigration violations. For example, Section 422.7 of the Spokane Police Department Policy Manual provided that "[a]fter a lawful detention or criminal arrest, officers may detain foreign nationals solely for alleged undocumented presence in the U.S. if the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is contacted and can respond to take custody within a reasonable time." *Id.*; *see also id.* § 428.3.7 (authorizing officers to "cause ICE to be notified for consideration of an immigration hold" even when the individual being arrested "is not going to be booked into the county jail").
- 86. Upon information and belief, Defendant Coleman was acting pursuant to these Spokane Police Department policies when she enforced civil immigration laws and prolonged Mr. Gomez's seizure to investigate his immigration status and allow Border Patrol agents to arrive.
- 87. Upon information or belief, these policies have not been rescinded or otherwise meaningfully changed since Mr. Gomez's seizure. *See* Spokane Police

Dep't, *Policy Manual* § 422.7 (July 21, 2017), available at https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/police/accountability/police-policy-manual-2017-07-21.pdf ("[O]fficers may detain foreign nationals solely for alleged undocumented presence in the U.S. if the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is contacted and can respond to take custody within a reasonable time.").

- 88. The City of Spokane has authorized the chief of police to set department policy, *see* Spokane, Wash., Mun. Code § 03.10.010(B)(1) (2013), and the Spokane Police Department Policy Manual is, upon information and belief, issued pursuant to that authority.
- 89. Moreover, upon information and belief, the Spokane Police

 Department and City of Spokane did not adequately train or supervise Defendant

 Coleman to prevent her from discriminating against Mr. Gomez on the ground of race, ethnicity, or national origin.

CAUSES OF ACTION

COUNT I

Seizure Without Probable Cause - Fourth Amendment; 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (Against Defendant Coleman, in her individual and official capacities, and Defendant City of Spokane)

90. All of the foregoing allegations are repeated and re-alleged as though fully set forth herein.

- 91. Defendant Coleman seized Mr. Gomez by taking possession of his driver's license and other documents, thereby preventing him from leaving the scene of the accident. At no point did Defendant Coleman return Mr. Gomez's documents or advise him that he was free to leave until after he was transferred to the custody of United States Border Patrol.
- 92. Defendant Coleman's seizure of Mr. Gomez lasted approximately 85 minutes, and lasted about seventy minutes longer than her investigation of Mr. McKinney.
- 93. The law was clearly established prior to August 24, 2014 that Defendant Coleman, as a local police officer, had no lawful authority to seize Mr. Gomez or to extend any seizure for purposes of investigating his civil immigration status.
- 94. The law was clearly established prior to August 24, 2014 that the Spokane Police Department, as a local law enforcement agency, had no lawful authority to seize Mr. Gomez or to extend any seizure for purposes of investigating his civil immigration status.
- 95. The law was also clearly established prior to August 24, 2014 that, for state and local law enforcement officers, a seizure without probable cause or at least reasonable suspicion of a crime constitutes an unreasonable seizure in violation of the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

- 96. Even if Defendant Coleman initially seized Mr. Gomez's documents for the purpose of investigating the accident, that seizure was unreasonable in length and scope, and lasted more than an hour *after* Defendant Coleman issued a citation to the driver who was at fault.
- 97. Defendant Coleman seized Mr. Gomez beyond the time period reasonably necessary to perform the routine task of verifying the driver's license, car registration, and insurance information of an individual involved in a car accident.
- 98. Defendant Coleman extended Mr. Gomez's seizure by holding his documents until United States Border Patrol agents arrived at the scene to apprehend him.
- 99. Defendant Coleman's extended seizure of Mr. Gomez was not justified by probable cause or reasonable suspicion of any criminal activity.
- 100. Defendant Coleman's extended seizure of Mr. Gomez beyond the time and scope reasonably necessary to investigate the automobile accident was not consensual.
- 101. Mr. Gomez had the right under the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution to be free from unreasonable seizures.
- 102. Defendant Coleman's actions constituted a seizure of Mr. Gomez's person.

- 103. Defendant Coleman's seizure of Mr. Gomez's person was unreasonable.
- 104. Defendant Coleman's actions subjected Mr. Gomez to a deprivation of his rights as secured by the Fourth Amendment.
- 105. In unconstitutionally prolonging the seizure of Mr. Gomez, Defendant Coleman was acting pursuant to Spokane Police Department policies that violate the Fourth Amendment.
- 106. Mr. Gomez was injured by Defendant Coleman's unconstitutional seizure and the Spokane Police Department's unconstitutional policies, which deprived him of his Fourth Amendment rights.
- 107. Defendant Coleman's conduct of subjecting Mr. Gomez to an unconstitutional seizure was motivated by evil motive or intent, or was recklessly or callously indifferent to his Fourth Amendment rights.
- 108. Mr. Gomez suffered physical, emotional, and economic harm as a result of Defendant Coleman' unconstitutional seizure.
- 109. Because the policies permitting Spokane police officers to prolong a seizure solely to facilitate investigations of civil immigration violations are still in place, absent an injunction enjoining the operation of these policies, it is likely that Mr. Gomez will be unconstitutionally seized again in the future.

110. As a result of Defendants' Fourth Amendment violations, Mr. Gomez is entitled to damages, an injunction, and declaratory relief.

COUNT II

Violation of the Constitution of the State of Washington (Against Defendant Coleman, in her individual and official capacities, and Defendant City of Spokane)

- 111. All of the foregoing allegations are repeated and re-alleged as though fully set forth herein.
- 112. Article I, section 7 of the Washington constitution forbids law enforcement officers from detaining any person longer than is necessary to investigate the matter for which they were stopped.
- 113. Once the initial reasons for seizing Mr. Gomez had been extinguished, under article I, section 7, Defendant Coleman could only continue the detention if she had reasonable suspicion or probable cause to believe that Mr. Gomez had or was in the process of committing a crime.
- 114. Defendant Coleman, by detaining Mr. Gomez far beyond the end of the accident investigation, violated article I, section 7 because she lacked the reasonable suspicion or probable cause necessary to continue the seizure.
- 115. Article I, section 7 also forbids state and local law enforcement officers from seizing an individual without "authority of law."

- 116. As a local law enforcement officer, Defendant Coleman was not authorized—by statute or common law—to enforce civil immigration laws. Thus, Defendant Coleman lacked authority of law to detain Mr. Gomez solely to investigate whether Mr. Gomez's was unlawfully present in the country and, accordingly, violated article I, section 7.
- 117. In unconstitutionally prolonging the seizure of Mr. Gomez to enforce laws she lacked the authority to enforce, Defendant Coleman was acting pursuant to Spokane Police Department policies that violated article I, section 7.
- 118. Mr. Gomez was injured by Defendant Coleman's unconstitutional seizure and the Spokane Police Department's policy permitting unconstitutional seizures, which deprived him of his rights under article I, section 7 of the Washington constitution.
- 119. Mr. Gomez suffered physical, emotional, and economic harm as a result of his unconstitutional seizure.
- 120. Because the policies permitting Spokane police officers to prolong a seizure solely to facilitate investigations of civil immigration violations are still in place, absent an injunction enjoining the operation of these policies, it is likely that Mr. Gomez will be unconstitutionally seized again in the future.

121. As a result of Defendants' violation of the article I, section 7 of the Washington constitution, Mr. Gomez is entitled to injunctive and declaratory relief.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests relief as follows:

- a. Trial by judge on all claims so triable;
- b. Compensatory damages from Defendants in an amount to be proved at trial;
 - c. Punitive damages from Defendant Coleman;
- d. A declaration that Defendants violated Mr. Gomez's rights under the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution and article I, section 7 of the Constitution of the State of Washington;
- e. A declaration that Defendant City of Spokane's policies permitting its officers to prolong a detention or arrest to allow federal immigration officers to arrive and investigate an individual's unlawful presence violate the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution and article I, section 7 of the Constitution of the State of Washington;
- f. A declaration that Defendants are not authorized to arrest or detain individuals solely for suspected unauthorized presence in the United States;