

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2013/05/18/federal-lawsuit-filed-against-guard-brutality-in-solitary-confinement-unit-at-north-carolinas-central-prison/>

Campaign and Advocacy

close

Search

close

close

by [Lisa Dawson](#) | May 18, 2013



Lawyers at North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services have filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of eight people held in solitary confinement at Central Prison against officers and administrators at the facility. As [reported](#) by the *Associated Press*:

A federal lawsuit on behalf of eight inmates at North Carolina's Central Prison alleges correctional officers used blind spots out of view of security cameras to beat handcuffed and shackled inmates.

An amended complaint filed last week in U.S. District Court by lawyers at North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services says the beatings occurred in Unit One, a cell block known as The Hole where inmates are kept in solitary confinement for disciplinary reasons.

The inmates' abuse claims are supported by medical records documenting blunt-force injuries that occurred while they were segregated from other prisoners, including broken bones, concussions and an inmate who is still unable to walk months after his hip was shattered.

N.C. Department of Public Safety spokeswoman Pam Walker said the agency would not comment on pending litigation.

The lawsuit names as defendants 21 correctional officers accused of participating in the abuse, as well as two wardens at the maximum security prison in Raleigh. The lawsuit alleges that former prison administrator Gerald J. Branker and current administrator Kenneth Lassiter knew about the problems.

The suit seeks to eliminate this problem going forward, calling for the Court to order installation of surveillance cameras throughout the hallways of Unit One, stating: Given the history at Central Prison's Unit One, these measures would benefit prison officials, prisoners, and the taxpaying public, and are required by the Eighth Amendment of the United States Constitution.

The article goes on to describe several instances of guard brutality:

One violent beating was Dec. 3, 2012, and left inmate Jerome Peters in a wheelchair, according to the lawsuit.

[Jerome] Peters, 48, was handcuffed and escorted by two correctional officers from his cell to an outdoor recreation area when the lawsuit said one of the guards punched him in the face while the other grabbed a leg and pulled him to the ground. The lawsuit said a third correctional officer then helped the other two kick, stomp and punch Peters.

When they were finished, the lawsuit said the officers put shackles on Peters' ankles and ordered him to walk. He couldn't, the suit said, because his pelvic bone was broken.

Peters was taken to an emergency room and diagnosed with a broken right hip, and fractured bones in his hand and face. He also had blurred vision and numerous cuts and bruises, according to the lawsuit. He underwent surgery, but more than five months later is still unable to walk.

The complaint also includes an account of an incident in which the ribs of a person held at the facility were broken. According to the *Associated Press*:

Riddle was removed from his cell so that officers could search it. While he was waiting in handcuffs, the lawsuit alleged a correctional officer punched him in the face. Two officers then took Riddle to a secluded area of holding cells inmates call The Desert because they are not covered by video cameras.

There, three officers are said to have punched and kicked Riddle in the chest and torso. Riddle was then locked back in his cell, where his pleas for medical attention were ignored, according to the lawsuit.

It took 11 days before prison staff took Riddle to see a physician assistant, who ordered an X-ray. He was diagnosed with multiple rib fractures.

In another instance of brutality by Central Prison corrections officers, the *Associated Press* reports:

Chardan Whitehead got in an altercation with a guard. One sprayed him in the face with pepper spray and two officers took him to The Desert.

There, the lawsuit said three officers beat the restrained inmate unconscious. He was later taken to a hospital and diagnosed with a concussion and received several sutures to sew up cuts on his head and face. He was also blind in his left eye for several weeks.

Whitehead was later released after serving about six months for larceny of a motor vehicle.

This is not the first time prisoner abuse at Central Prison, where around 600 people are held in Close Custody, or solitary confinement, has come to public light. In 2012, Solitary Watch [reported](#) that people held at the facility had launched a hunger strike in protest of various prison conditions, the demands of which included [a]n immediate end to the physical and mental abuse inflicted by officers and [t]he end of cell restriction.

Lisa Dawson served as an assistant editor, social media manager, and contributor at Solitary Watch. She continues to support prisoners and their family members who need help navigating re-entry. She is on Twitter [@endsolitary](#).

Accurate information and authentic storytelling can serve as powerful antidotes to ignorance and injustice. We have helped generate public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

Only with your support can we continue this groundbreaking work, shining light into the darkest corners of the U.S. criminal punishment system.

by [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

Solitary Watch encourages comments and welcomes a range of ideas, opinions, debates, and respectful disagreement. We do not allow name-calling, bullying, cursing, or personal attacks of any kind. Any embedded links should be to information relevant to the conversation. Comments that violate these guidelines will be removed, and repeat offenders will be blocked. Thank you for your cooperation.

My husband was in Central Prison. They put him in the hole for a year. Throughout that time they beat the mess out of him handcuffed and shackled and shot him up with unknown drugs all while they starved him from 170 to 115 pounds. Beating were a regular part of life there for him. To this day we are unable to conceive due to the meds they shot him up with and the disastrous side effects. He has severe PTSD to the point I can't leave him home alone not even long enough to make a convenient store run less than 10 minutes. Even if it's the middle of the night and he was already asleep he will get up he must go. We have been together almost 8 yrs and not 1 time has he been able to stay alone even momentarily!

Thank you for sharing your story. We are sorry for what you and your husband are going through. We hope someday everyone will understand the long-term effects of this torture.

You can always tell who the Blue lives matter ass-buckets are by their comments. Smith is either law-enforcement, or he, [or she] has a family member who is. Not all Officers are corrupt?

Are there any good cops out there? It would seem that when there are, they are fired or bullied off the force. Police officers who are good will by nature call out and hold accountable to the cops who are doing bad things. Anyone in law enforcement that stands idly by and allows bad cops to do bad things cannot be regarded as good.

A code of ethics is a statement or series of statements delineating the underlying attitude and behaviors expected of police officers and public officials. The code augments the Oath of Office and provides guidance in making ethical decisions and describes the fundamental duties of the office on which a person has entered. The code of ethics also forms a basis for disciplinary action should it become necessary.

Ass-bucket-teer! You're the problem_Ignorance!

Not all Officers are corrupt, But I do believe the ones that are, should be fired, If the alleged is true and was done for no reason, Some Inmates do provoke it. and fight back while they are in cuffs, so they are resisting,

My brother is detained in Butner 2 federal correctional institution in north Carolina,he wrote me a letter telling me ,3 officers assault him ,beat him to the wall and now his all hurt and beaten bad that he havent ate for three days,I just want to see where can I seek help ,so I can get justice for my brother ,and for this officers to punish for what they done,can anybody tell me where I can get help please?

I need some guidance please. My brother was abused by federal marshalls taking into court. Court order to use reasonable force does not mean someone should arrive in a wheelchair, beaten, bruised, broken bones hours later he has not received medical attention. who do we call???? HELP

Assault is a crime. The guards that assaulted need to be prosecuted as well as the wardens that had knowledge of the assaults. They need prosecuted to the fullest extent that the law will allow. It sickens me that many correction officers have no respect for human beings. There is nothing that gives them the right to treat inmates this way. They should be removed from their jobs pending litigation.

My grandson was assaulted by guards in upstate correctional 23 hour lock down. We have a lawsuit going but I wrote to every official in NYS and not a one has done a thing except pass it to someone else. Im tired of this broken system who beat on handcuffed inmates.; People need to wake up and see just because you commit a crime does not give these guards right to beat on you. My grandson was handcuffed and dragged through feces. I have no respect for law enforcement or high officials anymore

P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

Solitary Watch

Copyright 2022, Solitary Watch

Read about [rights and permissions.](#)



Solitary Watch News