

Equal Justice Initiative

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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01.03.20

Left to right: Brandon Ladd and childhood photo of Mr. Ladd.

Brandon Ladd, age 31, was murdered at Bibb Correctional Facility on December 10, 2019. Mr. Ladd's experience over the last five years was emblematic of the struggle men face to survive in Alabama's prisons.

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Even though spending on state prisons has increased 20% in the last 10 years, Alabama's prison system is the most violent in the nation.

Mr. Ladd was serving a 23-year sentence for non-homicide offenses out of Jefferson County and had been incarcerated since 2010. In 2015, Mr. Ladd was stabbed during an attempted robbery in his cell at St. Clair Correctional Facility by a prisoner who was assigned to a different housing block. Mr. Ladd suffered stab wounds to his arm and chest, resulting in a collapsed lung that required extensive treatment and surgery at UAB Hospital.

In August 2018, Mr. Ladd was again hospitalized after being stabbed in the back while he was handcuffed and unable to protect himself in segregation at St. Clair. Mr. Ladd also suffered a dislocated shoulder in that assault, which required surgical treatment at Brookwood Medical Center.

Mr. Ladd subsequently spent several months at St. Clair in solitary confinement for his protection before being transferred to Fountain Correctional Facility. Shortly after his arrival at Fountain and placement in general population there, Mr. Ladd was stabbed in the head and eye in March 2019. Mr. Ladd had at least four eye surgeries following the stabbing but remained legally blind in one of his eyes.

Mr. Ladd was transferred from Fountain to Bibb in November 2019. He was murdered at Bibb less than a month after his arrival and became the third homicide victim at that prison in the last nine months.

While limited information has been released by the Department of Corrections, at least 15 men have died in Alabama's prisons as a result of confirmed or suspected homicides in 2019 alone, making the state's current system the most deadly in the nation. Approximately 1 out of every 10 people that have died in Alabama's prisons in the past fiscal year have died as a result of homicide. The number of homicides and facilities reporting homicides both grew approximately 60% in that same time period.

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