

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2014/07/10/ninety-years-old-deaf-hole-florida-prison/>

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by [Adelyn Baxter](#) | July 10, 2014

Elliott Bud Yorke, who is incarcerated at Floridas Columbia Correctional Institution Annex at Lake City, was sent to solitary confinement on June 24. According to prison officials, he was placed in isolation for his own protection after corrections officers observed injuries suggesting that he had been assaulted. Aside from being two months shy of his 90th birthday, Yorke is deaf and non-verbal, communicating primarily through writing. He uses a wheeled walker to move around.

Apparently this confinement system is not concerned with impaired and elderly, Yorke wrote in a July 1 letter to a friend. He continued:

There are no grab and hold bars on wall to help me up and down on toilet. They wont let my walker stay in my cell to help, tho I am solo occupant in this cell while Im in this present hell place

At 1310 hrs. on June 25, 2014 the confinement guard has taken my walker wheels. He rode it out like a scooter with one knee on the seat. It was parked outside my cell. It has my jar of topical allergy skin salve under seat and I cant walk without a walker!! I need these. I wrote a note of need to guard and he wrote on back of note Make your bed- that is what you need! At 1635 hrs I got jar and nasty note F you!

My stationery, envelopes, stamps, pens, address records, and crotch supporters for sanitary male napkins have been put in storage and I have no access!!! Diapers, [to] which I am historically allergic, have been issued under door ground gap.

Yorke, who has served close to 30 years in Florida for a sex offense, has requested to be sent to a prison that teaches American Sign Language. He is able to hear some things with the help of a tinnitus masker, but has been denied that as well.

According to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, prisons receiving federal funding must supply an effective communications system for the deaf, while the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) specifically requires state and local agencies to make sure a disabled person is not limited in terms of communication. In the past, courts have found prisons that do not provide disabled inmates physical accommodations like handrails and shower chairs to be in violation of the ADA, according to [A Jailhouse Lawyers Manual](#).

On Monday, Columbia Annex Warden Munroe Barnes told Solitary Watch that he had made sure to correct the majority of Yorkes complaints, although a walker was still not permitted in keeping with standard procedure in solitary in case it can be made into weapon. The tinnitus masking instrument is also not allowed in solitary cells, Barnes said, because inmates are supplied with mp3 devices that have the same capabilities.

Yorke has been approved for transfer to a facility commensurate with his age and disability status, according to Barnes, but the process takes time due to limited availability throughout the state prison system. In the meantime, Yorke remains in solitary indefinitely.

Adelyn Baxter was a research and reporting intern for Solitary Watch and is now a radio and TV producer for Alaska Public Media in Anchorage.

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

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I had to take care of this man in prison. He was an evil human being. Y'all are crazy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RAyrbQrNBs>

This is EXACTLY what happened.. my Grandfather got 2 life sentences for an accused Touch used anatomically correct dolls in the court!!!

He is my Grandfather.. We found him beaten and in solitary THIS WEEKEND!! His entire face is black his arms are black and swollen.. he is a mess and has pneumonia.. has had it for a month and a half now..Santa Rosa Correctional!!!! HELP HIM PLEASE!!!! He was accused of touching by a family that wanted the insurance money they would get from this case in the 80s.. they had 4 of their girls accuse him at the age of 4 years old.. 3 testimonies were tossed out because they were proven to be COACHED!!.. look up all the 1980s wrongly accused witch hunts and you will learn a thing or two Stephanie and Emily He got two life sentences for an accused touch..He was already deaf during the trial..and had a horrible lawyer that took all of our money! He is the most calm wonderful man I know..and I will stand behind him 100%

Amber, my father in law visited him many times. I have letters from your grandfather to Roy. I wish I could share them. Roy passed away last November, age 96. I know they shared the love of Jesus.

Amber, my father in law visited him many years. I have letters from Elliott. Roy passed away Nov 2015. I pray things are better for your Grandfather.

The prisons should not be a place where a certain group of people (wardens, corrections officers) are given the okay to behave cruelly, abusively, and sadistically. If it is not right for one group of people it shouldn't be right for any other group. Prisoners should never be intentionally provoked and antagonized. That is a layer of punishment that is not necessary and serves no purpose but to satisfy a correction officers own criminal and sadistic tendencies. The consequences can be unnecessary emotional and physical pain for the prisoner, and predictable rage and frustration taken out on themselves, other inmates and the corrections officers. Remember and try to see the correlation to the movie, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.

have him out of prisoner, 30 years is longest time for him, send him to nursery home,

prisoners weren't thinking about ethnics or morals or what was inhumane for their victims. he was in jail for a sex crime, he deserves no respect and should have received the death penalty. they put animals to sleep when they attack a person, i believe they should do the same to rapist and child molesters. if our legal system and prisons were more stern, there wouldn't be as many crimes committed

This does not only happen to this man this kind of thing happens to others too, the crime this person committed is not at question is the abuse from guards who have a little of power and abused it. This people are in prison because they committed a crime but that does not give people no right to treat anyone like this. They have a code of ethics and they need to follow it. This is why u hear inmates killing or stabbing officers because this officers treat them like shit. Regardless of the crime this inmates have family who care for them and you would never one to be in this situation.

Did anyone bother to look up his charges?? I did. They are nasty because when he was in his 60s he committed sexual assault on a victim under the age of 12. Let the son of a bitch rot and suffer Hes a chomo and he deserves it.

HES BEING TORTURED BY THE PRISON SYSTEM..

It would be cost effective for the taxpayers of Florida to send this very old man to a nursing home, where he would be just as disabled but could be treated appropriately. The prison system is not equipped for people in their nineties. But fear not, prison enthusiasts, nursing homes aren't paradise, either. Everyone hates them.

Maybe he should of thought about this before he committed a sexual crime! I don't think he deserves anything.

He did the crime and hes doing the time, but adding unnecessary cruelty isn't the way to handle this situation. Wake up FLORIDA CORRECTIONS SYSTEM!!!!

It sounds to me he is not in solitary confinement, but in protective custody. This would be for his safety from other inmates.

no the guards do it to him and then say its for his protection!

Do the math! Most 90 yrs old, close to 30 yrs served for A SEX CRIME! So this guy was at least slightly older than 60 yrs old. Deaf or not, he has committed one of the most horrible crimes of raping and or molesting someone. Any disability is not an excuse and he should have thought about the repercussions before hand. He didn't afford any mercy on the victim. Where was his humanity when he hurt someone?

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accused of touching by a family that wanted the insurance money they would get from this case in the 80s.. they had 4 of their girls accuse him at the age of 4 years old.. 3 testimonies were tossed out because they were proven to be COACHED!!.. look up all the 1980s wrongly accused witch hunts and you will learn a thing or two Stephanie and Emily He got two life sentences for an accused touch..He was already deaf during the trial..and had a horrible lawyer that took all of our money! He is the most calm wonderful man I know..and I will stand behind him 100%

While I think the guards behavior and attitude are deplorable, I can also understand it. Prison guards, especially for solitary confinement, can not afford to feel sympathy for any inmate. Their jobs depend on it.

I imagine also that after awhile they become completely insensitive (& rude) while dealing with the sort of people who are incarcerated. I think that if the prison system actually put some effort into it & tried, they would find a way to let him finish his sentencing somewhere more accommodating to his needs. Maybe even so far as to give him House Arrest or a half-way house arrangement. It sounds like he has served the majority of his sentence? Jeeze, the guy is in his 90s? How harmful to society could he still be?

I can answer the question of wheres the basic humanity?there isnt any, primarily because a person who enjoys guarding inmates in the hole and comfortaably takes this job is a sociopath.they will be high up on the psycopathic scale and, being naturally unable to feel empathy or even understand the concept of the feelings most people will normally experience when face-to-face with any type of suffering.

This can make for an extremely dangerous person who will be compelled to seek out employment where they can unleash their personality freely.

Iv got to add that we have many sociopathic people among us with no danger from them;they simply cant understand empathy and are unable to feel sorry for anything.

I empathize with this mans situation and agree with the comments about providing basic needs (more so for an elderly and handicapped person) and ESPECIALLY abiding by ADA law. I also acknowledge that when a person commits a crime and is convicted by a jury of his peers, he must do the time. And time will not be easy on the person. If it was easy, everyone would do it.

The bottom line is that the USAs criminal justice system is what it is. And although its not a good deterrent, if you dont want to spend time in jail or prison, keep your nose clean.

This is horrible for anyone to be treated this way. A friend of mind was in SHU or BOX or other wise known as solitary and now she is in mental observation because of what they did to her and how they tortured her the sick things these guards did to her

I will be writing to Albany with the names of the officers who did this and what they did

We have to do this to TRY and change this

Its a start!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

This is clearly a violation of the ADA We should forward this complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice forward to

http://www.ada.gov/filing_complaint.htm

This is absolutely sad and ridiculous!!!! The man is 90 for petes sake! I am sure he is not planning to make a weapon out of his walker. Give him his skin cream and get him out of solitary!!! The US prison systems and justice systems all across this country are becoming inhumane. Things need to change. This man should be out of prison and living in a nursing home now. I think 30 yrs is plenty of punishment for a sex crime unless it was absolutely a heinous crime.

Bob, to me, that means he either knew of the mans complaints beforehand and didnt care to correct them OR he was not aware of any problems and only corrected them AFTER they became public knowledge.

The Warden of the Prison is either cruel beyond comprehension OR he is completely inept and has no clue what is going on in his prison. Perhaps both.

The Punishment Paradigm of todays prison system (I cant even use the word Corrections because it neither Corrects OR Rehabilitates anyone, just punishes them)

is a complete and utter failure. We need to find a better, more humane way of doing things or just admit we dont want to do it and kill all the prisoners by shooting them into large, open graves like they did in World War II prison camps.

Compared to what this poor man has suffered, he might consider THAT a kindness.

Locked up for 30 years. Presently in solitary. Ninety years of age. The torment of such incarceration. To add to the torment is a fk you from a guard when simply asking the guard to return his topical allergy skin salve. Where is this guards basic humanity? Where is our humanity as a society to torture some in isolation who live 23-24 hours per day in a bare 9 by 12 cell? Something is terribly wrong. This is 2014!!! Can any of us actually imagine the torment of social and environmental deprivation day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year. Personally, I dont think I could stand it without emotionally going through a complete breakdown. Is this what we want for our prisoners? There is no element of rehabilitation here, only torment and revenge.

Thank God Warden Barnes has enough humanity to correct some of Yorkes very basic requests.

Only after we as a family have mad MANY phone calls and have made this public!!

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