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Women allege widespread sexual abuse at Alabama prison, nonprofit group says

By the **CNN Wire Staff**

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Tutwiler Prison for Women opened in Wetumpka, Alabama, in December 1942.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

NEW: A 2007 report found Tutwiler had the highest rate of sexual assault among prisons for women

The group says women reported "frequent and severe officer-on-inmate sexual violence"

No comment from Alabama Department of Corrections or attorney general's office

Equal Justice Initiative wants Justice Department to investigate Tutwiler Prison

(CNN) -- Male guards at an Alabama women's prison engaged in the widespread sexual abuse of female inmates for years, a nonprofit group alleged in a formal complaint filed with the Justice Department on Tuesday.

The Equal Justice Initiative asked the Justice Department to investigate alleged incidents occurring between 2009 and 2011 at the Tutwiler Prison for Women in Wetumpka, Alabama. The federal agency confirmed that it received the complaint though declined further comment.

"In interviews with more than 50 women incarcerated at Tutwiler, EJI uncovered evidence of frequent and severe officer-on-inmate sexual violence," the Montgomery-based group said in a statement.

"This troubling cycle of abuse and lack of accountability has established a widespread pattern and practice of custodial sexual misconduct," said Bryan Stevenson, the group's executive director.

Stevenson also blamed the Alabama Department of Corrections for under-reporting the alleged attacks, which the group says include rapes, and for responding inadequately.

The group claims that more than "20 Tutwiler employees have been transferred or terminated in the past five years for having illegal sexual contact with prisoners."

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What's this?

"It's an ongoing thing, a daily thing," said Stefanie Hibbett, 31, a former Tutwiler inmate. "You see women raped and beaten, and nothing is ever done."

Hibbett said she was the victim of sexual assault in November 2010. She said she told the prison's warden about the assault, but no charges were ever filed against the prison guard she says attacked her. An Alabama judge dismissed a civil suit she filed in the case in August.

Several imprisoned women also allegedly became pregnant after being raped by guards, giving birth while in custody, the nonprofit group reported.

CNN cannot independently confirm that account. The Alabama attorney general's office referred questions to the Alabama Department of Corrections, which did not immediately return a call for comment.

A 2007 Justice Department report found that Tutwiler maintained the highest rate of sexual assault among prisons for women and 11th overall of those evaluated across the United States.

CNN's Dave Alsup and Vivian Kuo contributed to this report.

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acadia11

I don't know why they have male guards at female prisons to begin with?

4 months ago 91 Likes

Like



me138

The same exact thing happens with women guards at male prisons.

4 months ago in reply to acadia11 24 Likes

Like



BroadCasting

Female guards have abused prisoners. Not all male guards are rapist. Many both male and female do their jobs in a professional and disciplined manor and should not be discriminated against because of their sex.

4 months ago in reply to acadia11 13 Likes

Like



SupraPwn

Robot guards please.

4 months ago in reply to acadia11 9 Likes

Like



spurtulous

"20 Tutwiler employees have been transferred or terminated in the past five years for having illegal sexual contact with prisoners." ILLEGAL contact? so they were not arrested so it was not ILLEGAL? treated them like christian priests... deny deny deny relocate for fresher meat.

4 months ago in reply to acadia11 7 Likes

Like



nullcodes

Why not have total surveillance in prisons, with night vision cameras. No spot in the prison should be free from surveillance. For sensitive areas like restrooms the tapes can only be looked at if there is probable cause and with a search warrant. Total surveillance doesn't mean total monitoring. the tapes can be encrypted so that they are only viewable with a warrant.

4 months ago in reply to acadia11 6 Likes

Like



miller1974

Acadia, this particular case in Alabama aside there are two reasons why they have male c.o.'s working in female prisons.

The first reason is that for some reason female prisoners don't act out as much around male c.o.'s. When it's all female staff the prisoners are much more animated and tend to act out more.

The second and more important reason is that a great many of the female prisoners in the system have had almost zero positive contact with males in their entire lives. In a lot of case right from childhood most every man they have been in contact with has beaten them and abused them in one way or another. In the best case scenarios male c.o.'s that can form a positive working relationship with female prisoners have the opportunity to show that not all men are out to take advantage of them.

When a male c.o. betrays their trust (as seems to be the case in this article) they are really hurting women in more ways then they realize, and undoing the good that many other male c.o.'s work hard to accomplish.

4 months ago in reply to acadia11 1 Like

Like



iamajimm

back in my day we called them pigs; sad to see not much has changed. to these guys putting on a uniform is just an excuse to bully those who can't fight back, they are the worst of the cowards.

4 months ago 68 Likes

Like



t0ofly

daocmods102 you are stupid. I really hope you feel dumb for posting that.

4 months ago in reply to iamajimm 18 Likes

Like



daocmods102

How about not getting involved in situations that involve prison guards? Back in my day, if you got sent to prison you got what you deserved. I know how surprised everyone must be that prisoners get r@ped. Startling.

4 months ago in reply to iamajimm 5 Likes

Like



spurtulous

0 arrested.....

4 months ago in reply to iamajimm

Like



Sherrickb

Rape is rape. Rape is wrong regardless of WHO is committing it. To rape someone who is in prison and can't get away is doubly wrong. Any man who rapes a woman needs to be locked up. If you are a man and have had sex with someone after they said NO, or STOP - then you are a rapist. Whether you think you are or not.

4 months ago 49 Likes

Like



me138

Is it only men who rape?

4 months ago in reply to Sherrickb 11 Likes

Like



TrollinBob2

Nope. The women rape each other for both sex and power.

4 months ago in reply to me138 10 Likes

Like



spurtulous

yet 0 arrested. priest treatment?

4 months ago in reply to Sherrickb 2 Likes

Like



daskollaps

@TrollinBob2 Women RAPE each other? Where do I go to see that happening?!

4 months ago in reply to Sherrickb 1 Like

Like



angryersmell

A society should be judged, not by how it treats the best of it's citizens, but by how it treats the worst.

So not only do we spend massive sums on incarceration that would be better used elsewhere, not only is the system that incarcerates these people often fallible, corrupt and subjective, but once incarcerated, our prisoners are perpetually raped and abused by both their guards and each other, regardless of the crime.

Worst...society...ever.

4 months ago 35 Likes

Like



frotc914

As a man I question whether men should even be allowed to work in women's prisons without every square inch being covered by security cameras. Even in an ideal world where rape doesn't occur, there will be quid pro quo sex going on left and right in exchange for prison privileges.

4 months ago 34 Likes

Like



JJ45636

women are also capable of rape.

4 months ago in reply to frotc914 9 Likes

Like



frotc914

Agreed, but it would still definitely reduce the rate of prisoner sexual abuse.

4 months ago in reply to JJ45636 6 Likes

Like



TrollinBob2

Yes, but a lot of these female cons are just too violent for female guards to handle. My friend's dad was a prison guard in a women's prison and a lot of these little ladies are brutal.

4 months ago in reply to frotc914 6 Likes

Like



frotc914

Yeah I'm sure these ladies are tough as nails, but there has to be some way to prevent this. I mean, I know the estimate is probably way above what it really is, but this stuff probably happens at all women's prisons to some degree. Maybe not always rapes, but sexual assaults or whatever.

If the answer is that we need tougher broads guarding the prisons, so be it. The WNBA and the totality of women's collegiate sports always have some tough ladies looking for work.

4 months ago in reply to TrollinBob2 2 Likes

Like



turtle995

I wonder if they're hiring?

4 months ago in reply to frotc914 1 Like

Like



frotc914

dfc333 - I like that solution. Have men around, but not interacting with the general pop. all the time.

4 months ago in reply to frotc914

Like



dfc333

I agree to a point, because I still feel that men should be handy if needed. Maybe have them patrol the outside, only need a few at most any ways.

4 months ago in reply to frotc914

Like



KCArrowhead

The perps need to be thrown in a male prison. And let EVERYONE know they are prison guards.

Problem solved.

4 months ago 22 Likes

Like



PJL500

that might be an effective deterrent. Obviously this corruption goes right to the top at local prisons - the guards think they will get away with it for a reason.

4 months ago in reply to KCArrowhead 5 Likes

Like



1Lily

If true, this is unexceptable behavior. Just because these women are incarcerated, does not give these punks the right to abuse them. What they are doing is wrong so why not arrest them and send them to jail. An eye for an eye!

4 months ago 20 Likes

Like



xvet

Not a surprise. Prison rape is apparently pretty common whether it be guard on inmate or inmate on inmate. Sadly some feel that since they are criminals they deserve what they get. Shouldn't happen period.

xvet

4 months ago 18 Likes

Like



sandolz88

I can't believe half of these comments from you guys. It's ok to rape a woman because she is in jail? Are you serious??? This isn't the Congo, this is the US. This is appalling. These women are paying for a crime by being incarcerated and that does NOT entitle the prison guards to ALSO break the law by rape. I'm just horrified. As a woman, I am more horrified by some of these comments that are saying it's ok because these women are locked up. Sick pigs.

4 months ago 16 Likes

Like



Guest

Agreed. I've worked in a jail with both women and men. Frankly, some of them were truly horrible, despicable characters. But, by what code of ethics is it okay to break the law, in the name of the law? Corrections officers that break the law are criminals themselves, and from a characterological perspective, have more in common with the inmates, than law-abiding citizens.

4 months ago in reply to sandolz88 6 Likes

Like



acct8

It's not okay to rape anyone - unless you're a sadist who works at the DOJ. That's clear.

4 months ago in reply to sandolz88 2 Likes

Like



AndyMaxo

Any group of people who'd lock women up for pot smoking so they can rape them, is a sicko bunch of violent scumbags with jobs funded by taxpayer money. It's upside down and backwards and illegal and against federal law and against what we stand for, and against all that's right. Providing women for prison guards to rape at will should be grounds for execution by firing squad in the public square. Alabama better roll some heads - throw out the phony Bible-thumpers and get busy finding out who's raping all the women; maybe the Bible-thumpers are the ones raping women! Well?

4 months ago 16 Likes

Like



EricdeGreat

" no one has to accept abuse or rape. all it takes is to say no. "

are you serious...? it's called RAPE for a reason, genius!

4 months ago in reply to AndyMaxo 3 Likes

Like



Guest

Icook: So, it's okay for the corrections officers to engage in criminal conduct, but it wasn't okay for the women inmates? The law is the law: If it's true that these officers are braking the law, then they are also criminals and should be in prison themselves. As former corrections officers, I'm sure the type of punishment they inflicted on female prisoners would come instead from grown male convicts.

4 months ago in reply to AndyMaxo 1 Like

Like



Icook5

these are not just women. they are criminals who know exactly what they are doing, exactly how to work the system. how to get fabors. how to get what they want. they are not innocent girls next door. no one expects them to act like it either. no one has to accept abuse or rape. all it takes is to say no.

4 months ago in reply to AndyMaxo 1 Like

Like



Chey808

that's why it's called RAPE you piece of scum, because they ARE saying NO

4 months ago in reply to Icook5 6 Likes

Like



shenoah

What did they expect when you placed these people in such positions of power and authority. This happens at all levels and at every level of authority. These people aren't hired for their intellectual, professional and humane qualities. They're often the lowest of the law, given authority. In one Ga prison, it was a way to get people off welfare. It was well known by many of the male inmates the female guards and office workers were carrying on inappropriate relationships with many of the male inmates. Such abuses happen to male inmates too. Although female inmates are likely the most vulnerable when under male guards. At the end of the day the sole purpose of power is to abuse it. Take ignorant, uneducated people, with no compassion or vaulues for humanity and you create the prefect storm for this and other anti-social behaviors of this nature to take place. Many of these individuals hired have serious psychological and anti-social problems themselves. Some likely even have serious criminal records too.

4 months ago 15 Likes

Like



hreformnow

If this is such a scandal, why do people universally joke about male rape in prison, and suggest that encounters with "bubba" are a natural part of the punishment received along with incarceration? ALL rape must be stopped in prisons. NONE of it is acceptable.

4 months ago 13 Likes

Like



Liebchi

The voice of reason. Thank you. Torture in prison is never acceptable.

4 months ago in reply to hreformnow 4 Likes

Like

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