

FREMONT

Snowstorm?

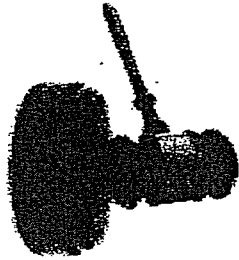
No, it's a time spill on railroad

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Sandusky

Preotstar

ADJUST PAPER



PORT CLINTON

Magistrate fired

Let go for 'acts of dishonesty'

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COLUMBUS

Cyberbullying bill

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*** Wednesday ***
February 1, 2012
75 cents

SANDUSKY COUNTY JAIL SEX ABUSE SCANDAL

Inmate abuse 'sickening'

All in the family

Sandusky County jail guards Frank Kalsen, Charlie Pump and Joshua Smith all have relatives who work for Sandusky County or serve in various political functions.

Kalsen's father is an investigator who works at Sandusky County prosecutor Thomas Stelwolt's office. Pump has an aunt who works for the county.

Smith's brother is a board member for the Sandusky County Board of Elections.

None of the relationships, however, have any bearing on the investigation into the three men's alleged actions on Jan. 10, said Bruce Hirt, chief deputy for Sandusky County Sheriff Kyle Overmyer.

BY JESSICA CUFFMAN
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FREMONT

Advocates for the mentally ill say they're sickened by how three local jail guards allegedly exploited a naked, schizophrenic woman while she was locked in a flooded jail cell for six hours.

"How terrible," said Terry Russell, executive director of the Ohio chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. "That's about as low as you can get. I can't think of anything worse."

Sandusky County Sheriff Overmyer placed jail guards Frank Kalsen, Charlie Pump and



"How terrible. That's about as low as you can get. I can't think of anything worse."

Terry Russell, Ohio chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness

Joshua Smith on paid leave the day after the Jan. 10 incident.

According to a police investigation, the three men played varying roles watching and encouraging a 21-year-old mentally ill woman as she masturbated and acted out sexually in a locked jail cell.

The cell had flooded with urine and water after the woman flushed a paper gown down the toilet.

The articles went on for six hours, until a sheriff's captain from the night shift arrived. That captain, Matt Bender, also wrote a formal complaint against the three guards, which helped set off the investigation.

Jail and prison inmates who suffer from mental illness are at greater risk of exploitation as compared to other inmates, Russell said.

Inmates in jails and prisons throughout Ohio, in fact, are four times as likely to suffer from mental illness compared to the general population, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, or NAMI.

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JAIL

FROM PAGE A1

"jails are our biggest psychiatric hospitals now," said Pam McGlothlin, a volunteer administrator at NAMI Erie-Ottawa.

And the problem permeates all of society, not just jails and prisons. People with mental illness are six times more likely to be abused or exploited than someone without mental illness, Russell said.

In jail, however, such inmates are at the mercy of those who wield authority.

One of the Sandusky County jail guards facing discipline told an investigator: "You can say anything you want to people like (the inmate) because no one will believe them... They are crazy."

It was exploitation, plain and simple, Russell said.

"This person is vulnerable not because they're weak, but because their illness is so severe they don't understand what is happening to them," Russell said.

Prime for problems

Kaiser, Pump and Smith are accused of watching and taunting the schizophrenic woman as she stood naked in the flooded jail cell.

Fremont police had arrested the woman earlier that day for telephone harassment and falsely accusing someone of harassment, according to a police report. It was a nonviolent offense.

Investigation continues

From staff reports

FREMONT

Sandusky County sheriff's administrators said the remainder of the investigation into allegations of "workplace violations" at the jail should be finished sometime next week.

After that comes disciplinary hearings for accused jail guards Frank Kaiser, Charlie Pump and Joshua Smith, who remain on unpaid leave.

The potential discipline they face is unknown. Smith, 22, was hired as a jail

guard this past summer after he graduated from college with a degree in criminal justice.

Pump, 34, was hired in 2008, but was laid off because of budget cuts. He was rehired in 2010.

Kaiser, 34, has worked at the jail for nearly eight years. His disciplinary history includes a dozen formal and informal warnings for behavior at work, such as incidents where he told co-workers details about his sex life. Kaiser was also warned about passing gas, which a supervisor called "nauseating and disgusting."

then it's just sickening," Russell said.

Most jail inmates with mental illness are arrested or charged with nonviolent offenses, according to NAMI.

At least half of all inmates with mental illness experience physical abuse at some point in their life, according to NAMI.

Quite often, family members of mentally ill people are forced to call police for help because there's a lack of services.

"Ninety-nine percent of the time, police have been tremendous in dealing with our loved ones," Russell said.

But every day, somewhere in the U.S., there is an incident much like the one in Sandusky County on Jan. 10.

"It's when it's not handled well,

she told investigators that's why she complied when the guards asked her to masturbate for them while she was on suicide watch.

More than 30 percent of female inmates who report such exploitation said jail employees used no force to coerce them into such acts.

There is a stigma that follows people with mental illness, and it is wrong, Russell said.

"It's not getting any better," he said. "There's misinformation out there and there is this stereotype of people with these illnesses."

The impact is far-reaching — it's estimated that one of every five families has a member who suffers from mental illness.

"There is no socioeconomic group that is immune to this illness," Russell said.

Schizophrenia, which causes delusions and hallucinations that can lead to erratic behavior, is like cancer or a heart condition: it can develop in anyone. There is no specific cause for the disease, and it manifests itself uniquely in each individual, according to NAMI.

The disease is manageable with treatment, but authorities must be diligent about administering that treatment.

By the time she was locked up, the Sandusky County jail inmate hadn't received medication for several hours.

People with mental illnesses need regular medication.

"They need that medicine in their body all the time," McGlothlin

said. "If they're regulated on it, they can live a very good life — if they have and take it like they're prescribed."

On the job

When corrections officers are hired at the Sandusky County jail, they must attend a training academy that covers policies and procedures on how to interact with mentally ill inmates, said Maj. Tom Filgor, the jail's administrator.

"The policies are in place for a reason, and we expect all of them to be followed," Filgor said.

Fremont police investigated the incident at the jail, but Sheriff Overmyer has asked for some follow up investigation, said Bruce Hirt, the sheriff's chief deputy.

Until that's done, no one knows if Sandusky County will revise its jail policies.

"Once we get the investigation completed and determine whether there have been any rule infractions, we can't go any further than that," Filgor said.

NAMI Ohio offers training for court workers and law enforcement officers to help them understand critical issues involving people with mental illness.

"We could come in — free of charge — and provide training for every officer in that jail," Russell said of Overmyer's facility.

"We would do that because we believe that's how important this is, to make sure it never, ever happens again."

Stigma

About 2 percent of male and female jail inmates in the U.S. reported being sexually victimized by jail employees, according to a 2008-09 survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Another 1.5 percent were victimized by other inmates.

Inmates who are gay, women, or who were sexually victimized before going to jail are more likely to be victimized in jail.

The schizophrenic woman at the Sandusky County jail wrote in a statement to investigators that she was a stripper and she "was not shy."