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Ex-judge says prison unfair, 'cruel' to him Kent alleges inhumane treatment and asks his sentence be shortened

By LISE OLSEN
HOUSTON CHRONICLE
Aug. 3, 2010, 10:18PM



Mayra Beltran Houston Chronicle

He's been treated badly behind bars, former Judge Samuel Kent says.

As a prisoner, former U.S. District Judge Samuel B. Kent has been shunted into solitary confinement, forced to hear the screams of another inmate being raped and ordered by a "cruel" sergeant in the Florida prison system to do calisthenics in the nude, according to allegations in a federal court memorandum filed Tuesday.

Kent has requested that his 33-month sentence be vacated and adjusted based on his allegations of inhumane and unfair treatment.

The former Galveston-based federal judge was impeached by Congress and resigned in June 2009 after being convicted of obstruction of justice. He admitted in a related plea deal that he lied about having repeated unwelcome sexual contact with two female court employees.

In legal action this week, Kent argues he has been unjustly labeled a sex offender by the federal Bureau of Prisons and wrongly excluded from a substance abuse treatment program that could have reduced his sentence by as much as a year. The court filings argue that U.S. District Judge Roger Vinson, a senior judge from Florida, also believed Kent would be treated more fairly and would qualify for the program at the time of sentencing.

Instead, Kent says he has been transferred from prison to prison without explanation, at times prevented from communicating his whereabouts with his wife or his attorney and forced to spend long stints in solitary — once for 43 consecutive days. He's now assigned to an unnamed maximum security facility in the Florida state prison system, where the alleged mistreatment only worsened, Kent's attorney Dick DeGuerin said. The BOP inmate website doesn't disclose Kent's current location.

DeGuerin likened Kent's treatment to "torture."

Attorneys for both of Kent's victims had no immediate comment on the judge's request for reconsideration of his sentence.

Says cell was cold, filthy

In the criminal prosecution and in congressional testimony, Kent was accused of repeatedly groping his former case manager both on and under her clothing and once attempting to force her to perform oral sex. He also was accused of forcing caresses on his secretary and of performing unwanted digital and oral sex on her.

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In court papers, Kent alleges his mistreatment as a prisoner began in June 2009 - the very day he resigned as a judge. At that time, Kent was assigned to the Deven Federal Prison, a medical evaluation facility in the U.S. Bureau of Prisons system in Massachusetts.

Kent resigned days after becoming the 14th judge in U.S. history to be impeached by a vote of the U.S. House of Representatives. The resignation allowed him to avoid removal from the bench through a full U.S. Senate trial.

That day, BOP staff locked Kent "wearing only a smock and carrying only a single sheet in a filthy ... completely empty cell where the temperature was kept at 60 degrees. The only bed in the room was a raised concrete slab with no mattress and the light was kept on constantly," Kent's motion to vacate his sentence says.

After being evaluated at Deven, Kent had expected to be transferred to a facility where he could receive treatment for alcohol abuse and depression, documents say.

Instead, he ended up at the Lake Butler Reception Center in Florida's Department of Corrections. There, an unidentified sergeant forced Kent to "strip naked and perform a painful and repetitive series of humiliating exercises. Once Sam Kent was too tired and in too much pain to perform the exercises any more, the sergeant confiscated Sam Kent's wedding ring and used it to ridicule him," the records say.

Calls conditions 'abusive'

Kent spent the next 16 days in solitary, where he claims the first night he helplessly listened to the "continuous screams of a man being violently raped in the next cell" and "was horrified to observe that the guards ignored the man's screams and only came to remove the man from the cell after the attack had finally ended."

Kent has participated in alcohol treatment in the Florida state prison, court papers say. But such "abusive psychological and physical conditions" have "jeopardized his ongoing recovery from severe depression and alcoholism." DeGuerin said Kent decided to appeal to the federal courts for relief after other informal complaints brought no real improvement.

DeGuerin said Tuesday he hopes Judge Vinson will grant a hearing to review evidence to support Kent's motion for the reconsideration of his sentence.

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lethiel wrote:

The conditions described are no different than what I've witnessed as a visitor to the Harris County jails. I guess such abusive behavior by law enforcement is common everywhere. Ironical that this guy, who sentenced people to such abuse, now has to endure it himself. On the other hand, why should this judge get reconsideration of his sentence? Because he's a judge? I think not. Maybe he can atone for his offenses by figuring out how to bring to light the deplorable actions of our paid civil servants, who ALSO should go to jail for their offenses. I think this may be karma at its finest.

8/4/2010 12:46:46 AM

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(183)

Chief_Decoy wrote:

Ex-judge says prison unfair, 'cruel' to him

=====

Actually, it sounds more cruel to the dude being raped.....

Count your chickens, you crook!!

8/4/2010 1:32:47 AM

Recommend: (457) (15)

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(0)

adrick wrote:

I think his punishment is excessive, but I think most of it is excessive, and counterproductive to rehabilitation. We treat these people so badly that they must undergo radical changes to their personality to survive. Then we wonder why they can never make it in free world society. The United States is becoming more and more barbaric. We treat prisoners that way and we treat the rest of the world that way.

I don't understand it.

8/4/2010 1:29:19 AM

Recommend: (236) (249)

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ChronicTroll wrote:

In the past 5-years I have witnessed around 100,000 law enforcement officers be sentenced to prison for various crimes. Every single one of them have bawled their eyes out once they realized what their new lives would entail. I've witnessed a substantial amount of prison guards who also had the opportunity to see the world from the inside of a cell, and there isn't a more satisfying sight in the entire world.....

8/4/2010 1:40:57 AM

Recommend: (235) (69)

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Areasure wrote:

What's GOOD FOR THE GOOSE, is GOOD FOR THE GANDER! Deal with it.

8/4/2010 3:44:12 AM

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wdtony wrote:

I feel sorry for him. I have been tortured.

Maybe this man will be a strong advocate for prison reform when he is set free. Hopefully he will stand strong against torture as well.

If he were in a troubled teen treatment program his cries wouldn't be heard and when he got out no one would believe him. FORNITS.COM, Google it.

Also, read about torture in prison programs. Google: SAFPF (Austin Chronicle, journalist - Patricia J. Ruland)

8/4/2010 11:33:05 PM

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(7)

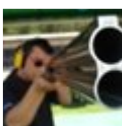
MarfaDude wrote:

"If the glove fits, you must not acquit!"

8/4/2010 7:16:50 PM

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(253)

BraveNewHeart1 wrote:

I am sure if this is successful...Charles Manson can claim the same defense

8/4/2010 5:56:35 PM

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MrsAlmaroad wrote:

LMAO!!! DUMBASS....he should of thought about that before he did his NASTY and DISGUSTING acts.

8/4/2010 4:54:54 PM



(0)

Recommend: (2) (0)

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think-about-it wrote:

Karma can be a bitch!

8/4/2010 4:39:16 PM



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