

YET ANOTHER DEATH

Sunday
July 20, 2014

There was another death related to inadequate medical care this week. This time, the victim was an older gentleman named Nelson. He'd just returned from some sort of surgical procedure, after which time he lost his balance, falling into his toilet/sink combo. He went to the medical clinic, fearing a broken rib, but rather than giving him an x-ray, they sent him back to his cell, ignoring his pleas and complaints. Later that night, he just stopped breathing, and the officer discovered his death at around 12:30 in the morning.

I'm not a medical expert, but one of the guys on my tier is a certified x-ray technician and he explained that, more than likely, Nelson had broken a rib, possibly puncturing a lung or getting some sort of blood clot that ended up restricting his flow of oxygen until he finally expired. No matter how you look at it though, he should have been examined when he went to the clinic.

You'd think that everyone involved would be in a panic, fearing for their jobs, or worse, criminal charges, but if you're thinking this, then you've obviously never been in a prison system. For the most part, these people live and work with virtually no fear of retribution for anything they do. And why should they be afraid? They know that their co-workers are going to stick up for them, and if not, who cares? While some courts will intervene, these aren't the lower courts, they're the higher courts, usually beginning at the federal level. Of course, to reach this point, you must first do an extraordinary amount of work, and most of us simply don't have the drive to do so, let alone the expertise needed to make it that far without their case being dismissed. As a result, inmates continue dying in here, not because we're killing each other, but because we can't even obtain the minimum standard of care required under the law. In that aspect, I consider myself lucky. The substandard level of care that I received resulted in disability, not death, which means that I stand a chance of seeing the streets again. Nelson, on the other hand, wasn't quite as fortunate, which is sad. He was a decent guy. No matter what he did to get in prison (several decades ago), he certainly deserved better than this.

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