
Mentally ill inmates ‘tortured,’ brutalized regularly at Miami prison – report

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George Mallinckrodt worked as a psychotherapist at the Dade Correctional Institution, a facility near Miami with a capacity of 1,563 inmates, from 2008 to 2011. During that time, he said, a 50-year-old convict named Darren Rainey was pushed into an enclosed shower and forced to endure a shower of scalding hot water for more than an hour, a torturous experience that ultimately killed him.

The incident is just one example of brutality Mallinckrodt described to the [Miami Herald](#), which has published extensive coverage of the allegations this week.

Mallinckrodt wrote a letter to the paper claiming that officers “*taunted, tormented, abused, beat and tortured chronically mentally inmates on a regular basis*” with the goal of infuriating the prisoners so they would react violently, thus making it possible for the guards to then punish the prisoner. The antagonism has gone on past Mallinckrodt’s time at the jail, he said, with a current employee informing him of Rainey’s death, which occurred on June 23, 2012.

He is the first former employee to substantiate a claim from an inmate who has sought to publicize the type of abuse prisoners are exposed to. Mallinckrodt contacted the Herald after reading an article in the Sunday edition of the paper that included a description of Rainey’s death. He learned of Rainey’s death in a phone call from a prison nurse who said she overheard a guard say “I don’t think we can get away with this one” when word began to spread.

“A 50-year-old mentally ill inmate at the Dade Correctional Institution, Rainey was pulled into the locked shower by prison guards as punishment after defecating in his cell and refusing to clean it up, said the fellow inmate, who worked as an orderly. He was left there unattended for more than an hour as the narrow chamber filled with steam and water,” wrote Herald reporter Julie Brown in [the article](#) that inspired Mallinckrodt to come forward.

“When guards finally checked on prisoner 060954, he was on his back and dead. His skin was so burned that it

had shrivelled from his body, a condition referred to as slippage, according to a medical document involving the death.”

No one has been deemed responsible for Rainey’s death, and at least two prison sources who wish to remain anonymous told the Herald other inmates have been threatened with the shower treatment.

The Miami Dade Police Department has opened an independent investigation into Rainey’s death.

Many of Mallinckrodt’s assertions came from his experience working directly with inmates. One, Joseph Swilling, showed the psychotherapist evidence of injuries he claimed to sustain when he was handcuffed behind the back, thrown on the ground, and kicked repeatedly. Richard Mair, who committed suicide inside Dade last year, left a note accusing staff of sexually abusing the inmate population and forcing black and white inmates to square off against each other in a kind of gladiatorial entertainment for guards.

Mallinckrodt now works in his own private practice, but maintained that he had taken his concerns about the condition inside Dade to the warden, as well as the inspector general but has not received any response. The mental health unit inside the prison sits under the watchful eye of a surveillance camera, although when the Department of Corrections was approached about turning over the tape the Herald was rebuffed, one of the paper’s many issues with the facility.

“You don’t say with a straight face, as the inspector general’s office did, that the security camera that could have shed light on how a mentally ill inmate was scalded to death, locked in a blazing hot shower – whoops! – malfunctioned just after a corrections officer put the inmate in a stall,” the paper wrote in an [editorial](#) published Tuesday.

“However, this abomination is symptomatic of Florida’s deeper problem of keeping mentally ill inmates in jail, rather than giving them treatment as they pay their debt to society. But if past behavior is any indication, Florida’s not about to do what makes the most sense.”
