

Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) Rap Sheet

A Series of Unfortunate Events

- A prisoner in a CCA prison in Ohio **took a guard's gun and uniform**, then **carjacked a vehicle** outside the facility to drive halfway across the state to the Columbus area, where he allegedly **robbed two banks, kicked down the door to a house, and held a woman hostage** ("Escape tarnishes image of prison once closed amid security concerns," *Associated Press*, 4/4/06).
- In January 2006, CCA's Hernando (Florida) County Jail **mistakenly released two inmates early**, in violation of a judge's orders ('CCA admits to more blunders," *Hernando Today* 1/31/06).
- In July of 2006, the same facility **released another inmate three months early**, resulting in a **\$20,000 fine** to the company from the County ("County punishes jail," *Hernando Today*, 8/1/06).
- In June 2007, a man charged with murder **broke out of his maximum-security cell using plastic eating utensils to pick the lock**. He then succeeded in opening the door to the pod, which might have been left open ("Murder suspect Harmon used plastic eating utensils to open jail cell, officials say," *Panama City News Herald*, 6/20/07).
- Here in Arizona, CCA admitted that **multiple cell doors accidentally opened on four occasions** at the new Red Rock facility, in one case resulting in an incident in which alleged prison gang members **used the opportunity to stab another prisoner with a homemade knife**. The incident recalled another blunder in a CCA prison in Tallahatchie MS, in which the doors in a disciplinary unit suddenly opened at 2:48am, **releasing about three dozen prisoners** from their cells. Inmates then attacked another prisoner, who suffered brain damage so severe he is now confined to a wheelchair ("Arizona prison mistakes trouble Hawaii officials," *Honolulu Advertiser*, 7/22/07).
- In November of 2007, CCA's Bay County Jail in Panama City, Florida **mistakenly released nine prisoners early**, resulting in the company being slapped with a **\$140,000 fine** by County Commissioners ("County officials fine Bay jail operator for mistakenly freeing 9 prisoners on Nov. 1," *Panama City News Herald*, 11/21/07).

What a Riot: 4 Disturbances in 4 Facilities in 3 Months

- In July of 2004, a CCA prison in Colorado Springs, CO erupted in chaos as hundreds of prisoners rioted for most of the night. A report by the Colorado Department of Corrections **blasted CCA for not staffing the facility adequately, not training its guards fully, being unprepared for an emergency, and for not responding quickly enough**. "Not even basic prison operational procedures were maintained at the prison, the report charged." ("Prison riot report," *Rocky Mountain News*, 10/13/04 and "Private prison operator blasted for Crowley riot," *Pueblo Chieftain*, 10/13/04).
- The day after the Colorado riot, 28 inmates in CCA's Tallahatchie prison in Tutwiler, MS also rioted, setting fire to everything from mattresses to a port-a-potty. A letter from a prisoner in the facility sent to a local newspaper that same week noted that 100 prisoners were waging a hunger strike to draw attention to the **"brutality and mistreatment at this facility."** ("Riot at Tallahatchie prison is quelled," *Clarksdale Press Register*, 7/22/04).

- In September of 2004, prisoners in CCA's Lee Adjustment Center in Beattyville, Kentucky rioted, setting two buildings on fire. The disturbance came after **allegations of inmate abuse and mistreatment increased** and visits from friends and family were cut back, an inmate advocate said." ("Prison riot followed increase in inmates," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 9/17/04).
- Also in September of 2004, 4 inmates held an **11-hour hostage standoff** in the infirmary of the Bay County Jail operated by CCA in Panama City, FL. One of the prisoners held a scalpel to a nurse's neck and threatened to rape her and cut off her body parts ("Jail inmates threatened nurse with torture, death," *Associated Press*, 9/8/04).

CCA Plagued by Mismanagement and Unsafe Conditions

- In July 2004 **Arizona** retrieved over 300 of its prisoners held in CCA's Diamondback Correctional Facility in Oklahoma after an **investigation into a riot** in the facility revealed that CCA personnel failed to read warning signs that trouble was brewing and even ignored reports from its own line staff that tensions were high. The report also found that staffing in the prison was inadequate in number and experience and the facility's "Incident Management Team was never fully functional." In fact, during the disturbance, **Arizona monitors had to step in and give directions to CCA staff** "who were unable or unwilling to make corrective decisions." ("Officials counter prison's claims," *The Oklahoman*, 7/8/04 and Arizona Department of Corrections, Corrective Action Plan: Diamondback Correctional Facility, June 22, 2004).
- One CCA jail in Florida was the site of **three suicides in three months** in 2005, resulting in multiple investigations, the removal of the warden, and a rash of wrongful death suits from family members ("Jail sued over man's suicide," *St. Petersburg Times*, 10/27/07).
- A letter from the US Dept. of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) charges that a Texas **CCA-run immigrant detention center was itself employing illegal workers**. The letter states, "there have been two other recent incidents whereby CCA has contracted for services they have been performed by workers that are not legally authorized to work" ("Illegal workers at T Don Hutto Residential Center," *KLBJ News Radio* (online edition), 1/5/07).
- A CCA guard, stationed with a prisoner who was receiving medical treatment, **accidentally discharged his gun inside a patient's hospital room**. The bullet lodged in the wall in the patient's room, which was in the *cardiac intensive care unit* ("Prison guard's pistol fired in hospital room," *Macon Telegraph*, 4/25/06).
- Two CCA guards from a facility in Florida were **found guilty of abusing inmates**. Court documents say one guard held a prisoner down while the other elbowed and kicked him, then **poured a gallon of head lice solution over his head** (the solution is typically applied with a spray bottle). Another prisoner was held up against a bathroom wall while one of the guards kicked him in the groin ("Judge sends guard to jail," *St. Petersburg Times*, 9/15/07).
- A CCA guard in Louisiana pleaded guilty to one count of oral sex with an inmate and one count of lying to an FBI agent. The guard **told the prisoner that if he didn't perform oral sex on him, "he would send him to lockdown with dangerous inmates, and no one would hear (the inmate's) screams"** (Ex-prison officer pleads guilty in inmate-sex case," *Daily Town Talk*, 1/19/06)

American Friends Service Committee, 103 N Park, Ste 109, Tucson, AZ 85719. Phone: (520) 623-9141, fax: (520)623-5901, email: cisaacs@afsc.org.