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### **Tennessee Prison Guard Sues CoreCivic Over Inmate Assault, Harassment**

A Tennessee woman is suing private prison contractor CoreCivic, claiming her colleagues left her alone with violent male inmates—and then ignored her calls for help. A Tennessee woman employed with prison contractor CoreCivic says she was forced to work alone with male inmates, enduring physical abuse and sexual harassment. According to a lawsuit filed by the unnamed woman, coworkers ignored her regular and repeated calls for help. Assistance consistently failed to materialize, even when the Chattanooga facility went into “code red” emergencies. Instead, supervisors chastised the woman for being weak, admonishing her to “grow a tougher skin.” When she tried to escalate the matter to human resources, a worker replied by saying that “boys will be boys.” The Tennessean reports that the guard quit in September and filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court in Chattanooga on Wednesday. She claims that the Silverdale Detention Center is a “sexually hostile work environment” and is demanding back pay, emotional damages and reinstatement. In a statement, CoreCivic claimed it doesn’t tolerate any form of sexual harassment or discrimination. “While we can’t speak to the specifics of pending litigation, CoreCivic does not tolerate any forms of sexual abuse and harassment,” said spokeswoman Amanda S. Gilchrist. “We cooperate fully with any outside agency handling investigations of such matters.” The complaint, recounts the Tennessean, describes a series of “unwelcomed, severe, and pervasive” incidents spanning much of 2018. “Despite Plaintiff’s repeated complaints and requests for assistance, management ignored her complaints, failed to take prompt remedial action toward the harassing inmates, and failed to provide a safe workplace free from severe sexual harassment and sexual assault by the male inmates,” alleges the lawsuit. According to Gilchrist, “CoreCivic takes these allegations very seriously,” noting the staff undergo “various types of training and have multiple options to report these types of allegations.” “Furthermore, inmates may be appropriately disciplined pending outcome of disciplinary reviews and/or hearings on these matters,” Gilchrist wrote in an e-mail. The Tennessean lists five incidents from 2018, all of which involved the guard being left alone with groups of male inmates. In one June incident, two inmates “grabbed Plaintiff on the buttocks and refused to back away despite her repeated commands.” The pair had purportedly been discussing having sex with the guard before touching her. The circumstances prompted the guard to call in a “code red,” but “no one responded.” The situation was defused only when other inmates intervened. And in September, the plaintiff claimed she’d been repeatedly flashed by inmates. Despite her complaints, staff told her to “just ignore” inmates’ sexual behavior. The exposure incidents escalated when one inmate grabbed the guard, pulled her into his cell and began kissing and groping her. Yet again, claims the lawsuit, nobody responded to the “code red.” She “somehow managed to escape” the cell and quit after September 4th, following threats from other inmates.