

# Red Flags of Abuse

*Do you know a senior or an adult with a disability who displays warning signs of mistreatment?*



**Mark Lindquist**



Prosecuting Attorney Mark Lindquist

Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Sven Nelson

(253) 798-6613

## Neglect

- Lack of basic hygiene, adequate food, or clean and appropriate clothing
- Lack of medical aids (glasses, walker, teeth, hearing aid, medications)
- Person with dementia left unsupervised
- Person confined to bed left without care
- Home cluttered, filthy, in disrepair, or has fire and safety hazards
- Homes without adequate facilities (stove, refrigerator, heat, cooling, working plumbing and electricity)
- Untreated pressure “bed” sores

## Financial Abuse/Exploitation

- Lack of amenities victim can afford
- Vulnerable elder/adult “voluntarily” giving uncharacteristically excessive payments/gifts for needed care and companionship
- Caregiver has control over finances, but is failing to provide for elder’s needs
- Newly-changed legal documents (Power of Attorney, will, etc.) that elder is unable to comprehend

## Psychological/Emotional Abuse

- Withdrawal from normal activities, unexplained changes in alertness
- Caregiver isolates elder by controlling access to him/her
- Caregiver is verbally aggressive or demanding, controlling, overly concerned about finances of elder

## Physical/Sexual Abuse

- Inadequately explained fractures, bruises, welts, cuts, sores or burns
- Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases

***If you know someone who is in immediate danger, call 911 or local law enforcement***

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### **WHAT IS ELDER ABUSE?**

In general, elder abuse refers to intentional or neglectful acts by a caregiver or "trusted" individual that lead to, or may lead to, harm of a vulnerable elder. In Washington State, younger adults with disabilities qualify for the same legal protections. Physical abuse; neglect; emotional or psychological abuse; sexual abuse; and abandonment are considered forms of elder abuse.

### **WHO IS AT RISK?**

Elder abuse can occur anywhere -- in the home, in assisted living facilities, or other institutions. It affects seniors across all socio-economic groups, cultures and races.

Based on available information, women and older elders are more likely to be victimized. Dementia and isolation are also significant risk factors.

### **WHAT IF ABUSE IS SUSPECTED?**

Report your concerns.

Most cases of elder abuse go undetected. Don't assume that someone has already reported a suspicious situation. The agency receiving the report will ask what you observed, who was involved, and who they can contact to learn more. You do not need to prove that abuse is occurring in order to report your suspicions.

**Adult Protective Services: 1-866-END-HARM**

*If you know someone who is in immediate danger, call 911 or local law enforcement*

# DUMPING GROUND NO LONGER

By Mark Lindquist  
*Pierce County Prosecutor*

One horrific August night in 1994, Johnny Robert Eggers took the life of Meeka Willingham, a Stadium High School cheerleader. He stabbed her 56 times.

Eggers had a long history of criminal violence in Eastern Washington and King County, but no prior record in Pierce County. So how had he come to live in Pierce County? He was released here by the Washington Department of Corrections (DOC), which had placed him at Rap Lincoln Work Release in Tacoma. For decades, 50-bed Rap Lincoln, located just down the street from Lincoln High School, has been the only DOC work release facility in Washington specifically designed for offenders with developmental disabilities or mental illness.

Rap Lincoln was one of several DOC facilities in Pierce County that operated as magnets for offenders. Violent criminals such as Eggers would offend in other counties and be released into our county. This went on for decades. Around 2001, my predecessor, Prosecutor Gerry Horne, identified the problem and called it "the crime warp." Though Pierce County was about 15 percent more populous than Snohomish County, we were

receiving five times as many offenders from DOC. We became known as "a dumping ground." This, of course, drove up our crime rate.

In 2007 the Legislature passed and the governor signed the "fair share" bill, SB 6157, which established the legal presumption that offenders should be released back to the county of their first felony conviction, the "county of origin." This bipartisan legislation addressed many of our fair share concerns. Rap Lincoln, however, stayed in Pierce County and continued to be the only facility in the state for disabled or particularly disturbed offenders.

Focused on public safety, our Prosecutor's Office rigorously monitors DOC to ensure compliance with SB 6157. As chair of the Pierce County Law and Justice Council, I have prioritized the issue of fair share and maintained a good working relationship with DOC. We are vigilant to avoid slipping back to the days when our county was a dumping ground.

Recently, I learned from DOC that Rap Lincoln will close June 30 of this year. For all of us who care about the safety of our community, this is outstanding news. After discussions with DOC, it's my understanding that there will be a replacement facility for Rap Lincoln, but the current plan is to place the facility outside of Pierce County.

Fairness, history and common sense demand this. We have shouldered more than our fair share of the DOC burden for too long. Pierce County is the home of the Correctional Center for Women at Purdy, the Special Commitment Center on McNeil Island, Western State Hospital in Lakewood, and Progress House Work Release in Tacoma. We should not also perpetually host the only work release program in the state specifically designed for some of the most challenging offenders.

Elected officials, leaders, and citizen groups all worked together to pass SB 6157 and stop the dumping. While transitional housing and programs are necessary to "serve as a bridge between life in prison and life in the community," as DOC states on its website, not all the bridges should dump into one county.

Pierce County is booming. Crime is down and property values are up. Public safety is the foundation for our economic growth and progress. Our continued success reducing crime and making our communities safer depends, in part, on receiving no more than our fair share of offenders. SB 6157 was a step forward, vigilant enforcement of the law has been a series of steps forward, and the closing of Rap Lincoln is a leap forward.