

This story describes the death of one of those inmates as told by one of his cell-mates, who we will call “C” to protect his identity.

C is incarcerated in the Oquirrh 5 Facility (OQ5) at the Draper State Prison. OQ5 is a dorm style housing unit where some of the most medically vulnerable individuals are consolidated. They are disproportionately elderly, disabled, and medically high risk. While C was quarantining due to exposure to COVID-19, he witnessed the deterioration and death of a fellow inmate (this inmate’s name is redacted for privacy reasons). Read his story below.

“On October 30, 2020 (Friday)—5 staff (med.) came in all in protective garb and gave us in “G” dorm a nose swab test. I have been having aches and pains and a headache that would come and go.

Two days before I noticed Officer [REDACTED] come in “G” dorm. He got as far as my bed – (3) and remembered he had forgotten his face mask. I’m not saying he started it or want to get him in trouble as we are all human—Officer [REDACTED] is a fine fellow.

I have in bed 2, next to me [REDACTED] who is sick, [REDACTED] in bed 6, sick, just across from me is [REDACTED] bed 5 who is also sick. Officer [REDACTED] told us as he walked through that we had all been exposed to the virus and would be on lockdown.

On October 31 (Saturday) at 12:15 am, the guards came in dorm “G”, flipped on our lights and told 6 or 7 guys they were moving! One happened to be my ADA person, [REDACTED]. [Note” ADA stands for the Americans with Disabilities Act].

[my ADA person] is in a wheelchair and a diabetic. He has to be helped in all he does and now they are moving him away from me to a new place. Well, I got him moved—packed all his belongings as he said bye and watched. Got his bed made in Dorm “F” just next to dorm “G.”

I could no longer get his meals for him and take him for his diabetes shots. I just hoped someone else would step up to the mark. How will he get a shower, shave, and even brush his teeth without me taking these things to him? He would not do any of these things unless he was reminded and helped. He should not be here! I get his laundry ready then fold and put it away for him when it comes back.

November 2 (Monday) - the staff handed out papers telling me I was positive for the COVID-19 virus. I was also told by the guard that my ADA person might be moved back to “G” form so I could help him. He came back later that day to Bed 12. I packed him up and unpacked him in his new bed. Put his TV together and all his things. He sat in his wheelchair as I made up his bed. Got him in the shower and in clean clothes. He was all wet. He had taken off his pull-ups, just wearing bare pants. I made him something to eat and warm him up. I find him asleep in the bathroom and wheel him back to his bed. He never got out to lie down on his bed as when I got up the next morning, he was still in his wheel chair.

November 3 (Tuesday) - [REDACTED] and I took him to the bathroom where it took us 45 minutes to get him on the toilet—he can no longer stand! I saw medical staff about 11:00 Am and told them how he can no longer stand—that he sits in his wheelchair and pees himself. I can't take care of him.

November 4 (Wednesday)—I wake up about 6 AM to help my ADA person with a blood draw. I notice [REDACTED] who is next to me in bed 6—we are maybe 3 ft apart from each other. His arm was hanging over in my walkway and he was on his back and his right leg is bent up he wasn't under any of his covers and he often slept on his back, so that was normal—I still thought he looked dead then. The night before, he had a labored breathing speed—he had told one medic he had a hard time breathing laying down and the medic told him to prop himself up!

When they brought breakfast around to us around 7 AM I noticed [REDACTED] had not moved. I touched his arm—cold. I touched his face—cold. I put my hand on his chest, no movement! I went over to [REDACTED], his ADA, and told him I “I think [REDACTED] is dead.” He came over and felt him and confirmed it. The COs were still outside handing out food trays—so they came in and did what they could do but he had been dead for some time—between 2 AM and 5 AM. The guards stilled tried chest compressions—a fire team came from the outside—we all were then sent down to dorm “F” to their day room for 5 hours. When we came back to our dorm, all of [REDACTED]'s belongings were gone. His bed was filled later that same day with another inmate!”