

Orlando, Florida police officer fired after arresting two six-year-old school children

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Last Thursday, two 6-year-old students at Lucious and Emma Nixon Academy, a charter school in Orlando, Florida, were arrested in unrelated incidents by Dennis Turner, a retired Orlando Police Department officer who now works as a School Resource Officer. Both children were arrested for and charged with “misdemeanor battery.”

Although the idea of arresting young children and dragging them out of school to book and detain them shocks the conscience, the increasingly violent and openly reactionary character of the ruling elite has created social conditions that produce such barbaric realities for countless students across the United States on a daily basis.

Kaia Rolle, one of the victims of Turner’s maliciousness, was arrested and processed at the Orange Regional Juvenile Assessment Center for the heinous crime of having a temper tantrum. Rolle was sent out of class to see a school administrator because of her tantrum and allegedly kicked a school employee who had grabbed the child by her wrist. Rolle’s family reports that the first grader suffers from sleep apnea, which has led to her having behavioral problems in the past.

The other student Turner detained has been identified only as a 6-year-old boy, and no information has been made available about the circumstances leading to his arrest. Turner handcuffed both of the children and transported them from the school in the back of a police car.

Rolle was released to the school after her grandmother intervened upon learning about the arrest from a supervisor’s phone call. The other child had his fingerprints and mug shot taken at the juvenile center before being released to a relative. In response to public outrage, the State Attorney’s Office for Orange and

Osceola Counties announced that it will not go forward with the prosecution of either child.

Turner worked at the elementary school as part of the Orlando Police Department’s School Resource Officer Program. According to the City of Orlando’s website, this program “provides full-time, on-site police services to all of the Orange County public middle and high schools.”

These officers can now be found in elementary schools as part of the “safety measures” being implemented in schools throughout the US in response to the growing rate of devastating school shootings. The events of last Thursday make it clear that officers are not being placed in schools to protect students, but to terrorize them.

On Monday, Turner was fired from his position in the face of widespread outrage, not for brutalizing the two children, but for making the arrests “without the approval of a commanding officer.” The Orlando police chief explained that Turner violated the police department’s internal policy, which requires reserve officers to have approval from a supervisor before arresting a minor under the age of 12. Turner did not have this authorization before arresting either of the elementary school children last week.

In 2015, Turner was the only officer from the Orlando Police Department to be reprimanded for excessive use of force, despite more than 500 reported incidents in the department. Turner received this written reprimand for using his Taser on a man five times, with two of these jolts coming after the man had fallen to the ground from the previous jolts.

Turner was also reportedly investigated in 2003 for threatening to “hurt” a man and then stating that authorities “couldn’t do anything” to him, insinuating no one would punish the officer for his threats. It has

also been reported that Turner was arrested for aggravated child abuse in 1998 while working as an officer for the Orlando Police Department.

It is unfathomable that an individual who has been investigated multiple times for violent behavior, including toward children, would be allowed to work in an environment with elementary school students. It was foreseeable that an authoritarian thug like Turner would behave as he did last Thursday, regardless of the age of the “suspects” receiving his brutality.

Turner’s placement at an elementary school illustrates the growing contempt toward the most vulnerable layers of society shared by the ruling elite and their lackeys throughout the state apparatus.

What Rolle and her fellow classmate experienced last Thursday is merely a matter-of-course for a system that allows the callous detainment of thousands of immigrant children in horrendous conditions. The Homestead Temporary Shelter for Unaccompanied Children, located less than four hours drive south of Rolle’s school, is currently “closed” for the hurricane season, but will soon reopen to hold thousands of children, many younger than 6 years old, for the crime of having crossed the US-Mexico border without proper documentation.

Much like Rolle could not control her sleep apnea or temper tantrum, these children had no power over the unfortunate circumstances that tore them from their homes and forced them to endure a dangerous and desperate journey to seek safety in the US. These realities find no sympathy from the ruling class and their armed enforcers in the government at the federal, state, and local level.

Youth, students, the working class, and all others that fail to comply with the unreasonable restrictions imposed by the ruling elite will be subject to greater extremes of violence as social inequality deepens and the class struggle erupts into the open.



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