

Homeless Detroit teenager handcuffed, publicly humiliated by judge after falling asleep during courtroom field trip

Zac Corrigan
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Anger is spreading in Detroit and beyond in response to the handcuffing and hours-long public humiliation by Judge Kenneth King of a homeless high school student during a field trip to the 36th District Court earlier this week. Eva Goodman, age 15, had fallen asleep during a presentation by King after having been up late the night before with her family looking for a place to sleep.

On Tuesday, August 13, in a courtroom in downtown Detroit, King first berated the exhausted teenager in front of her peers, then ordered her to be taken into custody. Eva was removed from the courtroom, forced to change into a prisoner's jumpsuit with "Wayne County Jail" printed on it, handcuffed, and paraded back in front of the group of students. King then forced Goodman's classmates to raise their hands and vote as to whether she should serve jail time for "contempt of court." This was streamed to a live audience on YouTube but has since been taken offline. Goodman and King are both African American.

This horrific incident provides a glimpse of the real class relations in American society and the daily humiliations faced by masses of workers in America which virtually never make the headlines. Millions of workers are subject to some level of state intrusion in their lives, whether through family, criminal or bankruptcy matters.

Eva's mother Latoreya Till told the *Detroit Free Press*, "My daughter is hurt. She is feeling scared. She didn't want to go to work. ... She was really nervous and intimidated. We have to bounce around currently because we don't have a permanent address. And so, that particular night, we got in kind of late."

Till later told WXYZ, "To belittle her in front of the

whole world and her friends, to make her feel even worse about our situation, the fact that he was talking about 'You go home and get in your bed.' How do you know my baby got a home, how do you know my baby got a bed, her own bed she could sleep in?"

Unstable living conditions are a part of working class life in America and in Detroit, in particular. A recent study from Wayne State University shows that between 11 and 16 percent of students in Detroit faced homelessness during the 2021-22 school year.

In the court's livestream, Judge King could be heard saying to Eva, "You sleep at home in your bed, not in court. And quite frankly, I don't like your attitude," and "I'm going to go to sleep tonight, while you're sitting in a juvenile detention center." He repeatedly suggested she should be jailed, and he described violent and unsanitary conditions inside the jails, including by referring to a juvenile prisoner who spread feces around with a spoon.

Judge King has now been removed from the docket, effectively suspended by the 36th District Court. Classes that he was scheduled to teach this fall at Wayne State University have also been reassigned, and the university removed his profile from its website.

The judge's vitriolic, abusive response to the completely natural actions of Eva Goodman, who had never been in a courtroom before, reflects the vast social gulf that separates the two of them. Anyone with any feeling for the conditions faced by Eva and her family would have expressed sympathy and understanding.

But King is from a different social universe. The Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division of the 36th District Court, appointed by Democratic Governor

Jennifer Granholm in 2006, is also the son of longtime UAW bureaucrat Stanley King. The senior King pocketed over \$1.2 million in pay drawn from workers' dues money between 2005 and 2017 as a staff member for Local 600 (at Ford's historic "Rouge" Dearborn Truck plant—an average of over \$95,000 per year, according to the Department of Labor's public records.

It is telling that a son of a UAW official in the leadership of a historically important local would take such a hostile attitude toward a working class youth, threatening to abuse state power to send a message to a child whose own economic situation is the product of decades of betrayals by the UAW. Today the UAW bureaucracy is helping Stellantis cut 2,500 jobs at the Warren Truck plant, driving hundreds more children into situations as precarious as Eva Goodman's.

These social crimes resulted in dramatically worsened living conditions for autoworkers nationally, including many cases of homeless autoworkers.

Kenneth King, for his part, publicly expressed support for the phony "stand-up strike" of 2023, a transparent betrayal of workers in which the UAW leadership, under President Shawn Fain, kept workers at Rouge and other critical plants working throughout the "strike" in order to limit its impact on production and guarantee a defeat.

King's abusive behavior toward the 15-year-old Goodman revealed in a particularly disgusting fashion the essential attitude of the UAW bureaucracy and Democratic Party apparatus towards all workers: Accept all these cuts and like it! Stay in line or we'll lock you up! Wipe that smirk off your face!

It recalls the infuriating 2020 jailing of Michigan high school student "Grace" for failing to do her online homework during the pandemic shutdown.

These social injustices and millions more which are not reported are bearing down with increasing weight on greater and greater numbers of workers each day.



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