

Britain Restores the Death Penalty - for Paedophiles

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Ralph Clarke, aged one hundred and one, received a thirteen-year jail sentence in December for assaults against a boy and two young girls between 1974 and 1983. At his age, he was born in March 1915, that amounts to more than a life tariff. Considering the conditions in our prisons, which were never built to accommodate older people, most don't even have wheelchair access, it is a death sentence. Although the judge didn't actually put on the black cap, this particular OAP received what is becoming increasingly frequent in the sentencing of elderly paedophiles, sentences which will cause them illnesses of such severity they hugely increase their chances of dying in prison. It is very unlikely that Rolf Harris for example, aged 84 will last much longer, and could well be demented already as a result of his incarceration.

Doctors know that the quickest way to kill a frail patient over 80 is to take him from his home and put him in an institution. The more badly run the institution, the quicker the patient will die.

There are some prison wings which operate as dysfunctional care-homes. About thirty per cent of prisoners are OAP's, but many of them have grown old inside, which is bound to happen. They are serving sentences decided when they were in the prime of life.

This sentence on former lorry driver Ralph Clarke is exceptionally savage, and pointless.

Special provisions were made for Clarke during the trial because of his age; he was allowed to sit at the back of the courtroom rather than in the dock and left for regular breaks during the case. The court only sat until lunchtimes to allow him to go home and rest. He listened to proceedings through a hearing aid and was supported by an intermediary. The hypocrisy of showing such concern for a frail centenarian in public while knowing what might very likely happen to him in prison is astonishing.

He annoyed the police, the judge and the jury by appearing to lack remorse. DC Emma Fennon, of West Midlands Police, called him 'utterly remorseless' saying he 'actually enjoyed' talking about his crimes. 'He fully understood what was going on and I am pleased he has been brought to justice,' she said. Not only is this an unnecessarily personal comment, what she was probably describing was a typical case of age-related dementia, in which the victim is unaware of his loss of social control.

His words in court related to the time in which he grew up when nefarious sexual activity was often hidden away or deliberately overlooked. He lived in an age of privacy before disclosure was considered healthy. He told the jury it was 'something that happened,' a common view