

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

CHARLES LAMONT NORWOOD,

Plaintiff,

v.

07-cv-446-bbc

CAPT. RADTKE, and C.O. GRAAK,

Defendants.

CHARLES LAMONT NORWOOD,

Plaintiff,

v.

07-cv-624-bbc

DYLON RADTKE, GREG GRAMS,
AMY MILLARD, TOM GOZINSKE,
AMY SMITH and ANDREA NELSON,

Defendants.

CHARLES LAMONT NORWOOD,

Plaintiff,

v.

08-cv-446-bbc

DON STRAHOTA, Sergeant HILBERT,
Sergeant PHILLIPS, MICHAEL THURMER,
Captain O'DONOVAN, JAMES MUENCHOW, ICE,
MICHAEL MEISNER, ICE, and THERESA MURPHY, ICE,

Defendants.

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On May 9, 2011, plaintiff Charles Norwood filed a motion asking the court to “unpublish” cases 07-cv-446-bbc, 07-cv-624-bbc and 08-cv-446-bbc, so that other inmates at the Waupun Correctional Institution will be unable to access them on the institution computers. In his motion, plaintiff states that his is being labeled a “snitch” and that by allowing these cases to be made accessible to other inmates “is causing me troubles I can do without.”

It is unfortunate that plaintiff believes that he could be in danger at the Waupun Correctional Institution; incarceration is unpleasant enough without the added burden of living in fear. However, the general rule is that materials should not be sealed “unless a statute or privilege justifies nondisclosure.” United States v. Foster, 564 F.3d 852, 853 (7th Cir. 2009). This rule applies with special force to judicial opinions, which are presumptively public. Id. Further complicating things is that plaintiff failed to ask for the record to be protected from the public until now, several years after the orders were entered. Although the court’s orders in this case were not published, they are accessible through electronic legal

databases. It is unclear whether the electronic content providers would even honor this court's request to withdraw those orders from the database; I am unaware of any instances in which opinions have been removed from these databases other than opinions that have been vacated by a court.

Given that plaintiff does not provide specific instances of threats to his safety since the orders were issued, it is difficult to justify taking the extraordinary steps of sealing the cases years after they were resolved and requesting that electronic content providers remove the orders from their databases. If plaintiff believes he is in danger, I encourage him to discuss his problem with prison staff, who can place him in protective status if they deem the threats to be real. Therefore, I will deny the request unless plaintiff makes a more compelling showing why the court should take these actions.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that plaintiff Charles Norwood's request to remove cases 07-cv-446-bbc, 07-cv-624-bbc and 08-cv-446-bbc from public access is DENIED.

Entered this 18th day of May, 2011.

BY THE COURT:

/s/

BARBARA B. CRABB

District Judge