

## Ala. judge charged with prisoner sex abuse

*by UPI*

MOBILE, Ala. -- A one-time Alabama judge checked male inmates out of jail and forced them to engage in sexual activities, spankings and whippings, authorities allege.

Former Mobile County Circuit Judge Herman Thomas was arrested Friday and later released on bond after a grand jury indicted him on 57 counts, including kidnapping, extortion, sex abuse and sodomy, CNN reported Tuesday.

The indictment, posted on the Web site of a Mobile television station, alleges Thomas forced prisoners to expose their buttocks "to paddling and/or whipping," the broadcaster said.

Thomas's attorney, Robert Clark, called the accusations against the former judge "a high-tech lynching."

"Did you ever think of the fact that this is the only black circuit judge we've ever had in Mobile County and that the right-wing Republicans have gotten rid of him?" Clark said.

The Alabama State Bar's disciplinary commission suspended Thomas' law license Monday, the group said.

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