

Six Year Old Kaia Rolle, Handcuffed by Orlando Police and Arrested: How Many More, and for How Long Is this America?

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

While fretting over refugee children in freezing tents along Turkey's border, or Nargis Fazili's family fleeing Afghanistan across (see [this](#)), or lone migrant children caged in U.S. detention centers, we may barely register what happens to American children like Kaia Rolle; she's a 6-year-old student at a not unusual neighborhood school in Florida.

I suppose we should feel grateful for the body cameras which most American police are now required to wear to document their on-the-job encounters. Some police videos are made available to the public; some are lost. One [recently released](#) records an incident [last September](#)—the handcuffing of Kaia Rolle by policemen at her school. The manacled child was led to a squad car and, unaccompanied by any school official or relative, and taken to a detention center to be finger-printed and photographed. The video was likely edited to hide the child's face, probably in compliance with a 'civil-rights' law that protects minors—thank you. But it illustrates enough for us to witness an all-too-common injustice.

It's not the pleas of the weeping child that I find most disturbing; it's the school staff's passive witness to the child's torture. None of the three women in the camera's scope makes any attempt to protest, or to question the decision by we-don't-known-whom, to subject the child to this unconscionable treatment.

To further emphasize the egregious behavior by the police, we hear one man -likely the school resource officer -chatting with the staff members without any hint of regret or hesitation about how he regularly arrests children. Arrests are a source of pride for him, it seems. "Six thousand arrests over 28 years", he boasts, "the youngest, 7-years-old." When informed that the latest victim is six, he quips: "She's six; now that's a record." Dennis Turner is a policeman who, like many in his position, are hired after retirement as "school resource officers".

These resource officers constitute a new class of law enforcement personnel employed by schools across America— they're in my New York neighborhood schools too- our solution to school shootings, a nationwide policy to protect our children from gun wielding maniacs. While they wait for anything that threatens the school from outside, these officers are engaged in student discipline inside. Parents and school administrators, out of fear of armed

assailants, are empowering these unsupervised, armed retirees and veterans of foreign conflict –men accustomed to manhandling mostly adult male suspects– to discipline troublesome children.

(In addition to their school salary, a wage often higher than teachers', many of them enjoy a generous pension from their police or military service. What a boon for the profession of law enforcement!)

[Attorney John Whitehead of the Rutherford Institute's warnings](#) about our expanding police presence is so alarming that we are either too disturbed to register the details or we think he's exaggerating. He is not.

Viewing this single video of an on-duty school guardian entrusted to protect children, one has to question how much more goes on that we are not privy to? And this in inside U.S.A. with its celebrated freedoms! (I cannot bear to imagine the experience of countless Iraqi and Afghan families subject to abuse by American military personnel.)

We are told Kaia was released and isn't facing any charges. This doesn't mollify me; nor am I gratified by the firing of that officer.)

The video of the child's arrest is revealing about how the child is handled too. A school staff member calmly tells Kaia to "Go with them, baby girl." As Kaia is handcuffed, we hear one officer gently say: "Come over here honey", then "It's not going to hurt".

Later news clips of Kaia with her grandmother report that she is doing fine. That's today. What about in the coming years?

This experience may embolden little Kaia to become an attorney or a civic leader, perhaps a policewoman to protect others from the cruelty she would never forget. Can we fault her, though, if she chooses violence as a way to defend herself when gentle people nearby fail her, or if they're better informed about child victims of foreign aggression?

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