

Escapee Returning to Florida

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A prison escapee who's been living a quiet life under another name for more than 30 years will soon be brought back to Florida to finish his sentence.

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Tallahassee attorney Don Pumphrey says the governor has now signed extradition papers for Jack Hazen and he's vowing to fight to keep Hazen from dying in prison.

Folks in Las Vegas knew him as Charlie Free - a hardworking husband and father of two. □

What they didn't know, the 61 year old - whose real name is Jack Hazen - had escaped from a Florida prison 32 years earlier and now Florida wants him back.

"We understand if there's something that he has to do as restitution out there, but at the same time, he has served out, you know, a good life and there's no reason for him to die in jail," said Hazen's daughter Christina Greer after a recent court hearing.

An extradition hearing is set for Monday, March 10th in Las Vegas and Tallahassee attorney Don Pumphrey says he'll fight to keep Hazen out of prison once he's transported to Florida.

"For the last 30 years, he's been a law abiding citizen. He's elderly. I know he suffered a brain tumor and was getting treatment for that, has early onset of Alzheimers and diabetes, so there's a cost issue with that too," Pumphrey said.

The Florida Department of Corrections says Hazen was ten months into a seven year sentence for aggravated assault when he slipped away from work detail at a carpentry shop near Lake Butler back in 1976.

"He was walking with a bucket, that's the last we saw of him. We did mount an effort to find him at that time with vehicles and staff and bloodhounds actually tracked him to a local highway near Lake

Butler but we lost his scent from there," said DOC Spokeswoman Gretl Plessinger.

Whether Hazen will finish out his original seven year sentence or face additional charges for escape is now up to the courts.

Attorney Don Pumphrey says once Hazen is transported to Florida, he'll focus on filing for clemency.