

El Dorado County fugitive back in custody after escaping 36 years ago

By Matt Kawahara, Sacramento Bee

When federal agents finally tracked down William Walter Asher III in Salida last week, the 66-year-old was going by an assumed name, retired after years working for trucking companies, and living with a woman who apparently had no idea he'd been running from the law for 36 years.

Asher, who escaped from Growlersburg Conservation Camp No. 33 in El Dorado County in 1975, was arrested Friday, agents with the Sacramento division of the FBI said Monday.

A pair of calls to a Stanislaus County home in 2005 at the behest of his dying mother, agents said, ultimately led authorities to his doorstep.

Asher escaped from the inmate camp while serving a seven-years-to-life sentence for his involvement in the 1966 robbery of a San Francisco bar, during which a bartender was shot and beaten to death, according to a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation news release.

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