

Captured after 48 years, Georgia fugitive says he's gravely ill

By Craig Schneider

Stackowitz and his lawyer, Norm Pattis, met with reporters from The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Hartford Courant Saturday morning.



Robert Stackowitz on Saturday morning in Sherman, Conn.: "I don't even think I've gotten a ticket," he said of his years as a fugitive.

Robert Gordon Stackowitz, the man who escaped from a Georgia prison camp 48 years ago and was discovered this week living in Connecticut, said Saturday he has serious illnesses and worries that extradition to Georgia will kill him.

Stackowitz, who was released on bond from a correctional center in Connecticut about midnight Friday, also said he has avoided any sort of crime in the nearly five decades since he escaped from a lockup in Carroll County 1968 and disappeared.

"I don't even think I've gotten a ticket," he said of his years as a fugitive.

He acknowledged that he had committed a crime in Georgia in the 1960s – he was convicted of "robbery by force" and sentenced to 17 years – calling it the "dumbest thing I ever did in my life." But after all this time, he said, he figured the law had simply forgotten about him.

Stackowitz and his lawyer, Norm Pattis, met with reporters from The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Hartford Courant Saturday morning.

Stackowitz, 71, has lived in the village of Sherman, Conn., for more than 30 years. On Saturday, he said he suffers from congestive heart failure, bladder cancer, diabetes, skin problems and swelling in his legs.

“Why they would ever want me back, I can’t understand,” he said of Georgia authorities. “I’m a medical nightmare.”

The Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles issued a statement Friday saying it would consider Stackowitz’s case after he is returned to Georgia.

Stackowitz said Saturday that his health is so grave that simply making the trip to Georgia might prove fatal. ■