



Department of Justice

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2014
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**Former Correctional Officers at Big Spring Correctional Center
Plead Guilty to Federal Charges**

Defendants on Duty When an Inmate Commits Suicide

ABILENE, Texas — Former Correctional Officers at Big Spring Correctional Center (BSCC), in Big Spring, Texas, have pleaded guilty to federal charges stemming from a Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) investigation that was initiated when an inmate committed suicide in the facility two years ago while they were on duty, announced U.S. Attorney Sarah R. Saldaña of the Northern District of Texas.

Today, Frederick Hernandez, 45, of Big Spring, appeared before U.S. District Judge Sam R. Cummings and pleaded guilty to one count of making false statements and aiding and abetting. He faces a maximum statutory penalty of five years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. Last Friday, Christopher Moore, 42, of Dallas, pleaded guilty to one count of misprision of a felony. He faces a maximum statutory penalty of three years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. Judge Cummings ordered a presentence investigation report for each defendant with a sentencing date to be set after the completion of those reports.

According to plea documents filed in the case, from August 22 - 23, 2012, Hernandez and Moore were assigned to the Flight Line Unit in the Special Housing Unit (SHU) at BSCC; Hernandez was the Officer in Charge. Part of their duties included making mandatory 30-minute safety checks of each cell and conducting six mandatory formal inmate counts during a 24-hour period, beginning at 12:01 a.m., 3:00 a.m., 5:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. Each Correctional Officer is further required to certify that the mandatory 30-minute safety check of each cell and the mandatory formal inmate counts were made.

An inmate housed in the Flight Line Unit committed suicide during the 8:00 p.m., to 8:00 a.m. shift on August 22 - 23, 2012, and was discovered during the morning feeding on August 23, 2012.

Hernandez admitted that he completed, signed and submitted to the Department of Justice, as required by law, the "SHU Control Log" forms indicating that formal counts of inmates had been performed from 12:01 a.m. to 5:10 a.m., on August 22 – 23, 2012. Hernandez further admitted he knew the logs were not correct and were false in that the formal counts of inmates were not conducted.

Moore admitted he knew Correctional Officers at BSCC submitted forms to the Department of Justice, as required by law, indicating that safety check rounds were conducted, when, in fact, he knew they had not been conducted. He further admitted that he concealed this fact and failed to advise an authority.

In related cases, two other defendants, James McKinnon, 22, and Jamie Navarette Salgado, 24, each pleaded guilty in September 2013; McKinnon pleaded guilty to one count of misprision of a felony and Salgado pleaded guilty to one count of making false statements and aiding and abetting. In December 2013, McKinnon was sentenced to six months in federal prison and ordered to pay a \$500.00 fine. He is presently serving his prison time. McKinnon and Salgado also worked as Correctional Officers assigned to the Flight Line Unit in the SHU at BSCC. Salgado admitted making false entries on logs and falsely indicating he had conducted safety rounds. McKinnon admitted that he knew entries on the logs were incorrect and that he failed to advise an authority.

The Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Paulina Jacobo is prosecuting.

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