



Department of Justice

ACTING UNITED STATES ATTORNEY RICK A. MOUNTCASTLE
WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

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CONTACT: Brian McGinn
Phone: (434) 295-8672
Email: brian.mcginn@usdoj.gov
<http://www.justice.gov/usao/vaw/>

Bureau of Prisons Employees Indicted by Federal Grand Jury

Joseph Collins and Michael Barnette Charged with Making False Statements

ABINGDON, VIRGINIA – A federal grand jury sitting in the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia in Abingdon returned two indictments yesterday against two United States Bureau of Prisons correctional officers who were employed at United States Penitentiary Lee County (USP-Lee), Acting United States Attorney Rick A. Mountcastle announced.

The grand jury has charged Joseph Collins, 43, of Pennington Gap, Va., with one count of making a false statement and using a false writing in a matter within the executive branch of the United States government. In addition, the grand jury has charged Michael Barnette, 34, of Dryden, Va., with ten counts of making a false statement and using a false writing in a matter within the executive branch of the United States government.

The indictment alleges that both Collins and Barnette falsified inmate urine drug screen forms and forged inmate signatures while employed at USP-Lee. The indictment further alleges that some of the forms stated that urine drug screens had been completed on inmates that were no longer incarcerated at USP-Lee.

The investigation of the case was conducted by the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General and the United States Bureau of Prisons. Assistant United States Attorney Zachary T. Lee will prosecute the case for the United States.

A Grand Jury Indictment is only a charge and not evidence of guilt. The defendant is entitled to a fair trial with the burden on the government to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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