



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Bobby L. Christine
Southern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 7, 2019

CONTACT: BARRY L. PASCHAL
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER (CONTRACTOR)
(912) 652-4422

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER AND NURSE INDICTED FOR SCHEME INVOLVING SEX WITH FEDERAL INMATE

Nurse served as a lookout while correctional officer had sex with prisoner

WAYCROSS, GA – A correctional officer with the rank of captain has been indicted on federal charges for having sex with an inmate, and a nurse is charged with facilitating the illicit trysts.

A federal grand jury indicted Rebecca Fussell, 48, of Waycross, for Conspiracy and Sexual Abuse of a Ward, and Melissa Batten, 47, of Waycross, for Conspiracy and False Statement, announced Bobby L. Christine, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, and Robert A. Bourbon, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (DOJ-OIG), Miami Field Division.

According to the indictment, Fussell was a correctional officer and Batten was a registered nurse employed by the GEO Group, a private contractor that operates the D. Ray James Correctional Institution, in Folkston, Ga., under contract with the federal Bureau of Prisons. An investigation began after another employee saw Fussell engaging in sex with a male inmate in a medical treatment room at the prison, leading to the discovery that Batten facilitated and helped cover up repeated sexual activity between Fussell and the prisoner.

Under federal law, any sexual activity between an inmate and prison employee constitutes sexual abuse of a person in custody, and carries a penalty of up to 15 years in prison.

“Employees at prison facilities are expected to oversee safe and humane incarceration of the inmates, not prey upon them,” said Bobby L. Christine, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia.

“The DOJ-OIG takes allegations of sexual abuse by federal correctional officers and employees very seriously, and is committed to investigating such allegations,” stated Special Agent in Charge Bourbon.

The case was investigated by the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorney Marcela C. Mateo is prosecuting the case for the United States.

An indictment contains only charges. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

For any questions, please contact Barry Paschal at (912) 652-4422.

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