



Department of Justice

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**Former Correctional Officers at Big Spring Correctional Center
are Sentenced**

Defendants on Duty When an Inmate Commits Suicide

ABILENE, Texas — Former Correctional Officers at Big Spring Correctional Center (BSCC), in Big Spring, Texas, who 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, were sentenced today, announced U.S. Attorney Sarah R. Saldaña of the Northern District of Texas.

U.S. District Judge Sam R. Cummings sentenced Frederick Hernandez, 45, of Big Spring, to 10 months in federal prison. Hernandez pleaded guilty in June 2014 to one count of making false statements and aiding and abetting. Judge Cummings sentenced Christopher Moore, 42, of Dallas, to 3 years probation. Moore pleaded guilty to one count of misprision of a felony.

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 Senior Correctional Officer whose primary responsibility was to ensure the safety and security of the inmates. 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. McKinnon has served his prison time, and Salgado is awaiting sentencing. 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 prosecuted.

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