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## **Federal Correctional Officer Pleads Guilty to Making False Statements About Engaging in Unlawful Sexual Activity with Jail Inmate**

LOS ANGELES – A correctional officer at the federal jail in downtown Los Angeles pleaded guilty today to a felony charge for lying to investigators about his sexual activity with an inmate who was under his care and supervision.

Abel Concho, 53, of East Los Angeles, pleaded guilty to one count of making false statements.

According to his plea agreement, Concho was employed by the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) as a correctional officer at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) in Los Angeles. The victim in this case was an MDC inmate under Concho's supervision from June 2010 to February 2011.

On July 28, 2021, Concho made a series of false statements during an administrative interview with federal investigators, including that he "never" had sexual contact with one MDC inmate, when in fact Concho engaged in sexual contact with the victim on approximately 35 different occasions. Concho, on multiple occasions, also lied that he "never had sexual contact" with any MDC inmates, Concho admitted in the plea agreement.

After initially denying he had any sexual contact with the victim, Concho then falsely stated that he had sexual intercourse and engaged in oral sex with the victim just "once (or) twice" that he could recall. Concho also falsely stated on multiple occasions that he did not provide a cellphone to the victim to take nude photographs for him. In fact, he illegally smuggled a cellphone into MDC and provided that cellphone to the victim to take nude photographs for him, which the victim then did.

Concho admitted in his plea agreement that he knew it was a federal crime and a fireable offense for a BOP employee to knowingly engage in any sexual act with a person in official detention and under his custodial, supervisory and disciplinary authority in a federal facility. Concho admitted he knew that under the law and pursuant to the BOP employee code of conduct, sexual activity between staff and inmates could not be considered consensual and was not permitted. In addition to the harm it caused inmates, staff sexual acts with inmates threatened the safety and security of the prison and betrayed the trust and confidence placed in the BOP by the public, Concho admitted.

He further admitted he knew it was a federal crime and a fireable offense for a BOP employee to smuggle contraband, including cellphones, into MDC for inmates' use.

As part of the plea agreement, Concho agreed not to seek employment in any law enforcement capacity or a position that requires carrying a firearm, to complete 100 hours of community service, and to pay \$9,500 in restitution to the victim.

United States District Judge R. Gary Klausner has scheduled a February 7, 2022 sentencing hearing, at which time Concho will face a statutory maximum sentence of five years in federal prison.

The United States Department of Justice Office of Inspector General and the FBI investigated this matter.

Assistant United States Attorney Veronica Dragalin of the Public Corruption and Civil Rights Section is prosecuting this case.