

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Eastern District of Kentucky

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Three Big Sandy Employees Indicted for Civil Rights Violations

LONDON, Ky.- Three Bureau of Prisons employees of the United States Penitentiary Big Sandy, located in Inez, Ky., were indicted on Thursday, for federal civil rights violations.

A federal grand jury sitting in London, Ky., returned an indictment charging the following individuals: Samuel J. Patrick, 41, of West Van Lear, Ky.; Clinton L. Pauley, 40, of Ironton, Ohio; and Kevin C. Pearce, Jr., 37, of Inez, Ky. The defendants have been charged with violating an individual's rights under the color of law and of falsifying records to impede an investigation.

The indictment alleges that on April 29, 2021, Patrick and Pauley assaulted an inmate, in the lieutenant's office of USP Big Sandy. After Pearce and a subordinate BOP employee witnessed the assault, Pearce asked that employee to write an untruthful report, omitting the assault. It is also alleged that Patrick pressured that employee to submit to Pearce's demand.

The indictment also alleges that Pearce wrote a memorandum that documented the false account of the officers' interactions with the inmate who was assaulted; that stated another employee was present in the office with the victim; and that stated the victim left the office without incident, omitting the assault. Patrick and Pauley are also alleged to have written memos to cover up the assault.

The indictment further alleges that Pauley previously assaulted another inmate on March 26, 2021, while the inmate was being escorted away from the lieutenants' office of USP Big Sandy and that he subsequently wrote a false incident report to cover up that assault.

Carlton S. Shier, IV, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky; Kristen Clarke, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division; William J. Hannah, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, Chicago Field Office; and Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge, FBI, Louisville Field Office, announced the indictment.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the DOJ OIG and the FBI. The case is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Zach Dembo and Trial Attorney Thomas Johnson of the Civil Rights Division.

A date for Patrick, Pauley, and Pearce to appear in court has not yet been scheduled yet. For the deprivation of rights charges, they each face a maximum of 10 years per, and for the falsification of records charges, they each face 20 years for each count. However, any sentence following a conviction would be imposed by the Court, after its consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal sentencing statutes.

Any indictment is an accusation only. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.