

Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

Former Kentucky Correctional Officer Pleads Guilty to Civil Rights Charges for Assaulting Two Federal Inmates

A former Kentucky correctional officer pleaded guilty today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Edward B. Atkins to two charges of deprivation of rights under color of law for assaulting two federal inmates.

According to court documents, Samuel J. Patrick, 42, of Inez, Kentucky, a former Bureau of Prisons corrections officer who held the title of Case Management Coordinator, admitted during his plea hearing that he assaulted two federal inmates while he worked at U.S. Penitentiary Big Sandy. Regarding the first assault, Patrick acknowledged that he punished a non-violent inmate by taking him to the ground and repeatedly elbowing him in the head, and that one of his co-defendants, Clinton L. Pauley, assisted him with the assault. Patrick also acknowledged that he entered an unlawful agreement with other corrections officers, including Pauley and another co-defendant, then-supervisor Kevin C. Pearce, to cover up what happened. Patrick admitted that the cover-up included steps such as writing false reports and pressuring other corrections officers to join the cover-up. Regarding the second assault, Patrick acknowledged that he punished another non-violent inmate for walking too slowly to his cell, and that both of his co-defendants also later assaulted the same inmate. Patrick admitted that he wrote a false report and spread a false cover story about the incident in order to cover up his and other correctional officers' unlawful uses of force.

Patrick faces a maximum statutory penalty of up to 10 years of imprisonment for each of the assault offenses.

Pauley and Pearce have pleaded not guilty and are scheduled to begin trial on March 6.

Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, U.S. Attorney Carlton S. Shier IV for the Eastern District of Kentucky, Special Agent in Charge William Hannah of the Justice Department's Office of Inspector General (DOJ-OIG) Chicago Field Office, and Special Agent in Charge Jodi Cohen of the FBI Louisville Field Office made the announcement.

The DOJ-OIG and FBI investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Zachary Dembo for the Eastern District of Kentucky and Trial Attorney Thomas Johnson of the Civil Rights Division's Criminal Section are prosecuting the case.