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Federal Correctional Officer Charged with Aggravated Sexual Abuse

A federal correctional officer at the Federal Correctional Institution, Dublin (FCI Dublin) made his first appearance before the Northern District of California after a federal grand jury returned a 12-count indictment charging him for sexually abusing three female inmates in his custody.

According to the indictment, Darrell Wayne Smith, 54, now residing in Florida, was employed at FCI Dublin as a correctional officer when he engaged in sexual acts and sexual contact with three female inmates who were then serving prison sentences. The indictment describes 12 incidents between May 2019 and May 2021 during which Smith allegedly engaged in illegal sexual contact and acts with his victims, including digitally penetrating a victim's anus by use of force.

“The charges announced today are the latest in the Justice Department’s campaign to root out sexual misconduct within the Bureau of Prisons,” said Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco. “As alleged, Darrell Smith exploited his authority to sexually abuse three vulnerable victims in custody at FCI Dublin. To enforce the BOP’s dual mission of providing a safe, humane environment for those in custody while preparing them to return to society, we will hold accountable all BOP personnel who abuse their authority.”

“For years, the defendant allegedly used his position of authority, as a federal corrections officer, to commit unspeakable acts of abuse and violence against multiple victims in a correctional institution,” said FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate. “The FBI and our law enforcement partners are committed to aggressively pursuing those who violate the civil rights of others, no matter their rank or title. Nothing can undo the pain inflicted on the victims, but we hope today’s indictment is a further step towards justice.”

“The Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General is committed to bringing to justice every single BOP employee at FCI Dublin who sexually abused inmates. To date, those efforts have already included arrests and convictions of FCI Dublin’s former Warden and Chaplain,” said Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz. “Today’s indictment alleges brazen and violent sexual assault by Smith and alleges abuse of multiple inmates over several years. As evidenced by these charges, the OIG and FBI investigation remains ongoing, and we will continue to aggressively investigate allegations of abuse at FCI Dublin and across the Federal Bureau of Prisons.”

“This indictment shocks the conscience of anyone reading it,” said U.S. Attorney Ismail J. Ramsey for the Northern District of California. “The alleged conduct falls far below the minimum standards of decency required – much less, the standards of integrity expected – of any Bureau of Prisons employee. Rest assured, the Department will root out any such conduct and prosecute all persons who are responsible.”

Each of the alleged victims is identified in the indictment by initials and was in official detention and under Smith's custodial, supervisory, and disciplinary authority at the time of the alleged illegal conduct. In addition, each count in the indictment corresponds with one encounter during which Smith allegedly engaged in unlawful sexual acts or contact with one of the victims.

Smith is charged with five counts of sexual abuse of a ward, six counts of abusive sexual contact, and one count of aggravated sexual abuse.

Smith faces a maximum of life in prison if convicted of the aggravated sexual abuse, a maximum of 15 years of in prison for each count of sexual abuse of a ward, and a maximum of two years in prison for each count of abusive sexual contact. In addition, as part of any sentence, the court may order a term of supervised release, a fine of up to \$250,000 for each count, restitution, and additional assessments. A federal district judge will determine sentencing after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Smith was arrested on May 11 and made his initial federal court appearance in the Northern District of Florida on the same day. Smith made his initial Northern District of California appearance this morning before U.S. Magistrate Judge Kandis A. Westmore. Smith's next federal court appearance is scheduled for July 10.

DOJ OIG and the FBI investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Molly Priedeman and Andrew Paulson for the Northern District of California are prosecuting the case, with the assistance of Leeya Kekona.

An indictment is merely an allegation. All defendants are innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.