

# Two Former Federal Correctional Officers in Kentucky Sentenced for Assaulting Federal Inmates and Conspiring with a Supervisor to Cover It Up

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

## For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

Two former Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) corrections officers, Samuel J. Patrick, 41, and Clinton L. Pauley, 42, were sentenced today to 36 months in prison followed by one year of supervised release and 40 months in prison followed by one year of supervised release, respectively, for their roles in the assaults of inmates held at U.S. Penitentiary Big Sandy. Patrick and Pauley previously pleaded guilty and testified against a third co-defendant at trial earlier this year.

“As today’s convictions demonstrate, the Department of Justice will hold accountable BOP employees who abuse their position of authority and those in their custody,” said Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco. “We will not let up in our ongoing efforts to root out abuse and misconduct at the Bureau of Prisons, so that it can fulfill its mission to safely and humanely care for the adults in its custody while also preparing them to reenter society.”

“Physical abuse and corruption by law enforcement officers is unacceptable no matter where it occurs, but these offenses stand out because they were committed by veteran federal officers in a Bureau of Prisons facility,” said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division. “Defendant Patrick’s racially-charged and violent assault on one inmate was not only unlawful but morally reprehensible. The Justice Department takes constitutional abuses by federal officers extremely seriously, and we will continue to prosecute officers who violate federal civil rights laws.”

“Patrick and Pauley engaged in egregious acts of violence towards inmates in their custody and care, and then tried to cover up their crimes,” said Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz of the Justice Department. “Today’s sentencing shows that assault of inmates will not be tolerated, and perpetrators will be held accountable.”

"These defendants were charged with the custody and care of others; instead, they committed themselves to abusing those in their care, breaching the public trust, dis-serving the interests of true law enforcement and violating the civil rights of others," said U.S. Attorney Carlton S. Shier IV for the Eastern District of Kentucky. "Holding law enforcement officials accountable for civil rights violations is an important first step to restoring the public trust in dedicated law enforcement and to protecting the civil rights of everyone."

According to court documents and evidence introduced at trial, Patrick and Pauley unlawfully used force to punish two inmates housed at Big Sandy. On March 30, 2021, the officers assaulted an inmate by spraying him in the face with pepper spray and kicking him in the head and upper body. Witnesses, including those who assaulted the inmates, testified that the inmate was not a threat and was compliant, and was assaulted for walking too slowly to his cell, rather than for any legitimate penological purpose. On April 29, 2021, the officers assaulted a second inmate by elbowing him in the head and punching him in the body. The victim of that assault had requested protection from other inmates. When the victim, who is white, revealed that he used to affiliate with Black gangs, Patrick referred to him as a "race traitor," after which Patrick and Pauley both repeatedly struck him in the head and body. In addition to the preceding incidents, Pauley further admitted that he assaulted a third federal inmate during an unrelated encounter on March 26, 2021.

On both March 30 and April 29, 2021, Patrick and Pauley's co-defendant, Lieutenant Kevin C. Pearce, 39, was present and saw his lower-ranking officers using force out of anger. Afterwards, Pearce helped them try to cover up what happened by writing false reports, backing up their cover stories and pressuring subordinate officers to join the cover-ups. Pearce was found guilty at trial of writing false reports that covered up the assaults. His sentencing is scheduled for Dec. 5.

The Justice Department's Office of Inspector General and the FBI Louisville Field Office 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 prosecuted the case.

BOP is committed to rooting out misconduct within its ranks and working with law enforcement partners to prosecute violations of federal law. The numerous BOP employees working diligently to ensure justice for the victims of misconduct are critical to the Department's reform efforts.