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**DOJ OIG Releases Report of Investigation and Review of the FBI's Handling of Allegations of Sexual Abuse
by Former USA Gymnastics Physician Lawrence Gerard Nassar**

Department of Justice (DOJ) Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz announced today the release of an Investigation and Review of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Handling of Allegations of Sexual Abuse by Former USA Gymnastics Physician Lawrence Gerard Nassar.

The DOJ Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that senior officials in the FBI Indianapolis Field Office failed to respond to allegations of sexual abuse of athletes by former USA Gymnastics physician Lawrence Gerard Nassar with the urgency that the allegations required. We also found that the FBI Indianapolis Field Office made fundamental errors when it did respond to the allegations, failed to notify the appropriate FBI field office (the Lansing Resident Agency) or state or local authorities of the allegations, and failed to take other steps to mitigate the ongoing threat posed by Nassar.

After eight months of inaction by the FBI Indianapolis Field Office, the FBI Los Angeles Field Office received the same allegations. The OIG found that while the Los Angeles Field Office took numerous investigative steps, it too failed to notify the FBI Lansing Resident Agency or state or local authorities of the allegations, and failed to take other steps to mitigate the ongoing threat posed by Nassar. The FBI Lansing Resident Agency did not become aware of the Nassar allegations until after the Michigan State University Police Department (MSUPD) executed a search warrant on Nassar's residence in September 2016, following the MSUPD's receipt of separate complaints of sexual abuse by Nassar, and discovered child pornography at Nassar's residence. During this period from July 2015, when the allegations were first reported to the FBI, to September 2016, Nassar continued to treat gymnasts at Michigan State University, a high school in Michigan, and a gymnastics club in Michigan. Ultimately the investigations determined that Nassar had engaged in sexual assaults of over 100 victims and possessed thousands of images of child pornography, led to his convictions in federal and state court, and resulted in Nassar being sentenced to incarceration for over 100 years.

The OIG further found that, when the FBI's handling of the Nassar matter came under scrutiny from the public, Congress, the media, and FBI headquarters in 2017 and 2018, Indianapolis Field Office officials did not take responsibility for their failures. Instead, they provided incomplete and inaccurate information to make it appear that they had been diligent in responding to the sexual abuse allegations.

The specific findings of the report include:

- Officials in the Indianapolis Field Office violated numerous FBI policies in handling the Nassar allegations. Specifically, officials in the Indianapolis Field Office:

- failed to formally document a July 28, 2015 meeting with USA Gymnastics during which the FBI first received the allegations against Nassar;
 - failed to properly handle and document receipt and review of relevant evidence, i.e., a thumb drive provided by USA Gymnastics President Stephen D. Penny, Jr.;
 - failed to document until February 2017 an interview of a gymnast that was conducted on September 2, 2015, during which the gymnast alleged sexual assault by Nassar; and
 - failed to transfer the Nassar allegations to the FBI Lansing Resident Agency, where venue most likely would have existed for potential federal crimes.
- Indianapolis Field Office Special Agent in Charge (SAC) W. Jay Abbott and an Indianapolis Field Office Supervisory Special Agent (Indianapolis SSA) made false statements. Specifically, we concluded that the gymnast interview summary that the Indianapolis SSA drafted in February 2017, 17 months after the interview took place, contained materially false statements and omitted material information. We further concluded that the Indianapolis SSA made materially false statements when twice questioned by the OIG about the victim interview. In addition, we concluded that Abbott made materially false statements during his OIG interviews to minimize errors made by the Indianapolis Field Office in connection with the handling of the Nassar allegations.
 - Abbott violated FBI policy and exercised extremely poor judgment under federal ethics rules when he, without prior authorization, communicated with Penny about a potential job opportunity with the U.S. Olympic Committee, an entity with which Penny had professional connections. Abbott communicated with Penny about the potential job opportunity while the two continued to discuss the allegations against Nassar and while Abbott took an active role in conversations about the FBI's public statements regarding USA Gymnastics' handling of those allegations. Abbott should have known—and we found that he in fact did know—that this conduct would raise questions regarding his impartiality. Further, Abbott applied for the position with the U.S. Olympic Committee, and then falsely denied that he had done so when questioned by the OIG on two separate occasions.

In addition, the OIG identified shortcomings in the FBI's policies, including its policy regarding notification of local law enforcement agencies in child exploitation cases, that should be further assessed to ensure that the FBI can more effectively handle these types of matters. The DOJ OIG made four recommendations to the FBI to address the concerns we identified. The FBI agreed with the recommendations.

Report: Today's report and an interactive timeline of key events is available on our website at the following link: <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/investigation-and-review-federal-bureau-investigations-handling-allegations-sexual-abuse>

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