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**FORMER POLLOCK PENITENTIARY PRISON GUARD SENTENCED
FOR ATTEMPTING TO SMUGGLE DRUGS INTO THE PRISON**

Alexandria, La.: United States Attorney Stephanie A. Finley announced today that Brandon Ray Willis, 27, of Pineville, a former guard employed by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons (BOP), was sentenced today to 71 months in prison and three years supervised release for attempting to smuggle heroin and methamphetamine into the U. S. Penitentiary at Pollock. U.S. District Judge Dee D. Drell also ordered the defendant to pay a \$5,000.00 fine.

The United States Department of Justice Office of Inspector General was investigating claims that Willis was being paid by inmates to smuggle contraband into the prison. During a sting operation, an undercover agent posed as a friend of one of the inmates. On August 8, 2011, the undercover agent met with Willis in the parking lot of a home improvement store in Alexandria. During the meeting, Willis discussed physically assaulting or threatening BOP investigators in an effort to derail their investigation into his smuggling activity. At the conclusion of the meeting, Willis accepted what he believed to be heroin and methamphetamine and agreed to smuggle it into the prison. Willis was immediately arrested. On January 25, 2012, Willis pled guilty in federal court to attempting to introduce contraband into the prison.

"Mr. Willis violated the law and the oath that he took when he became a guard at the prison. This sentence should send a message that corrupt conduct on the part of prison guards will not be tolerated," said U. S. Attorney Stephanie Finley.

The investigation was directed by the United States Department of Justice Office of Inspector General. The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney James G. Cowles, Jr.

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