



# Department of Justice

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## **FORMER FULTON COUNTY LIEUTENANT CONVICTED OF CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATION IN INMATE BEATING**

ATLANTA, GA - A federal jury today returned guilty verdicts against former Fulton County Sheriff's Deputy ROBERT W. HILL, Jr., 47, of Atlanta, Georgia, on one count of violating the civil rights of an inmate by using excessive force, one count of solicitation to commit a crime of violence (excessive force), two counts of obstruction of justice, and one count of lying to an FBI agent. The trial lasted three days. The jury deliberated approximately five hours before reaching the verdicts.

Acting United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said of the verdict, "This Fulton County Jail Watch Commander not only was involved in beating an inmate, he used his supervisory power to attempt to pressure others to cover up the incident. Fortunately, some of those under him did not succumb to his pressure and testified truthfully against him. The jury came back with a verdict that reflected the reality of what happened. As in other cases involving the Fulton County Jail, the message is the same: illegal treatment of inmates and lying about it will not be tolerated. This former law enforcement officer now faces jail himself."

Acting FBI Atlanta Special Agent in Charge Howard H. Hatfield said, "The jury spoke loud and clear that civil rights abuses in a correctional institution will not be tolerated nor will the subsequent attempts to cover up those violations. The FBI will continue to seek the truth in such matters in spite of efforts to obstruct our investigations."

According to Acting United States Attorney Yates, and the evidence presented in court: HILL, a former sheriff's lieutenant assigned to the Fulton County Jail, was in charge of the facility as the Watch Commander on August 9, 2008. During a morning roll call, HILL made remarks to his staff which included a directive regarding the use of force against inmates. According to witnesses and HILL's own recollection of the event, he told his subordinate officers that if an inmate touches an officer, that inmate should go to Grady Hospital.

Later that very day, Inmate Christopher Trammell, a pre-trial detainee with mental health issues, was involved in a physical altercation with a number of detention officers

including HILL. HILL was injured during the altercation. Eyewitnesses testified and a video surveillance recording showed that after the altercation, HILL picked Trammell up from the floor and escorted him into a nearby nurse station, which did not have a window and was not equipped with a surveillance camera. A group of at least eleven detention officers followed HILL and Inmate Trammell into the room. The video surveillance recording shows that after the group entered the room, the door was closed. Five officers testified that inside the room, HILL assaulted Trammell. Several of the witnesses testified that HILL struck Trammell multiple times about his face and head. Witnesses also said that after the assault, Trammell was bleeding from his face and blood was left on the floor of the nurse station.

Evidence presented also included HILL's report about the incident, which did not mention any use of force against Trammell inside the nurse station. In an interview with an FBI agent during the investigation of the matter, HILL insisted that he "in no way witnessed" Trammell being assaulted in the nurse station. HILL did, however, admit to an FBI agent, that he made the statement at roll call about sending inmates to Grady Hospital. According to the FBI agent, HILL quoted himself saying "if an inmate puts a hand on staff, then he is going to Grady." HILL further explained to the agent that this is the custom of the jail – "meaning you will get your (deleted) whooped."

According to the testimony of three officers who witnessed the assault, HILL met with them numerous times following his interview with the FBI. These witnesses testified that HILL repeatedly told them that nothing illegal happened in the nurse station and that they should "stick to the story" if they were questioned about the incident by federal authorities.

Sentencing is scheduled for May 17, 2010 before United States District Judge Thomas W. Thrash. HILL faces a sentence of up to 10 years in prison on each of counts one and two, up to 20 years on each of counts three and four, and up to 5 years in prison on count five. He also faces a fine of up to \$1.25 million. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

This case was investigated by the FBI.

Assistant United States Attorneys Angela Jordan and Brent Alan Gray prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact Sally Quillian Yates, Acting United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/ga](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ga).