



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates
Northern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

05/17/10

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/gan/>

CONTACT: Patrick Crosby

(404)581-6016

FAX (404)581-6160

FORMER FULTON COUNTY LIEUTENANT SENTENCED

Former County Jailer Goes to Prison

ATLANTA, GA - Former Fulton County Sheriff's Lieutenant ROBERT W. HILL, Jr., 47, of Atlanta, Georgia, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Thomas W. Thrash, Jr., to federal prison on charges of violating the civil rights of an inmate by using excessive force, solicitation to commit a crime of violence (excessive force), obstruction of justice, and lying to an FBI agent.

United States Attorney Sally Quillian Yates said of the verdict, "This Fulton County Jail Watch Commander not only was involved first hand in the beating of an inmate, he used his supervisory power to attempt to pressure others to lie to cover up the incident. Fortunately, some of those under him told the truth, and the jury returned with a verdict that reflected what really happened. As in other cases we have prosecuted involving the Fulton County Jail, the message is the same: illegal treatment of inmates and lying about it will not be tolerated. Now this former law enforcement officer himself goes to prison."

Brian D. Lamkin, Special Agent in Charge, Atlanta Division FBI, said, "Today's sentencing of former Fulton County Sheriff's Deputy Hill should serve as a reminder to other law enforcement officers of their sworn oaths that they accepted upon entering a career in the criminal justice system. The difficulties of working in a correctional environment are fully appreciated, but the disregard for the basic civil rights of others and the obstruction of the resulting federal investigation will not be condoned."

Fulton County Sheriff Theodore Jackson said, "The Fulton County Sheriff's Office continues to cooperate with federal authorities to ensure that the inmates in custody are supervised according to federal statutes. The use of excessive force and cover-ups are not tolerated at the Sheriff's Office. This case demonstrates that these matters are taken seriously and that when Fulton County Sheriff's employees fail to respect the civil rights of inmates, they may also face sentencing in federal court. This does not illustrate or characterize the majority of law-abiding employees of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office."

HILL was sentenced to 1 year and 1 day in prison to be followed by 2 years of supervised release. HILL was found guilty of the charges by a federal jury on March 5, 2010 after a four-day trial.

According to United States Attorney Yates, the charges and other information presented at trial: 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 that 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's 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 at trial also included HILL's report about the incident, which did not mention any use of force against Trammell inside the nurse's 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's 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 as saying that "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 *** 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's station and that they should "stick to the story" if they were questioned about the incident by federal authorities.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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

For further information please contact Sally Q. Yates, 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.justice.gov/usao/gan.