



Department of Justice

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THREE MEN CHARGED IN LOUISIANA FOR CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

WASHINGTON - The Justice Department today announced that three men were charged for their role in intentionally attempting to intimidate and interfere with African-American students who were attending Beekman Junior High School in Beekman, Morehouse Parish, La.

According to the bill of information filed in the District Court for the Western District of Louisiana, on or about Nov. 6, 2007, Brian Wallis, James Lee Wallis Jr. and Tony L. Johnson, acting together, tied a noose around a dead raccoon's neck and hung it from the flagpole located in front of Beekman Junior High School. The bill of information further alleges that the three men hung the raccoon in the noose to intimidate and interfere with the African-American students because of their race and color and because they were attending Beekman Junior High School, which is a public school.

Johnson, Brian Wallis and James Lee Wallis Jr. face a maximum penalty of one year in jail.

On Sept. 24, 2010, a federal grand jury returned an indictment against Christopher Shane Montgomery, who initially claimed responsibility for the act, in connection with this incident. Based upon additional information developed during the course of this investigation, the charges against Montgomery have been dismissed.

This case was investigated by the FBI and is being prosecuted by Senior Litigation Counsel Mark Blumberg and Trial Attorney Christine M. Siscaretti of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary J. Mudrick of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Louisiana, Shreveport Office.

A bill of information is merely an accusation, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty.

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