

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr.  
Western District of New York

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## **ERIE COUNTY HOLDING CENTER DEPUTY SENTENCED FOR A CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATION INVOLVING AN INMATE**

BUFFALO, N.Y.—U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Thomas Thompson, 40, of Grand Island, N.Y., who was convicted of deprivation of rights under color of law, was sentenced to eight months in a halfway house by U.S. Magistrate Judge H. Kenneth Schroeder.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Trini E. Ross, who handled the case, stated that on January 18, 2010, the defendant, a former Sergeant with the Erie County Sheriff's Department, recruited other deputies to assist him in the search of a cell at the Erie County Holding Center. Thompson was following up on an anonymous report of illegal narcotics in a unit that housed the victim.

After arriving at the victim's cell, the defendant asked which inmate had the illegal narcotics. Thompson and other deputies were told by the victim that an inmate across the hall had the drugs but a search of that inmate's cell did not turn up any drugs. Thompson and the other deputies then returned to the victim's cell and told the victim that because he had lied and did not assist with finding the illegal narcotics, the victim had would have to be punched. Thompson then told the victim to pick the deputy who should commit the assault. The victim pointed to a deputy who then proceeded to punch the victim.

“As a member of law enforcement, this defendant took an oath to uphold the law,” said U.S. Attorney Hochul. “As a Sergeant in the Erie County Holding Center, Thomas Thompson was expected to not only watch over the inmates inside the jail but to also supervise the other guards in his unit. In this case, the defendant in fact organized a group of deputies to participate in the attack on a pre-trial detainee who had not yet been convicted of any crime. As the outcome of this case demonstrates, such criminal behavior will not be tolerated.”

The sentencing is the culmination of an investigation by Special Agents of the Federal bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Christopher M. Piehota, Special Agent in Charge.

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