



U. S. Department of Justice

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**FORMER TALLAHASSEE FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL OFFICER
INDICTED FOR SEXUAL ABUSE OF MULTIPLE INMATES**

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA – A federal grand jury in Tallahassee has returned a three-count indictment charging a federal correctional officer with sexually abusing three inmates at the Federal Correctional Institution in Tallahassee. Jimmy Lee Highsmith was charged with Sexual Abuse of a Ward. Lawrence Keefe, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced the indictment, which was issued on February 2.

“The public places its trust in sworn law enforcement and correctional officers that they will represent the finest in our society, not the worst. Sadly, the charges contained in this indictment reflect the worst – an individual allegedly taking advantage of his position of trust to inflict harm on those under his care,” U.S. Attorney Keefe said.

Highsmith, 41, of Yazoo, Mississippi, was arrested last night by federal agents. His initial appearance will take place at 4:30 p.m. CST this afternoon at the Thad Cochran United States Courthouse in Jackson, Mississippi. Highsmith's arraignment hearing is scheduled for February 17 at 1:30 p.m. EST before United States Magistrate Judge Fitzpatrick at the United States Courthouse in Tallahassee.

The indictment alleges that while employed as a U.S. Bureau of Prisons Correctional Officer at Federal Correctional Institution Tallahassee, Highsmith engaged in sexual acts with three inmates who were under his custodial, supervisory and disciplinary authority. The criminal conduct allegedly took place between March 2014 and September 2018. If convicted, Highsmith faces a maximum sentence of 15 years in federal prison and a maximum \$250,000 fine, per count.

Assistant United States Attorneys David L. Goldberg and Lazaro P. Fields are prosecuting the case, which resulted from a long-term investigation by the Department of Justice Office of Inspector General.

An indictment is merely an allegation by a grand jury that a defendant has committed a violation of federal criminal law and is not evidence of guilt. All defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial, during which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at trial.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation's principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](#) website. For more information about the U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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