



U. S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

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FORMER TALLAHASSEE FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL OFFICER **SENTENCED TO FORTY-EIGHT MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON** **FOR SEXUAL ABUSE OF INMATE**

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA –Jimmy Lee Highsmith, 42, of Marianna, was sentenced to forty-eight months in federal prison following his conviction on one count of sexual abuse of a ward while on duty at the Federal Correctional Institution in Tallahassee. Jason R. Coody, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced the sentenced.

Highsmith was convicted by a federal jury in December 2021. Evidence introduced at trial revealed that Highsmith abused his authority as a correctional officer to engage in sexual acts with an inmate on various occasions. The jury received testimony and exhibits showing that between March and April 2014, Highsmith ordered a female inmate at Federal Correctional Institution Tallahassee to meet him in his office and the officers' bathroom to engage in illicit sexual acts. Surveillance video footage confirmed that, on April 30, 2014, Highsmith and his victim were caught by other inmates engaging in sexual acts between 11:30 p.m. and midnight in his office. The victim disclosed the illicit sex acts the next day and was taken to Tallahassee Memorial Hospital where a sexual assault examination confirmed injuries resulting from sexual activity.

“The sexual abuse of inmates by federal correctional officers is intolerable,” said U.S. Attorney Coody. “Those sentenced to prison are to atone for their crimes and gain skills that will enable them to return as productive members of society. They should not be preyed upon by officers who violate their oath of office. This office will vigorously investigate and prosecute any officer who engages in such acts of abuse to the fullest extent of the law.”

“Abuse of inmates of any kind is unacceptable, and Highsmith will rightly serve time for sexually abusing an inmate under his supervision. The Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General will continue to bring to justice anyone who engages in this type of conduct,” said James F. Boyersmith, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Miami Field Office.

Highsmith's prison sentence will be followed by 5 years of supervised release. He will also be required to register as a sex offender and will be subject to sex offender conditions.

This conviction was the result of an investigation by the Department of Justice Office of Inspector General. Assistant United States Attorneys David L. Goldberg and Lazaro P. Fields prosecuted the case.

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