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SECURITY

Police Officer Found Guilty Of Raping Undocumented Immigrant At Gunpoint Under Threat Of Deportation

By Andrea Nill Sanchez on Mar 11, 2011 at 5:18 pm

A former Georgia deputy from Cobb County, Jason Bill, was found guilty today on a total of seven counts, including, kidnapping, two counts of aggravated assault, aggravated sodomy, rape and false imprisonment of a 23-year-old undocumented woman.

According to reports, Bill accused the undocumented immigrant from El Salvador of stealing his phone. He threatened to deport her and then “used the power of his badge to force her to his nearby apartment.” Then he forced her to “commit sexual acts” at gun point. He will be sentenced tomorrow and faces a minimum of 25 years in jail. To add insult to injury, Bill’s attorneys alleged that the victim was actually a prostitute.

This isn’t the first time a Cobb County police officer has been accused of exploiting an undocumented immigrant. In 2009, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Georgia released a report documenting the stories of 10 people who claimed they were victims of racial profiling by Cobb County law enforcement.

In 2010, a 23-year-old Latino man filed a lawsuit against the Cobb County Police Department claiming that two officers “stopped him without cause, beat him and then jailed him on a pretext in an effort to get him deported.” According to the police report, officers stopped Angel Francisco Castro Torres (who was riding a bike) after observing his race. They then allegedly demanded Castro’s papers before proceeding to beat him. Castro required surgery to repair his broken nose and eye socket.

The ACLU attributed the civil rights violations to the federal government’s 287(g) program which involves an agreement between local law enforcement agencies and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) that allows police to enforce immigration laws. “In Cobb, members of the immigrant community live their daily lives in terror as Cobb law enforcement and jail personnel abuse the power afforded to them by their contract with ICE,” wrote the ACLU. The ACLU further noted that, “This problem is compounded in Georgia, as there is currently no state legislation banning racial profiling and mandating accountability and transparency for law enforcement.”

Of course, not every police officer who is charged with enforcing immigration law is going to go out of his or her way to target brown-skinned immigrants. Nor is every case of racial profiling going to turn into the horrific crime that Bill committed. However, as Georgia continues to move forward on a slew of bills that would expand law enforcement’s authority to enforce immigration laws, the likelihood that the state will confront more of these cases could go up.

