



# Department of Justice

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## **Former Grant County, Kentucky, Detention Center Supervisor Pleads Guilty to Civil Rights Crime**

WASHINGTON – Clinton Shawn Sydnor, a former sergeant at the Grant County, Ky., Detention Center, pleaded guilty in federal court today to conspiring with deputy jailers and with inmates to violate the civil rights of a man who was in his custody at the jail. Today's plea was jointly announced by Grace Chung Becker, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division, together with James A. Zerhusen, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky, and Tracy Reinhold, Special Agent in Charge of the Louisville Division of the FBI. Sydnor faces a possible sentence of 15 years in prison when he is sentenced on Dec. 8, 2008.

Sydnor was initially charged in a federal indictment that also charged deputy jailers Wesley Lanham and Shawn Freeman. The indictment charged all three defendants with conspiring to violate the civil rights of the man in their custody; with violating the man's rights; and with obstructing justice in connection with the investigation of those crimes. Sydnor was also charged with additional counts of obstruction for falsifying records in a federal investigation and for tampering with a witness.

According to the original indictment, on Feb. 14, 2003, Sydnor, Lanham and Freeman, along with other deputies not named in the indictment, while on official duty, taunted an 18-year-old high school student who had been brought to the detention center on a speeding charge. The deputies teased the teenager about his physical appearance. The indictment alleges that the defendants then solicited a group of convicted felons housed in a general population cell to intimidate the teenager. The indictment further alleges that the officers then left the teenager in the cell with the inmates, who proceeded to sexually assault the teen.

Sydnor admitted in court today that he conspired with the other officers and with the inmates to violate the teenager's civil rights, that he knew the teen faced a threat from the other inmates, and that he deliberately ignored that danger. Sydnor also admitted that he had other officers falsify reports relating to the incident.

Lanham and Freeman have pleaded not guilty to the charges against them and will face trial beginning on Aug. 11, 2008.

The case is being prosecuted by Special Litigation Counsel Kristy L. Parker and Trial Attorney Forrest Christian of the Criminal Section of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division and by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

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