



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2007
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TDD (202) 514-1888

U.S. MARSHALS SERVICE DEPUTY CONVICTED FOR FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATION AFTER STRIKING A HANDCUFFED SUSPECT

WASHINGTON - Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division Rena J. Comisac and U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Jeffrey A. Taylor announced today that Stephen Cook, 32, a deputy with the U.S. Marshals Service, was convicted by a federal jury for using excessive force against a bound arrestee in violation of his federally protected civil rights, and for covering up his illegal use of force.

Cook was convicted today of one count of depriving the civil rights of another while under color of law, one count of false statements, and two counts of tampering with a witness.

According to the testimony at trial, on Aug. 30, 2005, Cook was responsible for processing arrestees into the holding facility at the D.C. Superior Court. One of the arrestees gave Cook his name in a manner that Cook apparently found to be inappropriate. Cook then pulled the bound arrestee from the back of a police van, dragged him to the ground, and repeatedly struck him in the head with his fist. Shortly thereafter, Cook and another deputy marshal composed false reports in order to conceal Cook's unjustified attack from his superiors. Both deputies submitted those false reports to the U.S. Marshals Service on Sept. 1, 2005. On September 28 and Oct. 23, 2006, Cook contacted the other deputy and told him to conceal the truth from a federal grand jury.

For depriving the civil rights of another while under color of law, Cook faces a maximum punishment of 10 years of imprisonment. If found guilty of false statements, Cook faces a maximum punishment of five years of imprisonment. If found guilty of tampering with a witness, Cook faces a maximum punishment of 10 years in prison. Each of the aforementioned charges entails a potential fine of up to \$250,000.

"The Justice Department is committed to vigorously investigating and prosecuting misconduct by law enforcement officials," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Comisac. "Such unlawful behavior undermines the tireless efforts of the vast majority of law enforcement officers throughout our nation who lawfully perform their duties with professionalism and courage."

"No one is above the law," stated U.S. Attorney Taylor. "When a law enforcement officer violates the civil rights of an individual, such conduct is not only reprehensible, but it tarnishes the fine work done on a daily basis by law enforcement. It also helps breed contempt and distrust within the community where none should exist. We have no tolerance for such illegal behavior."

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney John Cummings from the U.S. Attorney's Office in the District of Columbia, and Trial Attorney Douglas Kern from the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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