



Department of Justice

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Former Major at Angola Prison Convicted of Beating a Handcuffed and Shackled Inmate

Officer Was Previously Convicted of Related Obstruction Offenses

Daniel Davis, 44, a former major at Louisiana State Penitentiary (LSP) in Angola, Louisiana, was found guilty by a jury yesterday in federal court for his participation in the beating of an inmate who was handcuffed, shackled, and not resisting and for failing to intervene to stop his subordinates from participating in the same beating. In a previous trial in January 2018, Davis was convicted of conspiring with other officers to cover up the beating by devising a false cover story, submitting false reports documenting that cover story, tampering with witnesses, and lying under oath. Davis was also previously convicted of this beating in November 2018, but was granted a new trial based on juror misconduct.

Four other officers—former LSP Captains James Savoy, John Sanders, and Scotty Kennedy, and former Sergeant Willie Thomas—have all previously pleaded guilty for their roles in the beating and cover up. At Davis’s trial, Captains Sanders and Kennedy testified for the government and described the abuse and the extensive cover up.

After hearing testimony over the course of three days, the jury convicted Davis of willfully depriving the inmate of his right to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. The evidence showed that Davis initiated the beating by yanking the inmate’s leg chains, causing the inmate to fall face-first onto the concrete breezeway. At that point, Davis and the other officers punched, kicked, and stomped on the inmate, leaving the inmate with a dislocated shoulder, a hematoma, a collapsed lung, and broken ribs.

“The Constitution and its Bill of Rights protect all people in our nation from unlawful abuse by the government, and the Department of Justice will continue to prosecute officers who willfully violate the Constitution by abusing their power over those in custody,” said Attorney General Eric Dreiband for the Civil Rights Division. “This officer violated his oath and the law, and the Department of Justice will not tolerate this kind of criminal misconduct by correctional officers.”

“Correctional officers have an obligation to protect inmates serving their sentences as ordered by the court,” said Bryan A. Vorndran, FBI New Orleans Special Agent in Charge. “Daniel Davis abused his authority by inflicting physical harm upon an inmate that was restrained and non-combative. His actions are a disgrace to all correctional officers who serve ethically and continue to maintain high moral standards throughout our correctional facilities. I commend the men and women of the FBI’s Baton Rouge Resident Agency Office, Louisiana Office of the State Inspector General, and the Department of Justice Civil Rights trial attorneys for their commitment to uphold the constitution and protect all Americans.”

“This is a just verdict,” said Louisiana Inspector General Stephen Street. “We cannot and will not tolerate the abuse of the considerable power afforded corrections officers. Whenever it does occur, it is critical to hold offenders criminally accountable in order to protect the integrity of the system. The jury did exactly that with Mr. Davis, and it was worth the time and effort to obtain this result. Thanks again to our federal partners at the FBI and DOJ.”

No date has been set for Davis's sentencing. He faces a maximum penalty of five years of imprisonment on the conspiracy and perjury counts, 10 years of imprisonment on the excessive force count, and 20 years of imprisonment on each of the remaining obstruction counts.

This case was investigated by the FBI's Baton Rouge Resident Agency Office and the Louisiana Office of the State Inspector General. It was prosecuted by Trial Attorneys Zachary Dembo and Anita Channapti of the Civil Rights Division's Criminal Section. Trial Attorney Christopher J. Perras of the Civil Rights Division and Assistant U.S. Attorney Frederick A. Menner Jr., of the Middle District of Louisiana also assisted in the case.

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