

Department of Justice
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

Two Federal Bureau of Prisons Employees Charged with Violating the Civil Rights of an Inmate Resulting in His Death

A federal grand jury indicted a Bureau of Prisons (BOP) lieutenant and a BOP registered nurse yesterday with violating the civil rights of an inmate by showing deliberate indifference to the inmate's serious medical needs, resulting in his death.

The indictment alleges that on Jan. 9, 2021, Lieutenant Shrona Covington, 47, of Chesterfield, Virginia, and Registered Nurse Tonya Farley, 52, of Chesterfield, Virginia, were on duty and working in their official capacities at the Federal Correctional Institution at Petersburg, Virginia. On that day, they allegedly each willfully failed to ensure that the inmate, a 47-year-old man identified as W.W., was provided with necessary medical care, resulting in W.W.'s death, even though each knew that W.W. had serious medical needs. Farley is also charged with writing a false report about the incident, and Covington and Farley are each charged with making false statements to federal agents about the incident.

The civil rights charges each carry a maximum penalty of life in prison, the false report charge carries a maximum penalty of twenty years in prison and each false statement charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, U.S. Attorney Jessica D. Aber for the Eastern District of Virginia and Special Agent in Charge Russell W. Cunningham of the Justice Department's Office of Inspector General (DOJ OIG) Washington Field Office made the announcement.

DOJ OIG investigated the case.

Special Litigation Counsel Kathryn E. Gilbert and Trial Attorney Matthew Tannenbaum of the Civil Rights Division's Criminal Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Garnett for the Eastern District of Virginia are prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.