

# Former Kentucky Federal Corrections Supervisor Sentenced to 66 Months for Leading Cover-Ups of Inmate Assaults and Making False Reports

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**For Immediate Release**

Office of Public Affairs

A former Bureau of Prisons supervisor, Kevin X. Pearce, 39, was sentenced yesterday to 66 months in prison followed by one year of supervised release for leading two cover-ups of assaults of inmates held at U.S. Penitentiary Big Sandy. Pearce was convicted after a six-day trial. His co-defendants, former corrections officers Samuel Patrick and Clinton Pauley, previously pleaded guilty and were respectively [sentenced](#) to 36 and 40 months in prison.

"As a supervisor, this defendant was responsible for safeguarding the rights of thousands of inmates, but he abused his authority by leading cover-ups of two violent assaults of inmates in his custody," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "The Justice Department will continue to hold accountable law enforcement officials who violate federal civil rights laws or who cover up violations. We will protect the rights of all people, including those held inside our jails and prisons."

"Not only did Pearce have a profound responsibility to protect people in his custody and care, he had an even greater one – to ensure that those under his supervision also protected them," said U.S. Attorney Carlton S. Shier IV for the Eastern District of Kentucky. "He fell well short on both counts. Instead of honoring his obligations, he acquiesced in the abuse by his subordinates and then tried to cover it up. He now faces the consequences of this betrayal of the public trust placed in him."

"Identifying and investigating law enforcement officials who deliberately violate the oath they take to protect and serve is of utmost importance at the FBI," said Special Agent in Charge Michael E. Stansbury of the FBI Louisville Field Office. "Pearce not only carried a badge, but he was responsible for ensuring those under his supervision protected the civil rights of all inmates in their facility. FBI Louisville will continue to aggressively pursue public officials who choose to abuse their position of authority."

"As a supervisor, Pearce had a duty to hold accountable Patrick and Pauley for assaulting inmates in their custody and care," said Special Agent in Charge William J. Hannah of the Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General (DOJ OIG) Midwest Region. "Instead, Pearce lied repeatedly to try to cover up these horrific crimes. The Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General will continue to aggressively investigate allegations of abuse in federal prisons and any efforts to conceal these heinous acts."

According to court documents and evidence introduced at trial and sentencing, Pearce, who at that time held the rank of Operations Lieutenant, covered up assaults committed by his co-defendants, Patrick and Pauley, on March 30 and April 29, 2021. On March 30, Patrick and Pauley assaulted an inmate by spraying him in the face with pepper spray and kicking him in the head and upper body. Witnesses, including those who assaulted the inmates, testified that the inmate was not a threat and was compliant, and was assaulted for walking too slowly to his cell, rather than for any legitimate penological purpose. Pearce tried to cover up what happened by writing a false report and pressuring lower-ranking corrections officers to join the cover-up.

On April 29, 2021, Patrick and Pauley assaulted a second inmate by elbowing him in the head and punching him in the body. The victim of that assault had requested protection from other inmates. When the victim, who is white, revealed that he used to affiliate with Black gangs, Patrick referred to him as a "race traitor," after which Patrick and Pauley both repeatedly struck him in the head and body. Pearce once again tried to cover up what happened by writing a false report and pressuring lower-ranking officers to join the cover-up. Pearce continued to stick with the cover-ups over a year later by making false statements to OIG and FBI agents who were investigating the assaults.

DOJ OIG and the FBI Louisville Field Office investigated the case.

Trial Attorney Thomas Johnson of the Civil Rights Division's Criminal Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Zachary Dembo for the Eastern District of Kentucky and prosecuted the case.

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