

# Former Federal Bureau of Prisons Lieutenant Convicted of Violating Inmate's Civil Rights

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## For Immediate Release

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Daniel Mitchell, a former lieutenant at the Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP), pleaded guilty this week to one charge of conspiring to violate civil rights.

"The defendant's actions were an unacceptable breach of his responsibilities as a law enforcement officer," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "FBOP officers cannot take the law into their own hands, and the Justice Department will aggressively prosecute federal and local law enforcement officials who use physical force to punish inmates."

"Corrections Officers work in dangerous environments with limited resources and deserve our respect and gratitude," said U.S. Attorney Michael F. Easley Jr for the Eastern District of North Carolina. "But officers acting outside the law to injure an inmate erodes the rule of law, violates civil rights and puts other officers' lives in jeopardy. We won't tolerate misconduct in our prisons, by inmates or guards, and will take every measure to keep our institutions safe."

"Rather than following the normal disciplinary process, Mitchell devised a plan to violently retaliate against an inmate," said Special Agent in Charge Timothy C. Edmiston of the Justice Department Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Mid-Atlantic Region. "This coordinated attack violated the civil rights of a defenseless inmate and broke every tenet that FBOP employees swear an oath to uphold. The Justice Department OIG is committed to protecting the civil rights of inmates and will pursue any DOJ employee who abuses their power."

According to court documents and other information presented in court, on Dec. 8, 2021, Mitchell was on duty as a lieutenant supervising the special housing unit (SHU) at Federal Correctional Institute Butner Medium II. Victim K.G. was an inmate housed in the SHU under Mitchell's supervision.

That morning, a female officer reported to Mitchell that she had been doing rounds in the SHU when inmate K.G. exposed himself and engaged in a sexual act within her view. After the female officer left, Mitchell called another corrections officer, co-conspirator 1, into his office to discuss how to handle K.G.'s alleged misconduct. The normal disciplinary process at FBOP involved a formal write-up of the alleged misconduct. Mitchell and co-conspirator 1 decided that the formal disciplinary was not sufficient. Instead, Mitchell directed co-conspirator 1 to take inmate K.G. from his cell to a holding cell to teach him a lesson by "tuning him up."

After receiving Mitchell's instructions, co-conspirator 1 asked some fellow officers to help move inmate K.G. to a holding cell. Once they were alone in the cell, co-conspirator 1 struck and kicked inmate K.G. several times, and knocked him to the ground. Other officers intervened and pulled co-conspirator 1 away from K.G. K.G. sustained minor injuries and later called a medical emergency to his room because the incident aggravated a preexisting back condition and caused spasms.

The Justice Department's Office of Inspector General initiated an investigation into the matter after an officer witness raised concerns. In interviews, multiple officer witnesses described officer co-conspirator 1's unprovoked assault on inmate K.G. Officers also described seeing co-conspirator 1 meet with Mitchell just prior to when co-conspirator 1 asked for their assistance moving inmate K.G. to the holding cell. In later interviews, Mitchell and co-conspirator 1 both described meeting in Mitchell's office and admitted that they agreed that officer co-conspirator 1 would assault K.G. as punishment.

A sentencing hearing is scheduled for March 31, 2025. Mitchell faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jake D. Pugh for the Eastern District of North Carolina and Trial Attorney Eric Peffley of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division are prosecuting the case.