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St. Croix Prison Guards Convicted of Inmate Abuse and Falsifying Reports of the Assault

Jury finds two ex-officers guilty of rights deprivation and obstructing justice in a high-profile case at John A. Bell Correctional Facility

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John A. Bell Correctional Facility in St. Croix By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — Two former correctional officers have been convicted of assaulting an inmate and obstructing an FBI investigation at the John A. Bell Correctional Facility in St. Croix. United States Attorney Delia L. Smith announced the convictions of Maxwell Bryan, 53, and Elvin Bloice, 72, following an eight-day federal jury trial.

The jury found Bryan guilty of depriving an inmate of his rights under color of law by physically assaulting him, and both Bryan and Bloice guilty of obstructing justice. Bloice received an

additional conviction for making materially false statements to the FBI.

According to trial evidence, the incident occurred on September 17, 2021, when Bryan responded to the inmate's refusal to return to his cell by physically assaulting him—punching him twice in the forehead and choking him inside the cell. During the assault, Bloice was reported to have stood in front of the cell, partially closing the door to block the view of the facility's surveillance cameras.

The motivations for the assault were linked to a prior incident on August 23, 2021, involving the same inmate, who had kicked the door of Bryan's vehicle, leading to a retaliatory attack by Bryan.

Following the assault, both officers submitted false incident reports to cover up the attack. Bloice further obstructed justice by denying the occurrence of the assault during an FBI investigation on October 4, 2021.

United States Attorney Smith emphasized the commitment of the U.S. Attorney's Office to uphold the civil and constitutional rights of all citizens, including the rights of inmates. She stated, "This case warranted attention from the Department of Justice because of the Color of Law violations that make it a crime for anyone to abuse their legal power or authority to deprive another of their rights."

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation with assistance from Deputy Chief Forrest Christian of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division. It was prosecuted by United States Attorneys Evan Rikhye and Dan Huston.