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Reporting on Prison Privatization and Related Issues

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Double Escape from CCA Facility in Tennessee

Two Montana inmates escaped from the CCA-operated West Tenn. Detention Facility in Mason on May 20, 1999 during an afternoon exercise period. Two other inmates were caught while attempting to escape.

Massive Manhunt

Prisoners Anthony Lankford, 30, and Christopher McKeon, 43, successfully fled into the surrounding woods. Lankford was serving 220 years for charges that included murder and wounding a Montana State Trooper; McKeon was serving a 50-year sentence for robbery.

The Mason facility holds 177 Montana prisoners as well as inmates from Hawaii and the federal prison system. Tennessee has no jurisdiction or authority over private prisons that exclusively house out-of-state prisoners. According to Montana officials who investigated the breakout, the inmates had loosened fencing around a gate frame, which gave them access to the perimeter fence.

More than 200 state and local law enforcement officers, three dog teams and a helicopter participated in

a week-long manhunt for the elusive escapees that included a door-to-door search of more than 300 buildings. Lankford and McKeon were captured without incident on May 27 at a golf course just outside of Memphis.

CCA officials have been invited to appear at a July 8 hearing before the legislative Select Oversight Committee on Corrections to discuss the breakout from the Mason prison.

Footing the Bill

Following the capture of the two escapees, attention turned to who would pay the bill for the enormous search effort. "[T]here's no law, federal or state, that gives us any kind of guideline. We don't really know the procedure," said Dana Keeton, a spokeswoman for the Tenn. Dept. of Safety. The cost of the seven-day search was estimated at \$67,000 to \$72,000, including \$35,000 for the Tenn. Highway Patrol and \$17,000 for the Shelby County Sheriff's Department.

CCA officials said they would consider reimbursing law enforcement agencies on a case-by-case basis, al-

though the company is under no obligation to do so.

Classification Criticized

Some Tennessee officials have questioned why dangerous prisoners such as Lankford were incarcerated at the medium-security CCA prison. Fifty-two of the Montana inmates at the facility have murder convictions; 16 have escape records. "I think any time you bring in high-risk prisoners — murderers, rapists — you are asking for problems that you don't need to have," said Tennessee state senator Pete Springer.

The classification of prisoners sent to the Mason facility was conducted by Montana authorities with no input from Tennessee. "Obviously, mistakes are possible," stated Mike Cronin, a spokesman for the Montana Department of Corrections. "But we had a major review of our classification procedures two years ago, and we feel confident that we have a reliable system," he added. He declined to divulge the classification levels of the two escapees, citing privacy concerns. [continued ⇨]

ADMINISTRIVIA

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WANTED

Articles, clippings and news reports regarding the private corrections industry — please include the source and date of all materials submitted.

When CCA opened the West Tenn. Detention Facility in 1990, city officials were under the impression that the prison would hold federal inmates awaiting trial. The company later entered into contracts to house North Carolina and Hawaii prisoners at the facility and added a maximum-security unit with little public input. "They totally misled the board members of the town as far as what kind of a prison it would be," stated former Mason alderman Bill Martin.

CCA spokesman Steve Owens said the prison remains a medium-security facility, but acknowledged that it housed high security District of Columbia prisoners last year. "I'm greatly disappointed in CCA, that they have brought in maximum-security prisoners," remarked Rep. Jimmy Naifeh, Speaker of the House in Tennessee's General Assembly.

Local Politics

Mason Mayor Joe Ward, who serves part-time with the city, has disclosed that he owns 4,300 shares of CCA stock. Also, until recently, he owned an auto maintenance and repair shop, now operated by his son David, where CCA company vehicles are serviced. Mason alderman Maude Seay is employed as personnel director at the CCA facility.

Mayor Ward said he doesn't believe there is a conflict of interest because the private prison is not regulated by the city. Walker Tipton, the city attorney, stated he was not familiar with possible conflicts of interest between CCA and Mason public officials, and would not comment. □

Sources: *Commercial Appeal* (TN), June 21, 13, 5, May 30, 28, 21, 1999; *The Tennessean*, May 28, 21, 1999; *The Jackson Sun*, May 27, 22, 1999.

CMS Settles Wrongful Death Suit

Last year Correctional Medical Services (CMS) settled a lawsuit filed by the estate of Mark Murphy, a former prisoner at the Delaware Corr. Center in Smyrna, Delaware.

In June 1992, Murphy had requested medical treatment from CMS staff for abdominal pain and blood in his urine. Almost a year later he was diagnosed with painless hematuria by Jason Walther, a contract physician for CMS, who recommended further tests. A series of additional tests was canceled without explanation; when Murphy was again tested in August 1993, he was found to have cancer of the liver. He died April 4, 1994.

Murphy's estate, represented by attorney Bruce Hudson, filed suit. Hudson said an expert witness had presented testimony that Murphy could have had a normal life expectancy if the cancer had been diagnosed earlier. "In summary, because of the negligence of both CMS and the specialist [Walther], Mr. Murphy lost his life," Hudson stated.

CMS agreed to settle the lawsuit for \$75,000, with the company paying \$50,000 and Dr. Walther paying the remainder. □

Source: *Prison Legal News*, June 1999.

RECOMMENDED READING

Transcript of *60 Minutes* broadcast, aired May 2, 1999, about problems at the CCA-operated Northeast Ohio Correctional Center in Youngstown. Available from: Sixty Minutes Transcript, P.O. Box 248, South Burlington, VT 05407 (800) 848-3256.

Other Private Corrections Industry Resources

Corrections and Criminal Justice Coalition (CCJC), Route 2, Box 1144, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425 (888) 315-8784; www.ccjc.com. A consortium of anti-privatization corrections employees' unions.

Corrections USA (CUSA), P.O. Box 394, Newton, NH 03858 (603) 382-9707; www.cusa.org. A professional association of public corrections employees opposed to prison privatization.

Prison Reform Trust, 15 Northburgh Street, 2nd Floor, London, EC1V 0JR England; phone: 011-44-171-251-5070; e-mail: prt@prisonreform.demon.co.uk. Publishes the *Prison Privatisation Report Int'l (PPRI)*, which covers news about the private corrections industry in the U.S. and abroad.

Private Corrections Project, Center for Studies in Criminology and Law, Univ. of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611 (352) 392-1025; web site: web.crim.ufl.edu/pcp. Conducts research into prison privatization. Note that the Project receives funding from the private corrections industry, including Correctional Services Corp., the Bobby Ross Group and Securicor New Century.

Reason Foundation, 3415 S. Sepulveda Blvd. #400, Los Angeles, CA 90034 (310) 391-2245; www.reason.org. A libertarian-oriented think-tank that favors prison privatization. Note that the Foundation has received funds from Securicor, Wackenhut and U.S. Corrections.

Federal, State Legislation Targets Private Prisons

Last March, U.S. Rep. Ted Strickland (D-OH) introduced a bill that would bar the future incarceration of federal inmates in privately operated prisons. The proposed legislation, the Public Safety Act, also would curtail federal funds for prison construction to states that contract with private prison operators.

"Private prisons have a primary motive, and that is profit. Every company that makes a profit seeks to cut costs. And in a prison, those costs can be cut by hiring rookie staffs, training those staff poorly and decreasing staff levels," observed Rep. Strickland. His bill has more than 50 co-sponsors.

Several states also are considering legislation that restricts or regulates privately-run prisons. In New Mexico, the legislature passed a bill that would mandate improved training for private prison guards and require private prison operators to provide additional information about out-of-state inmates housed in their facilities. Governor Gary E. Johnson vetoed the legislation last April.

In California, a proposed Sen-

ate Constitutional Amendment (SCA 10) would bar private prison companies from contracting with local governments. Senate Bill 1313 would ban privately-operated prisons in the state, and Assembly Bill 1222, recently approved by the legislative Public Safety Committee, would preclude CCA from filling its almost-completed prison in California City with out-of-state inmates.

The Montana legislature has passed a bill that bans out-of-state inmates from being housed in private prisons; similar legislation that was introduced in Colorado was defeated last April. In Ohio, House Bill 63 would authorize the state corrections department to contract with private prison operators while House Bill 229 would prohibit such contracts. And in Tennessee, seven bills to regulate privately-operated prisons were rejected by a senate committee in May (*PCINB*, May 1999, pg. 3). □

Sources: *CUSA News*, May 12, 1999; *National Journal*, May 1, 1999; *New York Times*, April 15, 1999; *PPRI*, April-May 1999.

Yet Another CCA Escape

Officers from several local law enforcement agencies are taking part in a search for an escapee from the CCA-operated Hardeman Co. Corr. Facility near Whiteville, Tennessee.

On June 7, 1999, Jonathan Cardwell, 20, stole a city pickup truck from a recycling site where he was assigned to a work release detail. He was one of eight inmates being supervised by one guard; it was his first day on the job. He later wrecked the

vehicle and escaped into a wooded area.

This most recent escape brings to nine the number of inmates who have absconded from CCA-operated prisons in Tennessee within the past nine months, including the May 20 breakout from the West Tennessee Detention Facility (see pg. 1). □

Sources: *The Jackson Sun*, June 9, 8, 1999.

In the News

On April 16, 1999 a male guard at a Cornell Corrections-operated jail in Santa Fe County, New Mexico was arrested on charges of sexually assaulting a male prisoner. Source: *PPRI*, April-May 1999.

A TransCor America Inc. van transporting ten inmates collided with a car in Kingston, Tenn., seriously injuring a teen-age driver in the other vehicle. The prisoners were treated for minor injuries at a local hospital; police said fault in the accident had not yet been determined. TransCor, based in Nashville, is a subsidiary of CCA. Source: *Commercial Appeal* (TN), May 5, 1999.

Montana's first private prison, a 500-bed facility near Shelby operated by CCA, is scheduled to open September 1. Source: *USA Today*, June 7, 1999.

Prison Realty Trust has purchased the 1,225-bed Eden Detention Center in Eden, Texas for \$28 million. The facility, which is operated by Correctional Management Services Corp. (CCA), houses prisoners for federal agencies. Source: *Corrections Forum*, May-June 1999.

Legislation that would have permitted privatization of medical services in the Nevada Department of Corrections has been defeated in committee. The bill was opposed by the Nevada Corr. Association. Source: *CUSA News*, May 12, 1999.

Prison Realty Stock Plummets; Shareholders File Suit

The price of shares in Prison Realty Trust Inc., the parent company of CCA, fell almost 35% within a week after Prison Realty announced it would pay increased costs for building and marketing private prisons. At least one investment firm downgraded Prison Realty's stock, which dropped to a 52-week low from a high of about \$22 per share.

On May 14 company officials said Prison Realty will pay an additional \$4,000 per bed in startup expenses to CCA, its main tenant, retroactive to January 1. The increase will cost Prison Realty shareholders an estimated \$70 million in 1999.

Prison Realty, a real estate investment trust (REIT), distributes almost all of its profits to shareholders through dividend payments; thus, the cost increase will have a direct impact on investors' returns. Rank-and-file CCA employees receive company stock in lieu of a pension plan, and the falling stock value reduces their retirement savings.

"It caught everyone a little off guard," said Gary Boston, an analyst with Paine Webber who downgraded Prison Realty's stock from attractive to neutral.

According to Prison Realty chairman and CEO Doctor R. Crants, the company also is paying 4.5% of the cost of each facility to CCA in marketing expenses. Prison Realty officials did not mention the elevated costs in a May 5 first quarter earnings statement even though the company's board had approved the increase the day before.

On May 21, in an attempt to reassure investors and stem the stock price slide, Prison Realty released occupancy rate information for CCA

facilities. The average occupancy rate fell to as low as 80% at year-end '98 but rebounded to 88% as of May 1999. Including CCA-operated facilities not owned by Prison Realty, the average occupancy rate was 93%.

Also, on May 25, Crants purchased 50,000 shares in Prison Realty to promote confidence in the stock; he now owns over 2 million shares in the company.

But Prison Realty's stock fell an additional 14% on June 4, to less than \$11 per share, amid concerns that the company was paying higher interest rates to acquire capital. Prison Realty announced plans for a \$100 million bond sale at 12% interest — well above the 9 to 9.5% interest rate that had been anticipated. The higher rate will result in a smaller amount of revenue for the company.

At least eleven Prison Realty investors have filed lawsuits against the company in Nashville courts, seeking to represent shareholders in class-actions. Two shareholders accuse the company in a federal suit of withholding information from investors in order to secure approval for Prison Realty Trust's January 1, 1999 merger with CCA (see *PCINB*, Dec. 1998, pg. 7).

According to court documents, the shareholders claim the company "waited until after release of its first quarter results to retroactively alter" the fees it pays to CCA. They are seeking damages for losses caused by the decline in Prison Realty's stock price; Prison Realty chairman Crants is named as a defendant. □

Sources: *Commercial Appeal* (TN), June 9, 1999; *The Tennessean*, June 15, 5, May 28, 22, 19, 18, 1999.

In the News

Montana officials have filed a complaint against Children's Comprehensive Services (CCS) following an investigation into two suicides at a company-owned facility in 1998. The state can impose a fine of up to \$1,000 if the complaint is substantiated; CCS also risks losing its eligibility to receive Medicaid payments in Montana. The company provides services for at-risk youths and juvenile offenders. Source: *The Tennessean*, June 10, 1999.

The first of several lawsuits filed on behalf of 25 youthful offenders at the Columbia Training Center, a juvenile facility in Columbia, South Carolina formerly managed by CCA, is scheduled to go to trial on November 1, 1999. The youths say they were subjected to abuse by CCA staff, including excessive use of force and denial of food, medical care and access to toilets. CCA declined to renew its contract to operate the center in June 1997. Source: *PPRI*, April-May 1999.

Following a five-month delay, commissioners in Val Verde Co., Texas have approved a \$24 million contract with Wackenhut to build and manage a 600-bed detention center at Del Rio. The county will continue to operate its 180-bed jail, though Wackenhut has the option to purchase the jail after the detention center is complete. The facility is expected to open by October 2000. Sources: *The San Antonio Express-News*, May 25, 23 1999.

Prison Realty Changes Name, Leadership

At Prison Realty Corp.'s first annual meeting, held May 11, 1999, shareholders voted to change the company's name to Prison Realty Trust, Inc. Shareholders also elected former Tennessee governor Ned McWherter to a three-year term on the company's board of directors. It was under McWherter's tenure as governor that a Tennessee statute was enacted permitting the state to contract with private prison companies.

On June 15, CCA announced that J. Michael Quinlan was being named president and chief operating

officer of the company, positions that previously had been held by Prison Realty chairman Doctor R. Crants.

Quinlan, a former director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons during the Bush administration, resigned as vice chairman of Prison Realty, CCA's parent company, to assume the new positions. He was formerly CCA's director of strategic planning and CEO of Prison Realty before the company merged with CCA. □

Sources: *The Tennessean*, June 16, May 12, 1999.

WI Approves Increase in Inmate Transfer Budget

On May 27 the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee approved an additional \$55.8 million in funding to transfer inmates to out-of-state contract facilities.

Wisconsin has been sending prisoners to other jurisdictions since 1996 due to prison overcrowding; 3,857 inmates are currently housed in public and privately-operated facilities in other states, including CCA

prisons in Tennessee and Oklahoma. The out-of-state contracts cost Wisconsin over \$61 million a year.

The governor initially had proposed an increase of \$101 million in the budget for out-of-state transfers, which the finance committee reduced to \$55.8 million. □

Source: *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, May 28, 1999.

Private Medical Prisons Questioned

PCINB reported in Feb. 1999 that Just Care, Inc. had opened a private medical prison and that Corrections National Corp. was building a similar facility in Pennsylvania.

Some inmate advocates have expressed concern about the lack of oversight and quality of health care. "There is the added need to generate profit, and that could potentially interfere with care and security," stated Prof. Jonathan Turley, founder of the

Project for Older Prisoners.

Julia Glover Hall, president of the Pennsylvania Prison Society, expressed reservations about the private medical prison being built in her state. "I'm troubled about it because our secretary of corrections has absolutely no authority, no oversight, was not consulted," she said. □

Source: *The Seattle Times*, June 7, 1999.

In the News

Georgia corrections commissioner Wayne Garner promised an "orderly and fair" bidding process when the state contracted with private prison companies in 1997 to build and operate three facilities (see *PCINB*, July 1998, pg. 3). However, last March it was revealed that Garner used his state car phone to call CCA lobbyist Jim Hammock four dozen times in the 63 days after the Request for Proposal was issued. CCA subsequently won two of the three private prison contracts. Comm. Garner has since resigned for unrelated reasons. Sources: *Augusta Chronicle*, April 16, 1999; *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, March 22, 1999.

The Arkansas Dept. of Human Services has rejected two proposals submitted by private prison companies to run the Alexander Youth Services Center, a state juvenile facility. The department determined that it would cost less if the state operated the facility. Source: *The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, April 23, 1999.

Cornell Corrections announced on May 11 that it will acquire assets in Interventions, a non-profit Chicago based company that provides correctional and behavioral health services. Cornell will acquire 45 Interventions programs in Illinois. Source: *The New Mexican*, June 2, 1999.

Joaquin Aguila Echenique, a Cuban felon housed at the CCA-operated Houston Processing Center, an INS detention facility, overpowered a guard and escaped on February 27. He was captured by INS agents two weeks later. Sources: *Dallas Morning News*, March 14, 1999; *The Houston Chronicle*, March 2, 1999.

The city council in El Centro, California has rejected a proposal by Correctional Systems, Inc. to build an INS detention center near the town. Source: *Imperial Valley Press (CA)*, April 22, 1999.

Cornell Lands Utah Prison Contract

Houston-based Cornell Corrections has made the winning bid to build and operate Utah's first private prison. Last March the state legislature passed House Bill 131, which allows private prisons to operate in Utah but bars them from housing inmates from other states. The Cornell facility, located in Grantsville, will hold Utah prisoners.

"We want to move very slowly and carefully and we don't want to start off with more than a third or fourth of the inmate population in a private facility," said Department of Corrections spokesman Jack Ford. DOC director Pete Haun wants to ensure that the state can reabsorb prisoners into public facilities in case problems arise.

Grantsville Mayor Merle Cole said city leaders support the private prison. "I think the majority of the people will be pleased with it. It's a clean industry and it should be pretty stable. These prisons don't seem to be going away

anytime soon," he stated.

Cornell will receive \$62.84 per prisoner per diem to house 500 inmates at the Grantsville facility, which includes \$15.56 to offset construction expenses. It costs the state around \$54 per prisoner per day to keep inmates in state facilities. "It's a good savings for government and it ensures we can run good programs," said Cornell senior vice president Marvin Wiebe. However, the per diem rate is higher than the \$38 per prisoner per day the state pays to house inmates at county jails.

Cornell prevailed over Wackenhut, CCA and the Management and Training Corp. to win the contract; Cornell's lobbying group in Utah is headed by Doug Foxley, a former deputy secretary of state. □

Sources: *The Tyler Morning Telegraph (TX)*, June 29, 1999; *The Salt Lake Tribune*, March 3, 1999.

Cornell Stops Prison Construction in PA

On June 14 Cornell Corrections, which is building a 1,000-bed facility in Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, received a stop work order from the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Cornell was awarded the \$342 million, 10-year prison contract last April.

Community members and local officials have been vocal in their opposition to the private prison. "I was told last October there would be public meetings, and that didn't happen. All of a sudden I see it's here. We didn't know anything about it," complained Morris

Township supervisor John Saggrese.

A group of Philipsburg residents filed suit against the Bureau of Prisons to halt construction of the Cornell facility, claiming the agency was in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act because it did not conduct an environmental impact study.

The lawsuit resulted in the stop work order while the Bureau of Prisons reviews the issue. □

Sources: *PRNewswire*, June 14, 1999; *Privatization Update*, Jan.-June 1999.

Brazoria County Approves Settlement

On June 18 Brazoria Co., Texas officials approved a \$2.22 million settlement in a lawsuit filed by Missouri inmates who were brutalized during a 1996 videotaped incident at the Brazoria Co. Detention Center, then operated by Capital Correctional Resources, Inc.

The prisoners were shocked with stun guns, bitten by guard dogs and forced to crawl on the ground; three Brazoria County deputies and one CCRI guard were indicted in connection with

the incident (*PCINB*, July 1998, pg. 1; Oct. 1998, pg. 6).

Approximately \$2.1 million of the settlement will come from insurance policies held by Brazoria Co. and CCRI. About \$20,000 will be paid by the company that transported the Missouri prisoners to Texas. □

Sources: *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, June 22, 1999; *The Longview News Journal (TX)*, June 20, 1999.

UPDATES

Dick Marr, a deputy warden at the Correctional Services Corp. operated Crowley County Corr. Facility in Olney Springs, Colorado has been replaced. Marr was the CSC official who requested assistance from state emergency response teams when a riot broke out at the Olney Springs prison on March 5 (*PCINB*, May 1999, pg. 7). Source: *The Denver Post*, April 3, 1999.

On June 14 the District of Columbia Zoning Commission unanimously rejected CCA's application to rezone property the company owns in Ward 8. CCA had hoped to build a prison on the site to house D.C. inmates under a contract with the Federal Bureau of Prisons (see *PCINB*, April 1999, pg. 4). Source: *The Washington Times*, June 15, 1999.

Last month *PCINB* reported that Prof. Charles W. Thomas, director of the Private Corrections Project at the Univ. of Florida, had agreed to settle ethics charges related to his financial involvement with private prison companies (see *PCINB*, May 1999, pg. 5). On June 3 Florida's Commission on Ethics rejected the proposed settlement. The commission reportedly is considering harsher punishment; Thomas faces up to a \$50,000 fine and loss of his job at the university. Source: *Privatization Update*, Jan.-June 1999.

Five former Arizona Boys Ranch employees face first-degree murder charges re the March 2, 1998 death of Nicholas Contreras, a California juvenile, at an ABR facility (*PCINB*, Aug. 1998, pg. 4). Prosecutors claim that Michael Moreno, Montgomery Hoover, Geoffrey S. Lewis, Linda Babb and Troy M. Jones killed Nicholas as they committed, or attempted to commit, felony child abuse. Manslaughter charges previously filed against the former ABR employees were dismissed due to a technicality. Source: *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1999.

CSC Settles Public Records Lawsuit

Correctional Services Corp. agreed on May 20, 1999 to settle a lawsuit filed by the Florida ACLU over the company's refusal to release records related to the CSC-operated Pahoee Youth Development Center, a state juvenile facility.

In November 1998 it was revealed that CSC had held ten juvenile offenders past their release dates to increase the company's per diem payments (*PCINB*, Jan. 1999, pg. 1). The ACLU requested documents concerning that and other incidents at the detention center.

In settling the lawsuit, CSC agreed to release thousands of pages of records; CSC attorney Debra Dawn pre-

viously had contended the records were not public documents because they were maintained by a private company.

In an unrelated incident the Florida ACLU filed a similar lawsuit against Wackenhut Corrections on June 4 after the company refused to release internal documents critical of management at a Wackenhut-operated South Bay prison. The lawsuit alleges that the company is trying to cover up reports of sexual harassment and physical abuse, among other complaints at the facility. □

Sources: *Port St. Lucie News*, June 5, 1999; *The Sun Sentinel* (FL), May 21, 1999.

Indiana Residents Sue Over Private Prison

A group of community members in Shoals, Indiana who own property near the site of a 750-bed prison being built by CCA have filed a lawsuit and are seeking an injunction to stop construction of the facility.

Named as defendants in the suit are CCA, Shoals Town Board members, Martin Co. commissioners, and Martin County Circuit Judge Joseph Howell. Howell, a former classmate and personal friend of CCA attorney William Moreau, Jr., has voiced support for

CCA and moderated meetings on the company's behalf.

The lawsuit claims that Howell "has engaged in numerous actions designed to intimidate and discourage persons from enforcing their legal rights" to oppose the private prison.

Ironically, CCA chose to locate the facility in Shoals after facing opposition elsewhere in Indiana. □

Sources: *The Washington Times-Herald*, April 28, 23, 1999.

Former Warden Indicted on Abuse Charges

On May 18 former Lafayette police chief Gary Copes, 50, was indicted by a federal grand jury on twelve counts of aiding and abetting physical abuse of inmates when he was a warden at the privately-operated Tensas Parish Detention Center in Newellton, Louisiana.

The Tensas facility is one of five jails owned and operated by Louisiana Correction Services, Inc.

Copes is accused of conspiring with former Tensas Parish Sheriff Jeff Britt to "injure, oppress, threaten and intimidate" prisoners at the detention center in connection with an Oct. 1996 disturbance at the facility. According to the indictment Copes told Britt, "If you want me to kick ass, I will"; he then watched as deputies beat inmates with batons.

Copes also was charged with witness tampering for allegedly trying to persuade a grand jury witness "to deny everything" in regard to the beatings.

Britt pleaded guilty to malfeasance on May 17 in exchange for the dismissal of federal charges. As part of a plea bargain he agreed to make restitution and to never work in law enforcement again.

Copes, who has pleaded innocent, was released on a \$75,000 unsecured bond and is scheduled to go to trial on November 1. He is presently employed as a warden at another Louisiana Correction Services, Inc. detention center, located in Basile. □

Sources: *The Advocate* (LA), May 19, 20, June 9, 1999.