



David A. Clarke Jr.
Sheriff

Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

NEWS RELEASE

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Inmate Case Against Sheriff's Office Dismissed



Milwaukee, WI – US District Court Judge William E. Callahan Jr. ruled in favor of the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office in a case filed by county jail inmate Jamel Whiteside, age 34.

The case involved an inmate, Whiteside, who refused to place his hands back in his cell after throwing his lunch bag at a correctional officer in August 2010. Despite being ordered several times by three officers to place his hands in the cell, Whiteside refused to do so.

Whiteside grabbed an officer's arm and scratched him. In response, the officer quickly closed the door to the food chute. Whiteside had not removed his hand completely from the chute, which resulted in two fractured fingers and the need for stitches. The inmate then claimed the officer used excessive force.

As Judge Callahan noted in his decision, "the inmate himself conceded that he was trying to overpower (the correctional officer) when the officer attempted to close the trap door on the cell." The judge concluded by saying that the closure of the trap door was a reasonable attempt to gain compliance and prevent further misconduct, and that "the injuries would not have occurred if he would have followed orders and placed his arms back in the cell."

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Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. said, “County lawyers are usually eager to settle a case like this feeling it’s not worth it to take the time to defend it,” said Clarke. “I have a different view, and want to applaud county attorneys Kimberly Walker and Roy Williams for having the strength and determination to take this one to trial.

We shouldn’t succumb to shakedowns of public funds by prison inmates looking to score a quick buck. My officers are privileged to use force when conducting their dangerous work, and I have ensured we have multiple review processes in place to confirm that any force used is justified, reasonable and appropriate.”

The judge's decision will conclude the case unless Whiteside appeals to the 7th Circuit Court. Whiteside has an extensive criminal history, including multiple Battery Against Officer cases, and convictions for Endangering Safety by Use of a Dangerous Weapon, Criminal Trespass to Dwelling with Use of Dangerous Weapon, 2nd Degree Recklessly Endangering Safety, Battery, Disorderly Conduct-Habitual Criminality, Felon in Possession of Firearm, and 3rd Degree Sexual Assault.

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