United States Department of Justice



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UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS 12000 FEDERAL BUILDING AND U. S. COURT HOUSE 515 RUSK AVENUE HOUSTON, TEXAS 77002

P. O. BOX 61129 HOUSTON, TEXAS 77208

June 1, 1979

Dr. Cleo Garcia 2601 Morgan Avenue Corpus Christi, Texas 78405

Dear Dr. Cleo:

Enclosed is a copy of an editorial from a Fort Smith, Arkansas, newspaper concerning our recent police case and the office of your favorite son and my favorite boss. His fame, if not his name, has spread even to Fort Smith!

Sincerely yours,

CECILIA T. JASSO Secretary to Mr. Canales

Enclosure

cc: \Dr. Hector Garcia 1315 Bright Street Corpus Christi, Texas 78405 (w/encl.)

SOUTHWEST TIMES RECORD

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Editorials and columns

8-A

Thursday, May 24, 1979

Policemen's image hurt by breaking law

Fort Smith and most American cities have dedicated police officers who do a vital and too often thankless job. But when lawmen anywhere violate the rights of citizens, the image of law enforcement everywhere is tarnished.

That's why we are somewhat shocked by the latest ruling of a federal judge against police officers in Houston, Texas. This marks the second time that guilty police officers have been given only probated sentences after being convicted of crimes in connection with the death of an unarmed prisoner.

Two former Houston policemen received probated sentences after they were found guilty of planting a "throw-down" gun to make the killing of a teenage traffic offender look like self-defense, and then lying to a federal grand jury about it. In an earlier case, another judge granted probation to three officers who violated the civil rights of a Mexican-American by beating him and throwing him into a bayou where he drowned.

Granted, sentencing a police officer to prison often places his life in jeopardy. But the unlawful taking of a human life by a man sworn to uphold the law, at least to us, is not something that merits only a slap on the wrist.

The Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney in Houston are to be congratulated for bringing both these cases to trial under federal law after local authorities proved themselves unwilling or unable to mete out any measure of justice at all. We urge federal agencies to continue their crusade, for sooner or later a tough-minded judge will rule on a case of this kind. Then even the most cruel and unworthy men who taint the good name of law enforcement will get the message: A badge is not a license to kill without cause.