



South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC) South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED)

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For immediate release

Contact: Chrysti Shain, (803) 413-8206
Shain.Chrysti@doc.sc.gov

Contact: Renée Wunderlich, (803) 260-3020
rwunderlich@sled.sc.gov

COLUMBIA, S.C. – Four inmates pleaded guilty to various charges Thursday for their part in the 2018 riot at Lee Correctional Institution.

Thursday’s pleas were the first in the incident, which left seven inmates dead and dozens wounded the night of April 15, 2018.

All of the inmates in Thursday’s pleas lived in the same housing unit on the night of the riot.

“These inmates took part in violent mayhem fueled by contraband and illegal cellphones and are now being held accountable,” SCDC Director Bryan Stirling said. “This is just the beginning. We intend to prosecute everyone charged with crimes involving the Lee riot.”

Authorities have said they learned of growing violence in adjacent housing units through the use of contraband cellphones, then joined in the melee.

“The SLED SWAT Team worked with SCDC’s Emergency Response Teams to secure a dangerous situation, preventing further loss of life. A subsequent joint investigation by SLED and SCDC made sure those responsible were brought to justice,” SLED Chief Mark Keel said. “SLED is committed to assisting state partners like SCDC, with the hope that one day what happened at Lee Correctional five years ago can be prevented in the future.”

All of the inmates in Thursday’s pleas are still incarcerated. Their new sentences will be incorporated into their existing ones. The contraband referred to in the charges involves weapons.

Thursday's pleas:

Mike Smalls, 28, pleaded guilty to second-degree assault and battery by mob and conspiracy. He was sentenced to 18 years on the mob charge and five years for conspiracy. These charges are concurrent. Smalls received three years credit for time served.

Rahim F. Carter, 40, pleaded guilty to possession of contraband. He was sentenced to five years and received three years credit for time served.

Tyrone Lewis Jr., 34, pleaded guilty to possession of contraband. He was sentenced to three years and received three years credit for time served.

Arsenio Donta C. Colclough, 36, pleaded guilty to possession of contraband. He was sentenced to three years credit for time served. Colclough is currently housed in the Sumter-Lee Detention Center on unrelated charges.

The agencies thank the S.C. Attorney General's office for its assistance in prosecuting these cases.