

Equal Justice Initiative

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://eji.org/news/alabama-correctional-officer-convicted-murder-rocrast-mack/>

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07.03.13

Former prison supervisor Michael Smith was convicted in federal court on June 25, 2013, of fatally beating inmate Rocrast Mack at Ventress Correctional Facility in Clayton, Alabama. Smith was convicted of violating Mr. Macks civil rights, conspiring to cover up what happened, and obstruction of justice.

U.S. District Court Judge Myron P. Thompson ordered that Smith be taken into custody immediately. Judge Thompson has yet to set a sentencing date but Smith faces a potential sentence of life in prison.

The jury, comprised of four men and eight women, heard from twenty-one witnesses over six days, including Smith himself. Both sides finished closing arguments on Monday afternoon and the jury began deliberations first thing Tuesday morning. It took them less than a day to find Smith guilty on all charges and the jury announced its verdict Tuesday afternoon.

Rocrast Mack was serving a sentence for a non-violent drug crime when he was [beaten to death by correctional officers](#) at Ventress on August 4, 2010. He was 24 years old. Several officers were fired but no criminal charges were filed.

In August 2011, [EJI sent letters to the Alabama Attorney General and the Justice Department](#) criticizing the states lack of an adequate response and calling on them to immediately pursue criminal prosecution of the correctional officers who brutally beat Mr. Mack to death. In October 2011, the Alabama Attorney General announced that [Smith had been arrested for the murder of Mr. Mack.](#)

Mr. Macks family wept while listening to the jurys verdict. Justice has been served for my son, his father, Larry Mack, said outside the courtroom.

Former Ventress correctional officers [Scottie Glenn](#) and [Matthew Davidson](#) earlier pleaded guilty to violating Mr. Macks rights and conspiring with other officers to cover it up. Glenn and Davidson are scheduled for sentencing on July 30, 2013.

Trial of a fourth officer involved in Mr. Macks murder, Joseph Sanders, is set to begin on July 8.

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