

Thank you for submitting a report to the Civil Rights Division.

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United States Department of Justice



Report successfully submitted

Please save your record number for tracking.



Your record number is:
218562-JHC

What is your primary reason for contacting the Civil Rights Division?

Something else happened

Location

Where did this happen?

Organization name

Carter County Jail

Address

100 S Washington Street

-

Ardmore, Oklahoma

Personal characteristics

Do you believe any of these personal characteristics influenced why you were treated this way?

None of these apply to me

Date

When did this happen?

11/9/2022

Personal description

In your own words, describe what happened

On or about November 9, 2022, an Ardmore Defense Attorney, Jason D. May, disclosed to the public that he had discovered a recording device/camera was installed in the light fixture within the Attorney/Client conference room in the Carter County Jail.

Public Officials responsible include (but may not be limited to):

Craig Ladd (District Attorney)

Melissa Handke (ADA)

James English (ADA)

Chris Bryant (Carter County Sheriff)

Tommy "Gus" Handke (Carter County Undersheriff)

Chris Douthit (Jail Administrator)

Carter County Sheriff Chris Bryant told news media "I was unaware that it was there. The former sheriff in 2002 had authorized a recording device to be placed in the light fixture for a limited purpose that led to the arrest of an attorney, Twana Cherese Smith, for smuggling contraband into the room," Bryant said.

"I have no reason to believe that the camera had been used subsequent to that investigation 20 years ago," Bryant said. "Once I was made aware of it, I checked into it and got it removed, then got with the district attorney and we turned it over to OSBI." The District Attorney he is referring to is Craig Ladd.

New articles and online case record for (carter County) CF-2002-00121 indicate NO WARRANT was requested or issued authorizing the installation/use of a camera in the private room utilized strictly for conducting conversations held to the strict privacy of attorney-client privilege during the investigation Sheriff Bryant referenced.

Photos of the device indicate that it's alleged placement (2002) is highly unlikely as those florescent light bulbs have a life span of 9-12 months. Also a former employee has come forward to the attorney stating she discovered the device and informed Bryant who told her not to tell anyone (in contradiction to Bryan claiming its discovery to be 11/09/2022).

The only parties who stand to benefit from such a device are law enforcement and the prosecutors.

An investigation by the DOJ is necessary in order to identify and notify the affected defendants of their due process rights being violated, as District Attorney Craig Ladd has an extensive history of failing to provide brady material or participating in proactive disclosure. Oklahoma's Judicial District 20 is not in compliance with the DOJ open government directive governing the proper disclosure or application of the brady doctrine.

The Oklahoma Attorney General's office was notified as of 11/3/2022, by Atty May. Afterwards, the camera was still present, but had been covered/concealed, by a screw. Bryant claimed he processed the scene personally prior to turning over any evidence to OSBI on 11/9/2022.