

Jail chief hit with 2 lawsuits

7/14/97

Jail director hit with lawsuits

Officer: I was fired for marrying ex-inmate

By Gilbert D. Martinez
Journal Staff Writer

Ralph Green, the recently reinstated director of the Hudson County Jail, has found himself becoming a favorite target of lawsuits, with two filed against him within the last seven months.

In the first case, a Hudson County correction officer alleges in a federal civil lawsuit that she lost her job in December 1995 because she married a man who had been an inmate at the Hudson County jail.

No one told former Officer Yolanda Braddy, of East Orange, that such a marriage was a violation of any policy, her lawsuit states, but shortly after the wedding bells sounded, she was told that she was fired.

The lawsuit doesn't make it clear when Braddy met her husband-to-be but says the two began dating after his release in Janu-



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ary 1995, and that they married a month later. Braddy began working at the jail in 1988, and her husband spent 10 months in jail on charges not specified in the lawsuit.

Braddy alleges that another correction officer, Maria Gaines, also married an ex-inmate at a ceremony attended by Green, but that no disciplinary action has been brought against her.

Green didn't return a phone call seeking comment and a county spokesman could not be reached, but the county generally does not comment about pending litigation.

Neither Gaines, nor the attorney representing her in a sexual harassment lawsuit she has pending against another jail employee, could be reached for comment.

Green regained control of the jail in December when he was made head of a new county Department of Corrections. For 11 months previous to that, he had control of the jail in name only as the state had assumed control.

But Braddy's lawsuit is not the only one Green, and the county, have to worry about.

Another suit, filed in Superior Court in Hudson County last month, alleges that Green retali-

ated against an Internal Affairs officer in the Correction Department by transferring him out of that unit.

In documents filed June 2, Officer Robert A. Sasso alleges Green transferred him because he spoke to a fellow officer about an ongoing federal corruption probe of Hoboken.

The suit charges that Green told Sasso during a meeting that Hoboken Mayor Anthony "Rosso" was unhappy with him because of his comments about the federal investigation.

As a result, Green had Sasso moved to the jail in a retaliatory move, the lawsuit maintains.

Both Green and Rosso are named in the lawsuit, along with Hudson County and Eugene Drayton, director of the county Office of Emergency Management.

Sasso demands that the defendants be prohibited from transferring him out of the IA unit and be stopped from making what Sasso calls repeated threats or retaliatory actions.

Rosso vehemently denied all knowledge of the lawsuit and said he never expressed displeasure about Sasso's comments.

"I don't see the correlation between a Hudson County internal affairs officer and a federal probe of Hoboken," said Rosso. "I virtu-

ally have no say in county government."

"I think it's interesting that one person is able to generate so much activity in terms of lawsuits and people who believe their rights are being trampled," Braddy's lawyer, D. Gayle Loftis of Hackensack, said of Green.

Loftis is also representing Capt. Joseph Bellino of the county jail in a federal civil lawsuit that names the county and numerous jail officials, including Green.

Bellino seeks damages, alleging the officials named in the suit allowed his psychological reports from his personnel file to be displayed on bulletin boards in the county jail, causing embarrassment and humiliation.

Loftis also represented most of the women in a wide-ranging federal sexual harassment lawsuit against the county and sheriff's officials. All seven cases were resolved before trial, but not before the county spent at least \$1.7 million in settlements, fees for three private attorneys and other costs.

In an interesting twist, Gaines, the officer named in Braddy's suit, has a civil lawsuit pending against Bellino, charging sexual harassment. She is being represented by Wanda Moliba of Jersey City.