

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/5

Report Date: 06/16/2025

Primary Information

Description:	NOTIFICATION TIMELINE SUMMARY
Dissemination Code:	CHAIN OF COMMAND
Reporting LEO:	CHAMPAGNE, DRAKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	07/24/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY

I. Introduction

This report outlines the timeline of notifications made by Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC) personnel at the North Central Unit (NCU) in response to the escape of inmate Grant Hardin, as well as significant notifications outside of the ADC. The timeline was reconstructed based on interviews and official ADC documentation. The report also includes an analysis of ADC notification policies, identification of policy discrepancies, and a review of the failures that contributed to delayed or incomplete notifications.

For context, after accounting for the approximate five minute discrepancy in the surveillance footage time stamp, Hardin exited the facility at approximately 2:58 PM.

Hardin began his work duties in the kitchen as normal at 9:00 AM. At around 2:00 PM, Hardin was allowed outside on the back dock to clean by Food Service Supervisor Justin Delvalle, which was reportedly not uncommon. Just before 3:00 PM, Corrections Officer (CO) William Walker sees what he believes to be a corrections officer at the west gate pushing a loaded cart. Walker who is in the west tower, opens the gate and allows the subject to leave the prison through two separate gates. At approximately 3:08 PM, Delvalle goes to the back dock and calls for Hardin. He is unable to locate him. The following timeline outlines times (some approximated) of the notifications made once Inmate is unaccounted for.

II. Timeline of Notifications

A. Initial Internal and External Notifications

Time	Notification
3:08 PM	Cpl. Andrew Teegarden contacted by Ofc. Delvalle asking if Cpl. Teegarden let inmate Grant Hardin inside through the laundry area. He did not. Teegarden assisted Delvalle look for Inmate on the back dock.
3:16 PM	Sgt. Kendall Drinkard notified by Ofc. William Walker that he had allowed an unknown officer to exit through the sally port gate.
3:16 PM	Sgt. Drinkard notified by Ofc. Delvalle that inmate Grant Hardin was unaccounted for.
3:18 PM	Cpt. Christopher Brandon notified by Sgt. Drinkard. Attempt to review video begins.

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Time	Notification
3:24 PM	Cpt. Brandon issued a facility-wide radio notification. (Emergency Containment Order)
3:26 PM	Cpt. Brandon ordered an emergency count.
3:26 PM	Warden Thomas Hurst notified by Cpt. Brandon. Warden Hurst was at the unit working.
3:30 PM	Lt. Steven Lively (Dog Team) notified by Warden Hurst.
3:40 PM	Video confirmation that Hardin walked out of the gate.
3:45 PM	Cpl. Nathan Williams notified Building Cpt. Dustin Foster, Field Cpt. Bruce Sanders, and Sgt. Jeremy Cottrell (Fire/Safety Officer).
3:45–4:00 PM	Escape whistle sounded (precise time not logged).
3:49 PM	Deputy Director Aundrea Culclager notified by Warden Hurst.
3:50 PM	Sgt. Alexander Delgado (ERT Leader) notified by Cpl. Williams.
3:52 PM	Director Dexter Payne notified by Deputy Director Culclager.
3:57 PM	Deputy Director William Straughn notified by Warden Hurst.
3:59 PM	Assistant to Board of Corrections Shari Gray notified by Director Payne. Gray Began notifying all board members.
4:00 PM	NCU Command Center activated.
4:02 PM	ASP Sgt. Chad Staley notified ASP Captain Wesley Smithee that he was allowing TFC Remmington Lively to assist with NCU Dog Team. This was Smithee's first notification of the escape.
4:03 PM	Secretary Lindsay Wallace notified by Director Payne.
4:09 PM	Dog Team arrived on scene.
4:14 PM	Governor's Liaisons Cody Arnold and Cortney Kennedy notified by Secretary's Chief of Staff Wade Hodge.
4:19 PM	Deputy Warden Kennie Bolden and IZARD County Sheriff's Office notified by Warden Hurst.

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Time	Notification
4:20 PM	Major Randy Shores (Emergency Coordinator) and Major Aaron Rogers (Chief of Security) notified by Warden Hurst.
4:23 PM	Chairman Benny Magness notified by Director Payne.
4:26 PM	Ofc. Breann Cowgill (Classification) notified by Sgt. Jeff Cooper.
4:29 PM	Sgt. Shanetta Brown attempted to enter BOLO into ACIC but due to incorrect format, it was never sent.
4:37 PM	Baxter County Sheriff's Office notified by Sgt. Cooper.
4:45-5:20 PM	Local residents notified by phone (attempted) by Cpl. Jason Lundry.
4:48 PM	Emergency count complete, confirming Hardin is missing.
4:49 PM	Temporary escape warrant entered into ACIC by Sgt. Shanetta Brown.
4:50 PM	Troop I Communications sent email notification to Troop I Troopers.
4:56 PM	Communications Director Rand Champion notified by Warden Hurst.
5:39 PM	Media notified by Communications Director Rand Champion.

B. Pine Bluff Radio Room Notifications

The following notifications were made by Cpl. Matthew Summers at the ADC Pine Bluff Radio Room pursuant to policy, though many recipients had already been contacted:

Time	Notification
4:34 PM	Secretary Lindsay Wallace and Director Dexter Payne
4:36 PM	Deputy Directors William Straughn and Aundrea Culclager
4:38 PM	Chief Deputy Director Dale Reed
4:39 PM	Superintendent of Work Release Gaylon Lay; Assistant Director Richard Cooper
4:40 PM	Secretary's Chief of Staff Wade Hodge

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Time	Notification
4:41PM	Executive Assistant to the Director Linda Sanner
4:42 PM	Emergency Coordinator Randy Shores; Internal Affairs Administrator Thomas Rowland
4:43 PM	Drug K-9 Supervisor Ronald Watson
4:44 PM	Communications Manager John Maples
4:45 PM	Transportation Coordinator Dwana Johnson
4:46 PM	Maintenance Supervisor Beecher Broadnax
4:47 PM	Communications Director Rand Champion
4:48 PM	Senior Chaplain Jerry Wilson

III. Notification Policy Structure

A. Policy Structure

1. Secretarial Directives

Broad policies originating from the Secretary’s Office that ensure compliance with state law.

2. Administrative Directives

Operational directives issued by the Director’s Office. Must comply with Secretarial Directives but give more job-specific instruction.

3. Unit Directives

Policies developed at the unit level and are unit specific. These must conform to both Secretarial and Administrative Directives but are not reviewed beyond the Warden’s authority.

Note: Only Secretarial and Administrative Directives are reviewed annually for consistency and legality. Unit Directives are not reviewed externally or forwarded to higher-level oversight.

IV. Identified Policy Conflicts

- The **Administrative Directive** on escapes includes a “Commander’s Checklist,” which requires notification of the Arkansas State Police and law enforcement in the county of commitment, placing the responsibility on the commander.

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- The **NCU Unit Directive** (Emergency Notification Action Plan) instructs personnel to: “Contact the ADC RADIO ROOM. Advise them an EMERGENCY COUNT is in progress. Request them to notify all agencies and individuals on ATTACHMENT #1 of the North Central Emergency Notification list.”
 - Attachment #1 includes ADC leadership and law enforcement agencies local to the NCU.
 - The Pine Bluff Radio Room appropriately made leadership notifications only, not law enforcement local to the NCU.
 - The Pine Bluff Radio Room does not retain copies of unit level directives, nor were they asked to notify law enforcement agencies by the NCU during Hardin's escape.
 - The NCU Directive regarding escape notifications being used during Hardin's escape (last signed January 3, 2025, by Warden Thomas Hurst) retained incorrect notification policy. Documentation prior to 2008 could not be located, but the flawed policy appears to trace back to at least that year.
- The **Secretarial Directive** regarding notifications contains language that can be understood as charging the Internal Affairs Administrator with notifying State and Local law enforcement in the event of an escape.
 - Under section II, B, 3, the Internal Affairs Administrator is listed as an individual requiring immediate notification involving a "serious Incident." Also under the same section is the following paragraph: "The Internal Affairs Administrator will be notified first on incidents involving suspected criminal activity. After consulting with the Secretary and appropriate Division Director, the Internal Affairs Administrator will notify local law enforcement; including State Police or the County Sheriff where the incident occurred."
 - Section C, 1 through 15 defines "serious incidents," with number 2 stating "Escapes from correctional facilities and centers, to include walkaways from reentry centers."
 - The combination of an inmate escaping by nature being a criminal act and the directive's definition of a serious incident including escapes would require a reader to believe that the Internal Affairs Administrator would be responsible for making law enforcement notifications.

V. Root Causes of Notification Failures

A. Communication Breakdown

- Although the NCU's Unit Directive was flawed, the immediate cause of the failure to notify local law enforcement stemmed from breakdowns in internal communication and follow-through.

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- According to Warden Hurst, the conflict between policies was only identified the day following Hardin's escape and after it became apparent that only two law enforcement agencies (Izard and Baxter County Sheriff's Offices) had been notified.
- Cpt. Christopher Brandon delegated the notification task to Cpl. Nathan Williams, who began contacting administrative personnel. However, before he reached the law enforcement section of the list, he was reassigned to the Command Center. No replacement was assigned to complete the remaining notifications.
- Lt. Robert Cross later inquired about notification status, prompting Cpt. Brandon to ask Warden Hurst, who mistakenly believed administrative notifications were being referenced. No further action was taken under the assumption that notifications were complete.
- Law enforcement response occurred due to communication among agencies or informal word of mouth.

B. Structural and Operational Weaknesses

- Cpt. Brandon, during the early stages of the escape response, was tasked with:
 - Issuing assignments across the unit.
 - Confirming Hardin's escape.
 - Setting up the Command Center and assisting in its operation.
 - Ensuring documentation was completed.
 - Following up with superiors and subordinates regarding notifications.
- The amount of responsibility placed on Cpt. Brandon may have led to incomplete tasks due to multiple responsibilities to complete at the same time.

C. Human Error

- Sgt. Shanetta Brown attempted to enter an escape BOLO (Be On the Look Out) into ACIC from the Pine Bluff Radio Room but the formatting was incorrect, leading to the failure of the BOLO reaching any law enforcement agency.

VI. Other Observed Time Delay Issues

- Cpt. Brandon did not know how to operate the surveillance system and had to call Lt. Cross for directions.
- Local residents had to be called individually as there was no access to a mass notification system.
- Cpt. Brandon asked Warden Hurst about "filling out the sheet" to log the notification timeline, to which Hurst said they would do it later. Using the log during the event could have helped avoid the oversight of not notifying

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all law enforcement agencies. Because the log was completed at a later date, many of the times were estimated rather than being accurate.

VII. Conclusion

This report has demonstrated that the notification failures during Grant Hardin’s escape from the NCU were primarily the result of communication breakdowns, operational deficiencies, and human error. These factors compounded to cause a delayed response from law enforcement. While the review identified several inconsistencies among the three levels of ADC notification directives, these policy discrepancies did not appear to contribute directly to the failures observed during Hardin’s escape.

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INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/6

Report Date: 06/17/2025

Primary Information

Description:	INTERVIEW OF NCU MAJOR AARON ROGERS
Dissemination Code:	SYSTEM WIDE ACCESS
Reporting LEO:	MCNEILL, MIKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	07/24/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



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INTERVIEW OF WITNESS

On June 12, 2025, at approximately 9:55 AM, I conducted an interview with North Central Unit Major Aaron Rogers. Major Rogers is identified as the Chief of Security for the North Central Unit. The interview was audio recorded for documentation purposes.

Below is a summarized version of the interview, not intended to be a verbatim account but capturing the key points of discussion:

The interview with Major Aaron Rogers focused on information contained in a two-page report he authored regarding the escape of inmate Grant Hardin. This report, dated May 26, 2025, was addressed to Warden Thomas Hurst and will be included in the investigative file.

In the report, Major Rogers documents a statement made by Food Production Supervisor (FPS) Justin Devalle, in which Devalle acknowledged that it was common practice to allow inmate Hardin to access the back dock unsupervised on Sundays when Devalle was working. According to Devalle, Food Production Manager (FPM) Hayden Grady was aware of this practice and had no objections.

Major Rogers' report further describes FPM Grady's response upon being informed of Devalle's statements. FPM Grady reportedly told Major Rogers that FPS Devalle was incorrect in allowing inmate Hardin to be on the back dock without supervision and stated that at no time did he authorize or approve such conduct. FPM Grady also stated that he had conducted a staff meeting on May 14, 2025, during which he made it explicitly clear that inmates were not to be permitted on the back dock without supervision. FPS Devalle was reportedly present for that meeting.

Major Rogers advised during the interview that, to his understanding, during the staff meeting held on May 13, 2025, FPM Grady had informed all Food Service staff not to allow inmates on the back dock unsupervised. However, Major Rogers clarified that he was on medical leave at the time of the May 13 meeting and was therefore not present. He could not confirm whether FPM Grady's instructions were given at the direction of Warden Thomas Hurst or Deputy Warden Kennie Bolden. It should be noted that Deputy Warden Bolden is the immediate supervisor of FPM Grady.

Upon returning to work from medical leave, Major Rogers stated that one of his first actions was to hold a staff meeting which he did on May 21, 2025, to reiterate a directive received from Deputy Warden Bolden that inmates were not to be permitted on the back dock without direct supervision. A copy of the staff meeting notes from that date will be included in the investigative file.

The Staff Meeting Report related to Major Aaron Rogers' May 21, 2025, meeting lacks both a list of attendees and any form of signed acknowledgment.

On June 12, 2025, I conducted a follow-up interview with Major Rogers via telephone to clarify inmate Hardin's assigned duties in the kitchen. Major Rogers confirmed that inmate Hardin was classified as a janitor/porter and was responsible for cleaning the kitchen, the chemical room, and the back dock area. However, Major Rogers emphasized that despite the written language in the applicable post orders—which may suggest otherwise—it was the widely

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understood policy among supervisory staff that inmates were never to be left unsupervised on the back dock under any circumstances.

Both interviews with Major Rogers were audio recorded and will be included in the investigative file.

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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
DIVISION OF CORRECTION
NORTH CENTRAL UNIT
10 Prison Circle
Calico Rock, AR 72519



To: Warden Thomas Hurst
From: Major Aaron Rogers *M. A. R.*
Re: I/M Grant Hardin #168541 escape
Date: May 26, 2025

On May 25, 2025, at approximately 2:53 PM, Inmate Grant Hardin #168541 assigned as a I-C Kitchen worker escaped from the facility, walking through Sallyport in a makeshift uniform made to resemble an officer's uniform. At approximately 1:58 PM, FPS Justin Delvalle was supervising inmates in the kitchen, when he allowed Inmate Hardin to exit to the back dock of the kitchen to clean the chemical cage on the back dock of the kitchen unsupervised. At approximately 3:08 PM, FPS Delvalle stated he went to the back dock to look for Inmate Hardin but was unable to find him, at which time he called Cpl. A. Teegarden who was working in Laundry and asked if he had let Inmate Hardin in through Laundry, to which he stated he had not. They both then went to look for Inmate Hardin but was unable to find him, at which time he called West Tower officer Cpl. William Walker and asked he had seen Inmate Hardin to which he stated he had not.

FPS Delvalle then went back to the back dock and looked in the boiler room, and upon not seeing any sign of Inmate Hardin, contacted Sgt. K. Drinkard at 3:16 PM and advised him that he could not find Inmate Hardin. Sgt. K. Drinkard then contacted Capt. C. Brandon immediately who went to review the unit and perimeter cameras, and found what appeared to be Inmate Hardin walking through the Sallyport gates in a makeshift dark colored uniform including vest and hat, pulling a flat cart with a cardboard box, and what appeared to be a homemade ladder on the cart. Inmate Hardin was then seen taking the cart to the front of the ICC garage, then walk to the left side of the ICC garage carrying the box, and is not seen again.

Capt. Brandon then notified duty Warden Thomas Hurst of what had been reported and he had seen at approximately 3:40 PM. The unit was placed on lockdown and an emergency count was started at 3:47 PM, and cleared, with the exception of inmate Hardin, at 4:48 PM. Responding staff started arriving at the facility at approximately 4:00 PM. Seventeen checkpoints were dispersed, and inmate Hardin's property was gathered and searched, as well as the kitchen, and outside grounds where inmate Hardin was last observed. North Central Unit's K-9 team arrived and began searching for inmate Hardin. The box that was observed on the cart was found behind the ICC garage, and the homemade ladder was found to be made from pallets and was manipulated using draw string from state issued clothing.

Upon arriving at the unit I interviewed Cpl. W. Walker regarding the incident, to which he stated he remembered seeing an inmate on the back dock of the kitchen possibly around 1:00 PM or 2:00 PM, but did not see anyone else, until he saw someone walking from the back dock area towards the Sallyport area wearing what he thought was an officer's uniform, pushing a silver cart with a cardboard box and wooden pallets on it. Cpl. Walker stated seeing that he was in what he thought was a uniform, he let him through the gates unchallenged. Cpl. Walker stated after seeing the individual walk to the ICC garage, his phone rang in the tower so he went back inside to check the phone, but by the time he got to the phone, it quit ringing, and when he looked back up, the individual was gone. Cpl. Walker stated he called out a couple times and received no response, at which time he called Cpl. Teegarden in Laundry to see if he had let anyone out to which he stated he had not. FPS Delvalle then called Cpl. Walker to

ask if he had seen inmate Hardin. According to Cpl. Walker, this is when they contacted Sgt. Drinkard, and him along with Sgt. G. Queen and Sgt. J. Balentine came to search and inspect the area.

Sgt. Drinkard was interviewed and corroborated the accounts given by FPS Delvalle and Cpl. Walker and stated he notified Capt. C. Brandon and once Sallyport, ICC Garage and the kitchen back dock area was searched, they returned into the building to conduct the roster count. While interviewing FPS Delvalle, he stated that it had been the practice to allow Inmate Hardin on the back dock by himself on the Sunday's he worked, and he asked his supervisor FPM H. Grady about it, and he was told until some 1-D inmates were assigned to carry on "business as usual." I interviewed FPM Grady, who stated this was false, and that everyone, including him have not been allowing inmates on the back dock unsupervised, and that on May 14, 2025, he had a staff meeting with his staff and advised them that inmates could not be on the back dock unsupervised, and all his staff including FPS Delvalle signed, acknowledging it was discussed and had been gone over. On the morning of May 26, 2025, Cpl. A. Teegarden was interviewed via telephone and also corroborated the account of events as stated by FPS Delvalle.

I began interviewing inmates assigned to the kitchen, and Inmate J. Lute #158779 was interviewed and stated that he was cleaning the ODR bathroom earlier in the day of May 25, 2025, when Inmate Hardin came to him and asked to borrow his cart. Inmate Lute stated that it was somewhat strange but Inmate Hardin was known for "being strange" and argumentative, so after Inmate Hardin told him, the regular kitchen carts with the cross bars wouldn't do what he needed it to do, he let Inmate Hardin take the cart, but had no idea what he wanted to use it for. Several other inmates were interviewed, none of which provided any useful information pertaining to the investigation at this point.

Myself and Capt. D. Foster went to the kitchen to see the area where Inmate Hardin worked inside of the kitchen, and upon going into that office, there was a door that appeared to be secured on the backside of that office, that with pressure applied could be opened without a key. During a search of that area, a homemade needle was found and confiscated by Capt. D. Foster. An additional search was conducted of the kitchen on the morning of May 26, 2025, with the following contraband items being found in the Inmate Hardin's assigned work area in the kitchen: a piece of cardboard that had been colored black by a sharpie, and a pair of rubber boots with the top cut off, with a piece of the cut off section also being found and confiscated from the office.

Maintenance as well as key control were notified of the issues securing the mechanical room door, so it could be repaired to normal working order.

Through a review of the incident thus far, security breaches were discovered that allowed Inmate Hardin to escape by walking out of the Sallyport gates. Several weeks prior, kitchen staff was advised that inmates are not allowed on the kitchen back dock unsupervised. I also discussed during my monthly security meeting to all supervisors on May 21, 2025 that any 1-C inmate going outside must be supervised. This breach of security was facilitated by FPS J. Delvalle for not following the directives given to him, that he signed for on May 14, 2025, and upon reviewing of camera footage and the interview with FPS J. Devalle, he left inmate Hardin unsupervised on the back dock for approximately 1 hour and 8 minutes, which allowed him ample time to change into the makeshift uniform he escaped wearing.

Furthermore, Cpl. W. Walker by his own admittance stated he saw an inmate on the back dock unsupervised, and did not follow up. Cpl. Walker then allowed Inmate Hardin to exit through the sally port gates, but did not challenge or question him for identity. This failure by both staff members to perform their assigned duties allowed Inmate Hardin to escape the North Central Unit.

As a result of these critical mistakes, these two staff members were placed on Administrative Leave pending the outcome of this investigation. At the time of this letter Inmate Hardin is still on escape status.

Mike McNeill

From: Candice Seay (DOC)
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 8:31 AM
To: Mike McNeill
Subject: May 2025 security meeting agenda minutes
Attachments: may 2025 security meeting agenda minutes.docx

Thank you,

Candice Seay

North Central Unit Warden's Administrative Specialist III

Arkansas Department of Corrections

Division of Corrections

Phone: 870-297-3305

Fax: 870-297-4322

Email: candice.seay@doc.arkansas.gov





ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
DIVISION OF CORRECTION

NORTH CENTRAL UNIT

10 Prison Circle
Calico Rock, AR 72519



To: North Central Unit Supervisors
From: Major Aaron Rogers
Re: May 2025 Security Meeting Agenda
Date: May 21, 2025

- Supervision of 1-C inmates
 - Outside of the building must have security present
- Disciplinary packets- time frame
 - Sending in with known mistakes
- Saying what you did and why in packets, especially those going to IA
- Front entrance supervisor
- Securing control booth doors
- Information pages for RHU cell doors
- Changes to RHU staff and responsibilities
- Performance evaluations- ensure staff review as soon as possible and go over with staff under your supervision
- Security audit- June 12
- Infirmary porters- need to be working or sent back
- Post orders have been updated- ensure you and your staff have reviewed
- Gym equipment- don't leave outside, and shake down the equipment occasionally
- Ensure we are using proper decontamination during use of force incidents
 - Also be smart about what we are giving the inmates
- Graduation coming up on May 29

Cpl. Stroud-

- Ensure we are labeling discs with incidents #, and name and date
- Ensure all packets are scanned in correctly
- Ensure the original accident report is with the packets

Sgt. Fowler- Ensure staff aren't double locking control booth doors while open, damaging the bolts

Capt. Foster- will be doing 2 more range days to get staff qualified next week

Sgt. Cottrell- remind staff to check the fire boxes and not tamper with them by stuffing full of trash

Capt. Sanders- the returns from work call will duece up and come in together at the end from now on

D/W Bolden- ensure staff is pat searching correctly, and staff is doing meaningful property searches of inmates, and with at least 2 staff involved or present.

Warden Hurst:

- April 26, 2026- ACA audit
- Evaluations- several have been changed. Discussed
- Communication between staff- no secrets between shifts
- Start getting annual time back under 240 instead of 360.
- Staff assignments- stay on post
- RHU- discussed keeping riot gates shut
- Inmate DR's- don't have to write DR's on everything, can counsel.
- Staff discipline- disciplinary in private
- Mass movement- slow chow down, be present in hallways
- Mainline table- is not a hang out spot
- Emergency gate pass- put a short summary of why inmate is going out in e-mail
- Take green books out of everywhere except RHU
- Field staff needs to be occasionally checking the parking lot
- No smoking while in parking lot

Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/7

Report Date: 06/17/2025

Primary Information

Description:	INTERVIEW OF SECRETARY OF ADC-LINDSAY WALLACE
Dissemination Code:	CHAIN OF COMMAND
Reporting LEO:	CHAMPAGNE, DRAKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	07/02/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF SUBJECT

On Tuesday June 17, 2025, I interviewed Lindsay Wallace. Wallace is identified as the Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Corrections. The below is an interview summary, it is not intended to be a verbatim account and does not memorialize all statements made during the interview.

Wallace provided me with the following timeline of notifications in which she was involved after Hardin's escape on May 25, 2025:

- **4:03 PM** – I received notification of Hardin's escape from Arkansas Department of Corrections (ADC) Director Dexter Payne.
- **4:08 PM** – I forwarded Hardin's information to my Chief of Staff, Wade Hodge.
- **4:10 PM** – Director Payne contacted Chief of Staff Hodge to provide additional information regarding the escape.
- **4:14 PM** – Chief of Staff Hodge sent a text message to the Governor's Office liaisons, Cody Arnold and Courtney Kennedy, informing them of the situation.
- **4:33 PM** – I received a call from the ADC Radio Room confirming that I had been notified of the escape.
- **4:34 PM** – I received a call from Arkansas State Police Colonel Mike Hagar, who offered the assistance of his agency.
- **7:15 PM – 7:30 PM** – My Chief Legal Counsel, Tawnie Rowell, contacted the families of Hardin's victims to ensure they had been personally notified of his escape.

Wallace advised that she had been made aware by North Central Unit Warden Thomas Hurst that the unit had adopted a notification process that differed from official ADC policy. Wallace said that Hurst indicated that he was unaware of the differing policy at the time of the escape.

Wallace advised that the Secretarial level directive regarding notifications could be found online. A copy of the directive is attached to this report.

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Report Date: 06/17/2025	ESCAPE



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

1302 Pike Avenue, Suite C
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72114
Phone: (501) 682-3309 | Fax: (501) 534-3958
DOC.ARKANSAS.GOV

SECRETARIAL DIRECTIVE

SUBJECT: Incident Notification Procedures

NUMBER: 2021-14

SUPERSEDES: 2020-07

APPLICABILITY: All Employees

REFERENCE: Ark. Code Ann. §§ 25-43-105, 25-43-108; 25-43-403; 25-43-405; AR 005 Reporting of Incidents; AR 011 News Media, Interviews, and Correspondence

PAGE: 1 of 3

ISSUED BY: Original Signed by Secretary Solomon Graves **EFFECTIVE DATE:** 8/20/2021

I. **POLICY:**

As the executive head of the Arkansas Department of Corrections (DOC), it is the responsibility of the Secretary of Corrections (Secretary) to administer the various rules, orders, or directives issued by the Department. The Secretary shall exercise direction, control, and supervision over the immediate notification of serious incidents within the Department. As used in this Secretarial Directive, the term “offender” applies to inmates, parolees, and probationers; in addition to residents in a community correction center or reentry center.

II. **PROCEDURES:**

- A. The divisions within the DOC will establish operational policies, and incident notification checklists, which provide for the notification of incidents. The Division Directors shall establish specific procedures for the immediate notification of serious incidents, occurrences of illnesses covered in a declared public health emergency, and the notification of incidents determined to not require immediate notification.
- B. The immediate notification of serious incidents shall provide for the notification to the Governor’s Office, Board of Corrections, and the Office of the Secretary.
 1. The notification requirements for the Governor’s Office contained within this Secretarial Directive are in addition to the minimum notification requirements contained in the Governor’s Incident Notification Matrix (Attachment) to be made by the Secretary or the Chief of Staff. **The requirements in the Governors Incident Notification Matrix are applicable to all entities within the Department.**
 2. The Chair of the Board of Corrections, the appropriate Board liaison, and the Assistant to the Board will be contacted regarding any serious incident. Upon notification to the Chair, the Chair will advise of the appropriate method of notifying remaining Board Members and Board staff (i.e. phone call, text message, or email).

3. The individuals within the Office of the Secretary requiring immediate notification are as follows:
 - a. The Secretary;
 - b. Chief of Staff;
 - c. Communications Director; and
 - d. Internal Affairs Administrator

The Internal Affairs Administrator will be notified first on incidents involving suspected criminal activity. After consulting with the Secretary and appropriate Division Director, the Internal Affairs Administrator will notify local law enforcement; including State Police or the County Sheriff where the incident occurred.

- C. For use in the development of operational policies, the term “serious incident” refers to, at a minimum, those incidents involving:
 1. Death or the serious injury of an offender, employee, contract employee, or visitor in a Department facility or office (not suspected to be due to natural causes);
 - a. Division of Correction: Deaths by natural causes will be reported during a work day or the next work day with the exception of notification to the Medical Services Administrator, or designee, the Internal Affairs Administrator or designee, the Chaplain, and the Communications Director, who are to be notified immediately upon the death of any inmate.
 - b. Division of Community Correction: Resident deaths, regardless of cause, will be reported to the Center Supervisor, the Internal Affairs Administrator designee, Medical Services Administrator, Chaplain, County Coroner, Arkansas State Police, the Chief Law Enforcement Officer of the County or Municipality, State Crime Lab, Medical Examiner’s office, and the County Prosecuting Attorney’s office.
 2. Escapes from correctional facilities and centers, to include walkaways from reentry centers;
 3. Work stoppages;
 4. Use of lethal force by an employee in the line of duty;
 5. Discharge of a state-issued firearm, at any time other than in training, by an employee;
 6. Suspected criminal activity within a Department facility or office;
 7. An employee’s arrest on felony charges;
 8. Hostage situations involving employees or offenders;
 9. Riots or mass disturbances involving offenders on or off Department leased or owned property (involves six or more offenders);
 10. Chemical spills injuring, or potentially injuring, employees and offenders;
 11. Natural disasters or fires damaging Department leased or owned property;

12. Any incident on Department property requiring outside assistance from first responders (law enforcement or firefighters) other than routine law enforcement activities such as serving an outstanding warrant;
 13. Any felony criminal activity by an offender in the custody of the Department but on furlough, or community work assignment, or otherwise off Department property; such as Act 309 assignment, Work Release job assignment, or Reentry Center;
 14. An incident, not of a routine nature, worthy of media notification, or upon media inquiry; and
 15. Occurrences of an illness covered in a declared public health emergency.
- D. For purposes of notification for serious incidents involving suspected criminal activity within a Department facility or office, or by an offender in the custody of the Department but otherwise off of Department property, immediate notification will commence if at any point during an investigation, findings indicate the allegations or activity are likely to arise to a criminal level. If findings indicate allegations are unsubstantiated, immediate notification is not required.
- E. The Communications Director will have primary responsibility for any communication with the news media regarding incidents. The Chief of Staff will communicate with the media in the absence of the Communications Director. Incidents will be reported to the news media only after contact has been made with the Board of Corrections, the Governor's Office, the Secretary, and other officials as required by the Secretarial Directive on Public Relations and Release of Information.
- F. When referenced in this directive, or any other operational policy, the notification of a serious incident will be made by telephone call, unless otherwise noted.
- G. Divisions are encouraged to utilize multidisciplinary Critical Incident Review Committees in order to examine staff performance or the adequacy of policy and procedures related to an incident.
1. Division Directors will notify the Secretary prior to the formation of a Critical Incident Committee.
 2. Division Directors will provide a copy of all reports and recommendations from a Critical Incident Committee to the Secretary or Designee. The Secretary may, at his or her discretion, appoint a member of their staff to any Critical Incident Committee.
- H. The Board of Corrections, or the staff of its Compliance Division, at their discretion shall be entitled to any records pertaining to incidents occurring within the Department.

III. **ATTACHMENT:**

Governor's Incident Notification Matrix

Attachment

GOVERNOR'S INCIDENT NOTIFICATION MATRIX

	IMMEDIATE VIA PHONE	IMMEDIATE VIA TEXT	4 HOUR VIA EMAIL	12 HOUR VIA EMAIL
Facility Riot or Mass Disturbance	X			
Death of Inmate/Resident				X
State Employee Arrested on Felony Charges*				X
Executive Branch loss or compromise of Personal identifiable information (PII)*		X		X
Death of State Employee in Line of Duty*		X		
FOI Request with anticipated media or public interest*			X	
Cyber Attack with loss, or the compromising of data*		X		
Damage to state property in excess of \$100K* <i>Notification will also be made to the Arkansas Insurance Department</i>				X
Environmental Damage of Media Interest*			X	
Other Event with High Media Interest*		X		
Note: Immediate and 4 Hour Notifications will be made by either the Secretary or Chief of Staff (when authorized by the Secretary). Notifications will be made to the Governor's Chief of Staff and to the Department's Liaison.				

This notification matrix was approved by the Governor on September 25, 2019.

* Applicable to ALL entities within the Department of Corrections.

Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/8

Report Date: 06/17/2025

Primary Information

Description:	INTERVIEW OF NCU KITCHEN STAFF GREGORY WOOLSEY
Dissemination Code:	SYSTEM WIDE ACCESS
Reporting LEO:	MCNEILL, MIKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	07/25/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS

On June 17, 2025, at approximately 12:56 PM, I conducted an interview with North Central Unit Food Production Supervisor (FPS) Gregory Woolsey. The interview was audio recorded for documentation purposes.

Below is a summarized version of the interview, not intended to be a verbatim account but capturing the key points of the interview:

Food Production Supervisor (FPS) Gregory Woolsey stated that, based on his understanding of operational procedures at the North Central Unit (NCU), inmates assigned to duties on the back dock were permitted to be in that area without direct supervision, provided that a supervisor conducted periodic visual checks at least every 30 minutes. FPS Woolsey indicated that this practice was consistent with how the Food Service Department had managed inmate supervision in that area prior to the escape incident involving inmate Grant Hardin.

FPS Woolsey further confirmed that he was present at the staff meeting conducted by Food Production Manager (FPM) Hayden Grady on May 13, 2025. According to Woolsey, during this meeting FPM Grady stated that inmates classified as I-D were permitted to be on the back dock without direct staff supervision. His recollection of the guidance given appears to contrast with statements provided by other Food Service staff, including FPS Jessica Kanani, who recalled being instructed unequivocally that inmates were not to be left unsupervised on the back dock under any circumstances.

FPS Woolsey did not indicate whether he was aware of any subsequent verbal or written directives issued by FPM Grady or other supervisory staff that may have clarified or amended the expectations surrounding inmate supervision on the back dock following the May 13, 2025, meeting.

The interview with FPS Gregory Woosley concluded at approximately 1:04 PM. The interview will be made a part of the investigative file.

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: MCNEILL, MIKE
Report Date: 06/17/2025	ESCAPE

Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/9

Report Date: 06/17/2025

Primary Information

Description:	INTERVIEW OF NCU KITCHEN STAFF KYLE FOSTER
Dissemination Code:	SYSTEM WIDE ACCESS
Reporting LEO:	MCNEILL, MIKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	07/24/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS

On June 17, 2025, at approximately 12:43 PM, I conducted an interview with North Central Unit Food Production Supervisor (FPS) Kyle Foster. The interview was audio recorded for documentation purposes.

Below is a summarized version of the interview, not intended to be a verbatim account but capturing the key points of the interview:

Food Production Supervisor (FPS) Kyle Foster advised that on Friday, May 23, 2025—two days prior to the escape of inmate Grant Hardin—he specifically inquired with his supervisor, Food Production Manager (FPM) Hayden Grady, about whether inmates were permitted to be on the back dock without direct supervision. According to FPS Foster, FPM Grady affirmed that inmates could be present on the back dock without being directly supervised.

FPS Foster further stated that, in practice, when he placed an inmate on the back dock without direct supervision, it was common for him to notify the west tower guard to ensure the tower was aware of the inmate's presence in that area.

Regarding the May 13, 2025, staff meeting conducted by FPM Grady—which was attended by Foster and other Food Production staff—FPS Foster asserted that, to the best of his recollection, FPM Grady did not communicate or otherwise instruct that inmates were prohibited from being on the back dock without staff supervision. FPS Foster indicated that no verbal or written directive about inmate supervision in the back dock area was given during that meeting.

FPS Foster further reported that following the escape incident involving inmate Hardin, he and other staff members received a new directive—delivered verbally by FPM Grady—explicitly stating that all inmates must be supervised at all times when on the back dock, without exception. This directive appeared to be a shift in policy or practice from the guidance previously given or understood by FPS Foster and his colleagues.

The interview with FPS Kyle Foster concluded at approximately 12:55 PM. The interview will be made a part of the investigative file.

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: MCNEILL, MIKE
Report Date: 06/17/2025	ESCAPE

Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/10

Report Date: 06/17/2025

Primary Information

Description:	INTERVIEW OF NCU KITCHEN STAFF JESSICA KANANI
Dissemination Code:	SYSTEM WIDE ACCESS
Reporting LEO:	MCNEILL, MIKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	07/25/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS

On June 17, 2025, at approximately 1:05 PM, I conducted an interview with North Central Unit Food Production Supervisor (FPS) Jessica Kanani. The interview was audio recorded for documentation purposes.

Below is a summarized version of the interview, not intended to be a verbatim account but capturing the key points of the interview:

Food Production Supervisor (FPS) Jessica Kanani stated that she was present at the staff meeting held on May 13, 2025, which was conducted by Food Production Manager (FPM) Hayden Grady. According to FPS Kanani, during this meeting, FPM Grady gave a direct verbal directive to all Food Production Supervisors in attendance that inmates were not to be permitted on the back dock without direct staff supervision—without exception. She characterized the instruction as clear and definitive, leaving no room for alternative interpretation or discretion.

FPS Kanani acknowledged that she was aware of existing post orders which, as written, may authorize an inmate to be present on the back dock without staff supervision if the inmate is engaged in cleaning duties. However, she emphasized that all Food Production Supervisors in attendance at the May 13th meeting—including herself—understood that FPM Grady’s verbal directive represented an operational change that superseded the post orders in practice. Kanani stated that this new directive was treated as a mandatory and immediate policy update requiring continuous staff supervision of all inmates assigned to the back dock area.

When questioned further, FPS Kanani stated she did not have personal knowledge as to whether inmate Grant Hardin had ever been permitted unsupervised access to the chemical storage room located adjacent to the back dock area. She explained that while the room falls within the general vicinity of kitchen inmate work assignments, she could not confirm the level of supervision inmate Hardin may have received in that specific location.

FPS Kanani’s statements reflect a clear understanding among supervisory staff—at least as of May 13, 2025—that direct supervision of inmates on the back dock was required regardless of any prior written policy.

The interview with FPS Jessica Kanani concluded at approximately 1:17 PM. The interview will be made a part of the investigative file.

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: MCNEILL, MIKE
Report Date: 06/17/2025	ESCAPE

Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/11

Report Date: 06/17/2025

Primary Information

Description:	INTERVIEW OF ASP CAPTAIN-WESLEY SMITHEE
Dissemination Code:	CHAIN OF COMMAND
Reporting LEO:	CHAMPAGNE, DRAKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	06/17/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER

On Tuesday June 17, 2025, I interviewed Wesley Smithee via telephone. Smithee is the Commander of Troop I within the Arkansas State Police Highway Patrol Division. The below is an interview summary, it is not intended to be a verbatim account and does not memorialize all statements made during the interview.

Smithee advised that on May 25, 2025 at approximately 4:02 PM, he received a call from Sergeant Chad Staley of the Arkansas State Police advising that he was going to allow ASP Trooper 1st Class Remington Lively to assist [REDACTED], ADC Lieutenant Steven Lively, with running the ADC dog team to track the escaped inmate at the North Central Unit. Smithee replied that he was unaware of an escaped inmate as Troop I had not been notified. Smithee said that he called the North Central Unit in an attempt to verify that an inmate had escaped. Smithee said that he was transferred multiple times before he reached a corrections officer who confirmed that Grant Hardin had escaped. Smithee said that he notified ASP Lieutenant Colonel Jason Aaron of the escape at 4:06 PM. Smithee said that Troop I dispatch created their own BOLO to send to the Troopers in the field as they did not receive it from ADC. Smithee said he isn't sure that Troop I ever received terminal information from ADC in reference to the escape.

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: CHAMPAGNE, DRAKE
Report Date: 06/17/2025	ESCAPE

Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/12

Report Date: 06/18/2025

Primary Information

Description:	INTERVIEW OF NCU STAFF WILLIAM WALKER
Dissemination Code:	SYSTEM WIDE ACCESS
Reporting LEO:	MCNEILL, MIKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	06/19/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS

The interview of North Central Unit Correctional Officer William Walker was conducted on May 26, 2025, at approximately 4:49 PM by Criminal Investigation Division, Company E, Special Agent Justin Nowlin. The interview was audio recorded and will be included as part of the investigative file. Additionally, a written interview summary authored by Special Agent Nowlin will be attached to this report. Based on the thoroughness and scope of the information obtained during Special Agent Nowlin's interview, a follow-up interview with Officer Walker was deemed unnecessary.

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: MCNEILL, MIKE
Report Date: <<CaseReport.ReportDate[Date]>>	ESCAPE



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS

On May 26, 2025, at approximately 4:49 PM, I interviewed William Walker at the Baxter County Sheriff's Office (BXCSO) in Mountain Home, Arkansas. The interview of William Walker was recorded and the recording is attached to this report.

The below is an interview summary. It is not intended to be a verbatim account and does not memorialize all statements made during the interview. Communications by the parties in the interview room were electronically recorded. The recording captures the actual words spoken.

William Walker stated the following:

I have been employed by the North Central Unit (NCU) prison for approximately five (5) years as a Corrections Officer. I have worked nearly every post at the NCU. I have never had an inmate escape on my watch, I have never been disciplined at the prison, and I have never been accused of having an inappropriate relationship with an inmate.

In the last five (5) years working at the NCU, I have never even received a note in my file. I applied to be a Sergeant, but I got beat out by a couple of points on the test. I have been the shift employee of the month two (2) times while working at the NCU. I love this job and I love working at the NCU. I currently work on B-Shift and I work from 6:00 AM until 6:00 PM.

I don't know, Grant Hardin, and I wouldn't probably even know him at first glance. I have had very few dealings with him. I don't even know what type of class inmate he is or the barracks he is assigned to. I don't even know what type of job he has in the prison. No officer I work with has ever even mentioned the name, Grant Hardin. I would absolutely never assist him with escaping from the prison.

On May 25, 2025, at approximately 6:00 AM, I attended shift briefing at the NCU and reported to one (1) barracks at approximately 6:25 AM. After that I reported to Restrictive Housing to assist and while I was there Sergeant Drinkard asked me to go to the West Tower to fill in for Officer John Horton who was sick and was being sent home.

At approximately 11:00 AM or 12:00 PM, I reported to the West Tower. My duties are to maintain security, watch the back perimeter, watch the dock, watch the ICC garage, and the watch the sally port. There are inmates that come outside the prison such as the wastewater, horse barn, and the Warden's domestic.

When I got on shift, the sally port Corporal Raymond was done for the day and the inmates had already been turned back inside the prison except for the Warden's domestic.

I did not let any other inmates out of the west gate that day. I never let anyone in a white suit out of the gate unless given permission by a supervisor on duty. No officers had been let out by me because it was a weekend.

Case #: ASP-2025-0639	Agent: NOWLIN, JUSTIN
Report Date: 05/28/2025	ESCAPE

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS - WALKER, WILLIAM (NCU)

At approximately 3:00 PM, I noticed a white male with what appeared to be a black hat, sunglasses, a vest, dark colored pants, unknown shoes, and a dark colored looking blue shirt. He was pushing a silver cart with wood type pallets on it.

I don't remember where the guy came from out of the prison because he was approximately ten (10) feet from the gate before I ever saw him. I was not paying attention and was looking towards the back part of the prison watching it rain. All of a sudden, the guy was just there standing near the gate. No supervisors notified me by radio that anyone was coming out towards my area and chow was going on inside the prison at the time.

The guy approached the gate, laid his hand on the gate, and yelled "gate." I then popped the first gate because I thought the guy was an officer. I just noticed what looked like a uniform and it was not a white suit that inmates wear. I just popped it because I saw what appeared to be an officer uniform.

The guy then approached the second gate at this point and he was approximately twenty (20) yards away from me. I looked at him and I saw a vest, a hat, uniform style clothing, and the cart. The guy yelled "gate" and I popped the second gate. Every guard yells "gate" so I just popped it.

The guy then exited the second gate line. I thought, something isn't right, in my mind, but I didn't say anything. The guy was approaching a truck near the ICC garage. My tower phone rang and I walked around to get the phone, but it stopped ringing. When I looked back up the guy was gone. The cart was left near the ICC garage, but I couldn't see the guy anymore. I hollered a couple of times and the guy never answered.

I knew then something wasn't right and I called the laundry officer Teagarden. I asked Officer Teagarden if he let any officers out or anyone else out the back and he replied "no."

I then got called by the kitchen supervisor Delvalle. Delvalle asked if I had seen his guy on the back dock. I replied "I have not seen anyone on the back dock in several minutes."

I then called Sergeant Drinkard and told him about the guy coming out that looked like an officer. I explained that I let the guy looking like an officer out the back gate. Sergeant Drinkard replied "I'm on it."

Sergeant Drinkard, Ballentine, and Queen came out and went to look for the guy but could not find him. I was told to maintain security on the perimeter of the West Tower. Sergeant Drinkard then notified Captain Brandon about the situation. I would say the whole incident lasted approximately five (5) to ten (10) minutes and the guy was gone.

I did not have anything to do with this, I wouldn't jeopardize my family or anyone else over something like this. I remained in the West Tower until I was relieved of my post at approximately 5:00 PM. I wrote a statement about the incident and was then interviewed by Internal Affairs.

I never spoke with Officer Delvalle about this incident and I don't even know if he let the inmate out on the back dock. I never saw inmate Hardin exit the NCU because I only saw him when he was at the back gate.

This all happened because I was complacent and just not paying attention. I never had a plan to help this guy out and I don't even give inmates an extra bar of soap. I feel terrible and I let the NCU down. I just made a huge mistake.

Case #: ASP-2025-0639	Agent: NOWLIN, JUSTIN
Report Date: 05/28/2025	ESCAPE

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS - WALKER, WILLIAM (NCU)

The interview concluded at approximately 5:38 PM.

Case #: ASP-2025-0639	Agent: NOWLIN, JUSTIN
Report Date: 05/28/2025	ESCAPE

Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/13

Report Date: 06/18/2025

Primary Information

Description:	INTERVIEW OF ADC DIRECTOR-DEXTER PAYNE
Dissemination Code:	CHAIN OF COMMAND
Reporting LEO:	CHAMPAGNE, DRAKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	07/03/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF SUBJECT

On Wednesday June 18, 2025, I interviewed Dexter Payne. Payne is identified as the Director of the Arkansas Department of Corrections. The below is an interview summary, it is not intended to be a verbatim account and does not memorialize all statements made during the interview.

Payne advised that ADC has three levels of directives as follows:

Secretarial Directives- Orders created by the Governor's cabinet.

Administrative Directives- Orders created by the Director's Office.

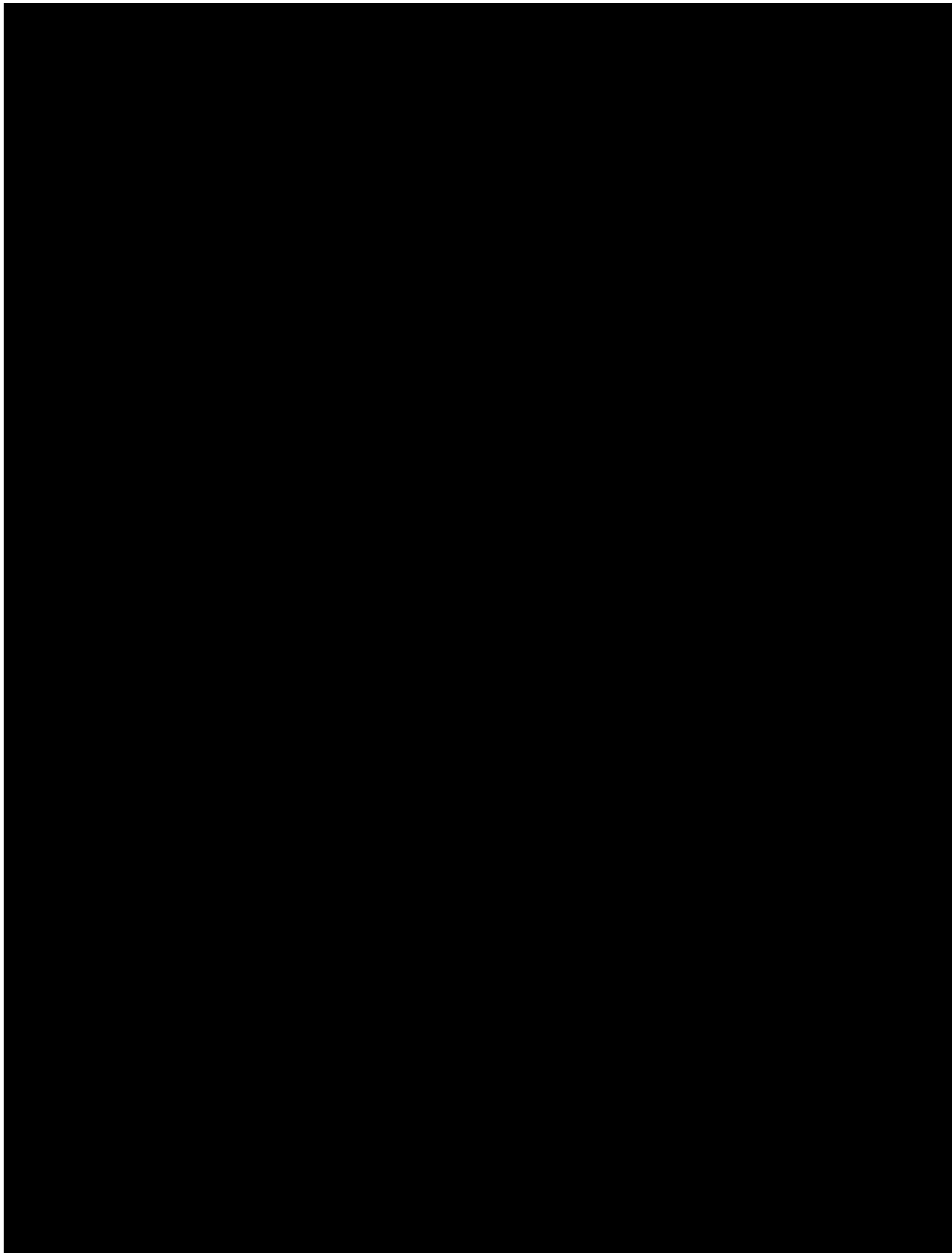
Unit Directives- Orders created at the unit level.

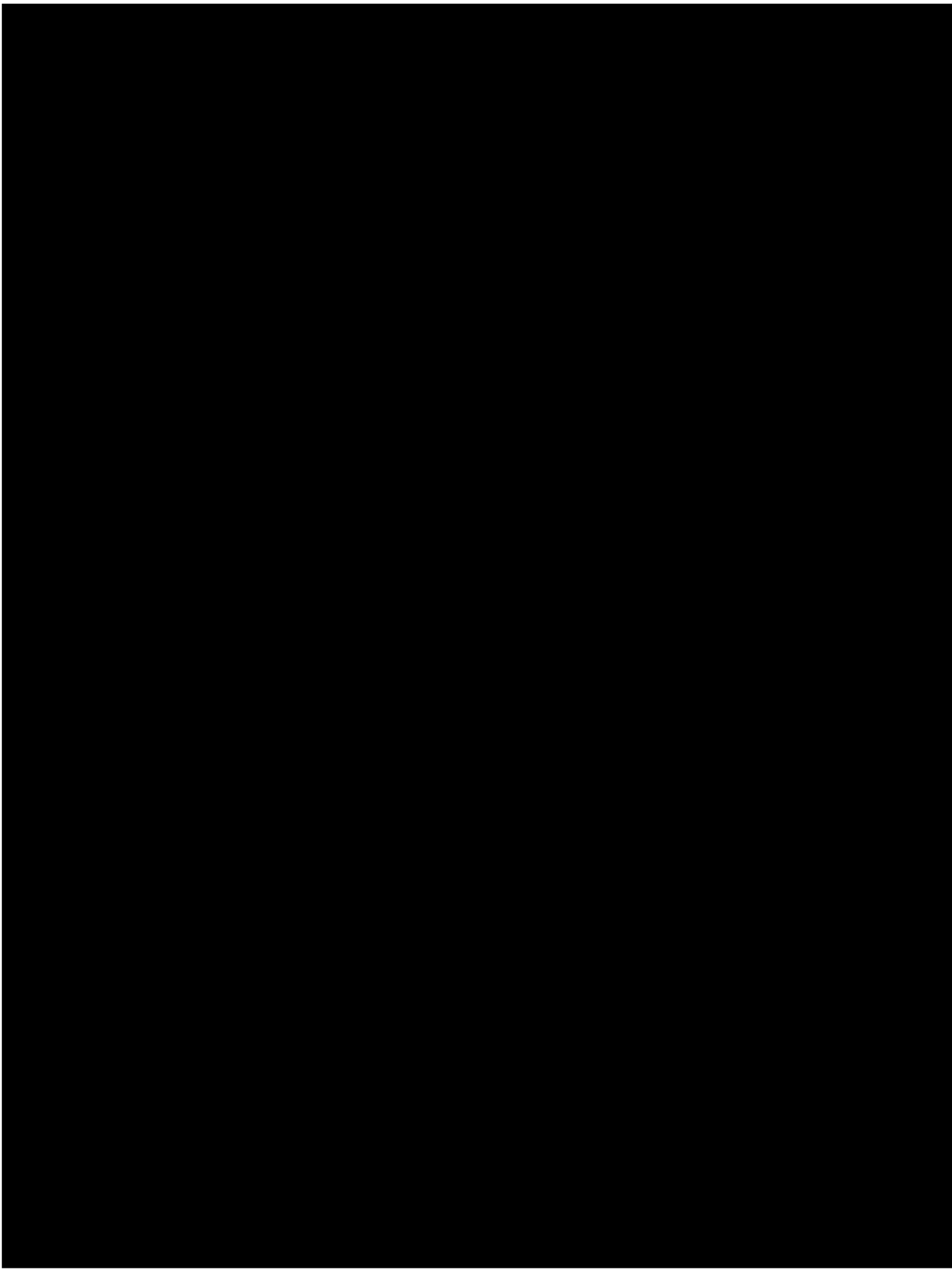
Payne said that administrative directives cannot supersede secretarial directives and unit directives cannot supersede administrative or secretarial directives. Payne explained that the units have flexibility in their directives only when secretarial and administrative directives do not apply to their individual unit.

Payne gave the example that if a directive is given in relation to towers and the unit in question does not have towers, that portion of the directive would not apply to that specific unit. Payne said that a major problem with the North Central Unit's Emergency/Escape Notification Action Plan is that it was changed from the administrative directive. NCU's plan states that the Pine Bluff Work Complex PBX will notify many external contacts, including surrounding law enforcement agencies. Payne said that the plan is "flat out wrong" and should not have been changed. Payne said that Warden Thomas Hurst was apparently unaware of the change in NCU's directives as it had been put in place before he was the Warden but he should have known as he signed off on the directive. Payne said that the individual unit directives are not sent "up the chain" beyond the Wardens so it would not have been caught by anyone outside of the unit.

Payne provided me with a copy of the escape plan checklist that should have been followed by the NCU. The checklist is attached to this report. Payne advised that he was notified of the escape at 3:52 PM by Deputy Director Aundrea Culclager. Payne confirmed that he notified Secretary Lindsay Wallace of the escape.

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: CHAMPAGNE, DRAKE
Report Date: 06/18/2025	ESCAPE

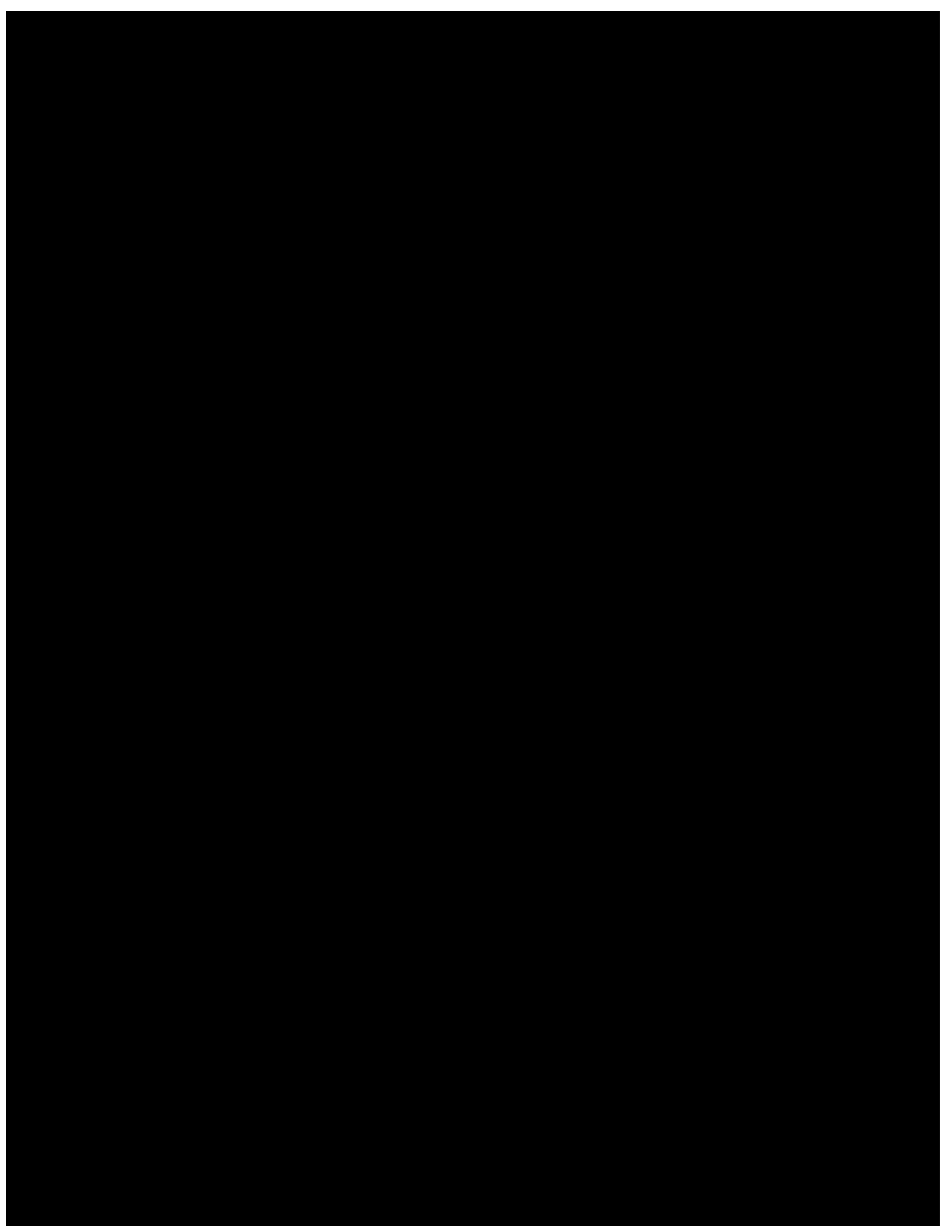




The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry, no matter how small, should be recorded to ensure the integrity of the financial data. This includes not only sales and purchases but also expenses and income. The document provides a detailed list of items that should be tracked, such as inventory levels, customer orders, and supplier invoices. It also outlines the procedures for recording these transactions, including the use of specific forms and the assignment of responsibilities to different staff members.

The second part of the document focuses on the analysis of the recorded data. It describes various methods for identifying trends and anomalies in the financial performance. This includes comparing current data with historical trends, analyzing seasonal fluctuations, and identifying areas where costs are higher than expected. The document also discusses the importance of regular reviews and reports to management, providing a clear framework for how these reports should be structured and presented. It highlights the need for transparency and accountability in the reporting process, ensuring that all stakeholders have access to the same information and can make informed decisions based on the data.

The final part of the document addresses the challenges of data management and the importance of security. It discusses the risks of data loss, theft, and unauthorized access, and provides practical advice on how to mitigate these risks. This includes recommendations for secure storage solutions, regular backups, and strict access controls. The document also touches on the importance of data accuracy and the need for regular audits to ensure that the records are reliable and up-to-date. It concludes by emphasizing the value of a robust data management system in supporting the overall success of the organization.



Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/14

Report Date: 06/18/2025

Primary Information

Description:	(1) INTERVIEW OF NCU STAFF JUSTIN DELVALLE
Dissemination Code:	SYSTEM WIDE ACCESS
Reporting LEO:	MCNEILL, MIKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	06/19/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS

The first interview of North Central Unit Correctional Officer Justin Delvalle was conducted on May 26, 2025, at approximately 6:05 PM by Criminal Investigation Division, Company E, Special Agent Justin Nowlin. The interview was audio recorded and will be included as part of the investigative file. Additionally, a written interview summary authored by Special Agent Nowlin will be attached to this report.

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: MCNEILL, MIKE
Report Date: <<CaseReport.ReportDate[Date]>>	ESCAPE

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0639/13

Report Date: 05/28/2025

Warning

Contains entities exempt from disclosure

Primary Information

Description: INTERVIEW OF WITNESS - DELVALLE, JUSTIN (NCU)
Occurrence From: 05/26/2025 18:05
Occurrence To: 05/26/2025 19:10
Dissemination Code: SYSTEM WIDE ACCESS
Reporting LEO: NOWLIN, JUSTIN (COMPANY E / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status: Approved
Report Status Date: 06/19/2025
Approved By: RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Subject #1 - WITNESS #1 - DELVALLE, JUSTIN

Primary Information

Exempt From Disclosure: YES
Subject Name: DELVALLE, JUSTIN
Record Type: LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIAL
Bio: 23 yr. old, WHITE, MALE
Birth Date: [REDACTED]
Juvenile: NO

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS

On May 26, 2025, at approximately 6:05 PM, I interviewed Justin Delvalle at the Baxter County Sheriff's Office (BXC SO) in Mountain Home, Arkansas. The interview of Justin Delvalle was recorded and the recording is attached to this report.

The below is an interview summary. It is not intended to be a verbatim account and does not memorialize all statements made during the interview. Communications by the parties in the interview room were electronically recorded. The recording captures the actual words spoken.

Justin Delvalle stated the following:

I have been employed at the North Central Unit (NCU) prison for approximately six (6) years. I am the current Food Preparation Supervisor (FPS) and I run the PM shift in the kitchen from 8:30 AM until 6:30 PM. I work four (4) ten (10) hour shifts from Sunday through Wednesday.

I applied for the position, and I have been the FPS supervisor for approximately two (2) years. I supervise over forty (40) inmates inside the kitchen area. I make sure the kitchen is clean; food is prepared and maintain the overall security inside the kitchen area.

I have had a verbal reprimand for calling in sick one (1) time in the past, but nothing else disciplinary wise. I have never been accused of having an inappropriate relationship with an inmate.

I have seen Grant Hardin around the NCU in the past, but I have only really known him for the past two (2) years while he worked in the kitchen. Hardin was the janitorial porter, and he was allowed to issue cleaning supplies to the other inmates. Hardin had access to chemicals and rubber boots. I would have to unlock the inside cages for him to have access to the hard chemicals, but he would pump spray bleach in the dish room while I watched.

NCU policy doesn't allow me as his supervisor to perform PAT searches on inmates I supervise, but he was searched after each shift by the hall security officers. I haven't seen that policy, but I've just heard that is possibly the protocol. I stood with all the inmates until they were searched by hall security.

Hardin was allowed to have access to the extra storage cage on the back dock. Hardin would clean that cage on the back dock once a week. Hardin was not supervised while cleaning the cage on the back dock, but my post orders state inmates are not allowed on the back dock unless they are assigned to clean up.

Hardin would have only had access to the 55-gallon barrel drums of cleaner, extra trash cans, boots, aprons, bleach, detergent, and a binder that he updates his inventory in. The inventory is checked routinely by me or another supervisor. The back dock only has wood pallets, trash cans, and plastic pallets. The West Tower can see the inmates on the back dock, but not in the cage.

Case #: ASP-2025-0639	Agent: NOWLIN, JUSTIN
Report Date: 05/28/2025	ESCAPE

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS - DELVALLE, JUSTIN (NCU)

I never came up with a plan or assisted inmate Hardin in this escape. I don't believe Hardin worked any other places, but in the kitchen. My best guess is Hardin stored stuff in the cage on the back dock. I had not searched the back cage in approximately two (2) weeks. I should have searched it more and I do have to unlock the cage to let him in it. I think he stored it in the cage and I obviously didn't search it properly.

Hardin never hung out with anyone and all the inmate's made fun of him because he was an ex-police officer. Hardin would rat on other inmates, so they didn't trust him and they all thought he was crazy.

On May 25, 2025, at approximately 8:30 AM, I arrived at work and went to the kitchen area. I checked my roster for inmates to see who all I would have working in the kitchen that day.

At approximately 9:00 AM, Hardin came to the kitchen to work. Hardin was wearing all whites and had nothing with him. I'm sure he talked to other inmates that day to hand out chemicals, but he didn't really have any friends. I didn't overly watch him that day because I have multiple inmates inside the kitchen area.

At approximately 2:10 PM, I let Hardin out on the back dock. Hardin was in all whites, he had a cart, brushes, and mop heads with him.

I walked him over to the cage and unlocked it for him. I locked the lock so he wouldn't be able to get it off. I then went back inside the unit and carried on with my duties. Hardin was outside on the back dock with no supervision. I didn't notify the West Tower that he was out on the back dock and this is not uncommon because inmates are out there every day.

I carried on with my duties in the kitchen. Hardin usually stays out on the back dock cleaning for approximately one (1) hour.

At approximately 3:08 PM, I went out to get Hardin to assist with chow and handing out chemicals so the inmates could clean.

I hollered his name and I heard no response. I went outside on the back dock to the cage and he was not there. It looked like he had been in the cage because it appeared stuff had been used or moved around.

At approximately 3:09 PM, I called the laundry area and spoke with Officer Teagarden. Officer Teagarden stated he had not seen Hardin, but he would come help me look for him on the back dock.

Officer Teagarden checked near the reefer unit and I checked the cage again just to double check. Hardin was still not seen by me or Officer Teagarden.

At approximately 3:12 PM, I called the West Tower and asked if Officer Walker had seen any inmates out on the back dock. Officer Walker replied "no."

I went to check the Boiler Room, but it was locked and Hardin was obviously not in that area.

At approximately 3:17 PM, I contacted Sergeant Drinkard and told him I think I have an inmate missing. I told Sergeant Drinkard it was inmate Hardin over the radio.

Case #: ASP-2025-0639	Agent: NOWLIN, JUSTIN
Report Date: 05/28/2025	ESCAPE

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS - DELVALLE, JUSTIN (NCU)

I went back in the kitchen and completed a count of all the inmates I had that day. Hardin was missing during the count.

Sergeant Drinkard called me and asked if Hardin had a cart. I told him "Yes" that was Hardin's cart by the ICC garage. I then locked down all my inmates in the chow hall and conducted another count. I waited until I spoke with the Warden at that point.

I have no idea how Hardin would have gotten colored clothing. Hardin has had access to black sharpie pens. The chemicals are diluted so much I don't believe Hardin would be able to dye anything. I don't think Hardin had Hobby Craft or Art card access.

NCU officers would not help any inmate escape. This place is rock solid except for this one (1) incident. I think Hardin knew my routine and everything was just like the perfect storm. I was complacent in checking the back dock cage and I should have watched Hardin more in that area.

The laundry area has no colored clothing. There is a maintenance inmate named Lourie in three (3) barracks that might have made him that ladder or provided something he found from the outside free world. Lourie doesn't ever leave the prison because he's the inside maintenance inmate.

The interview concluded at approximately 7:10 PM.

Case #: ASP-2025-0639	Agent: NOWLIN, JUSTIN
Report Date: 05/28/2025	ESCAPE

Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/15

Report Date: 06/18/2025

Primary Information

Description:	(2) INTERVIEW OF NCU STAFF JUSTIN DELVALLE
Dissemination Code:	SYSTEM WIDE ACCESS
Reporting LEO:	MCNEILL, MIKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	06/19/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF WITNESS

On June 17, 2025, at approximately 3:03 PM, I conducted a telephone interview with former North Central Unit (NCU) Food Production Supervisor (FPS) Justin Delvalle. The interview was audio recorded for documentation purposes and will be made part of the investigative file. At the time of the interview, FPS Delvalle had already been terminated from his position at the NCU due to insubordination.

The following is a summarized account of the interview and is not intended to serve as a verbatim transcript:

FPS Delvalle stated that he had been employed in the NCU kitchen for approximately two (2) years. According to Delvalle, all inmates assigned to kitchen duty held a Class I-C classification. He explained that on May 21, 2025—four days prior to inmate Grant Hardin’s escape—he had a conversation with Captain Hayden Grady, during which he was informed that, moving forward, only inmates classified as I-D would be assigned to the kitchen. Delvalle was told the reclassification and reassignment process would occur on May 22, 2025, which was his regular day off. He was next scheduled to return to work on Sunday, May 25, 2025—the day of the escape.

Upon his return to duty on May 25, Delvalle reviewed the kitchen inmate roster and noted that none of the assigned inmates appeared to have been reclassified to I-D status. Delvalle questioned this discrepancy in a conversation with Captain Grady. According to Delvalle, Captain Grady responded that he had consulted with the Warden and instructed Delvalle to proceed with operations as “business as usual.” Delvalle advised that a phone call between him and Captain Grady took place on the kitchen landline during which this statement was made. However, information obtained during the course of the investigation confirmed that landline calls placed from staff phones within the NCU are not recorded. A confirming email from the NCU regarding the non-recording of staff landline communications will be made a part of the investigative file.

Delvalle stated that he interpreted the directive “business as usual” to mean that inmate Hardin could continue accessing the chemical storage room adjacent to the back dock unsupervised, as had been standard practice each Sunday for the preceding two years. He explained that inmates specifically assigned to clean the back dock area are typically off-duty on weekends, and under then-existing post orders, inmates were permitted to be on the back dock unsupervised if they were engaged in cleaning duties. According to Delvalle, inmate Hardin was designated to clean the chemical room, thereby justifying his presence in that area without supervision.

Delvalle further advised that inmate Hardin escaped through the sallyport gate at approximately 2:55 PM on May 25, 2025. He became aware of Hardin’s absence at approximately 3:07 PM, when he noticed that the inmate was not present in the chemical room. Based on these timestamps, Delvalle estimated there was a 12-minute window between the time of the escape and the point at which staff began an active search for inmate Hardin.

With respect to the staff meeting held on May 13, 2025, and conducted by FPM Hayden Grady, Delvalle confirmed that he was in attendance along with other Food Production staff. However, he stated that to the best of his recollection, FPM Grady did not verbally instruct or otherwise communicate that inmates were prohibited from being on the back

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: MCNEILL, MIKE
Report Date: <<CaseReport.ReportDate[Date]>>	ESCAPE

<<CaseReport.BriefDescription>>

dock without direct staff supervision. Delvalle maintained that no oral or written directive on the issue of inmate supervision in that area was conveyed during the meeting.

The interview with FPS Justin Delvalle concluded at approximately 3:27 PM. The interview will be made a part of the investigative file.

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: MCNEILL, MIKE
Report Date: <<CaseReport.ReportDate[Date]>>	ESCAPE

Mike McNeill

From: Candice Seay (DOC)
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 3:51 PM
To: Mike McNeill
Cc: Thomas Hurst (DOC)
Subject: RE: recorded phone call

The phone calls are not audio recorded for staff.

Thank you,

Candice Seay

North Central Unit Warden's Administrative Specialist III

Arkansas Department of Corrections

Division of Corrections

Phone: 870-297-3305

Fax: 870-297-4322

Email: candice.seay@doc.arkansas.gov



From: Mike McNeill <mike.mcneill@asp.arkansas.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 3:45 PM
To: Candice Seay (DOC) <Candice.Seay@doc.arkansas.gov>
Subject: recorded phone call

Ms. Seay,

I understand that the North Central Unit administration is in possession of a recorded phone call between Captain Hayden Grady and FPS Justin Devalle, which took place on May 25, 2025, sometime between 9:00 AM and 10:00 AM.

I was advised that the call was made using the kitchen phone (extension 3321).

If possible, please provide a copy of the audio file. You're welcome to send it to me via email. If email delivery isn't feasible, just let me know when the file will be available, and I'll make arrangements to come by and pick it up.

Thank you for your assistance, and please let me know if you need anything further from me to facilitate this request.

Thanks,
Mike



Mike McNeill

Special Agent Mike McNeill #270
Arkansas State Police Division
Special Investigations Unit / CID
Arkansas Department of Public Safety

1600 east Booth Rd. #4
Searcy, Ar 72143

Office Phone: 501-322-3365
Fax: 501-279-6239

John 3: 20-21

Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/16

Report Date: 06/18/2025

Primary Information

Description:	INTERVIEW OF NCU WARDEN-THOMAS HURST
Dissemination Code:	CHAIN OF COMMAND
Reporting LEO:	CHAMPAGNE, DRAKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	06/19/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF SUBJECT

On Monday June 16, 2025, I interviewed Thomas Hurst by phone. Hurst is identified as the Warden of the North Central Unit of the Arkansas Department of Corrections. The below is an interview summary, it is not intended to be a verbatim account and does not memorialize all statements made during the interview.

Hurst advised that he was the duty Warden at the time of Hardin's escape. Hurst said that the notification process was initiated by Corporal Williams but he was reassigned to the command center prior to all notifications being made. Hurst said that there was a communication error, as someone else should have been assigned to complete the notification process. Hurst said that the NCU has a policy which dictates that the radio room in Pine Bluff will make all external notifications but that he was unaware of the policy at the time. Hurst admitted that multiple law enforcement agencies were not notified of the escape as they should have been.

Hurst provided me with a copy of the NCU notification packet, which contains handwritten notes of notifications from Hardin's escape. The packet also contains a narrative of the circumstances surrounding the escape, written by Hurst to ADC Deputy Director William Straughn. A copy of the packet, as well as the email containing the packet, is attached to this report.

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: CHAMPAGNE, DRAKE
Report Date: 06/18/2025	ESCAPE



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
DIVISION OF CORRECTION
NORTH CENTRAL UNIT

10 Prison Circle
Calico Rock, AR 72519



To: Deputy Director William Straughn
From: Warden Thomas W. Hurst
Re: I/M Grant Hardin #168541 escape and recapture
Date: June 09, 2025,

On May 25, 2025, at approximately 2:53 PM, Inmate Grant Hardin #168541, assigned as a I-C Kitchen worker, escaped from the facility, walking through Sallyport in a makeshift uniform made to resemble an officer's uniform. At approximately 1:58 PM, FPS Justin Delvalle was supervising inmates in the kitchen, when he allowed Inmate Hardin to exit to the back dock of the kitchen to clean the chemical cage unsupervised. At approximately 3:08 PM, FPS Delvalle stated he went to the back dock to look for Inmate Hardin but was unable to find him, at which time he called Cpl. A. Teegarden who was working in Laundry and asked if he had let Inmate Hardin in through Laundry, to which he stated he had not. They both then went to look for Inmate Hardin but was unable to find him, at which time he called West Tower officer Cpl. William Walker and asked he had seen Inmate Hardin to which he stated he had not.

FPS Delvalle then went back to the back dock and looked in the boiler room, and upon not seeing any sign of Inmate Hardin, contacted Sgt. K. Drinkard at 3:16 PM and advised him that he could not find Inmate Hardin. Sgt. K. Drinkard then contacted Capt. C. Brandon who immediately went to review the unit and perimeter cameras. Capt Brandon found what appeared to be Inmate Hardin walking through the sallyport gates in a makeshift dark colored uniform including vest and hat. Inmate Hardin was pulling a flat cart with a cardboard box, and what appeared to be a homemade ladder on the cart. Inmate Hardin was then seen taking the cart to the front of the ICC garage, then walk to the left side of the ICC garage carrying the box, and is not seen again. Cpl. W. Walker was assigned to the West Tower Post during this time.

Capt. Brandon then notified me of what had been reported and the video recording of the sallyport area at approximately 3:40 PM. The unit was placed on lockdown and the Command Center was activated. Staff conducted an emergency roster count at 3:47 PM, and cleared at 4:48 pm, with the exception of Inmate Hardin. Unit inmate visitation was ongoing and no one was allowed to exit the unit at that time. Emergency Escape Procedures were implimented and responding staff started arriving at the facility at approximately 4:00 PM. Seventeen checkpoints were dispursed, and Inmate Hardin's property was gathered and searched, as well as the kitchen, and outside grounds where inmate Hardin was last observed. North Central Unit's K-9 team arrived and began searching for Inmate Hardin. The box that was observed on the cart was found behind the ICC garage, and the homemade ladder was found to be made from pallets and was manipulated using draw string from state issued clothing.

I interviewed FPS Delvalle concerning his actions of allowing Inmate Hardin access to the kitchen backdock. FPS Delvalle stated he allowed him out to the backdock to work unsupervised in the chemical room. FPS Delvalle was well aware that several weeks ago all kitchen staff was personally instructed to never allow any IC inmate to be on the kitchen backdock unsupervised. FPS Delvalle acknowledge he was aware of this directive. He was instructed to write a 005 incident report of his actions concerning this matter. Next, I interviewed Cpl. W. Walker about his actions on the West Tower / SallyPort post. Cpl. Walker stated that he had seen an inmate on the back dock of the kitchen possibly around 1:00 PM or 2:00 PM. He later saw, what he believed to be a staff member on

the kitchen back dock and the person then approached the sally port gate pulling a flat cart. He assumed it was a fellow staff member due to the uniform he was wearing. Cpl. Walker allowed the person to enter and exit both security gates. Cpl. Walker stated after seeing the person walk to the ICC garage, his phone rang in the tower so he went back inside to check the phone, but by the time he got to the phone, it quit ringing, and when he looked back up, the individual was gone. Cpl. Walker stated he called out a couple times and received no response, at which time he called Cpl. Teegarden in Laundry to see if he had let anyone out to which he stated he had not. FPS Delvalle then called Cpl. Walker to ask if he had seen inmate Hardin. According to Cpl. Walker, this is when they contacted Sgt. Drinkard, and him along with Sgt. G. Queen and Sgt. J. Balentine came to search and inspect the area. Sgt. Drinkard was interviewed and corroborated the accounts given by FPS Delvalle and Cpl. Walker and stated he notified Capt. C. Brandon and once Sallyport, ICC Garage and the kitchen back dock area was searched, they returned into the building to conduct the roster count.

Major Rogers and Capt. D. Foster went to the kitchen to see the area where Inmate Hardin worked inside of the kitchen, and upon going into that office, there was a door that appeared to be secured on the backside of that office, that with pressure applied could be opened without a key. During a search of that area, a homemade needle was found and confiscated by Capt. D. Foster. An additional search was conducted of the kitchen on the morning of May 26, 2025, with the following contraband items being found in the Inmate Hardin's assigned work area in the kitchen: a piece of cardboard that had been colored black by a sharpie, and a pair of rubber boots with the top cut off, with a piece of the cut off section also being found and confiscated from the office. Maintenance as well as key control were notified of the issues securing the mechanical room door, so it could be repaired to normal working order.

From May 25, 2025 to June 6, 2025, the unit remained on lockdown status as the search for Inmate Hardin continued. On June 6, 2025, at approx. 3:45 pm through the assistance of Federal, State, Local law enforcement agencies and ADC /ACC staff Inmate Hardin was located approx. 1 ½ mile northwest of the North Central Unit in densely wooded area by the US Border Patrol. Inmate Hardin was returned to the NCU Unit where he was checked by medical staff and his identity was verified by the Arkansas State Police using a portable fingerprint scanner. Inmate Hardin was immediately transferred to the Varner Supermax Unit.

After a through a review of the incident, the following issues were discovered that allowed Inmate Hardin to escape by walking out of the Sallyport gates impersonating an officer. Kitchen staff was advised that inmates are not allowed on the kitchen back dock unsupervised. This breach of security was facilitated by FPS J. Delvalle for not following the directives given to him, that he signed for on May 14, 2025. The camera footage and my interview with FPS J. Delvalle determined he left Inmate Hardin unsupervised on the back dock for approximately 1 hour and 8 minutes. This allowed Inmate Hardin ample time to change into the makeshift uniform he escaped wearing. Additionally, Cpl. W. Walker by his own admission stated he saw an inmate on the back dock unsupervised, and did not follow up. Cpl. Walker then allowed Inmate Hardin to exit through the sally port gates, unchallenged nor question him for identity. This failure by both staff members to perform their assigned duties allowed Inmate Hardin to escape the North Central Unit. As a result of these critical mistakes, these two staff members were placed on Administrative Leave pending disciplinary action.

A review of the incident determined that there was a communication conflict pertaining to proper notification of staff and supporting agencies. On 5-25-2025, I was present at the unit, as the Duty Warden at the time of Inmate Hardin's escape. I was notified by Capt. C. Brandon of the escape and additional staff responded to the Unit Command Center to assist. Cpl. N. Williams was instructed by Capt. Brandon to begin recalling Sgt. Delgado and the ERT staff from the Red Manuel in the Control Center. He began making calls from pg.1 from the NCU Emergency Escape Plan and shortly he was reassigned to the command center by Capt. Brandon to scribe the log before all the notifications were made. The EPC Red Manuel was retrieved by Sgt. Cooper from the EPC Ofc. and brought to the Command Center. At this time, I contacted the on call Duty Director A. Culclager and advised we had a confirmed escaped inmate, Grant Hardin ADC #168541. Lt. R. Cross reported to the Command Center and asked Capt. Brandon had the Emergency Escape Plan checklist been initiated. Capt. Brandon asked me if notification was made and I advised yes, since I had notified Duty Director A. Culclager. I was unaware that the

external notifications hadn't been made. During this time, additional staff was being dispatched to assigned escape post and numerous telephone calls were coming to the Command Center from staff and other agencies. Local residents were contacted to advise them of the incident. It was later determined that the responding law enforcement agencies were alerted and responded to the Command Center. It was determined on 5-26-2025, that the Escape Notification Checksheet was started, but however due to the misunderstanding of the communication of the question. "Have the Notifications been made" and new staff arriving into the Command Center to assume post it wasn't completed. It was also determined that the NCU policy pertaining to escape notification had been changed to reflect that the Pine Bluff radio room would make notifications to the outside law enforcement agencies and the Management Team. This documentation conflict was discovered after a review of notification procedures and has been corrected.

Requested Documentation on Notification

😊 Reply Reply All Forward

Mon 6/16/20

Thomas Hurst (DOC)

To Drake Champagne

Cc Kennie Bolden (DOC); Christopher Brandon (DOC); Robert Cross (DOC)

replied to this message on 6/16/2025 3:42 PM.

ASP Drake Champagne_0001.pdf
10 MB

request. If you need anything else.



Thomas Hurst

WARDEN | NORTH CENTRAL UNIT
DIVISION OF CORRECTION

Arkansas Department of Corrections

10 Prison Circle

Calico Rock, Arkansas 72519

Phone: (870) 297-3301

Thomas.Hurst@doc.arkansas.gov

Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/17

Report Date: 06/18/2025

Primary Information

Description:	INTERVIEW OF ADC COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR-RAND CHAMPION
Dissemination Code:	CHAIN OF COMMAND
Reporting LEO:	CHAMPAGNE, DRAKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	06/19/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

INTERVIEW OF SUBJECT

On Tuesday June 17, 2025, I interviewed Rand Champion via telephone. Champion is identified as the Communications Director for the Arkansas Department of Corrections. The below is an interview summary, it is not intended to be a verbatim account and does not memorialize all statements made during the interview.

Champion advised that the decision to notify the media and the contents thereof was a collaboration between Secretary Lindsay Wallace, Director Dexter Payne, and himself. Champion said that the press release was sent out via email at 5:39 PM on May 25, 2025. Champion said that he is unaware of who would have notified the community surrounding the NCU grounds but assumed it was local law enforcement. Champion provided me with a copy of the press release. A copy of the press release and the email in which it was contained is attached to this report.

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: CHAMPAGNE, DRAKE
Report Date: 06/18/2025	ESCAPE

Media Press Release




Rand Champion (DOC)

To Drake Champagne

☺ Reply Reply All Forward ...

Tue 6/17/2025 3:01 PM

i You replied to this message on 6/17/2025 3:03 PM.

 Mail - Rand Champion (DOC) - May 25 Grant Hardin Escape Release.pdf 362 KB

Good afternoon -

Following up on our conversation earlier, here is a copy of the original media release for the Grant Hardin escape on May 25, with a list of the media outlets it was distributed to.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Thanks,

Rand



RAND CHAMPION
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Arkansas Department of Corrections
1302 Pike Avenue, Suite C
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72114
Phone: (501) 683-5191 (Office)
(870) 550-5210 (Cell)
Rand.Champion@doc.arkansas.gov

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - ESCAPED INMATE GRANT HARDIN

From Rand Champion (DOC) <Rand.Champion@doc.arkansas.gov>

Date Sun 5/25/2025 5:39 PM

To Rand Champion (DOC) <Rand.Champion@doc.arkansas.gov>

Bcc Sam Dubke <Sam.Dubke@governor.arkansas.gov>; Cindy Murphy (ASP) <c.s.murphy@asp.arkansas.gov>; Manda Bass (DOC) <Manda.Bass@doc.arkansas.gov>; Shari Gray (DOC) <Shari.Gray@doc.arkansas.gov>; Thomas Burns (DOC) <Thomas.Burns@doc.arkansas.gov>; Lindsay Wallace (DOC) <Lindsay.Wallace@doc.arkansas.gov>; Wade Hodge (DOC) <Wade.Hodge@doc.arkansas.gov>; Dexter Payne (DOC) <Dexter.Payne@doc.arkansas.gov>; Thomas Hurst (DOC) <Thomas.Hurst@doc.arkansas.gov>; Andrew DeMillo AP <ademillo@ap.org>; austinbailey@arktimes.com <austinbailey@arktimes.com>; benjaminhardy@arktimes.com <benjaminhardy@arktimes.com>; KTHV <news@thv11.com>; news@fox16.com <news@fox16.com>; news4@kark.com <news4@kark.com>; newsroom@katv.com <newsroom@katv.com>; KHBS/KHOG 40/29 TV <news@4029tv.com>; news@knwa.com <news@knwa.com>; Danny Shameer <dshameer@arkansasonline.com>; Arkansas Democrat Gazette <news@arkansasonline.com>; griffincoop@arktimes.com <griffincoop@arktimes.com>; news@jonesbororightnow.com <news@jonesbororightnow.com>; Northwest Arkansas ADG <jsnyder@adgnewsroom.com>; mtalley@talkbusiness.net <mtalley@talkbusiness.net>; Michael Wickline <mwickline@adgnewsroom.com>; Talk Business <roby@talkbusiness.net>; sgoff@adgnewsroom.com <sgoff@adgnewsroom.com>; tholt@adgnewsroom.com <tholt@adgnewsroom.com>; Sonny Albarado <salbarado@arkansasadvocate.com>; info@arkansasadvocate.com <info@arkansasadvocate.com>; KFSM TV 5 <news@kfsm.com>; andrew.lankford@kfsm.com <andrew.lankford@kfsm.com>; news@kait8.com <news@kait8.com>; aplatt@arkansasadvocate.com <aplatt@arkansasadvocate.com>; cderby@kark.com <cderby@kark.com>; mrogers@kark.com <mrogers@kark.com>; nearley@adgnewsroom.com <nearley@adgnewsroom.com>; Worth Sparkman <worth.sparkman@axios.com>

 1 attachment (31 KB)

Grant Hardin Headshot.pdf;

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

CALICO ROCK – On Sunday, May 25, at approximately 3:40 p.m., inmate Grant Hardin, ADC #168541, escaped from the North Central Unit.

Anyone with information about inmate Hardin’s whereabouts should contact local law enforcement immediately.

The Division of Correction and the Division of Community Correction are working with local, state and federal law enforcement to follow leads.

Hardin has been at the North Central Unit since 2017, serving a 30-year sentence for first degree murder, as well as an additional sentence for rape. Hardin was the former police chief for the city of Gateway with a background in law enforcement.

Further information will be provided as it becomes available.



RAND CHAMPION
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Arkansas Department of Corrections
1302 Pike Avenue, Suite C
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72114
Phone: (501) 683-5191 (Office)
(870) 550-5210 (Cell)
Rand.Champion@doc.arkansas.gov

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Arkansas State Police

INVESTIGATIVE SUPPLEMENT ASP-2025-0704/18

Report Date: 06/18/2025

Primary Information

Description:	NCU WEST TOWER POST ORDERS
Dissemination Code:	SYSTEM WIDE ACCESS
Reporting LEO:	MCNEILL, MIKE (SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS / ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)
Report Status:	Approved
Report Status Date:	06/19/2025
Approved By:	RHOADS, STACIE (ARKANSAS STATE POLICE)

Narrative begins on the following page.



ARKANSAS STATE POLICE

Criminal Investigation Division

SPECIAL AGENT NOTES

On June 17, 2025, Candice Seay, North Central Unit Warden's Administrative Specialist, provided me a copy of the NCU West Tower Post Orders via email. The noted email and post orders will be made a part of the investigative file.

Case #: ASP-2025-0704	Agent: MCNEILL, MIKE
Report Date: <<CaseReport.ReportDate[Date]>>	ESCAPE

Mike McNeill

From: Candice Seay (DOC)
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 12:44 PM
To: Mike McNeill
Subject: West Tower Post Orders
Attachments: West Tower Post Orders.pdf

Thank you,

Candice Seay

North Central Unit Warden's Administrative Specialist III

Arkansas Department of Corrections

Division of Corrections

Phone: 870-297-3305

Fax: 870-297-4322

Email: candice.seay@doc.arkansas.gov



