

TRAINEE ABUSE CASE STUDY

The following information is provided as a case study from an Advanced Individual Training (AIT) Battalion Command Sergeant Major. This information is fact; names and references were changed to protect the privacy of those involved.

Preliminary Information: On whether SFC Bland, an instructor, sexually harassed PV2 Coin, an IET student, violating battalion policy, TRADOC 350-6, para 2-6j, XXX School policies, and AR 600-20.

Fact: The preponderance of the evidence shows that SFC Bland, an instructor, committed physical sexual harassment on PVT Coin, violating AR 600-20, para 4-15 and 7-5; TRADOC Reg 350-6, para 2-6j; XXX policies 01-04 and 01-05, and X Bn policies 06, 07, and 12. Interviews were conducted with PVT Coin in which she describes several incidents. The most serious incident is of physical harassment taking place in a classroom bay. All students, with the exception of PVT Coin, had proceeded to the bay door to begin forming up for return to the barracks. The incident involves SFC Bland betting PVT Coin one dollar that she could not throw a pen she had found, across the bay. PVT Coin accepted the bet and threw the pen successfully across the bay, at which time SFC Bland gave her a dollar, which she refused to take. SFC Bland admits to this taking place. At this point PVT Coin states that SFC Bland crumpled the dollar and placed it down the front of her tee shirt saying, "you keep it". SFC Bland does not admit to this portion of the incident, but a witness, PVT Fracks, does corroborate PVT Coin's view of the incident. PVT Fracks had gone to return a tool to the tool room and, upon returning to the bay, noticed that all the students were gone with the exception of PVT Coin, who was standing in the bay with SFC Bland. He observed the incident as it occurred and corroborated PVT Coin's version completely. Due to his location, SFC Bland did not observe PVT Fracks and did not know he was present.

Another incident occurred approximately three weeks prior to the above incident. In this incident SFC Bland, who is eating pumpkin seeds, goes up to PVT Coin in the classroom bay and proceeds to attempt to throw them down the front of her BDU blouse. According to PVT Coin's statement, she found several pumpkin seeds down her tee shirt that evening when she returned to the barracks. This incident was witnessed by no one and SFC Bland does not admit to it.

Disciplinary Action: SFC Bland received a letter of reprimand from the X Brigade Commander and it was filed in his permanent records for violating AR600-20, para 4-15 (contact with a trainee outside the needs for training) and 7-5 (physical sexual harassment), TRADOC Reg 350-6, para 2-6j, XXX School policies 01-04 and 01-05, and X Bn policies 06, 07, and 12 for his involvement with an AIT student. He received a Relief for Cause NCOER, was directed to have no further contact with AIT students, and was relieved of all assigned instructor duties.

Lessons Learned: That the Battalion battle-buddy policy standard must be enforced. Command emphasis on the implementation of this policy is necessary. Company, Division, and Department cadre must enforce this standard and ensure all instructors, drill sergeants, and cadre comply with the policy and governing regulations.