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# Former jailer faces felony over relations with inmate

Judge Knox-Bauer sets signature bond during initial appearance Tuesday; incident occurred in 2018

A former Taylor County jailer is facing up to 40 years in prison and up to \$100,000 for having a sexual relationship with a male inmate.

Bailee Cheever, 25, faces a single charge of second degree sexual assault of an inmate by correction staff. This is a Class C felony.

Cheever was in Taylor County Circuit Court on Tuesday for an initial appearance in the case. She is represented by attorney Karl Kelz with Price County District Attorney Mark Fuhr as special prosecutor.

At Tuesday's hearing, Taylor County Circuit Court Judge Ann Knox-Bauer followed a recommendation from Fuhr and ordered a \$2,000 signature bond. A settlement conference was scheduled for Monday, Feb. 19. As a condition of the bond, Cheever was ordered to have no contact with the inmate.

According to the criminal complaint, Cheever began working for Taylor County in July 2016 and worked third shift from 10 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. in the jail. In September 2018, then-chief deputy Larry Woebeking was contacted by other jail staff members about concerns that Cheever was having extended visits with the inmate. Cheever was suspended from the jail staff and Woebeking asked deputies from Marathon County to investigate potential misconduct in office.

According to the complaint, Cheever and the inmate exchanged numerous text messages and had conversations over the cell block intercom with the longest at one hour, 23 minutes in length. In addition, Cheever also admitted to investigators to having sexual contact and sexual intercourse with the inmate in the Med Room at the Taylor County Jail while she was on shift. The incidents are alleged to have occurred between Aug. 14, 2018 and Sept. 18, 2018.

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According to the complaint, Cheever said she had known the inmate "in passing" prior to him being incarcerated and that he would talk to her about his situation and had worked with her husband. According to the complaint, over time she said the inmate became "super charismatic" and would make comments about her hair or appearance. He would also wait until she was on duty to ask to do things like change out property or asking for additional medication from the Med Room. In those situations, Cheever would take him to the room and either he would stay in the hallway or he would come in the room with her.

The contact between the two continued while Cheever was off work as well with them texting each other. Cheever told investigators that the conversations "got carried away" and got sexual in nature. According to the complaint, "she told him 'I love you' a lot, but didn't mean it" and that the inmate had asked her to leave her husband to be with him after he was released from jail. She told investigators that the inmate was "very charismatic and good with words." Cheever told investigators that she put a total of \$70 on the inmate's texting account using prepaid credit cards she purchased at a local grocery store in order for them to continue texting.

According to the complaint, the visits to the Med Room progressed to include kissing, over-the-clothes contact, and ultimately intercourse that occurred on September 8 or 9, 2018. The complaint notes she told officers that "it felt good to be almost appreciated in a way" and receive the attention from the inmate.

Cheever left employment with Taylor County on Sept. 20, 2018.

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