



NEWS SPORTS BUSINESS ENTERTAINMENT LIFE TRAVEL BLOGS JOBS HOMES CARS CLASSIFIED



0 Comments

Recommend

9

## Ex-Texas prison official on trial for pupil sex

By BETSY BLANEY Associated Press © 2011 The Associated Press

Feb. 6, 2011, 10:56AM

### Share



Del.icio.us



Digg



Twitter



Facebook



StumbleUpon



Email

Recommend

9 people recommend this.

LUBBOCK, [Texas](#) — Six years have passed since a sex scandal involving jail administrators and teenage inmates were first investigated by Texas Rangers.

In that time, the case has prompted the resignations or firings of several top state officials responsible for jailing Texas' juvenile criminals and sent a former West Texas jail administrator to prison.

Now, after years of court motions and alleged inaction by a local [district attorney](#), state prosecutors have one target left in their case: John Paul Hernandez. The 45-year-old former principal at the [Texas Youth Commission's West Texas State School](#) in [Pyote](#) is on trial this week on charges he sexually molested pupils in 2004 and 2005.

The trial, which was moved to Lubbock out of Ward County at the defense's request, is perhaps the last criminal aspect to a scandal

that prosecutors say scarred more than a dozen youth abused by jail administrators. Ex-assistant Superintendent Ray Edward Brookins, the only other official at the youth prison charged in the scheme, was sentenced in April to 10 years in prison.

Hernandez's trial, which begins Monday with jury selection, comes four years after he pleaded not guilty to 11 counts stemming from allegations he had oral sex with pupils while at the school.

The [Texas attorney general's](#) office took over the prosecution of both former officials after the Ward County district attorney was accused of not acting quickly on the cases.

One of Hernandez's alleged victims, who The Associated Press would not identify under company policy, said the delays made him skeptical that his former principal would ever stand trial.

"For the past six years, it's felt like no one cared about what happened to me, and that Mr. Hernandez could get away with sexually assaulting me," the victim said in an e-mailed statement through his attorney. "In TYC (Texas Youth Commission) they try to teach you to be accountable for what you do. I hope Mr. Hernandez is held accountable for what he did to me."

Authorities believe at least 13 boys were sexually abused at the school, which closed last summer. The case upended the Texas Youth Commission and led to accusations of a cover-up, reports exposing lax medical care, beatings, and a culture of retaliation against whistle-blowers. Lawmakers eventually ordered an overhaul of the system.

A report from Texas Rangers investigators in 2005 said Brookins and Hernandez summoned young male inmates from their dorms late at night. The report states that for at least two years the teens went with the men to ball fields, darkened conference rooms, and offices for sex.

Investigators described late-night encounters involving oral sex, masturbation and pornographic videos. Some of the teen inmates, investigators said, were also threatened with retaliation. In one instance, investigators alleged, an

inmate who resisted Brookins' advances reported he threatened to keep the teen locked up until he was 21 unless he complied.

Other inmates were lured into sexual acts with offers of birthday cake or pledges of help getting into college, investigators said.

An internal investigation revealed that several employees at the Pyote jail complained to their bosses or other TYC officials but their complaints about alleged abuse by Hernandez and Brookins were largely ignored.

Both were allowed to quietly resign amid the Rangers' investigation.

Hernandez's attorney, Albert G. Valadez, said his client denies the charges and is looking forward to completing the trial.

The allegations became public in 2007 when the Rangers report was brought to the attention of lawmakers in Austin, and prompted an outcry from legislators and parents of teens jailed at other TYC facilities. Legislators in 2009 put an executive commissioner in charge of the commission for two years. The changes improved staff-to-inmate ratios, created new investigative powers to check abuse claims and prohibited courts from sending youths to state lockups for misdemeanors.

Widespread allegations of abuses and inmates being held beyond their sentences at TYC jails across the state quickly emerged and state officials launched an agency-wide probe aimed at rooting out problem employees.

In the wake of the Pyote revelations, TYC's top two administrators lost their jobs and the state did a comprehensive review of the entire TYC system. They found other reports of abuse and as part of an overhaul, released 550 inmates who had served their minimum sentences.

TYC officials weren't the only ones ensnared in the scandal.

Ward County District Attorney Randall W. Reynolds received the Rangers report in 2005 and was accused of failing to act on it.

Reynolds blamed a "breakdown in communication" for delays in the case, which was quickly taken over by state Attorney General **Greg Abbott's** office.

Once the men were indicted, Abbott vowed speedy trials. But the cases stalled in the court system. Initial trial dates for both men came and went and a flurry of motions, including where the cases should be heard, went unanswered for months.

Last year, attorney general spokesman Jerry Strickland said, prosecutors repeatedly asked District **Judge Bob Parks** to set trial dates but the requests went unanswered. Parks was removed from the case last July. Jay Gibson, an Odessa judge who replaced Parks, then ordered the cases moved to Odessa, about 50 miles east of Pyote.

Valadez, Hernandez's attorney, succeeded in having the trial moved further from Ward County to Lubbock.

---

## Read More

### From Chron.com:

Powered by  one spot

#### [Ex-Texas prison official on trial for sex with teen...](#)

LUBBOCK, Texas — Six years have passed since a sex scandal involving jail administrators and teenage inmates were first...

#### [AP source: Obama wants jobless aid help...](#)

WASHINGTON — The White House says a proposal that gives states an opportunity to collect more unemployment insurance taxes...

#### [Charles Taylor's boycotts end of war crimes trial](#)

LEIDSCHENDAM, Netherlands — Charles Taylor's war crimes trial is ending the way it began — with the former Liberian president...

#### [Perry: State of the State is strong](#)

Gov. Rick Perry just opened his state of the State message, saying that Texans won't remember speeches from state leaders. "We will...

#### [Government: No electronic flaws in Toyotas](#)

WASHINGTON — A government investigation into Toyota safety problems has found no electronic flaws to account for reports...

### From Around the Web:

#### [Abuse trial starts for ex-Texas prison official](#)

Feb 08, 2011 | statesman.com - Texas

#### [Vernon teacher on trial for alleged sex with student](#)

Feb 08, 2011 | Vancouver Sun - News / BC Region

#### [Group warns of continued abuse in Iraqi prisons](#)

Feb 08, 2011 | The Seattle Times: Nation & World

#### [Prosecutor: WikiLeaks' Julian Assange dodged Swedish investigators](#)

Feb 08, 2011 | L.A. Times - Europe

#### [Milan Prosecutors to Seek Berlusconi Trial in Prostitution Case](#)

Feb 08, 2011 | BusinessWeek.com -- Top News



#### [Driving in Seattle?](#)

Your auto insurer hates this. Obey this one trick to get extremely cheap rates.



#### [Seattle: Do NOT Buy Car Insurance!](#)

1 Trick Your Auto Insurer hides from you for extremely cheap rates.

ADVERTISEMENT

### Related Topics:

[Texas Youth Commission](#) • [West Texas State School](#) • [District attorney](#) • [Texas Attorney General](#) • [Texas](#)



### Add Your Comment

#### New to the site?

To use commenting, you need to sign up.

[Sign up](#)

#### Already a member?

Please log in.

[Forgot Password?](#)

Email

Password

☐ Remember Me

[Log in](#)

**[Washington Real Estate](#)**

Free Search: WA Homes for Sale.  
ZipRealty.com

**[Mortgage Rates Hit 2.99%](#)**

If you owe less than \$729k you probably  
www.SeeRefinanceRates.com

• **["Criminal Records"](#)**

Obtain Criminal Records On Anyone!  
Criminal-Info.com/CriminalRecords

**[1.25-1.45% Apply Online!](#)**

With AA+ Rated GE Capital Corp.  
GEinterestplus.com

Ads by Yahoo!

|  |  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| <b>CHRON</b><br><a href="#">Home</a><br><a href="#">Houston &amp; Texas</a><br><a href="#">Nation</a><br><a href="#">Business</a><br><a href="#">Sports</a><br><a href="#">Entertainment</a><br><a href="#">Life</a><br><a href="#">Travel</a><br><a href="#">Corrections</a><br><a href="#">Blogs</a> |  | <a href="#">Weather</a><br><a href="#">Chron Commons</a><br><a href="#">Traffic</a><br><br><b>TOPICS</b><br><a href="#">Small Business</a><br><a href="#">PetsHouston</a><br><a href="#">MomHouston</a><br><a href="#">HoustonBelief</a><br><a href="#">Gardening</a><br><a href="#">29-95</a> | <b>NEIGHBORHOODS</b><br><a href="#">Aldine</a><br><a href="#">Alief</a><br><a href="#">Baytown</a><br><a href="#">Bellaire</a><br><a href="#">Clear Lake</a><br><a href="#">Conroe</a><br><a href="#">Cy-Fair</a><br><a href="#">East End</a><br><a href="#">Fort Bend</a><br><a href="#">Heights</a><br><a href="#">Katy</a> | <a href="#">Kingwood</a><br><a href="#">Lake Houston</a><br><a href="#">Magnolia</a><br><a href="#">Memorial</a><br><a href="#">Montrose</a><br><a href="#">Pasadena</a><br><a href="#">Pearland</a><br><a href="#">Spring</a><br><a href="#">Tomball</a><br><a href="#">West U</a><br><a href="#">The Woodlands</a> | <b>MARKETPLACE</b><br><a href="#">Jobs</a><br><a href="#">Homes</a><br><a href="#">Cars</a><br><a href="#">Classifieds</a><br><a href="#">Place a classified ad</a><br><a href="#">Place a retail ad</a><br><a href="#">Contests</a> |
| <b>LOCAL SERVICES</b><br><a href="#">Houston Attorneys</a> <a href="#">Houston Salons</a> <a href="#">Houston HVAC Contractors</a>   |  |  |   |  |  |

[Privacy statement](#) | [Terms of service](#) | [About Our Ads](#)  
Copyright © 2011 The Houston Chronicle

**HEARST** *newspapers*