

Placer County Sheriff's Office faces lawsuits

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

Ten weeks after Placer County Sheriff Devon Bell announced that three of his officials had been arrested on allegations of excessive force against inmates at the Auburn Main Jail, his department is facing a series of lawsuits claiming that abuse at the jail has routinely gone unchecked and that video and audio recordings have been altered to cover up the wrongdoing.

At least three cases have been filed so far, and attorneys say several more are expected. The most recent case was filed Friday in federal court in Sacramento by civil rights attorney Mark Merin, who is seeking class-action status to represent hundreds of former and current inmates who may have been victimized.

The lawsuit, filed on behalf of former inmate Beau Bangert, claims that there "has been a group of sheriff's deputies ... working at the Auburn Main Jail that frequently utilized unreasonable force against inmates, sometimes individually and sometimes collectively."

Read the whole story