Inside Out — November 13, 2026: Deaths and Walkaways at Four Facilities, Maxwill Habeas Argument, and FSA Credit Litigation

This issue covers a cluster of operational events at Bureau of Prisons (BOP) facilities over the past two weeks: two in-custody deaths (FCI Talladega in Alabama and FCI Jesup in Georgia) and two walkaways from satellite camps (FCI Edgefield in South Carolina and FCI I Victorville in California). Each triggered mandatory BOP press releases, and each has practical implications for families trying to get information and for defendants watching camp-placement policy evolve.

On the legal front, the Supreme Court heard oral argument in Maxwill v. Dinis, the case asking whether a federal prisoner can use a 28 U.S.C. § 2241 habeas petition to challenge the BOP's refusal to transfer them to a halfway house or home confinement under the First Step Act (FSA). Reporting from SCOTUSblog and the LISA Newsletter suggests the Court is leaning narrow. We walk through what a narrow ruling would and would not do for people awaiting FSA-credit application.

Also inside: the bureau-wide rollout of the VITAL program for incarcerated veterans; the closure of FCI Thomson's satellite camp; a new third-party tracker of FSA time-credit and prerelease-placement rulings organized by district and circuit; and Thanksgiving-week visitation logistics. The practical tip this week focuses on confirming holiday visiting hours and phone-account funding before the Thanksgiving surge.

THIS WEEK'S LEAD

Four BOP operational incidents in two weeks: two deaths, two camp walkaways

Theme: deaths and walkaways / custody notification

Between October 30 and November 10, 2026, the Bureau of Prisons issued four public incident notices. Two concerned deaths in custody: an individual found unresponsive at FCI Talladega (a medium-security federal prison in Talladega, Alabama) on or about November 8, and a death at FCI Jesup (a medium-security federal prison in Jesup, Georgia) reported on November 5. BOP press releases on in-custody deaths are typically brief and do not state cause of death pending investigation.

The other two incidents were 'walkaways' — a BOP term for an unauthorized departure from a minimum-security satellite camp, where there is no secure perimeter fence. On October 30, an individual walked away from the satellite camp at FCI I Victorville in California. On November 8, an individual walked away from the satellite camp at FCI Edgefield in South Carolina; according to local reporting, the U.S. Marshals Service captured that individual in Asheville, North Carolina two days later. A walkaway is charged as escape under 18 U.S.C. § 751(a) and carries a separate federal sentence.

For families, these events matter for two reasons. First, when an incident occurs at a facility, the institution often goes on modified operations — lockdowns, suspended visiting, suspended phones — and families need to know how to confirm status. Second, the walkaways will feed an ongoing internal BOP conversation about satellite-camp placement criteria, which has direct bearing on who gets designated to a camp going forward.

UNDERSTANDING THIS STORY

Before incarceration

What walkaways may mean for camp designation

A satellite camp is the minimum-security component attached to a higher-security federal prison. Camps house people with low PATTERN scores (the BOP's Prisoner Assessment Tool Targeting Estimated Risk and Needs), minimal violence history, and typically fewer than 10 years remaining to serve. Camp placement is highly desirable: no perimeter fence, more programming access, closer to work-cadre and community-custody opportunities.

When walkaways occur in clusters, BOP tends to respond with tightened designation criteria and, sometimes, with the conversion or closure of individual camps. The agency this month confirmed that FCI Thomson in Illinois will no longer house inmates at its satellite camp, and the string of walkaway press releases over the past several weeks has become visible enough that counsel preparing designation packets should expect added scrutiny.

If you are pre-sentence and your attorney is preparing a designation request, ensure the submission to the Designation and Sentence Computation Center (DSCC) in Grand Prairie, Texas addresses camp eligibility affirmatively: PATTERN score estimate, Public Safety Factors (PSFs), Management Variables, and any disqualifiers (detainers, prior escapes, violence history). The judicial recommendation on the Judgment & Commitment (J&C) order, while not binding on BOP, carries weight.

During incarceration

If your facility is on modified operations

When a facility goes on lockdown or modified operations following an incident, communication with the outside is the first thing to go. Document the dates and duration in writing — these facts become relevant for later administrative remedy filings concerning missed legal calls, missed medical appointments, or missed programming hours that affect FSA Earned Time Credit (ETC) accrual.

If programming you are enrolled in (FSA-approved Evidence-Based Recidivism Reduction programs, Productive Activities, UNICOR, education) is suspended, keep your own count of missed sessions. When operations resume, ask your Unit Team and your programming coordinator to confirm in writing how the suspension will be reflected in your ETC ledger. BOP's position is generally that credits continue to accrue during institutional lockdowns not caused by the individual, but practice varies — a written record is your protection.

POLICY AND REGULATORY REFERENCES

Program Statement 5538.05 (Death of an Inmate) governs internal notification and reporting procedures when an individual in BOP custody dies. The statement requires the Warden to notify designated next of kin and to issue a public press release; it does not require disclosure of cause of death before medical examiner findings. Program Statement 5553.09 (Escape) defines a walkaway and triggers immediate notification to the U.S. Marshals Service, local law enforcement, and victims under the Crime Victims' Rights Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3771.

The criminal escape statute, 18 U.S.C. § 751(a), carries up to five years consecutive to any undischarged sentence. Sentencing is governed by USSG § 2P1.1, with a base offense level of 13 for escape from secure custody and 8 for escape from non-secure custody (which includes satellite camps). A walkaway also results in loss of camp eligibility and typically a security-level increase, which is calculated through the inmate load and security designation form (BP-A0337).

For families seeking records, FOIA requests to BOP go to the Office of General Counsel's FOIA/PA Section at BOP headquarters. The request must reasonably describe the records and, if seeking records about an identified individual, include a Privacy Act waiver signed by that individual (or, for deceased individuals, proof of death and next-of-kin standing). Fees and processing categories are set by 28 C.F.R. § 16.10. Administrative appeals of FOIA denials go to the DOJ Office of Information Policy under 28 C.F.R. § 16.8.

ACTION ITEMS THIS WEEK

- If your loved one is at FCI Talladega, FCI Jesup, FCI Edgefield, or FCI I Victorville, call the facility switchboard (numbers at bop.gov) and ask the PIO whether the facility is on modified operations and when visiting and phones resume.
- Confirm your emergency-contact information is current in your loved one's central file by asking them to request a BP-A0408 update at their next Unit Team meeting.
- If you are pre-sentence and pursuing camp designation, ask counsel to document camp eligibility affirmatively in the DSCC designation packet: PATTERN score estimate, absence of Public Safety Factors, and judicial recommendation on the J&C.
- If you were in programming that was suspended by a lockdown, ask your Unit Team in writing (via Inmate Request to Staff, BP-A0148) how the suspension will be reflected in your FSA Earned Time Credit ledger.
- For an in-custody death, families seeking records should file (1) a request with the county medical examiner for the autopsy and (2) a FOIA request to BOP's FOIA/PA Section for the after-action report. Expect long timelines.

- If visiting is suspended through Thanksgiving week, confirm reinstated hours directly with the facility before traveling; do not rely on the posted schedule.

SOURCES

- Death at FCI Talladega — BOP
- Death at FCI Jesup — BOP
- Walkaway from FCI Edgefield's Satellite Camp — BOP
- Walkaway from FCI I Victorville's Satellite Camp — BOP
- South Carolina federal prison escapee captured in Asheville, marshals say — WLOS
- Man dies after being found unresponsive at Talladega federal prison — WBMA

DEEP DIVE 2

Maxwill v. Dinis: Supreme Court weighs habeas as a tool to compel halfway-house and home-confinement transfers

Theme: SCOTUS / habeas / FSA placement

On October 29, 2026, the Supreme Court heard oral argument in Maxwill v. Dinis, a case asking whether a federal prisoner may use a petition for writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 to challenge the Bureau of Prisons' refusal to transfer them to a residential reentry center (RRC, also called a halfway house) or home confinement based on First Step Act Earned Time Credits. SCOTUSblog's post-argument coverage reports that the Court appeared inclined toward a narrow ruling. The LISA Newsletter reported that during oral argument the Solicitor General advanced a new procedural argument — a shift in position — suggesting the government is now contesting threshold jurisdiction in addition to the merits.

The practical stakes are concrete. The First Step Act, codified at 18 U.S.C. § 3632(d)(4), authorizes eligible prisoners to earn time credits that are applied toward either supervised-release transition (up to 12 months) or prerelease custody — RRC or home confinement. In practice, BOP determines when and whether credits are actually applied, and prisoners who believe the agency has miscalculated or delayed application have very few procedural tools. A § 2241 habeas petition, filed in the district of confinement, has become the primary vehicle; a ruling foreclosing or narrowing that vehicle would reshape the landscape.

A decision is expected before the Court recesses for summer 2027, but could come earlier.

UNDERSTANDING THIS STORY

During incarceration

What to do now if you believe your FSA credits are miscalculated

Do not wait for the Supreme Court's ruling. Preserve your administrative record now. Start with an Inmate Request to Staff (BP-A0148, often called a 'cop-out') to your case manager asking for a printout of your FSA Time Credit Assessment and your current PATTERN score. Review it for accuracy: eligible programming hours, disallowed periods (any time in SHU, any writ trips, any disciplinary findings), and your current prerelease-custody projected date.

If the calculation looks wrong, file a BP-8 (informal resolution) with your Unit Team, then a BP-9 (formal administrative remedy at the Warden level) within 20 calendar days. If denied, appeal to the Regional Director on a BP-10 within 20 calendar days of the Warden's response, and to the General Counsel on a BP-11 within 30 calendar days of the Regional response. The full process is set out at 28 C.F.R. §§ 542.10–542.19. Completing BP-11 is required to establish 'exhaustion' before most federal courts will hear a habeas petition, so even if Maxwill narrows habeas, exhaustion remains valuable.

If you are within a few months of your projected prerelease-custody date and BOP has not moved you, document each unit-team meeting and each conversation with the Residential Reentry Manager (RRM) who oversees your region's halfway-house placements.

POLICY AND STATUTORY REFERENCES

The First Step Act's time-credit provisions live at 18 U.S.C. § 3632(d)(4). Eligible prisoners earn 10 or 15 days of credit per 30 days of successful participation in Evidence-Based Recidivism Reduction (EBRR) programs

or Productive Activities (PAs), depending on their PATTERN score tier (minimum/low vs. medium/high). BOP's implementing regulations are at 28 C.F.R. part 523, subpart E. The underlying placement authority for halfway-house and home-confinement transfers is 18 U.S.C. § 3624(c), as amended by the Second Chance Act and the FSA.

Section 3625 of Title 18 provides that '[t]he provisions of sections 554 and 555 and 701 through 706 of title 5 … do not apply to the making of any determination, decision, or order' under the subchapter governing BOP placement. Courts have read this as barring APA review of individualized placement decisions, which is why habeas has become the vehicle of choice.

The administrative remedy regime at 28 C.F.R. §§ 542.10–542.19 requires attempted informal resolution (BP-8), a formal BP-9 to the Warden, a BP-10 appeal to the Regional Director, and a BP-11 appeal to the General Counsel. Response deadlines (20 days at the institution, 30 at the region, 40 at the central office) can be extended once by the agency. The regulatory remedy for a non-response is to treat the absence of a response as a denial and move to the next level.

For habeas pleading, § 2241 requires filing in the district of confinement, naming the warden as respondent, and prior exhaustion of administrative remedies (a judicially created rather than statutory requirement, excusable in limited circumstances).

ACTION ITEMS THIS WEEK

- Request your current FSA Time Credit Assessment and PATTERN score from your case manager via BP-A0148 Inmate Request to Staff.
- If the credit calculation appears incorrect, open the administrative remedy chain immediately: BP-8 to the Unit Team, then BP-9 to the Warden within 20 days, BP-10 to the Regional Director, and BP-11 to the General Counsel.
- Keep dated copies of every remedy filing and every response. If BOP misses a response deadline under 28 C.F.R. § 542.18, treat the non-response as a denial and advance to the next level.
- Attorneys: consult the BOP Reform tracker (flagged by LISA Newsletter) when drafting § 2241 petitions, and preserve alternative theories under 28 U.S.C. § 1361 in case Maxwill narrows § 2241.
- Families: if a projected prerelease-custody date passes without placement, ask your loved one to request the specific reason in writing from the unit team and the Residential Reentry Manager.
- Monitor the Supreme Court docket for Maxwill v. Dinis; the decision will likely issue before summer 2027 recess.

SOURCES

- Court leans toward narrow ruling on inmate's use of habeas for accelerated transfer to a halfway house or home confinement — SCOTUSblog
- 'Our Bad,' Government Tells SCOTUS While Trying to Scuttle Habeas Case — Update for November 9, 2026 — LISA Newsletter (Legal Information Services Associates)
- Federal Criminal Justice Reform… Maybe in Small Steps — Update for November 12, 2026 — LISA Newsletter (Legal Information Services Associates)
- It's Now November… and Nothing's Happening (Except Maxwell) — Update for November 2, 2026 — LISA Newsletter (Legal Information Services Associates)

Systemic Issues Inside Out Is Watching

Patterns the publication is tracking this week from source material and court filings. Each entry includes factual description of the pattern and concrete guidance for readers affected by it.

Satellite-camp footprint continues to contract

PATTERN

Over the past several months, BOP has either closed or converted the satellite-camp component at multiple facilities. This month, FCI Thomson in Illinois confirmed it will no longer house inmates at its satellite camp. That announcement came in the same two-week window as walkaways at the Edgefield (South Carolina) and

Victorville (California) camps. The cumulative effect is a shrinking inventory of minimum-security camp beds nationally, which affects both initial designation for pre-sentence defendants and transfer applications for people currently at low- or medium-security facilities whose PATTERN scores and time remaining would otherwise qualify them for a step down to camp.

WHAT FAMILIES AND DEFENDANTS CAN DO

If you are pre-sentence and your attorney is targeting a camp designation, build the designation package with the current camp inventory in mind — identify three or four geographically acceptable camps your client would qualify for rather than a single preferred facility. If you are currently in custody and pursuing a redesignation to camp, file a BP-A0148 to your case manager requesting a Program Review that addresses your eligibility for minimum security and ask the Unit Team to document that review in the Inmate Skills Development Plan. If denied, use the BP-9 through BP-11 administrative remedy chain under 28 C.F.R. §§ 542.10–542.19.

SOURCES

- FCI Thomson will no longer house inmates at satellite camp, BOP says — WQAD
- Walkaway from FCI Edgefield's Satellite Camp — BOP
- Walkaway from FCI I Victorville's Satellite Camp — BOP

District- and circuit-level divergence on FSA credit disputes

PATTERN

Litigation over the BOP's application of First Step Act time credits and prerelease-custody placement continues to produce divergent rulings across federal districts and circuits. LISA Newsletter reports that a nonprofit, BOP Reform, now maintains a tracker organizing those rulings by district and circuit with links to the underlying opinions. The practical consequence is that outcomes on identical FSA claims can turn substantially on venue, and that litigants and counsel benefit from forum-specific pleading tailored to the most favorable published opinions in the district of confinement.

WHAT FAMILIES AND DEFENDANTS CAN DO

If you or your client is preparing to challenge an FSA credit calculation or a delayed RRC/home-confinement transfer, identify the district of confinement first, then search for the most recent § 2241 rulings in that district and the governing circuit. Where favorable district-level opinions exist, cite them directly in the petition. Where the circuit has not yet addressed the issue, preserve the argument with a clean record. The BOP Reform tracker is one organizational tool; PACER docket searches in the district of confinement for § 2241 petitions filed by pro se prisoners also surface recent rulings.

SOURCES

- Federal Criminal Justice Reform… Maybe in Small Steps — Update for November 12, 2026 — LISA Newsletter (Legal Information Services Associates)
- Second Chances — Update for November 10, 2026 — LISA Newsletter (Legal Information Services Associates)

Compassionate release after Rutherford

PATTERN

The LISA Newsletter reports continuing district- and circuit-court application of the Supreme Court's decision in Rutherford, which has narrowed the circumstances under which district courts find 'extraordinary and compelling reasons' for sentence reduction under 18 U.S.C. § 3582(c)(1)(A). Recent rulings have declined to find extraordinary and compelling reasons in situations where earlier post-FSA case law had been more receptive, particularly for non-retroactive sentencing-law changes.

WHAT FAMILIES AND DEFENDANTS CAN DO

Petitioners preparing or renewing a compassionate release motion should structure the 'extraordinary and compelling reasons' section around the specific categories enumerated in U.S. Sentencing Guidelines § 1B1.13 as amended — medical circumstances, age, family circumstances, victim-of-abuse, and the 'other' catch-all — rather than relying primarily on non-retroactive sentencing-law disparity arguments that Rutherford has made harder to sustain. Ensure the administrative request to the Warden under § 3582(c)(1)(A) is on file and that the 30-day lapse period has run before filing in court. Document medical and family circumstances with contemporaneous records.

SOURCES

- Rutherford Claims Another Victim — Update for November 6, 2026 — LISA Newsletter (Legal Information Services Associates)

BOP Operations

VITAL program for incarcerated veterans expands bureau-wide

BOP · 2026-11-10

The Veterans Integration to Address Transition and Leverage (VITAL) program, which coordinates reentry planning, VA benefits enrollment, and healthcare referrals for incarcerated veterans, is now available at all BOP institutions. Veterans in custody should ask their Unit Team or Reentry Affairs Coordinator to confirm VITAL enrollment and to document the veteran's DD-214 in the central file; VA healthcare enrollment and benefits applications can be initiated pre-release through VITAL coordinators.

Spotlight on the NIC Library and Information Center

BOP · 2026-11-06

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Library and Information Center, a federally funded corrections research library, offers free document delivery and reference services to practitioners, researchers, and the public. Attorneys, advocates, and family members researching federal-prison policy can request materials at nicic.gov; this is a useful resource for locating older BOP Program Statements and corrections-management literature that is otherwise hard to find.

Operation Full-Strength

BOP · 2026-11-03

BOP announced 'Operation Full-Strength,' a hiring and staffing initiative aimed at correctional-officer vacancies. For families, the staffing picture at a specific facility can affect lockdown frequency, programming availability, and visiting coverage; the agency's regional vacancy data is not routinely public, but a facility's unit team is generally willing to discuss current staffing conditions when asked directly.

Sentencing & Courts

Katherine Kealoha set for halfway-house release after serving a fraction of a 13-year sentence

KITV · 2026-11-12

A former Honolulu prosecutor convicted in a federal corruption case is being transferred to a residential reentry center (halfway house) well before her full sentence completion date. Cases like this illustrate how FSA Earned Time Credits, combined with Second Chance Act prerelease-custody authority under 18 U.S.C. § 3624(c), can substantially compress the custodial portion of a sentence for individuals who complete recidivism-reduction programming and maintain a low PATTERN score.

Federal prisoners can spend years on home confinement, at a cost

Forbes · 2026-11-07

The Forbes coverage focuses on the financial cost of extended home confinement — subsistence payments owed to the halfway house or supervising contractor (typically 25% of gross income under BOP policy), electronic-monitoring fees, and the practical cost of maintaining employment and housing. Families planning for a loved one's home-confinement return should budget for subsistence obligations and confirm the specific rate with the supervising Residential Reentry Manager.

Tri-Cities 'ghost cattle' rancher Easterday asks for clemency

Tri-City Herald · 2026-11-12

A federally convicted fraud defendant has submitted a clemency petition. For readers considering a petition, the standard pathway is the Office of the Pardon Attorney at the Department of Justice (justice.gov/pardon). Commutation petitions require a waiting period (generally five years from release for pardon; no fixed waiting period for commutation of an active sentence) and a detailed petition form. The year-end calendar period historically sees heightened clemency activity, though grants remain rare in any given year.

Policy & Legislation

FCC may lift cellphone-prison jamming ban

LISA Newsletter (Legal Information Services Associates) · 2026-11-03

The Federal Communications Commission is considering changes to its longstanding prohibition on cellphone-signal jamming inside correctional facilities. Any rule change would apply primarily to state facilities (federal institutions generally use managed-access systems rather than jamming), but the FCC's proceeding is worth monitoring for families whose loved ones are housed in state contract facilities or in federal facilities that contract with state systems. Comments on FCC rulemakings can be filed at fcc.gov.

Second Chances — Update for November 10, 2026 (AEDPA/§ 2255 limits)

LISA Newsletter (Legal Information Services Associates) · 2026-11-10

LISA's write-up summarizes recent appellate rulings applying the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 (AEDPA) limits on successive 28 U.S.C. § 2255 post-conviction petitions. For readers whose first § 2255 was denied, a second-or-successive petition requires prior authorization from the Court of Appeals under 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(3), and the grounds for authorization are narrow (newly discovered evidence establishing innocence, or a new rule of constitutional law made retroactive by the Supreme Court).

Conditions & Litigation

Miami-Dade 'brick oven' heat lawsuit certified as class action

Miami Herald · 2026-11-12

A detention-conditions suit alleging unconstitutional heat conditions at a Miami-Dade facility has been certified as a class action. While the facility is not BOP, the certification is a useful reference point for federal detainees and inmates pursuing Eighth Amendment conditions claims under Bivens or 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (for state facilities). Federal plaintiffs face narrower Bivens doctrine, but conditions complaints should still be documented through the BOP administrative remedy process (BP-8/9/10/11) to preserve any future claim.

DOJ contests January 6 jail-abuse lawsuit

RadarOnline · 2026-11-11

The Department of Justice is defending against a civil action filed by individuals detained following the January 6, 2021 Capitol events alleging unconstitutional conditions. The litigation is in an early procedural posture. The case is one of several ongoing conditions suits concerning federal and D.C. detention facilities; outcomes could shape pleading standards for future federal conditions claims.

PRACTICAL TIP

Thanksgiving visiting: confirm hours and fund phone accounts before the surge

Thanksgiving falls on Thursday, November 26. Visiting at BOP institutions during Thanksgiving week is typically modified — many facilities offer special holiday visiting on Thanksgiving Day itself, but hours and capacity differ by institution. Call the facility's visiting room directly (numbers at bop.gov) at least 10 days ahead to confirm hours, and re-confirm 48 hours before you travel; incidents (like the ones covered in this issue) can trigger visiting suspensions on short notice.

Before the holiday, fund the TRULINCS phone account and commissary so your loved one does not run out during the week when institutional staffing is thinned. Phone-line congestion is predictable on Thanksgiving Day itself; calls placed in the early morning or late evening typically connect more reliably. If a scheduled visit is canceled due to modified operations, document the date and reason in writing and ask the visiting room for a reschedule — most facilities will accommodate a makeup visit within the following month.

Inside Out will publish next on November 27. Readers who need further assistance navigating a specific federal-prison matter can reach DrPrison.org at help@drprison.org.

NEED FURTHER ASSISTANCE?

Readers navigating a specific federal-prison matter — a designation question, a halfway house issue, an administrative remedy, a compassionate release motion — can reach DrPrison.org directly at help@drprison.org. Inside Out is a free service; no subscription required.

Inside Out is published biweekly by DrPrison.org. Founded by Dr. Patrick Fisher, PhD, LPC, NCC. Editorial contributions from lived-experience consultants including Ken Gaughan.
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