

Chad McFarland Discusses Sergeant at West Point Accused of Filming Female Cadets

Sergeant First Class Michael McClendon is facing a number of charges in military court, accused of videotaping female cadets without their consent. Officials say these images appear to have been taken at a number of locations on West Point campus, including in bathroom showers and through windows. Army officials say some of these images may have been taken consensually. "The military holds any type of sex based offense or any even consensual sex between a trainer and a trainee is absolutely prohibited," said Chad McFarland, former JAG Attorney. An Army spokesman at the Pentagon says they're in the process of contacting dozens of women to let them know their privacy may have been violated. They're also offering counseling and support services for these women. In response to the investigation, New York's Senator Kristin Gillibrand tweeted, "Another disturbing report illustrating the need for real reform of military culture & increased accountability." Army officials say they've been investigating Sergeant McClendon for about a year. Sergeant McClendon was responsible for a company of 125 cadets at West Point from July 2009 to May 2013. Last week, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand unveiled legislation that would drastically change the way the military handles complaints. "When we take these cases outside of the chain of command, we give the victims the basic confidence to know that justice will be had and there will be accountability and transparency in their case," said Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand. In a statement, General Campbell, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, said, "The Army is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of our Cadets at the Military Academy at West Point - as well as soldiers throughout the Army. Once notified of the violation, a full investigation was launched followed by swift action to correct the problem. Our Cadets must be confident that issues such as these are handled quickly and decisively, and that our system will hold those responsible accountable." Army officials say Sergeant McClendon has been moved from West Point to Fort Drum for the duration of the investigation. The next step, is a grand jury hearing that will decide if there is enough evidence to proceed with a grand jury trial.