



# Department of Investigation

## *Press Release*

**Release # 061-2000**

### **DOI Arrests 4 City Correction Officers, Cook, And Inmate**

*-Drug Smuggling Crackdown At Manhattan, Queens & Rikers Island Jail-*

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2000**

EDWARD J. KURIANSKY, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the arrest of 5 Department of Correction (DOC) employees -- 4 Correction Officers and a cook -- and a Rikers Island maximum security inmate for attempting to smuggle drugs into 5 City jails, 3 on Rikers Island and 2 others in Manhattan and Queens. The Correction Officers and the inmate were also charged with bribery. The arrests were the result of separate undercover investigations.

According to Commissioner Kuriansky, the DOC employees met with DOI undercover agents, posing as friends of various inmates, on 10 separate dates between December 10, 1999, and July 31, 2000, and allegedly accepted bribes ranging from \$75 to \$800 to smuggle heroin, cocaine, and marihuana into 5 different detention facilities. The Rikers inmate, between March and June 2000, allegedly offered a total of \$550 in payoffs to a Correction Officer who promptly notified DOI of the bribe offers.

Commissioner Kuriansky said that DOI initiated an investigation in December, after Correction Officers and DOC supervisors referred allegations from inmates that several Correction Officers were smuggling drugs to prisoners.

Commissioner Kuriansky said, "Corrupt employees can endanger the safety of all personnel and compromise the security and integrity of a correctional facility. The smuggling of contraband into City jail facilities is a very serious crime and a top priority for DOI. It is therefore especially gratifying that during the course of this investigation, an incorruptible Correction Officer promptly reported an inmate's bribe offers, and I commend him for his honesty and professionalism."

Acting Correction Commissioner Gary M. Lanigan said, "The seriousness of this breach of trust jeopardizes the safety and security of fellow officers as well as inmates in our care, and is totally unacceptable. We will continue to assist the DOI Inspector General's Office in uncovering and prosecuting any such incidents."

A summary of the facts and circumstances surrounding each arrest follows:

1.) CO MICHAEL CONNORS, 36, of Staten Island, on July 12 and July 18, 2000, allegedly smuggled a total of 8 "nickel" bags and a half-ounce of marihuana to a Otis Bantum Correctional Center, Rikers Island inmate,

and accepted a total of \$150 cash from a DOI undercover agent posing as the inmate's girlfriend. CONNORS, a Correction Officer since April 17, 1997, earns a salary of \$36,681 a year, but has been suspended without pay pending the outcome of the case. He has been charged with Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, a Class D felony; Receiving Reward for Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a Class E felony; Promoting Prison Contraband in the Second Degree, and Criminal Sale of Marihuana in the Fourth Degree, both Class A misdemeanors; and, Criminal Possession of Marihuana in the Fifth Degree, a Class B misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces up to 7 years in prison.

2.) CO RICHARD GORDON, 34, of Queens, on December 30, 1999, and January 7, 2000, allegedly smuggled a total of one ounce of simulated cocaine to a James A. Thomas Center, Rikers Island inmate, and accepted a total of \$1,200 cash from a DOI undercover agent posing as the inmate's girlfriend. GORDON, 34, a Correction Officer since September 14, 1989, earns a salary of \$49,023 a year, but has been suspended without pay pending the outcome of the case. He has been charged with Attempted Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree, a Class A- II felony; Attempted Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree, a Class C felony; Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, and Promoting Prison Contraband in the First Degree, both Class D felonies; and, Receiving Reward for Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a Class E felony. If convicted, he faces up to life in prison.

3.) CO GRINDL HAWKINS, 36, of the Bronx, on December 10, 1999, and January 5, 2000, allegedly smuggled a total of one ounce of simulated cocaine to an Anna M. Kross Center, Rikers Island inmate, and accepted a total of \$600 cash from a DOI undercover agent posing as a friend of the inmate. HAWKINS, a Correction Officer since August 30, 1990, earns a salary of \$49,023 a year, but has been suspended without pay pending the outcome of the case. She has been charged with Attempted Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree, a Class A-II felony; Attempted Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree, a Class C felony; Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, and Promoting Prison Contraband in the First Degree, both Class D felonies; and, Receiving Reward for Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a Class E felony. If convicted, she faces up to life in prison.

4.) CO DANIELLE RUTLEDGE, 31, of Queens, on July 26 and July 31, 2000, allegedly smuggled a total of one ounce of simulated cocaine to a Queens Detention Center inmate, and accepted a total of \$1,200 cash from a DOI undercover agent posing as the inmate's sister. RUTLEDGE, 31, a Probationary Correction Officer since April 1, 1999, earns a salary of \$29,624 a year, but has been suspended without pay pending her anticipated termination by DOC's Committee on Uniform Personnel. She has been charged with Attempted Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree, a Class A- II felony; Attempted Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree, a Class C felony; Bribe Receiving in the Third Degree, a Class D felony; Receiving Reward for Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a Class E felony; and, Promoting Prison Contraband in the Second Degree, and Official Misconduct, both Class A misdemeanors. If convicted, she faces up to life in prison.

5.) OLLIS WOODS, 39, of Brooklyn, on June 17 and June 21, 2000, allegedly smuggled a total of one ounce of simulated cocaine and one gram of simulated heroin to a Manhattan Detention Center inmate, and accepted a total of \$900 cash from a DOI undercover agent posing as the inmate's sister. WOODS, a DOC cook since January 9, 1989, earns a salary of \$25,740 a year, but has been suspended without pay pending the outcome of the case. He has been charged with Attempted Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Second Degree, a Class A-II felony; Attempted Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree, and Attempted Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree, both Class C felonies; Receiving Reward for Official Misconduct in the Second Degree, a Class E felony; and, Promoting Prison Contraband in the Second Degree, a Class A misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces up to life in prison.

6.) CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON, 23, of Manhattan, a maximum security inmate at the Central Punitive Segregation Unit, Otis Bantum Correctional Center, who had been incarcerated on Rikers Island since November 5, 1999, allegedly offered a Correction Officer a total of \$550 in bribes between March 2000 and June 2000, to smuggle marihuana to him. The Correction Officer promptly notified DOI of the bribe offers. ANDERSON was serving a 1-year jail sentence for Attempted Criminal Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree. He has been charged with Bribery in the Third Degree, a Class D felony, and, Obstructing Governmental Administration in the Second Degree, a Class A misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces up to 7 years in prison.

The investigations were conducted by Michael Caruso, DOI's Inspector General for the Department of Correction, and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Louis Marano; Supervising Investigators Migdalia Figueroa and George Santiago; Correction Officer Investigators Timothy Brymn, Eric Gomez, and Brian Martin; and Special Investigator William Injeian. Assisting in the investigation were members of other DOI investigative units, including Chief Investigator Alberta Ancrum, and Special Investigator Rosemary Caruso.

Commissioner Kuriansky expressed his sincere appreciation to DOC Acting Commissioner Lanigan, DOC Chief of Security Robert Davoren and his staff, and the detention facility security staffs for their assistance and cooperation in the investigation.

The cases of CONNORS, GORDON, HAWKINS, and ANDERSON are being prosecuted by the Office of Bronx District Attorney Robert T. Johnson. Assistant District Attorneys Richard Best, John Carroll, Laura Moore-Brown, and Kevin Zolot are assigned to handle the matters. The case of WOODS is being prosecuted by the Office of Manhattan District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau. The case of RUTLEDGE is being prosecuted by the Office of Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown. Assistant District Attorney Daniel O'Leary is assigned to handle the matter.