



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

**TWO NEW YORK CITY CORRECTION OFFICERS AMONG SIX DEFENDANTS
CHARGED WITH CONSPIRING TO ACCEPT BRIBES AND SMUGGLE
CONTRABAND INTO RIKERS ISLAND FACILITIES FOR GANG MEMBERS**

Cell Phones and Narcotics Smuggled to Members of the Bloods Gang

Two criminal complaints were unsealed today in federal court in the Eastern District of New York charging six defendants with conspiring to bribe correction officers employed by the New York City Department of Corrections (DOC) as part of contraband smuggling conspiracies. Correction Officers Krystle Burrell and Katrina Patterson, as well as Ashley Medina, Imani Matthews and Terrae Hinds were arrested earlier today, and their initial appearances are scheduled for this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Lois Bloom. Defendant Michael Ross is currently in New York State custody and will make his initial appearance at a later date.

Breon Peace, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Ricky J. Patel, Acting Special Agent-in-Charge, Homeland Security Investigations, New York Field Office (HSI), Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner, New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), and Keechant L. Sewell, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD) announced the arrests and charges.

“The defendants, public servants on the City’s payroll, allegedly smuggled contraband, including cell phones and drugs, to incarcerated gang members at Rikers Island. The flow of contraband into our jails is a serious problem which puts inmates, fellow officers and potentially the public at risk,” stated United States Attorney Peace. “We will continue to root out corruption at Rikers Island and work to protect incarcerated individuals and correction officers in our jails.”

“As alleged, Burrell and Patterson, both New York City Correctional Officers, brought shame and disgrace to New York’s Boldest by putting the safety of fellow officers and inmates at risk by conspiring to introduce contraband at Rikers Island Correctional Facilities on

behalf of known Bloods Gang members,” said HSI New York Acting Special Agent in Charge Patel. “The details in the complaint allege that both officers brazenly betrayed their oath to act with integrity and professionalism to create a safe environment in correctional facilities - their actions tarnish the great reputation of the men and women who put on the uniform of a New York City Correction Officer and risk their lives on a daily basis. HSI New York’s Violent Gang Task Force, with our local and federal partners, will continue to conduct violent crime and gang investigations throughout the New York City area to ensure those perpetrating criminal activities in any manner are held accountable.”

DOI Commissioner Strauber said, “As alleged, these correction officers facilitated the illegal entry of drugs and cellphones into the City’s jails in exchange for thousands of dollars in bribes, enriching themselves at the expense of the safety and security of inmates as well as their fellow officers. The contraband trade fuels violence that endangers inmates and staff, and undermines the rules and regulations intended to maintain order on Rikers Island. DOI is committed to continued collaboration with our law enforcement partners in the United States Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of New York, the New York Field Office of Homeland Security Investigations, and the New York City Police Department to expose and stop this type of corruption that destabilizes the City’s jails.”

“The charges detailed in today’s federal complaints reflect an intolerable betrayal of public trust – including by those who allegedly abandoned their sworn oath to uphold the law,” said Police Commissioner Sewell. “I commend our NYPD officers, along with our law enforcement partners and the prosecutors in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of New York, for working together to build this important case.”

HSI, DOI and the NYPD have been investigating contraband smuggling rings involving the payment of bribes to DOC officers in exchange for smuggling contraband, including unauthorized cell phones and narcotics, to Bloods gang members on Rikers Island.

As alleged in one complaint, New York City Correction Officer Katrina Patterson accepted at least \$34,090 in bribes from Ashley Medina and Imani Matthews on behalf of Michael Ross in exchange for Patterson smuggling contraband into the Robert N. Davoren Center on Rikers Island for Ross. Ross, who was incarcerated on unrelated offenses, arranged for the bribes to be sent to Patterson. DOC subsequently located narcotics and cell phones in Ross’ cell. In addition to obtaining surveillance video from Rikers Island showing Patterson bringing unauthorized items to Ross, law enforcement also seized Patterson’s text messages, including messages with Matthews where Matthews told Patterson that some of the contraband would be “4 black joints in 1 paper,” and Patterson responded, “it better be wrapped so many times I don’t want to smell it.” Patterson and Matthews also discussed the need to delete their text messages.

As alleged in a separate complaint, New York City Correction Officer Krystle Burrell accepted bribes in exchange for smuggling contraband into the Anna M. Kross Center on Rikers Island for Terrae Hinds, facilitating Hinds’ contraband smuggling business and permitting Hinds and others to violate DOC regulations. Hinds, who was incarcerated on unrelated offenses, arranged for approximately \$9,780 in bribe payments to be sent to Burrell. In exchange, Burrell smuggled at least two unauthorized cell phones to Hinds, and also facilitated Hinds’ sale of narcotics and other contraband items at the Anna M. Kross Center.

The charges in the complaints are allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. If convicted, the defendants each face a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment.

The government's case is being handled by the Office's Public Integrity Section and prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Philip Pilmar.

The Defendants:

KATRINA PATTERSON

Age: 31

Jamaica, NY

IMANI MATTHEWS

Age: 25

Bronx, NY

ASHLEY MEDINA

Age: 24

Bronx, NY

MICHAEL ROSS

Age: 36

Comstock, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 22-MJ-377

KRYSTLE BURRELL

Age: 35

Lawrence, NY

TERRAE HINDS

Age: 28

Yonkers, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 22-MJ-378