



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 20, 2022

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PRESS RELEASE

Two New York City Correction Officers Plead Guilty to Accepting Bribes in Exchange for Smuggling Contraband Into Rikers Island for Gang Members

Defendants Smuggled Cell Phones and Narcotics to Members of the Bloods Gang

Earlier today, in federal court in Brooklyn, New York City correction officer Krystle Burrell pleaded guilty to bribery, admitting that she accepted nearly \$10,000 in bribe payments in exchange for smuggling contraband into Rikers Island. On August 16, 2022, New York City correction officer Katrina Patterson pleaded guilty to bribery, admitting that she accepted more than \$34,000 in bribe payments in exchange for smuggling contraband into Rikers Island. Burrell and Patterson are employed by the New York City Department of Corrections (DOC). Burrell's proceeding was held before United States District Judge Kiyo A. Matsumoto, and Patterson's proceeding was held before United States District Judge Carol Bagley Amon.

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 (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 guilty pleas.

"The defendants threw in their lot with Bloods gang members and betrayed their sworn duty to maintain the safety of incarcerated individuals and other correction officers at Rikers Island by smuggling cell phones and drugs into the jail," stated United States Attorney Peace. "This Office and our law enforcement partners are committed to rooting out corruption at Rikers Island."

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "These two Correction Officers took bribes in return for smuggling contraband to inmates, crimes that risked the safety and security of the jails and willfully circumvented Correction Department regulations. These violations of their duty carry serious consequences, including termination from their City employment. DOI and our law enforcement partners will continue to target contraband smuggling and other misconduct that destabilizes the City's jails."

"When correction officers betray their oath to serve and protect, the public is put at risk and the entire law enforcement community is tarnished," stated NYPD Commissioner Sewell. "We have zero tolerance for such misconduct. With today's guilty plea, Ms. Burrell joins Ms. Patterson in publicly acknowledging that their actions were immoral, unethical, and without integrity –

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diametrically opposed to the core requirements of our profession. I commend all of our partners for their dedication to uncovering and eradicating corruption in all of its forms.”

According to court documents and facts presented at the guilty plea proceedings, Patterson accepted at least \$34,090 in bribes from co-conspirators on behalf of co-defendant 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 personnel subsequently located narcotics and cell phones in Ross’s cell. Law enforcement also recovered Patterson’s text messages, including messages where a co-conspirator 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.”

Burrell accepted bribes in exchange for smuggling contraband into the Anna M. Kross Center on Rikers Island for co-defendant 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.

When sentenced, Burrell faces up to 10 years’ imprisonment and Patterson faces up to five years’ imprisonment. Ross, who is a Bloods gang member, has also pleaded guilty to a bribery offense and is awaiting sentencing. Charges against Hinds remain pending.

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

The Defendants:

KATRINA PATTERSON

Age: 31

Jamaica, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 22-CR-196 (CBA)

KRYSTLE BURRELL

Age: 35

Lawrence, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 22-CR-195 (KAM)