



U.S. Department of Justice

Breon Peace

United States Attorney

Eastern District of New York

*271 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, New York 11201*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 20, 2022

Contact:

John Marzulli

Danielle Blustein Hass

United States Attorney's Office

(718) 254-6323

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)



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www.twitter.com/BronxDAClark

DARCEL D. CLARK
DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

198 EAST 161ST STREET
BRONX, N.Y. 10451
(718) 590-2234

79-2022
For Immediate Release
July 25, 2022

**NYC DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION CAPTAIN, THREE OFFICERS INDICTED
FOR RECKLESS ENDANGERMENT IN RIKERS ISLAND INMATE'S
2019 SUICIDE ATTEMPT**
Defendants Allegedly Failed to Aid Victim When He Hanged Himself in Cell

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber today announced that a New York City Department of Correction Captain and three Department of Correction Officers have been indicted for failing to help an inmate who had attempted suicide by hanging himself in a holding cell in Rikers Island in 2019. The inmate suffered significant brain damage.

District Attorney Clark said, "The defendants ignored their duty as Correction Officers to maintain custody, care and control of the person incarcerated, by allegedly waiting nearly eight minutes until they rendered assistance to the inmate whom they saw hanging. The young man is now living with extensive brain damage."

DOI Commissioner Strauber said, "As alleged, these four Correction Officer defendants failed to provide aid to an inmate who attempted suicide in a holding cell at Rikers. They delayed assistance or intervention for nearly eight minutes, despite their observations of the inmate, and other inmates' pleas for help. These officers violated Department of Correction regulations, which required them to protect that inmate, and they broke the law, as charged. DOI thanks the Bronx District Attorney's Office for its partnership on this investigation."

District Attorney Clark said DOC Captain Terry Henry, 37, and DOC Correction Officers Daniel Fullerton, 27, Kenneth Hood, 35, and Mark Wilson, 46, were arraigned today on first-degree Reckless Endangerment, second-degree Reckless Endangerment, and Official Misconduct before Bronx Supreme Court Justice George Villegas. The defendants are due back in court on September 15, 2022.

According to the investigation by the Department of Investigation and the Bronx District Attorney's Public Integrity Bureau, the victim, Nicholas Feliciano, then 18 years old, was inside Intake Pen 11 in the George R. Vierno Center on the night of November 27, 2019 when he tied two



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DARCEL D. CLARK
DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

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BRONX, N.Y. 10451
(718) 590-2234

sweatshirts to the ceiling of the holding cell and wrapped them around his neck. Feliciano stood on the privacy partition, crouched down, then stepped off the partition, causing the sweatshirts to constrict his neck. Feliciano's body shook and twisted for approximately two minutes until he went still.

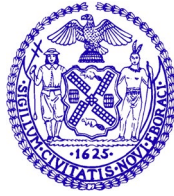
According to the investigation, over the course of seven minutes and 51 seconds, DOC staff and other personnel can be seen on surveillance video walking past Feliciano and taking no action to cut him down or render aid. Defendants Hood, Wilson, and Fullerton were on post in the Intake, and their supervisor at the time was Captain Henry. Henry, Fullerton, and another Correction Officer ultimately attempted to cut Feliciano down, and the victim fell to the ground, limp. They began CPR and called for medical assistance. Feliciano suffered significant brain damage and is currently in a rehabilitation center.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Cassie Perez and Jared Rosen of the Public Integrity Bureau, under the supervision of Omer Wiczzyk, Chief of the Public Integrity Bureau, and under the overall supervision of Denise Kodjo, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division, and Wanda Perez-Maldonado, Chief of the Investigations Division. District Attorney Clark thanked Trial Preparation Assistant Carlina Bayuelo of the Public Integrity Bureau for her assistance in the case.

District Attorney Clark thanked DOI for its investigation of this matter by Deputy Inspector General Richard Askin under the supervision of Inspector General Whitney Ferguson, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel G. Cort.

An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.

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The City of New York
Department of Investigation

JOCELYN E. STRAUBER
COMMISSIONER

180 MAIDEN LANE
NEW YORK, NY 10038
212-825-5900

Release #10-2022
nyc.gov/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2022

CONTACT: DIANE STRUZZI
(212) 825-5931

**DOI INVESTIGATION RESULTS IN ARREST OF DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION CAPTAIN
ON A CHARGE OF STEALING \$40,000 IN ALLEGED INVESTMENT RUSE**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrest of a Captain with the City Department of Correction ("DOC") on a charge of stealing \$40,000 from an individual as part of a purported investment agreement. DOI initiated its investigation after the victim reported the incident to DOC, which then alerted DOI. The Office of Queens County District Attorney Melinda Katz is prosecuting this matter.

STEVE FRANCOIS, 43, of Jamaica, N.Y., is charged with Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, a class D felony. Upon conviction, a class D felony is punishable by up to seven years in prison. FRANCOIS was arrested on April 4, 2022 and given a Desk Appearance Ticket to return for arraignment in Queens Criminal Court on Sunday, April 24, 2022. The defendant was released on his own recognizance and scheduled to return to court on June 21, 2022.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, "As alleged in the complaint, this defendant promised to profitably invest the victim's \$40,000 but stole the funds instead, enriching himself at the victim's expense and breaking the law. This defendant is a high-ranking member of DOC's supervisory staff whose integrity must be a top priority. I thank the Queens District Attorney's office and the City Department of Correction for their partnership on this investigation."

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz said, "Financial crimes can be devastating for victims and could lead to economic ruin. I want to thank the City Department of Investigation and all those involved in bringing this case to my Office. We will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to right the wrongs of all who have been victimized."

DOC Commissioner Louis A. Molina said, "Integrity is the most important quality that a law enforcement official must have, and when they betray someone's trust, they fail that person and the agency they represent. We will not tolerate this type of alleged disgraceful behavior and if this individual is found guilty, they will be disciplined and face termination. I would like to thank the Department of Investigation and the Queens District Attorney's office for their support."

According to the criminal complaint and DOI's investigation, the victim agreed, by written contract, to invest \$40,000 with FRANCOIS with a return of \$15,000. The \$55,000 total was due to the victim in October 2021. On September 3, 2021, the victim met with FRANCOIS outside his Queens County residence and provided FRANCOIS with a \$40,000 cashier's check. On December 21, 2021, after FRANCOIS gave conflicting responses to the victim's inquiries about the status of her money, FRANCOIS sent the victim a funeral announcement and pictures of a man in a coffin, telling the victim that the man they were doing business with was deceased and the victim's money would not be returned. DOI investigators reviewed bank records from an account in FRANCOIS's name, which revealed that FRANCOIS deposited the \$40,000 cashier's check into his account on September 4, 2021; and that between September 8 and September 10, 2021, FRANCOIS withdrew a total of \$39,937.43 from the same account. FRANCOIS did not have permission and authority to take, use, possess or remove the \$40,000 that was provided to him by the victim by false pretenses. During the time of the incident, between September and December 2021, FRANCOIS was on sick leave from DOC.

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FRANCOIS, who was suspended on the date of his April 4th arrest, has been employed by DOC since May 2013 and receives an annual base salary of approximately \$96,208.

Commissioner Strauber thanked Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz and her staff for their partnership in this investigation and prosecution of this matter; and DOC Commissioner Louis A. Molina, and his staff, for their referral and cooperation in this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Correction, specifically DOC Captain Lawrence Bond and Correction Investigator Ernesto Gonzalez, under the supervision of Inspector General Whitney Ferguson, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel Cort.

The case is being prosecuted by the Queens County District Attorney's Office, specifically Assistant District Attorney Leann Staines, under the supervision of Joseph Conley, Chief of the Frauds Bureau.

A criminal complaint is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

**DOI's press releases can also be found at twitter.com/NYC_DOI
Know something rotten in City government? Help DOI Get the Worms Out of the Big Apple.
Call: 212-3-NYC-DOI or email: Corruption@DOI.nyc.gov**



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Breon Peace

United States Attorney

Eastern District of New York

*271 Cadman Plaza East
Brooklyn, New York 11201*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 10, 2022

Contact:

John Marzulli

Danielle Blustein Hass

United States Attorney's Office

(718) 254-6323

PRESS RELEASE

**THREE NEW YORK CITY CORRECTION OFFICERS CHARGED WITH FRAUD
FOR LYING TO STAY ON SICK LEAVE FOR OVER A YEAR**

Two of the Defendants Allegedly Forged Medical Documents

Two criminal complaints were unsealed today in federal court in Brooklyn charging three correction officers employed by the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) at Rikers Island with federal program fraud. Correction Officers Steven Cange, Monica Coaxum and Eduardo Trinidad were arrested earlier today, and their initial appearances are scheduled for this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Vera M. Scanlon.

Breon Peace, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Michael J. Driscoll, Assistant Director-in-Charge, New York Field Office (FBI), and Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner, New York City Department of Investigation (DOI) announced the charges.

“As alleged, in the midst of an ongoing staffing crisis at Rikers Island, the defendants defrauded New Yorkers by fraudulently obtaining their full salaries while taking over a year of sick leave. These correction officers abandoned their oath to protect inmates and put the safety of their fellow correction officers at risk” stated United States Attorney Breon Peace. “Today’s arrests demonstrate that this Office remains committed to rooting out corruption at Rikers Island and protecting New Yorkers from public officials who steal their tax dollars.”

“As alleged, the defendants deliberately violated their oath when they participated in an elaborate scheme to defraud our community. The FBI and our partners are committed to disrupting these fraudulent scams and holding the public officials who perpetuate them accountable,” stated FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Driscoll.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “As charged, these New York City Correction Officers feigned illness and submitted false medical documentation to take sick leave

during a staffing crisis, defrauding the City of New York of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Today's arrests hold these Correction Officers accountable for the shameful dereliction of duty alleged in the Complaints. I thank the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for their continuing partnership and efforts to bring to justice those whose misconduct jeopardizes the safety and stability of the City's jails."

As alleged in one complaint, New York City Correction Officer Steven Cange fraudulently obtained more than \$160,000 in salary by being on sick leave from March 2021 to the present. Although Cange claimed that he suffered from symptoms of vertigo and side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine, evidence obtained by law enforcement demonstrates that Cange was able to work. During his sick leave, Cange submitted more than 100 fraudulent medical notes to DOC demonstrating that he was at physical therapy or another medical provider when records subpoenaed from those providers demonstrate that Cange was not at those appointments. Law enforcement also observed Cange engaging in normal life activities with no apparent difficulty.

As alleged in a separate complaint, New York City Correction Officer Monica Coaxum fraudulently obtained more than \$80,000 in salary by being on sick leave from March 2021 to May 2022, and her fiancée, Correction Officer Eduardo Trinidad, fraudulently obtained more than \$140,000 in salary by being on sick leave from June 2021 to November 2022. Although Coaxum claimed to suffer from multiple injuries, evidence collected by investigators shows that she was able to work. During her sick leave, Coaxum submitted nearly 50 fraudulent medical notes to DOC stating that she had gone to a medical appointment at times law enforcement determined she was elsewhere. Additionally, evidence shows that on some occasions where Coaxum claimed to be injured and at home, she was traveling and at parties. When approached by law enforcement, Coaxum admitted to forging some medical documents.

Trinidad likewise obtained more than \$140,000 by claiming to be too injured to work for over a year. Although he went to medical appointments with DOC wearing some combination of a sling, cane, and/or boot, photographic and video evidence during the same period showed Trinidad doing normal life activities like home improvement work, bowling and traveling abroad, without any difficulty or help from equipment like a boot, sling or cane.

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 10 years' imprisonment.

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 Attorneys Philip Pilmar and Andrew Grubin.

The Defendants:

STEVEN CANGE

Age: 49

Brooklyn, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 22-MJ-1204

MONICA COAXUM

Age: 36

Harrison, NY

EDUARDO TRINIDAD

Age: 42

Yonkers, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 22-MJ-1203