



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Southern District of New York

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Six Defendants Charged For Corruption At Rikers Island

Damian Williams, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York; James Smith, the Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"); and Jocelyn E. Strauber, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the unsealing of Complaints charging former Rikers Island correction officers CARLOS RIVERA, CHANTAL DE LOS SANTOS, and STEPHANIE DAVILA; former Rikers Island program counselor SHANEQUA WASHIGTON; former Rikers Island contractor KENNETH WEBSTER; and former Rikers Island inmate KRISTOPHER FRANCISCO with federal crimes arising from their involvement in corruption at Rikers Island. RIVERA, DE LOS SANTOS, WASHINGTON, WEBSTER, and DAVILA were arrested earlier today. RIVERA, DE LOS SANTOS, WASHINGTON, and DAVILA will be presented this afternoon before U.S. Magistrate Judge Sarah Netburn in Manhattan federal court, and WEBSTER will be presented tomorrow in Manhattan federal court. FRANCISCO is currently in state custody.

U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said: "Rikers Island is less safe, for inmates and officers alike, when corrections officers and others in positions of public trust accept bribes to smuggle contraband. As alleged, the defendants in these cases engaged in corruption for their own enrichment. In our relentless pursuit of justice, we leave no stone unturned, especially within the confines of jails and prisons, where the safety and dignity of all individuals must be safeguarded. We will not tolerate any breach of trust or corruption that jeopardizes the well-being of inmates and staff."

FBI Assistant Director in Charge James Smith said: "These defendants allegedly abused their former positions within the Department of Corrections by accepting bribes from multiple inmates - including one charged along with them - to smuggle contraband, including illicit substances, into several jail facilities on Rikers Island. This alleged conspiracy permeated Rikers Island, polluting the integrity of the Department and its institutions, while jeopardizing the trust in other officials with similar job roles. The FBI is committed to pursuing all forms of corruption, especially schemes involving those responsible for safeguarding our corrections system."

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said: "As charged, former City Correction officers and employees, and a former employee of a vendor to DOC, used their positions of trust to traffic drugs and cell phones into Rikers Island jail facilities. Contraband in our City's jails fuels disorder and violence, and DOI has issued recommendations to the Department of Correction intended to improve controls around officers' and vendors' entry and access to jail facilities, and to thereby limit the flow of contraband. I thank the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and the Federal Bureau of

Investigation for their continued partnership and commitment to hold accountable those who undermine the stability and security of the City’s jails.”

According to the three Complaints unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:¹

RIVERA was a correction officer who was assigned to the North Infirmery Command, one of the jail facilities on Rikers Island in the Bronx, New York. From December 2021 through February 2022, RIVERA accepted bribes from an inmate and smuggled contraband, including oxycodone and marijuana, into the jail.

DE LOS SANTOS, a former correction officer who was assigned to the Anna M. Kross Center (“AMKC”), another jail facility on Rikers Island, accepted bribes from multiple inmates to smuggle contraband into the jail from March through June 2022. WASHINGTON, a program counselor at the Department of Correction, also accepted bribes in exchange for smuggling contraband into AMKC, conspiring with DE LOS SANTOS from March through April 2022. In addition, WEBSTER, an employee of a contractor that provided services at Rikers Island, also accepted bribes to smuggle contraband and conspired with DE LOS SANTOS from May through June 2022.

DAVILA, a former correction officer who was assigned to AMKC, and FRANCISCO, then an inmate at the facility, conspired to smuggle contraband into AMKC in exchange for bribes between approximately July and August 2021. Specifically, DAVILA and FRANCISCO bribed another correction officer to induce the officer to smuggle contraband, including fentanyl, marijuana, and synthetic cannabinoids commonly known as “K2,” into AMKC.

* * *

RIVERA, 27, of Yonkers, New York, is charged with conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud, which carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison, and conspiracy to distribute narcotics and controlled substances, which carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison.

DE LOS SANTOS, 30, of the Bronx, New York, is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit bribery, which carries a maximum potential penalty of five years in prison, and two counts of conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud, each of which carry a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison.

WASHINGTON, 39, of Brooklyn, New York, is charged with conspiracy to commit bribery, which carries a maximum potential penalty of five years in prison, and conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud, which carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison.

WEBSTER, 42, of the Bronx, New York, is charged with conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud, which carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison.

DAVILA, 30, of Brooklyn, New York, and FRANCISCO, 29, of Ossining, New York, are each charged with conspiracy to commit bribery, which carries a maximum potential penalty of five years in prison; conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud, which carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison; and conspiracy to distribute narcotics and controlled substances, which carries a maximum potential penalty of 20 years in prison.

¹ As the introductory phrase signifies, the Complaints and the descriptions of the Complaints set forth herein constitute only allegations, and every fact described should be treated as an allegation.

The maximum potential sentences in these cases are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendants will be determined by a judge.

Mr. Williams praised the outstanding investigative work of the FBI and DOI.

The cases are being handled by the Office's Public Corruption Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Adam Z. Margulies, Jonathan E. Rebold, and Derek Wikstrom are in charge of the prosecutions.

The charges contained in the Complaints are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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