



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

June 26, 2024

Contact:

John Marzulli

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United States Attorney's Office

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PRESS RELEASE

**FIVE EMPLOYEES OF JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER CHARGED WITH
SMUGGLING CONTRABAND IN EXCHANGE FOR BRIBES**

Defendants Brought Weapons and Drugs into Juvenile Facility in Brooklyn

Five criminal complaints were unsealed today in federal court in Brooklyn charging current New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) employees Da'Vante Bolton, Roger Francis, Christopher Craig and Nigel King, and former ACS employee Octavia Napier, with conspiracy to commit Travel Act bribery. All five defendants were Youth Development Specialists at the Crossroads Juvenile Center in Brownsville, Brooklyn (Crossroads). All five were arrested this morning, and their initial appearances are scheduled for this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Joseph A. Marutollo.

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

"As alleged, these so-called 'Youth Development Specialists' violated their duty to the City and the residents at Crossroads by smuggling in weapons, drugs, and other contraband in exchange for bribes, placing young people and other staff members at an alarming risk of serious harm," stated United States Attorney Breon Peace. "Today's arrests demonstrate that this Office remains committed to rooting out corruption and cleaning up our city's jails and juvenile detention facilities."

DOI Commissioner Strauber said, "As Youth Development Specialists at ACS, these defendants were trusted to ensure the safety and security of residents in the City's youth detention facilities. They betrayed that trust when, as charged, they accepted cash payments in exchange for smuggling drugs, weapons, and other contraband, into the Crossroads Juvenile Center in Brooklyn, destabilizing the facility and increasing the risk of violence to residents and

staff alike. I thank ACS for reporting information to DOI, which prompted, in part, the work that led to this investigation with our law enforcement partners in the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York and the FBI, and the charges we announce today."

"These five defendants, each Youth Development Specialists at the Crossroads Juvenile Center, are alleged to have repeatedly smuggled dangerous contraband into the facility in exchange for bribes. Youth development specialists are entrusted to help troubled youth get back on the right path, instead these individuals allegedly strayed themselves, placing personal gain above the safety and rehabilitation of the juveniles under their watch. The arrests today highlight the FBI's continued dedication to eradicating public corruption and holding those responsible accountable in the criminal justice system," stated FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge James Smith.

Approximately 120 residents, ranging from ages 14 to 20, are detained at Crossroads. Residents at Crossroads are prohibited from possessing narcotics, cellular telephones, cigarettes, weapons, and alcohol, among other items. ACS employees at Crossroads are trained to confiscate any contraband they find and must notify a supervisor if any contraband is discovered. Although staff members are supposed to undergo a security screening whenever they enter the facility, a significant amount of contraband has recently been recovered from Crossroads residents. Between approximately March 2022 and May 2024, at least 75 cell phones and more than 340 scalpels or blades were recovered from the facility, as well as narcotics and tobacco.

The defendants either are or were Youth Development Specialists at Crossroads, which required them to supervise residents. Their responsibilities are similar to those of a correction officer at a jail facility.

As alleged in the complaints, the defendants accepted bribes in exchange for smuggling contraband and violating their duties as staff members.

The Defendants and the Alleged Criminal Conduct

Da'Vante Bolton has been employed by ACS since March 2020. As alleged, Bolton accepted more than \$20,000 from Crossroads residents or their associates and smuggled in razor blades and marijuana in exchange for those bribes.

Roger Francis has been employed by ACS since July 2018. As alleged, Francis received more than \$17,000 in bribes from Crossroads residents and their associates for smuggling in contraband, including marijuana and phone accessories.

Christopher Craig has been employed by ACS since August 2018. As alleged, Craig received more than \$5,000 in bribes to smuggle in contraband, including marijuana and tobacco.

Nigel King has been employed by ACS since October 2021. As alleged, King accepted more than \$6,800 in bribes for smuggling in marijuana, prescription pills and alcohol.

Octavia Napier was employed by ACS from June 2022 to May 2023. As alleged, Napier received more than \$2,000 in bribes to both smuggle in contraband and allow a Crossroads resident to use her Cash App account to run his contraband distribution business from within Crossroads.

* * * * *

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

The government's case is being handled by the Office's Public Integrity Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Philip Pilmar and Andrew D. Grubin, and Special Assistant United States Attorney Cassie Perez of the Bronx District Attorney's Office, are in charge of the prosecution with assistance from Legal Assistant Thomas Englert.

The Defendants:

DA'VANTE BOLTON
Age: 31
Queens, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-MJ-435

ROGER FRANCIS
Age: 58
Brooklyn, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-MJ-432

CHRISTOPHER CRAIG
Age: 37
Brooklyn, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-MJ-433

NIGEL KING
Age: 45
Queens, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-MJ-431

OCTAVIA NAPIER
Age: 26

Brooklyn, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-MJ-434



U.S. Department of Justice

Breon Peace

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Eastern District of New York

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 1, 2024

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PRESS RELEASE

Four Employees of Juvenile Detention Center Plead Guilty to Taking Bribes
Defendants Brought Weapons and Drugs into Juvenile Facility

Earlier today, in federal court in Brooklyn, Da’Vante Bolton, an employee of the New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), pleaded guilty to accepting bribes, admitting that he smuggled contraband into a juvenile detention facility in exchange for illegal payments. On September 3, 2024, September 10, 2024 and September 26, 2024, ACS employees Octavia Napier, Christopher Craig and Nigel King pleaded guilty, respectively, to Travel Act bribery charges in connection with the same conduct. Today’s proceeding was held before United States District Judge Orelia E. Merchant. All four defendants were Youth Development Specialists at the Crossroads Juvenile Center in Brownsville, Brooklyn (Crossroads). When sentenced, Bolton faces a maximum sentence of 10 years’ imprisonment, and Napier, Craig and King each face a maximum sentence of five years’ imprisonment.

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

“These defendants prioritized their own financial interests above the safety and security of residents and co-workers at the Crossroads Juvenile Center, giving dangerous contraband to juveniles in their care in exchange for bribes,” stated United States Attorney Peace. “This Office and our law enforcement partners will not stop rooting out and prosecuting corruption in our City’s jails and juvenile detention facilities.”

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “These four City Youth Development Specialists were responsible for the safety and well-being of juveniles at the Crossroads Center in Brooklyn. They failed the juveniles in their care, and the City, when they took bribes to smuggle dangerous items into Crossroads, including razor blades, prescription pills, and alcohol. I think

the FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York for their partnership in the investigation that led to guilty pleas of these four defendants.”

Approximately 120 residents, ranging in age from 14 to 20, are detained at Crossroads. Residents at Crossroads are prohibited from possessing any contraband, including narcotics, cellular telephones, cigarettes, weapons and alcohol, among other prohibited items. ACS employees at Crossroads are trained to confiscate any contraband they find and must notify a supervisor if any contraband is discovered. Although staff members are supposed to undergo a security screening whenever they enter the facility, a significant amount of contraband has recently been recovered from Crossroads residents. Between approximately March 2022 and May 2024, at least 75 cell phones and more than 340 scalpels or blades were recovered from the facility, as well as narcotics and tobacco.

The defendants are or were Youth Development Specialists at Crossroads, who were responsible for supervising residents. Their responsibilities are similar to those of a correction officer at a jail facility, except, among other differences, Youth Development Specialists are restricted in the type of force they may use and are not permitted to carry pepper spray or restraints.

Da’Vante Bolton has been employed by ACS since March 2020. Bolton accepted more than \$20,000 in bribes from Crossroads residents or their associates and, in exchange, smuggled in razor blades and marijuana.

Christopher Craig has been employed by ACS since August 2018. Craig received more than \$5,000 in bribes to smuggle in contraband, including marijuana and tobacco.

Nigel King was employed by ACS from October 2021 to August 2024. King accepted more than \$6,000 in bribes for smuggling in marijuana, prescription pills and alcohol.

Octavia Napier was employed by ACS from June 2022 to May 2023. Napier received more than \$2,000 in bribes to both smuggle in contraband and allow a Crossroads resident to use Napier’s Cash App account to run the resident’s contraband distribution business from within Crossroads.

A fifth defendant, Roger Francis, is currently awaiting trial on the same charges.

The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s Public Integrity Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Philip Pilmar and Andrew D. Grubin and Special Assistant United States Attorney Cassie Perez of the Bronx District Attorney’s Office are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Legal Assistant Thomas Englert.

Defendants Who Have Pled Guilty:

DA’VANTE BOLTON

Age: 31

Queens, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-CR-383 (OEM)

CHRISTOPHER CRAIG

Age: 37

Brooklyn, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-CR-345 (OEM)

NIGEL KING

Age: 45

Queens, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-CR-368 (RPK)

OCTAVIA NAPIER

Age: 26

Brooklyn, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-CR-328 (FB)

Defendant Awaiting Trial:

ROGER FRANCIS

Age: 58

Brooklyn, NY

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-CR-342 (NCM)



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

JOCELYN E. STRAUBER
COMMISSIONER

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Release #43-2024
nyc.gov/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2024

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**PARENT OF RESIDENT AT BROOKLYN JUVENILE CENTER PLEADS GUILTY TO
BRIBING A CITY EMPLOYEE TO BRING IN SCALPELS AND MARIJUANA TO THE FACILITY**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), issued the following statement on today’s guilty plea by JESSICA ALICEA, 44, of Brooklyn, N.Y., to one count of federal program bribery for providing more than \$10,000 in total to a City Administration for Children’s Services’ (“ACS”) Youth Development Specialist to smuggle contraband into Crossroads Juvenile Center in Brooklyn. The criminal conduct occurred between August 2022 and February 2024. U.S. District Judge Orelia E. Merchant accepted ALICEA’s plea and scheduled her sentencing for April 15, 2025. DOI investigated this matter with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”) and the office of U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, which is handling the prosecution.

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “Contraband smuggling at juvenile detention centers jeopardizes the safety and security of both staff and residents of these City facilities. Today’s conviction sends the important message that bribing staff to introduce dangerous contraband will have serious consequences. I thank the FBI and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of New York for its partnership on this important investigation and prosecution.”

According to court documents and information presented in court, ALICEA provided approximately \$14,000 in total, in approximately 136 transactions, to ACS Youth Development Specialist DA’VANTE BOLTON to smuggle scalpels and marijuana into the Crossroads Juvenile Center. BOLTON was convicted earlier this year for accepting bribes in exchange for smuggling in contraband into Crossroads. (To read more about those cases, [please click here](#).)

Approximately 120 residents, ranging in age from 14 to 20, are detained at Crossroads. Residents at Crossroads are prohibited from possessing any contraband, including narcotics, cellular telephones, cigarettes, weapons and alcohol. ACS employees at Crossroads are trained to confiscate any contraband they find and must notify a supervisor if any contraband is discovered. Between approximately March 2022 and May 2024, at least 75 cell phones and more than 340 scalpels or blades were recovered from the facility, as well as narcotics and tobacco. Youth Development Specialists at Crossroads are responsible for supervising residents.

Commissioner Strauber thanked United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York Breon Peace, and the FBI’s Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Field Office James E. Dennehy, and their staff, for their partnership on this investigation.

The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s Public Integrity Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Philip Pilmar and Andrew D. Grubin and Special Assistant United States Attorney Cassie Perez of the Bronx District Attorney’s Office are in charge of the prosecution.

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At DOI, the investigation was conducted by Confidential Investigator Shameika Nixon and Special Investigator Danielle Melian of DOI's Office of the Inspector General for ACS and was supervised by Deputy Inspector General Gladys Cambi, Senior Inspector General Laura Millendorf, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella.

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.

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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**



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Southern District of New York

U.S. ATTORNEY DAMIAN WILLIAMS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 9, 2024

<http://www.justice.gov/usao/nys>

CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Nicholas Biase, Lauren Scarff

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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.

Press Release Number: 24-124



The City of New York
Department of Investigation

JOCELYN E. STRAUBER
COMMISSIONER

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Release #19-2024
nyc.gov/doi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, APRIL 9, 2024

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**DOI RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CITY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION TO
IMPEDE CONTRABAND SMUGGLING IN THE CITY'S JAILS**

Jocelyn E. Strauber, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued the following eight recommendations in connection with the announcement today of the joint investigation by DOI, the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation that resulted in federal charges against four former City Department of Correction ("DOC") employees, one person in custody, and one vendor for their alleged involvement in contraband smuggling and corruption at Rikers Island.

DOI re-issues two recommendations made in prior public reports in 2014 and 2018 that were meant to strengthen procedures that allowed correction officers to bypass drug and weapon detection mechanisms at entry points to DOC jail facilities. DOI also issues six new recommendations, as detailed below. In the near future, DOI will issue a report describing key observations from recent investigations that support these recommendations. DOI's 2014 and 2018 reports can be found on its public reports' page at the following link: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doi/newsroom/public-reports.page>

- 1: In 2014 DOI recommended that DOC explore reasonable structural changes to the facilities in order to place correction officer lockers outside of security gates. In 2018, DOI recommended that the lockers be located outside of front gate entrances. DOC partially implemented this recommendation by placing lockers outside the front gate entrance of a single DOC facility.

DOI now recommends that all DOC staff members' personal lockers currently located within the facilities and past the screening areas be re-located either outside of the facilities or at a location within the facilities before the screening areas. Staff members must be required to secure cellphones and other electronic devices in their lockers prior to entering the facility at the front gate or prior to moving through the screening areas. The new borough-based DOC facilities should be designed with this feature in mind. In the event that modification of DOC's existing facilities is impractical in light of the anticipated closure of Rikers Island in 2026, DOC should explore temporary and cost-effective solutions, such as installing trailers in the immediate vicinity of the facility to house staff lockers.

- 2: In 2014, DOI recommended that DOC place canine (K-9) units at the staff entrance gates to screen correction officers for drugs; in 2018 DOI re-issued this recommendation after determining that K-9 units rarely were placed at entrance gates. DOC partially implemented this recommendation -- prior to the summer of 2023 DOC conducted sporadic front gate K-9 searches; however, DOC has not conducted any front gate searches with drug-sniffing dogs in over a year.

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DOI now re-issues its recommendation that DOC increase the presence of K-9 Units at security checkpoints so that the units are present during as many tours as possible, including weekends, overnight tours and times between tour changes. DOC should develop a detailed plan to increase the K-9 presence at the front gate and submit the plan to DOI for review within 30 days.

DOI issues the following new recommendations:

- 3: DOC should use contractors or external law enforcement partners to serve as front gate staff, rather than DOC staff, in order to ensure that front gate staff are free of conflicts of interest and conduct robust searches and screening of DOC staff.
- 4: DOC should prohibit DOC staff from bringing open or unsealed containers into DOC facilities and front gate staff should check all liquid containers to ensure that they are fully sealed and have not been opened.
- 5: DOC should prohibit staff members from visiting unauthorized areas by:(a) requiring Correction Officers to swipe their ID cards when reporting to a housing area; (b) disciplining officers found on a post to which they are not assigned without justification.
- 6: DOC should implement a standardized, comprehensive application review process for any non-DOC agency employee and any employee of a City vendor with access to Rikers Island, including prohibiting access by (a) any employee who does not meet standards applicable to DOC staff; (b) any service provider who was formally incarcerated at Rikers Island until at least 3 years after their release, to avoid undue familiarity concerns.
- 7: Persons in custody who have smuggled or possessed contraband in City jail facilities in the past, or who are deemed high risk due to their gang affiliation, should be rotated between different housing areas to minimize the risk of inmate control over any housing area.
- 8: DOC should establish a classification system for persons in custody who attempt to bribe staff, similar to existing Intended Contraband Recipient or Red ID applicable to inmates involved in slashings/stabbings. This classification system would affect placement in housing areas.

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.

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UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Southern District of New York

U.S. ATTORNEY DAMIAN WILLIAMS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, October 2, 2024
<http://www.justice.gov/usao/nys>

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FORMER CORRECTIONS OFFICER CHARGED WITH CONSPIRING TO SMUGGLE NARCOTICS INTO RIKERS ISLAND

Damian Williams, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Jocelyn E. Strauber, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), and James E. Dennehy, the Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), announced the unsealing of a Complaint charging GHISLAINE BARRIENTOS with conspiracy to commit honest services fraud, conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, and false statements as part of a scheme to smuggle narcotics into Rikers Island. BARRIENTOS was arrested today and will be presented before Chief U.S. Magistrate Judge Sarah Netburn later today.

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 defendant in this case engaged in corruption for her 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."

DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said: "The contraband trade destabilizes the City's jails, and City Correction Officers play a vital role in maintaining order and keeping persons in custody, and their fellow officers, safe. But this defendant, as charged, ignored her obligations and violated the trust the City placed in her when she took bribes in exchange for smuggling dangerous narcotics and other contraband into Rikers Island jail facilities. I thank the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and the FBI for their partnership with DOI in the effort to stop illegal contraband smuggling in the City's jails."

As alleged in the Complaint:¹

BARRIENTOS, a former New York City Department of Correction ("DOC") correction officer, conspired with others to smuggle contraband, including cocaine, smokeable synthetic

¹ As the introductory phrase signifies, the entirety of the text of the Complaint constitutes only allegations, and every fact described herein should be treated as an allegation.

cannabinoids (known as “K2”), and food, to inmates housed at the Robert N. Davoren Complex on Rikers Island in exchange for thousands of dollars in bribe payments.

For example, on April 11, 2024, CC-1, an associate of an inmate (“Inmate-1”), and BARRIENTOS discussed CC-1 sending BARRIENTOS a package through a delivery service. On April 15, 2024, surveillance footage showed BARRIENTOS entering Inmate-1’s cell, where surveillance footage could not capture her actions. Two days later, DOC searched Inmate-1’s cell and recovered sheets of paper that tested positive for the presence of cocaine.

On April 24, 2024, CC-1 sent BARRIENTOS another package using the delivery service. When BARRIENTOS went to work later that day, a drug-detecting canine alerted for the presence of narcotics. DOC employees searched BARRIENTOS’s belongings and found approximately 10 sheets of paper that tested positive for the presence of K2. In an interview with law enforcement, BARRIENTOS falsely stated, among other things, that no inmate had ever asked her to bring them contraband. Law enforcement officers then searched BARRIENTOS’s vehicle sheets of paper that tested positive for the presence of K2. In an interview with law enforcement, BARRIENTOS falsely stated, among other things, that no inmate had ever asked her to bring them contraband. Law enforcement officers then searched BARRIENTOS’s vehicle and recovered additional sheets of paper, as well as approximately \$2,466 in cash, as shown in the following photographs:





* * *

BARRIENTOS, 37, of Mount Vernon, New York, is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud and one count of conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, each of which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison; and one count of false statements, which carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison.

The statutory maximum sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the judge.

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

This case is being handled by the Office's Public Corruption and Narcotics Units. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jeffrey Coyle and Sheb Swett are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

24-306

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DISTRICT ATTORNEY, BRONX COUNTY

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36-2024
For Immediate Release
May 15, 2024

**NYC DOC OFFICER INDICTED FOR SMUGGLING CONTRABAND TO INMATE
IN THE BRONX HALL OF JUSTICE
Defendant Passed Cigarettes, Marijuana to Inmate Who Brought Them to Rikers Island
Where One Cigarette Fetches Up to \$100**

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 Officer has been indicted for bribe receiving and promoting prison contraband for passing thousands of dollars' worth of banned items to an inmate who was appearing for a court date in the Bronx Hall of Justice.

District Attorney Clark said, "Cigarettes and marijuana are valuable commodities that fuel violence and corruption in the jails, and this Correction Officer allegedly contributed to the lawlessness for a \$500 bribe. That the alleged crime occurred in the courthouse is remarkably audacious. The investigation is continuing."

Commissioner Strauber said, "City correction officers have a duty to maintain safety and order in the jails, for the protection of persons in custody as well as their officer colleagues. As alleged, this correction officer totally disregarded his obligations when he handed off contraband to a person in custody at the Bronx Hall of Justice, who thereafter returned to Rikers, undermining security in the courthouse and at the City's jails. I thank the City Department of Correction for reporting information to DOI that led to these charges and the Bronx District Attorney's Office for its dedicated partnership in bringing to justice those officers who jeopardize the safety of those they have a duty to protect."

NYC Department of Correction Commissioner Lynelle Maginley-Liddie said, "Smuggling contraband into our facilities puts our Correction Officers, staff, and people in our care at great risk. Anyone doing so should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law for their egregious and dangerous actions. Thank you to the Department of Investigation and District Attorney Clark and her team for their extensive efforts on our common goal – improving the safety of New York City's jails."



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District Attorney Clark said the defendant, Andre Brown, 59, was arraigned May 15, 2024, on one count of third-degree Bribe Receiving and two counts of second-degree Promoting Prison Contraband by Bronx Supreme Court Justice Brenda Rivera. He is due back in court on August 6, 2024.

According to the investigation, on February 15, 2024, the defendant, a NYC Department of Correction Officer assigned to the DOC holding facility in the Bronx Hall of Justice courthouse, allegedly provided an incarcerated individual in the facility with 16 cigarettes and 30.25 grams (about an ounce) of marijuana in exchange for money. The defendant passed the items in small packages, and the inmate took them on the bus from court and into jail, where cigarettes are sold for between \$50-100 each, and three grams of marijuana sells for between \$350-500. The total jailhouse value is about \$6,600. Brown allegedly received \$500 through a payment app.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Sarah Clements, Teri Chung, and Michael Naughton of the Public Integrity Bureau, under the supervision of Omer Wiczyc, Chief of the Public Integrity Bureau, Alison Riesel, Deputy 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 Assistants Maria Segura and Margaret Williford, Principal Accountant Investigator Jessica Harrison, and former Assistant District Attorney Kenneth Collado for their assistance in the investigation.

District Attorney Clark thanked NYPD Detectives Daniel Angen, Andro Stambuk, and Kristopher Persaud of the NYPD Bronx DA's Squad, under the supervision of Sergeant Louis Meade, for their work in the investigation.

District Attorney Clark thanked DOI's Office of the Inspector General for DOC, under the supervision of Assistant Inspector General Sasha Holguin, Deputy Inspector General Sony Fortune, Inspector General Whitney Ferguson, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/ Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella for their work in the investigation.

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



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76-2024

For Immediate Release
September 25, 2024

**NYC DOC OFFICER INDICTED FOR SMUGGLING CONTRABAND INTO
RIKERS ISLAND WORTH \$15,000 IN THE JAIL**
Defendant Allegedly Brought In 200 Cigarettes and a Cellphone in Exchange for Cash

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced a NYC Department of Correction Officer has been indicted for allegedly smuggling approximately \$15,000 worth of contraband into Rikers Island.

District Attorney Clark said, “Cigarettes are sold for \$50 to \$100 each in Rikers Island jails, making this contraband extremely valuable, and a fuel for violence. The Correction Officer allegedly committed activity that contributes to crime in the jail.”

NYC Department of Investigation Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber said, “As charged, this defendant – a NYC Correction Officer – accepted bribes to smuggle cigarettes and cellphones into the Rikers Island jail facility, supporting the illicit contraband trade and undermining the safety of his fellow correction officers who do their jobs with integrity, as well as other persons in custody. I thank the Bronx County District Attorney’s Office for its partnership on this investigation and the Department of Correction for its cooperation.”

NYC Department of Correction Commissioner Lynelle Maginley-Liddie said, “This individual put his own interests above the safety of the people in custody, DOC employees, and visitors. Our jails become less safe when correction officers accept bribes to smuggle in contraband. We commend the Office of the Bronx District Attorney for working with our department to ensure this individual is brought to justice.”

District Attorney Clark said the defendant, Kendell Felix, 37, was arraigned today on third-degree Bribe Receiving, first-degree Promoting Prison Contraband, two counts of second-degree Promoting Prison Contraband, and Official Misconduct before Bronx Supreme Court Justice Shari Michels. The defendant is due back in court on December 4, 2024

According to the investigation, between August 25, 2024, and August 27, 2024, the



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defendant, a Correction Officer assigned to the North Infirmary Command, allegedly accepted \$3,000 in exchange for providing contraband. Felix allegedly provided 200 cigarettes, and a cell phone in exchange for \$3,000. The estimated value of the contraband in prison is approximately \$15,000.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Tyler Gibson and Sarah Clements, Supervisor in the Public Integrity Bureau, under the supervision of Allison Riesel, Deputy Chief of the Public Integrity Bureau and Omer Wiczuk, 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 NYPD Detective Daniel Angen of the NYPD Bronx DA's Squad, under the supervision of Sergeant Louis Meade, for their work in the investigation.

District Attorney Clark thanked NYC Department of Investigation Correction Officer Investigator Andrew Walker, with assistance from Correction Officer Investigator Brian Hilario, supervised by Assistant Inspector General Sasha Holguin, Deputy Inspector General Sony Fortune, Inspector General Whitney Ferguson, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives Christopher Ryan, and Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella for their work on the case.

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