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Southern District of New York

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FORMER STAFF MEMBER CHARGED WITH SMUGGLING
CONTRABAND INTO JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER IN EXCHANGE
FOR BRIBES

United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Jay Clayton, Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), James C. Barnacle, Jr., and Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), Nadia I. Shihata, announced the unsealing of a Complaint charging JOSHUA SMITH with conspiracy to commit bribery. SMITH was arrested today and presented before U.S. Magistrate Judge Gary Stein.

"For years, the defendant allegedly engaged in a scheme to smuggle contraband into a juvenile detention facility in the Bronx in exchange for cash bribes," said U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton. "Rehabilitation of juvenile offenders is a challenge. It is only made more difficult when corrupt staff members supply contraband. This callous and hypocritical disregard for the rehabilitation mission calls for swift justice, including a message of deterrence."

"Joshua Smith allegedly exploited his position of employment by the Administration of Children's Services to traffic contraband through the Horizon Juvenile Center," said FBI Assistant Director in Charge James C. Barnacle, Jr. "The FBI and our law enforcement partners continue to apprehend those who undermine the law to enrich themselves while putting the youth community at risk."

"The duty of this City Youth Development Specialist at Horizon Juvenile Center was to safeguard the young people in his care," said DOI Commissioner Nadia I. Shihata. "Instead, he allegedly used his access to traffic marijuana, pills, and other contraband to the young residents in exchange for thousands of dollars in bribes, according to the criminal complaint. Let me be clear, any City employee who misuses their position, exploits those in their care, or undercuts safety will be called to account. I thank the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and the New York Field Office of the FBI for their continued commitment and partnership in exposing wrongdoing that endangers juveniles and corrupts New York City."

As alleged in the Complaint unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:¹

SMITH was employed by the Administration for Children’s Services (“ACS”) as a “youth development specialist” at Horizon Juvenile Center (“Horizon”) in the Bronx, New York. Horizon is a secure detention facility (also known as a juvenile detention facility) for youth who are alleged or adjudicated juvenile delinquents, juvenile offenders, or adolescent offenders, and have been remanded to secure detention. From at least in or about April 2023 through at least in or about July 2025, SMITH received money in exchange for smuggling contraband into Horizon. As part of this course of conduct, SMITH met associates of Horizon residents in the Bronx, among other places, received contraband—including, but not limited to, marijuana, tobacco, and pills—from those associates, and then transported such contraband into Horizon and delivered it to Horizon residents. On at least some of these occasions, the Horizon residents or their associates provided SMITH with monetary bribes in exchange for SMITH agreeing to introduce contraband into Horizon.

* * *

SMITH, 34, of Yonkers, New York, is charged with one count of conspiracy to commit bribery, which carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison.

The maximum potential sentence in this case is prescribed by Congress and provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by a judge.

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

The case is being handled by the Office’s Public Corruption Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Lauren Phillips and Stephanie Simon are in charge of the prosecution.

The charge contained in the Complaint is merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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