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43-2019
For Immediate Release
April 29, 2019

**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION OFFICER, INMATE AND THREE CIVILIANS
INDICTED FOR SMUGGLING CONTRABAND INTO RIKERS ISLAND
Defendants Allegedly Conspired to Smuggle Marijuana, Cigarettes
and Other Contraband into the Jail**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark and Department of Investigation Commissioner Margaret Garnett today announced that a NYC Department of Correction Officer, a former Rikers Island inmate and three civilians--including two people who worked in a Brooklyn afterschool program--have been indicted for smuggling contraband into jail.

District Attorney Clark said, "The defendant broke the oath he took when becoming a Correction Officer and betrayed his fellow Officers by allegedly working with an inmate to smuggle marijuana into the Otis Bantum Correctional Center. Contraband fuels corruption and violence in jails. My Office is committed to working with DOI and DOC to investigate and prosecute crimes in the jails, whether they are committed by inmates or Correction Officers. No one is above the law."

DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett said, "Investigating contraband smuggling schemes is a vitally important facet of DOI's work rooting out corruption and reducing violence in the City's jails. In this all too familiar case, a Correction Officer, and his co-conspirators both inside and outside the jail, allegedly set up an elaborate operation, ferrying drugs and other contraband in exchange for bribes, according to the charges. DOI and the Bronx District Attorney's Office are committed to breaking up these criminal networks and punishing those individuals who engage in them."

District Attorney Clark said the defendant, Torray Riles, 36, of the Bronx, a DOC Officer since December 2016, was arraigned today on four counts of third-degree Bribe Receiving, four counts of Official Misconduct, first and second-degree Promoting Prison Contraband, Attempted Promoting Prison Contraband second-degree, third and Attempted Criminal Sale of Marijuana in the third and fourth-degree, fifth-degree Criminal Possession of Marijuana, and sixth-degree Conspiracy before Bronx Supreme Court Justice George Villegas. He is due back in court on August 7, 2019.



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The other defendants, Joseph Swaby, 33, a former Rikers Island inmate, Vergillian Blount, 33, of Brooklyn, Damont Brooks, 23, of Brooklyn, and Aisha Tolbert, 41 of Manhattan, were charged with third-degree Bribery, third-degree Criminal Sale of Marijuana, fifth-degree criminal Possession of Marijuana, first and second-degree Promoting Prison Contraband, Attempted Promoting Prison Contraband in the second degree, and fifth and sixth-degree Conspiracy. Brooks and Tolbert were arraigned today before Justice Villegas. They are due back in court on August 7, 2019.

If convicted of the top count of Bribery and Bribe Receiving, the defendants face a maximum of 2 1/3 to seven years in prison.

According to the investigation, on January 21, 2018, Riles, was discovered trying to bring contraband into the Otis Bantum Correctional Center. He had two Ziploc bags of marijuana hidden in his pants. He also had five DVDs, four packs of Newport Cigarettes, loose rolling paper and fanto leaves inside a book bag. Riles was fired shortly after his arrest.

During an investigation conducted by the Bronx DA's Office and DOI, investigators discovered that Riles had been part of an ongoing conspiracy with Joseph Swaby, who was incarcerated in Rikers Island at the time, to smuggle various contraband into the jail in exchange for money. Swaby allegedly recruited Aisha Tolbert, his wife, who is the director of a Brooklyn afterschool program at RiseBoro Community Partnership; Damont Brooks, who was a group leader in the same afterschool program; and Vergillian Blount. Through multiple phone calls made from Rikers Island, Swaby allegedly ordered Tolbert, Blount and Brooks to give the contraband--including marijuana, and a gold and diamond pendant of Jesus on a gold chain--to Riles and ordered them to pay Riles for his involvement.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Joseph Marciano of the Public Integrity Bureau, under the supervision of Allison Riesel, Supervisor of the Public Integrity Bureau and Omer Wiczuk, Chief of the Public Integrity Bureau, and the overall supervision of Tarek Rahman, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division, and Jean T. Walsh, Chief of the Investigations Division. District Attorney Clark thanked Annarese Marcano, Trial Prep Assistant in the Public Integrity Bureau. District Attorney Clark also thanked DOI Captain Ali Fayad for his assistance in the investigation.

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