



## **Former correctional officer sentenced for murder-for-hire scheme**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPRINGFIELD, Mo. - Tammy Dickinson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that a former correctional officer at the U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners in Springfield, Mo., has been sentenced in federal court for hiring someone to kill his wife's ex-husband.

Robert W. Jones, 43, of Springfield, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Beth Phillips on Monday, March 31, 2014, to six years in federal prison without parole.

On Nov. 13, 2013, Jones pleaded guilty to using a telephone with the intent that a murder be committed for payment. According to court documents, Jones contacted an inmate at the federal medical center while he was employed as a correctional officer. Jones asked him to assist in hiring a hit man to murder his wife's ex-husband (referred to as "John Doe" in public court documents). Jones was aware that the inmate had been in a leadership position in a drug-trafficking organization, an affidavit says, and had connections to individuals who could carry out such a request.

The inmate, who was cooperating with investigators, met with Jones for 10 to 15 private conversations in March and April 2012. Jones offered to give the inmate a cell phone to call a hit man, avoiding the possibility of the conversation being recorded if the call were placed on a landline at the prison.

As a part of a routine quarterly personnel shift at the medical center, Jones was moved to a different unit and was therefore unable to meet with the inmate for a period of time. The inmate later reestablished contact with Jones after being moved to a cell in the same unit that Jones was assigned. They met again on June 21, 2012, the first day they were in the unit at the same time. They had multiple meetings during July 2012, with Jones standing outside the inmate's jail cell and speaking to him through an opening in the door. All the meetings were captured on the unit's surveillance system. During one of those meetings, Jones told the inmate that his wife had left him and took all their belongings except the couch, television and bills, and he blamed John Doe for his wife's departure.

An undercover FBI agent posed as a hit man named Chuey, and the inmate gave Jones a telephone number to contact Chuey. Jones contacted Chuey and made arrangements to meet in the food court located inside the Battlefield Mall in Springfield. At that meeting, Jones told the undercover agent he would pay him \$1,500 to murder John Doe and provided the undercover agent with a photograph of John Doe, his home address, and \$1,500 in cash. At the conclusion of the meeting, Jones was arrested.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney James J. Kelleher. It was investigated by the U.S. Medical Center for Federal Prisoners Special Investigative Support, the FBI and the Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General.