



# Department of Justice

Office of the United States Attorney  
Eastern District of California  
U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Friday, March 31, 2017  
[www.justice.gov/edca](http://www.justice.gov/edca)  
Docket #: 1:17-cr-077 DAD

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**ATWATER PENITENTIARY COOK INDICTED FOR CONSPIRACY, ATTEMPTED  
DRUG DISTRIBUTION AND ACCEPTING A BRIBE**

FRESNO, Calif. — A three-count indictment was unsealed Thursday following the arrest of David G. Bruce II, 32, of Merced. Bruce is charged with conspiring to provide inmates with prohibited objects; attempting to possess marijuana and heroin with the intent to distribute; and taking a bribe as a public official, U.S. Attorney Phillip A. Talbert announced.

According to court documents, Bruce was employed as a cook foreman at the Federal Bureau of Prisons' United States Penitentiary Atwater (USP Atwater) in Merced County. Between May and December 2015, Bruce conspired with others to provide USP Atwater inmates with marijuana and heroin. In return, Bruce received \$1,580 from associates of the inmates. On December 2015, Bruce attempted to possess marijuana and heroin.

This case is the product of an investigation by the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorney Vincenza Rabenn is prosecuting the case.

If convicted, Bruce faces a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$1 million fine for possessing a controlled substance with intent to distribute. The maximum statutory penalty for conspiring to commit an offense against the United States is five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The maximum statutory penalty for a public official taking a bribe is 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Any sentence, however, would be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of any applicable statutory factors and the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables. The charges are only allegations; the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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