

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Northern District of Georgia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Former federal prison guard pleads guilty to accepting bribes to smuggle contraband into prison for inmates

ATLANTA – Melvin Thomas, a former prison guard at the Atlanta United States Penitentiary (“USP”) has pleaded guilty to accepting bribe payments in exchange for smuggling contraband into the prison.

“Corruption in prisons undermines the public’s faith in the criminal justice system and puts the safety of prison staff and inmates at risk,” said U.S. Attorney Byung J. “BJay” Pak. “Thomas took bribes instead of honoring his oath. He compromised his commitment to his fellow officers and the citizens who expect prison guards to have the utmost integrity.”

“The OIG remains committed to rooting out corruption within our federal prisons. Today’s guilty plea demonstrates that those who betray the trust of their fellow correctional officers and citizens will face consequences for doing so,” stated Robert A. Bourbon, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General’s Miami Field Division.

According to U.S. Attorney Pak, the charges and other information presented in court: From approximately July 2009 to April 2017, Thomas was a correctional officer at the U.S. Penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia. USP Atlanta is a medium-security federal prison for male inmates operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. USP Atlanta prohibits inmates from using or possessing tobacco products. Nevertheless, as a prison guard, Thomas accepted several bribe payments from an inmate in exchange for smuggling tobacco into the prison. In total, the inmate paid Thomas approximately \$3,500 for the contraband that he smuggled into the prison.

On February 14, 2018, Melvin Thomas, 40, Rocky Mount, North Carolina, was charged via criminal information with the bribery of a public official. Sentencing is scheduled for July 10, 2018, before U.S. District Judge Timothy C. Batten, Sr.

This case is being investigated by the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Ryan Huschka is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact the U.S. Attorney's Public Affairs Office at USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov (link sends e-mail) or (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is <http://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga>.

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