

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 5, 2020

Three Correction Officers Arrested For Taking Bribes To Smuggle Drugs And Other Contraband Into Private Jail

Geoffrey S. Berman, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and Guido Modano, Special Agent in Charge of the New York Field Office of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (“DOJ OIG”), announced today the unsealing of a Complaint in Manhattan federal court charging corrections officers JERMAINE HARMON, a/k/a “Mel,” KHARI FAISON, a/k/a “Country,” and COMPTON RICHMOND, a/k/a “Rich,” with taking bribes in exchange for smuggling contraband into a private detention facility in Queens, New York, which houses federal inmates pursuant to a contract with the United States Marshals Service (the “Jail”).

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman said: “As alleged, these correction officers abused the power entrusted to them and compromised the safety of the very institution they swore to protect by taking bribes in exchange for smuggling contraband to the inmates in their custody. We remain committed to rooting out corruption anywhere it takes hold – from the halls of power to the corridors of our correctional facilities.”

DOJ OIG Special Agent in Charge Guido Modano said: “The public relies on Correctional Officers to maintain order and uphold the law. Instead, these three Correctional Officers allegedly accepted bribes for smuggling drugs and cell phones into the jail, endangering their fellow Correctional Officers, staff, inmates and the public, and also jeopardizing the security of the jail facility.”

According to the allegations in the Complaint^[1] unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

HARMON, FAISON, and RICHMOND were all, at relevant times, correction officers at the Jail. As alleged, HARMON, FAISON, and RICHMOND took bribes from numerous inmates housed at the Jail in exchange for smuggling contraband to those inmates, including marijuana and, in HARMON and FAISON’s case, smokeable synthetic cannabinoids (“K2”). The bribes were funneled to HARMON, FAISON, and RICHMOND by non-incarcerated friends and relatives of the inmates either in cash or via a cellphone payment application. For example, on at least four occasions in 2019, HARMON is alleged to have received bribes from an inmate (“Inmate-1”) in exchange for smuggling marijuana and cigarettes into the Jail. HARMON warned Inmate-1 to “stay low” and “be careful” and offered Inmate-1 marijuana to assault inmates whom HARMON believed to be providing information about him, but Inmate-1 declined. On multiple occasions in 2019, HARMON took bribes from another inmate (“Inmate-2”) in exchange for smuggling marijuana, K2, and cigarettes into the Jail. On at least four occasions in 2019, FAISON is alleged to have accepted bribes from two inmates (“Inmate-8” and “Inmate-9”) in exchange for smuggling marijuana, K2, cigarettes, and a cellphone into the Jail. On at least two occasions in 2019, RICHMOND is alleged to have taken bribes from one of the same inmates who bribed FAISON (Inmate-9) in exchange for smuggling contraband, including marijuana, into the Jail. As alleged, in most instances, RICHMOND, HARMON, and FAISON obtained the contraband, including marijuana and K2, from non-incarcerated associates of the inmates; those non-incarcerated associates also paid cash bribes, either in person or via mobile applications, to RICHMOND, HARMON, and FAISON.

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JERMAINE HARMON, 32, of Brooklyn, New York, KHARI FAISON, 26, of Brooklyn, New York, and COMPTON RICHMOND, 24, of Staten Island, New York, each have been charged in the Complaint with one count of conspiracy to commit bribery and to introduce contraband into prison, which carries a maximum prison term of five years, and one count of bribery, which carries a maximum prison term of 15 years.

Mr. Berman praised the investigative work of the DOJ Office of Inspector General in this investigation.

This case is being handled by the Office's Public Corruption Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Maurene Comey and Jessica Lonergan are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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