

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

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Acting U.S. Attorney Announces Charges Against Correctional Officer Who Demanded Bribe In The Form Of Sex From A Female Prison Visitor**

Audrey Strauss, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and William F. Sweeney Jr., the Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), announced today the unsealing of an Indictment charging ROBERT ADAMS with bribery and blackmail. ADAMS was arrested this morning and is expected to be presented before U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert W. Lehrburger. The case is assigned to U.S. District Judge Paul G. Gardephe.

Acting U.S. Attorney Audrey Strauss said: "As alleged, Robert Adams was derelict in his duties as an MCC correctional officer, not only by turning a blind eye to the smuggling of contraband, thereby putting inmates and fellow officers at risk, but also by exploiting his position of authority to pressure a prison visitor into having unwanted sex with him. Now Adams, a sworn law enforcement officer, is facing prosecution for these alleged serious violations of the law."

FBI Assistant Director William F. Sweeney Jr. said: "Correctional officers are supposed to serve as society's guardians – protecting us all from some of the worst offenders while they complete their sentences, not making offenders' lives more comfortable by breaking rules, and certainly not engaging in their own extortionate behavior while doing so. We allege Adams did just that – he allowed illegal contraband into the MCC, risked the overall security of the facility and safety of his co-workers, and even more egregiously, he used his position of authority to blackmail a victim to have sex. Today we want to remind those who guard federal facilities the consequences for illegal behavior are just as severe for sworn officers as they are for anyone else in society."

According to the allegations contained in the Indictment unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:[1]

ADAMS is a correctional officer employed by the United States Bureau of Prisons ("BOP") at the Metropolitan Correctional Center ("MCC"), a federal prison located in New York, New York. Between June 2019 to August 2019, ADAMS was, among other responsibilities, assigned to work in the visit area of the MCC. Among his official responsibilities in that capacity, ADAMS was

required to conduct searches, deny entry, detain visitors, and make reports when, among other things, he believed a visitor was smuggling contraband into the MCC.

ADAMS abused his official position as a correctional officer by blackmailing and corruptly demanding that a visitor, whom he had caught smuggling contraband into the MCC (“Visitor-1”), engage in sexual acts with him, or else be arrested and denied future entry to the MCC. Specifically, on or about July 5, 2019, while working as a correctional officer in the MCC’s visit area, ADAMS escorted an inmate away from a visit with Visitor-1, who was still in the visit area. After discovering that the inmate was carrying contraband, ADAMS confronted Visitor-1 and told her that he had caught the inmate with contraband she had provided to him. ADAMS further told Visitor-1 that she would be in trouble unless she met him at a nearby pizzeria.

As instructed by ADAMS, Visitor-1 left the MCC – without being reported or arrested for smuggling contraband – and walked to the nearby pizzeria. Soon thereafter, ADAMS met Visitor-1 at the pizzeria, where he requested that Visitor-1 get in his car and travel with him to a motel to have sex. ADAMS conveyed to Visitor-1 that unless she had sex with him, she would be prohibited from visiting the MCC and would be arrested. After arriving at the motel, ADAMS and Visitor-1 had sex. Visitor-1 did not want to have sex with ADAMS, but agreed to it in exchange for not being reported to law enforcement or having her visiting privileges at the MCC revoked.

After the July 5, 2019, incident, Visitor-1 was permitted to continue to visit the MCC. Not only did ADAMS not report Visitor-1 on July 5, 2019, for smuggling contraband, in dereliction of his official duties, but he was also present on other occasions where she returned to the MCC with contraband.

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ADAMS, 39, of New York, New York, is charged with one count of bribery, which carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison, and one count of blackmail, which carries a maximum penalty of one year in prison. The maximum potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the judge.

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Ms. Strauss praised the outstanding investigative work of the FBI. She also thanked the Department of Justice’s Office of the Inspector General for its assistance in this matter.

The prosecution of this case is being handled by the Office’s Public Corruption Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys Nicolas Roos and Rushmi Bhaskaran are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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