

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

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## **Bureau Of Prisons Correctional Officer Charged With Sexual Abuse Of A Ward**

OAKLAND – Ross Klinger has been charged in a criminal complaint with sexual abuse of a ward, announced Acting U.S. Attorney Stephanie M. Hinds, Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Los Angeles Field Office Special Agent in Charge Zachary Shroyer, and FBI Special Agent in Charge Craig D. Fair.

According to the complaint filed June 25, 2021, and unsealed today, at the time of the offense, Klinger, 36, of Riverside, Calif., was a correctional officer at Bureau of Prisons Federal Correctional Institute Dublin (FCI Dublin), an all-female low security federal correctional institution. As a correctional officer, Klinger had disciplinary authority over inmates incarcerated at FCI Dublin. He received training that inappropriate relationships with inmates, including sexual or financial involvement, were prohibited. According to the complaint, Klinger knowingly had sexual intercourse with at least one inmate while she was incarcerated at FCI Dublin and were under his custodial, supervisory, or disciplinary authority. The complaint further alleges that Klinger was also sexually involved with a second inmate. Klinger told both inmates that he wanted to father their children and that he made plans to marry them. He also gave his victims, and at times their families, either money, gifts, or both.

“Prison officials are given great power over incarcerated individuals and are entrusted to use that power to ensure the care, safety, and control of the people placed under the government’s supervision,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Hinds.

“The abuse of these powers echoes through the entire criminal justice system and threatens to compromise the public’s trust in the system’s legitimacy. The allegations in the criminal complaint unsealed today describe a disturbing deviation from the responsibilities of correctional officers. Such an abuse of power will not be tolerated.”

“Correctional Officers wield great power in correctional facilities,” said Special Agent in Charge Shroyer. “Klinger allegedly abused his authority to engage in sexual relations with two inmates. Sexual abuse of inmates will never be tolerated.”

“As alleged in the complaint, Klinger took advantage of his role as an officer, entrusted to supervise inmates on behalf of the government, and instead displayed an egregious abuse of power” said Special Agent in Charge Fair. “The FBI will continue to work with our partners to investigate such violations of the law and hold those responsible accountable.”

The complaint alleges that between April 2020 and October 2020, Klinger repeatedly had sexual intercourse with one of the victims in a storage warehouse at FCI-Dublin. After he transferred to a different BOP prison in San Diego, he allegedly kept in touch with the victim using the alias “Juan Garcia,” and communicated with her via email and video visits. Klinger also gave money to the victim’s mother, and visited her family, including her minor children.

According to the complaint, Klinger also had sexual intercourse with the second victim in a Conex box on FCI Dublin’s campus, while another inmate acted as a lookout. After the victim was released

to a halfway house, Klinger remained in contact with her via text message and Snapchat. Klinger visited the victim at the halfway house, where he engaged in sexual intercourse with the victim and proposed to her with a diamond ring.

Klinger is charged with one count of sexual abuse of a ward, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2243(b). Klinger was arrested this morning and made an initial federal court appearance in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. His first appearance in the Northern District of California has not yet been scheduled.

The charges contained in the criminal complaint are mere allegations. As in any criminal case, the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law. If convicted of the charge, Klinger faces a maximum statutory sentence of 15 years imprisonment, a three-year term of supervised release, and a \$250,000 fine. However, any sentence following conviction would be imposed by the court only after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. § 3553.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Molly K. Priedeman is prosecuting the case with the assistance of Kay Konopaske. The prosecution is the result of an investigation by the DOJ OIG and the FBI.