

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, November 4, 2021

**Current And Former Metropolitan Correctional Center
Employees And Inmates Indicted For Bribery, Contraband
Smuggling, Narcotics Distribution, And Obstruction Of
Justice Offenses**

**Defendants Include Three Current and Former MCC Employees and Eight
Former MCC Inmates Charged with Participating in Wide-Ranging Scheme**

Damian Williams, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Michael J. Driscoll, Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), Ryan T. Geach, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General New York Field Office ("DOJ-OIG"), and Frank Russo, Director of Field Operations for U.S. Customs and Border Protection in New York ("CBP"), announced today the unsealing of an indictment charging three current or former Bureau of Prisons ("BOP") employees, as well as eight former inmates of the Metropolitan Correctional Center ("MCC"), of conspiring to smuggle contraband such as drugs, alcohol, and cellphones to inmates at the MCC. Two of the BOP employees were also charged with obstructing justice. Four of the defendants were arrested today and will be presented before Magistrate Judge Sarah L. Cave later today. The additional defendants are already in federal custody and will be presented in this District at a later date. The case has been assigned to U.S. District Judge Andrew L. Carter.

U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said: "As alleged, MCC corrections officers Perry Joyner and Mario Feliciano, and MCC unit secretary Sharon Griffith-McKnight, undermined the institution they swore to serve by conspiring with the very inmates they are charged to protect by smuggling contraband into the MCC and, in the case of Joyner and Griffith-McKnight, by obstructing the pursuit of justice. This Office is committed to rooting out corruption in our jails and prisons."

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Michael J. Driscoll said: "Federal law enforcement officers take an oath to defend the laws of the United States and protect its citizens. We allege the guards we've arrested today acted like nothing more than the criminals in their charge and assisted incarcerated offenders in committing more crimes. Our FBI/NYPD Joint Violent Crimes Task Force is working with our partners to root out the corruption we've uncovered; they will find everyone who should be held accountable for their blatant disregard for the law."

DOJ-OIG Special Agent-in-Charge Ryan T. Geach said: "The defendants allegedly engaged in an extensive scheme to introduce dangerous contraband into MCC New York, threatening the safety and security of the institution, inmates, staff, and the public."

CBP Director of Field Operations Frank Russo said: "As public servants, we are naturally held to a higher standard of conduct and subject to the same laws and rules that apply to private citizens. CBP will fully assist the Department of Justice in any and all investigations involving alleged unlawful conduct by our personnel, including cases that involve conduct which occurred prior to employment with CBP."

According to the Indictment^[1] unsealed today:

The defendants participated in an extensive scheme involving bribery and smuggling of contraband, and the distribution of contraband within the MCC. The defendants include two current employees of the BOP, PERRY JOYNER and SHARON GRIFFITH-MCKNIGHT, and one former employee of the BOP, MARIO FELICIANO, as well as eight former MCC inmates: DONNELL MURRAY, a/k/a “Don P,” MARKEEN JORDAN, a/k/a “Kingo,” ANTHONY ELLISON, a/k/a “Harv,” TYRELL SUMPTER, a/k/a “Rell,” KEVIN CROSBY, a/k/a “Sama,” DAVID VALERIO, a/k/a “Santana,” a/k/a “Bando,” VIRGILIO ACEVEDO DE LOS SANTOS, a/k/a “Jairo Taveras,” a/k/a “Junior,” and STARLIN NUNEZ, a/k/a “Chino,” a/k/a “Junior.”

The contraband that JOYNER, FELICIANO, and GRIFFITH-MCKNIGHT smuggled into the MCC included controlled substances, cellphones, alcohol, and cigarettes. For their efforts, JOYNER and FELICIANO agreed to receive, and did receive, bribes from the inmate-defendants.

During the course of the scheme, in an effort to obtain a lesser sentence for ELLISON, GRIFFITH-MCKNIGHT submitted a letter to the District Judge responsible for sentencing inmate and co-defendant ELLISON that falsely described ELLISON as a “model inmate” even though at the time GRIFFITH-MCKNIGHT was smuggling contraband to ELLISON and therefore knew he was anything but a “model inmate.” Relying on this letter from GRIFFITH-MCKNIGHT, the District Judge who presided over ELLISON’s sentencing remarked that ELLISON’s purported good behavior in prison was “impressive” and that “[u]nless this is some sort of Grisham novel, and people are all corrupt and making all of this up about [ELLISON], it seems to me that it’s unavoidable that [ELLISON’s] trajectory at the MCC contains a lot of good.”

JOYNER obstructed justice by intimidating and threatening an inmate—an inmate that JOYNER was charged with protecting—whom JOYNER believed was providing the Government with information about JOYNER’s participation in the charged scheme.

* * *

A chart containing the names, charges, and maximum penalties for the defendants is set forth below. The maximum potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendants will be determined by the judge assigned to each case.

Mr. Williams praised the outstanding work of the FBI, DOJ OIG, Special Agents from the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York, and CBP.

The prosecution of this case is being handled by the Office’s Public Corruption and Narcotics Units. Assistant United States Attorneys Aline R. Flodr, Jonathan E. Rebold, and Daniel H. Wolf are in charge of the prosecution.

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