

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Correctional Officer Greg McKenzie Indicted For Obstructing Investigation Of Smuggling Of Firearm Into Metropolitan Correctional Center

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"), and Ryan T. Geach, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General New York Field Office ("DOJ-OIG"), announced today the unsealing of an indictment charging GREG MCKENZIE, a Bureau of Prisons correctional officer, with obstructing a federal investigation into the smuggling of a firearm into the Metropolitan Correctional Center ("MCC"). The loaded firearm was recovered from inside the MCC on March 5, 2020. MCKENZIE was arrested today and will be presented before Magistrate Judge Robert W. Lehrburger later today. The case has been assigned to U.S. District Judge P. Kevin Castel.

U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said: "Greg McKenzie is alleged to have obstructed justice by lying to federal agents investigating the smuggling of a firearm into the MCC in 2020. His alleged use of a prepaid cellphone to communicate secretly with an inmate from whose prison cell the firearm was recovered and subsequent false denials about those communications is a serious crime."

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Michael J. Driscoll said: "McKenzie allegedly obstructed justice when he lied to federal investigators regarding his contact with a MCC inmate who last occupied a cell in which a loaded firearm was discovered. As a federal corrections officer, McKenzie was responsible for protecting the welfare of the inmates and his coworkers in the facility. Instead of fulfilling that duty, he chose to lie to the agents investigating a gravely serious violation of safety protocols. With today's charges, he will be forced to face the consequences of his actions."

DOJ-OIG Special Agent-in-Charge Ryan T. Geach said: "McKenzie's alleged lying and obstruction of a federal investigation are serious offenses, especially because a loaded firearm in the hands of an inmate endangers not just the prison, but the entire community."

According to the Indictment^[1] unsealed today:

On or about March 5, 2020, a loaded .22 caliber firearm (the "Firearm") was recovered from inside an MCC prison cell that had last been occupied by two inmates, including "Inmate-1." Several weeks before the Firearm was recovered, Inmate-1 and his wife had each communicated by phone with a particular cellphone used by MCKENZIE (the "McKenzie Prepaid Cellphone"). However, when law enforcement agents interviewed MCKENZIE regarding the Firearm investigation, MCKENZIE falsely denied having any connection to the McKenzie Prepaid Cellphone.

Specifically, on January 30, 2020, MCKENZIE purchased the McKenzie Prepaid Cellphone from a store in lower Manhattan, just moments after having withdrawn approximately \$120 in cash from a nearby ATM. The next day, MCKENZIE used the McKenzie Prepaid Cellphone to repeatedly exchange calls with Inmate-1 – who was using a contraband cellphone from within the MCC – and Inmate-1's wife.

Meanwhile, cellphone location information revealed that the McKenzie Prepaid Cellphone frequently traveled between MCKENZIE's Danbury, Connecticut residence and the MCC on dates and times consistent with MCKENZIE's work schedule. On the evening of January 31, 2020, MCKENZIE and Inmate-1's wife each briefly traveled to the same location in the Bronx at the same time, and MCKENZIE thereafter traveled directly to the MCC to begin a shift beginning at midnight on February 1, 2020, whereupon he was assigned to the very unit where Inmate-1 was housed and from where the Firearm was later recovered.

Surveillance video and call detail records further established that after beginning his February 1, 2020, shift, MCKENZIE and a colleague conducted a routine check of Inmate-1's cellblock. Moments later, Inmate-1, using a contraband cellphone, called and then texted the McKenzie Prepaid Cellphone. Within minutes, MCKENZIE briefly returned to Inmate 1's cellblock – this time alone – while appearing to carry an object under his left arm.

On November 4, 2021, two federal agents conducted a voluntary interview with MCKENZIE. During the interview, MCKENZIE falsely denied ownership, possession, and use of the McKenzie Prepaid Cellphone, and falsely denied ever using any prepaid cellphone to communicate with an MCC inmate or inmate's associate.

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MCKENZIE, 35, of Danbury, Connecticut, is charged with one count of false statements, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1001(a)(2), which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, and one count of obstruction of justice, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1512(c)(2), which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

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 the U.S. Customs and Border Protection in New York.

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, with assistance from Assistant United States Attorney Juliana N. Murray.

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

[1] As the introductory phrase signifies, the entirety of the text of the Indictment, and the description of the Indictment set forth herein, constitute only allegations, and every fact described therein should be treated as an allegation. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.