PRESS RELEASE

Federal Correctional Officer Pleads Guilty to Sexual Abuse of an Inmate and Receipt of a Bribe by a Public Official

Tuesday, July 28, 2026

For Immediate Release
U.S. Attorney's Office, Middle District of Florida

Ocala, Florida – Cornelius Alexander Thompson (38, Ocala) has pleaded guilty to one count of sexual abuse of a ward in federal custody and one count of receipt of a bribe by a public official. He faces a maximum penalty of 15 years in federal prison on each count. A sentencing date has not yet been set. The indictment also notifies Thompson that the United States will seek an order of forfeiture of $24,550, which represents the proceeds of the bribery offense. U.S. Attorney Gregory W. Kehoe made the announcement.

According to court records, Thompson was a public official employed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons as a correctional officer at the Coleman Federal Correctional Complex (FCC Coleman) in Sumter County. Between January 2020 and August 9, 2023, Thompson engaged in a sexual act at the prison with a federal inmate under his custodial, supervisory, and disciplinary authority. Furthermore, between January 2020 and April 29, 2024, Thompson received money to unlawfully smuggle contraband into FCC Coleman for federal inmates. The prohibited items Thompson smuggled into the prison included K2 (a synthetic marijuana), fentanyl, PCP, methamphetamine, ketamine, suboxone, marijuana, cigarettes, and cellphones.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Justice – Office of the Inspector General, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Hannah Nowalk Watson.

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