

Fifteen Defendants Indicted on Federal Racketeering and Drug Conspiracy Charges at Jessup Correctional Institution

Posted by [TBN\(Staff\)](#) On 02/13/2020

JCI Indictment Defendants:

Correctional Officers:

Dominique Booker, Correctional Officer, age 43, of Baltimore;
Chanel Pierce, Correctional Dietary Officer, age 27, of Pikesville, Maryland.

Inmates:

Page Boyd, age 35;
William Cox, a/k/a Dollar, age 43;
Kenneth Fonseca, a/k/a Bean, age 36;
Marshall Hill, a/k/a Boosie, age 28;
Vernard Majette, a/k/a Nard, age 38; and
Darnell Smith, a/k/a Hook, age 39.

Facilitators:

Chaz Chriscoe, a/k/a Cheese, age 39, of Owings Mills, Maryland;
Vonda Bolden, age 55, of Baltimore;
Latina Braxton, age 34, of Baltimore;
Trinesse Butts, age 36, of Parkville, Maryland;
Sataya Hall, a/k/a Tia, age 37, of Baltimore;
Laurice Norfleet, age 41, of Taneytown, Maryland; and
Samantha Washington, a/k/a Pinky, age 28, of Baltimore.

Greenbelt, MD – February 13, 2020 - A federal grand jury has indicted 15 defendants on federal racketeering and drug conspiracy charges at the Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI), including former correctional officers, inmates, and outside “facilitators,” for allegedly paying bribes to correctional officers to smuggle contraband, including narcotics, alcohol, tobacco, and cell phones into the prison. The indictment was returned on February 5, 2020, and made public today upon the arrest of 11 of the defendants. Three of the defendants were arrested earlier this week. Law enforcement is still seeking outside facilitator, Trinesse Butts.

The indictment was announced by United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Robert K. Hur; Special Agent in Charge Jennifer C. Boone, of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Baltimore Field Office; and Secretary Robert Green, of the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

“Corrupt correctional officers endanger the lives of their co-workers and of the inmates entrusted to their care and supervision,” said United States Attorney Robert K. Hur. “They also endanger the entire community, as prisoners can use contraband cell phones to direct criminal activity outside prison walls. The United States Attorney’s Office will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to root out prison corruption and prosecute correctional officers who abuse their positions of trust to facilitate and engage in criminal behavior.”

“The public expects its correctional officers to guard the wall that divides those who are in prison from the community. But the allegations in the indictment show that the defendants were nothing more than corrupt gatekeepers -- allowing the free flow of criminal activity in and out of the prison,” said Jennifer Boone, Special Agent in Charge of the Baltimore Field Office of the FBI. “Today’s charges show that no one in a position of public trust who carries out a criminal conspiracy is beyond the reach of the dedicated agents, officers and detectives from Maryland’s law enforcement agencies.”

“Nothing matters more than the safety of our citizens, our correctional employees, and the inmates in our custody,” said DPSCS Secretary Robert L. Green. “We have worked diligently on this case from the moment we learned of the potential security compromise. And, we’ll continue to work closely with our local and federal law enforcement partners to maintain secure facilities for our employees and the inmates in our care.”

According to the indictment, JCI was a maximum-security prison that housed approximately 1,800 male inmates, with approximately 423 Correctional Officers (COs).

The two-count indictment alleges that from at least 2017 until the present, the COs, inmates, and outside facilitators conspired to smuggle contraband into JCI, including narcotics, alcohol, tobacco, and cell phones, in order to enrich themselves and protect and expand their criminal operation. According to the indictment, defendant COs accepted or agreed to accept payments from facilitators and/or inmates or engaged in sexual relations with inmates as consideration for smuggling contraband into JCI. Inmates allegedly acted as both wholesalers and retailers of contraband and in the process made profits that far exceeded the profits that could be made by selling similar drugs on the street. For example, conspirator inmates could purchase Suboxone strips for approximately \$3 each and sell them inside JCI for approximately \$50 each, or for a profit of more than 1,000 percent.

The indictment alleges that the defendants conspired to smuggle and traffic in narcotics within JCI, including MDMA (commonly referred to as “molly” or ecstasy), buprenorphine (commonly referred to as “Suboxone,” a prescription opioid used to treat heroin addiction), and synthetic cannabinoids (otherwise known as “K2”), as well as other contraband, including cell phones, alcohol, and tobacco.

According to the indictment, although COs were required to pass through security screening at the entrance to JCI, the COs were able to hide contraband on their persons. Once the COs had the smuggled contraband inside the facility, they allegedly delivered it to inmates in the kitchens and in bathrooms or closets near where inmates and staff interacted, among other locations. The indictment alleges that defendant inmates who had jobs that allowed them to move throughout the prison took orders for contraband from inmates and delivered contraband to inmates. Further, the indictment alleges that defendant COs had sexual relationships with inmates and exchanged sex for contraband. In addition, these sexual relationships allegedly facilitated smuggling and trafficking relationships

between COs and inmates.

According to the indictment, inmates and facilitators paid COs for smuggled contraband in cash, as well as using Cash App, Green Dot cards, and other forms of electronic payments. Inmate defendants were able to use contraband cell phones or the jail call system to direct outside facilitators to pay corrupt COs directly using the Cash App from within JCI. Inmate defendants also received payments from inmates for contraband through Green Dot and other forms of electronic payments, often with the assistance of facilitators.

If convicted, the defendants face a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison for the racketeering conspiracy and 20 years in prison for the drug trafficking conspiracy. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors. The arrested defendants will have initial appearances in U.S. District Court in Baltimore today.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The U.S. Attorney expressed appreciation to the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, whose staff initiated the JCI investigation and have been full partners in this investigation.

United States Attorney Robert K. Hur commended the FBI and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services for their work in the investigation. Mr. Hur thanked Assistant U.S. Attorneys Burden H. Walker and Lauren E. Perry, who are prosecuting this case.

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