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PRESS RELEASE

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Fifteen People Indicted in Dangerous Prison Contraband Conspiracy Involving Drones, Hospitals, and a Staff Member at Roxbury Correctional Institution
Ongoing Joint Effort Led by AG and Dept. of Public Safety and Correctional Services Increases Safety Inside and Outside of the Prison

BALTIMORE, MD (May 25, 2023) – Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced that fifteen people have been indicted in three different prison contraband conspiracies in connection to inmates at Roxbury Correctional Institution (RCI) in Hagerstown, Maryland. The investigation unveiled a sophisticated criminal network that employed drones, a correctional officer, and a hospital, allowing the distribution of dangerous drugs, including fentanyl, and a wide array of contraband such as cell phones, tools, and other illicit items. This is the second major announcement of multiple indictments in prison contraband smuggling schemes in just the past six weeks.

“Crimes committed behind locked prison gates are as much a threat to our communities as crimes committed in our neighborhoods and streets,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “The Office of the Attorney General is committed to doing the work of making sure that anyone who tries to threaten the safety of Marylanders will be caught and brought to justice.”

In April 2022, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) Intelligence and Investigative Division began an investigation after the recovery of drugs and other contraband smuggled into RCI after an inmate had returned to the facility from a hospital visit. Working with the Office of the Attorney General, the investigative team uncovered a complex web of conspiracies operating to smuggle drugs and other contraband into RCI by way of an employee, drones, and outside civilians who were recruited over social media.

“Our Intelligence and Investigative team did a great job collecting information to build a strong case that we could present to our partners in the Attorney General’s office for prosecution,” **said Carolyn J. Scruggs, Secretary of the MD Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services**. “Anytime contraband is introduced into one of our facilities, it places our staff and the incarcerated in danger. We will not tolerate contraband because it can lead to violence.”

In one conspiracy, inmate Jose Tapia recruited two civilians via Instagram and paid them to try to fly drones over the RCI fence and drop drugs and other contraband for Tapia to receive and redistribute within RCI. On September 7, 2022, law enforcement interrupted an attempted drone delivery and arrested Guy Austin and Miya Scott. Investigators also recovered a drone Austin and Scott had crashed the evening prior while attempting to make a delivery. The recovered packages attached to the drones included drugs, tools, cell phones, phone chargers, SIM cards, headphones, and thumb drives. Three individuals are charged in this conspiracy:

Jose Tapia, 36, an RCI Inmate, is charged in a 10-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy and illegal possession of a telecommunications device in a place of confinement.

Guy Austin, Jr., 30, of Baltimore, Maryland, an outside facilitator for Jose Tapia, is charged in a 60-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy, possession of controlled dangerous substances with the intent to distribute, and attempt to deliver contraband to a place of confinement.

Miya Scott, 25, of Baltimore, Maryland, an outside facilitator for Jose Tapia, is charged in a 19-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy.

In the second conspiracy, dietary correctional officer Temille Ashby, a 10-year veteran of DPSCS, smuggled drugs to inmate Jamal Brown, who would then redistribute them within RCI. As a dietary officer, Ashby would work in the RCI kitchen where inmate Brown was assigned to work. On November 5, 2022, law enforcement intercepted Ashby when she reported to RCI to work an overtime shift and recovered a bundle of approximately 158 strips of Suboxone, which Ashby had hidden within her body cavity. Suboxone is sold for \$100 a strip inside of prison. Financial records showed that Ashby had received approximately \$16,132 in payments on Cash App from Brown and his family members. Ashby's normal work location was at Jessup Correctional Institution in Anne Arundel County, but she would occasionally work overtime shifts at RCI. Two individuals are charged in this conspiracy:

Temille Ashby, 33, a dietary correctional officer, is charged in a 14-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy, possession of controlled dangerous substances with the intent to distribute, and attempt to deliver contraband to a place of confinement.

Jamal Brown, 33, an RCI inmate, is charged in an 8-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy and illegal possession of a telecommunications device in a place of confinement.

In the third conspiracy, inmate Akeem Banks was transported from RCI to the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) in Baltimore City for medical treatment. Friends and family of other RCI inmates would hide bundles of drugs and other contraband within bathrooms at UMMC, which Banks would collect during his visits to the hospital. Banks hid the contraband in his clothing and smuggled the items back to RCI. Once inside RCI, Banks would give the contraband to other inmates, who would redistribute the items within the facility. Between April 2022 through August 2022, law enforcement intercepted four packages of drugs and other contraband intended to be smuggled into RCI. The recovered packages included drugs, including fentanyl, cell phones, power adaptors, flash drives, and cigarettes. Surveillance showed Tracy Williams (an outside facilitator for RCI inmate Jason Butler), and Keith Shuford (an outside

facilitator for inmate Deven Matos) hiding packages within UMMC. Five individuals are charged in this conspiracy:

Akeem Banks, 29, an RCI inmate, is charged in a 40-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy, possession of fentanyl with the intent to distribute, and possession of methamphetamine with the intent to distribute.

Jason Butler, 44, an RCI inmate, is charged in a 6-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy and attempt to possess contraband in a place of confinement.

Tracy Williams, 49, of Brooklyn, Maryland, an outside facilitator for Jason Butler, is charged in a 4-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy.

Deven Matos, 29, an RCI inmate, is charged in a 6-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy and illegal possession of a telecommunications device in a place of confinement.

Keith Shuford, 26, of Waldorf, Maryland, an outside facilitator for Deven Matos, is charged in a 4-count indictment, including charges of contraband conspiracy.

“Illicit controlled substances, like Fentanyl, continue to flood our country at an alarming rate, and no communities or institutions are immune from its devastation, to include this correctional facility in Maryland”, mentioned **Jarod Forget, Special Agent in Charge of the DEA Washington Division**. “Multi-agency collaboration is fundamental to disrupt and reduce violent, drug-related crimes, hold these offenders accountable and ultimately ensure the safety for our neighborhoods. The DEA resources and expertise are always available to our counterparts. We must continue our efforts until we no longer see illicit drug distribution and gang violence in our communities.

Additionally, cell searches within RCI discovered additional contraband. Five additional individuals are charged as a result of those cell searches:

Denis Alvarez, 27, an RCI inmate, is charged in a 2-count indictment with charges of illegal possession of a telecommunications device in a place of confinement and possession of contraband.

James Careton, 34, an RCI inmate, is charged in a 5-count indictment, including charges of illegal possession of a telecommunications device in a place of confinement and possession of contraband.

Jeffrey Gilmore, 41, an RCI inmate, is charged in a 13-count indictment, including charges of illegal possession of a telecommunications device in a place of confinement and possession of controlled dangerous substance in a place of confinement.

Avery Perry, 31, an RCI inmate, is charged in a 4-count indictment, including charges of illegal possession of a telecommunications device in a place of confinement and possession of contraband.

Deon Warren, 28, an RCI inmate, is charged in a 2-count indictment with illegal possession of a telecommunications device in a place of confinement and possession of contraband.

This investigation was led by the Maryland Office of the Attorney General’s Organized Crime Unit, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, the Washington County Narcotics Task Force, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration Washington Division.

The Attorney General’s Office has a long-standing relationship working with DPSCS to dismantle the importation and distribution of contraband in State institutions and hold those responsible accountable. On April 12, we announced the [indictment of 11 individuals](#) **connected to a contraband conspiracy operating at Jessup Correctional Institution.**

In making today’s announcement, Attorney General Brown thanked Criminal Division Chief Katie Dorian, DPSCS Lieutenant Valentrina White, Lieutenant David Roman, Detective Sergeant Michael Baier, Detective Sergeant Ryan Shifflet, as well as Senior Assistant Attorneys General Jared I. Albert and Zachary A. Norfolk, and Special Assistant Attorney General Brendan J. Flynn, who are prosecuting this case. Attorney General Brown also thanked the Special Agents from the DEA Washington Division’s Hagerstown Resident Office, the Washington County Narcotics Taskforce and State’s Attorney for Washington County Gina Cirincion for their assistance in this investigation.

A criminal indictment is merely an accusation of wrongdoing, and a defendant is presumed innocent until the State proves the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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