

Former Corrections Officer Sentenced to Federal Prison for Smuggling Drugs into Goose Creek Correctional Center

Anchorage, Alaska – Acting U.S. Attorney Bryan Schroder announced today that a former Alaska Department of Corrections employee was sentenced to eight months in federal prison for his role in smuggling drugs into Goose Creek Correctional Center (GCCC) in Wasilla, Alaska.

Adam Jason Spindler, 33, of Wasilla, a former Corrections Officer at GCCC, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Sharon L. Gleason, to eight months in federal prison, three years of supervised release, forfeiture of his 2011 pickup truck, a \$1,400 fine, and 120 hours of community service. On

Aug. 29, 2016, Spindler pled guilty to one count of drug conspiracy and one count of possession of controlled substances with the intent to distribute.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrea Hattan, who prosecuted the case, between at least March 30, 2016, and May 23, 2016, Spindler agreed on multiple occasions to smuggle drugs into GCCC for several different GCCC inmates housed in the section of GCCC that Spindler was responsible for guarding as a Corrections Officer. More specifically, Spindler met with several inmates' respective drug associates at locations outside of GCCC to obtain drugs, and then smuggled those drugs into GCCC and delivered them to the particular inmate for whom Spindler had obtained and smuggled the drugs. Spindler got the drugs into the prison by hiding them when he reported for work. As a Corrections Officer, Spindler had to pass through a metal detector but was not routinely subjected to pat-down or further searches when he entered GCCC. To coordinate these drug trafficking schemes, Spindler obtained contact information for each co-conspirator inmate's drug courier(s) from the applicable inmate, and then communicated with the drug courier via telephone and text message to arrange meetings outside of GCCC to obtain the drugs.

One of the drug schemes that Spindler was involved in was his May 2016 conspiracy with inmate Edward Wayne George, aka "Bigs," and George's girlfriend, Taylor Hunter, to smuggle drugs into GCCC for distribution to other inmates. George was a GCCC inmate who was housed in the same section of GCCC where Spindler worked as a Corrections Officer. Spindler got Hunter's contact information from George and from there, Spindler and Hunter coordinated the drug delivery directly. Between May 5 and May 25, 2016, Spindler had contact with Hunter approximately 35 times.

On May 23, 2016, as law enforcement officers looked on, Spindler, who was dressed in his Alaska Department of Corrections uniform, met Hunter at a McDonald's restaurant in Wasilla to retrieve the drugs that Spindler planned to smuggle to George. Hunter then got into Spindler's truck and she handed Spindler a plastic baggie containing heroin and marijuana. Spindler then drove from the McDonald's directly to GCCC. Spindler entered GCCC to begin his shift and was detained and subsequently arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Spindler admitted that he was paid approximately \$1,400 altogether for smuggling drugs into GCCC, but made it clear that he was doing it for the "excitement" not the money.

At sentencing, Judge Gleason noted the seriousness of Spindler's crimes and recognized "the enormous" and multi-faceted impact that introducing drugs into a prison environment has to GCCC inmates, GCCC personnel, and public trust. In addition, the Judge specifically noted the need for the sentence imposed to deter others by sending the "message that this conduct cannot be tolerated," particularly by a Corrections Officer like Spindler who "betrayed public trust." Judge Gleason also noted that Spindler's crimes were not a "one time event or one time error in judgment," but spanned two months, and were perpetrated in "a prison environment." The Judge specifically noted being "troubled" by Spindler being corrupted by the lure of, in his words, "excitement."

Edward Wayne George, 27, was previously sentenced on April 6, 2017, to 33 months in prison, followed by three years of supervised release, for his role in the conspiracy. At his sentencing, Judge Gleason noted that the offense endangered not just the other GCCC inmates but, importantly, GCCC employees, "who leave their families every day" to work within the state's largest prison.

Taylor Hunter, 20, is scheduled to be sentenced on May 17, 2017, at 1:30 P.M.

"The vast majority of government employees work hard every day to serve the people of the nation and our state," said Acting U.S. Attorney Schroder. "However, when one of them becomes corrupt, it is necessary to hold them accountable."

"Over the past year, we've developed strong working relationships, especially with the Department of Corrections to identify possible cases of corruption within our prisons," said FBI Special Agent in Charge, Marlin Ritzman. "This case is just the beginning of our collaboration with DOC. FBI Anchorage is committed to rooting out corruption at whatever level it exists."

Acting U.S. Attorney Schroder commended the FBI who conducted the investigation, as well as the Alaska Department of Corrections for their substantial assistance, leading to the successful prosecution of this case.