



Former Correctional Officer and Inmate Sentenced in Contraband Smuggling Case

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ABILENE, Texas — A former Correctional Officer at Big Spring Correctional Center (BSCC), Matthew Castaneda, 24, and an inmate at BSCC, Ferdinand Trinidad, 45, have been sentenced for offenses related to contraband smuggling at the facility, announced U.S. Attorney Sarah R. Saldaña of the Northern District of Texas.

Today, Trinidad was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Sam R. Cummings to six months in federal prison. He pleaded guilty in February 2014 to one count of misprision of a felony. Castaneda, who pleaded guilty in January 2014 to one count of making false statements, was sentenced by Judge Cummings on May 16, 2014, to six months in federal prison and six months home monitoring. He must surrender to the Bureau of Prisons on June 20, 2014.

According to documents filed in the case, from mid-September 2012 to mid-December 2012, Castaneda accepted monetary bribes from Trinidad's wife to smuggle cell phones and other contraband into the facility for Trinidad. Trinidad's wife would receive the contraband at her residence and then mail it to Castaneda at BSCC. She would deposit money directly into a bank account that Castaneda had set up to hide the scheme. Castaneda admitted receiving a \$1,700 bribe, and Trinidad admitted he failed to notify an authority as soon as possible that Castaneda had agreed to bring contraband into the prison in exchange for monetary bribes.

The Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Paulina Jacobo prosecuted.

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