

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Northern District of Georgia

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Former federal prison guard sentenced to prison for accepting bribes

ATLANTA – Melvin Thomas, a former correctional officer at the U.S Penitentiary in Atlanta (“USP Atlanta”) was sentenced to federal prison for accepting bribe payments in exchange for smuggling contraband into the prison.

“Thomas reneged on his oath of office by violating the laws he pledged to uphold,” said U.S. Attorney Byung J. “BJay” Pak. “This type of conduct will not be tolerated, and the defendant will now be held accountable for his betrayal of the public trust, as well as his disloyalty to his fellow correctional officers.”

“Smuggling contraband into federal prisons compromises the safety of correctional officers and inmates. For that reason, the OIG takes very seriously investigations of this nature,” said Robert A. Bourbon, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General’s Miami Field Division.

According to U.S. Attorney Pak, the charges and other information presented in court: From approximately July 2009 to April 2017, Thomas was a correctional officer at USP Atlanta, a medium-security federal prison for male inmates that is operated by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. USP Atlanta prohibits inmates from using or possessing tobacco products. As a correctional officer, Thomas accepted several bribe payments from an inmate in exchange for smuggling tobacco into the prison. In total, the inmate paid Thomas approximately \$3,500 for the contraband that he smuggled into the prison.

Melvin Thomas, 40, of Rocky Mount, North Carolina, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Timothy C. Batten, Sr. to one year, one day in prison to be followed by two years of supervised release. He was also ordered to pay a \$3,500 fine. Thomas pleaded guilty to bribery of a public official on April 10, 2018.

This case was investigated by the Department of Justice Office of Inspector General.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Ryan Huschka prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact the U.S. Attorney’s Public Affairs Office at USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov (link sends e-mail) or (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Northern District of Georgia is <http://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga>.

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