



The City of New York
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**DOI STATEMENT ON PRISON SENTENCE FOR FORMER CITY CORRECTION OFFICER CONVICTED IN
ACCEPTING BRIBES AND CONSPIRING TO SMUGGLE MARIJUANA INTO CITY JAIL**

MARK G. PETERS, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), issued the following statement on a former City Correction Officer sentenced today to 41 months in federal prison for accepting more than \$11,000 in bribes and conspiring to distribute marijuana in maximum security facilities on Rikers Island. U.S. District Judge Robert W. Sweet imposed the sentence late this afternoon in U.S. District Court in Manhattan. The defendant, AUSTIN ROMAIN, was convicted by a jury in December 2014. DOI worked on this investigation with the New York Field Office of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA") and the office of the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, which prosecuted the case.

DOI Commissioner Mark G. Peters said, "This sentence drives home the message that you can join law enforcement or join the inmates, but you can't do both. This correction officer compromised jail safety and the safety of the overwhelming majority of honest, dedicated correction officers. Since 2014 DOI has targeted this type of criminal activity, arresting nearly two dozen Correction employees and more than three dozen inmates on an array of offenses and underscoring that DOI has zero tolerance for any individual who undercuts our correction system."

ROMAIN, 33, of Brooklyn, N.Y. began employment with the City Department of Correction ("DOC") in August 2007, during his tenure was assigned to the George R. Verno Center ("GRVC") and Otis Bantum Correctional Center ("OBCC"), and had been suspended without pay since his arrest in June 2013. He was terminated in December 2014, after his conviction.

According to DOI's investigation, on multiple occasions in 2012 and 2013, ROMAIN contacted the wives and girlfriends of several inmates via cellphone numbers provided by the inmates and arranged to pick up the contraband. ROMAIN was paid more than \$11,000 in bribes by Western Union wire transfers under multiple aliases, including the name "Steve Smith." This investigation resulted in a second arrest and conviction, specifically of Correction Officer KHALIF PHILLIPS, 33, who was convicted in May 2014 of conspiracy to distribute marijuana, was terminated by the DOC, and was sentenced in November 2014 to three years in prison.

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DOI Commissioner Mark G. Peters thanked James J. Hunt, Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the DEA and Preet Bharara, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and their staffs, for their assistance and cooperation on this successful investigation and prosecution.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Correction.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Martin Bell and Russell Capone of the Public Corruption Bureau of the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.

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