

NEWS

United States Department of Justice
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Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney

More Information? Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Fort Dix Corrections Officer Charged with Smuggling Contraband

(More)

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NEWARK – A Fort Dix corrections officer was charged today with conspiring to smuggle and sell cellular telephones and tobacco products at the federal prison at Fort Dix, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Samuel Bethea, 41, was arrested early this morning at his home in Ocean City, on a criminal Complaint by Special Agents of the Department of Justice, Office of Inspector General.

Bethea appeared this afternoon before U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Falk, who allowed Bethea to be released on a \$50,000 unsecured bond.

Bethea, who was immediately suspended by official at Fort Dix, is charged in the Complaint with conspiracy, which carries a maximum statutory penalty of five years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine.

According to the criminal Complaint, in July 2006, Bethea told an inmate who was cooperating with federal law enforcement that he would sell the inmate tobacco products that that inmate could sell to other prisoners at Fort Dix. Over the course of the next several months, Bethea smuggled in thousands of pouches of rolling tobacco and dozens of packs of cigarettes for the cooperating inmate.

Additionally, in early November, the cooperating inmate “ordered” two cellular telephones and promised to pay Bethea \$1000 per phone. Federal law enforcement officers then wired \$1,990 to a friend of Bethea’s. A few weeks later, Bethea allegedly met the cooperating inmate in a Fort Dix bathroom and gave him the two phones. On November 19, more phones were ordered by the cooperating inmate. Again, federal law enforcement wired \$1,990 to Bethea’s associate. On December 1, Bethea allegedly met the cooperating inmate in a Fort Dix bathroom and gave him two more phones.

Christie credited Special Agents of the Department of Justice, Office of Inspector General, under the direction of Inspector General Glenn A. Fine, and Special Agent in Charge James E. Tomlinson, with the investigation that led to today’s charges. The investigation was also assisted by investigators from the Federal Correctional Institution at Fort Dix, under the direction of Warden Charles Samuels.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard E. Constable, III of the U.S. Attorney’s Office Special Prosecution’s Division in Newark.

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