



NEWS

From New York State Inspector General
Ellen N. Biben

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Four Employees Charged with Promoting Prison Contraband at Secure Center for Juveniles

State Inspector General Ellen Biben and Tompkins County District Attorney Gwen Wilkinson today announced the arrest of one former and three current youth developmental aides, and one individual in state custody, for the illegal promotion of dangerous contraband at the MacCormick Secure Center in Brooktondale.

The arrests result from an investigation conducted by Inspector General Biben's office. According to the felony complaints, youth developmental aides, who are responsible for the direct supervision of the individuals in custody at MacCormick, smuggled cell phones into the facility for individuals detained there.

Cell phones are prohibited in prisons and secure detention centers. MacCormick is one of three secure detention centers in New York state and mainly houses teenagers who have been convicted in criminal courts of violent felonies. The facilities are operated by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and the youth developmental aides are OCFS employees.

The investigation is continuing.

Inspector General Biben said, "Putting cell phones into the wrong hands can lead to extremely dangerous consequences. The state employees arrested today are accused of jeopardizing the security of the detention facilities that they were supposed to be protecting. Such misconduct – particularly when it implicates public safety – will not be tolerated. I thank District Attorney Wilkinson and the State Police for working with us to end these abuses."

Tompkins County District Attorney Gwen Wilkinson said, "It's illegal to bring cell phones into secure facilities because residents use them to organize criminal activity. Any employee of MacCormick Secure Center who smuggled a contraband phone to a resident has not only committed a crime; but has also knowingly provided the tools for the commission of future crimes. My office applauds the strong work of Inspector General Biben's office in investigating this matter."

The following current and former youth developmental aides at MacCormick were each charged with Promoting Prison Contraband in the First Degree, a felony punishable by up to seven years in prison:

- David Brown, 47, of Weedsport. He worked for the State for about a year in 2000 and 2001 and then returned in July 2008 to the present. His most recent annual salary was \$47,248.
- Khrista Calcagno, 31, of Auburn. She entered State service in October, 2010 and resigned in April of this year at a salary of \$43,270.
- Patrick Clearwater, 27, of Elmira. He began State service in May 2007. His most recent salary was \$48,575.
- Frank J. Kennedy, 53, of Cortland. He started working for the State in October, 2009 but also has previous State service. His most recent salary was \$54,056.

Julian Blazer, 18, a detainee at MacCormick, was also charged with Promoting Prison Contraband in the First Degree.

The four current and former employees were arraigned by Town of Caroline Justice Harold Phoenix and released on their own recognizance pending further court action. Blazer, initially charged October 26 as part of the investigation, is being held in the Tompkins County Jail pending further court action.

The defendants are all presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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