

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COLUMBIA DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)

CRIMINAL NO. 3:26-549

vs.)

LARRY WILLIAMSON,
COURTNEY BRIGGS
a/k/a Courtney Jones

-) 18 U.S.C. § 2
-) 18 U.S.C. § 1343
-) 18 U.S.C. § 1346
-) 18 U.S.C. § 1349
-) 18 U.S.C. § 1952(a)(3)
-) 18 U.S.C. § 981(a)(1)(C)
-) 21 U.S.C. § 841(a)(1)
-) 21 U.S.C. § 841(b)(1)(D)
-) 21 U.S.C. § 846
-) 28 U.S.C. § 2461(c)

SEALED INDICTMENT

COUNT 1

(Honest Services Wire Fraud Conspiracy)

THE GRAND JURY CHARGES:

At all times relevant to this Indictment:

1. **LARRY WILLIAMSON** resided as an SCDC inmate at Lee in Lee County, South Carolina from in or around August 2008 through in or around January 2024, and during the entirety of the scheme alleged below.
2. **COURTNEY BRIGGS, a/k/a "Courtney Jones,"** resided in Sumter County, South Carolina. She was an acquaintance of Co-Conspirator Jason Brown, a/k/a "AJ" (charged elsewhere).
3. Co-Conspirator Jason Brown, a/k/a "AJ," (charged elsewhere) resided as an SCDC inmate at Lee Correctional Institution in Lee County, South Carolina from January 2008 through March 2020, at Evans Correctional Institution in Marlboro County, South Carolina from March

2020 through March 2021, and at Turbeville Correctional Institution in Clarendon County, South Carolina from July 2021 through the balance of the scheme.

4. Co-Conspirator Lowanda Atkinson (charged elsewhere) resided in Kershaw County, South Carolina. From in or around February 2007 through in or around May 2023, Lowanda Atkinson, served as a Correctional Officer (“CO”) with the South Carolina Department of Corrections (“SCDC”), the South Carolina state prison system. She was assigned to Lee Correctional Institution (“Lee”), and at the time of her resignation on September 7, 2023, held the rank of Corporal.

5. Co-Conspirator Christopher Hickman (charged elsewhere) resided in Richland County, South Carolina. He is Jason Brown, a/k/a “AJ’s,” brother.

6. Co-Conspirator Adriana Conyers, a/k/a “Danielle Conyers,” a/k/a “Danielle Bethea,” (charged elsewhere) resided in Sumter County, South Carolina. She is the mother of Jason Brown’s, a/k/a “AJ’s,” nephew.

7. Co-Conspirator Mary Ann Hickman Brown (charged elsewhere) resided in Clarendon County, South Carolina. She is Jason Brown, a/k/a “AJ’s,” mother.

THE SCHEME

8. Beginning in or around August 3, 2018, and continuing through in or around May 31, 2023, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendants, **LARRY WILLIAMSON** and **COURTNEY BRIGGS, a/k/a “Courtney Jones,”** knowingly did conspire and agree with each other, Jason Brown, a/ka “AJ,” Lowanda Atkinson, Christopher Hickman, Adriana Conyers, a/k/a “Danielle Conyers,” a/k/a “Danielle Bethea,” Mary Ann Hickman Brown, and others, both known and unknown to the Grand Jury, to devise and intend to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud and deprive South Carolina and its citizens of the right to the honest and

faithful services of Lowanda Atkinson through bribery and to knowingly and intentionally transmit and cause to be transmitted by means of wire communications in interstate commerce signals, signs, and sounds for the purpose of executing such a scheme and artifice.

MANNER AND MEANS

It was part of the scheme that:

9. Lowanda Atkinson used her position as CO and assignment in the property room at Lee to smuggle contraband, including illicit narcotics, into the facility in exchange for cash bribes and bribes sent through peer-to-peer payment platforms from inmates and others on behalf of inmates. In doing so, Lowanda Atkinson violated SCDC contraband policy, violated state bribery law, and violated her duty to render the honest and faithful services owed to the public.

10. In or around 2010, Lowanda Atkinson sought out a position at Lee in the contraband unit where she was responsible for enforcing contraband law and SCDC contraband policy. Following her time in the contraband unit, Lowanda Atkinson worked in the property room at Lee for about ten years. As a CO in the property room, Lowanda Atkinson was entrusted with maintaining inmate property at the facility and searching inmate property for prohibited items. Taken together, Lowanda Atkinson spent more than thirteen years as a CO entrusted to discover, document, and deter the introduction of contraband within Lee.

11. Lowanda Atkinson held personal checking account number x0859 at Bank 1 and account number x0986 at Bank 2. Lowanda Atkinson also operated a Cash App account, a peer-to-peer payment platform, at the time of the charged conduct.

12. At all times while Lowanda Atkinson was employed as a CO, SCDC maintained a policy that employees maintain professional relationships with inmates and that COs conduct themselves in a way that would avoid situations that “compromise their professional integrity,

compromise security, or cause embarrassment to the Department of Corrections.” SCDC policy also prohibited COs from entering into any kind of personal relationship with inmates, including romantic or business relationships. COs were also prohibited from engaging in services not in keeping with SCDC operations or from receiving gifts from inmates or inmate family members. SCDC policy further prohibited COs from receiving or accepting money from anyone other than the state for the performance of their official duties, from using official facilities for private gain, and from receiving a thing of value that could be viewed as being for the purpose of influencing official action by the CO.

13. State law also prohibited COs from accepting bribes in exchange for performing or failing to perform acts within the CO’s official responsibilities, including under S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-705(A) and (B) and S.C. Code Ann. § 16-9-220.

14. Despite her oath to serve as a CO, in which capacity the public entrusted her to detect and deter contraband schemes at Lee, Lowanda Atkinson accepted numerous bribes to allow contraband to move through the property room she operated. Lowanda Atkinson later purchased contraband in coordination with Jason Brown, a/k/a “AJ.” She also accepted contraband at her personal residence from Christopher Hickman and others for transport and introduction into Lee.

15. It was further part of the scheme that the contraband smuggled into Lee by Lowanda Atkinson was sold by **LARRY WILLIAMSON** and Jason Brown, a/k/a “AJ.” The proceeds of the contraband sales were split between **LARRY WILLIAMSON**, Jason Brown, a/k/a “AJ,” and Lowanda Atkinson.

16. In total, Lowanda Atkinson accepted more than \$550,000 in bribes from the Defendants **LARRY WILLIAMSON** and **COURTNEY BRIGGS**, a/k/a “Courtney Jones,” as

well as Jason Brown, a/k/a “AJ,” Christopher Hickman, Adrianna Conyers, a/k/a “Danielle Conyers,” a/k/a “Danielle Bethea,” Mary Ann Hickman Brown, and others, including:

- a. More than \$250,000 in cash payments, which typically originated from proceeds from the contraband Lowanda Atkinson smuggled into Lee;
 - b. More than \$150,000 in Cash App payments linked to inmates and inmate family members;
 - c. More than \$40,000 in Cash App payments to accounts associated with Lowanda Atkinson’s children; and
 - d. Approximately \$4,000 in payments through other peer-to-peer payment methods such as Zelle and Apple Cash.
17. **LARRY WILLIAMSON** sent more than \$4,000 in bribes through Cash App to Lowanda Atkinson.
18. **COURTNEY BRIGGS, a/k/a “Courtney Jones”** sent more than \$15,000 in bribes through Cash App to Lowanda Atkinson.
19. In exchange for the bribes, Lowanda Atkinson obtained contraband for inmates, including cell phones, cell phone accessories, tobacco, and controlled substances. She then smuggled the contraband into the prison and caused it to be delivered to inmates **LARRY WILLIAMSON** and Jason Brown, a/k/a “AJ” for distribution and sale. In the process, she engaged in certain acts and failed to perform certain acts in violation of her job responsibilities, SCDC policy, state bribery law, and her duty to the public to provide honest and faithful services.
20. It was further part of the scheme to conceal the bribes and introduction of contraband into Lee. In doing so, Lowanda Atkinson hid the contraband, including in potato chips bags, to smuggle into the Lee property room on the weekends. Additionally, Jason Brown, a/k/a “AJ,” and Mary Ann Hickman Brown used Cash App accounts with business names and names other than their own to disguise the bribes as legitimate transactions. **LARRY WILLIAMSON**

used a stolen identity to create a Cash App account and disguise his bribes to Lowanda Atkinson as legitimate transactions.

21. Lowanda Atkinson transferred the bribery proceeds to accounts in her name held at Bank 1 and Bank 2, spent the proceeds, and enriched herself in the process. For example, Lowanda Atkinson spent over \$50,000 in bribes at high-end designer stores, an amount more than her annual salary. Lowanda Atkinson also used the bribes to pay for a luxury vehicle and thousands of dollars in cosmetic procedures, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1343 and 1346;

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1349.

COUNTS 2-7

(Honest Services Wire Fraud and Aid/Abet)

22. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 21 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

23. On or about the dates below, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendants as identified below, devised and intended to devise a scheme and artifice to defraud and deprive the public, South Carolina, and its citizens, of the right to the honest and faithful services of Lowanda Atkinson through bribery and to knowingly and intentionally transmit and cause to be transmitted by means of wire communications in interstate commerce the following signals, signs, and sounds for the purpose of executing such a scheme and artifice in furtherance of the scheme as described herein, and did aid and abet another in the commission of the aforementioned offense:

Count	Date	Defendant(s)	Amount	Description
2	7/23/2021	COURTNEY BRIGGS, a/k/a "Courtney Jones"	\$1,450	Bribe sent to Cash App account belonging to Lowanda Atkinson for contraband

3	8/5/2022	LARRY WILLIAMSON	\$1,200	Bribe sent to Cash App account belonging to Lowanda Atkinson's daughter for contraband
4	8/10/2022	LARRY WILLIAMSON	\$1,250	Bribe sent to Cash App account belonging to Lowanda Atkinson's daughter for contraband
5	8/10/2022	LARRY WILLIAMSON	\$1,250	Bribe sent to Cash App account belonging to Lowanda Atkinson's son for contraband
6	8/14/2022	LARRY WILLIAMSON	\$1,450	Bribe sent to Cash App account belonging to Lowanda Atkinson's daughter for contraband
7	8/23/2022	LARRY WILLIAMSON	\$800	Bribe sent to Cash App account belonging to Lowanda Atkinson's daughter for contraband

All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1346 and 2.

COUNT 8

(Use of Interstate Facility to Facilitate Bribery and Aid/Abet)

24. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 21 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

25. Beginning in or around August 5, 2022, and continuing through in or around August 23, 2022, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **LARRY WILLIAMSON** used a facility in interstate commerce, with the intent to promote, establish, carry on, and facilitate unlawful activity, to wit:

- a. Bribery in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-705; that is, Lowanda Atkinson directly and indirectly, knowingly accepted, received, and agreed to receive something of value as a public official and employee in South Carolina for herself in return for being influenced in the discharge of her official responsibilities; and
- b. Bribery in violation of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-9-220; that is, Lowanda Atkinson corruptly accepted something of value and a promise to supply something of value

as an officer in South Carolina for her benefit in exchange for the improper use of the power of her position;

and thereafter performed and attempted to perform an act to promote, establish, carry on, and facilitate the unlawful activity, and did aid and abet another in the commission of the aforementioned offense;

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1952(a)(3) and 2.

COUNT 9
(Drug Conspiracy)

26. The allegations in paragraphs 1 through 21 of this Indictment are realleged and incorporated herein by reference as if set forth fully herein.

27. Beginning in or around March 2020, and continuing through in or around May 2023, in the District of South Carolina and elsewhere, the Defendant, **LARRY WILLIAMSON** knowingly and intentionally did combine, conspire, agree, and have tacit understanding with others, both known and unknown to the Grand Jury, to knowingly, intentionally, and unlawfully possess with intent to distribute and distribute a quantity of marijuana, a Schedule I controlled substance, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a)(1) and 841(b)(1)(D);

All in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 846.

FORFEITURE

WIRE FRAUD:

As a result of the foregoing violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343, as charged in this Indictment, upon conviction, Defendant **LARRY WILLIAMSON** and **COURTNEY BRIGGS, a/k/a "Courtney Jones,"** shall forfeit to the United States any property, real or personal, constituting, derived from or traceable to proceeds the Defendant individually obtained directly or indirectly as a result of such offenses.

PROPERTY:

Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 981(a)(1)(C) and 28 U.S.C. § 2461(c), the property which is subject to forfeiture upon conviction of Defendant for the violation charged in this Indictment includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Proceeds/Forfeiture Judgment:

A sum of money equal to all proceeds the Defendant individually obtained, directly or indirectly, from the offenses charged in this Indictment, and all interest and proceeds traceable thereto, and/or such sum that equals all property derived from or traceable to his or her violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343.

SUBSTITUTE ASSETS:

If any of the property described above, as a result of any act or omission of a Defendant-

- (1) cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence;
- (2) has been transferred or sold to, or deposited with, a third party;
- (3) has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the court;
- (4) has been substantially diminished in value; or
- (5) has been commingled with other property which cannot be divided without difficulty;

it is the intent of the United States, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 853(p) to seek forfeiture of any other property of the said Defendant up to the value of the forfeitable property described above.

All pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, Section 981(a)(1)(C) and Title 28, United States Code, Section 2461(c).

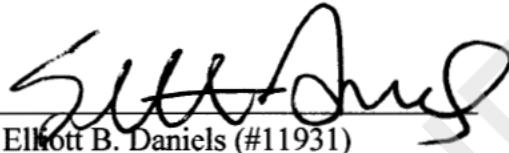
A TRUE BILL



FOREPERSON

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