

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA : Hon.
 :
 v. : Crim. No. 24-
 :
 EFRIN WADE : 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a)

I N F O R M A T I O N

The defendant having waived in open court prosecution by Indictment, the United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey charges:

1. At all times relevant to this Information:

a. Defendant EFRIN WADE (“WADE”) was a Correctional Officer at the Essex County Correctional Facility (“ECCF”) in Newark, New Jersey, since in or around February 2020. As a Correctional Officer, WADE was responsible for maintaining order at the ECCF and ensuring the safety of inmates, including federal pretrial detainees at the facility. WADE was tasked with, among other duties, upholding and enforcing rules prohibiting the introduction of contraband into the ECCF, such as cell phones, tobacco, and cigarettes.

b. Yairisa Lizardo (“Lizardo”) was a close acquaintance of WADE who was employed by a janitorial/cleaning service company.

c. An undercover FBI agent (“UC-1”) posed as an associate of an inmate at the ECCF who sought to smuggle contraband into the facility to be sold to other inmates.

2. In or about late January 2023, WADE spoke by telephone with UC-1 over a telephone subscribed to by Lizardo. During that conversation, WADE encouraged UC-1 to ascertain what type and amount of contraband UC-1's inmate contact wanted WADE to smuggle into the ECCF. Several days later, WADE again contacted UC-1 by telephone, at which time UC-1 informed WADE that UC-1's inmate contact wanted WADE's assistance in smuggling four sizable packages of tobacco into the ECCF.

3. On or about February 1, 2023, per instructions provided to UC-1 by WADE, UC-1 traveled to the parking lot of a store in Bayonne, New Jersey where he entered the passenger side of a vehicle driven by Lizardo. Lizardo thereupon accepted four packages of tobacco and \$10,000 in cash from UC-1. The \$10,000 cash was provided by UC-1 in exchange for Wade's agreement to smuggle contraband tobacco into ECCF. During this meeting, Lizardo called WADE, who indicated to UC-1 that WADE would receive the tobacco and cash from Lizardo and would subsequently inform UC-1 of the plan for smuggling the tobacco into the ECCF in exchange for the \$10,000 cash payment that UC-1 had provided to Lizardo.

4. On or about February 6, 2023, WADE informed UC-1 during a telephone conversation that he would smuggle in some of the tobacco provided by UC-1 into the ECCF the next evening (February 7) during WADE's shift at the ECCF. WADE also informed UC-1 of the location where he would drop off the tobacco so that UC-1's inmate contact could retrieve it without detection.

5. On or about February 8, 2023, members of the Essex County Internal Affairs unit retrieved two packages of tobacco which had been concealed in the location described by WADE to UC-1 during the phone conversation of February 6, 2023.

6. On or about February 8, 2023, WADE met UC-1 in a parking lot of a pharmacy in Jersey City, New Jersey at which time WADE accepted from UC-1 another package of tobacco in which a cell phone had been concealed. WADE agreed to smuggle in this tobacco and cell phone and confirmed that he had received the \$10,000 in cash which UC-1 had provided to Lizardo on or about February 1, 2023. WADE also discussed his willingness to smuggle additional cell phones into the ECCF in the future.

7. On or about February 11, 2023, WADE sent a text to UC-1 indicating that he had placed the tobacco and cell phone at a pre-arranged location in the ECCF for UC-1's inmate contact to retrieve.

8. On or about February 12, 2023, members of the Essex County Internal Affairs unit recovered a cell phone wrapped in tobacco at the location where WADE had agreed to hide the contraband for the inmate to retrieve.

9. On or about February 15, 2023, WADE met with UC-1 in the parking lot of the same pharmacy in Jersey City, New Jersey where the two had met a week earlier. During the meeting, WADE accepted \$4,000 in cash from UC-1 in exchange for smuggling tobacco and a cell phone into the ECCF.

10. From in or about January 2023 through in or about March 2023, in

Essex County, in the District of New Jersey, and elsewhere, defendant

EFRIN WADE

did knowingly and intentionally attempt to obstruct, delay, and affect interstate commerce and the movement of any article or commodity in interstate commerce by extortion under color of official right—that is, by agreeing to accept and accepting bribe payments in exchange for his official action and assistance in smuggling in contraband, namely cell phones and tobacco, to inmates at the Essex County Correctional Facility.

In violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1951(a).


PHILIP R. SELLINGER
United States Attorney