



NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Terra Taylor

Presented by Jason Miller, Office of the Commissioner, Chief of Communications and Community Relations

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Multiple suspects charged following prison contraband investigations

Dover, DE -- The Delaware Department of Correction today announced the recent arrests of four individuals on drug-related charges as the Department acts to disrupt the flow of contraband into prison facilities.

On November 11, 2024, an on-site drug investigation initiated by the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center revealed that 36-year-old **Tyshekia Thomas** of Wilmington, Delaware, was observed passing one or more concealed packages to 39-year-old **Markevis McDougal**, an inmate at the facility, during a scheduled inmate visit. McDougal was immediately removed from the visitation area and a search of his person revealed three packages containing approximately 8.93 grams of suspected marijuana and 140 Suboxone strips weighing approximately 18.64 grams. McDougal, of Wilmington, Delaware, was charged with the crimes listed below and remains incarcerated at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center:

- Possession with Intent to Deliver a Controlled Substance, Tier 2 (Felony) – 2 counts
- Possession with Intent to Deliver a Controlled Substance (Felony)
- Promoting Prison Contraband (Felony)
- Conspiracy 2nd Degree (Felony)
- Promoting Prison Contraband (Misdemeanor)

McDougal has been in DOC custody since December 2019 and is currently serving a 23-year prison sentence for Assault, Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, and Possession of a Firearm By a Person Prohibited.

As a result of the investigation, JTVCC Criminal Investigations Unit Officers contacted Delaware State Police and State Troopers responded to the facility on November 11, 2024, where they arrested Thomas. She was transported to Delaware State Police Troop 9 where she was charged with the following crimes listed below, was arraigned by Justice of the Peace Court 11, and was released on her own recognizance:

- Possession with Intent to Deliver a Controlled Substance, Tier 2 (Felony) – 2 counts
- Possession with Intent to Deliver a Controlled Substance (Felony)
- Promoting Prison Contraband (Felony)
- Conspiracy 2nd Degree (Felony)
- Promoting Prison Contraband (Misdemeanor)

These arrests follow another recent unrelated, but similar, drug investigation initiated by the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center that resulted in the arrest of two additional individuals for attempting to smuggle drugs into the facility. During a scheduled inmate visit on September 28, 2024, 34-year-old **Amaryllis Figueroa** of Newark, Delaware, was observed conducting suspicious behavior consistent with passing a concealed object to 39-year-old **Jamaal Dearry**, an inmate at the facility. Dearry was removed from the visitation area and a search of his person revealed a package that contained approximately 22.92 grams of paper laced with suspected synthetic cannabinoids, 40 doses of sublingual Buprenorphine strips, and approximately 4.64 grams of suspect marijuana. Dearry, of Bear, Delaware, was charged by the Department of Correction with the crimes listed below and remains incarcerated at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center:

- Possession with Intent to Deliver a Controlled Substance, Tier 3 (Felony)
- Possession with Intent to Deliver a Controlled Substance, Tier 2 (Felony)
- Promoting Prison Contraband (Felony)
- Possession of Marijuana Other Than Personal Use Quantity (Misdemeanor)

Dearry has been in DOC custody since November 2014 and is currently serving a 15-year prison sentence for Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony and Possession of a Firearm By a Person Prohibited.

As a result of the investigation, JTVCC Criminal Investigations Unit Officers contacted Delaware State Police and State Troopers responded to the facility on September 28, 2024, where they arrested Figueroa. She was transported to Troop 9 where she was charged with the crimes listed below, was arraigned by Justice of the Peace Court 11, and was released on \$5,000 unsecured bond:

- Possession with Intent to Deliver a Controlled Substance, Tier 3 (Felony)
- Possession with Intent to Deliver a Controlled Substance, Tier 2 (Felony)
- Promoting Prison Contraband (Felony)

“Recent investments in [enhanced mail screening across all of our correctional facilities to improve security and eliminate mail contraband](#) have achieved those goals, but we have also recognized that this effort could drive an increase in schemes to smuggle drugs and other illegal contraband in through other means,” **Department of Correction Commissioner Terra Taylor said.** “Thanks to the active and continued vigilance by our highly trained Correctional Officers and facility investigation teams, we are meeting that risk head-on through the use of technology, monitoring, and other tools to keep our employees, visitors, and incarcerated individuals safe.”

The Department of Correction acknowledges and thanks Delaware State Police for its assistance in support of these prison drug investigations.



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