

MDC Correctional Officer Charged with Federal Civil Rights Violation

Monday, September 30, 2024

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of New York

Officer at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn Shot a Civilian in a Car That Was Driving Away from the Prison

Earlier today, a complaint was unsealed in Brooklyn federal court charging Leon Wilson, a correctional officer at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC-Brooklyn), with willfully depriving an individual of his constitutional rights while acting under color of law. Last fall, Wilson, while on duty and driving a Bureau of Prisons (BOP)-issued minivan, allegedly chased a civilian vehicle from the MDC-Brooklyn staff parking lot and through a large section of Brooklyn before firing three gunshots towards the car, at least one of which struck one of its occupants. Wilson was taken into federal custody yesterday and is scheduled to be arraigned this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge Marcia M. Henry.

Breon Peace, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Ryan T. Geach, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector General, Northeast Region (DOJ-OIG) and James E. Dennehy, Assistant Director in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI), announced the charges.

"Correctional officers are sworn to uphold the law but, as alleged, this defendant violated his oath and position by starting a dangerous car chase through the streets of Brooklyn ending with him shooting wildly at the passengers in the other car without justification, and wounding one," stated United States Attorney Peace. "My Office is committed to protecting the civil rights of everyone in this district and will hold accountable those who violate them."

Mr. Peace expressed his appreciation to the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division for their work in this case.

"Today's complaint alleges that Wilson recklessly pursued another vehicle through the streets of Brooklyn and fired a weapon three times, harming a passenger and endangering countless New Yorkers. His alleged conduct was dangerous, illegal, and

antithetical to the behavior we expect from an officer of the law,” said Ryan T. Geach, Special Agent in Charge, Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, Northeast Region.

“Leon Wilson, a correctional officer, allegedly failed to report an unlawful on-duty shooting to the Bureau of Prisons following an unauthorized high-speed vehicle pursuit from the Metropolitan Detention Center. The defendant’s alleged actions exceeded the boundaries of his authority and recklessly endangered countless civilians. The FBI is committed to pursuing those who willingly disregard public safety and violate policies designed to protect constitutional rights,” stated FBI Assistant Director in Charge Dennehy.

As alleged in court documents, Wilson was on duty at MDC-Brooklyn on September 4, 2023 when he chased a BMW out of the facility’s staff parking lot and off MDC-Brooklyn property. Wilson had no authority to pursue the BMW past MDC-Brooklyn’s property line, but he did so anyway, ultimately chasing the BMW to the edge of the Brooklyn Bridge, approximately five miles from the facility. During the chase, Wilson exceeded the speed limit, passed other vehicles, and ran red lights. Approximately two minutes after the chase began—and nearly a mile from MDC-Brooklyn—Wilson fired three shots at the BMW, one of which penetrated the rear of the vehicle and struck a passenger in the back seat. Wilson continued to chase the BMW for several minutes after firing his weapon. He never reported the on-duty shooting to the NYPD, MDC-Brooklyn, or BOP personnel.

The charges in the complaint are merely allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. If convicted, Wilson faces up to ten years in prison.

The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s Civil Rights and Public Integrity Sections. Assistant United States Attorneys Erin Reid and Eric Silverberg are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Eastern District of New York Special Agent Anthony Cunder and Paralegal Specialist Nadya Osman.

The Defendant:

LEON WILSON

Age: 49

Bronx, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 24-MJ-553 (SJB)

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