

Halfway House Employee Arrested for Sexual Assault of Federal Inmate

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Georgia

ATLANTA – Former residential halfway house employee, Tristan Cox, 33, of Atlanta, Georgia, made his initial appearance on November 13, 2024, before U.S. Magistrate Judge Justin S. Anand on federal charges of non-consensual sexual contact with a federal inmate in his custody. Cox was released on a \$10,000 bond.

"The Department of Justice takes seriously its commitment to keep inmates and detainees safe from harm within its correctional and detention facilities," said U.S. Attorney Ryan K. Buchanan. "This commitment to humane treatment extends to contract facilities like halfway houses and to contract employees like Cox. He is charged with grievous conduct that undermined the Department's efforts and injured someone in our custody."

"Residential Reentry Centers, or halfway houses, are intended to provide a safe, structured, supervised environment for inmates who are nearing the end of their sentences to help them transition back into society," said Eric R. Fehlman, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Southeast Region. "Inmates should never experience assault of any kind at the hands of employees working in custodial settings."

According to U.S. Attorney Buchanan, the charges, and other information presented in court: The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) contracts with various non-governmental organizations to operate Residential Reentry Centers (RRCs), also known as halfway houses, to aid inmates nearing their release date from federal incarceration.

The Department of Justice's Office of Inspector General received a complaint alleging that Cox, a BOP contract employee working at the Atlanta RRC as a Residence Monitor, sexually assaulted an inmate resident who was under Cox's care and custody in April 2024. The inmate resident alleged that Cox sexually assaulted him in a supply room during Cox's overnight shift. DNA evidence tested by the FBI corroborated the inmate resident's account.

Any sexual contact between a BOP employee and a BOP inmate is a criminal offense prohibited under the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003.

Members of the public are reminded that a criminal complaint and arrest warrant contain only charges. The defendant is presumed innocent of the charges, and it will be the government's burden to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt at a trial.

This case is being investigated by the Department of Justice Office of Inspector General.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Bret R. Hobson and Brent Alan Gray are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact the U.S. Attorney's Public Affairs Office at USAGAN.PressEmails@usdoj.gov or (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is <http://www.justice.gov/usao-ndga>.