

## PRESS RELEASE

# Federal Inmate And Visitor Sentenced In Scheme To Introduce Contraband Into Prison Facility

Thursday, May 29, 2025

### For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Middle District of Florida

Ocala, Florida – United States District Judge Thomas P. Barber has sentenced a federal inmate, Jessie Wooden (36, Miami), to 10 years in federal prison for possession with the intent to distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine. A co-defendant, Janai Chanel Stephens (38, Opa Locka), also was sentenced to 18 months' probation for her role in introducing contraband into a federal prison and making false statements to a federal agent. A federal grand jury indicted Wooden and Stephens on May 28, 2024. Both defendants entered guilty pleas to the charges in January 2025.

According to the court records, on March 10, 2024, Wooden was an inmate at the Coleman Federal Correctional Complex (FCC Coleman) in Sumter County, Florida. On that date, Stephens visited Wooden at the prison. She entered FCC Coleman with a bag containing contraband 78 grams of methamphetamine and tobacco cigarettes that she intended to give to Wooden. Federal inmates are prohibited from possessing such items because they threaten the order, discipline, and security of the prison.

Prior to the visitation, Stephens falsely represented to a corrections officer on a written form that she did not have any contraband in her possession. When she subsequently met with Wooden in a visitation room, however, she threw him the bag containing the contraband. After being confronted by law enforcement, Stephens confessed to bringing in the contraband for Wooden, though she claimed only to know about the tobacco products. Wooden admitted that he had planned to distribute the methamphetamine and other items to inmates inside FCC Coleman.

"Individuals who smuggle contraband into federal prisons put lives at risk," said Eric Fehlman, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Southeast Region. "The Department of Justice Office of Inspector General will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to keep federal prisons safe and hold those who would exploit our correctional system for personal gain accountable."

This case was prosecuted as part of a United States Department of Justice (DOJ) task force aimed at rooting out contraband and misconduct in the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). The task force was led by the BOP and the DOJ - Office of the Inspector General (DOJ-OIG), with support from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the United States Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Hannah Nowalk Watson.