

Examples of SCDC cases related to cell phones

Below are examples of SCDC cases related to cell phones. Other matters are still ongoing and some of the examples below are still active but the information below, and in the links, is public record. SCDC provided the information via email on January 7, 2020.

Dark Web Mail Bomb Plot – 3 subjects arrested, 1 inmate and 2 others. Multiple charges for each.

- <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sc/pr/scdc-prisoner-and-co-conspirator-sentenced-federal-prison-roles-dark-web-mail-bomb-plot> (February 27, 2019)
 - “SCDC Prisoner and Co-Conspirator Sentenced to Federal Prison for Roles in Dark Web Mail Bomb Plot” from a 2017 investigation “Evidence presented to the court revealed that while incarcerated in the South Carolina Department of Corrections, Young obtained a contraband cellphone smuggled into the Broad River Correctional Institution. Young used that contraband cellphone to run a drug business distributing marijuana he obtained from a California supplier and from the Dark Web. Drugs purchased by Young were shipped to a conspirator’s residence before being picked up by co-defendant Vance Volious for re-distribution.
 - While this drug conspiracy among Young, Volious, and others was operating, the conspirators also plotted to kill Young’s ex-wife. This was not the first time that Young had tried to kill her; he was serving a 50-year sentence after having been convicted of attempting to kill her and of murdering her father in 2007.
 - In February 2017, Young accessed the Dark Web from prison on his contraband cellphone and started a dialogue with an undercover FBI agent, whom he believed to be a foreign explosives dealer. Young paid for a mail bomb to be sent to a conspirator’s residence in Irmo and for the re-shipment label addressed to his ex-wife to be sent to Volious’ house in Columbia.”
- https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2018/04/26/SC-inmate-bought-mail-bomb-off-dark-web-to-kill-ex-wife/9091524711151/

Civil Forfeiture Proceedings: - Civil case so no criminal indictments.

- “U.S. Attorney’s Office Initiates Forfeiture Proceedings Seizing \$400,000 From Prison Accounts of 15 Inmates....The U.S. Attorney’s Office recently initiated civil forfeiture proceedings in which the federal government has seized over \$400,000 from the prison accounts of just 15 inmates. According to the seizure warrants, this money was derived from unlawful activity including extortion and the distribution of narcotics and other contraband.” <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sc/pr/let-states-jam-prison-cellphones-says-us-attorney-sherri-lydon>

Operation Surprise Party / Sextortion Ring – 15 arrests in November 2018, 5 of those were SCDC inmates.

- “Prisoners stole more than \$500K from troops through dating app sextortion ring” <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-army/2018/11/28/prisoners-steal-more-than-500k-from-troops-through-dating-app-sextortion-ring/>
- <https://www.theitem.com/stories/lee-correctional-inmate-gets-extra-time-for-sextorting-dod-servicemen,331301>
- <https://www.wistv.com/2018/11/28/watch-live-us-attorney-military-investigation-services-hold-am-press-conference-sc-doc/>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2018/11/28/inmates-posing-women-online-blackmailed-hundreds-troops-sextortion-scheme/>
- <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sc/pr/5-inmates-among-15-defendants-indicted-wire-fraud-extortion-and-money-laundering-scheme> “5 Inmates Among 15 Defendants Indicted for Wire Fraud, Extortion, and Money Laundering Scheme at SCDC” “inmates used smartphones to join Internet dating websites and pose as young women seeking romantic relationships. On the dating websites, the named inmates targeted young male service members. After meeting the service members on the dating websites, the

named inmates texted nude pictures of young women that they obtained from the Internet, claiming these nude pictures were of the woman that they were impersonating on the dating website. After they texted nude pictures, they asked the military members to text nude pictures and other personal information in return... They then threatened to notify the military authorities and/or law enforcement that the military member was exchanging nude pictures with a minor unless the military member paid money..."

Drug Trafficking Ring – 15 arrests, 7 were inmates

- <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sc/pr/fifteen-charged-drug-trafficking-ring-operated-inside-south-carolina-prisons>
 - “Fifteen Charged in Drug Trafficking Ring that Operated from Inside South Carolina Prisons”
“On September 14, 2016, a federal grand jury returned a twenty-one count sealed indictment alleging the defendants conspired to possess with intent to distribute and did distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine; used telephones and the U.S. Mail to facilitate a drug offense and conspired to launder drug money by conducting money transfers, cash withdrawals and purchases of and deposits onto pre-paid cash cards, all in violation of federal law.”

Jared Johns – no arrests, sextortion blamed for Johns suicide

- “SC inmates accused of sextortion scheme that ended with Army veteran's suicide”
<https://abcnews4.com/news/crime-news/sc-inmates-accused-of-sextortion-scheme-that-ended-with-army-veterans-suicide>
- <https://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/south-carolina/2019/05/10/sc-inmates-charged-blackmail-sextortion-greenville-army-veteran-jared-johns-before-suicide/1157088001/>
- <https://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/south-carolina/2019/02/25/sextortion-scam-inmates-targeted-greenville-army-veteran-jared-johns-before-his-suicide/2813412002/>
- <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/05/14/veterans-suicide-was-blamed-depression-then-police-found-threatening-texts-sent-prison/>

Homicide of Michelle Dodge of York, SC – 8 arrested in connection to kidnapping and death of Dodge to include inmate James Peterson who was charged with orchestrating the murder from prison.

- “Man accused of orchestrating murder from prison has history of cellphone infractions”
<https://www.wyff4.com/article/man-accused-of-orchestrating-murder-from-prison-has-history-of-cellphone-infractions/28589828>
- <https://apnews.com/4fd3a363113040f3bdb3faa3aceac673>
- <https://www.wspa.com/news/gaffney-men-arrested-in-connection-to-york-womans-killing/>
- “Sheriff Reynolds stated they have evidence which indicates Peterson orchestrated Ms. Dodge’s murder from prison. James Robert Peterson is being charged with Murder and Conspiracy to Commit Kidnapping regarding the death of Ms. Dodge.” <https://wlbj.com/2019/08/02/8-people-now-charged-in-death-of-michelle-dodge/>

Captain Robert Johnson - 1 arrest (former inmate at the time of Capt. Johnson shooting, current inmate now)

- “The investigation, which is still ongoing, has revealed that the shooting was done in retaliation as a direct result of Captain Johnson’s enforcement of contraband rules in the South Carolina Department of Corrections. Captain Johnson had foiled a number of shipments of contraband (such as drugs and cell phones) into the state prison and some of the inmates were unhappy about that.” (April 2014)
<https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/columbia/press-releases/2014/man-pleads-guilty-to-conspiracy-to-commit-murder-for-hire-in-shooting-of-correctional-officer>
- <https://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article13875710.html>
- https://www.postandcourier.com/capt-robert-johnson/image_2e7858be-f34b-11e8-99e7-47266ef5de48.html

Operation Cash Cow – currently “118 counts, consisting of 200 charges against 38 defendants”

- “allegations of sophisticated and highly lucrative conspiracies to smuggle large amounts of contraband into the South Carolina prisons” “118 counts, consisting of 200 charges against 38 defendants”
<http://www.scag.gov/archives/39553#ixzz64QoClFho>
- <http://www.scag.gov/archives/38922>
- <https://wach.com/news/local/21-more-arrests-in-operation-cash-cow-prison-scam>
- <https://abcnews4.com/news/local/operation-cash-cow-nets-106-charges-on-prison-contraband>