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For Immediate Release

Sergeant Injured at Groveland Correctional Facility

Inmate Choked Staff Member While Attempting to Flush Drugs Down Toilet

Sonyea, NY – A Corrections Sergeant was choked by an inmate at a prison family festival when the Sergeant attempted to stop the inmate from flushing balloons filled with drugs down the toilet.

The incident occurred on Saturday, July 9 at approximately 11:15 AM at the medium security correctional facility.

The Sergeant was supervising a family festival for the inmates that was being held in the prison's gym. The Sergeant observed Inmate Lance Williams take something suspicious from a visitor. Inmate Williams then proceeded to head to the gym's bathroom. The Sergeant followed him into the bathroom and observed Inmate Williams with four balloons that he was trying to conceal.

When the Sergeant confronted Inmate Williams, he threw the balloons in the toilet. The Sergeant attempted to retrieve the balloons from the toilet when Inmate Williams grabbed him from behind around the neck and put him in a choke hold.

The Sergeant began to struggle with the inmate and try and get out of the choke hold. Both men went to the ground as the Sergeant called for assistance. Initially the other officers assigned to the family festival didn't hear the Sergeant call for assistance because of the loud music that was being played in the gym.

Additional officers came to his assistance from outside the gym and helped the Sergeant restrain Inmate Williams.

The Sergeant sustained injuries to his right knee, both shoulders and groin. He was able to remain on duty.

The inmate, 36, was placed in a special housing unit. He is serving a seven year sentence after being convicted in Bronx County in 2015 for Criminal Possession of a Weapon 2nd and Attempted Assault 2nd.

The investigation could not determine the type of drugs since they were flushed down the toilet.

"Contraband making its way into our state prisons continues to be a problem that needs to be addressed. The administration needs to find a solution to keep these dangerous drugs from getting inside the walls as our members are continually getting assaulted or hurt trying to stop inmates from possessing them ", said Joe Miano, Western Region Vice President.

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