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**For Immediate Release**  
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**THREE RIKERS ISLAND INMATES SENTENCED TO PRISON IN  
ASSAULT OF NYC DOC OFFICER THAT CAUSED  
LIFE-ALTERING INJURY**

Bronx District Attorney Darcel D. Clark today announced that three Rikers Island inmates have been sentenced to prison terms for an assault on a New York City Department of Correction Officer that left the officer with a fractured spinal column.

District Attorney Clark said, “The Officer suffered a horrendous injury while performing his duty as a civil servant. He has been an inspiration in his long recovery and through rehabilitation. The main defendant will serve 10 years for the assault, concurrent with a 10-year term for his underlying Attempted Murder case. We had hoped he would have to serve more time to send a stronger message that gang violence will not be tolerated on Rikers Island.”

District Attorney Clark said the defendants, Steven Espinal, AKA Jefe Balla, 19, of Lancaster, PA,; Samson Waltson AKA Bam Balla, 19, of Creston Avenue, the Bronx; and Devin Burns AKA Dev Balla, 19, of Third Avenue, the Bronx were sentenced today by Bronx Supreme Court Justice Barry E. Warhit. They had pleaded guilty on February 20, 2019. Espinal and Waltson pleaded guilty in the Rikers case pursuant to offers by the judge.

Espinal pleaded guilty to first-degree Gang Assault in the Rikers attack and to Attempted Murder second-degree and second degree Criminal Possession of a Weapon for his underlying case. He received 10 years in prison for each case, to run concurrently, and five years post-release supervision. Walston pleaded guilty to first-degree Gang Assault for the Rikers attack and Attempted Criminal Possession of a Weapon second-degree for his underlying case, and received five years for the assault and two years for the weapon case, to run concurrently, and five years post release supervision. Burns pleaded guilty to second-degree Assault and received three years in prison and three years post-release supervision.



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According to the investigation, on February 10, 2018, inside the George Motchan Detention Center, Espinal began the assault, striking Correction Officer Jean Roston Souffrant, 39, in the head, causing him to fall and strike his head. The other inmates joined in the attack. CO Souffrant suffered a fractured spinal column and head injury.

Espinal's Attempted Murder case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Justin Daly, Supervisor in Trial Bureau 70, under the supervision of Jeffrey Glucksman, Chief of Trial Bureau 70, and the overall supervision of Assistant District Attorney James Brennan, Deputy Chief of the Trial Division, and Theresa Gottlieb, Chief of the Trial Division.

The Rikers Island case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney James Brennan, Deputy Chief of the Trial Division. District Attorney Clark thanked Deanna Logan, Chief of the Rikers Island Prosecution Bureau, Jean T. Walsh, Chief of the Investigations Division, and Theresa Gottlieb, Chief of the Trial Division, for their assistance.

District Attorney Clark thanked DOC Investigators Timothy Fries and Anthony Scomma, DOC Liaison and Investigator Scott Frank, and Captain Vincent Fuca for their assistance in the case.

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