

Convicted Murderer Jailed for Revenge Gun Plot Against Prison Officer

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— Categories: Human Rights



A convicted murderer has been sentenced to 10 and a half years in prison after orchestrating a revenge plot against a prison officer who delayed his transfer to the hospital during a suspected medical emergency.

Robert Paterson, 45, was serving a life sentence at HMP Edinburgh when he faked a heart attack in November 2022 after swallowing bags of cocaine. A prison officer, who knew Paterson's history of escape attempts, suspected the incident could be another ruse. The officer delayed the hospital transfer while monitoring his condition inside the prison. Paterson later claimed the delay endangered his life and vowed to retaliate.

At the High Court in Edinburgh, Paterson admitted to arranging for accomplices to obtain a handgun and ammunition with the intent to seriously assault the officer. The plot was foiled when prison authorities, concerned by his behaviour, installed a covert surveillance device in his cell. The device recorded Paterson discussing the planned attack, leading to police intervention before any action could be carried out.

Passing sentence, Lord Harrower stated that the prison officer had acted "entirely appropriately" and that there was "nothing in his behaviour that required to be avenged." The court heard that Paterson was already considered a high-risk inmate, having attempted a hospital escape in 2012. During the 2022 incident, he was seen removing a SIM card from a mobile phone and swallowing it before claiming he was suffering a heart attack. An ambulance that arrived at the jail had not been requested by staff, further raising suspicions.

Prosecutor Alan Cameron KC told the court that Paterson was later told by hospital staff he was lucky to have survived, fuelling his anger toward the officer. He said Paterson sought revenge by planning a serious assault, although no actual attack was carried out thanks to timely police intervention.

Further investigations revealed that Paterson had also instructed two men, Sean McGregor and Donald Stone, and other unnamed individuals to smuggle drugs into the prison. He reportedly ordered them to rob people of drugs, money, and valuables to support his criminal operations behind bars.

The case highlights the continued risks posed by high-risk inmates and the critical role of vigilance among prison staff. Thanks to early intervention, the targeted officer remained unaware and unharmed, and the plot was dismantled before it could escalate.