



**STEPHEN B. RUSSELL**  
*Office of the State Attorney*  
*20th Judicial Circuit*

**Serving Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee**

May 31, 2017

### **Tampering with a Juror**

Today, Fort Myers resident, Travis Earl Blanks, 43, and was sentenced to 30 months in prison for Obstructing Justice by Tampering with a Juror. The conviction stems from the August 2015 incident in which he attempted to influence a juror sitting on a murder trial by sending messages to 'find the man not guilty'.

While on trial for murder, Kevin Black showed fellow inmate, Blanks, the list of jurors. Blanks recognized the name of one of the jurors and told Black that he would get a message to the juror through her sister.

In a recorded call, Blanks spoke with his son and requested that his son contact the sister of the juror and tell her to let her sister know that she was to find that man not guilty. The woman did not know that her sister was serving as a juror and sent a text message that read "I was told to tell you to find the man not guilty." Meanwhile on the same day, Blanks, was also leaving phone messages for the sister of the juror telling her to pass the message to her sister.

During a break in the murder trial, the juror turned her phone back on and she received the text message from her sister. Prior to court resuming, as she had been instructed the juror notified court personnel and the court was made aware of the improper contact. She was then excused from the jury by the court. The incident was investigated by the State Attorney's Office.

The 30 month sentence was part of a plea agreement to resolve all pending charges. Blanks received concurrent sentences for Jury tampering and Fleeing or Attempting to Elude a Law Enforcement Officer and Driving While License Suspended or Revoked (Habitual Revocation).

Assistant State Attorney Mara Marzano of our Homicide Unit handled the jury tampering case.  
Assistant State Attorney Ashley Adams handled the unrelated driving charges.

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