

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* TEXAS

[U.S. Attorneys](#) » [Southern District of Texas](#) » [News](#)

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, December 15, 2022

## **Former federal agent receives sentence for corruption in connection to illicit Syrian relationship**

HOUSTON – A 49-year-old former special agent with Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) has been sent to prison following her conviction of obstructing justice, making false statements and accepting money and gifts for official acts, announced U.S. Attorney Alamdar S. Hamdani.

A federal jury sitting in Houston convicted Leatrice Malika DeBruhl-Daniels June 13, following a six-day trial.

Today, U.S. District Judge Gray Miller ordered DeBruhl-Daniels to serve 108 months in federal prison to be immediately followed by one year of supervised release. In handing down the sentence, the court cited DeBruhl's breach of trust and deterrence.

"Leatrice DeBruhl-Daniels betrayed her badge and our country by revealing sensitive and classified information to the target of an FBI counterterrorism investigation in exchange for money, gifts and affection," said NCIS Director Omar Lopez. "Holding her accountable will make it clear that NCIS will not tolerate corruption within our ranks."

DeBruhl-Daniels was a veteran NCIS special agent working in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. There, she met Nadal Diya, a Syrian businessman living in Dubai looking for help in securing a visa to the United States. At that time, Diya was the target of several federal investigations.

At trial, the jury heard from 16 government witnesses, which included numerous agents and Diya himself. Testimony revealed that in 2017, DeBruhl-Daniels used her position to get certain benefits from Diya in exchange for providing information to him about his visa status. The gifts included an expensive birthday party at Diya's home, approximately \$1,400 in cash and the promise of a job for her son in Diya's company.

The relationship with Diya eventually became sexual. During that relationship, she revealed he was a target of an FBI counterterrorism investigation, information that was classified at the time. She also told him that if he came to the United States, he would likely be arrested.

In late December 2017, federal agents had questioned DeBruhl-Daniels about Diya. However, she failed to disclose her intimate relationship with him, the gifts he had given her, the job he offered her son and the classified information she provided.

Following the interview, she also visited with Diya and coached him on what to say in a subsequent interview.

Several months later in May 2018, she left Dubai for Hawaii for a highly sensitive and coveted job. However, she soon learned she would not get the new position. It was only then she confessed to superiors and investigators about her illicit relationship, the monies, party and gifts she had received and the classified information she had previously revealed.

Debruhl-Daniels testified in her own defense at trial. She claimed, among other things, that the classified information she revealed to Diya was public information. She further attempted to convince the jury she did not have a duty to reveal any of the details of her personal relationship with Diya nor her disclosures to him.

The jury did not believe her claims and found her guilty.

Diya, 50, of Dubai, was previously sentenced and has been removed from the United States.

Debruhl-Daniels will remain in custody pending transfer to a U.S. Bureau of Prisons facility to be determined in the near future.

NCIS led the investigation with the assistance of the FBI, Homeland Security Investigations, Department of Commerce, Department of State and the Defense Criminal Investigative Service. U.S. Attorney Alamdar S. Hamdani and Assistant United States Attorney Arthur R. Jones prosecuted the case.

---

**Topic(s):**

National Security

**Component(s):**

USAO - Texas, Southern

Updated December 15, 2022