IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

RAWLE GERARD SUITE	:	
	:	
v.	:	**CIVIL NO. 25-2613**
	:	
CHRISTOPHER J. LAROSE, et al.	:	
	:	

COUNSELED REPLY IN SUPPORT OF
PRO SE PETITION UNDER 28 U.S.C. § 2241

Petitioner Rawle Gerard Suite has been detained in immigration custody for nearly 23 months without receiving an individualized bond hearing before a neutral arbiter. Undersigned appointed counsel respectfully replies to some of the arguments raised in Respondents' filing of November 20, 2025.

I. Mr. Suite's arguments are neither moot nor premature.

Respondents argue that Mr. Suite is now detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1231 rather than § 1226(c). The section under which Mr. Suite is detained is relevant because the framework of *German Santos v. Warden Pike Cty. Corr. Facility*, 965 F.3d 203 (3d. Cir. 2020), applies to those detained under § 1226(c), prior to a final order of removal. The detention of those detained under § 1231 after a final order of removal is governed by *Zadvydas v. Davis*, 533 U.S. 678 (2001).

Mr. Suite has filed a petition for review and a motion for a stay of his removal with the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. Attached as Exhibit A. Assuming the Third Circuit follows its Standing Order of August 5, 2015 (*see* Counseled Memo. of Law (ECF 14) Exhibit B), the final order of removal will be stayed and Mr. Suite will continue to be detained under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(c). *Leslie v. Attorney Gen. of U.S.*, 678 F.3d 265, 270 (3d Cir. 2012) (when a Court of Appeals has issued a stay of removal, the alien is not detained under § 1231,

but remains detained under § 1226). Thus Mr. Suite's arguments under *German Santos* are neither moot nor premature.

II. *German Santos* factors

With regards to the *German Santos* factors, Respondents do not contest that the length of Mr. Suite's detention is now well beyond that which other courts have determined to constitute a violation of due process. *See* Counseled Memo. (ECF 13) at 3-4.

Regarding the likelihood of continued detention, Mr. Suite will be detained for at least as long as it takes to resolve his petition to the Third Circuit.

Regarding the reasons for delay, Mr. Suite has the right to exercise all the process that he is due in order to try to remain in the country he has called home for the past 56 years.

Finally regarding the conditions of confinement, since the time he first filed his habeas petition, Respondents have moved Mr. Suite from the Federal Detention Center (a current federal Bureau of Prisons facility that holds pretrial detainees awaiting their criminal trial), to the Moshannon Valley Processing Center (a detention facility formerly contracted with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to hold sentenced federal prisoners), to, most recently, the Miami Correctional Facility in Indiana.[1] The location in which Mr. Suite is currently held is a maximum-security prison run by the Indiana Department of Correction and two inmates have recently been killed there.[2] It is known as "one of the most violent and deadliest prisons in Indiana."[3] The conditions

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[1] *See* https://www.ice.gov/detain/detention-facilities/miami-correctional-facility-mcf (last visited Dec. 5, 2025).

[2] Kristine Phillips, *Inmate dead after stabbings at Indiana prison plagued by violence*, IndyStar (Dec. 4, 2025). Attached as Exhibit B.

[3] Kristine Phillips, *Drug crisis at Miami Correctional Facility; prison now known as Speedway Slammer*, Indianapolis Star, Dec. 3, 2024, at A1. Attached as Exhibit C.

of Mr. Suite's confinement are not "meaningfully different from criminal punishment." *German Santos*, 965 F.3d at 211 (internal modifications and citations omitted).

III. Conclusion

For the reasons set forth above, in the Counseled Memorandum of Law, and in Mr. Suite's pro se filings, the Court should find that his detention without a bond hearing is unconstitutional under the Due Process Clause and order a bond hearing be held forthwith.

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: December 5, 2025

/s/ Susan M. Lin

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EXHIBIT A

****UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS**

FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT**

Rawle Gerard Suite
Petitioner,
v.
LaRose, et al.
Respondents.

RECEIVED
DEC - 4 2025
U.S.C.A. 3rd. Cir

~~CIVIL NO. 25-2613~~
A Number: [redacted]

PETITION FOR REVIEW OF AN ORDER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY / EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR IMMIGRATION REVIEW

Petitioner **Rawle Gerard Suite**, pursuant to **8 U.S.C. § 1252**, hereby petitions the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit to review the final order of removal issued by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and/or the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR).

I. JURISDICTIONAL STATEMENT

1. This Court has jurisdiction under **8 U.S.C. § 1252(a)(1)** to review final orders of removal.
2. This Petition for Review is timely because it is being filed **within 30 days** of the final order of removal.
3. Venue is proper in the Third Circuit because Petitioner is challenging a removal order subject to review within this Circuit.

II. PARTIES

- **Petitioner**:
  Rawle Gerard Suite
  [redacted]
  Currently detained at:
  Miami Correctional Facility
  3038 W 850 S
  Bunker Hill, Indiana 46914

- **Respondents**:
  Officials of the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement, including **LaRose, et al.**

III. NATURE OF THE CASE

4. Petitioner is a native and citizen of **Trinidad and Tobago**.
5. The Department of Homeland Security issued a removal order against Petitioner.
6. Petitioner now seeks judicial review of that final order, asserting that the decision is **legally erroneous, unsupported by substantial evidence, and issued in violation of Petitioner's constitutional and statutory rights.**

IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

7. Petitioner entered the United States on or about **[insert date if you want to include it]**.
8. Petitioner has resided in the United States for many years and has substantial ties to the community.
9. DHS issued a removal order based on **[you may specify grounds if known—criminal charges, overstays, aggravated felony designation, etc.; if you don't know, I'll keep this generic]**.
10. Petitioner has raised arguments that were improperly rejected, including:

- **Due process violations** during the removal proceedings;
- **Failure to consider material evidence**;
- **Improper legal interpretation or application of immigration statutes**;
- **Errors in determining removability or eligibility for relief.**

11. Petitioner faces severe consequences if removed to Trinidad and Tobago, including potential danger and disruption of long-established ties in the United States.

V. ISSUES PRESENTED FOR REVIEW

Petitioner respectfully presents the following issues for review:

1. Whether the agency's decision was **contrary to law** or based on an **erroneous interpretation** of the Immigration and Nationality Act.
2. Whether the removal order is **unsupported by substantial evidence**.
3. Whether Petitioner's **due process rights were violated** during the proceedings.
4. Whether the agency failed to properly consider **material evidence**, including changed circumstances or eligibility for relief.
5. Whether the proceedings were conducted in a manner that **denied Petitioner a fair hearing**.

(If you want, I can expand these into detailed legal arguments.)

VI. RELIEF REQUESTED

Petitioner respectfully requests that this Court:

1. **Grant the Petition for Review**;
2. **Vacate** the removal order;
3. **Remand** the case to the agency for further proceedings consistent with the Court's decision;
4. **Grant any other relief the Court deems just and proper**, including a stay of removal pending review.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

The following documents should be attached (I can draft any you need):

- A copy of the **final order of removal**
- Any written decisions from an Immigration Judge or the BIA
- Custody documents or charging documents (NTA, etc.)
- Certificate of service

Respectfully submitted,

Rawle Gerard Suite
A[redacted]

Miami Correctional Facility
3038 W 850 S
Bunker Hill, Indiana 46914

Date: _____

Signature: _____

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

U.S. Department of Justice
Executive Office for Immigration Review
Board of Immigration Appeals

MATTER OF:

Rawle Gerard SUITE, [redacted]

Respondent

FILED
Nov 04, 2025

ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT: Pro se

ON BEHALF OF DHS: John P. Ellington, Assistant Chief Counsel

IN REMOVAL PROCEEDINGS
On Appeal from a Decision of the Immigration Court, Elizabeth, NJ

Before: Volkert, Appellate Immigration Judge

VOLKERT, Appellate Immigration Judge

ORDER:

This appeal is summarily dismissed under the provisions of 8 C.F.R. § 1003.1(d)(2)(i)(A), (E). The Notice of Appeal (Form EOIR-26) does not contain statements that meaningfully apprise the Board of specific reasons underlying the challenge to the Immigration Judge's December 9, 2024, decision. *See Hoxha v. Holder*, 559 F.3d 157, 163 (3d Cir. 2009) ("[T]he notice of appeal must set forth sufficient facts and law to inform the BIA of the basis of the appeal."); *Matter of Lodge*, 19 I&N Dec. 500 (BIA 1987); *Matter of Valencia*, 19 I&N Dec. 354 (BIA 1986).

Moreover, the respondent checked the block on the Notice of Appeal indicating that a separate written brief or statement would be filed in support of the appeal. This block is immediately followed by a clear warning that the appeal may be subject to summary dismissal if the respondent indicates that such a brief or statement will be filed and, within the time set for filing, fails to file the brief or statement and does not reasonably explain such failure. The respondent was granted the opportunity to submit a brief or statement in support of the appeal. However, the record indicates that he did not file such brief or statement, or reasonably explain the failure to do so, within the time set for filing. *See Argueta-Orellana v. Att'y Gen. U.S.*, 35 F.4th 144, 147 (3d Cir. 2022) (holding that the Board has the discretionary authority to summarily dismiss an appeal where the appellant does not submit a brief despite indicating that a brief will be filed). Accordingly, the appeal is summarily dismissed under the provisions noted above.

NOTICE: If a respondent is subject to a final order of removal and willfully fails or refuses to depart from the United States pursuant to the order, to make timely application in good faith for travel or other documents necessary to depart the United States, or to present himself or herself at the time and place required for removal by the Department of Homeland Security, or conspires to or takes any action designed to prevent or hamper the respondent's departure pursuant to the order

of removal, the respondent shall be subject to a civil monetary penalty of up to $998 for each day the respondent is in violation. *See* section 274D of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1324d; 8 C.F.R. § 280.53(b)(14).

****UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS**

FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT**

RECEIVED
DEC - 4 2026
U.S.C.A. 3rd. CIR

Rawle Gerard Suite
Petitioner,

v.

CHRISTOPHER J. LAROSE, et al.
Respondents.

~~Case No.: 25-2613~~
A Number [redacted]

EMERGENCY MOTION FOR STAY OF REMOVAL PENDING DISPOSITION OF PETITION FOR REVIEW

Petitioner Rawle Gerard Suite, currently detained by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), respectfully moves this Court for an emergency stay of removal pending the resolution of his Petition for Review. In support of this Motion, Petitioner states as follows:

I. Introduction and Position of Respondents

Pursuant to Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 27 and the Local Rules of the Third Circuit, Petitioner seeks an emergency stay of removal during the pendency of his Petition for Review.

The order of removal in Petitioner's case is administratively final, and he faces imminent removal to Trinidad and Tobago. ICE currently detains him at the Miami Correctional Facility in Indiana. DHS has not stipulated to a stay.

Removal prior to adjudication of the Petition for Review would deprive this Court of jurisdiction and deny Petitioner meaningful judicial review.

II. Background and Procedural Posture

1. Petitioner Rawle Gerard Suite is a native and citizen of Trinidad and Tobago.
2. Petitioner is currently detained at:

Miami Correctional Facility
3038 W 850 S
Bunker Hill, Indiana 46914

3. Petitioner is the subject of a final order of removal issued by DHS.
4. Petitioner has filed a Petition for Review with this Court, ~~docketed as *Suite v. LaRose, et al.*, Case No. 25-2613.~~
5. DHS has not agreed to a stay of removal. Petitioner remains at risk of imminent deportation.
6. Removal before this Court rules on the Petition for Review would effectively nullify this Court's jurisdiction.
7. **Critically, Petitioner also has a pending appeal from the denial of his writ of coram nobis** in the federal criminal case underlying DHS's aggravated felony classification. That appeal challenges:
    - the validity of the plea,
    - the loss amount calculation, and
    - the legality of the restitution order—
      issues central to DHS's aggravated felony determination and removability.

III. Legal Standard

In determining whether to grant a stay of removal, the Court considers:

1. The likelihood that the petitioner will succeed on the merits, or whether the case presents serious legal questions;
2. Whether the petitioner will suffer irreparable harm absent a stay;
3. Whether issuance of a stay will substantially injure the government; and
4. Where the public interest lies.

See *Nken v. Holder*, 556 U.S. 418 (2009); *Hope v. Warden York Cnty. Prison*, 972 F.3d 310, 320–21 (3d Cir. 2020).

Petitioner satisfies all four factors.

IV. Argument

A. Petitioner Is Likely to Succeed on the Merits or, at Minimum, Raises Serious Legal Questions

8. Petitioner's underlying Petition for Review raises substantial legal and constitutional questions concerning the validity of the removal order. These include, but are not limited to:

• Whether DHS properly classified Petitioner as an aggravated felon based on a disputed loss amount;
• Whether the underlying criminal conviction is reliable, given the district court's erroneous loss and restitution calculations;
• Whether Petitioner's plea was knowing and voluntary, as argued in his pending coram nobis appeal;
• Whether DHS satisfied its burden to establish removability by "clear and convincing evidence."

9. Because the aggravated felony charge turns on the disputed loss amount—and because that amount is now under active challenge in federal court—Petitioner raises serious legal questions that go to the heart of removability.

10. These claims satisfy the "likelihood of success" requirement under *Nken*.

B. Petitioner Will Suffer Irreparable Harm Without a Stay

11. If removed to Trinidad and Tobago, Petitioner will suffer irreparable harm, including:

• Loss of the ability to pursue his Petition for Review;
• Inability to meaningfully litigate his pending federal coram nobis appeal;
• Separation from U.S. family, community, and legal resources;
• Exposure to hardship or danger in the country of removal.

12. Courts, including the Third Circuit, recognize that premature removal constitutes irreparable harm because it forecloses judicial review.

C. Issuance of a Stay Will Not Substantially Injure the Government

13. A stay merely preserves the status quo while this Court exercises its Article III authority.

14. Any delay to DHS is minimal compared to the severe, irreversible consequences Petitioner faces from premature removal.

D. The Public Interest Strongly Favors Granting a Stay

15. The public interest is served by ensuring that removal orders are based on constitutionally sound and legally valid convictions.

16. Preventing removal until this Court can fully review the underlying legal issues promotes fairness, due process, and integrity within the immigration system.

V. Relief Requested

WHEREFORE, Petitioner Rawle Gerard Suite respectfully requests that this Court:

1. Grant an immediate stay of removal pending disposition of the Petition for Review in Case No. 25-2613;
2. Order Respondents to refrain from removing Petitioner from the United States while this matter is pending; and
3. Grant any other relief this Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

Rawle Gerard Suite
[redacted]
Miami Correctional Facility
3038 W 850 S
Bunker Hill, Indiana 46914

Date: _____

EXHIBIT B

Inmate dead after stabbings at Indiana prison plagued by violence

IndyStar | The Indianapolis Star Online (Indiana)

December 4, 2025 Thursday

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Section: US NEWS & CRIME AND PUNISHMENT NEWS

Length: 643 words

Byline: Kristine Phillips, Indianapolis Star

Body

An inmate at the violence-plagued *Miami Correctional Facility* is dead after multiple stabbings that shut off visitations just before Thanksgiving, with several housing units still on lockdown a week later.

The Indiana Department of Correction has released almost no information about the stabbings at the maximum-security prison, which *recently became a major detention center* for undocumented immigrants. The agency did not answer even basic questions, including when the stabbings occurred or how many inmates were involved. What's clear is that there were two 911 calls from the prison on Nov. 26, the day before Thanksgiving. One was at around 9:40 a.m., according to Miami County's dispatch center, and another just after 6 p.m.

Indiana State Police Sgt. Steven Glass said the agency is investigating the death of one inmate, J Trinidad Ramirez, 36, who was killed during a stabbing that began at about 5:30 p.m. on the same day. Three hours later, Miami Correctional *announced on its Facebook page* that the prison will be on lockdown "due to safety and security concerns."

The agency also did not say where in the prison the stabbings occurred, but Miami Correctional *announced on social media* on Dec. 3 that it will resume limited visitation for inmates housed in the infirmary and in three housing units. Several other housing units remain on lockdown.

The recent spurt of violence did not appear to involve ICE detainees, and the dorms that were placed on lockdown housed state prisoners. Ramirez, the inmate who died, was serving a 150-year sentence for two murders in Allen County.

Drug use 'every day, all day': *Crisis at what is now known as Speedway Slammer*

The facility, long plagued with *worsening problems with violence, drugs and understaffing*, drew national attention earlier this year. Gov. Mike Braun *announced last summer* that the maximum-security prison will become a detention facility for hundreds of ICE detainees, as President Donald Trump continues his aggressive push to detain and deport undocumented immigrants. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security dubbed the prison the Speedway Slammer, a nickname that drew local controversy.

The partnership with the Trump administration *could bring in hundreds of millions of dollars* in federal funds. The Trump administration agreed to pay IDOC $291 per detainee per day, an unusually high premium compared to the $75-$85 that *other Indiana facilities* get.

Deaths, drugs and discord: *Inside Speedway Slammer, Indiana's latest ICE detention center*

Neither IDOC nor the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement have said how many immigrants are detained at Miami Correctional. ICE detainees are being housed separately from state prisoners in a portion of the facility that was closed a few years ago because of understaffing problems. That previously closed portion can house up to 1,000 men. ICE has agreed to pay IDOC *for a minimum of 450 beds*, even if they're not filled.

Violence inside the prison *has worsened in recent years*. In 2024, the prison logged 58 calls about stabbings, assaults and traumas, according to the 911 county dispatch. This year is on pace to surpass that, with the same number of calls by the end of November.

Over the past month, IndyStar *published two stories* about problems at Miami Correctional. A booming, *gang-operated drug trade* preys on the more vulnerable and fuels violence that has made the prison *one of the most violent in Indiana*. The facility has *among the highest death tolls* in the state's correctional system. Nearly half of all homicides in Indiana prisons since 2019 *happened at Miami Correctional*.

IndyStar reporter Kayla Dwyer contributed. Contact IndyStar reporter Kristine Phillips at (317) 444-3026 or at kphillips@indystar.com.

This article originally appeared on Indianapolis Star: Inmate dead after stabbings at Indiana prison plagued by violence

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Inmate dead after stabbings at Indiana prison plagued by violence

Company: META PLATFORMS INC (55%)

Organization: INDIANA STATE UNIVERSITY (56%)

Ticker: META (NASDAQ) (55%)

Industry: NAICS516210 MEDIA STREAMING DIST SVCS, SOCIAL NETWORKS, AND OTHER MEDIA NETWORKS AND CONTENT PROVIDERS (55%); SIC7374 COMPUTER PROCESSING & DATA PREPARATION & PROCESSING SERVICES (55%)

Person: MIKE BRAUN (79%); DONALD TRUMP (64%); DONALD TRUMP (66%); MIKE BRAUN (79%)

Geographic: INDIANA, USA (96%); OHIO, USA (79%); INDIANA, USA (95%); OHIO, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (96%); UNITED STATES (99%); Ohio & Indiana; United States; Americas, Northern America

Load-Date: December 4, 2025

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EXHIBIT C

Drug crisis at Miami Correctional Facility; Prison now known as Speedway Slammer

Palladium-Item (Indiana)

December 3, 2025 Wednesday

1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 2130 words

Byline: By, Kristine Phillips, Indianapolis Star

Body

"Guards are called mules."

Cody Stinson

former Miami Correctional inmate

"To keep him safe, we pay the bill."

relative of prisoner at Miami Correctional

Brandon Wicker grew desperate back in 2015. His wife had been diagnosed with autoimmune diseases, and his $30,000 salary as a Miami Correctional Facility officer couldn't cover their new bills.

So when members of a prison gang found out about his problems, they offered a way out.

He received a few thousand dollars to slip two cellphones under his vest during inmate transports and to smuggle eight bottle caps of tobacco by hiding them in his mouth. He was also offered money to move synthetic marijuana, he said, but he refused.

Wicker's experience as a correctional officer is part of a larger pattern. An IndyStar investigation - which draws on interviews with four dozen people, including current and former inmates, their families and former employees, as well as data on 911 calls and contraband confiscations - reveals a booming gang-operated drug market inside the maximum-security prison about 70 miles north of Indianapolis.

The drug trade is preying on the vulnerable and fueling bloodshed, making Miami Correctional one of the most violent and deadliest prisons in Indiana.

The crisis has been exacerbated by the facility's longstanding problems with understaffing, which prompted the Indiana Department of Correction to shut down half of the prison and move inmates elsewhere.

Wicker worked at Miami Correctional 10 years ago. But the drug problem inside what is now also known as the Speedway Slammer has only worsened since. Overdoses, which were once rare, became one of the leading drivers of 911 calls. The amount of confiscated drugs and weapons went from paltry to nearly four dozen items last year. There were more than five dozen the year before.

"The drugs that go into that place, the cellphones that go into that place, correlated into a lot of the violence," said Wicker, who was fired in 2015. "Even when I got there, it wasn't as bad as when I left."

The crisis has extended beyond prison walls. To keep their sons, grandsons, brothers and significant others from getting hurt because of unpaid drug debts, several family members said they've been pouring thousands of dollars of their life savings into the drug habit that turned their loved ones into criminals in the first place.

IDOC did not grant requests to interview Commissioner Lloyd Arnold and Miami Correctional Facility Warden Brian English, neither of whom spoke with IndyStar for an article published earlier this month about the years of violence at the prison.

Instead, a written statement from a spokesperson said the agency takes precautions to keep contraband out of its facilities, including searching every person who enters the facility. The statement also said IDOC is recruiting and hiring new staff, while retaining employees through training, pay raises and routine surveys on work conditions. But the statement did not answer several questions about the drug issues, including how drugs make it inside the facility.

Miami Correctional drew national attention last summer after Gov. Mike Braun and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced the facility would become an ICE detention center to support President Donald Trump's goal of detaining and deporting undocumented immigrants.

IDOC now houses ICE detainees in the area of Miami Correctional that had been closed due to staffing shortage. The space can house up to 1,000 people, making the prison one of the largest ICE detention centers in the Midwest. The partnership with the Trump administration could bring in hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funds and has led to a hiring spree.

IDOC is now offering about $50,000 a year, not including overtime. Some officers can make more by working outside normal business hours. The pay is a marked improvement from Wicker's time there but still below the national median wage for correctional officers.

Paying officers a higher salary is one solution, said Michele Deitch, director of the Prison and Jail Innovation Lab at the University of Texas at Austin.

Reducing the demand for drugs and gang involvement, though, is another.

'Guards are called mules'

Cody Stinson, a former Miami Correctional inmate who described himself as a former gang member, said he has witnessed officers drop off drugs and other contraband to inmates in exchange for bribes.

"Guards," he said, "are called mules."

In 2018, two officers, on separate occasions, were caught with Suboxone strips and methamphetamine, one of the most prevalent drugs in Indiana. One of the officers, according to court documents, told investigators she was paid $1,500 to smuggle the drugs.

In 2021, an officer was caught with THC-laced candies packed in her lunch box, a powdery substance hidden in two maxi pads and a Nike watch intended for an inmate with whom she had a relationship.

All were fired and later pleaded guilty.

Earlier this year, another officer was accused of trafficking a cellphone and some tobacco to an inmate. The case is pending.

IDOC's statement to IndyStar did not address a question on how many officers have been caught in the past, only saying that staffers "routinely perform searches inside the facility for contraband and initiate investigations on how any items came into the facility."

Officers smuggling drugs into a prison is not unique to Miami Correctional. Deitch, the prison expert, said it shows a lack of professionalism but is also a reflection of their low pay. Bringing in contraband, she said, is "quite lucrative."

Wicker smuggled contraband for six months before he was caught. During that time, he met with an inmate's outside contact who gave him the items. Wicker recognized the man as a gang member who had been released from prison.

After he was caught, he confessed, pleaded guilty and was later sentenced to house arrest and probation.

Inmates who sell drugs have tried other ways to smuggle contraband, like using drones.

Wicker now works a well-paying construction job, holds a master's degree and is completing his doctorate in business administration. But he still feels shame for the mistake that brought him to rock bottom.

"I regret the officers that I let down. I regret my wife finding out like that. I regret breaking the law," he said. "I regret every freaking minute of it."

Drug use happens 'everyday, all day'

The 911 call was made on the morning of March 20, 2024. The officer spoke nonchalantly. It was the fifth call about an overdose that year. There would be another in less than a week. And 17 more by Christmas.

"We got a 20, 25-year-old," the officer told the operator. "Overdose."

The young man was alert and breathing, the officer confirmed.

"Do you know what he took?" the operator asked.

"No, no," the officer said. "We never know around here what they're getting their hands on."

Whatever drugs are sold in the streets, they're also sold behind bars, according to several inmates. Except inside, the customers are a captive audience of desperate men. Some turned to drugs to escape the realities of prison life. Some had addictions that began long before incarceration.

Drug use happens "every day, all day," said inmate Isaac Hicks, who recalled working in the facility's infirmary and seeing people come in regularly because they'd overdosed.

"Some, they can save," he said. "Some, they can't."

Some jailers, according to inmates, allowed gang activities to happen.

For example, the prison's former warden, who led the facility from 2018 to 2022, met with several gang leaders as violence began to rise. Zachary Cutshall, an inmate who said he was among those in attendance, said the meeting happened after gang members assaulted officers.

The warden's message, according to Cutshall, essentially gave them a pass to go about their business: "Do whatever you want. Just don't put your hands on the correctional officers."

The former warden, William Hyatte, didn't respond to interview requests. IDOC did not address a question about Hyatte's meeting, which was confirmed by two other former inmates.

The problems seemed to have escalated since Hyatte left.

Of the 49 calls about overdoses in the past decade, 40 were made just in the last three years, according to an analysis of Miami County's 911 call logs. In 2024 alone, there were nearly two dozen, higher than any year in the past decade.

Since 2015, Miami Correctional officials have confiscated 61 items that are considered narcotics, according to IDOC data, including 45 in the last three years.

IDOC data also showed seven confirmed or suspected overdose deaths at Miami Correctional in 2023 and 2024. But this could be an undercount because data from earlier years do not indicate whether deaths were tied to drug use.

Even in deaths that were not caused by overdose, officials found drugs in many inmates' systems.

Drugs, including methamphetamine, were found in the systems of two inmates who died this year of natural causes.

An autopsy of a 2021 stabbing victim also found methamphetamine. Another autopsy of an inmate who was strangulated in 2024 found methamphetamine and naloxone, which is used to reverse an opioid overdose.

'As long as he has it, he smokes it'

John Smith has seen it many times: His cellmate inhaling the chemicals he'd sprayed on a piece of paper. One night, he watched the man smoke every 10 minutes for three hours.

"As long as he has it," Smith said, "he smokes it."

"Katie" or "KD," as it's known in the streets and behind bars, comes in different forms - marijuana, tobacco or a piece of rolled paper - laced with bug spray and smoked. It's highly addictive, cheap and easy to get.

By his count, about two dozen other people in his housing unit came to their cell regularly to smoke.

Smith said he never got into using "Katie" in the three decades he's been incarcerated. Still, being away from his family when his father died and missing out on having children drove him to depression. He did turn to drugs, mostly cocaine and methamphetamine.

Daniel Curran, another inmate, also tried smoking chemicals, but he called it the "stupidest drug" he'd ever tried. He said other inmates then got him to try methamphetamine, and he was quickly hooked.

"I was just going crazy with it," he said.

As long as inmates can prove to their dealers that they can pay, Curran said, they're unharmed.

"But eventually, your payment is late," he said. "Your people are late in sending money."

He and other inmates said that's when violence happens.

Curran said he has spent all the money he'd inherited from his mother on his drug habit, about $10,000.

That's small compared to how much other families have spent.

Spending life savings for safety

It started with small amounts - $25 to $50 a couple of times a week - shortly after her loved one was sent to Miami Correctional in 2021. Then, he began asking for more, sometimes up to $700 a week.

He owed somebody money, her relative often said. He wouldn't say why, but she knew. Drug addiction runs in their family, and he has long struggled with it. She assumes he must be using marijuana, methamphetamine or pills, and she worries the drugs might be laced with fentanyl, the leading driver of overdose deaths in Indiana and in the country.

Still, she felt she had no choice. He'd talked about stabbings over drug debts in the prison. She dreads that one day, someone from the prison will tell her the young man she'd raised since he was 8 is dead.

"The first couple of months he was there, I didn't sleep," said the woman, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation against her loved one.

Sometimes, she gets angry at herself for not being strong enough to tell him she's not sending any more money. Most of the time, she's simply scared.

Other family members said they've reached out to IDOC officials. A statement from the agency's spokesperson did not answer an IndyStar question about whether officials are aware of or have investigated the issue.

In 2023, she'd had enough.

"Don't ask me for no more," she told him during a phone call.

But soon, she started sending him money again.

She and her husband have lost track of how much money they've spent. Their best estimate is between $50,000 and $75,000. At 68, she would love to stop working - she runs an in-home daycare - but she said all she'd saved is gone.

Another man whose relative is also at Miami Correctional said he and his wife have spent $37,000 over two years. He said the constant requests for money is one reason he's still working at 76.

"To keep him safe," he said of his loved one, "we pay the bill."

Contact IndyStar reporter Kristine Phillips at (317) 444-3026 or at kphil

"Guards are called mules."

Cody Stinson

former Miami Correctional inmate

"To keep him safe, we pay the bill."

relative of prisoner at Miami Correctional

Graphic

Protesters gather Aug. 12 outside Miami Correctional Facility in Bunker Hill. The rally was held to protest plans to use Miami Correctional as an ICE detention center.

Kelly Wilkinson/IndyStar

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on December 5, 2025, the foregoing Counseled Reply in Support of Pro Se Petition under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 was filed via the Court's CM/ECF system, is available for viewing and downloading, and, as such, was served upon the below counsel:

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