

**United States Attorney Jenny A. Durkan
Western District of Washington**

**Former Caseworker At Corrections Half-Way House Pleads Guilty
To Federal Charges**

Caseworker had Sexual Relationship with Felon; Enabled Drug Use

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A former caseworker at a Seattle half-way house for federal felons pleaded guilty today in U.S. District Court in Seattle to a felony of concealing a person from arrest, and a misdemeanor: conspiracy to possess controlled substances, announced U.S. Attorney Jenny A. Durkan. CAITLAN T. GRASSI, 29, of Seattle, resigned from her job at Pioneer Fellowship House in March 2011, after managers at the house confronted her about her inappropriate relationship with one of the felons she supervised. In her plea agreement, GRASSI admits she had a sexual relationship with the felon, took him to her home, and assisted him with purchasing and using heroin and marijuana. When sentenced by U.S. District Judge John C. Coughenour on February 8, 2013, GRASSI faces up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

According to the facts admitted in the plea agreement, in February 2011, GRASSI assisted the inmate with concealing his drug use from others at the half-way house. She warned the inmate about an upcoming random drug test, and advised him to "hide" in his room when he appeared intoxicated. She gave the inmate her cell phone number and the two exchanged more than 1,000 text messages over a one month period. On average the two exchanged 50 text messages a day. In March 2011, GRASSI arranged for the inmate to sign out of Pioneer under the guise of going to work. Instead, she took the inmate to her apartment for sex. The staff became suspicious of the relationship, but when confronted GRASSI denied any inappropriate relationship. She was suspended from Pioneer and resigned her job a few days later. Within the next week the inmate absconded from Pioneer and a warrant was issued for his arrest. GRASSI knew about the warrant, but still met the inmate at a bar, took him home to her apartment and gave him money to purchase heroin. GRASSI transported the inmate to a location to purchase drugs and to a house in Renton where he lived while on the run from authorities. A few days later GRASSI picked up the inmate in Seattle and took him to a location where he could purchase heroin. She watched him use the drug, and then took him to her apartment where the pair smoked marijuana she had obtained. The inmate subsequently surrendered to authorities and was sentenced in connection with the supervised release violation.

Investigators interviewed GRASSI in March and April 2011. She denied any misconduct and asked for an attorney. In October 2011, GRASSI admitted her conduct, acknowledging that she had lied to investigators and had destroyed text messages between her and the inmate.

The case was investigated by the Office of the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Justice. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Francis Franze-Nakamura.