



## Biden Diplomacy: WNBA Star Brittney Griner Released by Russia in Exchange for International Arms Dealer Viktor Bout, Known as “Merchant of Death”

### Description

WNBA star Brittney Griner was found guilty of drug smuggling with criminal intent in a Russian court back in August

The 6'9" butch basketball star sat in her courtroom cage as the judge read the verdict.

Prosecutors pushed for a sentence of 9.5 years in a penal colony.

Russian prosecutors asking for 9.5 years in prison for US basketball star Brittney Griner in case clearly being used as bargaining chip for a US prisoner swap. Here she is coming into courtroom today. Verdict expected this evening. [pic.twitter.com/LZ9BTba6hE](https://pic.twitter.com/LZ9BTba6hE)

— Andrew Roth (@Andrew\_\_Roth) [August 4, 2022](#)

Newsweek reported:

Griner, 31, was arrested and accused of possession of vape cartridges containing cannabis oil at a Moscow airport in February, during the lead-up to Russian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine later that month. Maria Blagovolina, a lawyer for the Russian firm representing Griner, argued that the basketball star did not use marijuana while in Russia. Her defense team has maintained that Griner mistakenly packed the cartridges and that she was prescribed medical marijuana by a doctor for pain treatment.

Griner pleaded guilty in early July to bringing the cartridges into Russia, where she was playing during the WNBA's offseason. Her lawyers have said the guilty plea was made as an admittance of responsibility and should be considered during sentencing.

**Griner said she had no intention of breaking the law when she smuggled the cannabis oil into Russia during the off-season. That was a mistake.**

Brittney Griner said she had no intention of breaking the law when she brought cannabis oil into Russia. The two-time Olympic gold medalist was found guilty of drug smuggling with criminal intent by a Russian court on Thursday. <https://t.co/im0ODOdF7o>  
[pic.twitter.com/MG1Mjnrifn](https://t.co/im0ODOdF7o)

— Newsweek (@Newsweek) [August 4, 2022](#)

Griner has been locked up in Russian prison ever since.

On Thursday Joe Biden made a deal with Russia for Brittney's release.

Russia released Brittney in exchange for international arms dealer Viktor Bout.  
Only Democrats would think this is a good deal.

BREAKING: Brittney Griner released by Russia in 1-for-1 prisoner swap for arms dealer Viktor Bout, U.S. official says <https://t.co/oa6fEPHtM9>

— CBS News (@CBSNews) [December 8, 2022](#)

Viktor Bout is known as the “merchant of death” so it makes sense that Joe Biden would make this insane prisoner swap.

[CNN](#) reported:

Bout, a former Soviet military officer, was serving a 25-year prison sentence in the United States on charges of conspiring to kill Americans, acquire and export anti-aircraft missiles, and provide material support to a terrorist organization. Bout has maintained he is innocent.

The Kremlin has long called for his release, slamming his sentencing in 2012 as “baseless and biased.”...

...The Russian businessman, who speaks six languages, was arrested in a sting operation in 2008 led by US drug enforcement agents in Thailand posing as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, known by the acronym FARC. He was eventually extradited to the US in 2010 after a protracted court proceeding.

“Viktor Bout has been international arms trafficking enemy number one for many years, arming some of the most violent conflicts around the globe,” said Preet Bharara, the US attorney in Manhattan when Bout was sentenced in New York in 2012.

“He was finally brought to justice in an American court for agreeing to provide a staggering number of military-grade weapons to an avowed terrorist organization committed to killing Americans.”

by Jim Hoft

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1. Crime-Justice-Terrorism-Corruption
2. Main
3. Politics-Geopolitics-Gov.-Events

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