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**Grand Jury Charges Twenty People in Tobacco Smuggling Scheme
at New Jersey State Prison**

TRENTON – A Mercer County grand jury recently returned an 11-count indictment charging 20 people in a venture that illegally brought tobacco products into a state correctional facility, Mercer County Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini Jr. reported.

The indictment, returned on October 10, charges Senior Corrections Officer Eric Dawson with three counts of second-degree official misconduct, one count of second-degree pattern of official misconduct, one count of second-degree bribery, one count of second-degree introduction of a cellular device inside a correctional facility and one count of third-degree financial facilitation of criminal activity.

Institutional Trade Technician Keith Harris is charged with one count of second-degree official misconduct.

According to Bocchini, in March 2013, the New Jersey Department of Corrections Special Investigations Division received information regarding the smuggling of tobacco inside the secured perimeter of New Jersey State Prison and began an investigation. Tobacco and tobacco-related products were banned from the prison as of February 15, 2013, creating a lucrative underground market.

The investigation revealed that Dawson, age 41, and Harris, age 47, smuggled tobacco into the prison in exchange for bribes from inmates and inmates' family and friends. Dawson was charged with an additional count of official misconduct, as well as pattern of official misconduct, for introduction of the cell phones as well as smuggling in jewelry and protein powders.

Eight inmates and nine civilian defendants are also named in the indictment and charged as follows:

LORENZO BLAKENEY

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

DIEESHA JOHNSON

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

MALIK ALI (Inmate)

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

ROOSEVELT WITHERS (Inmate)

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

HILDEGARD BARTHOLOMEW

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

GREGORY BARTHOLOMEW (Inmate)

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

CINDY HILL

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

MADLINE WEST

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

NICOLE DELACRUZ

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

ABDUS HAMILTON (Inmate)

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

TARON HILL (Inmate)

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

TANYA WILLIAMS

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

EDWARD DAVIS (Inmate)

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

PATRICIA DAVIS

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

AYESHA SHAHEED

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity
- Possession of a Cellular Device Inside a Correctional Facility

DUAN SHAHEED (Inmate)

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity
- Possession of a Cellular Device Inside a Correctional Facility

MITCHELL WEST (Inmate)

- Official Misconduct
- Bribery
- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity
- Possession of a Cellular Device Inside a Correctional Facility

MAYA BOZEMAN

- Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity

Each count of official misconduct and bribery carries a sentence of five to 10 years in state prison. Dawson will face an additional five to 10 years if found guilty of the pattern of official misconduct charge.

Bocchini complimented the investigation by the state Department of Corrections Special Investigations Division. Assistant Prosecutor Tim Ward presented the case to the grand jury.

An indictment is merely an accusation. All persons charged are presumed innocent until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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