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### **County Narcotics Task Force Raids Renovated Gambling Hall in City**

**TRENTON --** Mercer County Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini Jr. announced that a three-month investigation into illegal gambling led by his Special Investigations Unit (SIU), under the command of Lt. Mike Novembre, concluded Monday with the arrest of the three ringleaders.

Bocchini stated an investigation began in early January after his office received multiple complaints about illegal gambling and a lot of money going in and out of 286 North Willow Avenue in Trenton. On Monday, at about noon, officers with SIU, the county Sheriff's Office, the New Jersey State Police, the state Division of Criminal Justice, and the Ewing, Hamilton, Lawrence and Trenton police departments executed search warrants at the following five locations: 17 Crawford Court, Hamilton; 1534 Chambers Street, Hamilton; 286 North Willow Street, Trenton; 406 Rutherford Avenue, Trenton; and 102 Monument Place, Trenton.

Upon entering 286 North Willow Street, officers found the residence had been renovated into a gambling hall where individuals could place wagers. One of the operation heads, Vincent Lacey, was located inside along with multiple others. A search of the residence revealed a fully-loaded Taurus semi-automatic handgun between two refrigerators, and more than \$6,000. Lacey had more than \$3,000 and betting slips on his person. A laptop computer, two printers, rolls of betting slip paper and miscellaneous sports schedules were all found inside a room converted into an office where individuals would place bets through a glass window. Lacey's 2002 BMW 750 was located in front of the residence and seized as gambling proceeds.

Another ringleader, Jovan Bryant, was located at 406 Rutherford Avenue. A search of the residence revealed \$575 in cash, two laptop computers, a printer, betting slips and gambling stubs.

The third target, Alvin Brown, was located at 17 Crawford Court, along with cash and betting slips.

Betting slips and a fully-loaded Ruger .38 caliber handgun were found at 1534 Chambers Street, and approximately \$1,900 in cash was found at 102 Monument Place.

A 2003 black Mercedes Benz was also seized as gambling proceeds.

In total, more than \$12,000 in cash was seized. A bank account belonging to Vincent Lacey was also frozen pending further investigation.

Brown, 67, of Hamilton, Lacey, 45, of Hamilton, and Bryant, 26, of Trenton, were each charged with maintaining a gambling resort and possession of gambling records. Bryant was additionally charged with possession of a weapon, certain persons not to possess a weapon and receiving stolen property for a fully-loaded Smith and Wesson semi-automatic handgun that was found under the front seat of his 1999 Chevrolet Tahoe.

Brown's bail was set at \$75,000; Lacey's bail was set at \$100,000; and Bryant's bail was set at \$100,000. Source hearings were ordered for each defendant's bail. All three men were transported to the Mercer County Correction Center.

Also arrested during the search warrant executions were:

- Edward Butler (DOB 9/10/1985), Martin Luther King Boulevard, Trenton – charged with possession of marijuana.
- Japeth Miller (DOB 5/9/1981), Parkway Avenue, Trenton – charged with possession of a weapon and certain persons not to possess a weapon.
- Charles Gilliard (DOB 11/23/1985), Reading Avenue, Trenton – charged with possession of marijuana.

Despite having been charged, every defendant is presumed innocent until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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