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**Three State Corrections Officers and 32 Others Face Charges  
in Operation Lockdown**

**TRENTON** – Mercer County Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini Jr. reported today the next phase in “Operation Lockdown,” a two-year, wide-ranging joint investigation between the New Jersey Department of Corrections’ Special Investigations Division and the Mercer County Prosecutor’s Office. Over the next several weeks, 35 defendants charged in three separate indictments will be making court appearances for arraignments and status conferences. The indictments were returned by a Mercer County grand jury in February and March of this year, and include charges ranging from official misconduct, pattern of official misconduct, bribery, smuggling cellular telephones inside the prison, money laundering and distribution of drugs.

During the course of the investigation, investigators from the Special Investigations Division identified three corrupt corrections officers. The indictments charge Senior Corrections Officer Roosevelt Francis, Senior Corrections Officer Shareeka Miller and Senior Corrections Officer Tony Evans with multiple counts of official misconduct and with “Pattern of Official Misconduct,” *N.J.S. 2C:30-2*, a rarely used criminal charge.

In addition to the corrupt staff members, investigators identified 14 inmates within New Jersey State Prison who arranged with other defendants outside of the institution to pay bribes to the officers to smuggle cellular telephones and drugs inside the prison. Many of these prisoners are serving lengthy prison sentences for murder, aggravated manslaughter, robbery and other violent crimes. Several of the inmates are self-admitted members of criminal street gangs. As permitted by the New Jersey Criminal Code, the inmates and civilian defendants have been charged as accomplices to the charges of official misconduct as well as bribery.

Bocchini observed that the smuggling of cellular telephones inside the secured perimeter of a correctional facility is major concern for law enforcement in general and corrections officers in

particular. “There have been multiple cases where inmates have directed a variety of criminal activity outside of the prison including murder, gun and drug distribution, and witness intimidation,” he said.

“The vast majority of corrections officers are hard-working and honest,” Bocchini emphasized. “That is why it is critical to identify and aggressively prosecute those who have violated their duty.”

Francis, Miller and Evans all face a sentence of five to 10 years for each count of official misconduct and bribery, and an additional five to 10 years for the pattern of official misconduct charge.

Bocchini complimented the investigation by the state Department of Corrections Special Investigations Division. He also expressed his gratitude for the assistance of Lisa Ford, an analyst with the Middle Atlantic-Great Lakes Organized Crime Law Enforcement Network. Senior Assistant Prosecutor James Scott, chief of the prosecutor’s Economic Crime Unit, presented the cases 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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