



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY PROSECUTOR

**MERCER COUNTY
COURT HOUSE
P.O. BOX 8068**

JOSEPH L. BOCCHINI, JR.
Prosecutor

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08650-0068
PHONE: (609) 989-6350
(609) 989-6305
FAX #: (609) 989-0161

ANGELO J. ONOFRI
First Assistant Prosecutor

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CONTACT: Casey A. DeBlasio
(609) 989-6379

\$21,000 in Cocaine Seized by County Narcotics Task Force

TRENTON – Mercer County Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini Jr. announced that a two-month investigation led by his Special Investigations Unit (SIU), under the command of Lt. Mike Novembre, concluded Wednesday with the seizure of more than \$21,000 in crack cocaine.

On May 29, at approximately 5:15 p.m., members of the Mercer County Narcotics Task Force executed search warrants at two locations in Trenton. When SIU officers, the New Jersey State Police, the Mercer County Sheriff's Office and the Ewing, Hamilton, Lawrence and Trenton police departments executed search warrants at 242 Walnut Avenue, they secured **DEE THOMAS** outside the residence. **WILLIE OWENS, WILLIE SANDERS** and **BETTY CLARK** were located inside and detained. During a search of the residence, officers discovered that the front door had the capability of being fortified with steel bars. Two digital scales and drug packaging materials were found in the kitchen. A search of Thomas' BMW 745i, which was parked across the street, revealed 28 grams of crack cocaine in the center console. The vehicle was seized as drug proceeds. Thomas had \$1,853 on his person at the time of his arrest.

Officers also searched 353 Cleveland Avenue where they discovered a pocketbook in a bedroom closet containing approximately 188 grams of crack cocaine. Cash totaling \$620 and .44 caliber bullets were also found in the same closet. Plastic baggies, baking soda, a digital scale and a small amount of crack cocaine were found in a kitchen cabinet.

Novembre stated that the approximate street value of the crack cocaine is \$21,600.

THOMAS, age 28, of Cleveland Street, is charged with multiple counts of possession of a controlled dangerous substance, possession with the intent to distribute, possession with the intent to distribute within 1,000 feet of a school, possession with the intent to distribute within 500 feet of a park and possession of drug paraphernalia. He is being held at the Mercer County Correction Center in lieu of \$250,000 cash bail.

OWENS, age 53, **SANDERS**, age 60, and **CLARK**, age 51, all of Walnut Avenue, are charged with having a fortified facility and possession of drug paraphernalia. They were released pending future court proceedings.

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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