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SIU Investigation Yields \$52,000 in Cocaine

Mercer County Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini Jr. announced today that a month-long investigation conducted by his Special Investigations Unit (SIU), under the command of Lt. Frank LaBelle, has led to the arrest of one individual and the seizure of approximately \$52,000 in narcotics.

Bocchini stated that his office was contacted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement earlier in November regarding suspicious activity at an apartment in Hamilton. An investigation ensued and at approximately 4 p.m. Monday afternoon, members of the SIU, the Hamilton Police Department, the Mercer County Sheriff's Office and ICE executed a search warrant at 81 Newkirk Avenue. A search revealed a package containing 520 grams of powder cocaine in the living room. Two grams of marijuana, \$2,580 in cash and a dozen .45 caliber bullets were also located in a safe under the bed.

Jason J. Charles, 33, who resides at the apartment, was taken into custody and charged with possession of a controlled dangerous substance, possession with the intent to distribute, possession with the intent to distribute within 1000 feet of a school and possession of drug paraphernalia. He is being held at the Mercer County Correction Center in lieu of \$200,000 bail.

LaBelle stated that the seized cocaine has an approximate street value of \$52,000.

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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