

NEWS RELEASE

FRANCONIA TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Date: July 29, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TWO PERSONS CHARGED IN THEFT OF DONATED CLOTHING

The Franconia Township Police Department has charged two residents of Philadelphia with the thefts of clothing from donation bins. Police arrested Abdul Basir Muhammad, 41, and Sharon Williams, 46, who both gave their address on the 4800 block of North Carlisle Street in Philadelphia. They were charged with felony counts of Theft of Moveable Property, Theft by Deception, and Receiving Stolen Property. They were arraigned before Special Court Judge Deborah Lukens and both were remanded to the Montgomery County Correctional Facility in lieu of \$25,000 cash bail.

Basir and Williams were the employees of MAC Recycling (Mid-Atlantic Clothing Recycling) of Owings Mills, Maryland, which owns the donation bins. They were assigned to empty the bins, which are located throughout the Delaware Valley, into a company-owned box truck and then deposit the collected clothing into a larger truck trailer that was located on a lot on Hatfield Pike in Franconia Township.

Company officials had learned that Williams was offering large amounts of donated clothing for sale through a recycling web site. They found that Williams and Basir were selling large amounts of the MAC clothing from the trailer for their own profit.

Police set up a surreptitious purchase operation on Friday, July 25, 2008 in which the pair agreed to sell 10,000 pounds of the clothing for 45 cents a pound to an agent posing as a clothing buyer from Canada. When the transaction took place shortly after 2:00 p.m. on Hatfield Pike, Basir and Williams were arrested without incident. Members of the North Penn Tactical Response Team took the subjects into custody since there was credible information that both subjects could possibly be armed with handguns. However, neither subject was found to be in the possession of weapons at the time of arrest.

A preliminary hearing for both subjects has been scheduled for 10:00 a.m., Thursday, August 7, 2008 at District Court 38-1-17, 121 East Chestnut Street, Souderton, PA.

Franconia Township officers were assisted by members of the Hatfield Township Police Department, along with the Tactical Response Team.

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