

# ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

4997 Unami Boulevard, Mays Landing, NJ 08330

**Theodore F. L. Housel**

**Prosecutor**

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Dec. 3, 2009

1 Page (s)

For further information contact:

Madelaine Vitale 609-909-7855

609-457-7359

---

**MAYS LANDING** – An Atlantic County Grand Jury indicted a West Virginia man today on multiple counts of aggravated assault, obstruction and weapons offenses, in connection with assaulting two Somers Point police officers, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced.

It is alleged that on Oct. 9, 2009, Earnest Freeman, 29, of Clarksburg, while in custody on an unrelated offense, attempted to flood a Somers Point jail cell by stuffing whole rolls of toilet paper into the toilet. While attempting to stop Freeman, Sgt. John Barbieri was attacked. Freeman ripped the badge off of Sgt. Barbieri's shirt and then turned the badge into a weapon and attempted to stab Barbieri and Lt. Michael Sweeney. Barbieri continues to recover from his injuries. Sweeney was uninjured in the incident, according to Assistant Prosecutor Harlee Stein, who presented the case to the Grand Jury Thursday afternoon.

Freeman remains in the Atlantic County Justice Facility in lieu of \$35,000 cash or bond bail. A condition of the bail is that the defendant must not have contact with the victims.

If convicted on all counts, Freeman faces more than 20 years in State Prison.

**\*\*\*These charges are merely an accusation and not proof of guilt. In all criminal cases, a charged defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.**

Anyone with information involving serious crimes is asked to call the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office at 609-909-7800 or go to the Prosecutor's Office Web site at <http://www.acpo.org/tips.html> and provide information by filling out the form anonymously on the Submit a Tip page. People can also call Crime Stoppers at 609-652-1234 or 1-800-658-8477 (TIPS) or visit the Crime Stoppers Website at <http://www.crimestoppersatlantic.com/>. Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of those who commit crimes in Atlantic County.