



# Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office

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**\*News Release\***

**Date: October 24, 2014**

## **Four Edison police officers; officer's wife, indicted in multiple cases**

Middlesex County Prosecutor Andrew C. Carey today announced that two grand juries in Middlesex County have indicted four Edison police officers and the wife of one of the officers on a variety of charges, including counts of official misconduct, in two separate indictments.

An 11-count indictment, handed up today, charges Officer Michael A. Dotro, 37, of Manalapan, Officer Brian Favretto, 39, of Brick, and Officer Victor E. Aravena, 42, and Officer William H. Gesell, 46, both Edison residents, with planning to retaliate against a North Brunswick police officer who had arrested another individual on a drunk-driving charge.

The four officers are accused of conspiracy and official misconduct. It is charged that between January 18, 2012 and May 1, 2012, they planned to retaliate against the North Brunswick police officer by improperly accessing information about him and performing surveillance of him and his travel habits.

In addition, Gesell was charged with unlawfully accessing a police computer system, and a related count of official misconduct for seeking information on the North Brunswick officer.

An investigation by the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office determined the retaliation was planned after the North Brunswick police officer arrested an associate of Dotro on a charge of driving while intoxicated.

Dotro subsequently conspired with his three fellow police officers to retaliate against the North Brunswick officer. No actual retaliation was undertaken, however.

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The identities of the individual charged with DWI, and the North Brunswick police officer, will not be disclosed at this time.

The indictment further charges Dotro with unlawfully accessing a police computer system on August 1, 2012, and accuses him of a related count of official misconduct for obtaining information from a registered license plate at the request of one of Dotro's friends. Dotro also was accused of engaging in a pattern of official misconduct.

In addition, Aravena was charged with witness tampering, obstructing the administration of law and official misconduct for attempting to influence another Edison police officer on May 12, 2013 to alter a police report in an unrelated investigation. A count of engaging in a pattern of official misconduct also was filed against Aravena.

A separate indictment, handed up on October 23, 2014 and unsealed today, charges Dotro and his wife, Alycia Dotro, 39, with official misconduct, conspiracy and criminal mischief on March 17, 2013, for slashing the tires of a car owned by an Edison woman.

Michael Dotro also is charged in the 12-count indictment with unlawful access to a computer system and unlawful disclosure of computer system data between March 17, 2013 and March 20, 2013. He also is accused of checking police records and notifying his wife of any reports on the slashing.

Additionally, Michael Dotro is charged in the October 23, 2014, indictment with two counts of having prohibited devices, possession of an imitation firearm and official misconduct for carrying brass knuckles, an imitation weapon, a small club known as a black jack, a small quantity of marijuana, and a device used to smoke marijuana, all of which were discovered in his police duty bag on May 23, 2013.

He also is charged in that indictment with official misconduct and conspiracy for buying less than one ounce of marijuana for his wife on various occasions between September 1, 2012 and December 31, 2012. She was not charged with those counts.

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The indictments were handed up following investigations by Detective Donald Heck and other members of the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office.

The cases were presented to the grand juries by Middlesex County Assistant Prosecutor Thomas Mannion.

Earlier today, Superior Court Judge Bradley J. Ferencz set bails in New Brunswick and said the defendants may remain free, but must post the amounts on or before November 7, 2014. They also are scheduled to appear in court on that date at 1:30 p.m.

Bail was set at \$100,000 for Michael Dotro; \$75,000 each for Alycia Dotro, Aravena, and Gesell, and \$50,000 for Favretto.

As is the case with all criminal defendants, the Dotros, Aravena, Gesell, and Favretto are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

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*Note to editors: Questions may be directed to Jim O'Neill, public information officer, at (732) 745-3300.*