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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County Corrections Officer Charged with Sex Assault

A county corrections officer was arrested Sunday and charged with sexual assault, Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo J. Onofri and Trenton Police Director Ernest Parrey Jr. reported today.

Donald J. Ryland, age 44, is charged with one count of second-degree sexual assault. Ryland is a corrections officer at the Mercer County Correction Center.

The assault took place on October 6 when the adult female victim entered the suspect's vehicle in the area of South Broad Street. The suspect then drove to Cadwalader Park, at which time the victim exited the vehicle. Moments later, the victim saw the suspect running toward her. He knocked her to the ground and sexually assaulted her. The victim fled the area and found refuge with two guards at a park security gate.

Based on the nature of the incident, during the next week, the Trenton Police Department and the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office conducted operations in the city aimed at identifying the suspect.

Sunday afternoon, the victim recognized the suspect in Trenton and flagged down Sgt. Jason Astbury, who was working a street crimes detail. The victim was able to provide Astbury with a description and license plate of the suspect's vehicle. An alert was broadcast, and a short time later, Trenton Officers Jose Gonzalez and Crystal Everett, and Detective Drew Astbury, stopped the vehicle on Adeline Street and subsequently detained Ryland.

The case was investigated by the Mercer County Prosecutor's Special Victims Unit, with assistance from the Cyber Crimes and Special Investigations units, and the Trenton Police Special Victims Unit, with assistance from the Street Crimes Unit. The investigation is ongoing. Anyone with information on the case should contact Mercer County Prosecutor's SVU Detective Anthony Petracca at (609) 989-6424 or Trenton Police Detective Laurel Rogers at (609) 989-4155.

The prosecutor's office has filed a motion to have Ryland detained.

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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