



# PRESS RELEASE

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## **FIVE PEOPLE ARRESTED IN CONTRABAND INVESTIGATIONS AT TWO PRISONS**

JACKSON - Five people, including a parolee and an ex-convict, have been arrested in connection with contraband items found recently at Central Mississippi Correctional Facility and South Mississippi Correctional Institution.

One of the persons charged is linked to a box filled with contraband items that led to the lockdown at CMCF on April 21. The package, intended for an inmate at CMCF, was delivered via a commercial vehicle.

“This arrest shows that we are going to diligently pursue anyone who thinks he or she can get contraband into our prisons,” said Corrections Commissioner Marshall Fisher. “There will be more arrests in this case.”

Tiffany Gray, 30, of Mount Olive is charged with introduction of contraband. She was taken to the Rankin County Jail.

Her name was on the package, and she acknowledged her involvement to investigators, said Sean K. Smith, director of the Corrections Investigation Division (CID).

The other four persons are facing the same charge following a foiled plan to deliver contraband to inmates at SMCI in an unrelated case. All four were arrested early Friday morning.

Brian Peeks, 35, Donta Shirley, 31, and Stacey Nicole Taylor, 30, all of Columbus, and Jennifer Lauren Ruth, 26, of Aberdeen, also have been charged with conspiracy to introduce contraband.

Peeks has been on parole since October for a receiving stolen property conviction, and Shirley completed a sentence in 2011 for cocaine possession. Both were convicted in Lowndes County.

The investigation leading to the four arrests started after a contraband package, filled with wrapped bags of tobacco, was found between the security fences behind SMCI, Area II after midnight Friday.

As a CID investigator was examining the package, a Greene County deputy on patrol stopped a Nissan carrying Taylor and Ruth on Old Highway 24, adjacent to the prison. Ruth, the driver, revealed during questioning that they had dropped off two men carrying backpacks on the side of the road. The women were subsequently arrested and taken to the Greene County Jail.

Authorities then began searching for the two males. Peeks was arrested on Vo-Tech Road and Old Highway 24. Shirley was caught walking on Highway 57 near the prison.

Further questioning of the four revealed they had been in the area since April 29. Investigators learned that the men had taken several backpacks and a pair of bolt cutters into the woods. They left the woods and returned to the prison again Thursday night with the intention of throwing the contraband over the fence, investigators said.

Introduction of contraband into a correctional facility is punishable by three to 15 years in prison, a maximum \$25,000 fine, or both. Conspiracy to introduce contraband carries up to a \$5,000 fine, five years imprisonment, or both.

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