

# NEWS

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United States Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey  
401 Market Street, Fourth Floor  
Camden, New Jersey 08101

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**Christopher J. Christie, U.S. Attorney**

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**More Information?** Contact the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

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Former Federal Grand Juror Arrested for  
Tipping off Major Camden Drug Dealer

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(More)

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Greg Reinert , PAO : 856-757-5233  
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CAMDEN – A former federal grand juror was arrested today for tipping off the leader of a major Camden drug ring that the grand jury had indicted him and his codefendants, which allowed Darnell Tuten to avoid arrest for two-and-a-half months, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Tallena K. Chesney, 28, of Gloucester Township, had an initial appearance before U.S. Magistrate Ann Marie Donio today on a charge of knowingly, willfully and corruptly endeavoring to influence, obstruct and impede a grand jury investigation. Chesney was released on a \$75,000 unsecured appearance bond pending trial.

“The grand jury is the very foundation of our justice system,” Christie said. “A solemn oath of secrecy is taken by grand jurors to protect the criminal investigative process as well as those who may or may not ultimately be charged. Much is at stake, as this unfortunate case illustrates, and we will prosecute Ms. Chesney accordingly.”

According to a criminal Complaint, Chesney was a member of a federal grand jury impaneled on May 21, 2002, and sitting in Camden. On March 25, 2003, the grand jury returned a 32-count Indictment against members of the Tuten Organization, which was later docketed as United States v. Darnell Tuten, a/k/a “Big Lips,” et al, Criminal No. 03-228 (FLW), according to the Complaint.

The grand jury heard testimony on the Tuten matter on March 25, 2003, as well as during the prior week’s session on March 18. According to the complaint, Chesney signed in as being present for both day’s grand jury sessions and an investigation revealed that Chesney was present and heard testimony on March 25.

The Complaint alleges that on the date the Indictment was returned against Tuten and his codefendants, Chesney met with Tuten and told him that he had been indicted and informed him of the substance of the charges. Chesney allegedly contacted a friend, who is referred to in the Complaint as a confidential source of information (CS-1), via text message to advise him/her that she had information regarding Tuten.

According to the Complaint, CS-1 was aware that Chesney was serving on a federal grand jury because they would often meet on that day of the week after the grand jury had concluded its business for the day. At the conclusion of the grand jury proceedings on March 25, Chesney met with CS-1 and told him/her that Tuten had been indicted. The two then located Tuten in Camden and advised him of the Indictment, according to the Complaint.

After being informed of the Indictment, Tuten then fled the Camden area to avoid being arrested on the charges. On March 28, 2003, many of the 13 indicted defendants were

arrested; however, Tuten, of Deptford, could not be located. According to the Complaint, Tuten remained at large with fugitive investigations conducted in Atlanta and Pittsburgh, Richmond and Norfolk, Virginia, Tampa, Florida, as well as New Jersey. He remained a fugitive until he was arrested the night of June 15, 2003, by federal agents in Pine Hill.

The charges in criminal complaints are merely accusations. All defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted of a crime.

The charge against the defendant carries a statutory maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

Christie credited Special Agents with FBI Philadelphia Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge John C. Eckenrode, with developing the investigation.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin T. Smith of the Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorney: Andrea Bergman, Esq. AFPD