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Press Release

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Two charged in firearm incident at the Berrien County Courthouse

At about 8:45 am Tuesday, May 30, Arnelda Dywayne Jackson, age 40 years and Molly Michiell Jackson, age 37, husband and wife, both of Wyoming, Michigan were entering the courthouse in St. Joseph for a hearing on a pending criminal case for Arnelda Jackson. As they were going through the routine security checkpoint, the court security deputies scanned Ms. Jackson's purse in the x-ray machine discovering a firearm in their viewing device. When it likely appeared to the Jacksons that the firearm was detected, Mr. Jackson is alleged to have grabbed the purse out of the device and run out of the building with Ms. Jackson following. The court security deputies stationed at the entrance called additional courthouse deputies and bailiffs to the scene at which time a Berrien County deputy apprehended Mr. Jackson in the parking lot finding the firearm several feet away along his course of travel. A courthouse bailiff secured Ms. Jackson. The purse had been discarded near a car.

As a result of the investigation Arnelda Jackson was charged with Carrying a Concealed Weapon (on person), Possession of a Firearm by a Felon, both five year maximums; Tampering with Evidence, a four year maximum; Resisting and Obstructing an Officer, a two year maximum; and Felony Firearm, a mandatory two year consecutive sentence. Molly Jackson has been charged with Carrying a Concealed Weapon (on person), Carrying a Concealed Weapon (in vehicle), both five year maximums; Tampering with Evidence, a four year maximum; Resisting and Obstructing an Officer, a two year maximum; and Felony Firearm, a mandatory two year consecutive sentence.

The criminal case set for preliminary exam on Tuesday morning for Arnelda Jackson was on a charge of Possession of Counterfeit Money, a five year maximum. That charge was delayed until this Thursday afternoon (today) and was bound over for trial after testimony. A trial date for that charge is set for August 1, 2017.

At their arraignment today bonds were set at \$100,000 cash or surety for Arnelda Jackson and \$400,000 cash or surety for Molly Jackson. A preliminary exam conference and preliminary exam hearing date for both are June 9 at 8:30 am and June 15 at 8:30 am, respectively.

The Berrien County Sheriff's Department investigated this incident with assistance from St. Joseph Department of Public Safety.

The charges are merely accusations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

Press release available at County Web site:

<http://www.berriencounty.org/ProsecutingAttorney/pressreleases>