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Commissioner Phelps Issues Statement on Verdicts

Today, in response to the verdicts rendered in the cases of Jarreau Ayers, Dwayne Staats and Deric Forney, the first three defendants to face trial for their involvement in the February 1, 2017 hostage event at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center, DOC Commissioner Phelps offered the following statement:

"The DOC family will never be the same, but the news today is a long-awaited step toward healing and closure. We extend our most sincere gratitude to the members of the jury who put their lives and families on hold to thoughtfully listen to and evaluate the evidence presented to them. We are grateful for the efforts of the Delaware State Police and the Department of Justice who successfully and tirelessly pursued justice on behalf of our fallen officer. The DOC is and always will be: One Family, One Team."

Dwayne Staats was found guilty of the following charges: riot, felony murder, murder of a law enforcement officer, two counts of assault, four counts of kidnapping and conspiracy 2nd degree. Jarreau Ayers was found guilty of the following charges: riot, two counts of assault, four counts of kidnapping and conspiracy 2nd degree. Deric Forney was acquitted of all charges.

Judge Carpenter will determine sentencing at a later date.

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