

FREEHOLD — Setting the stage for what could turn into a battle between state and federal criminal justice officials, a state Superior Court judge yesterday scheduled a May trial for a man accused of murdering an Asbury Park woman.

Expressing frustration with the federal government's handling of the case, Superior Court Judge John A. Ricciardi ordered the trial for Marcus Cojab even though Cojab may already have pleaded guilty in federal court to the murder.

‘ I have no clue as to what is going on up there. ’

Alton D. Kenney
FIRST ASSISTANT
PROSECUTOR

Cojab, of Miami, is charged with ordering the murder of Deborah Owens, a liquor store cashier believed to be a courier for an international drug ring run by Cojab. Owens, 37, was shot to death Aug. 7, 1990, in a vacant lot in Ocean Township.

Cojab was indicted in Monmouth County on charges of ordering the murder, and the prosecutor's office planned to seek the death penalty. But the federal government superseded in the case last year and it was moved to the Southern District of New York.