

Drugs Burn, Weapon Explodes, Bullets Whiz Around Basement

Irvington — With bullets exploding like popcorn kernels over an open fire, two suspects were arrested yesterday by Essex County sheriff's detectives with drug and weapons charges being filed against them.

Sheriff Armando Fontoura stated that detectives from the Bureau of Narcotics executed an arrest warrant for Tremayne McKenith, age 35, at his Stuyvesant Avenue residence yesterday. When the officers announced their presence they heard the sound of people running around inside the first floor apartment.

Prior the entering the residence, a woman, Diamonda Fann, age 20, who was in the apartment, ran to the basement where she apparently removed the pilot light panel of the building's water heater and placed a large quantity of heroin and a fully loaded, .380 caliber, semi-automatic Hi-Point handgun into the unit.

Within a few moments, some of the heroin caught fire and ignited the cheaply manufactured weapon which is primarily made of plastic.

"It was like a mini-Fourth of July Day celebration," Sheriff Fontoura noted. "Flying bullets and shrapnel from the water heater were whizzing all over the place. Fortunately, no one was in the basement and no one was hurt."

McKenith was charged with selling heroin to an undercover officer during an earlier investigation and possession of heroin within 1000 feet of Chancellor Avenue School.

Fann was charged with the unlawful possession of a weapon, possession of a weapon while committing a drug crime, possession of heroin, possession of heroin with intent to distribute, possession of heroin with intent to distribute within 1000 feet of Chancellor Avenue School, possession of drug packaging paraphernalia and hindering apprehension.

Sheriff's BON detectives recovered the remains of the handgun and 550 bags of heroin.

Late last night, Judge Jerome St. John ordered Fann held at the county jail on \$85,000 cash bond. Judge Amilkar — Velez Lopez set bail on McKenith at \$40,000. Both suspects are scheduled to be arraigned on Thursday.