Cell Phone Chat and Broken Tail Light Leads to Drug Arrest

Newark – An alleged drug suspect was arrested yesterday evening by Essex County sheriff’s officers who were on patrol at Ivy Hill Park

Sheriff Armando Fontoura stated that officers David Cohen and Giuseppe Forgione observed Sherloc Alphonso, age 22, of Newark talking on a cell phone while in the area of the park as he operated a gold-colored, 1997 Jeep Grand Cherokee on Monday evening. The vehicle also had an inoperable brake light.

Sheriff Fontoura said that when Officer Cohen approached the vehicle from the driver’s side the suspect admitted that he did not have a driver’s license. At that time, Cohen smelled the odor of alcohol emanating from the Jeep and he noticed a Poland Spring water bottle which contained a pink liquid.

Alfonso stated, “It’s just wine”.

Officer Forgione then observed a red plastic container which held nearly 7 grams of “crack” cocaine, packaged in dozens of zip-lock bags, on the vehicle’s center console.

Alphonso was placed under arrest and charged with possession of a controlled dangerous substance, possession of CDS with intent to distribute, possession of CDS with intent to distribute within 1000 feet of Mt. Vernon School, possession of CDS within 500 feet of Ivy Hill park, possession of CDS in a motor vehicle and transporting an open alcoholic beverage in a vehicle.

The suspect was also issued numerous motor vehicle summonses, including operating a vehicle with a suspended driver’s license, operating a vehicle with a cracked windshield, operating a vehicle with a broken tail light and use of a cell phone while driving.

Newark municipal court Judge Antonio P. Sebastiao set bail on Alphonso at $60,000 cash bond only. The suspect was lodged in the county jail where he awaits arraignment on Monday’s charges.