

Arrest Yields 164 Grams of "Crack" Cocaine

Newark ‐ A suspect was arraigned today on multiple drug charges following his arrest earlier this week by Essex County sheriff's officers.

Sheriff Armando Fontoura stated that detectives from his department's Bureau of Narcotics conducted a plainclothes surveillance operation at 321 Park Avenue on Monday morning as part of an on-going investigation of their target, 55-year-old Leoncio Vargas.

Sheriff Fontoura said that Vargas was observed leaving his residence by the BON detectives at 10:45 a.m. and he was followed.

Vargas then stopped near the intersection of Park Avenue and North 7th Street and engaged in conversation with the driver of a parked, late model, Nissan. When Vargas exchanged an item from his jacket pocket for cash from the driver the sheriff's detectives believed they had witnessed a hand-to-hand narcotics transaction.

Fontoura noted that the BON officers then followed Vargas to the subway entrance, located at Park Avenue and 1st Street, and detained him.

A search of the suspect yielded a plastic bag that contained 164 grams of "crack" cocaine. The sheriff estimated the street value of the drugs to be \$8,200.

Vargas 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 Dr. William H. Horton School and possession of CDS with intent to distribute within 500 feet of Branch Brook Park.

At today's arraignment, Judge Arthur Batista ordered Vargas held at the county jail in lieu of \$80,000 cash bond only.