

Suspect Arrested and Arraigned on Drug Charges

Newark — A male suspect was arraigned today on drug charges following his arrest yesterday afternoon by Essex County sheriff's officers.

Sheriff Armando Fontoura stated that as part of an on-going drug investigation in the city's North Ward detectives from his department's Bureau of Narcotics executed a search warrant for apartment #5 at 131 Grafton Avenue early on Wednesday afternoon.

Upon entering the apartment, the tenant, Jerome Simmons, age 55, along with two females, were detained while the residence was searched. Sheriff Fontoura said that in Simmons's bedroom the BON officers found black wooden standing cupboard with metal safes bolted to the back of the cabinet.

The safe on the top shelf was unlocked and it was found to contain 77 glassine envelopes filled with heroin, stamped "THE WIRE" in green ink.

The three other safes were locked and forced open. These safes contained an additional 64 envelopes of heroin and 22 grams of cocaine.

The sheriff added that a fifth locked safe was found bolted to the bottom of a bedroom dresser. This safe was forced open and found to contain 240 glassine envelopes of heroin, stamped "9 1/2" in red ink.

The estimated street value of the drugs is \$6,000.

"It appears that the suspect was conducting a lucrative mid-sized drug distribution operation from his apartment," Fontoura observed

The sheriff said that the BON detectives also seized a wide variety of narcotics packaging and processing paraphernalia from the bedroom.

Simmons was placed under arrest and charged with two counts each of possession of a controlled dangerous substance, possession of CDS with intent to distribute, possession of CDS with intent to distribute within 1000 feet of the Elliot Street School Annex and possession of CDS with intent to distribute within 500 feet of the North End Library. Simmons was also charged with possession of narcotics paraphernalia.

The two females in the apartment were identified as 46-year-old Carrie Rodriguez of Nutley who was found to be the subject of an open New Jersey Superior Court warrant for possession of CDS and Katelyn Flanagan, age 26 of Newark, who was found to be the subject of an open criminal warrant for larceny issued by West Bolyston (Massachusetts) Police Department.

At today's arraignment, Judge Marilyn Williams ordered Simmons held at the Essex County jail in lieu of \$200,000 bail.