Meth and Crack Seized During Arrest

Newark – A Dominican national who is scheduled for deportation was arraigned this morning on multiple drug charges following his arrest Friday afternoon by Essex County sheriff’s officers.

Sheriff Armando Fontoura stated that, as part of an on-going investigation into drug trafficking in the city’s North Ward, detectives from his department’s Bureau of Narcotics executed a search warrant for the second floor apartment at 306 North 5th Street late last week.

Sheriff Fontoura said the BON detectives established surveillance at that location and observed as a late model Jeep Grand Cherokee pulled up and the driver repeated beeped the vehicle’s horn.

Within moments, the target of the investigation, Fray Ovando, age 45, exited his residence and engaged in conversation with the driver. Ovando then exchanged an item from his jacket pocket with the driver for cash.

As the Grand Cherokee sped away, the sheriff’s BON detectives announced their presence, moved in and detained Ovando.

The suspect was returned to his apartment and the search warrant was executed.

In a dresser in Ovando’s bedroom, the BON detectives discovered and seized more than a kilo of ‘crack’ cocaine, 237 grams of crystal methamphetamine and a variety of drug processing and packaging materials. The sheriff’s officers also recovered $3,810 in cash from a jacket in the suspect’s bedroom closet and an additional $699 from his pants pocket.

Both drugs had yet to be cut or diluted and a conservative estimate of the street value of the narcotics is more than $75,000.

“The recovery of methamphetamine in this area is indeed rare,” noted Fontoura. “I’ve been in this business for a long time and our Bureau of Narcotics is the second oldest such unit in New Jersey. This may be only the second or third time we’ve come across the hardcore narcotic in three decades.”

Ovando was 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 Dr. William Horton School and possession of CDS with intent to distribute within 500 feet of Branch Brook Park. The suspect was also charged with one count of possession of narcotics processing materials.

The sheriff’s department alerted the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement as to Ovando’s arrest. ICE agents also put a hold on any release of the suspect.

At today’s arraignment, Judge Marilyn Williams ordered Ovando to be held at the county jail in lieu of $300,000 cash bond.