Suspects Arrested; Heroin & Marijuana Seized

Newark - Two male suspects were arraigned today on drug charges following their arrest late yesterday afternoon by Essex County sheriff's detectives.

Sheriff Armando Fontoura stated that officers from his department's Bureau of Narcotics executed a search warrant on Thursday at Hometown Liquor Store, located at 69 7th Avenue, after a three-week investigation which was prompted by neighborhood complaints of drug trafficking in the North Ward.

Upon entering the liquor store, Fontoura said the BON detectives spotted a female, later identified as 23-year-old Tiffany Antonetty of Newark, standing at the end of the counter. Antonetty was observed reaching into her waistband and tossing four glassine envelopes to the floor. The envelopes were found to contain heroin, stamped "JUSTICE FOR ALL" in blue ink, and Antonetty was placed under arrest.

The store's manager, Nileshkum Patel, age 40 of Jersey City, and the sales clerk, Nelson Cardona, age 49 of Newark, were behind the counter.

In a counter drawer, the BON officers discovered an additional 38 envelopes of heroin, also stamped "JUSTICE FOR ALL" in blue ink, and narcotics packaging paraphernalia. At this point, the two male suspects were placed under arrest.

In a rear storeroom, the sheriff's detectives discovered a black plastic bag which was found to contain 335 grams of marijuana and additional drug processing paraphernalia.

The total street value of the narcotics is estimated at just under $4,000.

Patel and Cardona were each charged with two counts 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 Barringer 9th Grade Academy and possession of CDS with intent to distribute within 500 feet of a public housing complex. The suspects were also charged with conspiracy to violate New Jersey narcotics laws and possession of narcotics processing paraphernalia.

Cardona, who uses the alias Hector Velasquez, was also found to be the subject of an open warrant issued by the Newark municipal court.

At today's arraignment, Judge Marilyn Williams ordered Patel and Cardona held at the Essex County jail each in lieu of $40,000 cash bond only.

Antonetty was issued a summons for possession of CDS and released. She will be arraigned on yesterday's charges at a later date.