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Mercer County Narcotics Task Force Seizes \$19,000 in Marijuana

TRENTON – Acting Mercer County Prosecutor Angelo J. Onofri and Trenton Police Director Ernest Parrey Jr. reported the Mercer County Narcotics Task Force concluded a two-month investigation yesterday with 11 arrests and the seizure of more than \$19,000 in marijuana.

At approximately 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27, officers with the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, the Mercer County Sheriff's Office, the New Jersey State Police, and the Hamilton and Trenton police, under the command of Lt. Mike Novembre, executed search warrants at 320-322 East State Street, Trenton, a property used by Ed Forchion AKA Weedman as a café and sanctuary.

Onofri stated the task force had received information from multiple sources that Forchion was distributing marijuana from the premises. Complaints from the community had also been received about the constant foot traffic in and out of the establishment at all hours.

During the execution of the search warrant, Forchion and several other individuals were located within the premises and secured without incident. One of the individuals, Shawn Hurley, observed officers and discarded a deck of heroin off the roof. A search of the building revealed 56 grams of marijuana and 32 grams of edible marijuana candy in the sanctuary, along with \$85 in a jar that read, "Nothing is free donate." More than a pound of marijuana butter was found in the kitchen. Ten grams of marijuana and a large amount of drug paraphernalia were located in an additional private shop area.

In the office, officers found 1,055 grams of marijuana, five grams of hashish, five ounces of promethazine, scales, \$60 in cash and packaging materials. Twenty-eight additional grams of marijuana was found in the backyard.

During the search of the residence, Tomas Geronimo, who distributed marijuana during the investigation, was observed outside and placed under arrest.

A search of Forchion revealed \$330. A Toyota Matrix was seized as drug proceeds. Two other vehicles were seized from the scene pending further investigation.

A search warrant was also executed on South Olden Avenue in Hamilton in connection to the investigation. Seven grams of marijuana were found in the garage and drug paraphernalia was located in the residence. The homeowner, Sharon Shelton, 52, arrived during the search and was placed under arrest and charged with possession of marijuana under 50 grams and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Novembre said the estimated street value of the seized narcotics is \$19,270.

Forchion, 51, is charged with six counts of distribution of a controlled dangerous substance, three counts of possession of a controlled dangerous substance, possession with the intent to distribute, two counts of possession with the intent to distribute within 1,000 feet of a school, possession with the intent to distribute within 500 feet of a park, fortified premises, two counts of possession of drug paraphernalia and maintaining a narcotics nuisance. His bail was set at \$50,000 cash or bond.

Ten additional arrests were made as a result of the investigation. Trenton residents Nhuygel Green, 52; Gregory Peterson, 20; Philippe Dume, 28; Alfonso Clark, 35; Brian Jones, 46; Roderick McKinney, 39; and Timothy Williams, 27 were arrested and each charged with outstanding warrants. Geronimo, 27, was charged with three counts of marijuana distribution, one count of marijuana possession and an outstanding Trenton warrant. Shawn Hurley, 45, was charged with one count of possession of heroin.

Despite having been charged, every defendant is presumed innocent until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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