

Farmington man arrested in Troy drug bust

By GREG TAVARILE

Troy police arrested three men last week confiscating 3,500 pounds of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$3 million in what police called the largest drug bust in the history of the city.

Arraigned Saturday on charges of possession of a controlled substance (marijuana) with the intent to deliver, were: Thomas Mercurio, 22, of Detroit; Michael Butler, 29, of Farmington; and Gilbert Baker, 31, of Union Lake. Baker was also charged with possession of a firearm in the commission of a felony, which carries a mandatory two-year sentence.

Mercurio and Butler were released on \$10,000 personal surety bond, while Baker posted \$10,000 cash bond. Preliminary examinations for the three were set for Feb. 24 at 8:30 a.m. in Troy Municipal Court.

POLICE FOUND the marijuana in a house at 1187 Nicklaus, located off

Rochester just south of Square Lake across the street from the Silver Glen golf course.

Opl. Ewald Rollinger said the house was rented out by its owners, Paramount Homes of Michigan, to an tenant unknown to police at this time. When police locate the owner, Rollinger said there is a possibility that further arrests will be made.

According to Rollinger, the investigation began at 9:30 p.m. Thursday, when a suspicious person report was made to Troy police by a neighbor, who believed somebody was in the home which had only recently been built.

"Two officers, Ptl. Richard Bowers and Bradley Dalton, checked it out," Rollinger reported. "Mercurio responded to their knock on the door, and upon questioning, Mercurio did not give the officers what they felt were adequate responses to their questions relating to his presence in the home. Upon checking the residence they found the marijuana."

Rollinger said the marijuana, reported to be high grade Columbian gold, was in 74 forty-eight pound bags. He said Mercurio was arrested, and the house was put under surveillance by Troy, Madison Heights and Oakland County police.

Rollinger said "At 2 p.m. Friday, two men later identified as Baker and Butler showed up at the residence. For

some reason, probably because Mercurio wasn't home, they had a discussion outside the house and pulled a van that Butler was driving into the garage. A few minutes later Butler came out and was arrested with a quantity of marijuana in the van. About 30 minutes later, Baker left the house in a car and was arrested."

Rollinger said Baker had a 9 mm loaded handgun in his possession.

After the arrests were made, Rollinger said police took the marijuana to the Troy police station.

"I don't know where it came from," he said. "We can assume it came from a larger source, but we can assume almost anything right now. There is a possibility that there will be further arrests."

Rollinger refused to comment on whether the three men had a key to the house. The house was empty except for the marijuana and a few cans of food, Rollinger said.

Conviction of possession of a controlled substance with intent to deliver carries a four-year prison term and/or a \$2,000 fine.

Woman tells of fight against weather

By KATHLEEN MORAN

Trapped inside her car during the recent blizzard, Mary Lewis began a vigorous struggle for survival by freshening her lipstick and brushing her hair.

It was that spirited attitude and her Irish humor that carried Ms. Lewis through an ordeal in which she was held captive in her car for five hours. Then, in a mistake which could have

been fatal, she forced her way out of the car and started out, first walking and then crawling to find help.

Her story sounds like one set in the Yukon, but Ms. Lewis was en route from her home in Kingsville, Ont., to her job in Troy when she became involved in the frightening experience.

It's an ordeal which she is eager to put behind her, but she recounted it Friday in the hope that others will avoid her mistake.

"It won't happen to me again," she said. "But people should remember to stay with their car if they become snowbound. We're living in a modern day when snowmobilers will be out to help you as soon as the storm breaks."

Another woman snowbound in the same area as Ms. Lewis wasn't as fortunate. Her quest to find help ended when she froze to death alongside the road.

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