

**JAIL SEX ACCUSER BUSTED**

# Narc Squad, Sheriff, Patrol Deputies Make Drug Arrests

BY ERIC CARLSON

Drugs, crack pipes, firearms and a pickup truck were among the items seized during a series of arrests by the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department last week, according to Lt. David Crocker, head of the narcotics squad.

One of the suspects arrested was the 23-year-old Wilmington woman whose allegations about sexual activities in the Brunswick County jail led to the resignation of a veteran jailer last summer.

In another arrest, local drug officers were notified by Detective Sid Causey of the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department that a shipment of cocaine was expected to be transported into Brunswick County Thursday night. The information was received from a concerned citizen, Crocker said.

Brunswick narcotics officers Kevin Holden and Patti Hewett and others from New Hanover County followed a suspect vehicle for more than 400 miles to the Rockingham area and back. While there, the officers observed activity that led them to stop the 1987 Dodge Dakota pickup truck near the intersection of U.S. 76 and N.C. 87 near Maco, Crocker said.

The driver, Raymond Jackson Goodman, 42, of Rocky Point and passenger Michael Wayne Helton, 36, were both arrested on charges of possession with intent to sell and deliver cocaine. Jackson also was charged with maintaining a vehicle for the purpose of keeping a controlled substance.

Seized in addition to the truck was a package containing 22 grams of crack cocaine and a .30-06-caliber rifle with scope.

"We had officers from both counties along so an arrest could be made no matter which way they went," Crocker said. "It appears the cocaine was headed for Brunswick County."

The following morning, a town clerk at Navassa was called by a citizen reporting that a man and two women were trying to get inside a building at the town's baseball park. The clerk found the suspects in the field house and dialed 911, according to an incident report filed by Detective Steve Mason.

Deputies Mark Trull and Leslie Moore responded to the scene and arrested Samantha Ann Stevens, 23, of Wilmington on charges of felony cocaine possession, misdemeanor breaking or entering and possession of drug paraphernalia.

It was Stevens whose allegations of being raped in the Brunswick County Jail led to the resignation of Deputy Sergeant Thomas Gore last May. An investigation by the SBI indicated that there had been sexual activity in the jail between the two, but no evidence of rape.

Also arrested with Stevens at the Navassa ball field Friday was Marvin Edward Merrick, 44, of Main Street, Navassa, and Tammy Lynette Blue, 28, of Poe Street, Leland. Both are charged with misdemeanor breaking or entering.

The deputies confiscated four smoking pipes containing crack cocaine residue during the arrest.

"It appears that they broke in to get out of the cold and smoke some crack cocaine," Crocker said.

On Friday night, the narcotics squad along with several deputies and auxiliary officers set up a drug interdiction checkpoint on Cedar Grove Road. Crocker said the sheriff's department has received numerous citizen complaints about drug activity in the area.

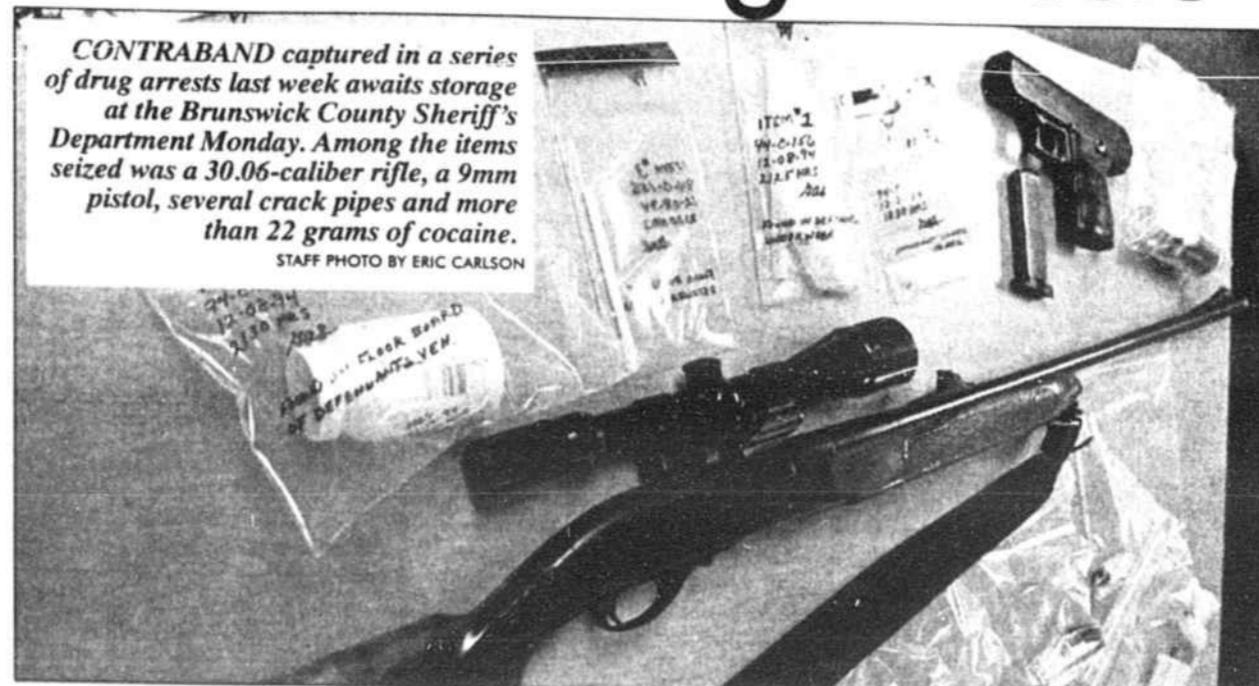
A car driven by Curtis Lee Epps, 31, of Route 3, Supply, was searched after the squad's drug sniffing dog "Colonel" alerted officers to possible contraband inside. During the search, Sheriff Ronald Hewett located a large "rock" of crack cocaine hidden in Epps' sock, Crocker said.

Epps was charged with one count of felony cocaine possession and jailed under a \$5,000 bond.

Also that night, detectives searched a car driven by Libby Jane Hill, 32, of Cedar Grove after a computer records check indicated that she was driving while her license was revoked. She was charged with that offense and with carrying a concealed weapon after officers

*CONTRABAND captured in a series of drug arrests last week awaits storage at the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department Monday. Among the items seized was a .30-06-caliber rifle, a 9mm pistol, several crack pipes and more than 22 grams of cocaine.*

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON



found a 9mm pistol hidden under a towel in the front seat, Crocker said.

The narcotics squad welcomes

tips from citizens who have information about illegal drug activity,

Crocker said. Drug officers can be reached directly at (910) 253-4797 or by calling (800) 672-6397. All calls will be kept confidential.

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1994—PAGE 3-A

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