

Judge: Drug evidence based on firefighter tip is valid

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TOMS RIVER BUREAU

TOMS RIVER — A judge ruled that a search warrant yielding drugs and a gun was valid even though defense attorneys argued otherwise in court.

Superior Court Judge James N. Citta denied a motion to suppress evidence -- 30 grams of cocaine -- found during a search warrant executed on Dec. 27 that resulted from a tip from a firefighter responding to a call on Amherst Road in South Toms River.

A firefighter with the Manitou Park Fire Company told police he saw evidence of drugs in the home while searching for the source of smoke from an electrical fire, said William J. Heisler, an executive assistant prosecutor for the county.

Assistant Fire Chief Joseph Jubert told South Toms River police Detective David Burke that a white powder was on a table inside the home and he saw small plastic bags.

Burke obtained a search warrant based on Jubert's information. As a result, police charged two people living at the residence, Vincent B. Shelton, 22, and Jedon M. Neal.