

## Shelby raid turns up 123 balloons of heroin; 3 face drug charges

Officials seized 123 balloons of heroin in a raid early this morning.

Anthony Lopez, 34; girlfriend Carlie Clark, 25; and roommate Jeremy Rank, 33, were charged with felony possession of heroin and drug paraphernalia and several related misdemeanor charges after authorities discovered heroin valued at \$3,000 inside their house at 68 Broadway St.

Because he's a convicted felon, Lopez also will face a weapons charge after a small caliber black handgun was recovered.

METRICH Commander Ken Coontz said more charges are pending.

All three were taken to Richland County Jail and will make their initial appearance in Shelby Municipal Court Judge Jon Schaefer's courtroom at 10 a.m.



Coontz said Lopez had been under investigation by Shelby police "for months" and has a criminal history that includes receiving stolen property.

"The information we've received lead us to believe he's bringing in large amounts of heroin, and our sources say he's been dealing for quite some time," Coontz said. He said he believed Lopez was dealing primarily from home.

After hours of briefings Wednesday night, Allied Special Operations Response Team, METRICH (the multi-county drug task force) and Shelby Police drove around 1:30 a.m. to 68 Broadway St., where Lopez said he's lived for eight years.

ASORT surrounded the home around and made sure the area was safe for METRICH detectives to enter. Lopez, Clark and Rank were immediately taken into custody.

Seated on a bucket in the living room, Clark cried as she watched detectives move from room to room, executing the search warrant signed by Mansfield Municipal Court Judge Jerry Ault.

"I'm a part of him, but I'm not a part of dealing and possessing," she said, choking on the words. A ring of tears began to moisten the top of her gray T-shirt. "Can I have a cigarette? I swear, I can smoke one with no hands."

After some initial questioning, Rank was lead into a Shelby cruiser. Using a halogen tool, a member of the Shelby Fire Department broke open a safe in the bedroom after Lopez refused to provide the combination.

Ninety-four balloons were inside.

An emergency squad was called after Lopez, a diabetic, complained of low blood sugar.

"Too much going on here. I feel funny," Lopez said, shaking his head. "I was laying in bed when (ASORT) broke my window. It scared me."

Detectives found a heroin needle, pills, heroin balloons and a plastic container full of heroin wrappers in Rank's room.

"If they get desperate enough, they'll lick them," Coontz said of the wrappers.

Lopez said Rank has only been living with the couple for the last two weeks. "I don't know what the heck he has up there," Lopez said.

"We've been providing METRICH with info for a while," Shelby Police Chief Charlie Roub said. "We've known this guy for a long time and dealt with him on a lot of drug issues."

The search was over about 4 a.m. All seized items were readied for the crime lab to be analyzed.

"Is this going to be in tomorrow's paper?" Lopez asked.

"She's a reporter?" Clark asked, tears falling more quickly. "Oh, great. My mom's going to be so proud of me."

**Originally published in the News Journal on August 18, 2011.**