

The Sunday Record

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

APRIL 20, 1986

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Artis held in Passaic coke ring

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John Artis, whose conviction — recently nullified — on murder charges catapulted him and Rubin "Hurricane" Carter to national attention, was among 12 persons arrested Friday in connection with a drug operation that police said supplied cocaine bought in Upper Manhattan to customers in Passaic County.

Artis, 40, was charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine, authorities said.

Police said they also found a stolen, fully loaded .45-caliber handgun in Artis's Paterson apartment. He is expected to be charged tomorrow with receiving stolen property, said Donald Campolo, chief assistant prosecutor in charge of the narcotics unit of the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office.

Artis's wife, Dorothy, was arrested and charged with possession of narcotics paraphernalia, possession of valium, and possession of a gun without a permit.

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Artis seized in cocaine ring

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In November, U.S. District Judge H. Lee Sarokin in effect overturned the December 1976 conviction of Carter and Artis in the 1966 killings of three persons in a Paterson bar.

He ruled that the prosecution's case was improperly tainted with racial prejudice and that the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office had misrepresented the results of a lie-detector test taken by a key state's witness.

Ruling appealed

The prosecutor has asked the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia to reverse Sarokin and reinstate the convictions of Carter and Artis. Sarokin, in granting a writ of habeas corpus, effectively nullified the convictions of both men and Artis's parole. Artis was released on parole in December 1981.

The 12 suspects from Friday's drug raid are being held at the Passaic County Jail, pending a hearing tomorrow in Superior Court in Paterson. Artis is being held without bail; bail for his wife was set at \$5,000. Authorities said she posted the bail and was released yesterday afternoon.

Artis was arrested about 6 p.m. in his 1985 Ford Thunderbird on Hamburg Turnpike near Berdan Avenue in Wayne as he was driving from his Paterson home to Wanaque, said Campolo of the prosecutor's office.

Police said they found in Artis's car a "trace" amount of cocaine and drug paraphernalia, including a straw and razor blades.

Mrs. Artis was arrested at the couple's apartment. Police said they searched the apartment and found drug paraphernalia and the gun, which was reported stolen late last year in Norfolk, Va., Campolo said.

Others charged

Also arrested on charges of conspiracy to distribute cocaine were Rosemarie Linda Hendricks, 39, of Wanaque; Christine McCaghey, 43, Christopher Caserta, 18, Charles Quintana, 20, and Michael Mully, 27, all of Wanaque; and Michael Tremonti, 35, of Hawthorne.

first assistant prosecutor, said the position of his office on parole would be known tomorrow.

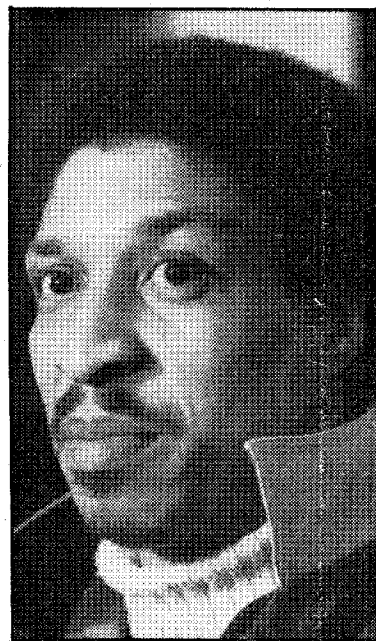
When Artis was released in December 1981, after 14 years in prison, he was placed on parole. That parole would be in force today were it not for Sarokin's ruling, said Lewis Steel, Artis's lawyer for the 1976 trial and subsequent appeals.

If the conviction were reinstated, Artis might be liable for a parole-violation charge as a result of Friday's drug charges, said James V. Stabile, a spokesman for the Department of Corrections.

Passaic County Sheriff Edwin Englehardt denied a reporter's request to interview Artis and his wife in jail, as did attorney William Perkins, who is representing the Artises in the drug case.

In January 1980, in a prison ceremony, Artis married Dorothy Williams, an employee of the state Division of Public Welfare in Paterson. They had met during the 1976 and corresponded after Artis had returned to prison.

Steel said that since Artis was paroled, he had been unable to



John Artis
Faces pistol charge

work steadily because of a circulatory disease picked up in prison. The lawyer said that Artis has had several fingers and toes amputated.

Charged with conspiracy to possess cocaine were Rick McGrady of Bloomingdale and Maureen Payne, 31, and Alphonso Payne, 30, both of Paterson.

Cathy Osborne, 22, of Wanaque was charged with conspiracy to distribute marijuana.

The arrests culminated a six-to-eight-week investigation conducted by the prosecutor's narcotics unit in cooperation with the Wanaque Police Department.

Police allege that since December, members of the drug ring made trips about twice a week to Upper Manhattan to purchase cocaine and "crack," a highly potent form of cocaine that is consumed by smoking.

The suspects allegedly transported the drugs to New Jersey and sold the substances to users and other dealers in Wayne, Bloomingdale, Hawthorne, and Paterson.

Campolo said there is evidence that Artis took part in both the purchase of the cocaine in Manhat-

tan and in making deliveries. Campolo said that Artis had a close relationship with Ms. Hendricks and Ms. McCaghey, whom he described as the leaders of the ring.

\$3,000 a week

Authorities believe that each week the suspects sold cocaine valued at \$3,000 to \$5,000 on the wholesale level and an unspecified amount of crack, Campolo said.

Rubin Carter, 48, was not involved in the drug ring, Campolo said.

Carter's lawyer, Myron Beldock, said that Carter was living in a secret location that had been given to the prosecutor's office.

"He will not make any statements until the case is entirely disposed of," Beldock said, referring to the 1966 murder charges.

Lawyers for Artis and the prosecutor's office said yesterday that the question of Artis's parole was legally murky. John Goceljak,