

# Warren jury still deliberating on drug trafficking trial

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**BELVIDERE** — A jury of 10 men and two women spent more than 7½ hours deliberating but was unable to agree on a verdict Wednesday in the trial of a Chicago man on drug charges.

Superior Court Judge John F. Kingfield sent the jurors home more than an hour past the customary court closing hour and directed them to return today to continue deliberating. The jury sent the judge a note during the afternoon, reporting that members were split on a verdict.

The defendant, Herman Arango, 42, is charged with unlawful possession of heroin and marijuana and possession of the drugs with intent to distribute them when stopped in Knowlton Township last Jan. 28.

Troopers from the New Jersey

State Police Interdiction Training Unit found a 17.6-ounce brick of 53 percent pure "black-tar" heroin and a 5½-ounce bag of marijuana in a concealed compartment between the back seat and trunk of the car Arango was driving on Interstate 80.

Because of the quantity and purity of the heroin, Arango faces a first-degree charge for its possession with intent to distribute.

Detective Frank Simonetta of the state police narcotics bureau said black-tar heroin sells for about \$225 per gram and estimated the quan-

tity found in the car to be worth about \$90,000. Ground up and cut down with lactose to a purity of 6 percent for street distribution, it could have sold for \$900,000, he said.

Simonetta said the marijuana would make about 440 cigarettes selling for \$880 to \$1,320.

The principal issue in the case is whether Arango knew the drugs were in the car.

A native of Colombia who said he has lived in the United States since 1969, Arango insisted he knew nothing about the hidden drugs.

He said he borrowed the car from a customer at the Chicago restaurant where he worked and was driving to Jackson Heights, N.Y., to visit his family.

"I'm not in any drug deal," he testified through an interpreter.

But John Laky, Warren County first assistant prosecutor, told the jury it was "not consistent with common sense" that anyone would lend Arango the car.

Defense attorney Leonard Artigliere belittled Laky's description of Arango as a high-level drug trafficker.