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Drug Bust
Word Count: 783

Two Nicholls State University students were arrested on campus Wednesday, Nov. 11 after a drug sniffing dog detected illegal narcotics during a traffic stop.

Lt. Jason Naquin, a K9 officer, was patrolling the in the area when he stopped Ryan Taylor Reech, 18, of Port Allen, La. and his passenger Dustin Paul Mantia, 21, of Port St. Lucie, Fla., after Reech disregarded a stop sign on the corner of Bowie Rd. and Ardoyne Dr. at approximately 9:00 p.m.

After stopping the two men, Lt. Naquin ordered Reech to exit the vehicle. Upon exiting his vehicle, Lt. Naquin noticed the smell of marijuana on Reech's breath and clothing. Lt. Naquin then issued Reech a ticket for running the stop sign. Because Lt. Naquin detected the odor of marijuana, he asked Reech if he could search his vehicle. According to Lt. Naquin, Reech refused a search of his vehicle.

Since Reech refused a search of his vehicle, Lt. Naquin then retrieved his K9 from his patrol car and conducted a sniff test on the vehicle. A search warrant, according to Lt. Naquin, is not needed in this case because K9s are certified and trained in detecting the smell of narcotics. Lt. Naquin explained if nothing is detected by the K9, then the officer does not have a right to a search.

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Once Lt. Naquin instructed his K9 to begin the sniff test on Reech's vehicle, the K9 quickly alerted Lt. Naquin of illegal narcotics. Inside of Reech's vehicle, Lt. Naquin discovered an assortment of illegal narcotics such as Vyvanse, Hydrocodone, and Amphetamines, as well as Smarties candy that the Thibodaux Police Department believes to have been laced with LSD. In addition, Lt. Naquin found \$1,466 and a locked safe inside Reech's vehicle.

Mantia was arrested for possession with intent to distribute Hydrocodone, possession with intent to distribute Vyvanse, possession of amphetamine, four counts of possession with intent to distribute Amphetamine, and possession with intent to distribute Ecstasy. After further investigations were complete, warrants were obtained to also charge Mantia with intent to distribute Ecstasy, and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Reech was arrested for possession of marijuana, possession of Vyvanse, and violation of a stop sign.

Both Mantia and Reech were transported to the Lafourche Parish Detention Center after the arrests. Reech was released on Thursday, Nov. 12 after posting a \$2,850 bond, and Mantia was released on Sunday, Nov. 15 after posting a \$22,500 bond.

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Police obtained a search warrant for the safe, and its contents were examined. A warrant was needed for the safe because it was locked and not easily accessible in Reech's vehicle. Inside the safe, police found 900 Ecstasy pills valued at \$18,000. Further information inside the safe allowed police to link the safe to Mantia. After the examination of the safe was complete, police issued a warrant for Mantia's arrest. Mantia was arrested again Tuesday, Nov. 17. He posted a \$52,500 bond and was released the same day.

While drug arrests happen every day, Lt. Naquin said this arrest is unique. He said, "Usually we find a joint or two, or maybe a baggie of narcotics in a car, but rarely do we find the amount of drugs that I found then."

Craig Jaccuzzo, Nicholls State University's Chief of Police, said both Reech and Mantia have been banned from campus. He also said Reech and Mantia will have to appear before the university's judicial affairs board before returning to school.

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Jaccuzzo said the most popular drug on campus is marijuana. Narcotics use on campus, such as marijuana, is a misdemeanor if caught, according to Jaccuzzo. While he said the Nicholls Police Department does not often catch offenders with mass quantities of marijuana or other illegal narcotics, they do typically catch offenders with quantities in which they consider “above human consumption.”

According to crime statistics kept by Nicholls Police Department Investigator Larry White, the number of arrests for pot usage is increasing each year. For instance, in 2009 the Nicholls Police Department only arrested four students for marijuana related offenses. Three years later, in 2012, the number of marijuana related arrests on campus increased 400 percent to 20 arrests. The number of arrests each year, according to Investigator White, are the second highest after simple burglary arrests.

“I can only see the number of marijuana arrests increasing each year. We need to stop the further spread of marijuana on our campus before it becomes an even bigger issue,” said Investigator White.

