

Cops raid Main Street bars

Arrests cap three-month investigation

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A sizable drug deal in Watsonville was thwarted and three bars on South Main Street were sealed off and searched last night, the end result of a three-month state Alcohol and Beverage Control undercover operation.

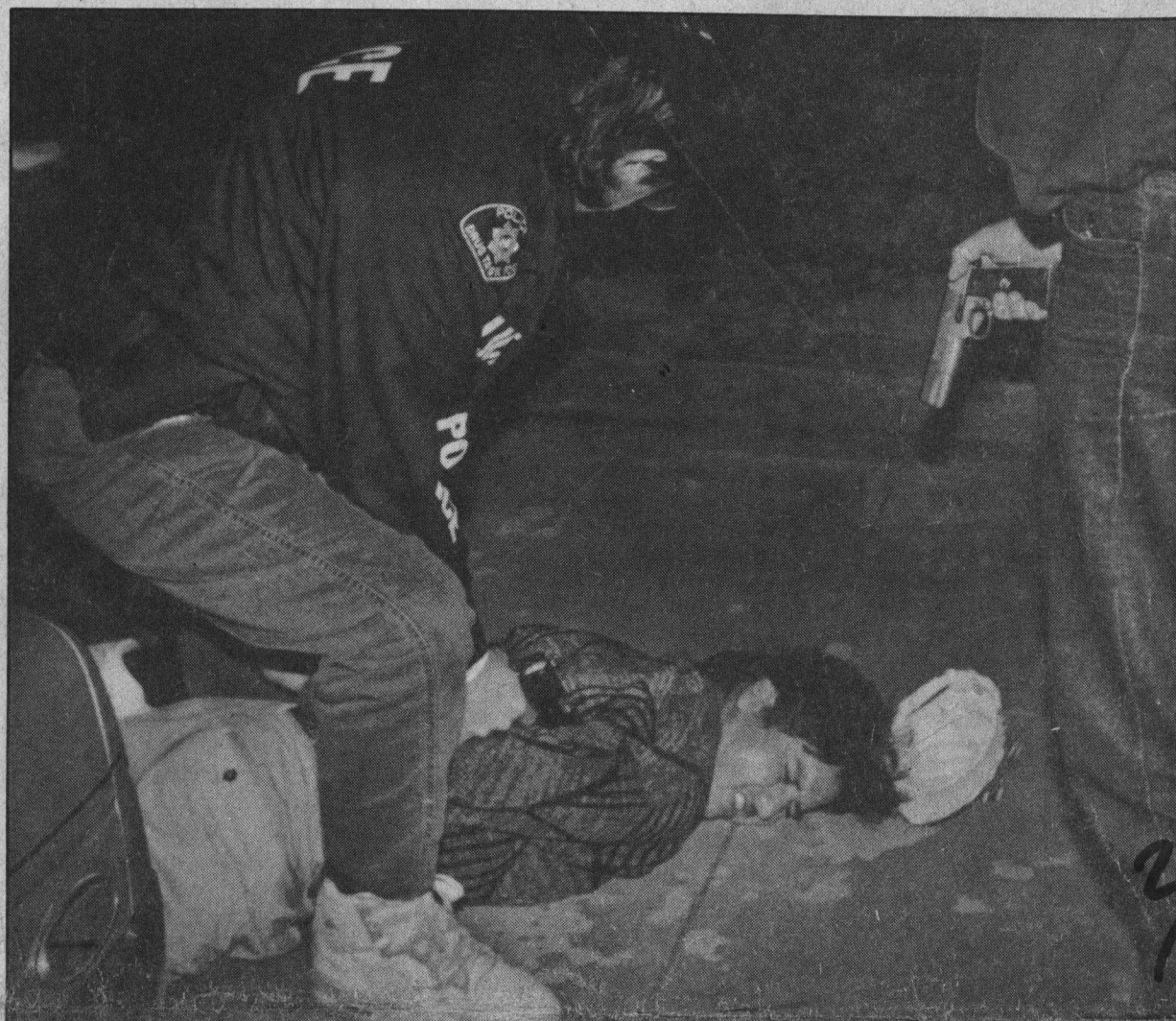
The ABC, assisted by the Santa Cruz County Narcotic Enforcement Team and the Watsonville Police Department, used several men and a woman undercover agent over the course of the investigation into La Frontera, Caesar's and La Poblana clubs. Thirty drug buys from 14 suspects were completed, the ABC said.

ABC supervising investigator Forrest Frazier said the ABC will have to assess last night's results before deciding whether to take action against the bars' owners and operators.

The ABC regulates businesses that have liquor licenses, and it can take actions ranging from warnings to revoking licenses. Frazier said the ABC will consider how much knowledge of the drug sales the bar owners had.

Officials said two men, Ted Sanchez and Frederico Licia, were arrested on felony charges of arranging to sell an undercover agent 4 ounces of cocaine, which has a street value of between \$9,000 and \$11,000.

The deal had originally involved 6 ounces at \$600 an ounce, but at



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Frederico Licia is arrested by undercover agents on Menker Street.

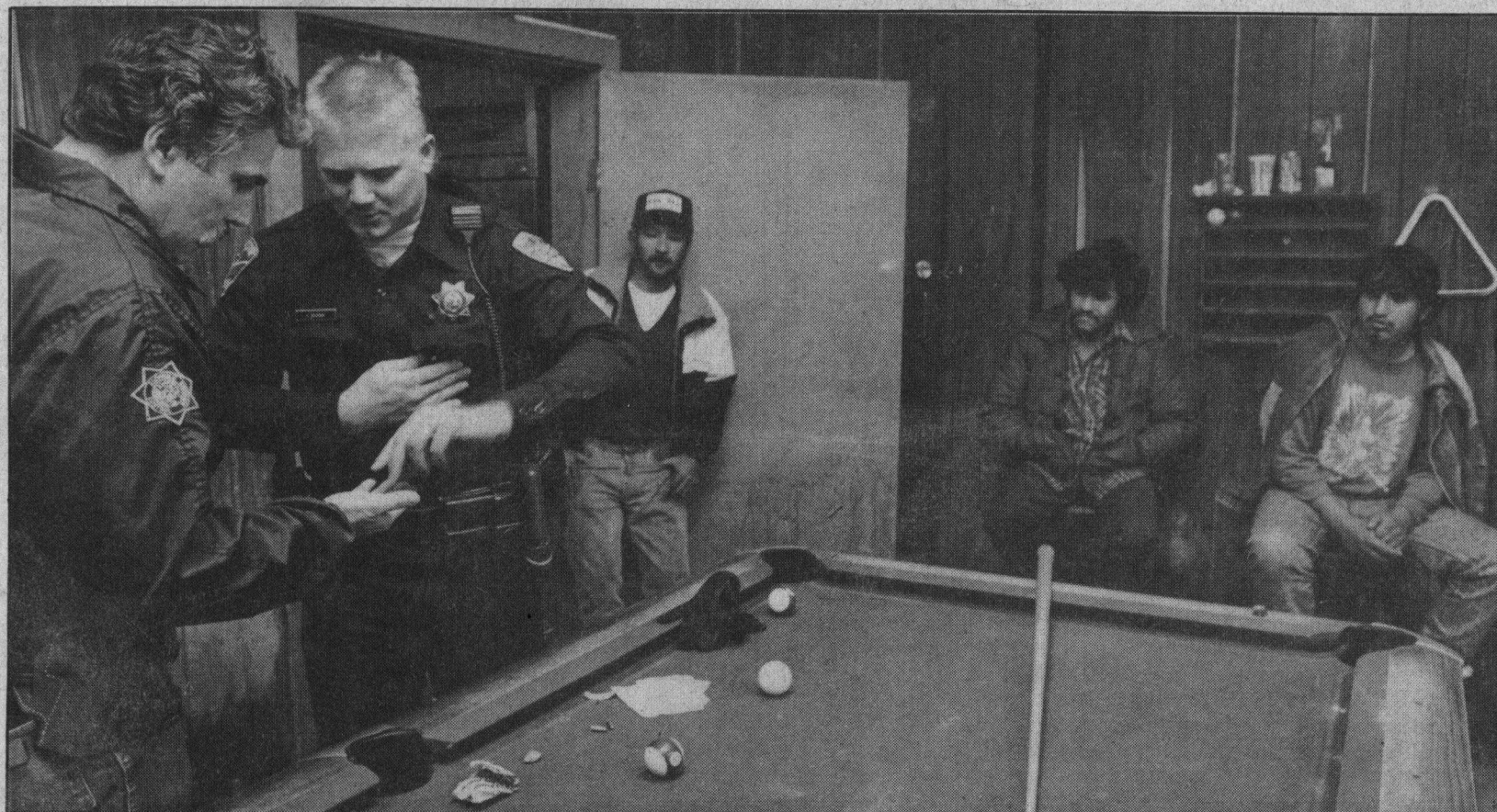
the last minute the suspects balked at supplying the whole amount, officials said.

The two were arrested about 7 p.m. on Menker Street in the industrial district, where the undercover agent drove them.

Sanchez was also arrested on other warrants for drug sales. The undercover agent who arranged the deal over a two-day period said it was sometimes hard to negotiate simply because Sanchez was so busy selling drugs.

Later, law enforcement officers regrouped and sealed off the bars about 8 p.m.. They asked everyone inside to stay seated and did not allow anyone to leave or enter for

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Officer Forrest Frazier, left, of state Alcohol and Beverage Control, and Officer Greg Ingham, of the WPD, collect cocaine and heroin found on and around the pool table at La Frontera Club.

erick killed the couple out of hate,

would appeal the verdict.

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about half an hour while they looked for suspects they had warrants for and searched for drugs on the floors, counters and tables.

Four more people were arrested in the clubs on warrants for selling cocaine or heroin to undercover agents during the last several months. The search also turned up heroin, cocaine and marijuana in La Frontera, some of it wadded in bottle caps or napkins and thrown on the floor.

About six more warrants for arrests from the operation are still pending.

For the most part, the search was quiet and uneventful, with some card games going on uninterrupted until officers began to search the card tables.

Several people in the clubs, however, said they were angered by the police search, which included a barking canine unit at the

back door of La Frontera and searches of a handful of patrons on the busy weekend night.

"You can buy drugs anywhere," said Salvador Torres, a card dealer at La Frontera. "There's something ridiculous about this. I'm very disappointed. This is police harassment."

A La Frontera patron, Rosa Ellis, said it was wrong for the police to seal the bar and search, and it made her angry.

"We were just drinking a beer, OK? All these (cops) coming in here and making a scene, it's just not right," Ellis said. "You have to have some respect."

The officers disagreed.

"We went in as easily and politely as we could and conducted our business," ABC's Frazier said. "There was no harassment."