

FRIDAY

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Traffic stop

Louisiana State Police find \$3.5 million inside luggage

By REBECCA CHAISSON
Daily News Staff Writer

Dean Bodendieck of Houston was pulled over by a Louisiana State Police trooper Wednesday evening, leading to the seizure \$3.5 million in cash — the largest seizure in state police history.

A trooper from the Louisiana State Police Motor Carrier Safety Section pulled over 35-year old Bodendieck to inquire about the “goose neck” trailer being towed behind his vehicle.

Bodendieck was traveling on Interstate 10 just west of Welsh that evening and was pulling the large trailer with his one-ton Dodge truck. The trooper pulled the vehicle over at 7:45 p.m. to question Bodendieck on whether the trailer was being used for commercial or personal purposes.

According to a press release from Louisiana State Police Troop D, the driver of the vehicle appeared to be extremely nervous, which eventually led to a further investigation and ended in a search of the vehicle.

The trooper then discovered \$3.5 million in vacuum-sealed wrappers and hidden inside seven different pieces of luggage.

Bodendieck was arrested for illegal use of United States currency after being unable to explain where the money came from or what it was being used for.

Bodendieck was booked into the Jeff Davis Parish jail on Thursday, where his bond was set at \$3 million.

According to Louisiana's forfeiture law, if the money is forfeited, the seizing agency, which is the state police, will receive 60 percent or \$2.1 million of the seizure pending the results of the investigation.

The Jeff Davis Parish District Attorney's Office and the Jeff Davis Criminal Court Fund will each receive 20 percent, or \$700,000, of the seizure if the money is forfeited as a result of the investigation and subsequent trial.