

NEWS

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Newark Bloods Members and Associates Arrested in
Morning Raids; Assault Rifles, Drugs Purchased by Cooperators

(More)

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NEWARK – Fifteen members and associates of the Bloods street gang were charged federally – 12 were rounded up in early morning arrests today – on drug-trafficking and weapons charges. Some of the defendants were trafficking in semi-automatic assault rifles and high-powered handguns and, in one case, a fully automatic machine gun, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie, Essex County Prosecutor Paula A. Dow, the heads of federal law enforcement agencies and the Newark Police and Sheriff’s Department announced.

The charges and arrests were the result of a year-long investigation using three cooperating witnesses to make more than 20 purchases of crack cocaine, heroin and firearms from members and associates of the Nine Tre Bloods set in Newark.

The investigation and arrests are the work of the Essex-Federal Gang Suppression Partnership, formed in early 2006 by Dow and Christie to combine federal, state and local law enforcement resources and federal statutes with their enhanced penalties to target street gangs in Essex County.

One of the federally charged defendants was arrested last evening; 12 were picked up this morning, and another two are still being sought. The Essex County Prosecutor’s Office will be prosecuting at least three others on state charges.

The federally charged defendants in custody were all expected to make initial appearances at 2 p.m. before U.S. Magistrate Judge Madeline Cox Arleo.

Over the course of the investigation, at least 14 firearms, including handguns, assault rifles (including the machine gun) and one shotgun, were sold to the cooperating witnesses, as well as approximately 560 grams of crack cocaine and a smaller amount of heroin.

In one instance, for example, defendant Omar Curry, a high-ranking member or “5-star general” of the Nine Tre Bloods, arranged the sale of an SKS Chinese-made semi-automatic assault rifle to a cooperating witness for \$1,200, according to one criminal Complaint. Curry also sold several other firearms and directed numerous sales of crack and heroin, according to the Complaint. Because of the number of weapons he sold, Curry is also charged with trafficking in firearms.

In another transaction, on June 7, Eric Hayes allegedly sold a fully automatic AK-47 assault rifle with an ammunition magazine with 21 rounds to one of the cooperating witnesses. Hayes also sold a Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun and a semi-automatic assault rifle to the cooperating witness.

Another defendant, Harry Quiah allegedly sold three firearms including a defaced .45

caliber handgun, an SKS assault rifle and .40-caliber Glock handgun, along with 99 grams of crack to cooperating witnesses.

Many of the defendants, including Omar, Hayes and Quiah, have prior felony convictions in state or federal court and, as such, are charged federally with being felons in possession of firearms, as well as other charges. Convictions under that statute alone carry a maximum federal prison sentence of 10 years. See the addendum below for a list of the defendants and a summary of their alleged activities and the charges against them.

The felon in possession charges have the added benefit of taking dangerous defendants off the street immediately. Prior convicted felons caught in possession of weapons are almost always denied bail and held pending disposition of their cases.

The investigation centered primarily around activity in and around two public housing complexes in Newark, the Fairview Homes and Steven Crane Village. Curry and others charged today, including Hayes, lived in those apartments. Meetings and sales often took place in the suspects' apartments or were directed from the apartments.

“Gang members have turned Newark neighborhoods into killing zones,” said Christie. “Imagine the carnage that a Bloods gang member could inflict with a fully automatic machine gun. This is what we are all up against and what we want to stop. We intend to arrest, prosecute and put these and other gang members and associates in federal prison for as long as we possibly can.”

“We in law enforcement view these violent street gangs as domestic terrorists – domestic terrorists who wreak havoc in our neighborhoods by instilling fear in ordinary citizens,” said Dow. “Today, simply put, we ganged up on a gang. Our message to gang members is this: We’re watching you intently, we’ll arrest you unexpectedly, and most of all – we’ll prosecute you extensively.”

“This successful investigation is evidence that working as a cohesive unit targeting this group we have been able to draw first blood against the Bloods,” said William G. McMahon, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, New York Field Office, said. “This is just the first step in reclaiming our neighborhoods so that our children can enjoy their freedom without fear of injury. The 14 guns purchased during ATF undercover operations are guns now in the hands of cops and not criminals and they will never be used again to cause harm.”

“We have applied federal resources to the pressure point of drug violence in Newark, and it will help stem the flow of blood on our streets,” said Gerard P. McAleer, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New Jersey Division.

Christie wished to thank and credit member agencies of the Essex-Federal Gang Suppression Partnership, their Special Agents, officers and detectives: the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Paula A. Dow; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William G. McMahon; the Drug Enforcement Administration, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Gerard P. McAleer; the Newark Police Department, under the direction of Director Garry McCarthy; the U.S. Marshal's Service in Newark, under the direction of Marshal James Plousis; the FBI, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Pedro Ruiz, the Essex County Sheriff's Department, under the direction of Sheriff Armando Fontoura, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Special Agent in Charge Kyle Hutchins.

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Following are the defendants with a summary of the allegations and charges against them:

1. **Omar Curry**, a.k.a. "Omar Treadwell," 30, of 92 17th Avenue, Apt. C, Newark, arrested today, charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute more than 50 grams of crack cocaine; and interstate trafficking of firearms. The Criminal Complaint alleges that Omar Curry sold approximately 150 grams of crack cocaine, a 7.62 caliber semi-automatic assault rifle, a .340 magnum rifle, a .357 caliber handgun, and two .45 caliber semi-automatic handguns, along with corresponding ammunition.
2. **STILL BEING SOUGHT: Michael Stradford**, a.k.a. "Muff," 33, of 390 Hunterdon Street, Apt. A, Newark, arrested today and charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute over 5 grams of crack cocaine. The criminal Complaint alleges that Michael Stradford sold over 150 grams of crack cocaine.
3. **Eric Hayes**, a.k.a. "Frank White," 34, of 96 4th Street, Apt. 1, Newark, arrested today and charged with multiple counts of firearms possession. The criminal Complaint alleges that Hayes possessed and sold an AK-47 fully-automatic assault rifle, a 12-gauge shotgun, and a 7.62-caliber semi-automatic assault rifle, along with ammunition.
4. **Shakir Lovestorm**, a.k.a. "Ma Sharad," 43, of 33 North Hawthorne Lane, Newark, arrested today and charged with multiple counts of possession of firearms. The Criminal Complaint alleges that Shakir Lovestorm possessed and sold a .223 caliber assault rifle, a 7.62 caliber assault rifle, and a 9mm semi-automatic pistol, with ammunition.
5. **Jesus Hernandez**, a.k.a. "Jay," 36, of 41 North Hawthorne Lane, Newark, arrested

today and charged with firearms possession. The Criminal Complaint alleges that Jesus Hernandez possessed and sold a 9mm semi-automatic pistol and ammunition.

6. **Harry Quiah**, 23, of 19 Lincoln Park, Newark, arrested today and charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute over 100 grams of crack cocaine; and multiple counts of firearms possession. The Criminal Complaint alleges that Harry Quiah possessed and sold a 7.62 caliber assault rifle, a .40 caliber semi-automatic pistol, and a .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol, along with ammunition. The Complaint also alleges that Harry Quiah sold approximately 99 grams of crack cocaine.

7. **Shaheed Curry**, a.k.a. "Tuna," 24, of 53 Ogden Street, Newark, arrested today and charged with multiple counts of firearms possession. The Criminal Complaint alleges that Shaheed Curry possessed and sold a 7.62 caliber assault rifle and a .40 caliber semi-automatic pistol, along with ammunition.

8. **David McCleave**, a.k.a. "Boochie," 37, of 70 North 7th Street, Newark, arrested today and charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute a quantity of heroin. David McCleave is believed to be the leader of a heroin distribution house.

9. **STILL BEING SOUGHT: Darin Richardson**, a.k.a. "Check," 35, of 555 Mount Prospect Avenue, Apt. 10H, Newark, arrested today and charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute a quantity of heroin and conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute over 5 grams of crack cocaine. The Criminal Complaint alleges that Darin Richardson sold over 20 grams of heroin and conspired to sell over 60 grams of crack cocaine.

10. **John Curry**, a.k.a. "Poppy," 31, of 81 Lincoln Park, Apt. 3C, Newark, arrested today and charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute a quantity of heroin and conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute over 5 grams of crack cocaine. The Criminal Complaint alleges that John Curry sold approximately 20 grams of heroin and conspired to sell over 60 grams of crack cocaine.

11. **Quazine Robinson**, a.k.a. "Coz," 28, of 825 S. 10th Street, Apt. 4D, Newark, arrested today and charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute over 5 grams of crack cocaine. The Criminal Complaint alleges that Quazine Robinson conspired to sell over 60 grams of crack cocaine.

12. **Doug Bateman**, 21, of 114 4th Avenue, Newark, arrested today and charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute a quantity of crack cocaine and possession of a firearm. The Criminal Complaint alleges that Doug Bateman sold over 50 grams of crack cocaine and that he possessed and sold a .380 caliber semi-

automatic pistol.

13. **William Garcia**, a.k.a. “Papo,” 52, of 482 Summer Ave, Newark, arrested today and charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute a quantity of crack cocaine. The Criminal Complaint alleges that William Garcia sold over 50 grams of crack cocaine.

14. **Rahzan Campbell**, a.k.a. “Rah,” 25, of 84 17th Avenue, Apt. D, Newark, arrested today and charged with firearms possession. The Criminal Complaint alleges that Rahzan Campbell possessed and sold a .340 magnum rifle and a .45 caliber semi-automatic handgun.

15. **Tarik Major**, a.k.a. “Reek,” 33, of 94 17th Ave, Apt. B, Newark, arrested today and charged with firearms possession. The Criminal Complaint alleges that Tarik Major possessed and sold a .357 caliber handgun along with ammunition.

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