

POLICE STOP BANDITS WHO POSED AS OFFICERS INVADERS STORMED DOPE HOUSES, TOOK CASH

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Federal prosecutors said they've shut down a Detroit gang that masqueraded as **police** to rape and pillage fellow drug dealers.

"This particular gang has been put out of business," U.S. Attorney Saul Green announced at a news conference Wednesday, hours after law enforcement **officers** arrested 11 members of the Home Invaders gang.

Green said the arrests happened after a federal grand jury on Tuesday indicted 22 members of the gang on charges of racketeering, conspiracy to distribute cocaine, using a firearm in commission of a felony and violent crimes in aid of racketeering activity.

Indicted Tuesday were: Christopher Allen Jr., Michael K. Avery, Marcus U. Baldwin, Willie Barginere, Edward J. Bell, Perry Boddy Jr., Steve J. Brooks, Chatyn L. Byrd, Kenneth Carr, Derrick Funderberg, Michael K. Hamilton, Tyree Jones, Samuel Livingston Jr., Aijalon W. McLittle II, Crystal Phifer, Mario Powell, Dwayne O. Smith, Yon Clameche Snyder, Eddie Turner Jr., Michael T. Willis, Eric F. Wilson and Andre C. Woods.

Green said seven of the 22 already were in custody because of earlier arrests in the case. Four suspects were still at large: Byrd, Smith, Willis and Wilson.

Green said the gang raided dozens of dope houses, taking cash, drugs and weapons, between May 1993 and November 1994. He said the gang members, wearing bulletproof vests and carrying assault rifles, would smash down doors and yell "**Police !**" as if on a drug raid. They dubbed the assaults licks.

"The goal . . . was to frighten, confuse and terrify the occupants at the time of entry so as to render them incapable of resistance," Green said. "The occupants were confined at gunpoint and sometimes . . . beaten. Occasionally, one or more of the perpetrators would shoot the occupants and rape women found in the home."

Green said the group committed 37 armed robberies and attempted armed robberies, two attempted murders, three serious assaults and several rapes. It was not immediately known how much money, valuables and drugs the gang seized in the incidents. Occasionally, the gang crashed into the homes of ordinary citizens.

Detroit **police** arrested several members of the gang in a November 1994 shoot-out after gang members looted the home of a woman on the near west side. The gang's leader, Obie Carter III, was killed and another gang member seriously wounded in the shoot-out. **Police** had staked out the area believing the gang was about to strike.

Police arrested 15 people in the incident, but released most of them pending further investigation.

Then a Safe Streets-Violent Crimes Task Force was created to continue the investigation started by the Detroit **police**. In addition to Detroit **police**, the task force consists of investigators from the State **Police**, the FBI, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and the IRS. State, local and federal departments from Lansing, Southfield and Ohio assisted in the investigation and in Wednesday's arrests.

Green said the Invaders planned assaults with a surveillance team.

"When a target location was selected a group of co-conspirators, varying in number, would be summoned via telephone pagers to plan and carry out the invasions," Green said. "The number of perpetrators would vary depending upon the anticipated risk involved in a particular robbery."

Green said gang members were armed with AK47s and MAC 10 assault rifles.

"After the robberies, the group would reassemble to distribute the proceeds," Green said.

He said Carter planned most of the robberies and picked the targets, often with the help of his girlfriend, Crystal Phifer. Phifer would research potential victims, some in Lansing, believed to be hoarding cash or drugs in their homes, Green said.

"Cash was usually distributed . . . firearms were retained for future robberies, jewelry was pawned or given to girlfriends as gifts," Green said, and the gang used or sold the drugs it seized.

After the November 1994 shootout, Detroit **Police** Chief Isaiah McKinnon and Mayor Dennis Archer asked for the federal government's help. Archer and McKinnon were concerned about the group's violent activities and firepower.

McKinnon said the meeting resulted in creation of the task force that conducted Wednesday's arrests.

"All the agencies got together and decided on specific locations," McKinnon said at the news conference. "We knew several individuals had the potential for violence. Fortunately, it was not met with violence today."

Anyone with information is asked to call Detroit **police** at 1-313-596-2300 or the FBI at 1-313-965-2323 anytime.

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