



Report Information from ProQuest

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FBI Smashes L.A. Drug Ring Linked to Medellin Cartel Crime: Six people are charged and three arrested. The case shows growing ties between local street gangs and major Colombian dealers.

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Abstract (Abstract): [Stacey Harper] and [Ernest Bronson] were affiliated with the "Muslim Crips" street gang, according to an affidavit prepared by FBI Agent Constance J. Beachem. Neither the FBI nor the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, which also worked on the investigation, could provide any details on the group. An affidavit filed by Beachem said FBI agents and Internal Revenue Service agents learned that from May, 1989, to December, 1991, Harper, Bronson and other members of the ring received and transmitted large sums of cash via Western Union. The affidavit said the funds are believed to be the proceeds of cocaine sales. Harper, also known as "Ace" and "Shahid Muwwakil," and Bronson, also known as "Hasaan Ali Simon," have been indicted in Alaska on charges that they conspired to distribute cocaine in Anchorage. The Alaska indictment states that Harper, Bronson and others weighed out and packaged 750 grams of cocaine for shipment to Alaska on Aug. 16, 1990.

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Full text: The FBI announced Wednesday that it had cracked a Los Angeles drug network, with ties to the Medellin cartel, that distributed 50 tons of cocaine and made \$30 million in profit during the last decade. The Justice Department has charged six people in Los Angeles and Anchorage, including three here on Wednesday. Three ringleaders have been arrested, but three remained fugitives, FBI spokeswoman Karen Gardner said.

On Wednesday, residences in Lake View Terrace, Panorama City, Walnut and Los Angeles were searched and business records were seized, according to FBI officials.

Charlie Parsons, special agent in charge of the Los Angeles FBI office, said the cocaine originated in Colombia, was transported to Mexico and then brought to Los Angeles by car. From there, it was distributed to Anchorage, Dallas, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston and Seattle.

The case demonstrates a clear link between Los Angeles gangs and Colombian drug dealers, according to the FBI, which has described similar connections in other cases.

"This investigation revealed that many Los Angeles street gangs now have established direct connections to major Colombian smugglers, thus ensuring a continuous supply of top-quality cocaine," Parsons said.

FBI Agent Robert L. Jones, who supervised the two-year investigation, said the Colombian cartels were selling drugs to upper-level street gang dealers in Los Angeles on a consignment basis, indicating "a growing level of trust" between the cartels and the gangs.

Two alleged members of the ring-including one of its leaders, Stacey Harper, 33, of Walnut-were arrested in Anchorage last month and another suspected operative was arrested here Wednesday. Three other alleged members of the ring remain at large, including Ernest Bronson, 27, of Los Angeles, who authorities described as its co-director.

Harper and Bronson were affiliated with the "Muslim Crips" street gang, according to an affidavit prepared by FBI Agent Constance J. Beachem. Neither the FBI nor the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, which also worked on the investigation, could provide any details on the group.

However, Parsons said the principal distributors of the crack cocaine were members of the street gang or their associates. He said the gang members "converted cocaine powder to the highly addictive cocaine base form, commonly referred to as crack."

The investigation began in August, 1989, and is continuing, Assistant U.S. Atty. Alan G. Dahle said. FBI spokeswoman Gardner said figures on the ring's profits were derived "from a full range of our investigative techniques. We've tracked assets, reviewed bank records and obtained information from sources." FBI agent Jones said the group sold about 400 kilograms of crack cocaine a month, some of which was purchased by undercover agents.

Few documents were released Wednesday.

However, an affidavit filed by Beachem said FBI agents and Internal Revenue Service agents learned that from May, 1989, to December, 1991, Harper, Bronson and other members of the ring received and transmitted large sums of cash via Western Union. The affidavit said the funds are believed to be the proceeds of cocaine sales. Beachem's affidavit also states that telephone company records showed that a phone at Harper's residence in Walnut was used to call a pager number in Anchorage 33 times during December, 1991.

According to the affidavit, undercover FBI Agent James B. Snow met with Harper, Duncan W. Haylock and another member of the ring on June 4, 1990, at a Southwest Los Angeles apartment to buy 250 grams of crack for \$9,000.

Four months later, Haylock provided a kilogram of crack to another member of the ring, at the same apartment, according to Beachem's affidavit. Haylock, 45, was arrested Wednesday on charges stemming from those incidents, according to the FBI.

Harper, also known as "Ace" and "Shahid Muwwakil," and Bronson, also known as "Hasaan Ali Simon," have been indicted in Alaska on charges that they conspired to distribute cocaine in Anchorage. The Alaska indictment states that Harper, Bronson and others weighed out and packaged 750 grams of cocaine for shipment to Alaska on Aug. 16, 1990.

Also charged are Thomas Anthony Johnson, 25, of Los Angeles, Deanna Thedford, 25, of Lake View Terrace, Blanca Liria Mosquera, 45, of Panorama City, and her husband, Orlando Gutierrez Ramos, who is in state prison. Authorities said they were looking for Johnson and Mosquera as well as Bronson.

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