

NEWS RELEASE



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Luis A. Valentin, Prosecutor

MATAWAN MAN AND 20 OTHERS ARRESTED; APPROXIMATELY 100 "BRICKS" OF HEROIN, ONE HANDGUN AND ALMOST \$300,000 CASH SEIZED

On November 16 and 17, 2009, Detectives from the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office, the Old Bridge Police Department, the Sayreville Police Department, the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office and the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office arrested Dectric Rawls, a/k/a "Low," 29, of Matawan, NJ, and twenty of his associates, on criminal complaints charging them with numerous crimes relating to heroin distribution activities. Members of the Aberdeen Township, Atlantic Highlands, Hazlet Township, Highlands, Holmdel Township, Keansburg, Keyport, Matawan, Middletown Township and Union Beach Police Departments provided officers who worked as members of the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office which specifically targeted narcotics activity in those towns which are collectively known as the Bayshore area of Monmouth County. The Ocean County Prosecutor's Office and Lakewood Police Department assisted with the arrests.

The arrests followed a comprehensive investigation which was commenced by the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office after law enforcement authorities received information indicating that Dectric Rawls was responsible for distributing significant amounts of heroin in the Bayshore area of Monmouth County. During the investigation, Dectric Rawls used his associates, including Jessica Henderson and Jacquelin Wiedemeyer, to sell heroin to undercover detectives on various dates. The investigation revealed that Dectric Rawls sold approximately 100 bricks of heroin, with a street value of approximately \$25,000, each week. A "brick" of heroin typically contains 50 glassine bags of heroin.

On November 16, 2009, law enforcement officers executed a search of Dectric Rawls' residence on Fredwood Place in Matawan. The search resulted in the seizure of approximately 63 bricks of heroin, a Lorcin .380 caliber semi-automatic handgun and \$28,766. The "bricks" of heroin have a weight of approximately three ounces and a street value of approximately \$15,000. A 2001 GMC Yukon belonging to Dectric Rawls, which he utilized during his drug distribution activities, was also seized.

The search of Dectric Rawls' residence led detectives to a storage facility in Morganville, New Jersey. Later the same day, detectives conducted a search of a storage unit at that facility

which was rented by Dectric Rawls. A safe located inside the storage unit contained an additional \$258,491.

Rawls was arrested and charged with the first degree crime of being a Leader of a Narcotics Trafficking Network, and the third degree crimes of Distribution of a Controlled Dangerous Substance, Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Dangerous Substance, Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance, Financial Facilitation of Criminal Activity and Conspiracy to Commit the foregoing Offenses. As a result of the search of his residence, additional second degree charges of Certain Persons not to Possess Weapons, Possession of a Weapon During the Course of a Controlled Dangerous Substance Offense and Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute were filed against Rawls. The Honorable Lawrence M. Lawson, A.J.S.C., set bail on the charges at \$1,250,000 cash only. Additionally, a bail source hearing is required prior to the posting of any bail. Rawls is being held in the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of bail.

Amanda Strohkirch was inside Rawls' residence when officers conducted the search of that location. Strohkirch was taken into custody on third degree charges of Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance, Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute and Conspiracy to Distribute a Controlled Dangerous Substance. The Honorable Thomas F. Scully, P.J.S.C., set bail for these offenses at \$50,000 with no ten percent option. As a result of the searches, Strohkirch was additionally charged with the second degree offenses of Possession of a Weapon During the Course of a Controlled Dangerous Substance Offense and Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance With Intent to Distribute. The Honorable Lawrence M. Lawson, A.J.S.C., set bail on the additional charges at \$150,000 cash only. Additionally, a bail source hearing is required prior to the posting of any bail. Strohkirch is being held in the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of bail. A 2001 Chrysler 300 belonging to Amanda Strohkirch, which she utilized during her drug distribution activities on behalf of Rawls, was also seized.

In furtherance of the investigation, a search was conducted of Daryel Rawls' residence on Albert Avenue in Lakewood, New Jersey. Daryel Rawls is Dectric Rawls' brother. As a result of that search, 37 bricks of heroin and \$5,300 in cash were recovered. Daryel Rawls was charged with the second degree crime of Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute and the third degree crime of Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance. Bail for Daryel Rawls was set at \$25,000 with no ten percent option by Municipal Court Judge Scott J. Basen. Daryel Rawls remains in the Ocean County Jail in lieu of bail.

On November 16 and 17, 2009, law enforcement officers affected arrests of 17 additional members of Dectric Rawls' heroin distribution network. The following individuals were arrested and charged with the third degree crimes of Possession with Intent to Distribute a Controlled Dangerous Substance, Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance and Conspiracy to Distribute a Controlled Dangerous Substance and had their bail set at \$25,000 with no 10 percent option by the Honorable Lawrence M. Lawson, A.J.S.C., or the Honorable Thomas F. Scully, P.J.S.C., as indicated:

Brandon Vashey, 20, of Krueger Place, Middletown, NJ (Hon. Thomas F. Scully)
Jessica Henderson, 19, of Oregon Avenue, Middletown, NJ (Hon. Thomas F. Scully)
Joseph Plaia, 52, of Willow Street, Highlands, NJ (Hon. Thomas F. Scully)

Joseph Dube, 25, of Brookside Avenue, Cliffwood Beach, NJ (Hon. Thomas F. Scully)
John Puglisi, Jr., 31, of Forest Avenue, Keansburg, NJ (Hon. Thomas F. Scully)
Kevin Craven, 24, of Sealey Avenue, Keansburg, NJ (Hon. Lawrence M. Lawson)
Russell K. Dunn, 22, of Highland Avenue, Leonardo, NJ (Hon. Lawrence M. Lawson)

The following individuals were arrested and charged with Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance and Conspiracy to Possess a Controlled Dangerous Substance and had their bail set at \$25,000 with no 10 percent option by the Honorable Lawrence M. Lawson, A.J.S.C.:

Dawn M. Pastor, 37, of Beachway Avenue, Keansburg, NJ
Shara Coppola, 22, of Forest Avenue, Keansburg, NJ
Peter J. Slover, 27, of 6th Street, Union Beach, NJ
Christine Jenkins, 24, of Highland Avenue, Hazlet, NJ
John W. Maynard, 28, of Oceanport Avenue, Little Silver, NJ
Andrea J. Ray, 24, of Bristol Road, Holmdel, NJ
Anthony Galluccio, 19, of Clark Place, Middletown, NJ
Casey Vota, 22, of Olivia Place, Matawan, NJ
Robin Ruff, 24, of Fleetwood Drive, Hazlet, NJ

Jacquelin Wiedemeyer, 19, of Leonardville Road, Belford, NJ, was charged with two counts each of the third degree crimes Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance, Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute and Distribution of a Controlled Dangerous Substance, for selling heroin to an undercover detective on behalf of Detric Rawls on two separate occasions. The Honorable Lawrence M. Lawson, A.J.S.C., set her bail at \$100,000 with no ten percent option.

While the investigation was still in progress on October 8, 2009, Joel Benitez, 25 of Freehold, purchased three bricks of heroin from Rawls. Police immediately arrested him and after a brief struggle he was placed in custody. The heroin was recovered, and Benitez was charged with the second degree crimes of Attempting to Disarm a Law Enforcement Officer and Aggravated Assault on a Police Officer. Benitez was also charged with the third degree crimes of Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance, Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute and Resisting Arrest. Benitez remains incarcerated at the Monmouth County Correctional Institution in lieu of \$220,000 bail with no ten percent option set by Municipal Court Judge Scott J. Basen.

If convicted, a third degree crime carries with it a maximum potential custodial term of up to 5 years in State Prison, a second degree crime carries with it a maximum potential custodial term of up to 10 years in State Prison, and a first degree crime carries with it a maximum potential custodial term of up to 20 years in State Prison.

Notwithstanding these arrests, the investigation into the criminal activities of Detric Rawls and his associates is continuing. Members of the public possessing information regarding any criminal activity on the part of the Rawls or any of his associates are encouraged to contact Captain Brian Rubino of the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office at 1-800/848-0668. Photographs of the members of this heroin distribution network are attached to this News

Release in order to assist members of the public in ascertaining whether they possess relevant information.

Monmouth County Prosecutor Luis A. Valentin said the following: “Heroin, its distribution and use are a plague on our community. The narcotics crimes themselves not only affect the people involved but the ripple effects of its use and what those who are addicted to it will do in order to get it are felt by us all.”

The Prosecutor also noted that “this investigation and its successful resolution would not have been possible without our law enforcement partners in Middlesex, Ocean and Monmouth Counties.” The Prosecutor singled out for special praise, the local police departments and their Chiefs located in the Bayshore area of Monmouth County for supplying the personnel necessary to combat this heroin distribution ring and for bringing their special knowledge of the area to the investigative team.

Despite these charges, every defendant is presumed innocent, unless and until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, following a trial at which the defendant has all of the trial rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and State law.

The case is assigned to Assistant Monmouth County Prosecutor Christopher Matthews.

Released: November 18, 2009