

' THE ENEMY WAS HEROIN '

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Author: BRIAN FLANIGAN and TIM BELKNAP Free Press Staff Writers

Tuesday's raids of more than 40 different Detroit-area locations -- part of federal indictments against **the** alleged \$7.5 million-a-week **heroin** operation of Young Boys Inc. -- were conducted like a major military operation, according to federal and local law enforcement officials.

"Only in this instance **the enemy was heroin** traffickers," said Robert DeFauw, special agent in charge of **the** Detroit office of **the** federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

Despite **the** success of **the** raids -- 19 of **the** 41 people named in **the** indictments had been arraigned in U.S. District Court by Wednesday afternoon -- law enforcement officials are cautious when discussing what long-term effect **the** indictments will have on Detroit's **heroin** trafficking.

"(Young Boys) will be starved (for bulk **heroin** purchases)," DeFauw said Wednesday. "As to whether or not that holds . . . remains to be seen."

DeFauw's counterpart, Detroit police Inspector Raymond Murray of **the** Narcotics Section, said it will be "three or four months" before **the** full effect of **the** indictments and raids can be properly gauged. "Anyone can say it's got to have an effect . . . but as long as they grow poppies, we're going to have a **heroin** problem in Detroit. And poppies aren't grown in Michigan."

THE RAIDS against Young Boys, a drug ring which uses juveniles for most of its street sales, had been in **the** works for weeks, according to DeFauw and Murray.

It began with round- **the** -clock surveillance of most of **the** 41 people named in **the** indictments. "We were charting their habits, their haunts . . . where they spent their time and with whom," said DeFauw. "We were convinced we could pull **the** whole thing off without a hitch . . . and I mean injuries to officers, agents or those we were going to arrest . . . if we knew everything there **was** to know about each one of them."

Using one of **the** primary surveillance tools -- a set of high- powered binoculars -- DEA teams and police units spent hours watching **the** suspects. "We had crews working 16, 17 and 18 hours a day on this," said Murray. "We were putting these people (**the** suspects) to bed every night."

The week before **the** raids, numerous briefings and meetings were held to finalize all **the** details -- weapons and equipment to be used, team assignments and special radio codes -- which raid party members rehearsed and re-rehearsed. **The** day before **the** raids, five final briefings were held for various people involved in **the** raids.

Shortly before 5 a.m. Tuesday, officials said, more than 100 members of **the** raid party -- DEA and Internal Revenue Service agents and Detroit police officers -- met for a roll call and final briefing at **the** federal building in downtown Detroit.

Crews assigned to execute six search warrants at houses connected to **the** Young Boys operation were assigned **the** "normal gear for that kind of work," according to Murray. That gear included flak jackets, 12-gauge shotguns and reinforced battering rams. " **The** other agents and officers involved were all armed normally," he said. "We waited for daylight -- about 6 a.m. -- before we really kicked it off, because we didn't want officers or agents getting shot as they walked up on porches while it **was** still dark to make arrests. We wanted them to be easily seen. We felt there would be less problems that way."

BUT, IN a touch of irony, one portion of **the** raid party left shortly after 5 a.m. -- a full hour before most of **the** raids were under way -- to arrest Sylvester Murray, **the** man alleged to be one of Young Boys' kingpins, at his Southfield home.

As they arrived at his home, **the** raiding party members let **the** operations base know by radio that they had reached "Location A" and were preparing to arrest "Subject One (Murray)." Murray **was** taken into custody without incident -- a scene that **was** to repeated throughout **the** day.

Despite all **the** advanced planning, there were some snafus, officials said. Both DeFauw and Inspector Murray said several people slipped through **the** first round of arrests because they were listening to police scanners. "Some of **the** scanners out now are very sophisticated," Inspector Murray said, "and **the** people we're talking about have an awful lot of money. If they've got enough money to buy a Mercedes (an automobile often used by Young Boys to distribute their **heroin**), they've got enough to buy scanners. We confiscated at least one of them."

The 42-count indictment followed a two-year investigation involving federal agents, Detroit police and Michigan state police officers, officials said. U.S. Attorney Leonard Gilman, who said **the** raids netted " **the** leadership" of Young Boys, said **the** organization is responsible for 25 to 30 percent of Detroit's **heroin** traffic.

By Tuesday afternoon, 16 people had been arrested . Within 24 hours, another person had been arrested and two others named in **the** indictment had surrendered to agents at **the** federal building. Milton (Butch) Jones, Murray's alleged partner, is believed to be in Florida and **was** still being sought. "We've still got teams out, and they'll stay out until we get everybody named in **the** indictments," DeFauw said.

After his arraignment, Murray's bond **was** set at \$10 million. **The** others arraigned faced bonds in much lesser amounts and some -- such as James Thorpe, a cab driver named in **the** indictment -- were released after posting bond. Wednesday morning , Thorpe walked into **the** DEA office and tried unsuccessfully to retrieve belongings confiscated when he **was** arrested -- his driver's license, a medical card and \$25.

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, two youngsters at 18706 Tracey in northwest Detroit talked about **the** raid at that address. **The** Tracey street residence, a well-maintained brick structure on a street of similar houses, **was** listed in **the** indictment as a place where money from narcotic sales **was** stored.

Unlike any of **the** neighboring houses, 18706 Tracey **was** fortified with elaborate wrought iron bars on every door and window. To check out visitors , there were an electronic intercom and peepholes on **the** front and side doors.

The youths said **the** house had been raided at 7:30 a.m. Monday by police. One of its residents, Velma Bailes, who is named in **the** indictment, **was** arrested.

No one **was** at home at 2628 Wreford, a flat in a two-story brick tenement a block from Linwood on **the** near west side. In **the** indictment, this **was** described as a location where telephone orders were accepted for cocaine and **heroin** distributed by Young Boys.

In **the** same neighborhood is **the** church attended by Murray's family. A neighborhood source said that while "Seal" (Murray) had not regularly attended services for some time, he **was** at **the** church last week for his father's funeral. "He just seemed like a very well-mannered, well-dressed young guy," according to **the** source. "About **the** most noticeable thing about him **was** his car, a white Corvette with a custom top. There were a few Mercedes around, too."

In addition to Murray and other alleged supervisors in **the** operation, sources said at least one of **the** persons indicted -- Kevin (Lughead) Wilson -- is a member of Young Boys' enforcement arm, a group known as " **The** Wrecking Crew."

While both DeFauw and Inspector Murray were taking a realistic "wait and see" attitude about **the** indictments and **the** raids, Inspector Murray found a little immediate solace: "Ordinarily, **the** corner of Dexter and Richton is a center of dealing on **the** west side. This morning, it **was** mighty quiet."

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