

YOUTHS BUSTED AT DETROIT DOPE DEN SHERIFF SAYS KIDS RAN OPERATION SOLO

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Six **youths** -- including four under the age of 14 -- were accused Friday of operating a lucrative crack cocaine business in a house that had been abandoned on the east side of **Detroit** .

During a raid, undercover officers with the Wayne County Sheriff's Department found the **youths** hiding in a closet in the house in the 2200 block of the I-94 service drive.

The **youths** told police they had not attended school in a week, Wayne County Sheriff Robert Ficano said Friday. One said he had been kicked out of his house and had not bathed for a week.

On the second floor, police confiscated about \$1,000 worth of crack -- about 50 rocks. They also discovered a semiautomatic weapon on the table, a cellular phone and several beepers.

"It's not uncommon to have an adult use juveniles for drug dealing, but this was completely operated by kids," Ficano said. "They were covering the house in shifts."

Two of the **youths** are sisters. Two are 12 years old; two are 13, one is 14 and one is 16.

At a hearing in Wayne County Juvenile Court on Friday, the **youths** were released on tethers and \$1,000 bonds to await a pretrial hearing Feb. 27 on undisclosed charges.

Acting on a tip, police had the house under surveillance for a week. Police said the **youths** were doing about \$5,000 a day in business.

In the hour after the bust, police arrested eight people who came to the house to buy drugs and confiscated eight vehicles.

Ficano said the **youths** had mirrors set up in the hallway to see who entered the house. The first floor had no furniture and all windows were boarded.

Police are seeking those who supplied the **youths** with the cocaine, Ficano said.

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