

WOMAN'S HOUSES SEIZED UNDER DRUG LAW

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Federal officials have seized three houses, seven tractor trailer rigs and three trailers worth more than \$660,000, alleging the property was purchased with drug proceeds raised by the **Highwaymen** Motorcycle Club.

The property, seized Monday by federal, state and local police, belonged to Doris Barnes, widow of Elburn (Max) Barnes, who founded the **Highwaymen** in the 1950s. Not all of the houses are listed in Doris Barnes' name, federal officials said.

Doug Wankel, assistant special agent in charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration in Detroit, said Barnes owns and operates B&W Leasing in Taylor, where the trucks were seized.

A woman who answered the phone Tuesday at B&W Leasing identified herself as a friend of Barnes and said Barnes plans to fight the forfeiture action. She said Barnes, who was not arrested or charged, was not available for comment.

"She doesn't know what it's all about and she certainly did not do anything wrong and will fight it," said the woman.

The houses -- in Taylor, Farmington Hills and Inkster -- and vehicles will remain in federal custody until the case is resolved. Tenants of the houses have been instructed to pay their rent to the government.

Wankel said an explosive device was found in the Taylor house and was removed without incident by the Wayne County Sheriff's Department.

He said a house Barnes owned in Westland was sold recently before agents could seize it.

Wankel said Monday's forfeiture action was a result of a two-year investigation of the **Highwaymen** in Michigan, Florida, Georgia and Canada.

In 1987, 22 members and associates of the **Highwaymen**, a longtime fixture in southwest Detroit, were indicted and charged with running a drug distribution ring that intimidated rivals through shootings, kidnappings, robberies, threats, bombings and arson.

Most of the defendants pleaded guilty to reduced charges in the case.

Memo: SHORTER VERSION IN METRO FINAL EDITION page 4A

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