

DRUG RING MEMBERS EXPECTED TO PLEAD GUILTY

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A dozen **members** of the Pony Down gang are **expected to plead guilty** today **to** running one of Detroit's biggest heroin and cocaine **rings** , U.S. Attorney Roy Hayes said Tuesday.

The pleas, worked out with government prosecutors, would bring **to** 17 the number of defendants who have pleaded **guilty to** federal **drug** charges since a 49-count indictment was returned against the gang and its reputed leader in November.

The defendants were charged with trying **to** sell 9 1/2 pounds of heroin worth about \$335,000. Some also were charged with trying **to** sell 3 1/2 pounds of cocaine worth about \$160,000 and more than 26 pounds of marijuana worth about \$20,000.

The alleged ringleaders bought the **drugs** and packaged them for sale on street corners under brand names such as Pony, GQ, Atomic Dog, Shotgun, Nodd City and Renegade, according **to** the indictment.

"I think if we can get pleas **to** felonies on the major counts, then I think it will be acceptable," Hayes said.

The group's reputed leader, LeRoy Buttrom-Willis, who was a fugitive until he was captured by police Jan. 27 in a routine traffic stop on I-94 in Berrien County, has not indicated if he will **plead guilty** , Hayes said.

Five other defendants pleaded **guilty** earlier. Thomas Mason and William Lundy Jr. each were sentenced **to** 36 months in prison, Partello Road got 20 months, Timothy Quinn got 30 months and John Nunnally got 18 months.

The remaining defendants are **to** be tried beginning April 7.

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