

CONVICTIONS NOT EXPECTED TO STEM DETROIT COCAINE FLOW

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The convictions Friday of the leaders of the largest cocaine ring cracked in Detroit are unlikely to slow the flow of the drug through the city's streets and crack houses, law enforcement officials said.

"There is no doubt in my mind that people out there will always be willing to step in, take over and take the risk of selling drugs," said Wayne County Sheriff Robert Ficano. "Taking one organization off the streets isn't going to solve the drug problem. But it does send out the significant message that something will happen to you if you get caught."

U.S. Attorney Roy Hayes, who prosecuted the case decided by a jury Friday against leaders of the **Chambers Brothers** organization, agreed that the message it carries is powerful.

"We are going to investigate, we will indict and we will convict to the limit," he said. The four **Chambers brothers**, using young recruits from Detroit high schools and their native Marianna, Ark., ran about 300 crack houses in 1983-88, and made profits of up to \$1 million a week, federal prosecutors said.

Billy Joe Chambers, 26, and Larry Chambers, 38, were found guilty of running the operation and face life in prison without parole. Willie Chambers, 34, and Otis Chambers, 20, were convicted of conspiracy.

Ficano said narcotics officers have noticed an increase in the price of drugs, which could mean supplies are down.

"But you can't say that it's because the **Chambers brothers** aren't working," he said. "We've been making an awful lot of drug arrests and so have the police."

One undercover narcotics officer, who spoke only on the condition he not be identified, said his work has not changed despite the absence of the **Chambers brothers**.

"We no sooner close one crack operation down and another springs up. That's how it's always been -- just like weeds," he said. "But, you keep trying, though, because you think maybe somewhere you're saving a life or two."

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