

Drug-ring leader gets 18 years in prison - Area police forces get big payday from \$18 million in cash and property seized during case.

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The leading figure in a massive drug ring with headquarters in Metro Detroit was sentenced Monday to 18 years in federal prison.

The case produced a multimillion-dollar windfall for police agencies involved in breaking it.

Quasand Lewis, 36, of West Bloomfield, who has been in custody since his arrest in July 2005, was charged with 23 co-defendants in a drug conspiracy officials said netted more than \$178 million in pot and cocaine profits.

Lewis pleaded guilty in April to drug trafficking and money-laundering conspiracy charges related to the sale of more than 10,000 kilograms of marijuana.

U.S. District Judge Avern Cohn sentenced **Lewis** as a prosecutor read a list of millions of dollars in cash, real estate, jewelry and weapons seized from **Lewis**. The list was so long Cohn did not want to hear it, but Foley said the law required that she read the four-page list into the record.

It included more than \$2.5 million in cash, more than \$200,000 in jewelry, a 2002 Mercedes, a 2003 Land Rover, a 2000 Lincoln, homes in Farmington Hills, Detroit, Canton, Troy and Florida, and close to 40 firearms.

Officials used forfeiture laws to seize cash and property worth about \$18 million from **Lewis** and his co-accused. About 80 percent of that has been or will be paid to police forces involved in the case, said Gina Balaya, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The federal government distributed about \$3.7 million of the proceeds from the case in October, with police forces in Novi, Farmington Hills, Troy, West Bloomfield, Warren and Detroit among those benefiting.

"By and large our federal effort at dismantling narcotics organizations is to go after the significant profits involved in the sale of drugs," said U.S. Attorney Stephen Murphy.

The investigation began with a 2004 raid at a Novi hotel that turned up suitcases full of cash.

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