

KIDS AND HEROIN DRUG RING MAKES MILLIONS FROM SALES BY CHILDREN

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Kids selling heroin .

To most people, the idea is obscene. But for some , the idea -- which became known as Young Boys Inc. -- proved obscenely lucrative.

The numbers stagger the imagination. Until last week's federal grand jury indictments of 41 alleged bosses and supervisors of Young Boys, law enforcement officials estimated, the drug ring grossed \$7.5 million a week in **heroin** sales.

Kids . . . arrested with hundreds of packets of **heroin** in their distinctive leather jackets and thousands of dollars worth of gold jewelry around their necks. **Kids** . . . given diamond rings as sales bonuses. **Kids** . . . armed with baseball bats, shotguns and automatic weapons as they pushed competitors out of the city's housing projects or off street-corner distribution centers.

Kids . . . killing or assaulting anyone who got in the way of their selling \$400 million worth of **heroin** a year. **Kids** . . . accounting for between 25 and 30 percent of the annual **heroin** sales on the streets of Detroit.

Kids . . . employed by, and controlled by, adults who use them to skirt the law. Rarely, if ever, do **kids** go to prison for selling **heroin** . The adults who run Young Boys know that, so they prey on the **kids** .

WHILE DETROIT POLICE and federal authorities believe they have seriously damaged the structure of Young Boys, they also acknowledge work has begun on a second phase to dismantle vestiges of the teenage drug ring.

"We just won a battle, we didn't win the war," says Detroit Police Inspector Raymond Murray of the narcotics section.

"This (the indictments) doesn't end it . . . This is just the start. We'll be on them eternally if we have to," adds Robert DeFauw, special agent in charge of the Detroit office of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

Although Murray and DeFauw would not discuss their second- phase attack on Young Boys, other sources said several former top-level members are already targets of a new investigation.

"A new (federal) grand jury will be impaneled next month," said a law enforcement official who asked not to be named, "and what's left of Young Boys will be high on their agenda."

A major **heroin** wholesaler believed to be a former business partner of Sylvester (Seal) Murray's is said to be a target of the second phase investigation

Seal Murray, 30, was described in the federal indictment as one of Young Boys' major **heroin** suppliers. After his arraignment last week, Murray was sent to the Federal Correctional Institution at Milan, where he is held on a \$10 million cash bond.

YOUNG BOYS INC. was born on a west side Detroit street corner about five years ago, just one of hundreds of small **heroin** operations in Detroit

That didn't last long.

The organization, allegedly led at that time by Raymond Peoples, 26, and Mark Marshall, 29, "grew like a terminal cancer," said a police official in 1979. Peoples has been named in the current indictment. Marshall, who left Detroit and moved to California, is said by law enforcement sources to be a target of the second phase.

Using **kids**, some only 10 years old, as their street sales staff, Young Boys grew . . . and grew . . . and grew. The **heroin** came from Mexico, then later from Southwest Asia through New York, according to investigators.

Recruits were lured by weekly salaries that ranged from \$250 to \$1,000 and kept in check by intimidation from their peers. The number of recruits kept growing and enabled Young Boys to move from a local **heroin** distribution ring, operating primarily in the 10th (Livernois) Precinct, to a city-wide organization.

'You have to be an octopus'

On May 18 of this year, according to court affidavits, police raided two apartments at the Jeffersonian Apartments, 9000 E. Jefferson. In one, investigators found \$696,000 stuffed in grocery bags. In the other, investigators found a police scanner, several ounces of **heroin** and an ounce of cocaine. Both apartments were "stash houses" for Young Boys, authorities said.

Trying to control Young Boys, as a police official noted, means "you have to be an octopus."

The leaders of the drug operation found an efficient way to manage. Police say the ring leaders developed a structure that proved to be a major hindrance to law enforcement. Using fleets of automobiles -- that ranged from Buicks and Mercedes-Benzes to DeLoreans -- and 10-speed bicycles, the group distributed **heroin** throughout the city. According to documents filed as part of the federal indictments, most of the group's supervisors carried telephone beepers to aid communication. Radio scanners were used to monitor police actions against the group.

TAXICABS were also used to ferry drug couriers, and two cab drivers have been indicted. According to documents filed with the indictments, a home in the 12000 block of Chelsea on Detroit's east side was bought by Milton (Butch) Jones in 1979. Investigators say they believe Jones took over day-to-day control of Young Boys when Peoples and Marshall began trying to phase themselves out. Jones was the other major figure named in the federal indictments. He is still being sought; police say they believe he is in Florida.

According to a citizen complaint in October 1981, three to seven cabs would drive up to the Chelsea address every night and blow their horns. The lights inside the house would flash off and on, and Young Boys lieutenants would get out of the cabs, according to the complaint, and carry duffle bags into the house.

The house was a Young Boys "bank" from which street salesmen were paid, according to court documents.

'Freak of the Week'

Evidence that Young Boys was no longer run-of-the-mill surfaced in 1979 when, after a series of police raids, flyers were passed out at a west side playground advertising a **heroin** giveaway called "Freak of the Week."

The giveaway, police think, was used to attract new customers and to get back old ones frightened by the raids. Police said the sales tactic was unprecedented in Detroit's drug world.

In addition to their "salaries," youngsters who were good salesmen were rewarded with such incentives as chauffeured trips to local music concerts in hired limousines, trips to Las Vegas, gold jewelry and the distinctive aviator style, fur-lined jackets that have become a trademark for Young Boys Inc. sellers.

And there was always the possibility of moving up in the organization.

A 19-year-old, arrested last spring at an alleged Young Boys distribution house in Highland Park, was wearing more than \$100,000 in gold jewelry, although he had no visible means of support. Police described him as a mid-level operative who probably got into the organization a few years earlier as a street salesman.

THE YOUNG DRUG DEALERS are rarely drug users and are attracted to trafficking solely for profit, police say.

"They're in it for the money, not for the dope," one narcotics officer told a reporter. "A lot of these **kids** are making considerably more money than their parents."

On the street, youths known to work for the ring were feared -- with good reason.

Law enforcement officials link numerous killings, including the slaying in March of an undercover Detroit police officer, to Young Boys Inc. The height of the violence attributed to the group occurred last spring in the Jeffries Homes project near downtown, where the ring had become entrenched over 14 months.

Residents said shootings related to frenetic curbside **heroin** selling occurred almost nightly. At the time, one investigator noted that the young salesmen were literally crawling on the hoods of passing cars trying to make sales. During an 18-day period earlier this year, three people were killed in the same area of the project, allegedly by young drug sellers.

Homicide detectives who questioned youths alleged to be involved in the Jeffries Homes shootings described the worst of them as "cold-blooded killers" who claimed they hadn't seen anything because they were too busy selling their "product" -- **heroin** .

How they cut the risks

Similar scenes occurred almost daily in the Brewster-Douglass housing project and at numerous street corners throughout the city. And everyone in the organization, from the youngest lookout on up, had been trained in methods that provided minimum risk of police detection.

Police, for example, have a hard time catching sellers with drugs because the sellers are trained to carry only enough for a single sale. The rest of the "stash" is hidden anywhere nearby -- the top of a fencepost, a hole dug in the ground . . .

If a raid does occur, according to narcotics officers, youngsters who get away are instructed to call an attorney as soon as possible so the people taken in by police will have a lawyer waiting when they reach the police station.

DESPITE ITS structure, investigators say some infighting began in Young Boys as police and the DEA began making inroads in the organization which has operations in Highland Park, Pontiac and Flint as well as Detroit.

Police said the man they identified as the founder of the the Pontiac operation, Dwayne Davis, 26, was shot to death on a Detroit street corner last September as the result of infighting in the ring. Peoples was shot and wounded Aug. 9 during a quarrel with a woman in front of a home on Detroit's west side.

The two-year investigation that led to the federal indictments of Young Boys involved both Detroit police and DEA undercover agents who penetrated the organization, according to DeFauw.

"Actual undercover (**heroin**) purchases were made during the investigation," he said.

Twenty-nine of the 41 persons indicted by the federal grand jury have been charged. The others, including Jones, are being sought. And, while law enforcement officials are still glowing with the success of their first major offensive against Young Boys, they admit fighting Detroit's **heroin** traffickers is a tedious -- and sometimes unsuccessful -- effort.

And **kids** selling **heroin** ?

"What do you do with a 10-year-old who's selling **heroin** ?" DeFauw asked. "We've got to start looking . . . the whole structure . . . social workers, ministers, community leaders . . . at what can be done. We're talking . . . about people who live in the ghetto and . . . a **kid** who brings home \$200 to his momma and she forgets about where it came from.

"What the hell do you do?"

Caption: Map ROY BEAVER

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