

OFFICIALS: DRUG RING BUSTED - 2 BROTHERS RAN HUGE GANG; 25 ARE INDICTED

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A federal grand jury in Detroit indicted 25 people in what officials say is one of the region's largest drug and money laundering conspiracies.

The gang, known as the **Black Mafia Family**, distributed more than 476 kilograms of cocaine in metro Detroit and laundered more than \$270 million in drug proceeds since the early 1990s, officials said Friday.

The alleged ringleaders, brothers Terry (Southwest T) Flenory, 35, of Los Angeles and Demetrius (Rico Seville) Flenory, 37, of Atlanta are former Detroiters who allegedly moved drugs and money nationwide in vehicles with hidden compartments.

"There's an old saying - kill the head and the body will die," said U.S. Marshal Robert Grubbs at a news conference with U.S. Attorney Stephen Murphy III and other authorities.

The gang bought or sold cocaine in Michigan, California, Florida, Georgia, Missouri and Texas, authorities said, and used drug proceeds to buy luxury cars, houses and other items. It also created false employment information to give to car dealerships and banks in order to buy cars and property, the indictment said.

One of the more novel methods the gang used to launder drug proceeds was buying more than \$1 million worth of winning lottery tickets from a Detroit party store owner for less than they were worth and later redeeming them through the Michigan Lottery bureau.

Agent Robert Corso, head of the Detroit Drug Enforcement Administration office, said the gang also used the rap music industry to distribute drugs and launder money.

Demetrius Flenory made a guest appearance on a rap music video and was featured in rap music magazines, officials said. It was unclear Friday whether the drug ring is connected to the rap music group by the same name.

Flenory was charged with murder in the death of the former bodyguard of rapper Sean (P. Diddy) Combs in a shootout outside an Atlanta nightclub in 2003, authorities said. He is free on bond in that case.

Most of the other people in the indictment allegedly managed the gang's operations or helped distribute drugs and cash or launder drug proceeds. Several of the defendants were arraigned in U.S. District Court in Detroit. Most were released on bond.

The indictment, issued Oct. 19 and unsealed Friday, said law enforcement authorities seized large quantities of drugs and cash from the gang beginning in 1997. Eventually, the Detroit-based gang operated from Atlanta and Los Angeles.

The Flenory brothers were charged with multiple drug counts, operating a continuing criminal enterprise, using a telephone to commit a drug crime and money laundering. The most serious counts, operating a continuing criminal enterprise, carries a maximum penalty of 20 years to life in prison and a \$2 million fine. They are in custody in other states.

The indictment seeks to force alleged gang members to forfeit 18 vehicles, bank accounts, cash and 10 homes in Detroit, Canton, Ecorse, Romulus, Southfield, Los Angeles and suburban Atlanta.

State, county and Ecorse police raided a commercial building on Second Street near Southfield Road in Ecorse early Friday and hauled away nearly a dozen classic vehicles. The building belongs to an alleged distributor in the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michael Liebson, Dawn Ison and Julie Beck supervised the investigation.

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ILLUSTRATION: Photo

CAPTION: Demetrius Flenory, left and his brother Terry Flenory were the alleged leaders of the gang.

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