

Syracuse Post Standard: 4 drug pipelines that funneled heroin, cocaine to Upstate NY busted, over \$1 million in drugs seized

3/12/2015

WATERTOWN, N.Y. -- Four major drug pipelines that brought more than \$1 million worth of heroin and cocaine from New York City, Massachusetts and Syracuse up north to St. Lawrence County have been busted.

State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman and state police Superintendent Joseph D'Amico announced the major busts during a press conference at the Dulles State Office Building in Watertown.

Four indictments were unsealed in St. Lawrence County Court, charging 33 people with 109 total counts in connection with the operation, codenamed "Operation 315". Of those charged, 26 people have been arrested, according to the attorney general's office. Seven others are being sought.

"These arrests should send a clear message to anyone dealing these dangerous and deadly drugs- you will be found, you will be arrested and you are going to jail," D'Amico said in a statement.

The charges range from misdemeanor criminal sale of a controlled substance all the way up to second-degree conspiracy, which carries up to a 25-year prison sentence and first-degree criminal sale of a controlled substance, which carries a prison sentence of up to 20 years.

Authorities seized two kilograms of heroin, valued at \$500,000 and five kilograms of cocaine, valued at \$600,000. Additionally, seven handguns, three assault rifles, two shotguns, a rifle and more than \$100,000 in cash were seized.

The following 26 people have been arrested:

Matthew P. Van Hying, 26, of Canton

Zachary Latimer, 23, of Canton

Darian Cameron, 18, of Winthrop

Ryan Finley, 27, of Ogdensburg

Eric Drasye, 34, of the Adirondacks region

Zachary Cole, 20, of Gouverneur,

Justin Whitmarsh, 24, of Edwards

Colin Campbell, 25, of Winthrop
Gregory Lanphear, 24, of Edwards
Joshua Jones, 24, of Edwards
Reynold Voisine, 37, of Canton
Caleb Serrano, 22, of Edwards
Ryan Donaldson, 26, of Potsdam
Jason Brunet, 28, of Edwards
Omar Serrano, 24, of Edwards
Kyle Hawley, 25, of Potsdam
Elizabeth Briggs, 23, of Canton
Laronda Ashlaw, 28, of Potsdam
Paula Welsh, 28, of Massena
Nicholas P. Adams, 22, of Potsdam
Kyle E. Kain, 21, of Potsdam,
Matthew A. Klemko, 27, of Colton
Justin M. Lashomb, 31, of Hogansburg,
Nathan D. Lightfoot, 26, of Massena
Michael T. Matzell, 28, of Potsdam
Jordan C. Willette, 25, of Pierrepont

The first of the four indictments alleges that Ashlaw bought heroin in Massachusetts and brought it back to St. Lawrence County while her toddler child was inside the vehicle. When authorities raided her home, they found a loaded assault weapon and hypodermic needles in her child's bedroom closet, the attorney general's office said.

Adams, who lived with Ashlaw, purchased heroin in Leominster, Massachusetts and brought it to St. Lawrence County to distribute, according to the attorney general's office. Stolen jewelry and other items from two burglaries were also found in their home, the attorney general's office said.

Nine others were named in that indictment and charged with distributing heroin and cocaine.

The second indictment named 20 people, including three people named in the first indictment. A Syracuse-based drug supplier was among three suppliers who supplied drugs to Campbell, Jones, Caleb Serrano and Willette. The drugs in this network were sold in Edwards, Pierrepont and Stockholm, according to the attorney general's office.

In addition to the Syracuse-based supplier, two other drug suppliers, one from Yonkers and the other from The Bronx, brought drugs to the four. One of the downstate suppliers smuggled heroin from New York City to St. Lawrence County in the trunk lining of a 2008 Cadillac CTS, according to the attorney general's office.

Brothers Caleb and Omar Serrano smuggled cocaine inside a lint brush, the attorney general's office said.

Among the nine people named in the final two indictments, of whom four were also included in the first two indictments, a fourth drug supplier was charged with distributing cocaine to Brunet.

Members of Syracuse Police, Onondaga County Sheriff's Office, Canton Police Department, Potsdam Police Department, Massena Police Department, Gouverneur Police Department, Ogdensburg City Police Department, St. Lawrence County District Attorney's Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, the Franklin County Drug Task Force, state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, U.S. Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Border Patrol, Border Enforcement Security Task Force and the Coast Guard Investigative Service took part in the investigation.