

Charleston drug sweep: only 4 suspects at large
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CHARLESTON, SC (WCSC) - Charleston City Police have arrested 15 people and issued arrest warrants for 15 others in a drug bust on the East side of Charleston Thursday.

Over an eight hour period, suspects were arrested Thursday for being involved in the distribution of heroin and crack cocaine. Two others turned themselves in to police.

Of those served arrest warrants, five were already in jail on other charges.

The bust was part of an eight month operation whose goal was to identify and track down key drug dealers.

"These people just don't sell drugs. They sell intimidation. They scare people. They create fear," said Charleston City Police Chief Greg Mullen.

Mullen said phase one of the operation involved new cooperation efforts between the Charleston Police Department and the Ninth Circuit Solicitor's Office.

The city is using drug money to pay a prosecutor, whose sole assignment is to work with the narcotics unit.

"When a prosecutor is on the ground, knowing who all the players are...they can better allocate their time. They know who the big fish really are. They know who the violent folks really are," said Scarlett Wilson, Ninth Circuit Solicitor.

The agreement has been in effect since last July. The solicitor's office receives \$50,000 from the police department to help pay for the prosecutor's salary.

In addition to the help from the prosecutor, police used street-level officers to crack down on buyers first.

In six months, there were dozens of arrests and some 200 drug-related offenses, Mullen said.

Intelligence and help from the prosecutor helped track down what Mullen called an "all-star list" of suspected drug dealers.

More than 60 officers from Charleston Police, North Charleston Police, Charleston County Sheriff's Office, State Law Enforcement Division and U.S. Marshall's Service helped round up the suspects in Thursday's bust, which Mullen said helped disrupt a network of drug dealers.

"We know them, we're familiar with them and when we learned through intelligence that they were the ones who were actually carrying out the distribution, then that's when started focusing on them," Mullen said of the 30 suspects.

Mullen and Wilson were not surprised many of the suspects who were allegedly part of this network were repeat offenders.

Both have advocated for tougher bond, parole and probation laws.

"A vast majority of these 30 have been in the criminal justice system before," Mullen said.

Half of the suspects are on probation or parole; a third are out on bond and half are repeat offenders, Mullen said.

Wilson cited Michael Hayes as an example.

Hayes was arrested in 2006 for the murder of David Hamilton, but was later set free because prosecutors say witnesses in the case fell through.

Hayes was arrested in Thursday's bust.

Mullen cited another example.

George Bellinger was out on bond, he said.

Bellinger was arrested in 2007 for the murder of 15-year old Montrell Harrell.

"The violence and the drugs go hand in hand. And if we can make an arrest on a drug case and get a good sentence, so be it. It's better than having another victim," Wilson said.

Wilson and Mullen agree their new arrangement is providing good results.

"We're seeing people call us and give us information about where drugs are being hid. They're calling us and telling us about people that are actively in distribution," Mullen said.

Eight officers who are assigned to the area are building relationships and trust, he said.

"In the past, we've never seen that kind of cooperation in these neighborhoods," Mullen said.

Wilson's office will move to revoke the bonds of those who were out on bond and were arrested.

During the bust, police were able to seize some drugs and three handguns.

Mullen said they were not looking for large seizures, rather to disrupt the drug dealer network and put people in jail.

Mullen also revealed during the operation, a dog attacked an officer. The dog was shot and the officer is said to be doing fine.

ARRESTED IN SUBSEQUENT POLICE ACTIVITY

- Vanessa Laquetta Frayer, 39, Distribution of Cocaine Base, Distribution of Cocaine Base Prox (arrested Wednesday morning).
- Herman Nathaniel Jenkins, 38, Distribution of Heroin, Distribution of Heroin Close Prox (Arrested Tuesday afternoon).
- Sharod Devain Young, 30, Distribution of Cocaine Base x2, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox x2 (Arrested Thursday afternoon).
- Amir Jerome Jenkins, 22, Distribution of Heroin x2, Distribution of Heroin Close Prox x2 (Arrested Thursday afternoon).
- Terry Quantaine Richardson, 31, Distribution of Heroin x2, Distribution of Heroin Close Prox x2 (Arrested May 14).
- Aaron Vernard Edwards, 24, Distribution of Cocaine Base, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox
- Johnell Lamar Watson, 21, Distribution of Cocaine Base, Distribution of Cocaine Base close prox

ENTERED POLICE CUSTODY WILLFULLY

- Shane Darcell Jenkins, 21, Distribution of Cocaine Base, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox (Entered police custody Monday morning)
- Deangelo Rashard Mitchell, 21, Distribution of Cocaine Base x2, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox x2 (Entered police custody Saturday)
- Rashard Gregory, 20, Distribution of Cocaine Base x2, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox x2 (Entered police custody Friday)
- Keith Anthony Wilkins, 21, Distribution of Cocaine Base, Distribution of Cocaine Base close prox (Entered police custody Friday, April 30)

ARRESTED

- Arnold Terrell Bellinger, 29, Distribution of Heroin x3
- George Avery Bellinger, 25, Distribution of Cocaine Base x3, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox. x3
- Kenneth Bernard Brown, 29, Distribution of Cocaine Base x3, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox x3
- Tony Brown, 42, Distribution of Heroin x2, Distribution of Heroin Close Prox x2
- Calvin Dixon, 29, Distribution of Heroin x2, Distribution of Heroin Close Prox x2, Distribution of Cocaine Base, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox
- Laquell Takeem Dixon, 20, Distribution of Cocaine Base x2, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox x2
- Thomas Ray Drayton, 22, Distribution of Heroin, Distribution of Heroin Close Prox
- Charles Fabers, 41, Distribution of Heroin, Distribution of Heroin Close Prox
- Jamile Raynard Harley, 29, Distribution of Cocaine Base x2, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox x2
- Rico Arden Hartwell, 39, Distribution of Heroin, Distribution of Heroin Close Prox

- Michael Angelo Hayes, 28, Distribution of Heroin x3, Distribution of Heroin Close Prox x3, Distribution of Imitation Substances
- Robert Kenyatta Lincoln, 20, Distribution of Cocaine Base, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox
- Joshua Iean Nelson, 20, Distribution of Cocaine Base, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox
- Geonaldo Rasheed Young, 27, Distribution of Cocaine Base x2, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox x2
- Malcolm Bernard Wright, 45, Distribution of Heroin x2, Distribution of Heroin Close Prox x2

WANTED

- Walter Demetrius Brown, 51, Distribution of Heroin x3, Distribution of Heroin Close Prox x3
- Darrielle Jamal Coaxum, 20, Distribution of Cocaine Base, Distribution of Cocaine Base Close Prox
- James Cecil Washington, 24, Distribution of Cocaine Base, Distribution of Cocaine Base close prox
- Montrell Sharife Wise, 18, Distribution of cocaine base, distribution cocaine base close prox