



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 25, 2020

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PRESS RELEASE

**11 MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES OF THE BULLY GANG CHARGED WITH
NARCOTICS CONSPIRACY, ILLEGAL WEAPONS POSSESSION AND MONEY
LAUNDERING**

Comic Books and Legal Documents Soaked in Drugs Were Smuggled into Rikers Island

Defendants Include Two New York City Department of Education Employees

Two criminal complaints were unsealed today in federal court in Brooklyn charging 11 members and associates of the New York City-based Bully street gang with crimes related to conspiracies to distribute drugs throughout Maine and in New York, smuggling drugs into Rikers Island, illegal weapons possession and money laundering. The initial appearances of six defendants arrested today in Brooklyn and New Jersey—alleged Bully gang member Derrick Ayers and gang associates Bermon Clarke, Amy Sonnenblick, Nia Govan, Paul Harris and Anthony Kennedy—are scheduled for this afternoon before United States Chief Magistrate Judge Cheryl L. Pollak. Defendant Amanda Walton was arrested in Maine. Defendant Amanda Huard is currently not in custody. The remaining defendants were previously incarcerated.

Richard P. Donoghue, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, John B. DeVito, Special Agent-in-Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, New York Field Division (ATF), Dermot F. Shea, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD), and Margaret Garnett, Commissioner, New York City Department of Investigation (DOI), announced the charges.

“As alleged, these defendants trafficked narcotics between Maine and New York, including smuggling dangerous contraband drugs into Rikers Island,” stated United States Attorney Donoghue. “Drug dealers, and those who launder their drug proceeds, destroy lives and communities and, in this case, jeopardized the safety and security of a prison.”

Mr. Donoghue expressed his grateful appreciation to the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Maine, New Hampshire State Police, Maine State Police, Brewer Maine Police Department, Waterville Maine Police Department and Augusta Maine Police Department for their assistance in the case.

“These arrests will undoubtedly have a significant impact on public safety. As alleged, these gang members and their associates plagued communities from New York City to Maine, but today, thanks to the diligent work of the ATF/NYPD Joint Firearms Task Force, their criminal exploits have been brought to an end,” stated ATF Special Agent-in-Charge DeVito. “I would like to thank the United States Attorney’s Office for their work in prosecuting this case and acknowledge the contributions of the New Hampshire State Police, Maine State Police, Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, Waterville Maine Police Department and the Augusta Maine Police Department.”

“The NYPD’s responsibility to prevent crime and keep people safe knows no boundaries. In this case, our hardworking detectives and law enforcement partners dismantled an alleged drug gang with a complex distribution network that crossed state lines and penetrated Rikers Island,” stated NYPD Commissioner Shea.

“Contraband smuggling at Rikers Island continues to be a threat to the security of our City’s jails and an active area of investigation for DOI. These defendants allegedly worked in concert using various methods to smuggle illicit drugs into Rikers Island, including mailing packages of paper soaked with K2 disguised as mail to inmates in an attempt to bypass Department of Correction screening procedures. DOI is proud to partner with the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, New York Field Division, and the New York City Police Department to investigate and prosecute these alleged crimes,” stated DOI Commissioner Garnett.

According to the complaints, Ayers, Clarke, Govan, Huard, Jessica Pelkey, Walton and Demetrius Wright are members of a drug ring operating in New York, Maine and elsewhere. The organization trafficked cocaine base (or “crack”), heroin and other controlled substances using vehicles with hidden compartments and “trap” houses in Maine to store and sell narcotics.

As alleged, the drug trafficking proceeds were deposited into various bank accounts, including an account controlled by Sonnenblick, who is employed as a paraprofessional by the New York City Department of Education, as is Clarke. Sonnenblick then transferred the drug money to her co-conspirators. In addition to laundering proceeds through bank deposits and wire transfers, drug proceeds were also laundered through the acquisition of vehicles, including a Range Rover purchased by Sonnenblick and used by Ayers.

As charged in the related complaint, Moeleek Harrell, the founder of the Bully gang and currently an inmate at Rikers Island, coordinated with associates Kennedy and Harris to smuggle 5-Fluoro MDMB-Pica, a Schedule I controlled substance commonly referred to as “K2,” into the jail. Law enforcement officers recovered multiple pages of a court transcript that had been soaked in K2 and earmarked for delivery to Harrell. A subsequent search of Harrell’s cell revealed additional pages of paper from comic books that field tested positive for synthetic cannabinoid and for fentanyl and/or heroin.

Ayers, Clarke, Govan, Huard, Pelkey, Walton and Wright are charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute heroin and at least 280 grams of crack cocaine; Ayers and Clarke are charged with possessing one or more firearms in relation to the drug conspiracy; Ayers, Clarke, Govan, Sonnenblick and Walton are charged with money laundering conspiracy; and

Harrell, Harris and Kennedy are charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute K2.

During searches of premises today in Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York, law enforcement officials found multiple firearms; a substantial amount of U.S. currency; drug manufacturing and packaging supplies; law enforcement paperwork pertaining to criminal investigations and narcotics believed to include marijuana, crack cocaine, heroin and fentanyl.

The charges in the complaints are allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The government's case is being handled by the Office's Organized Crime and Gangs Section and Public Integrity Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Drew G. Rolle, Nicholas J. Moscow and Special Assistant United States Attorney Virginia T. Nguyen are in charge of the prosecution.

The Defendants:

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 20-MJ-453 (RER)

DERRICK AYERS (also known as "Mel")

Age: 33

Rahway, New Jersey

BERMON CLARKE (also known as "G")

Age: 28

Rahway, New Jersey

NIA GOVAN (also known as "Cam")

Age: 29

Boston, Massachusetts

AMANDA HUARD

Age: 38

Maine

JESSICA PELKEY

Age: 26

Presque Isle, Maine

AMY SONNENBLICK

Age: 48

Brooklyn, New York

AMANDA WALTON

Age: 31

Portland, Maine

DEMETTRIUS WRIGHT (also known as “Clean” and “Meexhi Brim”)
Age: 22
Brooklyn, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 20-MJ-472 (CLP)

MOELEEK HARRELL (also known as “Moe Money”)
Age: 30
Brooklyn, New York

PAUL HARRIS (also known as “Baldhead”)
Age: 31
Brooklyn, New York

ANTHONY KENNEDY (also known as “Biggie”)
Age: 34
Queens, New York