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## Report Information from ProQuest

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## 10 Arrested in Cocaine Raids; Crime: Authorities say drug ring terrorized two South-Central L.A. housing projects.

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**Abstract (Abstract):** Federal and local law enforcement officers early Wednesday arrested nine Southern California men and one woman who authorities said controlled drug trafficking and instilled fear in residents at two South-Central Los Angeles housing projects.

The FBI, the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department made the arrests in predawn raids at seven Los Angeles residences, one in Carson, one in Riverside and one in Rancho Cucamonga.

The arrests were based on a 12-count federal indictment unsealed Wednesday. Each defendant was charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, conspiracy to distribute cocaine and conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine base, commonly known as crack.

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**Full text:** Federal and local law enforcement officers early Wednesday arrested nine Southern California men and one woman who authorities said controlled drug trafficking and instilled fear in residents at two South-Central Los Angeles housing projects.

The FBI, the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department made the arrests in predawn raids at seven Los Angeles residences, one in Carson, one in Riverside and one in Rancho Cucamonga.

"Some real key players in the drug-trafficking and violent world of gangster activity were taken into custody, along with a number of weapons," said Mark Kroeker, commander of the LAPD's South Bureau.

"It is hoped that the arrests will help reduce the flow of drugs and make the neighborhoods safer in and around Jordan Downs and Imperial Courts," said Charlie Parsons, special agent in charge of the FBI's Los Angeles office.

"This is much more than a drug investigation," Parsons said. "The tenants, many of whom are on public assistance, are really being terrorized."

Parsons said the three law enforcement agencies have "formed an investigative team to work with members of the community to solve a series of violent crimes that have plagued the area."

Kroeker and Parsons said the FBI and LAPD are preparing a joint application for federal funds to set up a mobile substation in the housing projects in an attempt to reduce crime.

U.S. Atty. Nora M. Manella said, "These arrests demonstrate the federal government's commitment to work together with other counterparts in investigating the most violent and dangerous gang members and drug traffickers in the Southland."

The arrests were based on a 12-count federal indictment unsealed Wednesday. Each defendant was charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, conspiracy to distribute cocaine and conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine base, commonly known as crack.

The lead defendant, Cedric James McGill, 36, of Riverside, was charged with five additional counts, including distribution of cocaine, distribution of crack, possession with intent to distribute cocaine, possession with intent to distribute crack, and use of a cellular telephone with a counterfeited electronic serial number.

Each of the other defendants was charged with one additional drug-related count.

The indictments do not refer to crimes other than drug dealing.

Papers filed by the U.S. attorney's office outline a lengthy investigation, saying that McGill used telephones and other means to negotiate sales and to arrange for the delivery of narcotics, that other defendants assisted him and that narcotics were stored at the residence of Lavern Clark.

The indictment says a confidential government informant made arrangements with McGill to buy crack cocaine on several occasions.

The transactions described in the indictments involve nearly 5 kilograms of powder cocaine and 426 grams of crack, a significant amount of drugs but not much in the world of Los Angeles drug dealing, where federal agents once recovered 17 tons of cocaine in a raid on a Sylmar warehouse.

The amounts spawning Wednesday's raids prompted defense lawyer Paul Potter of Pasadena to scoff at the suggestion that the defendants were among the area's "most dangerous gang members and drug dealers," as stated in a news release from the U.S. attorney's office.

"This seems like a lot of hoopla for this much drugs," said Potter, who represents defendant Clyde Williams, 36, of Paramount.

Defense attorneys Neison M. Marks, who represents McGill, and Terry Amdur, who represents Corgins Winn of Rancho Cucamonga, agreed.

"I don't see truckloads of drugs," Marks said.

Amdur added: "I don't understand why this was a sealed indictment. This is not how they usually handle a case with a relatively small amount of drugs."

Federal Pre-Trial Services, the agency that monitors defendants at the start of a case, recommended that McGill be granted bail. Nonetheless, U.S. Magistrate-Judge Charles F. Eick granted the request of federal prosecutors Michael Terrell and Terri Law that McGill and six of the other defendants be kept in custody without bail.

The government cited a federal law that says a defendant facing a sentence of 10 years or more in a drug case is presumed to be a danger to the community and a flight risk. Saying that he has concerns about community safety, Eick noted that McGill had a prior record for shooting at a building in 1979.

But Eick did grant bail to three defendants, including Clark, 32, of Los Angeles, the sole female defendant. Eick said Clark was "a lifelong resident of the area" and that there was no record "of any drug-related activity in her past."

The judge set the next hearing for Tuesday.

Eick's small courtroom was jammed with law enforcement agents who had been involved in the raids, as well as families and friends of the defendants.

PHOTO: Officers check South-Central residence during raid Wednesday.; PHOTOGRAPHER: PAUL MORSE / Los Angeles Times

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