

Federal authorities move to seize estate of reputed Cities drug dealer

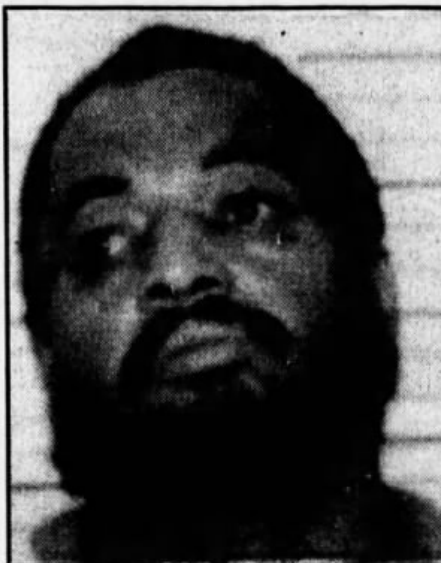
Federal authorities filed forfeiture papers Monday to seize a \$100,000 Watertown compound belonging to Ralph (Plukey) Duke, a reputed Twin Cities drug dealer.

Duke, 43, was arrested with his son and four other associates last week in a federal drug sting. Authorities said his organization tried to buy 20 kilos of cocaine for \$140,000.

About \$118,000 was taken from Duke's son, 19-year-old Ralph La-Mont Nunn, following a transaction last Wednesday night at the Hilton Hotel on Industrial Blvd. in Minneapolis.

The six suspects appeared before a federal magistrate in St. Paul yesterday for a hearing to set bail. Magistrate Janice Symchych is expected to set bail amounts within several days. Meanwhile, the men are being held without bail.

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Ralph (Plukey) Duke

ty one step to an electric chair . . . I feel like I've been hung before I was sentenced."

Agents from a task force of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) have described Duke as "the orchestrator of one of the largest and most

extensive drug operations in the state." Police say Nunn boasted to a police informant that his father was able to make 75-kilo cocaine deals in a period of two months. Local DEA chief Jim Braseth called the claim "conservative."

In testimony during the bail hearing, Minneapolis police officer Michael Carey said authorities had wire-tapped telephone conversations between Duke and others in his organization. Carey testified that Duke boasted of close ties with some law enforcement officials in the conversations.

Carey testified that two men arrested in Faribault, Minn., recently on suspicion of running drugs for Duke are the sons of a Ramsey County sheriff's deputy. They were released without charges.

Ramsey County Sheriff Charles Zacharias said he was aware of the situation, but said there are no specific allegations that the deputy has had associations with Duke.

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