

St. Paul/Drug-trafficking fugitive arrested

A St. Paul man convicted of drug trafficking with now-imprisoned Twin Cities cocaine kingpin Ralph (Plukey) Duke has been arrested after nearly a year as a "high priority" federal fugitive.

Ramon Hutchinson, 23, was arrested late Sunday at the south Minneapolis apartment of a girlfriend, U.S. Marshal Tony Bennett said Monday. He suffered minor cuts when he twice tried to jump through a window to elude deputy marshals, Bennett said.

Hours later, a federal magistrate judge ordered Hutchinson to begin serving a nine-year prison term.

Hutchinson, a graduate of St. Paul Central High School, was a University of Minnesota sophomore with no criminal record when he was arrested in May 1989 after a police chase. He later pleaded guilty to federal drug charges and testified against Duke at his trial.

Hutchinson failed to surrender to serve his sentence last March 29. Bennett said he will be charged with defaulting on a signature bond and could receive an additional five years in prison.

Marshals were led to Hutchinson by an informant who may receive a reward, Bennett said.