

Accused drug kingpin, 4 others are ordered held without bail

Accused Twin Cities cocaine wholesaler Ralph (Plukey) Duke and four associates were ordered held without bail Tuesday pending trials on charges of attempting to buy 20 kilos of cocaine with intent to distribute.

Duke, 43, is in federal custody at

Stillwater prison. The others, including Duke's 19-year-old son, Ralph LaMont Nunn, are in jail at Eau Claire, Wis.

Federal agents describe Duke as one of Minnesota's major drug dealers. He was arrested in Minneapolis May 17 after police said members of his group tried to buy 20 kilos of cocaine worth \$140,000 from undercover agents.

Duke's nephew, Loren Duke, 23, and Ramon Jamal Hutchinson, 21, were also ordered held without bail. Loren Duke drove a pickup truck carrying \$118,000 in cash, police said. Hutchinson led police on a chase to St. Paul after they tried to arrest him, police said.

Two other men arrested in the federal drug "sting" had bail set for \$25,000 each. They are Anthony Turner, 20, and Larry Hutchinson, 18.

The detention orders were filed by U.S. Magistrate Janice Symchych, who presided over two days of bail hearings last week in St. Paul.

Meanwhile, federal authorities filed papers last week to seize two more houses reportedly belonging to Ralph Duke. The houses are at 1936 Portland Av. and 634 Watson Av. in St. Paul.

Authorities already have seized Duke's \$100,000 compound in rural Wright County.

The forfeiture papers describe Duke as a drug dealer with no legitimate source of income who laundered money through properties he purchases in other people's names. Duke has said he runs an independent luxury car leasing business.

The U.S. attorney's office is expected to seek a federal grand jury indictment next month against all six men.