

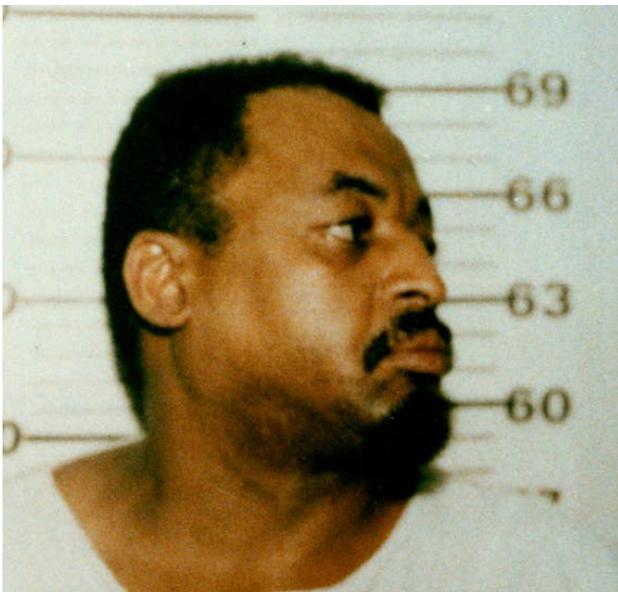
GANGSTER REPORT



Purple Reign Redux: One-Time Minnesota Cocaine Kingpin Can't Wrangle Himself Free From Life Prison Term

Scott Burnstein | February 13, 2018

The former king of cocaine in the Twin Cities failed to find the results he had hoped for in his bid to be resentenced. Ralph (Plookie) Duke, the Godfather of the drug trade in Minneapolis and St. Paul and the “Prince” of the Minnesota underworld at the height of the coke boom in the 1980s, didn’t get the reprieve he had hoped for from the courts, as his trial judge hit him with another life sentence for the narcotics and weapons convictions he took three decades ago. Duke was found guilty in 1990 at a month-long federal trial that grabbed headlines across the Midwest. In 2016, a federal court in Illinois (the state where Duke is incarcerated) reversed Duke’s three illegal weapons convictions, setting the stage for a resentencing in his case. With the recent trend of long-serving non-violent drug offenders getting second chances, attorneys for Duke felt they had a good shot at getting him resentenced to time served. They were wrong. Last week, U.S. District Court Judge David Doty rejected the plea for leniency and slapped Duke with another two life sentences to run concurrently for his drug business and an additional three 30-year stints for the weapons unearthed in his suburban Minneapolis estate. The 72-year old Duke has been locked up for almost 29 years. Duke ran the drug world in the Twin Cities throughout the 1980s, flooding the streets with cocaine he obtained directly from cartels in Colombia via pickups in California and Arizona. His downfall came at the hands of controversial DEA informant Andrew Chambers, who sold the Duke organization 20 kilos of blow in a deal he made with Duke’s son and right-hand man, Ralph (Monte) Nunn, in the spring of 1989. The drug transaction was in fact part of a DEA sting operation. Chambers is the highest paid snitch in DEA history, clearing almost \$5,000,000 in helping the government make close to 300 cases around the United States in the 1980s and 1990s. He was found to have perjured himself on the witness stand over a dozen times and was temporarily de-activated from use by the DEA in 2000 after 16 years of work. According to a report by the USA Today, Chambers was put back to work by DEA agents in a case out of Phoenix in 2013.



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