

Police say man jailed in drug case was Twin Cities kingpin

By Kevin Diaz
Staff Writer

Although they could never pin a charge on him before this week, police said Ralph (Plukey) Duke's name has been associated with drugs in the Twin Cities for nearly 20 years.

Agents of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) have pegged him "the orchestrator of one of the largest and most extensive drug operations in the state," but they said in a news release that they always found themselves unable to penetrate his organization deeply enough to incriminate him.

Instead, they set up the most extensive drug task force ever assembled in the Twin Cities to disrupt his connections and dry up his sources. Then on Wednesday, using 20 kilos of government cocaine as bait, drug agents say they got members of Duke's organization to make a \$140,000 deal with them.

"They were scrambling around looking for a safe source, and they found us," said Jim Braseth, head of the DEA office in Minneapolis.

Duke, 43, his 19-year-old son, Ralph LaMont Nunn, and four associates were arrested late Wednesday after a drug deal was set up in the parking lot of the Minneapolis Metrodome

Hilton Hotel on Industrial Blvd.

Another man was arrested Friday afternoon at Duke's guarded compound in Watertown, which has been sealed off by authorities. All the suspects are being held without bail pending a hearing Monday in federal

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