

3 more indicted in Duke's alleged drug money scam

By Margaret Zack
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Three people have been indicted by a federal grand jury for allegedly laundering money for Ralph (Plukey) Duke, who is facing charges in connection with a complex narcotics money scheme.

Named in the indictment returned Wednesday but unsealed yesterday were Duke's wife, Patricia Bettyce Holley, Holley's sister Alta Laverne Manuel and Ralph Clinton Tillman.

Holley, 36, of 111 Marquette Av., is named in 10 counts. Manuel, 39, of 1633 Xerxes Av. N., and Tillman, 34, of 1396 Portland Av., St. Paul, were named in four counts.

In a prepared statement, U.S. Attorney Jerome Arnold said the object of the four-year conspiracy was to conceal the fact that narcotics were Duke's source of income and to avoid income tax.

Duke and 20 other individuals were indicted in the alleged scheme by a federal grand jury in June. They face many drug-related charges, including conspiracy to distribute cocaine. Duke is being held without bail.

Holley was indicted for conspiracy to impede the Internal Revenue Service, improperly structuring financial transactions and failure to file appropriate financial transaction statements.

Holley, Manuel and Tillman were

arrested yesterday morning and made their first appearances before U.S. Magistrate J. Earl Cudd in Minneapolis. Bail for Holley was set at \$50,000; Manuel and Tillman's bail was set at \$10,000 each.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jon Hope-man said in court yesterday that Holley was Duke's principal money launderer. He said she worked for the Postal Service but had cash deposits of \$184,000 go through her bank account in three years. He also said she and Duke spent more than \$1 million during that time.

The 46-count indictment outlines an elaborate scheme involving bank deposits, cashier's checks and purchases of homes, cars and furniture in other people's names or with cash.

It said Holley, Manuel and their mother, Rosemary Holley, who was not indicted, Tillman and others helped Duke buy a home in Delano, Minn., by purchasing with currency cashier's checks in their names.

"This concealed and disguised the ownership of an asset purchased with proceeds from the sale of narcotics," said the indictment.

It said that neither Duke nor Holley have filed an income tax return since 1985.

Duke, 44, has been described as the organizer of one of the most extensive drug operations in Minnesota. His trial is scheduled for Nov. 13.