

Nine indicted in Oakland drug network

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Five people have been arrested and four others are being sought in connection with what is described as a "multi-million dollar drug network" operating in southern Oakland County.

Among the customers of the drug network are recent graduates of Troy High School and, presumably, students enrolled there and in other high schools, according to Oakland Prosecutor Richard Thompson who called a press conference Wednesday.

"We have no indication they (the drug network) was operating in Troy High School" or any other school, said Troy police Chief Lawrence Carey. "But we know some recent

Troy graduates were involved and (presumably) they sold to acquaintances still in school."

Of those indicted, eight are from Troy and one is from West Bloomfield Township.

Carey and Hazel Park police Chief Albert Sadow attended the press conference.

Thompson said warrants against the nine people were obtained on the basis of two indictments handed down by the Oakland County Grand Jury late Tuesday.

Although the drug ring was based in Troy and Hazel Park, Thompson said it was part of a larger narcotics network "with tentacles extending" into most Oakland County communities.

THE DRUG NETWORK was lucrative, Thompson said, with one de-

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with the cooperative effort of local police departments," Thompson said.

THOSE INDICTED were identified as: Robert Darcy Sr., 42; Robert Darcy Jr., 20; Sally Smith, 33; Robert Jessman, age unknown; Irene Jessman, 65; Kirk Appleman, 20; Mark Piwtorak, 29; Steven Blaszcak, 19, all of Troy, and Christopher Quann, 20, of West Bloomfield.

Irene Jessman, Appleman, Piwtorak, Quann and Blaszcak have all been arrested, Thompson said. They stood mute Wednesday when arraigned before Robert C. Anderson, chief judge of the Oakland Circuit Court.

Anderson set bond at \$1 million for Jessman and \$5,000 for the other four defendants. None had posted bond as of late Wednesday.

According to one of the grand jury indictments, the elder Darcy, Smith and Robert and Irene Jessman are charged with conspiring to possess or deliver — and possessing or deliv-

ering — more than 650 grams of cocaine.

They face maximum penalties of life in prison if convicted.

Specifically they are accused of storing "multiple kilogram quantities of cocaine" at 1105 Glaser in Troy from Jan. 1, 1985 through Dec. 15 of this year, according to the indictment.

THE SAME INDICTMENT states Darcy possessed more than 2,800 grams of cocaine and more than \$22,000 in cash and checks last Feb. 22, in the city of Hazel Park.

The second indictment states that between Jan. 1 and Dec. 15 of this year, Robert Darcy Jr., Appleman, Quann, Piwtorak and Blaszcak conspired to possess and deliver 50 or more grams of cocaine, a felony carrying a maximum penalty of 10 to 20 years in prison.

They are also charged with delivering less than 50 grams of cocaine, a felony with a maximum penalty of a \$25,000 fine, 1 to 20 years in prison and lifetime probation.

County winning war on drugs, Thompson says

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Oakland County appears to be winning its war on drugs and should not succumb to those who would decriminalize the use of narcotics, according to prosecutor Richard Thompson.

The grand jury has been meeting quietly since September when it was authorized by the Oakland Circuit Court judges for six months.

Thompson made his comments Wednesday in response to questions during a press conference called to announce two more indictments from the Oakland County Grand Jury involving nine people.

"This brings the total number of people indicted by the grand jury to 13, including two who are charged with murder," Thompson said.

The grand jury has been meeting quietly since September when it was authorized by the Oakland Circuit Court judges for six months.

The jury is scheduled to go out of existence in February. But Thompson seemed to hint that he would ask to have it extended for another six months, or possibly ask for another grand jury.

"We will have to make an evaluation," Thompson said. "But so far, I think the grand jury has proven its effectiveness."

that Oakland County is waging an effective campaign against drug traffic, even though he acknowledged the nine people indicted were part of a "multi-million dollar ring" that is part of a much larger, and presumably more lucrative, narcotics operation.

It would be a serious mistake to let up on the war on drugs, Thompson said, much less decriminalize use of narcotics.

"That would be very bad public policy," he said.

Thompson said he believes narcotics use in Oakland County is on the decline, although he didn't have any specific evidence to support that claim.

fendant — Robert Darcy Sr., the person the prosecutor called the "ring leader" — boasting of "putting away more than \$2 million."

The drug operation involved a money laundering scheme, but he declined to give details of how it worked or what businesses were involved.

Police have been investigating the operation for some time and on at least one occasion last August, undercover officers from Troy bought several packets of cocaine, Thompson reported.

Although police agencies suspected that a drug network was operating in the area as early as 1985, they were unable to gather enough evidence for arrest warrants, Thompson said.

Witnesses simply wouldn't cooperate until authorities compelled them to testify before the grand jury.

"This case is a good example of what a citizens grand jury can do

ABKED IF HE sought out, or received, any feedback from the circuit judges, Thompson said. Those judges would have to approve any extension of the existing grand jury or calling a new one.

The prosecutor said he is confident

"I just believe the situation in Oakland County mirrors what is happening nationally," Patterson said. He was referring to statistics cited by national drug enforcement officials showing that drug use is down.

GOP targeting drunk drivers

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Young drinking drivers are the particular target of Republican state representatives who served on a drunk driving task force.

THE PANEL stopped short of recommending that bars be closed at midnight, as in other countries, rather than Michigan's 2:30 a.m.

"We consciously decided to focus on the law enforcement aspect rather than on liquor laws," said Fitzgerald, a former Eaton County assistant prosecutor.

"Zero tolerance for those 20 or younger" is the phrase chairman Frank Fitzgerald, R-Grand Ledge, used as his panel unveiled a series of 34 recommendations, mostly dealing with "swifter and more certain punishment."

Police are cool to the earlier closing idea for fear it would only push drinkers into illegal "blind pigs."

Dolan and Fitzgerald also doubted the value in suburban society of the British system of neighborhood pubs, small and numerous establishments from which drinkers could walk home.

"We have cases of 13- and 14-year-olds in possession of alcohol," said Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, one of seven panel members. "For those who drink under-age, there would be a mandatory delay in getting their first license." (See chart)

"Our zoning wouldn't permit it," said Dolan, a former city councilwoman and mayor.

The report was issued Monday at a series of news conferences, including one in Farmington Hills, where the panel had a public hearing earlier in the year.

DOLAN URGED police to videotape people in the police station when they are arrested for drunk driving because "when they come to court they look like they've stepped off Wall Street."

ALTHOUGH ONLY one in 3,000 drunk drivers ever is arrested, according to state estimates, those odds could be improved, Fitzgerald said.

Fitzgerald said higher enforcement costs could be met, at least in part, by charging convicted drivers for participating in community service and alternative detention programs. Those programs would allow the convicted driver to continue working.

"We're recommending the Oakland County model be followed," he said.

The Oakland sheriff has a special task force that targets particular roads, such as Telegraph and Woodward, on nights when much drunk driving occurs.

Dolan said support for the GOP recommendations would be sought from majority Democrats.

Dolan said the House Liquor Control Committee, of which she is a member, meets whenever bills are assigned to it.

"We're trying to change behavior," said Fitzgerald, citing a national study showing that drivers change their habits when impressed by news of tougher laws.

Several GOP recommendations were aimed at "encouraging" tougher action by police, prosecutors and judges rather than mandating it or funding it.

"But our committee does not take initiatives," she said.

Fitzgerald said Republicans set up their own task force to show people "this is what we would be doing if we were the majority party and had control of the House and its committee structure. As a minority, they don't set the agenda."

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