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## Morris-led drug bust nets more than 100

### Morristown man accused of being network ringleader

**BY JIM NAMIOTKA**  
**DAILY RECORD**

MORRISTOWN -- Authorities announced the arrests of more than 100 people on Saturday aimed at disruption of a multi-state drug-trafficking network that distributed cocaine, heroin, marijuana and oxycodone in and around Morris County.

Dubbed "Operation Redirect," 400 police officers swarmed across Morris, Sussex and Warren counties beginning at 5:30 a.m. Saturday to make the arrests, with some taking place as far away as New York and Florida, according to the Morris County Prosecutor's Office.

Among those arrested and charged:

- Ovie N. "Tony" Lattimore, 50, of Kissimmee, Fla., and George R. Washington, 43, of Morristown, were charged as leaders of the drug trafficking network. Each was held on \$350,000 cash bail on Saturday.

Authorities said Lattimore ran the network from his Florida home, but traveled to New Jersey often to direct local operations. Washington -- whose aunt and brother also were arrested in Saturday's sweep -- reported to Lattimore in the network's hierarchy.

Several of Lattimore's relatives also were caught up in the sweep, including sisters Myra and Terri. Lattimore is to be extradited from Osceola County, Fla., later this week.

- Two Montville grandparents -- 70-year-old George Delvecchio and his 69-year-old wife, Jean Delvecchio. George Delvecchio is charged with conspiracy to possess and distribute large amounts of cocaine and marijuana. He was jailed on \$200,000 cash bail on Saturday. Jean Delvecchio is charged with conspiracy to possess and distribute cocaine. She is being held on \$25,000 cash bail.

Authorities said the Delvecchios ran distribution operations in the Roxbury area.

- James Hamilton Jackson, 47, of Madison was known as the cocaine kingpin of Morris County before his arrest in 1991. He was released from state prison in 2000 and remains on parole.

Authorities said Jackson was an ancillary part of the "Operation Redirect" network, but, in the 1990s, he was prosecuted as a drug kingpin and a jury convicted him of 38 offenses. He was sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years. But the conviction was overturned and a new trial ordered in 1996 while Jackson remained behind bars.

Rather than face retrial, Jackson pleaded guilty in April 1999 and was sentenced to 27 years. He was first eligible for parole in May 2000.

Authorities said it was Jackson's first arrest since he was paroled.

- Timothy Crew, brother of Stanton Crew, who was shot to death by New Jersey State Police troopers in 1999 following a 15-mile chase on Route 80. The infamous incident inflamed racial tensions and sparked accusations of racial profiling by state police.
- Barbara Wilfong, mother of Jhana Wilfong, a Morristown Bloods leader who already faces a long list of drug charges in Morris County.

The Morris County Prosecutor's Office said the "Operation Redirect" investigation is continuing. By Saturday afternoon,

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Ovie N. 'Tony' Lattimore was charged as a leader of the drug trafficking network, authorities said.

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more than 100 people had been arrested and at least 30 vehicles were confiscated. Seizures also included drugs, weapons, cash and other items related to the distribution network.

The Prosecutor's Office also said it plans to aggressively pursue prosecution of those arrested in Saturday's dawn raids.

## **200 cases**

With 200 cases from previous Morris County drug raids -- including "Operation Bulldog" and "Operation Direct Pressure" -- Prosecutor Robert Bianchi has assigned additional staff to put an end to case backlogs. But he admits it will take some time.

"As a prosecutor, all I can do is arrest the bad guys," Bianchi said on Saturday. "It's up to the courts to dispose of the cases."

Appointed to the prosecutor's office earlier this year, Bianchi said he is still trying to prosecute backlogs of cases left by his predecessor, Michael Rubbinaccio. Some murder cases have been on the books for five years or longer, he said, allowing lower-level drug cases to idle.

But Bianchi's new policy calls for aggressive prosecution to ensure that drug cases aren't disposed of with light plea bargains. He insists that the courts play a role in that effort.

"This office is not going to engage in a carousel of 'claims adjusting' cases," he said, meaning that his office will offer only plea bargains that call for a fair result to charges. But the courts must set firm trial dates he can use as a hammer over defendants' cases. Without the credible threat of trial, he said, defense attorneys have no motivation to accept plea offers.

"I don't know what else I can do," Bianchi said.

## **Federal, state, local**

Federal, state and local police participated in Saturday's raid.

Agencies included the Morris County Sheriff's Department, the Morris County Park Police, the New Jersey State Police, the U.S. Marshall Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Postal Inspector, the New Jersey Division of Parole, the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice, Human Services, the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the New York City Police Department and local police from Boonton, Boonton Township, Chatham Township, Chester Township, Chester, Denville, Florham Park, Hanover, Mountain Lakes, Long Hill, Montville, Morris Plains, Morristown, Morris Township, Mount Olive, Parsippany, Pequannock, Randolph, Raritan Township, Riverdale, Rockaway, Rockaway Township, Roxbury, Wharton, the Morris County Office of Emergency Management and the Morris County Crime Stoppers, which Bianchi credited with providing a steady stream of information that assisted investigators.

Case agents from the Roxbury, Morristown and Morris Township police departments were assigned to the task force, which additionally was supported with more than 30 other agencies.

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