

*State of New Jersey  
Commission of Investigation*

**AFRO-LINEAL  
ORGANIZED CRIME**

*March 1991*

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132300

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Commission of Investigation*

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U.S. Department of Justice  
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***March 1991***



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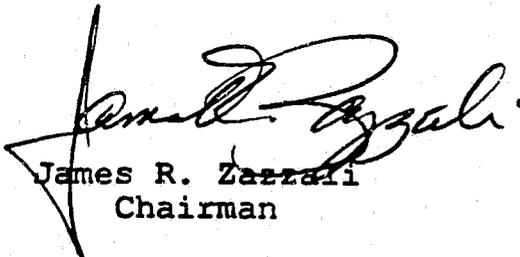
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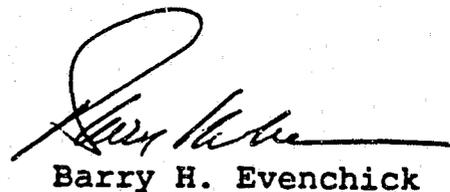
Governor James J. Florio  
The President and Members of the Senate  
The Speaker and Members of the General Assembly

The State Commission of Investigation herewith formally submits, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:9M, a report on its investigation into matters relating to Afro-lineal organized crime, including its public hearing held on November 29, 1990.

Respectfully,



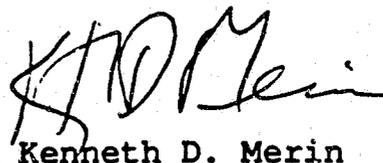
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>AFRICAN-AMERICANS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>THE FAMILY (NORTH).....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME GROUPS IN NEWARK.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Paterson Group .....	4
Ratchford Family .....	4
Brown Family .....	4
Williams Group .....	4
Lee Group .....	4
<b>THE FAMILY (SOUTH).....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>JUNIOR BLACK MAFIA.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CAMDEN "SETS".....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>GAMBLING RINGS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Leonard Jones Group .....	6
Gilbert Young Group .....	7
Lewis Tyler Group .....	7
Eugene Terry Group .....	7
Wayne Pack Group .....	7
<b>E'PORT POSSE.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ISAAC WRIGHT GROUP.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>FIVE PERCENTERS.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>GANGS.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>JAMAICAN POSSES .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SHOWER POSSE.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>SPANGLER POSSE.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>DUNKIRK BOYS POSSE.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>TEL AVIV POSSE.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>WATERHOUSE POSSE.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>NIGERIANS.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>COMMON CONCERNS ABOUT AFRO-LINEAL CRIMINAL GROUPS.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>BREEDING GROUNDS FOR DURABLE SYNDICATES.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>VIOLENCE.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>DESTRUCTION OF NEIGHBORHOODS.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>BROAD IMPACT AND CONNECTIONS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>CONCEALMENT (HIDING THE WEALTH, CORRUPTION, AURA     OF RESPECTABILITY).....</b>	<b>34</b>

<b>RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>EMPHASIZE REDUCTION OF DRUG DEMAND.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>INCREASE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE AND ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>INCREASE INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AND SHARING.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>TARGET, EXPOSE AND ISOLATE LEADERS.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>RETAIN AND EXPAND ORGANIZED CRIME FIGHTING TOOLS.....</b>	<b>46</b>

# AFRO-LINEAL ORGANIZED CRIME

*The Commission shall have the duty and power to conduct investigations in connection with ... organized crime and racketeering .... (N.J.S.A. 52:9M-2)*

*... [T]he Commission shall keep the public informed as to the operations of organized crime .... (N.J.S.A. 52:9M-11)*

## INTRODUCTION

The public, media, and even most law enforcement officials, have traditionally associated the term "organized crime" with Italian ethnic criminal syndicates, commonly called La Cosa Nostra (LCN) or the Mafia. To counter this narrow point of view, the State Commission of Investigation (SCI or Commission) has, for some time, emphasized that LCN, while a serious problem, represents only part of the organized underworld which preys on New Jersey and the rest of the country.

Among the criminal groups which should receive more attention than they have in the past are those of African ethnic background. Such Afro-lineal organized crime -- composed exclusively or predominantly of persons of African ancestry -- includes criminal syndicates of African-Americans, Jamaicans, Nigerians and others.

The neglect of this problem stems, in part, from the erroneous stereotype that African ethnic groups lack the stability to organize and are not capable of structuring a syndicate of any consequence. In addition, law enforcement resources are limited, and they have been devoted to dealing with more familiar groups which receive greater media attention, probably because they are perceived to threaten suburban interests.

Whatever the cause of the neglect, it has led, in many areas, to a serious shortage of information concerning the activities, membership and leadership of Afro-lineal criminal groups. As a result, several have become wealthy and entrenched, with substantial numbers of members. Their leaders are insulated from police investigations. They have

terrorized neighborhoods, corrupted youth and fanned violence in urban areas.

Afro-lineal criminal groups are particularly threatening because they are heavily engaged in narcotics trafficking, a scourge against all of society and a severe impediment to urban revitalization. They also promote significant frauds, high-volume illicit gambling, murder, extortion, official corruption and other criminal activities.

For several years, the SCI has developed intelligence on Afro-lineal mobs. These efforts culminated in a public hearing on November 29, 1990. This report summarizes the public hearing and provides additional information in order to give a comprehensive review of the problem and recommendations for dealing with it. In addition, some successful law enforcement efforts to curtail Afro-lineal organized crime will be highlighted in anticipation that they will be imitated elsewhere in New Jersey.

A survey of New Jersey law enforcement agencies conducted by the Commission concentrated on reported activity by African-American, Jamaican and Nigerian criminal groups in New Jersey. As reported at the Commission's public hearing by SCI Intelligence Analyst Debra A. Sowney, African-American groups have been identified as active in thirteen counties: Passaic, Bergen, Hudson, Essex, Union, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic, Camden, Mercer, Somerset and Morris. They participate primarily in the distribution of narcotics, but they were also reported to be involved in homicides, robberies, aggravated assaults and weapons offenses. In addition, the survey, combined with the SCI's own intelligence, revealed that African-

American groups are involved in organized illegal gambling, often in cooperation with La Cosa Nostra, in the counties of Bergen, Essex, Union, Camden, Passaic, Mercer and Hudson.

The survey also showed that Jamaican posses operated throughout New Jersey. They were reported to be active in the same thirteen counties where African-American criminal groups were reported, as well as Burlington and Cumberland counties. Jamaican posses primarily distribute drugs and traffic in weapons, but they also engage in homicides, robberies, assaults and extortion. In the survey, several agencies reported that Jamaican posses interact with African-American groups in drug distribution, providing them with narcotics and using them for transportation.

Agencies identified Nigerian criminal operations in six counties, Hudson, Essex, Union, Middlesex, Burlington and Mercer. Nigerian groups specialized in various types of fraud, including false bank accounts, writing bad checks, forgery, counterfeiting, credit card fraud and student loan fraud. Local groups are small, but they interact with larger groups on the national level. Those Nigerians involved in the smuggling of heroin and cocaine into the United States have not, to date, been linked to the leadership of the organized Nigerian fraud networks, although both the fraud and narcotics operations have ties to operatives in Nigeria.

## AFRICAN-AMERICANS

Organized and powerful, African-American criminal groups have operated in the United States for decades. One of the witnesses at the SCI's public hearing, Donald L. Ashton, Special Agent-in-Charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New Jersey Division, testified about his experiences with such organizations throughout the country:

*Highly organized, wealthy and dangerous African-American organized crime groups*

*have been around for a long time, particularly in the area of drug trafficking. As an example, in 1968, while I was assigned to the [DEA's] Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, office I investigated an African-American heroin trafficking organization which controlled the heroin distribution in Pittsburgh and identified the source of supply for this organization as an individual in New York.*

*In 1972, while assigned to Cincinnati, Ohio, I investigated an African-American heroin trafficking organization, which also controlled the heroin distribution in Cincinnati. The source of supply for this group was also in New York.*

*In 1976, while assigned to the Wilmington, North Carolina, office, I investigated a major heroin trafficking organization which was responsible for bringing into the United States thousands of kilos of pure heroin from Southeast Asia during the height of the Vietnam War. Our investigation revealed that this North Carolina-based organization and importer of heroin, consisting of well over 100 members, was the source of supply to both individuals in New York which supplied the organizations I referred to in Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, as well as other groups in Detroit, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Richmond and Norfolk. This organization developed a number of sophisticated methods of smuggling heroin into the United States, most of which were through the U.S. military channels.*

...

*They were ex-military, inactive military, most were master sergeants. They utilized the military system in a number of different methods to bring heroin back from Southeast Asia. The most notable method, which made the media, was that they were alleged to have brought heroin back in the bodies of dead servicemen.*

## THE FAMILY (NORTH)

New Jersey has a significant presence of African-American organized crime. A Newark-based cocaine and marijuana trafficking organization, called The Family, operates in several areas of the country. It was headed by Wayne (Akbar) Pray for nearly 20 years until his incarceration in federal prison in 1989 for life, without the opportunity for parole. Pray was convicted for being the "principal administrator" of a substantial cocaine importing and distribution organization. At its height, Pray's group had about 300 members and associates. Newark Police Director Claude M. Coleman testified at the SCI public hearing as to the difficulties encountered in investigating Pray:

*For some years ... [Pray] was considered to be one of the so-called untouchables, because he never came close to the [narcotics]. He was leading the life of wealth and influence, [but] I think everyone knew that he was involved in drug dealing .... Nonetheless, he had not been ... brought to justice, so to speak.*

Director Coleman related how Pray built up The Family through "fear, intimidation and violence," directed primarily against rivals for the drug trade. Although the group has continued after Pray's incarceration, Director Coleman described it as "fragmented" with several of Pray's former lieutenants "now dealing on their own as freelancers" and some having been incarcerated.

DEA Special Agent-in-Charge Ashton detailed the past and current status of The Family in testimony at the Commission's public hearing:

*... Akbar's African-American organized crime network, called The Family, continues to operate. It is based in Essex County and consists of over two hundred members. Pray's organization started in the early 1970s as [an outgrowth of] the New World of Islam.*

*The Muslim [name] Akbar means omnipotent, all powerful, or the great one. In fact, Akbar referred to himself as Akbar Akbar in some cases, or the greatest of the great. He lived up to this name by assuming control over a vast and durable criminal network. The New World of Islam initially focused on supporting bank robberies and even operated a bank robbery school. Pray's drug trafficking venture started out in a small area of Essex County and eventually extended to several states, including Ohio, Michigan, New York and Southern Florida.*

*At its height Pray's network had at least 12 mid-level supervisors classified by the DEA as Class I violators. A Class I cocaine trafficker is defined by DEA as one who has the capability of distributing at least fifty kilos of cocaine on a monthly basis and manages at least five subordinate drug traffickers.*

...

*During Pray's 1989 federal trial for leading a continuing cocaine and marijuana trafficking enterprise, DEA witnesses testified that he was responsible for possessing and distributing approximately 188 kilograms of cocaine in a five-month period between February and June of 1987. In addition, he was responsible for distributing approximately 544 pounds of marijuana during the same period. It is estimated that Pray's organization was receiving millions of dollars of gross income annually.*

...

*Pray's organization is presently operating at a much lower and more discrete level with basically the same structure. Reliable sources have indicated that Pray ... has maintained his customers and contacts and is still overseeing his drug transactions from prison.*

## NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME GROUPS IN NEW-ARK

In his public hearing testimony Director Coleman described several criminal groups that take advantage of drug markets concentrated in certain Newark neighborhoods. He noted that sometimes the territory of one of these groups extends no farther than the environs of a single large building "in the projects."

### Paterson Group

Kenneth (KP) Paterson was a Wayne Pray protégé who operated a successful cocaine trafficking ring in the Columbus Home projects for many years until the buildings which he controlled were abandoned. Paterson was incarcerated on April 28, 1989, after a conviction for distributing drugs to minors. Estimates of the size of this group range from five street managers and an undetermined number of workers to 20-25 members.

### Ratchford Family

This group operates in the area of a single building at 260 Prince Street. Led by Eddie Ratchford, once an associate of Wayne Pray, the group numbers only about 15 members. Director Coleman described the group as "sophisticated" and "rather violent in defending its territory." Eddie Ratchford is presently in federal prison for cocaine trafficking and is scheduled for release on December 17, 1992. His brother, Derrick, is in federal prison for drug distribution and is scheduled for release on October 10, 1991. Two other brothers, Marvin and Willie, continue the operations of the group.

### Brown Family

The Brown group distributes drugs in the 17th Avenue area. It occasionally cooperates with the Ratchford brothers, according to Director Coleman, and was similarly led by three brothers. One brother,

Ernest (Bo), was incarcerated in state prison for murder on June 25, 1982. Another, Phil, was murdered, and the third, Dennis (Mufee), is presently in charge of the group, which has 20-25 members.

### Williams Group

Until he was recently sentenced to 60 years in prison, Roger G. (Little Akbar; Little Ak) Williams led a cocaine and heroin distribution ring, which had at least 30 members and operated in the Prince Street area of Newark. A close associate of Wayne Pray, Williams started his group after Pray's incarceration. The Williams group was recently involved in a turf war with the Ratchford family in the area of 260 Prince Street. The territorial squabbling erupted after a lengthy period during which the two groups respected each other's territory. Williams is presently incarcerated for homicide.

### Lee Group

Another group which distributes cocaine in the Prince Street area is headed by Harry (Butch) Lee. The group is composed of 40-50 members. Lee oversees the group from his residence in the state of Georgia. Director Coleman noted that Lee himself is well-insulated from the people that are directly selling the drugs in New Jersey.

## THE FAMILY (SOUTH)

Rivaling the power of The Family headed by Wayne Pray in northern New Jersey, another group calling itself The Family distributed heroin and cocaine for nearly 20 years in the Philadelphia area, including southern New Jersey. The group was headed by the late Roland (Pops) Bartlett, a resident of New Jersey, until his federal conviction in the fall of 1987 for conspiracy to distribute heroin and operating a continuing criminal enterprise. He was imprisoned in that case for 35 years with no oppor-

tunity for parole. The Family consisted of approximately 60 members and associates, 35 of whom were indicted with Bartlett in 1987.

Bartlett was also convicted in state court on November 29, 1988, for ordering the contract murder of his Willingboro, New Jersey, neighbor. Bartlett was sentenced to life with a minimum 30-year term in December 1988. He died in federal prison on January 15, 1990.

Bartlett cooperated with the Genovese-Gigante crime family of La Cosa Nostra and made substantial investments in legitimate businesses. Much of The Family's income was invested in the corporate entities Bartlett Enterprises, Inc. and Domino Records, Inc. Among the group's known assets were a 60-acre retreat in the Pocono Mountains; five houses, two lots and a night club in Philadelphia; a \$750,000 home in Cherry Hill; 32 acres in Georgia, and several race horses.

Bartlett group members and associates sold heroin and cocaine to street operatives in Camden and Burlington counties in New Jersey. It has been estimated that The Family grossed close to \$7 million per year while it existed.

### JUNIOR BLACK MAFIA

Based in Philadelphia, the Junior Black Mafia (JBM) is involved primarily in the distribution of drugs, mainly cocaine. It also offers murder contract services. The JBM cooperates with associates of the Bruno-Scarfo LCN crime family in the distribution of cocaine and appears to have modeled its criminal methods after that organization, relying heavily on violence and extortion to further its drug enterprises.

The JBM came into existence in 1985 to counter a sudden migration of New York-based Jamaican posses into the Philadelphia drug scene. Original members of the 1960s Black Mafia (and later Black, Inc.) organized African-American youths into the

JBM to thwart the Jamaican influence and to regain from the Jamaicans control of drug distribution in the affected areas of Philadelphia.

The JBM is estimated to have approximately 100 members and about 300 street-level associates. Its members drive expensive cars and often wear gold jewelry and rings with the JBM initials encrusted in diamonds. Originally, admission into the group required a \$1,000 initiation fee, lack of a criminal record and the operation of an established illegal activity.

In Philadelphia the JBM has sought to expand its drug trafficking profits by offering independent narcotics dealers membership in the JBM. The Pennsylvania Crime Commission documented two 1989 incidents in which the JBM targeted for death dealers who turned down such offers.

Information regarding the JBM's influence or activity in New Jersey has been limited due to the lack of a coordinated intelligence collection effort. The Commission has been able to document at least two members and eight associates living in Camden and Burlington counties. On February 20, 1991, five associates of the JBM from Philadelphia were arrested in Camden County by the Philadelphia office of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) while transporting a kilogram of cocaine intended for sale in Philadelphia. Just as the old Black Mafia from Philadelphia eventually spread into Camden, Burlington, Gloucester, Cumberland and Atlantic counties, it is likely that this new group of African-American organized criminals will follow suit.

### CAMDEN "SETS"

Three detectives from the Camden Police Department -- Leonard Hall, George Joyner and Louis Muzyczek -- testified at the public hearing that scattered street-level drug markets in Camden are controlled by organized groups of youthful drug dealers who claim dominance over particular "sets"

or areas of operation for drug sales. In response to questions by SCI Counsel Charlotte K. Gaal, Detective Muzyczek described these youth gangs:

*Q. What is the age range of these youths?*

*A. Their ages range between 13 and 24 years old.*

*Q. How are the youth involved in the drug trade structured or organized?*

*A. The drug dealing youth are structured into sets which vary in size and area of operation. The controlling elements of the young street dealers in Camden are outside the city, and they are insulated by means of mid-level managers.*

...

*Q. Can you give us some examples of sets in Camden?*

*A. We have approximately 38 active sets throughout the city. They label themselves by some street corner names like the 24th Street Posse, the 32nd Street Posse, and so forth.*

*Q. What is the racial composition of these sets?*

*A. Some of the sets are racially mixed, Hispanic and black. Approximate composition of these sets throughout the city, of the total of 38 that we know, 75 percent I would estimate are black and 25 percent are Hispanic.*

*Q. How many principals control the 38 sets in Camden, in your opinion?*

*A. I would say there are no more than seven to 10 individuals who control all of the sets in the City of Camden.*

*Q. Are the sets organized?*

*A. The fact that the sets are organized is not in doubt. The problem is being able to identify the controlling individuals, since*

*they do not get directly involved in the distribution of the drugs. In most instances the young street dealers have no idea who the ultimate boss is of the operation, as the boss only deals with trusted managers, who in turn deal directly with the mid-level managers. We know they are well-organized because if we go into an area and we make five arrests on a corner today, tomorrow there will be five more people ... out there to replace them.*

### GAMBLING RINGS

Historically, many ardent supporters of illegal numbers gambling were in the African-American community. Illegal lottery operations run by African-American groups continue to thrive in New Jersey's urban areas despite the existence of a legal state lottery. Unlike the state lottery, illegal lottery operations have no minimum wager. They also offer better odds and extend short-term credit to the bettors. Finally, convenience and cultural traditions play a role in the continued existence of illegal numbers.

#### Leonard Jones Group

Over the decades, the illegal lotteries and numbers games were actually controlled by La Cosa Nostra, and black operatives worked within the framework established by them. Today, LCN control has begun to diminish in some areas of New Jersey.

Leonard A. (Benny the Bum) Jones has operated an independent black numbers gambling network for years in Camden, Burlington and Gloucester counties. In 1989, the New Jersey State Police arrested Jones and several of his underlings for operating an illegal lottery. They were subsequently indicted by a state grand jury on July 19, 1990, for operating an illegal lottery. The case is awaiting trial. Based on the records seized at the time, it was estimated that Jones' operation netted

over \$1 million per year.

### Gilbert Young Group

Another numbers operation in Camden County is run by Gilbert R. (Buck) Young. Young is associated with Frank A. DiSalvio, an associate of the Bruno-Scarfo organization of La Cosa Nostra, who last year fled New Jersey to avoid an SCI subpoena. The group lays off bets to the Bruno-Scarfo mob.

### Lewis Tyler Group

In northern New Jersey African-American illegal gambling operatives work with the LCN. For example, Lewis H. Tyler of Jersey City runs a gambling and narcotics operation in conjunction with the Genovese-Gigante crime family.

### Eugene Terry Group

Also in Jersey City, Eugene Terry, Sr., is the leader of a black gambling syndicate which also operates in conjunction with the Genovese-Gigante crime family. Terry, along with his brother, Steven (Buzz) Terry, is also involved in the financing of a cocaine distribution network.

### Wayne Pack Group

In Trenton an African-American known as Wayne Pack conducts an illegal lottery which lays off to Gambino-Gotti LCN associate Anthony (Pushy) Pulcinello. Under changing leadership, this operation has been in existence since 1954. In its early years, its leaders dealt with the Bruno-Scarfo LCN family.

### E'PORT POSSE

At the Commission's public hearing Elizabeth Police Detective Thomas G. Swan testified about a particularly vicious group of young African-American males that operated a cocaine trafficking net-

work in Elizabeth and the Clinton Avenue area of Newark. In March 1988, working with the Union County Narcotics Strike Force and the State Police, the Elizabeth Police Detective Division began making a series of undercover narcotics buys from street level dealers near the Pioneer Homes housing project in Elizabeth. The investigation was dubbed Operation Pioneer.

After search warrants and arrests in November 1988, Detective Swan was able to develop a confidential informant, Mutah Sessoms, who revealed that the vast majority of those arrested in Operation Pioneer were part of organizations controlled by two brothers, Robert and Bilal Pretlow. After the arrests, the two groups merged under the leadership of the younger brother, Bilal. Organization members called themselves the E'Port Posse, Phase II, after the Elizabeth Seaport, and modeled themselves after Jamaican posses, often dressing in flamboyant style, arming themselves with sophisticated weapons and investing in expensive jewelry. Several expensive cars driven by group members were placed in the names of their acquaintances or relatives.

Starting out as a marijuana dealer in high school, Bilal Pretlow eventually grabbed the drug market for his and his brother Robert's organization and ran rival gangs out of Elizabeth, occasionally with shootouts -- some in broad daylight. Detective Swan testified as to the grandiose style in which Bilal Pretlow pursued his goal to expand:

*Bilal convened a meeting of drug dealers from all over Elizabeth in a central New Jersey restaurant. There he indicated his intention to control drug trafficking in the Elizabeth area and threatened that those who would not go along would face reprisals.*

Detective Swan testified that the group's cocaine supply came from a Dominican by the name of Benson, who was located in New York City. The

cocaine was generally transported to Elizabeth in taxi cabs. In 1989 the group was distributing kilograms of cocaine resulting in profits up to a hundred thousand dollars a week.

Law enforcement strengthened its resolve to deal with the E'Port Posse as the violence surrounding its operations escalated. Mutah Sessoms, the informant, was murdered in June 1989. Robert Pretlow was slain by a rival gang on July 9, 1989. The next day, a third Pretlow brother, Thomas, killed Bobby Ray Davis, a Newark drug trafficker with designs on the Pretlow turf, in retaliation for Robert Pretlow's death. The federal Drug Enforcement Administration, Union County Sheriff's Office, Newark Police and Essex County Sheriff's Office joined the Elizabeth Police, State Police and Union County Prosecutor's Office in the investigation. Sessoms' description of an organized criminal enterprise was taken seriously at all levels.

Detective Swan testified how Bilal Pretlow continued to run the operation even while incarcerated:

*At the time of the November 1988 and subsequent arrests, Bilal Pretlow had paid bail and attorneys fees for his group members. While in the Union County Jail on various drug charges, he continued to run his organization by calling telephones equipped with speed dialing, call forwarding and conference call capabilities. Telephone toll records to the apartment used by Shawn Hartwell, his first lieutenant who ran the operation in his absence, showed nearly 400 collect calls from the Union County Jail from December 1988 to early February 1989. Many of these calls were for extended periods of time. Some lasted more than an hour. We had one or two going into three and a half hours.*

*Normally the inmates are allowed use the public telephone at the jail during a specific*

*eight-hour period, and each is restricted to approximately five, maybe ten minutes at a time. Bilal Pretlow, however, ingratiated himself with other inmates by getting his underlings to post bail for them. He bought them gifts and promised them jobs upon his release. Those jobs were in his drug distribution operation. In one instance he bought \$70 Reebok sneakers for all the inmates on his tier, which numbered in excess of thirty-five. The inmates returned favors by giving up their allotted telephone time to Pretlow. This alone, though, does not adequately explain to us ... the extensive use of the telephone [from the jail].*

On January 18, 1991, Thomas Pretlow was convicted of manslaughter in the fatal shooting of Bobby Ray Davis. Federal charges brought by the United States Attorney for New Jersey are pending against Bilal Pretlow and eight other members of his group. Bilal Pretlow faces the death penalty on two of the charges brought under a new federal law which provides for capital punishment for persons convicted of drug-related murders. He is presently scheduled to begin trial in federal court in Newark on March 26, along with eight other members of his group charged with participating in the drug ring and various other offenses. Bilal Pretlow is presently serving a 20-year sentence in state prison stemming from a drug trafficking conviction in November 1989 arising out of Operation Pioneer.

In December 1990 Husamiddi Williams was sentenced to 13 years in federal prison after pleading guilty to charges of possession of cocaine with intention to distribute and possession of weapons in furtherance of illegal drug activity. Williams ran a "franchise" at Sixth and South Park streets in Elizabeth for the E'Port Posse for more than a year until he was arrested in August 1989. He employed at least four juveniles to assist in the drug sales. Williams was apprehended by Elizabeth detectives after a shootout between Williams and rival drug dealers.

Detective Swan testified that police seized \$270,000 in cash, 19 guns, five cars and about \$30,000 in jewelry from Bilal Pretlow and his underlings.

### ISAAC WRIGHT GROUP

Somerset County Prosecutor Nicholas L. Bissell, Jr., testified at the Commission's public hearing about the operations of a cocaine trafficking ring that plagued housing projects in Somerset and Middlesex counties. He described how various law enforcement agencies first came into contact with members of the group and how this led to a successful cooperative effort to short circuit its operations and bring its alleged leader, Isaac Wright, Jr., to trial:

*Q. Please describe the operation of [the Isaac Wright] group and the roles played by various individuals in it and the efforts by law enforcement to discover it and curtail its activities.*

*A. Our office first became aware of this group when the Franklin Township Police Department reported to us that they had made observations [of a] member of the group, Willie (Chill Will) Sirmans, in October of 1988. Mr. Sirmans was a juvenile at the time operating a Lincoln limousine with a forged driver's license, the limousine belong[ing] to an Isaac Wright of Edison, New Jersey, and Mr. Sirmans at the time was also carrying a ... telephone pager that was registered to Mr. Wright.*

*In February of 1989 the Edison Police Department had contact with Ernest Earvin, another member of the group. He was stopped for a routine traffic check, and the police, during the check, noticed a bag with 884 vials of cocaine in the back of a motor vehicle belonging to Mr. Wright. During that contact Mr. Earvin fled the scene, was followed to an apartment in Edison, and it turned out that it was Mr. Wright's apart-*

*ment. Mr. Wright indicated to the police at that point that he hadn't seen anyone. The police asked for permission to search the apartment. It was granted, and they found Mr. Earvin hiding under the bed in the bedroom. They also found a large quantity of cash on the table in the apartment.*

*In addition to that, in March of 1988 Fred Dickerson, also known as Fred Gilbert, was arrested by members of our office and the Franklin Township police in possession of in excess of 700 vials of cocaine. He was also using a vehicle owned or leased by Isaac Wright[, and] Isaac Wright provided bail money for these people to post bail after they were arrested.*

*All of them indicated during the course of interrogation that they were involved in an operation that was run by Isaac Wright, and, based on that information and continuing intelligence, we determined that the group was operating in the Franklin Township area, primarily at the Edgemere and Parkside apartment complex and in the Robeson Village area in New Brunswick, also an apartment complex. And based on that information we began an investigation targeting Mr. Wright and the rest of the organization.*

...

*Q. Where did the cocaine come from, and how much of it was being sold?*

*A. The investigation revealed that Wright supplied cocaine to these people for sale, buying approximately two to three kilograms of cocaine per week. The supplier that was identified during the course of the investigation was Roberto Alexander of Passaic City, a Dominican national with cocaine sources in New York City, and also a former Brooklyn Dodgers minor league baseball player.*

*Wright would pick up the cocaine from Alexander in Passaic, and it would then either be transported to a safe house in New Brunswick or to an apartment at 455 Elizabeth Avenue in Newark, that apartment having specifically been rented by Dickerson, or in Dickerson's name, along with Wright for the purpose of cutting the cocaine. There was nothing in the apartment other than a table and a couple of chairs and instruments to cut and package the cocaine into vials for sale.*

*We estimate, based on the guilty plea entered by Mr. Sirmans, that in his case alone ... he distributed approximately \$15,000 worth of cocaine per week. And extrapolating that we estimated that the group was good for annual gross sales of approximately \$20 million.*

*Q. So now we've got this group operating, in addition to Middlesex and Somerset Counties, also in Essex County and Passaic County?*

*A. Yes, sir.*

*Q. Did your office cooperate with other law enforcement agencies in the investigation of the Wright group?*

*A. Yes, we did. [As] the scope of the operation was revealed, ... we contacted the agencies from those various localities and jurisdictions. And the first that we were involved with was the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office. And this operation became a joint operation with that office. And as the investigation expanded we became involved with the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office, the Franklin Township Police Department, the New Brunswick Police Department and the New Jersey State Police, as well as the Essex County Sheriff's Narcotics Unit.*

*This operation led to the [formalization] of*

*the relationship between our office, Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, Franklin and New Brunswick Police Departments. And we formed a unit known as the Border Anti-Drug Team [BAT] to deal specifically with this investigation and with successor organizations. Essentially [the BAT] unit provides personnel from each of the offices that I mentioned to work in a specific area and on a specific problem. So we have a BAT unit, if you will, that exists that deals with the Somerset, Middlesex, Franklin Township, New Brunswick border, and recently we've expanded that to the eastern portion of Somerset County where we share a border with Union County. And the Union County Prosecutor's Office, along with the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, our office, North Plainfield, Plainfield, South Plainfield and Piscataway Police Departments, and I believe also Edison, have provided personnel. And we formed that unit to do the same thing in that area.*

*Q. This BAT operation is ongoing, then?*

*A. Yes, it's ongoing in two areas. And what it does is it allows these units to focus on a particular problem in a particular area without being concerned about being moved because of resources or other demands or other ... law enforcement problems that may exist.*

*Q. Did electronic surveillance help in bringing down the Wright group?*

*A. Yes, this group was unique because they did not operate from a fixed location. They essentially operated out of the automobiles that Wright leased for the members of the group, and they contacted each other by use of cellular telephones and telephone paging devices. So, we obtained a court order, and with the help of the State Police, who provided us the technology, we were able to bug two of the vehicles. And those bugs led*

significantly to the results of this investigation.

For example, without the bugs we would not have been able to know when Wright was meeting Alexander on July 25, [1989], for the pick up of the narcotics and we would not have, in all probability, been able to not only arrest Wright with [the] product, but also to arrest Alexander and then get a search warrant, execute that search warrant on his house and seize yet another three kilos of cocaine....

...

Q. Now, when you talk about the electronic surveillance, did the State Police supply the expertise and you supplied the equipment?

A. Yes. What happened was we contacted the State Police because ... our people knew what we wanted to do, but we didn't have the technology, and the State Police Electronic Surveillance Unit provided us with the know-how, so to speak, the technology. And they put us in contact with someone who could build for us that particular equipment that we needed .... And without their assistance we would not have been able to do it. And since then we've shared that technology with them, as well.

Q. How did Wright attempt to insulate himself from the activities of his underlings and from law enforcement detection?

A. Wright only dealt with two people, essentially, directly, and that was Earvin and Dickerson. Dickerson and Earvin then dealt with all the others. So there was very little direct contact with respect to distribution of cocaine between Wright and street dealers such as Sirmans. In addition to that, all the contacts were made through the pagers, the telephone pagers that he provided. There were no telephone calls from a fixed location, such as Wright's home or anything like

that.

In addition, for example, when they leased the apartment in Newark Wright picked a location, he brought Dickerson with him, and Dickerson signed the lease for the apartment. Wright's name doesn't appear on the lease. He also instructed these people, Earvin and Dickerson, on how to instruct the runners with respect to ... not keeping cash and narcotics together. He provided for intermediaries when they were arrested to post bail so the bail didn't come directly from him, but at the same time his people didn't stay in jail for any significant length of time.

In addition to that, he owned a ... recording company in New York known as Express Records, which we believe was essentially a cover for the narcotics operation, while his wife was a member of a recording group known as the Cover Girls. We also discovered in his apartment two sets of tax returns indicating the use of an alias on his part to further cover the nature of the operation.

Q. What's the status of the Wright group now?

A. ... [T]welve people were arrested as a result of this operation. With the exception of Wright, who is awaiting trial, and Earvin, who will shortly enter a guilty plea, all others have entered guilty pleas, with the exception of two whose charges were dismissed. They were relatives of Alexander who were arrested when his house was searched and the cocaine was found and his guilty plea exonerated them from involvement.

...

Q. Wright still faces jail time?

A. Yes, he's in the Somerset County Jail and awaiting a trial scheduled for [early] 1991.

## FIVE PERCENTERS

At its public hearing the SCI heard testimony from an electronically disguised former member of a group which variously calls itself the Five Percenters, the Five Percent Nation or the Gods. Also, Louis L. Jordan, an Investigator with the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office with extensive experience in tracking the group's members and activities, testified at length.

Particularly troubling about the Five Percenters is the existence of racist attitudes and criminal activities behind the facade of a culture with religious overtones. The dogma underlying the group originated in New York City in 1964 when the late Malcolm X expelled the late Clarence 13X from the Nation of Islam (better known as the Black Muslims) for adulterating the beliefs of that movement. While the Muslims believe that blacks should respect themselves and their fellow human beings and that blacks should take their rightful place in society, Clarence 13X postulated that black men (not women) are gods, that black men are the sole creators and controllers of the Earth and that whites are devils.

Clarence 13X's teachings included the dogma that 85 percent of the world's population are blacks who, like cattle, have strayed away from "true teachings." Ten percent are the white "devils," who are not to be trusted. The remaining five percent are the "pure righteous teachers" or "originals," who must lead the cattle back to the "true way." Thus, the group came to be called Five Percenters or Gods. Some Hispanics and Sicilians are allowed into Five Percenter groups, as they may be considered to be "half-originals," tracing themselves to black ancestry or relations.

In the 1980s the Five Percenters migrated from New York to New Jersey and several other states. They became active in Asbury Park, Long Branch, Red Bank, Freehold Borough, Bradley Beach, Aberdeen, Lakewood, Matawan, Elizabeth, Lin-

den, Irvington, parts of Newark, Jersey City, Camden, Atlantic City, Trenton, Paterson, Plainfield, Mount Holly and Pemberton Township. They are presently concentrated in Monmouth and Ocean counties with approximately 14 chapters numbering about 300 to 400 members in Monmouth County, according to Detective Jordan.

In addition to developing a prejudiced and demeaning cultural dogma, the Five Percenters became a haven for those engaged in criminal activities, primarily narcotics distribution.

Investigator Jordan testified that investigations have revealed Five Percenters "involved in everything from criminal mischief to murder, arson, burglary, robbery, aggravated assault, possession of a weapon ...." He emphasized that religious teachings are only a nominal part of the movement:

*Q. Since they are an offshoot of a religious movement, we should clarify one thing. Are all Five Percenters involved in violence and crimes?*

*A. No, they are not.*

*Q. How many would you say are?*

*A. I have met, in my experience since 1980, of tracking, two families that have not been involved in any way, form or fashion with the negative aspects. However, the rest I've found to be all involved in criminal activity*  
....

...

*Q. When you say families, you mean —*

*A. Mother, father, children.*

Under questioning by SCI Deputy Director and Counsel Robert J. Clark, the disguised witness testified about the difference between Five Percenters involved in criminal activities and those who are not:

*Q. Are Five Percenters involved in criminal activity?*

*A. Five Percenters are involved in drug sales, sales of guns, robbery, stolen cars, chop shops, murder, all types of criminal activities.*

*Q. Can a Five Percenter choose not to be involved in criminal activity?*

*A. Yes, he can.*

*Q. What would this be called by the movement?*

*A. He would be leading a pure righteous life.*

*Q. So the pure righteous life is a Five Percenter who is not involved in criminal activity?*

*A. Yes.*

*Q. How many of the Five Percenters that you know live the pure righteous life?*

*A. About 15 percent.*

Investigator Jordan detailed how Five Percenters spread their doctrine and expand their criminal activities:

*Q. We've heard of operations called universal rallies. Could you explain what that is?*

*A. That's normally a place set up by someone in that movement where they go and they have meetings. One of the key places where they go to have these rallies is in New York City. We have also tracked them since 1980 as having their rallies down in Florida, Great Adventure in Jackson [Township, New Jersey] and also several parks [within] the State of New Jersey, such as Shark River Park in Neptune and several other parks in Monmouth, Middlesex and Ocean counties.*

*Q. What is the purpose of these rallies?*

*A. The purpose is supposedly to educate the*

*young men [and] young women in the better understanding of their culture. We have found that a lot of them are involved in narcotics trafficking, ... that is, that they are going out, instead of attending the meetings, for example, the bus takes them from here to New York City, some will attend the rallies, the others will stray away and be involved in a lot of narcotics trafficking and bringing the drugs back across the line.*

*Q. Are these places where they learn techniques for the distribution of narcotics?*

*A. They learn that, as well as New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania law.*

*Q. Learning the law is a means of protecting themselves against it?*

*A. That's very true.*

The disguised witness elaborated on the activities at the Five Percenter universal rallies:

*Q. You said rally?*

*A. Yes, sir, [they] usually go to the rally in Central Park in New York City.*

*Q. Do people from New Jersey attend these rallies?*

*A. Yes, they do.*

*Q. Five Percenter members from New Jersey?*

*A. Yes.*

*Q. What is the purpose for a rally?*

*A. To bring out existence, to gain knowledge of self.*

*Q. Is there any other purpose for these rallies?*

*A. Certain members use the rally for certain things like to make connection for drugs, guns or whatever they into at that time.*

The Five Percenters have run into some barriers to the spread of their organization. In answer to Commissioner Kenneth D. Merin's questions, Investigator Jordan testified that Five Percenters "initially ... would go in and set up in places where there is a constant denial of their existence, just giving them a lever to operate, if you will ...." He explained one reason why they are not well-established in some places, such as Newark:

*[I]n Newark there is the Muslim faith, which is very strong there, as well as in New York; and they denounce what the Five Percenters are doing. And as a result of that it is very difficult for the Five Percenters to get a foothold. You have to understand also that it is taboo in the Muslim faith to call yourself a god, so here you have these gentlemen calling themselves gods and the Muslim community just does not want to hear that, so they denounce what they are doing.*

Investigator Jordan described the subservient role of women in the organization:

*Women, for the most part, are basically an auxiliary. They are used, for the most part, to be impregnated, to have the children ... to keep the movement going. ... [W]e've found that [those on welfare or state aid turn it] over to the movement. Part of that is then given back to them. A majority of it is turned over into narcotics trafficking ....*

Five Percenters are apparently not consistently responsive to a centralized leadership. Leaders in the movement may be called ministers, Allah, Father Teacher, Father Allah, and the like, according to Investigator Jordan. The disguised witness further described the leadership and organization of the Five Percenters and the division of profits from illegal activities:

*Q. What happens to the proceeds of Five Percenter criminal activity, that is the money*

*that is earned?*

*A. It goes to support the Five Percent Nation. The money from the criminal activities is shared among the members.*

*Q. Are the profits passed up to a leader?*

*A. There is not really one certain leader. [They] are more of a group activity.*

*Q. Are there people called kingpins?*

*A. Yes.*

*Q. And do they operate in different areas?*

*A. Yes.*

*Q. Do they receive a share of the profits?*

*A. Yes.*

...

*Q. Who decides what type of crimes a particular group of Five Percenters will commit?*

*A. It's usually a group activity. Someone decides to do a certain crime, and the rest agree. It's like a Mafia type thing where they are all a family and they make a decision as a group.*

...

*Q. Do you know of any Five Percenter kingpins in New Jersey?*

*A. Yes.*

*Q. In what area do you know of them?*

*A. Asbury Park.*

*Q. Could you give their righteous names?*

*A. King Nijee and Knowledge Supreme.*

...

*Q. Have both these kingpins been involved in drug distribution?*

*A. Yes.*

*Q. What kind of drugs have they sold?*  
*A. Whatever the traffic demands they sell, but it's mostly cocaine and marijuana.*

*Q. Where do they get their supply of cocaine?*  
*A. They go up to, like 135th Street or 185th Street, Upper Manhattan or the Bronx and buy the cocaine from the Dominicans.*

*Q. Where do they get their supplies of marijuana?*  
*A. From the Jamaicans in Queens and Harlem.*

*Q. Are any of these Jamaicans Five Percenters themselves?*  
*A. Yes.*

...

*Q. Would you say that the Five Percent Nation is an organized crime group?*  
*A. Yes.*

*Q. And why would you say that?*  
*A. They sell drugs, they steal cars, they do burglaries, commit murder, they have police working for them. I guess you could say they were an organized crime group.*

Investigator Jordan described how localities can determine if they have a Five Percenter presence:

*Q. How do you, as a law enforcement member, identify a Five Percenter or an area where there is Five Percenter activity?*  
*A. ... [W]e look for the graffiti around the buildings, public places, and the telephone booths, the curbing. We look for the negative attitude by the members. At one time they were easily identifiable. They used to wear the knitted skull caps and [lens]less glasses .... Now we are identifying them with a half crescent moon and star with a number 7 in it, which is their logo, which represents*

*the Five Percenter Nation. And again we look for that negative attitude.*

*Q. Is there any kind of distinctive dress that Five Percenters wear?*

*A. It changes from area to area. Here in Trenton I understand they do wear a certain manner of dress, but down in Monmouth County ... they no longer wear it.*

*Q. Would you watch for people wearing a lot of jewelry?*

*A. Yes, I would, large amounts of gold, beepers, and in short we just look for that "Mr. T starter kit", so to speak.*

...

*Q. Is there any particular language or jargon that the Five Percenters use?*

*A. Yes, there is. Other than calling themselves righteous, they use [names, such as] ... Master Born, King Understanding, Wisdom Knowledge, Divine Power, Righteous God, Queen Asiatic.*

*Q. Are these substitutes for their given names, or do they use them alternately?*

*A. You have to understand that they say this is their righteous name and they refer to the term righteous. The name that they have, such as Johnson or Jones or Smith, is an "enslaved name," and they do not accept that, even though if you were to challenge them ... in law enforcement, they will always give their government name, but that is only because of all the press that they've been getting lately. Normally they use their righteous names.*

*Q. Do some gangs that are not composed of Five Percenters adopt some of the trappings of Five Percenters in order to make themselves more intimidating?*

*A. Yes, we have that, as well, where we have gang members that ... call themselves Five Percenters, even though they are really not,*

*just because the Five Percenters are basically the dominant gang in Monmouth County.*

*Q. Have you heard of a term, Jive Percenters?*

*A. Yes, I have. Those are what ... some true, so-called, Five Percenters say are the ones who are just setting a name for themselves, who are actively involved in all the different types of crimes and so forth.*

One multi-kilo cocaine distribution network in Atlantic City had substantial connections to the Five Percenters. Its leader, Hakeem Abdul Shaheed (aka Robert E. Molley or Midget Molley), and most of its 60 some members were Five Percenters. Shaheed, a resident of Vineland, called his group the Aso Posse and often flaunted his drug-financed wealth by wearing a gold crown.

Victor (Shorty) Fernandez, a Dominican who lived in Edgewater, New Jersey, was the principal supplier of cocaine to Shaheed's organization. In February 1989, Shaheed, Fernandez and 18 members of the Aso Posse were arrested by federal authorities, who estimated that Shaheed's organization was obtaining and distributing \$1 million worth of cocaine per month in the Atlantic City projects. Shortly after Shaheed's arrest, several Jamaican drug dealers from Brooklyn moved into the Atlantic City projects to take over his territory. Shaheed was convicted, and on January 22, 1990, he was sentenced to 19 years in prison.

## GANGS

While testifying specifically about the Five Percenters, Investigator Jordan described the gang problem in general. He noted that although there are about 14 Five Percenter chapters in Monmouth County, there are approximately 68 gangs in that county involved in criminal activity.

Investigator Jordan is a member of Concerned Officers Organization On Gang Activities (CO3GA

or COOOGA). He outlined the organization's structure and activities at the Commission's public hearing:

*Q. What is that organization and what does it do?*

*A. [CO3GA] was ... started in 1980 by four concerned police officers, from the Asbury Park and Neptune Police departments who felt that gang violence was on the rise, who also felt that there was a lot of denial with respect to the growth of gangs, and who felt this was a contributing factor to the tremendous drug problem that we have in our state today, that constant denial. ... [T]he Concerned Officers Organization basically tracks gangs. What we do is monitor groups that are out there, youth groups, as well as adult groups, and if we find that they are involved in gang activity or they take up criminal activity, we inform not only the local police department, but the community as a whole.*

*Q. This is a non-profit organization?*

*A. Non-profit, self-supporting, civilian-run organization that also does a lot of counseling with gang members.*

*Q. Does it have any ties to law enforcement, aside from the members being from law enforcement, a lot of them?*

*A. No ties.*

*Q. Are the members of this organization both black and white, male and female?*

*A. That's correct.*

*Q. And it works with civic organizations?*

*A. Yes, we will work with any organization that is in the State of New Jersey or elsewhere to help combat this juvenile delinquency problem or gang problem.*

*Q. Does it work with law enforcement agencies?*

A. Yes, sir, definitely.

Q. In what capacity?

A. Seminars, training, identifying active gang members that are involved in an ongoing investigation of crime where a pattern has been set.

Q. And this organization studies gangs that are not just Five Percenters, is that right?

A. That is correct.

Investigator Jordan elaborated on CO3GA's definition of a gang and described the various types of gang leadership encountered:

Q. In general, is there a definition that you use to describe a gang ...?

A. Yes, we say that there must be four elements that must be met ... for them to be classified as a gang. The first one is they must have an identifiable leader. That leadership structure, weak or structured in nature, must be there.

...

[Second,] we say that they must have a geographic area or turf that they call their own.

[Third, w]e say that they must meet on a continuous or regular basis. [The] fourth element certainly must be there, and that is that they must be involved in juvenile delinquency or criminal activity. If you have all four of those elements you have what we call the working definition of a gang.

...

[W]ith respect to leadership, ... we look at three different types ... [--] a bull's-eye, a pyramid, and an intrigue structure. ... If you visualize with me, if you will, a bull's-eye, we find with this particular structure there is no real identifiable leadership to this gang. We also find that the closer you get to the center of this bull's-eye the closer you get to the hard core members of the gang. We also

find that, whether the gang structure was there or not, this particular group would still be involved in some form of criminal activity.

Next we see the pyramid structure, ... everybody at the bottom catering to the person at the top. All movements within this gang are controlled ... by that person at the top. This is the structure you will more than likely see when you start to talk about narcotics trafficking with respect to this gang. It is organized in that sense.

The intrigue or want-to-be structure is nothing more than a bunch of looseballs attached by a single thread. These are the up and coming members who have not yet been involved in criminal activity, who are still learning their lessons or are still studying, if you will, they are the want-to-bes. Mostly, you will find this gang operating in terms of leadership [somewhere] between the pyramid or concentric circle or bull's-eye structure.

...

Q. Are you saying that the leadership fluctuates or changes to meet the needs of the organization or different criminal enterprises that it's involved in?

A. Yes.

Q. So, it's fluid, the leadership?

A. Yes, it is.

Q. Are there certain higher leaders that command attention from the members more than others?

A. Yes, there are. At present we are in court with several. On the street now, at least in Monmouth County, there are not too many. Most of our leaders are incarcerated or pending trial, but we do have several on the street that are out there that are trying to

*build themselves to take over the leaders' places.*

## **JAMAICAN POSSES**

Born in the poverty and political turmoil of Kingston, Jamaica, violent, structured organized crime groups spread to the United States during the last two decades. Jamaican criminal gangs adopted the term "posse" because of their fondness for American western films and because the word connoted the use of violence to enforce political will and to protect neighborhoods from intrusion by rival gangs. Each posse eventually came to be structured, with a particular leader -- sometimes called a general -- and a substructure divided into cells. Cell leaders are sometimes called captains or lieutenants.

The initial impetus for the migration of Jamaican posse members to the United States in the 1970s was simply the need for funds to obtain sophisticated weapons to be used in the perpetual gang warfare in Kingston. Once in this country, posses were soon able to take over marijuana distribution networks of nonviolent Jamaicans who preceded them here. As the posses matured in the United States, the leaders became more insulated from actual street drug sales and expanded into bulk distribution, especially when they became involved in the cocaine and crack markets.

Since the mid-1970s, posses have been trafficking the high-grade sinsemilla strain of marijuana called "Jamaican Gold," which is indigenous to Jamaica. By 1984, the various posses became active in the transportation and distribution of cocaine and crack, also called rock cocaine. In addition to drug distribution, the posses are involved in trafficking of firearms, kidnappings, robberies, home invasions, alien smuggling and money laundering.

The two largest Jamaican posses are Shower and Spangler. Many of the active posses in the United States are spin-offs from these two. Traditionally,

the Shower and Spangler groups have been bitter enemies because of their political differences. Members of the Shower Posse are avid supporters of the Jamaican Labor Party, while Spangler Posse members have been solidly behind the opposition Peoples National Party.

Typically, posse members and associates use aliases, nicknames and false identification. Most who enter the United States are here illegally. They are very adept at obtaining phony drivers licenses, birth certificates, passports, citizenship cards and naturalization certificates. They are also very mobile.

Under questioning by SCI Deputy Director Clark, a disguised Jamaican posse associate testified about the posses' operations in New Jersey:

*Q. Where in New Jersey were the posses active?*

*A. Well, [there are] different posse figures from different groups, and they are active in East Orange, Englewood, Paterson, Newark and I would say to a lesser extent in Hackensack. Also in Port Elizabeth there are a lot of posse figures in that area who are involved in smuggling marijuana, I would say with the help of the Jamaicans who work on the docks, because many times the cargo containers would be used to hide shipments of marijuana.*

*Q. In what particular types of criminal activity are the posses involved in New Jersey?*

*A. Sir, New Jersey [was] always considered to be a safe place to hide from the New York police and a very good place to stash marijuana, weapons. During the '70s and early '80s New Jersey was always considered and used as a safe area.*

*Q. Why was New Jersey considered to be a safe area?*

*A. Police in New Jersey did not take posses*

*seriously at the time and, as a matter of fact, ... I don't think that they even knew that they existed.*

*Q. That the posses existed?*

*A. Yes, sir. We would use hotels and motels specifically in New Jersey on Route 4 to keep marijuana and later distribute it back over into the New York area.*

...

*Q. What area in New Jersey has the highest amount of Jamaican posse activity?*

*A. Well, from my experience personally I would say that Paterson is the number one area in New Jersey, you know, and also places like East Orange.*

*Q. Why Paterson?*

*A. Maybe because posse members, they have relatives that live in the Paterson area and East Orange, you know, and because of this it was always a good area to hide out, you know.*

*Q. Is that also true for East Orange?*

*A. Certainly, sir.*

The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) estimates that there are at least 40 Jamaican posses with more than 13,000 members operating in the United States. The SCI has positively identified five posses that presently or in the past have operated drug distribution networks in New Jersey: Shower, Spangler, Dunkirk Boys, Tel Aviv and Waterhouse. Members or associates of other posses who are not aligned with an operational drug network have also been arrested in New Jersey. Similar to many La Cosa Nostra operatives who live in New Jersey and conduct their criminal activities in New York, many Jamaican posse members who operate drug distribution networks in New York have chosen to live in New Jersey. In addition to the posses already mentioned, members of the Paine-land and Two Mile posses have been identified as

living in New Jersey.

### SHOWER POSSE

The Shower Posse originated in the Tivoli Gardens section of Kingston around 1981. Its members have been avid supporters of the Jamaican Labor Party (JLP). Its name derives from its reputation for showering its victims with bullets. In September 1988 a federal grand jury in Miami indicted 34 members of the Shower Posse, including Lester Lloyd (Big Jim Brown) Coke, the top leader in Kingston, as well as Vivian Blake, the top leader in the United States. Coke is scheduled for an extradition hearing from Jamaica. Blake is still a fugitive. Intelligence information indicates that in September 1989 he had been in Atlantic City for less than 24 hours before departing for Toronto and then to Jamaica.

Shower Posse networks are involved in the sale of cocaine and marijuana in the New Jersey cities of Newark, East Orange, Irvington, Camden, Atlantic City, Vineland, Trenton and Bridgeton. Recent arrest statistics indicate that the number of Shower Posse members operating within the state is growing. As of November 1988, 53 Shower Posse members had been arrested in New Jersey for involvement in drug distribution. In 1989, the number of members identified increased to 75.

### SPANGLER POSSE

The Spangler Posse originated in the Matthews Lane area of Kingston, and its members have traditionally supported the Peoples National Party (PNP). The late Glenford (Early Bird) Phipps headed the New York City-based operations for the Spanglers, along with the recently murdered Toywell (Cow) Phillips, who also controlled drug distribution networks in Englewood and Paterson in New Jersey. Under investigation by New York authorities, Toywell Phillips fled back to Jamaica in early 1989. Some law enforcement officials believe that the new leader of the Spanglers in New York City will be from New

Jersey. According to the disguised Jamaican witness and several other sources, the leader of the Spanglers in Jamaica is an individual named Dannie Dodd. Glenford Phipps was murdered in Kingston on July 15, 1990, while acting in his capacity as Supervisor of Metropolitan Parks and Markets in Kingston. Toywell Phillips was killed on December 1, 1990, in Jamaica, reportedly on orders of Lester Lloyd Coke, the leader of the Shower Posse in Jamaica.

Spangler Posse networks distribute primarily marijuana, cocaine and crack in Paterson. Intelligence indicates that Spangler members in New York City continue to supply marijuana to associates in Trenton and Camden. The number of Spangler Posse members identified as operating drug distribution networks in New Jersey in 1989 was 45, an increase from the 27 reported in 1988.

#### DUNKIRK BOYS POSSE

The Dunkirk Boys Posse, also known as Kirkys, has been under the leadership of Dennis (Stickman) Smith since 1977. Traditionally, this posse has been mixed politically, but has many members who support the PNP in Jamaica. From 1987 through 1988, the Dunkirk Boys in New York City were at war with the Spangler Posse, but within the last two years a truce has been declared.

Some members and associates of the Dunkirk Boys who did not wish to participate in the New York war moved into Englewood, New Jersey, in 1987, selling marijuana, cocaine, crack and weapons. However, the group has been virtually eliminated from that area because of arrests of their street dealers and mid-level suppliers by the Englewood Police Department and the Bergen County Narcotics Task Force. Ledlo (Blacker) Gillings, who operated in conjunction with this cell of Dunkirk Boys, was sentenced to federal prison on March 3, 1989, on charges of conspiracy to distribute cocaine. The other members of this cell split, some moving their operations to Boston, others to

Richmond, Virginia.

Intelligence information indicated that in 1988 several members of the Dunkirk Boys who left New York City went to the New Brunswick area. These persons, who were only known by their street names, were not reported to be involved in drug distribution. Instead, they were using New Brunswick only as a safe area.

There were 29 members and associates of the Dunkirk Boys Posse identified as operating or controlling drug distribution networks in New Jersey in 1988. At the present time, however, there is no known network of this posse actively operating in New Jersey.

#### TEL AVIV POSSE

In the late fall of 1989, information was developed regarding known members of the Tel Aviv Posse operating in Paterson. This posse originated in the Tellerville section of Kingston, where it was initially known on the streets as the Skulls. Its members support the PNP, and they have been known to associate closely with members of the Jungle Posse. The Spangler Posse has long operated several drug distribution networks in Paterson, and it appears that they are operating independently of and not in conflict with this new posse. Since the Spangler, Jungle and Tel Aviv posses are all supporters of the PNP, it is possible that they are working together.

The disguised Jamaican witness identified the leader of the Jungle Posse as Tony (Red Tony) Welsh of Miami. The SCI has corroborated this information from additional sources.

#### WATERHOUSE POSSE

The name of this posse derives from the fact that many of its members are from the Waterhouse area of Kingston. Members and associates of the Waterhouse Posse have been arrested in Jersey City and

Mount Laurel in the past. Between 1983 and early 1985, a small cell of the Waterhouse Posse operated a marijuana distribution network in Trenton. The principal operatives of this network were Dennis Derrick Dobson and Daniel Augustus Comrie, both of Willingboro, who were arrested in 1985 for attempting to bribe a Trenton police officer to protect their operation on South Clinton Avenue. On June 4, 1990, Dennis Dobson was arrested by police in Bristol Township, Pennsylvania, for operating a cocaine and crack distribution network out of the Venice-Ashby housing project in the township. Dobson's operation sold cocaine and crack through street operatives in Lower Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and Trenton, New Jersey.

Since about 1989, the term "posse" has become popular with non-Jamaican gangs, due to the publicity surrounding the Jamaican groups. In many urban areas, for instance, African-American youth gangs have adopted the term "posse." On February 15, 1991, several members of a group comprised of both Jamaicans and African-Americans were arrested on drug and weapons offenses in Trenton. The group, calling itself the Suicide Posse, had been active in the western section of the city selling marijuana.

Meanwhile, many of the real Jamaican posses have started calling their groups "massives." Many of the second-tier members have started using the term "crews" to describe their cells or drug distribution networks. For example, at the SCI's public hearing the disguised Jamaican witness identified a New York City group, calling itself the Tower Hill Crew, led by a Jamaican named Bonnie Wizzie.

By the end of 1989, entrepreneurial considerations had become more important than political allegiances in running the posses. As members of the old guard of the posse leadership are either killed or jailed, younger members, some of them second generation immigrants less attuned to the gang warfare and politics of Kingston, are taking over. The emphasis now is on practical concerns such as

who is able to supply the drugs and at what price. The disguised Jamaican witness described some of these trends:

*I feel the future of the first generation members connected to Jamaica is very, very dim. [A]gain they are beginning to run back to Jamaica due to the heavy sentences that ... they are getting in the U.S., you know. Some of, I would say, the second generation are involved in the same, just as they pose more [of a threat] as far as they are concerned, because they know more about the American justice systems ... because they were born here. They are American citizens, but from Jamaican parentage, you know.*

This does not mean that a posse member in the United States no longer cares who is in power in Jamaica. On the contrary, politics affects his relatives and friends in the old neighborhood in Kingston. What this does mean is that the new Jamaican immigrants connected to a posse think more of the bottom line as they assume leadership roles in their gangs rather than of political labels as their elders did.

Law enforcement has even reported former enemies, such as Spangler and Shower posse members, working together in drug deals to increase profits for their common benefit. Within the next three years, as posses are dismantled by law enforcement, the younger members will splinter into smaller groups and operate their drug networks on a regional level rather than on the expansive levels that the posses now operate. This move toward independence will create additional problems for law enforcement, since drug quantities available for seizure will become smaller and the targets will therefore seem less significant. These separate cells or crews will utilize the same sources of supply as their predecessors and will also have adequate manpower for their street sales by smuggling illegal aliens from Jamaica. It is also most likely that these youths will expand their legitimate business opera-

tions beyond the ethnic grocery stores or record shops into more Americanized, large investment enterprises such as automobile leasing or dealerships, trucking or travel agencies. In fact, examples of this probable trend are beginning to occur in Florida and New York.

Although powerful, secretive and mobile, Jamaican posses are not invulnerable to law enforcement efforts. In a successful federal-local cooperative effort, in December 1990, virtually all of the 42 alleged members of the Jamaican Gulleyman Posse were indicted by a federal grand jury in Brooklyn. The indictment named 35 people on narcotics conspiracy charges, 16 for money laundering and three on fraudulent passport charges. Included in the indictment was a State Department employee who allegedly helped the gang members obtain fraudulent passports. The case was broken with information provided by several gang members now serving life sentences on guilty pleas to various crimes, including murder. The gang reportedly took in more than \$100 million from sales of heroin, cocaine, crack and marijuana in New York, Washington and Dallas over the last five years and carried out at least 10 murders on orders of its leader, Eric Vassell, currently believed to be in hiding in the New York area.

In November 1990, a Burlington County grand jury indicted six people who allegedly operated a Jamaican marijuana smuggling ring from a home in Willingboro. This group was supplying much of the marijuana to Shower Posse members and associates who operate and staff Jamaican crack houses in West Philadelphia and the Germantown section of Philadelphia. The Willingboro Police Department, Burlington County Prosecutor's Office, State Police and SCI cooperated in a yearlong investigation of the operation, which at its height spent \$60,000 to \$80,000 to purchase about 200 pounds of marijuana per week. The alleged leaders of the drug distribution network were Dawn Patricia Ulett, her sister Sonya Henry and her husband Milton Anthony Hylton. From the "control point" in Willingboro,

couriers were given money to purchase marijuana in Houston, New York, Tucson, Los Angeles, Jamaica and Mexico. The marijuana was stashed in rental apartments in Philadelphia, before being distributed out of Hylton's Philadelphia residence to customers in South Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Willingboro is also the base for an alien smuggling ring which supplies much of the manpower to staff the various crack houses for the Shower Posse in Philadelphia.

Under questioning by SCI Counsel Gaal, Detective George Joyner of the Camden Police Department testified about Jamaican posse involvement in drug trafficking in Camden:

*Q. Is the Jamaican criminal activity in Camden organized?*

*A. Yes. The term ... posse ..., picked up by our local drug ... sets, ... [originally came] from the Jamaican posses.*

...

*Q. In what types of criminal activity are the Jamaican posses involved?*

*A. They deal basically in the sale of marijuana and cocaine, and they've also been involved in numerous weapon violations.*

*Q. Have you been able to identify the Jamaican gangs that operate in Camden?*

*A. [I]ntelligence information has identified elements of the two major [Jamaican] posses ..., which [are] Spangler and Shower, but at this time the term posse, as an individual group, is fading away and what you are seeing now is the search for the money. Everything is developed on the profits.*

*Q. Do these Jamaican drug dealers interact with any of the African-American sets or other operations in Camden?*

*A. Yes, several of the Jamaican drug dealers do interact with the sets in Camden by selling marijuana. In addition to their own*

*sources of supply for cocaine in New York City the Jamaican dealers in Camden have obtained cocaine from members of the Junior Black Mafia operating out of Philadelphia, and they also maintain their own marijuana supplies.*

*Q. Is there any particular set in Camden with which Jamaican posse figures have established ties?*

*A. Yes, there appears to be a close relationship between one of the principal Jamaican dealers and the 24th and Hyde Street set.*

*Q. How do the Jamaican drug dealers launder their drug profits?*

*A. Within the last two to three years the Jamaicans involved in drug distribution have tripled their legitimate business operations. They own and operate several bars, clothing stores and small food stores in the Camden area.*

*Q. Approximately how many Jamaican posse members or associates are involved in either cocaine or marijuana distribution in Camden?*

*A. I would estimate at least one hundred individuals are involved with the Jamaican drug trade in the Camden City area.*

Commissioner W. Hunt Dumont asked Detective Joyner to elaborate on the influence of the Jamaicans in Camden:

*Q. Do the Jamaican groups ... cooperate with these other non-Jamaican groups in Camden? Do they divide up the territory or is this not as organized as that?*

*A. They are extremely organized. They are nationally connected. As a matter of fact, I would even go as far as to say internationally connected as far as the United States. Their network is as far reaching from Camden as Texas, Florida, Baltimore, New York, Kansas City. I keep in contact with numer-*

*ous officers that are running into Jamaicans who are showing up in their territory that are giving Camden addresses, et cetera. In reference to the specific group in Camden, they specialize in quiet takeovers.*

*Q. What do you mean by that?*

*A. A quiet takeover, they do not have to come in and shoot up an area, beat up people, and things like that to take over. They move in, I don't know whether they negotiate, they buy a property, they centralize themselves in an area, they attach themselves to the locals from the area and then begin to use them and then at one point they become at a higher level and just fade out of the picture, but they are still in control and this is what has happened in the Camden area. It took somewhere around the neighborhood of 10 years for this to develop to this point.*

## **NIGERIANS**

Bernard J. Murphy, Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge of the Newark office of the FBI, testified at the Commission's public hearing about highly mobile Nigerian criminals engaged in organized schemes to defraud banks and other financial institutions. Special Agent Murphy detailed several examples in which Nigerians, using high quality fabricated identification, engaged in sophisticated frauds in New Jersey:

*In early 1987 a group of New Jersey bankers requested FBI assistance in investigating a series of frauds which were being committed by Nigerians against New Jersey financial institutions. Upon our initial investigation these crimes appeared to be widespread and isolated. However, a detailed examination of the individual frauds revealed a complex scheme which employed similar styles, all of which were interconnected.*

*A detailed examination of one of these frauds*

revealed that an individual using an alias opened accounts in four banks in Marlboro, Old Bridge and Freehold, New Jersey. All of the accounts were opened with a minimal cash deposit, normally fifty to a hundred dollars, and [each] bank was provided with a home address, place of employment and a New Jersey photo driver's license for identification. The customer also requested and received an automatic teller machine [ATM] card for [each] bank account. The banks followed their normal procedure for new account verification, did not develop any invalid information which would cause them to close the accounts and, therefore, opened [the] accounts.

Shortly after the accounts were opened, a series of checks drawn on banks in Florida, Georgia, Maryland and New York were deposited into these accounts via the ATMs. The accounts were monitored remotely via ATM, and when the money was released into the account the Nigerian visited several branches of each bank during a two to three day period and withdrew the majority of the money. [Finally, a]ll of the deposited checks were later returned unpaid causing the banks to suffer losses.

The investigation revealed that the address given by the Nigerian customer was, in reality, a self-storage facility. The self-storage facility also offered private mail receiving services. The employment that he had provided was contacted by the bank, and it was determined to be a telephone answering service that verified employment. The alias name and the Social Security number used by this individual was determined to be a true person who was an executive with a New York financial institution.

In yet another case in May of 1988, an individual attempted to open a bank account

in Middletown, New Jersey. An alert customer service representative questioned the individual, who then fled the bank. The service representative obtained the license plate of his vehicle and contacted local police, who then arrested the suspect within a few blocks of the intended victim bank. Although this individual was alone when he left the bank, he had a passenger in his car at the time of his arrest. The passenger was later identified through fingerprints as a Nigerian national who was a federal fugitive. The original charges against the passenger were also for fraudulent activity. The driver of the vehicle posted a \$10,000 bond and was released the same day.

Again, our later determination was that the name given by the driver was, in fact, an alias of yet another Nigerian national. The alias given to the Middletown Police Department [in Monmouth County] was the same name used to defraud another bank in Millstone, New Jersey. Further investigation determined that all the aliases were true identities of bank employees from New York City.

An in-depth investigation by the FBI determined the driver's true identity, revealed that he had used nine different aliases in ... Jersey City, Passaic, Belleville, North Arlington, Perth Amboy, Bellmawr, Edison, Iselin, Haddon Township and Blackwood, New Jersey, and had defrauded banks in those areas of \$225,000. It was also determined that the driver had applied for and obtained credit cards from a local department store under the true person's name and credit history. He [had] obtained another \$60,000 in cash and merchandise with these credit cards ....

In a little over a year the driver obtained almost \$300,000 in cash and merchandise

from New Jersey businessmen. We have no way of calculating the driver's total financial gain from his fraudulent activities, but we do know of his extensive travel up and down the East Coast and as far away as California. We also know that the checks deposited by the driver were used by other Nigerians to commit similar frauds.

Another individual, while on bail for a \$40,000 fraud committed against the State of New Jersey Department of Labor, engaged in an eight-month fraudulent spree that netted him well in excess of \$100,000 using the Social Security accounts and true names of New Jersey residents. Again, one of the individuals victimized was a senior executive at a New Jersey financial institution.

These and similar investigations reveal a pattern of widespread fraudulent activity, [including] bank fraud, credit card fraud, student loan fraud, unemployment fraud, insurance fraud, rental car fraud and the like.

These frauds all have a common denominator, the false identification card. The card is a prerequisite to all of the fraudulent activity. Nigerian criminal elements will seek to infiltrate major companies to obtain biographical data on the company's legitimate employees. They will normally apply for positions as security guards, cleaning personnel or positions with temporary employment agencies, even in white collar capacities, such as accountants. The security guards and cleaning personnel, for example, during periods of minimal presence by company employees, will attempt to obtain information on payroll and human resource records, which will, of course, contain biographical data on legitimate company employees. If they are not successful in penetrating these areas of the company, they will look for information on individual employees, nor-

mally supervisory or management position employees, which will also enable them to obtain the biographical data and credit lines based on the true employee's biographical data.

I'll give you three additional, what appeared to be unrelated, instances that took place earlier this year which, upon first blush, did not appear to be related. But I'll try to tie them together for you at the end of this particular segment to show you how ... circuitous the routes are and how many different kinds of criminal activities can take place in one particular scheme.

In March of 1990, accounts were opened at two banks in Princeton, New Jersey, under the name of Moneyline Investment. A series of checks drawn on an attorney trust account in Georgia were deposited into the accounts with money withdrawn ... prior to checks being returned unpaid, causing a \$25,000 loss.

The month before ... an individual had attempted to get a \$3,000 cash advance on a credit card in West Windsor, New Jersey. At that time an alert teller called the credit card company for authorization and the customer spoke with the security department of the credit card company. The customer was asked a series of questions, one of which was fictitious and designed to be so, and when he responded, the security department told the bank to seize the card. The bank also seized the driver's license used for identification. The individual fled the bank and the police obtained a John Doe warrant for this individual.

A few months later, in September of 1990, the Plainsboro, New Jersey, Police Department arrested a woman who had attempted to open a bank account under an alias name.

*The woman was later identified to be a Nigerian from Maryland. In her possession was a check drawn on the same Georgia attorney's trust account, the one that was used in Princeton under the Moneyline Investment account name. This woman we believe was ... working in concert with the West Windsor, New Jersey, John Doe.*

*Once the link between the West Windsor and the Plainsboro incidents was developed, further investigation determined that this John Doe customer had obtained a safe deposit box at yet another branch of the same bank in East Orange, New Jersey. Again in September this John Doe customer went to the East Orange bank to close his safe deposit box. The only warrant for him was the local John Doe warrant for the attempted cash advances. Two local officers were in the bank parking lot taking a report on another incident and they took the individual into custody. The same vehicle that had been used at the bank in Plainsboro was located in the parking lot.*

*In May of 1990, a set of Interceptor tires was put on this vehicle and charged to a fraudulently obtained American Express credit card. At the time the tires were put on the car the mileage was 56,000 miles. When this fellow was arrested in mid-September the mileage was in excess of 90,000 miles. He had put 35,000 miles on the car in a little over four months. How would this individual put so many miles on the car in four months? What developed ... as a result of this arrest, was the identification of mail drops in Alexandria, Virginia, the District of Columbia, Maryland, and five more in New Jersey.*

*Additionally, it was determined that this individual had been employed through a temporary accounting service at a company in New Jersey. While working for the company*

*he stole ten blank checks of a subsidiary company from the back of a checkbook and a legitimate accounts payable check in the amount of \$28,000. This check was negotiated at a bank in Virginia where a fraudulent account had been established. One of the blank checks was also negotiated in Massachusetts. Additional deposits in the Massachusetts accounts were drawn on a federal credit union in Bladensburg, Maryland. In Bladensburg, Maryland, it was determined that that credit union had been victimized, and a series of 700 checks were stolen from that institution. The credit union in Maryland suffered over \$100,000 worth of losses before we caught up with them.*

Special Agent Murphy described what he called "controlling cells," operating in various regions of the country, that suggest the presence of centralized leadership for Nigerian organized crime:

*The information which is obtained by [cell] workers in similar scenarios is furnished to a cell leader, who controls access and distribution. The cell leader interacts and exchanges information with leaders in other states. The exchange of information, checks and identification provides these groups with a constant supply of new information which allows them to perpetrate new frauds without readily being detected.*

...

*We see people that are performing at different levels, different functions and much like smurfs that are used in money laundering. There is a group that are doing that. Well, they have been doing it at the direction of cell leaders and we know that they are obtaining training in how to approach and how to manipulate the system.*

*Let me give you a very good example: the use of the ATM. ... I indicated at one point*

*that the subject of one of the investigations monitored the account from an ATM. ... [T]hey'll go in with fairly good identification, fraudulent identification, make their initial deposits, get the system opened up, and then they sit back and from afar, outside, they test that ATM machine. And they'll know within hours when that check clears. And as soon as it clears is when they hit, because there is a window of maybe a day or two days before the bank will release the funds and when, in fact, the Federal Reserve System will clear the check. They know how long that window is. They monitor it from afar [because] if they mess it up, if they come in too fast to the bank, they'll get identified, so they monitor it from the outside. As soon as the funds are released, they go in, cash their checks and get out. You won't find them doing it four or five days later, because they know that the check will clear in that period of time.*

Special Agent Murphy summarized the extensive negative impact which Nigerian organized crime has on our society:

*Nigerians present a unique problem for law enforcement, in that their fraudulent activities are committed against government agencies where benefits can be obtained, against financial institutions, department stores, credit card companies and insurance companies. They also impact heavily on the general public with increased costs from frauds being passed on to them in higher interest rates and taxes. The individual victim whose personal credit history has been victimized faces a long battle to get his personal credit history back to normal with the fraudulent charges deleted.*

The Commission has learned that Nigerians are also involved in organized smuggling of heroin into the United States. In this country a person called a

“God Father” controls four to six “mules” who transport drugs and money. The typical smuggling process starts in Nigeria when the mule -- usually a woman or juvenile -- goes to a “Black Magic House” to receive instructions and swallow the contraband drugs, which are sealed in condoms for transport to the United States. Nigerians obtain most of their heroin from Southeast Asia where 70 percent of the heroin available in the United States is produced. Three out of five couriers arrested in Thailand in possession of heroin are from Nigeria.

Historically, the source of heroin in the black community has been La Cosa Nostra -- trafficking in Southwest Asian heroin. Today, the major source is ethnic Chinese organized criminals dealing in Southeast Asian heroin. Of course, the evidence of Nigerian smuggling clearly indicates that Chinese criminals are not the lone suppliers of Southeast Asian heroin in the United States.

#### **COMMON CONCERNS ABOUT AFRO-LINEAL CRIMINAL GROUPS**

Afro-lineal criminal groups are particularly dangerous because they exhibit all or some of the following characteristics.

#### **BREEDING GROUNDS FOR DURABLE SYNDICATES**

Although many Afro-lineal criminal groups have only a fleeting existence, some of the more notorious have enjoyed significant duration and power. If left unchecked, each gang, set, posse or other incipient organization has the potential to become entrenched to the point where it may achieve a life of its own. This certainly occurred in the case of The Family in northern New Jersey, once headed by Wayne (Akbar) Pray.

Narcotics trafficking, in particular, provides a fertile breeding ground for criminal cartels. Just as Prohibition during the 1920s promoted the rise of La Cosa Nostra families, the vast demand for illegal

drugs provides many opportunities for new groups to accumulate power and markets through energy, resourcefulness and brute force. Newark's Police Director, Claude M. Coleman, summarized the problem during the Commission's public hearing:

*[A] lot of [African-American] groups are what I refer to as freelancers, having very fleeting operations. We take them out, there are others that take their places .... [B]ut a lot of them have achieved a level of sophistication and durability that we find disturbing and ... make it more difficult to detect, to apprehend and to prosecute.*

Director Coleman noted that "as long as the demand continues, we are going to have drug traffickers," but he emphasized that "constant attention from law enforcement and from groups such as [the SCI] can prevent any one group from becoming too powerful and ... too entrenched or too insulated from police detection."

## VIOLENCE

As established or aspiring drug trafficking groups vie for available markets, they become extremely violent. Returns from the lucrative drug trade provide ample funds to purchase devastating weapons. The criminal milieu breeds a lack of respect for life. This volatile combination leads to high rates of homicide and aggravated assault, as well as the disruption of normal life in many neighborhoods.

On October 26, 1989, the front lines in a drug turf battle engulfed two Essex County Police officers. A police captain and sergeant were severely wounded in Newark when they stopped their patrol car to question individuals who turned out to be heavily armed and grouping for a territorial fight with a rival drug dealer.

DEA Special Agent-in-Charge Donald Ashton detailed the violence associated with The Family in Essex County under Wayne Pray:

*[Pray] also reinforced his control over his organization and drug trafficking within its territory through violence. Pray hired thugs to intimidate or eliminate witnesses who might implicate him in criminal activity. Witnesses in at least five homicide investigations have asserted that Pray was directly responsible for victims being murdered because they had attempted to obtain cocaine from less expensive sources of supply or attempted to withdraw from his organization.*

Elizabeth Police Detective Thomas Swan testified how the E'Port Posse disposed of Mutah Sessoms, one of its members who had been cooperating with police:

*[I]n March of 1989, during the discovery phase in the criminal cases stemming from Operation Pioneer, the defense was able to obtain a statement which had been provided by Mutah. Soon afterwards Sessoms was severely beaten by five individuals after he had left the Union County Courthouse, three of whom he identified as Pretlow underlings, Shawn Hartwell, Bilal's second-in-command, and another by the name of Wendell Wilson, who would later help avenge the death of Robert Pretlow. I warned Sessoms that his identity had been revealed, and we took precautions to make sure that he stayed out of Elizabeth. We provided him with funds, but because of his age, which was I believe at the time, nineteen, he had a girlfriend that he couldn't stay away from. So he sneaked into Elizabeth at night, unbeknownst to us, and finally on June 17, 1989, his mutilated, decapitated and dismembered torso was found in suitcases in Newark.*

Detective Swan described the violence connected with the struggles for supremacy in the drug trade in Elizabeth and parts of Newark among the E'Port Posse and other groups:

*[On] January 8, 1989, Ricky Williams was shot in the abdomen by [E'Port Posse members] Keith Cashwell and Andre Williams, ... because he posed a threat to the Pretlows. Bilal Pretlow ordered this shooting from the Union County Jail, and it was relayed via [his second-in-command] Shawn Hartwell. Jeanette Griggs was severely beaten by Bilal Pretlow, Shawn Hartwell and others for selling cocaine in the vicinity of Pioneer Homes for someone other than the Pretlow organization.*

*Shortly thereafter, on July 9, 1989, Robert Pretlow was shot to death in Elizabeth by Bobby Ray Davis, Walter Griggs, who was Jeanette's brother, and Maurice Crowley, who was Jeanette's boyfriend. Bobby Ray Davis was a major supplier of heroin to many New Jersey cities, extending into the state prison system. He had decided to expand his drug operation to include cocaine distribution to the Pretlow turf in Elizabeth. On the day of Robert Pretlow's death the Elizabeth Police stopped a car driven by [Bilal] Pretlow, who was then out on bail, and containing Shawn Hartwell and Irving Bethea. All three fled the car, and in a garbage can which Pretlow had passed was found ... a Tech-9 automatic pistol with a clip of 25 rounds. On July 10, 1989, which was the following day, Bobby Ray Davis was shot to death in front of his home in Elizabeth [by] Thomas Pretlow, the oldest of four Pretlow brothers.... ... [Wendell] Wilson [was] charged with driving Thomas Pretlow to the Davis house where Pretlow allegedly shot [Davis] in the head three times. We've had at least four other execution-style killings attributed to the Pretlow organization or its rivals. At the height of this group's activity we had shots fired in the downtown area of Elizabeth every night.*

Bilal Pretlow faces the death penalty in federal charges for the alleged drug-related murders of Sessoms and Melanie Baker, a 16-year-old girl who inadvertently stumbled on the location of one of the outfit's "stash" houses.

Camden Police Detective Leonard Hall testified about the violence associated with the criminal sets in Camden:

*With the involvement of young street dealers in the last few years their dealing is wide open, on the corners, projects and what have you. This fact, coupled with keen competition for turf, has led to violent confrontations on the street.*

...

*... [S]ome [sets] attempt to invade [others'] area[s] of operation to increase their drug sales. Frequently this results in drive-by shootings, to force one set to either relinquish the area or to fight back by attacking the other set.*

*In other instances the individuals often rob the young drug dealers as a means to obtain money without dealing drugs themselves. We refer to these individuals as stick-up boys. Recently in Camden we had a triple homicide by a hired shooter originating from Philadelphia who also double-crossed one set who had hired him to protect them and their operation.*

Camden Detective Louis Muzyczek testified about the availability of weapons to set members:

*[They possess] Uzi machine guns, automatic pistols. The weapon of choice is the nine millimeter automatic. We see sawed-off shotguns, and ... individuals in [different] sets are actually wearing bullet-proof vests.*

Violence is also characteristic of Five Percenter gangs. Monmouth County Investigator Jordan testified how the violence centers around battles for turf:

*[Five Percenters] will become very hostile to any rival gang or anyone who attempts to take over their drug turf, as it has been outlined by them. ... We have 68 gangs that we are dealing with in our county [including 14 Five Percenter chapters], so there is a lot of rivalry there.*

Five Percenter violence extends beyond turf battles with other groups, as related by the disguised witness:

*Q. What happens to any member who wishes to leave the Five Percenters?*

*A. He will be subject to a "universal beat down," which is an assault or a beating and may even be killed, depending on the circumstances.*

...

*Q. Even a killing could result, depending on the circumstances?*

*A. Yes, sir.*

*Q. Is the term "universal beat down" used for any other reason?*

*A. Yes. Could be assault on a white person, who assaulted or questioned a black man. It could also be used against a Five Percenter for failure to learn his lessons.*

...

**CHAIRMAN JAMES R. ZAZZALI:** *Mr. Witness, you've indicated that a "universal beat down" could include a murder, am I correct?*

*A. Yes.*

**CHAIRMAN ZAZZALI:** *Without going into*

*any details, do you have knowledge of such murders?*

*A. Yes.*

**CHAIRMAN ZAZZALI:** *About how many?*

*A. Three, four.*

Violence also occurs between Jamaican posses and other posses or African-American narcotics traffickers. It takes place as one group or another defends its drug-dealing turf or for political and other reasons. A blatant example occurred in a park in Oakland, New Jersey, on August 4, 1985. In a gun battle between elements of the Shower Posse and elements of the Spangler and Dog posses, three people, including the leader of the Dog Posse, died and 19 were wounded. Police seized 33 weapons at the scene. More than 1,000 spent shell casings were found.

Illegal aliens from Jamaica are typically employed to staff the Jamaican drug trafficking organizations. Their loyalty is insured by threats of violence to them and their families. There have been documented incidents of what is called "jointing" of individuals cooperating with law enforcement. An informant's body is dismembered at the joints and pieces sent to his family in Jamaica.

Since 1985, approximately 1,400 homicides in the United States have been attributed to posse drug dealing. In New Jersey, there have been 17 posse-related murders since January 1987. In excess of 200 posse-related killings occurred in New York City during 1988. In Philadelphia, there have been more than 40 posse-related homicides since October 1986. The posses have engaged in indiscriminate shooting sprees, even though only one person was the target, and they often assassinate the entire family of a targeted victim.

## DESTRUCTION OF NEIGHBORHOODS

Established and emerging Afro-lineal organized crime groups have disrupted everyday life in many urban and suburban areas. They recruit youth into a disastrous way of life, destroy families, intimidate decent people to the point where they feel like prisoners in their own homes and have even been responsible for the murders of innocent bystanders.

In a statement submitted at the public hearing, Camden Police Chief George D. Pugh emphasized Afro-lineal organized crime's crippling effects on urban neighborhoods and society at large:

*I perceive no greater threat to the rebirth, stability and quality of life in our urban communities than the organized groups of young predators terrorizing our neighborhoods while engaged in illicit drug trafficking and its attendant violence, all under the control and direction of well insulated individuals. ... The crisis in the urban centers is just the beginning; the problem has and will continue to infiltrate the suburban and rural communities. I sincerely hope and pray that this hearing is the first step towards developing and implementing a comprehensive policy and plan to effectively eradicate this ever-increasing cancer we have identified as youth violence.*

Camden Police Detective Leonard Hall elaborated on the adverse effects on neighborhoods that become the turf of drug distribution rings in Camden:

*[With] widespread [drug selling] operations and the frequent drive-by shootings and situations like that, the individual citizens in Camden have become prisoners in their own homes. The young people, the youth dealers, have no respect for the elderly, and a few innocent people have been shot and even killed. People can't even walk*

*to the store basically like they would do in [normal] neighborhoods.*

Newark Police Director Claude Coleman described the situation existing in some neighborhoods in Newark:

*... [S]ome of the decent people who live [in buildings that become part of the territories of these criminal groups] become like prisoners in these buildings. ... They are afraid to go in; they are afraid to come out; they are afraid to have visitors. They don't get deliveries as other people would in normal neighborhoods. I think the quality of life in the neighborhoods has overall deteriorated. The kids that play in the neighborhood become workers for the people who are dealing drugs because they are attracted by the fast money and the fast cars and the so-called symbols of success -- the gold chains, the sneakers. They want these things, but the only way to get them is to deal drugs, so it's ready employment for them. ... [T]here is the danger of [the criminals] serving as role models for the kids that they come in contact with.*

In response to Commissioner Dumont's inquiry about the ages at which some youths participate in drug trafficking, Director Coleman testified:

*Well, we've had some as young as nine serving as lookouts. ... They are all around the block. As soon as someone comes around the corner who they suspect to be a narcotics officer or a police officer, they start yelling, "Five-oh, five-oh" [using the name of the old Hawaiian police show on television], and they are actually serving as lookouts.*

Somerset Prosecutor Nicholas Bissell described how one of Isaac Wright's minions was enticed by the trappings of the drug trade:

*For example, during the guilty plea of [Willie (Chill Will)] Sirmans, he indicated that he first met Wright when Wright arrived at one of these apartment complexes driving a white Mercedes. We had surveillances going at the time, and you could see on the surveillance tapes that it attracted all the kids to his car. Not that he ever sold any cocaine from that car, but that Mercedes was a status symbol in that area. Sirmans indicated that once he became involved and he was found to be reliable he had what was known as a franchise. That franchise entitled him to get a new Volvo automobile, which Wright purchased for him. Not to sell drugs for him -- in Sirmans' words it was for show. In addition to that, he could keep anywhere from three to five thousand dollars of the money per week that he made. He kept, as he indicated during his plea, essentially whatever he wanted, and he, therefore, never had less than \$500. This is a kid that's, at the time, 16 or 17 years old and going to school, and he's driving a new Volvo on a forged license, and he's got at least \$500 in his pocket. So that kind of an operation allows for those kinds of role models. And in those disadvantaged areas you can see, I think, where kids would be drawn to that type of a life-style, [figuring,] "I can get all the things I can't get any other way, and this is an easy way to do it."*

Detective Hall also described the recruitment of youths into drug distribution rings in Camden:

*Some of the sets have what they call a lookout. Lookouts can vary anywhere from eight to 13 years old, and they are paid to look out for the police or stick-up boys. They are paid between 50 and 60 dollars a day. Now the street dealers receive about \$600 worth of drugs from the mid-level manager, and at the end of the day, if he sells the entire amount, he's permitted to keep \$200, one*

*third of what he was given. In many cases the \$600 worth of drugs has already been ... diluted by the [boss or] manager of the operation, what we call stepped-on.*

Camden Detective Louis Muzyczek compared for Commissioner Dumont present-day cocaine dealing to the heroin trade which predominated in the past:

*Just the fact that Camden's population is only 85,000, and ... it's only three square miles, and we have 38 active drug sets, which can range from 10 individuals on one particular set up to 50, that is quite a bit of young people involved in narcotics. And I've been a police officer going into my seventeenth year, and it was there in the beginning ... with heroin, and its much larger now ... with the cocaine flow throughout the city. More people are involved. More young people are involved. Children that are going to the elementary schools are carrying what we call beat bags, and they are actually role playing what they see on the corners at night when they go home from the schools.*

Monmouth County Investigator Louis Jordan related how Five Percenters recruit and use juveniles:

*They use a lot of juveniles, which we see a lot of, mostly, who are familiar with the system. And you have to understand also that when these juveniles are approached by law enforcement, they have been taught that they are basically going to be smacked on the wrist and turned back into society. So we have adults who are behind them, we find, a lot of the time.*

...

*They do a lot of recruiting at our schools. In fact, a majority of it. Again, I will estimate*

*we are dealing with juveniles mostly. Recruiting is going on at the schools, themselves, also in parks and on the streets.*

...

*[A] lot of it is done in the grammar schools.*

...

*[T]here is [also recruitment in the prison system.]*

Investigator Jordan told Commissioner Merin how quick drug money breeds parental condonement of young drug traffickers operating in poor areas with high unemployment rates:

*[W]e find when ... we arrest [a juvenile], ... we can get a lot of flak from the parent. You have to understand that if the parents are getting a \$300 or \$400 check from the State and ... their child ... all of a sudden ... is out there involved in drugs and bringing home \$300 or \$400 a day, that parent is not going to turn that child in. And, not only that, the parent is probably going to give the authority that brought that child there, be it DYFS [Division of Youth and Family Services] or the police, a very hard way to go.*

## BROAD IMPACT AND CONNECTIONS

Drug trafficking is not the only scourge of Afro-lineal organized crime groups. The Commission learned about gun running, homicides, robberies and extortion committed by these groups. It learned about enduring gambling operations, some under the control of La Cosa Nostra and some operating independently. The SCI also learned about certain organized Nigerians systematically defrauding banks and other commercial enterprises. The adverse impact of these groups on our society has been sweeping and profound.

When asked by Chairman Zazzali to compare the harm caused by Afro-lineal organized crime to

that caused by La Cosa Nostra, Director Coleman concluded that the former's heavier involvement in drug trafficking made its effects "much worse." He added, "We've had gambling, which other groups have engaged in, we've had prostitution, but those activities have never had the effect that drug trafficking has had." Camden Detective Leonard Hall told Chairman Zazzali that the drug trade is "the biggest business within [Camden]."

In some instances Afro-lineal organized crime groups have cooperated with criminal groups of other ethnic backgrounds in order to obtain financing, gain sources of supply or customers or avoid territorial disputes. Detective Hall described the evolving relationship between African-American gambling operations in his area and La Cosa Nostra:

*In the past many of the black numbers operators have been under the Bruno-Scarfo organization or have edged off their bets to that organization. With the demise of the Bruno-Scarfo influence it appears that most of the black numbers operations have become independent.*

Cooperation among criminal groups is international in scope. DEA Special Agent-in-Charge Ashton testified about the Colombian connection with The Family headed by Wayne Pray:

*[The Family] distributed both cocaine and marijuana. Pray's supplies of these drugs came from as far west as California and as far south as South Florida. His primary sources for both were Colombians, affiliated with the Medellin cartel. One of his sources for cocaine was Nelson Gomez, a member of the Paladinos, an organization located in Medellin, Colombia. The Paladinos' primary role is to execute drug traffickers who have crossed the Medellin cartel. They were, in fact, enforcers for the Medellin cartel. On at least one occasion, Pray, himself, traveled to Colombia. Pray dealt with*

*representatives of the Medellin cartel located in South Florida, thereby purchasing his cocaine at a much lower price. He was able to originally meet the Colombians because of his reputation for being able to obtain false identity documents.*

While urban communities with large minority populations suffer most at the hands of Afro-lineal organized crime groups, these organizations also provide drug supermarket for customers who live in the suburbs. Much of the wealth accumulated by such operations comes from suburban, upper and middle class drug customers that patronize the drug traffickers' turfs. Newark Police Director Coleman testified about the suburban connection:

*[C]ertainly the users ... are suburban. Some of the people we see coming into Prince Street, some of the other areas that I've talked about, ... [are] coming from Short Hills, Millburn and from other suburban areas ....*

Camden Detective Muzyczek also testified that suburbanites are a mainstay of the illegal drug markets in that city:

*The purchasers of these drugs are coming from the suburbs into the City of Camden. Camden City's population could not support all the drug activity that we see on a daily basis and throughout the many years that I've been working there.*

Finally, Somerset County Prosecutor Bissell described the interaction between suburban customers and urban narcotic suppliers:

*[O]ne of the things that we've noticed with respect to our efforts is that urban areas have become essentially the shopping centers, if you will, for narcotics. They present a geography that makes it difficult for law enforcement to operate, obviously, and it*

*allows these groups to operate almost openly. And they attract the customers from the suburban areas, so while Somerset is essentially a suburban county, we have New Brunswick on one border and Plainfield on the other. And we find that our citizens go to Union and Middlesex County, buy drugs and bring them back to Somerset, and they are creating a narcotics problem in Somerset County. But they are also allowing and creating a narcotics problem in these urban areas. And these groups become more organized, because the organized nature of the network allows for a more reliable supply, which results in a deeper addiction of more people, a greater demand, more money and a strengthening of the distribution ring. The more established the group, the more likely there will be unwholesome role models for young people, especially in the innercity areas.*

#### CONCEALMENT (HIDING THE WEALTH, CORRUPTION, AURA OF RESPECTABILITY)

As in other criminal organizations, Afro-lineal organized crime groups strive to insulate their leadership from connections to the criminal activity. Newark Police Director Coleman described for Commissioner Barry H. Evenchick the care which is sometimes taken by street-level drug dealers:

*Well, [a drug purchase] might unfold with someone from the suburbs driving through the area, and he approaches a dealer who might direct him to someone else. This person may take the money [and then] direct him to someone else, who will give him the drug.*

...

*The person who gives you the drug is going to give you what you order. If you apprehend him, he's going to have that one drug on him. He's not going to be arrested for a*

*major deal [nor] lose his "stash," that is, the major part of his drugs.*

DEA Special Agent-in-Charge Ashton detailed how Wayne Pray of The Family in Essex County invested illicit gains in legitimate businesses and insulated his illegal activities from law enforcement scrutiny:

*Q. Did Pray's activities extend to investing illicit gains in legitimate businesses?*

*A. Yes, sir. Pray used several businesses as fronts to create the appearance that he had legitimate sources of income and that he was merely an honest businessman. Some of his front businesses were the Golden Comb Hair Salon, Garmal Auto Sales, Za-Key Associates, which is a paralegal and financial consulting firm, Mel-Ton Talent Promotion and Entertainment Company, an abortion clinic, and he touted himself as a boxing promoter. During an eighteen-month period between January of 1987 and June of 1988 at least one million dollars in assets were purchased by or on behalf of Pray.*

*Q. Were there other ways in which Pray insulated himself from the criminal activities of The Family?*

*A. Yes, sir. One of the methods utilized was to exploit women who would carry out his drug transactions. He oversaw these arrangements, but he neither handled the money nor the drugs directly.*

*Q. You earlier mentioned his reputation for being able to obtain false identity documents. Could you elaborate on this?*

*A. Yes, sir. Pray provided phony identification for several of his Colombian contacts who were traveling in the United States. This included fraudulent New Jersey driver's licenses which he obtained through suspected corrupt employees of the Irvington motor vehicle agency.*

Special Agent Ashton also testified that when Pray promoted boxing matches he hired off-duty local police officers to provide security. Agent Ashton attributed Pray's "image within the community that he was untouchable" by law enforcement, in part, to this police presence in his entourage, "which would give him a certain aura, and people would be fearful of providing information."

The Isaac Wright group from Somerset and Middlesex counties and The Family of Roland (Pops) Bartlett, which operated in southern New Jersey, both utilized recording companies to launder profits from the sale of drugs. Wright used the New York City firm Express Records, and Bartlett used Domino Records, also of New York City, which he had purchased from the Genovese-Gigante LCN family.

Camden Detective Joyner described for Commissioner Merin the infiltration of legitimate businesses by drug traffickers looking for fronts or places to launder illegal profits:

*Q. You indicated that several of these [Camden] groups used legitimate businesses to launder their money. I think you mentioned there were bars and laundry shops, that sort of thing. Do you know for a fact which businesses those are? Can you trace the ownership back to the posse members?*

...

*A. The same names involved in the drug activity are showing up on the licenses for the purchases and rentals of the businesses. We have people that have histories going back into the '70s involved in different activities, especially with the Jamaicans that are involved in legitimate businesses in the Camden area and Philadelphia area.*

*Q. Have you attempted to work with ABC, for example, so that prior to the time the license is granted in Camden they run the information by you, or you go to them to try to get some of these bars de-licensed?*

*A. This has been one of the problems, the interagency coordination. A lot of times we don't find out about a business until it's opened, established and moving. They take over businesses. A lot of the businesses that they take over, it's just a matter of changing the license and that is just a short-term deal. We don't know about it ahead of time. It's done.*

*Q. So might one of the recommendations be to have ABC contact the police department directly before it grants any licensing in Camden ...?*

*A. Yes, both local and statewide.*

*Q. In terms of some of the other businesses that are outside the jurisdiction of the ABC, the laundries or whatever type of commercial enterprise, is it possible to set up some sort of licensure operation or coordination with the Department of State, in other words, prior to the time that a business can be incorporated or prior to the time it receives any other necessary papers from the state, is there some communication or coordination that would be helpful at that level?*

*A. Again, this is an issue that is hard to get ahead of. You don't realize its happening unless you have someone working right in Licensing and Inspection, or checking [it], on a daily basis almost, that the takeover is being done. A person comes in and applies for a permit or a license at a food store, sandwich shop, steak shop; it doesn't raise any suspicion [at Licensing and Inspection] that this is happening.*

*Q. If we, being the State, required that, prior to the time that any business would open,*

*[there would be] a 72-hour waiting period in order to give the police the opportunity to review the names, would that be helpful?*

*A. If the information for every business could be forwarded to the police -- to the municipalities, the officers, our investigative division, to check the names and see who these people are, it would help possibly in identifying just what is happening and the organizations, how they are spreading out.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends the following actions to more effectively counter the threat of Afro-lineal organized crime:

1. Spending programs should emphasize the reduction of demand for the drugs whose sales provide the profits which are the lifeblood of most of the Afro-lineal organized crime groups. In the long run it will be cheaper and more beneficial for society to spend significantly more for boot camps for youthful offenders, drug addiction treatment facilities and vocational training, even if it means that less money will be available for more prison cells. In addition, suburban customers of urban drug supermarkets should face tougher sanctions and forfeitures.

2. Direct assistance to local law enforcement should be increased so that more police can walk beats and help urban residents reclaim their neighborhoods. Meanwhile, programs that encourage community participation in efforts to stamp out drug trafficking and other crime should be enhanced. The State Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control should expedite appeals of local license revocations for those liquor establishments notorious as fronts for drug trafficking.

3. Law enforcement should devote a greater proportion of its intelligence effort to Afro-lineal organized crime groups. Equally important, this information should be routinely shared among law

enforcement agencies in a true spirit of cooperation. The Narcotics and Organized Crime Management and Analytical Database (NOMAD) should be expanded by eliminating federal funding restrictions which deprive such systems of federal "drug war" funds.

4. Leaders of Afro-lineal organized crime groups should be targeted, exposed and isolated. They should be prosecuted as "drug kingpins" and denied bail if the government can prove they pose a danger to the community. If granted bail, their trials should be expedited. Their investment of illegal gains in legitimate assets should be traced. Finally, after incarceration they should be closely monitored in order to curtail their influence over their organizations.

5. Law enforcement tools, which have proven successful in the fight against La Cosa Nostra, should be retained and expanded to counter Afro-lineal organized crime. Electronic surveillance is particularly helpful. Meanwhile, New Jersey needs a state law counterpart to complement the federal statute dealing with money laundering.

The Commission is well aware of the fiscal constraints which limit the State's ability to fund some of these recommendations. However, much could be accomplished without additional funding by simply altering correction and treatment priorities, encouraging more flexibility in federal funding, improving cooperation among agencies and focusing more attention on group leadership.

#### EMPHASIZE REDUCTION OF DRUG DEMAND

Our society should put proportionately more money into reducing the demand for drugs through prevention, education and rehabilitation. Money must be spent at the source of the drug problem -- demand -- in order to avoid spending much greater sums for jails and the criminal justice system. Somerset County Prosecutor Bissell succinctly described the right combination of resources for

victory in the war against narcotics trafficking:

*... [A]s [the drug war] becomes a more comprehensive effort, [with] ... law enforcement being stepped up to the point where it has been, ... education and treatment and rehabilitation also ... elevated to the same level, then I think ... we can move even farther, ... and we will continue to have success as long as everyone understands that this is not something that law enforcement is going to solve by itself. I don't think anybody in law enforcement believes that. We need these other components. Education, treatment and rehabilitation are just as important as effective law enforcement.*

More money should be provided for corrections resources capable of reducing drug demand: boot camps, drug rehabilitation facilities and vocational training. Newark Police Director Coleman described for Commissioner Dumont the absence of facilities to deal with youths who enlist in drug distribution and auto theft rings:

*The ones that ... [serve] as lookouts, we don't bother to arrest them, first of all -- [it's a] very hard charge to prove. The other kids that are definitely engaged in the activity, whether it's drug trafficking or auto theft, we arrest those, and they are handled through the juvenile justice system and, just like the adult system, there are so many kids involved in there that they are released. There is no place to put them.*

*Unfortunately, too, it seems that [judges have] fewer alternative dispositions ..., to incarceration, like reform school or juvenile schools ..., since those places are crowded. The kids that we are dealing with now are not going to be released to the YMCA or some local social group because those groups just aren't able to take responsibility for the kids.*

Director Coleman further explained that the criminal justice system cannot cope with a solution based largely on arrests, prosecutions and incarceration:

*I think that we've seen that the drug arrests really just led to a general breakdown of the criminal justice system, where we are not seeing speedy trials, we are not seeing any justice at all. And it seems the more people we arrest the more broken down the system becomes -- really nowhere to put these people that we are arresting. They are right back out. ... [T]here is simply no place to put them. The more people we arrest ... the more crowded the jails become, and almost all of the prisons now are under some form of court order which says that you have to reduce the crowding in the jail.*

He elaborated for Commissioner Merin:

*Let me say with respect to the penalties, I'm not sure if we toughen the penalties that that is going to make a major difference [against drug traffickers]. ... I think when we start to institute mandatory penalties and start to make them longer and longer, we just create the need for more jail space and more prisons which kind of got us here in the first place. We don't have enough jail space. It's not being built fast enough to accommodate the people that we are arresting. A lot of the police officers would be satisfied if we could get them six months as opposed to six years, as long as we got them something -- when they are arrested at least they went away for six months. Right now they are not going any place because it takes too long.*

Director Coleman's concerns are punctuated by projections for increased state and county prison populations in the coming years. On February 26, 1991, Corrections Commissioner William H. Fauver reported to the Assembly Appropriations Committee that the state adult prison population is expected

to increase by about 3,075 inmates (over 14.5 percent) during the next 18 months. The Commissioner added that the state prison system is operating at approximately 140 percent of capacity. Current construction plans are not expected to reduce the number of adult state prison inmates (varying between 2,800 and 3,000) who are housed in county jails under an emergency order that has been in effect for a decade.

There are some signs that the state government is serious about devoting a greater share of resources to demand reduction. Under a 1989 law creating a Drug Enforcement Demand Reduction Fund, the State has collected more than \$20 million in mandatory fines from drug offenders ranging from \$300 to \$3,000. In February of this year, \$8.1 million of this money was made available to 300 municipal alliances as seed money for their local education and public awareness efforts against drug and alcohol abuse. The Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse has formally approved the first allocations of Fund money to authorized spending programs in Passaic, Bergen and Burlington counties. All 21 counties will eventually receive funds. The counties' shares are based on a formula which takes population (including the proportion of juveniles), incomes and numbers of arrests into consideration.

A portion of the remainder of the \$20 million in the Fund has been earmarked for the State Department of Health for community drug programs. The rest is being held in reserve for future years.

As a further means of reducing the demand for narcotics, law enforcement should put increased pressure on suburban drug customers who frequent urban drug supermarkets to purchase their deadly wares. Increased seizures of the customers' automobiles would discourage drug use.

The present forfeiture law applies only to indictable crimes. A proposal which would have allowed the forfeiture of any property directly or indirectly used in or derived from a disorderly persons drug

offense has not moved in the Legislature since the majority of prosecutors expressed opposition. The prosecutors were concerned that public support for drug enforcement would be weakened if the punishment were too severe to fit the crime charged. Amendments being suggested to the bill's sponsor, Senate President John A. Lynch, would allow the forfeiture of property involved in disorderly persons offenses so long as the offenders were arrested for indictable crimes that were downgraded to disorderly persons offenses. The Commission believes that something of this nature should be worked out so that casual, suburban drug users supporting urban drug supermarkets will face sanctions weightier than municipal court fines or driver's license suspensions.

A bill sponsored by State Senator Ronald L. Rice would mandate a jail sentence for anyone who buys, sells or obtains an illegal drug from a juvenile. Senator Rice also has sponsored a bill that would mandate a jail term for anyone buying, selling or obtaining drugs in a municipality outside the one where he resides. The Legislature should study these measures in relation to other mandatory incarceration laws to determine which ones are useful. Assuming an ability and willingness to substantially increase prison capacity and criminal justice system resources, such measures may prove helpful in discouraging the most insidious forms of drug trafficking. In the absence of such a commitment, however, it would be more productive to devote scarce resources to more proven methods of demand reduction.

#### INCREASE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE AND ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

There should be more police walking the beat and patrolling in urban areas. The bulk of drug war law enforcement assistance funds should be provided directly to the local level where the real war is being waged against drug rings. We should devote more resources to community outreach programs

that support and involve civic groups eager to drive criminal organizations from their neighborhoods. DEA Special Agent-in-Charge Ashton testified, "[W]e need to have a positive law enforcement presence in the community, and we need to solicit the community's trust and support."

Newark Police Director Coleman described how some of this funding could be put to work on the local level. He delineated a program, involving Newark and State police, called Operation Homestead, operating in Newark on a limited basis:

*We try to reduce the demand on drugs by being present in the community. ... We try to work and empower the community so that when the police do leave, at least the neighborhood has been improved by our being there. It involves, too, bringing to bear much more different resources than the police on a particular problem. ... We've seen by arresting certain traffickers that others simply just take their place. What we try to do is improve the overall quality of that community, not just arrest the traffickers, but try to help those there who need treatment. [We t]ry to organize the community, [so] that when we do arrest one, no one rises to take his place.*

Since last year the Newark Housing Authority (NHA) also has conducted a program called Operation Clean Sweep, a version of an anti-drug initiative developed by the Chicago Housing Authority in 1988 to combat drug activity through increased security and evictions, as well as rehabilitation of the housing stock. Under the program police secure buildings by clearing them of people who do not belong there. Housing Authority workers then clean and repair hallways and apartments and install new building entrance doors and locks. The federal government allocated \$250,000 to the NHA to conduct the program at three high-rise buildings in the Stella Wright Homes within the last year. Another \$1.2 million has been given to complete the remaining

buildings at the complex.

Operation Clean Sweep should be just the start of a more aggressive program to clear drug-dealing gangs out of public housing projects. The NHA has a security plan calling for \$13 million to be spent to sharply curtail crime at its 36 projects. \$600,000 in local matching funds have been pledged by Newark City Council, but the State, which has been asked to supply the rest of the money, has not promised anything in light of its present fiscal crisis. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has also been asked to fund the proposal. The NHA, which presently employs 105 mostly-unarmed security guards, wants to hire 400 police to patrol its buildings. The full-time police patrols would also back-up tenant patrols called for by the security plan.

Somerset County Prosecutor Bissell testified about how community activism helped to thwart the Isaac Wright cocaine trafficking network:

*For example, right around the time of the Wright investigation and those arrests, the people in Robeson Village got together and developed their own community watch where they put up a guard station at the entrance to the complex. And they wouldn't let in any vehicle that didn't belong to a resident of the complex, because the problem was, as people like Wright and his suppliers would arrive in these cars, people would come out, buy drugs and go back in. It was destroying their neighborhood. They finally took matters into their own hands in a peaceful way and took control of their neighborhoods and wouldn't allow this to continue. The effort goes on today, and from what we understand, it's had tremendous success in improving the quality of life in that area by keeping these people that want to sell drugs out.*

Monmouth County Investigator Jordan described for Commissioner Evenchick how responsible African-American leaders have involved themselves in an effort to slow the growth of the Five Percenters:

*A lot of the community-based religious organizations, as well as the community, itself, have only recently started to, in my observation, take a step forward and say, "Okay, enough is enough; there are too many kids and innocent people being killed out there on our streets." And you have to understand that we have seen a large jump in terms of activity, crime, with respect to this particular gang since 1980. Crime was relatively low when they first came on the scene. And we keep active statistical records, and crime is up all the way across the board with respect to this particular gang, so the community folk, educators, all of them are now starting to become concerned. The denial is starting to stop, but some of the denial is still there.*

Camden has also developed a program involving law enforcement interaction with the community. Camden Police Detective Louis Muzyczek described for the Commission the activities of a small Camden City Police Youth Task Force, "which works to thwart the inducement of the city's youth into the drug trade":

*It was formed in October of 1989 with a two-fold mission. One, to eliminate shootings and street corner violence and to prevent the proliferation of youth involvement in the drug trade. We also work frequently with the grade school children to educate them in an attempt to eliminate the peer pressure of middle school and high school age youths who are already involved in the city's organized drug trade.*

...

*We go inside. We go into the neighborhoods, we try to get the confidence of the parents and the people that live in there to cooperate with us on the black-on-black crime that we see every day, the drive-by shootings. But we are severely understaffed.*

**COMMISSIONER DUMONT:** *How understaffed?*

*A. We started with three, and there are currently five of us [in the Youth Task Force]. When I came on the Camden Police Department in 1974 we had approximately 465 police officers. At that time ... the major narcotic in the city was heroin, and ... it was done at a house; it wasn't as open as it is today. Seventeen years later we have approximately 280 police officers, and we have 38 drug sets, as opposed to four or five 17 years ago. There is more crime out there, less police to fight the battle.*

Camden Police Chief George Pugh highlighted the need for more police officers walking the beat in inner-city neighborhoods:

*Walking the beat by patrolmen, in my opinion, is the primary mechanism needed to reduce the open air drug markets we have in our cities today. Also, when we were able to have beat patrols in the City of Camden the public perception relative to fear was the lowest in my entire career in the police department. We urgently need the funds to put the policemen back on the streets.*

In early 1990 police and school officials in Camden also formed a Committee on Gang Violence to increase coordination and information-sharing between police and school officials about potential posse-related problems. Although most youth in the gangs or posses are not in school, their violence sometimes spills over into the schoolyards, and students are vulnerable to the enticements of

their fast and flashy lifestyle. The group has distributed posters warning posses to stay out of the schools.

The State can assist overburdened municipal authorities by continuing state/local cooperative programs and expanding others. For example, the State Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) should crack down on taverns which serve as drug distribution points, especially in urban areas. When a license holder appeals to ABC from a local license suspension or revocation, the local action is stayed pending the appeal. This sometimes allows notorious drug distribution premises to continue under the guise of a licensed liquor establishment for quite some time while the appeal progresses. ABC should coordinate with local authorities to expedite the appeal process for the more disreputable licensees.

#### INCREASE INTELLIGENCE GATHERING AND SHARING

The vast majority of police intelligence resources over the years have been devoted to La Cosa Nostra mobs. Insufficient attention has been devoted to developing strategic intelligence about Afro-lineal organized crime. While law enforcement should continue to focus attention on the LCN, it should commit a greater proportion of its intelligence effort to Afro-lineal groups. As DEA Special Agent-in-Charge Ashton testified, "We need to recognize and identify the existence of these criminal organizations, and we need to develop and share strategic intelligence."

Law enforcement agencies must also share their intelligence routinely in a true spirit of cooperation. The DEA's Ashton noted, "It is important that we communicate and cooperate in these investigations."

The Border Anti-Drug Team (BAT), described by Somerset County Prosecutor Bissell, is a good example of successful cooperation that should be emulated. Efforts by groups such as Concerned Officers Organization on Gang Activities (CO3GA)

should be encouraged.

The Narcotics and Organized Crime Management and Analytical Database (NOMAD) should be expanded to more municipal police departments. As part of the Attorney General's Statewide Narcotics Task Force, NOMAD provides a computer database to assist its participants in assessing the scope of illegal narcotics and organized criminal activity in New Jersey. Present federal funding conditions, however, place restrictions on the use of federal grants for such a project. This, and the absence of sufficient state funds, has prevented the expansion of NOMAD to significant local police departments.

In an effort to determine how familiar New Jersey law enforcement agencies are with Afro-lineal organized criminal groups operating in their areas, the Commission sent surveys to various law enforcement agencies throughout the State. Each agency was asked to identify groups operating within its jurisdiction, the memberships and structures of these organizations, their characteristics, and their methods of operation, including their criminal activities.

A total of 65 surveys were distributed. Forty-nine agencies (approximately 75 percent) responded. Seventeen of the 49 responding agencies indicated that they did not have any information to report. SCI Special Agent Bruce C. Best testified why the survey results were disturbing:

*Some of the 17 [agencies] that reported having no information are in localities where other agencies reported significant activities by Afro-lineal criminal groups. Whether agencies are not sharing their intelligence, or do not wish to acknowledge that there is a problem, is unclear. The result is that the collective arm of law enforcement has not established the necessary unified effort against these criminal organizations.*

...

*[T]he fact that the response rate was only about 75 percent indicates that the desired level of cooperation among law enforcement agencies has not been achieved. This is disturbing in view of the fact that our own intelligence indicates that there are significant problems with Afro-lineal criminal groups in several of the jurisdictions that did not respond to the survey.*

Special Agent Best summarized the wide variations in recognition and coping with the problem of Afro-lineal organized crime among law enforcement agencies throughout New Jersey:

*[T]here is a widespread activity of these groups. There are some jurisdictions, including several that we've heard from [in the public hearing,] which are aggressive in developing information about them, cooperative with other agencies to promote prosecution and willing to share information. On the other hand, several agencies deny the existence of organized Afro-lineal criminal activity, and we find that they either have very little information concerning the leadership, structure or membership or they are negligent in sharing intelligence with other agencies.*

To deal effectively with certain groups, it is necessary to have multi-jurisdictional cooperation on a national scale. For example, Nigerian criminal groups involved in fraud schemes are highly mobile and use fictitious means of identification. Just as in the case of Jamaican posse figures, mobility and concealment of identity have caused significant problems for law enforcement. The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) created a national intelligence data base on the various aliases, nicknames and social security numbers utilized by the Jamaican criminals. A similar program should be established for Nigerian criminals in order to link individuals to frauds perpetrated in

diverse jurisdictions. Such a system, including photographic elements, is especially important since Nigerian criminals often use the identities of legitimate individuals. As local law enforcement is the first line of defense against Nigerian fraud schemes, access to such a national data base should be permitted at the local level.

#### TARGET, EXPOSE AND ISOLATE LEADERS

Working cooperatively, law enforcement should identify and target the leaders of organized criminal groups for the most attention and the severest punishment. Effective use of federal and state "drug kingpin" statutes should be a priority. When the leaders are arrested, they should be denied bail if the government can prove that they pose a danger to the community. If they are granted bail, their trials should be expedited so that they can be removed from the community as soon as possible. Courts should be given the resources to handle cases more quickly. After targeted leaders are incarcerated, they should be so closely monitored that they can have no continuing influence on their organizations.

DEA Special Agent-in-Charge Ashton connected the targeting of leaders to narcotic demand reduction efforts:

*We need to vigorously pursue our demand reduction programs and quickly remove criminal leaders from the community before they have the opportunity to establish themselves as role models for the young.*

Special Agent Ashton described for Commissioner Evenchick the coordinated effort among federal, state and local law enforcement that eventually led to the successful prosecution of Wayne Pray and the serious disruption of his organized criminal group, The Family:

*In general, I'd have to say that it was more a concerted, concentrated and cooperative enforcement effort which directed and tar-*

*geted Mr. Pray. My experience has been that if an individual is involved in criminal activity and we target and direct our efforts towards him, we will develop the sources of information and be able to take him or to arrest him. That's what happened in the Pray case. It was a more concerted effort, a cooperative effort that we were able to develop informants and sources of information which were able to lead us to his arrest.*

Similar coordinated efforts have proven successful elsewhere. Since the creation in Philadelphia of the Violent Traffickers Project, which includes federal, state and local officials, approximately 250 individuals have been indicted, over 200 have been detained without bail, and the conviction rate is 100 percent.

In July 1990, coordinated law enforcement, assisted by substantial information from people in affected communities, obtained a federal indictment in Philadelphia against 46 leaders and members of a Jamaican-led organization called the Grandison Cocaine and Crack Organization. The alleged ringleaders, Derrick Anthony Grandison and Cecil Everard Walters, both Jamaican citizens who have been living in the United States for several years, were charged under the federal "drug kingpin" statute, which provides for a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in jail and a maximum of life imprisonment. The group stored, manufactured, prepared and distributed cocaine from 56 locations throughout Philadelphia and three others in Brooklyn, Far Rockaway and Staten Island in New York.

The Camden Police detectives described for the commissioners the difficulties encountered in focusing law enforcement resources on the leaders of the criminal groups:

*DETECTIVE GEORGE JOYNER: In reference to the 1,200 [drug arrests made by Camden Police in 1989 and 900 made by the Camden County Prosecutor's vice unit], we*

have a high rate of recidivists. ... [T]he same guys are arrested two or three times within one year for the same activity. ... We don't have a super criminal population. We have a group that is locked into that point. ... [W]e have the same thing over and over, a small number of people continuously being arrested and just repeat over and over and over, and these kids range from, how old?

DETECTIVE LEONARD HALL: Twelve.

DETECTIVE JOYNER: You'll get 12 and 14-year old kids who might get arrested two or three times within a three-month period, so it's not a large number of criminals, just a large number of arrests on the same criminals.

COMMISSIONER DUMONT: What is the answer to the recidivism?

DETECTIVE LOUIS MUZYCZEK: I think we have to get down to the bone. We have to go after the individuals that are providing the narcotics in the city, these people that are insulated by other people working for them. ... [W]e fill our jails up with just street corner dealers. It's a revolving door for them; we don't have the space. If we had the manpower to sweep our streets initially and then target the kingpins and work towards putting them away, they are the people that organize these youth and impress them to go out and do this. These are the people that we have to show the public we are going after. If we don't have the drug kingpins who provide the source, we won't have the cancer.

COMMISSIONER DUMONT: That says to me, though, you are not getting enough cooperation from the people lower down. Either their sentences are not severe enough, that there is not enough pressure put on them

to force them to cooperate against the kingpins [or] there is too much insulation there.

DETECTIVE MUZYCZEK: That's correct too.

COMMISSIONER MERIN: Do you find that there is a great deal of frustration with the judicial system, people that will come in and get out on bail and have that lengthy period of time between the time they are apprehended and when they actually go to trial?

DETECTIVE HALL: Well, I do, because basically if you give a guy a year, ... he does four months. That means he's finished with his time, and four months later we got him again .... [I]f he didn't [plead guilty and] take a year [sentence], he's out there [on bail] for a year to a year and a half before he comes to trial. So these guys are actually laughing at you. He gets caught with \$2,000 [one] day. If you let him out of jail and you catch him five days later, [he's] got 2,000 more dollars in his pocket.

COMMISSIONER MERIN: How do you feel about the concept of preventive detention that would allow someone to be held in jail until the trial comes up?

DETECTIVE HALL: That would be good, very good.

COMMISSIONER MERIN: I know [U.S.] Senator [Edward] Kennedy ... had introduced that proposal several years ago .... [I]t's a controversial idea, and many people are coming to the conclusion that for those kingpins, for those people that were leaders, it would be beneficial to keep them behind bars until their trial comes up.

...

CHAIRMAN ZAZZALI: ... [T]hat new State corrections facility [in Camden] was built what, two and a half years ago?

DETECTIVE MUZYCZEK: Yes.

CHAIRMAN ZAZZALI: It was built to house 450 people?

DETECTIVE HALL: Yes.

CHAIRMAN ZAZZALI: The population today is?

DETECTIVE HALL: 1,300.

CHAIRMAN ZAZZALI: Gone from 450 to 1,300 in a brand new facility in two and a half years. And there is a lawsuit over that brought by the Public Advocate against the Attorney General and the people in Camden County, am I correct?

DETECTIVE HALL: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN ZAZZALI: The Special Master, Justice Schreiber, came down with a recommendation just two weeks ago ... telling the county to take out how many, 450, I think?

DETECTIVE HALL: Yes.

CHAIRMAN ZAZZALI: Just trying to demonstrate, without passing judgment on any issue on anyone, the multidimensional complex nature of the problem. I share Commissioner Merin's feelings.

COMMISSIONER MERIN: I think at the beginning of 1982 there were about 7,000 State prison cells, and at the end of the 1980s

there were about 15,000. And clearly there are more ... people that should be in prison than there are cells. And again I think that one of the recommendations might be to target those people that are going to spend time ... in prison and make sure that it's the leaders, it's the kingpins, that are there and not the people that maybe can be penalized in a different fashion.

COMMISSIONER DUMONT: The problem, though goes back to my point that unless you penalize the people lower down in some form you are not going to get their cooperation to identify and prosecute the kingpins. At least you are not going to get that form of technique to be effective. It is exceedingly complex.

Elizabeth Police Detective Thomas Swan emphasized that for some time after initial arrests E'Port Posse members continued their violent cocaine trafficking and turf wars:

*They were rapidly able to make bail, despite the fact they posed a danger to the community. Meanwhile, priority for trials was given to incarcerated individuals unable to make bail because they didn't have the resources of an organization behind them. Therefore, the arrested members of the Pretlow gang continued to prey on the community for lengthy periods.*

As part of the effort to thwart the ability of the leaders of organized criminal groups to accumulate wealth and power, authorities should devote more resources to tracing the investment of illegal gains in legitimate businesses. Taxation officials should be more involved in this process in cooperation with other law enforcement officials.

## RETAIN AND EXPAND ORGANIZED CRIME FIGHTING TOOLS

Existing law enforcement tools, such as electronic surveillance, which have proven so successful in the fight against La Cosa Nostra, should be extended to deal with equally dangerous groups that have thus far not received equal attention. Somerset County Prosecutor Bissell related how electronic surveillance and law enforcement cooperation helped to defeat the Isaac Wright group and a would-be successor:

*There is no question that we would not have had the success in this operation without the availability of that electronic surveillance, and we certainly need that. And we are going to have to develop greater capability, because while we have the capability with respect to land line telephones and the like, they are now into a new generation of mobile cellular telephones, telephone pagers and those kind of things.*

*And I think the other aspect of it is also the cooperation, the need for cooperation between law enforcement agencies. Certainly our agency could not have conducted this investigation by itself. We could not have been as successful without the willingness of the State Police to become involved and to help us essentially design the equipment that we needed and to find somebody to manufacture it for us. So, the combination of all those things allowed us not only to recognize that we had an organized group, [it] allowed us to target the group and allowed us to*

*conduct an investigation and bring that investigation to a successful conclusion. And, in addition, the continuing cooperation has allowed us [to continue to have successes.] For example, in the Franklin Township area there was a group who came together shortly after Wright was taken from the scene and tried to fill the void that was created two or three months down the road by the absence of this group. And the BAT [Border Anti-drug Team] concept allowed us to identify this group, to infiltrate it [and] to make arrests. And all of those people have since been arrested, convicted and ...incarcerated. And that Edgemere area in Franklin is a much improved area in terms of it being less susceptible to narcotics trade today ....*

In addition to maintaining the present law enforcement arsenal for dealing with organized crime, additional tools should be considered by the Legislature in order to fill any gaps. For example, New Jersey still does not have its own law against money laundering to complement the federal law dealing with money laundering.

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**The SCI investigative team for the inquiry into Afro-lineal organized crime was headed by Deputy Director and Counsel Robert J. Clark and Senior Special Agent Francis A. Betzler and included Special Agent Bruce C. Best and Intelligence Analyst Debra A. Sowney.**