



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of JUSTICE

United States Attorney Andrew M. Luger
District of Minnesota

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 3, 2023
DMN.gov | [@DMNnews](https://twitter.com/DMNnews)

Contact: Tasha Zerna
Public Affairs Officer
Tasha.Zerna@usdoj.gov

45 Minneapolis Gang Members and Associates Indicted on Federal Charges

Newly Unsealed Indictments Include RICO Conspiracy, Murder, and Drug Trafficking Offenses

MINNEAPOLIS – Two indictments were unsealed today in the District of Minnesota charging 30 members and associates of two Minneapolis-based street gangs – the Highs and the Bloods – with racketeering (RICO) conspiracy involving alleged murder, attempted murder, robbery, obstruction of justice, and drug trafficking. Additional charges include the use of a firearm to commit murder and drug trafficking. In addition to these indictments, separate charging documents have been brought against an additional 15 Highs or Bloods members on drug and gun charges.

“Today’s announcement marks a fundamental change for federal law enforcement. We are now addressing gang violence for what it is: organized criminal activity,” said U.S. Attorney Andrew Luger. “As alleged, these defendants engaged in an unrelenting trail of violence, resulting in today’s federal RICO charges and related charges. The aggregate nature of a RICO prosecution has a deeper impact and carries a stronger deterrence message, with the ultimate goal of reducing violence and returning peace to our communities.”

“Violent gangs wreak havoc on local residents, engaging in bloody street wars and peddling dangerous drugs that devastate communities and families,” said Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division. “As today’s announcement demonstrates, the Criminal Division is deploying its resources and expertise in close coordination with our partners to target the specific drivers of violent crime and hold gang members and associates accountable for their offenses.”

“When rival gangs declare war on each other in the streets in any city, it is the innocent bystanders that suffer the greatest consequences,” said Director Steven Dettelbach of the ATF. “I want to thank the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Justice Department’s Criminal Division, the Minneapolis Police Department, the Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office, and all of our law enforcement partners involved in bringing this case.”

“Today’s indictment of numerous Highs and Bloods gang members is the result of an exhaustive investigation conducted with our local, state, and federal partners,” Special Agent in Charge Alvin M.

Winston Sr. of the FBI Minneapolis Field Office. “No American should be forced to live in perpetual fear of being a victim of violent crime. These arrests demonstrate our efforts are turning the tide against organized crime in the Twin Cities and the upper Midwest.”

“For too long, criminal gangs have wreaked havoc on our streets, leaving in their wake tragedy and trauma that threatens to destroy families, neighborhoods, and communities. When we refrain from utilizing the full force of laws available to hold these bad actors accountable, we allow for this horrific behavior, and its impact on residents, to continue to be normalized. The behavior of these bad actors is outrageous and entirely unacceptable,” said Chief Brian O’Hara of the Minneapolis Police Department. “The most vulnerable in our communities are often those most impacted by gun violence and criminal gang activity. Our most vulnerable residents are entitled to the same protections and safety as everyone else in society. These arrests are just the beginning. For the first time ever, we have embedded Minneapolis police officers in the U.S. Attorney’s Office, and we will continue to develop future cases. Today we are standing shoulder to shoulder with all of law enforcement and making clear that this behavior will not be tolerated. If you intend to engage in violent crimes in our city, we will find you, we will track you down, and we will bring you to justice.”

Higs Enterprise Indictments

Twenty members and associates of the Higs Enterprise are charged in a 12-count indictment with RICO conspiracy involving five separate murders, over 10 attempted murders, robbery, and drug trafficking. Five additional defendants are charged in this indictment with separate drug and gun charges.

As alleged in this indictment, the Higs have been operating primarily in the north side of Minneapolis since approximately 2008. The Higs congregated at specific businesses and residences located at or near the West Broadway Avenue and Lyndale Avenue North intersection. Prospective Higs members proved their loyalty to the gang by “putting in work,” i.e., committing acts of violence for the benefit of the gang or offering other benefits such as introducing a source for drugs or firearms. Higs members were expelled from the gang and physically assaulted for failing to “put in work.” The Higs leaders, or “shot callers,” determined the quantity of drugs bought and sold and the locations where members were permitted to sell the drugs. The shot callers sometimes took the lead in obtaining and distributing firearms to other Higs members.

The indictment alleges a years-long pattern of violence including murders, numerous shootings and acts of retaliation against rival gang members, dealing in fentanyl, and robberies. Between April and September 2021, Higs members are alleged to have committed five murders.

Minneapolis Bloods Enterprise Indictments

Five members and associates of the Minneapolis Bloods charged in a separate indictment, including two who are charged with RICO conspiracy involving two separate murders, over 10 attempted murders, robbery, and drug trafficking. The remaining three defendants are charged with separate drug and gun charges, including using a firearm in a killing for two separate murders.

As alleged in this indictment, the Minneapolis Bloods chapter has been in existence for several decades, controlling and operating territory on the south side of Minneapolis. The hierarchy of the Bloods includes a head or leader of the gang, senior leaders, street-level leaders, and other members or associates. New recruits (called “YGs” or young gangsters) must fight, shoot, or make money to gain respect and increase their position in the gang. The next level in the gang is “OG” (original gangsters), who are well-respected members of the gang, and the highest level is “double OG.” All OGs are equal in rank and can direct “shots” or orders. “Enforcers” carry out the OG’s “shots” or orders by beating or assaulting the offender. Members of the Bloods often wear red clothing, display gang signs, and obtain tattoos that identify the Bloods, its members, or territory.

This indictment alleges a pattern of violence, including a 2020 shootout and murder at the 200 Club in north Minneapolis. In April 2022, Bloods members physically attacked, shot at, and murdered an individual outside of William’s Pub in Uptown. The indictment also alleges other criminal acts, including numerous instances of narcotics trafficking.

The following defendants are charged in the Highs indictment, with all defendants being from Minneapolis, unless otherwise noted below.

- Montez Brown, aka Tez Blood, 31, is charged with RICO conspiracy, conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, possession with intent to distribute fentanyl, and possession of a machinegun in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.
- Dantrell Johnson, aka Trell Moe, 30, is charged with RICO conspiracy and with using and carrying a firearm in furtherance of murder.
- Gregory Hamilton, aka Lil’ Lord, 27, is charged with RICO conspiracy and using and carrying a firearm in furtherance of murder.
- Keon Pruitt, aka KenKen, 20, is charged with RICO conspiracy and using and carrying a firearm in furtherance of murder.
- Jovan Knight, aka 23, aka JoJo, 23, is charged with RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.
- Tyreese Giles, aka Reese, 22, is charged with RICO conspiracy.
- Josiah Taylor, aka Joker, 29, is charged with RICO conspiracy, conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.
- Douglas Mobley, aka Nut, 35, of St. Paul, is charged with RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.
- Jarrett Robinson, aka Gator, 25, is charged with RICO conspiracy.

- Trevaun Robinson, aka Tricky Tre, 27, is charged with RICO conspiracy, conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.
- Isaac Hodge, aka Ike, 46, is charged with RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.
- Christopher Finch, aka Twin, 22, is charged with RICO conspiracy, conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.
- Tony Jelks, aka BD, 29, is charged with RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.
- Cortez Blakemore, aka Tez, 33, is charged with RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.
- Randy Tate, aka "Randy," aka 32, is charged with RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.
- Trevoneia Felton, aka Tre, 21, of St. Paul, is charged with RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.
- Chase Robertson, aka Chase Loco, 25, of St. Paul, is charged with RICO conspiracy, conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.
- Malcolm Samuels, aka Reggie, 24, is charged with RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.
- William Banks, aka Bear, 33, is charged with RICO conspiracy and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.
- Ronald Washington, aka Black, 36, is charged with RICO conspiracy.
- William Johnson, aka Lil' Will, 32, is charged with using and carrying a firearm in furtherance of murder.
- Dashaun Morris, aka Mush, 21, is charged with conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.
- Ernest Boyd, aka Shaky Shawn, 42, is charged with conspiracy to distribute controlled substances and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.
- Maron Bailey, aka Boonie, 25, is charged with conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.
- Isaiah Bell, 20, of St. Paul, is charged with conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.

Additionally, the following defendants are Highs members or associates who were charged in individual indictments:

- Montrell Shief, 23, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm and unlawful possession of a machinegun.
- Deon Williams, aka Ghost, 28, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm.
- Dennis Mobley, aka Diddy, 34, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The following defendants are named in the Bloods indictment:

- Desean James Solomon, aka Black, 33, is charged with RICO conspiracy and two counts of using and carrying a firearm in furtherance of murder.
- Michael Allen Burrell, aka Skitz, 42, is charged with using and carrying a firearm in furtherance of murder.
- Leontawan Lentez Holt, aka Leon, aka Shotta, aka Shot Dog, 25, is charged with using and carrying a firearm in furtherance of murder.

Additionally, the following defendants are Bloods members or associates who were charged separately:

- Theodore Harold Bobo Jr., aka Boo, 37 of St. Paul, is charged with possession with intent to distribute cocaine, being a felon of possession of a firearm and ammunition, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.
- Jordan Kenneth Edwards, aka J-Bird, 34, is charged with possession with intent to distribute cocaine, being a felon of possession of a firearm and ammunition, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.
- Isaiah Lamuel Elisha Ferguson, 26, is charged with firearm conspiracy and being a felon in possession of a firearm.
- Josiah Ferguson, 24, is charged with firearm conspiracy and being a felon in possession of a firearm.
- Demarcus Cortez Garner, 24, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition.
- Andrew Dayjon Griffin, 32, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm.
- Obuatawan Holt, aka Bone, 47, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm.
- Latoya Bea Smith, 47, is charged with knowingly transferring firearms to a felon.

- John Eric Solomon, aka Eastside, 33 of Minneapolis, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm.
- Traigh Sean Tillman, 29, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm.
- Nathan Walz, aka Fat Nate, aka Fat Blood, aka Fat Boy, aka White Boy Nate, 34, of Prior Lake, is charged with possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, being a felon in possession of a firearm, and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

If convicted, the defendants face a range of penalties, including up to life in prison for racketeering conspiracy involving acts of murder, using a firearm to commit murder, and conspiracy to distribute controlled substances.

The ATF, FBI, Minneapolis Police Department, IRS Criminal Investigation, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, and Minnesota Department of Corrections are investigating the cases, with assistance from the U.S. Marshals Service, DEA, Homeland Security Investigations, and the Hennepin County Attorney's Office. The Ramsey County Sheriff's Office, Dakota County Sheriff's Office, St. Paul Police Department, and numerous other law enforcement agencies contributed to this investigation through reports or evidence control.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Samantha H. Bates, Justin A. Wesley, Esther Soria Mignanelli, and Joseph S. Teirab for the District of Minnesota and Trial Attorneys Brian W. Lynch and S. Benjamin Tonkin of the Criminal Division's Organized Crime and Gang Section are prosecuting the cases.

An indictment is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

###