

PRESS RELEASE

# Nineteen Gang Members and Associates Charged in Federal Sweeps Targeting Boston Gangs

Thursday, August 29, 2024

## For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Massachusetts

BOSTON – Earlier today, charges were unsealed against 10 members and associates of the H Block Gang (Appendix A) for drug conspiracy. Separately, nine members and associates of the Mission Hill Gang (Appendix B) were charged with engaging in financial fraud. The charges are the result of separate, multi-year investigations into gang violence in Boston and follow the February 2024 takedown of over 40 members and associates of the Heath Street Gang for alleged racketeering conspiracy, drug trafficking, firearms and financial frauds.

According to the charging documents, the H Block Street Gang is one of the most feared and influential city-wide gangs in Boston. Originally formed in the 1980s as the Humboldt Raiders in the Roxbury section of Boston, the gang re-emerged in recent years as H Block. Current members of H Block have a history of violent confrontation with law enforcement, including a 2015 incident when a member shot a Boston Police officer at point blank range without warning or provocation.

The current investigation of H Block began in response to an uptick in gang-related drug trafficking, shootings and violence. According to court documents, since the start of the investigation in 2021, law enforcement attributed at least a dozen incidents involving firearms and gunfire to the tensions involving H Block gang associates. Six H Block members and associates were arrested today and charged with drug dealing in Boston and the surrounding communities. Four additional H Block members and associates are already in state custody. Additional drugs and four firearms were seized during today's arrests.

In addition, three members and associates of H Block are charged with a conspiracy to smuggle illegal drugs into a Massachusetts prison. According to court documents, the

Massachusetts Department of Correction has seen a significant increase in the smuggling of synthetic cannabinoids, a/k/a "K2," and other dangerous substances into the prison system. A common method of introducing the drugs is by exploiting the Department of Correction's inmate mail policies, which prohibit delivery to inmates of original copies of any materials contained in incoming mail except for legal mail, original copies of which are inspected and delivered via the U.S. postal system. Sheets of paper are saturated or sprayed with liquid narcotics, dried, printed with fake legal correspondence, and then mailed to inmates in an envelope marked as legal mail, in the hopes that the drug-laced paper will be delivered undetected. It is alleged that 14 sheets of paper containing PCP (Phencyclidine) and illegal K2 were seized over the course of the investigation. It is estimated that a single sheet of such drug-laced paper would be worth as much as \$80,000 inside the prison.

Separately, charges were filed today against Mission Hill street gang members and associates for their involvement in a mail theft and financial fraud scheme known as "card cracking." According to court documents, card cracking involves the theft and laundering of money through bank accounts in various names that are controlled by the primary offenders. Card cracking schemes are fueled by checks that are stolen from postal collection boxes, and chemically washed and rewritten to various recruited bank account holders. These washed checks are then deposited into checking accounts for cash withdrawal or laundering through money transfers and other means, such as the purchase of postal money orders. Six Mission Hill members and associates were arrested today and charged with financial crimes, along with three additional Mission Hill members and associates who are already in custody.

The Mission Hill Street Gang operates in the Mission Hill neighborhood of Boston, centered on the "Mission Main" and "Annunciation Road" housing developments in Boston.

Today's announcement follows the [February 2024 takedown](#) of over 40 members and associates of the Heath Street Gang, which is involved in a violent rivalry with both H Block and Mission Hill. According to charging documents, Heath Street Gang, which was formed in the 1980s and has over 150 members, operated primarily out of the Mildred C. Hailey Apartments in Jamaica Plain (previously known as the Bromley Heath Housing Development). Since February, five members and associates of Heath Street Gang have pleaded guilty to crimes including drug trafficking; firearms charges; and financial frauds, including COVID-related fraud.

*"Keeping communities safe involves combatting a number of different types of threats. The fight to keep our streets safe from*

*dangerous gangs and drugs is an ever-constant struggle and, as this case shows, extends to our state's prison facilities. Today's arrests are an important step forward in making our streets and prisons safer," said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy. "These arrests send a message that the federal government is actively engaged with our state and local partners and stands ready to hold accountable those who violate federal laws."*

"I am proud of our Boston Police officers and all of our law enforcement partners for this great work. These are individuals who do not value life, they have terrorized and wreaked havoc in our City. These investigations were intricately designed and carried out and there is no doubt that all of those in law enforcement who were involved, have put themselves in danger to get to this point, Partnering and pulling together our resources is powerful, it makes our residents safer, and we are seeing the result of that collaboration today," said Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox.

"Dismantling violent gangs is a top priority of the DEA. Operations like these have a direct, positive effect on the neighborhoods in which these gangs sell drugs and cause violence," said Stephen Belleau, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New England Division. "Today's arrests should serve as a warning that we will not tolerate drug trafficking, gang related violence, and those who cause it. This investigation demonstrates the strength of collaborative local, state and federal law enforcement efforts and our strong partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office."

"ATF remains resolute in our mission to apprehend trigger pullers and firearms traffickers," said James M. Ferguson Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, Boston Field Division "By leveraging crime gun intelligence, we empower law enforcement to break the cycle of violence by concentrating on the individuals and criminal organizations fueling gun-related crime in our communities. Today's arrests exemplify ATF's unwavering commitment to collaborating with our local, state, and federal partners to combat the violent gang and drug activities that jeopardize public safety. Our collective efforts are crucial in holding violent offenders accountable, mitigating threats to the public, and driving down violent crime."

The charge of possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance (cocaine) provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, not less than three years of supervised release, up to life, and a fine of up to \$1 million. The charges of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute controlled substances (cocaine,

cocaine base, fentanyl, PCP, and controlled substance analogues, i.e. K2) provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, not less than three years of supervised release, up to life, and a fine of up to \$1 million. The charges of theft of government property provides for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, up to three years of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of conspiracy to commit wire and bank fraud provides for a sentence of up to 30 years in prison, five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$1 million. The charge of conspiracy to steal or possess stolen mail provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy; BPD Commissioner Cox; DEA Acting SAC Belleau; ATF SAC Ferguson; Ketty Larco-Ward, Inspector in Charge of the United States Postal Inspection Service, Boston Division; Special Agent in Charge Andrew Murphy of the U.S. Secret Service Boston Field Office; Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; and Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge of the Depart of Labor, Office of Inspector General made the announcement. The investigation was supported by the Massachusetts State Police; Suffolk County District Attorney's Office; Massachusetts Department of Corrections; and the Braintree, Quincy, Randolph, Watertown and Wellesley Police Departments. Assistant United States Attorneys Fred M. Wyshak, III, John T. Dawley and Philip C. Cheng of the Organized Crime & Gang Unit and Jeremy Franker of the Department of Justice's Violent Crime and Racketeering Section are prosecuting the cases.

The case was investigated under the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF). OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. For more information about Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces, please visit [Justice.gov/OCDETF](https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF).

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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## **APPENDIX A**

1. Trea Lankford, a/k/a "Heff," a/k/a "Hefna Don," a/k/a "Montana," a/k/a "Tre Cain," 33, of Boston;

2. Dennis Wilson, a/k/a "Deuce," a/k/a "Deep Jhonenson," 36 of Boston;
3. Avery Lewis, a/k/a "Wave," 32 of Dorchester;
4. Mark Linnehan, 25, of West Roxbury;
5. Eric Celestino, 30, of Boston;
6. Timothy Hearn, a/k/a "King Kill," a/k/a "Tool Man," a/k/a "Tooly," 34;
7. Dominique Carpenter-Grady, a/k/a "8-Zipp" a/k/a "Eighty," a/k/a "Cindy Surin," 35;
8. Robert Heckstall, a/k/a "Ribbs," a/k/a "Buck," a/k/a "Buck Corleone," 41, of Roxbury;
9. Jason Bly, 44, of Quincy; and
10. Jerry Gray, 28, of Dorchester.

## APPENDIX B

1. Imanol Rios-Franco, 24, of Brookline;
2. Jairo Cabral-Santos, 22, of Boston;
3. Brandon Baez, 22, of Framingham;
4. Jiovanny Matos, 25, of Boston;
5. Josman Romero Delgado, 22, of Boston;
6. Jonathan Martinez, 25, of Roslindale;
7. Anthony Worthen, 28, of Roslindale;
8. Tyrone Brimage, 28, of Boston; and
9. Glenroy Miller, 28, of Boston.

*Updated August 29, 2024*

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### Topics

**DRUG TRAFFICKING**

**FINANCIAL FRAUD**

**FIREARMS OFFENSES**

**VIOLENT CRIME**

### Component

[USAO - Massachusetts](#)