



# AURORA POLICE DEPARTMENT

**CHIEF GREGORY THOMAS**

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[www.aurora-il.org/APD](http://www.aurora-il.org/APD)

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## **19 CHARGED IN A.T.F. AND AURORA POLICE JOINT OPERATION**

A year-long investigation staged by agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Aurora Police that targeted members and associates of four Aurora street gangs, culminated November 4 with the arrests of 14 people who are charged with distributing heroin and cocaine along with other narcotics-related offenses. Five additional men also facing charges remain at large. Of the 19 charged, two men face federal charges while the other 17 were charged under state statutes.

During the investigation dubbed “Operation Blue Flame” that began in fall 2013, 47 grams of heroin with a street value of approximately \$5600 and 256 grams of cocaine worth about \$25,600 on the street, were seized. All of the subjects were targeted due to their extensive criminal histories including arrests and charges in connection with past weapons and drug offenses, aggravated batteries, mob actions, and other crimes. Several of the defendants were either on probation or parole due to recent past offenses.

The charges stem from the defendants allegedly selling narcotics near parks and churches on 40 different occasions during controlled, undercover buys. Due to the locations of the transactions or the weight of the narcotics delivered, several Class X felonies were lodged which under Illinois law, carry enhanced penalties upon convictions.

“This operation targeted two of Aurora’s biggest challenges: street gangs and heroin”, said Chief of Aurora Police Greg Thomas. “Thanks to our partners at the federal, state, and county levels, we have taken career criminals off the streets and will do everything in our power to assure they are held accountable.”

Kane County State’s Attorney Joe McMahon said, “The cooperation and coordination among the agencies involved in this operation have been the key to removing drug dealers from our streets and neighborhoods. Thanks to all at the local, state and federal level who played a role in this investigation.”

The two men charged with unlawful delivery of a controlled substance under federal statutes are Karlid Lash, 54, of the 1300 block of Howell Place, Montgomery; and Eric D. Coachman, 45, of the 700 block of Concord Street, Aurora. Lash is currently being held without bond at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago while Coachman is at large.

Charges of unlawful delivery of a controlled substance under state statutes include:

Tyree O. Pryor, 35, of the 700 block of South Route 31, Oswego, charged with four counts, all of which are Class-X felonies. His bond is set at \$300,000.

Michael A. Turner Sr., 42, of the 1000 block of Grand Boulevard; Kenya Pittman, 43, of the 300 block of Old Indian Trail; Jaquel K. Owens, 29, of the 100 block of North Kendall Street; Shelly Vickers, 40, of the 600 block of Palace Street; and Steven L. Simmons, 40, of the 100 block of South View Street, all in Aurora, each charged with four counts, two of which are Class-X felonies. Bond for Turner, Pittman, and Simmons has been set at \$200,000; Owens at \$300,000, and Vickers at \$150,000.

Lafande C. Hicks, 48, of the 1200 block of Monomoy Street; and Darrius T. Darden, 24, of the 600 block of Four Seasons Boulevard both in Aurora, each charged with three counts. One of the counts against Darden is a Class-X felony. Hicks' bond is \$250,000; Darden's is \$150,000.

Andrea S. Welter, 41, of the 500 block of Montgomery Road; and Andre T. Hill, 29, of the 300 block of Manor Place, both in Aurora each charged with two counts, one of which is a Class-X felony. Welter's bond has been set at \$100,000; and Hill's at \$150,000.

Michael James, 39, of the 800 block of East New York Street, Aurora, charged with two counts. His bond has been set at \$200,000.

Wendall C. Thompson, 48, of the 200 block of South Fourth Street, Aurora, charged with one count. His bond is \$250,000.

In addition, Latasia A. Laurant, 42, of the 400 block of New Indian Trail Road is charged with six counts of felony permitting unlawful use of a building for allowing narcotics transactions to take place at her apartment while she was present. Her bond has been set at \$70,000.

Those charged under state statutes are being held in lieu of bond at the Kane County Correctional Center in St. Charles. The arrests took place Monday and Tuesday by approximately 50 officers broken into teams who served the warrants at the defendants' homes and other addresses they were known to frequent. They were all taken into custody without incident and there were no injuries. Their next court dates are all at 9 a.m., November 19, at the Kane County Judicial Center.

Aside from Coachman, four defendants charged with unlawful delivery of a controlled substance under state statutes remain at large. They are:

Kelly C. Stephens, 42, of the 400 block of North Avenue; Marcus J. Hill, 29, of the 100 block of LaSalle Street; Lawrence J. Rayford, 37, of the 100 block of North Calhoun Street; and Christopher M. Fenley, 40, of the 1100 block of Cumberland Avenue; all in Aurora.

Anyone with information on the whereabouts of the defendants still at large is asked to call Aurora Police Special Operations Investigators at (630) 256-5600, Aurora Area Crime Stoppers at (630) 892-1000, or their local law enforcement agencies. Calls to Crime Stoppers are anonymous and qualify for a cash reward of up to \$5,000 for information that leads to an arrest. Tips can also be submitted through the Aurora Police Department's free app available through iTunes, the Android Market, or Amazon App Store. Simply search for "My Police Department", find the Aurora Police, and download.

The public is reminded that the charges are not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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