

# Dozens charged in alleged drug ring

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - Federal prosecutors have charged 27 people in connection with a multimillion-dollar cocaine ring, the investigation of which helped lead to an ongoing probe of alleged corruption in city government.

FBI agents, while listening to wiretapped conversations among operatives in the alleged drug ring three years ago, picked up information that led to the corruption probe.

But investigators stressed that the city officials being scrutinized are not thought to have been involved in drug dealing.

Agents arrested defendants throughout the city Thursday as prosecutors unsealed two indictments outlining the alleged North Philadelphia drug network, which allegedly purchased hundreds of kilograms of cocaine from suppliers in Norristown, New York and Florida and sold it throughout the city from 1999 to 2003.

While listening to wiretapped calls in the alleged drug ring, the FBI picked up conversations between drug dealers and Imam Shamsud-din Ali, individuals close to the investigations have told The Philadelphia Inquirer and Philadelphia Daily News.

Ali, 65, a leader of a West Philadelphia mosque, was not mentioned in Thursday's indictment. He has political relationships with Mayor John Street and Gov. Ed Rendell, and is under investigation in the corruption probe. Ali has insisted he has done nothing wrong.

No one has been indicted as a result of the corruption investigation, which became public in October with the discovery of an FBI listening device in the mayor's office.

## Newman

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ance. "I hope you accept my apology for any difficulties these false claims have caused you," Bowe wrote.

It is obvious Newman, knowing there was not wrongdoing, has been waiting to exhale.

"It vindicated me in the public eye," said Newman, a Las Vegas resident. "All my business conduct was honorable and done with integrity. When that lawsuit was filed, it created doubt about me in the public's mind.

"That unequivocal apology gave me a sense of complete vindication and that's important to me."

Newman and legendary trainer Eddie Futch got involved in Bowe's professional career at a time when there were few takers. In 1992, Bowe shocked the world by going toe-to-toe with Evander Holyfield. Newman, a one-time Washington, D.C., radio personality and car salesman, now serves as chairman of Left Right Marketing Technologies (LRMK), a publicly-traded company.

What does the future entail?

"I don't know what the future entails," Newman said. Bowe is reportedly considering a return to the ring. "If he does, I wish him well, but I

can't see him putting his health at risk. When he stopped boxing Riddick Bowe's skills were eroding. He was experiencing severe weight loss and gain.

"Boxing is dangerous if you are not on the top of your game," Newman said. "I hope that he will respect my decision that I won't be a part of his returning to the ring."

To quiet concerns about the former heavyweight champion's health, his attorney, Steve Silverman, said Bowe is as sharp as he ever was, both physically and mentally. Concerns about Bowe's health have arisen as a result of his speech, which at times has been noticeably slurred, observed a boxing insider.

It's been six years since Newman has had any involvement in Bowe's financial affairs.

"I've heard him quoted that he's still financially set for life," Newman said. "I hope that is the case."

Bowe was serving time for kidnapping his estranged wife, Judy Bowe, and their five children in 1998 from her home near Charlotte, N.C. He forced her and the children into a car and set out for his Maryland home. At a restaurant in Virginia, Judy Bowe called her sister, who summoned police to the restaurant.

# Cosby won't retreat from comments

Entertainer snipes at low-income Blacks with misplaced priorities

By George E. Curry  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA)—Comedian Bill Cosby has declined to retract remarks that were highly critical of "the lower economic" African-Americans that he claims are willing to pay \$500 for sneakers but not half that amount for educational tools.

At ceremonies here last week commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision outlawing "separate but equal" schools, Cosby's remarks caught many in the audience by surprise.

With NAACP President Kwesi Mfume, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund President Ted Shaw and many other Black dignitaries looking on, Cosby complained that "the lower economic people are not holding up their end in this deal."

He said, "These people are not parenting. They are buying things for their kids - \$500 sneakers for what? And won't spend \$200 for 'Hooked on Phonics'... They're standing on the corner and they can't speak English. I can't even talk the way these people talk: 'Why you ain't,' 'Where you is'... And I blamed the kid until I heard the mother talk. And then I heard the father talk... Everybody knows it's important to speak English except these knuckleheads... You can't be a doctor with that kind of crap coming out of your mouth."

Cosby cited a 50 percent dropout rate for Blacks. However, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, the dropout rate for African-Americans was 13.1 percent in 2000, the last year for which statistics are available.

Cosby's comments about education were made in the larger context of African-Americans having to struggle to desegregate schools 50 years ago and seeing many youth today who will not take advantage of those sacrifices. He pleaded with those present to take back the Black community.

The comedian declined to acknowledge the existence of political prisoners.

"These are not political criminals," he said. "These are people going around stealing Coca Cola. People get-

ting shot in the back of the head over a piece of pound cake, and then we run out and we are outraged, saying 'The cops shouldn't have shot him.' What the hell was he doing with the pound cake in his hand?"

Cosby claims that some of his comments were taken out of context. Excerpts of the remarks can be heard on the Washington Post's Web site, www.washingtonpost.com, and it appears that Cosby was quoted accurately.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel columnist Eugene Kane wrote a column noting that like Cosby, he was born in North Philadelphia and attended Temple University.

"Given his record as a philanthropist who had donated millions to Black colleges and Black causes in general, Cosby has certainly earned the right to speak his mind."

He continued, "Still, there's a sense of uneasiness whenever somebody like Cosby uses the same lan-

guage some Whites use to justify their racism... Particularly, the idea that poor Blacks and their children weigh down the rest of society, or that every Black person behind bars deserves to be incarcerated. Sure, some Blacks may fit that description, not all. Some White people, too."

Kane wrote, "He's not a poor Black mother raising children in the inner city, so he has no idea how difficult that is in 2004 America. And if the TV star really wants to pass moral judgments on poor Black women, ahem, Mr. Cosby, there is a little matter of you having an out-of-wedlock child yourself."

After reading the column, Cosby telephoned Kane.

The columnist said that in an hour-long discussion, Cosby explained that he did not intend to smear all poor Blacks.

"I didn't say all Black people from the lower classes were to blame," Kane said Cosby told him.

"But I said that when you have a 50 percent graduation

rate, and some people can't put two sentences together, and can't write or spell... you've got people who have put themselves on a track to failure."

As for Autumn Jackson, who claims to be Cosby's out-of-wedlock daughter, the comedian told Kane that she has repeatedly refused his offer to take a paternity test.

In the interview with Kane, Cosby deplored the glorification of a pimp mentality, placing more emphasis on athletics than academics and celebrating rap videos on BET.

"I am talking about parenting. It is time for us to turn the mirror around. We have to take back the neighborhood."

And he reiterated his comment about the misuse of the English language.

"We can't excuse these people," Cosby said. "There are generations who have been born here and their English is worse than Koreans who have just been here a few years."

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