

METRO

3 locals accused of gun running

Men charged with selling firearms in New York City

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Authorities say they have put a dent in a New York City gun-selling and narcotics ring - partly fueled with weapons from the Tri-state - with the indictments of 14 people, including three Cincinnati men.

Facing a string of felony charges, including conspiracy, criminal sale of a firearm and multiple counts of criminal possession of a firearm, are:

■ Jamall Merchant, 26, of Neave Street, Lower Price Hill.



Merchant



White



Pankey

■ John E. White, 38, of Kinney Avenue, Evanston.

■ David Pankey, 29, of Fulton Avenue, Walnut Hills.

The indictments cap an eight-month investigation into a gun-selling ring that sold firearms and ammunition in upper Manhattan and the Bronx, and involved trafficking in cocaine and the designer drug Ecstasy, New York City authorities said.

The three were arrested here

earlier this week on New York City warrants and are in the Hamilton County Justice Center awaiting extradition to New York.

If convicted, the men could each face more than 113 years in prison, the Manhattan district attorney's office said Thursday.

"They were providing guns to guys from New York that they knew were going to turn around and sell them illegally in New York," said Nancy Ryan, trial division chief for the Manhattan district attorney's office.

Mr. Pankey and Mr. Merchant are accused of driving guns from

Cincinnati to New York for illegal sale in New York City. Mr. White's alleged role in the operation was unclear Thursday.

The investigation was conducted by the New York Police Department and the New York district attorney's office.

During the investigation, undercover detectives purchased 60 firearms - including semiautomatic pistols, revolvers and large-caliber flare guns.

Detectives also bought about 900 rounds of ammunition, almost four ounces of cocaine and more than 600 tablets of Ecstasy.

"This case illustrates once again the importance of strengthening gun regulation at both the national and state levels," said Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau.