

Eighth man arrested in robbery ring

BY KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Writer

An eighth man has been charged and warrants issued for two others in the bizarre case of a robbery gang impersonating police, allegedly with the help of a Toronto officer.

Carl Leroy Jones, 30, of Toronto, was accompanied by his lawyer when he turned himself in at the York Regional Police Richmond Hill station Monday night.

He joins seven others arrested March 10, including Toronto officer Darin Cooper, and faces one count of conspiracy to commit robbery.

One of the men charged earlier this month, Elie Salama, 31, of Toronto, has been implicated in the Feb. 1 drive-by shooting on Hwy. 404 and charged with attempted murder, along with 14 other charges, including conspiracy, robbery and impersonating police.

Two men inside the '97 Chevrolet Tahoe escaped injury in the 10 p.m. shooting, but were held by police for questioning for 18 hours. The bullets shattered three windows in the truck and demolished three tires.

Lead investigator Randy Horne said the eight men, already charged with more than 60 offences between them, will likely face further charges as the joint forces investigation winds down.

The armed robbery scheme involved suspects using fake police identification and bulletproof vests to rob victims of luxury vehicles and cash.

One police source said, on some occasions, the gang would pretend to be executing a search warrant while robbing their victims.

But, as has been the case since the initial arrests, police are releasing few details.

"It's a long, long involved story," Horne said. "We can't get into any specifics."

Only some of the accused impersonated police

during hold-ups, he said. In some robberies, three men were involved; in others up to six participated.

Some accused face charges of forcible confinement; all face at least one count of possession of a prohibited weapon.

As a result of search warrants executed March 9, officers seized police identification badges, body armour, 25 handguns, \$125,000 worth of marijuana, \$130,000 cash and six luxury vehicles.

Cooper, who lives in Whitby, is suspected of being the ringleader and faces a total of 16 charges, including breach of trust, importing a controlled substance, forcible confinement and assault.

When he made his first court appearance the day of his arrest, his scalp was smeared with blood.

Two other accused, Mike Wassilyn, 27, and Kristopher Dellapia, 22, also had visible cuts and bruises.

Fatal car crash witnesses wanted

York Regional Police are seeking witnesses to a fatal crash on 16th Avenue at Village Gate Drive in Markham Friday.

Tyron Kan, 68, was pronounced dead at Markham Stouffville hospital after his car was T-boned by an 18-year-old Markham girl driving a Pontiac.

Police said Kan was proceeding on a green light from Village Gate on to 16th Avenue, when he was struck. His car plowed into two others stopped for the red light.

Kan's wife and two-year-old granddaughter were in the car with him. They suffered non-life-threatening injuries in the crash as did the young driver.

Police want to speak with anyone who saw events leading up to the collision or the crash itself. If you can help, call 881-1221, ext. 7703.

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