

METROPOLITAN BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1999



The **MBI Narcotics Section**, although still a poly-drug enforcement unit, primarily focused on heroin investigations during 1999. The Central Florida heroin overdose death rate remained high with 43 overdose deaths in 1998 and 46 confirmed overdose deaths in 1999. As a result, the MBI Narcotics Section, in concert with other local, state and federal enforcement groups, impacted the Central Florida heroin trade with a series of extensive and successful investigations. Those investigation's included "*Operation Yumbo*", which resulted in the arrests of many members of a Colombian drug smuggling organization, and "*Operation Yumbo II*" which successfully targeted a drug smuggling ring based in Venezuela.

Each of those criminal organizations was distributing at least a kilo of heroin a month in Central Florida. Additionally, "*Operation Face-off*" dismantled a trafficking ring of illegal aliens that distributed between three to four kilos of heroin each month in Central Florida. During 1999, MBI investigations resulted in a total value of narcotics removed from the Central Florida streets of \$4,347,790, and the arrests of 125 defendants for narcotics trafficking offenses.

The **MBI Vice/Organized Crime Section** continued efforts to remove illegal vice businesses from the 9th Judicial Circuit, comprising Orange and Osceola Counties. During the year, MBI vice agents joined forces with specialized units from the Orange County Sheriff's Office and the Orlando Police Department to develop the "Prostitution Mapping" program that will prohibit arrested prostitutes, during their probation, from returning to designated local areas, which have a significant history of prostitution offenses and have become the marketplace for such activity.



The three vice enforcement units also joined together in a number of concentrated arrest operations that removed hundreds of prostitutes from the negatively effected neighborhoods. In addition, MBI vice agents conducted racketeering investigations which resulted in the closing of two massage parlors and fourteen escort services that were fronts for prostitution. Additionally the *Playmates* bar a long-time adult entertainment establishment, closed following a series of enforcement actions and license suspensions. During the past 21 years, MBI initiatives directed at organized criminal vice operations and establishments in Central Florida have made the Greater Orlando area one of the cleanest communities in the nation. Many of those vice establishments closed as a result of criminal charges or civil RICO actions brought by the MBI, and the remainder voluntarily closed or left Central Florida when it was clear that law enforcement was not going to permit their illegal activities to go on undisturbed. As of 1999, at least 18 body scrubs, 28 massage parlors, 9 adult peep operations, 3 adult theaters, 3 private nude dancing establishments, 3 private lingerie establishments, 6 commercial bingo halls, and 249 escort services have left Orange County, leaving Central Florida virtually free of those types of vice-related or illegal businesses. In addition to civil and criminal prosecution, the MBI has been instrumental in securing agreements from local advertisers to help the community and not publish advertisements for illegal vice businesses, seriously impacting the ability of criminal enterprises to expand, or even remain profitable and in operation. In the two decades since 1980 most industries in Central Florida have flourished but that is not true for the sex-for-sale industry. In 1980, Orange County was home to 46 sexually oriented businesses but, by the end of 1999, their number had been reduced to 15.

As the citizens of Central Florida look forward to the new millennium, the MBI stands poised and ready to continue its long tradition of applying pride, integrity, and investigative excellence to its mission of reducing and eliminating organized criminal activities.

William A. Lutz, Director
Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation (MBI)