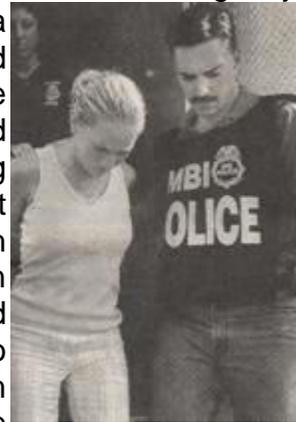


METROPOLITAN BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2003

The ***Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation (MBI)*** in Central Florida is believed to be the longest-running task force of its kind in the nation. Founded in 1978, the 12-agency task force investigates narcotics, vice, and organized crime with a team consisting of local, state and federal agents and two assigned state prosecutors, and has now reached its 25th Anniversary. The ***MBI*** cooperative approach to law enforcement has fostered increased teamwork among law enforcement agencies working together to dismantle criminal narcotics and vice organizations that frequently cross jurisdictional boundaries. Historically, many such task forces have come and gone, but the ***MBI*** has been an effective and long-lasting task force, because dedicated agents and civilian personnel are selected by home agencies and assigned to the task force and those personnel have a reputation as team players. Additionally, the ***MBI Governing Board*** made up of the State Attorney, the two Sheriffs, and four Chiefs of Police act as the ultimate Law Enforcement Team and direct the task force operations for the good of the entire Central Florida area.



Part of the recipe for a great community is to keep **organized illegal vice operations** out of Central Florida. The importance of the ***MBI*** mission to remove illegal vice operations is sometimes misunderstood and perceived as an unimportant use of law enforcement resources without a historical perspective. In the early 1970's, the vice industry overwhelmed Central Florida with out-of-control strip bars, adult theaters, adult bookstores, sex peep show arcades, live nude shows, lingerie dancing rooms, illegal body scrub parlors, illegal massage parlors, literally hundreds of prostitution escort services and adult entertainment businesses that moved into commercial areas near many residential neighborhoods. During that period of time, certain roads and areas of Orange County, Florida developed a sleazy reputation and the ***MBI*** was created and charged with the task to change that reputation. Since then, the ***MBI*** has spent 25



years applying criminal prosecution and often legal pressure on the vice industry, resulting in a significant reduction of the illegal vice industry in our community. The Orlando and Orange County, Florida areas now have a reputation throughout the world as being a wholesome, family-oriented and tourist-friendly community – a positive reputation that is not by chance, but the result of continued law enforcement efforts supported by city/county government officials and the public consistently saying “no” to illegal vice organizations.

Only .003% of Orange County law enforcement and approximately 15% of MBI personnel are assigned to remove illegal vice operations from Central Florida. Examples of success in vice enforcement operations in 2003 include the conclusion of the **Rachel's Men's Clubs** investigations. In a settlement agreement with the *Office of Statewide Prosecution* in Tallahassee, Florida, the corporations that operated **Rachel's Men's Clubs** pled guilty to racketeering, were placed on 6 years probation, and agreed to pay a fine of \$620,000. **The Rachel's Men's Club** in Casselberry, Florida was closed as an adult entertainment business for two years, as a result of crimes uncovered by the investigation. In addition, 30 employees and sub-contractors, including 2 general managers, 4 managers, and 2 supervisors pled *guilty* or *no contest* to violations ranging from racketeering, trafficking in cocaine, sale of ecstasy, sale of GHB, sale of cannabis, prostitution, and lewdness. Follow-up inspections of **Rachel's Men's Clubs** have, thus far, not uncovered evidence of the same types of illegal activity.



In another successful **MBI** investigation that was initiated to assist the *Brevard County Sheriff's Office*, the arrests for prostitution-related charges were made and the owner of the **Boardroom Men's Club** massage parlor and employees pled to charges that ranged from racketeering to prostitution and agreed to pay a \$70,000 fine and keep the business closed.



As a result of charges brought by the **MBI Vice and Organized Crime Section**, the unlicensed adult bookstore **Video Expose** also agreed to close, and the owner and several managers of the business pled to 32 counts of obscenity and agreed to pay a \$29,000 fine. Another unlicensed adult bookstore operation called **Jerry's General Store**, remains a focus of extensive court proceedings. The operators have been charged with offenses related to racketeering, obscenity, grand theft of sales tax, filing false tax returns, and operating an unlicensed adult bookstore in a neighborhood protected from such adult entertainment establishments. The **MBI** vice enforcement efforts also continue to discourage illegal escort services and massage parlors (often supported in advertising in a free distribution newspaper called the *Orlando Weekly*) from re-establishing themselves in

Orange

County.

Concerning narcotics enforcement, historically, the **MBI** has been charged to investigate and dismantle **mid-level narcotics** organizations before they become too well financed and established. Central Florida is one of the few areas in the State that has such a specialized effort focused at mid-level narcotics distributors.

During the past 25 years, the **MBI** and assisting agencies have seized \$37,144,877, narcotics valued at \$151,370,835, and have experienced a series of narcotics trends in the process. In the late 1970's, the importation of **cocaine** increased, as cocaine was



no longer just accessible for the "elite" Hollywood and jet-setter population. The increased cocaine use occurred despite the high price of a kilogram of cocaine that, at that time, was \$65,000 a kilogram, compared to the current today's price of \$23,000 a kilogram. The abuse of cocaine increased even further during the mid-1980's with the advent of cheap and highly addictive, **crack cocaine**, sold at the street level for as little as \$10 a dosage. Meanwhile, **marijuana** or **cannabis** has

remained a constantly abused illegal drug over the last 25 years that formerly sold for \$350 a pound (in the early 1980's) and now is much more potent and sells for \$1,000 a pound. In the early 1980's, another trend, **PCP** started to disappear from Central Florida, as the volatile drug developed the negative reputation of being particularly dangerous to use. In another positive step, new strict minimum-mandatory sentencing laws were established for **quaalude (ludes)** distribution in the early 1980's and for **rohypnol (roofies)** in the late 1990's, which resulted in those illegal drugs virtually disappearing from the drug scene. On the negative side, the late 1990's was marked by the return of a more potent form of **heroin**, causing a significant rise in heroin fatalities. In the early part of 2000, **Methamphetamine** abuse showed an increase in Central Florida although, presently, the abuse is confined to only a few areas in the community.

Enforcement by the **MBI Narcotics Section** during 2003 continued to be very successful, with a 13% increase in **drug trafficking** arrests. Drug traffickers receive a minimum mandatory sentence of from three to twenty-five years. Approximately 85% of the **MBI's** staff are assigned to narcotics enforcement. Highlighted investigations include **Operation "What's Up G"**, an investigation that dismantled a 15-member **GHB** organization, as well as a **GHB laboratory** that was being operated in East Orange County that supplied GHB, a drug sometimes used as a date rape drug, to local university students and customers in downtown clubs.

The **MBI** was also involved in "**Operation Lockdown**" which was another narcotics investigation that attracted widespread community interest. The investigation by **MBI, FBI, FDLE** and Orange County Corrections Internal Affairs agents was directed at several Orange County Corrections officers that were alleged to be **helping smuggle drugs to inmates** in the Orange County Corrections facility. The smuggling was controlled by an inmate who had been incarcerated for trafficking in Heroin by the **MBI** and assisting agencies, and who was the President of the *Florida Latin Kings* street gang. The subsequent investigation resulted in two separate narcotics arrests of Orange County Corrections



officers.

MBI and federal agencies narcotics agents continue to pursue investigations concerning the **Jorge Farah** organization, called **Operation Catchstretch**, and have identified the location of **19.5 million dollars in drug proceeds** and other assets used in **an effort to wash the drug proceeds**. In cooperation with the **United States Attorney** and other federal agencies, efforts are being made to recover those drug proceeds. **MBI** narcotics agents and DEA agents also concluded 2003 by closing in on a large **crystal methamphetamine ("Ice")** organization in **Operation Ice Down**. Twelve of approximately thirty personnel in the organization have been arrested so far.

In conclusion, the **Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation (MBI)** remains committed to each component of its motto; "**integrity, perseverance and investigative excellence**" to keep Central Florida an area as free as possible of illegal vice and narcotics

organizations, and to help Central Florida maintain a reputation as one of the cleanest metropolitan areas in the country.

William A. Lutz, Director

Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation (MBI)