

ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE NEWS RELEASE

OPERATION ANTI-FREEZE

Subject: 36 Charged in Racketeering, Gang/Narcotics related Statewide Grand Jury Indictments and 7 Search Warrants Served

Agencies Involved: Orange County Sheriff's Office Gang Enforcement Unit
Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation
Florida Department of Law Enforcement
United States Drug Enforcement Administration
Apopka Police Department
Winter Park Police Department
Attorney General's Office of Statewide Prosecution

April 23, 2008

Orange County Sheriff Kevin Beary and Attorney General Bill McCollum today announced that the Orange County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) Gang Enforcement Unit, working in conjunction with the Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation (MBI), Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Apopka Police Department (APD), and the Winter Park Police Department (WPPD) are making arrests in connection with **thirty-six (36) Statewide Grand Jury indictments for racketeering, gang and narcotics related offenses.**

On April 18, 2008, the Statewide Grand Jury returned an **eleven count indictment on thirty-six (36) individuals**, including **seven (7) documented SUR-13 gang members or associates**, residing in northwest Orange County. All thirty-six individuals are charged with Conspiracy to Traffic Cocaine over 400 grams. The core **SUR-13 Gang members and associates are also charged** with criminal Racketeering and Conspiracy to Commit Racketeering and **could spend up to sixty (60) years in prison if convicted.**

Investigations have resulted in evidence that the **SUR-13 gang has been responsible for violent crimes** throughout the state to include: murder, attempted murder, home invasions, armed robberies, and other crimes. To address the gang issue on a statewide level, the Attorney General's Office launched a Statewide Grand Jury last August to investigate criminal gang activity including crimes involving narcotics or other dangerous drugs and robbery, as well as violations of the **Florida Racketeer Influenced and Corruption Organization (RICO) Act.**

This investigation, *Operation Anti-Freeze*, began twelve (12) months ago, and initially focused on seven (7) members and associates of the **SUR-13 Gang** who were selling cocaine and cannabis to other conspirators **primarily in Pine Hills, Apopka, Winter Park, and unincorporated northwest Orange County.**

As the investigation progressed a connection was established to a **Mexico-to-Central Florida drug smuggling organization.** Last month, the task force of agencies quietly arrested the following seven individuals connected to that drug smuggling organization, **which supplied narcotics to SUR-13 gang members** who distributed the drugs locally. During the arrests, law enforcement seized **four (4) kilos of cocaine and four (4) firearms.** Four (4) Kilos of cocaine when cut, repackaged, and sold at the street level has a value of **approximately \$300,000.**

March 11, 2008 Arrests

- 1) Jose Velez H/M 05/12/1969
- 2) Juan Jose Castaneda H/M 08/15/1966
- 3) Joel Amaral Avalos H/M 06/18/1985
- 4) Misael Avalos H/M 08/06/1987
- 5) Cristobal Torres-Isiordia H/M 07/27/1976
- 6) Roque Rivas-Rivera H/M 08/09/1974
- 7) Rubi A. Veliz H/F 03/12/1988

Today SWAT teams from the OCSO, APD, WPPD, and FDLE served **search warrants at the following seven locations:** 1) 16 East Sandpiper Street, Apopka, Florida 2) 10 W. Sandpiper Street, Apopka, Florida 3) 373 Monroe Street, Apopka, Florida, 4) 791 Dacoma Court, Apopka, Florida, 5) 310 South Thompson Road, Apopka, Florida, 6) 550 Shoreview Avenue #3, Winter Park, Florida, and 7) 6308 Lake Lerla Drive, Apopka, Florida. These search warrants were part of efforts to complete the investigation by arresting the remaining twenty-nine conspirators to include the seven (7) *SUR-13* gang members and associates. **Bonds for the arrested subjects range from a quarter of a Million dollars to 3.1 Million Dollars.**

As a result of the Statewide Grand Jury indictments, the **Office of Statewide Prosecution** will prosecute the defendants in the investigation. Questions concerning the media release should be directed to the Orange County Sheriff's Office Public Information Officer _____ at (407) -----.

S:\Chavis\Press Release\Operation Anti-freeze-042208