

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2014 MBI Annual Report



The Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation (MBI) continued its mission to remove criminal organizations engaged in Narcotics, Vice, and Organized Crime from Central Florida. The MBI Task Force unites local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in a joint effort to combat criminal organizations. In the year 2014, the MBI member agencies included: the State Attorney's Office for the Ninth Judicial Circuit, Orange County Sheriff's Office, Orlando Police Department, Winter Park Police Department, Apopka Police Department, Ocoee Police Department, Winter Garden Police Department, University of Central Florida Police Department, Osceola County Sheriff's Office, Florida Highway Patrol (FHP), Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), United States Secret Service, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Support Center (HIDTA).

The MBI Pharmaceutical Crimes Unit continued to obtain positive results in their efforts to confront the prescription drug abuse epidemic. Agents continued using the new state-wide Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) that was passed into law to create a data base of prescription pain drugs prescribed, the physicians who do so, and the users who obtain the pills. Although there has been a significant reduction in pill mills in Central Florida, an increase in heroin use, and overdoses, has been observed. Heroin trafficking organizations have become one of the top priorities of the MBI.

The MBI Narcotics Section continued to work with local, state, and federal agencies. Overall, illegal drugs valued at \$3,603,810 were seized as evidence, and removed from the community. Currency or money totaling \$1,683,040 was seized as evidence, with most of it being subject to forfeiture. MBI agents arrested 131 drug dealers; 101 for mid-level trafficking offenses. A significant narcotics case was Operation Island Heat, a 2 ½ year investigation into a Drug and Firearms Trafficking Organization operating within Orange and Osceola Counties. This organization also had strong ties to

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Puerto Rico, from where drugs were being imported into the United States, and to where firearms were exported from the U.S. (to Puerto Rico). At the center of this investigation were Edmundo Caraballo Olivero and Raul Pardo Soto, who owned and used a local restaurant, La Terraza Restaurant, located at 6432 East Colonial Drive, as a base of operation. Other members of that cocaine trafficking organization sold trafficking amounts of Cocaine to undercover agents at other locations in Central Florida. The organization smuggled multiple kilos of Cocaine from Puerto Rico, which were later sold and distributed in East Orange County and Osceola County. In addition to Cocaine, the organization also sold and distributed Heroin and Marijuana. The organization used the U.S. Postal Service to facilitate the transport of the contraband. Undercover agents were also able to purchase and seize firearms from this organization that varied from handguns to assault style rifles. Several firearms, seized during the investigation, were packaged to be illegally shipped through the U.S. Postal Service to Puerto Rico. Over 6 Kilos of Cocaine were seized, and over 30 firearms were recovered, during this investigation.

The MBI Vice and Organized Crime Section continued its efforts against organized prostitution and human sex trafficking. In 2014, the MBI Vice Section conducted 63 human trafficking investigations. Those investigations led to 38 arrests for human trafficking. With the addition of 1 State Attorney Investigator, 1 FDLE Agent, 2 FBI Agents and 2 HSI Agents, the MBI Vice Section has now grown from 4 agents to 11. The Orlando Police Department also added a sergeant position to the Vice Section in addition to the Orange County Sheriff Sergeant. In 2014, the MBI continued to conduct training for local law enforcement, community groups, and others on the signs and indicators of human trafficking victims.

A significant human trafficking investigation involved Aaron David George, a violent career criminal, and registered sexual offender, with 55 felony arrests and 18 misdemeanor arrests. MBI had conducted several investigations into Aaron George's human trafficking activities since 2007, and had investigated and charged him with human trafficking on four separate occasions, in 2007, 2008, and twice in 2010. MBI opened a new investigation in July of 2013; one month after Aaron David George was released from prison for his last conviction for human trafficking. The investigation revealed that Aaron David George was again engaged in an organized prostitution venture, and was conspiring with several female prostitutes to promote and engage in organized prostitution. Aaron George was also discovered to be pimping, and having sex with a 16 year old female, who he used to provide commercial sex to his customers. Aaron George was arrested in January of 2014, and went to trial on nine felony counts, including human trafficking of a minor. The jury convicted on all nine counts, and the sentence was life in prison.

The MBI Vice Section aggressively investigated several Asian themed massage parlors which were fronts for prostitution. Over 20 massage parlors were closed in 2014, and the Vice Section made a total of 153 prostitution, and vice related, arrests.

Those investigations, and several other investigations that are mentioned in the following pages, reflect the efforts of MBI member agencies to remove narcotics and vice organizations from the Central Florida community. The MBI's combined efforts, as a multi-agency task force, help in maintaining the image of Metro-Orlando as being a great place in which to live, raise a family, and visit.