



## NEWS RELEASE



**TOPIC:** Operation "Gas Leak"

**DATE & TIME OF OCCURRENCE:** Varied

**ADDRESS: OF OCCURRENCE:** Miami-Dade County At Large

**SUBJECT(S):**

**NAME:** See the attached list

### **Narrative:**

The Miami-Dade Police Department, in conjunction with the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the Offices of Inspector General for the United States Department of Transportation, the United States Postal Service and the United States General Services Administration have dismantled a dangerous criminal enterprise, resulting in over 40 arrest and the seizure of 44 vehicles including 2 fuel tankers.

Operation "Gas Leak" commenced on August 23, 2004, in an effort to counter an increase of various illegal and dangerous schemes involving the sale and purchase of stolen fuel. Several local South Florida gas station owners were involved in the conspiracy, which included the use of stolen and fraudulent credit cards. The stolen fuel was then transported on our public highways in vehicles rigged with homemade tanks endangering the lives of the citizens of Miami-Dade County.

The method of operation utilized by these individual was to obtain stolen or fraudulent credit cards and later purchase fuel at numerous gas stations using the stolen cards. The fuel was pumped into personal vehicles equipped with illegal tanks.

The fuel was then later transported to Loumar Express in the northwester section of Miami-Dade County and transferred into large fuel tankers. Members of the criminal enterprise would then deliver the stolen fuel to various gas stations that were a part of the scheme

Charges against these individuals include: Money Laundering, Organized Fraud, Dealing in Stolen Property, Grand Theft, Unlawful Conveyance of Fuel and various credit card and computer offenses. These individuals will also be charged with violation of the "RICO" Act.

At today's press conference, Miami-Dade Police Director Robert Parker stated, "These individuals endangered many lives every time they placed highly flammable fuel in vehicles rigged with homemade tanks and then transported it on our roadways. It shows a complete disregard for the safety of the citizens of this community."

U.S. Postal Service Inspector General David C. Williams added, "It's the responsibility of the Office of Inspector General to identify and pursue corrupt individuals who attempt to defraud the Postal Service and, indirectly, the American public. We believe successful prosecution will send a strong message that will deter potential wrongdoers from committing crimes against the Postal Service. I would like to thank all those who participated in this joint effort in successfully dismantling a dangerous criminal enterprise."

Prepared by:  
Nelda Fonticiella, Detective  
Media Relations Bureau

01-28-05

**MIAMI-DADE POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
Media Relations Bureau  
9105 NW 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Doral, Florida 33172-1500  
305-471-1900 Fax 305-471-1904