



ATF News

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Los Angeles Field Division

Contacts:

PIO Susan Raichel, 213-925-4547 (cell)
PIO Carlos Baixauli, 305-423-5183 (cell)
PAS Andrew L. Lluberes, 202-327-4194 (cell)
PIO Thomas Mangan, 602-859-6317 (cell)

For Immediate Release
FY-07-33
April 12, 2007

ATF/LAPD/USSS ARREST NEIGHBORHOOD CRIPS GANG MEMBERS *Undercover VCIT Investigation Nets 40*

LOS ANGELES – Special Agent in Charge John A. Torres of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Chief William Bratton of the Los Angeles Police Department and Special Agent in Charge Ramon F. Maytorena of the U.S. Secret Service announced today the arrests of 22 members and associates of the Neighborhood Crips street gang on federal and state firearms, narcotics and counterfeit currency charges.

The arrests, which involved more than 500 federal agents and local law enforcement officers serving 41 federal and state search and arrest warrants, followed an undercover investigation conducted under the ATF-led Violent Crime Impact Team (VCIT) initiative. VCIT teams seek to identify, disrupt, arrest and prosecute the “worst of the worst” criminals in 25 U.S. cities, including Los Angeles. Seven Crips members were arrested previously and 11 remain at large.

“Today ATF is reinforcing the message that we will not put up with armed gang violence and the drug trade that fuels it,” Torres said. “We are warning street gang members that if they don’t stop terrorizing our neighborhoods and cities, the combined weight of federal, state and local law enforcement will come after them and bring them to justice.”

“Teamwork and collaboration are the cornerstones of this multi-agency, anti-gang effort,” Bratton said. “By partnering with state and federal agencies, we send a clear message to gang members that we will not tolerate gang violence in any form. We will not stand idly by while street gangs wreak havoc on our communities.”

“The U.S. Secret Service has a long-standing tradition of cooperative relationships with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in the suppression of criminal activities related to the manufacture and distribution of counterfeit U.S. currency” Maytorena said. “Given the tremendous success of today’s multi-agency operation against organized criminal enterprises, the Secret Service is proud of having played a part in protecting and securing the general public’s welfare and safety.”

--more--

ATF and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) conducted this joint investigation of the Neighborhood Crips, which primarily operate in south Los Angeles, since October 2004. The 17 warrants ATF prepared along with the 24 that the LAPD wrote were instrumental in bringing the case to fruition.

The gang's criminal activities have included murder, gun and narcotics trafficking, drive-by shootings, assaults, robbery, counterfeiting, witness retaliation and other intimidation efforts. During the course of the investigation, investigators recovered or purchased 28 firearms, including handguns, shotguns, assault weapons and sawed-off shotguns; 147 rounds of ammunition; 1,834 grams of crack cocaine; 137 grams of powder cocaine; 87 grams of marijuana; eight grams of methamphetamine; and 164 tablets of the illegal narcotic Ecstasy.

In addition to today's arrests, authorities seized 17 firearms, including two that were stolen; \$47,880 in currency; counterfeit currency amounting to less than \$1,000; 15 packs of Ecstasy; three-four pounds of marijuana; and assorted drug paraphernalia.

Today's operation against the Crips came exactly three weeks after ATF arrested two Southern California men on charges of selling firearms illegally from a Compton gun dealer. ATF also seized 3,390 firearms and more than a million rounds of ammunition from the dealer's stores in Compton and Oak View, Calif., cutting off a source of weapons for gangs in Southern California.

In addition to ATF, LAPD and Secret Service, other law enforcement agencies assisting in today's arrests were the U.S. Marshals Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, California Department of Corrections Probation and Parole, Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, Long Beach Police Department, Riverside Police Department and the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department.

More information on ATF, VCIT and other programs to reduce violent crime is at www.atf.gov.

###