



The Violent Crime Bureau

News Release



Los Angeles Field Division

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MORE THAN 100 FEDERAL AGENTS AND POLICE OFFICERS ARREST DOZENS OF VIOLENT CRIMINALS FOR FIREARMS AND DRUG TRAFFICKING VIOLATIONS

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Special Agent in Charge Steven J. Bogdalek and Anaheim Police Chief John Welter today announced the conclusion of a joint investigation dubbed Operation Halo, which has resulted in the arrest of defendants who are charged with crimes ranging from drug trafficking to homicide.

Operation Halo concluded this morning when more than 100 law enforcement officers fanned out across Orange County to target 49 defendants who now face criminal charges in either federal or state court.

This morning's operation stems from a one-year investigation jointly conducted by the ATF and the Anaheim Police Department (APD) into the criminal activities of career criminals and members of a criminal street gang known as Eastside Anaheim. Today's crackdown on the Eastside gang is the latest example of how federal and local authorities have come together to fight the most entrenched street gangs.

Eleven defendants were taken into custody on federal narcotics. A federal grand jury on Wednesday issued 11 indictments that name a total of 15 defendants. This morning, 11 of those federal defendants, most of who face charges related to the sale of methamphetamine, were taken into custody and expected to be arraigned throughout the day in United States District Court. Three of the defendants named in the indictments were already in custody.

Throughout this investigation, informants and undercover law enforcement personnel purchased 38 firearms and approximately one pound of methamphetamine. An additional two firearms and 10 pounds of methamphetamine were also seized from the streets of Anaheim during enforcement activities stemming from the undercover operation. The firearms recovered during Operation Halo include "sawed-off" shotguns, assault-style weapons and semi-automatic handguns.

During this morning's enforcement activities, authorities seized one additional firearm, a quantity of methamphetamine, one explosive device other drugs, and cash.

"ATF and its federal and local partners are dedicated to pursuing and combating those career criminals whose violent criminal activities threaten and severely detract from the welfare of our communities," said Steven J. Bogdalek, Special Agent in Charge of the ATF's Los Angeles Field Division. "It is essential that federal law enforcement continue to work in conjunction with local agencies to ensure that these criminals are removed from the communities. Today we have demonstrated that this mission is serious, and that with time and continued efforts it can be accomplished."

This morning's roundup involved officers with the APD and special agents with the ATF. The following agencies provided assistance during this morning operation: the Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, the Orange Police Department, the Placentia Police Department, the Buena Park Police Department, the Tustin Police Department, the Garden Grove Police Department, the Fullerton Police Department, the Santa Ana Police Department, the Irvine Police Department, and the region gang task forces in Orange County.

Criminal indictments and complaints merely contain allegations and do not offer evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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