



COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Thomas J. Dart, Sheriff

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570 Sex Buyers Arrested in National Super Bowl Sting Operation

CHICAGO, IL – A national coalition of local law enforcement agencies conducted a sting operation that led to the arrests of 570 would-be sex buyers (or “johns”) and 23 pimps or traffickers, Cook County Sheriff Thomas J. Dart announced today.

The ninth “National Day of Johns Arrests” ran for approximately two weeks, from January 15 through February 1. The sting brought together 37 law enforcement agencies throughout 17 states in a widespread crackdown on the demand for purchased sex.

The operation also targeted pimps and traffickers who have forced victims into lives of prostitution. 23 men were taken into custody on charges of pimping, trafficking or promoting prostitution.

Sheriff Dart conceived these sweeps in 2011 to highlight the role of sex solicitors as perpetrators to this violent and exploitative industry. Since then, the Cook County Sheriff-led national coalition of nearly 70 jurisdictions has grown rapidly, with this sting emerging as the largest and most successful operation yet. The campaign has evolved to highlight the role of classified ad site Backpage.com as a conduit for the sex trade – 64% of the johns ended up in handcuffs after answering what they thought were online ads for prostitution on Backpage. Additionally, 7% of the johns responded to fake ads on Craigslist.

Charges stemming from this effort include adult and juvenile felony sex trafficking, commercial sexual abuse of a minor, pimping and rape. In addition to sex-related arrests, the sweeps yielded charges of kidnapping, drug trafficking and possession of illegal firearms.

The results of the latest National Day of Johns Arrests sting reflect growing momentum for this national campaign. Across nine operations over a four-year stretch, the collaborative effort has led to the arrests of more than 2,900 total johns.

“Sex trafficking continues to destroy countless lives, and this broad national movement should send a strong message to prospective johns that their ‘hobby’ is much more than a ‘victimless’ crime,” said Sheriff Dart. “It’s particularly meaningful that this sting culminated on the day of the Super Bowl, which unfortunately has emerged as a prominent haven for sex trafficking.”

Cumulative numbers from the ninth “National Day of Johns Arrests” campaign are as follows:

- 23 sex trafficking/pimping arrests
- 570 sex solicitation arrests (johns)
 - \$341,330 in minimum fines
 - 408 johns arrested as a result of fake Backpage.com ads
 - 40 johns arrested as a result of fake Craigslist ads
 - 221 cars towed/forfeited from johns
 - 18 weapons seized from johns
 - 4 narcotics charges for johns
- 83 victims recovered
 - 54 adults
 - 29 juveniles

Noteworthy anecdotes from the sweep include:

- Phoenix PD recovered several women who revealed they had been trafficked in for the Super Bowl, which took place in suburban Glendale. One of the victims had broken ribs and black eyes as a result of a beating from her pimp. She is now in recovery with her family.
- Cincinnati PD arrested two sex traffickers who had been using public computers at a local library to post prostitution ads on Backpage.com.
- Las Vegas PD took a man into custody and will extradite him to Dayton, OH to answer for federal human trafficking charges.
- The Harris County Sheriff’s Office arrested 100 johns. Law enforcement agencies in Texas combined for 162 johns arrests overall.
- The Cook County Sheriff’s Office recovered 20 adult victims, while Memphis PD recovered 19 juvenile victims.
- The Cook County Sheriff’s Office arrested 61 johns, several dozen of which were in partnership with Broadview PD, Lansing PD and Matteson PD.
- Memphis PD recovered 19 juvenile victims. Additionally, among the johns arrested by Memphis PD were a youth counselor and an Arkansas state correctional officer.
- Seattle PD arrested six pimps and traffickers. Seattle PD also arrested 59 johns, resulting in \$67,500 in fines for attempting to solicit sex.

- Boston PD arrested six pimps or traffickers, one of whom actively tried to recruit an undercover officer to work for him by offering her a place to live and new clothes. Of the 21 johns arrested by Boston PD, three had long and violent criminal histories, including kidnapping and assault.
- Denver PD towed 18 cars from johns who attempted to solicit sex.
- Newport News PD recovered eight weapons among the 12 johns they arrested.

Agencies who participated in this sting include:

- *Special recognition to Demand Abolition for their support of this national initiative.*

Arizona

- Phoenix PD (22 johns)

California

- Alameda District Attorney's Office, Alameda County Vice Enforcement Team and Hayward PD (combined 11 johns)
- Oakland PD (12 johns)

Colorado

- Denver PD (20 johns)

Georgia

- Alpharetta PD (3 johns)
- DeKalb PD (3 johns)
- Georgia Attorney General's Office (provided support to Alpharetta and DeKalb)

Illinois

- Cook County Sheriff's Office (25 solo johns arrests)
- Aurora PD (2 johns)

- Broadview PD (15 johns in partnership with CCSO)
- FBI – South R.A.-Orland Park (provided support to CCSO)
- Lansing PD (5 johns in partnership with CCSO)
- Lake County Sheriff's Office (19 johns)
- Matteson PD (16 johns in partnership with CCSO)

Massachusetts

- Boston PD (21 johns)
- Massachusetts Department of Homeland Security (provided support to Boston PD)
- Massachusetts State Police (provided support to Boston PD)
- Massachusetts Transit Police (provided support to Boston PD)

Minnesota

- Minneapolis PD and St. Paul PD (3 johns)

Nevada

- Las Vegas PD (5 johns)
- Reno PD (14 johns)

North Dakota

- Minot PD (13 johns)

Ohio

- Cincinnati PD (16 johns)
- Dayton PD (20 johns)
- Riverside PD (11 johns)

Oregon

- Portland PD (21 johns)

Pennsylvania

- Pittsburgh PD (23 johns)

South Carolina

- Greenville County Sheriff's Office (18 johns)

Texas

- Harris County Sheriff's Office (100 johns)
- Houston PD (48 johns)
- Texas Department of Public Safety (14 johns)

Tennessee

- Memphis PD (19 johns)

Virginia

- Newport News PD (12 johns)

Washington

- Seattle PD (59 johns)