



COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Thomas J. Dart, Sheriff

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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312-603-4242

BUYER BEWARE

Law Enforcement Across the Nation Targets "Johns" to End Human Trafficking

CHICAGO, IL... Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart's "National Day of Johns Arrests" campaign launched its third nationwide sweep this month which resulted in 268 arrests of "Johns" and charged with \$299,710 in fines. This national sweep, named "*Operation: Buyer Beware*", included 20 United States law enforcement agencies in eleven different states simultaneously conducting sting activities on the streets, in hotels and brothels and on the internet over a 10-day period. In Cook County alone, 66 "Johns" arrests were made.

"Human trafficking is a worldwide concern that is affecting even the smallest of communities and neighborhoods and occurring in even the safest of places," Sheriff Dart said. "This joint initiative of law enforcement agencies throughout the nation is just one of the many steps taken to put a stop to this vile crime and getting these offenders off the streets. We are very proud of all the hard work our agencies put into this operation and are well aware we still have a long way ahead to entirely eliminate the issue from society."

Buyers of sex are increasingly becoming the target of law enforcement efforts to end prostitution and sex trafficking. Law enforcement recognizes that sex buyers perpetuate a violent, exploitative industry. If no one were to buy sex, pimps and traffickers would not be supplying bars, back alleys and websites with victims.

As a result of *Operation: Buyer Beware*:

489 Total Charges

- 268 men were arrested for soliciting sex
 - 101 civil citations/misdemeanor arrests (includes prostitution)
 - 9 pimping/pandering arrests (includes child pandering)
 - 3 possession/delivery of drugs arrests
 - 4 weapons charges
 - \$10,000 seized

- Nearly \$300,000 in fines
- 128 vehicles were towed

Participating law enforcement agencies in the collaboration include:

1. Cook County Sheriff's Office (Illinois) – lead coordinating agency
2. F.B.I. Chicago Division - Orland Park Office (Illinois)
3. Aurora PD (Illinois)
4. Elgin PD (Illinois)
5. Kane County Sheriff's Office (Illinois)
6. Indianapolis Metro PD (Indiana)
7. Boston PD (Massachusetts)
8. Los Angeles PD (California)
9. Phoenix PD (Arizona)
10. Las Vegas PD (Nevada)
11. Newport News PD (Virginia)
12. Cincinnati PD (Ohio)
13. Dayton PD (Ohio)
14. Denver PD (Colorado)
15. Nashville Metro PD (Tennessee)
16. Seattle PD (Washington)
17. F.B.I. and other federal agencies in collaboration with counties and municipalities

The Cook County Sheriff's Office has taken the lead in coordinating the nationwide sweeps as part of an on-going effort to highlight the role of sex buyers as perpetrators, while providing support for prostituted individuals through its Human Trafficking Response Team (HTRT). The HTRT is comprised of survivors of prostitution who work closely with the Cook County Sheriff's Police Officers trained to identify victims that have been led into prostitution out of desperation and survival. Victims are offered services and safe housing opportunities to assist them in leaving their current situation.

Victims that were prostituted/trafficked during the sweep were offered rescue and restore services by the Cook County Sheriff's Office HTRT, the FBI and other jurisdictional programs such as Newport News, Virginia's Prostitution Intervention Program (PIP).

New Port News PD, Phoenix PD and the Cook County Sheriff's Office reported seven victims Rescues, where women picked up for the charge of prostitution are provided interventions and/or information to get them off the street and provide case management services.

During the sexual exploitation process, offenders usually perpetrate a number of different offences as arrests totals from this sting reflect, once again proving the linkage between these types of activities and other criminal behavior. *Operation: Buyer Beware* resulted in; 2 CCSO arrests for promoting prostitution, Phoenix PD charging an individual with pimping, New Port News PD arresting a known pimp/panderer, assisting the Federal Bureau of

Investigation, (FBI) resulting in charges for drug distribution, abduction, aiding prostitution, using a vehicle for prostitution, taking person for prostitution, and receiving monies for procuring prostitution and Boston PD reporting 3 felony charges for enticement of a minor under 16 years old. Las Vegas PD rescued 4 juveniles who have been exploited into a life of prostitution which resulted in pandering; pandering transport, kidnapping, child abuse, child endangerment and conspiracy to pander a child were among the charges.

Additional information, including a summary of all data collected as a result of this collaborative sting operation, will be available by the end of the week on the websites of the Cook County Sheriff (www.cookcountysheriff.org) and Demand Abolition (www.demandabolition.org).

If you have further questions, below is a list of Public Information Officers from participating jurisdictions:

- *Director Frank Bilecki, Cook County IL Sheriff's Office Director of External Affairs
- *Sue Olafson, Elgin IL PD Public Information Officer
- *Dan Ferrelli, Aurora IL PD Public Information Officer
- *Lou Thurston, New Port News VA PD Public Information Officer
- *Danita Kilgore, Cincinnati OH PD Public Information Officer
- *Officer Bill Cassell, Las Vegas NV PD Public Information Officer
- *Commander Andrew Smith, Los Angeles CA PD Public Information Officer
- *Sgt. Steve Martos, Phoenix AZ PD Public Information Officer
- *Cheryl Fiandaca, Boston, MA PD Public Information Officer
- *Det. Cayce Cantrell, Dayton OH PD Public Information Officer
- *Linda Jackson, Indianapolis IN PD Public Information Officer
- *Don Aaron, Nashville Metro PD TN Public Information Officer
- *Sonny Jackson, Denver PD CO Public Information Officer
- *Kimberly Mills, Seattle PD WA Public Information Officer
- *Carol Edgar, Demand Abolition Campaign Public Information Officer

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