



Department of Justice

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21 CHARGED FEDERALLY IN "OPERATION WOODCHOP"

Orlando, Florida - United States Attorney Robert E. O'Neill announced today the culmination of "Operation Woodchop," an investigation into two neighborhood-based street gangs in the Orange and Lake County areas. The operation concluded this morning with a total of 21 individuals charged federally with drug violations (see attached list). In addition, 28 individuals were charged with state crimes ranging from drug violations to murder and property crimes.

In March 2010, agents with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Orlando District Office Enforcement Group and the Orange County Sheriff's Office Gang Unit initiated an investigation into multiple individuals operating in Zellwood and Tangerine, Florida. These individuals were known to be associated with one another and involved in criminal activities, operating in two neighborhood-based street gangs, the "Zellwood Boyz" and the "Tangerine/Terrell Boys. These two gangs operate only a few miles apart from one another and often work together or through criminal affiliates to engage in drug trafficking and other crimes within a small geographical area.

DEA was the lead agency conducting this operation with assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. Marshals Service, the Orange County Sheriff's Office, the Mount Dora Police Department,

the Tavares Police Department and the Central Florida Intelligence Exchange. Early this morning approximately 200 federal, state and local law enforcement officers initiated enforcement activities to dismantle and disrupt these two drug trafficking organizations and affiliates operating in Northern Orange and Lake County, Florida.

The federal cases are being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney E. Jackson Boggs Jr.

A criminal complaint is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws, and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.