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MORE THAN 1,600 SEX OFFENDER ARRESTS BY U.S. MARSHALS’ “OPERATION FALCON III”

Among 10,773 Fugitives Apprehended in Nationally Coordinated Operation

WASHINGTON – Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales and U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) Director John F. Clark today announced that a seven-day nationally coordinated fugitive roundup led by the USMS and hundreds of partners from state, local and other federal agencies led to the arrests of 10,773 fugitives. Among those arrested during Operation FALCON III were 1,659 fugitive sex offenders, the largest number ever captured in a single law enforcement effort.

Operation FALCON III (Federal and Local Cops Organized Nationally) was conducted in 24 states east of the Mississippi River, in the District of Columbia and in Puerto Rico. Deputy Marshals teamed up with thousands of officers, deputies, troopers, agents and investigators from other federal, state and local agencies to conduct the operation which ran from Oct. 22-28, 2006.

“Operation FALCON has once again proven how much we can accomplish with our network of federal, state, and local law enforcement,” said Attorney General Gonzales. “This operation has made our nation’s neighborhoods and children safer by taking off the streets some of the worst sex offenders, violent felons and gang members.”

High-priority targets for arrest were fugitives wanted for committing sexual offenses, including unregistered convicted sex offenders. Of the 1,659 fugitive sex offenders apprehended, 971 were wanted on charges of failing to register as a sex offender. Other priority targets were fugitive gang members and violent offenders wanted for homicide, kidnapping, robbery, burglary, carjacking, weapons offenses and major narcotics distribution. During FALCON III, agents apprehended 364 gang members, cleared 140 open homicide cases and arrested thousands of fugitives sought on kidnapping, robbery, burglary, carjacking, weapons offenses and other violent charges. Additionally, more than 230 weapons were also taken off the streets.

The Operation received a major boost from the Adam Walsh Act, named after the murdered son of “*America’s Most Wanted*” host John Walsh. The law directs federal resources to the tasks of rounding up sexual predators and helping state and local governments catch convicted individuals who failed to register in communities where they live.

“When the Adam Walsh Act became law this summer the American people expected to see

results,” said U.S. Marshals Director John F. Clark. “I believe FALCON III fulfilled that promise, thanks to the hard work of Deputy Marshals and their partners serving on our district and regional fugitive task forces. Because of their work we brought fugitives to justice, and we hope we brought a bit of peace to the communities they left behind.”

One such arrest took place on Oct. 24, 2006, when investigators arrested Allen Marksberry in Rickman, Tenn. Marksberry was an unregistered sex offender, stemming from a 1996 conviction of sexual assault of a child who was under eight years old. After a short standoff, investigators discovered Marksberry was babysitting several children, all under the age of eleven. After taking the children into protective custody, investigators discovered pornography and drugs inside the home, as well as a separate trailer, which provided the suspect with a clear view of a nearby playground. Investigators also seized a pair of binoculars inside the trailer. Marksberry is now in custody facing additional charges.

FALCON III would not have been possible without the cooperation of more than 1,000 partner agencies from federal, state and local law enforcement communities. On average, more than 3,000 investigators took to the streets each day, working side-by-side with Deputy U.S. Marshals. Director Clark noted the important contributions of the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives throughout the week. He also recognized the efforts of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which helped identify high-priority cases.

Participating federal agents also came from the Offices of Inspector General of the Social Security Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Department of Agriculture among others.

INTERNATIONAL ARRESTS

Thanks to the efforts of USMS personnel overseas, agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and from the State Department’s Diplomatic Security Service, fugitives who fled across international jurisdictions also were successfully targeted. Seven arrests were made abroad, and an additional seven foreign fugitives arrested in the U.S. will be returned to nations where they were sought.

PHOTOS/VIDEOS AVAILABLE

The U.S. Marshals Service has photos of actual arrests during the operation available to press at www.usmarshals.gov/falcon3, as well as fact sheets on arrests nationwide and in each of the participating districts. Dossiers on the “FALCON 15,” describing 15 of the most significant cases closed during the operation are available to media at the site. A 10-minute B-roll video package for broadcasters will be available for satellite distribution on Nov. 2, at 2:00 – 2:15 P.M. EST (11:00 – 11:15 A.M. PST) and at 7:00 – 7:15 P.M. EST (4:00 – 4:15 P.M. PST) at C-Band coordinates (IA 6 T-11 Downlink Frequency 3920 V 93 degrees WL), and on Nov. 3, at 4:00 – 4:15 A.M. EST (1:00 – 1:15 A.M. PST) at C-Band coordinates (IA 6 T-17 Downlink Frequency 4040 V 93 degrees WL).

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

A complete list of all federal, state and local agencies that participated in Operation FALCON III is available at the USMS Web site, www.usmarshals.gov/falcon3.