



**Media Advisory**

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**100 FUGITIVES ARRESTED DURING OPERATION FALCON - MOBILE**

**MOBILE** – In one of the largest fugitive initiatives ever undertaken in the Mobile area, the U.S. Marshals Service, Gulf Coast Regional Fugitive Task Force (GCRFTF) – Mobile Office, teamed with law enforcement agencies throughout the Southern District of Alabama, and arrested 100 fugitives and cleared 120 warrants during a recent six-day, four-county sweep.

Led by the U.S. Marshals Service, Operation FALCON (Federal and Local Cops Organized Nationally) is an ongoing, multi-city, nationwide law enforcement effort. The operation targets persons wanted for sexual offenses, narcotics violations and other violent crimes. Since its start in July, Operation FALCON 2007 has netted 1871 arrests and cleared 2152 warrants in 11 operations. Operation FALCON-Mobile took place from July 23-28. This is the third consecutive year that the U.S. Marshals Service has conducted the FALCON fugitive sweep operation throughout the country.

Of the 100 fugitives arrested, seven were wanted for sexual offenses. Among those arrested was alleged sex offender James D. Riels. Riels, 20, of Mobile, was arrested by a team of investigators on one count of first-degree rape. Riels is alleged to have committed this offense against a female under the age of 12. Also arrested on sex offense warrants were Frank J. Taite, 27, of Fulton, Ala., wanted by the Clarke County Sheriff's Office for first-degree rape and possession of marijuana; Marcel J. Jones, 26, of Mobile, on a Mobile County warrant for one count of second-degree sodomy and Robert C. Garza, 48, on a Baldwin County warrant for a violation of the Community Notification Act.

There were numerous arrests of targeted fugitives that were wanted for violent crimes. One of those targeted fugitives, 44-year-old John D. Hebert of Grand Bay, was wanted on a grand jury indictment warrant in Baldwin County, charging him with one count of vehicular homicide and one count of criminal negligent homicide. Hebert was apprehended in Smith County (Miss.) by members of the GCRFTF from the Jackson, Miss., office.

Lawrence Ash, 24, of Mobile, was arrested on a warrant from Mobile County for violating conditions of his probation. Ash has a prior weapons conviction. During the arrest, a loaded 9mm pistol was found under the sofa cushion where Ash was laying. A small quantity of a substance suspected to be cocaine was also found near Ash.

Southern District of Alabama, United States Marshal William S. Taylor stated, "During last years Operation FALCON we arrested 53 fugitives in the Southern District of Alabama. This year, we nearly doubled that number. The investigators we have assigned to the GCRFTF and the investigators from the participating agencies are as good as you'll find anywhere, and I think the criminal element is learning that first hand. More fugitives are being apprehended and more are deciding to turn themselves in when they learn we are on their trail. The results of this year's Operation FALCON represent continued cooperation and support among the area law enforcement agencies, and the cooperation of community-minded citizens. I consider it an honor to be a part of this effort."

Operation FALCON – Mobile was comprised of 53 law enforcement agents from 18 contributing agencies in the Southern District of Alabama. The agencies involved in the operation were the United States Marshals Service, Alabama Department of Corrections, State of Alabama Board of Pardons and Parole, Mobile County Sheriff's Office, Baldwin County Sheriff's Office, Clarke County Sheriff's Office, 1<sup>st</sup> Circuit District Attorney's Office, 35<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Task Force, Escambia (AL) Sheriff's Office, Mobile Police Department, Daphne Police Department, Orange Beach Police Department, Atmore Police Department, Fairhope Police Department, Thomasville Police Department, Chatom Police Department, Grove Hill Police Department, and Foley Police Department.

The U.S. Marshals Service coordinates the Gulf Coast Regional Fugitive Task Force, a multi-agency task force that targets persons wanted for violent crimes, narcotics offenses, and sex offenders in the 13 counties within the Southern District of Alabama. Full time contributing agencies are the Alabama Department of Corrections, Mobile County Sheriff's Office, Baldwin County Sheriff's Office, and the Mobile Police Department.

Since its inception in 2005, Operation FALCON has made over 30,000 arrests and cleared over 38,000 warrants. It continues to be the largest and most successful fugitive apprehension effort in U.S. Marshals history.

For more information about the U.S. Marshals Service, visit <http://www.usmarshals.gov/district/la-m/index.html>.

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