

**Attorney General Martha Coakley's Office Announces
Indictments and Arrests of Numerous Individuals Connected
to Widespread Comprehensive Economic Crime Bill
Press Conference October 7, 2009**

Attorney General Martha Coakley:

I am Attorney General Martha Coakley. To my left is Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis, and to my right is State Police Major James Hannafin.

Back in June, Commissioner Davis and I stood at this podium, and we sought your help and the public's help in locating one defendant named Christian Miranda, who, based upon an extensive joint investigation, we believe was a significant player in a widespread narcotics distribution enterprise in the city of Boston.

We are pleased to tell you today that not only was Mr. Miranda arrested last week on September 30, after an aggressive, three-month, multistate search, but in the time since we first announced the charges against him, our joint investigation has continued and we have made tremendous progress in that.

On Monday afternoon, a Suffolk Grand Jury returned indictments against Mr. Miranda as well as 15 other individuals involved in what we believe is a violent narcotics distribution ring that has plagued the streets of Boston in recent years. This morning one hundred Massachusetts State Police and Boston police officers conducted a coordinated arrest sweep, taking into custody seven of the individuals who were indicted on Monday; eight of the others are already in custody on other matters. This group of individuals, indicated to my right, charged in this case, includes impact players and other associates of a violent Boston street gang known as the Magnolia Steelers.

Working with Boston Police, the Attorney General's Office, along with State Police, used the latest in electronic surveillance to target this street gang and we hope the result will be safer streets in Boston. Of course, I emphasize that all the individuals charged in this case are presumed innocent and they will have their day in court.

Police referred to this investigation as Operation 1370, because 1370 degrees Celsius is the temperature at which steel melts. With today's arrests we believe we made an impact on the Magnolia Steelers and their impact on the streets of Boston. We believe that they often engaged in acts of street violence. In one set of indictments, we alleged that there was a conspiracy among members of this gang to commit an assault with a gun on a rival gang member. This was intercepted by police. In addition, we believe that our investigation did thwart a number of planned acts of violence in Boston at the same time that we gathered intelligence around the activities of these individuals, not just in selling drugs, but in other ways they make the streets dangerous. We began this investigation in August 2008 and we did use various investigative techniques, electronic and otherwise, to track and locate these defendants.

This investigation was a success largely due to exemplary collaboration between the Boston Police Department, the state police who were assigned to the Attorney General's Office, as well as other division of state police, and in our divisions, we had the cooperation of our Enterprise and Major Crimes and our Cyber Crime Division working on this matter. We had extensive assistance from numerous other law enforcement agencies, including the U.S. Marshalls Service, who was instrumental in helping us locate Christian Miranda, the United States Postal Inspection

Service, the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, the Norfolk County District Attorney's Office, Randolph Police Department, and the MBTA Transit Police. And you can see by the engagement of all of those agencies we had a truly collaborative template to try and resolve what we believe was at least one serious problem on the Boston streets.

Our investigators worked to identify and charge those, who because of their criminal activity, have contributed to the urban violence that has been fueled by gang violence, gang feuds, drug sales, drug use and gun sales and the organized way in which a small number of impact players have been able to spread anxiety, fear and violence on the streets of Boston. We hope that today marks a significant milestone in this critical work, but we know that it is just the beginning. We are confident that getting these impact players off the streets will have a significant impact on minimizing violence and drug activity, improving overall public safety in our communities.

I know that the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, my colleague Dan Conley, and the Boston Police have been doing this work on a daily basis and do a tremendous job. We were just please in this instance that we were able to work with them and collaborate in a way, in a more intensive and long-term investigation, that I think will prove to increase safety on Boston streets. With that I am going to turn the microphone to Commissioner Ed Davis.

Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis:

Thank you General and good afternoon to everyone. I first wanted to thank Attorney General Martha Coakley for sending her limited police resources to the City of Boston to work this very important case. These are not the biggest drug dealers in Massachusetts. But these individuals have been targeted because they are the most prolific shooters that we have in the city of Boston.

This group, the Magnolia Steelers, have been responsible for more shootings over the last year than any other group and that's why we have targeted them. And that is why Christian Miranda is in jail right now, because they did not heed our warning that if you pick up a firearm and you use it in this city, we are coming to get you and we will use anything we can to take you off the street. During the course of this investigation, telephone calls were intercepted that lead us to prevent serious acts of violence including what could have been a homicide. These telephone calls were coming out of local bars in the Roxbury area.

We saved lives because of the partnership and cooperation that we have with Martha Coakley, with Colonel Delaney and the Massachusetts State Police, and we are sending a message out to the individuals in this city, who are in these gangs, that if they pick up firearms and they use them, we will take every tool that we have in our toolbox to get them off the street.

We have seen a 22 percent reduction in shootings this year in the city of Boston and it is largely due to the fact that of these 15 people, 8 of them have already been taken off the street due to the hard work of the men and women who were working undercover in this operation from the Boston Police Department and the Massachusetts State Police and our assistance from other agencies. I can't tell you how important it is for our safety and security that these men and women put themselves in harms way to take individuals who are trafficking in cocaine and using firearms to intimidate their neighbors in our city, who continue to do this hard work.

A lot of the time I am up here talking about trust in the community and about the softer side of policing, but the truth of the matter is, this case is going to make this city safer because bad guys are being taken off the street who have been picking up firearms.