

Transcript  
Press Conference October 20, 2010

Participants:

- Attorney General Martha Coakley
- Essex District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett
- Major James Hanafin of the Massachusetts State Police

**Attorney General Martha Coakley:** Good afternoon. Attorney General Martha Coakley, let me first introduce who is with me here for this announcement. Starting on my right is Assistant Attorney General Patrick Hanley; next to him is the Division Chief of the Enterprise and Major Crimes Division in the Attorney General's Office, Dean Mazzone. To his left is Major James Hanafin, he is the head of Investigative Services, to my left is Essex District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett, and to his left is the First Assistant District Attorney Jack Dawley, who also is appointed as a Special Assistant Attorney General for this matter.

With over 103 indictments, 31 individuals charged by way of indictment after a yearlong investigation, District Attorney John Blodgett, who began this probe, and I announce a major strike at a large organized crime network involved in drugs, gambling, loan sharking and violent enforcement, all of which we believe caused a threat to public safety.

The Essex District Attorney's Office initiated this major enforcement action and asked if the Attorney General's Office would assist when the criminal activity that was the focus of their investigation spread beyond the scope of the jurisdiction of that county. And I should indicate that we had extensive cooperation with local police departments, particularly with North Andover Police and Revere Police, I know Chief Reardon and Lieutenant Callahan, from the Revere Police Department are here today, with several other District Attorneys and police departments, including State Police. This was a model of effective law enforcement cooperation.

We were able to work cooperatively, particularly since now the Attorney General's Office can use a Statewide Grand Jury. This is one of the first and major cases that we used a Statewide Grand Jury to use effectively our investigative resources to make sure that we could accomplish these indictments, these arrests, we are announcing today.

As always, these are indictments only, that all of these defendants are innocent until proven guilty, and I would now like to turn the podium over to my colleague, District Attorney John Blodgett.

**Essex District Attorney Jonathan Blodgett:** Thank you General. As the General indicated, almost a year ago, my office and the office of Massachusetts State Police Special Service Section initiated an investigation into organized crime, specifically illegal

gaming and loan sharking in Essex County. Our initial target was Joseph Giallanella, also known as Jason Peters, of North Andover. Through sophisticated surveillance we discovered a network of illegal activity that went well beyond the original gaming and loan sharking scheme. The individuals involved committed acts of violence and vicious attacks, some of the vicious attacks will be something you will see at evidence at trial, which are quite shocking. Sometimes these attacks took place in front of the victim's families, in order to collect gaming debts and street loans, which were charging up to 150% annual interest.

During the course of the investigation our surveillance expanded and we learned about additional players associated with Mr. Giallanella. Not surprisingly we discovered other related criminal activity, specifically drug trafficking in marijuana and heroin. Specifically we uncovered a heroin distribution ring facilitated by Mark Rossetti, a reputed mafia capo.

Because of the multi-jurisdictional issues, we spoke with the Attorney General and her top staff and the Attorney General was very helpful, obviously in the prosecution of these cases. I think this speaks to the necessity and the need for what a Statewide Grand Jury does and does well. It certainly helps with respect to a collaboration resulting in multiple indictments, of multiple defendants. The Grand Jury here in Suffolk County has been hearing evidence for three months. As of yesterday, this Grand Jury has received testimony on 27 days from over 60 witnesses, has handed down the total, as the Attorney General said of 103 indictments against 31 people, on charges ranging from Gaming, Usury, Narcotics, Trafficking, Violence, Theft, Extortion, Witness Intimidation, and Perjury. This has been a long investigation and it has certainly put a major dent in organized crime and the investigation continues. Thank you very much.

**Attorney General Martha Coakley:** And now, Major Hanafin.

**Major James Hanafin of the Massachusetts State Police:** Thank you General. As a member of the Massachusetts State Police Command Staff I wanted to express how very proud we are of the Troopers that worked on this case and in particular, the Troopers assigned to the Special Service Section. This current case is an example of how great police work and the accompanying Grand Jury investigations can clear up numerous criminal activities that may have otherwise gone unsolved.

As always, these cases require a cooperative effort between prosecutors and law enforcement officers. This case, in particular the Essex District Attorney's Office along with Attorney General's Office worked hand in hand with the State Police Detectives during the operations phase of this as well as the Grand Jury phase of the investigation. Additionally, we wanted to thank local police departments and in particular, the Revere Police Department and the Boston Police Major Case Unit. They were instrumental in this operation's success.

Violence and organized crime have always gone hand in hand and because of that the Massachusetts State Police has long had a history of pursuing organized crime and will

continue to do so. We're honored to stand here with the Attorney General and the District Attorney to announce these indictments and arrests. Thank you.

**Attorney General Martha Coakley:** Thank you, and we'll take questions, I just want to note that what you see, items seized as a result of this investigation. Marijuana, weapons as you can see... cash was seized and we have available for you this chart, available in a smaller size if anyone is interested. John if you'll join me, if anyone has any questions?