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18 Arrested During Multi-Agency Gun Operation

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has a long history of providing assistance and expertise to other law enforcement agencies in support of firearm investigations. The success of the ATF task force initiatives, combined with the outstanding relationships forged with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), has led to the formation of a violent crime task force, in response to unique cases that pose immediate threats to the public.

In January of 2020, LAPD Harbor Area Narcotics Enforcement Detail and ATF-Long Beach initiated an investigation into the criminal activities of Eastside Wilmas gang members (ESW.) During the investigation, and with the support of the ATF and the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office, several wiretaps were conducted targeting the upper echelon and most active members of the gang. The case involved ongoing gang and narcotics investigations, multiple surveillance operations, search warrants, firearms and narcotics buys, all of which were conducted in the Wilmington, San Pedro, and Long Beach areas. The investigation lead to multiple arrests beginning in 2020 and culminating this last week of February, 2023. The investigation was found to connect the Eastside Wilmas criminal street gang to other Harbor Area gangs including Westside Wilmas and Rancho San Pedro criminal street gangs.

This joint investigation yielded the following results:

- 18 defendants identified and arrested for various charges;
- 19 pounds of methamphetamine;
- 3 kilos of fentanyl
- 5,000 fentanyl pills
- 5.5 pounds of cocaine
- 82 firearms recovered in total, including 40 ghost guns and 20 assault weapons.

In total, more than forty-one search warrants and arrest warrants were authored and executed. All charges encompass conspiracy allegations which include weapons and narcotics possession, sales, trafficking and gang-related assaults.

These types of operations would not be a success without the continued partnership of all those involved, including specialized teams of detectives, officers, and administrative staff. The LAPD would like to thank our partners at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office for their continued support in the apprehension of these violent suspects.

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Anyone that may have information that might aid in this investigation is asked to contact their nearest police station. During non-business hours, or on weekends, calls should be directed to (213) 972-2971 or 1-877-LAPD-24-7 (877-527-3247). Anyone wishing to remain anonymous should call the LA Regional Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (800-222-8477) or go directly to www.lacrimestoppers.org. Tipsters may also visit www.lapdonline.org, and click on “Anonymous Web Tips” under the “Get Involved-Crime Stoppers” menu to submit an online tip. Lastly, tipsters may also download the “P3 Tips” mobile application and select the LA Regional Crime Stoppers as their local program.

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