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For Immediate Release

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DA Announces Dozens of Indictments in Undercover Auto Theft Operation

RATT Task Force Partners with ATF for Six-Month Crackdown

San Diego County District Attorney [Bonnie M. Dumanis](#) today announced 33 grand jury indictments as a result of a six-month undercover operation conducted by the Regional Auto Theft Task Force ([RATT](#)) in cooperation with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). The defendants face various felony charges vehicle theft, residential burglary, possession of stolen property and illegal weapons possession.

“The DA’s Office and RATT continue to fight auto theft in San Diego and today’s indictments mean dozens of car thieves have been shut down,” DA Dumanis said. “We’re on the right track in San Diego—auto theft continues to decline thanks in large part to the dedicated work done by RATT.”

Operation G-Ride was launched in December 2010 and yielded 53 stolen vehicles worth an estimated \$600,000. Firearms and narcotics were also seized. Theft hotspots included LA Fitness, 24 Hour Fitness, daycare centers, beaches and residential homes. In some cases, suspects would enter a home at night, take property and car keys then return at a later time to steal the auto.

During the crackdown, the defendants offered undercover officers stolen cars, narcotics or weapons for sale. The transactions were video and audio recorded.

“We continue to take a pro-active approach in seeking out professional auto thieves and having them prosecuted,” said RATT Commander, CHP Captain Scott Parker. “It has definitely made an impact in our communities.”

Of the 33 indicted, 27 are in custody. Police officers arrested an additional six defendants on various charges during yesterday morning’s early-morning sweep in South and East County. Suspects in this investigation face varied sentences depending on their criminal background including probation to 25 years in prison. Some of the defendants will be arraigned Friday afternoon at 1:30 in Department 12 at the Hall of Justice.

(More)

“As it was evident with our joint operation with R.A.T.T., ATF will continue to dedicate federal resources to eradicate and forestall criminal activity,” said John A. Torres Special Agent in Charge, ATF Los Angeles Field Division. “Criminal activity ranging from stolen vehicles to possession of illegal firearms was impacted by the great work by all involved during Operation G-Ride.”

Auto theft in San Diego County has dropped in recent years lowering its ranking by the National Insurance Crime Bureau from third in the nation for stolen cars to number 15. In the last three years alone, auto theft dropped 50 percent. In 2007, there were 27,073 vehicles stolen in the county. Last year, 13,707 cars were stolen. Current figures and projections estimate that just over 11,000 vehicles will occur this year.

The mission of San Diego County’s Regional Auto Theft Task Force (RATT) is to collaborate effectively to reduce the incidence of vehicle and cargo theft and increase the arrests and prosecution of professional thieves using regional pro-active investigative methods and public education. The task force is led by the California Highway Patrol and members include the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office; San Diego County Sheriff’s Department; the FBI; the police departments in Chula Vista, Carlsbad, El Cajon, Escondido, La Mesa, National City and Oceanside; California Department of Insurance; National Insurance Crime Bureau; and the San Diego County Probation Department.

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