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REWARD INCREASED FOR OPERATION BACKFIRE FUGITIVES

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives announced an increased reward for information about fugitives being sought for their role in a domestic terrorism cell. Specifically, the FBI is offering a reward of up to \$50,000 for information leading to the arrest of Josephine Sunshine Overaker, Joseph Mahmoud Dibee, Justin Franchi Solondz, and Rebecca Rubin. These individuals were members of the domestic terrorism cell, referred to as “The Family,” whose criminal actions included vandalism, animal releases, arsons and attempted arsons across Oregon, Washington, California, Wyoming and Colorado.

“We appreciate the assistance of our domestic and international law enforcement partners in this ongoing fugitive search,” said Executive Assistant Director Arthur M. Cummings, II, FBI National Security Branch. “These individuals are terrorists –regardless of their political or social message – their actions were criminal and in violation of federal law. The FBI has remained vigilant in the search for these individuals and will make every effort to apprehend these fugitives and bring them to justice.”

From 1996 to 2001, these individuals conducted a range of criminal actions throughout the United States in the name of the Animal Liberation Front and Earth Liberation Front. They were responsible for at least 25 domestic terrorism criminal actions totaling over \$80 million in damages, including the largest eco-related arson in history, a \$12 million dollar arson at the Vail Ski Resort in Vail, Colorado. To date, Operation Backfire has resulted in the Indictment of 17 individuals for eco-terrorism criminal activities, four of which remain at-large, possibly overseas.

“The crimes perpetrated by ALF and ELF have proven violent and potentially deadly, as the criminals use sophisticated incendiary devices, pipe bombs and tactics” said ATF Deputy Assistant Director William McMahan. “As these fugitives are still on the run, law enforcement must remain aggressive in our pursuit. The ATF will continue to work with the FBI to battle the twin menaces of violent crime and terrorism.”

Detailed description information on these fugitives is available on www.fbi.gov. These fugitives are considered armed and dangerous. If you have information concerning any of these fugitives, please do not take any independent action. We ask that you contact your local FBI office or the nearest American Embassy or Consulate.

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