

World/Nation

10-week narcotics roundup captures 218 drug fugitives

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — More than 200 narcotics fugitives responsible for \$5.8 billion in U.S. drug sales were captured during a 10-week sweep of the southeastern Gulf states, federal officials said Monday.

Marshals said their calculations showed that if these fugitives were a corporation, sales would rank 71st on the Fortune 500 list.

The operation was headquartered in El Paso. Investigative teams worked in Tampa, Jacksonville and Miami; Mobile; New Orleans and Galveston. Fugitives targeted were on the run from two to 13 years and

ranged from accused Colombian smugglers to crack street dealers.

Miami U.S. Attorney Dexter Lehtinen said, "This program demonstrates that if the government would commit the resources to the drug-trafficking war, then we could win the war. The problem in the war has not been that the dopers are unapprehensible or that the government cannot find them — the problem is that the public is not yet committed to winning the war on drugs."

More than \$1.2 million in cash and property seized from the fugitives as illegal proceeds of narcotics

activity went to pay the tab for operation WANT II, a code-name for warrant apprehension narcotics team.

Richard Cox, U.S. Marshal in Tampa, said altogether, 249 were arrested, 218 of them narcotics fugitives.

And 402 warrants were cleared, representing 10 percent of the outstanding drug fugitive warrants in the country.

Deputy marshals, working with local law enforcement teams, made 38 arrests in Miami; 18 in Tampa; 13 in Jacksonville; 24 in New Orleans; 15

in Mobile; and nine in Galveston.

Three were arrested by an international team and 98 other arrests were generated out of El Paso.

Ralph Carr, a deputy marshal from Jacksonville, said, "The message is they're not forgotten once they're indicted."

This marked the second U.S. Marshals' roundup. Last year, 166 were picked up.

Nine of those arrested in Florida's middle district were financiers, major suppliers, lab operators or lead figures in narcotics organizations, marshals said.

Detectives uncover sixth body buried in boarding house yard

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Detectives armed with steel probes found a sixth body Monday in the yard of a Victorian rooming house run by a missing landlady who had told a social worker she took in elderly boarders as a way to repay society.

The sixth corpse — unidentified like the others — was discovered shortly after digging resumed Monday morning. It was wrapped in clothing and buried in a shallow grave under a shed, police Sgt. Bob Burns said. The cause of death was not immediately known.

On Monday, 200 spectators watched from behind police lines as investigators worked at the grounds of the home. Authorities say there could be eight bodies buried.

Burns said police are still searching for the landlady, Dorothea Montalvo Puente, 59. "Our first priority is to get her into custody," he said.

Burns said investigators were told she ran a board and care home eight or nine years ago about eight blocks away, and authorities were interviewing tenants and neighbors there. There were no immediate plans to dig at that property, Burns said.

Authorities issued an all-points bulletin for Puente, who disappeared Friday after detectives interviewed her for several hours and released her for lack of evidence.

Authorities believe the victims, apparently all low-income elderly

people and all residents of the eight-room Victorian home downtown — were killed for their Social Security checks. Police Lt. Joe Enloe said the payments continued to be sent to them after their disappearances but that someone else fraudulently cashed their checks. On Monday, detectives planned to examine Puente's bank records, Enloe said.

Police were led to the house after neighbors reported that a friend had been missing since August, and a social worker said some of her clients were missing.

Burns said police planned to get a search warrant for the home, which is sealed, later Monday.

Enloe said the means of death could not be determined until autopsies were performed. Evidence linking Puente to the deaths was found in the graves, Enloe said, but he declined to give details.

A social worker familiar with the rooming house described the residents as elderly people on fixed incomes with few relatives.

PLO parliament proclaims separate Palestinian land

ALGIERS, Algeria (AP) — The PLO's parliament on Tuesday proclaimed an independent Palestinian homeland in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip with Jerusalem as its capital, and extended an olive branch by implicitly recognizing Israel.

PLO chairman Yasser Arafat read the declaration of the independent state early Tuesday morning to a chamber filled with delegates to the 450-member Palestine National Council, Arab dignitaries and observers, who broke into long applause and loud cheers.

Wearing the traditional black-and-white checked headdress, Arafat read his speech in Arabic in a

low, slow, solemn voice.

His voice rising to a crescendo at 1:38 a.m. (7:38 p.m. EST Monday), he said:

"The Palestinian National Council hereby declares the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, which will be for all Palestinians wherever they are."

The PLO leader declared the new Palestinian state would be government by "a democratic, parliamentary system based on freedom of opinion, multiple parties, freedom of worship and equality between men and women."

In Washington on Monday, President Reagan said implicit PLO rec-

ognition of Israel "would be some progress," but added: "There are other problems that remain to be solved."

Israel rejected results of the Algiers meeting in advance.

"We will not negotiate with the PLO," Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said. "It's not a problem of definition and formulations of various positions. We'll not negotiate with them because they're opposed to peace with Israel."

Arafat and other PLO leaders consider the independence declaration a historic step toward creation of an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza.

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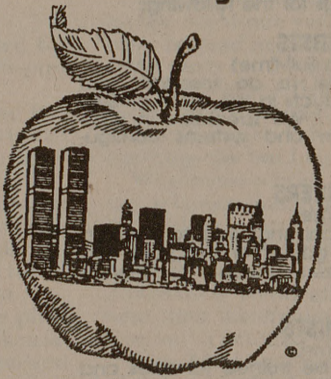
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