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TASK FORCE NETS INDICTMENTS, ARRESTS IN COLD CASE HOMICIDES

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A multi-agency task force designed to investigate several unsolved homicide cases long considered cold has completed a series of investigations that resulted in the indictments of dozens of individuals, many of whom have been taken into custody in recent days.

“Operation First Degree Burn” began three years ago when the Cold Case Task Force was established by the FBI and Aurora Police to develop evidence in an attempt to solve several unsolved homicides in and around Aurora. As part of the investigations, members of the task force also have developed information on several other attempted murders and shootings. All of the homicides are believed to be the work of members of the Latin Kings street gang.

As the investigations progressed, the Kane County Sheriff's Department, Montgomery Police Department and Kane County State's Attorney's Office became involved. As information on the cases was compiled, the Kane County State's Attorney in April 2007 convened a special grand jury to hear the evidence. After months of testimony and evidence presentation, the grand jury indicted 30 individuals in 22 homicides, 13 of which took place more than 10 years ago, the oldest of which occurred in 1989. Several of those indicted were involved in more than one homicide.

More than 100 police officers and law-enforcement personnel have been involved in the investigations. Additional charges are pending; the investigation is ongoing.

The charges to follow are not proof of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial in which it is the state's burden to prove his or her guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Indicted by the special grand jury were:

- **George Torres**, 30 (d.o.b. 1-13-1977) of the 700 block of Hamilton Avenue, Aurora. Charged with five counts of first-degree murder in the Nov. 5, 1997, homicide of Fernando Dieppa, 21, of the 600 Block of South Lincoln Avenue, Aurora. Torres is

accused of shooting Dieppa at about 9:05 p.m. Nov. 4, 1997, as Dieppa sat in a car parked in an alley behind a residence in the 200 block of East Illinois Avenue. A woman in the car with Dieppa drove him to an Aurora hospital, where he died the next morning from gunshot wounds to the head.

- **Julian Acosta**, 23 (d.o.b. 1-5-1984) of the 1000 block of Second Avenue, Aurora. Charged with two counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Arnoldo Aguilar**, 22 (d.o.b. 5-26-1985), of the 700 block of Superior Street, Aurora. Charged with two counts of first-degree murder.

Acosta and Aguilar are charged in the May 19, 2001, homicide of Brian Lambert, 26, of the 700 block of Palace Street, Aurora. Acosta and Aguilar are accused of shooting Lambert at about 9:41 p.m. as he sat in the passenger seat of a vehicle that was parked in the 0-25 Block of North Anderson Street. Lambert suffered fatal wounds to the head and torso.

- **Roel Soto**, 35 (d.o.b. 1-28-1972), of the 0-99 Block Pueblo Road, Montgomery. Charged with five counts of first-degree murder in the Jan. 30, 1997, homicide of Michael O’Gara, 19, of the 1200 block of Abbott Street, Elgin. Soto is accused of shooting O’Gara at about 2 p.m. Jan. 30, 1997, as he drove a vehicle in the 500 block of South Broadway. Shots were fired from a small, white car containing several passengers that was following O’Gara. Two men with the victim were not hurt even though O’Gara lost control of the vehicle and drove it into a tree after being shot.

- **Andres Beltran**, 23 (d.o.b. 7-8-1983), of the 100 block of North Kendall Street, Aurora. Charged with five counts of first-degree murder. Accused in the April 16, 2000, homicide of Steven Quigley, 17, of the 1500 block of Superior Street. Quigley was shot at about 1:50 p.m. inside his home. Multiple shots were fired from the outside of the residence; Quigley died from wounds to his head and back. The shooting also wounded Quigley’s 20-year-old sister, who was shot in the thigh. She since has recovered.

- **Omar Soto**, 29 (8-28-1977), of the 700 block of Delius Street, Aurora. Charged with two counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Rashaan Thomas**, 31, of the 12200 block of South Vincennes, Blue Island. Charged with two counts of first-degree murder.

Soto and Thomas are accused of shooting to death Demetrius Washington, 17, of the 400 block of Flagg Street, Aurora, on the front porch of his home at about 8:20 p.m. Sept. 16, 1995.

- **Michael Luciano**, 34 (d.o.b. 11-26-1972), of Mesa, Ariz., and formerly of Aurora. Charged with five counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Angel “Doc” Luciano**, 55 (d.o.b. 6-30-1951), of the 300 block of Spruce Street, Aurora. Charged with five counts of first-degree murder. Defendants, father and son, are accused of shooting to death Willie Arce, 20, of the 700 block of Liberty Street, Aurora, at about 10:30 p.m. June 29, 1989, as he walked down his basement stairs. The shots were fired through a basement window.

- **Shane Lopez**, 31 (d.o.b. 7-20-1975), of the 1600 block of Kensington Place, Aurora, charged with six counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Johnny Gonzalez**, 32 (d.o.b. 8-2-1974), of the 800 block of Superior Street, Aurora, charged with six counts of first-degree murder.

Lopez and Gonzalez are accused of chasing Noe Salinas, 16, of the 600 block of Pierce Street, through the yards in the 800 block of Rural Street and shooting him to death at about 5:10 p.m. Jan. 20, 1996.

- **Michael Diaz**, 31 (d.o.b. 3-11-1976), of the 100 block of Hickory Street, North Aurora, charged with five counts of first-degree murder. He is accused of shooting David Jimenez, 31, of the 100 block of Hickory Street, Aurora, at about 1 p.m. Sept. 27, 1995, as Jimenez stood in the driveway of a home in the 600 block of Bangs Street, Aurora.

- **Shane Lopez**, 31 (d.o.b. 7-20-1975), of the 1600 block of Kensington Place, Aurora, charged with five counts of first-degree murder.

Lopez is accused in the homicide of Curtis Thompson, 25, of the 500 block of South Broadway. Thompson was shot to death just after midnight on Jan. 6, 1996, as he sat in his car parked in a lot in the 100 block of North Ohio Street.

- **Jose Javier Ramirez**, 29 (d.o.b. 8-27-1977) of the 700 block of Liberty Street, Aurora, charged with five counts of first-degree murder.

Ramirez is accused in the homicide of Rogelio Hernandez, 26, of the 0-99 block of Madison Street, Aurora. Hernandez was at a pay telephone in the area of Liberty and Beach at about 1:40 a.m. April 24, 1995, when he was approached by a male who exchanged words with him and then opened fire. A man with Hernandez was also shot but survived.

- **Michael Diaz**, 31 (d.o.b. 3-11-1976), of the 100 block of Hickory Street, North Aurora, charged with five counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Jimmy Torres**, 32 (3-13-1975), of the 500 block of South LaSalle Street, Aurora, charged with five counts of first-degree murder.

Diaz and Torres are accused in the 1995 homicide of Larry Wesby, 17, of the 400 block of Florida Avenue, Aurora. At about 10:25 p.m. Aug. 28, 1995, Wesby and two other men were standing in the parking lot of an apartment complex in the 400 block of East Indian Trail, Aurora, when multiple shots were fired in the direction of the men. All three men were struck, but the other two men survived.

- **Irving Childress**, 32 (d.o.b. 5-13-1975), of the 1000 block of Light Road, Oswego. Charged with six counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Michael Rodriguez**, 33 (d.o.b. 10-13-1973), of the 1000 block of Sill Avenue, Aurora. Charged with six counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Michael Luciano**, 34 (d.o.b. 11-26-1972), of Mesa, Ariz., and formerly of Aurora. Charged with six counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Angel “Doc” Luciano**, 55 (d.o.b. 6-30-1951), of the 300 block of Spruce Street, Aurora. Charged with six counts of first-degree murder. The four men are charged in the homicide of Albert Gonzalez, 18, of the 300 block of Grove Street, Aurora. Gonzalez was shot to death at about 7:21 p.m., Oct. 31, 1990, at his home as he stood in a bedroom. The shots were fired from a grassy hillside adjacent to railroad tracks that were across the street from the home. Several other people also suffered gunshot wounds, but survived.

- **Abraham Estremera**, 37 (d.o.b. 12-26-1969), of the 1000 block of Front Street, Aurora. Charged with eight counts first-degree murder.

AND

- **Michael J. Reyes**, 34 (d.o.b. 11-16-1972), of the 900 block of Solfisburg Ave., Aurora. Charged with eight counts first-degree murder. Estremera and Reyes are accused in the 1993 homicides of Jesus Montoya, 20 (d.o.b. 9-8-1973), of the 200 Block of East Galena Boulevard, and Francisco Montoya, 19 (d.o.b. 10-28-1974), of the 600 Block of North Lincoln Avenue. At about 2:30 p.m. March 9, 1993, the Montoya brothers were found shot to death in a van parked in the 0-99 block of Spencer Street, Aurora. They were shot execution style.

- **Charles Lantz**, 26, (d.o.b. 1/29/81), of the 100 block of North Fourth Street, Aurora. Charged with two counts of first-degree murder. Lantz is charged in the 1998 homicide of Donald Goodman. At 11:10 p.m. April 12, 1998, Goodman, 25, of the 1000 block of Grove Street, Aurora, was shot multiple times as he stood in the front doorway of his home.

- **Quentin Moore**, 25 (d.o.b. 8-1-1981), of the 800 block of East Galena Blvd., Aurora. Charged with four counts of first-degree murder. Moore is charged in the 2001 double-homicide of Sharon Paulette and Larry Postlewaite. At about 9:20 p.m. Feb. 8, 2001, Paulette, 20, of the 300 block of South 19th Street, St. Charles, and Postlewaite, 17, of the 100 block of North Fourth Street, Aurora, were shot to death while backing out of a driveway in the 100 block of North Fourth Street. The car (Paulette was driving and Postlewaite was a backseat passenger) was approached by one subject on foot who opened fire into the vehicle.

- **Quentin Moore**, 25 (d.o.b. 8-1-1981), of the 800 block of East Galena Blvd., Aurora. Charged with five counts of first-degree murder. Moore is charged in the 2003 Jorge Uriostigue homicide. Just after midnight Aug. 8, 2003, Uriostigue, 19, of the 800 block of Claim Street, Aurora, was shot in the front yard of a home in the 200 block of North Smith Street.

- **Jose F. Melero**, 26, (d.o.b. 9-1-80), of the 200 block Fifth Street, Aurora. Charged with six counts of first-degree murder. Melero is charged in the 2004 Raul Romero homicide. At about 1 a.m. Aug. 28, 2004, while out with friends, Romero, 30, of the 1000 block of North Avenue, Aurora, was severely beaten in a downtown Aurora tavern in the 0-99 Block of West New York

Street. He died Oct. 31, 2004. The attack apparently was unprovoked. Several men beat Romero with various objects, causing massive head wounds.

- **Juan Carlos Verdugo**, 25 (d.o.b. 6-24-1982), of the 300 block of South Spencer Street, Aurora. Charged with five counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Jorge Alanis**, 32, of the 3100 block of Cambria Court, Aurora. Charged with five counts of first-degree murder.

Verdugo and Alanis are charged in the 2003 homicide of Robert L. Rehm.

At about 8:10 p.m. Dec. 21, 2003, Rehm, 17, of the 1300 block of North Star Lane, Aurora, left a friend's house in the 800 block of Birchwood Avenue, to walk to his grandmother's house on Star Lane. While walking in the street he was shot multiple times. Rehm had been scheduled to leave a few days later to fly to Germany to meet with his mother, who was in the Army at the time and had just finished a five-month tour in Iraq. He was staying with his grandmother and younger brother.

- **Quentin Moore**, 25 (d.o.b. 8-1-1981), of the 800 block of East Galena Blvd., Aurora. Charged with six counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Ruben Hernandez**, 24 (d.o.b. 6-18-1983) of the 600 block of North Lincoln Avenue, Aurora. Charged with six counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Juan Vargas**, 18 (d.o.b. 6-24-1989), of the 200 block of High Street, Aurora. Charged with six counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Max Aguilar**, 17 (d.o.b. 5-21-1990), of the 500 block of Fifth Street, Aurora. Charged with six counts of first-degree murder.

AND

- **Roman Lucio**, 26 (d.o.b. 4-14-1981), of the 800 block of Birchwood Drive, Aurora. Charged with six counts of first-degree murder.

The men are charged in the 2005 homicide of Jorge Caro. At about 4:15 a.m. Sept. 4, 2005, the body of Caro, 21, of the 900 Block of Wennamacher Street, Aurora, was found in a yard in the 600 block of North Lincoln Avenue. Police were alerted to the body after a resident spotted it and called 911. He died from blunt force trauma to the head.

- **Jesse M. Lopez**, 25 (d.o.b. 7-4-1981), of the 500 block of Palace Street, Aurora. Charged with five counts of first-degree murder.

Lopez is charged in the 2003 homicide of Juan Carlos Rodriguez. Just after midnight July 9, 2003, Rodriguez, 22, of the 1300 block of Light Road, Oswego, was shot three times at a convenience store in the 500 block of Montgomery Road, Montgomery. A suspect wearing a black, hooded sweatshirt approached the victim in his car, fired several shots and fled. Rodriguez was pronounced dead a short time later at an Aurora hospital.

The investigating agencies also would like to thank the Naperville Police Department for its assistance in the investigation.

Anyone with additional information on these cold case homicides or any other violent crime should call Aurora Police at (630) 801-6742 or Aurora Area CrimeStoppers at (630) 892-1000. Calls to CrimeStoppers are anonymous and qualify for a cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information leading to arrests of suspects.