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OFFICE OF THE
ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF FLORIDA

Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Attorney General James Uthmeier Announces Gang Takedown, Seizure of Large Quantities of Meth and Fentanyl



Photo Courtesy of the Office of the Attorney General

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General James Uthmeier announced that a multi-circuit drug trafficking investigation targeting affiliates of the Valentine Bloods gang resulted in 51 arrests, as well as the seizure of over 70 pounds of meth and 10 pounds of fentanyl.

“This was a highly organized, fentanyl-pushing enterprise operating in Central Florida that had ties all the way to California,” **said Attorney General James Uthmeier.** “We will continue dismantling these organizations from the top down. Anyone who traffics these poisons in Florida will be held accountable and prosecuted to the fullest extent.”

“Traffickers of methamphetamine and fentanyl are literally murdering people and tearing apart families,” **said Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd.** “The men and women who go after these drug dealers are doing a noble, but dangerous job—putting their own lives on the line, to protect their communities from the drug traffickers who are profiting from this destruction.”

“This investigation is a masterclass on how to effectively identify, disrupt, and dismantle drug trafficking organizations that are wreaking havoc across Florida,” **said Florida Department of Law Enforcement Special Agent in Charge Mark Brutnell.** “Thanks to our investigative teams, prosecutors and the benefit of the S.A.F.E. program, we can continue to ensure the safety of the state of Florida.”

This was a joint investigation between the Polk County Sheriff’s Office, the Office of Statewide Prosecution, and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. The investigation began in August 2025. Investigators uncovered a highly organized drug trafficking operation spanning Polk, Hillsborough, Pasco, and Orange counties, with additional connections to California.

Law enforcement conducted surveillance between October 2025 and January 2026, allowing investigators to intercept communications arranging drug transactions and coordinating distribution. All 35 defendants were charged either for trafficking in direct hand-to-hand drug sales to undercover law enforcement officers or else for conspiracy to traffic through recorded communications. Investigators were able to determine that 14 of the defendants are associated with the large-scale criminal enterprise known as the Valentine Bloods gang.

Charges include trafficking of meth and fentanyl, conspiracy to traffic, racketeering, and conspiracy to commit racketeering.

31 of the 35 defendants have been arrested and are currently in custody. One defendant was found by law enforcement in Kansas and is being extradited to Florida. The remaining four defendants have active arrest warrants pending.

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