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MCSO Detectives Take Part in Major Border Drug Seizure

Inter-agency effort takes \$2 million of Methamphetamine, Marijuana off the street

On the evening of January 30, 2019, Detectives from the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and agents from U.S. Customs and Border Protection working as part of the County Drug Suppression Task Force (MCDST) seized over 220 pounds of methamphetamine and 3500 pounds of marijuana bound for American streets. The estimated street value of the drugs is \$2 million.

Working in the area around Gila Bend, detectives observed two trucks avoid a border checkpoint and drive into an uninhabited desert area with their lights off. Tire deflation devices were deployed ahead of the trucks to prevent a potential vehicle pursuit, and both trucks were rendered inoperable after striking the devices.

Four suspects then fled from the trucks on foot. Detectives coordinated with CBP agents and air support, and three of the suspects were subsequently apprehended. The vehicles, loaded with bricks of methamphetamine and marijuana, had been reported stolen and were driving with fictitious license plates.

"This seizure is an example of exceptional police work by our deputies and law enforcement partners," said **Sheriff Paul Penzone**. "It is also an example that the demand for drugs continues to be epidemic. Illicit drugs are the most impactful contributor to violence, crime and gang activity that continues to adversely impact our community and our families. We will be unwavering in our commitment to hold the line. "

The three suspects, Jose Jaime Garcia-Lopez (DOB 8-23-88), Yoni Ontiveros-Torres (DOB 5-8-70), and Ruben Espericueta-Jiminez (DOB 3-6-72), were booked into the Fourth Avenue Jail on charges of Possession and Transportation of Dangerous Drugs for Sale, and Possession and Transportation of Marijuana for Sale.