

Contra Costa County Fire Fire Investigation Unit



Operation Big Bang
Fireworks Confiscation 2014

July 4th 2013



Pittsburg/Baypoint area, July 4, 2013

We needed 2014 to be different

- Attempted to get multiple agencies together
- Staffing issues in all agencies
- Early June started to peruse Craigslist
 - Located a seller
 - Many postings, pictures of large quantities
 - Preliminary work done
- Employed multiple agencies
 - Pittsburg PD
 - CalFire
 - Contra Costa Fire Investigators

Agencies came up with strategies

- Looked at undercover buys
- Had surveillance
 - Identified suspects
- 2 day surveillance operation
- Second day of surveillance investigators observed suspects making a transfer of fireworks between vehicles
- Arrests made of two suspects

Suspect vehicles



Truck had 507 pounds of fireworks





By way of comparison



40 pounds of fireworks in a car

Aftermath



Search

- In searching the vehicles investigators found evidence of a storage facility
- Storage facility was located in Antioch near the workplace of a third suspect
- Third suspect arrested, and storage facility was searched



Storage unit had 2497 pounds



That is nearly 1.5 tons



**Dumpsters containing more than
2,000 pounds of unlawful fireworks**



Same dumpsters



Fireworks loaded on to a truck





Sophisticated Business

Had catalogs

Appeared to have a business plan

Perhaps going on for multiple years

Purchased for \$4000 to \$8000 in Indiana

Would be sold for approximately \$100,000



Logging into evidence



FIRE

EMERGENCY
CALL 9-1-1
FIRE
POLICE
MEDICAL

89



THIS SIDE UP
Itenga (Pratik 8 Bricks)
36F180/097/12

MB-S16
MEGABANGER FIRECRACKERS 1-1/2"
12/80/16
MADE IN CHINA

6B
36F180/097/12

MB-S16
MEGABANGER FIRECRACKERS 1-1/2"
12/80/16
MADE IN CHINA

THIS SIDE UP
6C
36F180/097/12

MB-S16
MEGABANGER FIRECRACKERS 1-1/2"
12/80/16
MADE IN CHINA

THIS SIDE UP
36F180/097/12

MB-S16
MEGABANGER FIRECRACKERS 1-1/2"
12/80/16
MADE IN CHINA

6E
36F180/097/12

MB-S16
MEGABANGER FIRECRACKERS 1-1/2"
12/80/16
MADE IN CHINA

6F
36F180/097/12

MB-S16
MEGABANGER FIRECRACKERS 1-1/2"
12/80/16
MADE IN CHINA

THIS SIDE UP
6G
36F180/097/12

MB-S16
MEGABANGER FIRECRACKERS 1-1/2"
12/80/16
MADE IN CHINA



20

INSTRUCTIONS	SAFETY
<p>1. Read all instructions carefully before use.</p> <p>2. Do not use if the box is damaged or the contents are missing.</p> <p>3. Use only on concrete, asphalt or other hard, level surface. This item may tip over if used on grass or other uneven surface and serious injury could result. Never have any part of your body over the device when lighting. The fuse light flash and get away. Never relight a fuse that fails to ignite the device.</p>	<p>4. Do not use indoors.</p> <p>5. Do not use near buildings, trees, power lines, or other structures.</p> <p>6. Do not use near children or pets.</p> <p>7. Do not use if you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.</p> <p>8. Do not use if you are unable to stand on one foot.</p> <p>9. Do not use if you are unable to hear.</p> <p>10. Do not use if you are unable to see.</p>

WE WILL ROCK YOU

BIG FIREWORKS 600 GRAM

WARNING - SHOOTS FLAMING BALLS AND REPORTS

USE ONLY UNDER CLOSE ADULT SUPERVISION. FOR OUTDOOR USE ONLY. DO NOT HOLD IN HAND. PLACE UPRIGHT AND USE ONLY ON CONCRETE, ASPHALT OR OTHER HARD, LEVEL SURFACE. THIS ITEM MAY TIP OVER IF USED ON GRASS OR OTHER UNEVEN SURFACE AND SERIOUS INJURY COULD RESULT. NEVER HAVE ANY PART OF YOUR BODY OVER THE DEVICE WHEN LIGHTING. THE FUSE LIGHT FLASH AND GET AWAY. NEVER RELIGHT A FUSE THAT FAILS TO IGNITE THE DEVICE.

220 SHOT

#46

BIG FIREWORKS

43F108/192/13

BF1684

WE WILL ROCK YOU

1/1

MADE IN CHINA

4730A 00677 5



FIRE
POLICE
ED

WARNING SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS

1. READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE USING THIS PRODUCT. FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS MAY RESULT IN DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY.

2. NEVER USE FIREWORKS IN A CONFINED SPACE OR NEAR FLAMMABLE MATERIALS.

3. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR AIRCRAFT, HELICOPTERS, OR OTHER AIRCRAFT.

4. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR POWER LINES OR OTHER ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT.

5. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR WATER.

6. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR CHILDREN OR OTHER UNDESIRABLE PERSONS.

7. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR STRUCTURES OR VEHICLES.

8. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR OPEN FLAMES OR OTHER SOURCES OF IGNITION.

9. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR DRY GRASS, TWIGS, OR OTHER FLAMMABLE MATERIALS.

10. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR POWER LINES OR OTHER ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT.

11. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR WATER.

12. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR CHILDREN OR OTHER UNDESIRABLE PERSONS.

13. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR STRUCTURES OR VEHICLES.

14. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR OPEN FLAMES OR OTHER SOURCES OF IGNITION.

15. NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR DRY GRASS, TWIGS, OR OTHER FLAMMABLE MATERIALS.

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NEVER USE FIREWORKS NEAR DRY GRASS, TWIGS, OR OTHER FLAMMABLE MATERIALS.

BIG PRO 3

WARNING SHOTS FLAMING BALLS

USE ONLY UNDER CLOSE ADULT SUPERVISION. FOR OUTDOOR USE ONLY. DO NOT HOLD IN HAND. PLACE UPRIGHT AND USE ONLY ON CONCRETE, ASPHALT, OR OTHER HARD, LEVEL SURFACE. THIS ITEM MAY TIP OVER IF SHOT ON GRASS OR OTHER UNEVEN SURFACE AND RESULTS IN SERIOUS INJURY. NEVER HOLD ANY PART OF YOUR BODY OVER THE DEVICE WHEN LIGHTING THE FUSE. LIGHT FROM AND GET AWAY. NEVER RELIGHT A FUSE THAT FAILS TO GO OFF THE FIRST TIME.



BF1643
PRO 3"



MA



Press Coverage



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Contra Costa County: One ton of fireworks seized in sting, 3 arrested

By Rick Hurd

Contra Costa Times

POSTED: 06/27/2014 09:37:33 AM PDT | UPDATED: 18 DAYS AGO

PITTSBURG -- Three people were arrested Thursday in a sting that netted more than a ton of illegal fireworks, a fire official said.

Pittsburg police and investigators from the Contra Costa Fire Protection District caught up Francisco Hernandez, 22, of Richmond; Ivan Medina, 26, of Oakley; and Luis Amado Medina, 27, of Pittsburg, Fire Marshal Robert Marshall said.

Postings advertising fireworks for sale. Police contacted the owners Thursday morning on Century Boulevard in Pittsburg, Lt.

Eventually we gathered information that led us to the other two,

illegal fireworks were confiscated in Antioch, Marshall said.

of illegal fireworks," he said. "We're especially concerned about the conditions. We traditionally have a lot of fires in the weeks leading up to the Fourth of July. We expect this to be a bad year as it is. We don't need

County and nearly all Bay Area cities. Officials say they are especially concerned about the conditions of dry conditions created by the state's drought.

They were charged with felony and misdemeanor charges that include selling fireworks without a license, transporting fireworks not registered by the state, selling fireworks without a permit, possession of dangerous fireworks, and possession of more than 100 pounds of dangerous fireworks.



The Three Suspects

Fireworks Bust



Luis Medina



Ivan Medina



Jose Fernandez

SOURCE

12:01 PM
5
KPIX

-48.58
16,797.55

2500 Pounds Of Illegal Fireworks Seized In Antioch Police Sting
than a ton of illegal fireworks is now off the streets as East Bay investigators crackdown in the days before the Fourth of July. Anne Makovec reports. (6/27/14)

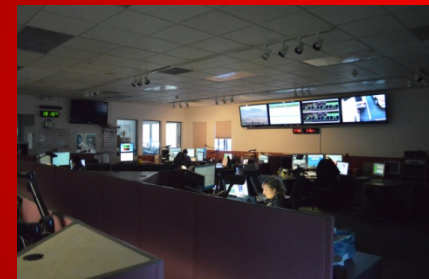
Pause 01:13:01:51

Aftermath

- Working to follow-up regarding transport
 - Working with several agencies
 - Federal DoT
 - CHP
 - ATF
- Regarding Storage and Disposal
 - California State Fire Marshal's Office
 - Had an in person visit by the SFM

We Believe We Had an Effect

- 2013 incidents
 - 35 fires, over 100 acres burned
- 2014 Incidents
 - 24 fires, less than 10 acres burned
- Of particular note, acreage of fires way down this year
- Combination of the seizure, the press coverage, and our staffing model





Thank you for your continued support!