

330 West Broadway  
San Diego, CA 92101  
(619) 531-4040  
SanDiegoDA.com



DWAIN D. WOODLEY  
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

November 13, 2025  
For Immediate Release

Contact: [Steve Walker](#) (619) 843-7977  
[Tanya Sierra](#) (619) 531-3315  
*En Español* [Barbara Medina](#) (619) 531-3305

# ***Operation Mic Drop Ends with Convictions for Dozens of Gang Defendants***

## ***Prosecution Results in Positive Impact on Neighborhood Safety***

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today that a complex, gang-related criminal prosecution resulting from a law enforcement operation conducted in southeast San Diego in 2022 has concluded with the conviction and sentencing of 22 defendants. The defendants were indicted by a grand jury on 221 charges resulting from *Operation Mic Drop*, a joint investigation conducted by the San Diego Police Department and the FBI targeting violent and drug-related criminal activity centered around Mike's Market in the Mountain View area of San Diego. The final defendant was sentenced on October 31, closing the multi-defendant case.

In the two years prior to the *Operation Mic Drop* investigation, the area around Mike's Market had experienced significant violent crime, including murders, attempted murders, assaults with firearms, robberies, and narcotics sales. There had been four homicides and 1,000 calls to the police, including 160 calls for violence that were occurring at the time. This hub of narcotics and gun activity created a flashpoint for violent crime that endangered the safety of neighborhood residents and impacted their quality of life.

In the three years following the conclusion of *Operation Mic Drop*, there were no homicides in the area, no robberies, a 75% decrease in calls for service per year, and a 50% decrease in arrests.

"This prosecution demonstrates how law enforcement strategically identifies and effectively responds to public safety threats and holds organized gangs accountable for large-scale fraud, and illegal drug and gun trafficking," said DA Stephan. "As a result, peace of mind has been restored in this neighborhood, and the community is significantly safer. It was heartbreaking to hear the voices of the great families in this San Diego neighborhood who were terrorized by crime and violence. Every child, adult and senior deserves to be safe and that's our goal. I want to thank our law enforcement partners at the FBI and San Diego Police Department for their critical role in investigating these cases, as well as our prosecution team led by DDA Miriam Hemming whose dedication saw this complex case through to the end."

"The proof is in the numbers on this case of just how effective law enforcement, working with our communities, can be in identifying a problem and bringing all of our resources together to

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address it,” San Diego Police Chief Scott Wahl said. “I want to commend the work of our investigators and the District Attorney’s Office for their tireless efforts to hold these criminals accountable. This is a win all around for violence reduction in our communities.”

*Operation Mic Drop* uncovered connections between the market and local gang members facilitating narcotics sales, as well as fraudulent use of food assistance benefits (EBT). A criminal street gang had taken over the location and was using it as a headquarters for narcotics sales, funded by over two million dollars in stolen taxpayer dollars perpetrated by store employees and gang members. Investigators uncovered a scheme where the store employees would illegally allow customers to use their EBT cards to receive cash, which would then be used by the customers to purchase narcotics from the gang members who both provided the drugs and vetted which customers would be allowed to engage in the EBT fraud.

The months-long investigation resulted in convictions on charges including narcotics sales, firearms-related offenses, EBT fraud, and gang enhancements. Defendants’ sentences ranged from 15 years in state prison to formal probation, as well as a court order for \$2 million in restitution.

The DA’s Gangs Division prosecutes complex murder cases and other serious crimes perpetrated by violent gang members who terrorize neighborhoods. These cases are handled by one prosecutor from beginning to end – also called vertical prosecution. Cases in this division are expertly navigated by 26 prosecutors and 20 investigators to bring justice to families left in the wake of violence. In 2024, the Gangs Division conducted 23 murder jury trials, which is more than 40% of the total murders tried in the DA’s office. The division also prosecuted other cases including kidnapping for rape, assault with great bodily injury, robbery, carjacking and possession of illegal firearms, such as ghost guns, by gang members.

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**About the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office**

*The San Diego County DA’s Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.*

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