

## **Detective Jeff Batz**

### **Florida Department of Financial Services**

#### **Nominated by the Department of Financial Services, Division of Investigative & Forensic Services**

- On March 11, 2017, the Bureau of Fire and Arson Investigations, (BFAI) was requested to determine the origin and cause of a residential structure fire at South Lee Avenue in Arcadia, Florida. There were three known fatalities, all juveniles between the ages of 4 and 10, as well as one adult male occupant who was transported to the hospital with severe injuries. Detective Jeff Batz led a team of BFAI detectives, along with the Arcadia Police Department detectives, in processing the scene of this high-profile and unfortunately highly emotional case from inception to the arrest. Detective Batz determined the fire to be incendiary. He continued the investigation, and along with the Arcadia Police Department, found that Marion Williams, a former girlfriend of the surviving victim, had burglarized the home earlier and battered the occupant in the residence. She later set fire to the residence with the house still occupied. The injured occupant sustained significant injuries as he attempted to reach his grandchildren who were trapped in the home. The other occupant in the home and the suspect escaped the residence without injury. Due in no small part by Detective Batz, Marian Williams was charged with: three counts of murder, two counts of attempted murder, burglary of the structure, and arson. Several weeks later Detective Batz testified before a grand jury and

an indictment was returned on Marian Williams. This case is pending a jury trial in the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit of Florida.

- This is one of many cases in which Detective Batz had a lead role. In addition to his duties as detective, he also serves as an evidence custodian and the Accelerant Detection Canine Handler for the South-Central Region of the Bureau of Fire and Arson Investigations. Detective Batz covers 13 counties and has responded to 165 canine assists since the beginning of 2017. Detective Batz's attitude toward the profession, his sacrifice of personal time to provide a level of service which reflects in his performance, his willingness to respond when needed, and tireless work ethic, are only a few reasons the BFAI are proud to have him on their team and serving the State of Florida.

## **Officer Schiefer S. Buckles**

**Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services,**

**Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement**

**Nominated by the Florida Department of Agriculture and**

**Consumer Services, Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement**

- Officer Buckles is assigned to a shift that has been short staffed most of the year. Despite the staffing issues, Officer Buckles has maintained a commitment to the core mission. Over the past year Officer Buckles has conducted 2,334 visual inspections which resulted in 94 administrative violations. He also conducted 214 traffic

stops resulting in 171 written warnings and 41 Uniform Traffic Citations. Officer Buckles made 48 criminal arrests which included 3 DUI's as well as multiple felony cases. Officer Buckles started his career with the Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement in July 2015, and has developed into a natural leader by stepping up and assisting with decision making, assisting fellow officers with cargo inspections, and is always willing to take on additional responsibilities.

- Although there are many cases that Officer Buckles worked over the past year where he assisted motorists, one stands out. The case involved a careless driver, where a bolo was sent out to be-on-the-look-out, for a blue cab semi-truck pulling a white box trailer. The semi was swerving all over the road, almost causing several wrecks. The semi entered the weigh station and was pulled over for inspection. During conversation with the driver, Officer Buckles detected the odor of an alcoholic beverage emitting from the driver. After the driver failed a field sobriety exercise and it was determined the driver was under the influence, he was arrested. While completing the vehicle inventory, alcohol was discovered inside the truck. The driver admitted he had been drinking since he left Wildwood, Florida, approximately two and a half hours from the weigh station. In this case, Officer Buckles took a fully loaded semi-truck/trailer, driven by a drunk driver off the road, and possibly saved numerous lives including the truck's driver.
- Officer Buckles also made numerous narcotic cases including possession of cocaine, methamphetamine, and controlled substance without a prescription. Most of these arrests were made from working the station ramp and going the extra steps during his inspections.

Officer Buckles interacts with citizens professionally and with concern, which is evident in the positive feedback from the citizens, his fellow officers, and supervisors. His outstanding work ethic and high productivity highlight his commitment to the State of Florida.

## **Special Agent Don Cannon**

### **Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Miami Regional Operations Center**

#### **Nominated by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement**

- Special Agent Don Cannon is assigned to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Miami Regional Operations Center (MROC), Cyber/High Tech Crime Squad. He is also assigned to an FBI Child Exploitation Task Force that focuses on abducted children, human trafficking, and investigations of child porn. Special Agent Cannon has been working crimes against children investigations for over 12 years and has over 37 years of law enforcement experience. Special Agent Cannon is very proactive in identifying initiatives focused on Human Trafficking, conducts community outreach, and is an expert at undercover online communications.
- On July 7, 2016, the MROC Cyber/High Tech Crime Squad, Homeland Security Investigations, United States Attorney's Office and HSI Bogotá, along with the full cooperation of the Colombian National Police, conducted an undercover operation in Medellin, Colombia called, "Operation Colombian Delight." This human trafficking case involved an identified Florida resident who operated

tours in Medellin, Colombia to engage in sexual relations with underage females. This operation reflected the culmination of ongoing electronic correspondence between the Florida resident (Drivas), and an undercover FDLE agent (Special Agent Cannon). Through this correspondence, probable cause was developed that Drivas was engaging in sex tourism and the international sex trafficking of children and child exploitation in Colombia. On July 7, 2016, Special Agent Cannon and Drivas met in Medellin to discuss the evening and additional payments to him for “hunting” and securing children in the El Centro barrio of Medellin. This was described by the Colombians to be a dangerous section of the city, therefore, a full tactical plan for arrest and extraction was developed. Special Agent Cannon entered the barrio and was introduced to potential victims. Drivas was taken into custody shortly thereafter, and charged with multiple charges to include child sex tourism, and sex trafficking of children by force or coercion. Drivas committed suicide in a Colombian jail while waiting to be deported to the United States. Two other associates of Drivas were also arrested in connection to the operation, and nine children, between the ages of 12 and 16 were recovered due to in-depth computer forensic skills, and undercover investigative skills. As a result of this case, hotels in Colombia are implementing human trafficking training, to teach hotel staff how to be vigilant and identify potential victims. Special Agent Cannon’s outstanding investigative skills, work ethic, along with his dedication and commitment to Florida’s citizens and the law enforcement community, makes Florida a safer place for all of us.

## **Detective Wolfgang Daniel**

### **Fort Myers Police Department, Special Investigations Group**

#### **Nominated by the Florida Gang Investigators Association**

- Detective Daniel has been a member of the Fort Myers Police Department for 10 years, and was promoted to Detective within the Special Investigations Group in 2012. Detective Daniel has been the recipient of multiple awards within the Fort Myers Police Department, and in 2017 he won the Grand Cordon Award. The Grand Cordon Award is for individual participation by a member of a specific unit whose efforts led the entire departmental staff in a cited action. The events leading up to that award, including the actions by Detective Daniel are commendable, and led to the arrest of twenty-three gang members in Fort Myers, Florida.
- In December 2015, the Chief of Police tasked Detective Daniel and his partner, (Detective Schulze) to identify the gang's enterprise, members, and historical information in an attempt to establish a pattern of racketeering behavior. "The Lake Boyz" are a criminal hybrid street gang that have been operating within the City of Fort Myers since 1989. The gang formed within a community called, "Harlem Lakes", and had been involved in narcotics distribution, shootings, and murders within the City of Fort Myers for the past decade, if not longer. The initial phase of the investigation included monitoring social media where evidence of photos and videos were found of the gang members using gang hand signs, posing with

firearms, and promoting the gang. The second phase of the investigation included working with the Fort Myers Police Department to begin conducting traffic stops with the likelihood of results being arrests and seizures. Detective Daniel also conducted hundreds of hours of surveillance on gang members and the locations they frequented, conducted probation checks, monitored jail calls, and worked with informants to do controlled drug buys. There were also proactive arrests lead by Detective Daniel involving gang members charged with drug possession, drug trafficking, fleeing and eluding, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

- After a full year of investigation lead by Detective Daniel into The Lake Boyz gang, the third phase led to twenty-three Racketeering Influence Corrupt Organization (RICO) warrants obtained for members within the enterprise. Detective Daniel was responsible for the nineteen-page operational plan on the arrest phase of The Lake Boyz gang members. More than 40 members of the Fort Myers Police Department and more than 20 United States Marshalls Fugitive Task Force Officers from all around the state of Florida took part in the arrest operation. Within 24 hours of the operation being put into motion, 22 of the gang members with active warrants were arrested, and all members charged with RICO were held on one million-dollar bonds. Detective Daniel was the foundation of this investigation from the initial task to investigate in December 2015, until the arrests were made in January 2017. Since the arrest of The Lake Boyz gang members, many citizens within the Harlem Lakes neighborhood have expressed their gratitude towards the police department for helping clean up the neighborhood. Detective

Daniel's skill, determination, and perseverance to complete this investigation led to the eradication of a violent street gang, and a safer community for the citizens of Fort Myers as well as the State of Florida.

## **Deputy Justin Ferrari**

### **Volusia County Sheriff's Office**

#### **Nominated by the Florida Sheriffs Association**

- Deputy Ferrari brought prior law enforcement experience to the Volusia County Sheriff's Office, and just 14 months after joining the force, he used all his training and experience on a domestic violence call on July 24, 2016. The victim told dispatch that her estranged husband was holding her against her will inside the residence. Deputies quickly learned that there were also three young children, ages 1, 4, and 7, present during the altercation. As Deputies approached the residence, the first report of shots fired rang out at 12:37 p.m. deputies immediately sought cover and could hear the female victim screaming for help from inside the residence. Deputies could also hear the husband threatening to kill the victim, as well as a child's plea of, "Please don't kill mommy!", followed by additional gun shots.
- The injured victim was able to get out of the house and Deputy Ferrari ran to help her move to the neighbor's house, while there was active gunfire. Once an EMT was with the victim to treat the gunshot wound, Deputy Ferrari returned to the home and was able to safely



remove the children, and reunite them with their mother. Deputy Ferrari's dedication to protecting the victim, her children, and the community with compassion, professionalism and courage reflects the highest level of commitment to public service.

## **Detective Sandra Marquez**

### **City of Aventura Police Department**

#### **Nominated by the Florida Retail Federation**

- Detective Marquez has been with the City of Aventura Police Department for 10 years, and has most recently lent her skills and expertise to the new Economic Crimes Unit. Over the past year she has been the lead investigator on many cases where she has demonstrated an exceptional mastery of professional investigative skills, and has effectively organized resources from other jurisdictions to achieve the successful criminal prosecutions of subjects involved in these cases. Detective Marquez led a series of major investigations including a retail crime case with total losses exceeding \$1 million dollars, an email phishing case with over \$250,000 in losses to the victim, and a sexual battery case involving a 22-month-old child. One of her recent cases was a self-initiated investigation that led to a major internal investigation at a retail store where many employees were working in concert to commit fraud. Detective Marquez noticed a suspicious pattern in several of her fraud cases linking to a retail store in her jurisdiction. She noticed that the fraud dollar amounts were significantly high and felt that employees may be

involved. She contacted the regional loss prevention investigator who reviewed closed-circuit television footage from the multiple cases and identified several employees who appeared to be collaborating with subjects to commit the credit card frauds.

- Detective Marquez continuously exceeds expectations and is a valuable asset to her team and community. Detective Marquez is credited by her peers for the success of their newly implemented Economic Crimes Unit, where her positive actions have made impacts not only on businesses and citizens, but also created momentum, enthusiasm, and pride within the criminal investigations unit.

## **Lieutenant Scott Smith**

### **Orlando Police Department**

#### **Nominated by the Florida Police Chiefs Association**

- On June 12, 2016, Lieutenant Scott Smith was one of the Watch Commanders during the Pulse nightclub mass shooting in Orlando, Florida. This incident would become our nation's second worst mass shooting. Lieutenant Smith organized and led a team into the nightclub. Lieutenant Smith shot at the suspect inside the building, allowing responding officers to rescue patrons and employees still inside the club. Lieutenant Smith organized the officers within the club and directed the deployment of SWAT operators responding to help. Due to the severity of the situation, Lieutenant Smith initiated a full SWAT/CNT call out and remained on the scene as a SWAT

operator for the remainder of the incident. When the suspect later emerged, he came out shooting at the SWAT operators. SWAT team members, including Lieutenant Smith, returned fire, killing the suspect.

- Lieutenant Smith played a critical role during the Pulse nightclub mass shooting. He commanded the initial tactical response as a First Responder. He led officers into the building, confronting the active shooter with return fire which limited the shooter's access to further victims. During the incident, Lieutenant Smith switched roles to that of SWAT commander and led the deployment of the team. Lieutenant Smith was among the team members fired upon by the gunman. Despite the imminent danger, he actively engaged the threat and returned fire. During a dangerous situation, Lieutenant Smith displayed commendable acts of valor and heroism.

## **Corporal Julio Torres**

### **Florida Highway Patrol**

#### **Nominated by the Florida Highway Patrol**

- On February 3, 2016, Corporal Torres was traveling southbound on Interstate 75 in Charlotte County when he witnessed a multi-vehicle crash. One of the vehicles involved in the crash travelled through the guardrail, overturned and entered a retention pond. Corporal Torres entered the water in an attempt to free and rescue the trapped occupant, even though there were alligators in the area. Corporal Torres used a knife to cut the seatbelt and a crowbar to assist with

extracting the unconscious occupant. After removing the occupant, CPR was immediately administered until emergency medical services arrived and transported the occupant to the hospital. Unfortunately, the victim passed away a few days later due to the injuries sustained during the crash. Although Corporal Torres' life-saving efforts were not successful in the long-term results, his efforts greatly increased the victim's immediate chance of survival.

- Corporal Torres' swift actions and brave efforts to serve the citizens of the State of Florida are commendable. He performed his duties as a first responder with no regard for his own safety, all in an effort to save another human being's life in a dire situation, as many others stood by and watched. His service is an asset to the Florida Highway Patrol, as well as the citizens and visitors of the State of Florida.