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Fact Sheet:

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The Notorious Record of Maricopa County, AZ's Sheriff Joe Arpaio

Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Maricopa County, AZ has become a hero of the anti-immigrant right for his hard-line police tactics to enforce immigration law in any way that he sees fit--tactics which have resulted in higher crime rates, thousands of lawsuits, millions of dollars in unnecessary expenses and a reversal of the community-policing strategies that have proved successful to police across the nation. Despite the failures of the Arpaio model, Governor Jan Brewer endorsed it as statewide policy by signing controversial new state law SB 1070. If the federal government's attempt to enjoin SB 1070 fails and the law goes into effect on July 29th, every police officer in the state will be forced to repeat Arpaio's failures. In this short report, you will find several examples of Sheriff Arpaio's failed record:

INEFFECTIVE TACTICS

- Violent Crime Rates Rise Under Arpaio, Fall in Rest of Arizona
- Under Arpaio, 911 Response Time Increased, Arrest Rates Decreased
- Arpaio Admits He Arrests "Very Few" Non-Hispanics
- Over 40,000 Un-served Felony Warrants
- Conservative Think Tank Report: Arpaio's Policies are Ineffective, Harmful, and a Waste of Millions of Taxpayer Dollars
- Mesa Police Chief: Arpaio's Approach Hurts Community Safety

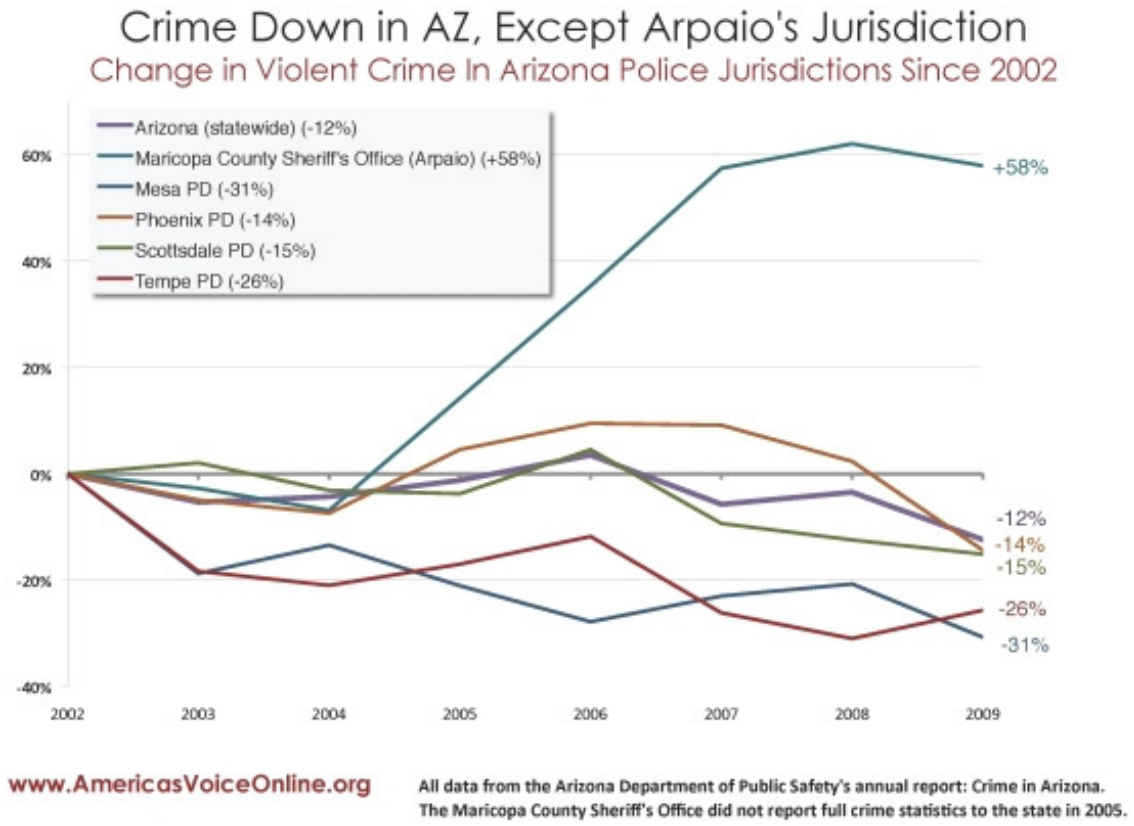
OPERATING ABOVE THE LAW

- Arpaio Under Investigation by the U.S. Justice Department for Civil Rights Abuses
- Arpaio Under FBI Investigation for Using his Power to Intimidate Political Opponents
- Judge Says Conditions in Arpaio's Jails "Violate the Constitution"
- 2,700 Lawsuits Filed Against Arpaio
- Federal Officials Take Away Arpaio's Deputies' Authority to Make Immigration Arrests, Arpaio Vows to Defy the Restriction
- Arpaio Threatens Attorneys with Criminal Charges for Criticizing Him
- Department of Labor Investigates Arpaio, Finds He Owes Employees $2M in Unpaid Overtime
- Arpaio Suspected of Misspending $50M in Taxpayer Funds, Refuses to Turn Over Records
- Advocates Awarded $475,000 for Civil Rights Violations by Arpaio Deputies
- Arpaio Stages Phony Murder Plot Against Himself, Accused Released for Wrongful Imprisnment, County Pays Over $1 Million to Settle

INSPIRING TERROR IN LATINO COMMUNITIES

- Arpaio Marches Immigrants in Shackles to Tent City Surrounded by Electric Fence
- Arpaio Separates Mother from Kids for Unpaid Traffic Ticket
- Arpaio Conducts "Crime Suppression" Sweeps in Latino Communities
- Arpaio Forces Mother to Give Birth while Handcuffed to Bed
- Arpaio's Deputies Deploy Heavy Duty Machine Guns

INEFFECTIVE TACTICS



- **Violent Crime Rates Rise Under Arpaio, Fall in Rest of Arizona**[1]
  Violent crime is down across the state of Arizona, but not in Maricopa County. The Arpaio approach is a proven failure at reducing crime. From 2002 to 2009, while the violent crime rate across the state as a whole decreased by 12 percent, the area policed by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office suffered a *58 percent increase* in violent crime. Compare that 58 percent crime increase to other law enforcement agencies in Maricopa County who engaged in community policing, not targeting immigrants. In that same time period, Phoenix enjoyed a 14 percent decrease; Tempe, a 26 percent decrease; and Mesa, a 31 percent decrease.

- **Under Arpaio, 911 Response Time Increased, Arrest Rates Decreased**[2]
  A Pulitzer Prize-winning investigation by the *East Valley Tribune* unearthed some disturbing news for residents of Maricopa County: "Response times, arrest rates, investigations and other routine police work throughout Maricopa County have suffered over the past two years as Sheriff Joe Arpaio turned his already short-handed and cash-strapped department into an immigration enforcement agency." Unfinished investigations include particularly heinous crimes such as rape and other violent assaults.

- **Arpaio Admits He Arrests ”Very Few” Non-Hispanics**[3]
  In an April 2010 interview on “Larry King Live,” Sheriff Arpaio admitted that he arrests “very few” non-Hispanics. Arpaio attempted to justify his admission by citing Arizona’s proximity to Mexico, but ignored the fact that non-Hispanics still make up almost three-quarters of the state’s population.

- **Over 40,000 Un-Served Felony Warrants** [4]
  During an interview by the *Arizona Republic*, the interviewer pointed out in a question, “You get criticized by local law-enforcement agencies for not serving felony arrest warrants, shirking that responsibility in favor of immigrant sweeps, which requires manpower and other resources. Mayor Phil Gordon says you have created „a sanctuary county for felons‟ and that you have „40,000 felony warrants stacked on (your) desk.‟ Why not go after the „real‟ criminals and actively serve outstanding arrest warrants, which local agencies see as a county obligation and responsibility?‟”

- **Conservative Think Tank Report: Arpaio’s Policies Are Ineffective, Harmful, and a Waste of Millions of Taxpayer Dollars**[5]
  In 2008, the Goldwater Institute, an independent, non-partisan public policy research organization with generally conservative views, issued a report cataloging the many failures of the Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office. The report’s overview explains, “Although MCSO is adept at self-promotion and is an unquestionably ’tough‘ law-enforcement agency, under its watch violent crime rates recently have soared, both in absolute terms and relative to other jurisdictions. It has diverted resources away from basic law-enforcement functions to highly publicized immigration sweeps, which are ineffective in policing illegal immigration and in reducing crime generally, and to extensive trips by MCSO officials to Honduras for purposes that are nebulous at best. Profligate spending on those diversions helped produce a financial crisis in late 2007 that forced MCSO to curtail or reduce important law-enforcement functions.”

- **Mesa Police Chief: Arpaio’s Approach Hurts Community Safety**[6]
  Mesa Chief George Gascón thinks “a wedge is being driven between the local police and some immigrant groups. Some law enforcement agencies are wasting limited resources in operations to appease the public‟s thirst for action against illegal immigration regardless of the legal or social consequences… If we become a nation in which the local police are the default enforcers of a failing federal immigration policy, the years of trust that police departments have built up in immigrant communities will vanish.”

OPERATING ABOVE THE LAW

- **Arpaio Under Investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice for Civil Rights Abuses**[7]
  In March 2009, the *Arizona Republic* reported that “The U.S. Justice Department has launched a civil-rights investigation of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office after months of mounting complaints that deputies are discriminating in their enforcement of federal immigration laws.” The official complaints which brought about the investigation, “said Arpaio had exceeded the limits of a federal program that gives local police federal immigration-enforcement powers by ordering deputies to ‘scour’ Latino neighborhoods looking for illegal immigrants based on skin color.”

- **Arpaio Under FBI Investigation for Using his Power to Intimidate Political Opponents**[8]
  The website of Phoenix TV station KPHO reported, ”The FBI is looking into accusations that Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio is using his position to settle political vendettas.” According to the Huffington Post, “Arpaio and County Attorney Andrew Thomas indicted Maricopa County Supervisor Don Stapley for the third time. They also indicted Maricopa County Supervisor Mary Rose Wilcox. Both Stapley (R) and Wilcox

(D) have been vocal opponents of Arpaio's hard line immigration enforcement policies. Stapley has been charged with fraud, theft, perjury, forgery, and false swearing. Wilcox has been charged with conflict of interest, perjury, forgery, and false swearing. The merit of the charges, though, are lost on a public who is becoming increasingly cynical of the persecution of political foes in Maricopa County even for a local folk hero like Arpaio."[9]

- **Judge Says Conditions in Arpaio's Jails "Violate the Constitution"[10]**
  After seven years of litigation, a federal judge ruled in October 2008 that Sheriff Arpaio and county health officials "violated the Constitution by depriving jail inmates of adequate medical screening and care, feeding them unhealthy food and housing them in unsanitary conditions." As of the ruling, Maricopa County had paid "up to $43 million, according to local news media, as a result of lawsuits alleging deaths, injury, mistreatment and other claims in the jails" during Arpaio's time as sheriff.

- **2,700 Lawsuits Filed Against Arpaio[11]**
  Between 2004 and 2007, 2,700 lawsuits were filed against Sheriff Joe Arpaio in Federal and County Courts – 50 times the number of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston combined.

- **Federal Officials Take Away Arpaio's Deputies' Authority to Make Immigration Arrests, Arpaio Vows to Defy the Restriction[12]**
  After a federal review of Sheriff Arpaio's 287(g) agreement, which allowed his office to collaborate with the Department of Homeland Security on immigration enforcement, officials only renewed the section of the agreement that allowed deputies to check the immigration status of those checked into a Maricopa County jail—not the part which had allowed deputies to conduct field arrests as an immigration "Task Force." The change "prompted an angry, rambling outburst from the sheriff Tuesday at a news conference at which he called Homeland Security officials 'liars' and vowed to press on with his campaign, using state laws, against illegal immigrants. He said he would drive those caught on the streets to the border if federal officers refused to take them into custody."

- **Arpaio Threatens Attorneys with Criminal Charges for Criticizing Him[13]**
  As reported in the *Arizona Republic*, Sheriff Arpaio attempted to use his standing as a law enforcement official to deter critics. "Sheriff Joe Arpaio has sent letters to current and former attorneys in the Maricopa County Attorney's Office warning them to watch their words if they speak to investigators looking into possible unethical conduct by former County Attorney Andrew Thomas. The letter threatens the attorneys with criminal charges if they reveal 'confidential' information about the Sheriff's inquiries into county Supervisors Don Stapley and Mary Rose Wilcox and Superior Court Judge Gary Donahoe." County Attorney Rick Romley responded with a letter of his own, warning Arpaio, "This threat is not only inappropriate but is a clear abuse of your authority as sheriff of Maricopa County. Thereby, I shall be forwarding your letter to the U.S. District Attorney's Office."

- **Department of Labor Investigates Arpaio, Finds He Owes Employees $2M in Unpaid Overtime[14]**
  A U.S. Department of Labor Investigation concluded that Sheriff Arpaio failed to pay $2 million of overtime pay to his employees. The *Phoenix New Times* reported, "Since August, 2009, the Department of Labor had been investigating whether Arpaio was illegally, and systematically, refusing to compensate detention officers for overtime. It appears that was, in fact, the case: Thanks to Labor's intervention, the county will be forced to make good with a total of 1,900 detention officers. They'll receive back pay for the work in their next paycheck, Smith said."

- **Arpaio Suspected of Misspending $50M in Taxpayer Funds, Refuses to Turn Over Records**[15]
  After Arpaio refused to turn over financial documents to Maricopa County supervisors or attend a county board meeting on concerns over his budget, the board voted to freeze some of his funds until it could investigate his misspending. According to the *Arizona Republic*, "The board wants the records to help set Arpaio's budget but also believes he may be misspending or misusing public funds, though to what extent is uncertain. Officials suggested there are 'substantial problems' with transactions from at least one fund that may need to be paid back." Some feared Arpaio had overspent up to $50 million. Arpaio claimed that turning over the financial records would endanger the safety of his officers.

- **Advocates Awarded $475,000 for Civil Rights Violations by Arpaio Deputies**[16]
  Arpaio's deputies arrested several advocates for speaking against Arpaio at a public hearing of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors. The Sheriff has been accused in several instances of taking extreme measures to silence political opponents. This award was just one clear cut example of Arpaio's routine behavior of operating above the law.

- **Arpaio Stages Phony Murder Plot Against Himself, Accused Released for Wrongful Imprisonment, County Pays Over $1 Million to Settle**[17]
  In 2004 a man was released from prison after being wrongly accused of plotting to kill Arpaio. Evidence suggested that Arpaio"s office staged the plot and the County agreed to pay over $1 million to settle the case. The County"s insurance policy paid an additional un-released amount.

INSPIRING TERROR IN LATINO COMMUNITIES

- **Arpaio Marches Immigrants in Shackles Through Streets of Phoenix to Tent City Surrounded by Electric Fence**[18]
  From the *Arizona Republic*: "Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio marched 220 chained illegal immigrant inmates into a segregated enclosure of Tent City Wednesday afternoon, despite protests from some County officials and civil rights groups who thought the procession violated human rights." Arpaio's office claimed that the publicity stunt was actually an attempt to cut costs.

- **Arpaio Separates Mother from Kids for Unpaid Traffic Ticket** [19]
  In yet another disturbing reflection of Sheriff Arpaio's departments' approach toward immigrants and their families, a widely circulated video was taken in January 2009 of a Maricopa County volunteer "posse" member stopping a car for an apparent problem with the taillight and interrogating the driver for over an hour in front of her children. The children were left in the parking lot with an adult passenger of the car while their mother was taken to jail for an unpaid parking ticket. Though the mother paid the fine, Arpaio was able to keep her in jail because of his 287(g) agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on the grounds that she was a "criminal alien."

- **Arpaio Conducts "Crime Suppression" Sweeps in Latino Communities**[20]
  Sheriff Arpaio has inspired terror in Latino communities by engaging in highly controversial "crime suppression sweeps" of Latino communities, allegedly hunting for undocumented immigrants. It is unknown

how many U.S. citizens and legal immigrants have been interrogated by deputies and volunteer members of Arpaio's "posse," but it has been widely reported that the sweeps have been highly ineffective at actually suppressing crime.[21]

- **Arpaio Forces Mother to Give Birth while Handcuffed to Bed[22]**
  In a story reported by Telemundo in 2009, Sheriff Arpaio forced Alma Minerva Chacon to give birth while she was in shackles. Latina.com detailed at the time, "Once she reached the hospital, nurses repeatedly begged the Sheriff's staff to allow them to unchain the mother, but they refused and Chacon was forced to give birth while still shackled to the bed. At one point, the nurse asked for them to release her so that she could be escorted to the bathroom for a urinalysis, but even that request was denied. But the worst came once Chacon gave birth to her baby girl." Following the birth, Chacon was told that unless someone came to pick up the newborn in 72 hours, her child would be turned over to state custody.

- **Arpaio's Deputies Deploy Heavy Duty Machine Guns[23]**
  Despite the fact that crime rates have been flat or have decreased in the Arizona border region, the Philadelphia Examiner reports that, "Arpaio ordered the deployment of a powerful belt-fed .50 caliber machine gun to be on site during the operation to ensure deputies' safety, as there have been recent reports of violence in the desolate desert areas. Thursday's crime sweep coincided with the very first federal hearing regarding Arizona's new immigration law, but Arpaio denied any connection between the two. The next planned sweep is set to take place July 29th, the same day Senate Bill 1070 is scheduled to take effect."

Endnotes

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