



ZACH KLEIN
COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

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Contact: Meredith Tucker, 614.645.8997
Email: mctucker@columbus.gov

Joint Investigation with Dublin Police Leads to Emergency Board-Up of ‘Cocaine Condo’

*Northwest side property was the scene of persistent drug trafficking, including a
‘crack cocaine manufacturing operation in the kitchen’*

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced that the City of Columbus secured an emergency court order to immediately vacate and shutter a northwest side residence described as a “cocaine condo” due to the rampant drug activity, including the “cooking and manufacturing of crack cocaine,” occurring at the premises. Both the Dublin Police Department and the Columbus Division of Police began investigating last year after receiving multiple complaints about the property.

City Attorney Klein’s office filed a request for an *ex parte* temporary restraining order in the Franklin County Environmental Court to board up [2626 Sandbury Boulevard](#), which is owned by Farshad and Farzaneh Lanjani of Hilliard.

The Lanjanis’ tenant—known as “D”—also was named as a defendant in the lawsuit.

“We especially want to thank the Dublin Police Department and the Columbus Division of Police for their multi-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration on this case,” said City Attorney Zach Klein. “It sends a strong message that no part of our city is immune from the drug epidemic and law enforcement will target these operations wherever they’re located.”

In early 2017, Dublin police officers arrested individuals for drug related offenses who alleged that they purchased their drugs from “D” at 2626 Sandbury Boulevard.

Columbus police officers also engaged individuals who alleged that they bought drugs from the premises, including an individual arrested on an outstanding felony warrant who stated that drugs were purchased there “on a daily basis and multiple times per day.”

While conducting ensuing surveillance, Dublin police officers documented suspected drug activity, including hand-to-hand drug transactions, at least 12 times at the premises between August and October 2017. An undercover investigation also resulted in the purchase of cocaine on two separate occasions at the property.

In early November 2017, investigators from Dublin, Columbus and other agencies executed a search warrant and found cocaine, marijuana, firearms, drug paraphernalia and more than \$2000 in cash.

An official from the Dublin Police Department spoke with owner Farshad Lanjani at the time, advising him of the reason for the search warrant. However, the illegal drug activity continued.

On February 22, 2018 Columbus police officers were granted consent to enter the premises and found several rocks of crack cocaine, marijuana, drug paraphernalia and what court documents describe as “a crack cocaine manufacturing operation in the kitchen.” Police subsequently arrested “D” and charged him with felony manufacturing of drugs and felony drug possession.

Columbus police officials sent a nuisance abatement warning letter via certified mail to the owners, which was signed as received by Farshad Lanjani on March 14, 2018. According to court documents, Columbus officials subsequently communicated via telephone and email with Farshad Lanjani, who indicated that he would not evict “D” and wanted to give him “another chance.”

After further communication, Mr. Lanjani indicated that “D” deserved yet “one more chance” since he claimed he “has not been selling drugs.”

Last week, Columbus investigators observed “D” driving to a nearby parking lot to conduct his drug transactions. When approached by officers, “D” admitted he was continuing to sell crack cocaine out of the premises to “support his family.”

“We don’t take the decision to board up a property lightly, but the criminal activity taking place at this condo unit was not going to go away on its own,” said Senior Assistant City Attorney Bill Sperlazza. “We had a tenant admitting he was dealing drugs and property owners who failed to act even when presented with serious consequences.”

In filing a civil motion for injunctive relief along with the emergency TRO request, Sperlazza, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to the northwest area of Columbus, is seeking to prove that the Lanjanis are guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing that they, as owners of the premises, “knew of, participated in, or acquiesced to the activity which constituted the nuisance” as prescribed by [Chapter 3767](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

The hearing for preliminary and permanent injunctive relief is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on April 19, 2018.

If the property is ultimately declared to be a statutorily defined public nuisance, state law grants the court authority to order the premises shut down for up to one year following the permanent injunction hearing.

Copies of the city’s [complaint](#) and the [court’s order](#) are available online.

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