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City of Columbus Shuts Down West Side Property with ‘Revolving Door’ of Drug Dealers

Duplex near school for developmentally disabled was the scene of narcotics complaints, domestic violence, robbery, assault, counterfeit money, and allegations of incest

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus secured an emergency court order to board-up a drug operation that was running out of a portion of a multi-family residential duplex located less than two blocks from a school for students with developmental disabilities. The City Attorney’s office has now obtained injunctions to shut down 16 drug-related nuisance properties so far this year. Half of them have been on the city’s west side.

Records indicate that the Columbus Division of Police responded to [287 South Central Avenue](#) multiple times over the last year and have seized heroin, cocaine, fentanyl, and a cache of weapons and ammunition from the premises. One police report documents a known drug dealer associated with the property who hired a Lyft driver to ferry him around. Officers also responded to the premises for a domestic violence incident and documented an encounter with a 22-year-old female victim who reported that “her father had been manipulating her into having sex with him.”

Immediately after the Franklin County Environmental Court granted City Attorney Klein’s motion for an *ex parte* temporary restraining order this morning, officers from the Investigative/Tactical Unit raided the property and enforced the court’s order to board up the premises.

“It’s unclear who the legal tenants were supposed to be or how they payed rent, but what is certain about this property is the fact that the owner was not in control as required by law,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. “There seemed to be a revolving door of drug dealers and other criminals who used the premises as a way station for all sorts of disturbing conduct. That’s why we had no choice but to go to court to seek this emergency board-up order.”

According to court documents, Columbus Police have conducted several covert purchases of crack cocaine from the premises, resulting in at least three search warrants that turned up various weapons and drugs.

Last year, detectives seized 18.6 grams of heroin from the kitchen freezer, powdered cocaine, over 65 grams of packaged crack cocaine, 1.2 grams of suspected fentanyl, cash, counterfeit bills, a digital scale, 12 cellphones, guns, and ammunition.

On May 17, 2019 police were called to the premises on a report that an individual was making threats with a gun. The responding officers determined that the suspect in this incident was the same individual accused by his daughter on November 12, 2018 of domestic violence and incest. During that incident, officers had noted that there were firearms present in the apartment.

Drug activity continued at the premises as detectives conducted several more covert purchases of crack cocaine this year, including twice in the last month. While executing a search warrant on August 14, 2019, officers found, among the items seized, “multiple boxes” of ammunition and heroin.

“We greatly appreciate the court granting us the emergency board-up order and hope shutting this property down for the foreseeable future will provide relief to the neighbors who live nearby,” said Assistant City Attorney Zach Gwin. “It’s particularly troubling to know that the illegal conduct associated with this property was taking place less than two blocks from West Central School, which is operated by the Franklin County Board of Developmental Disabilities.”

A hearing for preliminary and permanent injunctive relief against the property owner is scheduled for Monday, September 16, 2019 at 12:00 p.m.

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. The owners also would be permanently enjoined from “conducting, maintaining, using, occupying, or in any way permitting” a public nuisance anywhere else in Franklin County, Ohio.

In order to secure closure of the property, Gwin, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to Police Zone Three on the west side of Columbus, is seeking to prove that the owner is guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing that he “knew of, participated in, or acquiesced to the activity which constituted the nuisance” as prescribed by [Chapter 3767](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

A copy of the court [order](#) is available online.

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