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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City Shuts Down Another West Side Drug House

More than 1.5 kilos of marijuana and heroin found during police raid

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. announced today that the City of Columbus secured an emergency court order to vacate and shutter a west side property that has served as a drug trafficking hub and base of operations for more than 50 gang members. It is the ninth drug house the city has shut down on the west side this year and the second on the same street in the last two months.

The City Attorney's office filed a request for an *ex parte* temporary restraining order in the Franklin County Environmental Court to board up [54 Whitethorne Avenue](#), after previously [filing a complaint against 69 Whitethorne Avenue](#) in August. Both properties are located less than a half-mile from Highland Elementary School and the J. Ashburn, Jr. Youth Center.

The owners of record for 54 Whitethorne Avenue are Loss and Dorothy Miller of Hilliard. The Millers also are listed as the rental contacts for the property.

“Our attorneys are continuing to work aggressively with law enforcement and the community to identify persistently troublesome properties like this one,” said City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.

Columbus Police began investigating the property due to complaints of illegal activity this past summer. According to court documents, the owners were formally notified of the drug activity and other problems at the property in July. The owners previously had filed eviction cases in the Franklin County Municipal Court for other properties they own but failed to do so for 54 Whitethorne Avenue despite their constructive knowledge of the illegal activity occurring at the premises.

Narcotics detectives made a covert purchase of marijuana at the premises on September 11, 2017. They then executed a search warrant on September 21, 2017 and found:

- 1450 grams of marijuana (with a street value of approximately \$15,000)
- 136.6 grams of heroin (with a street value of approximately \$24,000)
- 100 doses of miscellaneous pills (with a street value of approximately \$2,000)
- Thousands of dollars of cash
- Plastic shipping bags
- A Glock 23 semi-automatic handgun and gun magazine
- Miscellaneous ammunition
- 10 people inside, including known gang members

“We just shut down a drug house across the street from this address and here we are a month later boarding up another,” said Assistant City Attorney Kristen Dickerson. “These cases are indicative of the drug epidemic that our neighborhoods and law enforcement officials are facing on a daily basis.”

In filing a civil motion for injunctive relief along with the TRO request, Dickerson, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to the west side of Columbus, is seeking to prove that the Millers 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 12:30 p.m. on October 4, 2017.

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

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