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## City, County File Lawsuit Against West Side Market Accused of Selling Stolen Goods

*Lawsuit seeks to declare Herbert's Market on Sullivant Ave. a public nuisance, bring claims of racketeering against owner for clear and repeated history of obtaining and selling stolen merchandise*

**COLUMBUS, OH**— Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein and Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney Shayla D. Favor announced that they filed a lawsuit against the owner of a west side market accused of selling stolen goods and maintaining a public nuisance at the property. The lawsuit aims to declare Herbert's Market, located at 1121 Sullivant Ave., a public nuisance and charge owners with violating the Ohio Corrupt Practices Act (racketeering) due to a clear and repeated pattern of receiving stolen property and reselling it for profit.

"The City is committed to cracking down on shady retailers that traffic stolen goods, maintain a public nuisance and attempt to rip off businesses and consumers," said **Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein**. "Business owners have a responsibility to remain in compliance with laws and regulations at all times, and thanks to the Division of Police, the County Prosecutor's Office and the Property Action Team, we've brought a strong case to hold owners accountable and clean up this illicit activity along Sullivant Ave."

According to the lawsuit, from July 31, 2022, to present, Columbus Police responded to Herbert's and the immediate vicinity 138 times for various criminal and nuisance activities, including reports of a male threatening people with a gun, drug use, several overdoses, and harassment. In addition, Columbus Fire recently observed several code violations for fire hazards at the premises, including inadequate signage for exits and inventory overflow blocking passage.

In addition to nuisance activity and code violations, inspections of the property repeatedly found evidence that owners knowingly attempted to sell stolen goods at the premises, which prompted a CPD investigation and racketeering claims against shop owner Ahmad Arman and Herbert's Market.

"Every resident in our county deserves to live in a community where businesses contribute to safety, fairness, and trust. This case is a powerful example of how coordinated enforcement promotes accountability, protects neighborhoods, and

preserves the integrity of our local economy,” said **Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney Shayla D. Favor**. “I’m proud of the Nuisance Abatement Unit’s diligent work alongside CPD and the Property Action Team. We remain committed to ensuring that those who put our communities at risk face real consequences.”

Across multiple inspections in recent months, Columbus Police detectives observed an assortment of goods originating from various other retailers for sale at the premises—original tags from other retailers still affixed—including shoes, clothing, audio equipment, liquor, and other goods.

During an initial inspection, CPD observed a man walking into the premises with the intent to sell various items to store operators, and upon a return inspection, detectives again observed numerous indicators that Herbert’s trafficked in stolen goods, including a stockpile of theft-prevention devices from third party retailers, apparently removed from products which the store intended to offer for sale itself.

When detectives approached Mr. Arman about the source of his merchandise, including products by Gucci, Adidas, and other name-brand manufacturers, he offered to take these products off the shelves. When confronted with a photograph of discarded retailer anti-theft devices and asked about receipts for goods for sale at the store, Arman admitted to purchasing stolen merchandise on at least one occasion and not requesting receipts for inventory purchases as they are allegedly all purchased with cash. The exchange continued with several other discrepancies in Arman’s story, all indicating the shop trafficked stolen merchandise.

The lawsuit also details widespread problems facing law-abiding merchants on the West Side, particularly along the Sullivant Ave. corridor, which has recently suffered an enormous amount of shoplifting that has diverted significant police resources to the area.

In fact, in the year between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025, officers spent more than 591 hours of patrol time responding to just one Hilltop-area retailer. Multiplied out across the entire police zone, Columbus Police have had to devote many thousands of hours to responding to these property crimes instead of focusing on typical day-to-day duties and violent crime, something the City and County believe will begin to be addressed with legal action like the one filed this week.

*\*Editor’s note: A copy of the filed complaint is attached.*

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