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Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein, U.S. Attorney Benjamin Glassman Announce New Initiative Targeting Dangerous Domestic Abusers

COLUMBUS—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein joined U.S. Attorney Benjamin C. Glassman and officials from the Columbus Division of Police and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) in announcing a new initiative in which federal and local prosecutors are working with law enforcement and domestic violence victim services agencies to protect victims and hold abusers who illegally possess firearms accountable.

As part of this new multi-jurisdictional, collaborative effort, City Attorney Klein and U.S. Attorney Glassman detailed indictments issued in federal court today against three Columbus residents charged with illegally possessing a firearm after being convicted previously of domestic violence-related crimes.

“Since becoming City Attorney, one of my highest priorities has been keeping guns out of the hands of criminals to help protect the lives of domestic violence victims and law enforcement,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. “We’re excited about this partnership which will better help us protect our friends and neighbors and make our community a safer place for everyone to live.”

A federal grand jury charged Eldon G. Draper, 45, Stephon A. Moore, 30, and Brandon N. Zachariah, 26, with possessing firearms and/or ammunition after being convicted of felony crimes in separate indictments returned earlier this afternoon.

According to court documents, on April 13, 2019 Draper possessed a Smith & Wesson .38 special firearm and five rounds of ammunition. He was previously convicted in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas of misdemeanor domestic violence and felonious assault, aggravated assault, arson, four offenses of aggravated arson, receiving stolen property, and theft.

Moore allegedly possessed a 9mm firearm and 16 rounds of ammunition on May 13, 2019. He was previously convicted in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas of misdemeanor domestic violence and felonious assault and attempted robbery. Police reports detail that in past instances, Moore shot at the gas tank of his partner’s car and also threatened others with a gun, stating, “I’m not playing around. I will be back and I’m always strapped.”

According to Zachariah's indictment, on March 20, 2019 he possessed a pistol and 22 rounds of ammunition. Zachariah was previously convicted of felonious assault in Franklin County. In that case, he strangled his victim to the point that she vomited and feared he was going to kill her. Columbus Police reports also indicate multiple domestic violence incidents involving Zachariah in the past five years.

Possessing a firearm or ammunition as a convicted felon is a federal crime punishable by up to 10 years in prison. Individuals who have been convicted of domestic violence or have an active protection order are prohibited from possessing a firearm.

Last year, the City of Columbus adopted several ordinances that made dozens of technical and substantive changes to the city's criminal codes related to firearms offenses, including laws to prohibit convicted domestic abusers and other violent felons from possessing firearms. The new domestic violence firearms provisions conformed city code to match the already existing federal prohibitions.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan J.C. Grey and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Melanie Tobias with City Attorney Klein's office are prosecuting the cases.

As the Department of Justice notes, indictments merely contain allegations, and defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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