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City Attorney Secures Court Orders to Shut Down Two Drug Houses and Illegal After-Hours Club

COLUMBUS — Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus secured three emergency court orders to board-up a south side drug house, a west side drug house, and a West Broad Street storefront that began operating as an illegal after-hours club during the height of the Covid-19 shutdown in April. The properties were the scene of repeated narcotics activity, drug overdoses – including at least one fatality, multiple shootings, and several incidents of violence against women.

Immediately after the Franklin County Environmental Court granted City Attorney Klein's motions for *ex parte* temporary restraining orders, the Columbus Division of Police boarded up [765 East Gates Street](#), [423 South Ogden Avenue](#), and the commercial portion of a mixed-use building at [2445-2449 West Broad Street](#).

The City Attorney's office has now taken legal action against 20 drug-related nuisance properties this year, 14 of which have been located on the city's west side.

“Our office continues to use the full force of the law to shut down violent and dangerous drug operations that plague our neighborhoods,” said Klein. “I want to make it very clear that property owners and landlords can't simply ignore their legal obligation to abate criminal conduct occurring at their premises. If they turn a blind eye, or say as they basically did in one of these cases, ‘I don't care what's happening as long as I get my rent check,’ they'll find themselves in court facing the prospect of boarded up buildings and no rental income for up to a year.”

[765 East Gates Street](#)

According to court documents, this residential property, located three blocks away from South High School, was the subject of repeated community complaints since at least November 2019—when a caller reporting narcotics activity informed Columbus police that an individual was passed out on the front porch with a needle stuck in his arm.

On February 23, 2020 officers were dispatched to the premises due to a drug overdose. The following day, a caller told police that the drug traffic was increasing and the “cars are getting nicer.” Hours later, Columbus narcotics detectives obtained a covert purchase of “China White” heroin.

On February 27, 2020, the Columbus SWAT Unit executed a search warrant and recovered crack cocaine and heroin. The landlord was officially notified of the illegal drug activity occurring at her property and reportedly told police she “did not care as long as rent was paid.”

On March 2, 2020, the city’s 311 call center received a complaint of “heavy foot traffic” at the premises and “people passing items out of windows” like it was a drive-thru. In July, narcotics detectives obtained a covert purchase of crack cocaine from the premises.

“The illegal drug activity at this property was clearly having a corrosive effect on the neighborhood and we would like to thank the community and law enforcement for working to help put this operation out of business,” said Assistant City Attorney Heidi Carr.

[423 South Ogden Avenue](#)

This property, which is located near West High School and Burroughs Elementary School, came to the attention of Columbus police late last year after a series of complaints about narcotics activity at the premises.

On March 5, 2020, police received a report of shots fired in the back of the property. The next day, officers once again responded after receiving a ShotSpotter alert at the premises.

On May 12, 2020, officers responded to a male overdosing with a handgun in his lap and found an individual unconscious on the couch with a loaded Smith and Wesson .357 Magnum on his right hip. This individual later was determined to have an active felony arrest warrant and also had a weapons under disability conviction and was not permitted to carry a firearm.

On June 10, 2020, officers responded to a call about a person who had been shot and found a man in the street with a gunshot wound to his chest. He was transported to Grant Hospital and survived what was later determined to be a robbery.

On June 15, 2020, Columbus police and paramedics responded to the premises on report of an overdose. The following day, officers were contacted by the victim’s family hoping to retrieve some belongings from the premises but were advised that a known individual had most likely taken the victim’s belongings, including credit and debit cards. While on scene, the officers learned the names of three individuals who sold drugs at the house and were told that one of them did not allow anyone to call 911 for a lengthy period of time while the victim overdosed. On August 9, 2020, officers responded to another report of shots fired. Officers made entry into the house and found a large group of people inside, along with a large amount of items indicative of narcotics consumption and trafficking.

[2445-2449 West Broad Street](#)

According to court records, Columbus police have responded to this mixed-use property, which features multi-unit housing and commercial spaces, at least 30 times on complaints of shootings, wanted persons, assaults, domestic violence, robberies, and burglaries since 2019. Beginning in April of this year, one of the storefronts opened up for business as an illegal after-hours club.

On April 9, 2019, officers responded to a domestic violence report involving strangulation and encountered a victim who said her abuser choked her several times and smashed her head into a wall. On May 3, 2019, officers responded to an assault at the premises and made contact with a victim who was hit in the back of the head with a plate during an altercation.

On May 7, 2019, officers responded to another report of a domestic violence incident involving strangulation. On June 9, 2019, officers responded to a domestic violence report and found a victim who suffered a broken orbital bone and 16 related facial fractures. The suspected abuser was also found to have an active felony warrant for failure to register as a sex offender. In April, May, and June of this year, police responded to multiple complaints of loud noises, disturbances, and groups of at least 20 people congregating inside.

On June 13, 2020, officers found a victim suffering from a gunshot wound to the chest. While securing the scene, they located an AK pistol with 29 live rounds in a loaded magazine and one round in the chamber of the firearm. The serial number on the weapon had been defaced in an attempt to make it untraceable.

On June 20, 2020, police responded after a fight broke out inside the bar and multiple shots were fired. The officers noted that no one would let them in the front door as they began to observe individuals fleeing out of the back of the building. The victim was located just east of the location but refused to cooperate.

On August 1, 2020, officers responded after a gunshot victim went to Grant Hospital and indicated that the shooting took place at the premises. Officers located multiple bags containing suspected drugs, two semi-automatic pistols, a revolver, and over \$2,000 in cash.

“It’s particularly troubling to know that the defendants took advantage of the coronavirus pandemic to open up an illegal after-hours club at a time when other law-abiding, legal establishments were adhering to the State’s orders,” said Assistant City Attorney Zach Gwin.

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**Editor’s note: Copies of the signed TROs are attached.*