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City Shuts Down East Side Property Where Drug Dealers Were So Busy, They Worked in ‘Shifts’

Columbus police say Milo Grogan-area home’s own security system recorded ‘hundreds of drug transactions’ just in the month of August alone

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus secured an emergency court order against a residential property that had a history of violent crime and rampant drug activity. The Columbus Division of Police conducted a months-long undercover investigation of the premises this past summer, making several controlled purchases of illegal drugs, observing dozens of other hand-to-hand drug transactions, and executing two search warrants. After the second search warrant, investigators obtained recordings from the drug dealers’ own security cameras showing “hundreds” of illicit transactions from August 1 to August 26, 2021. There was so much drug activity that the dealers allegedly coordinated work schedules.

Klein filed a motion for an *ex parte* temporary restraining order in the Franklin County Environmental Court against [672 East 3rd Avenue](#), which is located less than half a mile from the Milo Grogan Community Rec Center and a neighborhood community garden. Immediately following a hearing earlier today, officers evacuated the premises and enforced the court order to board it up.

“It’s not often that you see drug dealers coordinating their work schedules, but it’s a clear indication of the high volume of traffic at this location,” said Klein. “We’re thankful that the court granted us this emergency order and we’ll continue to use our legal authority to shut down dangers to our community such as this property.”

According to court documents, the property came to the attention of Columbus police in January 2020 when officers were dispatched to the premises on a report of shots fired and

recovered 9mm shell casings. Officers also were informed that a named suspect sold drugs at the premises “every day between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.” and another named suspect was “responsible for selling drugs at the [p]remises after 4:00 p.m. each day.”

On May 28, 2021, police responded to the premises after receiving several reports of shots fired and confirmed that the house had been struck by gunfire. Officers arrested one individual who had several outstanding arrest warrants.

On July 16, 2021, officers executed a search warrant at the premises, seizing illegal drugs, including a pint of Promethazine, a semi-automatic weapon, several rounds of ammunition, and \$2310 in cash. One suspect was arrested.

On July 18, 2021, police received three reports of a person with a gun at the premises.

On July 24, 2021 an officer conducting undercover surveillance observed 15-20 people walk up to the premises and make hand-to-hand drug transactions.

On July 29, August 14, and August 19, 2021 the same undercover officer observed several more illegal drug transactions.

On August 26, 2021 officers executed another search warrant at the premises, seizing illegal drugs, \$5345 in cash, a handgun, ammunition, and a Night Owl Security System. Upon reviewing footage from the security system, officers saw hundreds of drug transactions made between August 1 and August 26, 2021.

“The pattern of violence and crime at this property posed an ongoing threat to the area, especially given its close proximity to several important community assets,” said Assistant City Attorney Heidi Carr, who is the Zone Initiative attorney assigned to Police Zone Five, which includes the Milo-Grogan area. “We greatly appreciate the court granting the order and want to thank the Columbus Division of Police for their diligent work in helping us build our case.”

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