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PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE CONCLUDES LATEST RICO CASE

The Scioto County Prosecutor's Office has pursued the modern day racketeers who are bringing hundreds of pounds of drugs into Scioto County causing violent crime, prostitution and addiction. "Engaging in a Pattern of Corrupt Activities" is the Ohio version of the Federal Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act, often referred to as RICO.

The latest "RICO" case arose from a group operating out of Montgomery County, Ohio, who were bringing in huge amounts of fentanyl and methamphetamine into Portsmouth, Ohio. "Coordinate and cooperate is the name of the game in these complex investigations." stated Prosecuting Attorney Shane Tieman. The Prosecutor's Office, the FBI Drug Task Force, the Sheriff's Office, the Portsmouth and New Boston Police Departments and the Highway Patrol have coordinated and cooperated in battling drug trafficking using the RICO statute. The latest investigation arose in June 2019 where the Drug Task Force started investigating a number of trips by various co-conspirators transporting narcotics from the Dayton area to locations around Portsmouth for resale. The investigation included a number of hand to hand sales by the conspirators to street dealers and addicts. After various undercover buys and multiple simultaneous search warrants, utilizing officers from the Portsmouth Police Department and the Scioto County Sheriff's Office, large amounts of narcotics were seized. The operations prevented another scheduled shipment of approximately 160 pounds of methamphetamine from hitting the streets.

The conspirators were ultimately indicted in March 2020. Through the next two years, through several motions, hearings and an epidemic, the case ultimately came to a conclusion. A total of sixteen individuals were convicted and substantial cash and personal property was forfeited as instrumentalities and proceeds of drug trafficking. As a result of the investigation and subsequent prosecution, the majority of the defendants went to prison. Each defendant was sentenced by the Honorable Judge Howard H. Harcha, III of the Scioto County Court of Common Pleas. The two main players in the operation, Travis Grier and Michael Blair, both of Dayton, Ohio were sentenced to 15-16 ½ years and 14-18 years prison, respectively.

“This case could not have resulted in such success without the collaborative efforts of our various law enforcement agencies at the local, state and federal levels. Their efforts to investigate and safely apprehend several suspects, seize evidence, analyze evidence and prepare the case for trial took hundreds of hours of time and substantial resources. Our law enforcement agencies and their officers will continue to battle for this community, using every legal resource at our disposal.” Tieman said.