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City of Columbus Shuts Down Violent East Side After-Hours Club

Property next to historic Rickenbacker house was the scene of gang violence, shootings, murder, felonious assault, drug dealing, and liquor violations

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus secured an emergency court order to vacate and shutter a dangerous property where gunshots rang out with such frequency that in just one night, the city’s ShotSpotter alert system detected 29 shots fired. Officers responding to the scene found a person lying dead against a nearby fence and were informed that two others involved in the incident left the premises with gunshot wounds. In another shooting outside the club, officers recovered spent shell casings that matched those from a separate homicide on the city’s south side.

City Attorney Klein’s office filed a request for an *ex parte* temporary restraining order in the Franklin County Environmental Court to board up [1300-1304 East Livingston Avenue](#), which is zoned for commercial use but was operating illegally without a liquor permit. The property is close to residential housing and located a few houses down from famed World War I flying ace [Eddie Rickenbacker](#)’s boyhood home.

“Shutting down this dangerous and illegal boot-joint is another example of our office using civil litigation to stop violent crime,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. “It’s a shame that such pervasive violence was occurring next door to the historic home of Eddie Rickenbacker, one of Columbus’ most famous heroes. We hope that removing this threat from the neighborhood will bring a sense of relief to those who live nearby.”

On March 10, 2019 police were called to the club for a domestic violence incident and encountered a female victim who said that her boyfriend suddenly started smacking her inside the club and then dragged her out by her hair into the parking lot.

On April 10, 2019 officers responded to a ShotSpotter alert at the premises and found 19 spent handgun and three spent rifle casings. The shell casings were collected and provided to the crime lab.

On April 28, 2019 at approximately 3:34 a.m. ShotSpotter alerted that three shots were fired.

On May 5, 2019 a total of 29 shots were sensed by ShotSpotter. A security guard at the club stated that two individuals with gunshot wounds walked into the premises. When officers followed up with them at Grant Hospital, they were not forthcoming with information.

Approximately an hour and forty-two minutes later, officers received a call stating that a person was lying against a fence and appeared to be deceased. Officers concluded that both incidents were related and the latter victim was pronounced dead. Officers discovered evidence that the shooting occurred in the alleyway of the premises.

On June 12, 2019 police officials issued a warning letter to the property owner, Soroush Firouzmandi, advising him of the illegal activity and nuisance violations at the premises. Officers further confirmed his knowledge of the warning letter and illegal activity by speaking to him directly.

On August 10, 2019, officers recovered two 9mm casings related to a ShotSpotter alert at the premises. The shell casings matched those from a separate homicide that occurred on Stanaford Place in the city's Hungarian Village neighborhood. Officers also recovered another shell casing related to a separate ShotSpotter incident.

On August 18, 2019, officers received a video that shows a patron leaving the premises and firing a gun. After receiving the ShotSpotter alert and conducting an investigation, officers found that the shell casings collected from this incident matched another gun discharge that occurred in a separate incident elsewhere in the city.

On August 20, 2019, officers responded to an area near the premises to conduct a follow up from two ShotSpotter alerts and located one spent .38 caliber casing, which was collected and taken to the police property room to be held as evidence.

“This establishment was operating well beyond the scope of the law on many different levels,” said Assistant City Attorney Heidi Tawadros. “We’re pleased the judge granted our request for the emergency board-up order and look forward to presenting our full case at the next hearing.”

A follow-up hearing for a preliminary and permanent injunction against the owner and operator of the club is scheduled for 12:00 p.m. on September 16, 2019. At this hearing, the court can order the property to remain closed for up to one year.

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