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## Columbus Cracks Down on Dangerous Drug Properties and Sends Landlord to Jail for Ignoring Court Orders to Clean Up Properties

*City Attorney Klein says problem landlord continued to ignore revolving door of criminal activity and code violations that have harmed several Columbus neighborhoods*

**COLUMBUS, OH**—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced the City has taken action against a Columbus landlord who has ignored multiple court orders to clean up drug houses and fix Code violations at a number of rental properties. Franklin County Municipal Court Environmental Division Judge Stephanie Mingo Monday found Jose Villavicencio in contempt of court, sentencing him to 90 days in jail. The judge also ordered three of Mr. Villavicencio's properties to be boarded up for continued drug trafficking and criminal activity.

**“The level of inaction and indifference displayed by this landlord is among the worst I’ve seen in my time as City Attorney,”** said City Attorney Zach Klein. **“Landlords have a duty to their tenants and to the City. They simply cannot ignore a revolving door of criminal activity and numerous code violations and expect to be able to continue operating. If your actions threaten public health and safety, we will come after you and hold you accountable.”**

According to court documents, Mr. Villavicencio owns 40 properties in Columbus, many of which have long histories of code violations and criminal activity, including the three properties set to be boarded up at 315 Taylor Avenue, 929 Bellows Avenue and 637-639 South Wheatland Avenue.

In November 2021, Whitehall Police Detectives conducted multiple controlled purchases of fentanyl at the Taylor Ave. property. Later that month, Whitehall Detectives obtained and executed a search warrant of the premises, recovering crack cocaine, fentanyl, cocaine, methamphetamine, suboxone strips, miscellaneous pills and drug paraphernalia, a handgun and \$1,512 in cash. Mr. Villavicencio was notified of the criminal activity on his property and signed a letter noting his duty to abate the criminal activity.

In May 2021, Columbus Police responded to the property owned by Mr. Villavicencio on Bellows Ave. for a reported accidental overdose. The next month, in June 2021, CPD received a complaint of frequent narcotics sales at the property, responded to shots fired at the premises, and made multiple controlled purchases of crack cocaine. CPD then obtained and executed a search warrant of the premises, seizing crack cocaine, a firearm and ammunition.

CPD continued to receive narcotics complaints about the Bellows Ave. property in the months after the search, and in January 2022, Whitehall Police conducted yet another controlled purchase of crack cocaine at the premises.

Mr. Villavicencio's Wheatland Avenue property has numerous outstanding code violations, and has been the scene of multiple calls for service for shots fired, burglaries, suspicious persons and drug trafficking. In August 2022, CPD conducted a controlled purchase of fentanyl at the premises, and just days later obtained and executed a search warrant, where detectives recovered three semi-automatic firearms, crack cocaine, fentanyl, marijuana, ecstasy and more than \$1,000 in cash.

**“This landlord has subjected tenants to deplorable living conditions and allowed criminals to use his properties as hubs to traffic fentanyl and other drugs into our streets. This is just the first step to turn these properties around and make them positive pieces for our neighborhoods again,”** said Assistant City Attorney Zach Gwin.

The Court fined Mr. Villavicencio \$9,000, and his property companies, South German Village LLC and South German Village Medical Center, were fined \$3,000 and \$6,000, respectively, for dangerous criminal activity at their properties.

Additionally, Mr. Villavicencio will incur additional fines of \$250 per day for every day the following properties remain in violation of Columbus City Code:

- 669 South 22nd Street
- 463 South 22nd Street
- 36 East Innis Avenue
- 364-366 East Innis Avenue
- 929-931 Bellows Avenue
- 238-240 Reeb Avenue
- 841-843 Ann Street
- 377 Berkley Road
- 1037-1039 South James Road
- 1270 South Ohio Avenue
- 629-631 South Wheatland Avenue
- 637-639 South Wheatland Avenue
- 2-8 Reeb Avenue
- 289-291 Brehl Avenue
- 315-317 Taylor Avenue
- 36 East Innis Avenue
- 1931 Parsons Avenue

Mandatory re-inspections of the properties will be conducted by Columbus Code Enforcement. Additionally, all properties must have regular removal of all solid waste and weekly maintenance of grass and landscaping to the standards required by Columbus City Code. The landlord must also pull all necessary permits when making repairs or bringing properties into compliance.

[The court filings are attached – Doc 1.](#)

[The court filings are attached – Doc 2.](#)