

Woman found guilty of drug charges

A Findlay woman suspected by city police of running a crack house was convicted Tuesday of four felony charges stemming from a 2007 undercover drug investigation.

A Hancock County Common Pleas Court jury returned guilty verdicts against Rosemary A. Siefer, 48, 138 Harrington Ave., following a two-day trial.

Siefer was found guilty of one count of trafficking in cocaine and three counts of possession of drugs. The most serious charge, which involved crack cocaine, is a first-degree felony. The other offenses are a third-degree felony, a fourth-degree felony and a fifth-degree felony.

She will be sentenced by Judge Joseph Niemeyer on June 18 following a pre-sentence investigation.

Siefer had been indicted last July in connection with a Dec. 22, 2007 raid by the Hancock METRICH drug unit at the defendant's Harrington Avenue residence. According to court records, a large quantity of both powder and crack cocaine and Oxycodone, a narcotic pain reliever, were found in a safe seized during a search.

The trafficking offense involved a sale of between 1-5 grams of crack cocaine that Siefer made to a police informant the month before.

Testimony at the trial indicated Siefer got the attention of METRICH detectives after they received tips in July 2007 from several neighbors that drug activity was taking place at her home.

Findlay police Det. Bob Francis, who testified Tuesday, said officers conducted surveillance of the residence after receiving those tips, and noted a lot of people in and out of Siefer's home — an indication that drugs were being sold there.

Francis testified that police later used an informant, who was able to make a sale of crack cocaine from the defendant. The informant, who also testified, indicated that there were surveillance cameras inside and outside Siefer's home at the time he went there to make the controlled buy in November 2007.

One of the cameras allowed Siefer to see who was coming to her home and another was trained on the safe where the drugs were later found, according to testimony.

Assistant County Prosecutor Alex Treece wrapped up the state's case Tuesday after Francis and the confidential informant testified. On Monday, Assistant County Prosecutor Drew Wortman had called another METRICH detective and a crime lab chemist to the witness stand.

Defense attorney Andrew Schuman did not call any witnesses Tuesday. In his closing, Schuman suggested that Siefer allowed others to use the safe that was found in her bedroom, and that the illegal drugs were not hers.

The seven-woman, five-man jury deliberated about two hours before returning the verdicts at 7 p.m. Tuesday.

Siefer, who has been held in the Hancock County jail since last fall, was returned there to await sentencing. She faces a maximum sentence of 17½ years.

Treece said Tuesday night the prosecutor's office would seek a "significant sentence" for Siefer, whose Harrington Avenue property was initially subject to forfeiture since it was a suspected crack house.

He said the state is no longer seeking to seize the property, however, since two "suspicious" fires have occurred there since late 2007 and have diminished its value, and because there are liens on the home.

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