

Federal indictment charges 17 with participating in Mansfield drug trafficking conspiracy

Seventeen people were charged Monday in a 26-count indictment handed down by a federal grand jury in Cleveland for alleged roles in a drug trafficking conspiracy that involved the distribution of methamphetamine, heroin, fentanyl and crack cocaine in the Mansfield area.



Fifteen were arrested during an early morning takedown operation, the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio Justin Herdman, FBI Special Agent in Charge Eric B. Smith, Mansfield Police Chief Keith Porch and Richland County Sheriff J. Steve Sheldon said in a news release.

“During the past few years, federal and local law enforcement partners have been working tirelessly to identify, arrest and incarcerate drug traffickers in the Mansfield and Richland areas,” Herdman said. “Anyone attempting to sell drugs in this community should be prepared for a strong law enforcement presence and response.”

“Another group of drug traffickers are being held accountable for their illicit distribution of illegal narcotics on our neighborhood streets,” Smith said in the news release. “Over the past three years, collaborative law enforcement efforts have rid the streets of Mansfield of over 150 individuals for bringing poison to our community. Law enforcement will continue to identify, disarm and disrupt drug trafficking organizations in our territory.”

“Today’s operation was another fine example of collaboration between local law enforcement, our federal law enforcement partners, and the U.S. Attorney’s Office from the Northern District of Ohio in targeting drug trafficking suspects and removing illegal drugs from Mansfield as well as the surrounding communities in Richland County,” Porch said.

According to the release, named in the indictment are: Antoine Bentley, 36, of Mansfield; Tiffany Boggs, 25, of Mansfield; Jerry Bowen, 28, of Mansfield; Ryan Day, 37, of Butler; Ashley Fields, 25, of Mansfield; Sheldon Holbrook, 27, of Mansfield; Eric Jackson, 43, of Bellville; Michelle Jarvis, 36, of Ashley; Jason Jarvis, 40, of Mansfield; Brandon Mann, 38, of Mansfield; Gregory McClintok, 27, of Mansfield; Michael Murphy, 37, of Mansfield; Mark Spear, 37, of Ashland;

Roger Schlupp, 33, of Tiffin; Nicholas Vargas, 39, of Plymouth; Zachary Wallen, 39, of Mansfield; and Roz Whitworth, 38, of Mansfield.

The indictment alleges that, from March 2018 to September 2020, these defendants conspired together to distribute and possess more than a kilogram of methamphetamine, heroin and fentanyl throughout the Mansfield area via drug suppliers in California. The indictment states that defendants Eric Jackson, Jason Jarvis, Mark Spear and Roz Whitworth obtained the illegal drugs and distributed them to the other named defendants, who then sold the drugs to various customers in the Northern District of Ohio.

The conspirators are accused of conducting their drug trafficking activity using cell phones, text messages and Facebook Messenger. To reduce the risk of being detected by law enforcement, and to conceal the identity of the person using the device, co-conspirators often used cellular telephones that had been obtained in the names of other people or in fictitious names, according to the indictment.

If convicted, each defendant's sentence will be determined by the court after review of factors unique to this case, including the defendant's prior criminal records, if any, the defendant's role in the offense and the characteristics of the violation. In all cases, the sentence will not exceed the statutory maximum and, in most cases, it will be less than the maximum, according to the news release.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Cleveland Division of the FBI, OCDETF, METRICH Unit, Ashland Police Department, Mansfield Police Department, Richland County Sheriff's Office, Richland County Prosecutor's Office and Ashland County Prosecutor's Office. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Vasile C. Katsaros.

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