

## 43 arrested during major drug raid in Marion County

Forty-three alleged drug dealers were arrested Wednesday morning as part of major law enforcement operation in Marion County.

Special Agent in Charge Eric B. Smith of the Cleveland Division of the FBI said the sweep started at 6 a.m. Wednesday when about 200 law enforcement agents began executing 36 federal arrest warrants and one local arrest warrant in Marion County.

"This operation is in response to a 46-person federal indictment along with one individual indicted locally," Smith said during a press conference after the raid Wednesday. "Currently we have 43 suspects in custody and our operations are ongoing. Nine individuals named in this indictment were already in state custody and two in federal custody on other charges."

Smith noted that Wednesday's arrests are the result of several years of investigations into drug trafficking in Marion County and elsewhere in the region.

"The arrests this morning are based on a long-term investigation involving three drug trafficking organizations that have been importing, processing, and distributing large amounts of heroin, fentanyl, cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine, and prescription pills and marijuana since approximately 2015," Smith said. "These drug trafficking organizations have been shown to supply and distribute these drugs in Marion, Columbus, Detroit, and Chicago."

Smith said during the course of the investigation, law enforcement agents have seized more than 175 grams of heroin, 184 grams of fentanyl, 128 grams of marijuana, 40 grams of cocaine, \$42,000 in cash, and 10 firearms.

One Wednesday morning alone, Smith said agents seized \$25,000 in cash, six firearms, and undisclosed amounts of fentanyl and marijuana.

"Organizations like the one dismantled here today target communities like Marion because they mistakenly assume that they can operate either without detection or without people speaking up," said First Assistant U.S. Attorney Bridget Brennan. "Let these indictments serve as notice that law enforcement partners in this District and the residents of Marion are paying attention. And we will act."

Chief Bill Collins of the Marion Police Department said he believes drug traffickers have targeted Marion County over the years because "sentences handed down (by previous judges) were not very severe at all."

"We partnered with federal (authorities) many years ago because we couldn't get good sentencing here in Marion," Collins said. "That has since changed. We do have some judges that'll hand out some very hefty sentences. It certainly won't affect our partnership with the feds because we still need to be able cross state lines in some cases. But no doubt about it, the history that we've had here judicially has led to the amount of drug traffickers we have in our town."

Sheriff Tim Bailey agreed with Collins' assessment, further stating that "the judicial system in Marion County (has been) somewhat soft on crime."

"We've actually taken our drug task force to other counties and built cases because we felt that instead of getting probation like they would here, they would actually get a jail sentence there," Bailey said. "We knew a lot of these people that are dealing drugs in Marion County; we just

needed the support of our federal partners to actually bring this together so we could make a case in court."

Both Bailey and Collins noted that past layoffs at the sheriff's office and police department due to county and city budget issues also made Marion County an easier target for criminal activity because of fewer deputies and officers on the streets.

Bailey and Collins said all 43 individuals arrested were transported to the federal courthouse in Toledo. None will be held in Marion County.

### Who was arrested?

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio released a list of all those indicted. According to the indictments, from October 2015 to January 2019, these 46 individuals are accused of operating a drug trafficking organization that distributed large quantities of cocaine, crack cocaine, heroin and fentanyl throughout the Marion area via suppliers in Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and elsewhere.

The conspirators are accused of using multiple cellular devices and code words to conceal their activity. In some instances, the indictments states that members of the drug trafficking organization used firearms in the conduct of their drug trafficking activity.

Charged in a 29-count indictment with conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute and distribution of controlled substances, distribution of a controlled substance, possession with the intent to distribute a controlled substance and use of a communications facility to facilitate a drug trafficking offense are: Raheem Brown, age 28, Marion; Eric Carter, age 57, Marion; Tawana Cochran, age 37, in state custody;



Harold Cowans, age 81, Columbus; Brittany Crabtree, age 29, Marion; Rex Cumston, age 58, Marion; Jeff Ellinwood, age 38, Marion; Andy Fernandez, age 39, Ypsilanti, Michigan; Paula Foreman, age 58, Marion; Juan Demetrius Hartwell, age 46, Marion; Mitchem Hopper, age 30, in state custody; Marty Keifer, age 29, Marion; Ricky Kensler, age unknown, in federal custody; Jamal Mincey, age 32, Marion; Andre Pearson, age 40, Marion; Terry Phillips, age 61, Marion; Lawrence Redrick, age 43, in federal custody; Clifton Ross, age 45, Columbus; Toni Sparks, age 29, Marion; Terell Steen, age 43, in state custody; William Swartz, Jr, age 61, Marion; Billie Jean White, age 32, Marion; Taylor Williams, age 27, Marion.

Charged in a 22-count indictment with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute controlled substances, distribution of a controlled substance, possession with the intent to distribute a controlled substance, felon in possession of a firearm and use of a communications facility in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense are: Robert Baker, age 38, Marion; Corey Cesar, age 28, Marion; Tawana Cochran, age 37, in state custody; Kenneth Crumpton, age 31, Farmington

Hills, Michigan; Kenneth Drake, age 40, Marion; Rodney Tyson Hall, age 37, Larue; Warren Harris, age 40, Marion; Josten Jones, age 29, Marion; Ronald Jordan, age 33, in state custody; Courtney Miles, age 35, in state custody; Lindsay Pacha, age 26, Marion; Clifton Ross, age 45, Columbus; Terry Worthington, age 41 in state custody.

Charged in a 16-count indictment with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute controlled substances, distribution of controlled substance and use of a communications facility in furtherance of a drug trafficking offense are: Kendall Bender, age 33; Michael Collins, age 41; Meghan Landon, age 34; Destiny Pyles, age 23; Timothy Reed, age 36; and Alisha Taylor, age 24, all of Marion.

Charged in six separate indictments with possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance distribution of a controlled substance are: Otis Oliver, age 32; Darrius Kevin Karl Young-Owens, age 26; Anthony Robinson, age 32; all of Marion; James Glass, age 36; Curtis Thomas, age 33 and Johnny Thomas, age 34, both in state custody.

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