



Department of Justice

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**THREE INDICTMENTS ANNOUNCED CHARGING 14 WITH CONSPIRACY, GUN CRIMES
AND DRUG TRAFFICKING NEAR THE "TOT LOT" PLAYGROUND IN CINCINNATI'S
WEST END**

CINCINNATI -- Teams of federal, state and local law enforcement agents today began arresting 14 people accused in three federal indictments charging them with conspiracy, trafficking cocaine and crack cocaine within 1000 feet of a child's playground, and illegal firearms sales.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Christopher Sadowski, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), and Cincinnati Police Chief Thomas H. Streicher, Jr., announced the arrests today. A federal grand jury here returned the indictments on June 16. They were unsealed following the arrests.

A list of those charged is attached. All defendants will appear in U.S. District Court in Cincinnati for initial appearances on the charges.

The charges grew out of an investigation connected with the Cincinnati Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) in the West End neighborhood of Cincinnati. The federal charges are based on evidence gathered during an 18-month investigation by ATF, Cincinnati Police, the Hamilton County Probation Department, the Ohio Adult Parole Authority, and Hamilton County Prosecutor Joe Deters. In addition to today's federal indictments, Mr. Deters announced state charges against other people arising out of the same investigation.

"The 14 people named in these three federal indictments face lengthy terms in federal prison if convicted," Stewart said. "These charges allege an ongoing pattern of drug trafficking and violence in the affected neighborhoods."

The indictments unsealed today allege that the defendants conspired to possess and distribute quantities of crack cocaine and sold it within 1,000 feet of a playground in the West End known as the Tot Lot. The charges cover alleged criminal activity dating back to February, 2009.

Stewart commended the cooperative investigation by ATF agents with officers from the Cincinnati Police District One Violent Crime Squad, Cincinnati Police Homicide Unit, Intelligence Unit and Vortex Unit, along with Assistant U.S. Attorney Karl P. Kadon and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Kevin Tierney, who are prosecuting the case.

He also acknowledged the assistance of the U.S. Marshals Service Southern Ohio Fugitive Apprehension Strike Team (SOFAST) in making the arrests.

An indictment is merely an accusation. All defendants should be presumed innocent until and unless the government proves their guilt beyond a reasonable doubt in court.

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