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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE FILES PUBLIC
NUISANCE ACTION AGAINST SHELBY COUNTY BAR;
SHELBY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE, WEST TENNESSEE
DRUG TASK FORCE CLOSE PROPERTY





MEMPHIS, TN – Shelby County District Attorney Bill Gibbons and Shelby County Sheriff Mark Luttrell announced Thursday evening that agents with the West Tennessee Drug Task Force and Shelby County sheriff’s deputies closed a north Shelby County bar where rampant drug use and drug sales allegedly occur on a regular basis. The agents and deputies secured the property by court order after the D.A.’s office filed a public nuisance action against the establishment’s owner.

The D.A.’s Office filed a new nuisance action against Imbibrios Bar, located at 6353 Navy Road just outside of the Millington city limits. The nuisance action is the result of undercover investigations by the West Tennessee Drug Task Force and the Shelby County Sheriff’s Office Narcotics Division.

Environmental Court Judge Larry Potter ordered Imbibrios Bar temporarily closed and the bar’s operator, Thorne Peters, to court for a hearing on July 23 to answer to the allegations in the petition.

According to the petition filed against Imbibrios Bar, the Shelby County Sheriff’s Office investigation began last November. Deputies conducted undercover operations inside the bar in which they observed blatant and repeated use of marijuana inside the bar by patrons and the bar’s operator, Thorne Peters. Last December, deputies executed a search warrant for the bar, at which time the deputies recovered 10 grams of marijuana from behind the DJ booth and 30 grams of marijuana from inside a back room. Undercover deputies returned to the bar just this month and, according to the petition, purchased illegal narcotics on three separate occasions. The petition states that one of the drug purchases was from the operator himself.

“The Sheriff’s Office will aggressively pursue those involved in drug trafficking. Our deputies have, and continue to investigate allegations of drug sales throughout Shelby County. Let

this be a warning to any other persons involved in this kind of activity. We will find you and you will go to jail,” said Sheriff Luttrell.

Additionally, the West Tennessee Drug Task Force initiated a separate but coordinated investigation last month. According to the petition, undercover agents purchased illegal narcotics from individuals inside the bar on at least three occasions. The petition alleges that agents also witnessed the complicity of bar’s management and staff in illegal drug sales and use.

“We contend that Imbibrios Bar is a public nuisance. It is a haven for criminal activity, for illicit drug sales, unlawful drug use, and other nuisance activity. The operator is not only failing to take steps to prevent this type of criminal activity, but he’s actually taking part and encouraging it,” District Attorney Gibbons stated. “The owner must be held accountable,” Gibbons said.

The D.A.’s Office has filed nuisance actions against the owners of more than 100 properties, including both business and residential locations.

Tennessee law states that the District Attorney General has authority to bring a civil action against any establishment deemed a nuisance. The statute defines a nuisance, in part, as “any place in or upon which... unlawful sale of any regulated legend drug, narcotic or other controlled substance... quarrelling, drunkenness, fighting, or breaches of the peace are carried on or permitted.” Some nuisance actions have resulted in permanent closure of the properties. Others have reopened under consent orders to alleviate the nuisance.

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