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Friday, April 28, 2017

Columbus Man Sentenced for Dog-Fighting Conspiracy

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Charles A. Granberry, 40, of Columbus, was sentenced in U.S. District Court to 72 months in prison for conspiring to participate in a dog-fighting ring in central Ohio, illegally possessing a firearm and violating the terms of his supervised release.

Benjamin C. Glassman, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Anthony V. Mohatt, Special Agent in Charge, Midwest Region, U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of Inspector General, Columbus Police Chief Kim Jacobs, Franklin County Prosecuting Attorney Ron O'Brien, and Capital Area Humane Society Executive Director Rachel D.K. Finney announced the sentence handed down today by U.S. District Judge James L. Graham.

According to court documents, an undercover law enforcement officer met with Granberry and others over a two-week period at two houses in Columbus in March 2016. The officer saw evidence indicating that the house was used to train, fight and sell dogs, including at least 20 fighting dogs in the rear yard of one house that were chained to heavy automobile axles buried in the ground.

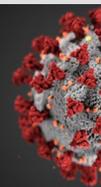
Granberry described the fighting style of his dogs to the undercover officer and boasted about his dogs' prowess during dogfights. He sold a dog to the undercover officer for \$2,500 and advised that the dog could fight immediately because of its breeding and conditioning.

Officers executed search warrants on April 5, 2016 at five Columbus houses.



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Agents seized evidence including 46 dogs along with cages, treadmills, heavy chains and collars and other items. Agents found canine blood on the floor and walls of the basement of one home indicating that the area was used as a dog-fighting pit.

Officers arrested Granberry and seized firearms and documents connected to the dog-fighting operation. Granberry – who was a manager or supervisor of the operation, directing activities and controlling the money – has been in custody since his arrest.

At the time of the search warrant, Humane Society officials took extreme measure to ensure the safety of the seized dogs and the ASPCA provided animal behavioral specialists to conduct examinations of each dog. Some of the dogs reacted severely to loud noises and leashes during the examinations. For example, one dog latched on to a stuffed animal so aggressively that professionals had to cut the head off the toy.

Additionally, a large number of the dogs seized had a canine disease called Babesia Gibsoni, which results in anemia and ultimately death. The prevalence of the disease is unusually high in “bully breeds” used in dog-fighting operations through exposure to infected dogs’ blood and during non-sterile procedures such as tail docking, ear cropping and vaccinations of multiple animals with single needles.

Of the 46 dogs seized, specialists determined that 15 were eligible for placement in a shelter for adoption, and the remaining 31 dogs were euthanized for behavioral concerns or medical issues.

“The cruelty involved in this case is significant,” U.S. Attorney Glassman said. “Mr. Granberry bred, raised, and sold dogs to be severely injured or maimed in dogfighting, and his sentence today shows that we take such illegal behavior seriously.”

“This investigation and prosecution should send a strong zero-tolerance message to those individuals who conspire or commit crimes in violation of the Animal Welfare Act, illegally possess firearms and drugs or attempts to defraud other USDA programs,” said Anthony V. Mohatt, Special Agent in Charge, USDA-OIG-Investigations. “It should also serve as a warning to individuals that these matters will be vigorously investigated and prosecuted by the USDA-OIG, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and all its federal, state, and local partners that have a stake in public safety and the enforcement of these statutes.

The USDA-OIG applauds the steadfastness resolution of the Columbus Police Department in this joint investigation and U.S. Attorney's Office to also prosecute these matters.”

Last week, a federal grand jury charged Dwayne T. Robinson, Jr., 33, and Henry Gerard James Hill, Jr., 21, both of Columbus, with conspiring to participate in the

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dog-fighting ring. Randall J. Frye, 58, also of Columbus, has pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court to the same charge.

U.S. Attorney Glassman commended the ongoing investigation by the USDA-OIG, Columbus Police, the Humane Society and the ASPCA, as well as Assistant U.S. Attorneys J. Michael Marous and Jessica W. Knight, and Franklin County Assistant Prosecutor Heather Robinson, who are representing the United States in this case.

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Topic(s):

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Component(s):

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