



TIMOTHY J. MCGINTY
CUYAHOGA COUNTY PROSECUTOR

**Indictment Targets Illegal Gambling Machine Distributors
Across State of Ohio**

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Cleveland – Eight people and two businesses have been indicted on racketeering charges for distributing illegal video slot machines across the state of Ohio, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Timothy J. McGinty announced today.

The defendants named in the 159-count indictment are Paul Lakuza, 29, of Painesville; Robert Valore, 38, of Cleveland; Walter Lakuza, 74, of Concord; Richard Johnson, 63, of Wooster; Michael Lakuza, 31, of Madison; Scott Lakuza, 37, of Painesville, Jeffrey White, 61, of Mentor; and Frank Toreki, 53, of Painesville; as well as Silver State Inc. of Wooster, Ohio, owned by Richard Johnson; and Walter Music and Vending Company, of Mentor, owned by Walter Lakuza.

The indictment is the culmination of efforts by the U.S. Marshals, the U.S. Secret Service, the Ohio Department of Public Safety's Ohio Investigative Unit, the Ohio Attorney General's Office and its Bureau of Criminal Investigations, the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office, the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, the Parma Heights Police Department and the Wooster Police Department.

Each of the defendants is charged with one count each of Engaging in a Pattern of Corrupt Activity and Conspiracy. The indictment also includes felony and misdemeanor gambling charges, operating a gambling house, money laundering, possessing criminal tools, tampering with evidence, tampering with records, and impersonation of certain officers.

The defendants made tens of millions of dollars off the proceeds of the slot machines, which were installed in businesses, primarily bars, across the state but focused primarily in Cuyahoga, Ashtabula, Lake, Ashland and Wayne Counties.

“Law enforcement here is not about to just sit back when criminals set up their illegal slot machines in local bars,” said Prosecutor McGinty. “The one-armed bandits will be seized, and their two-armed owners will be hauled off to jail with their pockets emptied.”

“For years, the manufacturers and distributors of gambling devices, including those known as the “Puzzle Bug,” have attempted to manipulate the criminal justice system while expanding their lucrative enterprises,” said Ohio Investigative Unit Agent-in-Charge Greg Croft. “Members of this criminal enterprise went as far as impersonating peace officers in order to strong arm competing illegal gambling operations. It clearly shows the lengths these subjects will go to further their criminal activities.”

“This indictment shows that those involved in illegal gambling will be pursued for these crimes by state, local, and federal agencies,” said Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine. “Those who believe that they can bypass gambling laws in this state should be aware that we are very serious about upholding the laws, and we will arrest and prosecute those who break them.”

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