

## Austin man, two women taken into custody after undercover meth buys conducted

Written by Marty Randall

Wednesday, 27 November 2013 00:00 -

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After conducting two undercover buys at an Austin home, Sheriff's Department deputies and officers with the Indiana State Police, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Safe Streets Task Force and the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) division visited the residence on November 7 armed with search warrants.

The operation began in October with Deputy Jeremy Arnold and an FBI Task Force officer arranging and making two successful buys of methamphetamine at the home on Johnson Lane.

The first buy resulted in the purchase of over four grams of the drug; the second buy, over three grams, according to Deputy Arnold's probable cause affidavit.

When officers arrived, they found a couple, Charles and Chasity Muns, at the home with two children ages nine and two. The Muns explained to the officers that they were living with the residents, Earl Jr. and Michelle Root. The youngsters are Michelle Root's children, they told the officers.

As the search was conducted, a baggie of methamphetamine was reportedly found inside Chasity Muns' purse along with a smaller baggie of marijuana and a set of digital scales. She was taken into custody and placed in handcuffs.

In the bedroom of the Roots, officers also allegedly found drug paraphernalia and a locked safe under the couple's bed. The safe contained more residue-coated paraphernalia and meth-coated coffee filter papers.

While officers were at the Roots' home, the couple returned to the residence, Earl Root at the steering wheel.

When he apparently realized what was happening, Earl Root reversed the vehicle and attempted to flee backing down the driveway. He crashed the vehicle into some trees and then attempted to flee on foot but was caught.

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Michelle Root was taken out of the vehicle and detained. Each had what was described as a “significant” amount of cash on them, Earl Root a little over \$900 and Michelle Root a little over \$1,200. The man also had a large baggie of pseudoephedrine pills in his pocket, noted Deputy Arnold. Those pills are a common ingredient in making methamphetamine.

After she had been cautioned with a Miranda warning, Michelle Root allegedly admitted to heavy drug use. She said the coffee filter papers were saved from a friend’s methamphetamine lab and that she placed them in her drinks to get “high” off the meth residue.

In Scott Superior Court, Michelle Root has been charged with one count each of possession of methamphetamine and possession of more than ten grams of a drug precursor, both Class D felonies. She was also charged with misdemeanor possession of paraphernalia.

The woman posted a 10% cash bond of \$1,500 on November 18 and was released. Her initial court hearing was held November 19. During that hearing, Judge Marsha Owens Howser set a jury trial date of February 13.

Root’s husband and Chasity Muns had initial hearings in Scott Circuit Court on November 13. Root is charged with two Class A felony counts of dealing in methamphetamine and D felonies of possession of methamphetamine, fleeing law enforcement and possession of precursors as well as one count of possession of paraphernalia, a Class A misdemeanor. Charity Muns’ charges include a B felony count of dealing meth, a D felony count of possession of methamphetamine and an A misdemeanor count of possession of marijuana. In each defendant’s case, a preliminary plea of not guilty was entered, and a jury trial was scheduled for April 15. The woman’s case was assigned to a public defender. Root posted a \$7,500 corporate surety bond on November 18 and was released. Each is scheduled to return to Circuit Court on November 25, Root for a hearing to review his need for an attorney and Muns for a bail reduction hearing.