

# **Lebanon Business Owner Convicted of Drug Trafficking**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 20, 2013**

**DAVID P. FORNSHELL  
(513) 695-1325**

A Warren County jury today found Hamza Shalash guilty of eight counts of trafficking in drugs and one count of engaging in a pattern of corrupt activities following a three-day jury trial in the Warren County Common Pleas Court.

Shalash was the co-owner and manager of the Marathon gas station and convenience store located on North Broadway in Lebanon, Ohio. Beginning in the fall of 2011 and continuing into early 2012, Lebanon Police Officers, agents of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, and agents of the Warren County Drug Task Force conducted an extensive investigation into the sales of various types of controlled substance analogs, including: synthetic marijuana, known as “Spice,” and substances commonly referred to as “Bath Salts” from the business. Multiple civilians and undercover agents were able to purchase the drugs from Shalash’s business.

Sentencing will occur in approximately six weeks before Judge Donald E. Oda. Shalash faces more than 40 years in prison if sentenced to the maximum sentence on each of the counts for which he was convicted.

Warren County Prosecutor David Fornshell issued the following statement in response to the verdict: “Once the law was changed to prohibit the sale of synthetic drugs, Shalash was warned not to sell these substances out of his business. He completely disregarded warnings that law enforcement gave him, and now he is going to have considerable time in prison to reflect on the consequences of his actions.”

Fornshell complimented the efforts of Assistant Prosecutor Andy Sievers who prosecuted the case, as well as experts from the Miami Valley Crime Lab who analyzed the drugs. This was one of the first major prosecutions of individuals trafficking in synthetic marijuana and analog drugs as a result of House Bill 64, which became effective in October of 2011. Fornshell also praised the cooperative efforts of the law enforcement agencies that were involved in the investigation.



Warren County Prosecutor  
David P. Fornshell  
(513) 695-1325

<http://www.co.warren.oh.us/prosecutor/>  
<http://www.co.warren.oh.us/clerkofcourts/>