

PRESS RELEASE
GREGG MARX, FAIRFIELD COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

Fairfield Prosecuting Attorney Gregg Marx hereby announces that, thanks to the diligent efforts of the Fairfield County Sheriff's Department and his office, information concerning an escape and vandalism incident occurring at the Fairfield County Jail on February 10, 2016 was compiled and the matter prepared for presentment to the Grand Jury on February 26, 2016.

The Fairfield County Grand Jury indicted Bert Wesley Brooks II, Bernie Clark Collinsworth, and Chase M. Cookson, on one count of Escape in violation of R.C. § 2921.34(A)(1), a Felony of the Third Degree and one count of Vandalism, a Fifth Degree Felony, a violation of R.C. § 2909.05 (B)(2). Matthew Allen Stai was indicted for one count of Escape in violation of R.C. § 2921.34 (A)(1) and one count of Vandalism, a violation of R.C. § 2909.05 (B)(2); both are Felonies of the Fifth Degree.

Brooks, Collinsworth, and Cookson were all being held in the Fairfield County Jail on felony offenses, while Stai was incarcerated in the jail on a misdemeanor. It is alleged that the four punched a hole in the ceiling of the shower area in the jail, which allowed at least one of the quartet to crawl into the area above the ceiling and move about the jail. Evidence indicates that the quartet intended to pry the concrete block wall loose as well. After damaging the County's jail property, the four tried to conceal the hole they had created. Surveillance confirmed that the four acted together to fashion tools and to take the steps to destroy the portion of the ceiling by which they broke detention.

This office will take the Grand Jury to the Fairfield County jails within the next two weeks, as required by statute for every Grand Jury, in order for them to report on the jail conditions. The Fairfield County Prosecutor's Office is pleased to work with the citizens serving on the Grand Jury and with law enforcement in continuous efforts to protect the public and to deter other inmates from contemplating an attempted escape from jail.

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Gregg Marx
Fairfield County Prosecuting Attorney