

# Purple Orchid manager convicted on drug charges

By Tom Waring  
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A judge last week convicted the former manager of a Burholme go-go bar with cocaine-related charges.

Common Pleas Court Judge John O'Grady convicted Jeffrey "Frenchy" French of possession with intent to deliver cocaine and conspiracy to sell cocaine.

French, 32, of Cedarville, N.J., once managed Purple Orchid II, at 7271 Rising Sun Ave. The bar has been closed since the police narcotics field unit raided it in August 2002. Inside, police found cocaine, marijuana, steroids, \$3,600 in cash and prescription Xanax, which is used to treat anxiety and panic disorders.

French, who is free on bail, was prosecuted only on charges related to the discovery of cocaine.

A 22-year-old dancer also was arrested and charged with possession with the intent to deliver marijuana. The district attorney's office was forced to withdraw charges after 2nd district police officers failed to show at three trial listings.

Police began an investigation of illegal activities at the bar after receiving complaints from neighbors and debriefing narcotics suspects.

Twice, according to Assistant District Attorney **Scott Sigman**, undercover police were able to buy \$40 worth of cocaine from a dancer.

Evidence at the Nov. 5 trial showed that the dancer obtained the cocaine from French before passing it on to the undercover officers.

French, who is represented by attorney A. Charles Peruto Jr., faces up to 10 years in prison on each charge, but he's likely to receive far less time than that when he's sentenced on Jan. 6. The sentencing guidelines call for him to serve a 3-to-12-month jail term. He'll be eligible to serve the time in boot camp.

Meanwhile, Purple Orchid II remains closed.

Immediately after the Aug. 15, 2002, raid, the city's Department of Licenses and Inspections posted an order to cease operations.

The bar owner, Steve Paik, contends he knew nothing of the illegal activity. Nonetheless, Sigman is seeking to win forfeiture of the bar. After French is sentenced, a trial to determine the bar's future will be held in front of Common Pleas Court Judge Joyce Kean.

Paik wants to reopen the bar. He is represented by attorney David Oh, a Republican who lost his bid for an at-large City Council seat in last week's election.

If the judge grants forfeiture, the district attorney's office could either donate the property to the community or sell it at auction. Proceeds from an auction would help the district attorney's office and the police department in fighting drug-related crime. \*\*

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