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Illegal fentanyl drug sale leads to murder conviction


By [MIKE DESMOND \(/PEOPLE/MIKE-DESMOND\)](#) • NOV 9, 2018

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Dontrell Wise faces spending the rest of his life in a federal prison because a jury on Thursday ruled the illegal drugs he sold led to a death.



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WBFO's Mike Desmond reports

"Because he took someone else's life. An eye for an eye."

U.S. Attorney James Kennedy said that jury verdict is one of the few in the country where the alliance of cops, science and prosecutors could tie together an illegal drug sale and a death, then convince the 12 members of the jury to convict Wise of a series of charges carrying a mandatory life sentence.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Adler, one of the prosecutors, said two other members of the Black Soprano Family street gang have already pleaded guilty in the drug trafficking case that led to the death of Amanda Jarczyk, 28, in her Cheektowaga home.

"Jerell Weathersby with butyryl fentanyl possession with intent to distribute butyryl fentanyl, and he was arrested with approximately 5 grams of butyryl fentanyl, and Lemario Jones also pleaded guilty to the distribution of controlled substances. Specifically there was sales of heroin and heroin-like substances."

Kennedy said the base of the conviction was good work by Cheektowaga Police.

"The victim in this case was discovered inside a premises in Cheektowaga, New York, and credit to the Cheektowaga Police Department for treating that overdose scene as a crime scene," Kennedy said. "As a result of their tremendous efforts, we were able to gather evidence, which was sufficient to link the drugs which caused the death of this victim to the defendant."

Buffalo Police Deputy Commissioner Joseph Gramaglia said officers have to treat every overdose as a crime because of the surge of fatal drug overdoses.

"We recognize that and we make sure that those scenes were handled the way any homicide team would be," Gramaglia said. "Whether it's a shooting or an unattended death, they're all treated the same way. Our detectives respond. Our Crime Scene Investigation Unit responds and every scene is processed - and these investigations are successful because of the crime scene handling and the crime scene collection."

Wise, Lemario Jones and Jerell Weathersby came under scrutiny after a routine Buffalo Police traffic stop for having a rental vehicle with heavily tinted windows. That stop turned up cash and fentanyl.

Weathersby was sentenced to 21 months in jail on his guilty plea and Jones awaits sentencing.

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U.S. Attorney James Kennedy announced the fentanyl-related homicide conviction.

CREDIT MICHAEL MROZIAK / WBFO NEWS

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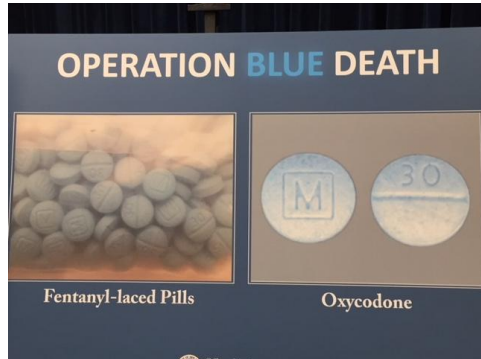
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