



BCPO News

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Camden Drug Dealer Indicted for Causing Death of Customer

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a Camden drug dealer has been indicted for causing the death of a customer to whom he sold fentanyl-laced cocaine last year.

Marquese Smith, 22, of Baird Boulevard, was indicted on one count of Strict Liability for Drug-Induced Death (First Degree). The indictment was returned January 14 and signed by Prosecutor Coffina. An arraignment will be scheduled soon in Superior Court.

The investigation began in June 2019 when officers from the Maple Shade Police Department responded to the Ryan Run West Apartment Complex and discovered the body of 33-year-old Kristi Ventura, who had fatally overdosed.

The Burlington County Medical Examiner's Office concluded the cause of death was cocaine and fentanyl toxicity.

The investigation determined that the drugs used by the victim had been purchased from Smith, who has been lodged in the Burlington County Jail in Mount Holly since his arrest in October.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant Prosecutor Jeremy Lackey. The investigation was conducted by the Maple Shade Police Department and the BCPO Gang, Gun and Narcotics Task Force.

This is the second drug-induced death indictment the BCPO has announced this week.

Terrance D. Walker, 37, of Pemberton Township, was indicted January 9 on charges of Strict Liability for Drug-Induced Death (First Degree), Distribution of a Controlled Dangerous Substance (Third Degree), two counts of Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance (Third Degree) and two counts of Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance with Intent to Distribute (Third Degree).

Walker was charged in October with causing the death of a 21-year-old Pemberton Township woman by supplying the fentanyl-laced heroin that led to her fatal overdose in May 2019.

An indictment is an accusation. Defendants are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty.

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