



# BCPO News

**Scott A. Coffina, Prosecutor**

**Philip S. Aronow**  
*First Assistant Prosecutor*

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## **Eastampton Drug Dealer Charged with Death of Medford Customer**

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina and Medford Township Police Chief Richard J. Meder announced that an Eastampton drug dealer has been charged with causing the death of a Medford Township woman who fatally overdosed last summer after purchasing heroin from the defendant.

Peter Mariano, 52, of the first block of Jess Court in the Fenimore Village trailer park, was charged with Strict Liability for Drug-Induced Death (First Degree), Possession of a Controlled Dangerous Substance (Third Degree), and Distribution of a Controlled Dangerous Substance (Third Degree).

The investigation began on September 2, 2019, when a relative of Crystal Elder contacted Medford Township police and requested a wellness check after failing to hear from her for several days. Officers responding to the residence forced entry into the home and found her body in a bathroom.

An autopsy performed by Burlington County Medical Examiner Dr. Ian Hood determined that Elder died of drug toxicity from heroin and fentanyl. The investigation revealed that the drugs used by Elder that resulted in her fatal overdose had been purchased from Mariano.

Mariano was taken into custody June 7 outside his residence and lodged in the Burlington County Jail in Mount Holly pending a detention hearing in Superior Court. Following that hearing, the case will be prepared for presentation to a Burlington County Grand Jury for possible indictment.

Mariano will be prosecuted by Assistant Prosecutor Jeremy Lackey.

The case was investigated by detectives from the BCPO GGNTF and the Medford Township Police Department, with assistance from the BCPO High-Tech Crimes Unit, Eastampton Township Police Department and New Jersey State Police. The lead investigators are BCPO Detective Steve Laramie and Medford Township Police Detective Christopher Matson.

*All persons are considered innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.*

**END**

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