



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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Approved: PN
Date: July 25, 2024
Release No.: 24-088

Oxnard Man Charged with Murder for Fatal Fentanyl Overdose

VENTURA, Calif. – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Rodney Rey Yanez (DOB 03/11/69), of Oxnard, has been charged with the second-degree murder of Dylan Rusch. This marks the first time the Ventura County District Attorney's Office has filed murder charges against a defendant who knowingly sold the deadly synthetic drug, fentanyl, to a victim who overdosed and died. Yanez is also charged with an additional nine felonies and four misdemeanors related to his alleged drug possession and sale activity.

"The filing of murder charges in a fentanyl overdose case underscores the grave responsibility we have to protect our community from the devastating impact of this deadly drug," said District Attorney Nasarenko. "We are committed to seeking justice for victims and holding accountable those who provide this poison."

On September 20, 2023, Yanez is accused of selling fentanyl to Mr. Rusch at a gas station in Oxnard. Rusch, who worked at the gas station, overdosed in the restroom. Officers and emergency personnel responded and performed CPR on Mr. Rusch but he was pronounced deceased at the scene. Toxicology results from the Medical Examiner's Office show a lethal level of fentanyl was the cause of death.

Yanez is charged in a series of alleged drug offenses for possessing and transporting for sale fentanyl, methamphetamine, and other drugs in the 14 months preceding Mr. Rusch's death. He was arrested by the Oxnard Police Department on July 24, 2024, and booked at the Ventura County Main Jail.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Audry Nafziger, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Major Crimes Narcotics Unit, is prosecuting the case.

Yanez made his first court appearance today and his arraignment was continued to August 21, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 11 of the Ventura County Superior Court. He remains in custody with bail set at \$1 million. A bail review hearing is scheduled for July 29, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. in courtroom 13.

Fentanyl is a highly addictive and often deadly synthetic drug. It is estimated to be 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Fentanyl is one of the most common drugs associated with overdose deaths in the United States.

In 2023, the Ventura County Medical Examiner reported 265 overdose deaths. Fentanyl was found in the system of 178 of the overdose victims. The Ventura County District Attorney's Office will seek to aggressively prosecute those that sell, furnish, or distribute fentanyl.

The public is urged to learn more about the dangers of fentanyl, how to find resources for people struggling with addiction, and where to get overdose rescue kits. This information can be found at <https://www.vcdistrictattorney.com/crimes/fentanyl-dangers/>.

Case: 2023029771

Defendant Information:

Rodney Rey Yanez (DOB 03/11/69)
Oxnard

Charges:

- PC 187(a) – Second-degree murder
- HS 11352 – Transport, sell, or distribute controlled substance (fentanyl)
- HS 11350(a) – Possession of a controlled substance (fentanyl)
- HS 11377(a) – Possession of a controlled substance (methamphetamine)
- (3 counts) HS 11379(a) – Sale/transport/offer to sell a controlled substance (methamphetamine)
- (3 counts) HS 11378 – Possession for sale of a controlled substance (methamphetamine)
- HS 11352(a) – Sale/transportation/offer to sell controlled substance (fentanyl)
- HS 11351 – Possession for sale of a controlled substance (fentanyl)
- HS 11350(a) – Possession of a controlled substance (heroin)
- HS 11350(a) – Possession of a controlled substance (cocaine)

Special Allegations:

- CRC 4.421(a)(8) – The manner in which the crime was carried out indicates planning, sophistication, and professionalism
- CRC 4.421(a)(10) – The crime involved a large quantity of contraband
- PC 1170.73 – Quantity of controlled substance

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 300 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.