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For Immediate Release

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# Drug Dealer Pleads Guilty to Selling Fentanyl that Led to Overdose Death

## *First Fentanyl Murder Case Prosecuted by the District Attorney*

San Diego County District Attorney [Summer Stephan](#) announced today a guilty plea by a drug dealer who sold a counterfeit oxycodone pill laced with fentanyl to a man who died after smoking part of one of the pills. Richard Summerfruit was 26-years old when he overdosed and died on November 16, 2016. Alfred Lemus, Jr., 31, pleaded guilty Friday to voluntary manslaughter, selling a controlled substance, possession for sale of a controlled substance, and possession of a firearm by a felon. As part of the plea he is scheduled to be sentenced to a stipulated term of 15 years in state prison on June 1 at 9:00 a.m. in Department 2001 of the San Diego Superior Court downtown.

**“We’re seeing a dangerous trend of drug dealers and cartels cutting various drugs at times disguised as painkillers with fentanyl and increasingly it’s a recipe for death,”** said District Attorney Summer Stephan. **“This first-of-its kind prosecution sends a message that when you sell fentanyl to another human being, you are literally providing them with toxic poison that can kill them in a matter of seconds. Even a tiny amount of fentanyl can be deadly, which is why we’re working with our partners at the U.S. Attorney’s Office, and Sheriff’s Department to address this disturbing trend.”**

The plea comes as more people are dying each year in San Diego County from accidental overdose or substance abuse intoxication of opioids, part of a national epidemic. Deaths specifically from fentanyl in San Diego County are spiking, with more than 40 fatal overdoses last year alone. In 2016, 544 people died of unintentional drug and alcohol overdoses in the County, according to Medical Examiner’s Office data. About half of those deaths are attributed to opioids, including heroin, fentanyl and prescription drugs such as oxycodone. Fentanyl is 50 to 100 times more powerful than morphine and deadly in small doses.

**RELATED:** See how the District Attorney’s Office is addressing the fatal prescription drug abuse epidemic and hear from people affected by overdoses in a [series of short videos](#).

The plea is the culmination of a criminal case that began with a San Diego County Sheriff’s investigation in November of last year.

"Our deputies immediately began an investigation into who sold the fatal drugs to this 26-year old victim they found when answering a radio call in Poway," said San Diego County Sheriff Bill Gore. "Through tireless investigation they proved Alfredo Lemus knowingly sold drugs containing the lethal opiate fentanyl to not only this victim in Poway, but to numerous others as well. I am grateful for the work of the Medical Examiner, District Attorney, and our other partners to bring this killer to justice. The Sheriff's Department instituted an overdose response protocol so that all overdose deaths are fully investigated by deputies and the suppliers of deadly drugs are brought to justice. This case is but one example of this proactive approach."

If you, or someone you know is struggling with addiction, there is help and resources at <https://www.sandiegorexabusetaaskforce.org/>

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**About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office**

*The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue justice and support victims daily across San Diego County. DA Summer Stephan has devoted her life to protecting children and families and providing justice to the voiceless and most vulnerable. She is a national leader in the fight against sexual exploitation and human trafficking, and has served as a Deputy District Attorney in San Diego County for 28 years.*