

DRUG DEALER GETS 30 YEARS IN FENTANYL CASE

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A 37- **year** -old Detroit man who sold the **fentanyl** -laced heroin that killed a Birmingham high school junior and a Madison Heights man last May was sentenced Thursday to **30 1/2 years in** prison.

The sentence imposed on James E. Coleman by U.S. District Judge Lawrence Zatkoff was at the top of the federal sentencing guidelines.

Coleman - accused of selling the **drugs** that killed 17- **year** -old Lauren Jolly and **30 - year** -old Daniel McElmurry - pleaded guilty **in** November to avoid a possible life sentence.

Coleman's lawyer, former Detroit police narcotics unit Cmdr. Warren Harris, urged Zatkoff to show leniency, saying Coleman had no idea that the **drugs** he sold contained **fentanyl** .

Fentanyl has been blamed for more than 100 deaths **in** metro Detroit since late 2005.

"I think the sentence was too severe," Harris said after the 10-minute hearing. Harris said Coleman grew up **in** a **drug** -infested neighborhood, was introduced to **drug** trafficking by family members and, despite prior **drug** convictions, wasn't a violent predator.

"He's not the villain who was the source of all of the **fentanyl** problem, and putting him away will not solve the **fentanyl** problem," Harris said. " **In** the total scheme of things, James Coleman is a small fry."

Detroit **Drug** Enforcement Administration Chief Robert Corso said, "Today's sentencing reflects a substantial sentence for a substantial violator" and should send a message to Detroit-area **drug dealers** .

Jolly's mother, Beth Jolly, declined to comment.

Jolly, a student at Birmingham Groves, and McElmurry bought **drugs** from Coleman's **drug** house **in** Detroit.

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