

## Drug dealer pleads guilty in fentanyl case

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Author: The Detroit News ; Paul Egan

A Detroit **drug dealer** faces more than 24 years **in** prison after he admitted today to distributing heroin laced with the painkiller **fentanyl** that killed two people.

U.S. District Judge Lawrence P. Zatkoff will sentence James Edgar Coleman, 36, on Feb. 6 on two counts of distributing a controlled substance causing death.

Coleman admitted to selling the **fentanyl** -laced heroin that killed Lauren Jolly, a 17-year-old Bloomfield Township high school student, and Daniel McElmurry, 30, of Madison Heights, earlier this year.

Coleman told Zatkoff he sold about 50 small packets of heroin to a **drug** house on Keating Street **in** Detroit, some of which was later purchased by Jolly and McElmurry, killing them **in** separate incidents. He said he did not know the heroin contained **fentanyl** .

"If you're **in** the business, you don't want to kill your customers," Coleman's lawyer Warren Harris of Southfield said outside court.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kathryn McCarthy told Zatkoff Coleman did not have to know exactly what was inside the fatal mixture for him to be **guilty** of the crimes, which each carry a minimum 20-year prison sentence.

Under a deal reached with prosecutors, Coleman is expected to be sentenced to between 24 and 30 years **in** prison and will lose his right to appeal.

Harris said outside court that because Coleman has previous **drug** offences on his record, he would have faced life **in** prison if found **guilty** of selling heroin. That's why the plea deal made sense, he said.

It's the first charge related to deaths caused by **fentanyl** -laced heroin and cocaine that killed an estimated 133 people **in** Metro Detroit **in** 2005-06.

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