

Was teenager's fentanyl death avoidable ? - Parole violations could have sent accused dealer to prison years earlier.

Detroit News, The (MI) - Thursday, June 22, 2006

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DETROIT -- A drug dealer accused of running a dope house where a 17-year-old Birmingham high school student overdosed **was** a career criminal and a fugitive on numerous parole violations that could have sent him to prison years ago, records show.

A toxicology report completed Wednesday confirmed that Lauren Jolly of Bloomfield Township died last month from a lethal dose of **fentanyl**, a painkiller that has been mixed with heroin and is believed to have killed at least 79 people in Metro Detroit.

Donald Edwin Cunningham, 26, with whom Jolly spent the last hours of her life at the house on Keating Street, according to police, violated terms of his parole at least nine times since he **was** sent to prison in April 2001. He also **was** arrested for drugs at least twice during that time, but each time **was** put back on parole instead of being charged with new crimes, according to Department of Corrections' records.

When Detroit Police arrested Cunningham and his brother Monday during the raid of the home on Keating, he had been a fugitive since September 2003 after walking away from parole.

Cunningham's brother, James Edgar Coleman, 36, **was** charged Sunday by the federal Drug Enforcement Administration with possession with intent to distribute more than 50 grams of heroin.

"We need to be asking more questions" of the Michigan Department of Corrections, said Alan Sanborn, R-Richmond, and a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"It's one more situation where people have died because of people falling through the cracks of a parole system that seems to be falling apart," he said.

Police sources said Jolly died May 24, hours after snorting cocaine laced with **fentanyl** at the drug house.

A witness told police that after Jolly lapsed unconscious in the dining room, Cunningham placed her in a bathtub full of ice to revive her. When she stopped breathing, a witness told police that they volunteered to take her to the hospital, but instead Cunningham panicked and carried Jolly to her car. He then paid a prostitute \$30 to drive the car away, according to police reports. Instead, the woman drove the teenager to St. John Hospital, where she **was** pronounced dead.

The Jolly case appears to be a public breakthrough in the ongoing **fentanyl** investigation because authorities were able link a **fentanyl death** to a drug house and make arrests.

The case is the latest example of Michigan's troubled parole system.

In February, authorities conceded their mistakes allowed parolee Patrick Selepak to return to the streets despite a serious domestic violence case. Selepak pleaded guilty to murdering a Vienna Township man and has said he plans to plead guilty to killing a New Baltimore couple.

Since then, the Department of Corrections has enacted several policy changes.

Police and Department of Corrections records show that Cunningham and Coleman have walked away numerous times from arrests and violations of parole.

According to Corrections Department records, Cunningham **was** sentenced in April 2001 to serve 1-5 years in prison for convictions of delivery of less than 50 grams of hard drugs and possession of stolen property.

While he **was** awaiting trial on those charges, he **was** arrested for possession of less than 25 grams of cocaine. That case **was** dismissed after Cunningham pleaded guilty to the other charges.

Four months into his prison sentence, Cunningham **was** sent to a boot camp where he walked away Aug. 26, 2001. He **was** a fugitive until the following February when he **was** picked up and returned to the boot camp, records show.

Six months later, Cunningham took off once again. While he **was** a fugitive, he **was** arrested with a bag of heroin in Detroit.

But Cunningham **was** not charged with a new crime. Instead, his parole **was** reinstated in February 2003. Corrections records show on the day his parole **was** reinstated, Cunningham **was** declared a fugitive again.

Lengthy records

James E. Coleman

Y Oct. 1987: Imprisoned.

Y Nov. 1988: Fugitive on parole

Y March 1989: Jailed for violating his release

Y Aug. 1996: Imprisoned while on probation

Donald E. Cunningham

Y April 2001: Imprisoned

Y Aug. 2001: Fugitive on parole

Y Feb. 2002: Fugitive on parole

Y Nov. 2002: Jailed

Y Feb. 2003 : Fugitive on parole

Y Aug. 2003: Imprisoned

Y Sept. 2003: Fugitive on parole

Michigan Department of Corrections

Caption: Jolly

Section: Front

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Company Name: #keywords2#

Index Terms: DRUG TRAFFIC ; DETROIT ; ARRESTS ; CRIMINALS ; RECORDS

Dateline: DETROIT

Record Number: det24272731

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