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For Immediate Release - Media
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PRESS RELEASE

Overdose death investigation leads to murder charge

The Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office is committed to investigating and holding drug dealers accountable for preventable deaths caused by fentanyl and other lethal drugs. On Friday, March 1, 2024, the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office charged **Benjamin Nathan Williams**, 34, of San Jose with one count of murder and one felony count of drug sales following an extensive investigation by the Sheriff's Office into an overdose death. The victim, Hope Noel Warrick, 26, died at her home in unincorporated Morgan Hill on February 13, 2023.

Santa Clara County Sheriff's Detective Sergeant Vicente Mitre, assigned to the Covert Investigation Unit (CIU), uncovered that Williams sold cocaine secretly laced with fentanyl to Warrick, and ultimately murdered her. The investigation began after the victim's mother discovered her daughter unresponsive at an ADU on the property. Detective Mitre found a white powdery substance, drug paraphernalia, and her cell phone at the home. A search warrant for the cell phone uncovered direct messages on Instagram between Warrick and Williams the night before her death that indicated Williams sold Warrick what she believed was cocaine and added in something extra for her, but did not specify what substance. Records show Warrick also did a Google search for "how to tell if there is fentynyl (*sic*) in something."

Williams worked as a certified pharmacist technician at Walgreens and a report from the Department of Consumer Affairs Board of Pharmacy indicates Williams was de-certified for stealing narcotics from the pharmacy. A search warrant revealed a photo that Williams sent someone else on Facebook Messenger of a white, crystalline substance in a clear Walgreens baggie, which was similar to the baggie located inside Warrick's home. Additionally, a search of Williams' cell phones uncovered photos and text messages of fentanyl sales, use, and his knowledge of the dangers of fentanyl.

On March 7, 2023, the Santa Clara County Medical Examiner-Coroner determined that Warrick's cause of death was cocaine, amphetamine, and fentanyl. The powdery substance located in the home also tested positive for cocaine and fentanyl. Williams was knowingly committing crimes for illegal personal monetary gain. He is being held at the Main Jail in San Jose and is expected to appear in court this week.

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Date / Time Prepared: 03/05/2024 @ 0900
Date / Time Approved: 03/05/2024 @ 0950