



**OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
ERIC M. HOFFMAN, PROSECUTOR  
46TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
DELAWARE COUNTY, INDIANA**

3100 S. TILLOTSON AVE., SUITE 270  
MUNCIE, IN 47302-6548

TELEPHONE 765-747-7801  
FAX: 765-747-7830

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

From: Eric M. Hoffman, Prosecuting Attorney  
prosecutor@co.delaware.in.us  
Date: February 9, 2023

**JURY CONVICTS ANOTHER DRUG DEALER OF  
DEALING IN A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE RESULTING IN DEATH**

*Muncie Indiana* – Today a Delaware County jury deliberated for 1.5 hours before convicting Curtis B. Atkinson (DOB 5/25/1982) of Dealing in a Controlled Substance Resulting in Death, a Level 1 Felony, Conspiracy to Commit Dealing in a Narcotic Drug, a Level 5 Felony, and Conspiracy to Commit Dealing in Methamphetamine, a Level 5 Felony. A copy of the Affidavit for Probable Cause for Arrest is Attached. The Honorable Thomas A. Cannon Jr., Judge of the Delaware Circuit Court No. 5 set sentencing for March 8, 2023 at 1:30 PM. Pursuant to Indiana law:



- A Level 1 Felony is punishable by 20 – 40 years in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine.
- A Level 5 Felony is punishable by 1 – 6 years in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine.

Curtis Atkinson

After the verdict was returned, Delaware County Prosecuting Attorney Eric Hoffman said “This marks the fourth time a jury has found a defendant guilty of Dealing Resulting in Death. Our community is speaking loud and clear – if you deal drugs and one of your customers dies as result you will be held accountable. I am proud of Chief Deputy Zach Craig and Deputy Prosecutor Andrew Ramirez, Prosecutor Investigators Heather Stanley and Alyssa Sorrell as well as Deputy Chief Chris Liggett of the Eaton Police Department for their hard work and dedication in this case. After the verdict Chief Deputy Prosecutor said we will no longer allow drug dealers to prey on the weak and vulnerable in our community.”

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STATE OF INDIANA ) IN THE DELAWARE COUNTY COURT SYSTEM  
 ) SS: 2021 TERM  
COUNTY OF DELAWARE ) CAUSE NUMBER: 18C05-2102-F1-

STATE OF INDIANA AFFIDAVIT OF PROBABLE CAUSE FOR ARREST

**VS.**

**CURTIS B. ATKINSON**

**AIDING, INDUCING OR CAUSE DEALING A  
CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE RESULTING IN DEATH**

I.C. § 35-42-1-1.5(a)(1),  
I.C. § 35-42-1-1.5(a)(2) &  
I.C. § 35-41-2-4

**CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT DEALING IN A NARCOTIC  
DRUG**

**I.C. 35-48-4-1(a)(1)(C)**

## CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT DEALING IN METHAMPHETAMINE

**I.C. 35-48-4-1.1(a)(1)(A)**

# AFFIDAVIT OF PROBABLE CAUSE FOR ARREST WARRANT

**The undersigned, being first duly sworn upon his oath, deposes and says:**

1. The Affiant is a law enforcement officer with the Eaton Police Department.
2. On November 28, 2020, at approximately 11:23 pm, Eaton Police Department and Eaton Fire Department responded to 301 E. Jefferson St, Eaton, IN, in reference to a unconscious person. Upon arrival, Hunter Decker of the Eaton PD and Ken Vandevener of the Eaton FD were met at the door to the residence by the individual that had called 911, Sandy Thomas. Sandy was crying and advised Decker and Vandevener that her daughter, Jennifer Thomas, was not breathing. Decker & Vandevener then found Jennifer in her bedroom, unconscious and slumped over in a chair at a computer desk.

Both Decker & Vandevener were unable to find a pulse on Jennifer and she felt cold to the touch. Jennifer was thereafter pronounced dead at the scene.

3. An autopsy was subsequently conducted on Jennifer's body by Forensic Pathologist Dr. Jolene Clouse. During the autopsy, biological samples were obtained and then provided to Axis Labs for toxicology testing. During the toxicology testing, it was determined that Jennifer had Amphetamine, Methamphetamine, Fentanyl and Benzodiazepines in her blood at the time of her death. Based on her examination of Jennifer's body and the results from the toxicology testing, Dr. Clouse determined that the cause of Jennifer's death was acute mixed drug intoxication, which resulted from the combination of Amphetamines, Methamphetamine, Fentanyl and Benzodiazepines.

4. The Affiant also responded to the scene of Jennifer's death and collected several items of evidence. On top of a table, there were 2 clear baggies containing a white powdery substance; 1 clear bag of a green leafy substance; and 1 Altoid can containing a white powdery substance. On the floor next to Jennifer's feet was a syringe containing a clear liquid. These items were subsequently sent to the Indiana State Police Laboratory for drug analysis. The Affiant was later informed that the powdery substances collected from the scene of Jennifer's death were Methamphetamine and Fentanyl. It was also discovered that the Fentanyl substance had been mixed with Diphenhydramine.

5. While at the scene of Jennifer's death, the Affiant also collected two (2) cell phones from Sandy Thomas, which she stated had belonged to Jennifer. These devices were subsequently taken to the Indiana State Police Cyber Crime Unit in order for

forensic extractions to be completed. On one of these devices, a Samsung Galaxy cell phone, investigators were able to locate an ongoing text conversation between Jennifer and Curtis Atkinson in the days leading up to her death.

- a. On November 24<sup>th</sup>, Jennifer asks Atkinson, "How much for what he has left." Jennifer also asks Atkinson if it is "the same stuff." Atkinson subsequently responds, "Yes same stuff." Atkinson then states, "Got a half left and it would be \$70.00." Atkinson then apologizes to Jennifer for the price and states, "She pays more so gets rid of it at a little higher price." Atkinson also ends up telling Jennifer that it is "fire," which the Affiant recognized as a term that is commonly used when referring to illegal narcotics. Based on training and experience, the Affiant was able to determine that Jennifer and Atkinson were arranging the sale of illegal narcotics during this text conversation. This sale appears to have taken place on November 24, 2020. In this conversation, Jennifer refers to an individual named "Brian" and informs Atkinson that "Brian" would be transporting her to the location for their transaction. At one point during this conversation, Jennifer and Atkinson also discuss Atkinson's girlfriend, "Cynthia."
- b. Another conversation between Jennifer & Atkinson was located on November 26<sup>th</sup>. During this conversation, Jennifer & Atkinson again appear to be arranging the sale of illegal narcotics. Once again, Jennifer

informs Atkinson that "Brian" would be transporting her to the location of the transaction.

6. The Affiant subsequently learned that the individual that had transported Jennifer to the aforementioned drug transactions was Brian Caylor. Caylor was interviewed on December 18, 2020. During this interview, Caylor admitted that in the days leading up to her death, he had transported Jennifer to the Best Way Inn hotel, where Curtis Atkinson was staying, so that Jennifer could purchase illegal narcotics.

7. The Affiant later conducted an interview with Jennifer's parents, John and Sandy Thomas. During this interview, John and Sandy stated that Jennifer had left their residence on November 26<sup>th</sup> with Brian Caylor and then returned later that day. They further advised that after returning home on the 26<sup>th</sup>, Jennifer did not leave the house again prior to her death.

8. The Affiant subsequently learned that Curtis Atkinson's girlfriend was an individual named Cynthia Crane. Crane was interviewed on December 18, 2020. During that interview, Crane confirmed that she was in a relationship with Atkinson, and that she and Atkinson had been staying at the Best Way Inn hotel. Crane advised investigators that Jennifer had previously been to her and Atkinson's hotel room prior to her death in order purchase illegal narcotics. Crane initially stated that she had only sold Jennifer Marijuana and Suboxone. Crane then later admitted that she also sold Methamphetamine to Jennifer. When discussing Jennifer's death, Crane stated that she "was afraid this would happen." Crane also stated that "she (Crane) was the one to blame." During this interview, Crane told investigators that she and Atkinson obtain

illegal narcotics from a subject from Detroit. Crane admitted that she and Atkinson both sell illegal substances to people.

9. Crane was subsequently arrested at the Best Way Inn hotel on December 31, 2020. At the time of that arrest, Crane was found to be in possession of a clear baggie containing a tan powdery substance. This substance was subsequently transported to the Indiana State Police Laboratory for drug analysis. The Affiant was later informed that this substance tested positive for Heroin. It was also discovered that the Heroin substance had been mixed with Diphenhydramine.

10. At the time of Crane's arrest, she was found to be in possession of a cell phone. A search warrant was subsequently obtained for this cell phone. The cell phone was then taken to the Indiana State Police Cyber Crime Unit in order to have a forensic extraction completed. During the extraction, investigators were able to locate multiple text conversations in which Crane is discussing the sale of illegal narcotics.

**WHEREFORE**, the undersigned requests that Delaware Circuit Court #5 issue a warrant for the arrest of Curtis B. Atkinson (DOB – 05/25/1982) for the following:

1. Dealing a Controlled Substance Resulting in Death, a Level 1 Felony, in violation of I.C. § 35-42-1-1.5(a)(1) and I.C. § 35-42-1-1.5(a)(2)
2. Conspiracy to Commit Dealing a Narcotic Drug, a Level 5 Felony, in violation of I.C. § 35-48-4-1(a)(1)(C); and
3. Conspiracy to Commit Dealing in Methamphetamine, a Level 5 Felony, in violation of I.C. 35-48-4-1.1(a)(1)(A);

and for all other relief just and proper in the premises.

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NOT.

I AFFIRM UNDER THE PENALTY OF PERJURY THAT THE FOREGOING REPRESENTATIONS  
ARE TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF.

2-22-2021  
Date

Chris Liggett  
Deputy Chief Chris Liggett  
Affiant

Reviewed by: Zachary Q. Craig  
Zachary Q. Craig  
Chief Deputy Prosecuting Attorney  
46<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit