



ERIK NASARENKO
VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY
NEWS RELEASE



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**Oxnard Drug Dealer in Fatal Overdose Headed to Trial
in Ventura County's First Fentanyl Murder Case**

VENTURA, Calif. – Accused drug dealer Rodney Rey Yanez (DOB 03/11/69), of Oxnard, has been held to answer for the second-degree murder of Dylan Rusch. Ventura County Superior Court Judge Diana Aizman made the decision today after a four-day preliminary hearing. At the hearing, 16 witnesses were called including a firefighter paramedic and several law enforcement narcotics experts.

"This case marks an important step in our ongoing efforts to hold drug dealers accountable for the deadly consequences of fentanyl," said District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. "We will continue to aggressively prosecute those who profit from this poison and pursue justice for victims and their families."

This is Ventura County's first fentanyl-related murder prosecution, charging a defendant who allegedly sold the deadly drug to a victim who fatally overdosed. Yanez is also charged with an additional nine felonies and four misdemeanors related to his alleged drug possession and sale activity.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Audry Nafziger, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office Major Crimes Narcotics Unit, is prosecuting the case.

"We believe the evidence in this case is compelling and fully supports the judge's findings," Ms. Nafziger said. "We are prepared and eager to present this case to a jury at trial."

On September 20, 2023, Yanez is accused of selling fentanyl to Mr. Rusch at a gas station in Oxnard. Rusch, who worked at the gas station, overdosed in the restroom. Officers and emergency personnel responded and performed CPR on Mr. Rusch but he was pronounced deceased at the

scene. Toxicology results from the Medical Examiner's Office showed a lethal level of fentanyl was the cause of death.

Yanez is charged in a series of alleged drug offenses for possessing and transporting for sale fentanyl, methamphetamine, and other drugs in the 14 months preceding Mr. Rusch's death. He was arrested by the Oxnard Police Department on July 24, 2024, and booked at the Ventura County Main Jail.

Yanez remains in custody with bail set at \$1 million. He returns to court on April 10, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in courtroom 12 of the Ventura County Superior Court for an arraignment on information.

Fentanyl is a highly addictive and often deadly synthetic drug. It is estimated to be 50 to 100 times more potent than morphine. Fentanyl is one of the most common drugs associated with overdose deaths in the United States.

In 2024, the Ventura County Medical Examiner reported 200 overdose deaths. Fentanyl was found in the system of 113 of the overdose victims. The Ventura County District Attorney's Office will seek to aggressively prosecute those that sell, furnish, or distribute fentanyl.

The public is urged to learn more about the dangers of fentanyl, how to find resources for people struggling with addiction, and where to get overdose rescue kits. This information can be found at ThinkAgainVC.com.

Case: 2023029771

Defendant Information:

Rodney Rey Yanez (DOB 03/11/69)
Oxnard

Charges:

- PC 187(a) – Second-degree murder
- HS 11352 – Transport, sell, or distribute controlled substance (fentanyl)
- HS 11350(a) – Possession of a controlled substance (fentanyl)
- HS 11377(a) – Possession of a controlled substance (methamphetamine)
- (3 counts) HS 11379(a) – Sale/transport/offer to sell a controlled substance (methamphetamine)
- (3 counts) HS 11378 – Possession for sale of a controlled substance (methamphetamine)
- HS 11352(a) – Sale/transportation/offer to sell controlled substance (fentanyl)
- HS 11351 – Possession for sale of a controlled substance (fentanyl)
- HS 11350(a) – Possession of a controlled substance (heroin)
- HS 11350(a) – Possession of a controlled substance (cocaine)

Special Allegations:

- CRC 4.421(a)(8) – The manner in which the crime was carried out indicates planning, sophistication, and professionalism
- CRC 4.421(a)(10) – The crime involved a large quantity of contraband
- PC 1170.73 – Quantity of controlled substance