



## Ponchatoula Man Indicted for Fentanyl Overdose Death

**PONCHATOULA (June 30, 2026)**- A Ponchatoula man has been indicted in connection with a woman's January overdose death.

Silas Latino, 28, from Ponchatoula, was formally charged Monday morning with one count of 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Murder. At the time he was indicted, Latino was already in jail following a May 2026 probation violation on a prior drug case out of Ponchatoula.

In January of this year, TPSO deputies responded to a home in the Hammond area for a report of an unresponsive 31-year-old woman. Despite life-saving efforts, Katheryn Austin died. An autopsy confirmed the death as the result of an overdose with an overwhelming amount of Fentanyl present in the victim's blood.

This case immediately became the focus of the DEA's Fentanyl Overdose Response Team (FORT) Task force which includes members of the TPSO, Hammond Police, and other partner agencies as part of the Northshore Opioid initiative. The investigation led the task force to confirm Latino as the individual who sold Austin the drugs that killed her.

"Our push to rid our communities of this poison, and to punish the people who spread it into our families, is not letting up and the impact is evident with only eight overdose deaths confirmed at this halfway mark in the year," said Sheriff Gerald Sticker, "If the streets missed the memo, here's a reminder-- this team's foot remains firmly planted on the gas pedal in our collective drive to save lives. And we won't use the brakes on this journey."

"Fentanyl is a ruthless poison stealing too many lives across the Northshore, and this indictment sends a clear message: if you deal this deadly substance in our communities, you will face severe consequences," said Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Special Agent in Charge John P. Scott, New Orleans Field Division. "Through the Northshore Opioid Initiative, spearheaded by the DEA Fentanyl Overdose Response Team, our partnership with state and local agencies allows us to track down and hold lethal drug dealers accountable. Every arrest and indictment brings us one step closer to a Fentanyl-Free America, and we will continue to use every resource at our disposal to protect Louisiana families from this epidemic."

TPSO participates with the Operation Angel program which offers those struggling with addiction to turn to the sheriff's office to seek treatment, at no charge, without fear of

consequences. If you, or a loved one, wants help through Operation Angel, individuals can come to any TPSO office or call 985-747-9696.

**TPSO Public Information Office**  
**Contact Information- [pio@tpso.org](mailto:pio@tpso.org)**