

Erie man admits to supplying drugs that caused Fairview woman's 2021 overdose



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Key Points

- Lawyers recommend 4-to-8-year sentence for Jeffery Thomas, who admitted to supplying fentanyl that caused 27-year-old Taylor Miller's death.
- Taylor Miller died of fentanyl overdose in April 2021 after starting Facebook group that advocated for addicts. She spoke openly about her struggles with heroin, other opioids.

An Erie man admitted in court on Tuesday that he supplied a Fairview Township woman with the fentanyl that caused her overdose death in April 2021.

Jeffery L. Thomas, 43, made his admission as he pleaded guilty before Erie County Judge John J. Mead to the most serious charge he faced, a first-degree felony count of drug delivery resulting in death, that the Pennsylvania State Police filed against him in their investigation into the death of [Taylor Miller](#), 27.

Assistant District Attorney Charles Cantrell told Mead that his office and Thomas' lawyer, Gene Placidi, agreed to recommend a four-to-eight year prison term for Thomas when he is sentenced. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, Cantrell said in court.

DIG DEEPER

Erie man enters plea in overdose death of Fairview woman

- Taylor Miller, advocate in Erie's opioid fight, dies at 27: 'She fought so hard'
- Suspected dealer charged in OD death of Fairview's Taylor Miller, an advocate for addicts
- Erie man charged in 2021 overdose death of addict advocate Miller to face counts in court
- Taylor Miller's family continues her mission to fight opioids, spread hope



What led to the charges?

According to state police, a review of financial records unearthed a number of money transfers to a "Jeffery Thomas" and "Jeffery T" shortly before Miller's death. Investigators also received information from a person who reported having Facebook messages from Thomas indicating Thomas provided the drugs that killed Miller, investigators wrote in the affidavit of probable cause filed with Thomas' criminal complaint.

In exchange for the plea, prosecutors dropped felony counts of possession with intent to deliver and criminal use of a communication facility and a misdemeanor count of possession of a controlled substance that Thomas also faced in the case.

Mead scheduled Thomas' sentencing for July 16 at 9 a.m. before Erie County Judge Daniel Brabender.

Thomas remains free on \$50,000 bail.

State police charged Thomas in April 2023 following a lengthy investigation into the death of Miller, who openly shared her experiences with addiction with others and who created and oversaw an online resource to help others battling addiction.

Miller died on April 11, 2021, at her residence in Fairview. Testing found levels of fentanyl and methamphetamine in her blood, and the Erie County Coroner's Office ruled Miller's death as accidental due to combined drug toxicity primarily involving the two drugs, investigators wrote in the criminal complaint against Thomas.



Erie resident Jeffery Thomas on Tuesday pleaded guilty to a felony count of drug delivery resulting in death in the April 2021 overdose death of Taylor Miller, 27, who had openly shared her struggles with addiction and who created an online resource for others battling addiction. PROVIDED BY MARIA MILLER

When Thomas was later interviewed, according to state police, he said he met Miller at a Narcotics Anonymous meeting in Fairview in 2014 and that, in 2019, Miller asked him to get her "dope." Thomas said when he provided Miller with dope, he would give her 3 grams of fentanyl, according to information in the affidavit.

Miller created a Facebook page in 2014 to offer aid to others battling addiction. Her family has expanded that resource, called [Taylor's HOPE](#), through a website, social media and community events.

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