

PREVENTION & PROTECTION MAGAZINE

by Narcotic Officers Magazine

ISSUE 1 JULY 2026



**Lost Voices of Fentanyl:
Families Demand Action at
the Nation's Capital
- PAGE 7**

EMPOWERING LAW ENFORCEMENT: YOUR TRUSTED POLICE MAGAZINE

Our communities rely on dedicated law enforcement officers to keep us safe.

These men and women put their lives on the line daily, facing dangerous situations to protect citizens and deserve our unwavering support. Let's show our appreciation for their service. A strong bond between the public and those who serve is vital for a safe and thriving community.

Letter From The Editor...

Welcome to the summer edition of the 2026 Narcotic Officers Magazine, Volume 15 Issue 1. I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your continued support and dedication. This publication thrives on the commitment of individuals like you, who are passionate about advancing the fight against narcotics and drug-related crime.

Navigating the Polysubstance Era & Synthetic Surge

In this milestone 15th anniversary edition, we address a critical shift defining narcotics enforcement in 2026: the arrival of the Polysubstance Era. As detailed in our field operations analysis, our mission is no longer defined by combating a single drug. We face an interconnected web of synthetic opioids, high-potency stimulants, and non-opioid adulterants like Xylazine ('Tranq'). Fentanyl now acts as a pervasive base-layer across counterfeit pills and illicit powders, while the co-ingestion of 'super-meth' and synthetic opioids presents unprecedented physiological and tactical risks to both the public and our investigators on the front lines.

Looking back at the 16-year evolution of drug enforcement from 2010 to 2026, the transition from plant-based cultivation cycles and prescription pill mills to 24/7 industrial chemical synthesis has forced specialized units to completely transform. Modern interdiction requires a seamless blend of elite street-level tactical excellence—from highway corridors to port precursor seizures—with advanced digital forensics, darknet tracking, and real-time wastewater intelligence. Our featured enforcement ledger showcases 25 major operations across the nation, proving that while our adversaries' tactics evolve, the resolve and adaptability of narcotics officers remain unshakable.

Community Action, Honor, and the Next Generation

Yet, tactical enforcement is only one side of our mission. The human cost of this crisis is felt deeply across our nation, as highlighted by the courageous families of 'Lost Voices of Fentanyl' advocating at the Capitol. To truly dismantle the market driving drug trafficking, we must invest heavily in prevention. We are proud to reaffirm our 15-year partnership with D.A.R.E. America and its evidence-based 'Keepin' It REAL' curriculum. By empowering youth with decision-making skills and building trust through officer mentorship, we build a proactive shield long before substances enter our communities.

As we carry this work forward, we pause with heavy hearts to honor our fallen brethren. The roll call of officers lost in early 2026 stands as a solemn reminder of the true cost of public safety. We honor their legacy not only through remembrance on Peace Officers Memorial Day, but through our daily commitment to rigorous tactical safety, unyielding integrity, and unwavering support for the families they left behind.

Lastly, I want to extend my appreciation to our advertisers and sponsors. Your support not only helps sustain this publication but also plays a vital role in funding essential programs that benefit our law enforcement community. Please take a moment to engage with these businesses that demonstrate a commitment to our cause.

Together, we can continue to inspire change and foster safer environments for all. Thank you for being an integral part of this journey.



Matt Neelley

Editor, Narcotic Officers Magazine
www.narcmagazine.info

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COURAGE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF FEAR, BUT RATHER THE JUDGMENT THAT SOMETHING ELSE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN FEAR. THE DEDICATED MEN AND WOMEN IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT PROVE THIS TRUTH EVERY DAY ON THE FRONT LINES.

— AMBROSE REDMOON



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Lost Voices of Fentanyl: Families Demand Action at the Nation's Capital

On a rainy September 24, 2023, the streets of Washington, D.C., were filled with grieving families united by an unimaginable loss. Gathering near the White House, attendees of the third annual “Lost Voices of Fentanyl” march and demonstration sought to turn their personal tragedies into a collective demand for change. Their message to the Biden administration was urgent and clear: more must be done to end the fentanyl scourge that continues to devastate communities across the nation.

A Visual of Heartbreak and Advocacy

The devastating human toll of the crisis was on full display throughout the demonstration. In the photograph referenced as shutterstock_2366502473.jpg, women wearing rain ponchos stand together, holding up large, heart-wrenching signs that honor the children they have lost.

The signs carry a stark warning: “FENTANYL POISONING AWARENESS. ONE PILL, ONE LINE, ONE SHOT, ONE TIME IS ALL IT TAKES.”

Beside these words are photographs of the victims. One sign pays tribute to a young man, reading, “In Loving Memory of Devin Rivers, Forever 25.” Another honors a young woman, stating, “In Loving Memory of Emma Goetze, Forever 26.” These are not just statistics; they are beloved children, siblings, and friends whose futures were abruptly stolen by illicit synthetic opioids.

A Call for National Intervention

The “Lost Voices of Fentanyl” advocacy group organizes these rallies to ensure that the victims of this epidemic are not forgotten and to push for stronger federal action. Illicit fentanyl is a highly potent synthetic opioid that is frequently mixed into other drugs or pressed into counterfeit pills, often without the user’s knowledge. Because it is lethal even in microscopic amounts, the overdose rates have skyrocketed, affecting families across every demographic and geographic boundary.

During the demonstration, parents and advocates shared their deeply personal stories of loss, calling for expanded prevention strategies, greater public education, and stricter accountability to disrupt the supply chains bringing the drug into local neighborhoods.

Turning Grief into Purpose

Events like the “Lost Voices of Fentanyl” march serve as a somber reminder of the human cost of the drug epidemic. By bringing their stories directly to the steps of the nation’s capital, these families are fighting to ensure that their loved ones did not die in vain. Through their resilience and advocacy, they hope to spare other families from enduring the same heartbreak, proving that while their loved ones’ voices may be lost, their memories will continue to inspire the fight for a safer future.

Investing in the Future: Narcotic Officers Magazine and the Legacy of D.A.R.E. America

By: Editorial Staff, Narcotic Officers Magazine

In the world of narcotics enforcement, we often measure success in kilograms, arrests, and dismantled conspiracies. We celebrate the big busts and the successful interdictions because we know that every gram of fentanyl seized is a potential life saved. But as any veteran officer will tell you, the long-term solution to the drug crisis doesn't just happen on the street—it happens in the classroom.

For decades, D.A.R.E. America (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) has been the gold standard for school-based prevention programming. As Narcotic Officers Magazine celebrates 15 years of service to the law enforcement community, we take this moment to highlight our long-standing partnership with D.A.R.E. and why supporting the next generation is the most critical mission we have.

A Shared Mission of Prevention

While our magazine provides the tactical intelligence and equipment resources necessary for the field, we have always recognized that enforcement is only one side of the coin. Since our inception, Narcotic Officers Magazine has stood firmly behind the D.A.R.E. mission.

Over the years, we have used our platform to:

- **Bridge the Information Gap:** Bringing the latest street-level drug trends from our investigators directly to D.A.R.E. officers so they can update their curricula with real-world data.
- **Support Training Initiatives:** Highlighting the specialized training that D.A.R.E. officers undergo to become mentors and

role models in their communities.

- **Promote the “Keepin’ It REAL” Curriculum:** Showcasing the evolution of D.A.R.E. from a simple “just say no” message to a sophisticated, evidence-based decision-making model.

The 2026 Reality: Why D.A.R.E. is More Critical Than Ever

In 2026, the stakes for our youth have never been higher. As we’ve reported throughout this anniversary year, the rise of synthetic opioids and counterfeit pills means that a single mistake is no longer just a “lesson learned”—it can be fatal.

Today’s youth are growing up in an era where social media is a digital marketplace for dealers and where “One Pill Can Kill” is a daily reality. D.A.R.E. America has adapted to this landscape, teaching students not just to avoid drugs, but how to navigate peer pressure, manage stress, and make safe, responsible choices in a complex world.

By supporting D.A.R.E., Narcotic Officers Magazine helps ensure that children have the “mental armor” they need before they ever encounter the substances we spend our lives investigating.

The Officer as a Mentor

One of the most powerful aspects of the D.A.R.E. program is the human connection. When a narcotics officer or a patrol deputy steps into a classroom, the “star” or the “shield” becomes a symbol of safety and guidance.

We have heard countless stories from officers who were first inspired to join law enforcement because of their D.A.R.E. officer in the fifth grade. By continuing to support these programs, we aren’t just

preventing drug abuse; we are building a foundation of trust between the community and the officers who serve them. This trust is the “force multiplier” that makes our communities safer for everyone.

Looking Ahead: Our Continued Commitment

As we look toward the next 15 years, our commitment to D.A.R.E. America remains unshakable. We will continue to:

1. **Fundraise and Donate:** Directing resources toward D.A.R.E. officer training and materials.
2. **Educate the Educators:** Providing D.A.R.E. instructors with the latest toxicology and investigative briefs to keep their lessons current.
3. **Advocate for Funding:** Using our voice to remind policymakers that prevention is the most cost-effective tool in the war on drugs.

A Final Thought

To the D.A.R.E. officers in the classrooms today: You are the first line of defense. While we work to take the poison off the streets, you are working to take the “market” away from the cartels by empowering our children.

At Narcotic Officers Magazine, we believe that every child who chooses a healthy path because of a D.A.R.E. lesson is a victory as great as any drug bust. We are proud to stand with you, today and every day, for the future of our youth.

Support the Mission: To learn more about how you can support drug prevention in your local schools, visit www.dare.org. For tactical updates and officer resources, stay tuned to Narcotic Officers Magazine.

The 2026 Crisis: The Polysubstance Era and the Synthetic Surge

By: Field Operations, Narcotic Officers Magazine

As we move through 2026, the narcotics mission is no longer about fighting a single “drug of the year.” We have entered the Polysubstance Era, characterized by a lethal convergence of synthetic opioids, high-potency stimulants, and veterinary adulterants. The danger to the public—and to the officers on the front line—has never been more volatile.

The Fentanyl “Base-Layer”

In the current market, fentanyl is no longer just an additive; it is the universal “base-layer” for almost all illicit powders and pills. We are seeing a massive influx of “pressed” pharmaceuticals—counterfeit pills that look identical to Xanax, Adderall, or M30s but contain lethal micro-doses of fentanyl. In 2026, a “recreational” user is playing a game of Russian Roulette with every dose. For the investigator, this means that even a routine search of a vehicle or residence requires Tier-1 PPE, as the risk of accidental aerosolization or skin contact is a constant threat.

The “Twin Towers”: Methamphetamine and Cocaine

While opioids dominate the headlines, 2026 has seen a staggering resurgence in stimulants. Metham-

phetamine purity is at near-pharmaceutical levels, fueled by P2P (phenyl-2-propanone) cooking methods that produce a “super-meth” linked to rapid-onset psychosis and permanent neurological damage.

Furthermore, we are seeing “speed-balling” on a massive scale. Users are intentionally mixing fentanyl (a “downer”) with high-potency meth or cocaine (an “upper”). This creates a physiological tug-of-war on the human heart, leading to a spike in cardiovascular-related overdose deaths that often don’t respond to standard opioid reversal protocols like Naloxone.

The Rise of Xylazine (Tranq) and New Adulterants

The most disturbing trend of 2026 is the saturation of Xylazine, or “Tranq,” in the heroin/fentanyl supply. Xylazine is a non-opioid sedative used in veterinary medicine. Because it is not an opioid, Naloxone (Narcan) does not reverse its effects. This has led to “complex overdoses” where an officer may successfully restore a victim’s breathing with Narcan, but the victim remains in a deep, unresponsive coma due to the Xylazine. Additionally, the chronic use of “Tranq” causes severe, necrotic skin ulcerations, posing a biohazard risk to officers during processing

and transport.

2026 Enforcement Objectives

Targeting the “Super-Lab” Precursors: National strategy has shifted toward international cooperation to intercept precursor chemicals (such as 4-ANPP) before they reach synthesis labs.

Wastewater Analysis Integration: Law enforcement is now using real-time wastewater data to predict where a “hot batch” of drugs has landed, allowing agencies to surge resources to specific neighborhoods within hours.

The “Whole-of-Community” Approach: In 2026, the narcotics officer is a bridge to recovery. We are increasingly working with “Warriors Grace” and other faith-based non-profits to ensure that when we take the dealer off the street, we are also offering the user a path to treatment.

Summary for the Field: The 2026 landscape is defined by chemical complexity and digital anonymity. To stay ahead, our units must prioritize advanced toxicology training and cyber-investigative tools. The war has changed; it is no longer fought in the fields, but in the lab and on the wire.

The 2026 Enforcement Ledger: Mapping the Front Line of Narcotics Interdiction

By: Field Intelligence Desk, Narcotic Officers Magazine

As we move through the middle of 2026, the data from the DEA and local task forces paints a picture of a narcotics landscape in constant flux. The transition from organic, plant-based drugs to industrial-scale synthetic production has reached its zenith. For the investigator, this has meant a shift from monitoring crop cycles to intercepting chemical precursors and dismantling high-output laboratories.

Below is a comprehensive tactical review of 25 significant operations from the past year. These cases represent the diversity of the threat—from the maritime “semi-submersibles” of the Caribbean to the encrypted servers of the Darknet.

The Synthesis Surge: Labs and Precursors

The battle is increasingly being fought “upstream.” By stopping the chemicals before they are pressed into pills or crystallized into “shards,” we prevent the poison from ever reaching the street.

1. **Atlanta, GA (Methamphetamine Conversion):** A massive residential “conversion lab” was dismantled. Officers seized commercial barrels of liquid meth being crystallized, requiring Tier-1 Hazmat protocols due to volatile chemical stabilizers.
2. **San Diego, CA (Precursor Interdiction):** At the Port

of Entry, agents intercepted tons of **4-ANPP** and other precursor chemicals. This operation stopped the production of millions of dosage units before they could reach Mexican “super-labs.”

3. **Boston, MA (The Pill Press Takedown):** Undercover agents infiltrated a manufacturing ring, seizing two industrial pill presses and stamps capable of producing thousands of counterfeit “M30” tablets per hour.
4. **Detroit, MI (Darknet & Crypto):** A sophisticated vendor was dismantled for shipping fentanyl-pressed pills nationwide. The operation included the seizure of hardware wallets and raw chemical supplies.

Highway Interdiction: The Arteries of the Trade

Highways remain the primary veins through which the cartels pump their product into the American interior. These 2025–2026 busts highlight the importance of “boots on the asphalt” and elite K9 detection.

5. **Salt Lake City, UT (I-15 Corridor):** A single district seizure yielded **774,000 fentanyl pills** in six months, marking a record for the Rocky Mountain region.
6. **Houston, TX (Commercial Concealment):** A trac-

tor-trailer hauling produce was found to have a false floor containing **200kg of fentanyl powder** and liquid meth.

7. **Fresno County, CA (Central Valley Pursuit):** A high-speed chase ended in the arrest of two LA-based traffickers who attempted to ram DEA vehicles to protect a multi-kilogram shipment.
8. **Colorado Springs, CO (Citizen-Led Interdiction):** Following a tip, agents intercepted a vehicle with **670,000 fake pills** hidden in sophisticated after-market compartments.
9. **Raleigh, NC (The Interstate Pipeline):** A pipeline from Philadelphia to Raleigh was severed, resulting in the seizure of 10kg of cocaine and multiple AR-15s with obliterated serial numbers.

Cartel Logistics and Transnational Conspiracies

The scale of modern trafficking organizations requires a “follow the money” approach combined with high-level intelligence mapping.

10. **Los Angeles, CA (The Olympic Conspiracy):** A transnational ring moving **a ton of cocaine** from Colombia through Southern California was dismantled, leading to 16 indictments.
11. **Miami, FL (Maritime**

Interdiction): A “semi-submersible” vessel was intercepted in the Caribbean, resulting in the seizure of **3,000 kilograms of cocaine**.

12. Chicago, IL (Rail Yard Logistics): Agents targeted a network using commercial rail yards to hide 400 pounds of methamphetamine inside industrial shipping pallets.

13. Cleveland, OH (The Prison Cell Plot): A network coordinated shipments from Mexico to Ohio via a smuggled contraband cell phone operated by an incarcerated leader.

14. Cincinnati, OH (The Money Trail): 36 individuals were indicted in a case focusing on sophisticated money laundering, seizing luxury real estate and millions in cash proceeds.

Regional “Hot Zones” and Pill Surges

Counterfeit pills continue to be the primary driver of the overdose crisis, forcing agencies to conduct massive “surges” in high-traffic urban centers.

15. Albuquerque, NM (The Historic Bust): A search warrant at a Northeast stash house yielded **150,000 fentanyl pills**, the largest single pill seizure in DEA New Mexico history at the time.

16. Tucson, AZ (Operation Fentanyl Free America): A 30-day regional surge resulted in nearly **600,000 counterfeit pills** being re-

moved from the Southwest corridor.

17. New York City, NY (Cartel Distribution): A targeted takedown of a cartel-linked distributor in NYC removed **60,000 fentanyl pills** destined for the local market.

18. Denver, CO (Rocky Mountain Record): The Field Division reported a record-breaking year with over **3.4 million fentanyl pills** seized across a four-state area.

19. Washington, D.C. (The DMV Surge): Seizures in the D.C. metro area spiked by 250% this year, with over **639,000 pills** confiscated in a single sweep.

Emerging Threats: Polysubstances and Adulterants

The newest frontier in narcotics enforcement is the presence of non-opioid additives that complicate the mission of saving lives in the field.

20. Philadelphia, PA (The “Tranq” Source): A multi-location takedown targeted distributors importing bulk **Xylazine** (a veterinary sedative) to mix with the local fentanyl supply.

21. Baltimore, MD (Poly-drug Strike): 43 arrests were made in an operation that seized a “cocktail” of fentanyl, heroin, and 1,200 lbs of marijuana, along with heavy firearms.

22. Greensboro, NC (38-Defendant Takedown): An entire multi-state network was dismantled, targeting

the intersection of fentanyl and high-potency methamphetamine distribution.

23. Newark, NJ (Militarized Distribution): A raid in Newark seized **46,000 pills** and 18 firearms, highlighting the increased armament of mid-level distribution hubs.

24. Haverhill, MA (Residential Conspiracy): A six-month undercover operation ended in the raid of a residential stash house containing 2.5kg of fentanyl analogs.

25. Seattle, WA (The Powder Shift): Agents in the Pacific Northwest reported a terrifying surge in raw **fentanyl powder**, signaling a shift toward local “mixing” operations rather than just importing finished pills.

Analysis for the Field

What these 25 cases prove is that our mission has never been more critical. Whether it is a high-speed pursuit in Fresno or a digital forensic audit in Detroit, the goal remains the same: disrupt the supply chain and protect the community.

As we celebrate 15 years of *Narcotic Officers Magazine*, let these successes serve as a reminder that though the methods of our adversaries change, the resolve of the narcotics officer is unshakable.

Keep your eyes on the precursors and your hands on the Narcan. Let’s bring everyone home safe.

FENTANYL FREE AMERICA

PROTECT • PREVENT • SUPPORT

***Fentanyl Free America* demonstrates the Drug Enforcement Administration's unwavering commitment to protecting the United States from synthetic opioids by disrupting the fentanyl supply chain, reducing its availability, and saving American lives.**

PROTECT

Protecting communities through increased enforcement and stronger measures to prevent fentanyl production and distribution

DEA leads the fight to protect American lives and communities from the devastating impact of fentanyl. Our mission is clear and rooted in decisive action: dismantling the cartels responsible for manufacturing and trafficking this deadly poison, breaking their command and control networks, disrupting the illicit financial systems that sustain them, and cutting off the supply before it reaches our neighborhoods. DEA is relentlessly driving toward a *Fentanyl Free America*, committed to eliminating the poison behind the nation's deadliest drug crisis and securing a safer, healthier future for all Americans.

PREVENT

Preventing fentanyl overdose through education and awareness

DEA conducts targeted prevention outreach for increased public awareness to save American lives through the following campaigns and initiatives:

- One Pill Can Kill
- Red Ribbon Week
- National Prescription Drug Take Back Day
- Together for Families Network
- Every Day is Take Back Day
- Operation Engage
- Operation Prevention
- Diversion Outreach

SUPPORT

Supporting families and those impacted by providing action-oriented resources

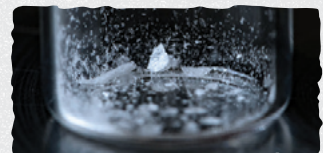
DEA provides parents, caregivers, and educators with up-to-date information about drug threats, and provides resources to help prevent substance misuse among children, teens, and young adults. DEA offers *Tips for Talking*, developed by prevention experts, to help facilitate age-specific conversations. The Together for Families Network provides valuable tools and support to assist people through any stage of their journey: [DEA.gov/TogetherForFamilies](https://www.dea.gov/TogetherForFamilies).

“TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE A FENTANYL FREE AMERICA AND CREATE A SAFER FUTURE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.”

DEA Administrator
Terrance Cole



29% of fentanyl pills tested by DEA contained a **potentially lethal dose**, compared to 76% of pills tested just two years before in fiscal year 2023



Fentanyl powder purity **decreased to 10.3%** in fiscal year 2025, from 19.5% in 2023

DEA.GOV/FENTANYLFREE



www.dea.gov

WHAT IS FENTANYL?

It is a deadly synthetic opioid that is being pressed into counterfeit pills or mixed into heroin, cocaine, and other street drugs to drive addiction.



TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

- Encourage open and honest communication
- Create an “exit plan” to help your child know what to do if they’re pressured to take a pill or use drugs
- Explain what fentanyl is and why it is so dangerous
- Stress not to take any pills that were not prescribed to you from a doctor
- No pill purchased on social media is safe
- Make sure they know fentanyl has been found in most illegal drugs

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WE ALL HAVE A ROLE

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DEA.GOV/FENTANYLFREE

The Great Disruption: How Narcotics Enforcement Transformed (2010–2026)

By: Analysis Desk, Narcotic Officers Magazine

To understand where we are in 2026, we must look back at the “Decade of the Diversion.” In 2010, the narcotics officer’s primary battlefield was the medical cabinet and the crooked clinic. The crisis was rooted in the over-prescription of legal opioids, creating a generation of dependent users who were functionally part of the mainstream economy. Today, that world is gone, replaced by a ruthless, synthetic-driven ecosystem that has forced law enforcement to reinvent itself.

The Collapse of the “Pill Mill” Era

In 2010, the “OxyContin Express” saw thousands of users traveling to Florida and other hubs to obtain scripts for high-milligram Oxycodone and Hydrocodone. Enforcement focused on “Doctor Shopping” and pharmacy audits. However, as the 2010s progressed, federal and state governments implemented aggressive Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) and the CDC issued restrictive prescribing guidelines.

While this effectively “choked” the legal supply, it inadvertently triggered the Great Disruption. By 2016, users who were priced out of the pharmaceutical market migrated to Mexican Black Tar and China White heroin. By 2020, those organic opioids were being systematically replaced by fentanyl. Data from 2025 indicates that prescription opioid misuse is now at its lowest point in two decades—not because the demand disappeared, but because the illicit market offered a cheaper, more potent alternative.

The Death of the “Season”

Historically, drug enforcement followed organic cycles. Marijuana had harvest seasons; heroin relied on

poppy growth cycles in the Golden Triangle or Mexico. Synthetic production has eliminated “down-time.” The shift from plant-based drugs to chemicals like fentanyl and methamphetamine means cartels no longer need land, favorable weather, or large labor forces for cultivation. Production is now a 24/7/365 industrial process in clandestine labs, leading to a relentless supply chain that narcotics units can no longer disrupt through “crop eradication” programs.

Tactical Evolution: From Street Corners to Servers

In 2010, a narcotics unit could be highly effective with “buy-bust” operations and confidential informants working street corners. In 2026, the “corner” has moved to the Darknet and encrypted apps. The modern investigator must be as skilled in blockchain analysis and IP tracking as they are in tactical entry. We have moved from a “boots on the ground” era to an “eyes on the screen” era, where the most significant seizures often begin with a digital footprint.

The Hidden Price of the Front Line: Peace Officers Memorial Day in Narcotics Enforcement

In the world of narcotics enforcement, we often operate in the shadows. Whether it's months of deep-cover surveillance, the high-octane breach of a suspected stash house, or the interdiction of fentanyl on a lonely stretch of highway, the work is inherently volatile. On May 15th, Peace Officers Memorial Day, we step out of the shadows to honor the colleagues who paid the ultimate price for a safer, drug-free society.

A Mission of Unique Peril

Every law enforcement officer understands the risks of the job, but those in narcotics units face a specific brand of danger. We deal with cartels, organized crime, and individuals driven by the desperation of addiction or the greed of the trade.

When we look at the names added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Wall this year, we see the faces of investigators who were lost during buy-busts gone wrong, interdiction officers struck on the roadside, and agents who succumbed to the long-term health toll of chemical exposures. Peace Officers Memorial Day is our time to ensure that while their work was often confidential, their sacrifice is public and permanent.

The 2026 Perspective: The Fentanyl Era

As we observe National Police Week in 2026, the landscape of our sacrifice has shifted. The rise of synthetic opioids has added a layer of “invisible” danger to every search warrant

and evidence processing room. This year, we honor not only those lost to violence but also the heroes who have faced unprecedented environmental hazards in the line of duty.

The names carved into the marble in Washington, D.C., represent more than just statistics; they represent the thin line holding back a tide of poison from our communities.

Standing with the Families

Behind every undercover operative or K9 handler is a family that lives with a unique kind of stress—the “not knowing” and the “not asking.” Peace Officers Memorial Day is a vital reminder to the survivors of fallen narcotics officers that their loved ones’ contributions mattered.

The bond in a specialized unit is often closer than family. When a team loses a member, the “unit” is never truly the same. This week, we reach out to the widows, widowers, and children of our fallen, ensuring they know that the Narcotic Officers’ community never forgets its own.

Honor Through Vigilance

We do not just honor the fallen with ceremonies and half-staff flags. We honor them through our commitment to the mission.

- **Integrity:** Carrying out the mission with the highest ethical standards, honoring the reputation of those who came before us.

- **Tactical Excellence:** Using the best training and technology to ensure that every member of the team makes it home.
- **Mentorship:** Passing down the hard-earned lessons of the past to the next generation of investigators.

The Final Word

To the investigators, agents, and officers who are no longer with us: Your courage in the face of the most dangerous elements of our society will never be forgotten. You took the fight to the doorsteps of those who would harm our children and our neighborhoods.

This May 15th, we raise a glass and offer a salute. The case is closed, the mission is honored, and your legacy is secure.

National Police Week 2026 Resources:

- **National Vigil:** Held annually at the National Mall.
- **The Wall:** Located at Judiciary Square, Washington, D.C.
- **Support: C.O.P.S. (Concerns of Police Survivors)** provides specific resources for agencies and families dealing with line-of-duty deaths.
- **Protocol:** Ensure all department flags are at **half-staff** from sunrise to sunset on May 15th.

DISRUPTING THE DEADLY FLOW: INSIDE THE GLOBAL FENTANYL SUPPLY CHAIN

Fentanyl is universally recognized as the greatest threat facing Americans today. For citizens between the ages of 18 and 45, it is now the leading cause of death. However, this synthetic opioid does not just magically appear on our streets. It is the product of a highly orchestrated, global criminal enterprise driven primarily by the Mexican drug cartels—specifically the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco Cartel.

To combat the most devastating drug crisis in American history, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has shifted its strategy. Today, law enforcement is not just targeting the street-level dealer; they are actively dismantling every single link in the global fentanyl supply chain.

The Source: Chemical Diversion

Unlike plant-based narcotics, purely synthetic drugs like illicit fentanyl are manufactured in clandestine laboratories and require specific precursor chemicals to synthesize, extract, and purify. The DEA strictly monitors these chemicals under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) and international drug control treaties, but cartels continuously seek illicit avenues to acquire them.

The origin of the modern fentanyl supply chain often begins overseas. In 2023, the DEA announced major indictments against several China-based chemical manufacturing companies and their employees. These entities allegedly supplied traffickers in both Mexico and the United States with the raw ingredients and scientific know-how necessary to synthesize fentanyl.

Targeting the threat where it begins is paramount. As DEA Administrator Anne Milgram noted during a 2023 press conference regarding these arrests, “Targeting entire criminal drug networks, from the source of supply to the last mile of distribution, is critical to saving American lives.”

The Cartel Connection: Manufacturing and Fake Pills

Once the precursor chemicals are secured, the manufacturing phase is spearheaded by the cartels. The Sinaloa Cartel, particularly the network known as the “Chapitos,” pioneered the large-scale manufacture and trafficking of fentanyl. For the past eight years, this network has flooded the United States with the deadly synthetic opioid. In response, the DEA proactively infiltrated the Sinaloa Cartel and the Chapitos network, gaining unprecedented access to the organization’s highest levels across the globe to bring charges against its leaders.

A critical and deeply deceptive part of the manufacturing process is the production of counterfeit pills. Cartels disguise fentanyl as legitimate prescription medication to expand their market and deceive buyers. To do this, traffickers purchase industrial equipment, such as pill presses and die stamps, online. In February 2024, the DEA issued formal warnings to e-commerce platforms, demanding they stop turning a blind eye to the sale of pill presses used to manufacture these deadly fakes, asserting that those platforms will be held accountable.

The Last Mile: Social Media and Street Distribution

How does this poison bridge the gap from a clandestine lab to an American neighborhood? Through extensive investigations like “Operation Last Mile,” the DEA uncovered that the Sinaloa and Jalisco Cartels utilize multi-city distribution networks, violent local street gangs, and individual dealers.

Alarming, the “last mile” of distribution heavily relies on mainstream technology. Cartels use American social media platforms and encrypted messaging apps to run their operations and directly solicit victims. When a buyer is killed by their product, the cartels simply move on, leveraging the internet to victimize millions of other social media users.

The Financial Engine: Money Laundering

None of this global movement happens without immense financial incentive. Relentless greed is the primary driver of the cartel’s operations. The supply chain requires a robust financial network to clean its dirty money.

In June 2024, Administrator Milgram announced a significant breakthrough in international drug money laundering. A DEA investigation uncovered a deeply rooted partnership between Sinaloa Cartel associates and a Chinese criminal syndicate operating out of Los Angeles and China. By laundering drug money, these syndicates provide the cartels with the continuous financial means to produce and import their deadly poison into the United States.

“One DEA”: A United Front

The fentanyl epidemic is a multi-faceted war. Defeating it requires unprecedented action against international chemical suppliers, cartel kingpins, e-commerce vendors, social media networks, and money launderers. For narcotics officers, prevention specialists, and community leaders, understanding the anatomy of this global supply chain is the first and most vital step in disrupting it.

As the DEA continues its fight to turn over every stone and follow every lead, the mission remains clear: target the entire supply chain to save American lives.

References

United States Drug Enforcement Administration. (n.d.). Fentanyl supply chain. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved August 11, 2026, from <https://www.dea.gov/resources/fentanyl-supply-chain>

THE 2026 FRONTLINE: A YEAR IN THE FIGHT AGAINST FENTANYL

The year 2026 began with a clear, aggressive mandate from the Drug Enforcement Administration: to root out the fentanyl epidemic from the largest metropolitan hubs to quiet suburban neighborhoods. By dismantling these complex transnational criminal organizations, the DEA initiated "Operation Fentanyl Free America," aiming to disrupt the illicit financial systems and distribution networks poisoning the country.

The crackdown started early on the East Coast. In January, a major raid in New York made headlines when three men were arrested in Queens after investigators seized three illegal pill-pressing machines and over 10 pounds of fentanyl from an apartment located directly across from a public school. Shortly after, the focus shifted to Connecticut, where a New Britain man was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison for his role in a regional fentanyl distribution ring. Down south, the DEA's Louisville Field Division made a massive interception when their Chattanooga Resident Office seized 17 kilograms of fentanyl and two industrial-grade pill presses, preventing nearly 9 million lethal doses from hitting the streets.

As winter progressed, the DEA escalated its operations nationwide. In Maryland, a massive coordinated enforcement operation in Baltimore resulted in 43 arrests alongside the seizure of two kilograms of fentanyl, seven kilograms of cocaine, and 13 firearms. By February, the danger of these operations was put on stark display in Arizona. During a sting operation, two defendants, Eduardo Valenzuela Lopez and Jael Gonzalez Banuelos, were arrested following a shootout with DEA agents in Phoenix, which ultimately led to the seizure of 50,000 fentanyl pills.

Meanwhile, regulatory actions were proving just as crucial as street-level raids. In Kentucky, Richie Pharmaceutical, a pharmaceutical distributor in Glasgow, received an Immediate Suspension Order for compliance discrepancies and violations of the

Controlled Substances Act, ensuring precursor materials and controlled substances stayed within legal distribution channels.

By March, the results of Phase II of Operation Fentanyl Free America were staggering. The West Coast saw massive takedowns, particularly in Southern California. The Los Angeles Field Division reported that a massive regional surge led to 104 arrests, the seizure of over \$7 million in illicit proceeds, and the removal of 131,400 fentanyl pills from local communities. Just down the coast, the San Diego Field Division announced that their local surge executed 126 arrests and seized over 14 kilograms of fentanyl powder and nearly 46,000 pills.

The Southwest border remained a primary battleground. Operations in southern Arizona dealt a heavy blow to cartel logistics when a targeted operation in Tucson resulted in the seizure of nearly 600,000 counterfeit fentanyl pills in a single sweep. Justice was also served in the courts; in late March, an Arizona drug trafficker, Ismael Alejandro Ortiz, was sentenced to five years in prison by the Pima County Superior Court for his distribution efforts. Moving slightly north, a multi-agency drug operation involving the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and HIDTA resulted in widespread local arrests and the seizure of over a kilogram of pure fentanyl. Nearby, a separate federal case saw an Albuquerque, New Mexico man sentenced to 220 months in federal prison for extensive drug trafficking and firearm offenses.

Back on the East Coast, the spring months brought historic seizures. In April, Nankel Stuardo Solorzano was charged following a historic New Jersey bust that uncovered over 40 kilograms of fentanyl and 52 kilograms of methamphetamine hidden in a residential apartment complex. The Boston area also saw significant court victories when a Brockton, Massachusetts man, Elijah Melton, pleaded guilty in federal court to two separately charged cases involving

the distribution of kilograms of fentanyl and cocaine.

The international reach of the DEA's efforts became highly visible in New York courtrooms. In a major cartel disruption, the DEA New York Task Force removed 60,000 fentanyl pills from circulation following the targeted arrest of a high-level, cartel-linked distributor. Brooklyn prosecutors also secured an indictment when Azer Arslanov of Ocean Township, NJ, was arrested for running an illicit pipeline selling fentanyl and cocaine on the streets of Brooklyn. The international roots of these pipelines were exposed further when seven Colombian citizens were arraigned in Brooklyn federal court for their roles in a vast international narcotics trafficking conspiracy.

As summer approached, multi-state conspiracies began to unravel. In June, four co-conspirators—Macayo Parrott, Bruce Frazier, Antwann Meyers, and Robert Bowie—were indicted for a widespread interstate drug trafficking conspiracy moving fentanyl between Arizona and New York. The Midwest was not left untouched, as the DEA's Detroit Field Division announced sweeping arrests that delivered major blows to local drug trafficking networks as part of the ongoing Phase II of Operation Fentanyl Free America.

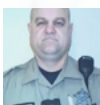
Each arrest, each raid, and each prosecution of 2026 wove together a singular narrative: from the cartel leaders orchestrating the crisis abroad to the street-level dealers pressing pills in Queens, the DEA's relentless pursuit aims to dismantle every link of the deadly fentanyl supply chain.

United States Drug Enforcement Administration. (2026). *Press releases: Fentanyl, arrest operations (2026)*. U.S. Department of Justice. Retrieved August 11, 2026, from https://www.dea.gov/what-we-do/news/press-releases?f%5B0%5D=-press_drugs%3A66&f%5B1%5D=press_subject%3A3651&f%5B2%5D=press_year%3A2026

Honoring the Fallen: Law Enforcement Losses in Early 2026

Between January and April of 2026, the law enforcement community experienced profound loss, with numerous professionals making the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. The individuals listed below represent a wide cross-section of public safety agencies, spanning from local police departments and county sheriff's offices to state highway patrols, correctional facilities, and specialized agencies across the United States and its territories.

These losses highlight the inherent risks that sworn personnel face daily. Each name recorded on the Officer Down Memorial Page represents a public servant who dedicated their life to the safety and security of their community. This list includes veteran detectives, dedicated state troopers, correctional officers, deputies, and even a department K9. Their service, bravery, and the void left in their respective departments and families stand as a solemn reminder of the true cost of maintaining public safety.



Deputy Constable Aaron Armstrong
Caldwell County Constable's Office -
Precinct 3 | TX
END OF WATCH: January 4, 2026



Police Officer Terry L. Bennett
Metropolitan Police Department | DC
END OF WATCH: January 7, 2026



Police Officer Stephen A. LaPorta
Uxbridge Police Department | MA
END OF WATCH: January 7, 2026



Police Officer Elijah Garretson
Copperas Cove Police Department | TX
END OF WATCH: January 11, 2026



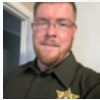
Agent Anibal Morales Aponte
Puerto Rico Police Department | PR
END OF WATCH: January 13, 2026



Deputy Sheriff Tim Jordan
Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office | LA
END OF WATCH: January 21, 2026



Deputy Sheriff Christopher Ohlmeyer
Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office | LA
END OF WATCH: January 30, 2026



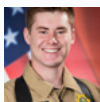
Deputy Sheriff Derrick Bonham
Weakley County Sheriff's Office | TN
END OF WATCH: January 30, 2026



Police Officer Senior Pradeep Tamang
Gwinnett County Police Department | GA
END OF WATCH: February 1, 2026



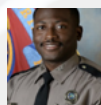
Deputy Sheriff Richard A. Haggard
Lee County Sheriff's Department | MS
END OF WATCH: February 2, 2026



Trooper Hunter R. Bennett
Arizona Department of Public Safety | AZ
END OF WATCH: February 4, 2026



Police Officer Brian D. Elliott
Beech Grove Police Department | IN
END OF WATCH: February 16, 2026



Trooper Michael Diego
Florida Highway Patrol | FL
END OF WATCH: February 18, 2026



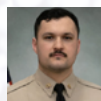
Police Officer Caleb Abney
Hahira Police Department | GA
END OF WATCH: February 19, 2026



Corporal David M. Hathcock
Montgomery Police Department | AL
END OF WATCH: February 22, 2026



Master Trooper Stien Davis, Jr.
North Carolina Highway Patrol | NC
END OF WATCH: February 22, 2026



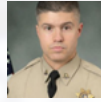
Deputy Sheriff Gabriel Ramirez
Christian County Sheriff's Office | MO
END OF WATCH: February 23, 2026



Sergeant Michael Schlattman
Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office | NM
END OF WATCH: February 23, 2026



Deputy Sheriff Kenneth Lewis
Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office | TX
END OF WATCH: February 23, 2026



Deputy Sheriff Michael Hislope
Christian County Sheriff's Office | MO
END OF WATCH: February 24, 2026



Correctional Officer Dustin Pedigo
Tennessee Department of Correction | TN
END OF WATCH: February 25, 2026



Police Officer Ronald John Bosela
New York State Environmental
Conservation Police | NY
END OF WATCH: February 27, 2026



Master Trooper Steven J. Perry
North Carolina Highway Patrol | NC
END OF WATCH: March 1, 2026



Deputy Sheriff Kaleb Mitchell
Forsyth County Sheriff's Office | NC
END OF WATCH: March 7, 2026



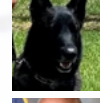
Corporal Timothy J. O'Connor, Jr.
Pennsylvania State Police | PA
END OF WATCH: March 8, 2026



Deputy Sheriff Steven Bruner
Calhoun County Sheriff's Office | FL
END OF WATCH: March 21, 2026



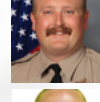
Deputy Sheriff Michael Leroy Jimerson
Jackson County Sheriff's Office | MS
END OF WATCH: April 1, 2026



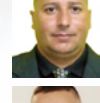
Floki
Mississippi Department of Corrections | MS
END OF WATCH: April 1, 2026



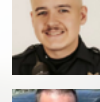
Trooper Vernon Brake
Oklahoma Highway Patrol | OK
END OF WATCH: April 8, 2026



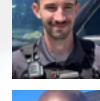
Detective Randy Hoppert
Tulare County Sheriff's Office | CA
END OF WATCH: April 9, 2026



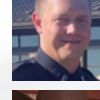
Agent Eddie Santiago-Renta
Puerto Rico Police Department | PR
END OF WATCH: April 10, 2026



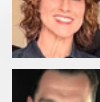
Deputy Sheriff Landon Faulkner
Hamilton County Sheriff's Office | TN
END OF WATCH: April 10, 2026



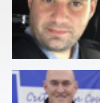
Deputy Sheriff Thomas "Walker" LeMay
LeFlore County Sheriff's Office | OK
END OF WATCH: April 19, 2026



Police Officer Dallas Hinton
Thomasville Police Department | AL
END OF WATCH: April 22, 2026



Reserve Deputy Constable Heather Avery
Jefferson County Constable's Office -
Precinct 1 | TX
END OF WATCH: April 24, 2026



Police Officer John Bartholomew
Chicago Police Department | IL
END OF WATCH: April 25, 2026



Deputy Sheriff Richard Coyle
Crittenden County Sheriff's Office | KY
END OF WATCH: April 30, 2026

A POLICEMAN'S PRAYER

Saint Michael, heaven's glorious commissioner of police, who once so neatly and successfully cleared God's premises of all its undesirables, look with kindly and professional eyes on your earthly force.

Give us cool heads, stout hearts, and uncanny flair for investigation and wise judgment.

Make us the terror of burglars, the friend of children and law-abiding citizens, kind to strangers, polite to bores, strict with law-breakers and impervious to temptations.

You know, Saint Michael, from your own experiences with the devil, that the police officer's lot on earth is not always a happy one; but your sense of duty that so pleased God, your hard knocks that so surprised the devil, and your angelic self-control give us inspiration.

And when we lay down our night sticks, enroll us in your heavenly force, where we will be as proud to guard the throne of God as we have been to guard the city of all the people.

Amen.



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