

## **Couple charged with involuntary manslaughter for August overdose death**

An Ashland couple has been indicted on a charge of involuntary manslaughter in connection to an opiate overdose that occurred in August 2016.

Christopher and Danielle Luce were indicted by the Ashland County grand jury on Thursday, according to a news release from Ashland County Prosecutor Christopher Tunnell.

Christopher Luce's mother, Sharon Parker was also indicted on two counts of obstructing justice for allegedly "providing transportation and other means for her son and his wife to elude authorities in connection with the case," according to the release.

The involuntary manslaughter charge is related to the overdose death of Ashland resident Jeffrey Sanders, who died August 9 at his home in the Almond Tree Inn, according to the release. Sanders had carfentanil in his system, according to the release.

Christopher and Danielle Luce had previously been in the Ashland County Jail and charged with a count of aggravated possession of drugs, specifically, methamphetamines. They both pleaded not guilty to the charge.

Now, the pair have been indicted on eleven charges.

According to the release, police began to investigate after Christopher Luce overdosed on August 8 at the Luce home. Ashland Police and Fire Departments were called to their Cleveland Avenue home and Luce was transported to University Hospitals Samaritan Medical Center. Both Luces were questioned following Christopher's overdose, according to the release.

The METRICH Enforcement Unit investigated both Luce's overdose and Sanders' which ultimately led to the charges being filed.

Tunnell said in the release that METRICH and Ashland Police detective Brian Evans "was able to link" the two incidents. Sander's home at the Almond Tree Inn was close to the Luce's Cleveland Avenue home, according to the prosecutor.

"Based on interviews from witnesses, along with cell phone data, a connection was made between the Luces and Sanders death which has been ruled as caused by a drug overdose after an autopsy was performed at the Cuyahoga County Coroner's Office, Tunnell said.

The Luces have been charged with involuntary manslaughter, a first-degree felony; corrupting another with drugs, a second-degree felony; two counts of aggravated trafficking in drugs, fifth-degree felonies; and three other drug related misdemeanors in connection to the August overdoses.

They were also charged with aggravated possession of drugs, a fifth-degree felony; possessing drug abuse instruments, a first-degree misdemeanor, and possession of drugs, a first-degree misdemeanor after a search warrant was executed at the Luce home on Jefferson Avenue on Feb. 10, 2017.

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