# Opioid Crisis Claims Life of 1-Year-Old Victim from the Bronx

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The current opioid crisis affecting the US has claimed the life of a 1-year-old from the Bronx. Darwin Santana-Gonzalez died after ingesting a deadly mixture of Fentanyl and heroin. His mother was subsequently charged with murder.

The little boy was found to have acetyl fentanyl in his system. The drug is a variant of the highly potent opioid Fentanyl.

Police said that the potent mixture of heroin and Fentanyl was being prepared, stamped, and packed for sale two days after Christmas inside a Bronx apartment where the child lived. The powerful opioids had been placed in packages, along with a related drug, acetyl fentanyl, creating the sort of deadly cocktail that has led to a surge of overdose deaths in the Bronx and beyond.

The authorities said that the mix somehow ended up in Darwin. By 10 a.m. that morning, the little boy had stopped breathing and was dead.

Darwin?s parents flagged down the police as they tried to rush him to the hospital. In January, they were charged with multiple counts of drug possession. However, the father fled the country.

More recently, the police announced that Darwin?s mother, Daira Santana-Gonzalez, who was in custody, had been charged with murder following her son?s death.

The 1-year-old victim?s death serves as another reminder of the dangers of Fentanyl, a drug that can kill children even through accidental ingestion of very small quantities. It remains unknown how Darwin ingested drugs.

Fentanyl variants can be 50 times stronger than heroin and have appeared in New York mixed into a number of drugs. This includes those sold as pure heroin, cocaine, and prescription pills.

?The amount of Fentanyl it would take to kill you or me would fit on the tip of your baby finger, and a small child would be much more susceptible,? said Bridget Brennan, the city?s special narcotics prosecutor.

In fact, just two days before Darwin died, an 18-month old girl, Ava Floyd, died from ingesting Fentanyl in Michigan. Her parents were charged with murder after the authorities found evidence of drug manufacturing and distribution inside their home.

The opioid epidemic in the United States has claimed the lives of almost 9,000 children and adolescents from 1999 to 2016, according to researchers from Yale University. Most deaths were ruled accidental, but some were ruled homicides.

The researchers reported that about 7 percent of the children who died from overdoses were younger than 5 years old.

In March, Darwin?s mother told The Daily News in a tearful interview that she was not aware of any drug activity in her home. She said her husband had been abusive, and that he had fled shortly after their son?s death.

?Everyone knows I loved Darwin,? she said. ?I would never do anything to hurt my son. l loved my son.?

Frances Gomez, 25, who lives in the same building as Darwin?s family, said he was smoking in the lobby on the morning of the incident when he saw the child?s father, Modesto Antonio Gonzalez, rush outside with his son?s lifeless body in his arms.

?The father was crying and saying, ?I can?t believe it. My baby, my baby, oh my God,?? Gomez said in an

interview. He said he had held Darwin in his arms briefly while the parents scrambled from the apartment to a car.

Darwin?s father was not seen again after he left the hospital that day, according to court documents. Click the link to see Chicago's top rehab placement programs.

During their investigation, police reviewed surveillance camera footage that showed people leaving the couple?s apartment with suitcases that were taken to an apartment next door. The police then obtained a search warrant and went into the apartment and found the suitcases, which were filled with drugs. However, they did not find anyone inside the apartment.

?All of these people are gone and she?s left holding the bag,? said Barry Weinstein, Ms. Santana-Gonzalez?s lawyer. ?They go away, she doesn?t go anywhere. And a month later, they arrest her.?

In recent years, the Bronx has become a focal point of the opioid epidemic. In 2017, the Bronx overtook Staten Island as the borough with the most fatal drug overdoses, with 363 of the city?s record, 1,487 fatal overdoses.

About 60 percent of victims were Hispanic, mirroring the overall demographics of the borough, according to a study of the opioid crisis from Columbia University.

Because of this, outreach workers have widely distributed Naloxone, a proven antidote against overdose. But while these efforts have helped reduce the number of fatal overdoses in most parts of the city, deaths have continued to climb in the Bronx. The overdose death rate per capita in the South Bronx was higher in 2017 than any place in the nation other than West Virginia, according to city health officials.

Police said that Darwin lived with his parents in the Morris Heights section of the Bronx, in an apartment that appeared to house that sort of operation.

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid or alcohol addiction, it is important to seek help. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in the fight against drug abuse. But because every individual is affected by addiction differently, a comprehensive program tailored to their specific needs is necessary. Look for a nearby addiction treatment facility today and find out how drug treatment programs work.

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