



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

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HUSBAND AND WIFE CHARGED WITH DISTRIBUTION OF OXYCODONE TO WIFE'S SON, THE USE OF WHICH RESULTED IN THE CHILD'S DEATH

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces the filing of a Complaint charging Billy Jack Courtright (age 35), and his wife, Linda Courtright (age 35), both of North Port, Florida, with conspiring to possess with intent to distribute and distributing oxycodone, the use of which resulted in the death of Nicholas Block (age 15). If convicted, the Courtrights each face a minimum of 20 years in federal prison and a maximum of Life.

According to the Complaint (attached), on June 19, 2009, the North Port Police Department and emergency services crews responded to a hotel room at the Budget Inn Motel (14000 S. Tamiami Trail, North Port) occupied by the Courtrights, Linda Courtright's 15-year-old son, Nicholas Block, and the Courtrights' three other children (ages 10, 9, and 7). Officers found Nicholas dead on one of the hotel beds and Linda Courtright unresponsive on another bed. They transported Linda Courtright to a hospital and the three remaining other children to a Child Protection Team location. Meanwhile, a detective noticed a pill bottle sticking out of Billy Courtright's pocket. The bottle was for a 210-pill oxycodone prescription filled the day before. Only 17 pills were inside.

Linda Courtright later stated that she, her husband, and Nicholas had chopped up

oxycodone pills and snorted them the previous night. She also stated that a physician had told her that Nicholas could not keep taking oxycodone because he would end up in the hospital or worse. Billy Courtright stated that Nicholas "took a lot" of pills over the last 3 or 4 months, that he knew that Nicholas had suffered a prior overdose, and that he, his wife, and Nicholas had had a "family gathering" the night before during which they had chopped up and snorted oxycodone.

A preliminary determination from the Sarasota Medical Examiner indicated that Nicholas Block's cause of death appeared to be a drug overdose, although the cause of death could not be officially determined until toxicology tests were complete.

A complaint is merely an allegation that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal laws and every defendant is presumed innocent unless, and until, proven guilty.

This case was investigated by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the North Port Police Department. It will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Matthew H. Perry.