

**Administrator Milgram's Remarks on Charges Filed Related to the
Overdose Death of Actor Matthew Perry**

**U.S. Attorney's Office Central District of California
August 15, 2024
Remarks as Delivered**

Morning.

Today we announce charges brought against five individuals who, together, are responsible for the death of Matthew Perry. Each of the defendants played a key role in his death - they falsely prescribed, sold or injected the ketamine that caused Matthew Perry's tragic death.

In the United States, most forms of ketamine are only approved by the Food and Drug Administration for anesthesia. A nasal spray version is approved for treatment of depression, but only in a certified medical setting. Here, Matthew Perry sought treatment for depression and anxiety and went to a local clinic where he became addicted to intravenous ketamine. When clinic doctors refused to increase his dosage, he turned to unscrupulous doctors who saw Perry as a way to make quick money.

Dr. Plasencia and Dr. Chavez violated the oath they took to care for their patients. Instead of do no harm, they did harm so that they could make more money. Without performing any medical evaluation or monitoring, they supplied Matthew Perry with large amounts of ketamine in exchange for large sums of money. Charging Perry \$2,000 for a vial that cost Dr. Chavez approximately \$12.

As Matthew Perry's ketamine addiction grew, he wanted more, and he wanted it faster and cheaper. That is how he ended up buying from street dealers, who sold the ketamine that ultimately led to his death.

In doing so, he followed the arc that we have tragically seen with many others whose substance use disorder begins in a doctor's office and ends in the street. Perry turned to a street dealer, Erik Fleming, who sourced his ketamine from a drug trafficker known as the Ketamine Queen, Jasveen Sangha. The ketamine supplied by Sangha would ultimately be the dose that took Matthew Perry's life. Sangha knew that the ketamine she supplied could be deadly, since in 2019 she had sold ketamine to Cody McLauri who died at the age of 33. But despite this knowledge, she continued to sell ketamine and methamphetamine throughout Los Angeles.

Matthew Perry's journey began with unscrupulous doctors who abused their position of trust because they saw him as a pay day, and it ended with street dealers who sold him ketamine in unmarked vials.

The desperation that led Perry to these individuals was not met with help, as it should have been from the doctors, but instead it was met with exploitation. Exploitation by those who should have guided him toward help. This betrayal of trust is at the heart of this tragedy.

Since 2023, DEA has investigated nearly 500 drug poisoning and overdose cases just like Matthew Perry's. We run a national initiative known as OD Justice where we work with our state and local law enforcement partners to conduct investigations after someone has passed away. And it is important to note that the national model we today have, in every 50 states across the United States, is based on the work that started here in Los Angeles. We began this work with our partners in the Los Angeles Police Department and with other local police departments and sheriff's offices in California, in the Los Angeles area, and with the U.S. Attorney's Office. And today it stands as our national model for this critical work.

Together as part of OD Justice, we work to bring justice for the lives that have been lost and to stop others from dying. Regardless of the size or scope of a drug distribution network, the DEA will work nonstop to uncover and disrupt this illegal activity, and in this case, the deadly activity.

I want to close by noting that Matthew Perry's death is not just a tragic overdose. After his 2020 book openly discussed his struggles with substance use disorder, Matthew Perry told podcast host Tom Power that he would prefer to be remembered for helping people rather than for his work on *Friends* as Chandler Bing. And, so perhaps what has happened, and the tragic details that we are discussing today, can help others and save lives.

I want to thank the Los Angeles Police Department, the United States Postal Inspection Service and the United States Attorney's Office in the Central District of California for their tremendous partnership and their outstanding dedication to this case.

I also have the privilege of serving every single day with the men and women of the DEA. And today I want to particularly recognize the outstanding work of our Los Angeles Field Division, as well as our diversion investigators, who tirelessly worked on this case to bring justice to the victims and the families. Thank you. It's now my privilege to introduce Postal Inspector Shields.