

NC mother's tale of daughter's drugging goes viral



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Glenwood Avenue and Cornerstone Tavern bustle with club-goers before 1 a.m. in the Glenwood South district on Friday, July 21, 2023.

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The phone rang at 3:30 a.m. on a Friday night, and Kelsey Walters woke to chilling news:

Her daughter and a friend took an Uber home from a [Glenwood South](#) bar, but by the time the ride ended, they were blacked out in the back seat — unresponsive when the driver tried to shake them awake.

The driver called 911 and EMTs found the two young women with pupils constricted to pinpoints, making the crackling sound of a death rattle. It took Narcan to revive them. When Walters got the call, they were recuperating inside a pair of ambulances, confused about everything.

Facebook post goes viral

As a terrified mother, Walters raced to the scene in Wake Forest, where she found daughter Makayla recovering.

But since then, Walters has posted an account of the ordeal that has found a viral-level audience on Facebook, getting shared more than 2,000 times and singling out what she and her daughter think happened:

Makayla and her friend got drugged with a dose of Fentanyl.

“It just scares me for our kids,” Walters, who lives in Zebulon, said in an interview Wednesday. “If they had died, people would have thought they did it to themselves. And that’s sad.”

Wake Forest police responded to the scene, Walters said, but they came to assist the EMTs and did not file a report or follow up because the incident started in Raleigh. They did ask the women if they had just had too much to drink, at which point they both produced receipts from their phones showing they had purchased only three.

As for her daughter taking the drug on purpose, or getting it accidentally while taking something else, Walters said Makayla is too old at 23 to feel the need to be deceptive. Her friend, she said, is a nurse who gets drug-tested.

“She said, ‘If I had done something at the age of 23, I would have been like, ‘Oh God, Mom, I was so stupid,’“ Walters said.

Fentanyl vs. a roofie

Her Facebook post drew responses from several women who reported similar experiences, one of whom said she was discovered in the woods behind the wheel of her car.

Unlike the more common Rohypnol, a date-rape drug commonly known as a “roofie,” Fentanyl is likely to be fatal.

For that reason, some experts think the synthetic opioid is more unlikely to get slipped into drinks than a roofie.

“If you were to spike someone’s drink with Fentanyl, the odds are you would kill them,” said Dr. Ty Schepis, a researcher at Texas State University, [in an online forum last year](#). “I haven’t heard any stories of spiked drinks or food with Fentanyl because, given how potent the drug is, you’d send someone into overdose.”

Raleigh police spokesman Lt. Jason Borneo did not respond to an emailed question about reports of drink-spiking in the city, particularly around Glenwood South.

A spokesman for NC Alcohol Law Enforcement said he would need to research the issue.

Drinks spiked with animal tranquilizer

At the N&O’s request, Wake County public health officials reached out to experts in UNC’s Street Drug Analysis Lab and at Healing Transitions. They said they had not heard of Fentanyl drugging in bars locally, but it remains possible.

There have been cases of drinks spiked with xylazine, an animal tranquilizer, and Fentanyl samples collected often contain xylazine. Regardless, test strips are available for both drugs, and public health officials recommend anyone in bars watch their drinks being prepared and not leave them unattended.

In 2022, [The Guardian listed reports from several women](#) in Austin, Texas, alleging drink-spikings after bar visits with Fentanyl as the suspected substance.

“I don’t know what it was, I was completely fine one second and then the next second throwing up, violently ill, completely black hole, do not remember anything,” said Kara Halderman, a wellness

influencer recounting her experience over a TikTok video quoted in the story. “I’ve never had an experience like this.”

Walters said her daughter and friends had both been in a bar on Glenwood South and at a hot dog vendor outside.

While her daughter began showing symptoms in the bar that were serious enough for her friends to call her an Uber, the friend who joined her on the ride to Wake Forest had not.

If her drink was spiked, it could have come from anywhere: a bartender, the hot dog stand or someone watching them. Walters is grateful for the driver and the EMTs being able to help in time.

“I’m thinking just be aware,” Walters said. “So many of my friends have college-age kids.”