

Harnett man accused of poisoning 4 people

Alleged crimes leave 12 without a parent

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Of the Record staff

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G. McLean

HARNETT COUNTY DETENTION CENTER

A Harnett County man with a history of law enforcement interaction for the past 20 years has been indicted by a grand jury for distributing fentanyl that killed four people on the morning of March 28, 2020.

The jury returned a true bill of indictment on Feb. 26 charging Gerard LaSalle McLean, 37, of 446 Raynor McLamb Road, Bunnlevel, with four counts each of death by distribution and aggravated death by distribution.

“There were two scenes,” explained Harnett County Sheriff’s Office Maj. Aaron Meredith. The first victim, Shannon Lynette McLean, was located at 112 Blake St. in Lillington at 12:49 a.m. Three other victims were found dead in a car located at 242 Nutgrass Road in Bunnlevel at 7:37 a.m.

“There were others who overdosed at both locations and survived,” Meredith shared.

The indictment alleges Gerard McLean sold fentanyl to a person identified as Courtney McLean. Investigators say this substance was ingested by Shannon McLean and she died as a result.

While looking into this indictment, the Record learned that Gerard McLean has three other related indictments stemming from his alleged distribution of fentanyl in March 2020.

Lt. R.S. Jackson, of the Harnett County Sheriff's Office and a homicide detective in the criminal investigation division, charged Gerard McLean with three counts of death by distribution on March 28, 2020. He was arrested on May 6, 2020. He has been held under a \$600,000 secured bond since that time. Based on this arrest and a prior drug conviction in Cumberland County, the jury agreed on charges of aggravated death by distribution in the deaths of Shannon McLean, Ervin Bass Jr., Laketa Vinson and Brittany Shaw.

The last three indictments were returned on July 6 and served on Gerard McLean in the Harnett County Detention Center the following day. The indictments allege that the fentanyl was purchased from Gerard McLean by Brittany Shaw and ingested by Bass, Vinson and Shaw, resulting in their deaths.

All four of Gerard McLean's alleged victims died on March 28, 2020.

Ervin "June Bug" Bass Jr., then 44, of Bunnlevel was the father of three and grandfather of one. He was laid to rest on April 4, 2020.

Shannon Lynette McLean, then 33, of Lillington was the mother of three. Her interment was on April 4, 2020.

Brittany Alexandria Shaw, then 27, of Spring Lake was the mother of three. She was buried on April 5, 2020.

Laketa Vinson, then 31, of Bunnlevel was laid to rest on April 10, 2020.

A search of court records reveals that Gerard McLean has been actively involved in the judicial system for more than 20 years. Past convictions and charges include traffic offenses, domestic violence, gun violence, possessing a firearm as a felon, numerous felony probation violations as well as controlled substance felonies through two decades.

Each charge of death by distribution in North Carolina is a Class C felony which carries a maximum sentence of 231 months (19 years) in prison, if convicted. The charge of aggravated death by distribution is considered by the courts as an enhancement. That enhancement changes the Class C felony to a Class B2 felony which is punishable by up to 393 months (32 years) in prison.

When asked if additional arrests are anticipated in this case, Meredith said no more arrests are expected.

"It's an open investigation while trial is pending and we cannot release any specific details without the prosecutors' authorization," Meredith explained.



S. McLean
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Vinson
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

“Harnett County Sheriff’s Office criminal investigators and narcotics agents, with the assistance of the district attorney’s office, have worked tirelessly on this very complex case,” said Harnett County Sheriff Wayne Coats. “We are confident the grand jury has made the correct decision to indict Gerald McLean. We will continue to fight the opioid epidemic every day by identifying and arresting drug dealers to protect all Harnett County citizens.”

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Bass



Shaw