

Robbie Hodge Took Just One Counterfeit Xanax With Tragic Consequences



Jennifer Hodge with photo of son

On November 29, 2016, Atlanta-area realtor Jennifer Bryant Hodge spent the evening with the coroner helping family cope with the recent loss of her nephew-in-law, who had died of a fentanyl overdose. Grieving over her nephew and her brother, who had died of an overdose exactly 17 years earlier, Hodge came home to find her 23-year-old son Robbie collapsed in the

bathroom. He was not breathing. EMTs rushed Robbie to the hospital, where he was declared brain dead.

Hodge presumed her son had overdosed on heroin. "Everyone else was dying from heroin," she said, "and I had no reason to believe it wasn't heroin." Toxicology results, however, showed that he had died of an overdose of benzodiazepines, a class of anti-anxiety drugs that includes Xanax, Klonopin, Valium, and Ativan. Robbie, shaken by the news of his cousin-in-law's death, took one counterfeit Xanax he got from a friend, with tragic consequences.

After reading the report, Hodge found four Xanax sitting in her kitchen cabinet and sent them to the Georgia

Bureau of Investigation for testing. They were a match for the drugs that killed her son. Hodge was chilled to realize that her daughter Ashleigh had asked her for one of those pills, presuming they were real Xanax, after Robbie's funeral, to relieve her anxiety.

Two years earlier, Jennifer and Robbie began building Realty4Rehab (R4R), a non-profit raising funds for addiction recovery as a way to pay forward a generous scholarship Robbie had received for OxyContin addiction treatment years earlier. Robbie's commitment and faith sustained him through the challenges of growing the non-profit. "Mom, God's GOT THIS," he told her. "It is going to be huge."

Robbie was "one of the most giving, caring, loving people you'll ever meet," Hodge says. "The stories that came out after his death were amazing...He got a lot of people off drugs...that was something that really took me by surprise. He left behind four years of journaling...in one of his journals he said, 'It's not about the things that you do that are great, that you tell people about, it's about doing things that are great and never saying a word.'"

Robbie leaves behind two amazing sisters Ashleigh and Lauren, who are both advocates for fighting addiction. Ashleigh moderates a Facebook group, Sibling Support for Overdose & Addiction. Hodge can be found on Facebook. ■

46 States Have a Deadly Fentanyl Problem

What is in these fake pills?

Pills that look like prescription painkillers, anti-anxiety meds, and even aspirin have all been found. They contain deadly doses of fentanyl or related analogues sourced from illegal labs overseas.

Where do they come from?

Mexican cartels and rogue Chinese manufacturers make finished pills which are then smuggled and mailed into the U.S. Illicit Chinese chemical companies also mail raw fentanyl and pill presses to ambitious U.S. drug dealers who then use them to make counterfeit prescription medication.

When did the epidemic start?

Cartels and dealers first mixed fentanyl into heroin in the 1990s, but the first reports of fake prescription medications made with fentanyl came in 2014.

As of January 2019, counterfeit fentanyl pills have been found in 46 states with confirmed deaths in 29. The full "46 States and Counting" update is available at <http://safedr.org/46states>

