



ILLEGAL PILL PRESSES: AN OVERLOOKED THREAT TO AMERICAN PATIENTS

A JOINT PROJECT BY:

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BOARDS OF
PHARMACY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
DRUG DIVERSION INVESTIGATORS, AND
THE PARTNERSHIP FOR SAFE MEDICINES**



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National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators®

 *The Partnership for*
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Moderator: Samuel J. Louis



Sam is a member of law firm Clark Hill Strasburger. He is a member of the firm's Healthcare, Food and Drug Law, and White Collar groups. Prior to joining the firm, he was an Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas.

Questions We Wanted This Whitepaper to Answer



- Why are increasing reports of pill press seizures not equating to increased instances of people being charged possession of a pill press?
- Are pill presses illegal to own or just to use?
- Who is responsible for enforcing the laws governing them?
- Are there impediments to prosecution?
- Where do criminals obtain the presses from?
- How do they learn to operate them?
- Where do they obtain the other ingredients needed to make pills?

1



2



3



4





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- > [Our Warranty](#)

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About Us

We Kos is specialized in tablet press/tablet compression /rotary table press machines for many years.

We offer :

Custom made Service

We have enough innovation ability to custom made any tablet press machine for our customers' specific

Customs Clearance Easily

Concerning shipment, if our customers have a good capacity for customs clearance, we would send the whole machine at once; if not, we would detach it into 3parts, pack into 3 parcels and deliver separately, finally pass custom easily. We have sent machines to USA, UK, Canada, Australia, Russia, Germany, India, Netherlands, Brazil etc. Rich experience makes us more reliable.

Video Shows

WE shoot videos to teach our customers how to disassemble, assemble, operate machines. Furthermore, if you have any problems with the purchased machine, we will instruct you how to settle it down with videos.

Important Findings

- Pill presses are broadly available for sale on the Internet and virtually untracked.
- The broad availability and sale of pill presses and molds allow novice criminals to make millions of doses of nearly perfect-looking counterfeit that can have deadly consequences.
- Possession of a pill press without molds, while not well regulated, is at most a violation of a Drug Enforcement Administration registration requirements carrying no jail time.
- Disrupting the availability of pill presses will be a challenging process.

Unexpected Findings

- Investigators told us that CAD files for counterfeit pill molds have been around for the last ten years.
- We found CAD files online for a pill press that can be 3D printed and we made one. Our concern is that regulatory enforcement will become more difficult as these designs become better.



The Honorable Louis J. Freeh



Louis is a former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigations and a former federal judge.

Key Findings:

- Drug importation would increase the threat of illegitimate products entering the United States, fueling criminal organizations' activities and profits.
- Drug importation proposals would worsen the opioid crisis – a crisis that has already grown substantially worse due to the powerful opioid fentanyl and fentanyl analogue-laced counterfeit pills being produced by illegal drug trafficking organizations, including in China, and reaching the United States through Canada and Mexico.
- Already overburdened law enforcement and regulatory capacity would be unable to ensure a safe prescription drug supply under importation.
- Although no findings have been made public, the creation of an FDA working group to examine the feasibility of any drug importation scheme—even limited—is a step backwards.

ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT ON THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF DRUG IMPORTATION PROPOSALS ON U.S. LAW ENFORCEMENT

FREEH, SPORKIN, AND SULLIVAN LLP
FREEH GROUP INTERNATIONAL
SOLUTIONS, LLC



George Karavetsos



George is an attorney at DLA Piper. Previously, he served as director of FDA's Office of Criminal Investigations.

Gregg Jones



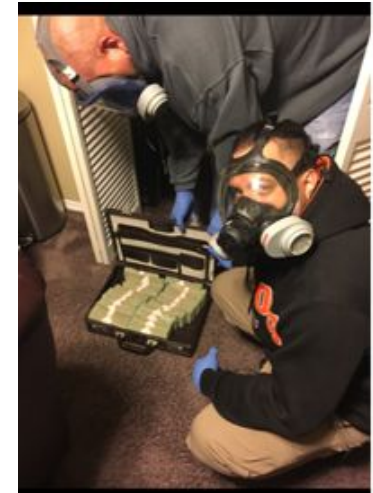
Gregg is the Compliance Senior Manager for the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, the professional association that assists its member boards of pharmacy in the U.S., the territories, and Canada in the shared mission of protecting public health.

Mark Baughman



Mark is a 35 year law enforcement veteran, who is retired from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and from the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office Narcotics Division. Mark is currently employed by Forum Capital Group in Jacksonville, Florida.

Pinellas SO Drug Investigation Operation "Top Dog Hot Dog"



Joe Patterson

Atlanta, Georgia



Lisa's son, Joe, died on February 15, 2015 after a friend gave him a counterfeit oxycodone pill laced with fentanyl after he hurt himself during a workout.

She is now a proud parent to Joe's son, Joseph Gabriel.



Left: Counterfeit pills from Joe's wallet found after his death.
Right: Casey Trichel
Photo courtesy of Lisa Hicks.

Tosh Ackerman

Aptos, CA

The evening of October 27, 2015, 29-year-old Aptos, California resident Tosh Ackerman took a benadryl and part of a Xanax pill to help him sleep. He never woke up, and his girlfriend found him dead the next day.

Investigation showed that Ackerman's Xanax was counterfeit. It contained a fatal dose of fentanyl.

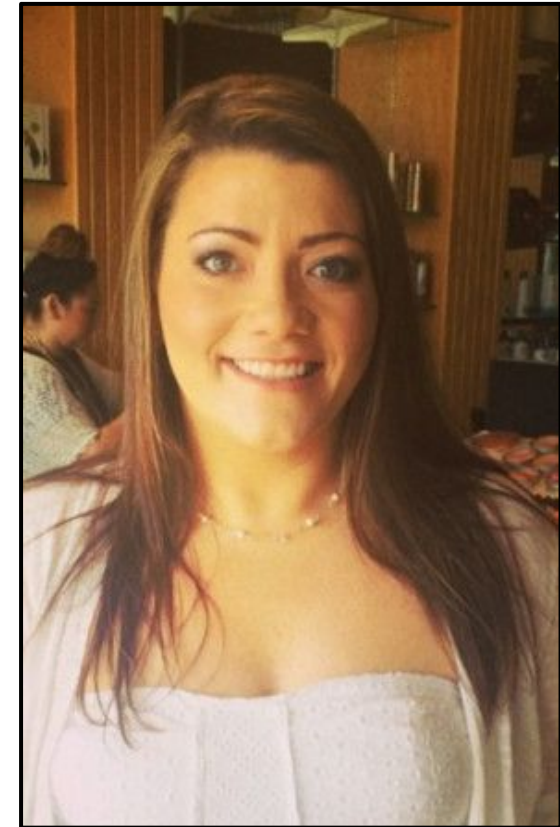




The remaining three quarters of the counterfeit Xanax Tosh Ackerman took.
Photo courtesy of Carrie Luther and Santa Cruz, CA County Coroner's office.

Maggie DiVita Crowley, Wellington, FL

On the evening of September 1, 2016, in Wellington, Florida, 34-year-old restaurant manager Margaret DiVita Crowley took a single oxycodone pill she had purchased from an acquaintance to deal with her chronic back pain. She died almost instantly of furanyl fentanyl poisoning.



Orthopedic surgeon Johnny Benjamin, Jr. of Vero Beach, FL made the pill that killed Maggie, using drugs and a pill press he ordered on the internet.

Robbie Hodge, Atlanta, GA

On November 29, 2016, Robbie Hodge collapsed in the bathroom, not breathing. Rushed to the ER, he was declared brain dead. He died of an overdose of benzodiazepines in a counterfeit Xanax he received from a friend.

Hodge found four Xanax sitting in her kitchen cabinet and sent them to the Georgia Bureau of Investigations for testing. They were a match for the drugs that killed her son.



Ashley Romero

Grand Junction, Colorado



Andrea's daughter, Ashley Romero, died on June 11, 2018 after taking a counterfeit prescription Oxycodone to alleviate the pain of her pancreatitis.

The pill was fentanyl laced and killed her almost instantly.



Joshua Holton

Nashville, Tennessee

Joshua Holton died on Sep. 15, 2016 after consuming a counterfeit Xanax made with fentanyl after seeing a promotion for online pharmacies in a TED talk.

Kenneth McCall



Kenneth is an Associate Professor and Director of Residency Programs & Professional Affairs at the University of New England's College of Pharmacy.

Media Resources

Today's Event

- NABP, NADDI and PSM's Pill Press Whitepaper was officially released March 19, 2019
- A copy of the paper is available at the URL below.
- You can find photos of the 3D printed pill press we found on the internet and fabricated, along with videos of a pill press in use there as well.

Additional Resources

- Victim advocates are available for media interviews
- Press contact:
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farheena@safemedicines.org