

# Counterfeit Pill Takes the Life of a Hardworking College Graduate



Travis Jacobson

24-year-old Travis Jacobson was excited about an upcoming job interview. Recently graduated from Sacramento State University, he moved to Los Angeles to live with his best friend Landon and launch a career in public relations. Sadly, Travis never made it to that interview.

Wanting a good night's sleep beforehand, he took a Xanax pill that turned out to be a fake made with fentanyl, and it took his life.

Travis had grown up in Visalia, CA, where he was an energetic, intensely social and inquisitive child who played a variety of sports. He was well known for his loyalty, thoughtfulness and compassion. Hardworking and enthusiastic, he was heavily involved in high school clubs and sports. According to his father, Dr. Jerry Jacobson, he went out of his way to be "kind, engaging and patient with senior relatives, younger relatives, neighbors." "Travis had such a sweet disposition," his aunt Nancy told us. "He was so respectful of others, two qualities hard to find among young people." His friends Landon and Sydney found him charming and outstandingly friendly.

Travis had spent the weekend before the interview in Visalia visiting his mother, Carolyn Britten. He studied for a Salesforce certificate, worked out, and played pool with his mom, who made him his favorite food. He even got up early to work out with the high school water polo team.

Wanting to be relaxed and alert for the interview, Travis purchased Xanax from a high school acquaintance. Back in L.A. on August 13, 2019, Travis had dinner and gave his other flatmate one of the Xanax before he went to bed. Travis's roommate went to work the next morning, only to come home to make the horrible discovery that evening that Travis was dead.

Carolyn thought it was a terrible, sick joke when she received the call that her only child was dead. It seemed impossible that such a loving son and loyal friend, "so full of life, so kind, so fun," as his mother and father

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## 49 States Have a Deadly Fentanyl Problem

### What is in these fake pills?

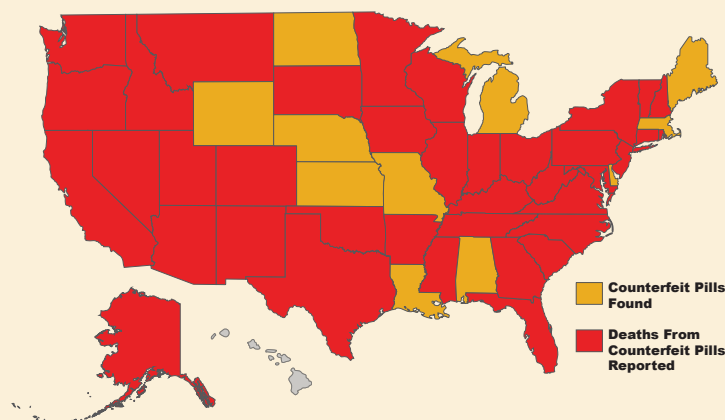
Pills that look like prescription painkillers, anti-anxiety meds, and even aspirin have all been found. They contain deadly doses of fentanyl or related analogues sourced from illegal labs overseas.

### 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.



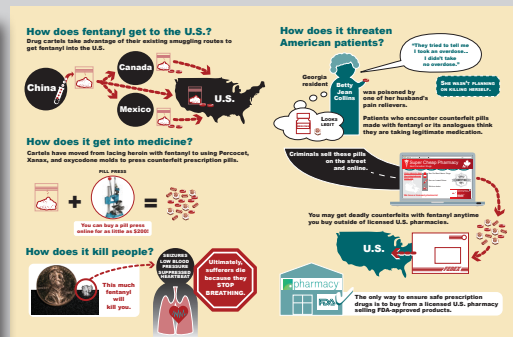
**As of August 2019, counterfeit fentanyl pills have been found in 49 states with confirmed deaths in 38. "48 States and Counting," the most recent update, is available at <http://safedr.org/48states>**

described him, could have died so unexpectedly. But Jerry, an Emergency Medicine doctor, suspected that the Xanax must have been laced with something—probably fentanyl. Two months later the family received Travis's toxicology report, which showed small amounts of alcohol, ibuprofen, Xanax, and a lethal dose of fentanyl.

Though Travis's life was cut brutally short, there is no way to pursue legal justice for his death. The police declared it an accidental overdose, closed the case, and disposed of the remaining pills. Said his sister Delaney, "I lost my brother two weeks before my wedding day. He was meant to sit next to me on the happiest day of my life. The void I feel from this incredible man and brother will forever live within me."

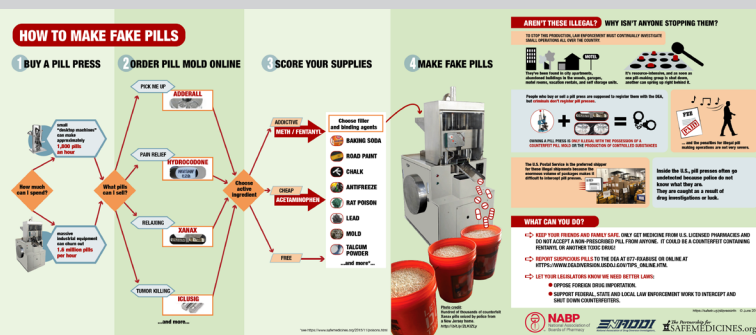
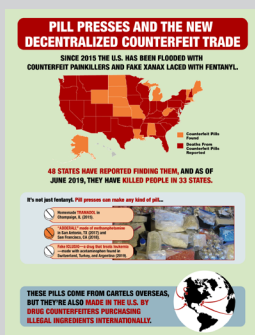
Travis's parents want everyone to know the risks of purchasing counterfeit medicine. At the end of Travis's memorial service, Jerry beseeched the mourners to share Travis's tragedy as a warning to others, "If you buy a drug that someone says is Xanax, you have no idea what it really is...A lot of times these drugs are mixed in somebody's house...there's no testing and no standards." He asked everyone to share information about counterfeit fentanyl pills and other street drugs. "Our dream, our vision, is to prevent this from happening to anyone again—to any of you, any of our friends." ■

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