

Second arrest made in alleged food drugging miscarriage plot

Kyle Werner

Des Moines Register | USA TODAY NETWORK

A second arrest has been made in a case where a Dec-rah couple is accused of trying to cause a woman to miscarry by lacing a lasagna with oxycodone.

Matthew Uthoff, 35, was arrested on Thursday, March 26. He has been charged with a controlled substance violation, two counts of administering harmful substances to an adult, two counts to a juvenile and attempted nonconsensual termination of a pregnancy, all felonies, as well as one count of child endangerment, an aggravated misdemeanor.

Uthoff's wife, Amber Snow, 36, was arrested on the same charges on March 10.

Investigators determined the intent of the laced lasagna was to cause a woman to miscarry. Snow shares custody of her minor child with a member of the woman's family, according to court filings. Snow's child knew about the lasagna and Snow's intentions, objected to it, and was present when the lasagna was delivered to the victim's family, according to court records.

The lasagna was tested by the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation's Criminalistics Laboratory, where it was confirmed that the dish was laced with oxycodone.

Both are being held in the Winneshiek County Jail, each on a \$100,000 cash bond. Both have no-contact orders against them from the alleged victim.

Snow has a hearing scheduled for March 31 and arraignment for April 7. According to court filings, Uthoff does not have a pending court date.

Kyle Werner is the breaking news and public safety reporter for the Register. Reach him at kwerner@registermedia.com.

Recalling his smile, his laugh, his short time here

Grimes boy's death in cold weather March 14 devastates family

Kyle Werner

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Mabel Jilo remembers her 5-year-old son's contagious laugh and big smile.

Wesley "Alvin" Dahn was in kindergarten at South Prairie Elementary in Grimes and not yet old enough to start losing his baby teeth when he was reported missing. The sheriff's office put out an urgent alert in the early morning search for Alvin, who had autism and a tendency to wander.

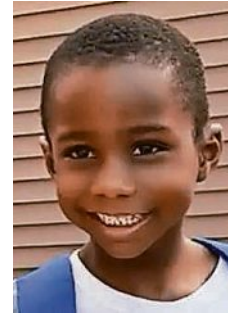
The small boy was found about a block away and unresponsive less than two hours after his family and police started looking for him.

He died at the hospital from hypothermia, his mother, Jilo, 39, of Grimes, said in an interview with the Des Moines Register. It was 34 degrees that morning.

Alvin, who was diagnosed with autism and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder at 3 years old, loved taking baths and playing in the water. He also liked to play outside, particularly on the swing sets at nearby playgrounds. He was the youngest of five with siblings aged 23, 18, 15 and 9.

"He was a little sweet boy, even though he didn't talk," Jilo said. "He didn't talk, but he would always smile when you called him." One of Alvin's siblings told his mother while she was on the phone with the Register that Alvin should be remembered by his smile. "His smile and his laugh," Jilo repeated back.

Because he had autism, Jilo's biggest fear was her young son wandering and going missing. Wandering, also known as elopement, is the tendency for a person with autism to leave the safety of a responsible person's care or safe area, which may result in potential harm or injury, according to the National Autism Asso-



Dahn

ciation.

Jilo did everything she could to keep Alvin from wandering, having her other children keep an eye on him when she wasn't around. She would never open windows around Alvin in fear of him leaving through one.

"I know his problem. I don't want something to happen to him," Jilo said. "When it comes to Alvin, it's not a joke. It's a serious thing."

That fear came true on Friday, March 13, around 4 a.m., when Alvin left the bedroom he shared with two of his siblings. He left the front door open. Jilo found his diaper near the house.

He had "nothing but a red shirt on him," she said. Jilo helped police search at about 5 a.m. once she found he was missing, but was told to go home while they continued. Alvin was found unresponsive at about 6:45 a.m. in a business parking lot about a block east of where he had last been seen. He was taken to Blank Children's Hospital, where he was declared dead.

His mother created a GoFundMe fundraiser to help her family recuperate after the loss of Alvin.

"Right away after hearing such death news of my beloved son, I was mentally and emotionally devastated and dropped on the floor crying," Jilo said in the fundraiser post.

Jilo said she is looking for a new place to live because she "can't come in this house because of what happened. I'm just trying to move out because it hurts. I'm so heartbroken."

"I don't know how to deal with this," said Jilo, adding she breaks down whenever she sees his shoes.

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Murder

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"I don't understand" why his father killed his mother, especially given the family had been planning to move her to a nursing home.

"Even now, at times I wake up around 2 in the morning reliving that moment (I learned about her death)," he said. "It's like my body remembers even if I try not to."

In pronouncing the sentence, Judge Terry Rickers called the case "amazingly sad" but said Hoelsing's actions were clearly unjustifiable.

"Somehow, you managed to rationalize in your mind that taking her life was the solution. Obviously, that was not the solution. And the way you chose to take her life was horrific," he said. "Regardless of how much suffering she experienced when you did that, she deserved none of it. She deserved an opportunity to seek appropriate care and live out the remaining days of her life."

In addition to his prison term, Hoelsing was ordered to pay \$150,000 to his wife's estate.

William Morris covers courts for the Des Moines Register. He can be contacted at wrmorris2@registermedia.com or 715-573-8166.



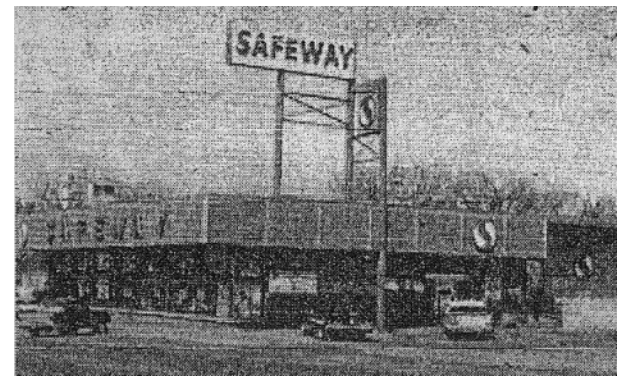
Did you know... what building this was and where it was located? PHOTOS PROVIDED BY LARRY VODENIK

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Larry Vodenik

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ownership changes. On May 1, the Grand will have new ownership and maybe some changes, but I'm just happy Perry will still have a Grand Theatre. If you have gift certificates remember to use them prior to May 1. All of us must make use of the local businesses we have to be sure they thrive and support our Perry business community. I'm going to start a weekly, or at least monthly, MOVIE night for myself. See you at the movies!

PERRY CHIEF

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