



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
TODD SPITZER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Date: January 12, 2023
Case# 23HF0054

Kimberly Edds
Director of Public Affairs
Office: 714-347-8405, Cell: 714-504-1917
media@da.ocgov.com

**Mother of 23-month-old Boy who Stopped Breathing after being
Exposed to Fentanyl
is Charged with Felony Child Abuse, Endangerment**

SANTA ANA, Calif. – A 30-year-old mother has been charged with felony child abuse and endangerment for allowing her 23-month-old son to be exposed to fentanyl, causing the baby to stop breathing. The baby was revived with CPR and is currently hospitalized at CHOC.

Jacqueline Hunter, 30, of Irvine, has been charged with one felony count of child abuse and endangerment, two misdemeanor counts of possession of a controlled substance, and one felony enhancement of causing great bodily injury on a child under the age of 5.

She faces a maximum sentence of 12 years in state prison if convicted on all counts. Hunter has pleaded not guilty to all charges. Prosecutors argued for bail to be set at \$500,000 given the seriousness of the charges, but an Orange County Superior Court Commissioner Sheri Sandeck deviated from the scheduled bail of \$100,000 and set bail at \$30,000 over the objection of prosecutors.

On January 9, 2023, after returning home from a doctors' appointment for a broken leg, the 23-month-old began struggling to breathe and then stopped breathing entirely. His father gave him CPR until paramedics arrived.

At the hospital, the baby tested positive for fentanyl.

A search warrant of the Irvine home where the baby lived uncovered a baggie of fentanyl and Xanax pills. Hunter is accused of possessing the drugs without the knowledge of her husband and allowing the baby to access the drugs.

"There is absolutely no reason that little boy is sitting in a hospital bed right now unable to breathe on his own," said Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer. "A parent's only job is to protect their children from harm and because of a selfish decision by his mother, this baby is fighting to survive. We all know how deadly fentanyl is and for a mother to refuse to provide information to paramedics to help save her child is beyond unbelievable. The Orange County bench needs to start taking fentanyl cases seriously – and impose the appropriate bail that reflects the seriousness of the offense and the potentially irreversible damage this woman did to her own child."

Deputy District Attorney Bethel Cope-Vega of the Family Protection Unit is prosecuting this case.