

Woman pleads guilty in prison heroin scheme

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BUFFALO — A woman has pleaded guilty in connection with a heroin smuggling scheme which resulted in three deaths last year at Attica Correctional Facility.

Elizabeth Camue Martinez, 33, of Buffalo pleaded guilty Tuesday to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute, and intent to distribute.

The charge carries up to a 20-year prison sentence, along with up to a \$1 million fine. Sentencing has been set for Jan. 29.

Camue Martinez smuggled grams of heroin and ounces of marijuana into the prison between April 2013 and December 2013, according to U.S. District Attorney William J. Hochul Jr.'s office.

She provided the drugs to her husband, Andres Martinez, 28, who was incarcerated there at the time. She knew he would distribute the drugs to other inmates.

The investigation was launched Dec. 5 after inmates Saleem Ali, 51, and Glendon Jackson, 25, were found dead inside their cells. Each man had died after snorting pure Fentanyl, believing it to be heroin.

The drug is an opiate about 100 times stronger than morphine. It's typically used as an anesthetic, or for treating chronic and cancer pain.

During the course of the investigation, Camue Martinez was connected to a third drug death at the prison.

Avery Cureton, 45, had been found unresponsive in his cell on Sept. 16, 2013. His cause of death was listed as acute heroin intoxication.

As part of her plea, Camue Martinez admitted purchasing the heroin and marijuana from Jerome J. Tallington, 25, of Buffalo.

Camue Martinez, Andres Martinez and Tallington were charged in February 2014. Charges are pending against the two men.

Andres Martinez has been transferred to Clinton Correctional facility in Clinton County.

“The willingness of some to commit crime does not end simply by presence inside prison,” Hochul said in a news release. “In this case, the vigilance of staff, law enforcement, and local prosecutors made this prosecution possible. Prison staff everywhere must continuously monitor their institutions, so that inmates once and for all lose the ability to break the law.”

The plea is the result of an investigation by the Drug Enforcement Administration; state police; the New York State Police Community Narcotics Enforcement Team; the Erie County Sheriff's Department; the Wyoming County District Attorney's Office; and the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision.