

**STATEMENT  
OF  
ELIZABETH CARR**  
**Before The**  
**U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations**  
**Hearing On**  
***BUYER BEWARE: THE DANGER OF PURCHASING***  
***PHARMACEUTICALS OVER THE INTERNET***  
**June 17, 2004**

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Good morning Chairman Coleman and Senator Levin. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Elizabeth Carr and on April 10, 2003, I lost my husband to an overdose of Darvon, a controlled substance. My husband, Jim, purchased this drug and others over the Internet from rogue pharmacies located in South Africa, Thailand, Spain and other foreign countries.

Jim and I were married in 1996. He moved from Los Angeles to accept a job in Sacramento, California. This was a significant climate change for him as he was used to very mild weather in Los Angeles. My husband was a former tri-athlete and marathon runner. He also loved to mountain bike. Through these activities, he dislocated his hip and had to have operations on both knees.

By 2002 it was painful for him to even take a brisk walk and he said it was always worse in the winter. In January of 2003, Jim told me he was going to purchase some codeine for his pain over the Internet. I didn't think much about it at the time because codeine was in cough syrup when I was growing up. He never told me how much he was taking and because he worked at home, I never saw the packages coming in the mail. However, by the end of March, I grew concerned because I could see a change in his demeanor. I confronted Jim about this and asked him to stop, which he agreed to do.

On the day before my husband died, he was behaving very disoriented when I got home from work. When I quizzed him about what was wrong, he explained that he decided to turn to Darvon to wean himself off the Codeine. This was the first time he had taken the drug Darvon. He went to sleep that night and never woke up.

The autopsy showed that Jim had eight times the recommended dosage of Darvon in his system. After Jim died, I received five packages in the mail that Jim had purchased weeks before he died. By comparing his credit card statements, the dates posted on the packages, and the dates the packages arrived, I ascertained that the time from order to receipt from these pharmacies took several weeks. In fact, all five packages were from overseas and none had a pharmacy label. Some had instructions but most of the instructions were not in English. One of the packages even had a green tag attached on the outside that said "Sweets."

As I continued to go through my husband's things, I found all kinds of empty pill containers. I also looked into his computer activities and discovered that he had done quite a bit of research on different kinds of drugs and how to get them. Some websites required him to fill out a short questionnaire before he could get the medication, while others did not require anything. All the overseas pharmacies required payment in credit card form and were shipped via U.S. mail.

After Jim's death, I worked with the California Medical Board to try to hold someone accountable for the delivery of these substances to my husband. However, there was nothing the California Medical Board could do because the only documents I could provide for them did not implicate doctors licensed in California. They told me something needed to be done at the federal level.

That is why I am here today Senator Coleman. I am here to tell you what is happening to real people not just numbers or statistics on a piece of paper. This problem affects everyone in our society in one way or another and something must be done to stop these companies from making money off of people's trust, need, or lack of awareness.

Thank you.

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