

Mother warns of date-rape drug

Jury selection for four accused in girl's death starts today

DETROIT (AP) — Samantha Reid's mother remembers the time when her daughter, at age 10, saved her allowance for weeks to throw her a surprise birthday party, even inviting 30 friends she found in her mom's address book.

Judi Clark recalls how even as a teen-ager, Samantha would meet her at the door each night and ask about her day at work.

The last memory she has of her daughter is from a year ago, when Samantha, at 15, lay comatose, poisoned by the "date-rape drug" GHB, and doctors said it was time to let her go.

"They said 'We keep bringing her back, and she keeps dying. We've brought her back three times, and she's died three times. How many times do you want to let her keep dying?'" says Clark, her voice quaking.

GHB — gamma-hydroxybutyrate — is an odorless and nearly tasteless drug linked to at least 58 deaths and more than 5,700 overdoses nationwide since 1990.

Public sales are banned by the Food and Drug Administration.

Today, in one of the nation's first trials resulting from a GHB-related death, jury selection begins for the manslaughter trial of four men accused of slipping the drug into Samantha's soft drink at a party.

Authorities say young people often believe that GHB and other "club drugs" aren't "real drugs" like cocaine, or they take them unknowingly as Samantha did. Recipes and ingredients

— some of them common household products — are easily available from the Internet and other sources.

"A lot of people who use them believe they are benign drugs and don't see them for what they are — taken under some circumstances, life-threatening," says Alan Leshner, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

From the start, Samantha was on the go. "Hammy Sammy," they called the attention-craving youngster even before her first birthday.

"If there was no action happening, she'd make it happen," her mother says.

Allowances often went to help pay her friends' way into movies. She befriended children who others ridiculed.

"She loved to make other people happy," Clark says. "She was there for the underdog."

Mother and daughter talked often and openly.

"I told her about people slipping stuff into drinks, but it was never something I harped on because she was only 15," Clark says.

"When you think of Rohypnol (another date-rape drug), you think of bars. You never dream, my God, it's going to happen to a 15-year-old."

In January 1999, Samantha, two friends and four guys they'd just met went to a party on Grosse Ile, an affluent island community in the Detroit River.

Samantha was handed a soft drink, and moments later she was vomiting and unconscious.

On the Rise

Emergency hospital visits related to gamma-hydroxybutyrate, more commonly known as a "date-rape drug" have rocketed nationally from 20 in 1992 to 1,283 in 1998.

- Gamma-hydroxybutyrate, or GHB, is an odorless and nearly tasteless drug.
- It has been linked to more than 58 deaths and more than 5,700 overdoses since 1990.
- GHB is hard to trace and is often out of the body within 24 hours.
- It can make users feel euphoric. It can also lead to breathing problems, seizures, long-term brain effects, coma and death.
- A person who drinks a soda laced with a few drops of GHB can lose consciousness within 20 minutes and have no memory of what happened.

Source: The Associated Press

Delan Lonowski/DN

Her best friend, then 14, drank what she believed to be orange juice and vodka, felt herself "getting drunk pretty quick" and also lost consciousness. The third girl escaped serious effects.

An attorney for one of the defendants says his client spiked the drinks with what he believed was only a harmless intoxicant. Two other defendants say they were unaware GHB was even present.

The fourth says he was gone or in his bedroom most of the night the girls were drugged.

GHB, originally developed as a surgical anesthetic, is sometimes used as an aphrodisiac, or a weight loss aid, or by body builders as a supplement. It's hard to trace, often out of the body within 24 hours.

It can make users feel euphoric. It also can lead to breathing problems, seizures, long-term effects on the brain, coma and death.

"This has become the upscale, inclusive social-scene thing to do," says Arthur Dean of the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America.

A person who drinks a soda laced with a few drops of GHB can lose consciousness within 20 minutes and have no memory of what happened, hence its reputation as a "date-rape drug" used to render women helpless against sexual advances.

GHB-related hospital emergency visits have rocketed nationally from 20 in 1992 to 1,283 in 1998, according to the Drug Abuse Warning Network.

Dartmouth students apathetic about primaries

The Dartmouth
Dartmouth College

HANOVER, N.H. (U-WIRE) — Despite the national media coverage of the New Hampshire primary and visits by many Oval Office hopefuls to Hanover, most students contacted by The Dartmouth said they were not closely following the race.

With the strategic importance of this state's primary, Dartmouth students have been able to see most of the major contenders during campaign visits to Hanover, with the notable exception of Republican frontrunner Texas Gov. George W. Bush.

However, many students interviewed said they were not impressed by

the political show and have not had much personal involvement with the campaigns.

Of the 30 students interviewed, only two were planning to vote in one of the upcoming presidential primaries.

"This is an average presidential election, and there are a sorry lot of candidates," freshman Constantine Vetoshev said.

"Politics isn't my thing," said one sophomore. "In fact, who exactly is [Democratic contender and former Senator] Bill Bradley?"

Still most students said they planned to vote in the national elections in November and predicted that, most likely, the presidential race would be between Democrat Vice President Al

Gore and Bush.

In the short run, most students predicted that New Hampshire Republicans would vote for Bush, while state Democrats would nominate Gore.

"Bush and Gore have name recognition," junior Allison Lange said, adding that they were both most likely to win the actual party nomination.

"Gore is competent and hasn't really made any major mistakes. The Democrats aren't going to deprive him what they see as his right," sophomore Allison Schumitsch said.

Other students said Bush's immense fundraising success and his recent win at the Iowa caucus would give him the edge.

Only one student predicted a primary result that was not a Bush victory.

"[Arizona Senator John] McCain has visibility and dedication and commitment to New Hampshire," senior Mark Stein said. However, Stein said, the national Republican nominee will still be Bush.

In October, the College played host to the first major debates of the primary season — one night featured the Democratic contenders Gore and Bradley, while the next evening, McCain, Sen. Orrin Hatch of (R-Utah), former Ambassador Alan Keyes, publisher Steve Forbes and former Reagan administration official Gary Bauer took the stage for the Republican debate.

AIDS-related death rate high among U.S. priests

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Roman Catholic priests in the United States are dying from AIDS-related illnesses at a rate four times higher than the general population and the cause is often concealed on their death certificates, The Kansas City Star reported Sunday.

The newspaper said death certificates and interviews with experts indicated several hundred priests have died of AIDS-related illnesses since the mid-1980s and hundreds more are living with HIV, the virus that causes the disease.

"I think this speaks to a failure on the part of the church," said Auxiliary Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of the Archdiocese of Detroit. "Gay priests and heterosexual priests didn't know how to handle their sexuality, their sexual drive. And so they would handle it in ways that were not healthy."

The Star received 801 responses to questionnaires that were sent last fall to 3,000 of the 46,000 priests in the United States. The margin of

error of the survey was 3.5 percentage points.

Six of 10 priests responding said they knew of at least one priest who had died of an AIDS-related illness, and one-third knew a priest living with AIDS. Three-fourths said the church needed to provide more education to seminarians on sexual issues.

"How to be celibate and to be gay at the same time, and how to be celibate and heterosexual at the same time, that's what we were never really taught how to do. And that was a major failing," Gumbleton said. Asked about their sexual orientation, 75 percent said they were heterosexual, 15 percent said they were homosexual, and 5 percent said they were bisexual.

The Star said precise numbers of priests who have died of AIDS or become infected with HIV is unknown, partly because many suffer in solitude. When priests tell their superiors, the cases generally are handled quietly.

World and Nation Datelines

China

U.S. entrepreneur declared brain dead after beating

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — A Silicon Valley entrepreneur visiting Beijing for a high-tech conference sponsored by the Chinese government was declared brain dead after he was severely beaten and left unconscious in a bar, relatives say.

Family members told the San Jose Mercury News that Steven Leung, chairman of Mountain View-based Scenix and the president of Santa Clara-based Emvix Communications Inc., was found unconscious with a head wound on Jan. 18 in a karaoke bar several hours after the conference.

Leung, a resident of San Jose and the father of three, is now being treated in a Hong Kong hospital.

Ivory Coast

Kenya Airways jet crashes into the sea, at least 9 survive

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP) — A Kenya Airways jet carrying 169 passengers and 10 crew members crashed Sunday night into the sea, shortly after taking off from Abidjan, airport officials said.

At least nine people survived the crash.

The plane, an Airbus 310, took off at 9:08 p.m., and crashed just one minute later, according to George Dapre Yao, the head of air traffic at Abidjan's Felix Houphouet-Boigny Airport.

The plane, which was en route to Lagos, Nigeria, carried 167 adult passengers and two children, Yao said.

Chicago

Governor blocks executions during investigation

CHICAGO (AP) — Illinois has seen more of its death sentences overturned than it has carried out, so Gov. George Ryan plans to block executions altogether pending a special investigation, the Chicago Tribune reported Sunday.

The decision, to be announced today, would make Illinois the first state in the country to stop executions while it reviews its death penalty procedures, the newspaper reported.

Ryan will create a special panel to study the state's capital punishment system in general and determine what happened in the 13 cases in which men were wrongly convicted since Illinois reinstated the death penalty in 1977.

Of the 38 death penalty states, only Nebraska has taken a similar step. But after the Nebraska Legislature passed a moratorium last year, the governor vetoed it.

Boston

Online gambling increases during Super Bowl Sunday

BOSTON (AP) — Whether gamblers placed their money on the St. Louis Rams or the Tennessee Titans, growing numbers of them made their wagers online.

Cyberspace wagering on Sunday's Super Bowl was expected to more than double this year, compared to last, to as much as \$50 million, said Jonathan Ader, who monitors the gaming industry for Bear, Stearns & Co.

That's a pittance compared to the total amount of legal and illegal bets on Sunday's contest, which is predicted to come in at between \$50 billion and \$100 billion.

WEATHER

TODAY

TOMORROW

Sunny
high 40, low 20

Mostly Sunny
high 36, low 22

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