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PRESS RELEASE

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REDWOOD FALLS MAN FOUND GUILTY OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE SALE IN THE THIRD DEGREE

REDWOOD FALLS, MN --- A Redwood County jury found Brandon Lee Jones, Sr., 36, of Redwood Falls guilty of one count of Sale of a Controlled Substance in the Third Degree. The jury deliberated for approximately one hour on February 8th, 2024, before delivering the guilty verdict around 6:30 p.m.

According to the criminal complaint, evidence discovered during the investigation, and testimony provided at trial, on August 16, 2022, at approximately 11:15 a.m., Jones sold .876 grams of fentanyl for \$150 to a confidential informant during a controlled buy, supervised by the Agents from the Brown Lyon Redwood Renville Drug Task Force. The sale was arranged earlier in the day via Facebook Messenger between Jones and the confidential informant ("CI"). At approximately 10:30 a.m., CI arrived at Jackpot Junction Casino. Surveillance footage showed Jones had arrived at the casino in a dark colored Tahoe shortly before CI arrived. When he arrived he parked his Tahoe in front of the casino entrance and both he and his female passenger, later identified as Denesse Ren'e Buckanaga (DOB 07/28/2000), exited the vehicle and entered the casino.

Upon arrival, CI waited outside the casino on a bench. While waiting, CI received multiple messages from Jones confirming he was inside the casino. Eventually, Buckanaga exited the casino and CI and Buckanaga got into Jones' Tahoe. Inside the vehicle, Buckanaga gave CI .876 grams of fentanyl and the CI gave her \$150 cash.

While being fingerprinted at the Redwood County Jail, after being charged with the sale, Jones posted a threat to his Snapchat account which consisted of a photo of himself and the caption,

“At the jail getting fingerprinted for 3rd degree sales from a year ago. Whoever set me up I'm giving u one chance to not show up for court. If u show up wen I take it to trial u Kno the rest.”

Shannon Ness, Assistant Redwood County Attorney, who prosecuted the case, told the jury in her closing argument, “Ms. Buckanaga was the one who actually delivered the fentanyl to the confidential informant. She along with Defendant made a drug sale. The fact Buckanaga delivered it does not make Defendant any less culpable. They are what we call co-conspirators. The definition of sale includes the offer and the delivery of drugs. The very instant there was an offer made by Defendant via the Facebook messages to sell a gram of “down” to the confidential informant for \$150 – pursuant to Minnesota statute a sale occurred. Defendant was using Buckanaga to do the dirty work.”

Jones will be sentenced on March 25, 2024, at the Redwood County Courthouse.

The hard work of the BLRR Drug Task Force continues and they took yet another dangerous controlled substance off the streets and out of the hands of those who utilize these deadly substances for their own profit. For that, we are thankful.

If you or someone you know is struggling with substance use, please call, 1-800-662-HELP(4357), or visit the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration website, <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>, for free, confidential, 24-7, 365 treatment referral and information.