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FILED - USDC - FLMD - TPA

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA  
TAMPA DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

WUHAN JINSHANG IMPORT &  
EXPORT TRADING CO., LTD., and  
WENYING NIE

CASE NO. 8:23-cr-441-WFJ-TGW

21 U.S.C. § 963  
(Attempt to Import Controlled  
Substances and Listed  
Chemicals)  
18 U.S.C. § 1956  
(Money Laundering)

**SEALED**

**INDICTMENT**

The Grand Jury charges:

**INTRODUCTION**

**A. The Fentanyl Epidemic in America**

1. Fentanyl is the deadliest drug threat facing the United States in its 247-year history. Not only is fentanyl 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times more potent than morphine, a dose of as little as two milligrams can kill a grown adult. Fentanyl analogues are similar in chemical structure and effects as fentanyl.

2. Fentanyl is the leading cause of death for Americans ages 18 to 49. From February 2022 to January 2023, at least 105,263 Americans died of drug overdoses, the majority of which involved synthetic opioids such as fentanyl and fentanyl analogues. In Florida in 2021, fentanyl was present in approximately 6,417 deaths, an average of 17 fentanyl-related deaths per day.

**B. The Role of Fentanyl Precursors**

3. Fentanyl is a chemical that does not occur in nature. It and its analogues therefore need to be synthesized through raw chemicals known as precursors.

4. Chemicals used in interstate and foreign commerce are often identified through a Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) Registry Number. The CAS is a division of the American Chemical Society and it maintains the CAS Registry, a list of all CAS numbered chemicals and their chemical associations. A CAS Registry Number is a unique and unambiguous identifier for a specific substance.

5. CAS: 79099-07-3 is the CAS Registry Number for N-Boc-4-Piperidone, a chemical compound commonly used in the production of fentanyl and fentanyl analogues.

6. N-Boc-4-Piperidone (CAS: 79099-07-3) is a Listed Chemical.

7. CAS: 79099-07-3 can be used in the production of fentanyl. The amount of fentanyl that can be generated from a particular chemical is called a yield. Each yield is dependent upon a variety of factors, including the purities of the associated precursors, reagents, and solvents, as well as the expertise and experience of the laboratory operator. A theoretical yield is the maximum amount of fentanyl or fentanyl analogue a precursor could theoretically produce.

8. One kilogram of CAS: 79099-07-3 would theoretically yield up to 1.83 kilograms of fentanyl.

**C. The Role of Protonitazene**

9. The primary synthetic opioid fueling the opioid epidemic is fentanyl. However, traffickers continue to develop new synthetic opioids for distribution in the United States. The introduction of these new synthetic opioids into the illicit drug market threatens to exacerbate the overdose epidemic.

10. Protonitazene is one such synthetic opioid that has a chemical profile similar to those of other scheduled opioids and is subject to abuse in the same manner.

11. On or about April 12, 2022, the Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”) issued an emergency scheduling order classifying protonitazene as a Schedule I controlled substance. There are no approved medical uses for protonitazene in the United States or anywhere in the world. Drug traffickers generally mix protonitazene with other opioids, such as fentanyl, to create new and more lethal cocktails of dangerous opioids.

12. The International Narcotics Control Board (“INCB”) is an independent, quasi-judicial expert body established by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961. INCB has 13 members, each elected for a period of five years. Ten of the members are elected from a list of persons nominated by participating Governments. The remaining three members are elected from a list of persons that the World Health Organization (WHO) nominated for their medical, pharmacological, or pharmaceutical experience. On or about March 15, 2023, INCB released with 2022 Annual Report which updated its established list of synthetic,

non-fentanyl opioids with no known legitimate uses. This list included the “nitazene group substances,” of which protonitazene is a member.

13. CAS: 119276-01-6 is the CAS Registry Numbers for *N,N*-diethyl-2-(5-nitro-2-(4-propoxybenzyl)-1 *H*-benzimidazol-1-yl)ethan-1-amine – more commonly referred to as protonitazene.

14. Protonitazene is a Schedule I controlled substance.

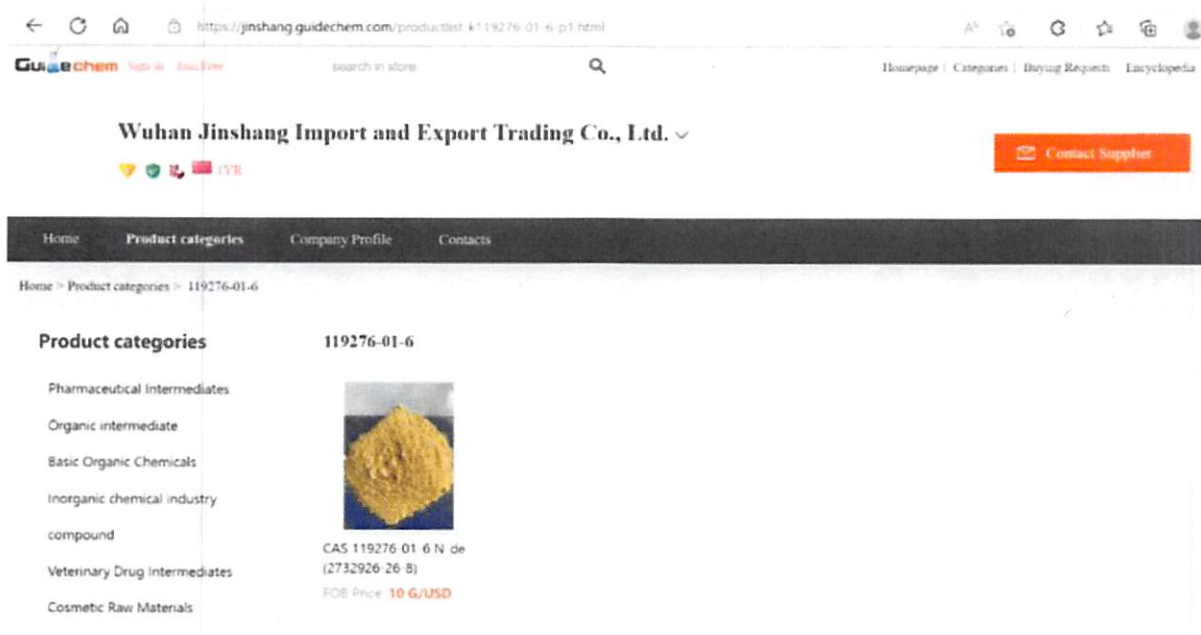
**D. Chinese Chemical Companies Supply Fentanyl Precursors and Other Synthetic Opioids to the United States and Mexican Drug Cartels**

15. The primary distributors of fentanyl and synthetic opioids in North America are the Sinaloa Cartel and the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación. These two transnational criminal organizations have significant presences throughout Mexico, maintain distribution hubs in various cities across the United States, and control smuggling corridors into the United States.

16. Organizations such as the Sinaloa Cartel and Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación receive synthetic opioids and fentanyl precursors from China that are then synthesized within clandestine laboratories into finished fentanyl at scale. China-based precursor chemical manufacturers ship synthetic opioids and precursors from mainland China directly to Mexico or through intermediaries in the United States. Among the methods used to smuggle such synthetic opioids and precursors is to mislabel the products being shipped and use containers and other packaging to avoid detection.

## E. The Defendants

17. WUHAN JINSHANG IMPORT EXPORT TRADING CO., LTD (“WUHAN JINSHANG”) is a chemical manufacturing company based in the city of Wuhan, in the Hubei Province, China. WUHAN JINSHANG openly advertises the sale of chemicals, including CAS: 119276-01-6 and CAS: 79099-07-3, on its website.



18. WUHAN JINSHANG ships fentanyl precursors and synthetic opioids to the United States, including CAS: 79099-07-3 and CAS: 119276-01-6, and represents it can deliver parcels the United States customs authorities will not seize.

19. WENYING NIE is a national of China and listed as the account holder for the Bitcoin account that sales agents shared for WUHAN JINSHANG.

**F. The Attempt**

20. In or around August 2023, an individual acting behalf of WUHAN JINSHANG began negotiating the sale of fentanyl precursors and synthetic opioids to an individual posing as a fentanyl precursor trafficker in the United States. The trafficker was a DEA undercover agent (UC) acting at the direction of law enforcement.

21. In a series of messages using an encrypted messaging application, WUHAN JINSHANG represented that it sold and shipped synthetic opioids and fentanyl precursor chemicals to the United States and Mexico. WUHAN JINSHANG engaged in the following conversation with UC during the below dates:

**August 18, 2023**

WUHAN JINSHANG: Messages and calls are end-to-end encrypted. No one outside of this chat, not even WhatsApp, can read or listen to them.

UC: Hello do you offer secure shipping to USA

**August 19, 2023**

WUHAN JINSHANG: yes

WUHAN JINSHANG: Friend, what products do you need

**August 20, 2023**

UC: I'm looking for a good price for 119276-01-6 and 14188-81-9

UC: Do you guarantee high quality?

WUHAN JINSHANG: Yes my friend I promise it is a high quality product and it works really well

**August 21, 2023**

UC: You are able to ship to US postal address? How is the packaging?

UC: What is your price per kilogram?

WUHAN JINSHANG: Yes, friend, delivery to your address is guaranteed

**August 22, 2023**

UC: Friend I can pay in Bitcoin. I just want to be sure the package is not labeled. I do not want any problems with US customs or postage.

UC: I will arrange to pay in Bitcoin

WUHAN JINSHANG: Friends, don't worry, we will send it in the name of electronic products to ensure that it must pass through customs and arrive in your hands

**September 9, 2023**

UC: I agree with that price. Do I send PayPal western union or Bitcoin. I want to ensure the quality and delivery

WUHAN JINSHANG: Use Bitcoin. It's quick and easy

WUHAN JINSHANG: [BTC Wallet 1]

WUHAN JINSHANG: This is the Bitcoin address, after the transfer is completed, take a screenshot to check and then send the address information

UC: Ok I will advise once the payment is sent. Good evening friend

UC: 🤝 [handshake emoji]

WUHAN JINSHANG: 🙌😊

**September 12, 2023**

UC: My friend do you supply 79099-07-3? I have a customer looking for it. Can you deliver to them in Mexico?

WUHAN JINSHANG: Yes, my friend. cas79099 is our hot seller

WUHAN JINSHANG: One kilogram costs US\$180, and there are discounts for larger orders.

**September 13, 2023**

UC: That price is reasonable, I will advise the client. They are looking for a reliable supplier. I just need to negotiate my commission with them 😊

WUHAN JINSHANG: Okay, friend, you can negotiate first. This CAS79099 is our best-selling product. Customers in Mexico especially want this product. If they order more than 25kg, the price is 130 US dollars per kilogram. Our customers all place orders of five kilograms, and we look forward to your good news.

**October 11, 2023**

WUHAN JINSHANG: 119276 The price of one kilogram is US\$4,000 including shipping. 79099, starting from 25kg, it is US\$130 per kilogram including shipping fee

WUHAN JINSHANG: Payment method can be Western Union, Bitcoin,



USDT, After payment is completed, send the delivery address to ensure that it will be delivered to you.

UC: Ok the client is willing to pay Bitcoin. You have safely delivered to Mexico before?

WUHAN JINSHANG: Of course, most of the previous customers in Mexico liked 79099, which is a hot seller in Mexico.

...

UC: If the customer orders more than 1 barrel are you able to give them a discount? I want to ensure I make a proper commission

WUHAN JINSHANG: 130 is already a discounted price. The original price is 180 US dollars per kilogram. Because the order quantity is one barrel (25kg), we give a discount of 130 US dollars per kilogram.

UC: Ok please give me a quote for 2 barrels 79099 and 1kg 119276.

WUHAN JINSHANG: 10500 US dollars including shipping fee

UC: Ok shipping to Manzanillo Mexico where they can safely retrieve the products. What is shipping costs? Do they pick up or you can deliver to them?

WUHAN JINSHANG: It can be safely delivered to the address provided

**November 17, 2023**

UC: My friend is it more secure to ship to USA or Mexico? The customer is on the border and has concerns with the safe discreet shipment

WUHAN JINSHANG: Yes, friends, we guarantee 100% safe delivery

WUHAN JINSHANG: We are shipped in the name of electronic products or cosmetics

22. WUHAN JINSHANG agreed to sell “2 barrels 79099 and 1kg 119276” to the UC and assured UC that it guaranteed safe delivery by shipping the chemicals “in the name of electronic products or cosmetics.” WUHAN JINSHANG also sent the UC a Bitcoin wallet address (BTC Wallet 1) and stated, “after the transfer is completed, take a screenshot to check and then send the address information.” The Bitcoin wallet address is registered to WENYING NIE.

23. WUHAN JINSHANG confirmed the price for the 2 barrels, or 50 kilograms, of CAS: 79099-07-3 and 1 kilogram of CAS: 119276-01-6 was \$10,500. The UC agreed to pay \$10,500 dollars for the shipment. Fifty kilograms of CAS: 79099-07-3 would theoretically yield 91.5 kilograms of fentanyl.

**COUNT ONE**

**(Attempt to Import Protonitazene Into the United States)**

Paragraphs 1 to 23 are realleged and incorporated by reference as though fully set forth herein.

In and around August through November 2023, in the Middle District of Florida, China, and elsewhere, the defendants,

WUHAN JINSHANG IMPORT & EXPORT TRADING CO., LTD., and  
WENYING NIE,

did knowingly and willfully attempt to manufacture and distribute protonitazene, a Schedule I controlled substance, knowing, intending, and having reasonable cause to believe that such substance would be unlawfully imported into the United States, contrary to the provisions of 21 U.S.C. § 959.

All in violation of 21 U.S.C. §§ 963 and 960(b)(3).

**COUNT TWO**  
**(Attempt to Import Fentanyl Precursor Into the United States)**

Paragraphs 1 to 23 are realleged and incorporated by reference as though fully set forth herein.

In and around August through November 2023, in the Middle District of Florida, China, and elsewhere, the defendants,

WUHAN JINSHANG IMPORT & EXPORT TRADING CO., LTD., and  
WENYING NIE,

did knowingly and willfully attempt to manufacture, distribute, and export from China a listed chemical, to wit: N-Boc-4-Piperidone, intending, knowing, and having reasonable cause to believe that such chemical would be unlawfully imported into the United States, and knowing and having reasonable cause to believe that such listed chemical would be used to manufacture a controlled substance, to wit: fentanyl.

All in violation of 21 U.S.C. §§ 963, 960(d)(3), and 960(d)(7).

**COUNT THREE**  
**(Attempted Money Laundering)**

Paragraphs 1 to 23 are realleged and incorporated by reference as though fully set forth herein.

In and around August through November 2023, in the Middle District of Florida, China, and elsewhere, the defendants,

WUHAN JINSHANG IMPORT & EXPORT TRADING CO., LTD., and  
WENYING NIE,

did knowingly and intentionally attempt to transport, transmit, and transfer, and attempt to transport, transmit, and transfer a monetary instrument and funds from a place in the United States to and through a place outside the United States, in an amount exceeding \$10,000, with the intent to promote the carrying on of specified unlawful activity, to wit, felonious narcotics offenses involving controlled substances and listed chemicals (as those terms are defined in the Controlled Substances Act), including the violation charged in Count One of this indictment, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1956(a)(2)(A).

All in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1956(h), (f).

**FORFEITURE**

1. The allegations contained in Counts One through Three of this Indictment are hereby realleged and incorporated by reference for the purpose of alleging forfeitures, pursuant to the provisions of 21 U.S.C. §§ 853 and 970, and 18 U.S.C. § 982(a)(1).

2. Upon conviction of a violation of Counts One and Two of this Indictment, in violation of 21 U.S.C. §§ 959 and 963, punishable by imprisonment for more than one year, the defendants,

WUHAN JINSHANG IMPORT & EXPORT TRADING CO., LTD., and  
WENYING NIE,

shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to 21 U.S.C. §§ 853 and 970, any property constituting, or derived from, any proceeds obtained, directly or indirectly, as the result of such offense and any property used, or intended to be used, in any manner

or part, to commit, or to facilitate the commission of, the offense.

3. Upon conviction of a violation of Count Three of this Indictment, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1956, punishable by imprisonment for more than one year, the defendants,

WUHAN JINSHANG IMPORT & EXPORT TRADING CO., LTD., and  
WENYING NIE,

shall forfeit to the United States, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 982(a)(1), any property, real or personal, involved in such offense, and any property traceable to such property.

4. The assets to be forfeited include, but are not limited to, an order of forfeiture in the amount of proceeds obtained from the offense.

5. If any of the property described above as being subject to forfeiture as a result of any act or omission of the defendant:

- a. cannot be located upon the exercise of due diligence;
- b. has been transferred, sold to, or deposited with a third party;
- c. has been placed beyond the jurisdiction of the Court;
- d. has been substantially diminished in value; or,
- e. has been commingled with other property which cannot be subdivided without difficulty,


the United States shall be entitled to forfeiture of substitute property under the provisions of 21 U.S.C. § 853(p), directly and as incorporated by 18 U.S.C. § 982(b)(1).

A TRUE BILL, [REDACTED]

\_\_\_\_\_  
Foreperson

ROGER B. HANDBERG  
United States Attorney

By:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lauren Stoia  
Assistant United States Attorney

By:   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel Baeza  
Assistant United States Attorney  
Chief, Transnational Organized Crime Section

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WENYING NIE

INDICTMENT

Violations: 21 U.S.C. § 963,  
18 U.S.C. § 1956

A true bill

[Redacted Signature]

Foreperson

Filed in open court this 30<sup>th</sup> day

of November, 2023

*Ashley Sanders*  
Clerk

Bail \$ \_\_\_\_\_