

## Lou Mansolillo

---

**From:** S Eppard <switchinz@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 12, 2024 9:34 AM  
**To:** House Corporations Committee  
**Subject:** my son died from kratom  
**Attachments:** matthew eller 22 pic.jpg; matttox (1).jpeg

To Whom It May Concern,

Please vote no on H7231 as Kratom is an addictive deadly plant, and making it legal via the Kratom Consumer Protection Act/KCPA would lead consumers to believe it's safe.

My perfectly healthy 22 year old son Matthew Eller died from using Kratom powder (the least potent form of kratom). Kratom caused him to have a seizure, go into cardiac arrest and die. His autopsy results read: "TOXIC EFFECTS OF MITRAGYNINE" (an alkaloid found only in kratom). His toxicology showed he had no prescription drugs, no street drugs nor alcohol in his system.

Because of Matthew's death, I'm in therapy, I have extreme anxiety, depression, insomnia, agoraphobia, my teeth are deteriorating and I look and feel 15 years older than my age. I find very little enjoyment in life, and my days are a horribly long combination of pretending to be okay and wishing I would die and go be with my son. My son's father intentionally crashed his car the day after Matthew died, and because of his injuries he no longer remembers any of our children nor realizes Matthew is dead. My surviving son is completely devastated because he lost his only brother and essentially his father; he also crashed his car on purpose according to the police, and later repeatedly smashed his own head into his car. So when you hear only a few hundred people died from Kratom, think of the thousands of lives it has forever destroyed.

The Tampa Bay Times did an in depth investigation on Kratom and put out an excellent Documentary called "Deadly Dose" which shows all aspects of Kratom. <https://project.tampabay.com/investigations/deadly-dose/kratom-industry/>.

Kratom meets the criteria for being a Schedule I drug as it currently has no accepted medical use in the United States, a lack of accepted safety for use under medical supervision, and has a high potential for abuse.

Mac Haddow, Lobbyist for the American Kratom Association/AKA admits to profiting from the sale of Kratom, is a self proclaimed Kratom user, and will attempt to dupe you into thinking you have no right keep Kratom illegal. Mac Haddow has a history of deception fueled by greed as evidenced by his time in prison:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1987/07/14/former-hhs-official-pleads-guilty-to-kickback-charges/b0e32db5-f85c-4cd6-a017-2f077f3fe01f/>.

Haddow falsely claims the FDA acknowledges that all adverse effects and kratom deaths are associated with poly drug use and underlying health conditions. I know for a fact that this is not true as I've given the FDA my son's information on his death by kratom with no underlying health conditions, no street drugs, no alcohol nor prescription drugs in his system. I also know of several other mothers whose children had no other substances other than kratom in their systems when they died, and they also reported this to the FDA, and consequently received calls back from the FDA for full interviews.

The Kratom Consumer Protection Act/KCPA was designed by the AKA to lull our government and the American Consumer into a false sense of security about the addictive and deadly drug Kratom. People are still dying from Kratom in states where the KCPA has passed because there's no enforcement and Kratom is a toxic deadly plant with the same effects and addiction profile as Heroin and other opiates.

The AKA's Mac Haddow claims they don't support Kratom Vendors, yet they have 43 Kratom Vendors on their website: <https://www.amerikankratom.org/gmp-qualified-vendors>. Of these 43 Kratom Vendors at least 4 of them are involved in kratom wrongful death lawsuits and one of them is involved in a class action lawsuit alleging they hid the fact that kratom is highly addictive.

Haddow suggests, "at a higher serving size it helps people to suppress feelings of depression", causing people to neglect safely monitored treatment resulting in deeper depression, psychosis, sometimes suicide and many people have died with

a combination of kratom and antidepressants. Haddow also states, "in higher doses people are successfully weening off of opioids", causing addicts to add kratom to the drugs they are already using resulting in liver damage, seizures, cardiac arrest, coma, permanent brain damage and death.

Haddow deceptively cited kratom deaths from 2016 - 2017 in committee meetings in 2023, leading government officials to believe that kratom has only killed a few people.

The AKA will attempt to mislead you to believe that the FDA has determined Kratom to be safe. The FDA has interviewed me about my son's death by Kratom as well as many others who have reported their loved ones kratom deaths. The FDA said they are actively collecting information on kratom, and are fully aware that kratom is dangerous. The studies by the FDA are being conducted in the hopes that Kratom could possibly be used as a pharmaceutical. They are fully aware that people are dying from Kratom, and that it shouldn't be sold out of gas stations, convenience stores, smoke shops and online with unlimited supply to the consumer.

Some great anecdotal evidence of Kratom being highly addictive and deadly can be found on Reddit: r/quittingkratom - 40K members, Facebook: Quitting Kratom Support - 6K members, Quitting Kratom No Judgement - 2.3K members, and Kratom Danger Awareness/KDA with 100's of members whose loved ones died from kratom (many of us in this group have been interviewed by the FDA regarding our loved one's death).

You likely heard stories of how people believe kratom has "saved their life", that's because it seems good at first just like heroin or other opiates. Then once addicted, it's needed just to keep from feeling withdrawals, which most ex-users say are horrendous. The majority of stories you will hear are from those profiting from Kratom who downplay addiction, side effects and deaths from Kratom. They say "it's a plant in the coffee family" however, deadly Hemlock is a plant in the carrot family (that doesn't make it safe). They will also say nonsense like "you can die from water" just to deflect and minimize the dangers of Kratom by comparing it to a substance necessary for human survival.

Kratom effects are liver damage, weight loss, aggression, nausea, vomiting, hair loss, brain damage, anxiety, depression, dizziness, drowsiness, hallucinations, delusions, muscle pain, psychosis, seizures, cardiac arrest, coma and death.

Many people state they are using kratom in place of other drugs, but as evidenced by death certificates, emergency room visits, medical examiner findings, poison control center calls; kratom is mostly just being added to drugs people are already taking with the added danger of having an unlimited supply.

Baby's born to mothers using kratom often have Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome which cause baby resting tremors, hypertonia, irritability, facial excoriations, screaming and some require an infusion of morphine to stay alive.

In 2016, the FDA recommended kratom be criminalized as a Schedule 1 drug, alongside heroin. A California man Sebastian Guthery whose companies grossed more than \$60 million selling kratom. was found guilty of money laundering. He was a founding funder of the American Kratom Association (AKA), a non-profit advocacy group that rallied kratom users to beat back the FDA's effort to outlaw kratom, and has since pushed model legislation to fully legalize and lightly regulate the drug which — once snuck through customs — remains legal to sell in 44 states." ([courthousenews.com](http://courthousenews.com))

Over 95% of Kratom in the United States was smuggled in from Indonesia as it's illegal to import into the United States. Indonesian Leaders admit that their Kratom is usually contaminated with heavy metals and bacteria due to lack of regulation. The FDA tested 30 different Kratom Brands for heavy metals, several of which are listed on the AKA's Website as GMP Qualified, and all but one had unsafe levels of heavy metals. <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/public-health-focus/laboratory-analysis-kratom-products-heavy-metals>

Testing for kratom post mortem in many cases by request only, this combined with the fact that many user hide their Kratom use makes it impossible to know the actual number of people dying from Kratom.

Attached are photos of my son.

Please call or email me if you have any question.

Sincerely,

Susan Eppard  
231-286-4498  
[switchinz@yahoo.com](mailto:switchinz@yahoo.com)

