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St. Mary’s County EMS Chief Who Admitted to Stealing Fentanyl and Other Drugs Makes Plea Deal

January 13, 2025



Thomas Patrick Raley, 39, of Leonardtown

UPDATE 6/3/2025: On June 2, 2025, Thomas Patrick Raley, 40, of Leonardtown, was convicted of possession of fentanyl and theft under \$100 in Calvert County District Court.

Raley received a sentence of 1 year incarceration, suspended down to 90 days, followed by 3 years of supervised probation.

UPDATE 1/9/2025: Thomas Patrick Raley has accepted a plea deal in St. Mary's County Circuit Court after facing multiple charges. He entered an Alford plea to second-degree burglary, meaning he does not admit guilt but acknowledges that prosecutors have enough evidence to convict him. Raley also pled guilty to two counts of rogue and vagabond, as well as seven counts of drug possession involving controlled substances other than cannabis.

The thefts primarily involved controlled substances essential for emergency medical treatments, with the total value of the stolen items amounting to \$6,755.59.

Under the terms of the deal, Raley will serve 18 months in the St. Mary's County Detention Center, with a release date set for September 15, 2025. Following his time in jail, he will enter the Adult Recovery Court program, often referred to as "drug court," which focuses on rehabilitation for individuals dealing with substance abuse. As of January 8, 2025, Raley had already earned 121 days of credit toward his sentence, as specified in his recovery court agreement.

In late October 2024, lawyers for Thomas Patrick Raley filed a motion in St. Mary's County Circuit Court to suppress statements he made during a police encounter earlier that year. The incident occurred on July 17, 2024, when officers from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office arrived at Raley's residence on Wathen Road in Leonardtown around 2 a.m. According to court documents, officers knocked on his door over 60 times, shined flashlights in his face, and questioned him outside his home for approximately an hour while he was dressed only in his underwear.

Raley's attorney alleges that the statements obtained during this encounter were made under unlawful conditions. The motion claims that officers failed to read Raley his Miranda rights, violated his right to remain silent, and denied him access to legal counsel. Additionally, the defense argues that the statements were coerced, that Raley was not promptly brought before a judge after his arrest, and that his constitutional rights were violated throughout the interaction.

The defense further challenges the legality of the arrest itself, suggesting that any statements made as a result should be excluded from evidence. The motion requests a court hearing to address these issues. The case raises broader concerns about police conduct and the enforcement of individual rights during law enforcement interactions.

The investigation into Raley's alleged misconduct began in July 2024, when the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office was alerted to a suspicious tampering incident involving a narcotics box in a local medic unit. Detectives from the Criminal Investigations Division (CID) learned that vials of fentanyl had been compromised, leading to

further investigation. The investigation revealed that multiple EMS facilities had been impacted by similar incidents, and Raley was quickly identified as the sole suspect.

On August 5, 2024, the State's Attorney's Office, led by Senior Assistant State's Attorney Lisa M. Ridge, secured an arrest warrant. The warrant requested that Raley be held without bond due to concerns that he might evade arrest if served with a court summons. The warrant was sealed to prevent Raley from being alerted to the charges. However, despite these precautions, Raley was not arrested by the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office until September 11, 2024, more than a month later. The delay has raised questions about the circumstances surrounding the arrest and why action wasn't taken sooner, given the severity of the accusations.

Scope of the Theft: Drugs and Dollar Amounts

Raley has been charged with 34 criminal counts, including multiple counts of theft, drug possession, and burglary. His alleged thefts occurred between May 1, 2024, and July 16, 2024, with stolen items primarily involving controlled substances vital to emergency medical treatments.

The total value of the stolen drugs amounts to over \$6,755.00.

Key thefts include:

- **Theft Scheme:** \$4,627.53 — Narcotics boxes and contents were stolen between May and July 2024.
- **Theft of Fentanyl:** \$1,233.96 — Raley stole fentanyl, a powerful opioid used for pain management during medical emergencies.
- **Theft of Narcotics:** \$297.66 — Additional thefts on July 8 and 10, 2024, included various medications from EMS units.
- **Theft of Narcotics:** \$198.44 — A theft on July 16, 2024, involved further medication stolen from EMS facilities.

Smaller thefts, valued under \$100, were reported on multiple dates, including July 6, July 7, and July 9, 2024, contributing to the total stolen.

Drugs Involved: Fentanyl, Ketamine, and Midazolam

Raley allegedly stole and tampered with various controlled substances, including:

- **Fentanyl** (Schedule II): A potent opioid critical for pain relief in emergency situations.
- **Ketamine** (Schedule III): Used for sedation and pain relief.
- **Midazolam** (Schedule IV): A sedative commonly used in surgical and emergency settings.

The theft and misuse of these drugs pose significant risks, as they are essential in treating severe medical emergencies.

Public Safety Concerns: Tampered Fentanyl Replaced with Saline Solution

The St. Mary's County Department of Emergency Services recently acknowledged what they called a medication mix-up that stemmed from Raley's actions. The Department disclosed that patients in July 2024 received saline solution instead of fentanyl during emergency medical treatments. While saline is generally harmless, the possibility that the solution was not sterile raises health concerns.

In a letter from Jennifer Aubert-Utz, Director of Emergency Services, affected patients were informed of the error and advised to contact their healthcare providers. The letter emphasized that patient well-being remains a top priority, and the Department is offering refunds for any medical treatment or transport costs related to the incident. Aubert-Utz further reassured the public that the Department is investigating the issue and taking corrective actions to prevent future occurrences.

This revelation has sparked outrage in the community, with many citizens expressing concern over the integrity of their emergency medical services and the safety of future treatments. The public's trust in EMS has been deeply shaken, and this incident underscores the need for stringent oversight and quality control within emergency services.

Previous Legal Troubles: Raley's History with Narcotics

Raley's legal troubles extend beyond this most recent case. In January 2019, he was issued a criminal summons for theft and destruction of property related to an incident at the Leonardtown Rescue Squad. In that case, Raley was found to have tampered with a medical box containing morphine, ketamine, and midazolam.

He entered the Rescue Squad building off-duty, accessed a secured medical box, and later admitted to stealing the medications due to personal substance abuse struggles.

Despite this past criminal behavior, Raley was appointed Chief of EMS in December 2023, a decision that has come under scrutiny in light of the current investigation.

Charges and Legal Proceedings

Raley now faces a series of charges, including:

- **Theft scheme:** \$4,627.53
- **Theft of fentanyl:** \$1,233.96
- **Multiple counts of CDS possession**, including fentanyl, ketamine, and midazolam.
- **Second-degree burglary** for breaking into EMS facilities to steal narcotics.
- **Rogue and vagabond**, for unlawful entry into vehicles and facilities with intent to commit theft.

Raley is currently being held at the **St. Mary's County Detention and Rehabilitation Center**, where he awaits a bond hearing.

The arrest of Raley has exposed serious vulnerabilities within the St. Mary's County EMS system. The delayed arrest and subsequent medication errors have raised significant concerns about public safety and trust in local authorities. As legal proceedings continue,

the community is left concerned about the impact of the case and is calling for accountability to ensure such incidents don't happen again.