

Item #7(2)

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL
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COMMISSIONER JACOBS**

Denver family warns others about dangers of legal herbal stimulant

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DENVER —

- It's an herbal stimulant that you can buy online or in smoke shops around Colorado, but one Denver family wants you to know that Kratom could kill you.
- It killed their son, husband and father, they said.
- Guy Garcia was only 36 when he collapsed at his parent's home and never regained consciousness.
- His family said he showed no signs of being sick.

They later learned he had been taking a drug that's perfectly legal. Now, they said they want to warn others.

"He was a loving, loving man is who he was," said Guy's wife, Carrie Garcia. "He always had a smile on his face, constantly had a smile on his face, which we don't get to see anymore, sadly."

That smile was forever wiped away Dec. 14 because of an overdose of Kratom.

The drug, made from the leaves of a tree in Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar and other areas of Southeast Asia, acts as both a stimulant and sedative, depending on dosage.

"He was sitting in that chair, working at the computer and he had the most horrendous grand mal seizure I have ever seen," said his Guy's mom, Joy Atencio.

Guy would *never recover* — doctors declared him brain dead four days later.

"That was the end of his life and we know that it was the Kratom, and that's what the death certificate says," said Atencio.

His death certificate listed "apparent acute mitragynine toxicity" as cause of death. Mitragynine is the chemical compound, commonly known as Kratom.

Carrie said her husband had used the drug in pill and powder form for two years to help combat anxiety.

He told his mom he became addicted after just three weeks.

"Everybody is all sweetness and light about this drug," said Atencio.

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She said she is so frustrated that people make claim after claim online that Kratom is not harmful, not addictive and no big deal.

“I recommend this as a legal high,” said one man about Kratom on YouTube.

“It’s no big deal. I tell you, it is a big deal to me,” said Atencio.

They said they want to bring awareness to others that a legal herbal stimulant has forever changed their lives.

“He was a healthy individual,” said Carrie. “To know in such a short time that he was here, that a drug that is not regulated, that’s glorified on the Internet, took his life.”

Kratom is on the US Drug Enforcement Administration’s watch list of Drugs and Chemicals of Concern in 2013.

Only Indiana and Ohio have banned its sale.

Guy’s family said they will now push for a law to have it declared illegal in Colorado as well.