

The Daily Edition 50¢

Serving Loudon, Monroe and Surrounding Counties

Wednesday, July 12, 2017

Roane County Woman Guilty in 2015 Vehicular Homicide

District Attorney General Russell Johnson announced that his office obtained a guilty plea from on Roane County woman in the tragic 2015 Valentine's Day vehicular homicide death of man from the Little Emory community of Harri- man, Terrance (Terry) Clark who was a 46 year old Army veter- an of Desert Storm, a high school Geometry and Algebra teacher, a coach, a husband and father of a 15 year (at that time) son. The defendant in the case, Robin Ledbetter (now 44 years old), admitted in her guilty plea before Judge Jeffery H. Wicks that the head on two car collision was the result of Led-

better's intoxication by numerous prescription medications. Ledbet- ter's sentence will be set by Judge Wicks at a hearing on Septem- ber 22, 2017 at 9 am in Loudon County due to court being in session there that month.

Ledbetter pled guilty to one count of vehic- ular homicide by in- (see guilty pg. 2)

Drug Dealer pleads guilty to conspiracy to distribute heroin resulting in death

On June 28, 2017, Darius Jermaine Blake- more, a.k.a. Tank, 28, of Chattanooga, Ten- nessee, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to dis- tribute heroin resulting in death, distribution of heroin resulting in death, possession with intent to distribute co- caine, possession with intent to distribute crack, and possession with intent to distribute heroin. He entered this guilty plea during the second day of his trial for the same offenses.

In his plea agreement on file with the U.S. District Court, Blake- more agreed to serve a prison sentence of 23 years. Federal law pro- vides enhanced penal- ties for drug dealers who distribute controlled substances that lead to overdose deaths, includ- ing a 20-year mandatory minimum sentence.

The plea agreement, along with proof at trial provided that in Febru-

see heroin pg. 5

DUI for disabled driver



Conner Jones

see underage pg. 7

Officers sworn in at Legion Post 256



American Legion Post 256 swears in their 2017-2018 Elected Officers. They all took the Legion oath reciting the pledge: "I do solemnly pledge myself to perform faithfully and impar- tially the duties of The Office of The American Legion I am about to assume, and I further pledge

John Hardin

see Legion pg. 3

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SETTLES IM- MIGRATION-RELATED DISCRIMINATION CLAIM AGAINST PANDA EXPRESS

WASHINGTON - The Justice Depart- ment announced that it reached a settlement agreement with Pan- da Restaurant Group, Inc. (Panda Express), a restaurant chain with over 1,800 locations in the United States. The agreement resolves the department's investiga- tion into whether Panda Express discriminated against non-U.S. cit- izens in violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) when reverifying their permission to work.

The department's investigation conclud- ed that Panda Express unnecessarily required

(see Justice pg. 4)



(see Justice pg. 4)

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Verse of the Day

Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trusts in the LORD. — Proverbs 16:20

Obituaries

see inside

Wazzup

Warnings have been issued for the ex- treme heat. Do NOT leave a child or pet in a vehicle!

Weather

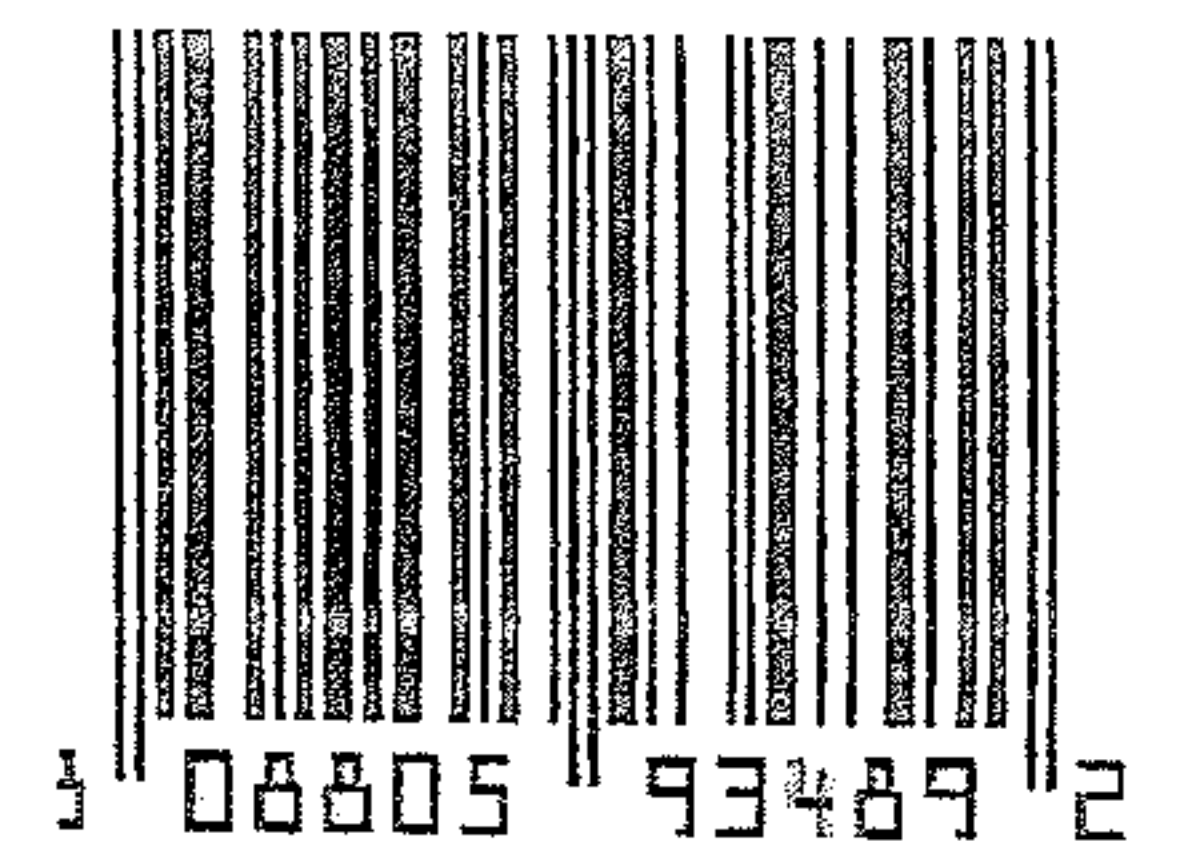
Today: Intervals of

clouds and sunshine. A stray afternoon thunder- storm is possible. High near 90F. Tonight: A few clouds. A stray shower or thunder- storm is possible. Low 72F.

Thursday Mixed clouds

and sun with scattered thunderstorms. High 88F Thursday Night Partly to mostly cloudy skies with scattered thunderstorms before midnight. Low 72F.

(Continued on page 6)



Guilty

toxication, one count of vehicular assault, one count of reckless endangerment, and one count of driving under the influence. Assistant District Attorney General Bob Edwards explained to the court at the plea hearing that on February 14, 2015, Robin Ledbetter, crossed the center-line on U.S. Highway 70 near Charles Ballew Road, and struck the vehicle of Terrance

Clark head-on, causing Mr. Clark to be killed, and his wife and son to suffer serious injuries; the passengers of Ledbetter's car were also seriously injured in the collision. Ledbetter was suspected and later found to be under the influence of a cocktail of prescription controlled substances. The investigation was led by Tennessee Highway Patrol Troopers Paul DuBroc and Phillip Warren.

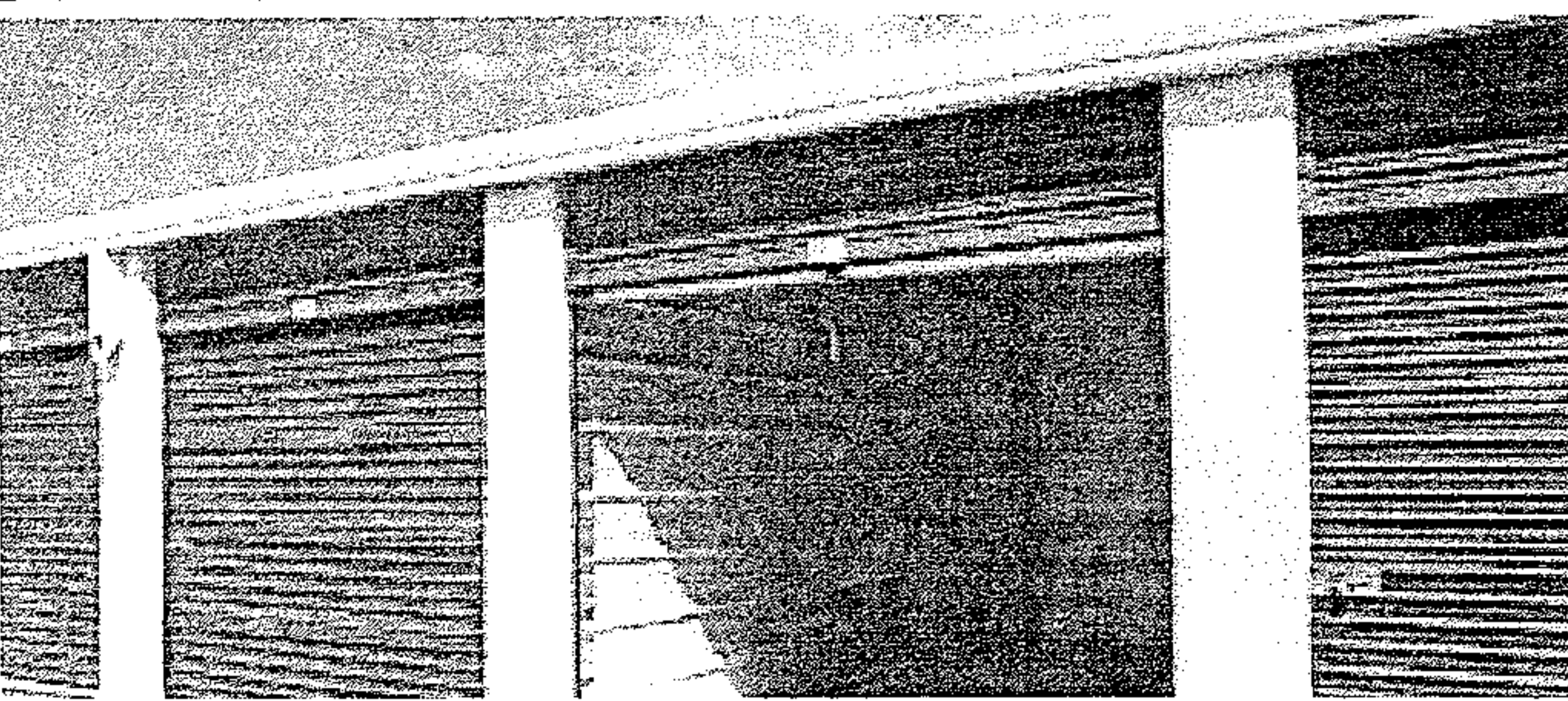
District Attorney General Russell Johnson stated in response to the plea, "These cases are complicated to work through due to the emotional impact to the victim's family. In cases like this, regardless of the outcome in court we can

never bring the loved one back to the grieving family. In this particular case, the defendant did plead guilty to causing the death of Mr. Clark and for injuries to the passengers due to her conscious decision to get behind the wheel and drive while intoxicated-see guilty ctd. pg. 7


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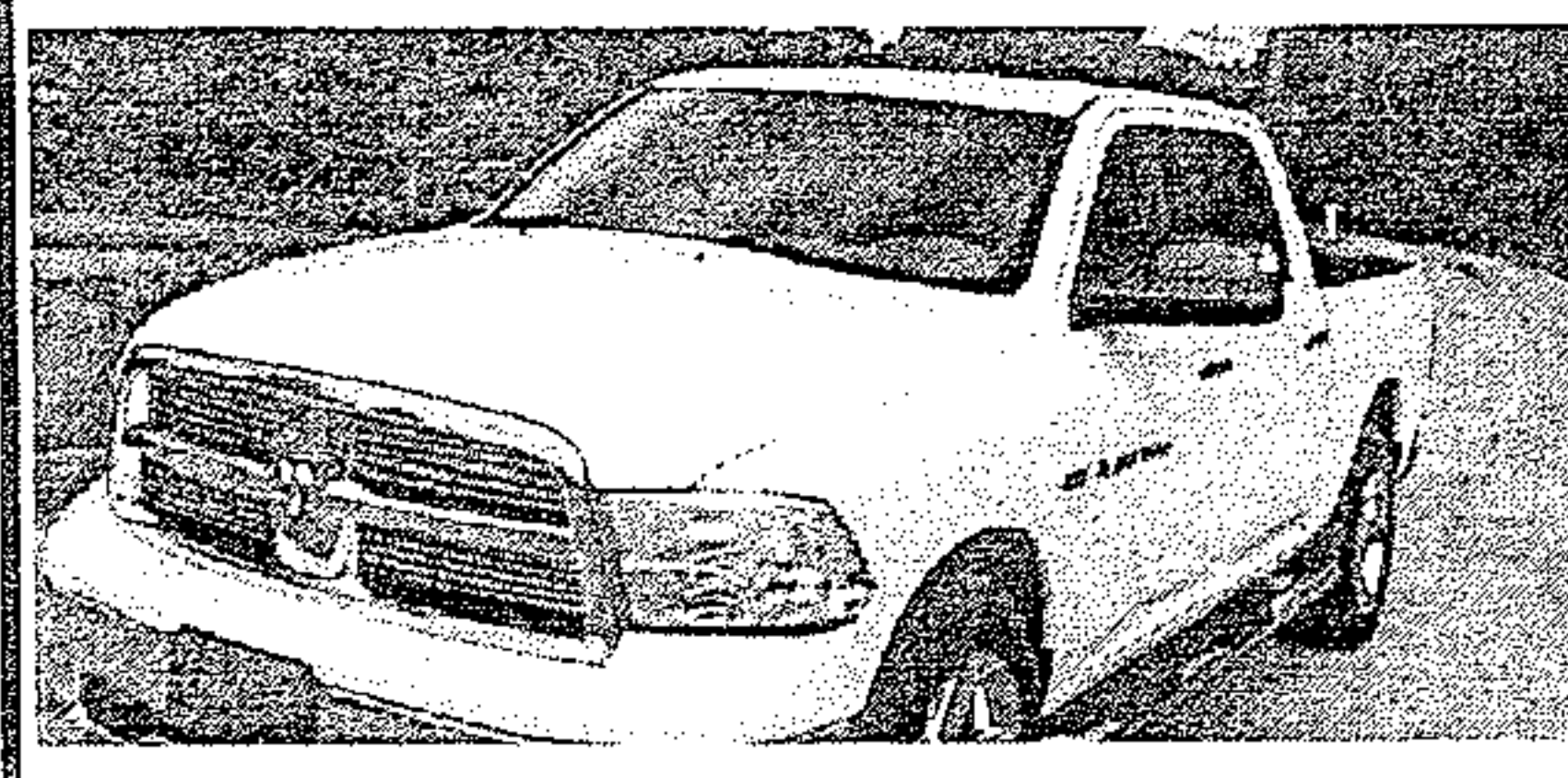
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2008 Ford F350 V10, Auto, Dually, Leather, Heated & Cooled Seats, 5th Wheel Compatible, PW, PL




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Legion

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Top L to R: Commander: Vic Vickery; Adjutant: James McNeece; 1st VC: Robert Haldi; 2nd VC: Arlen Bee; 3rd VC: James Patterson; Seated L to R: 4th VC: Pat

Brooks; Finance Officer: Anthony Adams; Chaplain: Ross Licata; Service Officer: Donald Edmands; Legion Riders Director: Jim Warner. Missing from the photo Sergeant At Arms: Doug Kahr. For additional information about the American Legion contact Commander Vic

Vickery, 423.884.6476 or visit: www.TellicoLakePost256.org

(Photo by Suzanne Vickery)

The Daily Edition

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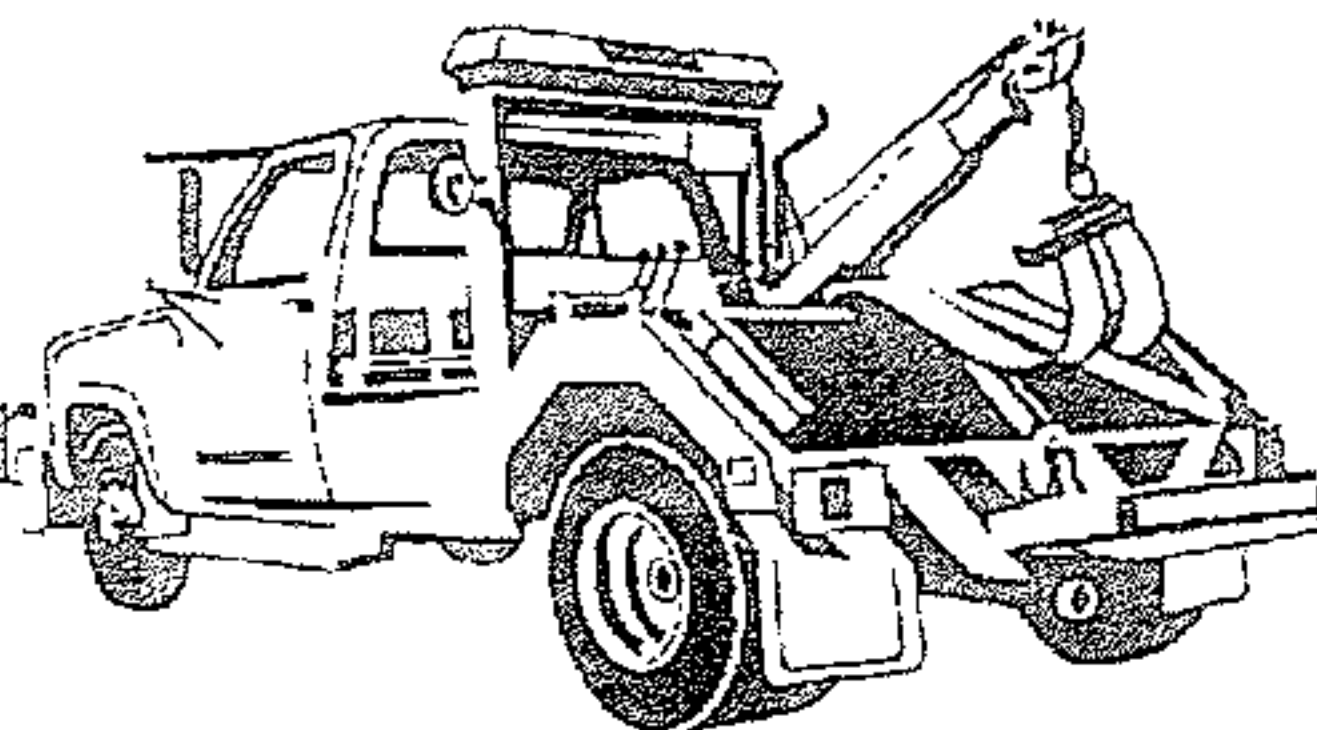
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Justice

lawful permanent resident workers to re-establish their work authorization when their Permanent Resident Cards expired, while not making similar requests to U.S. citizen workers when their documents expired. The investigation also revealed that Panda Express routinely required other non-U.S. citizen workers to produce immigration documents to reverify their ongoing work authorization despite evidence they had already provided sufficient documentation. The antidiscrimination provision of the INA prohibits such requests for documents when based on an employee's citizenship status or national origin.

Under the settlement, Panda Express will pay a civil penalty of \$400,000 to the United States, establish a \$200,000 back pay fund to compensate workers who lost wages due to the com-

pany's practices, train its human resources personnel on the requirements of the INA's anti-discrimination provision, and be subject to departmental monitoring and reporting requirements.

"Employers should ensure that their re-verification practices comply with laws that protect workers against discrimination," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Tom Wheeler of the Civil Rights Division. "The Justice Department applauds Panda Express for its cooperation during this investigation and its commitment to compensating workers who may have lost wages due to its documentary practices."

Work-authorized, non-U.S. citizens who lost work at Panda Express between May 31, 2014, and June 28, 2017, due to Panda Express' documentary practices may be eligible for back pay for the wages they would have earned.

For more information, email IER.PEclaims@usdoj.gov.

The division's Immigrant and Employee Rights Section (IER), formerly known as the Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices, is responsible for enforcing the anti-discrimination provision of the INA. The statute prohibits, among other things, citizenship, immigration status, and national origin discrimination in hiring, firing, or recruitment or referral for a fee; unfair documentary practices; retaliation and intimidation.

For more information about protections against employment discrimination under immigration laws, call IER's worker hotline at 1-800-255-7688 (1-800-237-2515, TTY for hearing impaired); call IER's employer hotline at 1-800-255-8155 (1-800-237-2515, TTY for hearing impaired); sign up for a free webinar; email IER@usdoj.gov (link

sends e-mail); or visit IER's English and Spanish websites.

Applicants or workers who believe they were subjected to different documentary requirements based on their citizenship, immigration status, or national origin; or discrimination based on their citizenship, immi-

gration status, or national origin in hiring, firing, or recruitment or referral, should contact IER's worker hotline for assistance.

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heroin

ary 2016, Blakemore sold a gram of heroin to Jessica Rachels for \$200.00 in the parking lot of a McDonald's in Chattanooga. After Rachels arrived at the parking lot, Blakemore gave the heroin to one of his runners, Joshua Corbett, who delivered the heroin to Rachels.

Rachels gave a portion of the heroin she received from Corbett to Logan Whiteaker, who drove her to the drug deal. Whiteaker's stepfather found him dead the next morning on the floor in the bathroom of his residence in Red Bank, Tennessee, with a hypodermic needle clutched in his hand. A blue container

with .64 grams of heroin inside was found on the bathroom counter. Whiteaker graduated from Hamilton County Drug Court less than 24 hours prior to his death. Like Blakemore, Rachels and Corbett both previously pleaded guilty to distribution of heroin resulting in death and are all awaiting sentencing.

"Heroin has proven to be a deadly poison that does not discriminate. Its victims include every gender, race, age, and economic background, and its debilitating effects are the same across all demographics. Statistics show that in 2016, heroin deaths surpassed gun homicides for the first time in more than

15 years. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Tennessee will not stand idle as the death toll continues to rise. We will use all available resources to hold drug dealers like Blakemore, who seek to profit from this epidemic, accountable for their actions," said U.S. Attorney Nancy Stallard Harr.

John McGarry, Resident Agent in Charge of the DEA Chattanooga Office stated, "The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and its task force partners from the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, the Tennessee Highway Patrol, the Red Bank Police Department, the Chattanooga Police Department, and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation will investigate and pursue overdose deaths in southeast Tennessee to the fullest extent of the law. The prosecution of Darius Blakemore stands as an example of this coalition's commitment to protecting the most vulnerable elements of our community from the persistent threat of heroin."

Law enforcement agencies participating in this joint investigation include the Drug Enforcement Administration, Hamilton County Sheriff's Office, Chattanooga Police Department, Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Tennessee Highway Patrol, and Red Bank Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michael D. Porter and Scott Winne represent the United States.

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Conner Jones, 33, Mylosshane Lane, Knoxville, was charged with DUI. Deputy Tony Branson LCSO, was dispatched to Interstate 75 at the 81 mm for a disabled vehicle. Deputy arrived on scene to find a gray vehicle in the median. Deputy approached the left side of the vehicle, and found the driver identified as Conner Jones sitting in the driver seat with the keys in the ignition. When speaking with Conner Deputy could smell an alcoholic beverage coming from his person. Jones had slurred speech, red eyes, and very slow to respond to Deputy questions. Cpl. Branam arrived on scene and had Jones perform sobriety test which he did poorly on. Jones was

placed under arrest. Deputy located a clear glass with liquid in it, that smell like alcohol, in the cup holder, and a 1.7 liter of Skky Vodka half empty in the vehicle.

cash ctd. from pg. 5

ed.” Johnson observed, “We have to somehow overcome the scourge that prescription drug abuse has brought to our region and our nation. Prescription drug use and abuse in this case has unfortunately taken the life of an upstanding and totally innocent citizen in Terry Clark. Ledbetter’s abuse of prescription pills caused severe and permanent injury to Terry’s wife, Tabitha, as well as emotional injuries to the son who was a victim in the accident as well.”

DUI and Vehicular Homicide prosecutor Joe Caldwell reiterated, “This type of criminal

activity will always be prosecuted by me in this district and our hearts go out to Mrs. Clark and her entire family. In this part of the state we are all victims of a terrible epidemic of prescription drug abuse, and unfortunately for Mrs. Clark, her marriage of 27 years came to an abrupt end on that horrific Valentine’s Day.”

At Ledbetter’s sentencing on September 22nd she will face a sentencing range of 8 to 12 years in prison on the Vehicular Homicide by Intoxication, 2 to 4 years in prison for vehicular assault and up to 11 months and 29 days in jail each for the DUI and reckless endangerment. Judge Wicks will decide the terms and length of Ledbetter’s sentence after the court conducts a presentence investigation and considers the victim impact statements.




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Public Notice
The Lenoir City Utilities Board’s regularly scheduled Board Meeting for July 17, 2017, has been cancelled. The next regularly scheduled Board Meeting will be August 21, 2017, at 4:00 p.m., and will be held at City Hall, 530 Highway 321 N., Lenoir City, Tennessee 37771.

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