

Prince's family sues doctor who prescribed him pain pills

MINNEAPOLIS » The family of the late rock star Prince is suing a doctor who prescribed pain pills for him, saying the doctor failed to treat him for opiate addiction and therefore bears responsibility for his death two years ago, their attorney announced Friday.

Prince Rogers Nelson died of an accidental overdose of fentanyl April 15, 2016. Authorities say Dr. Michael Schulenberg admitted prescribing a different opioid to Prince in the days before he died, oxycodone, under his bodyguard's name to protect the musician's privacy. Schulenberg has disputed that, although he paid \$30,000 to settle a federal civil violation alleging that the drug was prescribed illegally.

The lawsuit filed in Hennepin County District Court this week alleges that Schulenberg and others had "an opportunity and duty during the weeks before Prince's death to diagnose and treat Prince's opioid addiction, and to prevent his death. They failed to do so."

According to the complaint, which was first reported by ABC News.com, Prince's family seeks unspecified damages in excess of \$50,000.

An attorney for Prince's six surviving siblings said Friday that the new lawsuit will eventually replace a lawsuit they filed in April in Illinois to beat a legal deadline. A week before he died, Prince lost consciousness on a flight home from playing a concert in Atlanta. The plane made an emergency stop in Moline, Illinois, where he was revived at Trinity Medical Center with a drug that reverses opioid overdoses.

"Prince lived in Minnesota all his life and passed away here, so we always thought his family's lawsuit belonged in Minnesota," attorney John Goetz said in a statement. He said they now have sufficient legal grounds to pursue the lawsuit in Prince's home state.

Schulenberg's attorney, Paul Peterson, said Friday that they believe the lawsuit has no merit.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Photos and text from wire services



PHOTO BY CHRIS PIZZELLO — INVISION — AP, FILE

In this file photo, Prince performs at the Billboard Music Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

"We understand this situation has been difficult on everyone close to Mr. Nelson and his fans across the globe," he said in a statement. "Be that as it may, Dr. Schulenberg stands behind the care that Mr. Nelson received. We intend to defend this case."

Authorities say Prince probably didn't know he was taking the dangerous drug fentanyl when he took counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl that looked like a generic version of the painkiller Vicodin. The source of those pills remains unknown and no one has been charged in Prince's death.

The lawsuit also names North Memorial Health Care, where Schulenberg worked at the time; UnityPoint

Health, which operates the Moline hospital; and Walgreens Co., which operates two drug stores where Prince got prescriptions filled. The earlier lawsuit named only UnityPoint and Walgreens.

North Memorial said in a statement that it also stands behind the care Prince received. UnityPoint spokeswoman Vickie Parry said they can't comment on pending litigation. Walgreens did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

"The Minnesota lawsuit is against all parties whom we now believe share legal responsibility for Prince's death, but it is possible that we will identify and add other parties as we move forward with the case," Goetz said.

THEATRE

Act II Playhouse presents 'Biloxi Blues,' Aug. 28 to Sept. 23

Submitted to Digital First Media

Act II Playhouse presents Neil Simon's Broadway comedy Biloxi Blues, on

oirs, which Act II produced in 2016. (Audiences do not need to have seen Brighton Beach Memoirs to appreciate Biloxi Blues.)

"Brighton Beach Mem-

Eugene in Biloxi Blues when I was much younger (at the Hedgerow Theatre in 1997), I knew that Biloxi would also be tailor made for D.J. And we likely wouldn't be

Rizzo play Jerome's fellow soldiers. Actresses Heather Plank and Anne Wechsler round out the cast as Rowena and Daisy.

Tickets for Biloxi Blues at

stage in Ambler from Aug. 28 to Sept. 23.

In this dramatic comedy, inspired by Simon's own life, young soldier Eugene Morris Jerome goes to boot camp and learns about sex, love, and war. It's the second of Simon's autobiographical comedies, following Brighton Beach Mem-

oirs was one of our best-selling shows here at Act II Playhouse, and that was due in large part to the breakout performance of D.J. Gleason as Eugene Morris Jerome," said Artistic Director Tony Braithwaite, who is directing the production. "Our audiences universally adored D.J. Having played

doing the show if it weren't for him!"

Biloxi Blues also stars Andrew Criss as Sgt. Merwin J. Toomey, the hard-nosed officer who both abuses and instructs Jerome and his fellow soldiers. Actors Luke Bradt, Zachary J. Chiero, Andrew Criss, Ryan Hagan, Chris Monaco, and Michael

Act II Playhouse are \$31 to \$45. Tickets are available online at <http://www.act2.org>, by calling the Act II box office at 215-654-0200, or in person at 56 E. Butler Ave. in Ambler. Discount subscriptions are also available for the entire 2018-19 season.

Braithwaite calls the



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show "one of Neil Simon's greatest works."

"Biloxi Blues won the Tony Award for Best Play in 1985, beating out plays

by David Rabe and August Wilson among others that season," Braithwaite explained. "Frank Rich, the impactful New York Times

DANCE

Pottstown Dance Theatre returns to Olympics and wants you!

Submitted to Digital First Media

It's been quite a year at the Pottstown Dance Theatre! The studio got renovated as part of a multi-phase improvement project, the students performed at Carnegie Hall for a second time, and the studio is working to bring a performance group to the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan! We want more dancers to join us. You are going to love dancing with us.

Classes are starting on Monday, Sept. 10 and the Repertory Ensemble will have a fall performance in the studio, "The Haunted Dance Theatre", on Saturday, Oct. 6 beginning at 6 p.m. Come and see dance set in the frighteningly spooky house to Oingo Boingo, the "Walking Dead" theme, and a finale to the iconic Michael Jackson song, "Thriller." After seeing the ghouls



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dance, enjoy a spooktacular Halloween Bash with yummies and music until 9 p.m. Tickets are available upon arrival and are \$8 per person. Costumes for patrons are optional but, the person with the best costume wins four free tickets to "The Nutcracker."

Dancers from age 3 to adult are welcome to join the Pott-

stown Dance Theatre family. Your dancer will blossom right before your very eyes and will learn a love for the art form that will last. You will get world class performance opportunities that are once in a lifetime. Check us out. Call 610-323-2569 or visit www.pottstowndance.com for more information.



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ON STAGE

Playcrafters presents 'Dr. Cook's Garden' now through Sept. 1

From Mary Cantell

What could go wrong in a small idyllic New England town with a reputation for being perfect in every way?

Next up for Playcrafters is a captivating escape into the edgy side of life in Ira Levin's, Dr. Cook's Garden. The two-hour stage play began on Broadway in 1967 with a cast including Burl Ives and later was made into a TV movie. Known for his mastery in thrilling audiences, Levin's talents were showcased in the well-known classic book/film, Rosemary's Baby, as well as

Stepford Wives. The thrills don't stop there.

In the quaint Vermont village of Greenfield Center where everything is wholesomely Americana and reminiscent of a Norman Rockwell painting, the audience is introduced to the village doctor (played by Stephen Kuerschner). He's a kindly old gentleman who would do anything for his patients. Making house calls at all hours of the day or night is not beyond the scope of his duties. His loyalty to them is paralleled by the same devotion his staff workers Bea Schmidt and Dora Ludlow (played by Wendy

Mirto and Michele Loor Nicolay) display toward their elderly boss. Everyone loves and respects him, and he, too, loves the community. It's a blessed reverie for all.

When Dr. Cook's young protégé, Jim Tennyson (played by Ryan HENZES), comes back to town for a visit, he and the doc are pleasantly reunited. Then the young doctor begins to notice things, and what he finds is not quite kosher in his opinion. While his beloved mentor is older and perhaps more forgetful lately, things are different than before when he stumbles upon something distinctly troubling. Elias

Hart, the town official and also the doctor's gardener, is played by Rich Geller.

"There are plot twists you don't expect," said advisor Arnie Finkel. "One turn twists on itself... keeps going... and you don't know until the very end."

The question of medical procedures, choices and politics all collide in a disturbing caldron of good and evil in this timeless melodrama that speaks to the power of man's attempts to keep the status quo.

"The play unfolds to find more and more unusual turns and twists," Finkel added.

The climactic course leaves the audience guessing with questions such as, "Should he have...?"

"...theatrical excitement...moments of effective menace..." — NY Post.

"...aimed for suspense and goose pimples..." — NY Daily News.

Playcrafters presents "Dr. Cook's Garden" at the Barn, 2011 Store Road at Skippack Pike, Skippack. Remaining shows are August 25, 30, 31, and Sept. 1 at 8 p.m. and August 26 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$17. For tickets, www.playcrafters.org or 610-584-4005.

TODAY IN HISTORY

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

August 25, 1944

During World War II, Paris was liberated by Allied forces after four years of Nazi occupation.

ALSO ON THIS DATE

1718

Hundreds of French colonists arrived in Louisiana, with some settling in present-day New Orleans.

1875

Capt. Matthew Webb became the first person to swim across the English Channel, getting from Dover, England, to Calais, France, in 22 hours.

1916

President Woodrow Wilson signed an act establishing the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS

Actor Sean Connery is 88. TV personality Regis Philbin is 87. Actor Tom Skerritt is 85. Rock singer-actor Gene Simmons is 69. Rock singer Rob Halford is 67. Rock singer Elvis Costello is 64. Movie director Tim Burton is 60. Actor Blair Underwood is 54. Television chef Rachael Ray is 50. Country singer Jo Dee Messina is 48. Model Claudia Schiffer is 48. Actor Alexander Skarsgard is 42. Actor Jonathan Togo is 41. Actor Kel Mitchell is 40. Actress Rachel Bilson is 37. Actress Blake Lively is 31.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"Tradition is what you resort to when you don't have the time or the money to do it right."

— Kurt Herbert Adler, Austrian-born conductor (1905-1988)