

# Life

## Label lies

K2 is often sold as "herbal incense," but it contains dangerous chemicals that can mess with your body in unpredictable ways.



**"i overdosed  
on synthetic  
drugs!"**

Just because something is legal doesn't mean  
it's safe. Layla, 17, learned that the hard way.  
as told to ashley mateo

## Head shop owner, employee charged with giving drugs to minor

**F**or three months, my mom had been driving me crazy about my new boyfriend, Doug. Even though he was always doing sweet things, like surprising me with flowers, she kept saying how, at 19, he was too old for me. I knew she'd just go on about what a bad influence he was, so I'd wait for her to leave before having him pick me up in the mornings.

One day on our way to my school, he stopped at the head shop where he worked (they sell incense and pipes, but nothing illegal) to do a few chores before they opened. I knew I'd be a little late, but I didn't think it'd be a big deal. While I was waiting, bored, he offered me a pipe filled with stuff that looked like pot—he said it was K2, a synthetic form of marijuana—and asked if I wanted to snort “bath salts,” which looked like a powder. I'd never done drugs before, but he said, “They'll make you feel good, and they're legal. If they weren't okay, they'd be illegal, right?” I thought, Maybe this isn't the best idea. But he was my boyfriend, and I figured I could trust him. So I said, “Why not?” Plus, the idea of getting a little buzzed before school and stepping out of my comfort zone was exciting. It felt like a safe way to do something a little dangerous.

### bad reaction

I took one hit and *bam*—the world started to swim around me. I almost threw up on the store counter! Doug claimed he and his friends were always fine when they did this stuff, but my heart was racing and I was shaking uncontrollably. He tried to comfort me, but he kept saying, “You just have to get used to it,” which freaked me out even more. Something was seriously wrong.

A few minutes later, we heard knocking on the door. The school called my mom around 10 A.M. and told her that I hadn't shown up, so she came looking for me. When Doug saw who it was, he panicked and said, “You need to get in the closet so your mom doesn't find you.”

At first, I was like, “The closet? Are you serious?” But my mom is *not* cool with any kind of drugs, so I let him push me in there. I was so scared, and I felt trapped and paralyzed in the closet. My mind was racing a mile a minute: *My mom is going to kill me—if I don't die first.*

### time warp

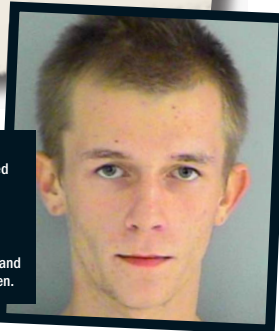
I must have passed out, because the next thing I remember was someone opening the closet door. I had sweated

“  
**The world started to swim around me... and I was shaking uncontrollably.**  
”

through my clothes and I was still shaky. When I looked at the clock, I realized I had been in the closet for 12 hours! It blew my mind. Doug was nowhere to be found! Luckily, there was a guy in the store who I'd met once before. He took me outside and asked for my mom's number—just as she pulled up next to us! She told me she'd suspected I'd been with Doug since the morning and had called the police, who *arrested* him! She looked so worried, it made me feel even worse. I kept stumbling and slurring my words, so I told her what I had taken and she immediately drove me to the hospital. After I checked in, I got really scared the doctors would tell the police I had taken drugs and I'd get arrested, just like Doug had been. I started yelling and begging her to take me home. Finally, she gave in. I crawled

#### busted!

After what happened to Layla, her then-boyfriend, Douglas Goins, was charged with corrupting another with drugs and endangering children.



into bed, wishing I could forget this ever happened, and slept another 12 hours with my mom sitting next to me, just to make sure I was still breathing.

### wake-up call

The next day, I woke up groggy—and furious. I couldn't believe that Doug—someone I trusted—would give me something so dangerous and then abandon me. He just left me in that closet like I was *nothing*! I haven't talked to him since, and I don't ever want to. Before, I heard friends joke about how these drugs are no big deal, and I probably wouldn't have said anything because I didn't want them to think I was lame. But now I want everyone to know what happened to me. Calling drugs “fake” or “synthetic” doesn't make them any less dangerous, and just because someone says something is safe doesn't mean it really is. **17**

## LEGAL BUT LETHAL

Certain types of synthetic drugs may be sold legally in some states, but people have reported → hallucinations and seizures—even death.

After a house party, 11 teens and young adults **landed in the hospital** after taking 2C-E, a synthetic drug similar to Ecstasy. A 19-year-old → died after going into cardiac arrest.

Ashley, 18, took one hit of 7H, “fake marijuana,” and **was** → paralyzed for three hours.

Stacy, 22, took 2C-E at a party, started spitting up blood, and passed out. At the hospital later that night, **she died of an overdose.**



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