



**'Nobody has seen him selling drugs': Bali lawyer - Age, The/The Sunday Age: Web Edition Articles (Melbourne, Australia) - September 26, 2022**

September 26, 2022 | Age, The/The Sunday Age: Web Edition Articles (Melbourne, Australia) | Chris Barrett

Singapore/Jakarta: The lawyer for an Australian surfing and diving instructor caught bringing drugs into Bali says police are "slowly moving away" from the suspicion that he was a dealer.

Jeff Walton, 51, was apprehended with eight grams of heroin and 0.34 grams of methamphetamine when he arrived at Denpasar airport from Vietnam earlier this month and has since been held in custody by the Indonesian National Narcotics Agency (BNN).

Australian Jeff Walton has been arrested in Bali for allegedly attempting to smuggle heroin and methamphetamine to the island. Nine

Under Indonesian law, the trafficking of more than five grams of illicit drugs in non-plant form can carry the death penalty or up to life in prison.

Walton's lawyer Edward Pangkahila said on past experience the quantity of drugs he was found with was unlikely to result in the top tier of punishment.

A German man was sentenced to 10 years behind bars in 2018 for carrying seven grams of heroin and 2.5 grams of methamphetamine into Bali from Berlin.

But prosecutors could still push for a jail term of up to 20 years for Walton, who holds Australian and British citizenship, if he is dealt with under the least severe band of penalties.

Pangkahila said he was lobbying for the Perth man to serve time in a rehabilitation facility, arguing he was an addict and that the drugs were for personal use – not to sell.

"In the beginning of the investigation, BNN tried hard to determine that he was a dealer," he said.

"They thought it could be a sample. But now I think they are slowly moving away from it. They started to believe that Jeff is an addict. So, I think, in order to get certainty, it's better to conduct an assessment."

According to his lawyer, Walton lived in Jimbaran, south of Kuta, and had been in Bali on and off for the past 11 years.

He told police interrogators he had been consuming drugs for 12 years, Pangkahila said, but "nobody ever saw him distributing drugs".

"BNN cannot find witnesses that saw him distributing drugs, for instance," he said.

Walton arrived in Bali on a VietJet flight late on the afternoon of September 5 and was X-rayed by customs officers at Denpasar airport, who discovered the heroin and methamphetamine in a condom in his anus.

He also tested positive to heroin on a urine test performed by the narcotics agency. Pangkahila said Walton had been in Vietnam on holiday.

BNN Bali spokesman Made Dwi Saputra said the case was still being investigated.

A press conference will be held in Bali on Thursday to outline the allegations against Walton.

Australians Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran were executed by firing squad in Indonesia in 2015 for being the ringleaders of the **Bali Nine** operation to smuggle 8.3 kilograms of heroin from the island to Australia in 2005.

Six other members of the group were handed life sentences. Another of the drug mules, Renae Lawrence, who had 2.6 kilograms of heroin strapped to her body, had her life sentence reduced to 20 years on appeal and was released in 2018.

In July, two other Australian men, aged 46 and 44, were arrested in Indonesia's contested West Papua region after being caught with methamphetamine and syringes while working in mining.

Police have since dropped their case against them after determining that the pair were addicts. They have instead been admitted to a rehabilitation clinic in Mimika, said local police chief I Gede Putra.

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