

# 19 drug related arrests at 11 Viall Street in New Bedford so far in 2019

So far in 2019, New Bedford Police officers were called 14 times to 11 Vial Street in New Bedford's south end for drug dealing related calls. According to the New Bedford Police and mayor's office, it was officially designated a "problem property" by the City of New Bedford on July 23. The "problem property" designation means the City of New Bedford can now bill future police costs associated with calls to the property to the landlord. The problem with this action against the property owner is the vast majority of those arrested do not live at 11 Viall Street and the landlord seems to be making an effort to secure the property.

According to the New Bedford Police Department, the 15 calls resulted in 19 drug-related arrests and 54 charges to those individuals. The latest arrest was on Friday, July 19, when New Bedford police arrested 59-year old Victor Medina who is being charged with possession of heroin.

On May 22, New Bedford police arrested four individuals in the driveway of 11 Viall Street on drug charges to include fentanyl distribution. The individuals arrested live on Central Ave, Sawyer Street, County Street, and Holly Street.

On July 2, **New Bedford police arrested four individuals on various drug charges to include fentanyl distribution** making it the third fentanyl/heroin distribution arrest made at 11 Viall Street since March 2 of 2019. The individuals arrested live on Stuart Street in Fall River and Gardner Street, County Street and Phillips Ave. in New Bedford.

The property is owned by Robert Amaral, who according to New Bedford Assessor records owns 17 properties in New Bedford.

Ronald Oliviera, who owned several properties through a trust with Amaral, says he sold the 11 Viall Street property and other properties to Amaral and removed himself as a trust on the property in early July. Robert Amaral confirms that, but says he's only been given a warning by the city.

The vast majority of those arrested on drug charges at 11 Viall Street do not live at the property. The driveway and yard seem to be used for drug transactions according to both Amaral and the New Bedford police. Mr. Amaral states that he has spent thousands of dollars securing the property and that police continue to make arrests, but the dealers keep coming back.

Viall Street is part of **The South End of New Bedford's Drug Dealer Mile** – a 1-mile area where 17 drug dealers were arrested in a 5 month period.

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## **Massachusetts State Troopers arrest operator of speeding vehicle for trafficking cocaine**

Just before 6 p.m. yesterday Trooper Tyler Hopkins and his Field Training Officer, Trooper Christopher Keane of State Police-Sturbridge, were conducting speed enforcement on Route 84 in Sturbridge. While in the area of Exit 3A they observed a gray Honda Accord traveling at a speed of 65 miles per hour where the posted speed limit is 50 miles per hour. Trooper Hopkins activated the cruiser's blue lights and initiated a motor vehicle stop on the Honda.

Upon the vehicle stopping both troopers approached it to speak with the operator, identified as DAVID BAEZ-VEGA, 28, of Springfield, informed him why he was stopped and gathered his information. Through further investigation on scene troopers built probable cause and received consent to search the vehicle. The results of the search revealed BAEZ-VEGA was concealing over one kilogram of a substance believed to be cocaine tightly wrapped in plastic. He was immediately placed under arrest and his vehicle was towed from the scene after a thorough search.

BAEZ-VEGA was transported to SP Sturbridge for booking where bail was set at \$2,500, which he was able to post. He was arraigned today at Dudley District Court on the following charges:

- Trafficking in Cocaine; and
- Speeding.

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## **Massachusetts Woman indicted for \$90,000 in Social Security, MassHealth and Food Stamp fraud**

A Fitchburg woman was arrested yesterday and charged in federal court in Boston with fraudulently receiving Social Security disability benefits, MassHealth, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Rhonda Bernal, 60, was charged with three counts of theft of public funds and two counts of making false statements. She

appeared before U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge Jennifer Boal and was released on conditions.

According to the indictment, over a period of approximately eight years, Bernal stole \$71,462 in Social Security benefits, \$6,444 in MassHealth benefits, and \$13,505 in SNAP benefits (previously known as Food Stamps). In February 2015, she allegedly falsely informed the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance that she was the only person in her household when, in fact, she was living with her husband. In addition, Bernal allegedly falsely told Social Security in April 2016 that she and a relative, who was not her husband, were the only members of her household.

The charges of theft of public funds provide for a sentence of no greater than 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. The charges of making false statements provide for a sentence of no greater than five years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Scott Antolik, Special Agent in Charge of the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations, Boston Field Division; Phillip M. Coyne, Special Agent in Charge of the Office of Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Boston Regional Office; and Suzanne M. Bump, State Auditor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, made the announcement. Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen Burzycki of Lelling's Major Crimes Unit is prosecuting the case.

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# **New Bedford police arrest three men in three separate drug distribution busts**

Within a 7 hour window, New Bedford police officers arrested three men in three separate drug distribution busts involving two firearms, fentanyl, crack cocaine and \$3,700 in cash late Tuesday and early Wednesday.

At 6:42 pm on Tuesday, New Bedford Narcotics officers observed a man with an active arrest warrant driving a vehicle. After stopping the vehicle and placing him in custody, they discovered a bag allegedly in his possession that contained 30 Suboxone strips, approximately 2 grams of fentanyl and over \$900.

37-year-old Chad Turner of 156 Chestnut Street – apartment #18 in New Bedford was arrested with an active warrant and is being charged with possession to distribute 30 Suboxone strips, possession to distribute fentanyl, possession to distribute a Class A drug (second offense) and possession to distribute a Class B drug (second offense).

At 10:06 pm on Tuesday, New Bedford Narcotics Officers concluded an investigation into a cocaine delivery service at 2120 Phillips Road – Apartment #15 in New Bedford. Officers executed a search warrant and seized over 6 grams of fentanyl, over 1 gram of crack-cocaine, 6 oxycodone tabs, \$400, a small-caliber handgun and 5 suspected MDMA tabs.

22-year-old James Williams is being charged with possession to distribute a Class A drug, possession to distribute a Class B drug (three charges), unlawful possession/transfer of a

firearm (rifle/shotgun), unlawful possession of mace, improper storage of a firearm and unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle.

At 1:42 am on Wednesday, New Bedford police officers arrested 23-year-old Jonathan Gonzalez of 70 Fair Street – apartment #1 in New Bedford for allegedly possessing 16 grams of crack-cocaine and \$2,400 dollars.

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## **New Bedford Postal Service Employee Pleads Guilty to Embezzlement**

A U.S. Postal Service (USPS) employee pleaded guilty today to embezzling over \$20,000 in payments from customers for money orders and stamps.

Austin Correia, 22, of New Bedford, pleaded guilty to one count of theft of embezzlement and theft of public money, property or records. U.S. District Court Chief Judge Patti B. Saris scheduled sentencing for Nov. 20, 2019. In June 2019, Correia was charged by indictment and arrested.

Correia began working for USPS at the end of 2017 as a Sales & Service Distribution Associate at both the Mount Pleasant and Coffin Station Post Offices in New Bedford. In this role, Correia had the ability to issue foreign and domestic postal money orders and sell stamps to customers. Correia engaged in a scheme in which he received a cash payment from customers to purchase stamps or money orders, but voided out the valid transactions to make it appear as if they did not occur. Correia provided the customer with the USPS product, but took

the cash payment for his own personal use either by pocketing the money or by purchasing gift cards sold at the Post Office. In total, Correia embezzled over \$20,000 from USPS.

The charging statute provides a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. According to the terms of the plea agreement, the government will recommend a sentence of two years of probation with the first six months to be served in home confinement, 25 hours of community service and restitution in the amount of \$20,584. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling and Matthew Modafferi, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Postal Service Office of Inspector General, Northeast Area Office, made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Eugenia M. Carris of Lelling's Public Corruption & Special Prosecutions Unit is prosecuting the case.

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## **19-year old New Bedford man charged in stabbing incident on Monday**

On Monday, July 29, at approximately 9:20 pm, New Bedford Police responded to the area of Ashley Blvd. and Deane Street after receiving a report of a stabbing victim.

Police arrived on scene and located a victim, who had sustained injuries after being stabbed multiple times. Police were able to identify the suspect immediately and learned the

incident had taken place at 219 Ashley Blvd., after an argument between parties known to each other.

Police were able to quickly locate Christopher Goode, 19, of 320 Tinkham Street, New Bedford. Mr. Goode was placed under arrest without incident and charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon. The male victim was transported to the hospital, where he was treated for the wounds sustained during the incident. New Bedford Police continue to investigate this incident, which is still active.

Christopher Goode is due to be arraigned at Third District on Tuesday, July 30, 2019.

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## **Massachusetts State Troopers arrest man for narcotics, firearm offenses**

On Saturday July 27 Trooper Brian Santry and his Field Training Officer, Trooper Michael Callahan of State Police-Revere, were dispatched to 911 reports of a vehicle stopped on Route 1 in Chelsea with the operator unconscious behind the wheel. Upon the arrival of troopers they observed the vehicle partially stopped in a construction zone and partially in an active travel lane and attempted to wake the operator. They noticed the vehicle was still in gear and the operator was holding the vehicle in place with his foot on the brake pedal. After 1-2 minutes the operator arose and began speaking to troopers.

Once Troopers Santry and Callahan arrived on scene they interviewed the operator, identified as BRIAN BARR, 30, of



Wareham, and noticed signs of impairment. They formed the opinion that BARR was under the influence of an intoxicating substance, placed him under arrest, and requested a tow truck to remove his vehicle. Prior to the vehicle being removed from the scene Trooper Santry conducted a motor vehicle inventory and immediately noticed a large amount of marijuana along with prescription medication not belonging to BARR. Trooper Santry continued the inventory and located a loaded Glock 22 firearm along with over 150 rounds of various ammunition. BARR is not licensed to possess firearms. A K-9 was requested and Trooper Daniel Purtell arrived with K-9 Neko to conduct a search of the vehicle locating additional narcotics.

BARR was transported to SP Revere where he was booked. He was arraigned today at Chelsea District Court on the following charges:

- OUI – Drugs, 2nd Offense;
- OUI – Liquor 2nd offense;
- Possession of a Class D Substance with Intent to Distribute;
- Five Counts of Possession of a Class E Substance;
- Illegal Possession of a Firearm;
- Carrying a Loaded Firearm while Intoxicated;
- Possession of a Firearm in the Commission of a Crime;
- Possession of Ammunition without FID Card; and
- Unlawful Possession of Fireworks.

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**Brothers convicted for  
trafficking large quantities**

# of cocaine in greater-Taunton area

A pair of brothers from Berkley who were involved in trafficking large quantities of cocaine in the greater-Taunton area were both convicted and sentenced to lengthy state prison terms recently, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Robert White, 38, was convicted last week in Fall River Superior Court after a three-day jury trial on charges of trafficking cocaine and possession with intent to distribute a class B drug. After the conviction was returned by the jury, Judge Thomas Perrino immediately sentenced Robert White to serve eight-and-a-half to 12 years in state prison.

Robert White's co-defendant and brother, 40-year-old Michael White, pleaded guilty to indictments charging him with the same two crimes on July 22. He was sentenced by Judge Perrino to serve a five to seven-year state prison term.

Both cases were prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Michael Sheehan.

On Friday, April 27, 2018, the Southeastern Massachusetts Gang Task Force, Bristol Narcotics Unit, and Community Action Team staged surveillance then executed a search warrant on 18 Stanley Ave, 2nd Floor in Taunton. The targets of the search warrant were these two defendants. Both parties arrived at the apartment on scooters. The Task Force observed Michael White conduct an apparent narcotics transaction with the driver of a Subaru shortly after his arrival. Another party was observed entering, then quickly exiting, the building.

The Task Force detained the defendants immediately upon their exiting of the building. Robert White admitted to having cocaine on his person during the pat-frisk. Officers found

four twists of crack cocaine on his person. Robert White had \$393 on his person. Michael White had \$320 on his person. Both defendants were advised of their rights and placed under arrest

The Task Force found several items of standing and evidence of distribution inside the apartment, along with nearly 100 grams of cocaine, three digital scales, glass measuring cup w/ gold strainer and crack residue, another glass cup with four plastic twists of crack cocaine, a box of glad sandwich bags, varying amounts of US Currency wrapped in elastic bands, and a safe containing black pouch of cocaine and US Currency. All monies seized totaled \$5,414.

Due to Robert White's extensive criminal record, Assistant District Attorney Sheehan argued for a 10 to 15 years state prison term. The five to seven-year state prison term for Michael White was agreed upon by the defense and prosecutor.

"I am very pleased the jury held Robert White accountable for dealing a large amount of drugs. He has a history of serious drug dealing, which is contributing to the drug epidemic in our communities. The sentence imposed by the court was well-deserved based on his lengthy criminal record," District Attorney Quinn said. "In addition, his brother, Michael White, is also being held accountable for his role in this lucrative drug trafficking operation. He too will be off the street for a significant period of time."

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## **Dominican National Sentenced**

# **for Laundering Nearly \$1 Million in Fraudulently Obtained IRS Refund Checks**

On Wednesday, July 24, a Dominican national was sentenced in federal court in Boston for laundering close to \$1 million in fraudulently obtained IRS refund checks using 11 different bank accounts at five different banks.

Francisco Oscar “Frank” Gullon, 52, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Leo T. Sorokin to 84 months in prison and ordered to pay restitution of \$1.6 million. Gullon will face deportation proceedings following the completion of his sentence. In April 2019 Gullon was convicted, following a six-day jury trial, of one count of conspiracy, 15 counts of theft or conversion of United States property and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering. Gullon was arrested in the Dominican Republic and extradited to the United States in 2018.

Gullon conspired with an attorney R. David Cohen, who, in 2016, was convicted for his role in the scheme, to deposit and launder over 100 fraudulently obtained tax refund checks. The checks were based on fraudulent tax returns with false W-2 information, usually using the name and Social Security number of a resident of Puerto Rico, where residents are not required to file federal income tax returns. Once the fraudulent returns were accepted by the IRS, refund checks were sent to addresses in Lawrence, East Boston and New York.

From October 2011 until November 2013, Gullon and his co-conspirators obtained and negotiated more than \$1.6 million in fraudulent checks, including nearly \$1 million in checks that were the product of fraudulent tax refunds. Gullon and his co-conspirators deposited the checks into bank accounts in the

name of a front company, AD Professional Association Inc., and in co-conspirator R. David Cohen's attorney client trust accounts. When questioned by bank officials about the suspicious quantity of U.S. Treasury checks, Grullon falsely claimed that he was depositing them as a favor for friends and that he had a check-cashing license. Later, after their bank accounts were closed by several banks, Grullon and Cohen recruited a third co-conspirator and directed him to open accounts for AD Professional Association Inc., deposit more than \$500,000 in treasury checks, and make hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash withdrawals.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Kristina O'Connell, Special Agent in Charge of the Internal Revenue Service's Criminal Investigation in Boston; Jason Molina, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; and Stephen A. Marks, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service, Boston Field Division made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Elysa Q. Wan of Lelling's Criminal Division prosecuted the case.

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## **Somerset child rapist sentenced to up to 35 years in prison**

A 30-year-old Somerset man was sentenced to serve 25 to 35 years in state prison on Friday after previously being convicted of raping and sexually molesting a pre-teen relative on a daily basis for about two years, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Daniel Viveiros was convicted by a jury of his peers after a

two-week trial in Fall River Superior Court, which concluded on July 18, on charges of: Four counts of Aggravated Statutory Rape, four counts of Indecent Assault and Battery on a Person Under 14, two counts of Indecent Exposure, two counts of Exhibiting Harmful Material to a Minor, and one count of violating a restraining order.

The defendant was living in a home with the victim and her mother during the incidents. The sexual assaults occurred for about 18 months in a home in New Bedford and then for an additional six months in a home in Swansea. In an effort to protect the victim's identity, no further information about the case or the relationship will be disseminated.

The case was prosecuted by Second Assistant District Attorney Silvia Rudman and Assistant District Attorney Casey Smith. The 25 to 35 year state prison sentence was imposed by Judge Karen Green. Upon the defendant's release from prison, he will be placed on supervised probation for an additional 10 years.

"This was a terrible case of sexual abuse against an innocent young girl, which took place regularly for about two years. The defendant used his position of trust with the victim's mother to have access to the child and engage in this heinous conduct," District Attorney Quinn said. "I applaud and admire the victim for coming forward and persevering through the prosecution of the case. This has had a major impact on her life and her relationship with her mother. The jury vindicated her complaints of abuse and justice was served by the sentence imposed by the court. I hope she and her mother can move forward with their lives."

#### **SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF PROBATION**

a) The defendant shall attend sex offender treatment at his own expense as directed by Probation & Court, at a program approved by Probation, and shall remain in treatment unless and until professionally discharged by the approved sex

offender therapist;

b) The Defendant shall provide Probation with signed releases as to any therapy/treatment he;

c) The defendant shall not reside in a household with minor children (including his own);

d) The defendant shall have no unsupervised contact with minor children.

e) The defendant shall have no supervised contact with minor children unless and until the supervisor has been approved in advance by the Probation Officer and informed by Probation Officer of the offense for which the defendant is on probation and of any other sexual offense for which the defendant has been found guilty.

f) The defendant shall not be employed in a job that puts him into contact with minor children on a regular basis and all employment must be approved in advance by the Probation Officer.

g) The defendant shall not perform volunteer activities that put him into contact with children on a regular basis and all volunteer activities must be approved in advance by the Probation Officer.

h) The defendant shall not date any parent of a minor child without permission from the Probation Officer and, if permission is granted, said individual must be informed by the Probation Officer of the offense for which the defendant is on probation and of any other sexual offense for which the defendant has been found guilty.

i) The defendant shall comply with his legal obligations to register with the Sex Offender Registry Board.

j) The defendant shall be subject to GPS monitoring for the entirety of his probation sentence with exclusion zones as to

the victims when they are in Massachusetts, and agrees that the exclusion zones for GPS may be altered as deemed appropriate by probation.

k) The defendant shall have no contact, directly or indirectly with the victim or members of her family.

l) The Defendant shall participate in testing in the form of polygraphs or any other methodology approved by the Court in order to measure compliance with the conditions of supervision and treatment.