

# 29-Year Old New Bedford Man Convicted of Repeatedly Raping 12-Year Old Girl

A 29-year-old New Bedford man was convicted by a jury of his peers recently of repeatedly raping and molesting a 12-year-old girl, who viewed him as a father, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Christopher Baez-Rivera was convicted after a two-week long jury trial in Fall River Superior Court. He was sentenced last Thursday by Judge Thomas McGuire to serve 12 to 15 years in state prison, to be followed by five years of supervised probation. The trial was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Canan Yesilcimen.

The defendant's mother became the guardian of the young victim when she was four years old. The rapes and molestation occurred in New Bedford while the defendant was living in the same home with the victim in 2020 and 2021.

The jury deliberated for just under four hours before convicting the defendant.

"The defendant took advantage of his relationship with and access to the victim. She was only 12 years old when he repeatedly raped her. I commend the victim for coming forward and persevering through this very difficult ordeal. I hope she can move forward with her life," District Attorney Quinn said.

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# Dominican woman living in Massachusetts sentenced for Fentanyl trafficking for Mexican Sinaloa Cartel

"BOSTON – A Dominican woman has been sentenced for possessing seven kilograms of fentanyl as well as one kilogram of fentanyl and fentanyl analogue intended for distribution.

Ana Checo, 42, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Indira Talwani on Dec. 7, 2023 to 135 months in prison and five years of supervised release. On Sept. 6, 2023, Checo pleaded guilty to one count of possession with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl and 100 grams or more of valeryl fentanyl and one count of money laundering conspiracy.

*"The devastating impact fentanyl continues to have on our communities cannot be overstated," said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy. "This sentence underscores our unwavering determination to identify and bring to justice those responsible for putting deadly fentanyl on our streets. Our office will continue to use every resource at our disposal to dismantle criminal enterprises that seek to profit off of addiction and misery."*

"Fentanyl is causing tremendous damage to the state of Massachusetts," said Brian D. Boyle, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New England Division. "Let this sentence be a warning to those traffickers who are distributing this poison in order to profit and destroy people's lives. DEA's top priority is combatting the opioid epidemic by working with our local, county, state and federal partners to bring to justice anyone who distributes this

deadly drug.”

In June 2019, Checo was identified as a member of a large-scale drug trafficking and money laundering organization working with drug suppliers based in Sinaloa, Mexico. Specifically, Checo was responsible for receiving narcotics – namely fentanyl – from the drug suppliers for distribution in Massachusetts, as well as delivering drug proceeds in bulk cash to money launderers who laundered the proceeds back to the suppliers in Mexico.

In June 2019, Checo delivered \$58,510 in drug proceeds to an undercover officer for laundering. In July 2019, a search of Checo’s residence resulted in the recovery of approximately over 12 kilograms of narcotics – including seven kilograms of fentanyl, four kilograms of tramadol, one kilogram of a fentanyl and fentanyl analogue mixture and half a kilogram of a hallucinogen. The drugs were found stored in bags inside Checo’s bedroom closet as well as her daughter’s bedroom closet. Also seized was \$18,325 in cash as well as several notebooks that detailed drug transactions dating back to 2017.

In April 2020, Checo arranged to deliver \$250,000 in bulk cash to an undercover agent posing as a money launderer who had accepted a contract to launder the money from a money broker. Similarly, in April and May 2021, Checo arranged to deliver \$100,000 to undercover agents posing as money launderers who had accepted contracts to launder the money from money brokers.

In April 2020, nearly \$250,000 in bundled cash was seized from Checo as she was traveling to deliver the money to an undercover officer for laundering. Similarly, over two separate occasions in April and May 2021, Checo delivered a total of \$200,000 to undercover agents for laundering. On May 26, 2021, in Peabody, Mass., Checo met with a tractor trailer driver and received a suitcase that contained 55 kilograms of fentanyl – worth over \$1 million. The fentanyl was ultimately

seized later that day.

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy and DEA SAC Boyle made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Katherine Ferguson of the Narcotics & Money Laundering Unit prosecuted the case.”- Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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## **Dartmouth woman arrested, charged with a scheme to embezzle \$280,000 from her employer**

“A former employee of a Bristol County industrial company was arrested and charged today in connection with a scheme to embezzle more than \$280,000 from her employer.

Jasmyne Botelho, 41, was charged with one count of wire fraud. Botelho was arrested this morning and, following an initial appearance in federal court in Boston today, was released on conditions.

According to the charging documents, between September 2017 and April 2020, Botelho stole at least \$280,000 from her employer. Botelho allegedly directed payments purportedly intended for the company’s vendors to bank accounts she controlled and used company funds to make payments on personal credit cards and auto loans. To hide her scheme, Botelho allegedly falsified her employer’s books and records to make it appear as though the payments had in fact been sent to legitimate vendors rather than to Botelho.

The charge of wire fraud provides a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy and Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kristen A. Kearney of the Securities, Financial & Cyber Fraud Unit is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging document are allegations. The defendant is presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in the court of law.”-Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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## **Texas man pleads guilty to threatening doctor at Massachusetts LGBTQIA+ health center**

“BOSTON – A Texas man pleaded guilty today in federal court in Boston to threatening a Boston doctor who provided care for members of the transgender community.

Matthew Jordan Lindner, 39, of Comfort, Texas, pleaded guilty to one count of interstate transmission of threatening communication. Senior U.S. District Judge William G. Young scheduled sentencing for Feb. 6, 2024. Lindner was arrested in

Texas and charged on Dec. 2, 2022. He was subsequently indicted by a federal grand jury in Boston on Dec. 15, 2022.

In August 2022, inaccurate information spread online regarding procedures doctors at Boston Children's Hospital were performing for gender nonconforming children. On Aug. 31, 2022, in the midst of social media vitriol directed at health care providers who serve transgender patients, Lindner called the Boston-based National LGBTQIA+ Health Education Center and left a threatening voicemail targeting one of the Center's affiliated doctors. In that voicemail, Lindner said: "You sick motherf\*\*\*\*s, you're all gonna burn. There's a group of people on their way to handle [victim]. You signed your own warrant, lady. Castrating our children. You've woken up enough people. And upset enough of us. And you signed your own ticket. Sleep well, you f\*\*\*\*\* c\*\*\*."

*"Doctors who serve pediatric patients, including the victim in this case and staff at Boston Children's Hospital, have dedicated their professional lives to treating children. They should be celebrated for their contributions to so many in their time of need. Instead, this defendant threatened a doctor with violence just for doing her job. This conduct is deplorable and sends a chill through the medical community," said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy. "Hate and bigotry have no place in Massachusetts. Our office will stop at no end to protect the safety of all members of our community. We will continue to do all that we can to ensure individuals who engage in such behavior are identified, prosecuted and held accountable."*

"There is no way to undo the damage Matthew Lindner did to this physician, with his hateful, repulsive, and threatening behavior," said Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. "No one should have to live in fear of violence because of who they are, what kind of work they do, or what they believe. This case, sadly, is just one example of the FBI's ongoing

commitment to bring to justice anyone who violates federal law, including those who threaten violence.”

After leaving the threatening voicemail, Lindner continued to try to contact the victim. To that end, he called the victim’s former medical practice and a university where the victim was a faculty member.

The charge of interstate transmission of threatening communication provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, up to three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy and Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brian A. Fogerty and K. Nathaniel Yeager of the Criminal Division are prosecuting the case.” - Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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## **Massachusetts State Police seek public help IDing erratic, speeding driver who caused fatal rollover**

“At approximately 8:40 AM Massachusetts State Troopers responded to a rollover crash on Route 93 north in Stoneham

that resulted in the death of a 34-year-old woman.

The victim was driving a 2015 Nissan Rogue sport utility vehicle northbound on Route 93. For reasons still under investigation, the vehicle rolled over south of Exit 26. The driver was ejected and was determined to be deceased on scene. Her name is not being released at this time.

The State Police are seeking to identify another vehicle that was in the area at the time of the crash, which is believed to be a dark-colored small SUV similar to a Subaru Crosstrek or a Nissan Rogue. That vehicle was being operated erratically and at a high rate of speed on Route 93 north in Medford and Stoneham between 8:25 and 8:40 AM. Anyone who may have seen this vehicle or has information about it is asked to call Trooper CJ Murgio at the State Police Detective Unit for Middlesex County at 781-897-6609 or the State Police-Medford Barracks at 781-396-0100.

The ongoing crash investigation is being conducted by the State Police-Medford Barracks, the State Police Detective Unit for Middlesex County, the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office, the State Police Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Section, and the State Police Crime Scene Services Section."-  
Massachusetts State Police.





*Massachusetts State Police photo.*



*Massachusetts State Police photo.*



*Massachusetts State Police photo.*

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# **New Bedford Police surveillance leads to charging Fall River couple with drug trafficking**

“NEW BEDFORD – Detectives have placed a man and woman under arrest for trafficking in crack cocaine.

On the evening of December 1st, narcotics detectives were conducting surveillance in the west-end sector. Det. Sgt. Jarrod Gracia was monitoring the area of the Bullock St./Trinity St. intersection, in response to anonymous information concerning possible drug activity. At around 8 PM, he observed what he believed to be a drug transaction taking place at this location involving a couple in a Mercedes.

The vehicle was followed until it was ultimately stopped by officers at the Austin St./Richmond St. intersection. It was found to contain two occupants, the operator, Mr. KEITH SANTERRE, 46, and his girlfriend, Ms. JENNIFER SANTOS, 42, both of 87 Orange St., Fall River.

As the result of a subsequent search, SANTERRE and SANTOS were found to be in possession of over 43 grams of “crack” cocaine, along with a digital scale that was covered in a white, powdery substance. Additionally, SANTERRE was found to have two active warrants for his arrest.

Both parties were placed under arrest and are being charged with trafficking in crack cocaine and conspiracy to violate the controlled substance laws.

SANTERRE has an extensive history of convictions for a variety of offenses including armed robbery, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, and drug possession. At this time, he is being held in the custody of the Bristol County Sheriff.

This case was investigated by Detective Sgt. Jarrod Gracia and Det. Samuel Mojica-Algarin.

If you have any information concerning crime, you can remain anonymous. Call 508-99-CRIME, or visit our website and leave tips at <https://www.newbedfordpd.com/report/>-City of New Bedford Police Department.

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## **23-year old New Bedford man charged with firearm offenses after thermal imaging detects pistol**

“NEW BEDFORD – Detectives use a thermal imaging instrument to assist them in determining possession of contraband.

On December 1st, at around 10:30 PM, Gang Unit detectives were active in the city’s west end. At this time, they observed TYLER THOMAS, 23, walking in the area of Cedar St. and Norton Ct. THOMAS is well known to the detectives through numerous previous interactions. As the officers drew near, THOMAS quickly began to sprint away from the area.

THOMAS was subsequently stopped in a nearby lot and found to be in possession of a spring-loaded knife. Detectives then began to search the immediate area for any other items that he

may have disposed of while running. At this time, a Smith & Wesson .38 caliber revolver was located in a nearby bush.

Detectives then utilized thermal imaging to further determine that the weapon had just been dropped. Thermal imaging is a valuable tool used in similar investigations, particularly when attempting to establish the possession of narcotics or weapons that have just been dropped by a suspect. This technology relies on the detection of infrared radiation emitted by objects based on their temperature.

When a person holds an item, they may leave behind a "heat signature" due to the transfer of body heat from their hand onto the object. Thermal imaging is used to identify and document these residual thermal patterns, creating a visual record that can be effective in determining possession. It offers a unique perspective that transcends what the naked eye can perceive.

When first imaged, the pistol was read to be 55 degrees. Approximately 16 minutes later, a second image was taken that determined the pistol was 36 degrees, which is a drop of 19 degrees in a relatively short period.

THOMAS was placed under arrest and charged with carrying a loaded firearm without a license. He has previous convictions for possession of Class "B" substance, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon, and assault and battery. At the time of this arrest, he had an open case in New Bedford District Court for assault and battery stemming from an incident in June.

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# Deceased Infant found at Fort Taber in New Bedford

On Saturday, December 9, 2023, New Bedford Police responded to Fort Taber at approximately 12:40 pm. An adult walking along a path by the water at Fort Taber had made observations of a blanket in an area adjacent to the walking path and detected an odor of decay.

Upon arrival, police located the body of a decomposing infant in the blanket first discovered by the adult walker. The body of the infant was transported to the Massachusetts Medical Examiner's Office.

This is an active investigation by the Bristol County District Attorney's Office, the Massachusetts State Police Detective Unit assigned to the Bristol County District Attorney's Office and the New Bedford Police.

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# Suspended license for failure to pay child support results in Fentanyl Trafficking charges for Massachusetts

# State Police man

“November 26, 2023, Trooper Joshua Gagnon was conducting patrol on Route 91 northbound in West Springfield. Trooper Gagnon’s attention was drawn to a Ford Fusion sedan which was drifting out of the marked lanes of Route 91. Trooper Gagnon ran a check of the vehicle’s registration and saw the registered owner’s license was suspended for failure to pay child support.

Trooper Gagnon stopped the Ford and made contact with the driver, FREDERICK JESERSKI, 35, of Southwick. Trooper Gagnon confirmed JESERSKI was the registered owner of the Ford and removed him from the vehicle. A search of JESERSKI’s person found a knife in his pocket, and in his hooded sweatshirt, several individual packages commonly used to bundle heroin or fentanyl. JESERSKI was placed under arrest and seated in the rear of a State Police cruiser.

At this point, backed up by Troopers Brett Goldsmith and Derrick Desruisseaux, Trooper Gagnon turned to conducting a probable cause search of the vehicle JESERSKI was driving. That search discovered, under the passenger seat and on the rear seat floorboards; a hunting knife, a collapsible baton, and approximately 7,575 individually packaged doses of fentanyl totaling over 151.5 grams, or almost 6 ounces.

JESERSKI was booked, photographed, and fingerprinted at the Springfield Barracks.

JESERSKI was arraigned at Springfield District Court on charges of:

1. Trafficking In Fentanyl;
2. Carrying a Dangerous Weapon;
3. Operating A Motor Vehicle With a Suspended License; and
4. Marked Lanes Violation.”-Massachusetts State Police.

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# **New Bedford Police respond to emergency call at local hotel, seize firearm**

“NEW BEDFORD – Patrol units responding to an emergency call at a local hotel have seized an illegal firearm.

On December 4th, at around 7 AM, patrol units were dispatched to the Marriot Fairfield Inn in response to an emergency call for assistance. As the officers dealt with the situation at hand, they located a Jennings 22 caliber handgun along with a magazine and ammunition in one of the rooms. The serial number of the gun had been defaced.

The owner of the firearm was determined to be Mr. JOSHUA BUTLER, 31, of New Bedford. BUTLER was located in the lobby of the hotel eating breakfast and was subsequently taken into custody. He has been charged with possession of a firearm with a defaced serial number and ammunition without a license.

The arresting officer was Matthew Couture.

If you have any information concerning crime, you can remain anonymous. Call 508-99-CRIME, or visit our website and leave tips at <https://www.newbedfordpd.com/report/> -City of New Bedford Police Department.