

New Bedford Firefighters battle Shawmut Ave. garage fire that threatened home, six displaced

"On Sunday evening, at approximately 6:00pm, Command Unit 1 & 2, Engines 1, 7, and 8, along with Ladders 1 and 4 were dispatched to 760 Shawmut Ave for a reported structure fire.

While en route, Command Unit 1 was notified by Fire Alarm that they had received multiple calls and that all residents were out of the building. Upon my arrival, Command Unit 1 reported heavy smoke and fire coming from the southwest corner which was an attached garage of this one-story, single family dwelling.

Fire crews advanced multiple hose lines into the residence and garage and the fire was under control by 6:30pm and by 8:00pm all apparatus had cleared the scene.

There were no injuries to either firefighters, civilians, or pets. A total of six residents were displaced and are being assisted by the American Red Cross. The fire was investigated by the Nbfd Fire investigation Unit and remains under investigation. The residence was protected by working smoke detectors."-New Bedford Fire Department.



New Bedford Fire Department photo.



New Bedford Fire Department photo.



New Bedford Fire Department photo.

American Airlines flight attendant indicted for allegedly filming minors in aircraft lavatory on Boston flight

“BOSTON – A former American Airlines flight attendant, previously charged by criminal complaint, has been indicted by a federal grand jury for allegedly surreptitiously recording or attempting to record a minor female passenger using a lavatory aboard an aircraft he was working in September 2023. The defendant is also alleged to have possessed recordings of

four additional minor female passengers using lavatories aboard the aircraft he had worked previously.

Estes Carter Thompson III, 36, of Charlotte, N.C., was indicted on one count of attempted sexual exploitation of children and one count of possession of child pornography depicting a prepubescent minor. Thompson was previously charged by criminal complaint and arrested in January 2024 in Lynchburg, Va. He has been in federal custody since.

According to the charging documents, on Sept. 2, 2023, while working as a flight attendant onboard an American Airlines flight from Charlotte, N.C. to Boston, Mass., Thompson video-recorded or attempted to surreptitiously video-record a 14-year-old female passenger as she used the aircraft lavatory. Specifically, approximately midway through the flight, the minor victim got up to use the main cabin lavatory nearest to where she was seated.

When the minor victim arrived at the lavatory it was occupied. After the minor victim had been waiting a short time, Thompson allegedly approached her, told her that the first-class lavatory was unoccupied and escorted her toward first class. Before the minor victim entered the lavatory, Thompson allegedly told her that he needed to wash his hands and that the lavatory's toilet seat was broken and briefly entered the lavatory.

It is alleged that, after Thompson exited the lavatory, the minor victim entered and observed red stickers on the underside of the toilet seat lid, which was in the open position, that stated, "INOPERATIVE CATERING EQUIPMENT" and "REMOVE FROM SERVICE," and "SEAT BROKEN" was hand-written in black ink on one of the stickers. It is alleged that, beneath the red stickers, Thompson had concealed his iPhone to record a video. The minor victim used her phone to take a picture of the red stickers and the concealed iPhone she found in the lavatory before exiting, at which time Thompson allegedly re-

entered it immediately.

According to court documents, when the minor victim returned to her seat, she informed her parents of what she saw and showed them the picture. The victim's parents reported the matter to other flight attendants onboard who notified the Captain, who in turn notified law enforcement on the ground. It is alleged that the victim's father confronted Thompson who, shortly thereafter, locked himself in the lavatory with his iPhone for three to five minutes prior to the flight's descent.

Upon the flight's arrival at Boston's Logan Airport, law enforcement observed that Thompson's iPhone may have been restored to factory settings. It is alleged that a subsequent search of Thompson's suitcase was found to contain 11 "INOPERATIVE CATERING EQUIPMENT" stickers, like those observed by the minor victim on the back of the toilet seat. A search of Thompson's iCloud account allegedly revealed four additional instances between January and August 2023 in which Thompson recorded a minor using the lavatory on an aircraft. The minor victims allegedly depicted in the surreptitious recordings were seven, nine, 11 and 14 years old at the time. Additionally, over 50 images of a nine-year-old unaccompanied minor were allegedly found in Thompson's iCloud. The images included photos taken while the minor victim was seated in her seat pre-flight and close-ups of her face while sleeping.

All minor victims involved in this matter have been identified and their families contacted by law enforcement.

It is further alleged that hundreds of images of AI-generated child pornography were also found stored on Thompson's iCloud account.

The charge of attempted sexual exploitation of children provides for a sentence of at least 15 years and up to 30 years in prison. The charge of possession of child pornography

depicting a prepubescent minor provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison. Both charges also provide for at least five years and up to a lifetime of supervised release, a fine of up to \$250,000 and restitution. 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; Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; and John E. Mawn Jr., Interim Colonel of the Massachusetts State Police made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Elianna J. Nuzum of the Major Crimes Unit is prosecuting the case.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse, launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices and the DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/psc>.

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

Greater New Bedford Regional Voc-Tech High School students win big at SkillsUSA competition

“Please join us in congratulating our students’ successes and recognition at the 2024 SkillsUSA State Leadership and Skills Conference! In addition to numerous medals, the SkillsUSA GNB Voc-Tech Chapter also earned the Gold Chapter of Distinction Award, a recognition of the achievement of the school as it relates to the integration of the SkillsUSA Framework in the chapter’s Program of Work activities. The GNB Voc-Tech Chapter was also recognized as 1 of only 24 nationwide chapters that earned the Models of Excellence Award and 2 GNB Voc-Tech students will represent Team Massachusetts at the National Leadership Conference.

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School’s results are following:

Gold Medalists:

- Michael Silva (Dartmouth) – Cabinetmaking – Advisor: Joseph Arruda
- Keira-Lyn Dextraze (New Bedford) – Early Childhood Education -Advisors: Deborah Brightman and Yasmin Flefleh-Vincent
- Ava Silva (New Bedford) – Extemporaneous Speech – Advisor: Ronald Quintin
- Jacob Reimels (Dartmouth) – Marine Service Technology – Advisor: Michael McConnell

Silver Medalists:

- Samantha Barboza (New Bedford) – Community Service – Advisor: Stacey Martin
- Christopher Cecil (New Bedford) – Community Service –

Advisor: Stacey Martin

- Nia Rodrigues (New Bedford) – Community Service – Advisor: Stacey Martin
- Ella DeMelo (New Bedford) – Costello Family Service Award – Advisor: Stacey Martin
- Ryan Fernandes (New Bedford) – Costello Family Service Award – Advisor: Stacey Martin
- Denisse Reyes Garcia (New Bedford) – Costello Family Service Award – Advisor: Stacey Martin
- Cameron Stapleton (Fairhaven) – Cabinetmaking – Advisor: Joseph Arruda
- Braden Duarte (Dartmouth) – Marine Service Technology – Advisor: Michael McConnell
- Sophia DeAlmeida (New Bedford) – Outstanding Chapter – Advisor: Lori Russell – Pelsue & Lauren Aubertine
- Jaelynn Sustache (New Bedford) – Outstanding Chapter – Advisor: Lori Russell – Pelsue & Lauren Aubertine
- Kylie Gagne (Dartmouth) – Outstanding Chapter – Advisor: Lori Russell – Pelsue & Lauren Aubertine
- Matthew Prezner (New Bedford) – Power Equipment Technology – Advisor: Paul Estrella
- Austin Hooda (New Bedford) – Robotics and Automation Technology – Advisor: Anthony Cabral
- Kylie Lourenco (New Bedford) – Robotics and Automation Technology – Advisor: Anthony Cabral

Bronze Medalists:

- Jesse Petitpas (New Bedford) – Automotive Service Technology – Advisor: Matt Talbot
- Evelyn Cardoza-Coj (New Bedford) – Career Choice Commentary – Advisor: Ron Quintin
- Sarah Barbosa (New Bedford) – Career Pathways Showcase – Advisor: Yasmin Flefleh-Vincent
- Angele Semedo (New Bedford) – Career Pathways Showcase – Advisor: Yasmin Flefleh-Vincent
- Kaelyn Medeiros (Dartmouth) – Career Pathways Showcase – Advisor: Yasmin Flefleh-Vincent

- Luis Pinto (New Bedford) – Cybersecurity – Advisor: Charles Glover
- Noah Cabral (New Bedford) – Cybersecurity – Advisor: Charles Glover
- Cody Amaral (New Bedford) – Engineering Technology – Advisor: Robert Southerland
- Jacob Duclos (New Bedford) – Engineering Technology – Advisor: Robert Southerland
- Jackson Simmons (Dartmouth) – Engineering Technology – Advisor: Robert Southerland
- Lileigh Sharples (New Bedford) – Related Technical Math – Advisor: Micaela Shea
- Elizabeth Santos (Dartmouth) – Diesel Equipment Technology – Advisor: Neil Sinclair
- Ayva Gouveia-Furtado (Dartmouth) – Sticker Design – Advisor: Ron Quintin

Recognition:

- Jada Sanchez (Fairhaven) – State Officer Elect – Advisor: Meghan Lacasse
- Sophia DeAlmeida (New Bedford) – Janine Baker Scholarship Winner

Presidential Service Award Winners:

- Jordan Melo (New Bedford) – Bronze.”-Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech High School.

**New Bedford Firefighters
flagged down on way to**

emergency medical call for fire at 3-family home

“At 12:29pm Saturday afternoon, Engine Company 8 was responding to an emergency medical call when they were flagged down by tenants of 270 Nash Road who reported a fire inside their three-family home. The next closest fire company was immediately dispatched to cover Engine 8’s original call for service.

Engine 8 reported smoke showing from the rear stairwell of that address. Engine 8 instructed Fire Alarm to send out a first alarm structure fire response and proceeded to locate the fire that originated in the 1st floor kitchen and extended into an interior wall. The crew of Engine 8 stretched a hose line to extinguish the fire and overhauled the area.

Eversource responded to secure the gas on the first floor and the 2nd and 3rd floor tenants were able to occupy their units later today, however the 1st floor tenants were displaced. The fire cause is under investigation by the Nbfd Fire Investigation Unit. No injuries were reported.”-New Bedford Fire Department.

Massachusetts woman arrested for allegedly blowing stop sign, seriously injuring

bicyclist

“Hingham, MA – A driver was arrested Saturday morning for operating under the influence of alcohol after hitting a bicyclist. The bicyclist suffered serious but not life-threatening injuries.

On Friday, April 26, 2024 at 12:38am Officers responded to the intersection of Otis St., Downer Ave. and Daley Rd. for a report of a crash involving an SUV and a bicycle. Officers found the injured bicyclist in the road on Daly Rd. The SUV had damage to the front end. Hingham Fire Paramedics transported the 39 year old bicyclist to South Shore Hospital. The SUV driver was not injured.

Investigation showed that before the crash the bicyclist had been riding north on Otis St. approaching the intersection and the SUV had been traveling west on Otis St. The SUV, which had a stop sign, failed to yield the right of way and entered Downer Ave. and hit the bicyclist.

Following an investigation at the scene the SUV driver was arrested. The SUV, a 2009 Cadillac Escalade, was towed. Arrested was Marcia Durant Way, age 59 of Hingham, MA. She was charged with;

- 1) Operating Under the Influence of Alcohol ;
- 2) Negligent Operation;
- 3) Failure to Slow/Yield

After booking, she was released on personal recognizance for arraignment on April 26 at Hingham District Court.”-Hingham Police.

Fairhaven Firefighters raise funds for the American Lung Association with “Fight For Air Climb”

“Awesome work FF Heather Lopes! She completed the Fight for Air Climb this morning in full gear.

Fight for air climb took her up 23 floors and 348 stairs at 5:33.9, a respectable time of under 6 minutes! She completed this event with partner Navy Veteran Peter Kendrick. This raised money for American Lung Association.

Great work!”-Fairhaven Call Firefighters Association.



Fairhaven Call Firefighters Association photo.



Fairhaven Call Firefighters Association photo.

Westport Police Department's 'Barry' the Dog becomes official Comfort Dog

"The Westport Police Department is excited to announce Barry the Dog has joined the rank and file as our Comfort Dog. Officer Kyle Fernandes (Barry's Hooman) will be his handler.

We would like to thank Eric Letendre's Dog Training School for working with Officer Fernandes and Barry the Dog in preparing them to take and pass the American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen Test. Eric was gracious enough to provide all the training free of charge!!!

Barry the Dog will be out and about at community events, the Council on Aging, and visiting the Westport Community Schools. If you see them out and about, be sure to stop by and say hello. Barry LOVES belly rubs!"-Westport Police Department.

UPDATED: New Bedford woman seeks public's help finding missing father who is deaf,

memory impaired

UPDATED at 6:00pm Wednesday, May 1: "He has been found and he is safe! Thank you to everyone who has helped us in any way to get him home safe ♥️"

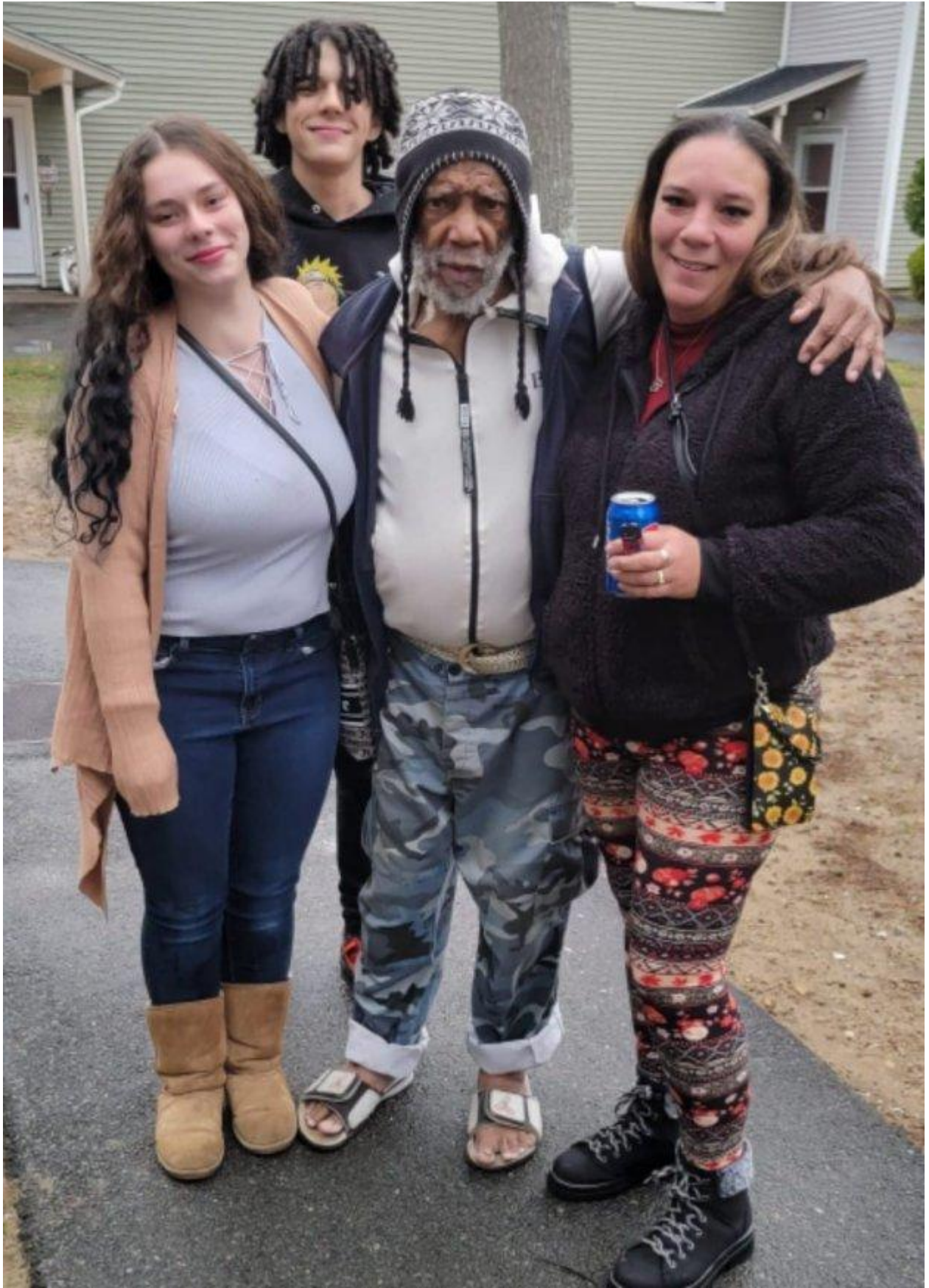
Original Story:

"Good Morning family, friends we need your help!! My dad is MISSING and a police report has been filed!

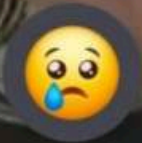
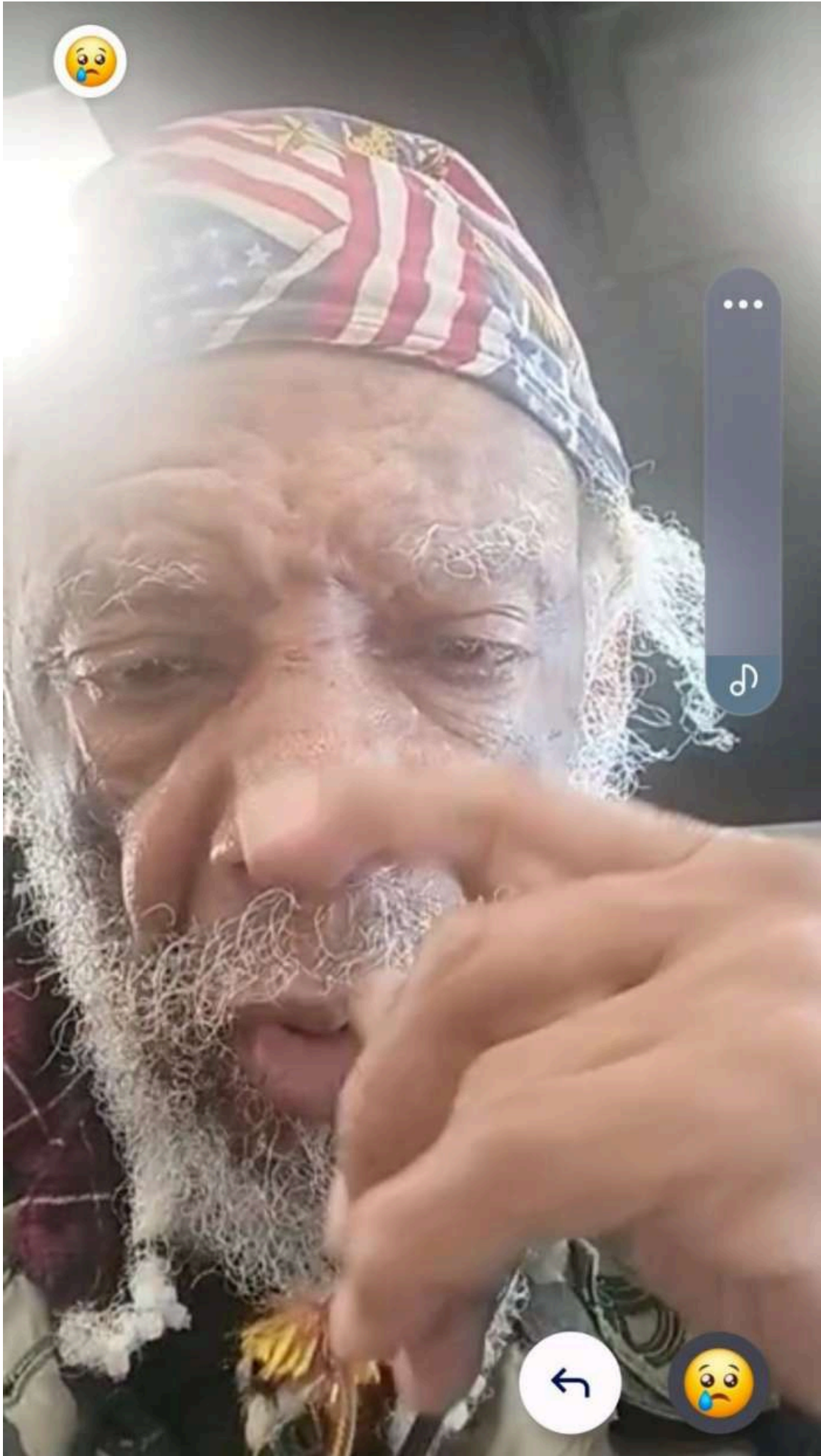
His last whereabouts were in New Bedford and he may be trying to make his way to Wareham.

If you see him please contact the New Bedford Police Department. His memory has declined over the years.

His name is William Monteiro. For those that know him he goes by 'Billy.' He is deaf and elderly! He has been missing over 24 hours now."-Starlene Gonsalves.



Starlene Gonsalves photo.



Starlene Gonsalves photo.

Boston man sentenced for hiring assassin to kill former wife and her boyfriend

Defendant agreed to pay \$4,000 per murder.

“BOSTON – A Boston man was sentenced yesterday for trying to hire a contract killer to murder his ex-wife and her boyfriend.

Mohammed Chowdhury, 47, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Leo T. Sorokin to 92 months of incarceration followed by three years of supervised release. In January 2024, Chowdhury pleaded guilty to two counts of use of interstate commerce facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire.

“Mr. Chowdhury literally thought he could get away with murder,” said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy. “Mr. Chowdhury’s disturbing conduct – in combination with the misogyny and dehumanization he expressed in trying to carry out this plot – speak volumes about how dangerous he is. This case represents the most extreme form of domestic violence and we will use all tools at our disposal to protect women in abusive relationships.”

“Anyone willing to hire a hitman to kill a once beloved family member and her new boyfriend is clearly a danger to the community,” said Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. “Thankfully, the FBI Boston’s Violent Crimes Task Force was able to thwart this deadly and horrific plot. Violent criminals like Mohammed

Chowdhury need to be locked up, for everyone's safety, and today's sentence ensures he won't be able to harm anyone for a significant period of time."



Massachusetts Department of Justice photo.

In November 2022, an individual notified law enforcement that Chowdhury was soliciting assistance in having his ex-wife murdered. The individual said that Chowdhury had paid someone to conduct the murder for hire, but that they took the money and did not follow through with Chowdhury's request. Chowdhury subsequently told the individual that he needed the murder done as soon as possible and that he would get the money to do so, even robbing a store if necessary to obtain the funds. The individual provided Chowdhury's phone number to law enforcement, who thereafter used an undercover agent posing as

a contract killer, to communicate with Chowdhury about his murder for hire plot.

On numerous occasions in December 2022 and January 2023, Chowdhury met with undercover agents posing as the contract killer and their associates, to seek help with killing his ex-wife and her new boyfriend, whom she left him for. During these meetings and communications, Chowdhury explained that his ex-wife would not let him see his children; described his frustration with his ex-wife's westernization and independent thinking; and expressed that he wanted the undercover agents to rob and beat his ex-wife and her boyfriend so that he would not be a suspect. Chowdhury asked, "So how we gonna disappear his, uh, body?" and stated, "No evidence. No evidence. No evidence from like, you know, that, uh, I did something, you know?" Chowdhury provided the undercover agents with photographs of his ex-wife and her boyfriend, where they lived, where they worked and their work schedules. Chowdhury ultimately agreed to pay \$4,000 per murder, with a deposit of \$500.

Image of defendant meeting with undercover agent

Chowdhury met with the undercover agents on Jan. 17, 2023, provided the \$500 deposit and confirmed that he wanted the murders committed. Chowdhury was then immediately taken into federal custody.

According to court records, in October 2019, Chowdhury was charged in Boston Municipal Court – Roxbury Division with violating an Abuse Prevention Order prohibiting him from abusing, contacting, or coming within a certain distance of his ex-wife. Chowdhury pleaded to sufficient facts and received a continuance without a finding.

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy and FBI SAC Cohen made the announcement today. The Boston Police Department provided valuable assistance with the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Luke A. Goldworm and John T. Dawley of the Criminal

Division prosecuted the case.”-Massachusetts Department of Justice,

Massachusetts State Police arrest members of burglary ring that targeted Indians, South East Asians

“The four men arrested this morning during a series of raids in Rhode Island – who are members of an organized burglary ring that victimized more than 40 homes in recent years – decided not to fight rendition.

This afternoon, Massachusetts State Troopers took custody of the four men and transported them to MSP Barracks in Millbury and Dartmouth. They are being booked and will be held in the Middlesex County House of Correction, most likely until their arraignments in Middlesex Superior Court next week.

JOVAN LEMON, 29, of Providence, R.I., his brother PAUL LEMON, 30, of Warwick, R.I., their father PAUL MILLER, 46, of Woonsocket, R.I., and STEVEN BERDUGO, 28, of Providence, R.I., were arrested this morning in connection with 43 burglaries and break-ins across 25 towns in Massachusetts between 2018 and 2024. Their criminal enterprise mainly targeted homes of people of Indian or Southeast Asian descent, often striking when they knew families would not be home and stealing large amounts of gems, jewelry, and currency.

The total value of all the stolen property has been estimated to exceed \$4 million.

“The defendants in this case were very sophisticated. They targeted victims based on their ethnicity and then gathered information about their targets in order to strike when families were not at home. They were disciplined in concealing their identity, avoiding alarms and minimizing cell phone use before, during and after the breaks and using Wi-Fi jammers. Despite these challenges and the complicated nature and breadth of this investigation, law enforcement collaboratively and persistently worked to today begin the process of holding these four defendants accountable,” said District Attorney Marian Ryan.

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Cyr, commander of the Massachusetts State Police Division of Homeland Security, added: “The theft crew we arrested today stole countless items of great monetary, emotional, and cultural value from families in multiple states, and did so by violating the sanctity of their homes. Such brazen criminal actions will not be tolerated in our communities. This investigation highlights the dedication of our law enforcement partners to work collaboratively to take down complex criminal networks.”

Their arrests were the result of a painstaking investigation by the Massachusetts State Police Fusion Center, including its MACrimeNet intelligence sharing program, the State Police Detective Unit assigned to the Middlesex District Attorney’s Office, dozens of city and town police departments, Rhode Island and Connecticut State Police, and US Marshals. The defendants were indicted earlier this week, and are being prosecuted by the Middlesex District Attorney’s Office.”- Massachusetts State Police.