

Former Leader of New Bedford Latin Kings Chapter Sentenced for Racketeering and Cocaine Conspiracy

A former leader of the New Bedford Chapter of the Massachusetts Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation (Latin Kings) was sentenced today on racketeering and drug charges.

Jose Rodriguez, a/k/a "King Stutter," 34, was sentenced by U.S. Senior District Court Judge Rya W. Zobel to 54 months in prison and three years of supervised release. On June 15, 2021, Rodriguez pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine and cocaine base and to conspiracy to conduct enterprise affairs through a pattern of racketeering activity, more commonly referred to as RICO conspiracy.

The Latin Kings are a violent criminal enterprise comprised of thousands of members across the United States. The Latin Kings adhere to a national manifesto, employ an internal judiciary and use a sophisticated system of communication to maintain the hierarchy of the organization. As alleged in court documents, the gang uses drug distribution to generate revenue, and engages in violence against witnesses and rival gangs to further its influence and to protect its turf.

Rodriguez served as Inca, or leader, of the New Bedford Chapter of the Latin Kings. Rodriguez conspired with other members of the Latin Kings to distribute controlled substances such as cocaine and cocaine base in New Bedford through a series of "trap houses" or multi-unit apartment buildings controlled by the Latin Kings. Following the murder of a Latin Kings member in October 2019, and while serving as Inca of the

New Bedford Chapter, Rodriguez was recorded during a Latin Kings meeting instructing members to attack rival gang members without seeking his specific approval for the acts of violence.

In December 2019, a federal grand jury returned an indictment alleging racketeering conspiracy, drug conspiracy and firearms charges against 62 leaders, members and associates of the Latin Kings. Rodriguez is the 38th defendant to be sentenced in the case.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; Commissioner Carol Mici of the Massachusetts Department of Correction; and New Bedford Police Chief Joseph C. Cordeiro made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was also provided by the FBI North Shore Gang Task Force and the Bristol County and Suffolk County District Attorney's Offices. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Philip A. Mallard of Mendell's Organized Crime and Gang Unit prosecuted the case.

This effort is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The remaining defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.