

# **Worcester man allegedly tries to stab mall worker, steal fragrances, jumps into pond to evade police**

“On Friday June 21, 2024, at approximately 6:00PM Auburn Police Dispatch received a call from a frantic male party reporting that another male attempted to stab him with a knife at the Auburn Mall.

The victim who was identified as an employee at the Auburn Mall, informed Auburn Police Dispatchers that the suspect attempted to steal approximately \$1200 worth of fragrances from Macys.

When the employee attempted to stop the suspect, he pulled out a knife and attempted to stab the victim. The suspect then fled on foot towards Southbridge Street. Due to the increase in call volume and an apparent uptick in gang/gun related activities in the Town of Auburn, the Auburn Police Department has been deploying additional patrol units on weekends for several weeks. These additional patrol units were in close proximity to the Auburn Mall and a foot chase with the suspect ensued that resulted in the suspect disappearing somewhere between the Auburn Library and the Auburn Fire Department.



*Auburn MA Police Department photo.*

Auburn Police Officers as well as Troopers from the Massachusetts State Police were able to establish a perimeter of the area. Massachusetts State Police K9s were deployed to the area. Officer Geldart assisted in deploying a drone, to provide an aerial view of the scene.

A few minutes into the track the State Police K9 flushed the suspect into the pond located behind the library, where the suspect was surrounded by Auburn Police Officers and Massachusetts State Police Troopers. After swimming into the middle of the pond, the suspect refused to come to shore and surrender. The K9 from the Massachusetts State Police was deployed and had to swim out towards the suspect and guided him towards the shore of Brotherton Way, where he was taken

into custody without further incident.

The male suspect was identified as 46-year-old Rafael Rios Candelaria from Worcester. Rafael had an active warrant for Larceny Over \$1200 and Disorderly Conduct from a previous incident in Auburn. Detective Bresse will be charging Rafael with Armed Robbery, Larceny over \$1200, Disorderly Conduct, and Disturbing the Peace. Rafael was held on \$15,040. Rafael has been arraigned on the charges in Worcester District Court.

Edit: The bail for this suspect was reduced at court to the amount of \$2,500. As of 6/25 he has not posted bail and is being held at the Worcester County House of Correction Sgt. Spiros Kaperonis, Officer's Gustafson, Brooks, Geldart, Markvenas, Myers, and Detectives Alexandrovich, and Bresse and numerous Troopers from the Massachusetts State Police worked cohesively to accomplish the capture of the armed suspect.

\*\*\* All suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty  
\*\*\*"-Auburn MA Police Department.



*Auburn MA Police Department photo.*