

# **61-year-old Dorchester man sentenced for tracking two underage girls, raping one**

"A 61-year-old Dorchester man convicted at trial of tracking two underage girls and raping one of them was sentenced last Friday to serve 60 to 80 years in state prison, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

The jury took less than an hour—after a two-week long trial in Fall River Superior Court—to convict Troy Footman of indictments charging him with two counts of Human Trafficking of a Child, one count of Rape of a Child-Subsequent Offense, two counts of Rape of a Child-Aggravated by Age Difference, one count of Rape of a Child by Use of Force, one count of Assault and Battery with a Dangerous Weapon, one count of Assault and Battery, one count of Threats to Harm and one count of Posing a Child in the State of Nudity.

The defendant trafficked the two girls and raped one of them in Seekonk motels in 2013 and 2014. He also violently assaulted the girl he raped on at least one occasion. His modus operandi was to have the girls work long shifts at a now defunct club in Providence, RI called "Cheaters." The girls would dance and engage in sex in back rooms of the club for money. He was able to get them jobs at the club in Providence by falsifying identification documents.

The defendant would routinely transport the girls from Seekonk to Providence and then pick them up at the end of their shifts. When he picked the girls up, he would take all their money. If the girls did not make at least \$1,000 per day, he would then prostitute them out of the Seekonk motels. The defendant would advertise the underage girls on the now-closed website, [backpage.com](http://backpage.com).

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Silvia Rudman and Casey Smith, and the lengthy state prison sentence was imposed by Judge Raffi Yessayan.

The multi-jurisdiction investigation was conducted by Seekonk Police, Boston Police, the Department of Homeland Security, Massachusetts State Police and Providence Police.

“I am very pleased with the jury verdict and the lengthy sentence imposed by the court, which was well deserved. This defendant has a lengthy history of trafficking and sexually assaulting girls and young women. I commend the victim for her perseverance and resiliency during the past decade,” District Attorney Quinn said. “It is great to know that the main victim, despite the terrible circumstances of this case, has turned her life around and has a bright future. Based on his criminal history and the facts of this case, this defendant should never be released from prison. I want to commend Silvia Rudman and Casey Smith for their efforts in this case, which led to the defendant’s conviction.”-Bristol County District Attorney’s Office.

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## **Massachusetts coach sentenced for sextortion, cyberstalking, cyber fraud against 128 women**

*Defendant targeted at least 128 women and continued to engage in conduct after indictment*

“BOSTON – A former college track and field coach was sentenced

today in federal court in Boston in connection with a scheme to fraudulently obtain thousands of explicit photos from over 100 women across the country through the use of nearly two dozen sham social media and email accounts. The defendant cyberstalked one female student-athlete and orchestrated another scheme to gain unauthorized access to other victims' Snapchat accounts.

The defendant previously worked as a track and field coach at several academic institutions, including Northeastern University, Penn State University, Illinois Institute of Technology, University of Tennessee and Concordia University Chicago.

Steve Waithe, 31, formerly of Chicago, Ill., and Somerville, Mass., was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Patti B. Saris to five years in prison to be followed by three years of supervised release. Among the terms of his supervised release conditions, Waithe will be prohibited from taking any jobs in which he could serve as a coach, teacher, mentor, or any similar role involving women or girls and his internet usage will be strictly monitored by probation. In November 2023, Waithe pleaded guilty to 12 counts of wire fraud; one count of cyberstalking; one count of conspiracy to commit computer fraud; and one count of computer fraud, aiding and abetting. Waithe was arrested and charged by criminal complaint in April 2021 and subsequently indicted by a federal grand jury in December 2021.

"This defendant's conduct is deplorable. He exploited his trusted role as a coach to college athletes to engage in a sextortion campaign that has left a trail of emotional devastation in its wake. We stand by the courageous victims who came forward and help this Office hold Mr. Waithe accountable. The array of on-line threats is striking, and this Office will be vigilant in investigating and prosecuting those who sexually exploit victims," said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy.

"The depth of deceit demonstrated by Steve Waithe in this case is deeply disturbing. This predator readily betrayed the trust of over 50 women, tricking them into sending him explicit photos which he then used to exploit and extort them. His reprehensible actions inflicted significant anguish on these victims who were living in fear of being so personally exposed," said Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. "Today's sentence shows that cyberstalking and sextortion is not some sick game, they're serious crimes, and the FBI will continue to unmask and hold accountable anyone who uses today's technology in such a vile way."

While a track coach at Northeastern University, Waithe requested the cell phones of female student-athletes under the pretense of "filming their form" at practices and meets and then covertly sending himself explicit photos of the victims that had previously been saved on their phones.

Approximately one year later in February 2020, and after he no longer worked at Northeastern University, Waithe began perpetrating an evolving series of schemes to deceive women into sending him nude or semi-nude photos of themselves.

In total, Waithe victimized at least 56 women and attempted to victimize 72 more. Waithe used anonymized social media accounts with usernames like "anon.4887" and variations of the phrase "Privacy Protector" to contact prospective victims, including some of the same student-athletes from the Northeastern University track and field team, claiming that he had "found" compromising photos of them online and offering to "help" get the photos removed from the internet. Waithe also requested additional nude or semi-nude photos from victims that he could purportedly use for "reverse image searches." Notably, none of the Northeastern University student-athletes were tricked by this scheme, though Waithe continued to try it on new prospective victims.

Further, Waithe fabricated at least two female personas, "Katie Janovich" and "Kathryn Svoboda," in an effort to obtain additional nude and/or semi-nude photos of women. Under the purported premise of an "athlete research" or "body development" study, Waithe emailed prospective victims pretending to be "Katie" or "Kathryn" with email accounts in their names. The emails described a phony study for athletes and requested information relating to height, weight, body fat and diet habits. The emails also included a request for the victims to send photos of themselves in order to "track their progress" and recommended that the photos show the women in a "uniform or bathing suit to show as much skin as possible." The emails often included attachments of sample nude and semi-nude images to illustrate the types of photos that victims should send.

Investigators identified 22 sham online accounts across at least seven different platforms used by Waithe and hundreds of photos sent by dozens of victims who thought they were emailing someone conducting a legitimate research study.

Waithe also cyberstalked one victim, from at least June 2020 to October 2020, through text messages and direct messages sent via social media, as well as by hacking into her Snapchat account. He texted and sent nude photos of the victim to the victim's boyfriend, stating, "I wanted to make you aware that someone hacked your girlfriend's snapchat account and will leak it soon. I need your help to assure this does not happen." Over the course of five months, Waithe sent harassing and intimidating messages to the victim and her boyfriend. The messages included explicit photos that Waithe had stolen from the victim's phone when she was on the track and field team at Northeastern.

In October 2020, Waithe conspired with another individual to hack into Snapchat accounts, ultimately gaining access to at least one account and its private "My Eyes Only" folder that contained nude and/or semi-nude photos. Additionally, Waithe

provided his co-conspirator with the usernames and phone numbers for the Snapchat accounts of at least 15 women. Waithe and his co-conspirator then used this information to craft and send text messages purporting to be from the "Snapchat Support Team" and requesting security information, through which they gained access to at least one account.

The investigation revealed that Waithe's internet browsing history included visits to webpages with titles like, "Can anyone trace my fake Instagram account back to me?" and "How to Hack Someones Snapchat the Easy Way." Waithe's search history also included searches for, among other things, "how to hack snapchat with a username and phone number."

Waithe distributed some of the stolen images on websites where stolen and so-called "leaked" photos are posted, shared, and traded. In one post, Waithe wrote, "Does anyone want to trade nudes? I'm talking girls you actually know. Could be exes or whatever. I have quite a few and [am] down to trade over snap[chat] or something." In total, Waithe posted or otherwise offered to trade images of victims on no fewer than 55 occasions.

After being released on conditions following his arrest in April 2021, Waithe continued to engage in virtually identical conduct while under pre-trial supervision. Specifically, Waithe accessed his Instagram account on more than a hundred occasions, soliciting new prospective victims and requesting that they send him photos of themselves via direct messages. In one Instagram conversation in late May and early June 2022 – approximately one year after his initial charge and arrest in this case, and months after being indicted by a federal grand jury – Waithe complimented a young woman via Instagram direct message and offered to pay her in exchange for allowing him to make "drawings" using photos of her. In another Instagram conversation with a separate prospective victim in June 2022, Waithe told a young woman that she is in "such great shape" and offered her \$50 to participate in a "study."

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy and FBI SAC Cohen made the announcement today. The Northeastern University Police Department provided substantial assistance with the investigation. The Suffolk County District Attorney's Office and the Chicago Police Department also provided valuable assistance. Assistant U.S. Attorney Adam W. Deitch of the Criminal Division prosecuted the case."-Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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## **Massachusetts conference empowered future female leaders in the maritime industry**

*Three-day event empowers future female leaders in the maritime industry.*

"BUZZARDS BAY, MA, ISSUED MARCH 7, 2024... The 12th annual Women on the Water (WOW) Conference, this year hosted by the Massachusetts Maritime Academy (MMA) in partnership with U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration (MARAD), provided an opportunity for undergraduates from maritime academies from across the country to learn from female industry leaders and experts in the maritime industry, meet peers on the same career path, and facilitate networking.

With more than 50 panelists and moderators, the three-day event held February 29 through March 2 at the Academy featured panel discussions on topics including work-life balance, clean energy, deep sea, and shore-side opportunities.

Keynote addresses were delivered by Rear Admiral Ann C. Phillips, U.S. Navy (Ret.) Administrator.

Maritime Administration/MARAD, Vice Admiral Joanna M. Nunan, Superintendent of The United States Merchant Marine Academy, Jennifer Downing, Executive Director of New Bedford Ocean Cluster, and Mary Regina Thomann, Vice Chair Massachusetts Maritime Academy Board of Trustees.

Other highlights of the well-attended conference included an interactive panel session discussing allyship and mentoring, networking events designed to prepare students for the ever-evolving maritime industry, a guided ferry harbor tour of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and New Bedford Commerce Terminal sponsored by Vineyard Offshore, and a performance by the New Bedford Harbor Sea Chantey Chorus.

“This inspiring conference not only served to showcase the remarkable achievements of women in the maritime industry and highlight their essential contributions to the nation’s maritime workforce, but it also provided an intergenerational platform for seasoned, novice and promising mariners to share experiences, knowledge, viewpoints, and aspirations,” said Rear Admiral Francis X. McDonald, USMS, president of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. “The entire MMA community thanks all who participated, making the 12th annual Women on the Water conference one to remember for years to come.””

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**OPINION:                    “Presidential  
immunity           case       ruling       in**



# Trump's favor will be death knell for democracy!"

*The following is an opinion sent to New Bedford Guide. It does not reflect the opinion of New Bedford Guide, nor is it an OP-ED. In fairness and objectivity, we share opinions from our readers whether we agree or disagree with their opinion.*

Do you have a counter opinion to this opinion? Have an opinion about something else? Email us at [info@newbedfordguide.com](mailto:info@newbedfordguide.com).

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The presidential immunity case is the last opportunity for the Supreme Court to save democracy.

One can hope that the Supreme Court decision denying individual state's ability to disqualify Donald Trump from the ballot, will be timely followed by a ruling that there is no such right as absolute presidential immunity. The ballot decision, though disappointing to some, was not unexpected and the unanimity of the court supports the position that an opposite ruling would produce great chaos. Legal scholars, as well as legislators from both parties predicted the outcome and were hoping for this ruling.

The presidential immunity case, however, is perhaps the weightiest case to come before the court during this divisive period in American history. It could be argued that democracy versus autocracy is the real underlying issue and that the justices understand the full import of their decision. If the court ruling is unjustifiably delayed until after the election or decided in Trump's favor it will assuredly be the death knell for democracy."-Betty Ussach, Dartmouth.

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# 38-year old New Bedford man arrested by Dartmouth Police after multi-week investigation

“DARTMOUTH, MA – On Thursday, February 29, 2024, at approximately 9:35 a.m., detectives assigned to the Dartmouth Police Department Community Impact Unit arrested Jermaine TIRADO, 38, of New Bedford on a warrant associated with a multi-week investigation conducted by Detective Sergeant Frank OLIVEIRA. The investigation was related to an argument that resulted in TIRADO allegedly discharging a firearm in a residential neighborhood in South Dartmouth.

Subsequent to his arrest, detectives secured search warrants for TIRADO’s house and vehicle, during which time they located a 9mm Ruger handgun, ammunition, suspected cocaine, and drug paraphernalia consistent with distribution.



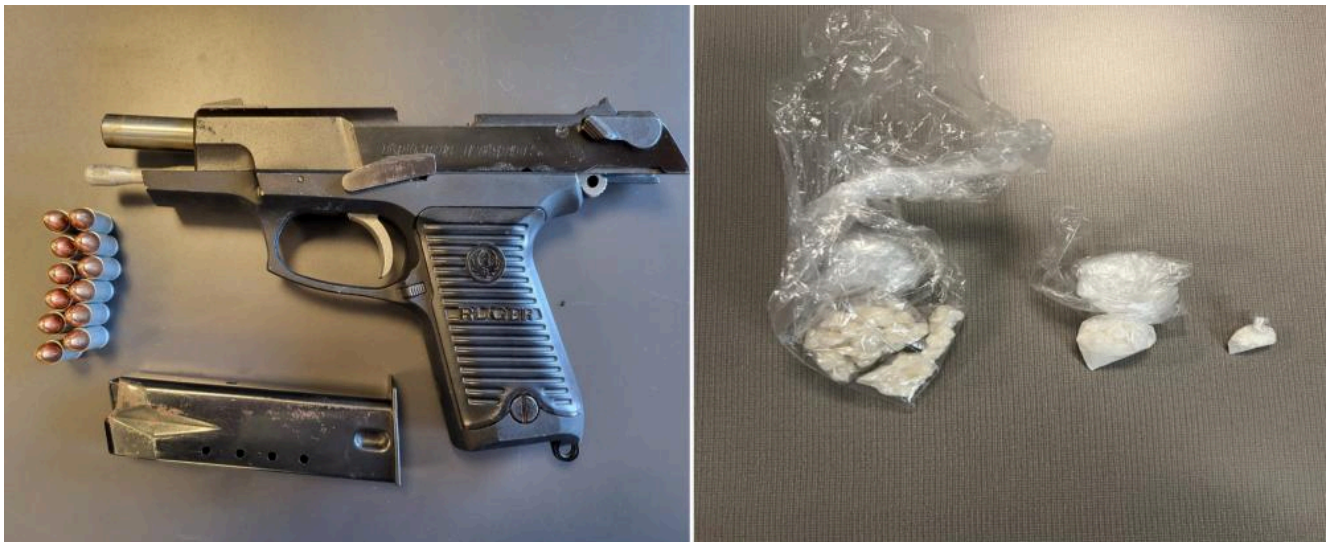
*Dartmouth Police Department photo.*

Based on the collective facts associated with the investigation, TIRADO was charged with discharging a firearm within 500 feet of a building, assault with a dangerous weapon, carrying a firearm without a license, carrying a loaded firearm without a license, possession of a large capacity feeding device (handgun magazine), possession of ammunition without a firearms identification card, receiving stolen property under \$1,200, improper storage of large capacity firearm near a minor, improper storage of a large capacity firearm, possession of a large capacity firearm, reckless endangerment of a child, possession with the intent to distribute a Class B drug (cocaine), possession with intent to distribute a Class B drug (crack cocaine), and possession

of a firearm without a firearms identification card.”

As a result of a dangerousness hearing held on Wednesday, March 6th, TIRADO is being held without bail for 120 days.

According to Dartmouth Chief of Police Brian P. LEVESQUE, “In a society currently inundated with violence and illegal drug activity, this arrest is the perfect example of this department’s commitment to removing guns, illegal drugs, and dangerous individuals, such as TIRADO, from the streets.”- Dartmouth Police Department.



*Dartmouth Police Department photo.*

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## **Massachusetts man sentenced for creating, distributing child sexual abuse material (CSAM)**

“BOSTON – A Chicopee man was sentenced yesterday in federal court in Springfield for creating and distributing child

sexual abuse material (CSAM).

Michael Geoffroy, 36, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Mark G. Mastroianni to 20 years in prison and 10 years of supervised release. On Feb. 16, 2023, Geoffroy pleaded guilty to three counts of sexual exploitation of a child, three counts of distribution of child pornography and one count possession of child pornography.

"There is no higher priority in this office than protecting vulnerable children. As this case demonstrates, we will continue to devote significant resources to holding accountable in individual who engages in the sexual exploitation of children," said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy.

"Michael Geoffroy sexually abused a little girl and documented it for his own twisted gratification. His trove of horrific images of that child and others represents an unimaginable level of pain and trauma inflicted on young victims," said Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. "Locking this sexual predator up doesn't undo that damage, not by a long shot. But it does keep him from hurting anyone else and for that we are thankful."

In December 2020, Geoffroy used a minor to create two videos and two images of CSAM. Geoffroy then distributed the videos and images in a chat group that same day. Geoffroy was arrested the following day and, during a search of his cellphone, was found in possession of more than 100 videos and images that depicting CSAM.

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy and FBI SAC Cohen made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the Chicopee Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Neil L. Desroches of the Springfield Branch Unit prosecuted 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>."-Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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## **Southcoast Health named to Newsweek's America's Greatest Workplaces for Diversity 2024**

"FALL RIVER, NEW BEDFORD and WAREHAM, Mass. – Southcoast Health officials announced today that the not-for-profit community health system earned significant recognition from Newsweek and Plant-A Insights Group as one of America's Greatest Workplaces for Diversity 2024.

"This award exemplifies Southcoast Health's dedication and commitment to embracing and delivering a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all," said David O. McCready, President and Chief Executive Officer for Southcoast Health. "I want to extend my sincere gratitude to our amazing team of providers, nurses and staff who continuously work to strengthen our respectful, accepting and collaborative culture, especially those serving on our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) Council."

The companies recognized for this achievement were based on a

comprehensive survey of over 220,000 individuals including representation at over 1.5 million U.S.-based companies. The winning list spans over 78 industries, and Southcoast Health is one of only 66 companies in Massachusetts to earn this award.

“Our mission at Southcoast Health is to recognize, affirm and celebrate the rich diversity of our colleagues and our community,” said Melanie Cluley, Director of Organizational Culture and Engagement and Chair of the DE&I Council at Southcoast Health. “It is essential to our role as the leading provider of healthcare in the South Coast region to ensure that everyone we serve, including our patients, staff and community members, are treated with kindness and respect.”



*Southcoast Health photo.*

Southcoast Health has an active Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council (DE&I), with Senior Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer, Lauren De Simon Johnson, as the Executive Sponsor since 2019. The DE&I Council and five strong Employee Resource Groups focus on broadening inclusion and implementing initiatives to serve the entire community. Recently, the DE&I Council played an instrumental role in the guidance and implementation of Southcoast Health's Health Equity efforts, including helping to lead the LGBTQIA+ Welcoming & Knowledgeable initiative. Their goal is to educate and promote a greater understanding of all members of the workforce and

community members.

“With our collaborative approach, we are making great strides in meeting the needs of our patients while we work together to envision and create a more just future for our community,” said Katelyn Ferreira, Health Equity Program Manager at Southcoast Health. “I am honored to work alongside our community partners to strengthen our health equity initiatives. These programs help us to address social drivers of health by filling gaps in areas like transportation and food access.”

Southcoast Health formed the system-wide Health Equity Committee (HEC) in 2022. Co-chaired by Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Dani Hackner and Deputy Chief Medical Officer at Southcoast Health Network Dr. Enitza George, the HEC includes leaders across the system including Southcoast Hospitals Group, Southcoast Physicians Group, and Southcoast Health Network as well as community members. This group works with the Hospital Quality and Equity Steering Committee, the Diversity Equity & Inclusion Council, Community Health and Wellness, the Patient Family Advisory Council, and many other stakeholders throughout the health system and beyond our walls.

“Diversity is a widely discussed topic – and it remains a crucial factor as people look for an employer or a business partner,” said Nancy Cooper, Global Editor in Chief at Newsweek. “Newsweek and market-data research firm Plant-A Insights are proud to introduce “America’s Greatest Workplaces for Diversity 2024,” highlighting companies that are committed to offering diverse and inclusive work environments.”

For the past five years, Southcoast Health has adopted a dedicated focus on inclusion and representation of our communities lived experiences throughout our workforce. This includes supporting our caregivers, veterans, and individuals with disabilities to ensure all voices are represented and



heard. Since October 2020, Southcoast Health has almost doubled the number of its racially diverse leaders and has increased the amount of racially diverse new hires by more than five percent.

To learn more about careers at Southcoast Health and our diversity, equity and inclusion programming, please visit [www.southcoast.org/careers/](http://www.southcoast.org/careers/).

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### **About Southcoast Health**

Founded in 1996, Southcoast Health serves communities across *southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island as the largest provider of primary and specialty care in the region. The not-for-profit, charitable system includes three acute care hospitals – Charlton Memorial in Fall River, St. Luke's in New Bedford (a Level II Trauma Center), and Tobey in Wareham, Massachusetts with a physician network of more than 675 providers.*

The system has established more than 55 service locations across the South Coast of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, including six urgent care locations, a Visiting Nurse Association, the Southcoast Health Cancer Center, the region's only Level II Adult Trauma Center and numerous ancillary facilities.

Southcoast Health has been recognized consecutively for six years in a row as a Newsweek's World's Best Hospital from 2019-2024 and named a Maternity Care Access Hospital for 2023-2024 by U.S. News & World Report. The organization was recognized as the best place to work for the sixth consecutive year by Southcoast Media Group's community choice awards.

With upward of 7,500 employees, Southcoast Health is the largest employer in southeastern Massachusetts, and one of the largest employers in the Commonwealth, according to the Boston Business Journal. More information is available online at

## **New Bedford Police respond to volatile situation involving a man with a knife on Monday**

“Police were called to a north-end residence to serve a commitment order on an emotionally disturbed person. Officers were advised that the male had expressed both suicidal and homicidal ideation. The male was also known to the officers to have been violent in the past.

Upon arrival, the male was located seated in a parked vehicle. He was holding a kitchen knife which he gestured towards the police.

At this time, rather than proceeding forward and engaging a male who was only an immediate threat to himself, the officers stepped back and encouraged communication. Family members spoke to the male in an effort to calm him down, as did police officers. Eventually, the male surrendered his weapon, exited the vehicle, and accompanied the police peacefully to the hospital.

The officers on the scene were David Figueiredo, William Suave, Marc Felix, and Lt. Arthur Hegarty.

“I’m proud of the officers’ approach to this call and their commitment to de-escalation during an extremely volatile situation. In the past, police were conditioned to simply charge recklessly forward to resolve a perceived threat. Today, officers are taking the time to consider all their

options. That's exactly what happened here, and the result couldn't have been better." -Chief Paul Oliveira.

*If you or anyone you know is experiencing a mental health emergency, you can call or text the Behavioral Health Line at 988, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Also, the Crisis Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by calling 508-996-3154. The New Bedford Police Department has a clinician response during certain hours by calling 911.*

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## **Guatemalan man living in Massachusetts deported 4 times for illegal entry, OUIs, sentenced**

"BOSTON – A Guatemalan man was sentenced on March 1, 2024 in federal court in Boston for unlawfully reentering the United States after deportation.

Romeo Waldemar Gabriel Lopez, 32, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Myong J. Joun to time served (approximately six months in prison) and one year of supervised release. In December 2023, Gabriel Lopez pleaded guilty to one count of unlawful reentry of a deported alien.

Gabriel Lopez was first deported in April 2016 following a conviction for operating under the influence (OUI). His second deportation was in October 2016, after he was apprehended illegally crossing the border in Eagle Pass, Texas.

Gabriel Lopez was later apprehended in Texas after illegally

crossing the border again in December 2016. He was subsequently deported for a third time in April 2017. In February 2020, Gabriel Lopez was found to have unlawfully reentered the United States again when he was arrested and charged with a second OUI. He was removed from the United States again in March 2020. Sometime after his March 2020 removal, Gabriel Lopez unlawfully reentered the United States and was arrested on charges of assault and battery, which were later dismissed.

In July 2022, he pleaded guilty to the second, pending OUI charge and was sentenced to probation. After being incarcerated for violating the conditions of his probation in August 2023, Gabriel Lopez was transferred into the custody of immigration authorities in September 2023.

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy and Todd M. Lyons, Field Office Director, Boston, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Enforcement and Removal Operations made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney John J. Reynolds III of the Major Crimes Unit prosecuted the case."-Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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## **U.S. National Weather Service Boston issues flood watch for the City of New Bedford, South Coast**

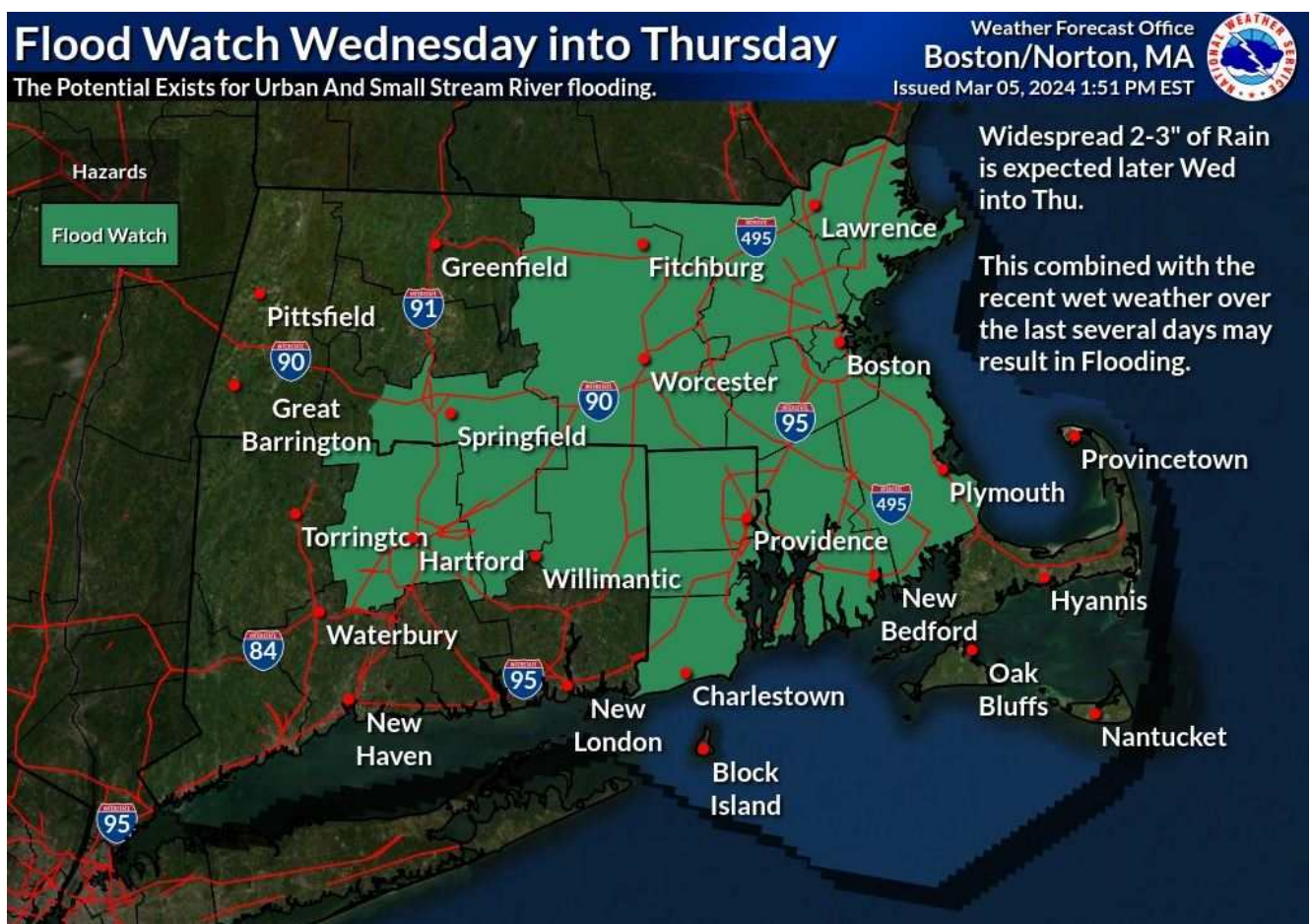
**“[Flood Watch Expanded]**

A Flood Watch has been issued for City of New Bedford for most

of the day tomorrow and well into Thursday. Residents should prepare for excessive rain in a short period of time.

A widespread 2-3" of rain is expected later Wednesday into Thursday. This coupled with the wet weather of the past few days will bring the potential for Urban/Small Stream & River Flooding.

Flood Watch has been expanded into central/northeast MA & northern CT."-US National Weather Service Boston.



*US National Weather Service Boston photo.*