

# Local, Massachusetts State Police investigating discovery of two bodies in Haverhill home

"A male and female were found fatally shot inside a residence on Broadway Street in Haverhill Sunday evening Essex County D.A. Paul F. Tucker and Haverhill Chief of Police Robert Pistone announced.

Haverhill Police received a check the well-being call at approximately 5:43pm.

Responding officers found a male and female deceased from apparent gunshot wounds. Their identities are being withheld pending completion of notification of next of kin. There is no known risk to the public.

The incident is under investigation by the Essex County D.A.'s Office State Police Detective Unit and detectives from the Haverhill Police Department."





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## City of New Bedford highlights “Cadillac” of vote counting machines as elections approach

“New Bedford is now home to the Cadillac of vote counting machines. The DS450 from Election Systems & Software will help make the process of counting mail-in, early and absentee ballots more efficient.

For example: In November, it took a dozen election workers about two 12-hour days to hand-feed all the early ballots into a counting machine on the weekend before Election Day. The new high-speed tabulator can now process and count them much more

quickly.

How quick? We'll find out on Saturday morning, starting at 9 a.m. at the Elections Office at City Hall, when the public is able to observe the new machine and how it works while we process the early ballots.

**Of note:** nothing is changing on Election Day itself, this new machine is only used for early ballots. **And a reminder:** Polls are open all day on Tuesday, March 5, for the Presidential Primary. Contact the Elections Office with any questions at 508-979-1420."-City of New Bedford.

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## **Lakeville Firefighters manage a surge of simultaneous emergency calls, including school bus accident**

"At 1:30 pm yesterday, the Lakeville Breaker (Forest Fire 1), Engine 2, and Tanker 1 responded to the area of 116 Pierce Avenue for a brush fire. The fire started when an unpermitted fire grew out of control due to gusting wind. The blaze was quickly extinguished.

As firefighters reset from the brush fire, a crash was reported between a school bus and a passenger vehicle in the area of Bedford St and Taunton area. Ambulance 2, Ambulance 3, Engine 1, and Car 2 responded to the scene.

As companies were turning out for the accident, emergency medical assistance was requested at 12 Main St (Urgent Care)



for an adult in anaphylaxis. Car 1 and a Middleborough Ambulance responded to that call.

Back at the accident, crews evaluated several patients for injuries. One adult was transported from the scene to the hospital with injuries not believed to be serious.”-Lakeville Fire Department.



*Lakeville Fire Department photo.*



*Lakeville Fire Department photo.*

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## **New Bedford Firefighters battle structure fires, multiple emergencies in a 4-hour window**

“Thursday night, crews were busy battling two structure fires in between many other emergency incidents.

At 1930 hours 911 calls were received for a house fire at 471 Sawyer St. Engine 7 arrived and reported smoke showing from a

single family, one story home. They stretched a hose line into the residence and located the fire in the kitchen.

While they proceeded to extinguish the fire Engine 8 stretched a back up line and Ladder 4 conducted search operations. Engine 1, Ladder 1, Command Units 1 and 2, NBPD and NBEMS were also on scene assisting in the operations. The occupants were not home at the time of the incident but arrived moments before the fire department and attempted to extinguish the fire with the help of two neighbors. hose two individuals were transported to St. Luke's hospital by NB EMS, for smoke inhalation and one dog perished in the fire. The home was protected by working smoke alarms.

Later at 2305 hours U1,U2,Engines 6, 7, 8 and Ladder 3 responded to reports of a fire at the Family Dollar, 689 Kempton St. The crew of Engine 7 forced entry into the structure and encountered a heavy smoke condition. A line was advanced inside the structure and the fire was quickly located and extinguished. The buildings working fire alarm system alerted neighbors and prompted calls to the FD. NBPD, NB EMS and NB Health Department assisted with the incident. Both fires are under investigation with New Bedford Fire Investigators."-New Bedford Fire Department.

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## **New York man convicted in Boston for forced labor, sex trafficking 15-year old minor**

"BOSTON – A New York man was convicted yesterday by a federal jury in Boston of sex trafficking a minor and forcing her to work at a strip club for his financial benefit.

Sherriff Cooper, 37, was convicted of sex trafficking of a minor by force, fraud and coercion; transportation of a minor with intent to engage in criminal sexual activity; and forced labor. U.S. District Court Judge Nathaniel M. Gorton scheduled sentencing for June 5, 2024. Cooper was indicted by a federal grand jury in June 2021.

“Justice was served here. Mr. Cooper abused his position of trust to violently exploit an innocent 15-year-old girl for his own financial benefit. The repeated violence and trauma he inflicted on the victim would be unimaginable if it wasn’t all so shockingly real. No verdict can erase the pain he caused, but we hope the young victim in this case and entire survivor community know that this Office will do everything in its power to hold dangerous predators accountable, and that this particular defendant will be off the streets for many years,” said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy. “This conviction does not happen without a tremendous, sustained effort by federal, state and local law enforcement partners who dedicate their professional lives to protect our children and ensure that exploitative traffickers like Mr. Cooper are held accountable.”

“The criminal acts that Sherriff Cooper were convicted of are stomach-churning,” said Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. “Using physical threats to control another human being, to force them into sexual servitude, is unconscionable. It was imperative that FBI Boston’s Child Exploitation – Human Trafficking Task Force take him off the street. Unequivocally, our community is safer with Mr. Cooper behind bars, locked away where he can’t victimize anyone else’s child.”

In 2017, Cooper was working as a security guard at a residential program for pregnant teens when he met the victim, who was then 15 years old. He began a sexual relationship with her and, in early 2018, Cooper began sex trafficking the victim around Boston, posting advertisements for her on



commercial sex websites and taking all the proceeds. He used violence, threats of violence and coercion to make the victim engage in commercial sex for his financial benefit.

Cooper transported the victim across state lines to sex traffic her in New York. While in New York, Cooper obtained a fake ID for the minor victim and forced her to strip at a club – again, keeping all the proceeds for himself. Cooper continued to use threats of violence, violence and coercion to keep the victim working at the club for his financial benefit.

If you or someone you know may be impacted or experiencing commercial sex trafficking, please contact [USAMA.VictimAssistance@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAMA.VictimAssistance@usdoj.gov).

The charge of sex trafficking of a minor by force, fraud and coercion provides for a sentence of a least 15 years and up to life in prison, up to five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of transportation of a minor with the intent to engage in criminal sexual activity provides for a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years and up to life in prison, up to five years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of forced labor provides for a sentence of up to 20 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. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy and SAC Cohen made the announcement. Special assistance was provided by the FBI New York Field Division and the Malden Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Torey B. Cummings, Stephen W. Hassink and Lauren A. Graber of the Criminal Division are prosecuting the case.”- Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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# Hyannis woman sentenced in Boston for helping distribute Fentanyl in Southeastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island.

“A Hyannis woman was sentenced yesterday in federal court in Boston for her involvement in a drug trafficking organization (DTO) that distributed fentanyl throughout Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Rebecca Bartholomew, 37, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Allison D. Burroughs to three years in prison and three years of supervised release. In October 2023, Bartholomew pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute fentanyl. Bartholomew was one of 10 individuals indicted by a federal grand jury in August 2022 in connection with the conspiracy.

In March 2021, an investigation began into a DTO operating in Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island led by Estarlin Ortiz-Alcantara. The investigation identified Bartholomew as a distributor for the DTO. Between April and June 2022, Bartholomew redistributed fentanyl she had obtained from Ortiz-Alcantara and allegedly other DTO members. During a traffic stop in April 2022, Bartholomew was found in possession of approximately 90 grams of fentanyl.

Bartholomew is the fourth defendant to be sentenced in case. Ortiz-Alcantara pleaded guilty in December 2023 and is scheduled to be sentenced on July 9, 2024.

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy; Brian D. Boyle,

Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New England Field Division; New Bedford Police Chief Paul Oliveira; and Fairhaven Police Chief Michael J. Myers made the announcement. Special assistance was provided by the Massachusetts State Police; Homeland Security Investigations; Bristol County Sheriff's Office; and Fall River, Taunton, Attleboro, Scituate, Yarmouth, Providence (R.I.) and West Warwick (R.I.) Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorney John T. Mulcahy of the Narcotics & Money Laundering Unit is prosecuting 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 document are allegations. The remaining defendants are 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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## **New Bedford Police Department kick off Women's History Month with photo of female**

# pioneers

"In honor of #WomensHistoryMonth, we thought we'd show off an early 2000s #throwback photo acknowledging some of the courageous women of the NBPD.

Happy #WHM, we celebrate the contributions and the sacrifices women have made not only in U.S. history, but every single day. Thank you to our officers, dispatchers, and civilian staff who have made the NBPD what it is today.

In no particular order: Former Officers Kelly Almeida, AnneMarie Lefever, Barbara Lipsett, Carol O'Shea, and Marge Clayton – May 29, 2000."-City of New Bedford Police Department.



*City of New Bedford Police Department photo.*



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# **Vermont State Police charge 29-year old New Bedford man with crack cocaine trafficking**

"On February 29th, 2024, at approximately 2100 hours, Troopers from the Vermont State Police Rutland Barracks, members of the Vermont Drug Task Force, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Rutland Town Police Department conducted a motor vehicle stop in the Town of Rutland.

The operator of the vehicle was identified as Calvin Holding (29) of New Bedford Ma. Holding was detained as a result of information gained during the traffic stop.

A K-9 was deployed and alerted to the presence of an odor of narcotics. A search warrant was applied for and granted. During the search of the vehicle 81.4 grams of a cocaine-based substance was found.

Holding was lodged at the Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility on 15,000.00 bail."-Vermont State Police.

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## **Massachusetts woman charged**

# **with traffic, narcotics offenses, after aggressive, erratic driving**

“Shortly before 9 p.m. on February 27, Trooper Victoria Thompson, assigned to State Police-Norwell, was dispatched to 911 reports of a white Mercedes sedan being operated erratically, speeding and tailgating other vehicles, on Route 3 northbound in Pembroke. Trooper Thompson set her cruiser in the area of Exit 32 and eventually observed the vehicle pass her location at a high rate of speed. Trooper Thompson entered traffic and stopped the Mercedes just prior to Exit 35 in Rockland.

Upon the vehicle coming to a full stop, Trooper Thompson approached it and identified the operator as TAJANAY VEIGA, 28, of Stoughton. While speaking to VEIGA, Trooper Thompson observed her to appear agitated and continuously reach to the floor in front of her. For officer safety reasons, VEIGA was removed from the vehicle, however, became non-compliant causing Trooper Thompson to place her in handcuffs and secure her in the rear of a cruiser. A search of the immediate area where VEIGA was seated revealed a bag containing multiple baggies of a substance suspected to be Heroin.

At this point VEIGA was placed under arrest and a tow truck was dispatched to relocate the Mercedes to the Norwell Barracks, where a full search was conducted. During this search Troopers located a loaded Smith & Wesson 9mm pistol, along with multiple baggies containing substances suspected to be Fentanyl, Heroin, Cocaine, Crack Cocaine, Marijuana, and various prescription pills. Troopers also located scales commonly used in the illegal packaging and distribution of narcotics.

VEIGA was transported to the Norwell Barracks for booking. A bail commissioner was contacted and set bail at \$2,540 before scheduling VEIGA for arraignment at Hingham District Court for the following charges:

1. Trafficking in Fentanyl;
  2. Trafficking in Cocaine;
  3. Possession of a Class B Drug with intent to Distribute;
  4. Possession of a Class C Drug with intent to Distribute;
  5. Possession Marijuana, Greater than One Ounce;
  6. Possession of a Firearm in Commission of a Felony;
  7. Speeding.”-Massachusetts State Police.
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## **Three injured, 85-year-old Rehoboth man dies in Seekonk head-on collision**

“An 85-year-old Rehoboth man died during a crash with another vehicle Thursday afternoon on County Street in Seekonk.

The deceased has been identified as John Denardo.

The preliminary investigation indicates that Mr. Denardo’s Cadillac was traveling east on County Street near 985 County Street at around 4:10 pm today when it unexpectedly crossed over into the westbound lane and crashed into an oncoming Toyota Camry.

The Camry was being operated by a 43-year-old man. He, his wife and their daughter were all treated for minor injuries at an area hospital. No criminal charges have been filed.

It appears Mr. Denardo may have had a medical episode prior to

the crash. The investigation into the fatal crash is ongoing.”