

Report: New Bedford's decade-long drop in crime continues

In 2023, violent crime continued to decline in New Bedford and is now down 58% over the past decade, with property crime down 55% in the same period.

When we report a crime, assault, shooting, etc. it isn't uncommon to see people comment saying, 'Riiiiight. Crime is down.' Why it isn't obvious to people that 'Crime is down.' isn't the same thing as saying 'There's no crime.' is puzzling.

New Bedford, MA – In 2023, violent crime continued to decline in New Bedford and is now down 58% over the past decade, with property crime down 55% in the same period.

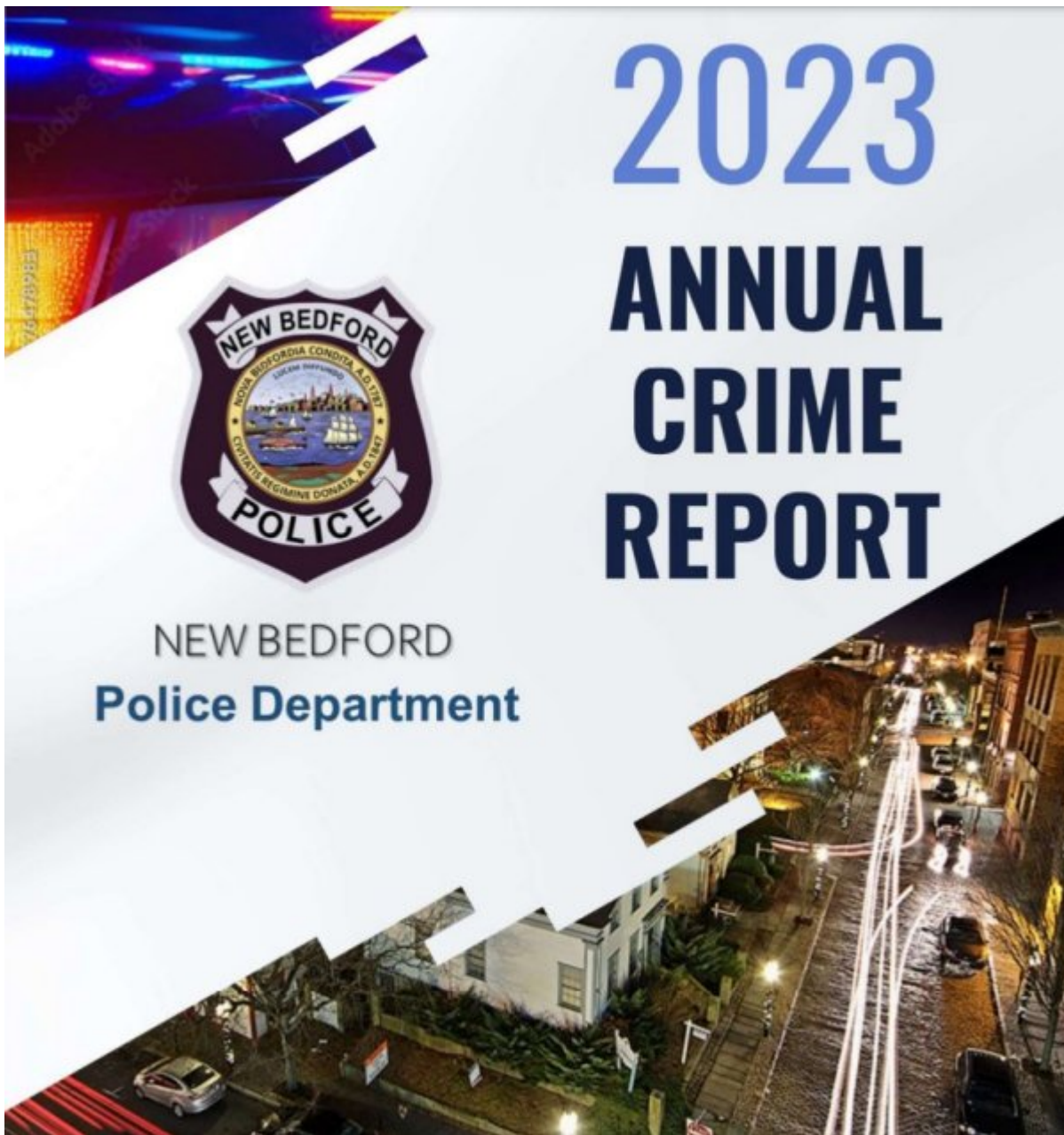
The drops over the last 10 years are reported in the New Bedford Police Department's (NBPD) 2023 Crime Report, a data-driven annual analysis of crime in the city that follows the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program.

Among the report's findings:

- Violent Crime decreased 58% from 2014-2023 due to drastic drops in rape (-34%), robbery (-61%) and aggravated assault (-62%).
- Property crime decreased 55% over that time frame due to sharp drops in arson (-68%), burglary (-71%), and larceny (-57%).

"With the release of this report, we reaffirm our commitment to transparency and our dedication to the citizens of New Bedford," Chief Paul Oliveira said. "I am encouraged by the city's downward trajectory of crime rates. These statistics are a testament to the dedication and hard work of our

officers and the support of our community partners.”



City of New Bedford Police Department photo.

The 2023 Crime Report reflects the collaborative endeavors of law enforcement agencies, local organizations, and engaged citizens in fostering a safer environment. The report tracks a notable decline in various crime categories, as the NBPD has continued to address the root causes of crime and build trust within the community through proactive engagement programs, innovative policing strategies, and effective law enforcement partnerships. The report underscores the importance of community involvement in crime prevention efforts, emphasizing

the role of residents, businesses, and stakeholders in promoting a safer and more resilient New Bedford.

The report also validates the department's efforts to react quickly and forcefully when criminal activity ticks upward in particular categories. For example, the "shots-fired" category rose in 2023 due to a gang-related spike late in the year. A proactive response to these incidents led to several arrests for firearms-related offenses, with shots-fired data returning to baseline levels.

Another example was motor vehicle theft, which rose in the second half of 2023 due to a nationwide viral social media "challenge" involving Hyundai and Kia vehicles."-City of New Bedford Police Department.

You can download the entire report [here](#).

35-year old New Bedford man sentenced for molesting, raping 12 and 13 year old relatives

"A 35-year-old New Bedford man was convicted last week after a weeklong Superior Court trial of raping and molesting a close underage female relative and the friend of another underage female relative, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Joel Berberena was convicted by a jury of his peers in Fall River Superior Court on indictments charging him with two

counts of rape of a child-aggravated by age difference, four counts of indecent assault and battery on a person under the age of 14, and one count each of rape of a child by force and indecent assault and battery on a person over the age of 14.

The trial was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Casey Smith and Silvia Rudman.

The defendant was sentenced by Judge Renee Dupuis to serve 23 to 30 years in state prison, to be followed by seven years of supervised probation.

The allegations came forward to New Bedford Police on November 30, 2020 after a 12-year-old girl who was staying over the house of the defendant's close relative told her mother that the defendant had digitally raped and sexually molested her at least three times during her stay at the house. Forensic interviews were set up at the Bristol County Children's Advocacy Center, at which time it also came to light that the defendant was repeatedly digitally raping and sexually molesting another close female relative when the girl was between the ages of 12 and 15.

Both victims testified during the trial.

"The defendant engaged in depraved conduct by raping a close relative and another relative's friend. He took advantage of his access to both victims to rape these two young girls. I commend the victims for their fortitude and perseverance for testifying in this case under very difficult circumstances. The lengthy state prison sentence imposed by the court was warranted," District Attorney Quinn said."-Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III.

Massachusetts man arrested for allegedly running a dogfighting ring from his home

Operation resulted in the seizure of several pit bull-type dogs.

“BOSTON – A Hanson man was arrested today for allegedly possessing dogs at his Massachusetts home for participation in a dogfighting venture.

John Murphy, 50, was indicted on nine counts of possessing animals for use in an animal fighting venture, in violation of the federal Animal Welfare Act. Murphy will appear in federal court in Boston at 10:45 a.m. today.

According to the indictment, Murphy possessed numerous items associated with possessing dogs for participation in an animal fighting venture at his residence in Hanson, Mass., including: intravenous infusion equipment; syringes; antibiotics; injectable anabolic steroids; injectable corticosteroids; a skin stapler; forceps; equipment used to train dogs, including a treadmill, a slat mill, a carpet mill, and a flirt pole; dog training and fighting literature; a hanging digital scale used to weigh dogs for matches; written training regimens; break sticks, used to separate fighting dogs; and a breeding stand used to immobilize female dogs during breeding to prevent harm while mating.



ASCPA photo.

The United States also filed a civil forfeiture complaint against 13 pit bull-type dogs, seized in June 2023 from Murphy's residence and another residence in Townsend, Mass. As alleged in the civil forfeiture complaint, several of the seized dogs had evidence of scarring. The dogs are currently in the custody of the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) being cared for by a USMS-contractor. Pursuant to the Animal Welfare Act, animals involved in violations of 7 U.S.C. § 2156 are subject to forfeiture to the United States.

At both locations where the dogs were seized, as alleged in the civil forfeiture complaint, the following items commonly associated with an illegal dogfighting operation were found: training equipment; veterinary supplies; dog fighting literature, DVDs, and/or CD-ROMs; kennels used to house dogs individually; and break sticks, which dogfighters use to force open a dog's bite onto another dog's body, specifically at the termination of a fight or while training.

The civil forfeiture complaint also alleges that Murphy communicated with other dogfighters via Facebook where they discussed the results of dogfights, injuries sustained by

fighting dogs, as well as breeding dogs. It is alleged that Murphy also belonged to private dogfighting Facebook groups used to share fight results, buy and sell fighting dogs and exchange information on training and conditioning fighting dogs, among other things.

It is further alleged that Murphy's Facebook accounts contained a photo of a pit bull-type dog with scarring and discolorations on its head and leg consistent with that of dogfighting, a photo of a pit bull-type dog restrained in a breeding stand, and videos that depicted pit bull-type dogs physically tethered to treadmill-like-devices commonly used to physically condition dogs in preparation for a dogfight. One video allegedly depicted what appears to be live bait placed at the end of the mill to entice the pit bull-type dog to run faster and harder.



ASPCA photo.

To report animal fighting crimes, please contact your local law enforcement or the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Inspector General complaint hotline at: <https://usdaoig.oversight.gov/hotline> or 1-800-424-9121.

The charges of possessing animals for use in an animal fighting venture each provide for a sentence of up to five years in prison, 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 United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy; Christopher P. Robinson, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Office of Inspector General, Northeast Region; John E. Mawn Jr., Interim Colonel of the Massachusetts State Police; and Joseph F. King, Director of the Animal Rescue League of Boston – Law Enforcement Division made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by Homeland Security Investigations; U.S. Customs and Border Protection; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives; U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service; U.S. Marshals Service; Maine State Police; New Hampshire State Police; Massachusetts Office of the State Auditor; Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals; and the Hanson, Boston, and Acton Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Danial E. Bennett and Kaitlin J. Brown of the Worcester Branch Office and Trial Attorney Matthew T. Morris of the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division (ENRD), Environmental Crimes Section, are prosecuting the case. Carol E. Head, Chief of the Asset Recovery Unit for the District of Massachusetts, and Trial Attorney Caitlyn F. Cook of ENRD's Wildlife and Marine Resources Section are prosecuting the civil forfeiture case.

The details contained in the charging documents and civil forfeiture complaint are allegations. The defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. The United States must establish that the dogs are subject to forfeiture by a preponderance of the evidence."

Statement From Acting U.S. Attorney Levy on First Federal Dogfighting Case Charged in the District of Massachusetts:

“John Murphy, of Hanson, Mass., was arrested after being indicted by a federal grand jury charging him with nine counts of possessing animals for use in an animal fighting venture – in violation of the federal Animal Welfare Act.

Court filings allege that on June 7, 2023, federal agents executed a search of Mr. Murphy’s residence in Hanson and seized nine pit bull-type dogs possessed for the purpose of animal fighting.

Federal agents also recovered from Mr. Murphy’s home many items commonly used with dogfighting operations, including:

- Veterinary supplies and disposable skin staplers, used to close dogfight wounds;
- Injectable anabolic steroids;
- Dog fighting literature and other dogfighting training equipment; and
- Break sticks, which are used by dogfighters to pry open a dog’s bite on another dog.

We have also filed a civil forfeiture action to forfeit the dogs seized to date during the investigation.

This is the first-time federal criminal charges have brought in the District of Massachusetts under the federal Animal Welfare Act. Dogfighting for entertainment and profit is cruel, it’s inhumane, and it is a felony under federal law.

Today’s arrest puts an end to the calculated brutality we allege Mr. Murphy perpetuated and should serve as a warning to others who engage in the barbaric practice of dog fighting.

The investigation remains ongoing.”-Massachusetts Department of Justice.

ERO Boston catches unlawfully present Guatemalan, charged with child sex crimes in Massachusetts

Local jurisdiction refused immigration detainer despite 9 counts of indecent assault and battery on a child less than 14 years old.

“BOSTON – Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Boston apprehended an unlawfully present Guatemalan noncitizen who has been charged with a myriad of crimes including sex crimes against minor victims in Massachusetts. Deportation officers from the ERO Boston field office arrested the 33-year-old Guatemalan national March 28, 2024, near his residence in Lynn, Massachusetts.

“This unlawfully present Guatemalan national has been charged with sex crimes against Massachusetts children,” said Field Office Director Todd M. Lyons. “His very presence in our community represents a dire threat to our residents. ERO Boston will continue to prioritize public safety by arresting and removing any such threat to the people of New England.”

The Guatemalan noncitizen unlawfully entered the United States on an unknown date, at an unknown location, and without being inspected, admitted, or paroled by a U.S. immigration official.

Authorities in Lynn, Massachusetts, arrested the Guatemalan noncitizen in March 2022. The Lynn District Court in Lynn, Massachusetts arraigned him on assault and battery on a household member and strangulation/suffocation charges March

30, 2022. Two days later, the court arraigned the noncitizen on the charge of reckless endangerment of child. On February 14, 2023, however, the Lynn District Court dismissed all charges against the Guatemalan noncitizen.

The East Boston District Court in Boston, Massachusetts, arraigned the Guatemalan national June 26, 2023, on the charges of compulsory insurance violation; number plate obscured/not displayed/ concealed ID; and forgery. The court East Boston District Court dismissed those charges June 26, 2023.

The Lynn District Court arraigned the noncitizen On Nov. 8, 2023. This time the court charged him with three counts of indecent assault and battery on a child under 14; assault to rape child; two counts of assault and battery on child with injury; and intimidation. The court again arraigned the Guatemalan national Nov. 15, 2023, on the charge of indecent assault and battery on a child under 14. On Feb. 27, 2024, however, The Lynn District Court dismissed all indictments for superior court arraignment.

ERO Boston lodged an arrest warrant and immigration detainer against the Guatemalan noncitizen Nov. 20, 2023, with the Essex County Correctional Facility in Middleton, Massachusetts.

The Essex Superior Court arraigned the Guatemalan national Feb. 26, 2024, on 9 counts of indecent assault and battery on a child under 14; rape of a child; 2 counts assault and battery; and intimidation of a witness.

On an unknown date, the Essex County Correctional Facility refused to honor ERO Boston's immigration detainer and released the Guatemalan noncitizen.

Deportation officers from ERO arrested the Guatemalan national March 28, 2024, near his residence in Lynn Massachusetts and served him with a notice to appear before a Department of

Justice (DOJ) immigration judge. He will remain in ERO custody pending removal proceedings.

As part of its mission to identify and arrest removable noncitizens, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) lodges immigration detainers against noncitizens who have been arrested for criminal activity and taken into custody by state or local law enforcement. An immigration detainer is a request from ICE to state or local law enforcement agencies to notify ICE as early as possible before a removable noncitizen is released from their custody. Detainers request that state or local law enforcement agencies maintain custody of the noncitizen for a period not to exceed 48 hours beyond the time the individual would otherwise be released, allowing ERO to assume custody for removal purposes in accordance with federal law.

Detainers are a critical public safety tool because they focus enforcement resources on removable noncitizens who have been arrested for criminal activity. Detainers increase the safety of all parties involved – ERO personnel, law enforcement officials, the removable noncitizens, and the public – by allowing an arrest to be made in a secure and controlled custodial setting as opposed to at-large within the community. Since detainers result in the direct transfer of a noncitizen from state or local custody to ERO custody, they also minimize the potential that an individual will reoffend. Additionally, detainers conserve scarce government resources by allowing ERO to take criminal noncitizens into custody directly rather than expending resources locating these individuals at-large.

ERO conducts removals of individuals without a lawful basis to remain in the United States, including at the order of immigration judges with DOJ's Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). EOIR is a separate entity from DHS and ICE. Immigration judges in these courts make decisions based on the merits of each individual case, determining if a noncitizen is subject to a final order of removal or eligible for certain

forms of relief from removal.

As one of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) three operational directorates, Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) is the principal federal law enforcement authority in charge of domestic immigration enforcement. ERO's mission is to protect the homeland through the arrest and removal of those who undermine the safety of U.S. communities and the integrity of U.S. immigration laws, and its primary areas of focus are interior enforcement operations, management of the agency's detained and non-detained populations, and repatriation of noncitizens who have received final orders of removal. ERO's workforce consists of more than 7,700 law enforcement and non-law enforcement support personnel across 25 domestic field offices and 208 locations nationwide, 30 overseas postings, and multiple temporary duty travel assignments along the border.

Members of the public with information regarding child sex offenders are encouraged to report crimes or suspicious activity by dialing the ICE Tip Line at 866-DHS-2-ICE (866-347-2423) or by completing the online tip form."- Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Boston.

New Bedford man indicted and arrested in connection to former Hawthorne Country Club Fire

"Shawn Lee Medeiros, 31, of New Bedford was indicted by a Bristol County Grand Jury today on a charge of burning of a

building connected to the vacant Hawthorne Country Club in Dartmouth on May 7, 2023.

On May 7, 2023, the Dartmouth Fire Department received numerous 911 calls regarding smoke emanating from the long vacant Hawthorne Country Club. When fire department officials arrived on scene, they discovered the clubhouse fully engulfed in flames. After several hours, the fire was extinguished, however, the building was a total loss.

The Hawthorne Country Club had no running water, electricity or other utilities which could have caused the fire. In addition, the degree of the fire was immediately suspicious. Members of the State Fire Marshall's office were contacted and responded to the scene. Based on their examination, the State Fire Marshall's Office determined that the fire was deliberately set inside of the building with multiple areas of origin meaning the fire was set in several different areas.

A state police K-9 was also brought to the scene and alerted to the presence of accelerants. An independent insurance investigation also found that the fire was deliberately set. Samples from the debris were sent to an independent laboratory for analysis and testing confirmed the presence of accelerants which were used to set the fire.

Massachusetts State Troopers assigned to the Fire Marshall's Office began an investigation into the fire and began to question witnesses. One of those witnesses was Shawn Lee Medeiros who was present at the scene of the fire. Mr. Medeiros told investigators that he was working at the Hawthorne Country Club the morning of the fire transporting tables and chairs from the country club to building in New Bedford. Mr. Medeiros was questioned several times by law enforcement. In addition, state troopers secured surveillance video in the area.

On March 27, 2024, the Bristol County grand jury indicted Mr.

Medeiros for starting the fire. A warrant issued for his arrest and he was arrested on March 28, 2024. At his arraignment, Mr. Medeiros was released on the condition that he stay away from the Hawthorne Country Club and that he report to the probation department at least one time per week.

The grand jury probe was headed up by Assistant District Attorney Jason Mohan.”-Bristol County District Attorney’s Office.

54-year-old New Bedford career criminal, cocaine trafficker, sentenced to prison

“A 54-year-old New Bedford career criminal, who was convicted after a week-long jury trial last month of trafficking cocaine, was sentenced yesterday to serve eight to 10 years in state prison, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

The charges were brought against Benjamin Duarte brought after New Bedford Police executed a search warrant at the defendant’s 2nd floor apartment located at 407 Park Street, in New Bedford on April 1, 2016. As a result of their search, police recovered 51.99 grams of Cocaine and 2 and 3/4 pounds of Marijuana. The drug evidence introduced at trial consisted of 44 grams of rock-like Cocaine and 8 individual bags of Cocaine powder, bagged in a manner consistent with street level distribution. In addition, there was significant non-drug evidence including, 3 bottles of Inositol powder, (a

common substance used to mix with Cocaine to increase the amount of product for sale), a grinder, multiple boxes of plastic sandwich bags, scissors, 2 digital scales, cut corner baggies and \$1,680.00 in US Currency suspected of being profits from prior illegal drug sales.

The trial was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Steve Butts and Cate Sauter. The state prison sentence was imposed by Judge Susan Sullivan.

The defendant has a 9-page criminal record dating back to the early 1980s, including convictions for firearm offenses, assaults and robberies. He also has two more pending cocaine trafficking cases currently scheduled for trial later this spring.

“The defendant is a career criminal who was arrested for three separate drug trafficking cases over a period of four years. Yet he continued to sell and possess drugs while being out on bail three separate times,” District Attorney Quinn said. “He clearly has no respect for the law and is a danger to the community. He needs to be kept off the street to protect the public. The prison sentence will accomplish that.”-Bristol County District Attorney’s Office.

Non-citizen, Fentanyl trafficker arrested in New Bedford, to be deported after

serving prison sentence

"A 49-year-old Braintree narcotics trafficker arrested in New Bedford in possession of nearly 500 grams of Fentanyl was sentenced to serve six to six-and-a-half years in state prison last week, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Robinson Paradis-Feliz pleaded guilty to an indictment charging him with Trafficking Fentanyl.

On June 27, 2019 at approximately 5 pm, New Bedford Police stopped the defendant's vehicle and located a pink Victoria Secret's gift bag that was stapled closed in the center console. This bag contained 493 grams of Fentanyl.

While this case was pending, this defendant was arrested after having a large amount of drugs delivered through the US Postal Service to his home in Norfolk County. That caused the US Attorney's Office to adopt the Norfolk case and resolved it for a sentence of 6 years and 9 months in federal prison.

"This defendant was selling large quantities of a lethal drug that is contributing to the tragic fatal overdoses we continue to see nationwide. While out on bail, he was arrested and prosecuted by the federal government for similar crimes," District Attorney Quinn said. "The defendant is not a US citizen and, as a result of this conviction, he will be deported."-Bristol County District Attorney's Office.

New Bedford man arrested after reports of person with pistol in waistband walking around

"NEW BEDFORD – Patrol officers have arrested a man in the north-end sector for unlawfully carrying a gun.

On March 25th, at around 10 AM, a call was received regarding a man with a pistol in his waistband walking on County St. in the area of Coggeshall St. Shortly thereafter, Officer Michael Dane located a male who matched the description provided. Ofc. Dane approached the male and conducted a search, soon discovering that he was carrying a firearm in his front waistband.

The male was identified as JONATAS MENDES, 40, of Hazard Ct. MENDES did not have a license to possess the gun, which was a .38 caliber revolver. He was taken into custody and charged with carrying a loaded firearm without a license.

If you have any information you would like to share with the police, you can do so anonymously by submitting a tip on our website or by calling 508-99-CRIME."-New Bedford Police Department.

Massachusetts State Police

seek man wanted in connection with nightclub homicide; \$5,000 reward

"We and our partners at the Essex County District Attorney's Office, Lawrence Police, and the United States Marshals are seeking FRANKLIN LARAS for the Dec. 24, 2023 homicide of a 29-year-old man in a #Lawrence nightclub.

The U.S. Marshals Service is offering a \$5,000 reward for information about the whereabouts of Franklin Laras.

Please view the poster below and call law enforcement if you have info on LARAS or his whereabouts."-Massachusetts State Police.



WANTED

FOR HOMICIDE



FRANKLIN LARAS

Age 27 (D.O.B. 12/05/1996)

Race: White Sex: Male

Height: 5'7" Weight: 190

Hair: Brown Eyes: Brown

Tattoos on Chest and Arms



The Essex County District Attorney's Office, Lawrence Police, Massachusetts State Police, and United States Marshals are seeking FRANKLIN LARAS for the fatal shooting of a 29-year-old man at Energy Lounge on Broadway in Lawrence early on the morning of Dec. 24, 2023. LARAS is actively attempting to avoid capture and should be considered armed and dangerous.

THERE IS A REWARD OF UP TO \$5,000 FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO LARAS' ARREST

If you have information about FRANKLIN LARAS or his whereabouts please contact law enforcement via one of the following numbers.

STATE POLICE: 1-800-KAPTURE (1-800-527-8873)

LAWRENCE POLICE: 978-794-5900 EXT. 629

UNITED STATES MARSHALS: 1-877-WANTED2 (1-877-926-8332)

Massachusetts State Police photo

Massachusetts State Police seize 4.5 kilos of cocaine,

arrest 52-year old, in early morning raid

"A joint investigation earlier today resulted in the seizure of more than four kilograms of cocaine and the arrest of a Springfield man on trafficking charges.

This morning the Massachusetts State Police Gang Unit, Springfield Police Department Firearms Investigation Unit, and Western Massachusetts Gang Task Force executed a search warrant at 33 East Hooker St., Springfield. The team seized 4.5 kilograms of cocaine, 93 bags of heroin, and approximately \$4,750 in US currency suspected of being the proceeds of drug trafficking.

The target of the investigation, WILLIAM ARROYO, 52, was charged with trafficking a Class B substance (cocaine) over 200 grams and possession of a Class A substance (heroin), subsequent offense. ARROYO was booked at the Springfield Police Department and was expected to be arraigned today in Springfield District Court.

The investigation was part of the Massachusetts Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative."-Massachusetts State Police.