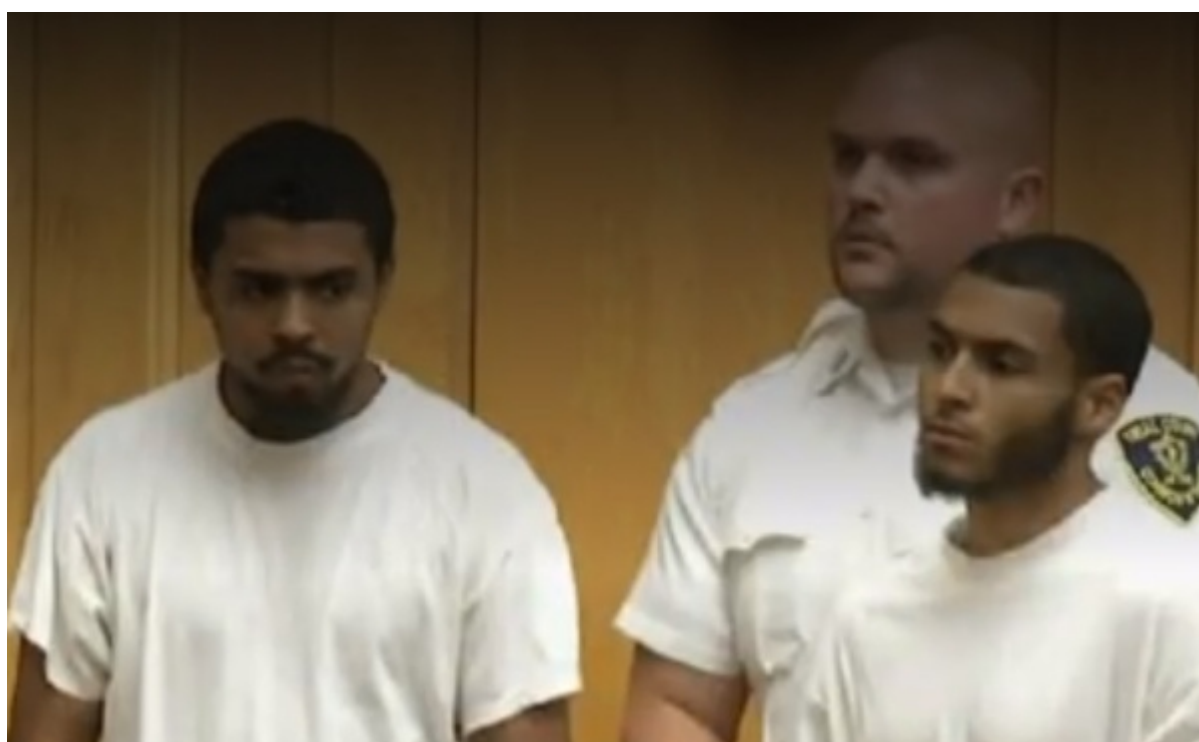


# 26-year-old New Bedford gang member convicted of Temple Landing shooting

"A 26-year-old New Bedford gang member was convicted at trial earlier this week in New Bedford Superior Court of illegal gun charges and sentenced to state prison Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Bruno Lopes, who was set to be released from jail in less than two months after being convicted of a 2019 non-fatal shooting at Temple Landing in New Bedford, will now serve an additional four-and-a-half to six-and-a-half years behind bars.

The jury of his peers convicted him after a three day trial of carrying an illegal firearm and carrying a loaded illegal firearm, which was related to a July 2020 incident on Margin Street where shots were fired at a house. This was a retrial of the defendant based on a new Supreme Judicial Court ruling in the case of Commonwealth Vs. Guardado.



*Bruno Lopes and Ivan Fontanez.*

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Matthew Sylvia and Shawn Guilderson and the sentence was imposed by Judge Renee Dupuis.

“The defendant is a gang involved person and a very dangerous person who does not belong on the streets of New Bedford. He was previously convicted of a shooting in New Bedford and was unfortunately released by the court when he committed this new offense. I want to commend the prosecution team for their perseverance and effectiveness which included locating witnesses who are uncooperative and very difficult to deal with,” District Attorney Quinn said.”-Bristol County District Attorney’s Office.

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## **Massachusetts man threatens to rape, kill, cut off body parts of interracial couple**

“BOSTON – A Massachusetts man pleaded guilty today to threatening an interracial couple via Facebook Messenger in January 2021, and with attempting to prevent the couple from reporting the threats and harassment to law enforcement.

Stephen M. DeBerardinis, 46, of Boston and Dedham, pleaded guilty to one count of transmitting in interstate commerce threats to injure a person; one count of tampering with a witness and victim by intimidation, threats, and corrupt persuasion; and one count of tampering with a witness and victim by harassment. U.S. District Court Judge Allison D. Burroughs scheduled sentencing for June 10, 2024. DeBerardinis was indicted by a federal grand jury in September 2021.

"This case demonstrates that you cannot cowardly hide behind a keyboard and spread bigotry, intimidation and fear. The spike we have all witnessed in hate-motivated threats of violence will not be tolerated, and our office remains steadfast in our commitment to aggressively pursue threats and acts of hate that are motivated by racism or bigotry," said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy. "Everyone deserves to live free from persecution and threats simply for who they are. Full stop."



*Stephen M. DeBerardinis LinkedIn photo.*

"You can't just threaten people online with racially motivated, violent physical harm and not face repercussions," said Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. "What Stephen DeBerardinis put this couple through is despicable. The FBI takes all threats to life seriously and so should anyone thinking about making one. We will investigate, identify you, and ensure you're held accountable for your actions."

"This is another example of the value of bringing together the collective resources and expertise of the Boston Police Department with our State and Federal partners to keep our

residents safe,” said Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox.

In late December 2020, the victims, a white woman and a Black man, announced their engagement on Facebook which included photographs of the couple. DeBerardinis, who did not know the couple personally, could view the photographs because he was a friend of one or more of the victims’ Facebook friends. On or about Jan. 6, 2021, DeBerardinis used Facebook Messenger to send the couple a series of threatening and harassing messages concerning the couple’s interracial relationship.

For example, DeBerardinis wrote, “EWWWWWWW YOUR A N\*\*\*\*\* F\*\*\*\*\* F\*\*\*\*\* DIRTY A\*\* WHITE TRASH,” and continued with similar messages. When the couple messaged DeBerardinis that they were reporting him to law enforcement, he sent them a message that said, “SNITCHES GET STITCHES” with a picture of brass knuckles. DeBerardinis also threatened, “Read up more on me lol... you will see how me and my crew burn n\*\*\*\*\*s alive,” and “And white whores like you well [sic]... get rape and killed THAN [sic] we cut off body parts and mail them to your family lol.”

The victims reported the incident to local police, who contacted federal law enforcement.

The charge of transmitting in interstate commerce threats to injure a person provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release, a fine of up to \$250,000 and restitution. The charge of tampering with a witness and victim by intimidation, threats and corrupt persuasion provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release, a fine of up to \$250,000, restitution and forfeiture.

The charge of tampering with a witness and victim by harassment provides for a sentence of up to three years in prison, one year of supervised release, a fine of up to \$250,000, restitution and forfeiture. Sentences are imposed by

a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting U.S. Attorney Levy; FBI SAC Cohen; and Commissioner Cox made the announcement today. The Suffolk County District Attorney's Office provided valuable assistance. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Torey B. Cummings and Nadine Pellegrini of the Criminal Division are prosecuting the case."Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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## **Massachusetts serial robber duct tapes women, drags them by hair, assaults them**

*At the time of the robberies, defendant was wearing a court-ordered ankle bracelet with GPS monitoring due to multiple prior state convictions for armed robbery and assault and battery.*

BOSTON – A Burlington, Mass. man was convicted today by a federal jury in Boston for his role in the armed robberies of multiple businesses in which he and two others beat, dragged and duct-taped victims.

Alfeu Barbosa, 26, was convicted of two counts of robbery affecting commerce. U.S. District Court Judge Nathaniel M. Gorton scheduled sentencing for July 17. Barbosa was arrested and charged in June 2022. His co-defendants, Li Wen Tang and Jonas Nunez, were later arrested and charged in August and September 2022. All three defendants were each subsequently indicted by a federal grand jury. Nunez pleaded guilty in January 2024 and is scheduled to be sentenced on April 18,

2024. Tang is pending trial and is presumed innocent.

“Barbosa did not simply rob businesses, he terrorized employees by duct taping them, dragging them by their hair, assaulting them and holding them at gunpoint. Barbosa cruelly inflicted lifelong trauma on multiple victims, all for a few hundred dollars,” said Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy. “We hope that this verdict holding Mr. Barbosa accountable will bring some solace to the victims.”

“Alfeu Barbosa was a crime wave unto himself, storming into these spas, robbing everyone at gun point, and physically assaulting and duct taping them. What he did to the victims in this case was horrific,” said Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. “Removing dangerous armed robbers like this from the street is a priority for FBI Boston’s Violent Crimes Task Force, and we thank the jury for making sure this prolific criminal won’t be able to terrorize anyone else for quite some time.”

On June 12, 2022 at approximately 8:51 p.m., Tang allegedly entered the Balance Reflexology Spa in Brookline pretending to be a customer seeking a massage. Because the victim was the only employee in the spa that night, she locked the door before taking Tang into the back room to begin the massage. It is alleged that Tang asked the victim if there was anyone else in the spa and that if there was, he would like to see them.

Almost immediately after the massage had begun, Tang claimed that he no longer wanted a massage because his stomach was upset and demanded a refund. The victim employee stated she had to call her boss to approve the refund. While the victim employee was on the phone in the lobby, it is alleged that Tang unlocked the front door and two masked men – later identified as Barbosa and Nunez – entered the business carrying firearms.

One of the men hit the victim employee in the face, knocking her to the floor and put a gun to her head. Barbosa and Nunez then pulled the victim by her hair into the back hallway where they instructed her to be quiet. There, the men proceeded to bind the victim's wrists and ankles with duct tape and gag her. As they were doing this, Barbosa and Nunez repeatedly yelled at the victim asking, "Where is the money?"

The men ransacked the spa for roughly three minutes before locating and stealing approximately \$500 along with the victim employee's cell phone and then exiting. Surveillance footage revealed that all three men had arrived in the same vehicle parked nearby, which they drove away in together following the robbery.

Later that evening, at approximately 10:19 p.m. on June 12, 2022, Barbosa, Nunez and allegedly Tang, committed a similar robbery of May's Spa Massage in Stoneham. Specifically, they entered the business wearing masks and firearms and duct-taped several victims who were in the spa at the time. In addition to stealing approximately \$600 in cash from the business and victims, Barbosa, Nunez and allegedly Tang, took three cell phones belonging to three of the female victims present during the robbery, as well as a victim's license, gift cards and credit and debit cards before leaving in the same vehicle.

On June 21, 2022, at around 9:40 p.m., Barbosa, Nunez and allegedly Tang robbed a third spa in the Chinatown section of Boston at gun point. Barbosa and Nunez took turns holding the firearm and guarding two female victims as the other ransacked the business. At one point, one of the men put the firearm to the head of one of the victims. In total, the men stole approximately \$140 in cash, a Coach purse, two Louis Vuitton purses and both victims' cell phones before fleeing the scene.

At the time of the robberies, Barbosa was wearing a court-ordered ankle bracelet with GPS monitoring due to a suspended sentence for multiple prior convictions out of Middlesex

Superior Court of armed robbery and assault and battery for robbing the De Onzen Spa in Waltham in July 2021. During that robbery, Barbosa threatened employees and patrons at knifepoint, stole their phones and punched one victim in the face causing an orbital fracture. Barbosa was subsequently charged in the state for assault and battery and sentenced in April 2022 to two and a half years in prison. That sentence was later suspended for three years.

Also at the time of the offenses, Barbosa was on pretrial release out of Suffolk Superior Court for charges of breaking and entering in the daytime with the intent to commit a felony and larceny from a building. Barbosa has multiple prior state convictions including resisting arrest; breaking and entering in the daytime with the intent to commit a felony; larceny over \$250; and breaking and entering in the nighttime with the intent to commit a felony.

The charges of robbery each provide for a sentence of up to 20 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 U.S. Attorney Levy and FBI SAC Cohen made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in New York; the Massachusetts State Police; as well as the Brookline, Stoneham, Boston, Wakefield and New York City Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Luke A. Goldworm and Robert E. Richardson of the Major Crimes Unit are prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the complaint are allegations. The remaining defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law."- Massachusetts Department of Justice.



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# Cell phone use while driving leads to firearm, narcotics charges for Massachusetts man

“On the afternoon of March 9, 2024, Trooper Jonathan Blanchard, a member of the State Police-Springfield Barracks, was conducting patrol on Armory Street at Route 291 in Springfield. It was then, that Trooper Blanchard saw a Nissan Altima drive past with no front plate, and the operator holding an electronic device in front of his face.

Trooper Blanchard conducted a traffic stop of the Nissan and made contact with the operator, who provided a Massachusetts driver's license. Trooper Blanchard conducted an RMV check of that license and discovered it had been suspended. Due to the suspended status of the license, Trooper Blanchard, now backed up by Trooper Sean Clark, returned to the operator and removed him from the vehicle. Trooper Clark turned to an inventory of the vehicle prior to a tow.

Trooper Clark located in a pouch being worn by the operator at the time of the stop, a magnum .22 caliber revolver loaded with 4 rounds of ammunition. The operator did not possess a license to carry a firearm and was placed under arrest. With the discovery of the firearm, the two Troopers turned to a search of the Nissan. The Troopers additionally discovered an unsealed bag of marijuana, an open can of “THC soda”, and a plastic container with cocaine inside.

The vehicle was towed and the operator was transported to the Springfield Barracks.

During the booking process, in the operator's personal items a

second Massachusetts driver's license was found. Through asking other questions, Trooper Blanchard was able to determine the second license was that of the operator, ROBERT ARNOLD, 38, of Springfield. ARNOLD's identity was also confirmed through the fingerprinting process. ARNOLD's license was also suspended, like the false identity he had provided. ARNOLD was additionally photographed and booked in accordance with MSP policy.

ROBERT ARNOLD was arraigned in Springfield District Court on charges of:

1. Unlicensed Possession Of A Firearm;
2. Possession Of Ammunition Without FID;
3. Carrying A Loaded Firearm;
4. Possession Of Cocaine;
5. OUI Drugs;
6. Operator's Refusal To Properly Identify;
7. Operation With A Suspended License;
8. Operation While Holding An Electronic Device;
9. Number Plate Violation; and
10. Failure To Wear Seatbelt."-Massachusetts State Police.

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## **New Bedford Police charge south end man with cocaine trafficking**

"NEW BEDFORD – Narcotics detectives have seized over 100 grams of cocaine from a south-end apartment.

On March 18th, Det. Nathaniel Almeida concluded his investigation into a cocaine distribution operation being

conducted out of 12 Roosevelt St., #2. The target of the investigation was JOSE SOTO-TORRES, 46.

A search warrant was executed at the apartment, which led to the discovery of approximately 130 grams of cocaine as well as a small amount of heroin. Also found were packaging materials used in the preparation of narcotics for street-level sales and \$161 in cash that was seized as a result of the nature of the charges.

SOTO-TORRES was taken into custody and charged with trafficking cocaine in excess of 100 grams and possession of a class A substance.

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

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## **New Bedford altercation involving 15 people at Top Shelf restaurant, at least one stabbed**

“On Sunday March 17th, at around 2 AM, north-end units responded to “Top Shelf” regarding a fight in progress.

Upon arrival, it was learned that one male had sustained an injury to his face and had been taken to the hospital. It was soon learned that a second male had arrived at St. Luke’s hospital with a non-life-threatening stab wound.

According to the report, officers were unable to take photos of blood splatters due to the fact that employees washed them away. Neither injured party cooperated with the police.

At this time, one of the males involved, Mr. CLYDE PERRY, 27, is being charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon for striking the second male in the face. The entire matter remains under investigation, and the report will be forwarded to the liquor licensing board for further scrutiny."-City of New Bedford Police Department.

**All photos by Carlos Pimentel Felix:**



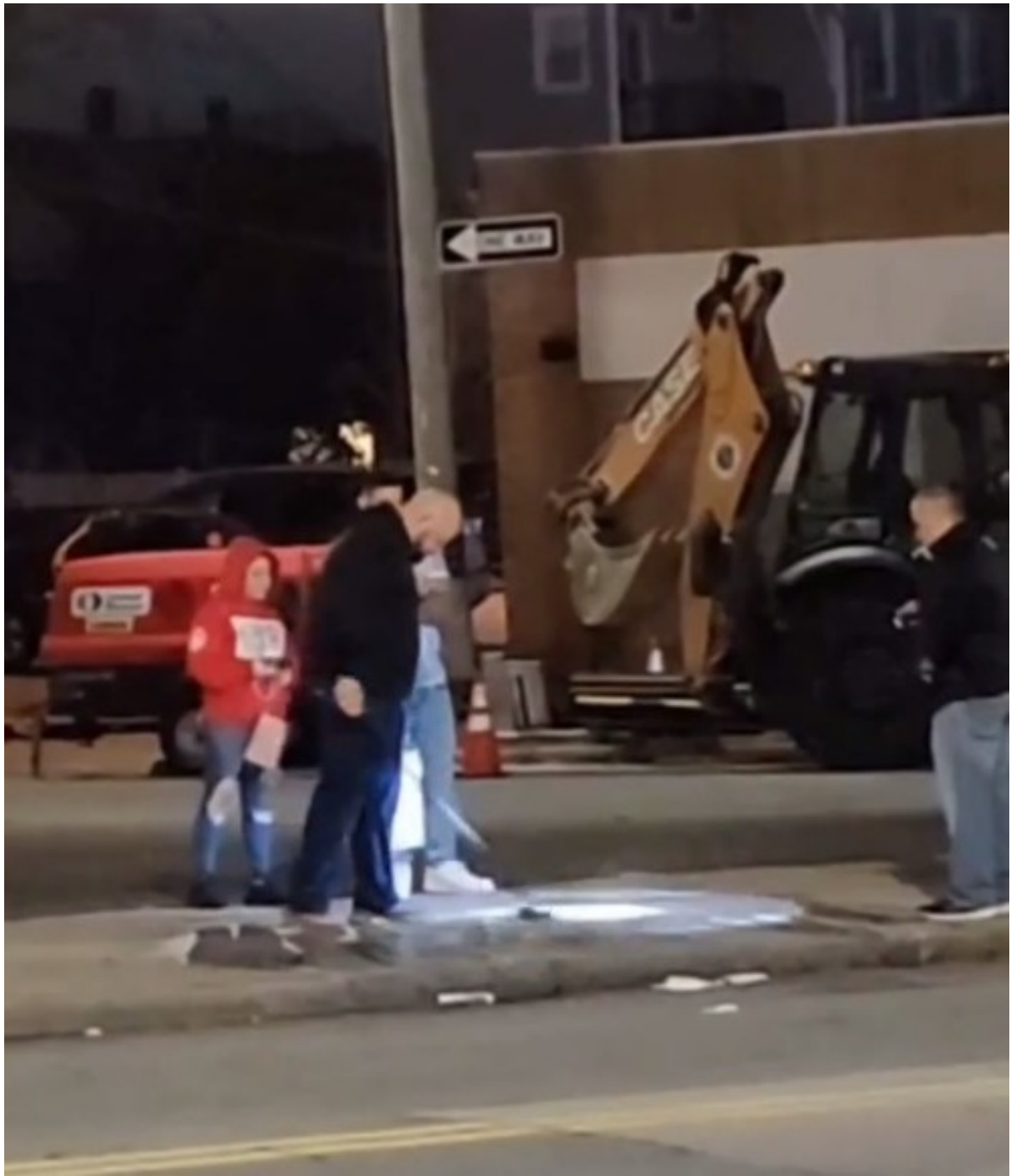














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**18-year-old Dartmouth man  
allegedly steals tools from**

# construction site

“DARTMOUTH, MA – On Saturday, March 16, 2024, at approximately 1:00 p.m., Dartmouth Police arrested Chad RAINVILLE, 18, of Cross Road, Dartmouth on charges associated with a construction site theft that occurred earlier in the day.

As part of the investigation initiated by Officer Caden KEHOE, members of the Dartmouth Police Department investigative services division and patrol division executed search warrants on both RAINVILLE’s residence and a U-Haul van which he had rented, during which time they located and seized a cache of stolen tools and other items.

RAINVILLE was subsequently charged with receiving stolen property and conspiracy.

A fifteen-year-old who also participated in the incident was questioned and released to a parent.”-Dartmouth Police Department.



*Dartmouth Police Department photo.*

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## **Massachusetts resident victim of multi-million cryptocurrency pig butchering romance scam**

"BOSTON – The United States Attorney's Office filed a civil forfeiture action to recover cryptocurrency alleged to include

proceeds of a “pig butchering” fraud scheme targeting a Massachusetts resident as part of a romance scam.

Specifically, the government seeks to forfeit 299,457.4 USD Coin (USDC), 1,455,305.997648 Tether (USDT), 102,278.515015 Tron (TRX), 3,032.1689461 Solana (SOL), 67.79400436 Binance Coin (BNB), 13,703.955431 Cardano (ADA) and 0.54151495 Ether (ETH) seized from two accounts located at Binance, a cryptocurrency exchange and custodian. Collectively, this cryptocurrency has a current estimated value of approximately \$2,300,000.

In the spring of 2023, an investigation began into a “pig butchering” fraud scheme targeting a Massachusetts resident. In a pig-butchering scheme, scammers obtain funds from victims using manipulative tactics. The scammer establishes a level of trust with a victim in online communications and then entices the victim into investing in a fraudulent cryptocurrency scheme. Often the victim is enticed to make additional payments before realizing they are a victim of fraud. The “butchering” or “slaughtering” of the victim occurs once the victim’s assets, or funds, are stolen by the criminal, or criminals, ultimately causing the victim financial and emotional harm. Perpetrators behind “pig butchering” fraud schemes are often located overseas.

As alleged in court documents, a Massachusetts resident was a victim of a romance scam and was tricked into wiring over \$400,000 into a cryptocurrency wallet hosted by a legitimate cryptocurrency exchange. Some of those funds were subsequently transferred to other wallets and ultimately to Binance. Some of the funds were traced to two Binance accounts and the cryptocurrency was seized in January 2024. The investigation revealed that the accounts from which the cryptocurrency was seized had been associated with funds from 36 other victims of fraud located across the United States.

It is a violation of federal law to use wire communications as

part of a scheme to defraud or to obtain money or property by means of false or fraudulent pretenses. It is also a violation of federal law to conduct, or attempt to conduct, a financial transaction involving property which is known to represent the proceeds of some form of unlawful activity, knowing that such transaction is designed to conceal or disguise the nature, location, source, ownership, or control of those proceeds of unlawful activity. The complaint alleges that the cryptocurrency is traceable to proceeds of wire fraud and was involved in money laundering and is subject to forfeiture. A civil forfeiture action allows third parties to assert claims to property, which must be resolved before the property can be forfeited to the United States and returned to victims.

This is one of several civil forfeiture actions the U.S. Attorney's Office has filed seeking to forfeit cryptocurrency traced to fraud schemes targeting Massachusetts victims.

Members of the public who believe they are victims of a cybercrime – including cryptocurrency scams, romance scams, investment scams and “pig butchering” fraud scams – should contact [USAMA.CyberTip@usdoj.gov](mailto:USAMA.CyberTip@usdoj.gov).

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy and Andrew Murphy, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Secret Service, Boston Field Office made the announcement today. The civil forfeiture action is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew M. Lyons of the Asset Recovery Unit.

The details contained in the civil forfeiture complaint are allegations. The United States Attorney's Office has not filed a corresponding criminal action on the matter.”-Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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# Californians sentenced in Boston for arranging 600 sham marriages to obtain green cards

*Defendants arranged sham marriages and submitted fraudulent "green card" applications for over 600 non-citizens*

"BOSTON – Four California-based individuals have been sentenced in federal court in Boston for their roles in running a large-scale marriage fraud "agency" that arranged hundreds of sham marriages for the primary purpose of circumventing immigration laws. This included, among other things, obtaining green cards under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) by claiming falsely that the undocumented clients had been abused by American spouses.

The defendants, all Philippine nationals residing in Los Angeles, were arrested and charged along with seven others with conspiracy to commit marriage fraud and immigration document fraud in April 2022.





*Massachusetts Department of Justice photo.*

Marcialito Biol Benitez, a/k/a "Mars," 50, was sentenced on March 7, 2024 by U.S. District Court Judge Denise J. Casper to 22 months in prison and three years of supervised release. Benitez pleaded guilty in September 2023. Also on March 7, 2024, Juanita Pacson, 48, was sentenced by Judge Casper to two years of supervised release with the first four months on home detention after previously pleading guilty in September 2023.

Engilbert Ulan, 43, was sentenced on March 6, 2024 by Judge Casper to 14 months in prison and three years of supervised



release. Ulan was convicted by a federal jury in November 2023.

On Jan. 11, 2024, Nino Valmeo, 47, was sentenced by Judge Casper to three years of supervised release with the first six months on home confinement after pleading guilty in August 2023.

Benitez, with the help of co-defendants, operated what he and others referred to as an “agency” that arranged hundreds of sham marriages between foreign national “clients” and United States citizens, including at least one foreign national who resided in Massachusetts. The agency then prepared and submitted false petitions, applications and other documents to substantiate the sham marriages and secure adjustment of clients’ immigration statuses for a fee of between \$20,000 and \$35,000 in cash.



Still photo of Benitez meeting with client and U.S. Citizen spouse, in his office at the “agency”

*Massachusetts Department of Justice photo.*

Benitez operated the agency out of brick-and-mortar offices in Los Angeles, where he employed co-defendants Ulan and Valmeo as staff. Ulan and Valmeo assisted with arranging marriages and submitting fraudulent marriage and immigration documents for the agency’s clients. Benitez relied on several other co-conspirators to recruit U.S. citizens to marry the agency’s clients in exchange for payment.

After pairing foreign national clients with citizen spouses, Benitez’s agency staged fake wedding ceremonies at chapels, parks and other locations, performed by hired online officiants. Pacson, a friend of these co-defendants who worked

at one of the chapels, assisted with sham wedding ceremonies and marriage documents. For many clients, the agency would take photos of undocumented clients and citizen spouses in front of prop wedding decorations for later submission with immigration petitions.

Benitez's agency then submitted fraudulent, marriage-based immigration petitions to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the federal agency responsible for granting lawful permanent resident status. Benitez, Ulan, Pacson, and others, advised clients about creating and maintaining the appearance of legitimate marriage to their spouses.

For the interview, the main objective is to prove that the marriage is genuinely true. These are the keynotes that should be given an utmost care and consideration especially during the interview for possible approval:

- 1.) Couples/spouses should be able to give **THE SAME** answers to all the questions correctly and confidently.
- 2.) Couples/spouses must provide supporting documents that they have their names **TOGETHER**.  
(Documents that need to be provided are listed from the letter sent by USCIS)
- 3.) Couples/spouses should show **GOOD CHEMISTRY** during the interview.

*Massachusetts Department of Justice photo.*

Ulan conducted practice interviews with the agency's clients and their fake spouses for the purpose of preparing couples to pass required interviews with immigration authorities. He coached the sham couples to provide the same fabricated answers to questions posed during green card interviews and conceal the fraudulent nature of the marriages.

Benitez, Ulan, Valmeo, and Pacson assisted clients with preparing fraudulent supporting documents submitted as "evidence" of the marriages' legitimacy. Ulan, Valmeo and Pacson also rented the use of their apartment addresses to clients who lived outside of Los Angeles so those clients could list these addresses as their own on green card applications and related documents, to make it appear to immigration authorities that they were living with their sham

spouses in the Los Angeles area. Ulan and Valmeo also received cash commissions for referring new clients to the agency.

Benitez's agency would assist certain clients – typically those whose spouses became unresponsive or uncooperative – with obtaining green cards under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) by claiming the undocumented clients had been abused by alleged American spouses. Specifically, Benitez, Valmeo, and others, would submit fraudulent applications on clients' behalf for temporary restraining orders against spouses based on fabricated domestic violence allegations. Benitez's agency would then submit the restraining order documentation along with immigration petitions to USCIS, in order to take advantage of VAWA provisions that permit non-citizen victims of spousal abuse to apply for lawful permanent resident status without their spouses' involvement.

Benitez's agency arranged sham marriages and submitted fraudulent immigration documents for at least 600 clients between October 2016 and March 2022.

Several co-defendants were previously sentenced by Judge Casper for their roles in this scheme. Peterson Souza, who referred non-citizens to the agency for a fee was sentenced to five months in prison and three years of supervised release with the first five months on home detention, and Felipe David, who referred clients to the agency for assistance with VAWA-based applications was sentenced to three years of supervised release.

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy; Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Office; Chad Plantz, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in San Diego; and Alanna Ow, Director of U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services, San Diego District made the announcement today. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California provided valuable assistance in this matter. Assistant U.S.

Attorneys David M. Holcomb and Leslie A. Wright of the Securities, Financial & Cyber Fraud Unit prosecuted the case.”-Massachusetts Department of Justice.

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## **Massachusetts State Police arrest Revere Level 2 Sex Offender man for CSAM**

“Massachusetts State Police detectives today arrested a Revere man after an investigation uncovered hundreds of images and videos of child sexual abuse material on his mobile phone.

Troopers charged KENNETH HIGGINS, 45, with possession of child pornography and possession of child pornography, third offense.

HIGGINS, who is classified as a Level 2 Sex Offender, has multiple prior convictions for possession of child sexual abuse materials; he is currently on probation imposed following a prison sentence he served for a 2008 child pornography conviction.



*Massachusetts State Police photo.*

Today's charges stemmed from an investigation by the State Police Detective Unit for Suffolk County and the State Police Cyber Crime Unit that began recently as a result of a cyber tip provided by Yahoo to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). The tip included several picture files depicting child pornography and data related to the IP address that accessed the picture files. NCMEC referred the tip to MSP.

Early this morning Troopers from the State Police Detective

Unit and the State Police Cyber Crime Unit, with assistance from a Revere Police detective, executed a search warrant at HIGGINS' Revere Beach Parkway apartment, where they located his phone. HIGGINS refused to provide a passcode to access the phone, but a Trooper was able to retrieve its memory card per the court authorized search. The hundreds of images and videos of child sexual abuse material were extracted from the card.

HIGGINS was placed under arrest and transported to the State Police-Revere Barracks for processing. After he was booked he was brought to Chelsea District Court for arraignment, and was ordered held without bail for violating his probation from the previous case by re-offending.

As part of the same investigation Troopers this morning executed a separate search warrant on an apartment at 165 Hawthorne St., Chelsea, the residence of a friend of HIGGINS. Troopers seized several electronic devices from that apartment, which will be analyzed by the Cyber Crime Unit.

Charges may be filed against the resident of that apartment depending on the results of the Cyber Crime Unit's examination of the devices. HIGGINS' booking photo from today's arrest is included with this release."-Massachusetts State Police.