

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.