

Massachusetts D.A., Taunton Police investigating 26-year old woman dead from gunshot wound

“Prosecutors, State Police detectives assigned to the district attorney’s office and Taunton Police are actively investigating a suspicious death, which occurred last night in The City of Taunton.

At around 11 pm Wednesday, Taunton Police received a 911 call from an apartment at 52 Tremont Street regarding a woman suffering from a gunshot wound. When first responders arrived they located the victim, later identified as Colby Dowling, 26, of Lakeville. Ms. Dowling was declared deceased at the scene.

Several people were inside the apartment at the time of the incident.

Due to the ongoing nature of this investigation, no further information can be released at this time.” -Bristol County District Attorney’s Office.

New Bedford High School Academy of Information

Technology earns distinguished status

"New Bedford High School's Information Technology Program receives NAF recognition."

The New Bedford High School Academy of Information Technology, affiliated with the National Academy Foundation (NAF), has been recognized as a distinguished national high school program, it was announced at the NAF national summer conference in Dallas, Texas.

The IT Academy, one of several programs part of New Bedford High's Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) offerings, joins Finance as the school's second NAF Academy to be recognized as a distinguished program. The designation was determined based on an evaluation and visit to NBHS by NAF officials in which they reviewed the facilities, interviewed school stakeholders, reviewed documentation and observed classes.

"I am thrilled that our Academy of IT has been recognized as distinguished, a milestone that was made possible through the work of our outstanding teachers, students and IT industry partners," said Bernadette Coelho, Principal of New Bedford High School. "Having two distinguished academies demonstrates the vibrancy of our CVTE programs, and we appreciate NAF's continued recognition of our innovative practices."

The distinguished designation represents the highest level of achievement for a NAF academy. New Bedford High School's Academy of IT was one of 181 programs recognized in the nation, according to NAF'S recent press release announcing the designees. The process to determine distinguished level includes evaluations and a site visit to assess program quality. NAF officials engaged with a cross section of

teachers, students, finance industry advisory committee members and administrators during the NBHS visit.

“Our recent NAF site visit provided the opportunity for the IT Academy to showcase its innovation, creativity and advanced technical skills,” said Chris Cummings, manager of CVTE programs, noting that teachers from all areas met with NAF officials to discuss how they collaborate with IT Academy staff to develop and implement projects across multiple disciplines. “The evaluators were impressed with the rich cross-curricular integration,” he added.

One of the criteria in determining a distinguished NAF program is an active advisory committee of industry representatives and post-secondary faculty. During their discussions with NAF officials, the committee – comprised of 16 members representing industries from New Bedford, Providence, Boston, and other regional communities – shared how they engage with NBHS staff and students in providing curriculum guidance and internship opportunities.

“We are fortunate to have highly engaged advisory committee partners to support our IT Academy, said Cummings. “Their active participation and support were key in our receiving this most prestigious recognition,” he added.

The IT Academy is part of New Bedford High School offerings of Career Vocational Technical Education programming. In addition to IT, the school offers career pathway programs in Finance, Health Sciences, Engineering, Early Childhood Education and Hospitality, as well as two Chapter 74 vocational programs in Business Technology and Radio and Television Broadcasting. For more information about Career and Technical Education at New Bedford High School, please contact Christopher Cummings, Manager of CVTE at (508) 997-4511, ext. 20799.”

New Bedford Police Department arrest six individuals for Fentanyl, cocaine

“On Wednesday, September 14, detectives executed a search warrant for a tenement on Rodney Street with the target being JOSEPH DEMERS, 56.

This investigation was subsequent to numerous complaints from concerned neighbors. After making entry, detectives located 13 oxycodone tablets, a plastic bag of cocaine weighing .5 grams, cutting agents, 5 digital scales, packaging materials, and loose fentanyl packaged in a manner for street-level sales totaling approximately 8 grams.

Detectives arrested six people in the apartment at the time of the search including JONATHAN DIGAETANO, 36, of 1959 Purchase Street, AMANDA YAPEJIAN, 36, of 79 Rodney Street, ROBERT MILLS, 37, of 70 Rodney Street, SANDRA DUNN, 54, of Fairhaven, STEVEN GALIPEAU, 41, of 287 Coffin Avenue, and DEMERS.

While the parties present were being searched, detectives also located Fentanyl weighing .2 grams on MILLS. DEMERS was charged with two counts of possession to distribute a class A drug, two counts of possession to distribute a class B drug, conspiracy to violate the drug law, and two warrant arrests.

DUNN was charged with possession to distribute a class A drug, possession to distribute a class B drug, and conspiracy to violate the drug law.

MILLS was charged with two counts of possession to distribute a class A drug, conspiracy to violate the drug law, and a

warrant arrest.

DIGAETANO and GALIPEAU were charged with possession to distribute a class A drug and conspiracy to violate the drug law.

YAPEJIAN was charged with two counts of possession to distribute a class A drug and conspiracy to violate the drug law.” -New Bedford Police Department.

Ohio man arrested in Boston, charged with possessing 2,800 videos, images of child sexual abuse

“An Ohio man has been arrested in connection with possessing child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

Thiago da Silva Pinheiro, 42, of Cincinnati, Ohio was charged with one count of possession of child pornography. Following an initial appearance in federal court in Boston today before U.S. District Court Magistrate Judge Paul G. Levenson, Pinheiro was detained pending a detention hearing scheduled for Sept. 22, 2022.

According to the charging documents, on Sept. 20, 2022, Pinheiro flew from Ontario, Canada to Boston with an ultimate destination of Brazil. During a screening by Customs and Border Protection at Logan Airport, customs officers observed apparent child sexual abuse material (CSAM) on Pinheiro’s tablet. It is alleged that a preliminary review of the tablet

revealed approximately 2,800 videos and images depicting apparent CSAM, some of which depicted children as young as two to four years old.

The charge of possession of child pornography provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, at least five years and up to a lifetime 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.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins and Matthew B. Millhollin, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in New England made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by Customs and Border Protection. Assistant U.S. Attorney Meghan C. Cleary of Rollins' Major Crimes Unit is prosecuting 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>.

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

Massachusetts Environmental Police charge one for baiting bears in off-season

“At the end of the 2021 bear season, Massachusetts Environmental Police Officers were notified of two tree stands that were set over bait.

Prior to the start of the 2022 bear season, Officers checked the area and found that it had been baited five days prior to the season opening. Over the course of several days, Officers surveilled the area.

On Saturday, September 10, 2022, Officers observed two individuals in the stands, one with a rifle, over the baited area. Officers further observed that the bait had been replenished, to include sunflower seeds, popcorn, marshmallows, and peanut butter spread on trees.

The individual admitted to hunting bear, and was subsequently charged with hunting bear over bait. The rifle was seized and the area has been closed for bear hunting until the day following the close of the November portion of bear season and all days inclusive.” -Massachusetts Environmental Police.

Illegal hunting methods:

- It is illegal to use dogs during bear hunting
- Using bait for bear hunting is illegal, including use of lure, scents or any substance that may attract a bear.
- Wanton waste: It is unlawful to intentionally leave a wounded or dead animal in the field or forest without making a reasonable effort to retrieve and use it. However, this does not apply to animals unfit for consumption use (animals that parts are damaged, destroyed, decayed, rotting, diseased, or infected.)

61-year old Boston man, career criminal, sentenced for kidnapping of Wendy's employee

"A 61-year-old Boston man with a lengthy record of convictions who kidnapped and robbed a Seekonk Wendy's employee was sentenced to lie in prison today after being convicted following a week-long trial in Fall River Superior Court.

Todd Johnson was convicted by a jury of his pers of armed and masked robbery and kidnapping. He was also found to be a "habitual criminal" under Massachusetts law, which enhanced his prison penalty.

On March 12, 2018 at 4am, the female victim was leaving her job at Wendy's in Seekonk alone. When she reached her car, the masked defendant approached and put a gun to her and demanded her deposit bags. The victim explained she had no money, at which point the defendant forced her to empty her pockets. She pulled out her cell phone, which the defendant took from her. He then forced her back into the restaurant at gun point to open up the safe.

Inside the restaurant surveillance cameras caught the incident. The victim was unable to open the safe because it was on a timer. The defendant then tried to tie up victim with zip ties. At that point, the victim began pleading with defendant and told him there were silent alarms throughout the restaurant. This spooked the defendant and caused him to flee the restaurant. The victim immediately called 911 from the office phone and then hid in the walk-in freezer until police

arrived.

The defendant was arrested a short time later at Stateline Auto just over the border in East Providence, RI, while hiding under a car.

The defendant was initially held without bail as a danger, but was ultimately released due to Covid. After his release, he committed a larceny offense in Suffolk and had his bail revoked. He eventually was released again and committed an Armed/ Masked Robbery in Jamaica Plain. He has since been indicted as a Habitual Offender in Suffolk County. He has served lengthy state prison sentences in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s for similar crimes and drug distribution offenses.

Since he qualified as a “habitual criminal,” he was sentenced today by Judge Daniel O’Shea to life in prison with the possibility of parole after 15 years.

“The defendant is a career criminal who was released on this case during the pandemic only to then commit another armed robbery in Boston. The defendant has a long history of committing armed robberies and this sentence was necessary to protect the public from this habitual criminal,” District Attorney Quinn said.

The case was prosecuted by Co-First Assistant District Attorney Karen O’Sullivan.” -D.A. Quinn’s Office.

Fiscal stability leads to healthy bond rating for City

of New Bedford in S&P report

“Standard & Poor’s Global Ratings cited “very strong management,” “continued economic expansion” and consistent operating budget performance in awarding the City of New Bedford an AA long-term rating, and a stable AA- underlying rating, for more than \$41 million in bond obligations to fund capital projects such as wastewater improvements and a central kitchen for public schools.

“The rating reflects our opinion of the city’s continued economic expansion beyond its historical status as a fishing port and home to the largest fishing fleet on the East Coast,” the credit ratings agency said this week in its latest report on the City’s finances. “During the past several years, New Bedford has seen economic development in the offshore wind industry, dining, and hospitality industries. Residential development has increased, with over 450 housing units expected to come online. The city’s prudent management practices have produced solid and predictable financial results through fiscal 2021.”

S & P’s added that, “Although the city faces challenges from long-term retirement liabilities and remains vulnerable to potential decreases in state aid, we expect the financial profile to remain stable.”

The report said the City’s stable long-term credit rating reflected several factors:

- Three fiscal years of modest growth in reserves and in the general fund in fiscal 2022;
- Very strong management and institutional framework score;
- Local economy that while adequate, is gaining advantage from access to a broad and diverse metropolitan statistical area and diversifying tax base; and
- Manageable debt, but with large pension and other

postemployment benefit obligation liabilities.

“This very favorable review from S&P’s is a credit to our dedicated finance team, which has worked on this particular bond issue for several months,” Mayor Jon Mitchell said. “Their dedication and experience, along with my Administration’s focus on economic expansion and cost reductions, are paying off with strong credit ratings that will benefit every taxpayer in the City for years to come.””

New Bedford Police Department seizes nearly 600 grams of Fentanyl, 2 arrested

“On Thursday, September 15, detectives executed a search warrant for a Nash Road residence. On Monday, September 19, at about 2 p.m., detectives entered the home and located a toolbox that contained 33 plastic bags of fentanyl pills weighing 356 grams, 11 plastic bags of fentanyl weighing 237 grams, cutting agent, digital scales, drug ledger, and three cellphones.

The homeowner, identified as KENNY GONZALEZ, 44, was arrested and charged with trafficking 200 grams or more of fentanyl, possession to distribute a class A drug, conspiracy to violate the drug law, and a career criminal act- violent crime or serious drug.

GONZALEZ was previously found guilty for the distribution of a controlled class A substance on Sept. 7, 2000, guilty for assault and battery with a dangerous weapon on June 30, 2003, and guilty for manslaughter on July 6, 2005.

His girlfriend, identified as ILIANA SANCHEZ-PAGAN, 33, was charged with trafficking 200 grams or more of fentanyl/morphine/opium, conspiracy to violate the drug law, and a warrant arrest.

The arresting officer was Det. Dre Frenette.”



New Bedford Police Department photo.

Brockton woman sentenced for

role in conspiracy to operate a prostitution business

"A Brockton woman was sentenced on Sept. 15, 2022 in federal court in Boston for her involvement in a conspiracy that involved coercing young women to engage in prostitution.

Natashia Bowman, 35, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Alison D. Burroughs to three years of probation and was ordered to pay restitution to victims. In September 2020, Bowman pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit interstate travel in aid of a racketeering enterprise related to a prostitution business.

Bowman was charged by an Information in November 2019 for her involvement in a sex trafficking business ran by co-conspirator Matthew Engram, a/k/a "Magic." From January 2009 until August 2015, Bowman assisted Engram in the recruitment and trafficking of multiple victims from a residence in Brockton and elsewhere to engage in commercial sex acts and took all or part of the proceeds for the financial benefit of the enterprise.

Engram and Bowman recruited multiple victims by falsely promising good earnings. Engram and Bowman advertised the victims on websites and Engram exchanged text messages with Bowman to share advertisements, organized prostitution dates and reserved hotel rooms. To maintain control, Engram used physical violence, intimidation and isolation to create a climate of fear that compelled the victims to continue engaging in commercial sex acts for the profit of the prostitution business. When the victims did not comply with Engram's demands or did not make enough money, he physically assaulted them or directed Bowman to physically assault them. Engram or Bowman also transported the victims to other states, including Florida, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, New

Jersey, Vermont, and Pennsylvania, to perform commercial sex acts for the business.

On May 19, 2022, Engram was sentenced by Judge Burroughs to 12 years in prison and five years of supervised release after previously pleading guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit sex trafficking, two counts of transportation of an individual for purposes of prostitution and one count of conspiracy to commit interstate travel in aid of a racketeering enterprise.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke; Matthew B. Millhollin, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in New England; Brockton Police Chief Brenda Perez; and Boston Police Commissioner Michael Cox made the announcement today. Assistance was provided by Homeland Security Investigations in Philadelphia. Assistant U.S. Attorney Suzanne Sullivan Jacobus of Rollins' Major Crimes Unit and Trial Attorneys Shan Patel and Vasantha Rao of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division prosecuted the case." -Massachusetts Department of Justice.

Ghanaian national living in Massachusetts pleads guilty in \$4 million romance scam fraud

"A Massachusetts man has pleaded guilty in federal court in Boston in connection with a wire fraud and money laundering scheme involving funds obtained from "romance scam" victims.

Kofi Osei, a/k/a Paul Proia, a/k/a Kenneth Buck, a/k/a Jeffrey Anashe, a/k/a Author Ivey, a/k/a David Label, a/k/a Manuel Abdalla, a/k/a Andrew Matses, 30, pleaded guilty on Sept. 16, 2022 to seven counts of making a false statement to a bank, six counts of wire fraud and two counts of money laundering. U.S. District Court Judge Indira Talwani scheduled sentencing for Jan. 20, 2023. Osei was charged in February 2021.

Between no later than 2016 through at least 2020, Osei opened bank accounts in the greater Boston area using fake identity documents. Those bank accounts were used to receive fraudulently obtained funds from a number of victims of romance scams, in which perpetrators create fictitious online personas to develop online romantic relationships with individuals in the United States and then leverage those relationships to obtain money and/or property. Once the fraudulently obtained funds reached the accounts controlled by Osei, Osei generally withdrew the money in cash, used the funds to purchase cashier's checks, or spent the money on personal purchases. During a search of Osei's residence and vehicle in February 2021, additional fake identity documents in the names of other aliases were recovered. In total, Osei opened more than 40 bank accounts using seven aliases. Those accounts received more than \$4 million in victim funds.

The charge of making a false statement to a bank provides for a sentence of up to 30 years in prison, five years of supervised release and a fine of \$1 million. The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000, or twice the gross gain or loss from the scheme, whichever is greater. The charge of money laundering provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$500,000, or twice the value of the criminally derived property. 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.

United States Attorney Rachael S. Rollins; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; Ketty Larco-Ward, Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Boston Division; and Matthew B. Millhollin, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in New England made the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Kristen A. Kearney of Rollins' Securities, Financial & Cyber Fraud Unit is prosecuting the case." -Massachusetts Department of Justice.