

Former Enforcer of New Bedford Latin Kings Pleads Guilty to Drug Trafficking and Manufacturing Charges

A former member and leader of the New Bedford Chapter of the Massachusetts Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation ("Latin Kings") pleaded guilty yesterday to drug charges.

Jeremia Medina, a/k/a "King Sweepy," 33, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute, manufacture and possess with intent to distribute cocaine base. U.S. Senior District Court Judge Rya W. Zobel scheduled sentencing for June 17, 2021.

Medina admitted to being a former Enforcer of the New Bedford Chapter of the Latin Kings, and to conspiring with other members of the Latin Kings to distribute, manufacture and possess with intent to distribute cocaine and cocaine base. As Enforcer, Medina was a leader of the New Bedford Chapter charged with organizing violent acts by the gang and administering violations and other violence. Medina also admitted to conspiring with other Latin Kings members and leaders to operate a vast drug trafficking network throughout New Bedford, utilizing a number of multi-unit apartment buildings controlled by the Latin Kings, known as trap houses. The evidence described at the plea hearing today included court-authorized interceptions of Medina's phone, and a recording where he is depicted in a trap house, in front of a stove preparing to "cook" a suspected kilogram of cocaine powder into "crack" cocaine, also known as cocaine base.

The Latin Kings are a violent criminal enterprise comprised of thousands of members across the United States. The Latin Kings adhere to a national manifesto, employ an internal judiciary

and use a sophisticated system of communication to maintain the hierarchy of the organization. As alleged in court documents, the gang uses drug distribution to generate revenue, and engages in violence against witnesses and rival gangs to further its influence and to protect its turf.

In December 2019, a federal grand jury returned an indictment alleging racketeering conspiracy, drug conspiracy and firearms charges against 62 leaders, members and associates of the Latin Kings. Medina is the 40th defendant to plead guilty in the case.

The charge of conspiracy to distribute controlled substances provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, at least three years and up to life of supervised release and a fine of up to \$1 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting United States Attorney Nathaniel R. Mendell; Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Division; Commissioner Carol Mici of the Massachusetts Department of Correction; and New Bedford Police Chief Joseph C. Cordeiro made the announcement. Valuable assistance was also provided by the FBI North Shore Gang Task Force and the Bristol County and Suffolk County District Attorney's Offices. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Philip A. Mallard and Lauren Graber of Mendell's Criminal Division are prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging documents are allegations. The remaining defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.