

Massachusetts man cuts ankle bracelet, skips out on \$1.5 million EBT fraud trial

The Massachusetts State Police Violent Fugitive Apprehension Section is searching for MARTIN B. SANTIAGO, 49, who did not show up for his food stamp fraud and money laundering trial today in Essex Superior Court. Investigators have determined that SANTIAGO has forcibly removed his court-ordered monitoring device.

SANTIAGO was scheduled to begin trial today for his alleged involvement in a scheme to fraudulently sell food stamps and launder money. SANTIAGO is charged with trafficking \$1.5 million in EBT benefits at his three stores in Lawrence. He was arrested for those offenses in June 2015 and has been awaiting trial since then.

The Essex County District Attorney's Office sought a high cash bail at SANTIAGO's arraignment in Superior Court. Bail was set, however, over the District Attorney's objection, at \$75,000 cash with GPS monitoring. SANTIAGO's GPS ankle bracelet was cut off at approximately 6 a.m. today. A warrant for his arrest has issued following his default on the court appearance today.

SANTIAGO is from the Dominican Republic, is not a United States citizen, and is fluent in Spanish. He is Hispanic, has black hair and brown eyes, is 5'11" tall, and weighs approximately 190 lbs. (A 2012 photo of him is attached). He has ties to the Lawrence and Methuen areas. In the past, he has used the fraudulent identities Mark Santiago and Martin Billone Santiago.

Anyone with information on MARTIN B. SANTIAGO's whereabouts, or who thinks they see him, is urged to call the Massachusetts

State Police at 1-800-KAPTURE (1-800-527-8873).