

Massachusetts man and woman plead guilty in wide-ranging Fentanyl, heroin, crack, cocaine conspiracy

A Fitchburg man and woman pleaded guilty today in federal court in Worcester to their roles in a wide-ranging fentanyl, heroin, crack and cocaine trafficking conspiracy.

Ricky Figueroa, 31, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute one kilogram or more of heroin, 400 grams or more of fentanyl, 280 grams or more of cocaine base and 500 grams or more of cocaine. U.S. District Court Judge Timothy S. Hillman scheduled sentencing for March 17, 2022.

Monica Troche, 29, pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute one kilogram or more of heroin, 400 grams or more of fentanyl, 280 grams or more of cocaine base (crack) and 500 grams or more of cocaine. Troche also pleaded guilty to five counts of distribution and possession with intent to distribute and distribution of fentanyl, heroin and cocaine. Judge Hillman scheduled sentencing for March 15, 2022.

Troche and Figueroa were charged in an eight-count superseding indictment along with 16 others in July 2020.

According to court documents, following a fatal fentanyl overdose in September 2018, law enforcement began an investigation into a drug trafficking organization (DTO) in the Fitchburg area led by co-conspirators Pedro Baez and Anthony Baez. Intercepted phone communications by the DTO and its suppliers revealed that Troche worked with Anthony Baez to distribute a fentanyl and heroin mixture and cocaine.

Communications also revealed that Figueroa supplied Pedro and Anthony Baez, as well as others in the Fitchburg area, with cocaine and crack cocaine on a regular basis.

Over the course of the investigation, agents seized over 1.8 kilograms of a heroin and fentanyl mixture, over 3.6 kilograms of cocaine and over 50 grams of crack cocaine, as well as a stolen, loaded handgun, drug manufacturing equipment and over \$376,000. Figueroa was responsible for distributing 280 grams or more of crack cocaine and 500 grams or more of cocaine. Troche is responsible for distributing 400 grams or more of fentanyl, 100 grams or more of heroin and 500 grams or more of cocaine.

Figueroa and Troche are the seventh and eighth defendants to plead guilty in this case. In December 2020, Anthony Baez was sentenced by Judge Hillman to 13 years in prison and five years of supervised release. Pedro Baez pleaded guilty on Feb. 2, 2021 and is scheduled to be sentenced on May 17, 2022.

The charge of conspiracy to distribute one kilogram or more of heroin, 400 grams or more of fentanyl, 280 grams or more of cocaine base and 500 grams or more of cocaine provides for a sentence of up to life in prison, at least five years and up to life of supervised release and a fine of up to \$10 million. The other drug trafficking charges provide for a sentencing range of five years to a lifetime in prison, at least four years and up to life of supervised release and a fine of between \$5 million to \$10 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 Division; Commissioner Carol Mici of the Massachusetts Department of Correction; and Colonel Christopher Mason, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police made the announcement today. The Fitchburg and

Lunenburg Police Departments, U.S. Postal Inspection Service and Massachusetts State Police provided valuable assistance. Assistant U.S. Attorney Alatheia Porter of Mendell's Narcotics and Money Laundering Unit is prosecuting the case.

This effort is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

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