

Massachusetts State and Local Police arrest Fentanyl trafficker found hiding in bedroom

Massachusetts State Police Troopers and federal agents assigned to a regional gang task force, along with Lawrence Police, yesterday arrested a suspected drug trafficker after they found him hiding in a bedroom in a Lawrence apartment yesterday afternoon.

When troopers and agents observed HECTOR RIVERA, 39, he was hiding his right hand behind a door. Concerned for their safety, the troopers and agents, assigned to the North Shore Gang Task Force took measures to secure the suspect through the threshold of the door and detained him after a brief struggle. Afterward they discovered a large sheathed kitchen knife on the floor behind the door, where RIVERA had been hiding his right hand.

Task force officers went to the apartment 237 Jackson St. after learning that RIVERA, whom they were seeking to speak to regarding a previous drug trafficking investigation, was there. They were given consent to enter the apartment, where RIVERA was an unwanted guest. After discovering the knife and detaining RIVERA, an MSP sergeant conducted a pat frisk and found, concealed in pockets in the suspect's pants, plastic baggies containing fentanyl and cocaine. The sergeant then located, in the suspect's sweatshirt pocket, a sock containing multiple baggies of suspected fentanyl.

In total, police discovered RIVERA to be in possession of approximately 50 grams of suspected fentanyl, approximately half a gram of suspected cocaine, and another twist of an

unknown brown substance. Task force officers then placed RIVERA under arrest and transported him to the Lawrence Police Department for booking. Prior to his being transported, RIVERA, speaking in Spanish, asked another person at the scene to "take care of my stuff for me," a statement heard by a Lawrence Police detective who speaks Spanish.

Based on observations made at the scene, task force officers and members of the Lawrence Police narcotics unit obtained and executed a search warrant of the bedroom. There they discovered additional baggies containing suspected fentanyl, another of suspected cocaine, cell phones, and \$604 cash. Also located in the bedroom and documented was the sheathed kitchen knife and a machete.

As a result of the initial arrest and subsequent warrant, a total of approximately 311 grams of fentanyl was seized. RIVERA was charged with trafficking in fentanyl over 10 grams; possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, and a default warrant from Dorchester District Court.

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that is many times more powerful than heroin.

The North Shore Gang Task Force is a partnership between the Massachusetts State Police Gang Unit, Lawrence Police and other local officers, and federal agents that works on the front lines of the battle against gang violence and drug trafficking.