

New Bedford fugitive who fled the country on the eve of trial held in custody

A 40-year-old former New Bedford man who fled the country at the outset of his narcotics trafficking trial in December 2014 was arrested last month back in New Bedford, and today was ordered held on \$500,000 cash bail by a Fall River Superior Court Judge, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III.

Rene Perez was set to stand trial in December 2014 on indictments charging him with trafficking heroin and trafficking cocaine. But on the first day of trial, while out on bail, he cut off a GPS monitoring device and fled to the Dominican Republic under the alias of Manuel Omar Castillo Aguasvivas. At some point during the ensuing five years, the defendant returned to New Bedford.

On February 20, 2019, New Bedford Police were canvassing an area of the city as a result of an ongoing non-fatal shooting investigation, when they happened upon the defendant. After running a check on the defendant, it was determined he was the individual by the name of Rene Perez who failed to appear for trial and was arrested.

The defendant appeared in Fall River Superior Court today and was ordered held on \$500,000 cash bail by Judge Raffi Yessayan while he awaits trial on the previous drug trafficking indictments.

“I am very pleased that the court set a very high cash bail that reflects that this is a defendant who has not and will not appear in court voluntarily. This defendant fled to the Dominican Republic to evade prosecution and somehow returned to the US, despite not being a citizen. The defendant had no

intention of ever coming in to face these charges and this type of bail ruling is what is necessary to assure that fugitives will answer for their alleged crimes," District Attorney Quinn said.