

New Bedford Latin Kings leader pleads guilty to racketeering and drug charges

The former second in command of the Massachusetts Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation ("Latin Kings") pleaded guilty yesterday to racketeering and drug conspiracy charges.

Jorge Rodriguez, a/k/a "King G," 32, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to conduct enterprise affairs through a pattern of racketeering activity, more commonly referred to as RICO conspiracy, and conspiracy to distribute cocaine and cocaine base. U.S. Senior District Court Judge Rya W. Zobel scheduled sentencing for Oct. 16, 2020. Rodriguez was arrested and charged in December 2019, at which time he was the second in command of Massachusetts for the Latin Kings, and had held leadership positions in the New Bedford Chapter.

The Latin Kings are a violent gang 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 criminal organization. As alleged in court documents, the gang uses drug distribution to generate revenue, and is motivated by a desire to further its influence and to protect its turf from rival gangs.

In addition to his statewide leadership of the Latin Kings in Massachusetts, Rodriguez also held a leadership position in the New Bedford Chapter. In New Bedford, Rodriguez ran a vast cocaine base distribution network that used multi-unit apartment buildings known as "trap houses" to distribute the narcotics. Members of the Latin Kings dealt drugs in the trap houses, obtaining their supply of cocaine base from Rodriguez. As detailed in court filings in the case, evidence developed

during the course of the investigation included multiple recordings of Rodriguez cooking cocaine base, directing violence against rival gang members, meting out discipline, and handling firearms used to protect the Latin Kings' drug distribution network.

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



Pursuant to the terms of the plea agreement, Rodriguez faces 15 – 25 years in prison and three years of supervised release. The RICO conspiracy charge provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Depending on the drug quantity, the drug trafficking conspiracy and distribution charges provide for a sentence of up to 20 years, 40 years, or life; a minimum of three, four or five years of supervised release; and fines of \$1 million, \$5 million and \$10 million. The charge of felon in possession of a firearm and ammunition provides for a sentence of up to 10 years, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; 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 today. 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. Attorney Philip A. Mallard and Mark Grady of Lelling'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.