

# North Dartmouth Woman and Weymouth Man Indicted on Drug Trafficking Charges

A North Dartmouth woman and a Weymouth man were indicted Wednesday and charged in connection with drug trafficking activities involving shipments of multiple kilograms of cocaine sent through the mail.

Cristina Lopez, 43, of North Dartmouth, and John Tavares, 31, of Weymouth, were indicted on charges of conspiring to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine and of possessing with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of cocaine. Lopez and Tavares were arrested on Aug. 18, 2018, and have been detained since that time.

According to court records, more than 40 suspicious parcels were identified that had been sent via the United States mail from Puerto Rico to various addresses in Massachusetts, including residences in Quincy, North Dartmouth, Weymouth, and New Bedford. The suspicious parcels were often sent on the same day from Puerto Rico to two or more different addresses in Massachusetts. Agents executed search warrants on two of the parcels and allegedly seized approximately two kilograms of cocaine hidden in sealed coffee cans. Through surveillance, agents allegedly determined that Lopez and Tavares were receiving the majority of the parcels. It is further alleged that Lopez and Tavares had regularly been flying from Massachusetts to Puerto Rico for trips lasting only 30 to 72 hours, and that the parcels suspected of containing cocaine were then typically sent to Massachusetts within one to three days after their return.

At an earlier court hearing, an agent testified that multiple

search warrants were executed on Aug. 18, 2018, including at three different residences in Weymouth, North Dartmouth, and Boston. During those searches, agents seized more than three kilograms of cocaine, more than \$100,000, two firearms, and various drug paraphernalia.

The charge of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute and to distribute five kilograms or more of cocaine provides for a minimum sentence of 10 years and up to a lifetime in prison, a minimum of five years and up to a lifetime of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$10 million. The charges of possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of cocaine provides for a minimum sentence of five years and up to 40 years in prison, a minimum of four years and up to a lifetime of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$5 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based on the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling; Brian D. Boyle, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New England Division; Raymond D. Moss, Acting Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service in Boston; Peter C. Fitzhugh, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; Colonel Kerry A. Gilpin, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police; Norfolk County District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey; and Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III made the announcement today. Investigative assistance was provided by the Quincy, Weymouth, Braintree, North Dartmouth and Boston Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorneys James E. Arnold and Nadine Pellegrini of Lelling's Narcotics and Money Laundering Unit are prosecuting the case.

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