

# **“Operation Ghost” dismantles New Bedford area Fentanyl trafficking ring**

Eleven New Bedford-area residents allegedly involved in a large-scale fentanyl trafficking ring were arrested this morning after a year-long multi-agency investigation led by the Bristol County District Attorney’s office and funded via a grant program through Attorney General Maura Healey’s office, District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced today.

The extensive investigation, dubbed “Operation Ghost”, resulted in several search and arrest warrants being executed throughout the City of New Bedford and surrounding area this morning, resulting in the arrest of the following defendants:

- Maria Carrion, 42, of New Bedford, charged with conspiracy to traffick fentanyl and trafficking fentanyl.
- Orlando Badillo, 40, of New Bedford, charged with conspiracy to traffick fentanyl and trafficking fentanyl.
- Pedro Cruz, 38, of New Bedford, charged with trafficking Fentanyl, conspiracy to traffick fentanyl and possession with intent to distribute marijuana.
- Samuel Gonzalez Lopez, 51, of New Bedford, charged with conspiracy to traffick fentanyl.
- Kelly Rodrigues, 29, of New Bedford, charged with conspiracy to traffick fentanyl and possession with intent to distribute a class A substance-subsequent offense
- Elizabeth Andrews, 31, of Fairhaven, charged with conspiracy to traffick fentanyl.
- Robert Peguero, 48, of New Bedford, charged with conspiracy to traffick fentanyl and trafficking fentanyl.
- Heather Cabral, 38, of New Bedford, charged with conspiracy to traffick fentanyl.
- Lisa Telfair, 57, of New Bedford, charged with conspiracy to

traffick fentanyl and trafficking fentanyl.

- Xiomara Rivera, 51, of New Bedford, charged with conspiracy to traffick fentanyl.
- Alberto Suazo, of Easton, charged with unlawful possession of a firearm and possession of a class B drug.

The year-long investigation targeted Orlando Badillo as the alleged leader of the Fentanyl Trafficking Organization and Robert Peguero as the organization's alleged supplier. During the execution of the warrants this morning, investigators seized large quantities of suspected Fentanyl and tens of thousands of dollars in cash.

"Operation Ghost" was coordinated by Assistant District Attorney Steve Butts, the Chief of District Attorney's Quinn's Drug Prosecution Unit, and involved cooperation amongst numerous law enforcement agencies. Those agencies include the Bristol County District Attorney's State Police Detective Unit, Dartmouth Police, New Bedford Police, the Attorney General's State Police Detective Unit, the Bristol County Sheriff's Department, the Department of Homeland Security's Boston Office and various other units of the Massachusetts State Police.

Funding for this operation came from a \$3 million federal grant that was awarded to the AG's Fentanyl Strike Force to expand its efforts to combat the opioid epidemic and disrupt drug and fentanyl trafficking throughout Massachusetts.

"I am very pleased that this successful investigation has led to the arrest of several people involved in a large-scale fentanyl trafficking ring. As we have seen repeatedly during the past several years, the distribution and use of fentanyl has led to a significant increase in fatal overdoses in the region," District Attorney Quinn said. "This is a very good example of law enforcement agencies working together and contributing their resources to a complex investigation. We will continue to invest significant resources to take down the

individuals who continue to be engaged in this lethal business. I would also like to thank the Attorney General's office for their support of this investigation."

Due to the ongoing nature of this case, no further information on the facts of the active probe can be disseminated at this time.

All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.