

Salvadoran National Charged with Distributing 15 kilos of Fentanyl in Massachusetts

A Salvadoran national was charged in federal court in Boston in connection with a law enforcement seizure of 15 kilos of fentanyl discarded on the side of a road in Sturbridge.

Nelson Garcia Martinez, 37, a Salvadoran national residing in Stockton, Calif., was charged with one count of distribution of 400 grams or more of fentanyl. Garcia Martinez is in custody pending a detention and probable cause hearing.

According to the charging document, Garcia Martinez was arrested on Nov. 13, 2018, after federal agents conducting surveillance at a rest stop in Sturbridge allegedly observed Garcia Martinez meet with two unidentified individuals outside of Garcia Martinez's tractor trailer. When the two unidentified individuals left the area, law enforcement attempted to stop their vehicle, but they fled. When they did finally pull to the side of the road, the passenger exited the car and discarded a vacuum sealed garment bag and then fled into the surrounding woods, while the driver of the car left the scene at high speed. The garment bag burst open on the ground, and agents recovered 15 kilograms of a substance that tested positive for fentanyl. Garcia Martinez consented to a search of his tractor trailer, where vacuum sealed bags matching the one discarded on the side of the road were recovered.

Law enforcement were led to Garcia Martinez after discovering a phone number, allegedly later determined to be associated with Garcia Martinez, that was believed to be used by a drug transporter related to an October 2018 seizure of 32 kilos of fentanyl in Methuen.

Garcia Martinez faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years and up to life in prison, at least five years and up to a lifetime of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$10 million. He will also be subject to deportation upon completion of any sentence imposed. 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 and Brian D. Boyle, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New England Division, made the announcement today. Valuable assistance was provided by the Massachusetts State Police and the Somerville, Medford, Boston, Ipswich, and Arlington Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorney Katherine Ferguson of Lelling's Narcotics and Money Laundering Unit is prosecuting the case.

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