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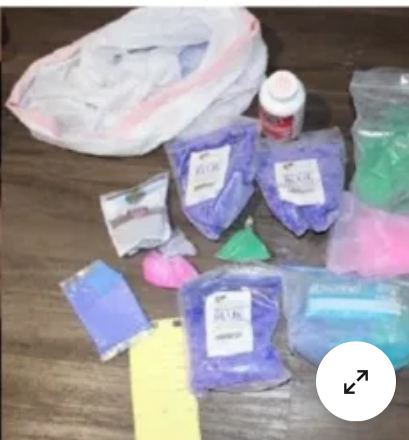
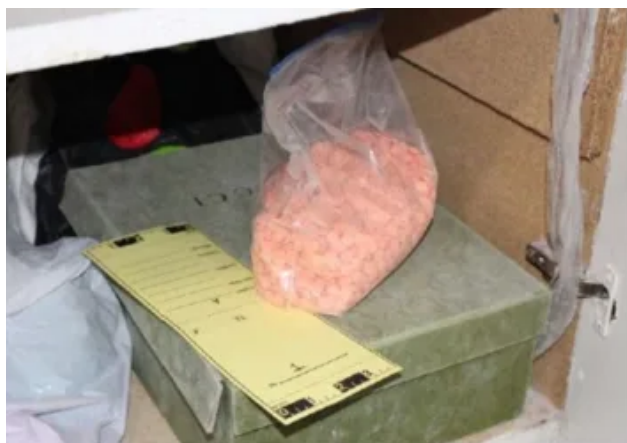
WWLP Spring

Lawrence manufacture and distribute counterfeit fentanyl pills

John Budenas

Fri, September 18, 2026 at 8:14 PM EDT · 2 min read

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BOSTON (WWLP) - A Lawrence man pleaded guilty Thursday to his involvement in a drug trafficking organization that manufactured and distributed counterfeit pills containing fentanyl.

[State police seize more than 20 kilos of suspected fentanyl in Lawrence drug bust](#)

According to federal prosecutors, **Aris Arvelo Gonzalez**, 37, pleaded guilty in federal court in Boston to one count of conspiracy to manufacture, distribute

federal court
and possess

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According to charging documents, Gonzalez was a member of a drug trafficking organization known as "La Culebra," which operated a large drug manufacturing location inside an apartment in Methuen.

Following his arrest, authorities executed search warrants at three locations in Lawrence tied to Gonzalez and the La Culebra organization.

During a search of the Methuen apartment in August 2025, authorities recovered more than 18 kilograms of controlled substances and a pill press.



(Courtesy of U.S. Department of Justice)

While on pretrial release following a January 2025 arrest for drug offenses in Salem District Court in New Hampshire, Gonzalez sold more than 1,500 grams of counterfeit pills containing fentanyl to a confidential informant and an undercover agent on four occasions between July and November 2025, prosecutors said. Gonzalez was arrested and charged in November 2025.

prosecutors

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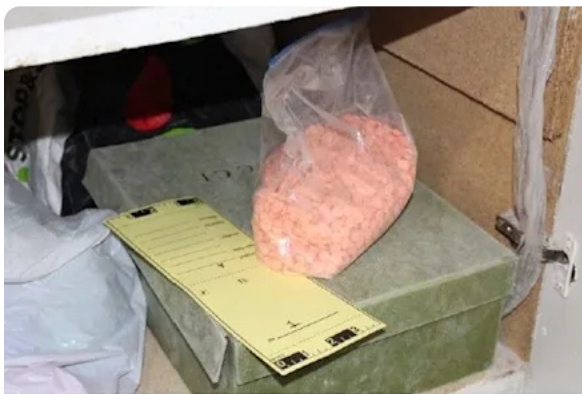
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counterfeit pills containing fentanyl, including a pill press and a 25-kilogram bag of pill binding agent.

At the time of his arrest, authorities found him with thousands of counterfeit pills packaged in smaller bags, along with a large amount of cash, according to prosecutors.



(Courtesy of U.S. Department of Justice)

The federal conspiracy charge carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, at least three years and up to a lifetime of supervised release and a fine of up to \$1 million.

Federal prosecutors said sentences are imposed by a district court judge based on the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and federal statutes governing criminal cases.

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