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St. Croix Man Gets 5 Years After 800 Fentanyl Pills Hidden in Book Are Intercepted in Mail

Federal prosecutors say Mario Felix's fingerprints were found on packaging around a book containing 800 blue fentanyl pills intercepted in the mail. He was sentenced to 60 months in prison, followed by five years of supervised release in federal court.

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Blue fentanyl pills seized during a separate USPS OIG mail-trafficking investigation illustrate the type of drug involved in the Mario Felix case. The image is not from the St. Croix seizure.

ST. CROIX — A St. Croix man has been sentenced to five years in federal prison after investigators tied him through fingerprints and text messages to a mailed package containing a

book concealing 800 blue fentanyl pills, federal prosecutors announced Wednesday.

Mario Felix, 36, was sentenced September 1 by U.S. District Judge Mark A. Kearney to 60 months in prison for causing attempted possession with intent to distribute. He was also sentenced to five years of supervised release and ordered to pay a \$100 special assessment. Mr. Felix will receive credit for the time he has already spent detained.

According to court documents, a package was randomly selected for inspection during an inbound examination of USPS mail on December 31, 2022. Inspectors opened the box and discovered a book containing several plastic bags filled with a total of 800 blue pills.

Testing determined that the pills contained fentanyl, with a Drug Enforcement Administration laboratory analysis confirming a total of 88.67 grams of fentanyl. The package was seized and sent to USPS Forensic Laboratory Services, where fingerprint testing identified Mr. Felix's prints on the plastic bag containing the book and drugs.

Investigators also recovered text messages that prosecutors say documented Mr. Felix's involvement in arranging for another individual to receive the shipment.

On December 12, 2022, Mr. Felix asked that person for a mailing address and last name. When asked what he intended to send, prosecutors say he transmitted a photograph of the book containing the fentanyl pills and indicated that something was inside it. He also offered to pay the individual \$800 after the package was received.

Several days later, Mr. Felix reportedly said he had been unable to find someone to mail the box. By December 27, however, he told the intended recipient that the package had been mailed and that the payment would be reduced to \$700 because he had paid someone else to handle the shipment. He then sent a photograph of the postal receipt containing its tracking number.

On December 30, Mr. Felix told the individual to check the post office for the package. The person went there but left without it after being told postal workers needed to locate the shipment. Communications continued through January 2, 2023, as the intended recipient reported still being unable to obtain the package.

The investigation was conducted by Homeland Security Investigations and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Assistant U.S. Attorney Rhonda Williams-Henry prosecuted the case for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of the Virgin Islands.