

Brazilian Doctor Is Charged with Manslaughter in the US and May Get 20 Years in Jail

Contributed by Francesco Neves
Saturday, 19 August 2006

The Brazilian doctor Luiz Carlos Ribeiro, 49, and his wife Ana Maria Miranda Ribeiro, also 49, who are accused of killing Brazilian Fabíola B. de Paula, 24, in Framingham, Massachusetts, during a botched liposuction procedure in the basement of a condo, were charged, Friday, August 18, with manslaughter by the American authorities.

Martha Coakley, the Middlesex county prosecutor, released the coroner's report, which concluded that the youngster from the Brazilian midwest state of Goiás died due to complications from the liposuction procedure, including pulmonary emboli fat, a rare but known risk of liposuction.

For their crime the Brazilian couple could get as much as 20 years in jail, which is the sentence the prosecutors in the case will be asking for.

"This is the maximum punishment we have in the state," explained Coakley. "After that he becomes a problem of Brazil. But before that, however, he should serve the sentence he is imposed here in the United States."

Ribeiro and his wife were also charged with illegally practicing medicine in the United States. The couple has tried unsuccessfully to have their case moved to a Brazilian court, alleging that this would be the right thing to do since both parts in the case (victim and defendant) are Brazilians.

The police say that the Ribeiro couple also used to obtain illegally the anesthetics they utilized for the illegal surgeries they performed. They have been in jail since July 31. The bail for the doctor was set at US\$ 250,000 in cash while the wife had her bail set at US\$ 50,000.

The couple should be back on court for an audience with the judge on August 25. They haven't hired a lawyer and their defense is being handled by an attorney appointed by the court.

Michael Esposito, the officer in charge of the investigations, commented on the popularity of Ribeiro's services: "Brazilian women used the services of Luiz Carlos Ribeiro due to the low price he charged and the fact that he speaks the same language as them." Ribeiro for two years had constantly travelled from Brazil to Massachusetts to conduct these operations for which he charged around US\$ 3,000.

Coakley commented that the death of de Paula has called attention to a widespread problem in the area. According to her, since the tragedy occurred the police and prosecuting office of Framingham, which has a large population of Brazilians, most of them illegal, started a campaign alerting the population for the risks of cosmetic clinics.

"We know that the liposuction practice is something common in Brazil. But people need to know that the Massachusetts' laws have to be respected. We are trying, through local Brazilian radio programs and newspapers, to show the unnecessary risks people face."

And she added: "People think this is an extension of getting my nails done, getting my hair done. We stress that there should be a lesson learned from the death of this young woman."

There were no new complaints filed against Ana Ceila Sielemann, 40, the woman who is accused of making her apartment available for the surgeries. She is also being held charged with distributing illegal narcotics to people undergoing plastic surgery.