

35-year old New Bedford man sentenced for molesting, raping 12 and 13 year old relatives

"A 35-year-old New Bedford man was convicted last week after a weeklong Superior Court trial of raping and molesting a close underage female relative and the friend of another underage female relative, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Joel Berberena was convicted by a jury of his peers in Fall River Superior Court on indictments charging him with two counts of rape of a child-aggravated by age difference, four counts of indecent assault and battery on a person under the age of 14, and one count each of rape of a child by force and indecent assault and battery on a person over the age of 14.

The trial was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorneys Casey Smith and Silvia Rudman.

The defendant was sentenced by Judge Renee Dupuis to serve 23 to 30 years in state prison, to be followed by seven years of supervised probation.

The allegations came forward to New Bedford Police on November 30, 2020 after a 12-year-old girl who was staying over the house of the defendant's close relative told her mother that the defendant had digitally raped and sexually molested her at least three times during her stay at the house. Forensic interviews were set up at the Bristol County Children's Advocacy Center, at which time it also came to light that the defendant was repeatedly digitally raping and sexually molesting another close female relative when the girl was between the ages of 12 and 15.

Both victims testified during the trial.

“The defendant engaged in depraved conduct by raping a close relative and another relative’s friend. He took advantage of his access to both victims to rape these two young girls. I commend the victims for their fortitude and perseverance for testifying in this case under very difficult circumstances. The lengthy state prison sentence imposed by the court was warranted,” District Attorney Quinn said.”-Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III.