

40-year old New Bedford domestic violence defendant convicted

A 40-year-old New Bedford man who slashed his ex-girlfriend with a knife in 2018 was sentenced to serve three years in state prison last week in Fall River Superior Court, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Rolando Ibarra pleaded guilty to an indictment charging him with Assault and Battery with a Dangerous Weapon and was sentenced to prison by Judge Gregg Pasquale.

On August 3, 2018, New Bedford Police responded to a domestic assault at 323 Highland Street. The victim was asleep in bed and received a call from who she thought was her stepson to open the front door. When she opened the door, the defendant pushed his way inside the apartment. The victim told the defendant to leave, but he refused and pulled out a knife. The defendant asked where the victim's dog was, at which point the victim attempted to get in between the stairway and the defendant.

The defendant then pushed the victim and started swinging the knife which then slashed her in the face and the arm. The victim's lip was cut and her arm had a 2 inch cut. After police arrival at the apartment, the victim was taken to the hospital for treatment.

The Victim, who was the only eyewitness, tragically died in December 2020 of a drug overdose. Despite her death, items from the incident were sent out for DNA testing and statements made by her during her 911 call were identified as an excited utterances. A motion was filed with the court to allow the DNA evidence and the victim's statements on the 911 call to be admitted as evidence during a scheduled April 2021 jury trial.

Judge Renee Dupuis indicated she was inclined to allow the motion to admit the 911 call into evidence. At that point, the defendant fired his attorney and spent the next six months working with a new attorney before finally pleading guilty last week on the eve of the rescheduled trial date.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Shawn Guilderson.

“I am pleased the defendant was held accountable for his violent assault against the victim despite the fact that she passed away prior to the trial,” District Attorney Quinn said.