

52-year old New Bedford child molester sentenced

A 52-year-old New Bedford man who sexually molested his live-in girlfriend's pre-teen daughter on multiple occasions more than a decade ago was sentenced to the maximum jail term allowed in the district court after being convicted during a jury trial in New Bedford District Court last week.

A Jury of Six convicted Julio Lima of three counts of indecent assault and battery on a person under 14 years of age on October 21. Judge Sabine Coyne sentenced the defendant to the maximum possible jail sentence of two-and-a-half years. The judge also ordered the defendant to be placed on supervised probation for an additional three years, register as a sex offender and undergo sex offender mental health treatment.

The offenses occurred between 2006 and 2010. When the victim initially told her older sister about the abuse while it was still going on, the defendant called the victim a liar to her face and told the victim's mother that if she repeated "the lies" he would disappear with her children.

The abuse was not officially reported until 2014 when the victim told her half-brother about the abuse. The half-brother eventually told the victim's biological father about the molestation, who in turn contacted the victim's school. The school filed a 51A report and New Bedford Police began to investigate. The case went to trial just before the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic shutdowns and was declared a mistrial because outstanding records still needed to be reviewed.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Gillian Kirsch.

"The defendant used his access to the victim to repeatedly molest her from the age of eight to twelve. When confronted

with the allegations, the defendant threatened the mother and her children. The maximum sentences imposed by the court were necessary to adequately punish the defendant for his very offensive conduct. I commend the victim for her perseverance during the lengthy court process and pray that she can move forward with her life," District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III said.