

Attleboro Market Basket Assault During Shoplift Attempt Results in Prison Time

A 43-year-old Pawtucket, RI man who attempted to stab a grocery store employee after being caught attempting to steal items from the store about two years ago in Attleboro has been sentenced to serve three years in state prison, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Phillip Coulombe pleaded guilty last week in Fall River Superior Court to indictments charging him with two counts of assault with a dangerous weapon.

On January 15, 2018, a store security supervisor at the Market Basket in Attleboro observed the defendant playing "Supermarket Sweep" in the aisles of the store. The defendant was running through the aisles and throwing various items into his shopping cart without looking. The security supervisor called up to another employee and asked the other employee to point the store's surveillance cameras at the defendant.

The security supervisor, believing that the defendant was going to run for the parking lot with his carriage of items, waited for the defendant outside the doors to the store. Once the defendant came through the exit doors, the security supervisor stopped him and brought him to an upstairs office with the other employee.

While the two employees were speaking with the defendant, a third employee mentioned contacting police. As soon as the third employee mentioned the police, the defendant became extremely agitated and attempted to flee from the store. A brief struggle ensued, at which time the defendant brandished

a knife and made stabbing motions at the employees. Once they noticed the knife in the defendant's hand, the two employees backed off and the defendant fled.

The defendant, who had left his driver's license behind at the grocery store was eventually apprehended in Rhode Island on February 8, 2018.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney William Flynn and the three-year state prison term was imposed by Judge Raffi Yessayan.

The defendant has an extensive criminal history involving larcenies and has served committed jail or prison time on multiple occasions for assaults and larcenies.

"This is a career criminal who pulled a knife on store personnel, who were trying to subdue him. He simply cannot obey the law and needed to be locked up," District Attorney Quinn said.