

Men Who Brought Loaded Illegal Gun to New Bedford Courthouse Convicted

Two New Bedford men who brought a loaded firearm to the New Bedford District Court this past June were both convicted of illegal firearm offenses last week and sentenced to serve two-and-a-half years in jail, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Alante Brown, 19, and Manny Andrews, 26, both pleaded guilty in Fall River Superior Court to indictments charging them with carrying an illegal firearm and unlawful possession of ammunition. In addition to the jail sentence, Judge Renee Dupuis also sentenced both men to two years of supervised probation, which will commence upon their release from jail. The cases were prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Patrick Driscoll.

On Tuesday, June 19, 2019, New Bedford District Court was open for business during regular work hours. Massachusetts State Trooper Keith Ledin was due to testify in a trial at the court. At approximately 10:15 a.m., Trooper Ledin was parked on the south side of Kempton Street in a black, unmarked State Police Ford sedan-style cruiser. During this time, Trooper Ledin observed a male, later determined to be Manny Andrews. Trooper Ledin observed Andrews walking with three additional males from the steps of the New Bedford District towards Trooper Ledin's cruiser.

Trooper Ledin observed Andrews and the three other males walking in a tight group with serious looks on their faces and minimal conversation between the group members. Trooper Ledin further observed the group to be looking around as if they were looking for someone or something. Based on his training

and experience, Trooper Ledin believed the group appeared to be on alert and constantly aware of their surroundings. Trooper Ledin observed the group of males walk past his cruiser and walk up to a white Honda vehicle.

For approximately 20 minutes, Trooper Ledin observed the four males continue to display the same serious and alert behavior as they walked back and forth from the Courthouse to the Honda and a gray Nissan Altima parked two car lengths behind the Honda. Trooper Ledin then observed Mr. Andrews separate from the group while on the courthouse steps and walk towards the intersection of Hill and Kempton Streets. Trooper Ledin also observed another male, who was later determined to be Alante' Brown, wearing black pants and a hooded sweatshirt walking south on Hill Street to the corner of Hill and Kempton Streets.

Trooper Ledin witnessed Brown and Andrews meet on the corner of Hill and Kempton Streets, engage in a short conversation, and then walk in a westerly direction on Kempton Street toward the gray Nissan Altima at the driver's side door. Looking through his driver's side mirror, Trooper Ledin observed Andrews open the rear driver's side door of the Altima, reach into the back seat, and appear to retrieve an item from the back seat. Trooper Ledin then witnessed Andrews hand an item to Brown that appeared to be a fanny pack with a belt. Trooper Ledin then watched as Brown stepped back from the Altima with the fanny pack and back into a grassy area between two buildings. Trooper Ledin observed Brown look around, pull up his sweatshirt, click the belt in his front with the fanny pack in the rear and cover the fanny pack with his sweatshirt.

Trooper Ledin observed Brown and Andrews continue to walk to the steps in front of courthouse and appear to talk to a group of other individuals. Trooper Ledin then observed Brown "post up" against the wall to the side of entrance to the courthouse. Brown's back was flat against the wall, feet away from the door to the courthouse. None of the other individuals

that Brown had previously spoken with were similarly situated. This observation was significant to Trooper Ledin as he believed Brown was waiting for someone that was inside the courthouse.

At this point, Trooper Ledin made a phone call to New Bedford Police Sergeant Shane Ramos, who was located inside of the courthouse, to inform the sergeant of his observations. After learning that New Bedford Gang Unit Detectives Lorenzo Gonzalez and Robert Decunha were working, Trooper Ledin called them and explained his observations.

Detective Gonzalez was aware that weeks prior to June 18, 2019, two shooting occurred in the city involving west end and south end gang members. In one of the shootings, a United Front Gang member was identified as a suspect. In Detective Gonzalez's experience, inter-gang violence often times results in retaliatory violence.

Shortly after Trooper Ledin spoke with the Gang Unit detectives, Detectives Gonzalez and Decunha arrived in an unmarked cruiser and parked near the entrance to the courthouse. A group of males were standing between Brown and the detectives as they exited their cruiser. Detective Gonzalez saw the person described by Trooper Ledin and recognized him as Alante Brown, known to be a United Front Gang member that does not possess a license to carry firearms.

Detectives Decunha and Gonzalez walked around the group in opposite directions. As they approached Brown, Detective Decunha said, "Hey Alante." At this point, Brown took two steps in an attempt to flee but ran into Det. Gonzalez. Brown and Det. Gonzalez fell to the ground as other law enforcement quickly arrived.

Officer Nelson Goncalves felt the fanny pack and informed Det. Gonzalez that it contained a gun. The fanny pack was removed, opened, and officers found a black Smith & Wesson Bodyguard

.380 caliber firearm. Brown was put in hand cuffs and arrested. Andrews was arrested trying to leave the scene.

"I commend the actions of Trooper Keith Ledine for preventing what could have been a very violent and dangerous situation at the New Bedford District Court. Two men affiliated with a local gang bringing a loaded gun to court is an example of extreme lawlessness that could have resulted in serious injury or death to anyone at the courthouse. Trooper Ledine fortunately took note of very suspicious activity by the two defendants. He acted in a very professional manner to diffuse a very dangerous situation. We owe him, and his colleagues with the New Bedford Police Department, a debt of gratitude," District Attorney Quinn said.