Dartmouth man who committed armed robbery on 11-year-old arrested again

A 31-year-old Dartmouth man who, despite committing an armed robbery against an 11-year-old girl in New Bedford, was released back to the street only to then get re-arrested after committing new crimes, was sentenced for serve three to four years in state prison, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Brandon Tetrault pleaded guilty last week in Fall River Superior Court to charges of armed robbery and assault with a dangerous weapon.

On December 14, 2017, the defendant entered the Atlantic Seafood Market wearing a mask. The defendant immediately approached the counter and, while holding what appeared to be a knife in his pocket, demanded money from the register. The 11-year-old daughter of the owner, who happened to be sitting behind the counter, opened the register and gave cash to the defendant. Responding officers reviewed surveillance video and broadcast a description of the suspect. Another officer working a patrol in the city saw a person fitting the description go into a building. Police eventually found the defendant in an apartment, along with the clothing he was wearing during the robbery, a knife and the cash from the register.

Due to the seriousness of the charges and the defendant's lengthy criminal record of convictions, prosecutors in New Bedford District Court attempted to have the defendant held without bail at a dangerousness hearing. Judge Thomas Barrett, however, released the defendant on the condition that he wear a GPS monitoring device and abide by a 6 pm to 6 a.m. curfew.

Within six months of his pre-trial release, the defendant was arrested again, this time for multiple counts of violating an abuse prevention order. The defendant is accused of sending numerous harassing texts and posting nude photos of the victim on his social media accounts. The victim had previously taken out still active restraining orders against the defendant, after suffering assaults and abuse at his hands.

After successfully arguing to have his bail revoked after his most recent arrest in New Bedford District Court, meaning he would be held without bail for up to 90 days, the defendant agreed to plead guilty to the Superior Court armed robbery case.

The three to four-year state prison sentence was handed down by Judge Thomas McGuire, and the case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Chuck Nadeau. The New Bedford District Court cases remain open and pending at this time.

"Although I am pleased the defendant was convicted of this serious offense, it is unfortunate that he had to be re-arrested to him into custody. We requested that a District Court judge hold him as a danger to the community because of his significant criminal record and the fact that he robbed an 11-year-old child. But the judge chose to release him without any bail, on some conditions. This should not have happened. Bail conditions imposed on dangerous defendants do not work," District Attorney Quinn said. "I have overseen the prosecution of hundreds of armed robbery cases. Most defendants charged with armed robbery are dangers to the community based on the violent act itself, and, in many cases, their criminal background. This defendant should have been held without bail. Instead, it took him committing a new crime to get him back into custody. This is another example of a defendant who was a danger to the community who should not have been out on the street."