

DNA Evidence Results in Jail Term for New Bedford Indecent Assault

A 61-year-old Falmouth man who sexually assaulted a passed out female acquaintance in New Bedford last September was convicted last week in New Bedford District Court and sentenced to serve two years in the Bristol County House of Corrections, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Russell Lopes pleaded guilty in New Bedford District Court to charges of indecent assault and battery, and larceny.

On September 14, 2018, the defendant and the victim drove from Falmouth to New Bedford together in a Silverado pickup truck. Once in New Bedford, they picked up a woman, who was a stranger to them both.

The three of them began drinking heavily for the next few hours. While the victim was passed out drunk in the back of the vehicle, the defendant reached into her pants and raped her while making lewd comments to the other woman. The other woman immediately left the truck and contacted her husband, who arrived onto West Rodney French Boulevard to meet up with his wife. The husband then drove to a known crack house on Tallman Street in New Bedford and dropped the victim off. He then drove the defendant back to Falmouth.

The victim was taken to the hospital when a resident of the Tallman Street address found the victim drunk and unconscious, having fallen down and hurt herself. At the hospital, a rape kit was performed on the victim. During the investigation, Assistant District Attorney Shawn Guilderson successfully motioned the court to allow for a buccal DNA swab of the defendant, which matched semen and saliva found in and on the

victim's vagina.

During sentencing, Assistant District Attorney Guilderson argued that the defendant, who has previously been convicted of indecent assault and batteries, should serve the maximum two-and-a-half year jail sentence. The defense, however, requested a sentence of 18 months in jail. Judge Katie Rayburn sentenced the defendant to two years in the house of corrections.

"I am very pleased this defendant will be held accountable for his offensive conduct. The defendant has a history of convictions for indecent assaults and needs to be kept off the streets to protect the public. This case highlights the importance of Modern technology in solving what would have been an otherwise difficult case," District Attorney Quinn said.