

# **New Bedford Armed Robber Sentenced to Five Years in Prison**

Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced today that a 20-year-old New Bedford man who committed back to back armed robberies last May was sentenced yesterday to serve four to five years in state prison.

Joseph Coito submitted an “unagreed plea” before Superior Court Judge Gregg Pasquale yesterday in Fall River Superior Court. Assistant District Attorney Jeanne Veenstra argued that Mr. Coito should be sentenced to serve five to seven-and-a-half years in prison due to the brazen nature of the crimes and the defendant’s lengthy criminal record dating back to his days as a juvenile. The defense requested a four to five year prison sentence.

After hearing from both sides, Judge Pasquale sentenced the defendant to a four to five year state prison sentence, and also placed him on probation for three years. The conditions of his probation are to stay away from Tedeschi’s and Citizens Bank; enter and complete long term residential treatment program, evaluation and treatment, and abstain from illicit drugs and alcohol with testing. The probation term will begin upon his release from prison.

On May 17, 2015 at around 3 a.m., New Bedford Police responded to Tedeschi’s convenience store on Brock Avenue for a report of a robbery. The defendant entered the store and threatened to male clerk with a large kitchen knife. The defendant told the clerk, “don’t make me stab you,” and demanded cigarettes, lottery scratch tickets and cash.

Then on May 18, 2015, at around 2 p.m., New Bedford Police responded to the Citizens Bank branch located within the Top &

Shop on Kings Highway for another reported robbery. The defendant walked up to the bank counter and handed a female bank teller a note which said, "I will blow your head off if you don't give me \$3,000." The teller gave the defendant cash and he immediately fled from the store.

Through the use of surveillance video and other investigatory tactics, New Bedford Police were quickly able to identify the suspect in both robberies as Mr. Coito. Police were able to track Mr. Coito to a motel in Wareham, and with the assistance of Wareham Police, arrested him without incident on May 21.

"I will continue to aggressively prosecute armed robberies against innocent civilians committed in convenience stores, supermarkets, banks, and other places of business," District Attorney Quinn said. "Sadly, this defendant is only 20 years old. However, he will be removed from the public for 5 years, and upon release, he will be on supervised probation, which offers some protection to the citizens of New Bedford."