

New Bedford career criminal sentenced to prison for string of break-ins

A career criminal with a 17-page record who broke into numerous buildings in New Bedford last August was sentenced to serve four to seven-and-a-half years in state prison, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Jason Fleck, 43, of New Bedford pleaded guilty last week in Fall River Superior Court to indictments charging him with breaking and entering, malicious destruction of property, breaking into a depository, assault and battery of a police officer, possession of burglarious tools, and two counts of larceny from a building.

The defendant stood accused of breaking into five building during a two-week time span last August at the Hillside Court housing complex, the County Launderette and the Northstar Learning Center.

During the last break-in on August 27 at just before 11 p.m., New Bedford Police received multiple alarms for the lower floor of 53 Linden St, which is the NorthStar Learning Center. When police arrived, a resident told them that residents were chasing a strange male into the basement.

Police found the inner door broken into, a safe deposit box broken open and checks and money orders strewn about. When police entered the basement area they spotted the suspect and yelled for him to surrender. The defendant, however, immediately fled into another room and locked the door behind him. A lone New Bedford Police officer was able to gain entry into the room and found the defendant struggling to escape through a now broken window. The defendant ran at the officer and a struggle ensued. After several failed attempts to subdue

the defendant, a second officer was forced to tase the defendant. However, despite being tased, the defendant continued to struggle with the officers and attempted to take the taser before finally relenting.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jeanne Veenstra and the state prison sentence was imposed by Judge William Sullivan. The defendant has previously served committed jail and/or prison time for at least five other breaking and entering convictions dating back to 1997.

"This is a career criminal who continues to break into and enter people's property with impunity. When arrested, he was so out of control, he had to be tased and subdued before being taken into custody," District Attorney Quinn said. "At the age of 43, he simply has to be kept off the streets."