

New Bedford Domestic Batterer Sentenced to Prison

A 32-year-old New Bedford man who violently assaulted his girlfriend and then attempted on numerous occasions to intimidate her out of pursuing the criminal case was sentenced last week to serve three years in state prison, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Antwan Wells pleaded guilty last week in Fall River Superior Court to a multi-count indictment, charging him with three counts of assault and battery on a household member and one count of intimidation of a witness.

On September 24, 2015, the defendant began an argument with the victim after she asked a stranger for cigarettes in downtown New Bedford. The argument escalated when the defendant pushed her in the head.

After being pushed in the head, the victim tried to get away from the defendant and began walking swiftly towards her mother's residence at the Melville Towers. Unbeknownst to her, the defendant followed her and confronted her in front of the Walgreen's Pharmacy at 838 Pleasant Street. At that location he poured a liquid on her and argued with her. She then tried again to get away from the defendant, and continued to the Melville Towers.

The defendant, however, continued to follow her inside and cornered her outside a parking garage elevator in front of a surveillance camera. When she tried to walk away from the defendant, he grabbed her hair and pulled her to the ground. After she got off the ground, the defendant began punching her repeatedly in the face. New Bedford Police arrived moments later and arrested the defendant after receiving a call reporting the assault by an anonymous witness.

While held in jail, the defendant sent two letters to victim. In one of those letters, he told her to not appear in court for hearings, to not talk to the prosecutor, and to not talk to defense counsel for fear that "he might try to sell [him] out."

Then on October 19, 2015, the defendant called the victim twice from jail and continued to harass and coerce her into not appearing in court to testify against him.

The three year prison term was handed down by Judge Karen Green, who also added two years of supervised probation to the sentence.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Jose Vazquez.

"While in jail, this defendant repeatedly called the victim in an attempt to prevent the victim from testifying against him. This is a serious problem in prosecuting domestic violence cases and undermines our ability to obtain justice for victims and their families," District Attorney Quinn said. "This type of conduct by defendants should be treated very seriously by the courts."