

New Bedford Gang Member Sentenced to Five Years in State Prison

A 21-year-old New Bedford man described by city police as the most dangerous gang member in New Bedford was convicted of an illegal firearm-related offense in Fall River Superior last week and sentenced to serve five years in state prison, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Rayshond Lewis pleaded guilty to indictments charging him with carrying an illegal firearm-subsequent offense and unlawful possession of a loaded firearm.

On January 28, 2017, New Bedford Police stopped a car for motor vehicle violations. Rayshond Lewis, who was in the rear seat of the vehicle, was known to police as a Monte Park gang member who had just been released from prison. According to officers, Rayshond refused to make eye contact with the officers, and was breathing heavily. As the officers were discussing his behavior, the windows of the vehicle began to go up. Police had all the parties exit and they found a .25 caliber firearm loaded with six rounds in the magazine and one in the chamber in a holster clipped to the front waistband of Rayshond Lewis.

After initially being found dangerous and held without bail in this case by a District Court judge, the defendant was released by a Superior Court judge on \$5,000 cash bail. Within a month of having his bail reduced, he was once again arrested, this time for allegedly breaking into his ex-girlfriend's home and strangling her. That domestic violence case is still pending. After his arrest on the domestic violence case, his bail was revoked and he was held without

bail.

The defendant also has a previous conviction for carrying an illegal firearm in 2014 and is a suspect in a number of violent incidents in New Bedford. During a recent murder trial, a witness testified under oath that this defendant shot the witness in the leg and an associate of hers in the facial area. He has not been charged criminally in that matter at this time due to a lack of corroborative evidence.

"This is a very dangerous defendant who had previously been convicted of a gun offense and was clearly up to no good with a loaded illegal gun in his waistband. Unfortunately, he was released on a bail review despite his record and the facts," District Attorney Quinn said. "It comes as no surprise that he was re-arrested a month later for allegedly breaking into his ex-girlfriend's house and strangling her. He never should have had that opportunity. The citizens of New Bedford are much safer with this defendant off the street."