

New Bedford Man Who Used Hypodermic Needle to Commit Armed Robbery Sentenced to Prison

A 44-year-old New Bedford man who used a hypodermic needle, and a threat that the needle was contaminated with HIV, to rob a pharmacy clerk about a year ago was sentenced to serve four to six years in state prison, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Steven Vieira pleaded guilty last week in Fall River Superior Court to indictments charging him with armed robbery and assault with a dangerous weapon.

On May 2, 2020, the defendant entered the Walgreens pharmacy on Cove Road in New Bedford. The defendant approached a clerk and handed her a note which stated that he has HIV. The defendant then pointed a hypodermic needle at her and demanded cash. After being handed cash from the cash register, the defendant fled on foot.

New Bedford Police reviewed surveillance footage of the incident and were able to identify this defendant as the perpetrator of the crime.

The defendant has a lengthy criminal record, which includes convictions for armed robbery, destruction of property, leaving the scene of property damage, receiving stolen property, illegal gun charges, and breaking and entering.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney James Powderly and the state prison sentence was imposed by Judge Raffi Yessayan.

"The defendant has a significant criminal history including a prior armed robbery conviction. He needs to be kept off the street to protect the public," District Attorney Quinn said.