

Repeat New Bedford drunk driver who fled scene of crash sentenced to jail time

A 69-year-old New Bedford man was convicted earlier this month of his fifth OUI will serve the next two-and-a-half years in the Bristol County House of Corrections, District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Domingo Fernandes pleaded guilty on March 1st in Fall River Superior Court to indictments charging him with Operating Under the Influence of Liquor-Fifth Offense, Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle and Leaving the Scene of Property Damage.

On December 29, 2018 around 5:45pm, the defendant was driving a grey BMW in New Bedford with no license plate. When police attempted to stop the car, the defendant sped off at a high rate of speed, and crossed double yellow lines to pass another car. While going 40 mph in a residential neighborhood, the defendant turned onto another street without breaking and almost lost control of the car and narrowly avoided striking numerous parked cars.

While speeding through the residential neighborhood, the defendant's vehicle almost struck a pedestrian who had to jump out of the way to avoid being hit. The defendant continued to drive at a high rate of speed, drove through a stop sign, and was going so fast that his car went airborne at one point. The defendant then struck a parked car, and continued to drive before crashing into a telephone pole. He then fled his car on foot, and after a short foot pursuit, he was apprehended.

The New Bedford Police officer concluded the defendant was under the influence of alcohol based on the strong odor of alcohol on his breath and his inability to answer questions in

a coherent manner. He was transported to Saint Luke's Hospital for minor injuries to his face and head, and had a .17 blood alcohol level.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Matthew Sylvia, who argued for a more severe five year state prison term. The defendant, however, requested a two year county jail sentence.

Judge Raffi Yessayan eventually sentenced the defendant to serve two-and-a-half year in the county jail.

"The defendant is a menace on the roadways because he repeatedly drives while drunk. The facts of the case clearly demonstrate this. Fortunately nobody was hurt despite his reckless actions," District Attorney Quinn said.