

Bristol County District Attorney's Office
C. Samuel Sutter
District Attorney

Press Release
September 2, 2010

District Attorney Sam Sutter announced today that his office's continued fight to prosecute domestic violence cases more aggressively was demonstrated this past week when Lamar Haston, 24, of Fall River, was indicted by a Bristol County Grand Jury on charges of intimidating a witness and domestic assault and battery.

Haston was arrested by Fall River Police on April 29, 2010 after police received a 911 from 181 Diman St. When police arrived at the apartment, they located Haston inside and a female victim hiding behind a mattress sobbing. A young child was also located in the home. The victim has visible red marks on her throat and complained of pain from her head and hip. The victim reported to police that Haston had attacked her and punched her in the head. When she attempted to call 911, Haston took the phone away from her and removed the battery. Haston then chased the victim into the bathroom where he choked her.

The Superior Court Indictment comes six weeks after District Court Judge Lance Garth dismissed the case against Haston in Fall River District Court despite objections from the prosecutor handling the case. Although judges generally permit a short continuance of a trial to determine why the victim did not appear, Judge Garth dismissed the case on July 14th, when the victim did not show up in court. Despite the dismissal, prosecutors continued to investigate the matter and learned that alleged acts of intimidation prevented the victim from appearing. This has resulted in the August 6, 2010 indictment and the re-arrest of Haston on the original charges as well as additional charges of intimidation. Haston has been arraigned in the Fall River Superior Court, where he was ordered held on \$1,000 cash bail. He is due back in court for a pretrial hearing on September 15th.

First Assistant District Attorney Thomas Quinn, who supervises the recently created Domestic Violence Unit, a team of experienced prosecutors using innovative methods to prosecute these difficult cases. Quinn noted that in many cases fear, intimidation and further abuse prevent many victims from appearing. It is necessary to understand why victims are reluctant to appear in court. Quinn said that "it may be expedient to dismiss cases when victims either do not appear or express a reluctance to pursue the charges, however in many instances this has only led to further violence in the home. Domestic violence is a huge problem in our country. During my time at the District Attorney's office, I have seen a tremendous escalation in violence towards women. In many of these cases children are present in those homes."

Quinn further noted that "violence in the home has ruined many families and has caused long term harm to children. We will bring the full power of our office to protect women and to target violent and repeat abusers. We will not tolerate abusers further exploiting victims through fear and intimidations to avoid prosecution. We will continue to seek the Court's assistance in insuring the presence of domestic violence victims so that we can vigorously prosecute any in individual charged with domestic abuse."