

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

**Press Release  
September 25, 2008**

District Attorney Sam Sutter announced today that Lawrence Gelmete, 37, of New Bedford, was convicted in New Bedford Superior Court yesterday on four charges connected to the non-fatal shooting of two men on Purchase Street in New Bedford on August 23, 2006.

Mr. Gelmete was sentenced by Superior Court Judge E. Susan Garsh to serve 10 years in state prison. Upon his release from prison, Mr. Gelmete will be placed on probation for an additional five years. The case was prosecuted by the district attorney's Chief of the Major Violators Unit, Steve Gagne.

The prison sentence highlights District Attorney Sutter's tough stand on illegal firearms and shooting cases. The District Attorney said repeatedly during the campaign of 2006 that sentences coming out of Superior Court on shooting cases were too lenient, and if elected, his prosecutors would be recommending much longer sentences in cases where someone was shot. Early last year, District Attorney Sutter filed legislation calling for a new statute, Assault and Battery by means of a Firearm, with a minimum prison sentence of 10 years and a maximum sentence of life in prison. Unfortunately, the Legislature has not passed this bill, but District Attorney Sutter does plan to re-file it during the 2009 legislative session.

The District Attorney's commitment to much longer sentences on shooting cases was illustrated last year by the 18 to 22 year sentence handed down to Nigel Vaughn and the 30 year sentence dispensed to Angel Peralta. The 10 year sentence sought by Assistant District Attorney Gagne in the Gelmete case is another illustration of the District Attorney's philosophy on shooting cases.

The charges of armed assault with intent to murder, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and unlawful possession of a firearm stem from an incident that took place outside 610 Purchase Street. Mr. Gelmete was driven to the Purchase Street address in order to settle a score with one of the victims of the shooting. When the first victim saw Mr. Gelmete running at him with a gun drawn, he immediately dove back into a car driven by his friend. The two victims attempted to speed away from the scene, but Mr. Gelmete fired at the car. The bullet shattered the car's rear window, struck the first victim in the arm and then continued on into the front seat, where it struck the second victim in the shoulder. Both victims were treated at St. Luke's Hospital for non-life threatening injuries and were released from the hospital within days.

Mr. Gelmete's case went to trial on Monday and was scheduled for closing arguments Wednesday. Before closing arguments, the defendant indicated he wanted to plead guilty rather than finish the trial.

Should Mr. Gelmete commit any new crimes while on probation, or fail to abide by the terms and conditions of his probation, he could be sentenced to up to 20 years on the armed assault with intent to murder charge. His conditions of probation include: Do not violate any federal, state or local laws; no illegal drug use or possession, w/ random testing by probation; cannot knowingly be present with any person using or possessing illegal drugs, or in any place in which illegal drugs are being used, sold or stored; no carrying or possession of firearms, ammunition, knives, or other dangerous weapons; stay away from and have no contact with the victims or their family members; and pay full restitution to victims for any property damage, medical expenses or lost wages incurred as result of shooting.

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