

Dartmouth man sentenced for 18 month rampage terrorizing at least eight of his neighbors

“A 52-year-old Dartmouth man was sentenced to state prison yesterday after being convicted by a jury of his peers of assaulting and terrorizing his neighbors for a period of about 18 months in 2020 and 2021, Bristol County District Attorney Thomas M. Quinn III announced.

Frederick Preece was convicted after a six-day jury trial in Fall River Superior Court on indictments charging him with two counts of Assault with a Dangerous Weapon and five counts of Criminal Harassment.

Preece, who is already serving a three-to-three-and-a-half-year prison sentence after being convicted last June of violently assaulting his elderly father in May of 2021, was sentenced yesterday by Judge Thomas Perrino to serve an additional three-and-a-half to four years in state prison. Upon his eventual release, he will also be placed on supervised probation for another three years.

In the current case, Preece was accused of threatening at least eight of his neighbors with death and attempting to run elderly neighbors off the road with his motor vehicle. Preece began his reign of terror in June of 2020 when he returned to live at his parents' Barney's Joy Road home. In addition to the death threats, Preece instilled fear in his neighbors by also telling them he had previously killed a man, could accurately shoot a small object from 1,600 yards away, was going to bring a “real monster” who had a number of confirmed kills to the laneway, was installing listening devices at

their homes and was employing mercenaries to keep his neighbors off the road he falsely asserted was part of his parents' property. At one point, he placed a large utility pole in front of one of the victims' homes and installed a guard shack at the end of the lane.

At another point, Preece, while armed with a chainsaw, entered onto a neighbor's property while the neighbor was hosting a party and began shouting at the party guests. On another occasion, he approached a female neighbor who was sitting alone on her porch and threatened to kill her dog.

In January of 2021, Preece began following his neighbors in various motor vehicles. They found him to be ever present. When they walked their dogs, he would appear and follow them. When they would leave their homes, Preece would be there watching and waiting to force an encounter with them. At the end of January of 2021, Preece saw another female neighbor walking her puppy on Barney's Joy Road. He proceeded to follow closely behind her while she was on foot and then in his car. The defendant ultimately opened his window and began screaming at her that he would kill her dog.

In February of 2021, Preece expanded his scope of intimidating conduct to additional neighbors, those living next door to his parents on Jordan Road. He was seen by one of the victims on various dates and times in the month of February, ranging from the early morning hours to late at night, standing near the end of her driveway. Sometimes he would stand and stare up at her home making her feel watched, other times he would scream various obscenities at her while pacing back and forth in front of the front yard.

On April 8, 2021, a male neighbor had another altercation with Preece when the victim tried to take his motorcycle out onto Barney's Joy Road. On that date the defendant again, ever present, was driving up and down the laneway. He ultimately parked and waited for the victim to pull out of his driveway

for more than 5 minutes. When the victim finally did pull out onto the lane, Preece drove a BMW SUV down the laneway at the victim at a high rate of speed, slammed on his brakes and stopped within inches of the victim's motorcycle. The defendant then began screaming at him again.

Also in April, Preece was seen attempting to block access to the laneway by putting up chains attached to old concrete pillars and dragging them across the road.

Then on or about April 10 2021, a 72-year-old man was walking down Jordan Road between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M. when he saw the defendant driving a silver BMW SUV driving toward him. When the elderly victim first saw Preece, he was traveling toward Barney's Joy Road at a normal pace, around 30 miles per hour. As the defendant got closer to the victim, the engine began to race, the vehicle sped up, and the defendant drove the vehicle abruptly toward the victim, forcing him to jump out of the road to avoid being hit. The defendant's vehicle then moved back to the appropriate position in the road and drove off.

Then on April 24, 2021, the same elderly victim had an almost identical interaction with Preece. While the victim was taking a walk, the defendant's car began accelerating to an estimated 60 MPH and drove abruptly at the victim, causing him to jump off of the shoulder of the road again. On that date, Preece stopped the car, turned around and drove back to the victim. The defendant then exited the vehicle and began yelling in his face.

Numerous other similar incidents of criminal harassment occurred during the harrowing 18-month period.

The case was successfully prosecuted by First Assistant District Attorney Patrick Bomberg and Assistant District Attorney Charlie Schofield.

"I would like to thank the jury for carefully reviewing the evidence and holding the defendant accountable for terrorizing

and repeatedly harassing his neighbors, who were just trying to live their lives. The defendant engaged in extremely disturbing and menacing behavior for no rational reason," District Attorney Quinn said. "This conduct, along with his previous conviction for assaulting his father, clearly demonstrates he is a danger to the community and a menace to his neighbors. I am pleased the defendant will be off the street for up to seven and a half years, and that the victims can move forward to resume their lives in a normal way."