

C. DAVID EYSTER  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

*ae*



OFFICE OF THE  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

☐ COURTHOUSE  
P.O. Box 1000  
Ukiah, CA 95482  
(707) 463-4211 Fax (707) 468-4687

☐ COAST OFFICE  
700 S. Franklin St., Rm. 148  
Ft. Bragg, CA 95437  
(707) 964-5624 Fax (707) 961-2429

## NEWS RELEASE

### March 16, 2011

#### ATTEMPTED RAPIST SENTENCED TO 7 YEARS IN PRISON



The sentencing hearing for **William Joseph Cannon**, 22, was held on Tuesday, March 15, 2011 in Department B of the Mendocino County Superior Court in Ukiah. After the conclusion of the arguments by the prosecution and defense attorneys, the Court sentenced Cannon to 7-years in prison. Leading up to the sentencing hearing, Cannon had previously pled guilty to a felony violation of Penal Code section 220(a) (Assault with Intent to Commit Rape) and a felony violation of Penal Code section 136.1(c)(1) (Attempting to Dissuade a Witness by Force or Fear).

On October 3, 2010, Cannon spotted a 16-year old girl walking alone on South State Street and, after donning a mask, attacked and grabbed her. A struggle ensued, but the girl was able to break free and run. She ran into the street looking for help, with Cannon in pursuit. As he again attempted to subdue the girl, Cannon threatened to kill the girl if she tried to call for the police. A passing automobile stopped and the occupants came to the girl's assistance. While the driver escorted the girl to the protection of his car, the passenger chased after the assailant as Cannon tried to escape on foot. With the help of the fleet-footed passenger, Sheriff's deputies apprehended Cannon in short order.

When searched, the incriminating mask was found on Cannon and he admitted to both Sheriff detectives and DA investigators his fantasies of raping young women. Worse, he admitted to having previously gone looking for potential victims. Twice, he claimed, he had gone on the hunt, but each time he failed to come upon a suitable victim. Cannon admitted that he was again on the hunt on October 3<sup>rd</sup> when he opportunistically came across the 16-year old. In his confession, Cannon made clear his intent to rape the girl if he had been able to force her to a secluded location. Regarding his threat to kill the girl,

Cannon told investigators that he had been ready to do whatever it took to keep her quiet. Cannon dismayed that the only unexpected obstacles to this planned rape were the people who stopped and came to the aid of the victim. Cannon candidly admitted that had he not been caught on this occasion, he would have likely gone on the hunt again and victimized others.

Pursuant to statute, Cannon could have been sentenced to a maximum term of 9-years in prison, the very sentence that was requested by Deputy District Attorney Shannon Cox. The Court however, citing Cannon's relative youth, psychological issues, and his lack of prior convictions, instead imposed a 7-year prison sentence. District Attorney David Eyster wishes to publicly thank the people who stepped up to the plate and came to the girl's rescue last October. "We all should extend hearty thanks to the good Samaritans in this case for coming to the rescue and for helping put a dangerous guy behind bars," said Eyster.