

# City man pleads guilty in assault on drug-addicted prostitute

By Christa Lee Rock  
Register Staff

**NEW HAVEN** — A disgruntled john accused of pouring petroleum inside a prostitute pleaded guilty to a lesser charge Thursday after a prosecutor admitted sexual assault charges would be difficult to prove.

Michael Monroe, 35, pleaded guilty to second-degree assault for breaking a bone in the woman's face and choking her into unconsciousness on Oct. 1, 1999.

The city resident faces five years' imprisonment suspended after three years when Judge

Roland J. Fasano sentences him Aug. 9.

Monroe was nabbed after the victim told police she had been beaten unconscious when a liaison went awry near the intersection of Lenox and Oxford streets in Fair Haven Heights.

She woke to a searing pain between her legs and "smelled a strong odor of what she believed was gasoline or motor oil," said Assistant State's Attorney David J. Strollo.

The victim, an admitted drug addict, was taken to the hospital where nurses did a rape test — but only "hydrocarbon" was found on

her pants. She gave a detailed description of the van where the assault occurred and the perpetrator's personal life, Strollo said.

Six weeks later, police nabbed Monroe in the unusual van, whiffed chemicals in the vehicle, and charged the john with assault and three different sex assault charges.

But police were never able to link the "hydrocarbon" to Monroe's car, said his attorney, Tara Knight.

They also failed to confirm anyone had poured oil inside the woman.

"My client never denied once

that he had been with this woman that night and had had conversations," Knight said. "She just was so dope sick that her night is all mixed up ... and she might not even know who did this to her."

The state agreed to the plea agreement Thursday as both sides prepared to pick a jury for the assault charge and three counts of sexual assault.

Strollo admitted the state "did not have a strong sex assault case" but was attempting to reach the victim to ensure she agreed with the disposition.

Christa Lee Rock can be reached at [crock@nhregister.com](mailto:crock@nhregister.com), or 789-5737.