

CAMPOBELLO MAN RECEIVES 21-YEAR PRISON TERM FOR SEX ASSAULT

A Campobello man received a 21-year prison sentence today for sexually assaulting a woman in the Una community.

Jeffrey Scott Owens, 39, pleaded guilty to second-degree criminal sexual conduct moments before his case was scheduled for trial. Circuit Judge Ned Miller issued a 15-year sentence on the sex charge and a consecutive 6-year sentence on a probation violation.

The crime occurred May 13, 2005. The 45-year-old victim told sheriff's deputies she was walking near the Big Bear convenience store when a man in a truck stopped and asked if she needed a ride. She accepted the offer and climbed into the truck. Shortly after the couple crossed the railroad tracks near the US Post Office, the victim said she was punched in the face and knocked unconscious. She woke up on a dirt road and the driver of the truck forced her to perform several sex acts on him. The victim broke free from her attacker and ran into a nearby wooded area.

During her interview with deputies, she reported the truck's license plate number and gave a detailed physical description of Owens. Deputies collected forensic evidence at Owens' home that further connected him to the crime. The victim also picked Owens out of a photo line-up, according to Assistant Solicitor Cindy Smith.

Owens will serve 85 percent of the criminal sexual conduct sentence before he begins serving the probation violation. His criminal record includes convictions for third-degree criminal sexual conduct, assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature and obscene telephone calls.