

Not guilty: Accused serial rapist Michael Dixon makes a plea

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MILWAUKEE (WITI) — An accused serial rapist has pleaded not guilty.

39-year-old Michael Dixon faces five felony charges, including:

- second degree sexual assault of a child (two charges)
- first degree sexual assault, use of a dangerous weapon (three charges)

Prosecutors say he sexually assaulted several women over a 10-year period. He was taken into custody with the help of new technology.

Two of the women Dixon is accused of sexually assaulting were under the age of 16 at the time.

A woman FOX6 News spoke with says back in 2011, her relative was at a friend's house and called for a ride home.

“By the time I called her back to let her know her ride was coming, that’s when the incident occurred,” the woman said.

According to a criminal complaint, Dixon allegedly offered the woman’s relative a ride. She got in the car, and he took her to an alley. He then allegedly pressed his arm against her throat, and asked her if she’d rather be choked to death or shot, before unbuttoning her pants and forcing her to have sex with him.

The girl was taken to a sexual assault treatment center, where they were able to collect evidence from the jeans she was wearing. The DNA didn't match anyone in the Wisconsin Crime Lab's data bank, which meant her assailant still roamed free.

While authorities didn't yet have a name, they did know that DNA from the same man had been collected from three other assaults.

"In other words, we had a serial rapist," Milwaukee County Assistant District Attorney Norman Gahn said.

The Crime Lab's data bank is filled with known convicted offenders. Dixon wasn't in the data bank, but authorities were able to use a new technology — called Familial Search Software — to track him down.

"They basically ask the computer — is there anyone in the data bank of these known persons who could be a relative of the person who's been raping these women?" Gahn said.

A relative of Dixon's popped in the data bank — helping point them in his direction. Police already had a DNA sample from Dixon from another case, and found that it matched the DNA left in the assault cases.

FOX6 was told that this is the first case where this particular software was used — though it's expected to be helpful in other unsolved or serial cases.

Michael Dixon will be back in court on Monday, September 15th