

Three years for violent robbery

A Pakistani national was attacked and robbed of a sum of money when he went to a house in Dungarvan late at night to buy cheap cigarettes, the Circuit Criminal Court was told in Waterford last week.

Dean O'Driscoll (23), with an address at Cathal Brugha Place, Dungarvan, was sentenced to three years in prison with the final six months suspended when he pleaded guilty to the robbery.

Judge Pauline Codd said the attack was unprovoked and the injured party suffered nasty injuries when he was grabbed and head-butted into the face.

The incident left him fearful for the safety of his family and he moved house to get further away from the place where he was assaulted.

The court heard that the injured party went with another man to Cathal Bugha Place at 3am and were directed to a certain house.

On leaving the area the accused man emerged in a threatening manner from a nearby house and with a hammer and hatchet. He demanded money and grabbed his victim around the neck.

He struck him on the head with the hammer and head-butted him before robbing €1,200 in cash, a wallet, bank card and cigarettes.

The Gardaí in Dungarvan were contacted and they spoke to the injured man in a local takeaway food outlet. He had cuts over his left eye and on his cheek and had a swollen lip. Two houses were searched and Dean O'Driscoll was arrested but the money was not recovered. During interview the accused man admitted the assault and said he held the hatchet to his victim's head while striking him.

In a victim impact statement the injured party said his mouth was bloody and he had cuts to his face. As a result of the attack he lost three weeks' wages, his hearing was impaired and he no longer went out at night.

Garda Conor Tallon, Dungarvan, said Dean O'Driscoll had 26 previous convictions for robbery, attempted robbery, possession of an offensive weapon, misuse of drugs, assault causing harm, burglary, theft and criminal damage.

Barrister Elaine Morgan, defending, said there were inconsistencies in the injured man's story and the accused was adamant that he did not rob the money.

He came from a background of severe violence and alcohol abuse and over the last five years his periods of liberty were very few.

He claimed that the provocative conduct of the injured man and his companion in calling to his house late at night led to the incident.

Ms Morgan said her client was one of five children who were raised in Macroom and his father was a violent alcoholic and drug abuser.

His mother left when he was 10 years old and over the years he found himself living in homeless shelters.

Since the age of 18 he lived in custodial environments and for the last 14 months he was in custody in respect of this case. There were now prospects of turning his life round.

Judge Codd said the injured man did nothing to provoke the aggression he suffered and he sustained quite nasty injuries.

At the time of the attack the accused was under the influence of alcohol.

The appropriate sentence was three years with the final six months suspended for one year on condition he remained under the supervision of the Probation Services and attended counselling for drug and alcohol abuse.