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## Judge rejects plea in Chelsea court sex case

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By **Brian R. Ballou**, *Globe Staff*

A federal judge today rejected a plea agreement between prosecutors and a former Massachusetts court clerk who allegedly used his position to get sexual favors from women facing prostitution charges.

Under the agreement, former Chelsea District Court clerk-magistrate James M. Burke would have spent 12 months and one day in prison, paid a \$5,000 fine, and undergone two years of supervised monitoring.

But US District Judge George O'Toole said today at a hearing, "I'm not going to accept the agreement."

Robert Sheketoff, Burke's attorney, said there was still a possibility that another plea agreement would be reached. A new hearing was set for May 6.

A grand jury indictment returned last year alleged that Burke used his position to extort sexual services from women and deprive them of their constitutional rights, "which includes the right to bodily integrity."

Burke allegedly forced a woman charged with prostitution to perform sex on him in an empty courtroom and sexually assaulted another alleged prostitute after locking her in a room at the courthouse.

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