

Judge denies bail in Island Pond meth case

Two Island Pond men who allegedly threatened a confidential informant in a methamphetamine lab case must be detained for public safety reasons, a judge has ruled.

Frank Santaw, 29, and Kevin Dodge, 43, are held without bail pending trial. Magistrate Judge John M. Conroy ruled there were no conditions or combination of conditions to reasonably ensure the public's safety.

Conroy said he would reconsider the issue if new information is provided including possible admission to a residential drug treatment facility.

Defense lawyer Bud Allen said efforts are under way to get Dodge into Serenity House, but because he was jailed for several days, his client had detoxed, and the rehab facility had lowered him on the admissions list. He could be screened as early as Tuesday, Allen said.

Conroy ruled a proposed release plan by Allen did not go far enough to protect the public. Allen had suggested Dodge be under virtual house arrest at his parents

residence in Island Pond and that he needed to be accompanied by one of his parents if he had to leave the home.

Dodge's father, Eugene Dodge, a former Marine with high security clearance, testified Wednesday that he would report his son if he violated his release terms.

While he found the father credible, Conroy said the defendant had amassed "a significant criminal record" that could not be overlooked.

"He's been out of control quiet frankly," Conroy said. He said the love and support of his parents has not been sufficient to keep him off drugs. Even after treatment at Brattleboro Retreat, Dodge continued to use drugs, the judge said.

Dodge has convictions for three driving under the influence cases, two violations of conditions of release and two fights in Essex County, Conroy noted.

Court records also show Dodge had secured \$1,000 and was preparing to leave the state before his arrest. An undercover state trooper assigned to the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration