

A Rotherham man “didn’t know what he was doing” when he started a fire on a petrol station forecourt.

Scott Dearing, 36, of Orchard Flatts Crescent in Rotherham said his mind was “gone on vacation” at a Sheffield Crown court hearing on Wednesday.

Dearing arrived at the Jet petrol station on Masbrough Street at around 2.45am on November 12 last year, carrying two petrol containers.

After filling one of them and paying, he proceeded to fill the second container, which was not meant for petrol. Having noticed that, the cashier informed him he couldn’t use the container and turned off the pump.

Neil Coxon, prosecuting said: “Seeing that the member of staff that was working there that night stopped the pump infuriated the defendant.”

He then approached the cashier and poured petrol along the shop windows and through the letterbox.

Mr. Coxon added: “He was making a sign with his fingers across his throat and was clearly in an agitated state.”

Edward Moss, mitigating, claimed the sign was intended to inform the cashier the pump had stopped, rather than threaten him.

Dearing walked back to the petrol he had spilled on the forecourt and set fire to it. He left, and shortly after returned to put it out using sand from a nearby sandbox.

The cashier was terrified and pressed the panic button. In a statement he said:

“I thought I was going to be seriously hurt and serious damage would be done to the petrol station”

After police arrested Dearing, he was found in possession of handcuffs and a key, a balaclava, a hand knife, and a marker pen, which he used to vandalise the cell he was held in.

Dearing, who has 32 previous convictions, pleaded guilty to arson, recklessness to life and damaging property.

Judge Megan Rhys said: “You did not know whether the petrol station was going to explode or not. The cashier must have been terrified, being locked in that shop on his own.”

She sentenced Dearing to 3 years and 9 months custody, with a consecutive 146 days for possession of the knife.