

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Western District of Missouri

United States of America

v.

Robert Bruce Knepper

DOB: 03/12/1965

Case No. 11-2036JCE-01

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of September 16, 2010 in the county of Jasper in the
Western District of Missouri, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

Title 18, United States Code,
Section 2113(a) and (d)

Bank Robbery

Offense Description

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

Please see the attached affidavit of Special Agent Patrick J. Thomas, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

/s/ Patrick J. Thomas

Complainant's signature

SA Patrick J. Thomas, FBI

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 02/17/2011

/s/ James C. England

Judge's signature

City and state: Springfield, Missouri

James C. England, United States Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI**

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT AGAINST:

Robert Bruce Knepper,
DOB: 03/12/1965
SSN: XXX-XX-9316

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, Patrick J. Thomas, a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI),
being duly sworn, depose and state as follows:

1. I have been employed as a Special Agent with the FBI for over 3 years and am currently assigned to the Kansas City Division, Springfield, Missouri, Resident Agency. As a Special Agent with the FBI, I am responsible for investigating violations of various federal statutes, including bank robberies. Further, I am authorized to execute warrants issued under the authority of the United States.

2. I am investigating the activities of Robert Bruce Knepper, white male, date of birth 03/12/1965, social security account number XXX-XX-9316. As will be shown below, there is probable cause to believe that on March 29, 2010, Knepper robbed Liberty Bank, located at 210 N. West Bypass, Springfield, Missouri, and that on September 16, 2010, Knepper robbed the Great Southern Bank, located at 1232 South Range Line Road, Joplin, Missouri, both in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2113. I am submitting this affidavit in support of a complaint against Knepper.

3. The facts set forth in this Affidavit are based on information I have obtained during the course of the investigation into the robberies of Liberty Bank and Great Southern Bank as well as information gathered by FBI Special Agents Stacy Moore and Barton Starkey, the Joplin, Missouri Police Department and the Fort Smith, Arkansas Police Department .

4. On March 29, 2010, at approximately 4:45p.m., a white male subject entered Liberty Bank ("the bank"), located at 210 N. West Bypass, Springfield, Missouri and presented a demand note to a bank employee. The demand note stated (paraphrasing): "You need to understand the seriousness of the situation. No silent alarms. I'm not leaving here without getting what I want. If you want to see your family again you will do what I tell you." The

subject told the bank employee that he had been in the military and had been killing people for several years. The subject also told the bank employee that he had 3 months to live due to pancreatic cancer and that, "I don't care what happens here."

5. As directed by the subject, the employee contacted the bank manager, who came into the employee's office. The subject told the manager that, "I didn't come in here just for what the tellers can give me". He inquired as to where the vault was located and stated that he was not leaving the bank "without millions". On several occasions, the subject threatened to kill everyone in the bank if he did not get what he wanted. Several times, the subject placed his right hand on the pistol grip of a handgun that was located in a shoulder holster under the subject's left shoulder.

6. The bank manager subsequently walked to the bank's vault, where the manager and other bank employees placed \$80,000.00 in cash in a bank bag. The manager then returned to the office and gave the bag to the subject. All the currency in the bag was strapped and included 20 (twenty) bait bills. After getting the money and placing it into a green colored pull along suitcase, the subject obtained from the manager the keys to her vehicle, then departed the bank and fled the premises in the bank manager's car. The subject abandoned the car approximately one mile from the bank, where it was recovered by the Springfield Police Department.

7. Bank employees noted that the subject wore a band aid or white bandage that covered his nose and that the subject had noticeable bruising below both eyes. Also, the subject had a black goatee that appeared fake or dyed.

8. On September 16, 2010, at approximately 5:00 p.m., a white male subject entered Great Southern Bank ("the bank"), located at 1232 South Range Line Road, Joplin, Missouri, while talking on a cellular telephone. The subject stated, "I'm in the bank now", then terminated the call and approached the bank's teller counter. The subject brandished a handgun, climbed over the teller counter and ordered the bank employees to the floor. He then ordered the tellers to open the bank vault.

9. The subject waited five minutes for the vault's lock to open and then retrieved money from the vault, placing it a blue soft shell cooler he brought into the bank. While he

waited for the vault to open, the subject told a bank employee that he was dying and that the money stolen from the bank would be his life insurance. He also removed money from some of the teller drawers. The subject took the driver's licenses from each of the three tellers and told them he would come to their houses if they didn't wait 30 minutes before telling anyone about the robbery. The subject then exited the bank. An audit by bank personnel indicated the robber got away with \$404,350.00 in U.S. Currency.

10. Bank employees described the subject as having dark hair and beard and what appeared to be black eyes with bandages covering his nose and finger tips. He was wearing a New York Mets baseball hat, blue checkered shirt, blue jeans and white tennis shoes. Subsequent analysis of the surveillance footage revealed that the handgun used by the subject was a Springfield Armory XD.

11. Based on the similar descriptive characteristics and a comparison of the surveillance footage from the Liberty Bank robbery and the robbery of Great Southern Bank, the same white male subject committed both bank robberies.

12. On February 13, 2011, the Fort Smith, Arkansas Police Department received a telephone call reporting that a bag containing a handgun was found behind the Red Lobster restaurant in Fort Smith. When the Fort Smith PD responded, officers discovered that the bag also contained \$166,000.00 in U.S. Currency as well as various hotel and car rental receipts. The handgun in the bag was a Springfield Armory XD. The receipts led the Fort Smith PD to Robert Knepper, who was staying at a Comfort Inn in Fort Smith. When questioned, Knepper advised that the money was his and that he had earned the money throughout his lifetime. Knepper claimed that he didn't trust banks and that was why he kept the money in the bag. The Fort Smith PD arrested Knepper on a misdemeanor weapons charge. He was later denied bail.

13. On February 15, 2011, the Fort Smith PD received a crime stoppers tip that advised Knepper resembled an individual the caller had seen on the "fbi.gov" website who had committed a bank robbery in Springfield, Missouri. Upon reviewing the information on the website regarding the bank robbery, Fort Smith PD officers noticed that the bank robbery occurred on March 29, 2010. While reviewing Knepper's bank records, Fort Smith PD officers noticed that he had a charge in Springfield, Missouri on March 29, 2010.

14. Fort Smith PD then obtained from the Joplin, Missouri PD the surveillance

photographs from the robbery of Great Southern Bank that occurred on September 16, 2010. Fort Smith PD officers showed the surveillance photographs to Knepper's wife, Tami Knepper, who identified Robert Knepper as the robber. Tami Knepper also identified the blue jeans and tennis shoes worn by Robert Knepper during the robbery. She advised that the New York Mets baseball cap worn by Knepper during the robbery was identical to a cap that Robert Knepper's daughter had bought him for his birthday. Tami Knepper noted too that Robert Knepper was diagnosed with testicular cancer in 2008.

15. On March 29, 2010, the deposits of Liberty Bank were insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. On September 16, 2010, the deposits of Great Southern Bank were insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

16. Based on the foregoing, there is probable cause to believe that Robert Knapper robbed the Liberty Bank, located at 210 N. West Bypass, Springfield, Missouri, and the Great Southern Bank, located at 1232 South Range Line Road, Joplin, Missouri, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2113.

/s/ Patrick J. Thomas

Patrick J Thomas
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn and subscribed before me this 17th day of February, 2011.

/s/ James C. England

James C. England
United States Magistrate Judge