

NEWS

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Leading Member of "Route 35 Crew" Admits Thirteen Robberies

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TRENTON – One of the two principal members of the so-called “Route 35 Crew” pleaded guilty today to committing 11 armed bank robberies and two other robberies between November 2006 and August 2007, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Michael Green, 30, of Linden pleaded guilty to a three-count Information charging him with one count of bank robbery, as well as one count of conspiracy to commit bank robbery and Hobbs Act Robbery, and one count of possessing a firearm during the commission of a violent offense, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Mack. Following the guilty plea, U.S. District Judge Joel A. Pisano ordered Green returned to custody, where he has been since his arrest on Nov. 10, 2007. Sentencing is scheduled for Nov. 18.

The defendant faces a mandatory minimum sentence of seven years in prison and up to life in prison, and a \$250,000. In addition, Judge Pisano must order that Green make restitution to the victims of his crimes.

During the plea hearing today, Green admitted his participation in the following robberies, in which more than \$288,000 was taken:

- Nov. 27, 2006 robbery of CardSmart, LLC - Garwood, NJ;
- Dec. 27, 2006 robbery of Speedy Check Cashing - Linden, NJ;
- Jan. 10, 2007 robbery of Rahway Savings Bank - Rahway, NJ;
- Feb. 8, 2007 robbery of Wachovia Bank - Colonia, NJ;
- March 10, 2007 robbery of Unity Bank - Colonia, NJ;
- April 24, 2007 robbery of Unity Bank - Colonia, NJ;
- June 25, 2007 robbery of Bank of America - Iselin, NJ;
- July 20, 2007 robbery of Columbia Savings Bank - Edison, NJ;
- Sept. 4, 2007 robbery of PNC Bank - Fords, NJ;
- Sept. 15, 2007 robbery of Wachovia Bank - Metuchen, NJ;
- Sept. 25, 2007 robbery of PNC Bank - East Brunswick, NJ;
- Oct. 12, 2007 robbery of Bank of America - Edison, NJ; and
- Nov. 10, 2007 robbery of Investors Savings Bank - Piscataway, NJ.

Green admitted at the hearing that he conspired with Ruben Rosado to commit each of the 13

robberies. Furthermore, Green stated that with all but one exception, firearms were used in the commission of the robberies.

With regard to the Nov. 27, 2006 robbery of CardSmart, LLC, Green stated that in addition to Rosado, he conspired with Andre Billups and Andria Yarborough to commit the robbery. Although no firearm was used during the crime, Green admitted that Rosado repeatedly punched the victim during the commission of the robbery.

Green currently has five co-defendants, including Rosado, Sandy Hart, Andre Billups, Brandon Thomas, and Andria Yarborough. Rosado was indicted on April 16, 2008, for the armed robbery of the Investors Savings Bank in Piscataway, which occurred on Nov. 10, 2007.

Sandy Hart pleaded guilty to a one-count Information on Aug. 11, 2008 before the Judge Pisano to a one-count Information charging him with interstate travel in aid of racketeering. During the plea hearing, Hart admitted to committing a home invasion robbery in Allentown, Pa. with Rosado and Billups. Hart further admitted that during the robbery, Rosado put a gun to a woman's head. Hart was ordered detained and is scheduled to be sentenced on November 19.

Billups was charged by criminal complaint on Dec. 14, 2007, for conspiring to commit the Nov. 27, 2006 with Rosado and Yarborough.

Brandon Thomas was charged by criminal complaint on April 18, 2008 for the receipt and possession of property stolen by Rosado and Green from the Bank of America in Edison, New Jersey on Oct. 12, 2007.

Finally, Andria Yarborough pleaded guilty on May 20, 2008 before U.S. District Judge Joseph E. Irenas to a one-count Information charging her with misprision of felony for lying to police and failing to report the Nov. 27, 2006 robbery to police. Yarborough is scheduled to be sentenced on Oct. 17, 2008.

Under an Information, a defendant waives the right to have his case presented to a grand jury and, instead, pleads guilty to charges presented by the United States.

Pursuant to the terms of Green's plea, each of the thirteen robberies counts as a separate offense under the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines. Furthermore, Count Three of the Information carries a mandatory minimum sentence of seven years' imprisonment, to run consecutive to the sentence to be imposed pursuant to the sentence for Counts One and Two.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Pisano will consult the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The Judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence. Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

U.S. Attorney Christie credited special agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Weyssan Dun, for this successful investigation.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Mack of the U.S. Attorney's Securities and Health Care Fraud Unit and Scott B. McBride of the U.S. Attorney's Government Fraud Unit.

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Defense Counsel: Richard Verde, Esq., West Caldwell