

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb. 26, 2008

Bank Robbers Each Sentenced to More Than 65 Years for Three Armed Robberies in Central Jersey

(More)

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NEWARK – Two bank robbers were each sentenced today to more than 65 years in federal prison for committing three armed and violent bank robberies in 2005, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Stanley R. Chesler sentenced Kreig “Chub” Prosper, 25, Woodbridge, to 66 years and two months in prison, and Shenez “Randy” Lawrence, 33, of Perth Amboy to 68 years and eight months in prison. Judge Chesler also ordered Prosper and Lawrence, to pay restitution of \$304,087, representing the money stolen from the three bank robberies. Prosper and Lawrence returned to federal custody, where they have been since their arrests in December 2005.

After a trial in November 2007, Prosper and Lawrence were convicted of a series of armed bank robberies in Central New Jersey in which they used verbal threats and intimidation to hold bank tellers at gunpoint as they stole money from the banks’ vaults.

The bank robberies included: a Sun National Bank in Matawan on Jan. 12, 2005, where Prosper and Lawrence stole over \$239,000; a Sun National Bank in Holmdel on Aug. 9, 2005, where Prosper and Lawrence stole \$37,000; and a Sovereign Bank in Woodbridge on Dec. 9, 2005, where Prosper and Lawrence stole over \$278,000. A jury convicted each of them of three counts of using a firearm during and in relation to the commission of a crime of violence, three counts of bank robbery, and one count of conspiracy.

For the three gun counts, Prosper and Lawrence both received a mandatory sentence of 57 years in prison. The sentencing judge had no discretion to sentence the defendants to less than 57 years for those charges.

Under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, Prosper then received another 110 months in prison on top of the 57 years. Lawrence received another 140 months in prison in addition to the 57 years.

In imposing sentence, Judge Chesler termed the crimes “extraordinarily serious” due to the manner in which the defendants “terrorized customers and employees of three banks.” Judge Chesler also characterized the robberies as “cold,” “calculated” and “well planned,” and noted that “it was only by the grace of God that somebody was not hurt or killed.”

Addressing Lawrence, Judge Chesler stated that “an extremely long sentence is necessary to deter people who are inclined to engage in your kind of conduct.” Judge Chesler added that the substantial sentences were necessary to show that people who engage in armed bank robberies and get caught have “effectively sentenced themselves to life imprisonment.”

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI's Red Bank Resident Agency, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dunn in Newark; the Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Luis A. Valentin; the Matawan Police Department, under the direction of Chief Robert M. McGowen; the Holmdel Township Police Department, under the direction of Chief Raymond P. Wilson; the Woodbridge Police Department, under the direction of Chief William Trenery; the Perth Amboy Police Department, under the direction of Chief Michael Kohut; and the Bridgewater Township Police Department, under the direction of Chief Richard Borden, with the investigation of the case.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Bradley A. Harsch of the U.S. Attorney's Criminal Division and Hallie A. Mitchell of the U.S. Attorney's Special Prosecutions Division, in Newark.

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Defense Attorney:
Edward C. Bertucio, Jr, Esq., for Prosper
Joshua Donahue, Esq., for Lawrence