

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Willingboro Man Pleads Guilty to Two Gunpoint Bank Robberies

(More)

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CAMDEN – A Willingboro man pleaded guilty today to committing two armed bank robberies and using of a firearm in relation to a crime of violence, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Cordell Maurice Bines, 18, formerly of Philadelphia, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Renée Marie Bumb to a three-count Information, which charged him with two counts of bank robbery and one count of using, carrying and discharging a firearm during and in relation to the commission of a crime of violence. Judge Bumb continued the defendant's detention and scheduled sentencing for Dec. 14.

At his plea hearing, Bines admitted that on April 6, 2007, he robbed a Farmers & Mechanics Bank branch in Willingboro of approximately \$13,120. In committing the robbery, Bines admitted that he assaulted a bank teller by punching him. Bines also admitted that on April 12, 2007, he and an individual known to him as, "Little Guy," robbed a Farmers & Mechanics Bank branch in Eastampton of approximately \$11,170. Bines admitted he again assaulted another bank teller by punching and kicking him.

Bines admitted that during both bank robberies, he was armed with a revolver and vaulted the bank counters while taking control over customers and bank employees through threats and use of physical violence. Bines admitted that the physical violence included kicking, punching and the pointing of firearms at victims, which put the life of another person in jeopardy.

Furthermore, Bines admitted that while escaping from the April 12 bank robbery, he fired a shot from a handgun into a vehicle that he was attempting to steal from the owner. Bines admitted that after the failed carjacking attempt, he committed a home invasion in Eastampton, during which he assaulted a 59 year-old woman, locked her in a closet, and stole her vehicle.

Bines was arrested following a police pursuit on April 12 by officers with the North Hanover Township Police Department. The pursuit ended when Bines crashed the stolen vehicle.

The investigation into the identity of the second perpetrator during the April 12, 2007 robbery, and the possible involvement of a third person, is continuing.

Counts One and Two charge bank robbery, which carries a maximum penalty of 25 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. Count Three, which charges carrying, brandishing, and discharging a firearm during and in relation to the commission of a crime of violence, carries a statutory mandatory minimum prison sentence of 10 years and a maximum term

of life, which is to be served consecutively to the sentence imposed on Counts One and Two.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Bumb will consult the advisory U.S. 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.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI's South Jersey Resident Agency, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge J.P. Weis in Philadelphia, the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Robert D. Bernardi, the Eastampton Police Department, under the direction of Chief Gerald D. Mingin, the Willingboro Police Department, under the direction of Public Safety Director Gregory Rucker, and the North Hanover Police Department, under the direction of Chief Mark Keubler, with the investigation of the case.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew Skahill of the Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense Attorney: Christopher O'Malley, Esq. Asst. Federal Public Defender