



# Department of Justice

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Northern District of Georgia

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## **“CROWN ROYAL BANDIT” PLEADS GUILTY**

### ***Blairsville Man Admits to Long String of Armed Bank Robberies in Georgia***

Gainesville, GA - BRUCE ALLEN HUGHES, 48, of Blairsville, Georgia, pleaded guilty this morning in federal district court to two counts of conspiracy to commit the armed robbery of 29 banks over 11 years, five counts of armed bank robbery, six counts of use of a firearm during the commission of a violent felony, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, “Today’s guilty plea will lead to a life sentence for one of the most prolific armed bank robbers ever to plague the citizens of Georgia. Never again will this violent criminal terrorize another teller or customer as he did over the last decade. Thanks to literally years of exhaustive investigation, the reign of the Crown Royal Bandit is over.”

FBI Atlanta Special Agent in Charge Greg Jones said, “The FBI is very pleased to close its case on the Crown Royal Bandit. The law enforcement resources expended on this investigation by the Atlanta FBI's Violent Crimes Squad were a necessary burden. The many bank employees and customers that bore the brunt emotionally of this defendant’s robberies can take some measure of satisfaction that he will now be off the streets and that the FBI stayed the course in the pursuit of justice.”

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: HUGHES pleaded guilty to charges related to armed bank robberies that occurred between May 7, 1997, and February 21, 2008, in the Northern and Middle Districts of Georgia. HUGHES, who was also known as “Brian Scott Hughes,” “Bruce Alan Hughes,” and “Bruce Allen Hughes,” participated in 29 armed bank robberies, many of which involved the use of a mask and the display of a gun, which was fired during two of the bank robberies. The FBI and other agencies referred to the string of robberies as having been committed by the “Crown Royal Bandit” because in the first few bank robberies the robber used purple “Crown Royal” liquor bags to collect the cash. The charges include one robbery, and a charge of use of a firearm during the commission of a violent felony in the Middle District of Georgia (Athens). HUGHES stole a total of over \$300,000 in the robberies.

HUGHES was charged in a second superseding indictment in the Northern District of Georgia in June of 2009 on two counts of conspiracy to commit armed bank robberies, four counts of armed bank robbery, five counts of use of a firearm during the commission of a violent felony, and one count of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Today, he pleaded guilty to all of the charges in both Districts. He could receive a maximum sentence of life plus 175 years in prison, with a mandatory minimum of 147 years in prison and a fine of up to \$3,500,000. In determining the actual sentence, the Court will consider the United States Sentencing Guidelines, which are not binding but provide appropriate sentencing ranges for most offenders.

A sentencing date for HUGHES has not yet been set before United States District Judge Richard W. Story.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. Significant assistance in this case has been provided by the Athens-Clarke County Police Department, the Banks County Sheriff's Department, the Fannin County Sheriff's Department and the Madison County Sheriff's Department.

Assistant United States Attorneys Matthew T. Jackson and Angela Jordan are prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is [www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan).