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News Release

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St. Paul man sentenced to 187 months in prison for robbing Park Midway Bank

Earlier today in federal court in St. Paul, a 57-year-old St. Paul man was sentenced in connection with the August 4, 2010, armed robbery of the Park Midway Bank, on Como Avenue, in St. Paul. United States District Court Judge Richard H. Kyle sentenced Robert Lee Russell, Jr., to 151 months in prison on one count of armed bank robbery. Moreover, Russell was ordered to serve an additional 36 months for violating the terms of federal supervised release relative to a previous crime when he committed this robbery. Russell was indicted on September 9, 2010, and pleaded guilty on January 10, 2011. In his plea agreement, Russell admitted stealing \$1,457 from the bank and putting the life of another person in jeopardy by using a firearm during the robbery.

According to a law enforcement affidavit filed in the case, the bank was robbed at 2:30 p.m. on August 4. The robber, later identified as Russell, walked into the building while pulling a mask down over his face and waving a handgun. After demanding and receiving money, he ordered a teller to leave with him. The teller complied, but once outside, the robber fled alone. Immediately, a bank security guard checked on the teller and then pursued the robber, who fired his gun at least one time at the guard.

Two nearby Xcel Energy employees in a company truck observed the chase and saw the robber get into a Dodge Caravan. As they pulled along side the van, they also saw that the robber was holding a handgun. The van, however, then sped away.

A short time later, police spoke with the owner of the van, who reported that Russell had borrowed it earlier in the day. Officers also learned that Russell had purchased some clothes and a backpack at a Stillwater Wal-Mart right after the robbery. The officers subsequently recovered from that store two bait bills obtained by the robber during the heist.

Just after midnight on August 5, the Wisconsin State Patrol reported responding to a motor vehicle crash involving the same Dodge Caravan. At the scene of the accident, Russell was found and arrested for bank robbery. An initial search of the vehicle yielded \$1,361 in cash inside the recently purchased backpack.

This case was the result of an investigation by the St. Paul Police Department, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the Minnesota State Patrol, the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office, the Wisconsin State Patrol, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Dunne.

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