



**United States Department of Justice  
United States Attorney's Office  
District of Minnesota**

**B. Todd Jones,  
United States Attorney**

**Jeanne F. Cooney  
Director of Community Relations  
(612) 664-5611  
email: [jeanne.cooney@usdoj.gov](mailto:jeanne.cooney@usdoj.gov)**

# **News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday, May 24, 2011  
[WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN](http://WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/MN)

## **Felon pleads guilty in connection with the armed robbery of a White Bear Lake Bar**

MINNEAPOLIS – Earlier today in federal court in the District of Minnesota, a felon pleaded guilty in connection with the November 27, 2010, armed robbery of a White Bear Lake bar. Tyice Alexander Phillips, age 33, no known address, pleaded guilty to one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of violence and one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm. Phillips, who was charged on March 21, 2011, entered his plea before United States District Court Judge Joan N. Ericksen. Prosecution continues against Phillips's two co-defendants.

In his plea agreement, Phillips admitted that on November 27, 2010, he and two other men traveled to the White Bear Bar in White Bear Lake in order to rob it. Phillips also admitted robbing the bar at gunpoint. During the robbery, one of the guns used by the robbers discharged and hit a patron.

A law enforcement affidavit filed in the case states that the three men, all dressed in dark clothing with ski masks or stocking caps pulled down over their faces, entered the White Bear Bar in White Bear Lake just before closing. More than 50 patrons were in the bar at the time. Phillips brandished a black, semi-automatic pistol. Then, the robbers told everyone to "get down" on the floor. Surveillance video shows the men pushing customers. It also shows Phillips pointing a gun at both patrons and employees. During the robbery, a bar patron grabbed the barrel of the gun held by one of Phillips's co-defendants, and a skirmish ensued. During that struggle, the gun discharged, striking another patron in the leg.

Meanwhile, Phillips took money from the till and then forced the bar manager, at gunpoint, to lead him to the office safe. Phillips held a gun to the manager's head while she opened the safe and removed several bank bags containing cash. After grabbing the money, Phillips and one of the other two robbers fled to their get-away car across the street, where the third suspect was

waiting. The three men then took off in the car, with Phillips driving. One of the bar patrons briefly gave chase on foot. The vehicle was a black, late-model BMW sedan.

A White Bear Lake police officer shortly encountered a vehicle that matched the description of the get-away car. When the officer turned on his emergency lights, however, Phillips tried to get away by turning into the entrance of an apartment complex. He then drove into a snowbank, prompting all three occupants of the car to jump out and run in different directions. A .40-caliber, semi-automatic pistol and a six-shot Ruger revolver were found along the paths taken by the robbers. A multi-colored stocking cap also was recovered near the front bumper of the abandoned vehicle.

Authorities found Phillips lying in snow approximately one-and-a-half miles from the car. He was wearing clothing that matched the description of the clothes worn by one of the robbers. Moreover, the soles of his shoes matched a shoe print left in the snow outside the bar. Officers also reportedly recovered from his pocket cash register receipts from the bar along with approximately \$1,495 in cash.

Police then obtained and executed a search warrant on the abandoned BMW. In the vehicle, they found Phillips's cell phone, photos of Phillips standing next to the BMW, mail addressed to Phillips, job and school financial aid applications in Phillips's name, four bank bags containing cash register receipts from the bar, a black stocking cap, and a gray balaclava-type hood.

The underlying crime of violence acknowledged by Phillips was a violation of The Hobbs Act. The Hobbs Act, passed by Congress in 1946, allows federal prosecutors to prosecute violent habitual criminals who commit armed robbery in places of business involved in interstate commerce. Federal prosecution of these cases is sometimes beneficial since the penalties are often tougher than under State law. Furthermore, because the federal system has no parole, those who receive federal sentences serve virtually the entire time imposed.

Because he is a felon, Phillips is prohibited from possessing firearms. He was previously convicted in Ramsey County in 2006 for felony kidnaping, first-degree aggravated robbery, and first-degree burglary. All three charges were connected to a home-invasion armed robbery.

Since Phillips' prior offenses were violent crimes, he is now subject to the federal armed career criminal statute. That statute mandates a 15-year minimum prison sentence if convicted of the felon in possession charge now levied against him. The charge carries a potential maximum penalty of life in prison. For the felon in possession crime, Phillips faces a potential mandatory minimum penalty of ten years, which will run consecutive to the 15-year sentence.

This case is the result of an investigation by the White Bear Lake Police Department and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Karen B. Schommer and Andrew R. Winter.

###