



**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**

News Release

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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. Percy Davis Peters, unknown age and address, pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence. Peters, who was indicted on February 8, 2011, entered his plea before United States District Court Judge Joan N. Ericksen. One of his two co-defendants has already pleaded guilty, and prosecution continues against the third.

In his plea agreement, Peters 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. Peters also admitted that prior to the robbery, he was provided a gun, and that the three men ultimately entered and robbed the bar at gunpoint. In addition, Peters admitted that during the course of the robbery his gun discharged.

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. The robbers brandished guns, and told everyone to “get down” on the floor. Surveillance video shows the men pushing customers. During the robbery, a bar patron grabbed the barrel of the gun held by one of the men, and a skirmish ensued. During that struggle, the gun discharged, striking another patron in the leg.

After grabbing the money out of the office safe as well as from customers, two of the 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. 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, the vehicle tried to get away by turning into the entrance of an apartment complex. It 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.

The underlying crime of violence involved in the defendant's plea is a violation of the Hobbs Act, passed by Congress in 1946, allows federal prosecutors to prosecute criminals who commit 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.

For his crime, Peters faces a mandatory minimum penalty of ten years in prison and a potential maximum penalty of life in prison. Judge Ericksen will determine his sentence at a future hearing, yet to be scheduled.

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.

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