

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Hat Bandit” Gets 120 Months for String of Bank Robberies

(More)

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NEWARK – A Maplewood man was sentenced today to 120 months in federal prison for a string of bank robberies throughout northern New Jersey, for which he earned the monikers “Hat Bandit” and “Mad Hatter” from the media, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

U.S. District Judge Jose L. Linares also imposed an \$81,123 restitution order on James Madison, representing the total of the money he robbed from 18 banks between Sept. 22, 2006 and July 22, 2007. Madison has been in custody since his arrest on July 23, 2007.

Under the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which Judge Linares was required to consult in imposing sentence, Madison faced a range of between 97 and 121 months in federal prison, taking into account all 18 robberies and one attempted robbery.

Madison, 50, pleaded guilty before Judge Linares on Sept. 11, 2007, to a six-count Superseding Information charging bank robbery. At his plea hearing, Madison admitted that between September 2006 and July 2007, he successfully robbed 18 banks and attempted to rob one bank, always by showing a note demanding money and while wearing a hat. Madison described with specificity many of the signature caps he wore during each of the robberies.

“This defendant actually portrayed himself as some kind of Robin Hood,” said Christie. “That’s nonsense. He robbed banks. And he couldn’t trick or charm his way out of this or slip away anonymously under a hat brim.”

Madison threatened to use a gun during two of the bank robberies and threatened to detonate an explosive in another, and stole a total of nearly \$81,000 from all of the banks. The robberies he admitted committing are as follows:

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|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sept. 22, 2006 | Commerce Bank, Springfield | \$3,935 |
| Oct. 7, 2006 | HSBC Bank, Millburn | \$7,801 |
| Oct. 22, 2006 | Commerce Bank, Springfield | \$1,650 |
| Oct. 28, 2006 | Chase Bank, Chatham | None – attempted robbery |
| Nov. 2, 2006 | Washington Mutual Bank, Chatham | \$1,000 |
| Nov. 5, 2006 | Commerce Bank, Union | \$14,000 |
| Dec. 16, 2006 | Commerce Bank, Summit | \$2,000 |
| Jan. 6, 2007 | Commerce Bank, Morris Township | \$3,360 |

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|----------------|---|----------|
| Jan. 18, 2007 | Hudson City Savings Bank, Florham Park | \$6,350 |
| Feb. 2, 2007 | Commerce Bank, Berkeley Heights | \$2,370 |
| Feb. 10, 2007 | Commerce Bank, Livingston | \$3,925 |
| March 17, 2007 | Commerce Bank, Roselle | \$10,113 |
| April 19, 2007 | Commerce Bank, Union | \$2,530 |
| May 3, 2007 | Commerce Bank, Cedar Knolls | \$2,820 |
| May 16, 2007 | Commerce Bank, Metuchen | \$1,420 |
| May 20, 2007 | Commerce Bank, Woodbridge | \$2,969 |
| June 1, 2007 | Commerce Bank, Montclair | \$2,890 |
| June 30, 2007 | Bank of America, Elizabeth | \$8,540 |
| July 22, 2007 | Bank of America, Union | \$3,060 |

On July 22, 2007, within hours of the nineteenth bank robbery, an investigation by Special Agents assigned to the FBI's Newark Division revealed that Madison was the offender. The next morning, Newark FBI agents, assisted by officers of the Morris County Prosecutor's Office and the Union Police Department, observed the vehicle that witnesses had seen Madison escape in parked behind Madison's apartment complex in Maplewood, directly next to Madison's own vehicle. He was confronted by the agents and officers, questioned and detained, and was later charged with the July 22 robbery at the Bank of America in Union.

Further investigation by Newark FBI agents revealed that Madison had committed the remaining 18 bank robberies.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI's Newark Division, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun, as well as local police officers in Essex, Middlesex, Morris, and Union Counties who investigated Madison's crimes, for his capture and prosecution. Christie also thanked for their cooperation and assistance, the Union County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Theodore J. Romankow; the Morris County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Robert A. Bianchi; the Essex County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Paula A. Dow, and the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Bruce J. Kaplan.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Shana W. Chen of the U.S.

Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Newark.

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Defense Attorney: Donald J. McCauley, Esq., Assistant Federal Public Defender,
Newark.