

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Belleville Man Pleads Guilty to Series of Bank Robberies

(More)

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TRENTON – A Belleville man pleaded guilty yesterday to a federal charge of bank robbery, admitting he committed six bank robberies in northern New Jersey, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr. announced.

Frederick Russell, 50, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Peter G. Sheridan to a one-count Information that charges him specifically with the Nov. 28, 2007, robbery of a Bank of America branch in Newark. Russell, however, also admitted committing five other robberies and attempting to rob a U.S. Post Office in Jersey City on Dec. 10, 2007. All of the conduct will be taken into consideration at sentencing. Judge Sheridan continued the defendant's release on a \$100,000 unsecured appearance bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for Dec. 28.

As part of his guilty plea, Russell also admitted to robbing the following additional banks;

- Nov. 23, 2007, Commerce Bank in Newark, of \$1,225;
- Dec. 7, 2007, Provident Bank in Jersey City, of \$700;
- Dec. 10, 2007, Northfork Bank in Jersey City, of \$2,000;
- Dec. 17, 2007, Commerce Bank in Hackensack, of \$2,335;
- Dec. 23, 2007, PNC Bank in Bloomfield, of \$1,329.

At the plea hearing, Russell admitted that during each robbery he approached a teller and handed the teller a note which stated he had a gun and demanded money.

Russell was arrested on Dec. 27, 2007, during an attempt to rob a Bank of America branch in Newark for the second time.

The charge of bank robbery carries a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. In addition, Judge Sheridan must order Russell to pay restitution.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Sheridan will consult the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The Judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Marra credited Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun in Newark, Inspectors with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, under the direction of Inspector in Charge David L. Collings, and

police officers with the police departments of Newark and Jersey City, with the investigation leading to the guilty plea.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lisa M. Colone of the U.S. Attorney's Violent Crimes Unit.

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Defense Counsel: Lorraine Gauli-Rufo, Esq., Assistant Federal Public Defender