

NEWS

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Belleville Man Sentenced to 61 Months in Prison for Series of Bank Robberies

(More)

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TRENTON – A Belleville man was sentenced to 61 months in federal prison today for committing a series of six bank robberies in northern New Jersey, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

U.S. District Judge Peter G. Sheridan also ordered Frederick Russell, 50, to pay \$12,819 in restitution and to serve three years of supervised release upon the completion of his prison term. Judge Sheridan continued Russell's release on a \$100,000 unsecured bond pending his surrender to officials with the U.S. Bureau of Prisons on Feb 16.

On Aug. 27, 2009, Russell pleaded guilty before Judge Sheridan to a one-count Information which charged him specifically with robbing a Bank of America branch in Newark of approximately \$5,230 on Nov. 28, 2007. Russell 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 was taken into consideration by Judge Sheridan at sentencing.

As part of his guilty plea, Russell 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 the Bank of America branch in Newark for the second time.

In determining the actual sentence, Judge Sheridan consulted 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.

Fishman 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 defendant's 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