



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**NEW JERSEY MAN INDICTED ON BANK ROBBERY AND EVIDENCE  
TAMPERING CHARGES**

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JOSEPH M. DEMAREST JR., the Assistant Director in Charge of the New York Field Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), announced the arraignment today of SONNY DESPOSITO of River Vale, New Jersey, on an Indictment charging him with bank robbery, evidence tampering, and using fire in connection with the evidence tampering felony. According to the Indictment filed in White Plains federal court and a previously filed Complaint:

On January 23, 2009, DESPOSITO entered the M&T Bank at 770 Chestnut Ridge Road in Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, New York, wearing, among other things, a mask and sunglasses. Upon entering the bank, DESPOSITO pointed what appeared to be a handgun at a customer's chest and directed the customer to turn around and face the teller counter. DESPOSITO then approached the teller counter and pointed the handgun at a bank teller and ordered the teller to give him money with no ink packs or he would hunt her down and kill her. DESPOSITO then handed the teller a sack. The teller put approximately \$10,288 in cash and approximately \$375 in checks in the sack. DESPOSITO then left the bank and fled on foot to a car parked on a nearby street in Chestnut Ridge.

Thereafter, DESPOSITO drove from Chestnut Ridge to Beckerle Drive, a residential street in Pearl River, New York. DESPOSITO got out of the car and put a number of items in a pile at the end of the street. He then lit the pile on fire and got back in the car and drove away. After the fire was extinguished, law enforcement officers recovered, among other things, a black knit cap with its eye holes cut out, a brown knit cap, a pair of

sunglasses, a pellet gun, two vehicle license plates, a pillowcase, a pair of sneakers, several items of clothing, and a can of lighter fluid.

Count One of the Indictment charges DESPOSITO with bank robbery. Count Two charges DESPOSITO with evidence tampering, and Count Three charges DESPOSITO with using fire to commit the evidence tampering felony charged in Count Two.

Following his arrest in March 2009, DESPOSITO was detained without bail. If convicted, DESPOSITO faces a maximum penalty of 25 years of imprisonment on Count One, a maximum penalty of 20 years of imprisonment on Count Two, and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years of imprisonment and maximum sentence of life imprisonment on Count Three.

Mr. DASSIN praised the efforts and assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Town of Ramapo Police Department, and the Rockland County Sheriff's Office.

Assistant United States Attorney KATHRYN M. MARTIN is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaint and Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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