



*United States Attorney
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**NEW JERSEY MAN CONVICTED OF THE ARMED BANK ROBBERY
OF ROCKLAND COUNTY BANK, ARSON,
AND OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that SONNY DESPOSITO, 25, of River Vale, New Jersey, was convicted of armed bank robbery, arson, and obstruction of justice after a seven-day trial before United States District Judge CATHY SEIBEL in White Plains federal court today.

According to the evidence at trial:

On January 23, 2009, DESPOSITO entered the M&T Bank at 770 Chestnut Ridge Road in Chestnut Ridge, Rockland County, New York, wearing a mask and sunglasses. Upon entering the bank, DESPOSITO put a pellet gun into the chest of a customer who was leaving, and directed the customer to stay inside of the bank. DESPOSITO then approached the teller counter, pointed the gun at a bank teller, and told her that he would shoot everyone in the bank if she did not give him money. DESPOSITO further told the teller that he would hunt her down and kill her if she included any dye packs or bait bills with the money. DESPOSITO left the bank with approximately \$10,600 in cash, and fled on foot to a car parked on a nearby street in Chestnut Ridge.

Prior to the bank robbery, DESPOSITO set fire to a Jeep parked in a driveway of a home near the M&T Bank, in order to divert and distract law enforcement during his robbery.

After the bank robbery, DESPOSITO drove from Chestnut Ridge to Beckerle Drive, a residential street in Pearl River, New

York. DESPOSITO put a number of items in a pile at the end of the street and lit the pile on fire. After the fire was extinguished, law enforcement officers recovered evidence from the bank robbery, including, a black knit cap with eye holes, a pair of sunglasses, a pellet gun, license plates, a pillowcase, a pair of sneakers, several items of clothing, and a can of lighter fluid. DESPOSITO's DNA was recovered from the black knit cap.

After his arrest, DESPOSITO attempted to fabricate evidence related to the can of lighter fluid recovered from the Beckerle Drive fire.

Mr. BHARARA 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 Attorneys SARAH R. KRISOFF and MARGERY B. FEINZIG are in charge of the prosecution.

DESPOSITO faces a maximum penalty of 25 years of imprisonment on the armed bank robbery count, a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years of imprisonment, which must run consecutively to any other sentence imposed, and a maximum sentence of life imprisonment on the arson count, as well as a maximum penalty of 20 years of imprisonment on the obstruction of justice count. Judge SEIBEL scheduled DESPOSITO's sentencing for March 11, 2011, at 2:30 p.m.

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