

Department of Justice

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Western District of New York

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BUFFALO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FIVE BANK ROBBERIES

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today that Michael Makolinski, 31, of Buffalo, N.Y. pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge William M. Skretny to bank robbery. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 25 years in prison, a \$1,000,000 fine or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Melissa Marangola, who handled the case, stated that between October and December 2007, the defendant robbed five banks; the Bank of America in Batavia, N.Y., the Northwest Savings Bank in Erie, Pennsylvania, the Fairport Savings Bank in Irondequoit, N.Y., the First Niagara Bank in Lewiston, N.Y., and the Evans National Bank in Buffalo, N.Y. During each of the robberies, Makolinski displayed what appeared to be a gun. The defendant confessed to committing the robberies in June, 2010 after being arrested by the Buffalo Police Department for an unrelated offense.

“In his greed to steal the money of others, this serial bank robber thought he could prey upon banks located in some of our smaller communities, as well as in Buffalo,” said U.S. Attorney Hochul. “As today’s convictions prove, the defendant’s belief was wrong.”

The plea is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Buffalo Police Department under the direction of Commissioner Daniel Derenda and Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Christopher M. Piehota.

Sentencing is scheduled for November 13, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. before Judge Skretny.