

For Immediate Release
September 1, 2011

RIO RANCHO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ROBBING THREE BANKS

ALBUQUERQUE – Today in federal court in Albuquerque, **Adam Matthew Thomas Blanton**, 36, pled guilty the first three counts of a five-count indictment charging him with armed bank robbery under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office. At sentencing, Blanton faces a maximum penalty of 25 years imprisonment on each of the three offenses to which he pleaded guilty. Blanton, dubbed the "Baby Blue Bandit," is a resident of Rio Rancho. Blanton has been in federal custody since his arrest on February 8, 2011, and remains detained pending sentencing, which has yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said Blanton was arrested on February 8, 2011 in the vicinity of a Walmart store shortly after the First Community Bank located at 1000 Commercial Drive SE in Rio Rancho, was robbed at gunpoint. Court records reflect that the First Commercial Bank was robbed by a man who entered the Bank, brandished a handgun, and demanded money from the tellers. The robber fled on foot after obtaining money from the tellers. Eyewitnesses provided a description of the suspect that was consistent with photographs taken by the Bank's surveillance camera. Shortly thereafter, officers of the Rio Rancho Police Department observed a man fitting the suspect's description in the vicinity of a nearby Walmart store. The officers took the man, identified as Blanton, into custody after they learned that he was in possession of a large sum of cash, a BB handgun that looked like a real handgun, and clothing that matched the description of the clothing worn by the suspect.

On March 9, 2011, a federal grand jury returned an indictment charging Blanton with five counts of armed bank robbery. During today's proceedings, Blanton pleaded guilty to robbing the First Community Bank located at 1000 Commercial Drive SE, in Rio Rancho, New

Mexico, at gun point on two separate dates, November 24, 2010 and December 1, 2010, and robbing the MyBank branch located at 6000 Montgomery NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico, at gun point on December 20, 2010. Under the terms of his plea agreement, Blanton is required to pay full restitution to all the victims of his criminal conduct. Counts 4 and 5 of the indictment will be dismissed after Blanton is sentenced.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Rio Rancho Police Department, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Norman Cairns.

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