



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Eastern District of Texas

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 30, 2004

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GUILTY PLEA FOR EAST TEXAS BANK ROBBER

(Beaumont, Texas) A 26-year-old East Texas man has pleaded guilty to robbing a bank in Noonday, Texas more than two years ago. **MICHAEL LEE HENDERSON** pleaded guilty this morning to one count of Bank Robbery for robbing the First State Bank just before Halloween in 2001.

According to information prosecutors presented in court, a man dressed all in black with a mask entered First State Bank on the morning of October 29, 2001. The man demanded money and fled the bank with an unspecified amount of cash. An investigation by the Smith County Sheriff's Office and the FBI led to Henderson who was living in the Lake Palestine area at the time of the robbery. Henderson, who now lives in Longview, admitted this morning in court he was the robber.

Matthew D. Orwig, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Texas, says bank robbery remains a serious problem in the United States, "We have seen an increase in the number of bank robberies in the last few years. We continuously work to investigate and prosecute individuals who see financial institutions like banks as tempting targets. We will do everything in our power to protect the assets of bank customers and bank employees from criminal acts."

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Henderson could face a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. A sentencing date was not set.

The FBI and Smith County Sheriff's Office are investigating the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jim Middleton is prosecuting the case.

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