

PRESS RELEASE

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Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Matthew Evans, 36, Rockford, Ill., was convicted yesterday following a three-day jury trial in U.S. District Court in Madison. The jury found Evans guilty of armed bank robbery, conspiracy to commit armed bank robbery, and possessing firearms during a crime of violence.

The charges against Evans stemmed from a bank robbery of the Mid America Bank in Footville, Wis. on November 9, 2007. As summarized below, the evidence at trial showed that Evans robbed the bank with co-defendants Troy Thomas, Donald Thompson, Curtis Seaberry, and Skye Archambault.

Evans and his co-defendants drove from Rockford to Footville the morning of the bank robbery. in Thomas' Mercury Grand Marquis. They first cased the bank; then drove to Beloit to gas up the Mercury. While in Beloit, Thomas stole a Lexus to use during the bank robbery itself. Archambault took the Mercury and parked it at a rendezvous point just a mile from the bank.

Evans, along with Thomas, Thompson and Seaberry, entered the bank brandishing three weapons and wearing masks. They ordered the tellers and customers

to get down on the floor.

After robbing the bank of \$5,895, the four robbers fled in the Lexus. As they were driving in the Lexus, Evans reached into the bag of stolen proceeds and put some of the cash in his socks. He told Seaberry to keep his mouth shut. The robbers went to the rendezvous point with Archambault where they transferred the guns, masks, gloves and robbery proceeds into the Mercury. They left the Lexus abandoned on the side of the road. A truck driver witnessed the vehicle switch and had his dispatcher call 911 to report this suspicious activity.

As Archambault began driving back to Rockford, a Rock County Sheriff's deputy received a call from dispatch informing him of the vehicle switch. He made contact with the Mercury near the state line on Highway 81 outside of Beloit. He ordered the Mercury to pull over. As the vehicle pulled over, Seaberry and Evans got out of the Mercury and fled on foot. Seaberry was found nearby, but Evans got away.

Thomas, Archambault and Thompson stayed in the Mercury and took off in the opposite direction. The deputy stayed in pursuit with speeds reaching in excess of 100 miles per hour. Thomas, who was now driving the Mercury, failed to stop at two stop signs and drove into the oncoming lane of traffic in an attempt to evade the deputy. As they neared Rockford on Meridian Road, the Mercury ran out of gas. All three suspects were taken into custody by the deputy and detectives from the Winnebago County (Ill.) Sheriff's Department who had also joined in the pursuit of the Mercury.

Authorities eventually arrested Evans four days later at his girlfriend's home. During his escape, Evans had dropped a bandana in a backyard near Highway 81. It

was later recovered by law enforcement. A DNA analyst from the Wisconsin State Crime Lab tested the DNA found on the bandana and testified at trial that it matched Evans' DNA. The analyst testified that the statistical probability that it was someone else's DNA was 1 in 41 trillion.

Thomas, Thompson, Seaberry and Archambault all pleaded guilty to armed bank robbery and possessing firearms during a crime of violence. All four testified against Evans at trial. Among other things, they all testified that Evans tried to get them to lie and say he was not involved in the bank robbery. Evans testified in his own defense. He unsuccessfully claimed that he had not participated in the bank robbery, but rather had waited in the Lexus while Thomas, Thompson and Seaberry robbed the bank.

U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb scheduled sentencing for Evans for May 29, 2008. Evans faces a maximum penalty of five years on the conspiracy count, twenty-five years on the armed robbery count, and a mandatory consecutive ten years on the possession of a firearm during a crime of violence count.

The charges against all of the defendants were the result of an investigation conducted by the Rock County Sheriff's Department, Orfordville Police Department, Beloit Police Department, Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, Rockford Police Department, and the Rockford and Madison offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel J. Graber.

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