



U.S. Department of Justice

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March 7, 2008

McHENRY MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ROBBERY OF CHARTER ONE BANK IN McHENRY

ROCKFORD – PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; ROBERT D. GRANT, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; LOUIS BIANCHI, McHenry County State's Attorney; and THOMAS J. O'MEARA, Chief of the City of McHenry Police Department, today made the following announcement:

BENJAMIN T. THOMA, 28, of Lakemoor, Illinois, pleaded guilty in federal court today to robbing the Charter One Bank inside the Dominick's grocery store located at 2000 Richmond Road, McHenry, Illinois, on December 19, 2007.

In pleading guilty, Thoma admitted that on December 19, 2007, at approximately 6:30 p.m., he robbed the Charter One Bank inside the Dominick's grocery store located at 2000 Richmond Road in McHenry, Illinois. According to the plea agreement, Thoma approached the teller counter and told a teller to give him all the money inside her cash drawer, not to use any dye packs, and not to press any alarms. Thoma then stated, "I'm not kidding, I have a bomb," and pointed to a bag that he was carrying which had a visible wire coming out of the top. The teller then opened her cash drawer and gave Thoma \$2,409 in United States currency in an envelope. That currency belonged to and was in the control of the Charter One Bank. Thoma then left the bank. The bag with the wire coming out of the top was not an actual bomb, but contained four to five soup cans. At the time of the robbery, the deposits of the Charter One Bank were insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Thoma has been held in custody since December 19, 2007.

Sentencing for Thoma will be conducted on June 12, 2008, at 2:30 p.m. Thoma faces a possible maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a fine of up to \$250,000, up to 3 years of supervised release following imprisonment, and full restitution. The actual sentence will be determined by the United States District Court, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The case was investigated by the Rockford office of the FBI and the City of McHenry Police Department. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney MICHAEL F. IASPARRO.

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