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Nicholas man charged with Moorefield robbery

Arrest occurred after Mt. Sterling robbery was committed last week; Moorefield robbery was last year

From Staff and AP Dispatches
MOUNT STERLING — A Nicholas County man, 34-year-old Robert W. Robinson, has been charged with the December 20, 1987 robbery of the Moorefield Branch of the First National Bank of Carlisle.

Following an interview with Kentucky State Police Detective Jeff Jett, last Tuesday, Robinson was charged with the Nicholas County robbery of a year ago.

In addition, according to Jett, Robinson has been charged with the March 8, 1988 robbery of the North Middletown Branch of the Bourbon Agricultural Deposit Bank and Trust.

A weekly newspaper photographer helped police trap a bank robbery suspect, authorities said, had just absconded with thousands of dollars from a branch bank in Mt. Sterling.

Officer Joni Ward of the Mount Sterling Police Department said that Robert Robinson, 34, of Carlisle had been charged with armed robbery in the first degree and was taken to the Montgomery County Regional Jail.

All of the money was recovered, she said, but she did not know exactly how much was taken from the Montgomery Traders branch bank early last Monday.

Photographer Bobby Warner of the Montgomery Times, a weekly newspaper in this community of about 9,000 residents, was in the area when he heard about the robbery on a scanner, Ms. Ward said. She said Warner was instrumental in leading her to the suspect.

"If it hadn't been for him, the deputy sheriff would have probably been there by himself with the subject" during the capture. But she said Warner directed her to the suspect by "jumping up and down in the field (behind the bank), pointing to him and hollering at me."

"(Warner) was right at the traffic light there at the bank" when he learned of the robbery, she said. "When he heard it on the scanner, he just drove off in the field.

Court says no to insurance

By Julie Pfeiffer
The Carlisle Mercury Staff

The Nicholas County Fiscal Court decided against taking the proposed Dental and Vision insurance in their special meeting November 20.

At the last Fiscal Court meeting it was reported that Charles Watkins was to clarify some changes in the cost of insuring the county. Watkins was not present.

"If you have a problem," Watkins said at the special meeting, "I want to be the first to know about it. I don't want to read about it in the paper." "I felt like this was a dig at me," he said, referring to the notation of his absence.

There will be a change in price, he said, because two county employees have opted for life and health insurance, instead of just health insurance.

hoping he'd be out of the way of us but not get pictures. "He kept us informed of where the guy was at all times. One time, he hollered at the guy, 'Halt or I'll shoot!' The guy didn't know he wasn't a police officer. All he had was a camera, but the man didn't know that."

Ms. Ward said the robbery occurred about 8:10 a.m. EST, just before the bank opened.

When one of the employees left the bank to go to her car, a man was waiting at the back door, Ms. Ward said. "He forced the gun into her ribs and forced her back into the bank. She let out a scream."

Ms. Ward said the robber told another female employee to turn off the alarm, forced her to unlock the vault and had the two employees fill his duffel bag with money.

"Then he had them go back into another room," where he made them lie on the floor while he tied their ankles together with duct tape, Ms. Ward said, adding that the robber took one of the women's car keys.

"While he was tying them up, he laid his gun on a pop machine. His mistake — he left it laying there — when he went outside to put the money in the woman's car. "He forgot that the bank door would lock behind him, and he couldn't get back inside."

By then, a third employee was arriving at the bank, and the suspect tried to get that employee to let him back inside, but the employee refused.

"He told him that he had robbed the bank — He went to the woman's car and got the money out of it, and he started walking off — through a field," Ms. Ward said.

"The man who was working there started kind of hitting on him, but it didn't stop him."

Ms. Ward said she and Montgomery County Sheriff Deputy Randy Joseph rushed to the scene, and "We just more or less closed in on him."

Authorities did not realize until later, she said, that the suspect was not armed.

"It took several verbal warnings to get him to stop," she said. "He just kept walking. But once we stopped him,

he did what we told him — to lay on the ground. — I had 12-gauge shotgun, and Randy Joseph had a .357 Magnum.

She said Joseph fired one warning shot but no one was hurt.

"The photographer was behind us taking pictures the whole time," Ms. Ward said. Jett said there were several reasons he went to Mt. Sterling to interview Robinson concerning the Nicholas County robbery.

"Of Tuesday I went to Mt. Sterling to interview the subject (Robinson)," Robinson said Thursday morning.

"After talking with him, a

warrant was served on him Wednesday at the Montgomery County Jail.

How, exactly, did Jett connect the three robberies? "I had interviewed several people in Nicholas County who had seen a gray Datsun parked near the dumpsters in Moorefield at the time of the robbery," Jett explained.

"When the robbery occurred we used tracking dogs at the scene and the path went through the woods, back to where the car had been parked — and then we lost the trail."

"After I heard about the Mt. Sterling robbery I called to see about the vehicle's description and it matched."

Robinson also matched the

description of the man who had held up the Moorefield Branch.

There were other similarities in evidence, Jett added. Robinson has been charged with robbery in the first degree in the Nicholas County robbery, and the Bourbon County robbery. He is under \$25,000 cash bond for each charge.

In a copyrighted story in the December 1 edition of the Mt. Sterling Advocate, Robinson is quoted as saying, "I don't know why I done it," while being detained at the Mt. Sterling Police Department.

"When asked what kind of gun he had used, Robinson said, 'I don't know."

Lang Kirk, vice president and security officer at the bank said the bank employees, "did exactly as they have been instructed to do. We're very proud of them."

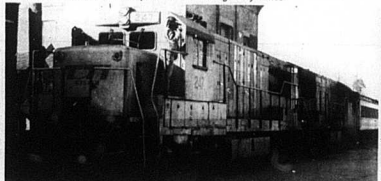
According to police officials the case may be turned over to the FBI for federal prosecution.

According to David Mays, with the United States Attorney General's Office in Lexington said a conviction under state statutes would mean 10-20 years in prison. A federal conviction carries not more than 25 years, or a \$10,000 fine, he said, in reference only to the one charge in Montgomery County.



Captured at gunpoint

Montgomery County Sheriff's Deputy Randy Joseph, right, holds his revolver to the throat of bank robbery suspect Robert W. Robinson, 34, Carlisle, as Mt. Sterling police officer Joni Howard searches Robinson. Robinson was followed by newspaper photographer Bobby Warner who then notified police on his two-way radio of the suspect's location. AP Laserphoto - Bobby Warner/The Montgomery Times



The Washington Express headed out Saturday morning, above, but not before the engineer stopped in the Hospital Auxiliary Bazaar for some refreshments. - Julie Pfeiffer photo



Hey kids, write Santa

In keeping with a longstanding tradition, The Carlisle Mercury will again publish letters to Santa this Christmas season.

Youngsters are invited to write Santa, in care of The Mercury, telling what they want his toys and fathers may help toy loads along their wishes.

Gifts are encouraged to participate by sending in their remembrances of Christmas past, or whatever might be appropriate during the holiday season. Letters will appear in this issue prior to Christmas. Deadline for letters to Santa is December 14.

So get busy, it's later than you think!

Scouting for food set this weekend

Boy Scouts in Nicholas County will be picking up donations of food, Saturday from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Many homes received plastic bags, provided by the Scouts, last weekend.

The bags will be picked up this Saturday from front porches. If you failed to receive a plastic bag, place your donations in a grocery sack. Food collected will be distributed to people in Carlisle and Nicholas County.