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Volume 8, Numbers 4, 5 & 6

August 1998

**Atlanta ATM Servicer Assassinated
By High-Velocity Shot To Head
In 2 P.M. Shopping Center Attack;
Several Cash Cassettes Stolen**

- 1) About 2 p.m. on Wednesday May 6, William Hill, 47, an experienced ATM servicer with Alliance Services Inc., drove an unmarked white truck up to a SouthTrust Bank kiosk ATM location in the Buckhead Shopping Center at 4387 Roswell Road in Atlanta, Georgia. Hill had removed several money-filled canisters from the van when at least one shot rang out, the FBI believes from a hunting rifle, or high-velocity weapon. Hill was killed instantly by the shot to his head. Police described the crime as an assassination. The shot occurred before any contact with the perpetrators was made or any demand for cash was made. After Hill fell, one male perpetrator was seen running to the ATM service truck, grabbing several cash cassettes which may have contained about \$70,000, and then fleeing to a waiting pickup truck driven by an accomplice. The fatal shot is believed to have been fired from the back of the pickup truck which had pine straw in it. (Continued on next page.)

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When he was slain, Hill was on his daily route on which he replenished cash in ATMs. Several witnesses at the Roswell Wieuca Shopping Center, where the machine is located, heard the shot. Witnesses told detectives they saw a man roar off in a Ford Ranger pickup. Police found what they believe was the first escape vehicle a few blocks away; it had been burned. William Hill was married and was the father of two children.

An intensive FBI investigation was launched involving more than 20 agents and local law enforcement officers. A nationwide list was being investigated of 400 suspects involved in earlier violent robberies in which ATM guards were victims. Police are looking for two white males, both between the ages of 40 and 50 and both at least 6 feet tall. One had light-colored hair and a dark mustache; the other had gray hair.



William Hill

Editor's Note:

Although many ATM service team robberies involve significant surveillance and planning, few, if any, have demonstrated the premeditated lethality of this attack, indicated by the distance at which the shot was fired, the fact that it was aimed at the victim's head (which would eliminate the advantage of any bullet resistant clothing), and the fact that the fatal shot took place before any demand for cash was made. This represents a disturbing development in the level of premeditated lethal violence toward ATM servicers. (*Atlanta [Georgia] Journal*, May 7 & 8, *Atlanta Constitution*, June 16).

- 2) **Two Toronto ATM Service Team Robberies In 24 Hours - \$500,000 Lost In One Ambush Robbery; Guard Shot In Face In Failed Second Robbery** - Two separate 3 person ATM service teams were attacked within 24 hours in the Toronto, Canada area on April 7 and 8. At least 3 armed robbers with machine guns surprised an ATM Services armored car team at a Royal Bank branch in Mississauga, Ontario at 10:45 p.m. on April 7. The two armed guard couriers were surprised by masked robbers who suddenly appeared from inside the closed Royal Bank branch and struggled briefly with the guards. One guard had his hands cuffed behind his back, but neither guard was disarmed and no shots were fired. More than \$500,000 was taken in the Mississauga ATM service team robbery.

While the two masked robbers ambushed the two ATM servicers inside the bank, a third robber approached the driver of the armored truck and fired two rifle shots in an attempt to get into the van. Police later examined a package containing a putty-like substance which was taped to the outside of a door of the ATM Services armored truck during the robbery. Forensic analysis found the package did not contain plastique-a powerful explosive with military application.

Police are questioning bank staff, cleaning workers and armored car personnel about the possibility of a key which appears to have been used to get inside the bank to set up the ambush of the ATM service team. Police recovered two vans believed used by the Mississauga ATM service team robbers. One was abandoned outside the bank, the other was found in an industrial area a few blocks away. "It appears to be well executed," said investigating detective Steve Culf, who noted one robber apparently wore a bulletproof vest. Police are investigating.

The second attack occurred as two Loomis guards were exiting their 3-person service vehicle about 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday April 8 to service Toronto Dominion Bank ATMs on the busy corner of Bloor Street and Royal York Road in Etobicoke. As soon as the two Loomis guards exited their vehicle, the robbers started shooting, resulting one guard being shot in the face, fortunately just receiving a grazing injury to his cheek. Both guards returned fire, forcing the thieves to flee, and possibly hitting one of the thieves. The third Loomis guard in the truck sped off after one of the thieves opened fire on the vehicle. At least twelve shots were exchanged in the shootout, but no cash was lost. Police described this robbery as "amateur" in comparison to the previous night's ATM service team robbery. (*Toronto* [Ontario, Canada] *Sun*, April 9).

ROBBERY OF COMMERCIAL DEPOSIT

- 3) **North Carolina Taco Bell Manager Robbed Of Deposit At ATM** - Between 9 and 10 a.m. on Sunday morning April 5, Deborah Sapp, manager of a Taco Bell reported she was robbed while attempting to make a deposit at a Wachovia Bank ATM in Randolph Mall parking lot near Asheboro, North Carolina. Police are investigating. ([Asheboro, North Carolina] *Courier-Tribune*, April 9).

THEFT OF ENTIRE ATM MACHINES

- 4) **Three Tennessee Men Confess To Theft Of Two Entire ATMs And Three Unsuccessful Attempts** - On April 13, Samuel Reece Downing, 19, and Tony Allen Neal, 25, pleaded guilty of conspiring with Richard Wayne McElhane Jr. during the winter of 1996-97 to steal entire ATM machines from Tennessee convenience stores that were closed late at night. The gang of three usually stole a vehicle, typically a van and rammed it rear-and first into the front of a closed convenience store. The thieves would then ram the ATM or pry it from the floor of the convenience stores and extract the machine. The burglars cut telephone and alarm wires before their "ram raids" began. On May 2, 1997 the gang removed an entire ATM belonging to AmSouth Bank from the Favorite Market in Chattanooga, Tennessee and hid the machine in the woods nearby. Shortly thereafter the thieves removed \$33,340 from the ATM.

A second successful ATM extraction occurred at the Mr. Zip convenience store. This ATM belonged to First American Bank and contained \$9,140, but the thieves were never successful in removing the cash from the machine. Prosecutors said three other unsuccessful attempts were made to extract ATMs from convenience stores: at the Golden Gallon on June 19, 1997; Mr. Zip on June 24, 1997 and Favorite Market on July 24, 1997. All three men are waiting sentencing. (*Chattanooga* [Tennessee] *Free Press*, April 14).

- 5) **Entire ATM Stolen In Kansas City By Duo Costumed As A Security Guard And A Repair Person** - About 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7, a woman dressed as a security guard and a man dressed as a repair person entered a convenience store on Grandview Road in Kansas City, Missouri and told clerks they were there to repair the ATM. Between 4:36 and 4:50 p.m., the duo tinkered with the ATM and talked to employees and customers. At 4:50 p.m. the "repair man" loaded the ATM on a dolly and removed it from the store. Police are seeking information. (*Kansas City [Missouri] Star*, April 9).
- 6) **Two Navy Men Charged In Theft Of Entire ATM Near Miami** - On March 24, John Wolfley, 27, and Paul Kenicki, 34, had their barracks at the Navy base's Truman annex searched. The two are waiting trial on charges of stealing an entire ATM from a Miami business, Fat Tuesday. The police search found hand held radios, a book on how to pick safe locks, and a BB gun hollowed out to look like a Colt 45 handgun. The two Navy men were believed to be planning a burglary of restaurant while they were out on bail from their arrests on the theft of entire ATM machine charge. (*Miami [Florida] Herald*, March 25).
- 7) **Entire ATM Stolen From Ohio Service Station** - Between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. on Friday April 17, burglars broke into Taz's Marathon Service Station near Pomeroy, Ohio, cut the store's alarm and telephone wires and then pried open the front door of the service station to gain access to the ATM. The entire ATM, owned by Farmers Bank & Savings Company in Pomeroy was removed. Police on routine patrol about 2 a.m. found nothing out of the ordinary at the service station. The police investigators believe the burglars were professionals who knew exactly what they wanted. The burglary was discovered at about 5 a.m. when the store's owner arrived to open the business. (*Gallipolios [Ohio] Daily Tribune*, April 17).

BURGLARY OF ATM MACHINES

- 8) **Photo From Nearby ATM Leads To Guilty Plea By Two Thieves Of Cameraless ATM In Philadelphia** - Shortly after 2 a.m. on April 4, 1997 two Philadelphia men, Charles Camel, 28, and Warren O'Connell, also 28, broke into a closed Shop'n'Bag Market, detached the phone lines to the ATM and were using a handcart to wheel it out of the store to a waiting vehicle, when the one-ton Money Access Center ATM tipped onto its side and attracted the attention of an employee in another part of the closed store, who heard the commotion and called police. The two would-be robbers fled empty-handed. There were no eyewitnesses to the attempted ATM machine theft, and the victimized ATM, which contained \$79,600 had no surveillance camera.

The two burglars failed to notice the camera on another MAC ATM at a bank two doors away from the grocery store. That camera recorded the suspects in several incriminating poses; putting on gloves, holding a pair of bolt-cutters, breaking the lock, opening the door, cutting the ATM's phone lines, dropping the handcart, running from the scene, and even recording the license plate of the burglars' van.

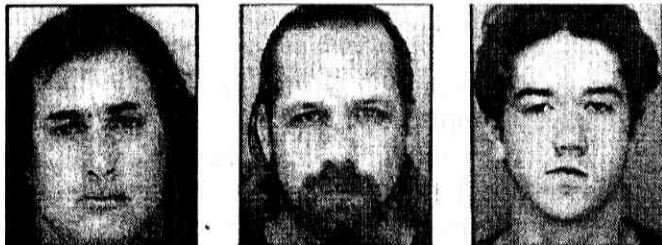
Photos from the bank ATM led to the arrest of Camel and O'Connell. On March 30, 1998 both men pleaded guilty to burglary, theft, trespassing and criminal mischief. (*Philadelphia Enquirer*, March 31 and [Doylestown, Pennsylvania] *Intelligencer Record*, March 31).

9) **ATM In West Virginia State Capitol Building Pried Open, \$19,530 Taken** - On Monday, April 13, a Valley Bank ATM in the West Virginia State Capitol in Charleston was pried open and \$19,530 was taken. The ATM was located in the basement of the Capitol's east wing. After the bank received a call that the ATM was not able to dispense cash, it dispatched two ATM servicers who arrived at 9:15 a.m. The servicers did not notice anything immediately wrong with the ATM. After they opened the ATM they discovered the cash cannisters were removed. One servicer said, "I feel someone would have to be very familiar with this ATM to get the cash." After the ATM was broken into and the cash was stolen, the ATM was put back together and locked. Charleston police investigating the burglary reported faint pry marks were visible near the three locks on the ATM vault. Charleston police and the FBI are investigating. (*Charleston [West Virginia] Gazette*, April 18).

10) **Gang Which Used Front-End Loader To Steal Florida ATM With \$30,000 In It Is Busted; Nine Arrested** - Federal and Pinellas County, Florida police have arrested nine people who may have been involved in more than 26 burglaries in four states during the last year, including the theft of an entire ATM in Pinellas Park, Florida in the past year. The gang is believed to have worked in New York, New Jersey, Florida and Texas, making off with at least \$7 million in gold and gemstones.

Seven of the nine persons arrested live in Pinellas County, Florida including Alfredo C. Carratala, 33. The burglars cased jewelry stores, watched employees and learned their routines during the day. The burglars returned after dark with police scanners, cellular phones, VHF radios and a cutting torch. In their most heavy-handed burglary on January 23, the gang used a stolen front-end loader to destroy a ATM kiosk at the GTE Federal Credit Union, and to steal the entire ATM and its \$30,000 in cash and deposits (see April 1998 *Newsletter*, Item # 4).

Three of the nine gang members arrested are pictured at right. Kenneth Phillip Abella, 42; William E. Deering, 30; and Jeremy Johnson, 18. (*St. Petersburg [Florida] Times*, March 18 & 19).



11) **Michigan ATM Burglar Drowns While Being Pursued By Police** - About 2 a.m. on Sunday March 15, Dearborn Michigan police responded to the U of M Dearborn Campus student union to investigate reports of a man trying to steal an ATM. When police arrived, they observed the man wheeling a part of the ATM on a dolly. When the man spotted the police, he fled the scene with officers in foot pursuit. Police chased the man into a wooded area, where they lost track of him.

While continuing their search for the suspect, police heard several cries for help. When they located the cries, they saw a man bobbing briefly in the Rouge River before he disappeared into the swift-flowing waters.

Divers who were called in had been unable to locate the body of the man who was believed to be the ATM burglar. Police investigation suggests that Joel Jeffrey Vela, 40, was the burglar. Police found a white 1994 pickup truck registered to Vela's mother about a half mile away from the student union. Police now believe Vela was acting alone, and his plan was to use the dolly to extract the entire ATM into a wooded area, then to walk half a mile to his truck and drive back to pick up the cash machine. Joel Vela has previous burglary and larceny convictions. The \$15,000 ATM and all its cash were recovered and returned to Coamerica Bank, its owner. (*Dearborn* [Michigan] *Times-Herald*, March 18, *Dearborn Press & Guide*, March 26).

- 12) **Atlanta Area Police Officer Spared Death By Gunbelt Which Stopped ATM Burglar's Bullet** - In October 1997, Cobb County Police Department officer G.D. Ferrell responded to the scene of an ATM burglary in progress. When Ferrell arrived, he saw three suspects at a Powers Ferry Road ATM. The three suspects, wearing body armor and heavily armed were intercepted as they prepared to burglarize the ATM. The burglars opened fire on Officer Ferrell when he drove up. Only one bullet struck him, but it hit Ferrell's gunbelt and was stopped by the inch-and-a-half of leather. "I sometimes feel how lucky I was, how somebody must have been looking out on me that morning," Ferrell said. "It makes you think how serious the job is and how fragile life is," he said. (*Atlanta* [Georgia] *Constitution*, March 12).
- 13) **Minnesota Ski Area ATM Broken Into For \$1200 Theft** - Late on Sunday March 15 or early the next morning, burglars broke a window to gain entry to a Welch Village Ski Area building near Red Wing, Minnesota, and its ATM. The burglars pried open the ATM machine, causing more than \$9,000 in damages, and stealing \$1200 cash. This was the second burglary at Welch Village, within a week. The previous burglary involved theft of beer, cigarettes and money. (*Red Wing* [Minnesota] *Republican Eagle*, March 18).
- 14) **Canadian ATM Servicers Interrupt Burglary Of ATM** - Early on Wednesday April 8, Brinks guards were about to make their stop at the ATM at the Toronto-Dominion Bank in St. Catharines, Ontario when they heard a woman in a white late-model car honking her car horn repeatedly. Suspicious, the Brinks guards checked the area and saw a man jump into the car and the vehicle speed off. Upon the inspection of the ATM, the guards saw that a door had been pried open at the bank and an attempt had been made to pry open a door leading to the ATM. A citizen saw the white car driving erratically and called the police. After stopping the vehicle, Walter Tabor, 49 and Catharine Price, 38 were arrested. Both suspects had numerous warrants in several other police jurisdictions, and were being held in police custody. ([St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada] *Standard*, April 9).

YACS SUSPECTED IN ATM BURGLARIES NATIONWIDE

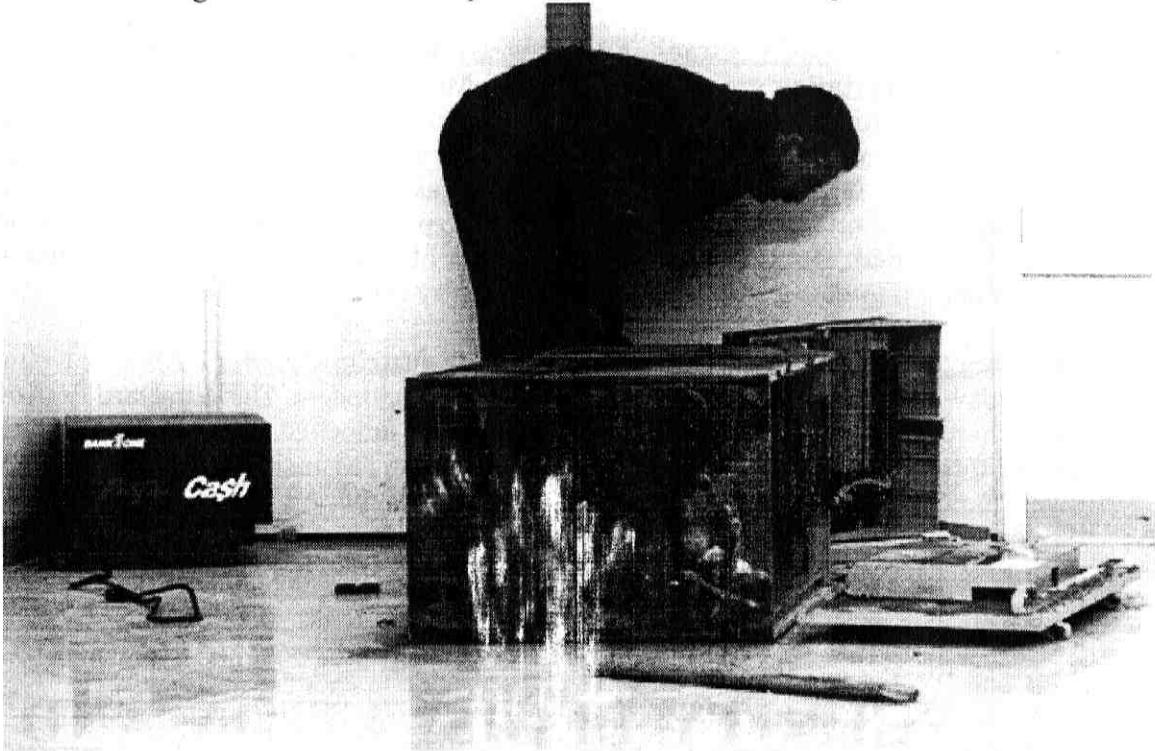
The Yugoslavian, Albanian, Croatian And Serbian (YACS) Burglaries Of ATMs Continue Across The Country - The FBI continues to investigate an estimated 1,000 burglaries nationwide attributed to cells of YACS burglars, including breakins at numerous jewelry stores, and burglaries of ATMs in grocery stores and convenience stores. The YACS are believed to have stolen \$50 million dollars nationwide, and have been designated a "major case" by the FBI. The Food Marketing Institute (FMI) of Washington, D.C. and its director of security, Chuck Miller (202) 429-8254 have provided private security leadership in coordination with the FBI investigations. The FMI is collecting data from its members on suspected YACS burglary attacks. Following are available details of several burglaries believed committed by cells of YACS burglars across America.

15) **Florida Supermarket ATM Burglarized And Security Videotape Stolen** - Early on the morning of January 29, 1998 the Spires IGA Supermarket in Lake Butler, Florida was burglarized. A crowbar was used to open the ATM which was located in the front lobby of the supermarket. Employees reported a darkly complexioned male was seen doing surveillance of the store the night before the burglary. The burglar(s) are believed to have been locked in the store the night before. The amount of loss was not reported. (FMI report)

16) **YACS Use 10-Foot Ladder To Drop Through Hole In New York Sears Store And Burglarize ATM** - Between 7 p.m. Sunday March 15 and 9:30 a.m. the next day, burglars smashed a square hole in the roof of a Sears store at the Cross Country Shopping Center in Yonkers. The hole was cut through four to six inches of concrete in the roof. The burglars then smashed through a dropped ceiling and used a 10 foot wooden stepladder they had brought with them to complete their entry precisely in front of the store's ATM. There were no security alarms in the room where the ATM was located, although if their entry had been a few feet farther inside the store, they would have triggered a motion alarm. The burglars turned a security video camera backwards so their images could not be taken. Police said the *modus operandi* of this burglary targeting an ATM and using earlier surveillance to identify the security countermeasures around the ATM and their precise point of entry into the store suggest the work of the YACS burglars. Once inside with the ATM,



the burglars used heavy tools to cut open the machine and remove the cash. The amount of loss in the Sears ATM burglary was not disclosed. The burglars exited the building on their 10 foot stepladder to the roof and escaped.



([Yonkers, New York] *Herald Statesman*, March 17). The photos of this burglary are copyright 1998 by the *Herald Statesman*, and are used here by permission.

- 17) **Rooftop Attack On New York Supermarket Fails** - During the early morning hours of Sunday March 22, Beacon, New York police responded to the Grand Union Supermarket where burglars had cut a hole through the roof in the rear of the store near the meat department and used a rope to drop down inside the store to attack the un-alarmed ATM. The burglars brought a crowbar and sledgehammer with them, but were unsuccessful in opening the ATM and stealing its cash. The burglars fled through the opening they made in the roof. (FMI Report).
- 18) **Supermarket Baker In Maryland Is Tied Up At 3:30 A.M. By ATM Burglars** - A female baker was working alone in the Weis Market in Westminster, Maryland about 3:30 a.m. on Sunday March 22 when burglars dressed in black burst into the store. Police believe the woman alone in the store making bread was probably a surprise to the burglars. She was bound with a cord by men with foreign accents, and was not physically harmed. The burglars disabled an alarm on the ATM, posted look-outs around the building and smashed their way into the ATM's vault. After taking cash, the burglars fled the store and the baker freed herself.

Maryland police believe the same group was connected with the burglary of an ATM in a Harford County convenience store on October 28, 1997 and a Frederick County Safeway grocery store ATM on Christmas Eve, 1997. In both previous burglaries, the thieves escaped with several thousand dollars. These burglaries are suspected to be the work of the YACS who are working in Maryland as a

result of stepped-up efforts by New York law enforcement officers, which has forced the YACS burglars to work outside of their preferred New York area. ([Baltimore, Maryland] *Sun*, March 24).

- 19) **Latest Maryland YACS Attack Features Syrup Poured On ATM And Safe To Stop Fingerprinting** - About 8:30 p.m. on Monday April 20, burglars entered the Valu-Food Store in Havre de Grace, Maryland by punching a hole through the rear wall of the store. Responding police found pry bars and sledgehammers at the burglary scene. Several thousand dollars were taken from the ATM, which then had syrup poured on the ATM machine and vault, presumably so fingerprints could not easily be lifted. Three white males had been observed earlier with dark wavy hair and dark skin doing surveillance of the grocery store. (FMI Report).
- 20) **California Strip Mall ATM Burglarized With Industrial Grinder** - About 11 p.m. on Monday April 13, Fontana, California police responded to The Vineyard Valley Mall, where burglars had apparently entered through unlocked front doors and then climbed through the ceiling and wall to approach an ATM inside the strip mall. A power angle grinder was used to open the vault of the ATM. The grinder and goggles were found by police at the scene. Approximately \$30,000 in cash was missing. ([Riverside, California] *Press-Enterprise*, April 15; FMI Report).

ATM SECURITY LEGISLATION AND LITIGATION

With most legislative bodies in the United States in summer recess, a review of key ATM-related legislation is appropriate:

- 21) **U.S. Senator D'Amato's Bill Regulating ATM Fees Stalls In Committee** - Senate Bill 885, the "Fair ATM Fees For Consumers Act", which could have far-reaching effects on fees ATM customers pay, has not passed out of Committee to the floor of the Senate. New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato, chair of the Senate Banking Committee, has continued to push SB 885 and is looking for cosponsors, but thus far has lacked the votes to get the bill out of committee.
- 22) **Massachusetts ATM Security Bill May Be Considered In Next Session** - Massachusetts House Bill 5298 sponsored by Representative Philip Travis passed out of committee and made its way to the House Ways and Means committee, but did not receive action by the full chamber in the session which ended in July. The bill is expected to be refiled in the next session of the Massachusetts legislature.

HB 5298 is a comprehensive ATM physical security proposal, fashioned after New York State's ATM security law, with minimum specifications for ATM location, lighting (ten foot candles at machine face outward to five feet; two foot candles outward to 50 feet), a surveillance camera system recording all persons entering

an ATM facility, access to a 911 emergency number, either via a telephone or emergency 911 button at the ATM, written customer safety instructions given to the cardholder upon issuance of the access device, and an annual compliance report about the ATM security program filed with the Commissioner of Banking. For more information contact Massachusetts Representative Philip Travis at (617) 722-2370.

- 23) **Ohio Bill Requiring E911 ATM Emergency Button Does Not Pass Current Session** - Ohio HB 315, which would require every ATM operating within an area served by an enhanced 911 system to install and maintain an E911 emergency call button on the machine, did not pass out of the Public Utilities committee in the Ohio House of Representatives. Representative Edward Jerse (614) 466-8012 introduced the bill, which likely will carry over to the next session of the Ohio legislature.

- 24) **California's New "10-20-Life" Gun Law** - A tough new California gun law may be applied to Kevin Thornton, 15, who is accused of firing a shot during a February 27 robbery at the Norton Credit Union ATM in Redlands, California. Thornton could receive a 25-year-to-life sentence under a new California "10-20-Life" gun law, which adds ten years to the original sentence for a criminal who displays a gun in the commission of a crime, an additional 20 years for firing a weapon during commission of a crime, and 25 years to life for wounding or killing someone during the commission of the crime.

Thornton is accused of firing a handgun at Leon Loyd, 47, who was using the ATM about 7:40 p.m. Loyd said the gunman came up behind him after he had received cash from the ATM and demanded, "Give me everything you've got--you've got a count of 10." Loyd, for some reason unknown to him, responded by saying a four-letter expletive and running away in an evasive pattern. Loyd said, "I figured if I gave him the money he was liable to shoot me in the face. I zigged and zagged...with me running, it gave me a good chance." Loyd, who has U.S. Army experience, said he heard bullets whizzing all around him, and he heard the windshield of his car shatter as he fled toward a nearby bookstore. "(The robber) fired five shots. They were meant to kill me," said Loyd.

A stray bullet shattered a glass door at the World Discoveries toy store nearby, and hit a pair of eyeglasses worn by Kathryn Holt, 36. The bullet caused a piece of glass to enter her eye and slash her cornea. Future cornea transplant surgery appears necessary for her left eye, and Holt may lose vision in that eye. Arrested with juvenile Kevin Thornton were 18-year-olds Brian Lovel Henderson and Christopher Henry. Thornton faces a stiff sentence under the "10-20-Life" law. ([Riverside, California] *Press-Enterprise*, April 17 & *Redlands Daily Facts*, April 17).

- 25) **Iowa Sues Sears Roebuck For \$3.8 Million In ATM Violations** - The Iowa Division of Banking filed suit April 17 in Polk County District Court alleging that Sears Roebuck knowingly violated several state ATM regulations. Iowa regulators allege Sears opened seven ATM machines in Iowa without prior approval, violated state requirements for open access to all brands of bank cards and ignored established limits on ATM fees.

Iowa is asking for \$3.8 million in civil penalties from Sears for these violations. Iowa law requires ATMs to be affiliated with a financial institution in the state, and Columbus, Ohio-based BankOne, which Sears says is the owner and operator of the machines, has no offices in Iowa. Sears has responded by arguing Iowa does not have authority to regulate ATMs in its stores because the company is a retailer, not a bank, and that Sears was only a landlord for the ATM machine. The \$3.8 million dollar penalty requested by Iowa is based on the alleged number of machines, the number of statutory violations and the number of days of operation of the machines while in violation. (*Des Moines [Iowa] Register*, April 18).

MAJOR INCIDENTS INVOLVING **ATM CUSTOMERS**

- 26) **California Man On Probation Befriends Daughter Of Elderly Woman, Steals Her ATM Card And \$3,000 Now Is Charged With Murder Of The Elderly Woman** - Philip Jimenez Sifuentes, 31, faces a variety of charges in connection with the October 30 murder of Helen Huff, 82, who was found October 30 asphyxiated from a broken neck in the bedroom of her La Canada, California home. Valuables had been stolen including her purse and her son's car. Sifuentes turned himself in to authorities a week later and was arrested in connection with these crimes. About a year earlier, Sifuentes, on parole, was hired to paint Huff's house after he and Huff's adult daughter Nancy Huff Castillo, began a romantic relationship. Friends of the couple say he virtually lived in Helen Huff's home for several months despite the fact that the elderly woman did not like or trust him. Sifuentes had stolen Huff's ATM card from her purse several weeks before her murder and had withdrawn more than \$3,000 cash from her accounts. ([La Canada, California] *Valley Sun*, March 26).
- 27) **Los Angeles ATM Robber Carjacks Man, Woman And Child After Robbing \$100 ATM Withdrawal From Them** - At 7:50 p.m. Saturday April 4, a 37-year-old Los Angeles man left his car with his wife in the driver's seat and child inside and went to an ATM near Westchester Parkway on Sepulveda Blvd. After withdrawing \$100 from the ATM, the man had returned to his car when a robber appeared, pointed a gun at the man's face, shoved him inside the car and said, "Don't move or I'm going to shoot your kid. Just get inside." The man turned over his \$100 to the robber and got in the car. The robber then ordered the man's wife to drive several blocks away. The carjacker then ordered the family out of the car and drove off. The stolen vehicle was later recovered. ([Marina Del Rey, California] *Argonaut*).
- 28) **Ohio Woman Carjacked And Stabbed While Making ATM Deposit** - Saturday morning April 4, Joyce Albers, 37, of Oregonia, Ohio was confronted by a man who asked her for a ride as she was leaving a SuperAmerica Station. Albers refused, but the suspect forced his way into the passenger side of her vehicle. The robber

saw the victim's intended ATM deposit in the car, stabbed the victim and exited the vehicle fleeing on foot about 1:45 p.m. Albers was taken to a local hospital. The suspect was described as having an unkept appearance, and was wearing a mechanic style uniform with a blue uniform shirt with the name tag "Jack" on it. Police are investigating. ([Dayton, Ohio] *Beavercreek News Current*).

- 29) **Three Elderly Women Targeted For Purse Snatching At Ohio ATMs** - Three elderly women were robbed of their purses near an ATM outside Fishers Foods in Canton, Ohio during the last week of May. Two of the strongarmed robberies occurred Thursday March 26. About 11:30 a.m. a 70-year-old woman had her purse pulled from her arm after she withdrew cash from the ATM. The victim was knocked to the ground, injuring her left arm and left leg. Her purse contained a checkbook, \$9 and other belongings. A 71-year-old woman reported a similar robbery about 7 p.m. the same day. A robber appeared after the victim had withdrawn cash from the ATM, jerked her purse from her hand and fled. The victim said her purse had a checkbook and \$10 in it. Both victims told police the strongarm robber approached on foot, stole their purse and then ran to a car and drove away. Details on a third elderly woman's victimization near the Fishers Foods ATM were not published. ([Canton, Ohio] *Repository*, March 28 & 31).

UNUSUAL ATM CUSTOMER ROBBERIES

Following are the details of several unusual ATM customer robberies. These represent the most newsworthy ATM customer robberies for the time period covered by this *Newsletter*.

- 30) **Two New Jersey Men Charged With Home Invasion Robbery Of 80-Year-Old And Theft Of ATM Card, PIN And \$500** - On the morning of March 4, Randall Bordeaux, 41, and his alleged accomplice Jeffrey Thomas entered the home of an 80-year-old Somerville, New Jersey man through an open breezeway door and bound his hands and feet. The home invasion robbers removed cash and bank cards from the man's wallet, and extracted his PIN number at knifepoint. The cards were used later that morning to obtain \$500 from an ATM in Plainfield, New Jersey. The perpetrators were imaged by bank security cameras. The two suspects have been arrested. ([Somerville, New Jersey] *Somerset Messenger-Gazette*, March 19).

- 31) **Suspect Sought In Four New Jersey ATM Robberies** - New Jersey State Police and Newark police are seeking a man (see photo at right) in connection with four strong-arm robberies at ATM machines in Irvington. The robber did not display a weapon during the four ATM robberies. In the fifth robbery of a woman whose car was stopped along the Garden State Parkway in Irvington, the same perpetrator is believed to have held the female driver at knifepoint and sprayed her with mace.



The robber later intended to use the victim's bank card at an ATM. New Jersey State Police are soliciting information about the robberies or the suspects at (973) 338-8260. ([Newark, New Jersey] *Star-Ledger*, April 2).

- 32) **Connecticut Woman Robbed Of 3:45 A.M. Deposit, Abducted And Raped** - About 3:45 a.m. on Sunday March 29, a Bridgeport, Connecticut woman, 30, went to a Peoples Bank branch after work to make a deposit and was confronted by a masked man with a handgun. The robber took \$200 from the woman after forcing her to withdraw it from her account at the ATM. Then the assailant forced the woman to drive him to a wooded area where he ripped off her clothes, raped her, threw her on the ground and stole her car. Police are investigating. ([Bridgeport] *Connecticut Post*, March 31).
- 33) **Brooklyn Man Hit In Face With Stun Gun In \$320 ATM Robbery** - About 6 a.m. on Saturday April 4, a 37-year-old Brooklyn man leaving an ATM was confronted by two men wielding a stun gun as he attempted to enter his car parked in front of a bank at 50th Street and Eighth Avenue. The victim stated he was hit in the face with a stun gun as he approached his car, after which two robbers took \$320 and his ATM card. The perpetrators then fled on foot. ([Brooklyn, New York] *Bayridge Paper*, April 10).
- 34) **Gunpoint Abductions Of Women In Two Separate Virginia Incidents May Be Related** - About 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday March 31, a 50-year-old woman was leaving an office building in Fairfax County, Virginia when an armed man opened the driver's side door to her Toyota minivan and climbed into the back seat. The abductor told the woman to drive to a First Union Bank ATM, where the victim withdrew several hundred dollars. The abductor then directed the victim to drive back to the location where the abduction began. He took the cash, got out of the minivan and fled on foot. The abduction lasted about 40 minutes.
- Police are investigating the possibility that this incident was connected to a similar gunpoint abduction of a 25-year-old Arlington woman who was confronted by a gunman in her parked vehicle about 9 p.m. on Wednesday March 25. In that incident, the abductor entered the woman's vehicle and directed her to drive to an ATM in Prince George's, Maryland. Neither woman was physically harmed during the abductions. No further details were reported. (*Fairfax [Virginia] Journal*, April 2).
- 35) **Armed Home Invasion Robbers Hit Atlanta Area Repeatedly** - A string of metro Atlanta home invasion robberies is believed the work of the same two robbers. On February 19, two masked robbers entered a Rockdale, Georgia residence about 12:30 p.m. through an unlocked front door. One intruder wore a mask and confronted the homeowner with a semi-automatic handgun. The second robber wore a bandanna. The robbers took the victim's ATM card and pointed a handgun at his head, forcing him to reveal his PIN number before binding him with packing tape.

Before the victim had freed himself the two robbers were at an ATM trying to drain his account. The thugs removed the mask and bandanna before approaching the ATMs. An ATM camera recorded one suspect removing several hundred dollars

with the stolen ATM card at 1:06 p.m. About 26 minutes later a SunTrust Bank recorded the second suspect step out of a burgundy or maroon Toyota Camry to try to withdraw cash again. Police circulated the photos and solicited public assistance.



About two weeks later on Monday March 2, two home invasion robbers struck in rural Newton County and held a family of three at gunpoint to steal a wallet and some credit cards. The suspects in this incident also fit the description of the earlier February 19 home invasion robbery.

The pair of home invasion robbers is also suspected in a February 27 robbery where two intruders entered the residence in North Coweta and taped a man to a chair before calling his wife at work and demanding the PIN number for their ATM card. The home invasion robbers threatened to kidnap the man unless his wife gave the robbers the correct information.

Early on Tuesday afternoon March 3, two men attempted to force their way into a Henry County residence, but they were unable to gain entry when a resident quickly shut and bolted the door. The pair of robbers in this incident also were armed with a handgun. Later the same day they did enter a home in Newton County, took an American Express card, but fled when a home security alarm sounded. The stolen AMEX card was quickly used nearby.

A Monday, March 16 home invasion robbery in Duluth, Georgia may be related. In that incident two black males burst into a doctor's home, taped his hands and feet, ransacked his home and stuffed him into the trunk of his car. The robbers entered the home through a garage door and found the victim in the kitchen. The victim told the home invasion robbers he did not have any cash in the house and did not have a safe. The robbers then demanded credit cards and PIN numbers, which the victim provided. After ransacking the house, the two robbers took the doctor into the trunk of his car. They told him they were taking him with them to the ATM in case he had not given them the correct PIN number. They then drove away in another vehicle.

The robbers have been described as well-spoken, polite and educated. ([Conyers, Georgia] *Rockdale Citizen*, February 20 & March 5; [Newton, Georgia] *Times-Herald*, March 7; [Lawrenceville, Georgia] *Gwinnett Daily Post*, March 19).

- 36) **Three Atlanta ATM Robbers Take \$220 From Two Victims** - On the night of Saturday March 28, Harlan Duval and his friend Donald Smith were walking back to their car after using a NationsBank ATM in Stockbridge, Georgia when a bearded man in his early 20s approached from the driveup area brandishing a semiautomatic handgun and demanding the victim's car keys. Two accomplices of the robber remained silent as the gunman grabbed the car keys and demanded cash. The victims turned over \$200, and the robbers fled on foot. (*Atlanta Constitution*, April 2).

CAMERAS AT ATMs

- 37) **California Newspaper Publishes ATM Photo Of Robbery Suspects, 40 Tipsters Call Police, And Suspects Turn Themselves In** - About 1 a.m. on Thursday March 19, Doug Higbee, 23, was using a Wells Fargo Bank ATM in Antioch, California when the ATM security camera captured images of two men attacking him. Higbee said one of the assailants threatened him with a screwdriver, and when Higbee tried to get away the second robber wrestled him to the ground. The two thugs repeatedly punched and kicked Higbee, who suffered a cut over his left



eye requiring seven stitches. Higbee eventually gave the two robbers \$45 from his wallet. On Friday April 3, the Antioch *Ledger Dispatch* published the ATM photo of the two suspects.

The photo sparked a flood of calls to police from more than 40 people, who identified the men including some of the co-workers of one of the suspects. The following Monday, the two men, Kenneth Hartman, 19, and his 17 year old accomplice turned themselves in at the Antioch police station. Police said, "I think they felt it was pretty obvious they would get identified, (by the ATM photo) so they decided they should turn themselves in and look as right as possible." ([Antioch, California] *Ledger Dispatch*, April 7).

38) **Los Angeles Police Release ATM Photos Of Suspects In Serial North Hollywood Robberies And Rapes** -

Los Angeles police have released bank surveillance photos March 25 of two armed suspects wanted on suspicion of abducting at least four women in North Hollywood and taking them to ATM machines for forced withdrawals. In two cases the women also were sexually assaulted (see April 1998 *Newsletter*, Item #36). The crimes occurred in the late-night to early-morning hours between February 8 and March 3 and involved four victims, ranging in age from 20 to 30 years old. Police are seeking information at (818) 623-4061. ([Los Angeles] *Daily News*, March 26).



39) **New Orleans Carjacker Caught On ATM Video** -

About 10:30 p.m. on Wednesday April 1, a robber pulled a knife on a woman as she was making an ATM withdrawal in the 3800 block of General De Gaulle Drive in New Orleans. The robber forced the victim to make a cash withdrawal, and then forced her into the passenger side of her Toyota and sped off with her in the car. The woman jumped out of the car and suffered facial injuries so severe she will need plastic surgery. The stolen car was found in Jefferson Parish the next day. Police released the ATM photo at right, and Crimestoppers is offering a reward of up to \$1,000 for information in the case. ([New Orleans, Louisiana] *Times-Picayune*, April 10).



- 40) **Baton Rouge Carjacker And ATM Robber Sought** - The ATM camera photo (at right) was released by police in connection with a kidnapping and carjacking at a Baton Rouge, Louisiana mall on February 10. The robber forced his victim to withdraw cash from an ATM on Blue Bonnett Road in Baton Rouge. Police are seeking information. Crimestoppers is offering a \$1000 reward for information. ([New Orleans, Louisiana] *Times-Picayune*, March 31).



- 41) **Brooklyn Police And ATM Robbery Victim Complain About ATM Cameras** - About 7 a.m. on Friday March 20, Bill DeLorge was at a Brooklyn Citibank ATM on 7th Avenue and President Street when two middle-aged men inside the kiosk pulled guns on him and pointed them at his head and said, "Take out \$1,000 or we'll blow your head off." Other customers started to enter the ATM vestibule as one of the robbers pretended to be a panhandler at the door and the other stood beside DeLorge with a gun pressed to his side. DeLorge withdrew \$900 and gave it to the robbers, who fled outside in an older model gray car with its license plate covered by cardboard.

Brooklyn police reviewing the Citibank video pronounced it so blurry as to be useless. One police officer estimated that location has been robbed five or six times in the past four years, and the bank has been urged by police to invest in better equipment. Detective Ernest Borrelli said, "We had the same problem on this robbery. You can see images but you can't make out the faces. So it's really no good to us. And it can't be enhanced." Specifically, Borrelli complained that the distance of the camera was too far to get a good image of the robbers; the bank does not have cameras in the ATM fascia facing the customers; there are no cameras near the entrance to image people going in or out of the ATM vestibule, and the same tape appears to have been used for months on end. Citibank responded by saying there are guards in the bank from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. and the security cameras at that location are live monitored six times an hour from a central location, and cameras are planned to be upgraded in all Citibank facilities. Police have descriptions of the two robbers, but no other significant leads in this case. ([Brooklyn, New York] *Park Slope Paper*, April 3).

NEWS OF WEIRD ATM INCIDENTS

- 42) **Ohio Con Man Claims To Be Special Military Investigator With Secret Code For ATM Withdrawals** - Alleged con man Calvin Fleming, 32, is being sought by Ohio police on multiple charges. Fleming has scammed several people in the Dayton, Ohio area, hitchhiking while posing as a stranded motorist. Once inside a Good Samaritan's car, Fleming claims to be an agent with the Office of Special Investigations at Wright-Patterson Air Force base in Dayton. He asks to be driven to a nearby ATM. Fleming then says that if the Good Samaritan would put his or her ATM card in the machine, Fleming would enter a special secret code to withdraw from an OSI account. The scamster has his victims turn their backs while he enters the "code," and then withdraws cash from his victims' accounts. To delay his victims from discovering the fraud, he deposits an empty envelope into their accounts. Four incidents of this scam are known in the Dayton area beginning in Mid-February and early March, involving a loss greater than \$800. The suspect has never displayed a weapon and none of the victims has been injured. (*Fairborn [Ohio] Daily Herald*, April 7).



- 43) **Wisconsin ATM Makes Woman "Millionaire For A Day"** - After work on Monday March 30, Gay Robertson, an insurance claims adjuster, withdrew \$25 from an ATM, and pocketed the receipt. Robertson did not read her receipt until Tuesday night, when she balanced her checkbook she noticed that the account balance on her ATM receipt was \$1,000,236.

"I looked at my slip and couldn't believe it," said Robertson. "We're not rich people, and we don't have that kind of money." Robertson said she didn't plan to try withdrawing the million dollars from her account at Blue Plans Credit Union. When Robertson checked her account balance again, the mistake apparently had been corrected, showing the original account balance of a few hundred dollars. Robertson's husband Ray said when he saw the ATM receipt with the \$1 million balance, he thought that they had won some sort of contest. "What an April Fools joke," he said, "but I guess the joke is on us." Gay Robertson mused, "At least I was a millionaire for a day." ([Cedar Rapids, Iowa] *Gazette*, April 4).

- 44) **Is Honesty Its Own Reward?** Blaine and Kandice Kemlenton of Orlando, Florida found bags containing \$36,000 in cash that had been lost by an armored carrier servicing ATM machines. The couple returned all the cash to the bank, and received a \$1000 reward. (*Miami Herald*, April 18).