

COPY SHOP ATTEMPTED ROBBERY

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(My life as Josh ~ Truth Stranger than Fiction)

"Never let fiction get in the way of true stories"



Robbery attempt ends in arrest

■ One man still at large in Copy Shop stick-up attempt

By SUSAN PRICE

THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

Two men with guns tried to rob The Copy Shop in the Mendenhall Valley on Sunday night. The store owner had his own gun and disarmed one of the men after a brief stand-off. The other man got away.

Cory A. MacDonald, 21, was arrested for felony robbery after the 11:45 p.m. attempted robbery at the 24-hour print shop on Glacier Highway between Valley Restaurant and the Wee Fishie Shoppe.

State prison officials said MacDonald was released from the prison within the last 2½ weeks. Officials said he was in prison for

violating probation on a 1994 felony theft charge that was reduced from a felony robbery charge.

Police continued their search this morning for the man who fled, apparently on foot, when the store owner confronted him with a faked gun beneath a blanket.

Josh Warner, owner of The Copy Shop, said he was in a back office covered with a black comforter, watching a movie after work. The store manager, Jake Lofton, was in an adjacent press room working. The front door is usually locked at 10 p.m. and customers use a buzzer to ask for help, but for some reason the door wasn't locked.

Warner, 32, said he heard some people come in the store and he thought Lofton, 28, was helping them. The next thing he knew, the man who later fled nudged open the door to the of-

fice. He looked between 19 and 22 years old and his face was partially covered with a bandana. Warner said he could see the butt of a pistol underneath his sweater. He apparently didn't know Warner was there.

Warner said he jumped up, stiffened his arm to look like a gun underneath the blanket, and yelled, "This could be the biggest mistake of your (explicative) life pal!"

The man ran out the store. Warner said he grabbed a shotgun he keeps behind a filing cabinet in the office.

Warner said he then saw Lofton face-down on the concrete in the press room with his arms behind his back. MacDonald was pointing a sawed-off shotgun at him, no more than an arm's length away.

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"I ran in there. My gun was pointed at the guy. I said, 'Drop it, or I'll blow your (explicative) head off.' He turned and pointed his gun at me," Warner said.

He said the standoff was probably only 30 seconds, but it seemed longer. MacDonald started to lower his shotgun and Lofton jumped up and started to wrestle him to the ground, Warner said.

"The guy wouldn't go down so I clocked him (in the head) with the butt of my shotgun," Warner said.

Warner said after he called police, MacDonald tried to lunge for the sawed-off shotgun that was still on the floor. Warner said he stuck MacDonald with the barrel end of his shotgun and threatened to shoot him.

Warner said it seemed like the police were there instantly.

"A definite hats off to those guys. They were real professional. It was like watching 'Hawaii-5-0' or something," Warner said.

Police Officer Rayme Vinson said MacDonald received cuts on his scalp during the scuffle with the employees. Medics took MacDonald to the Bartlett Memorial Hospital emergency room. He was taken to the Lemon Creek Correctional Center two hours later, a hospital official said.

No one else was injured.

MacDonald was being held without bail at the state prison this morning. His arraignment was set for 1:15 p.m. today in Juneau District Court.

Police described the second suspect as white, with a light complexion and a medium build, about 5-foot-8 to 5-foot-11. He was wearing a brown sweater, blue jeans, a light-colored stocking type knit and a light-colored colored scarf over his face, police said.

Juneau Empire - April 8, 1996

Two more arrested in robbery attempt

By SUSAN PRICE

THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

Police have arrested a second man they believe tried to rob The Copy Shop at gunpoint 1½ weeks ago. They also arrested a woman they say delivered the robbers and acted as a getaway driver.

Ronald Wheat, 28, and Amber Nickerson, 21, were arrested Friday on single charges of felony robbery. The two, along with their alleged accomplice, Cory MacDonald, 21, were being held today at the Lemon Creek Correctional Center.

MacDonald is facing the robbery charge along with a felony weapons charge because the shotgun he allegedly used in the robbery was illegally sawed off.

Rick Svobodny, Juneau's district attorney, said in court documents Nickerson drove MacDonald and Wheat around town the night of April 7, looking for an open business to rob. They went to several businesses and The Copy Shop in the Mendenhall Valley was the first one they found open.

MacDonald and Wheat walked into the print shop, MacDonald armed with a shotgun and Wheat with what looked like a pistol, said the shop owner, Josh War-

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ner.

Warner said he confronted Wheat with a faked gun — actually his arm under a blanket — and Wheat fled. Warner then grabbed his own shotgun and found MacDonald holding his store manager at gunpoint. Warner and the manager disarmed MacDonald and held him until police arrived.

Svobodny said police considered Wheat a suspect from day one, even though MacDonald told his captors someone else was his accomplice.

Svobodny said police ran across Nickerson when they stopped her Friday for driving with a revoked license. After questioning her, police determined she was the one who picked up Wheat as he was flee-

ing from the store.

MacDonald was released from the state prison 12 days before the The Copy Shop robbery, prison officials said. He was in for violating parole on a felony theft charge, which was reduced from a felony robbery charge as part of a plea agreement.

MacDonald's bail is set at \$25,000 cash. Wheat's is set at \$25,000 cash plus a court-approved custodian and Nickerson's is \$10,300 cash, also with a court-approved custodian.

Nickerson is facing the driving charge from Friday, as well as a second driving with a revoked license charge and a drunken driving charge. She was sentenced Friday to 12 days in prison and fined \$400 on a failure to appear charge, according to court records and prison officials.

Copy shop robbers get prison terms

By SVEND HOLST

THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

Sentences have been handed down on the team of three would-be robbers who were thwarted by the owner of The Copy Shop.

Cory MacDonald, 21; Ronald Wheat, 28; and Amber Nickerson, 22; received sentences of from 1½ to 15 years.

The three were convicted of trying to rob The Copy Shop, on Glacier Highway between Valley Restaurant and the Wee Fishie Shoppe, in April. MacDonald wielded a sawed-off shotgun, while Wheat carried what appeared to be a gun, according to court records. Nickerson tried to get rid of evidence following the nixed robbery attempt, according to Juneau District Attorney Richard Svobodny.

Under terms of a plea agreement, MacDonald pleaded guilty to a charge of first-degree rob-

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It really affirms my belief in the justice system to see him get a sentence like that.

Josh Warner, Copy Shop

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bery and was sentenced to 20 years in prison with five years suspended by Superior Court Judge Walter Carpeneti on Aug. 19.

Along with previous penalties, MacDonald has a 10-year tally of suspended prison time that can be applied if he breaks conditions of a 10-year probation period, which starts when his prison time is up.

Svobodny said the 15-year stint

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Robbers get jail...

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in prison was the presumptive sentence for a third felony. MacDonald was out of prison for about a month after serving time for robbing a cab driver.

Michael O'Brien, a lawyer who represented MacDonald, said the plea agreement he negotiated limited MacDonald's maximum sentence to 20 years. Since MacDonald was a two-time felon before the attempted robbery of The Copy Shop, he could have gotten up to 30 years on the charges initially brought by the state, O'Brien said.

Josh Warner, the owner of The Copy Shop, was pleased with MacDonald's sentence.

When the April 7 attempted robbery occurred, Warner bluffed Wheat by holding his arm under a blanket and pretending he had a

gun. He then ran into the back of his shop with his shotgun and confronted MacDonald, he said. MacDonald, he said, told him to calm down as they stood staring at each other over the barrels of their guns.

Warner and a shop manager disarmed MacDonald.

"It was stupid. I wouldn't do it again," Warner said. He said he was "three times dead" that night, a night he sometimes takes to bed with him.

"That's the part that still haunts me," Warner said. "It disturbs my sleep."

Wheat, who pretended to have a gun during the thwarted robbery, pleaded no contest to second-degree robbery under terms of a plea agreement. With one felony conviction under his belt al-

ready, Wheat was sentenced in August to eight years in prison with two years suspended and five years of probation.

Nickerson, also under a plea agreement, pleaded guilty to tampering with physical evidence. She was sentenced in August to four years in prison with 2½ years suspended and a five-year probation period.

Though he isn't sleeping any easier, Warner said he is pleased with the resolution to the attempted robbery.

"I think, in all honesty, Cory MacDonald got the full justice he could have got," Warner said. "I don't think it could have been handled any better. It really affirms my belief in the justice system to see him get a sentence like that."

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