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COCONUT GROVE

Wheelchair bank robbery fails

A man in a wheelchair didn't get far after he robbed a Coconut Grove bank, police said.

BY ELAINE DE VALLE
edevalle@herald.com

Cursing because he'd gotten only \$200, the bank robber threw his note demanding \$1,500 on the floor, rolled out of Pan American Bank in his wheelchair and headed for the Metrorail station.

A security guard at the station stopped him and called Miami police. They arrested Larry Miller, a homeless man who said in an angry public tirade that he had robbed the bank because he couldn't get the help he needed at the Homeless Assistance Center downtown. "I am a man of God," he said.

Police said Miller, 42, went into the bank, 2770 SW 27th Ave., across from the Coconut Grove Metrorail station, about 10 a.m. Tuesday.

Bank President Hugo Castro said when Miller couldn't get through the security doors at the main entrance, an employee held a side door open for him.

Miller had a small, brown paper bag with an ink-scrawled message -- "Robbery put the money bag" -- and a number: 1,500. He first set the note in front of a bank manager, then, realizing there was no cash at her desk, gave it to a teller, said Lt. Bill Schwartz, a police spokesman.

The teller gave him two \$100 bills.

"When he came to the door, he suddenly realized he only had \$200 and became very agitated and started cussing," Schwartz said.

He threw down the note and made for the Metrorail station, where a Wackenhut Security guard stopped him and summoned police.

Schwartz said Miller had no weapon -- this time. He told arresting officers he lost the ability to walk in a botched robbery nearly 20 years ago.

"He ended up in a wheelchair back in 1985 because he was robbing a store with a gun and the owner of the store got the gun away from him and shot him," Schwartz said.

Though records for that robbery could not be found by the Herald on Tuesday, police say Miller has a history of arrests including one for homicide in 1985, as well as robbery, burglary, aggravated assault with a weapon, aggravated battery on a police officer, and smuggling contraband into prison.

Sitting in a \$2,000 "top of the line" Quickie 2 sports chair, Miller told reporters that "the system" made him rob the bank.

Shouting, he blamed Alfredo Brown, deputy director of the Community Partnership for the Homeless.

"This is because of you, Alfredo Brown at the HAC bothering me," Miller said.

Brown told The Herald that Miller had gone into the Homeless Assistance Center downtown on Aug. 6 and left last week on his own accord.

"We tried to help him, but we weren't able to do much because he wasn't very cooperative," Brown said.

Miller also blamed the Salvation Army and Jackson Memorial Hospital. "Wouldn't give me no medical care," he said, and showed a hospital bracelet from Monday that shared space on his wrist with a plastic handcuff. Schwartz said Miller likely *wanted* to get arrested. ``It's sad. I think he just wants to go to jail."