

Man sentenced for drug-fueled bank robbery

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La Plata, MD - For Richard Cecil Anno, 24, of Indian Head, a severe drug dependency led to a poor choice Aug. 25 of last year when he held up a PNC bank on North Prospect Avenue in Indian Head. His decision led to arrest and ended in Charles County Circuit Court when he was sentenced by Judge H. James West to 18 months for the robbery.

Defense attorney Robert Harvey said a plea agreement with the Charles County State's Attorney's Office that his client wanted to continue with the jail-based drug treatment program.

Assistant State's Attorney Sarah Freeman told the court guidelines called for an active 18 month sentence with a cap of six years.

"After 18 months, the defendant should be responsible for \$7,300 of restitution in the case," Freeman said.

Freeman said Anno called 911 before the robbery in a false report to distract officers from his intended action.

"This wasn't a whim decision," she said, adding that it was unclear if there was a weapon involved in the heist.

Harvey said his client was struggling with his heroin dependency, which put him in a "downward spiral."

"He has a minor criminal record," he admitted, adding that Anno was a union worker who had a job waiting for him and that 20-35 friends and family had written letters of support.

"He was involved in an accident and prescribed medication," Harvey said. "He didn't deal well with his pain and graduated to heroin use."

He asked for local incarceration so his client could continue with the jail-based treatment program.

"As much as I dislike being incarcerated, I've had plenty of time to think," Anno told the court. "I'm not a violent person. I worked hard for what I have and abide by the law generally."

West sentenced the defendant to 15 years in the Maryland Department of Corrections with all but 18 months suspended, to be served in the Charles County Detention Center, giving him credit for 223 days already served. He also sentenced Anno to five years of supervised probation upon his release, and said Anno would be responsible for \$7,300 in restitution to the victim, PNC Bank.

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