

EDITOR'S PICK

Spotsylvania judge, prosecutor give repentant robber a break

Keith Epps

Sep 6, 2016

A man whose conscience led him to turn himself in for a robbery police had no idea he'd committed received a suspended sentence Tuesday in Spotsylvania County Circuit Court.

Corey Ortega Banks, 30, was sentenced by Judge Ricardo Rigual to 10 years in prison, with all of it suspended except for the 60 days Banks has already served. Banks was also ordered to make restitution of \$33 to the Four Mile Fork Shell station.

According to the evidence, a man entered the convenience store on June 2 of last year and demanded money. He got a relatively small amount from the clerk and left. No weapon was displayed, but the clerk told police the suspect reached into his jacket as if he had one.

Police had no leads in the case until Feb. 16, when Banks went to the Fredericksburg Police Department and confessed to a robbery. After police determined that the offense occurred in Spotsylvania, the county Sheriff's Office there was contacted.

People are also reading...

- 1 **Local baseball players, coaches shine at Commonwealth Games**
 - 2 **Pedaling padre cycles to raise roof on historic church**
 - 3 **Lifelong Stafford resident leading national Daughters of the American Revolution**
 - 4 **Spotsylvania teen arrested after pursuit following a burglary attempt, police say**
-

Banks said Tuesday that he is a Christian and that his conscience would not allow him to live with the secret he was keeping.

"I'm sincerely sorry for what I did," he told the judge. "I thank God for saving me and loving me."

Defense attorney Jenna Nacht said Banks became addicted to pain pills after suffering a serious injury in the military. She said Banks had already received treatment for his addiction long before he went to the police.

"He made a bad decision in a life otherwise well lived," Nacht said.

In an unusual twist, Commonwealth's Attorney Travis Bird agreed. Bird had already agreed to let Banks plead guilty to a lesser felony charge of grand larceny from a person and acknowledged Tuesday that it is rare from someone to turn himself in for a crime he was not suspected of committing.

"In this case, I can't honestly say that any further incarceration would be useful," Bird said.

A number of supporters were in the courtroom and several of them testified, including Bob Dennis, the pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church. Dennis' brother, Richard Dennis, said Banks is "a fine young man who got sidetracked somehow."

Judge Rigual said he was impressed by the support Banks has and by Banks' action in turning himself in. The judge noted that most defendants "find religion after they've been in jail for a little while."

But Rigual warned Banks that "you will serve a considerable amount of prison time if you have another relapse."

Keith Epps: 540/374-5404

kepps@freelancestar.com

By Keith Epps

Covers crime for Fredericksburg region
