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Garden City S&L Robbed; Five Suspects in Custody

By JOHN MONK
Sun News Writer

Police using a bloodhound took three suspects into custody in a wooded area near Garden City Tuesday afternoon following an armed robbery by masked men of the Surfside branch of the Peoples Savings and Loan Association.

Two other suspects remained at large until late Tuesday evening when they were captured by three Myrtle Beach policemen near the bus terminal on 9th Avenue N. in Myrtle Beach.

Earlier in the day, bandits took an undisclosed amount of money and tied up Peoples branch manager J. Steven Hawley with telephone cord during a holdup, which took place shortly after the trailer-type loan office opened at 9 a.m. The money has been recovered, police said.

Hawley, the only person in the office while the robbery took place, was not injured. Police said his car was used in the getaway by at least one holdup man, who later abandoned it about a mile away on Ocean Boulevard in the Garden City shopping district.

Eight other persons were questioned Tuesday afternoon by law enforcement officials, but were later released.

The suspects in custody have been identified as Raymond L. Mitchell, 23; his brother Michael Mitchell, 19; Theodore Thompson, 20; Ronald

McGuire, 20; and Larry L. Norman, 21. As of Tuesday evening, none had been charged with the robbery.

All except Raymond Mitchell, identified as a sergeant recently stationed at Myrtle Beach AFB, are said to be from New York, police sources said.

One source described the robbery as a "spur-of-the-moment type thing," rather than a well-planned heist.

The FBI has custody of the suspects.

"The capture was the result of all the local law agencies combining their efforts to effect the arrests," said an FBI spokesman, who added that about 11 municipal, county, state and federal law organizations helped in different ways to bring about the arrests.

The early morning robbery was apparently broken up while still in progress by Surfside Police Chief Robert Adamson, who arrived at the lending institution several minutes after an alarm went off in the Surfside police station at 9:07 a.m. (The savings and loan is about a half mile south of Surfside in the unincorporated area of Horry County known as Garden City.)

Upon the chief's arrival in a marked car, two cars apparently driven by holdup men hastily left the lending institution's small parking lot.

One of the cars belonged to the office manager, who was tied up inside the office.

Adamson, who jotted down the license number of one of the cars, then started into the office, but was met at the door by two existing masked men, one of whom brandished a black revolver.

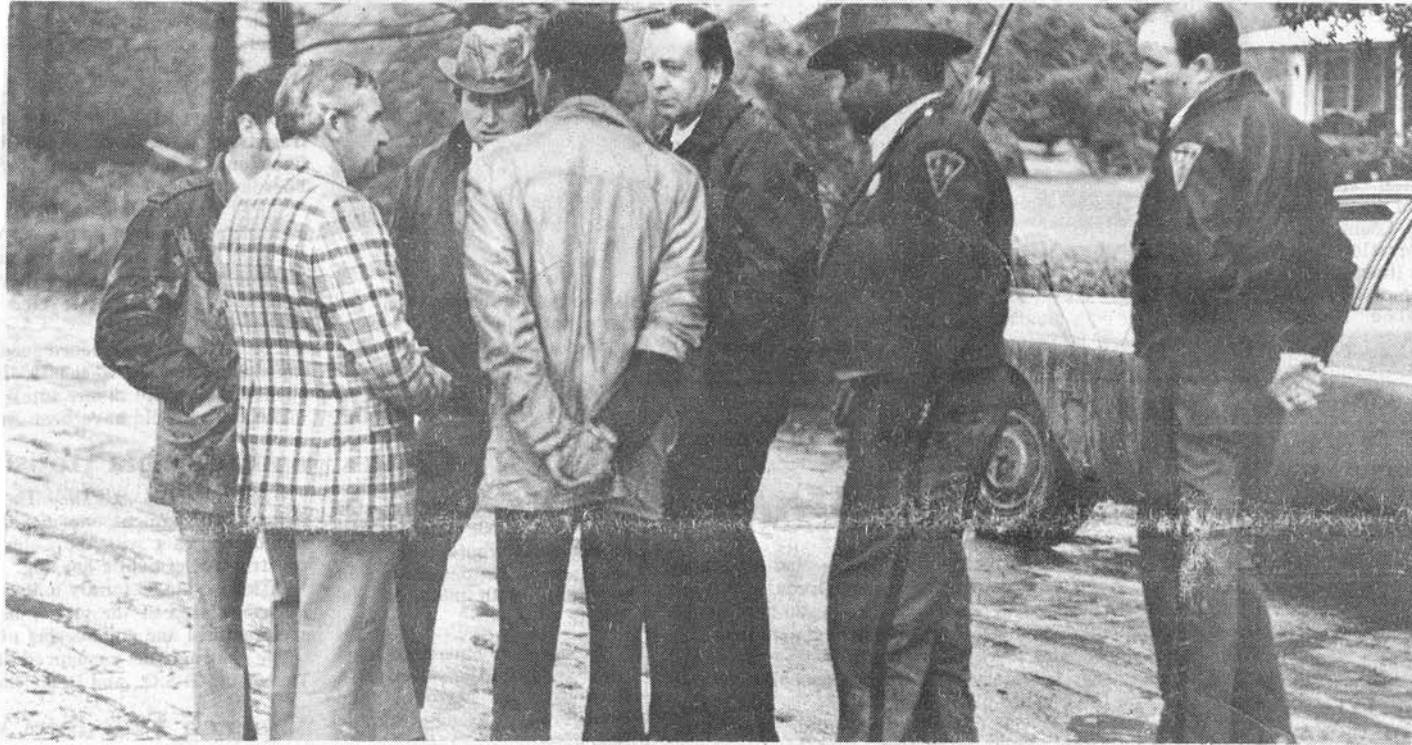
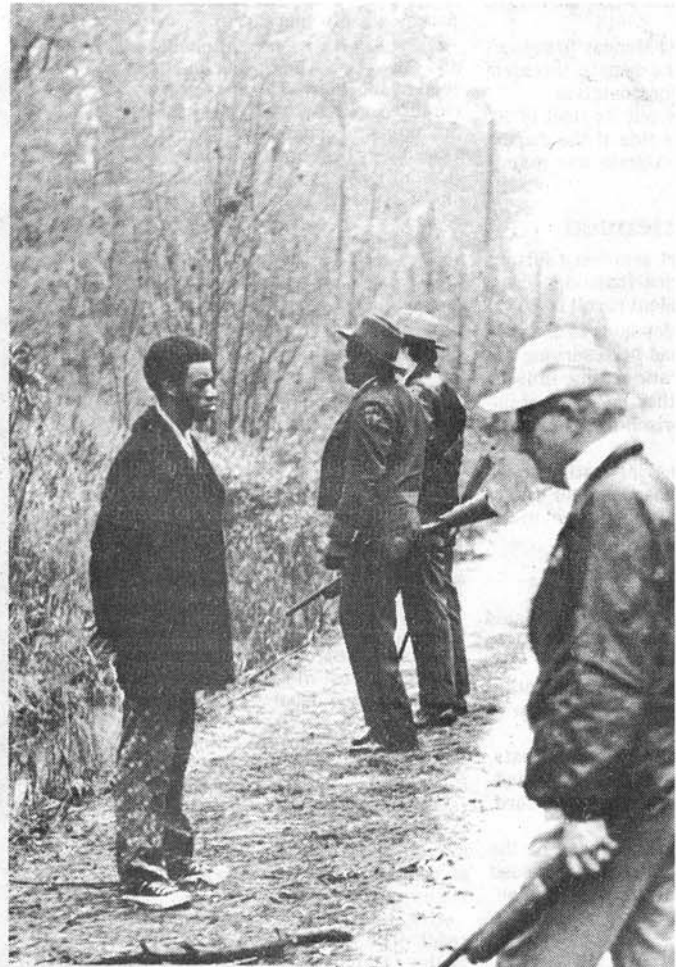
Adamson, who was not carrying a weapon, was frisked by one of the two masked men, who then took off on foot toward the beach area of Garden City, the chief said later in an interview.

"He was starting to take off his (nylon stocking) mask when he was coming out," said Adamson. "I just turned around and put my hands out to my side...I told him 'I have no gun.'" The chief said he does not wear a gun as a rule.

Adamson said his main concern at the time was to avoid a violent confrontation which might endanger not only himself but innocent people perhaps inside the office. He said, "I'm glad they reacted like they did. I didn't want to excite them because I thought they might take hostages."

Adamson said he then turned and walked away. The bandits fled, and he went in the trailer to find manager Hawley lying face down on the floor, tied with telephone cord. The inside

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Fast Action

Robbery suspect Theodore Thompson, top photo, stands in the rain on a muddy road west of Surfside minutes after being captured by area policemen. Law officers armed with shotguns face the woods, looking for another suspect then still at large. Horry County police question handcuffed robbery suspect Raymond Mitchell (back to camera, center photo), minutes after he and Thompson were captured. From left are, Det. Ellis Bellamy (face partially hidden) Det. Enoch Smith, Officer

Johnny Morgan, Mitchell, and officers Willie Dutton, Harry Wilson and Wesley Johnson. Below, Sgt. Eugene Graham and Horry County Police Department Chief Herman Enzor inspect a car stolen from the manager of People's Savings and Loan in Garden City and used as a getaway car after the loan institution was robbed. (Sun News Photos by John Monk and Donna Bise)

