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PRESS RELEASE

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State prison likely for admitted bank robber

A Mendocino Coast man is likely heading to state prison after he admitted robbing an Ukiah bank in late July and then using a toy gun during a hold-up three days later of a Fort Bragg book store.

The robbery prosecution of Flynn Washburne, 51, ended quickly following his Aug. 8 arrest and subsequent appearance in Mendocino County Superior Court, where he entered guilty pleas on Aug. 15 to two counts of robbery and admitted having already served two prior prison terms. Sentencing is set for 9:30 a.m. Sept. 12 in the Ten Mile Division of the Mendocino County Superior Court in Fort Bragg. The defendant is facing a sentence of up to eight years in prison.

Washburne's case has been curious from the outset, detailed in part by his own postings on his Facebook web site.

After his arrest, Washburne admitted to authorities that he robbed the Bank of America branch on State Street in Ukiah on July 27, and then fled on a bicycle.

That night he posted to Facebook: "Well, people. I've advanced into the big leagues. Without going into too much detail, I have definitely stopped fence straddling in the matter of being a criminal or not."

Within a short time of the bank robbery, authorities were able to identify Washburne based on a photo taken of the robbery suspect by a bank security camera. A local newspaper published the photograph, and Washburne in turn posted a copy of the photograph on his Facebook site.

The next day – July 30 – Washburne walked into Cheshire Books on Franklin Street in downtown Fort Bragg, pointed what turned out to be a painted black handgun at the clerk and grabbed money from the store cash register. Authorities said he admitted to fleeing on foot and stopping briefly to change his clothing in an alley afterward.

Washburne eluded capture until Aug. 8, when a Fort Bragg resident who knew he was wanted saw him in town and called police.

Washburne is being held in Mendocino County Jail, and as of Monday was still making posts through proxies to his Facebook site while awaiting his sentencing.

“Cavalier posts regarding my criminal acts seem ill-advised and inappropriate,” his latest post read. Washburne said an intermediary will continue to post on his behalf even while he’s serving time at San Quentin State Prison.