



BERKELEY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Suspect Arrested for Take-Over Robbery of Berkeley AAA Office

Berkeley, California (Monday, August 13, 2007) - The City of Berkeley Police Department (BPD) arrested an armed gunman who committed a take-over style robbery at the California State Auto Association office on University Avenue.

On Friday afternoon, shortly after 2:30 p.m., a suspect entered the AAA office at 1775 University Ave branch and displayed a handgun at several employees, demanding they fill up a bag with cash from their registers. At one point, the suspect jumped over a counter while he made his way through the business, making similar demands of other employees.

More than 30 employees and customers were present during the incident. No one was hurt during the robbery.

Police dispatchers received a call of a robbery in progress at AAA at 2:38 p.m. Within a minute, Lieutenant Eric Upson arrived near the scene where he observed the suspect leaving the business. He immediately summoned other officers. Officer Shira Warren located the suspect fleeing through backyards on the 1700 block of Berkeley Way towards Hearst St. A group of officers then converged towards the area, and suspect was later arrested.

Luther J. Sweet, 30, of Castro Valley was taken into custody behind a home in the 1700 block of Hearst Ave. He was charged with Armed Robbery, Resisting Arrest and a Parole Violation. A trail of evidence leading from the crime scene to Sweet was later collected. The stolen cash and checks were recovered.

BPD would like to remind community members to program their cell phones with our local 911 number; 981-5911. This will allow community members to quickly reach Berkeley Police and get immediate assistance. The non-emergency number is 981-5900.

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