

BREMERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 19, 2020

Bank Robbery – Wheaton Way Key Bank BPD Case # B20-004896

On August 18, 2020, at approximately 2:09 pm, a 29-year-old male entered the Key Bank, located at 3570 Wheaton Way. Once inside, the suspect pulled out a semi-automatic, handgun, racked the slide back to enter a round into the chamber, pointed the handgun at the teller, and demanded cash. The teller complied and placed cash into the bag, along with a covert GPS tracking device.

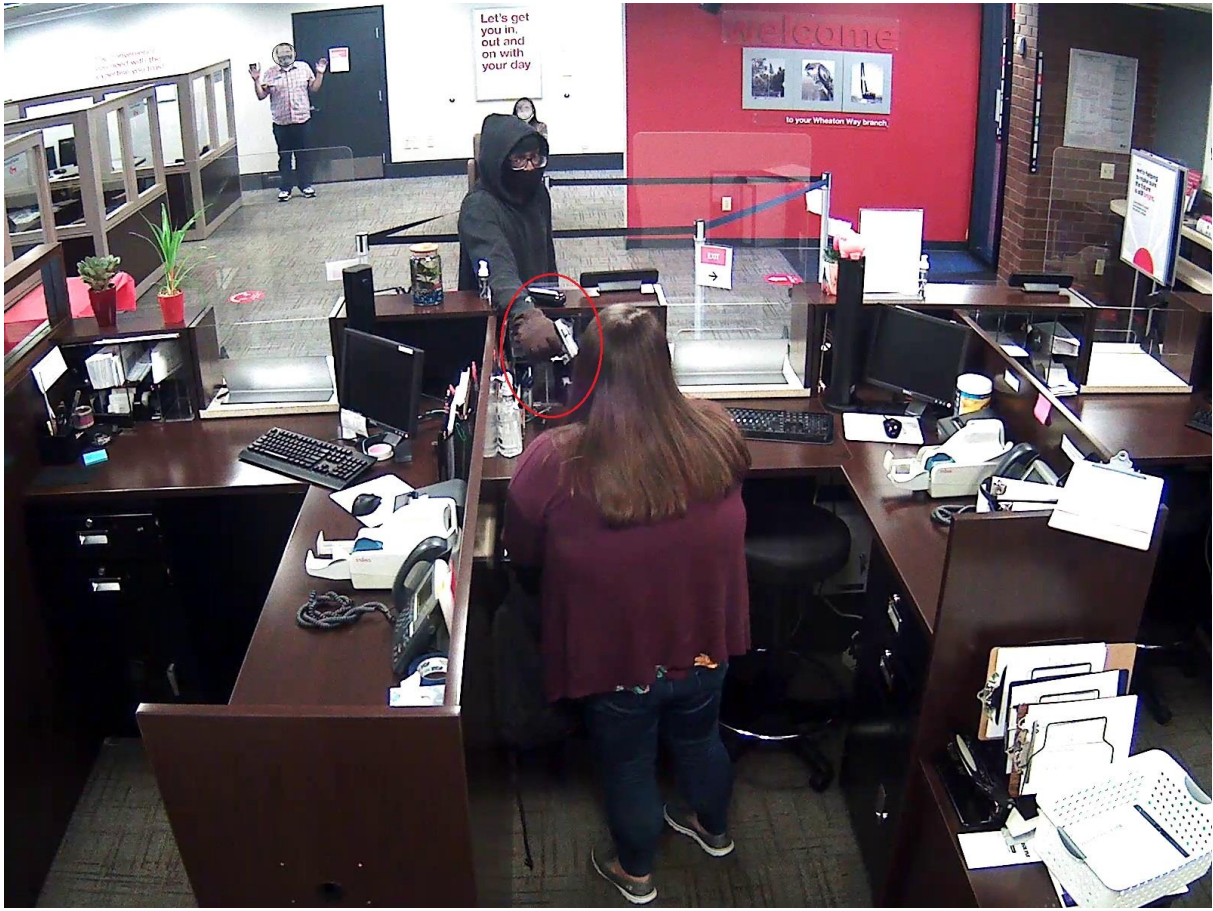
The Key Bank alarm company notified the Bremerton Police Department, via Kitsap 911. Responding officers immediately began receiving GPS tracking device location updates. The location updates revealed the possibility the suspect was initially on foot, heading in a westerly direction from the bank. Moments later, the signal revealed the probability the suspect had entered a vehicle and began moving more quickly in a southerly direction, toward Lebo Boulevard. Finally, the GPS tracker information indicated the suspect had stopped at 2700 Clare Avenue, directly in front of Harrison Imaging Center. When officers arrived at that location, they contacted a male who matched the general suspect description and was sweating profusely. The male engaged the officers in a brief conversation, but when one of the officers made observations of a large amount of cash in a nearby vehicle, the suspect fled the area on foot. The suspect was captured after a brief foot pursuit.

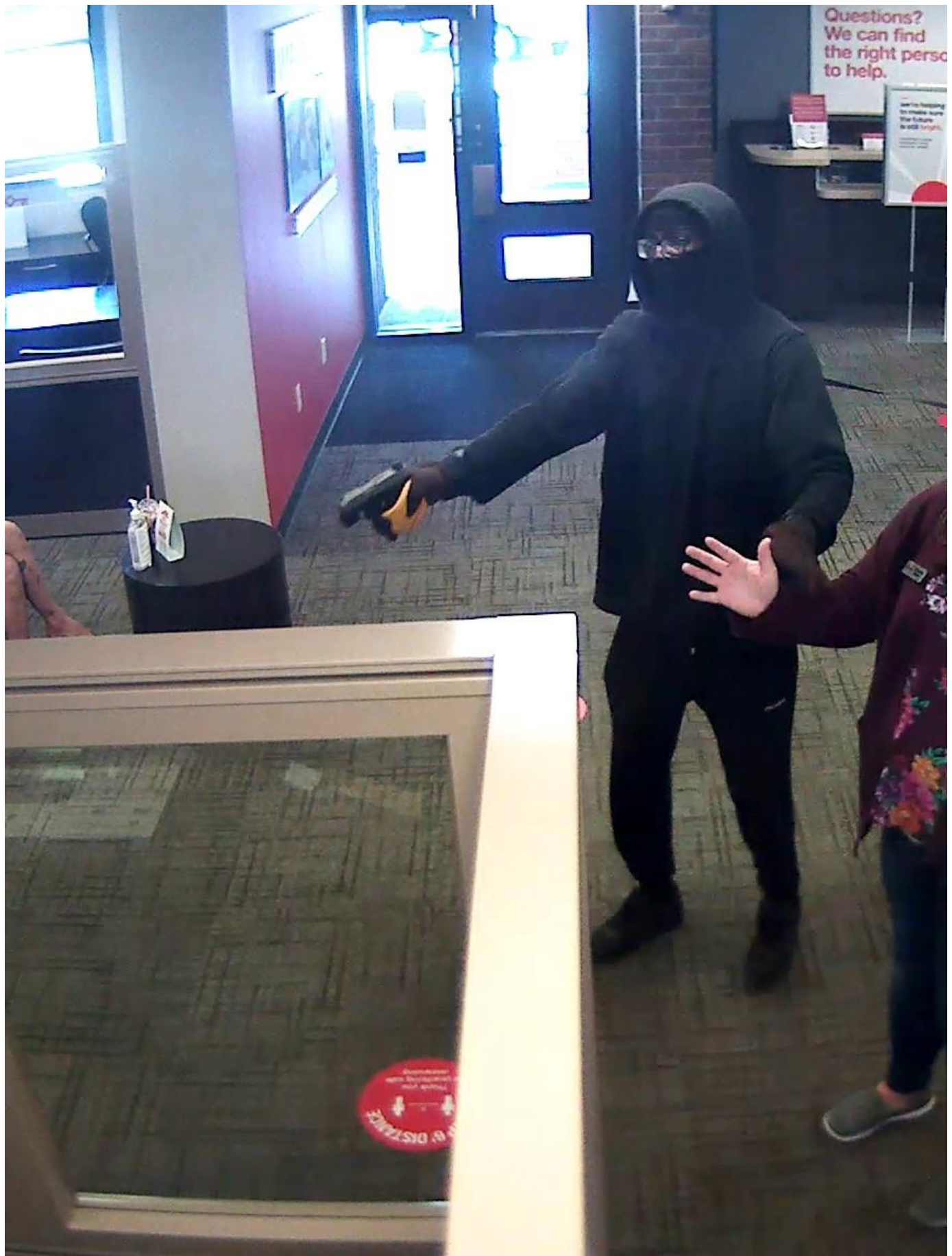
The suspect was identified as 29-year-old, Ralph J Stembridge; a convicted felon with violent criminal history. While officers were on scene, a longtime acquaintance of Stembridge emerged from Harrison Imaging Center and told investigators she was the owner of the involved vehicle. She said she had allowed Stembridge to borrow her car earlier that day. A witness inside the Imaging Center said Stembridge was seen attempting to remove the vehicle's license plates just prior to being contacted by the police.

Detectives obtained and served a search warrant on the suspect vehicle. During the search, they recovered all the stolen money, a handgun, the bank's GPS tracking device, and clothes Stembridge had worn during the robbery, including a distinct pair of gloves. At the time of Stembridge's arrest, he was carrying a pair of dark-rimmed glasses that he was wearing during the robbery. These glasses can be seen in the attached surveillance photographs from inside the bank.

Stembridge was booked into the Kitsap County Jail for 1st Degree Robbery, 2nd Degree Assault and felony firearm charges.

**See photos on page 2 & 3*





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