



BCPO News

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Career Criminal Sentenced to Life Term in State Prison for Florence Armed Robberies

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a Mount Holly man who has been arrested on 21 occasions for theft, burglary, assault, and weapons offenses was sentenced yesterday to life in prison for the armed robberies of a Florence Township convenience store and gas station two years ago.

It was the ninth conviction in New Jersey Superior Court for Frederick Owle, 49, who uses the street name of "Chief."

Owle was found guilty in January of two counts of Robbery (First Degree) as well as weapons charges, which were merged with the robbery counts for the purpose of sentencing. Assistant Prosecutors Jeremy Lackey and Heather Tran successfully argued that Owle should be sentenced to an extended term as a repeat, violent offender.

The Hon. Philip E. Haines, J.S.C., imposed a life sentence for one count, and a concurrent, 17-year term for the second count. A life sentence in New Jersey equates to 75 years.

"On the surface, it might appear that Mr. Owle is going to spend the rest of his life in prison for stealing a pack of cigarettes and a few hundred dollars, but the justification for this sentence is irrefutable," Prosecutor Coffina said. "This defendant has demonstrated total disregard for the law and safety of others time and time again, which warrants the tough sentence we sought."

Owle's most recent conviction stems from a criminal campaign that began minutes before midnight on April 14, 2017, when he entered the Wawa on Route 130 and stood in line with other customers. Upon approaching the counter, he asked the cashier for a pack of Newports. She retrieved the cigarettes from the shelf and after turning back around saw Owle holding a pocket knife and leaning toward her. "Empty the register and give me the cash," he said to her in a whisper.

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Instead of complying, the cashier backed away and broadcast over the store's speaker system that a robbery was occurring. Owle took the Newport's from the counter and fled the store.

Florence Township police officers responding to the incident were soon informed that another robbery was taking place at the nearby Valero gas station. For this robbery, Owle donned a mask and used a pipe to threaten two attendants, who then handed over approximately \$500.

With the assistance of the Bordentown Township Police Department and the Burlington Township Police Department, Owle was located and arrested several hours later at the Budget Inn on Route 130 in Burlington Township.

The case was prosecuted by Burlington County Assistant Prosecutors Jeremy Lackey and Heather Tran. The Florence Township Police Department conducted the investigation, which was led by Florence Township Detective Chris Powell.

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