

Man robbed of stolen money

PORTLAND (AP) — A bizarre case got a little stranger Saturday when a bag full of cash was robbed from a man who had stolen it during one of the nation's largest automated teller scams but was attempting to return it to authorities.

About a dozen bar patrons gave chase and caught the man about a block away. As he was captured, he tossed some of the cash into the air, but police recovered the money.

It all began when David Gallagher, one of a group that used a stolen card to rob \$346,770 from automated teller machines last November, was bringing a bag containing \$60,000 in cash to the Secret Service on Saturday as part of his plea-bargain agreement.

Gallagher, 40, said he was on his way to meet his lawyer to turn over the money when he decid-

ed to stop for a soft drink.

Gallagher, who was on weekend release, said he left the cash in his car. Portland police spokesman C.W. Jensen said. When he went out to the car to grab some cash to pay his bar tab, he was confronted by a gunman.

Jensen said Gallagher wrestled the gun away from his assailant, but the man took off with the bag of cash.

Gallagher's screams drew a crowd, which chased and subdued the suspect.

Police charged Justin Morris, 20, of Milwaukie, with first-degree robbery, unlawful use of a weapon and possession of a controlled substance, Jensen said.

Jensen said police recovered the money and were holding it as evidence.

Jensen admitted the whole thing sounded fishy but police believed Gallagher's account.

"To say it sounds like a coincidence would be an understatement," Jensen said. "But a detective talked to both individuals. After talking to the suspect, the detective felt confident that what happened was exactly what was said."

Gallagher and four accomplices made 724 withdrawals from 48 ATMs with a stolen card Nov. 18 in what the Secret Service said was one of the largest thefts of its kind.

The culprits made phony deposits and then withdrew the money they falsely had told the ATM machine they'd deposited.

A computer software problem at the Oregon Telco Credit Union removed the usual \$200 daily limit on withdrawals during the weekend spree.

All five have pleaded guilty and face sentences ranging from 10 months to nearly four years.

Northern California storm causes floods, tornadoes

SHINGLETOWN, Calif. (AP) — Another soggy weather system washed into Northern California on Saturday, producing flash floods that washed out roads and bridges near Lassen National Forest and tornadoes that uprooted trees in El Dorado County.

As much as 4 inches of rain poured down in two hours Saturday afternoon, forcing the closure of Highway 44, the main artery between Redding and eastern Shasta County, for about 90 minutes until 2:30 p.m., Det. Tom Gardner said.

The water also washed out five or six small bridges in residential areas in and around Shingletown, he said, and an unknown number of people were stranded, but nobody was injured. The water began receding in the afternoon.

The National Weather Service issued a tornado warning in western El Dorado County when a pair of twisters touched down near Latrobe Road and near Shingle Springs. Some trees were uprooted at Shingle Springs, but no other damage was reported.

The series of storms that brought the latest round of flooding to winter-weary Northern California came out of Hawaii, National Weather Service meteorologist Miguel Miller said.

"The air is so heavy with water that every wave impulse is dumping," he said.

The precipitation was not heavy enough to warrant flood watches, but residents along the Russian and Napa rivers, which have overflowed their banks already several times this year, were keeping an eye on water levels.

"Right now, we're just hanging on," Miller said.

Rainfall totals on Saturday ran up to 7 inches over 48 hours in the Sierra Nevada east of Chico. Other Northern Sierra areas such as Hillcrest in the Shasta and Siskiyou mountains' region saw more than 3 inches while northern Mendocino County and the mountains west of Healdsburg had about 2 inches.

Intermittently heavy rains were expected to continue through Monday then lighten up, Miller said. More rain was expected later next week.

With a record snowpack in the Sierra Nevada, rain up to 8,000 feet in elevation and reservoirs already at capacity, water officials are also keeping a close eye on dams and some are already releasing extra amounts.

Shasta and Oroville dams started increasing releases Friday, meteorologist Mike Pechner said.

Oregon militia leader quits group

SALEM (AP) — An Oregon militia leader has disbanded his group, citing a fear of government spies and a lack of support from his followers.

"My heart's in it," said Mike Cross, a 28-year-old insurance salesman from Salem. "But it was too frustrating. It's frustrating there weren't more people willing to get off their butts and help."

Cross said Friday he believed the Salem-based militia had been infiltrated by government spies. "There were security

breaches," he said. "These were plants by the government."

Oregon State Police have been monitoring militia groups since the bombing in Oklahoma City, said Lt. Bernie Giusto, police spokesman.

But Cross said his decision to get out of the militia had nothing to do with the intense scrutiny given to citizen militia groups following the bombing. "That part is a coincidence," he said.

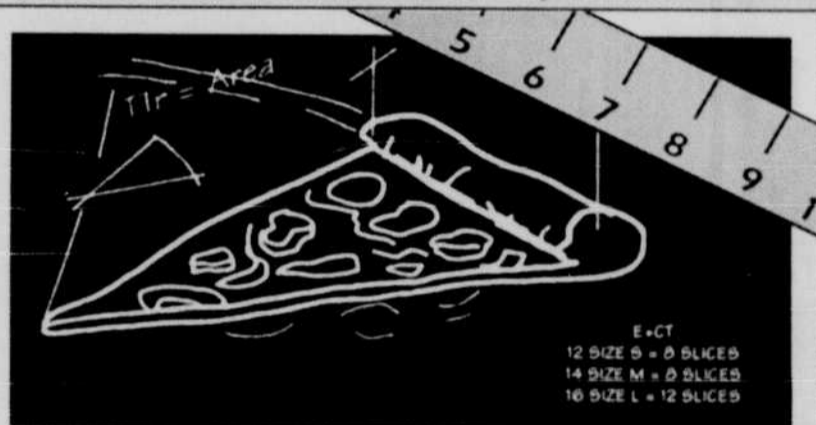
At the same time, said Cross, government officials had tried to

"demonize" citizen militias in the wake of the tragic bombing. "Once they demonize somebody," he said, "they can get away with anything."

Cross' decision to quit also coincided with the resignations of top leaders in the Michigan Militia Corps and the leader of the Box Elder militia in Utah.

Cross began organizing the Northwest Oregon Regional Militia last October after reading a newspaper article about the Michigan Militia.

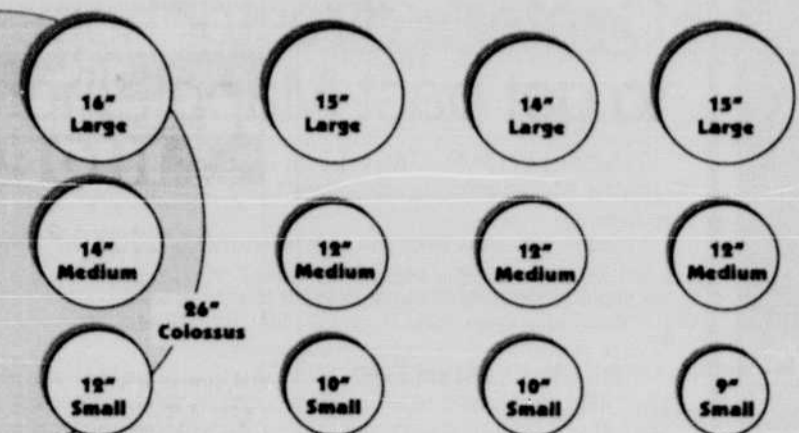
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