

## Attorney: Bank Case Principal Passes Polygraph

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HARRISONBURG - Nearly three months after a local doctor walked into a Harrisonburg bank with what appeared to be a bomb strapped to his back, police have neither cleared the man in the case nor made any arrests.

The doctor, Michael Smith, told police he had been forced to enter the Wachovia bank on South Main Street by two armed men who strapped the "bomb" onto his back and said they would remotely detonate it if he said or did anything other than withdraw all the money from his bank account.

John Holloran, Smith's attorney, said people who know the doctor don't believe he would carry out such an act willingly. Holloran said Smith, a radiologist at Rockingham Memorial Hospital, also has passed a polygraph test administered by an expert hired by Holloran's office.

The attorney said his client, who is still on a leave of absence from RMH, hasn't been asked by the Harrisonburg Police Department to take a polygraph test but is willing to do so.

"Anybody that knows him personally thinks it's out of the realm of possibilities" that he would attempt to rob a bank, Holloran said.

911 Called

On July 12, around 9:15 a.m., Smith walked into the Wachovia Bank branch and attempted to withdraw a large sum of money from his account. It's unclear what happened inside, but bank employees called 911 and evacuated the building.

Shortly after the call, a SWAT team surrounded the building and Smith walked out the front door about an hour later with his hands up after talking to crisis negotiators.

Bomb-squad technicians determined that the package strapped to his back was not an explosive device, but didn't say what, if anything, was found inside.

Smith has not been charged with any crime.

Lt. Kurt Boshart, who oversees criminal investigations for the Harrisonburg Police Department, said the case remains open and investigators are following up leads. He said he could not elaborate any further on the case. It's not clear if the leads have to do with Smith or the two men he says forced him to go into the bank.

Similar Claim In 2006

In December 2006, Smith claimed two men kidnapped him from his home and forced him to withdraw money from an ATM at the same Wachovia branch. No one was arrested in that incident.

The similarities between the two cases fueled speculation about whether Smith might have concocted one or both incidents.

But Holloran said that from the beginning, Smith has repeatedly given the same details when asked about the July 12 incident, a fact the lawyer says bolsters his client's credibility.

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