

REGION

Weapons, masks seized in case of 'Midwestern Bank Bandits'

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY — The FBI showed off bombs, guns and masks on Friday that agents said were used by a pair who called themselves the "Midwestern Bank Bandits."

The material included a semiautomatic rifle and pistol, a booby-trapped wooden crate, a military gas mask and masks of president Clinton and former president Richard Nixon. The items were seized Thursday night in a raid on a storage facility in Shawnee, Kan., in suburban Kansas City, said David Tubbs, special agent in charge of the Kansas City FBI office.

Authorities believe the two have hit at least 18 Midwestern banks since January 1994, stealing more than \$250,000 and poking fun at federal agents by writing taunting letters to newspapers, Tubbs said.

Authorities in Ohio were holding both suspects Friday. Peter Langan, 37, was shot and then arrested by federal authorities in Ohio on Thursday on a federal fugitive warrant, an FBI spokesman said. He was wanted for the armed robbery of a Pizza Hut in Lavonia, Ga., in 1992. His hometown was not immediately available.

The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch reported Friday that the FBI suspects Langan may be one of the two bank bandits.

The other, Richard Lee Guthrie Jr., 37, was captured on Monday in Cincinnati. He was being held there on federal charges from Georgia and West Virginia.

Authorities believe Langan and Guthrie used FBI logos while holding up banks, used agents' names when buying getaway cars, and wrote letters to newspapers making fun of the bureau.

They are believed to have robbed banks over the past couple of years in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Ohio and Kentucky. Tubbs said they are believed to be behind robberies in the Kansas City area in May and September 1994, and one in Springfield in July 1994.

The material the FBI displayed in Kansas City included a wooden crate containing ammunition, a military fragmentation grenade and a 40 mm grenade round fired from military rifles. The crate had been wired as a potential bomb device, Tubbs said.



Associated Press/Cliff Schappa

David Tubbs, left, FBI special agent in charge of the Kansas City office, and Max Gelman, FBI media representative, talked to reporters Friday during a news conference in Kansas City. The masks of Presidents Clinton and Reagan were among items found at a storage area in Shawnee, Kan., and tied to a string of 18 bank robberies in seven Midwestern states.