

## **BANK BANDITS LEADER WHO KILLED SELF PLANNED TO WRITE BOOK, LETTER SAYS**

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Richard Lee Guthrie Jr., one of the leaders of the Midwestern Bank Bandits, was planning to write a book about his crime spree, according to a letter he sent The Dispatch six weeks before his 1996 death.

The letter was written May 30 from Guthrie's Covington, Ky., jail cell. He had been arrested in Cincinnati Jan. 15, 1996.

The letter requested that he be sent all news articles The Dispatch had written about the Bank Bandits.

The letter added, "As a token for your assistance, I'll forward you a copy of the book that I am currently writing. Your cooperation is appreciated."

On July 12, Guthrie was found dead in his cell with a sheet wrapped around his neck-- an apparent suicide.

Guthrie's body was found shortly after he pleaded guilty to 19 robberies and agreed to testify against Peter "Commander Pedro" Langan and other alleged members of the gang. Langan is on trial in U.S. District Court in Columbus, charged with two of the gang's heists.

Guthrie left behind two notes, both dated July 10, 1996. One was written to his attorney, the other to his brother Nicholas.

The letter to his brother said, "I'm sure that you're going to question my motive, but the fact is that I have no intentions of putting our family in harms (sic) way."

"The worst part about this is that the media is going to gloat over past events as well as my testimony against Pete (Langan) and others, and I'm sure you understand what the consequences are for me in the future."

The letter to his attorney said, "You'll have to excuse the way I've dealt with resolving the delima (sic) I'm in but sometimes it takes something like suicide to settle a problem. Especially one that's like....mine."