

NORTH CAROLINA MAN RECEIVES 15-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR ATTEMPTED HOLD-UP

A North Carolina man received a 15-year prison sentence today after a jury decided he was responsible for a botched convenience store hold-up.

Jerry Lee Ward, 49, of Asheville, was found guilty of attempted armed robbery, kidnapping and assault with intent to kill during a jury trial at the Cherokee County Courthouse.

Ward attempted to rob the BP Station, 901 N. Mountain St., Blacksburg, on Sept. 10, 2008. The clerk told police she was stocking the cooler about 2:50 a.m. when Ward approached her and held a silver-bladed knife to her neck. Ward demanded the clerk's car keys. The clerk pressed the store's panic alarm when she went behind the counter to get the keys. Ward left the business on foot when he saw her press the panic alarm.

Cherokee County sheriff's deputies arrested Ward walking on the shoulder of I-85 about two hours after the attempted hold-up occurred. Ward's appearance and his wardrobe matched the description given by the clerk during her 911 call. The clerk also identified Ward in a photo line-up.

"The clerk deserves pat on the back for keeping her wits during a terrifying ordeal," Assistant Solicitor Mike Morin said. "She helped local police officers apprehend a dangerous criminal."

Ward will serve 85 percent of the prison sentence before he is eligible for release.

For more information, contact Murray Glenn at 809-4892.