

# Stabbing while robbing a bank: Attempted murder?

Attorney says client in iQ Credit Union robbery case is being overcharged



Timar A. Degraffe appears May 28, 2015, in Clark County Superior Court on accusations that he had stabbed a man two days earlier at an iQ Credit Union. His attempted-murder trial started Monday. (Ariane Kunze/The Columbian)

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A man accused of robbing a Vancouver credit union and stabbing a customer who tried to intervene is being overcharged, according to his defense attorney.

The attempted-murder trial for Timar A. Degraffe opened Monday in Clark County Superior Court. Degraffe, 25, faces charges of first-degree assault and first-degree robbery, in addition to a charge of attempted second-degree murder, in an incident last year at iQ Credit Union in the VanMall neighborhood.

The prosecution argued that the evidence paints a clear picture of those allegations.

On the afternoon of May 26, 2015, Degraffe walked into the credit union at 7017 N.E. Vancouver Mall Drive, demanded money while brandishing a knife and received more than \$2,000 in cash, according to a probable cause affidavit. As he attempted to leave with the money, a customer, William Uptmor, intervened. Degraffe stabbed him in the stomach with a large kitchen knife, the affidavit states.

Degraffe left the area and was captured following a daylong manhunt.

He admitted to police that he entered the credit union with the intention of robbing it, court records show, but he said he didn't intend to hurt anyone and only stabbed Uptmor because he prevented him from leaving.

Degraffe told police he robbed the credit union to help support the mother of his child, who has a felony protection order against him, according to court records. He later led detectives to the clothing he wore at the time of the robbery and provided information about the possible location of the knife on a street in Portland, court documents said.

Deputy Prosecutor Mike Vaughn said during opening statements Monday that Degraffe stabbed Uptmor so forcefully that the knife almost penetrated entirely through his abdomen. Uptmor still deals with complications from his injury, Vaughn said.

“(Degraffe) made a choice that almost ended his life for not much more than \$2,000 cash,” Vaughn said. “We know exactly what (Degraffe) did and intended because he told police and it was caught on video.”

Officers also found some of the bait money, planted by the teller, in Degraffe's pockets when they detained him, Vaughn said.

“This is not a complex case. This is a case where the evidence probably can't be more blindingly clear,” Vaughn said.

However, defense attorney Jack Peterson painted a slightly different picture. He told the jury that Degraffe doesn't disagree with the evidence or dispute that he stabbed Uptmor. He instead argued that the prosecution is pursuing the wrong charges. Degraffe should be charged with second-degree assault because he did not intend to cause Uptmor “great bodily harm or death,” Peterson said.

Peterson described the situation as a citizen's arrest and that Degraffe was blind-sided when Uptmor punched him in the face as he attempted to leave the credit union.

“(He) cold-cock punches him in the face,” he said.

A scuffle ensued and Degraffe took the knife from his pocket and stabbed Uptmor, causing him to fall to the ground, Peterson said. He said Degraffe was just trying to get away from Uptmor, who was assaulting him.

Degraffe's trial continues today with witness testimony.

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