

Written by Administrator  
Saturday, 26 February 2011 19:46 -

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LAS VEGAS (CNN) - Las Vegas police said they're close to finding the third member of a trio authorities believe robbed a casino, and then left a trail of evidence.

Police said a man, wearing a disguise and wielding a gun, walked up to a table at the Rio Hotel and Casino demanding money.

Investigators said the crooks walked away with about \$33,000 in casino chips, but that's when things started to fall apart.

Police said the crooks' poorly coordinated plan to pad their bank accounts with stolen cash is already dismantled.

The man who probably benefited the least was the first in custody.

Taxi Driver Hiroyuki Yamaguchi, who transported the thief after the armed heist, first claimed he didn't know the robber.

An arrest report said taxi video showed the 61-year-old placing black tape over the camera lens.

But it was hard to argue against recorded audio from side the cab when the accused robber asked Yamaguchi to hide the unloaded gun.

His neighbor feels he may not have been thinking straight.

"I feel bad for him because it's very surprising for me," Yamaguchi's neighbor, Drew Karedes, said.

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Police said the primary suspect, Steve Gao, was a fellow cab driver.

The getaway driver allegedly accepted a single \$1,000 chip for his driving role in the crime.

According to police documents, Gao returned to this home near Spring Mountain and Cimarron with another acquaintance.

Police executed a search warrant and discovered \$17,000 in chips.

"I was on the couch and I heard some rustling outside that I typically don't hear," Dan Wey, a neighbor, said.

He likely heard detectives riffling through the home of Edward Land.

Land claimed that the alleged robber told him that he buried the money under a leaf pile in the backyard.

He originally told police that Gao admitted that he robbed the casino to repay him for a \$15,000 loan, plus interest, that he owed.

"They're not going to learn, of course not. They will never learn. Well people are desperate, so," Saniel Yung, a former friend of the suspect, said.

Gao's ex-wife said that he had serious financial hardships and Yung said he had a love of casinos.

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"That I know, he gambled a lot. I was totally shocked. I never knew that he was going to do something like that. Seemed like he was calm, cool and all that," he said.

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