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Another chapter in the Brett Miller crime saga

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Brett Miller, the Watsonville man with a history of flamboyant crimes and escapes, will soon be facing charges of kidnapping and robbery in San Luis Obispo County and cattle rustling in three counties.

Miller, who was arrested as a parolee at large May 23 in San Luis Obispo County, will be charged with the kidnapping of a bank manager in that county, said sheriff's detective Mike Sheridan.

Sheridan said charges will be

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filed against Miller, 26, and Chris Simas, 26, who is also from the Pajaro Valley, for the April 12 kidnapping of Rita Kaye Roy, 47, manager of a bank in Atascadero.

Miller will also be charged with involvement in a cattle-rustling operation that had been going on for three months in Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Merced counties.

Sheridan said Miller and Simas are accused of kidnapping Roy at gun point from her home April 12 and taking her 20 miles to Miller's residence, a mobile home on acreage in Santa Margarita.

The kidnapers' plan was to get Roy's keys and get into the bank, Sheridan said. The kidnapers "took her out and deposited her

along the roadway in an isolated area," Sheridan said.

What the kidnapers apparently didn't realize, Sheridan said, was that a farmhouse was nearby, "the only one around for about six miles." Roy, who was uninjured, went to the farmhouse and called authorities.

Deputies alerted Atascadero po-

lice, who staked out the bank. Nobody attempted an unauthorized entry to the bank, Sheridan said. If would-be-intruders drove by the bank, they were not noticed.

"We didn't know what kind of car to look for," he said.

Evidence that linked Simas and Miller to the kidnapping were found in Miller's mobile home

when the two were arrested, Sheridan said. It was investigation of the cattle-rustling operation that led investigators to the two, Sheridan said.

The kidnapping scenario is strikingly similar to a plan to kidnap the manager of the Wells Fargo Bank on Freedom Boulevard in Watsonville in 1985 that Miller was involved in.

That plan was foiled when a man who had knowledge of it tipped off authorities several days

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before it was supposed to happen.

Miller is being held in Santa Cruz County, where he faces arraignment in Superior Court Thursday on parole-violation charges stemming from a chase involving the California Highway Patrol two years ago.

Miller could be sentenced to four years in prison on the parole violation charge.

If found guilty of the kidnapping charge in San Luis Obispo County, Miller could get life imprisonment, said Santa Cruz County District Attorney Art Danner.

"He fancies himself a modern-day Bonnie and Clyde," Danner said. "It's fun to talk about his exploits, but he's talking about (crimes that involve) hurting people. Our job is to put him away for as long as we can."

Miller was sentenced to seven years in prison in 1986 after pleading guilty to charges stemming from the Watsonville kidnapping plot and a plan to extort money from a prominent Watsonville family. Neither plot was carried out.

Miller was released after serving about three years in prison.

Miller's girlfriend, Priscilla Isidro, will be charged as an accessory to the San Luis Obispo kidnapping, Sheridan said. "She was at the mobile home the night of the kidnapping," he said, adding that the only reason she hasn't been arrested yet is because she is pregnant.

"She's not going anywhere," Sheridan said.

Isidro and Miller are parents of a 2-year-old boy, Brett Miller Jr.

Chris Simas's brother, Anthony, will be charged with being an ex-felon in possession of a firearm and possession of fighting roosters, a dozen of which were found at Miller's residence.

Miller will also be charged with possession of the roosters, Sheridan said.

Chris Simas and Yvonne Leopoldo, 20, are also charged with being involved in the rustling. Chris Simas has already been released on bail from Merced, Sheridan said.

Miller was involved in at least five chases involving authorities in Santa Cruz County, including two escapes from sheriff's custody. He escaped from a sheriff's van in 1985 after being taken from Santa Cruz to Watsonville for a court appearance. He was caught 45 minutes later hiding in a garage on Brewington Street, wearing only his boxer shorts.

A year later, Miller escaped from the roof of the old jail on Front Street in Santa Cruz and ran down the Pacific Garden Mall in his jail jump suit. Sheriff's deputies caught him several months later hiding in a hole behind a home on Riverside Drive.