

Botched robbery gets man 5 years

Incident began with attempted pot sale

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A Lynchburg man was sentenced Tuesday to five years in prison for his part in a botched robbery at Randolph College earlier this year.

Jerry Kenneth Harper, 21, pleaded guilty Tuesday to three counts of attempted robbery and

use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.

Harper and his roommate, Dustin Wheeler, came to the college's front entrance on the night of May 7 to meet three people who wanted to buy an ounce of marijuana, Lynchburg Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Chuck Felmlee said Tuesday.

Harper and Wheeler went to meet the people with the intention of robbing them, Felmlee said.

Wheeler faces a Sept. 18 jury trial.

None of the three people Wheeler is accused of trying to rob were Randolph College students.

Felmlee said the plan was for Harper to get in the car with the buyers and sell them the drugs. Wheeler would come up to the car, pull out a BB gun that looked like a firearm, steal the drugs back and take the money.

When the sale was completed, Wheeler came up to the car and pulled out the gun, but only managed to steal the marijuana back before running off, Felmlee

said.

Feeling like Harper had helped plan the robbery, the buyers wanted back the \$100 they'd paid for the drugs. But Harper refused and walked back to his house nearby, Felmlee said.

The buyers called police and lied to them about what happened until investigators confronted them about their story, Felmlee said.

Within two hours of the botched robbery, police had arrested Harper and Wheeler, Felmlee said.