

Robber got 4¢ and 3 years' probation

By Jay Apperson
Staff Writer

Kevin Brown followed his victim out of the grocery and along the East Baltimore sidewalk. He pulled a gun. He demanded money.

He demanded exactly 4 cents.

In Baltimore Circuit Court yesterday, Brown, 28, gave no explanation for his penny-ante robbery demand. He was content to plead guilty to armed robbery in return for a suspended, five-year sentence and three years of probation, according to prosecutor Gary Schenker.

"He got a suspended sentence?" the victim, Earl Williams, asked when reached at home yesterday. Mr. Williams, 35, said Brown deserved . . . well, about 18 months.

Like everyone else, Mr. Williams was at a loss to explain why Brown would bother to raise his gun for such a pittance.

He said the Jan. 11 incident began in the grocery. He was with his girlfriend, he said, paying for a soda and a bag of chips, and Brown was behind him in line.

Mr. Williams and his girlfriend walked up the 1600 block of E. Lafayette Ave. Brown followed.

"We get halfway up the block," Mr. Williams said. "He said, 'Can I borrow 4 cents?' I said, 'I ain't got 4 cents.'"

Out came the gun. "He said, 'Give me 4 cents, or I'm going to take all the money you got,'" Mr. Williams said.

Mr. Williams gave him the

change.

In court yesterday, Mr. Schenker, the prosecutor, outlined all this to Judge Kathleen O'Ferrall Friedman. He told the judge that Mr. Williams, who had previously seen Brown around the neighborhood, twice identified Brown as the robber. He said Brown, of the 1600 block of E. North Ave., was arrested two days after the robbery.

All the while, Brown sat in a wheelchair. Mr. Schenker said Brown was shot sometime after the robbery and has been paralyzed from the waist down since.

Mr. Williams said Brown could have had the pennies if he had only asked nicely in the store.

"I would have given it to him," he said.