

## Bank Robberies

### How Stats Can Protect Financial Institutions

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The "Geezer Bandit" is wanted for a string of bank robberies in San Diego County.

In Southern California, the "Blue Note Bandit" issues demands to bank tellers on blue paper. In San Diego, the "Geezer Bandit"—who appears to be well into his golden years—displays a semi-automatic weapon. In Arizona, a goateed man in sunglasses issues ominous notes that say "No Tricks." In Dallas two years ago, heavily armed men in body armor terrorized bank employees and customers in 21 takeover-style heists.

**Bank robbery methods are as novel and varied as the monikers used to label them.** But in the end, the most common approach is to step up to a teller and make a demand verbally, with a written note, or both, according to bank crime statistics compiled by the FBI and released on a quarterly basis here on [fbi.gov](http://fbi.gov).

In 2008, the most recent full-year data available, demand notes were issued in 3,833 of the 6,700 bank heists during the year.

Verbal demands occurred in 3,683 bank jobs, though some were

combined with the demand notes. Weapons were threatened in roughly a third of robberies and used in about one in four bank jobs, the statistics show.



#### Bank Crimes

**Most bank crimes are committed using verbal demands or notes. But weapons and the threat of weapons are also very common, according to records compiled by the FBI.**

**The quarterly and annual Bank Crimes Statistics reports provide a nationwide view of bank robbery crimes based on statistics contributed by FBI field offices responding to bank robberies or otherwise gathered when provided to the FBI from local and state**

The details are part of a rich trove of data the FBI collects about robberies of federally insured banks in the U.S.—from the days and times that robberies most often occur (Fridays and between 9 and 11 a.m., respectively), to the amount of loot taken and recovered. The data is particularly valuable to financial institutions.

## law enforcement.

### - Bank Robbery

“They help the banking industry develop best practices,” said Special Agent Amanda Moran of the FBI’s Violent Crimes Unit, which compiles the bank crimes data. “It lets them know when they are more vulnerable to attack.”

**The FBI has had a primary role in bank robbery investigations since the 1930s, when John Dillinger and his gang were robbing banks and capturing the public’s imagination.** In 1934, it became a federal crime to rob any national bank or state member bank of the Federal Reserve System. The law soon expanded to include bank burglary, larceny, and similar crimes, with jurisdiction delegated to the FBI. Now, as then, we have a role alongside local law enforcement in bank robbery investigations.

“We have a very good solution rate—well over 50 percent,” said Special Agent Brad Bryant, who heads the Violent Crimes Unit, which supports 43 violent crime task forces across the United States. They typically focus on violent or serial cases.

A violent serial gang terrorized the Dallas area in 2008 for six months, pulling off 21 bank jobs. The so-called “Scarecrow Bandits”—named for the floppy hats and plaid shirts they wore in early robberies—were arrested in June 2008 after a foiled bank robbery led to a high-speed chase. The defendants were well-organized in their operations, communicating with cell phones and walkie-talkies and spending no more than two or three minutes inside each bank. Most have been convicted and face heavy jail time.

The “Geezer Bandit,” meanwhile, is still sought in connection with a string of six robberies in the San Diego area. The suspect’s geriatric appearance—and the catchy label given him by local authorities—has drawn national attention to the case. That’s a good thing, says Bryant. More media attention means more tips and leads.

**“There’s a risk certain people are willing to take to rob a bank,” Bryant said.** “They know there’s a camera. They know employees are trained to recognize faces. They know the police are going to respond, that the FBI is going to respond.”

“It’s a high-risk crime for the subject,” he added. “Chances are you’re going to get caught.”

*Note: The individuals pictured here may have been apprehended or may no longer be wanted by law enforcement since the above information was posted on this website. Please check our [Wanted by the FBI website](#) or contact your [local FBI office](#) for up-to-date information.*

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