



## Breakfast Seminar - 2015

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### **BS3 Bank Robbery on Chicago's South Side — 75 Years After John Dillinger**

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The goal of this presentation is to introduce attendees to the current difficulties and challenges of investigating violent crime from both an investigator's and a forensic science perspective.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by creating a better understanding of the crime of bank robbery and the evidentiary issues associated with the crime.

The crime of bank robbery has been the subject of many Hollywood movies, books, and news stories in the United States since the mid-1800s. These events have sometimes been portrayed as glamorous and at other times as the violent and desperate actions of someone with nothing to lose. The closure rate on bank robbery cases varies over time based on numerous variables such as the skill and experience of the robber, the statement of the victims and witnesses, and the location of responding local police officers. However, the quality and amount of evidence available to investigators continues to climb.

As various examination methods of biological evidence get more sensitive, training is provided to bank employees on the importance of preparing the bank counters and other surfaces for the day. It is incumbent on the bank employees to ensure surfaces used by customers and potential bank robbers are cleaned each and every day to help ensure that the biological material from previous customers and employees is removed prior to a robbery.

This presentation consists of a review of several bank robberies on the south side of Chicago to include unarmed note jobs to high-profile takeover-style robberies with multiple subjects with an emphasis on the forensic evidence used in the investigation or lack thereof. Included is the unique experience of an investigating agent on bank robbery investigations who also undertook the responsibility on several occasions to process the evidence involved with the crime scene, the subsequent arrests, and any related search warrants.

Three cases will be presented that illustrate the difficulties and challenges of investigating the crime of bank robbery. The first case is a copy of the movie, *The Town*, in which the robbers, a man and a woman, dressed as nuns, robbed the bank at gunpoint. The second case is a robbery in which the robber conducted reconnaissance from inside the bank as well as surveillance of the bank prior to the robbery. The subject attempted to use the Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) effect leading up to trial and during sentencing to argue that absence of evidence is, in fact, evidence of absence proving that he was kidnapped and placed under duress which resulted in him robbing the bank. A range of video, forensic, digital, and circumstantial evidence was used to convict the subject. The third case involved two individuals who traveled to the Chicago area to rob a bank and planned to flee back to Oklahoma. After preparing for the robbery by obtaining disguises, a rental vehicle, weapons, and a scanner, they robbed a bank, only to be followed by a local tow truck driver who called the police, directing responding officers to the getaway vehicle. The chase was recorded by police dashboard cameras while one of the subjects called 911 to demand they be allowed to escape, ultimately threatening and firing a bullet into another vehicle before crashing into a police car.

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#### **Bank Robbery, Chicago, FBI**