

## FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF NEW YORK

NEW YORK, N. Y. 10045

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March 20, 1968

To the Chief Executive Officers of  
State Member Banks in the Second  
Federal Reserve District:

Enclosed is a copy of a pamphlet entitled "Criminal Assaults on Banks," which has been prepared by the three Federal banking agencies and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

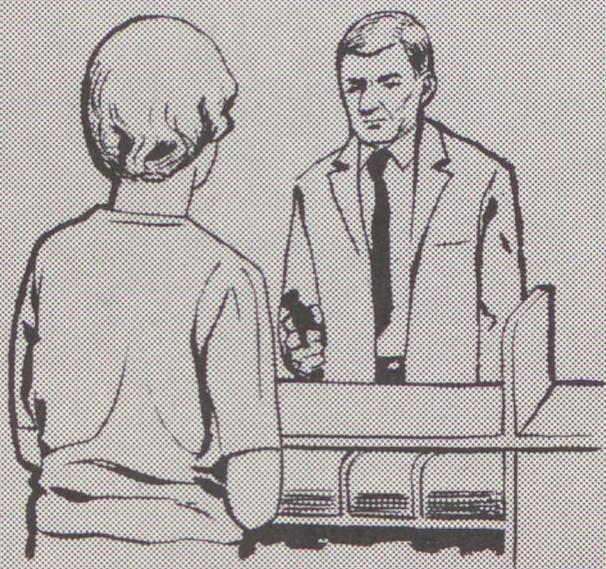
The pamphlet describes the growing danger from bank robberies, burglaries, and related crimes and stresses the need for adequate programs of bank security and protective measures. It describes several devices and techniques that have proved effective in protecting and safeguarding bank customers, personnel, and facilities, and in assisting the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other law enforcement agencies in identifying and apprehending offenders in robberies and burglaries.

We hope that you will find the pamphlet useful as a basis for reviewing the protection being afforded your own facilities, customers, and personnel.

ALFRED HAYES  
President

# Criminal Assaults on Banks

**GROWING  
DANGER**  
to you







This pamphlet will describe the growing danger from bank robberies and what a bank can do to prevent these criminal assaults.

## Mounting Wave of Assaults Upon Banking Institutions

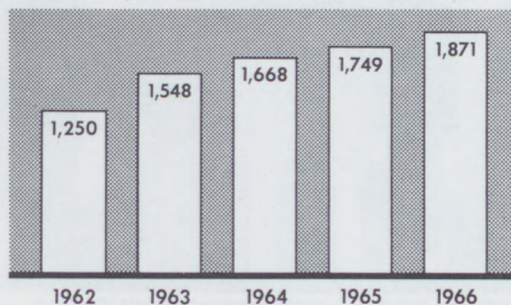
Bank robberies—and the critical danger to life and limb of bank officers, employees and customers—are increasing sharply across the United States. Burglaries of financial institutions are also growing at an alarming rate.

Statistics released by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover show that an all-time high of 1,871 robberies, burglaries and larcenies of institutions covered by the Federal Bank Robbery and Incidental Crimes Statute were committed in 1966. This is more than four times the number reported a decade earlier. But the new record which was established in 1966 was smashed during the first 10 months alone of 1967.

Furthermore, the dollar losses suffered by victimized institutions have risen tremendously. Data compiled by the American Bankers Association show that losses to Federally insured banks resulting from robberies committed from January through June, 1967, totaled \$3.3 million—compared with \$1.3 million in the same six-month period of 1966. These figures relate only to banks,

### FEDERAL BANK ROBBERY STATUTE

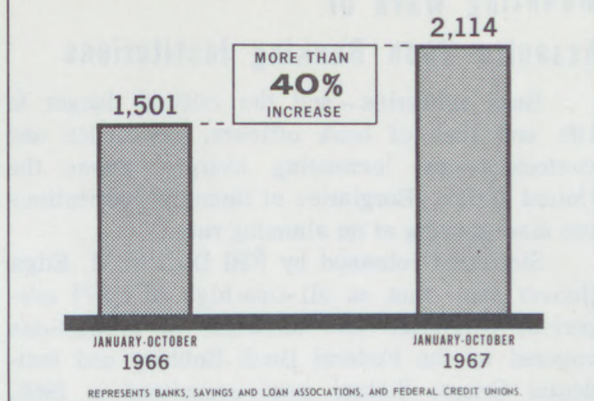
ROBBERY, BURGLARY, AND LARCENY VIOLATIONS



REPRESENTS BANKS, SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATIONS, AND FEDERAL CREDIT UNIONS.



## VIOLATIONS OF BANK ROBBERY STATUTE



and they do not include losses due to burglaries or larcenies—nor do they include the enormous cost to taxpayers of investigations by law enforcement agencies of these crimes.

A survey covering robberies of banking-type institutions in the United States during 1966 disclosed that the average amount of loot was \$3,986. Other statistics compiled and released by the FBI show a percentage increase for bank robberies far surpassing that for other robbery-type offenses.

## Rising Frequency of Shootings and Beatings

Accompanying the growth of criminal assaults upon banks and other financial institutions is a vastly expanding threat to the lives of bank customers, officers and employees. The threat of violence and death is inherent in every robbery; and as the number of bank robberies steadily rises, so does the danger to life and limb of bank personnel.



The above photograph was taken by a sequence-type camera installed as a security measure by a California bank. The camera was activated moments after three bandits entered the bank. During this robbery, a bank customer was viciously struck over the head with a shotgun. His assailant and the other robbers were arrested and convicted.

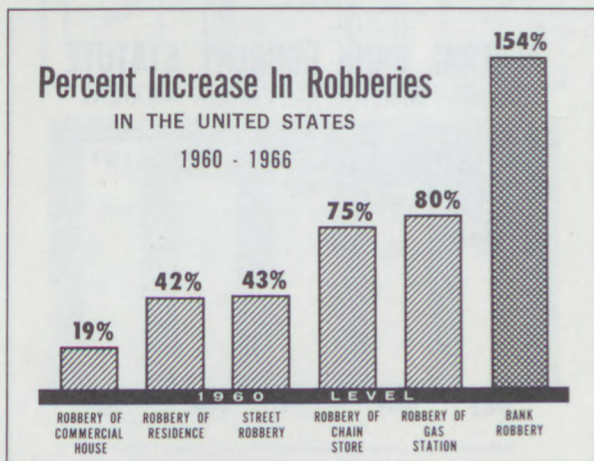


The above photograph was one of the several taken by a camera during a bank robbery in Geor-

## Percent Increase In Robberies

IN THE UNITED STATES

1960 - 1966



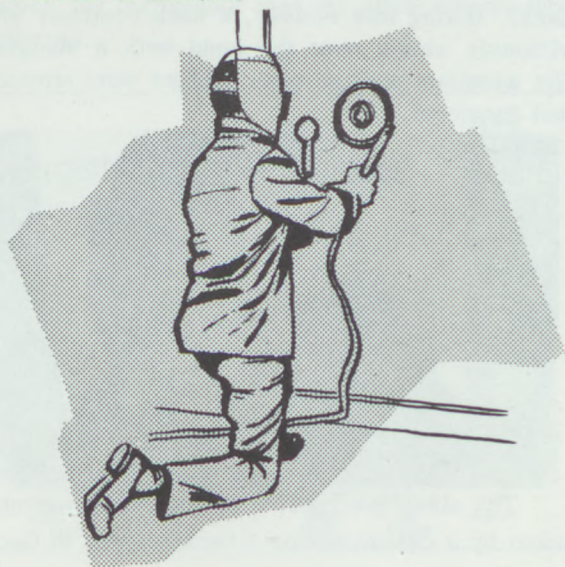


gia. The photographs resulted in the identification of the subjects involved.

During the robbery of a bank in Virginia by four gunmen, two employees were savagely pistol-whipped, and a state police officer was wounded in the criminals' flight from the scene. In another case, three employees of a bank in the Midwest were shot and killed by a lone bandit—and in still another, two bank employees and a police officer were killed, and a second policeman and an innocent bystander were wounded.

## Improved Criminal Equipment and Techniques

The arsenal of weapons available to robbers and others who commit criminal assaults on financial institutions has steadily grown. During 1967, a new burning tool—one commercially available at a cost of less than \$10—came into usage in bank burglaries. This tool is capable of burning through a six-inch thickness of tempered steel in approximately 15 seconds. It can cut an opening in a three-foot wall of concrete in a matter of minutes.



## Safeguarding Against Successful Assault

Banks are attractive targets for assaults by criminals not only because they are repositories for large sums of money, but also because security and protective measures are grossly inadequate in many banks. Too often in recent years, there has been a tendency to emphasize comfort and convenience—regardless of effect on the security of the bank's operations. As a result, some financial institutions are lagging behind retail stores and other business establishments in the protection they afford against robberies, burglaries and larcenies.

Modern technology has placed increasingly more effective safeguards at the disposal of banks and other financial institutions. By their mere physical presence, many of these tend to deter or discourage crime. Among those available at low to moderate cost are:

### Robbery Alarm Systems



At a cost of less than \$100, plus a nominal monthly charge, an alarm system can be installed which may have the effect not only of discouraging robbers, but also of immediately alerting the police if a robbery should occur.

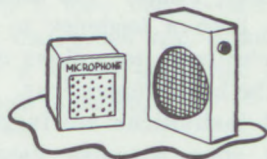
Other alarm systems are specifically designed to protect against burglaries.

The value of robbery alarm systems is dramatically illustrated in the experience of an Eastern bank which was robbed by the same bandit on two occasions four years apart. At the time of the first robbery, the bank had no alarm system



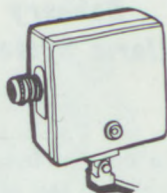
and the criminal made good his escape with more than \$7,500. Before his second assault, however, the bank installed an alarm system. It was used to alert police officers of the robber's return visit to the bank. They arrived in time to arrest the gunman and charge him with both crimes.

### **Microphone and Speaker**



At a cost of less than \$100, some banks have installed a microphone and connected it to a loud-speaker in the home of a bank officer or at the local police station. One such security device led to the swift detection and apprehension of a gang of burglars who had broken into a bank in the Midwest. Another was directly responsible for the smashing of a gang of bank burglars who had committed a series of well-cased crimes against financial institutions in the South and Southwest.

### **Bank Cameras**



Special protective cameras—both motion picture and sequence-type—have been purchased by some banks at a cost of approximately \$1,000. They are operated easily and inconspicuously by buttons concealed within the reach of bank employees. Furthermore, they can be used in combination with alarm systems so that a warning is sounded and the police are summoned at the same time that pictures of the robbers are being taken within the bank.

The picture below was made by a 35-millimeter sequence camera installed as a protective measure by a bank in Illinois. It shows the gunman who robbed the bank of more than \$3,400. Identified and apprehended as a result of photographs made inside the bank during the robbery, the bandit pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment.



At bottom of page is a picture showing three armed robbers in the act of holding up a bank in Pennsylvania. This picture was made by a 35-millimeter concealed camera which played an



important role in the identification and subsequent apprehension of the bandits.

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Among other protective and security measures in common usage by banks are:



Uniformed guards—trained and qualified in handling firearms.

Steel bars and gratings over windows, skylights, etc.

Bulletproof glass at tellers' windows, as well as two-way mirrors.

Adequate lighting both within and without the bank building.

“Bait” money (with the denomination, serial number and series year recorded), while not a protective device, is a valuable aid in the investigation of crimes against banks and should be used.

## Need to Assert Leadership

Banks and other financial institutions should set the example for others to follow in the protective and security field. Never has the threat of criminal action been greater to banking institutions and their officers and employees. And never has the need been greater for effective programs and measures to safeguard and protect bank customers, personnel and facilities.

For a banking institution not to make use of protective devices which can be installed at reasonable cost is penny-wise and pound-foolish indeed.