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10 Biggest Bank Robberies of All Time

Thieves made off with billions in these daring, historic heists.

A THREAD

10. The Dunbar Armored robbery

Stolen: $18.9 million

In 1997,6 men pulled off what remains the biggest cash heist in the history of the United States. The leader was Allen Pace, who turned out to be the worst "safety inspector" the Dunbar Armored trucking company ever employed.

Pace timed the security cameras at the Dunbar facility in Los Angeles so he could avoid them, and recruited five childhood friends to help him rob the vault. They broke in, assaulted two guards on their lunch breaks and loaded $18.9 million dollars into a U-Haul.

They almost got away with it — except one robber got sloppy and lent some of the stolen cash to a friend without removing the original cash straps.

9. The United California bank heist

Stolen: $30 million

In 1972, Amil Dinsio, a professional criminal from Ohio, assembled a gang of six robbers and flew them to California. They rented a town house and planned a heist on a bank where they had (mistakenly) heard President

Richard Nixon kept a multimillion dollar slush fund. The crew dynamited their way into the vault, stole $30 million worth of cash and valuables, and fled after meticulously scrubbing down the town house.

The cops eventually identified the robbers through a generous tip they'd given a taxi driver — and through fingerprints found on the inside of the town home’s dishwasher.

8. The British Bank of the Middle East robbery

Stolen: $20 million - $50 million

In 1976, when Lebanon was in the midst of a civil war, a group of robbers decided to cash in on the confusion. In one of the most brazen robberies of all time, the group used explosives to

burst through the wall of a Catholic church and enter the neighboring British Bank of the Middle East. They brought with them professional locksmiths to crack open the vault.
The robbers made off with $44.5 million in cash, stocks, gold bars, jewels and other valuables.

None of the loot was recovered and no one was arrested. Today, the stolen goods are worth more than three times their value in 1976.

7. The Northern Bank robbery

Stolen: $41 million

The week before Christmas 2004, robbers in Belfast, Northern Ireland, dressed as police officers and entered the homes of two bank managers.

Their families were held hostage, and the managers were instructed to go to work as normal the next day. When the workday ended, the managers let the thieves into the bank,

where they stole about 26.5 million British pounds and additional foreign currencies in the biggest bank robbery in Irish history. The case is still unsolved and so far only one person has been arrested, for money laundering.

6. The Brink's-Mat burglary

Stolen: $41 million

Britain’s most notorious bank heist was an inside job. On the morning of the heist in 1983, a Brink’s-Mat security guard named Anthony Black let a group of robbers into the company’s warehouse at London's Heathrow Airport.

They tied up other guards. The crew quickly realized the warehouse held not only a lot of money but also gold and diamonds. They made off with $41 million, and wished the guards a merry Christmas on the way out. Most of the robbers were caught — but the gold remains at large.

5. The Banco Central burglary

Stolen: $71.6 million

The 2005 Banco Central burglary in Fortaleza, Brazil, was once recognized by Guinness Book of World Records as the world's greatest bank robbery. To pull it off, a 25-member gang set up a fake landscaping business.

They spent three months digging a 256-foot tunnel that led up through the bank's vault floor. Once inside, they stole several containers that held 160 million Brazilian real (worth $71.6 million in 2005). Only eight people were arrested, and just 20 million real was recovered.

4. The Securitas depot robbery

Stolen: $83 million

The largest cash robbery in British history went down in 2006, at a security services company's warehouse in Kent. An inside man filmed the interior of the Securitas depot in preparation. Then, men clad in elaborate masks

kidnapped the branch manager and held his family hostage. The robbers took him to the warehouse and forced him to give them access to the cash cages. The crew stole about $83 million.

Despite their clever disguises, some of the robbers were caught, and the makeup artist who designed the masks became a key witness in the case.

3. The Knightsbridge Security Deposit robbery

Stolen: $97 million

Valerio Viccei, who was already wanted for more than 50 armed robberies in Italy, almost committed the perfect crime in London in 1987. He and an assistant walked into a bank and asked to rent a safe deposit box.

When the men were shown to the vault, they pulled out guns and overpowered the bank manager and guards.
After putting a "closed" sign on a bank door, they let in some friends, broke into as many of safe deposit boxes as possible and made off with millions in cash and valuables.

Viccei fled to South America but was eventually arrested when he returned to England to ship his Ferrari to his new home.

2. The Dar Es Salaam Bank heist

Stolen: $282 million

To this day, few details are known about the 2007 robbery at Dar Es Salaam Bank, a private financial institution in Baghdad, Iraq. It's unclear why the bank had so much American cash on hand to steal.

Allegedly, the theft was orchestrated by several bank guards. The government suspected the robbers also had contacts within local police and militias that allowed them to pass through the many checkpoints across Baghdad undetected. No further information has been released

about the whereabouts of the money or those responsible.

1. The Central Bank of Iraq robbery

Stolen: Over $920 million

Another robbery in Baghdad became the largest bank heist in history. The mastermind was none other than Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. One day before t

he Iraq War began in 2003, he sent three large trucks to the Central Bank. He also sent his son Qusay with a handwritten note asking to withdraw nearly $1 billion to keep it from enemy hands. The money was loaded into vans and driven away.

Most of the cash was recovered in the ensuing raids — but it doesn't end here. Tasked with counting the illicit loot, American soldiers made off with hundreds of thousands of dollars for themselves and their families. Thirty-five service members were caught.

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