

## **Preventing Armed Convenience Store Robbery: A Fusion of Environmental and Social Strategies.**

### **Contents:**

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3.</b>
<b>Background.....</b>	<b>4.</b>
<i>Definitions.....</i>	4.
<i>Table 1- California Penal Code.....</i>	5.
<i>Scope of the Problem.....</i>	6.
<b>Crime Characteristics.....</b>	<b>8.</b>
<i>Convergence and Planning.....</i>	8.
<i>Situational Factors.....</i>	8.
<i>Nobody Move, Nobody Gets Hurt!.....</i>	9.
<i>Repeat Victimization.....</i>	11.
<b>Prevention Strategies.....</b>	<b>12.</b>
<i>Traditional Approaches.....</i>	12.
<i>What the Experts Say.....</i>	13.
<i>Measuring Success.....</i>	15.
<b>Case Studies: Armed Robberies of Convenience Stores.....</b>	<b>18.</b>
<i>Environmental Influences: The Gainesville Studies.....</i>	18.
<i>Prevention on the Social Level.....</i>	19.
<b>Implications – Conclusion.....</b>	<b>21.</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>24.</b>

## Introduction

The crime of robbery is significant in terms of economic cost and the loss of security felt by victims. National statistics show that a robbery occurs every nine minutes (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1995). The loss of property is minimal (average loss: \$364) compared to loss of business, loss of qualified employees, and litigation (Clarke, 1997, p. 192). Many of the victims are physically assaulted, suffer serious injury or are killed. This element of force and fear separates the offense from other methods of theft, earning robbery the classification as a violent crime.

Robbery is listed among the seven major crimes in the United States Department of Justice Uniform Crime Reporting index (UCR). Variations of the offense range from robbery by use of threat and strong-arm robbery (hands, fists, feet, etc.), to robbery committed by use of torture, edged weapons, or firearms. The offense can be further categorized by offenses committed against individuals or businesses (commercial). The locus of this research is commercial robbery by use of firearm, specifically *convenience store robbery*; the central geographic focus will be the City of Palm Springs, California. The research is comprised of five parts.

1. *Background*: a review published material and available police data defining armed robbery of convenience stores, and outlining the nature and scope of the problem;
2. *Crime Characteristics*: a summary of research literature identifying the key ingredients of the opportunity for the offense of robbery, i.e., situational

- features that offenders look for in their decision to commit robbery, including, target selection, description of ideal targets, preferred locations, and tools used in the commission of the offense;
3. *Prevention Strategies*: a critical evaluation of traditional law enforcement responses to the offense of armed robbery of convenience stores, focusing on those situational factors that are not being addressed by law enforcement;
  4. *Case Studies*: a discussion of an innovative strategy that appears to address all or most of the features that create the opportunity for armed robbery of convenience stores. The discussion will describe how the strategy was conceived of, how it works, why the strategy works, and will provide evidence of its effectiveness, and;
  5. *Implications – Conclusions*: a discussion of the successes and shortcomings of previously implemented strategies, and recommendations for an efficient and effective strategy to prevent armed robbery of convenience stores.

## **Background**

### *Definitions*

The Penal Code of the State of California lists a number of different sections that define and characterize the offense of robbery. The substantive elements of the offense are: (1) *taking the personal property* in the possession of another, (2) *by means of force or fear*. California Penal Code sections applicable to armed robbery of convenience stores are listed in Table 1. Other offenses considered robberies but not within the scope of this monograph are *home-invasion robbery, train robbery, and carjacking*.

Table 1.

California Penal Code 2001.

Section (§)	Definition	Punishment
<p><b>§ 189 Murder; Degrees,</b></p>	<p>“All murder which is perpetrated by means of a destructive device or explosive, knowing use of ammunition designed primarily to penetrate metal or armor, poison, lying in wait, torture, or by any other kind of willful, deliberate, and premeditated killing, or which is committed in the perpetration of, or attempt to perpetrate arson, rape, <b>robbery</b>, burglary, mayhem, kidnapping, train wrecking, or any act punishable under Section 286, 288, 288a, or 289, is murder of the first degree . . .”</p>	<p>Punishable by death, If a victim suffers death or bodily harm, or is subjected to substantial likelihood of death.</p>
<p><b>§ 209 Kidnapping for ransom, reward, extortion or robbery, a), and (b),</b></p>	<p>“Any person who seizes, confines, inveigles, entices, decoys, abducts, conceals, kidnaps or carries away another person by any means whatsoever with intent to hold or detain, or who holds or detains, that person for ransom, reward, or to commit extortion, or to extract from another person <b>any money or valuable thing</b>, or any person who aids or abets any such act is guilty of a felony; and,</p> <p>Any person who kidnaps or carries away any individual to commit <b>robbery</b>.”</p>	<p>May be punishable by imprisonment in state prison for life without possibility of parole.</p>
<p><b>§ 211 Robbery</b></p>	<p>“The felonious taking of personal property in the possession of another, from his person or immediate presence, and against his will, accomplished by means of force or fear.”        (Enacted 1872)</p>	<p><b>§ 213 (a)</b> lists punishment for <b>robbery</b> as follows:        “(1) Robbery of the first degree: by imprisonment in the state prison for three, four, or six years; (2) Robbery of the second degree: by imprisonment in the state prison for two, three, or five years; and,        (b) Notwithstanding section 664 (Attempts), attempted robbery is punishable by imprisonment in the state prison.”</p>

### *Scope of the problem*

Convenience store robbery experienced the most rapid growth within all categories of robbery during the period from 1985 to 1990 (Sessions, 1990, p. 21). According to the California Department of Justice (1999), robbery accounts for 28.9 percent of all violent crime in the state. From 1994 to 1999 (the last year for which detailed statistics are available), the robbery rate decreased 14.1 percent. The 1999 robbery rate of 174.6 per 100,000 residents was the lowest since 1974. Armed robbery by use of firearm accounted for one-third of all robberies reported (California Department of Justice, 1999, p. 8).

A total 60,027 robberies were reported in California in 1999. Commercial robbery excluding bank robbery and robberies committed in churches, schools, and in public and private transportation accounted for 22.9 percent (13,763) of the total. The national and local crime statistics that were reviewed for this research did not provide clear distinctions between these various classifications of commercial robbery.

A review of robbery statistics for the City of Palm Springs, California, indicates that fifty-seven robberies occurred in 2000 (the last year for which detailed statistics are available), compared with forty in 1999, an increase of sixty-one percent. According to an informal interview with Detective Sergeant Michael Hall (personal interview, October 5, 2001) of the Palm Springs Police Department Crimes Against Persons Unit, commercial robbery accounts for approximately fifty percent of all robberies, and that approximately ninety-five percent of all commercial robberies are perpetrated by use of a firearm or simulated firearm.

Some typical characteristics of offenders (by highest percentage of 100 percent) as listed by the State of California Attorney General's Office are as follows:

- 29.8 percent of the robbers are from 20-29 years of age;
- 48.5 percent of the robbers are Black males;
- 58.9 percent of the robbers are strangers to the victims; and,
- 27.7 percent of the robbers are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Please note that these state robbery categories were not specific to commercial robberies.

According to Sergeant Hall, the age range of those committing commercial robberies in the City of Palm Springs mirrored the typical statewide age-range. Ethnicity was equally divided in thirds between Whites, Hispanics, and Blacks, and nearly 100 percent of the robbers were male. Approximately 50 percent of the perpetrators were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the offense. The educational level of the typical commercial robber in the City of Palm Springs is considered to be 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Most robbers are unemployed or situated in low-grade, low-wage employment. The perception held by law enforcement officers in the City of Palm Springs as elicited by informal survey, is that the majority of commercial robbers are from an unstable socio-economic background.

## **Crime Characteristics**

### *Convergence and Planning*

The commission of an armed robbery of a convenience store seems to balance on a thin edge of opportunity created by a convergence of a number of factors. Time, circumstance, access to the intended victim, and willingness by the offender to risk the use of potentially fatal force, are the compelling components of the offense. Studies suggest, however, that perhaps the edge is not quite so thin. According to the *rational choice* perspective, crime is purposive behavior designed to meet the offender's commonplace needs (Clarke, 1997, p. 9). Interviews with active robbers are the preferred method of obtaining information concerning their decision-making. Feeney (1986) found that the amount of planning increased with the number of robberies the offender had committed (p. 123).

### *Situational Factors*

Current research indicates that the opportunity to commit an armed commercial robbery hinges on a list of environmental elements. While target location and selection is not typically the result of detailed planning, the process does involve a number of considerations such as easy getaway, with close proximity to open rural areas or freeways, fences and/or walls, and interior designs that enable offenders to avoid being photographed or observed by the general public. Opportunity may include consideration of *accessibility* components such as entry and clerk station design and positioning of aisles, *target hardening* techniques including time delayed safes and "cashless tills", and *surveillability* factors such as the presence of video monitor equipment, visibility into offices, and

frequency of police patrols (Nugent, Burns, Wilson, & Chappell, 1989, p. 101).

Since many offenders target 24-hour convenience stores, time of day is a major factor in the opportunity matrix. Most of the offenses occur between dusk and dawn. Offenders may operate in this time frame to utilize cover of darkness, or due to lack of customers in the store.

One of the most debated questions is whether the number of clerks reduces the risk of robberies. A small number of staff on duty and the presence of female clerks were factors that may increase the chance of a store being robbed. Hunter and Jeffrey (1992) cite a number of studies showing that stores with fewer robberies are associated with two or more clerks being on duty.

The Gainesville, Florida, Police Department evaluated a city ordinance requiring two clerks to be on duty. The police department found that convenience store robberies declined immediately after the ordinance took effect (Clifton, 1987). Wilson (1990) reviewed the initial evidence and found that a plausible rival explanation for the decline in robberies was the arrest of active offenders responsible for a rash of convenience store robberies just before the ordinance took place. Although the short-term reduction may have been due to these arrests, robberies of these stores in Gainesville continued to decline for seven years.

### *Nobody Move, Nobody Gets Hurt!*

According to Wright and Decker (1997), creating an illusion of impending death is important to the success of armed robbers. A large part of the illusion is catching the potential victim off guard; the element of surprise denies them the

opportunity to adopt an oppositional stance (p. 131). Once the element of surprise has been achieved the robber is in control of the situation. One offender described the ideal target as a store in which, “. . . clerks were visible from the street. You just had to walk in and go straight to them . . .” (Nugent, Burns, Wilson, & Chappell, 1989, p. 105). This seems to fly in the face of the conventional wisdom that a cash register should be clearly visible to passers-by, and the counter arranged so that the clerk and customer are visible from the street (California Department of Justice, 1995).

The typical *modus operandi* (M.O.) for commercial robbery involves a handgun. Ninety percent of the commercial robbers were armed with a handgun, although a small number employed rifles, knives, chemical spray, or other weapons such as bludgeoning instruments (Feeney, 1986, p. 125). Factors leading to the overwhelming use of handguns were their relative ease of use and concealment, and the fact that handguns can be simulated by mere positioning of the hand inside a coat or pants pocket. Feeney (1986) points out that many of the offenders wanted to be sure that no one was hurt, so many used unloaded weapons:

It couldn't have been loaded. I made sure of that. I just didn't want it loaded. I didn't want to hurt nobody. Just wanted to more or less scare them to give me some money. (p. 125)

Wright and Decker concur:

. . . victims may fail to behave in the expected fashion. . . the offenders usually respond with severe, but non-lethal violence, relying on brute force. Very few of them want to kill their victims. . . (p. 136)

### *Repeat Victimization*

The convenience store industry has conducted some of the most sophisticated crime prevention experiments available. According to Nugent, Burns, Wilson, and Chappell (1989), these studies suggest that there are two types of stores, those with few or no robberies where crime prevention efforts are unlikely to influence future robberies, and a fewer number of stores with several robberies where prevention efforts may be more productive.

The findings of repeat victimization investigations in Palm Springs suggest that proximity of stores to open desert environments, roads affording easy getaway, and lack of other night time activity appear to be common threads in situational factors affecting convenience store robbery in that city. With the exception of lighting modification and installation of video-monitoring equipment, most stores have not taken an active role in protecting against robberies. Socio-economic status of the neighborhood does not appear to be a primary selection criterion of offenders in Palm Springs. Rather than being situated in proximity to the lowest socio-economic neighborhood in the city, the store that is robbed most frequently is located in a neighborhood considered near the high end of the socio-economic matrix. Investigators believe that this is phenomenon is linked to a combination of concealment and easy getaway.

To summarize the crime characteristics of armed robbery of convenience stores, research suggests that offenders select targets; (1) that have few environmental obstacles, in concert with an easy getaway route (accessibility), (2) that have few target hardening components such as safes, time delayed registers,

male clerks or more than one clerk on duty, and, (3), that are not observable from the exterior or from security cameras (surveillability). Additionally, most offenders operate under cover of darkness. In selecting M.O., an overwhelming percentage of commercial robbers rely on creating an illusion of impending death by using handguns.

### **Prevention Strategies**

Traditional law enforcement approaches to the crime of commercial armed robbery are largely ineffective. This is due in part to the random nature of the offense, but also because the police have repeatedly used ill-conceived strategies to address crime opportunity factors. Although robbery is a particularly feared and violent offense, according to Feeney (1986), most robberies are not the product of detailed planning. Over half the offenders interviewed said they did no planning at all (p. 122). Oftentimes the most important decision is whether to commit a robbery, or some other crime (such as a burglary) instead. By reviewing published documents and interviewing law enforcement officers, the nexus between opportunity factors and available strategies becomes apparent. This information may then be used in the construction of potentially successful prevention efforts.

#### *Traditional Approaches*

The traditional approach to the crime of armed robbery occurs after the fact. A victim contacts the police, and officers address the offense from a reactionary stance. Typical prevention strategies developed after the commission of armed robberies include suggestions for environmental alterations such as improved lighting and access modifications, target hardening techniques such as time-

delayed safes and “cashless tills”, and enhanced surveillability through video monitoring equipment, visible office spaces, and increased frequency of police patrols (Nugent, Burns, Wilson, & Chappell, 1989, p.101).

A by-product of these traditional approaches is displacement: some of the measures could result in more aggression or violence on the part of the offenders, or the offenders may simply commit their crimes elsewhere. One Australian study found extra police patrol to be effective at high-risk times near high-risk targets. Unfortunately, those times are often the busiest times for patrol officers in general, so the offenders would eventually discover suitable targets in another location.

#### *What the Experts Say*

According to an interview with Detective Bryan Reyes of the Palm Springs Police Department in Palm Springs, California, armed commercial robberies there are generally the random work of one or two suspects. A common characteristic noted by investigators is that the majority of armed robbers in Palm Springs are on supervised release from the California Department of Corrections. Preventative strategies used by the Palm Springs Police Department consist of persuading stores to make interior design modifications, enhance exterior lighting, and install video monitoring equipment, in combination with increased police patrols. As noted above, however, these strategies are generally ineffective. Armed robberies in Palm Springs increased more than 14 percent between January and November of 2001.

Detective Reyes said that his department’s greatest success in prevention is generated through tracking the individual offender’s crime patterns. When “The

"Hooded Bandit" committed twenty-three violent street robberies in 1998-99, citizens demanded that the Police Department close the case. By studying situational crimes factors that included where the bandit struck, similarity of victim characteristics, and the time frame in which the robberies occurred, detectives were able to predict high-risk location and times. Investigators learned that the perpetrator operated between eight o'clock P.M. and midnight, mid-week, on the perimeters of major shopping entertainment pedestrian thoroughfares where patrons would have to pass to and from parking.

The Department flooded the streets with undercover cars at predicted locations and times. The offender was eventually cornered as he approached a target, and he was arrested after a short pursuit. Follow-up investigation produced crucial evidence, including a confession by the offender and the arrest of a female accomplice who drove the getaway car. The exorbitant cost of this strategy, however, precludes its use as a typical approach for small-to-medium size law enforcement agencies. In a two-month focus on the "Hooded Bandit" alone, the Department exhausted \$100,000.00 of its annual overtime budget of \$700,000.00.

Sergeant Steve Shalob of the Las Vegas, Nevada, Metropolitan Police Department, echoed the words of Detective Reyes. Long-standing prevention measures addressing accessibility, target hardening, and surveillability have produced limited success. Businesses have spent millions of dollars in an attempt to reduce armed robberies in the Metro jurisdiction, yet the number of robberies has increased for the past four years. Las Vegas Metro has seen some success at locations that employ armed security guards. Shalob said that with the

exception of a high-profile jewelry store robbery, offenders avoid locations employing armed security.

Shalob's Target Team utilizes efforts similar to those employed during the "Hooded Robber" offenses. Crime analysts study criminal preferences of the offenders, with an emphasis on repeat victimization studies, and suggest strategies to the Target Team. These strategies lean toward social intervention: inserting people into the target/setting/offender calculus. The Target Team then responds en masse during predicted time frames to projected target locations, utilizing a combination of marked patrol cars and undercover officers in unmarked cars.

Although Metro's approach has culminated in numerous arrests, Sergeant Shalob is convinced that there must be a better method. "We've arrested many of our primary suspects, and we've caught lots of others that we didn't have previous knowledge of," he said, "so in that respect, the Target Team works." "I'm sure that sometimes we've displaced some crooks, though. Arrests are the goal, but I have a nagging feeling that this is still more reactionary than preventive, and it's expensive. I don't think many small departments can afford to do what we do without adversely impacting their daily operations."

### *Measuring Success*

One means of evaluating the success of crime prevention strategies is to ask if they address the Who, What, Where, When, and How of the crime opportunity matrix (class lecture, Bichler-Robertson, October 22, 2001). Strategies having the ability to address all five of these elements would

undoubtedly be successful. A comprehensive evaluation would necessarily include input from the victims of the offenses.

The similar strategies employed by the police departments in Palm Springs, California, and Las Vegas, Nevada demonstrate separate levels of success. The departments' accessibility and target hardening strategies address opportunity factors that include what offenders consider attractive targets, where offenders might strike, and how offenders accomplish their modus operandi. These strategies, however, exclude who and when. Surveillability strategies address who might commit the offense, but they fail to address where offenders operate, how they operate (one can easily defeat cameras by use of masks or disguises), and when the crimes occur.

Assigning a substantial number of undercover officers to high risk locations during high risk times appears to be an effective strategy that addresses who commits the offense and when crimes occur, yet this approach fails to consider what causes an offender to select a particular target in the first place, or how the offense is committed. Both Palm Springs and Las Vegas Metro Police have used this method with some success, but spokespersons for both departments mentioned the prohibitive costs of the strategy.

As Sergeant Shalob mentioned, armed security guards also seem to deter many offenders from robbing a particular target. Hannah (1982) suggests that armed guards are an effective deterrent to robbery. The cost of guards, however, can be prohibitive for some businesses, and armed guards leave open the possibility for a violent encounter as a direct result of the guards (AIC, p.1).

“Targeting models” as employed by the Palm Springs Police and Las Vegas Metropolitan Police are imprecise, and are based primarily on studies of past offenses, rather than on specific situational and offender characteristics. Scientific research is beyond the scope of a medium-size law enforcement agencies such as Palm Springs. Both cities have found that small liquor outlets and twenty-four hour convenience stores are the preferred targets. Offender characteristics are generally absorbed in the departments’ geographic forecasting, although investigators ascribed the following attributes to convenience store robbers:

- Male;
- 20-29 years of age;
- Unemployed, temporarily employed, or earning low wages;
- Previously incarcerated for robbery or assault;
- Lower socio-economic status, and;
- Under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

### **Case Studies: Armed Robberies of Convenience Stores**

The construction of an effective strategy to prevent armed robbery of convenience stores involves review of existing research, coupled with critiques of practical attempts to replicate research findings under field conditions. Hunter and Jeffery (1992) cite thirteen studies that provide a comprehensive review of environmental crime prevention strategies. This research for the most part ignores the human factor, i.e., social intervention between offender and victim. According to Eckblom (1996), a *social level* of control in proximal circumstances can work to interrupt the convergence of potential offender and situation that results in the commission of a crime. This monograph will suggest that a nexus of environmental and social level inhibitors may be successful in eliminating the opportunity structure that enables the commission of armed commercial robberies.

#### *Environmental Influences: The Gainesville Studies*

Three environmental factors seem to hold the most promise for reducing the potential for convenience store robbery: two or more clerks on duty at a time; cash handling procedures which limit available cash; and elimination of concealed access to the target (includes escape routes, lighting, and obstacles which offenders might use for concealment). Beginning in 1986, the City of Gainesville, Florida, implemented a series of ordinances to regulate the operation of convenience stores, which were experiencing a high rate of victimization. The above listed environmental prevention factors formed the basis of these ordinances. The locus of the strategy, however, was the element requiring

additional clerks. The Gainesville strategies addressed the situational opportunity features of the crime in the following ways:

- Controlled *accessibility* components such as escape routes, entry design and clerk station design, i.e. moving clerk stations to the center of the store;
- Employed *target hardening* techniques including time delayed safes and “cashless tills”, and;
- Increased *perceived risk*, by multiplying the number of clerks on duty.

Enforcement of the ordinances precipitated a dramatic decline in convenience store robberies. The Gainesville strategy, as measured over a five-year period, reduced convenience store robbery by 72 percent. A later study found that the influence of environmental factors varies over time: stores implementing new robbery prevention strategies had fewer robberies, while those that failed to develop new techniques experienced an increase. Therefore, robbery prevention techniques must constantly be upgraded and improved (Hunter and Jeffery, 1992, p. 193).

#### *Prevention on the Social Level*

While environmental influences include numerous physical and geographic interveners between offender and victim, according to Eckblom (1996), *people* can be modulators, shaping the situation by playing distinct roles in acting upon the chain of events, the situation, or against the offenders (p.51). Eckblom admits that there is no clear definition of social intervention. Social intervention can be *distal*,

that is, remote, as in the case of a technological change introducing new opportunities for crime, or *proximal*, in the presence of an offender in a suitable crime situation immediately prior to the commission of the criminal act. Social intervention can be institutional at a distal range, community generated at a proximal range, or inserted in a combination of modulators and ranges (Eckblom, 1996, p. 47).

As an example of institutional intervention at a distal range, a police department's citywide crack down on parole violators results in the incarceration of an offender who is in the initial planning stage of a crime. The insertion of the arrest prevents the convergence of circumstances necessary for the offense to occur. Modulation by the community at a proximal range may take place, for instance, if a citizen interrupts a commercial burglar as he approaches his intended target.

Strategies used by the Palm Springs, California, Police Department, and the Las Vegas, Nevada, Metropolitan Police Department, employ people as situation shapers at proximal range (personal interviews, Reyes, November 7, 2001, & Shalob, November 8, 2001). This "Target Team" strategy involves studying the decision making process of offenders to determine the Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How of the crimes. Much of the information is elicited from repeat victimization studies. Offenders target certain stores (or in the case of Palm Springs, victims on the street) time and again. By developing the characteristics of these crimes, investigators gain insight about target preference. A lesser volume of information comes from interviews with the offenders.

The police departments then flood the suspected target areas with plain-clothes officers at the indicated times. The strategy has succeeded in apprehending large numbers of offenders. The number of armed street robberies in Palm Springs fell from 73 in a twelve-month period from August 1998 to August 1999, to 40 the following year. Las Vegas has reduced convenience store robberies by 50 percent in three years. According to Sergeant Shalob, the Special Investigations Services (SIS) of the Los Angeles, California, Police Department employed this method to solve several high profile robbery cases before that unit was disbanded.

Four criticisms of this strategy are that it: (1) is reactionary rather than preventative; (2) is costly to implement because a substantial amount of overtime is necessary for its implementation; (3) depletes manpower by focusing a large portion of available resources on select areas, and, (4) displaces the criminal activity to other locales. Weiss & McGarrell (1996) studied a comparable strategy in Indianapolis, Indiana, which utilized increases in traffic enforcement to apprehend repeat offenders in a high robbery area (Sherman, 1998, p. 12).

### **Implications – Conclusion**

Existing research suggests that a strategy addressing only environmental factors or social level modulators will ultimately fail, because crime is transitional. Prevention research strongly supports the modification of environmental factors to deter convenience store robbery. One opportunity factor often overlooked in traditional environmental approaches is the advantage afforded by numbers. A small number of staff on duty and the presence of female clerks were factors that

may increase the chance of a store being robbed. Hunter and Jeffery (1992), cite a number of studies showing that stores with fewer robberies are associated with two or more clerks being on duty.

In 1986, the City of Gainesville, Florida enacted an ordinance requiring two clerks to be on duty in convenience stores. The Gainesville Police Department found that convenience store robberies declined immediately after the ordinance took effect (Clifton, 1987). Although a review of the initial evidence raised doubts that the decrease was attributable to the number of clerks, robberies of convenience stores in Gainesville continued to decline for seven years.

The *Gainesville* strategy succeeded by:

- Hampering the offenders' abilities to enter the target business, approach the victim, and flee from the scene;
- Lowering the amount of cash on hand to an amount deemed unacceptable to risk commission of the crime, and made cash difficult to access, and;
- Forcing offenders to confront multiple victims.

The success of this strategy, however, is based on the passage of stringent legislation that may not be acceptable in many communities.

Using modulators as situation shapers succeeds as an apprehension technique on a social level. Since repeat victims account for a disproportionate number of total victimizations, prevention strategies should center on those targets. The *Target Team* strategy as implemented by the Palm Springs and Las

Vegas police departments produces results by intervening between offender and repeat victim in a proximal circumstance.

A comprehensive and innovative strategy that addresses both environmental factors and social level modulators to prevent convenience store robbery fuses the Gainesville and Target Team strategies. The strategy should include “people as intervention” by requiring additional clerks to be on duty, the employment of armed security guards, and the assignment of police officers to undercover operations. Replication is a reality for communities that are willing to enact environmental changes voluntarily or through passage of legislation, and that are able to provide the necessary monetary and staffing resources for acutely focused law enforcement activities. A nexus of increased citizen involvement and technological/environmental modifications may lead to the ultimate goal of a permanent reduction in occurrences of armed robberies of convenience stores.

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