

60 Seconds to Commit the Crime - 6 Years to Pay for it

It was like a movie - a band of four thieves robbing a series of jewellery stores, waving guns at patrons and sometimes firing into the air. They were always in and out in less than 60 seconds, and made their get-away in a high-powered stolen vehicle.

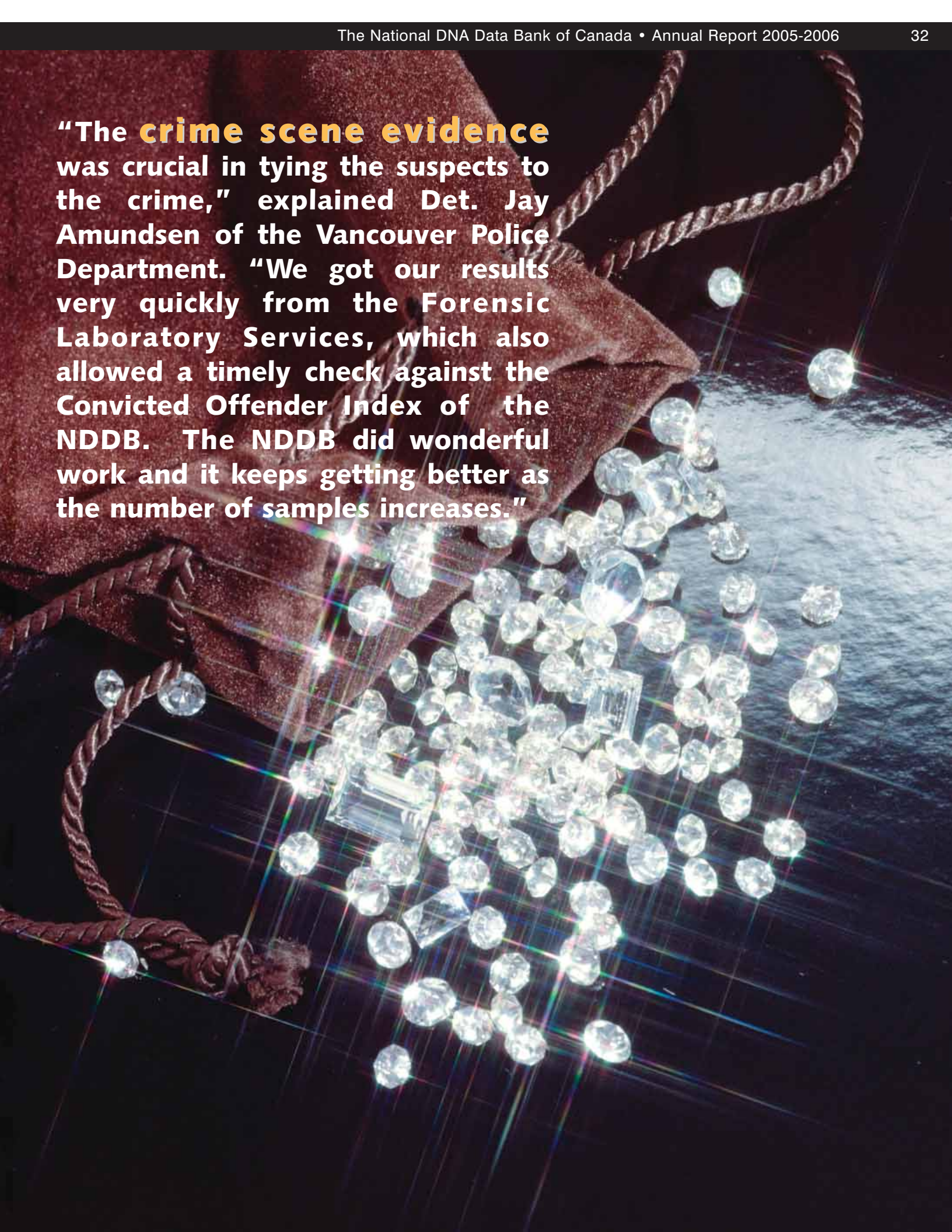
The difference was that this wasn't Hollywood, but British Columbia's lower mainland in the spring of 2001. There were eight robberies with a loss of \$1.4 million worth of expensive jewellery and high end watches.

The pattern was always the same; three masked and gloved suspects armed with firearms would enter the jewellery store. They would smash the display cases with hammers and steal the contents, while a fourth suspect would wait outside the store in a stolen, high powered get-away vehicle. They would flee and then abandon the vehicle a few blocks away from the robbery, along with their used clothing. A second vehicle was used to drive away.

A joint forces operation was conducted with the Vancouver Police Department and the RCMP detachments of Richmond, Burnaby, Surrey and Langley. After the police assessed the evidence to date, they identified that the best lead would be blood found on broken glass from one of the robberies. Other biological evidence was collected from the abandoned clothes, which police visually matched to the clothes worn by suspects on security camera footage.

This crime scene evidence was turned into DNA profiles which linked to three individuals in the Convicted Offender Index. Using castoff biological evidence collected through suspect surveillance, police were able to conclusively link the suspects to the crimes.

Three suspects were arrested, tried and convicted for four of the eight robberies. They were each sentenced to six to eight years in prison.



“The **crime scene evidence was crucial in tying the suspects to the crime,” explained Det. Jay Amundsen of the Vancouver Police Department. “We got our results very quickly from the Forensic Laboratory Services, which also allowed a timely check against the Convicted Offender Index of the NDDB. The NDDB did wonderful work and it keeps getting better as the number of samples increases.”**