

SUSPECT IN FAKE-BOMB BANK HEISTS IN CUSTODY

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The man police dubbed the fake-bomb bank bandit, who they say robbed at least three metro Detroit banks, is now in custody.

Detroit police have scheduled a news conference for today to announce the arrest and federal indictment of **Bob Best**, 38, of Detroit.

Best confessed to four bank robberies, two at a bank in Detroit and two at separate banks in the suburbs, in which he used a makeshift device with wires resembling a bomb, Detroit police spokesman James Tate said Thursday.

He was arrested Oct. 23 after a robbery of People's State Bank on East 14 Mile Road in Madison Heights. Madison Heights police chased him into Detroit and apprehended Best after he crashed a stolen 1998 Honda Civic into a fence at 7 Mile and Riopelle, police said.

"Also found in the stolen vehicle was a device fashioned to look like a fake bomb with electrical components," Tate said.

Best also confessed to robbing the Standard Federal Bank at East Warren and Mack in Detroit on Sept. 16 and 18 and a Charter One Bank on Gratiot in Roseville on Sept. 15.

In all four cases, he either went to a drive-through window or a teller with a note and a fake bomb, escaping with undetermined amounts of money, Tate said.

"We suspect him to be responsible for additional hoax robberies but have not been able to definitively determine whether he was responsible," Tate said. "He has indicated that he has a drug problem, and we believe that may have fueled the robberies."

A federal grand jury indicted Best on four felony bank robbery charges on Oct. 25. He is awaiting trial and is in the Wayne County Jail.

Detroit police also announced Thursday the arrest of a Detroit man who they say dressed up as a woman and used a toy gun for at least a dozen bank heists.

Mark Boyd, 47, of Detroit has admitted to 12 bank robberies, Tate said.

A Detroit police surveillance team arrested him Wednesday after his fourth time robbing the Bank One on the 1400 block of Trumbull in Detroit.

With bank robberies rampant in Detroit, the Police Department created a Financial Responsibility Team in September, and the results have been stupendous, Tate said.

Before September, the city's closure rate on bank robberies was 32 percent. Since then, it has been nearly 60 percent, Tate said.

"They have definitely responded to the chief's call for reducing crime," Tate said.

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