

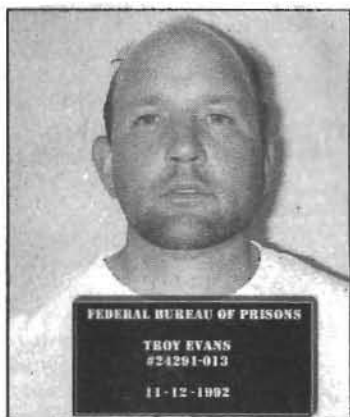
## Style

TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2004

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Robber-turned-motivational-speaker Troy Evans, as shown in his brochure and in a montage created from a 1992 mug shot for use in his lectures.

## Take the Money and . . . Get Caught

ROBBERS, From C2

In 1999, Troy Evans finished a 7½-year sentence for five robberies that netted about \$50,000 over six months in Colorado and neighboring states.

Now Evans, 41, is on the lecture circuit, giving motivational speeches about how he turned his life around—and talking to banking trade groups about robbery and security from his side of the teller window. He wrote a book last year called "From Desperation to Dedication: Lessons You Can Bank On."

"It's pretty much common knowledge the people who work in the banks, they are instructed by policy to do exactly as you tell them to do," Evans says. "Why go into a liquor store where the owner might have a gun behind the counter? Why not go into a place where they're instructed to give you the money?"

He took advantage of that when he was on his spree, trying to finance an omnivorous drug habit. He wore a ball cap and sunglasses. His demand notes, jotted on deposit slips, were precise: He asked for 20s, 50s, 100s, and he instructed tellers not to give him dye packs or bait money. Having dated a teller once, he knew to specify certain drawers he wanted the tellers to empty. He showed a pistol, which he says wasn't loaded.

He was caught after an ex-girlfriend saw his image from a security camera on television.

Evans doesn't advise banks to modify their policy of cooperating with robbers. "The last thing you want to do is make someone angry who has a gun," he says.

But there are other measures that might have prevented him from striking.

One is hire more men. "If I walked

in there and saw a male teller, who's bigger than me and might cause problems, then I'd turn around and walk right back out," he says.

Another deterrent, believe it or not, is "great customer service," Evans says. Greet all customers as they enter, look them in the eye, smile and ask how they'd like to be helped. "Kill two birds with one stone," he says. "The legitimate customer loves to be greeted and made to feel important. The would-be bank robber hates it and doesn't want to be noticed."

Banks should consider employing full-time greeters, Evans says, at least on Fridays, when most robberies occur.

Evans, who earned two college degrees while in prison, wrote letters of apology to all the tellers he robbed and probably terrified. Since he is barred from contacting them, he says he mailed the letters to Santa Claus at the North Pole. His ambition is to do enough good works to someday earn a presidential pardon.

He long ago got over his anger at the ex-girlfriend who alerted police: "I can say the worst thing that happened to me—going to prison—was also the very best thing that happened to me. It saved my life."

Calvin Adams, too, at first was angry at the person he thinks tipped off the agents. Now he says he's kind of grateful. Sooner or later, he thinks, the runaway train would have killed him.

"The money was good, but in the end, it don't pay," he says. "It didn't feel like it was paying."

Adams is taking classes in prison that he hopes will prepare him for work when he gets out.

"Honest working money," he says. "You feel better about it when you got it."