

## = The Bold Bank Robbery =

The Bold Bank Robbery is a 1904 short crime film produced and distributed by the Lubin Manufacturing Company . The silent film depicts a group of burglars who plan and execute a successful bank heist . Company employee Jack Frawley was the film 's director , also coming up with the story and serving as cinematographer ; the cast 's identities are unknown . The silent film was the first Lubin Manufacturing Company release to feature an original narrative .

The film was created after the commercial success of the Edwin S. Porter film The Great Train Robbery , and was intended to be similar to it . Released on July 30 , 1904 , reception was mixed . It is credited with having motivated Porter to direct the film Capture of the " Yegg " Bank Burglars . A print of the seven @-@ minute film , which is now in the public domain , is preserved in the Library of Congress . In 2002 , the film was released on DVD as part of a compilation of silent films .

## = = Plot = =

After learning they are short of money , a group of four robbers decide to execute a bank heist . The four create a plan and hire an unwitting chauffeur to drive them to their location . As soon as they reach an isolated road , the robbers force the chauffeur out of the car , gag him , and throw him into a ditch . The robbers then drive the car to the bank . After entering , they kill a security guard and use explosives to force the bank vault open . The thieves steal as much money as possible and make a quick retreat to their car . Back in the park , a young couple on a walk discover the unconscious body of the chauffeur , and the man calls the police .

The band of robbers , now at home , are about to start splitting their stolen goods equally , when the police barge in . While three of the robbers are subdued after a fight , one manages to make his escape via a window and ends up on the roof . The two policeman chase the criminal , who eludes them by jumping from rooftop to rooftop . After the robber jumps down to the street , he runs toward the railroad station and boards a departing train . The police officers arrive but are too late , as the robber has left . The officers tell the train dispatcher to send a telegram to the next station , informing them of the fugitive and asking them to catch him as soon as possible . When the train reaches the next station , the burglar exits the train and unknowingly runs right into the path of policemen . With all four of the robbers caught , they are sentenced to forty years in jail . While doing work in the jail 's quarry , the group review their failure , with each robber pinning the blame on another .

## = = Production = =

The Bold Bank Robbery was directed by Jack Frawley and produced by the Lubin Manufacturing Company . Frawley worked at the company , serving as their general manager . He often devised the stories for their films ; The Bold Bank Robbery was no exception . The film was the company 's first to feature an original narrative .

Frawley , who also served as cinematographer for the film , had a relaxed approach to making films ; he did not use screenplays and never numbered the scenes . During the assembling of Frawley 's films , the sole material for editors to rely on was a pad with notes scrawled in it . The identities of the cast of The Bold Bank Robbery are unrecorded . The film , silent and shot in black @-@ and @-@ white , was filmed in Philadelphia . It was shot using a camera that company creator Siegmund Lubin had built back in 1901 .

The Bold Bank Robbery was inspired by and created after the success of the 1903 western film The Great Train Robbery ; other inspirations included American and European crime films . Lubin Manufacturing Company had been known to produce films similar to other popular ones ; film historian Kemp R. Niver observed that " if it seemed like a good idea , and other film producers were making money , ' Pop ' Lubin simply appropriated the title and remade or duped the motion picture . " Siegmund Lubin filed a copyright for the film on July 25 , 1904 . The finished product comprised 600 feet ( 182 m ) of film .

= = Release = =

The Bold Bank Robbery was released on July 30 , 1904 . Distribution was handled by Lubin Manufacturing Company and the Kleine Optical Company . To promote the film , Siegmund Lubin placed an advertisement in Billboard ; appearing in its October 15 , 1904 issue , it was the first film to be advertised in the magazine . The advertisement offered the film for purchase at the price of 66 dollars , along with a free Victor Talking Machine if one were to purchase two other films . An advertisement for the film in the New York Clipper declared that The Bold Bank Robbery was " the most sensational film ever made . "

When the film was shown in theaters , it was played alongside a phonograph , a device used to record and replay audio . However , the audio was often not synchronized with the action , perhaps owing to the fact that the projectionists still had to operate the machines by hand . It received a positive review from a writer for the American newspaper The Victoria Advocate , who branded it as a film that " everyone should see . " Adversely , author Jay Leyda , writing for Film Quarterly , criticized the film for being " obviously derivative . "

In 1904 , Edwin S. Porter directed a film entitled Capture of the " Yegg " Bank Burglars , distributed by Edison Studios . Filmed in August and September of that year , the film features a group of robbers who execute a heist . Porter had been motivated to produce it by The Bold Bank Robbery . A man from Belleville , Ontario , who held screenings of The Bold Bank Robbery and paired it with other films in the crime genre , once screened the films at a fair . The man was surprised by the ovation received from the audience , writing that " The applause was something amazing . I really thought the grandstand had collapsed . "

The film has survived ; a print of The Bold Bank Robbery is preserved in the Library of Congress film archive . In 2002 , the film was released on DVD by Kino International as part of The Movies Begin , a DVD boxset which collects 133 silent short films released between 1894 and 1913 . The film is now in the public domain .