

“Robbery of the Century” case selected as 2020 DNA Hit of the Year

DNA identifies members of notorious Brazilian gang in high-stakes robbery of cash transit facility

Seattle/Tacoma, WA - June 24, 2020: Gordon Thomas Honeywell Governmental Affairs (GTH-GA) has announced that a case known as the “Robbery of the Century” was selected as the 2020 DNA Hit of the Year. The case was selected from 50 cases submitted from 20 countries. It was chosen by a panel of seven international judges with career backgrounds in forensic DNA and law enforcement. The recognition was announced during the annual Human Identification Solutions (HIDS) Conference held virtually this year.

Now in its fourth year, the DNA Hit of the Year program is organized by GTH-GA, an international authority on DNA database policy, legislation, and law. “The 2020 slate of cases exemplifies the extraordinary power of DNA databases to solve crime, identify the missing, and exonerate the innocent,” said Tim Schellberg, GTH-GA’s President. A full list of submitted cases and a presentation on this year’s program can be found at <http://www.dnaresource.com/hitoftheyear-2020.html>.

Named the “Robbery of the Century” by the Brazilian media, this crime occurred in Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, but was committed by members of Brazil’s largest criminal organization and investigated by the Brazilian Federal Police. On April 24, 2017, an estimated 50 heavily armed gang members crossed the border into Paraguay and blew up a Prosegur cash transit facility in pursuit of \$40 million USD stored in company vaults.

After testing an extraordinary 457 separate pieces of evidence recovered from the crime scene for DNA, the crime lab produced 47 separate crime scene profiles. Brazil used its DNA database to link many of the profiles to other serious crimes, including matching 13 of the 47 profiles to criminals suspected of taking part in the crime. Due to recent investments by the Brazilian government to expand their criminal offender DNA databases, it is believed that most of the 47 profiles left at the crime scene will eventually match to offenders placed into the Brazil DNA database.

Federal Police Director General Rolando Alexandre de Souza said: “The Prosegur (Robbery of the Century) case highlights the value of Brazil’s DNA database program to solve crime. The Brazil DNA database is rapidly expanding. This will have a significant impact on solving crime and will make our communities safer from violence.”

“Being recognized as the DNA Hit of the Year is a great privilege and an honor. I am proud of the men and woman of our police force that worked very hard to collect and test DNA to help bring the criminals responsible for this crime to justice,” said Director General de Souza.”

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About GTH-GA: GTH-GA is globally recognized as experts in forensic DNA database policy, legislation, and law. For over twenty years, consultants at GTH-GA have consulted in over 50 countries and states on legislation and policies to establish or expand criminal DNA databases.