



The Criminal Network that has  
Confounded Detectives Worldwide

# The Pink Panthers

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Millions of dollars in diamonds disappear without a trace. Posh jewelry stores frequented by society's elite are successfully robbed in broad daylight in three minutes flat. Meet a highly professional crime ring that has given countless law enforcement agents many sleepless nights. This group is infamously known as the Pink Panthers, and they are the most professional diamond thieves in the world.

While the Pink Panthers have made it into the headlines and front pages of many newspapers throughout the world, it is entirely possible that you've never heard about them. That's because they're not fanatical ideologues or bloodthirsty murderers. Rather, their goals are purely financial. In the past two decades, they've executed at least 370 diamond heists in 35 different countries and have managed to escape with half a billion dollars' worth of jewelry and diamonds. Incredibly, in all those robberies, they've only been held accountable for one fatality.

That's not to say that the Pink Panthers are compassionate, kindhearted people or that they have much respect for life or that you should have respect for their livelihood and lifestyle. They just happen to be highly trained, disciplined individuals who have perfected the art of carrying out sophisticated robberies without bloodshed. They plan each heist meticulously, repeatedly visiting the shops and boutiques they plan to rob until they feel ready to act. Most of their robberies take no longer than 60 seconds, and often within minutes they've already crossed the border into a foreign country, carrying jewelry worth millions of dollars.

Interpol and law enforcement agents around the world have tried relentlessly but unsuccessfully to topple the Pink Panthers, but the group only keeps on expanding. While there have been a few arrests of members, and even some leaders of the group, many of them have managed to escape from prison only to resume their nefarious activities. The only time the group resorts to violence is when they clash with police and prison guards while attempting to liberate group members from prison.

The Pink Panthers are a conglomerate of multiple groups who work together under one umbrella organization. They hail from various countries, mostly Serbia and Montenegro, both parts of the former Yugoslavia. Many of them are believed to have had some military training (which explains why they are so disciplined and organized) and may have fought in the Yugoslav Wars. And while

most of their robberies have taken place in Europe, their tentacles have spread all the way to Tokyo, Dubai and elsewhere.

Here is a glimpse into the Pink Panthers, a group whose very name evokes fear in diamond dealers, jewelry boutique owners and executives of insurance companies. Last but not least, they strike fear in the hearts of police officers and detectives, who try as they might, cannot capture or dismantle the group.

## Next Stop: Graff Diamonds in London

It was a pleasant spring day, May 19, 2003, when a man in his twenties strolled casually down New Bond Street in London, stopping right outside Graff Diamonds' flagship shop. Graff prides itself on selling the "most fabulous jewels in the world" and its clientele is comprised of rich and famous personalities worldwide.

The tall blond man who stood outside Graff on that spring morning didn't exchange a word with anyone, nor did he enter the shop. After five minutes of staring at the display in the window he resumed his stroll.

This man was no ordinary window shopper. His name was Predrag Vujosevic,



Graff specializes in colored gems.



Jewelry on display in Graff Diamonds.



A robbery at Graff in 2009. The two robbers were caught on security cameras as they entered the store.

born and raised in Bijela, a fishing town in Montenegro. He is believed to be one of the masterminds of the infamous Pink Panthers.

New Bond Street in London is home to various jewelry shops and is located just a few minutes away from Buckingham Palace. Possibly, the reason Vujosevic was drawn to Graff Diamonds was its unique jewels. Graff is famous for its specialty, colored gemstones, and Vujosevic had a penchant for them. It is also highly probable that he chose Graff because of the lax, woefully inadequate security measures.

Security guards at Graff Diamonds do not ask clients if they have scheduled appointments and never check their client's handbags, lest the posh, upper class clients be offended. At Graff Diamonds, courteous treatment of every client is of primary importance.

Around noon, Vujosevic visited Graff again. This time, though, he was not alone. There was another Pink Panther with him. They entered the store together and in less than three minutes they made off with \$30 million worth of diamonds—the biggest diamond heist in all of Britain's history!

Naturally, Scotland Yard made every effort to pursue Vujosevic and his accomplice. There were plenty of clear photos of both of them retrieved from security cameras that were sent to police forces and detectives around the world in the hope that someone somewhere would recognize them and turn them in.

## Concealed in a Jar of Face Cream

It did not take long for the British police to identify Vujosevic, who was then residing in Paris. They learned that he had arrived in London and rented a room in a shoddy hotel in Bayswater, near Hyde Park, a mere two weeks before he carried out the heist. In London, he met Milan Jovetic from Montenegro, who made all of Vujosevic's travel arrangements and helped him plan the burglary.

A week before the burglary, a third man—this one from Zurich, Switzerland—joined the group in London. His name was Nebojsa Denic, a hulking Serb originally from Kosovo who was a janitor in a Swiss hospital. The three met in Isleworth, in West London, where they finalized their plans.



It was a pleasant spring day in May 2003 when a man in his twenties paused outside the Graff Diamonds shop to admire the gems in the window.



Items on display in a jewelry boutique in London.