

THE HOLDEN ROBBERY

(Continued from page 1)

"When did Mr. Alvin leave?"
"A few minutes after I locked the vault."

"When did Speed leave?"
Uncertainty Hovers
"Let me see—why, I don't know just when he left but I know he had gone when I went in to sweep the shipping room."

"You said you helped in the shipping room, Johnson. Do you frequently help Speed take boxes to the elevator and then to a truck and to the freight house or express company?"

"Yes, I always help him when we have to take stuff to the freight house, which ain't often because most of our stuff is sent by express; and whenever there's a box to go by express, I help move it over to the elevator."

"Now," said Darrington, changing the subject, "do you know whether Timothy is a highfyer or not? Did he ever mention going to cabarets?"

Timothy Woman-Hater
"Ha! Ha! Ha!" the porter laughed heartily. "Mr. Timothy ain't that kind—he's bitter on the women, although he's married."

"Probably because of it," the detective mused to himself, and then aloud: "what time do you usually send out your shipping here?"

"Oh, about three o'clock."

"When is it usually packed and made ready?"

"In the mornings."

"Were there any boxes that you didn't get off the afternoon of the 13th?"

"Yes, we had quite a lot of stuff that day, so there were two or three boxes we left until the next afternoon."

Darrington stroked his chin meditatively. "Well," he snapped out with a tone of finality "let's get back."

Returning to the office, the detective found the employees and Mr. Alvin impatiently awaiting him, each with his paper covered with writing. Darrington read each sheet carefully, eyeing the group from time to time.

Alibi Perfect
When he had finished with them all he announced: "Well, all of you seem to have ironclad alibis, so I guess it was an outside job." As he said this he watched Alvin, Timothy and Speed closely. Then turning to the president he informed him that the employees could return to their work.

"When they were all outside he turned to Alvin and said quietly, "Mr. Alvin I suppose you won't mind my questioning your cashier, will you?"

"Not at all," replied the president, though evidently annoyed with the whole procedure.

When Mr. Timothy, a short, slender, nervous man with scant hair, watery eyes that peered from behind thick spectacles, entered the room, Darrington asked but two questions: "Mr. Timothy, did you direct Johnson, the porter, to sweep up the glass under the back window when you came in on the morning of March the 14th?"

Timothy Watched Closely
"Why, come to think of it," the little cashier replied, "there wasn't but one piece of glass on the floor and I threw that in the trash box myself."



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"Who was the next person you saw after you unlocked the door on the morning of the 14th?"

"Well, let-me-see. Oh yes, I unlocked the door and came in, and right away I saw the window smashed. I went right back there and picked up that piece of glass. Then I opened the safe, as usual, and that's when I discovered that the coats were gone. I heard a hammering in the shipping room and I knew Speed must be there so I called him. Nobody else had arrived at the time. A few minutes later the colored boy came in."

"Thank you, Mr. Timothy. That will be all."

When the cashier had retired, Darrington turned to Mr. Alvin, saying: "I wish you would let me see your express shipping orders for the 13th and 14th, Mr. Alvin."

"Why certainly," the president replied, wonderingly, reaching for his telephone he asked Mr. Timothy to bring them in.

No Clue Yet
Darrington studied the orders carefully. There were two of them, the one for the 13th, mentioning four boxes to various firms and that of the 14th listing three. He handed the orders back to Timothy and waved his dismissal. Evidently he saw no clue there.

Rising he said, "Well, Mr. Alvin, thanks ever so much for your assistance. This looks like a clear case of outside robbery. I figure they got up on the roof, kicked in the window, and then were able to hit on the combination of your vault."

"But," interrupted the president, "how did they get down off that roof through the locked door of the penthouse and out past the night watchman, to say nothing of unlocking the door of this shop without disturbing the burglar alarm?"

Darrington Is Puzzled
"I think they must have let themselves down with a rope from the roof to the fire escape and thence to the ground. At any rate there are a lot of loose ends I've got to gather up, but I'm sure it was an outside job."

Outside, the Negro sleuth hailed a taxicab and had himself driven rapidly to the express office. He immediately closeted himself with the manager after making himself and his mission known. Upon his request the manager permitted him to examine the express shipping orders of the Holden Fur Company for March 13th and 14th. There were the originals of the two orders listing seven boxes to as many firms.

"Mr. Simpson," said Darrington turning to the manager, "may I talk to the driver who called at the Holden Company for these boxes?"

"Why yes," the manager replied. "Fortunately, Carahan is out front now." Rinsing for his secretary he bade her call the driver.

Driver Caught
Carahan, a tall, shaggy-headed, lantern-jawed Irishman with shifty

blue eyes, entered questioning. Darrington bade him be seated, then turning suddenly and whipping out his blue automatic, pressed it into the Irishman's ribs. Out of another pocket he drew dangling handcuffs.

"Put 'em up, Carahan," he hissed, "and turn around." Then before the astonished eyes of the express manager, he handcuffed the driver.

"Why, what does this mean—how do you get that way?" the man blustered.

"Now listen," Darrington grated, "if you don't tell what you did with that other box—the fourth one—you took from the Holden Fur Company on the afternoon of March 14th, and for which you received no order nor gave any receipt, you're going to be in prison for the next ten or fifteen years."

Driver Gives Clue
At these words the man sprang as if shot and before he could control his wits, he babbled, "How in the devil did you find that out?" Then realizing his mistake, he bit his lip until it bled.

"Sit down," Darrington commanded, with a smile. Then turning to the astonished Mr. Simpson, he said: "Pardon me, old man, for using your office for this purpose but it couldn't be avoided. As you have heard, your driver has admitted that he took a box away from the Holden Company of which neither you or that company has any record. That box, I am positive, contained those five chinchilla coats. Now please let me use your telephone. In a moment he was connected with Mr. Sanders of the Safety Insurance Company.

Speed Arrested
Still keeping his automatic trained on the big driver, he directed Sanders to have the police arrest Jim Speed and bring him over to the Express office.

A half hour later, Speed, accompanied by two detectives from headquarters and the plump little president of the insurance company, entered the office. Turning to one of the officers, Darrington requested him to step outside with Carahan for a few minutes. Then turning to Sanders, he said:

"Well, Mr. Sanders, you see I've made some progress. This driver has already confessed to his part in the robbery and has told the whereabouts of the furs." As he said this he glanced sidelong at Speed and noticed that he had gone pale as a sheet.

"The damn snitch!" Speed snarled. "I'll get him for this." Then he caught himself as he realized the admission of guilt in his words, and his face went red with chagrin.

Guilt Admitted
"Well, you see," said Darrington to Sanders, stroking his chin with a gleam of triumph in his eyes, "the culprits have admitted their guilt. You can take them both down to headquarters, officer."

"But how was it done?" Sanders burst out when the two officers had

departed with the prisoners. Darrington stroked his chin, lit a cigarette and getting back in his chair began:

"After going over the roof carefully, I found no evidence that a rope had been used up there. There were no marks of a rope either on the cornice or the smokestack. Moreover the lock on the penthouse door had not been picked or broken. Again the foot and heel marks on the gravel roof above the Holden windows were altogether too numerous not to arouse my suspicions that they had been put there on purpose. For another thing, Timothy, the cashier testified that he only found one piece of glass on the floor when he arrived the morning of the 14th. Now, if the window had been kicked in from the outside there would have been a large number of pieces of glass on the floor."

Darrington Explains
Consider, too, that Speed was not seen to leave by Johnson, the porter, nor was he seen to enter the next morning by Timothy, the cashier. The last time Johnson saw Speed he was wiping his hands; when Timothy saw him next morning he was in the shipping room. While it was customary to send out all boxes at 3 p. m., on the afternoon of the 13th there were two or three boxes that were not sent off. I figured that Speed did that on purpose to avert any suspicion next morning when a

search would be made by the police. Instead of him going one that night, he hid himself in his individual locker until everyone was gone. He forgot, however, to clear away the crumbs from his sandwiches which he had left on his shelf. When everybody was gone he took the furs from the vault, put them in a box, nailed it up and then hid until morning. He knew that Timothy would not notice that he had not entered."

"Yes," interrupted Sanders, "but how did he open the vault? He didn't have the combination. How do you explain that?"

Clever Scheme
"Quite simple," Darrington returned blandly. "In front of the vault is the wash bowl, over the wash bowl is a large mirror, by standing in the door of the shipping room you can glance right into the mirror and see anyone in front of the vault. Speed must have had a pair of opera glasses; and when Timothy opened the vault every morning he watched him through the glasses from the inside of the shipping room door. Did this until he knew the combination as

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