

The Case of the Pilfered Purse

As I knocked on the door of the neat little apartment, I was met by the fierce barking of a dog. “Stop, Butch! No!” came the rebuke of its owner.

The door opened and I was greeted by a tired, drawn looking young lady by the name of Sarah Sontner. “Ah, hello, Miss Sontner,” I said, “I’m Detective Lucy Avila. I’m here concerning your stolen purse.”

“Oh, thank goodness you’re here,” sighed Miss Sontner. Butch, a poodle-Maltese cross, sat growling, not taking his eyes from me. “Quiet, Butch! Oh, I’m sorry. He always barks and growls at strangers. Now about my purse. I really hope you can find it. Not only did it contain \$5,000 in cash, but it had my credit cards, ID, everything...all missing.”

She burst into tears. All I could do was comfort her and wait till she regained her composure. Butch maintained his glare and began barking on several occasions.

“Okay, Miss Sontner, can you tell me what happened?” I asked.

“Well,” she replied, “I’d just been downtown with my boyfriend, Adrian. I’m new to New York...only been here a day.

“Adrian just flew in for a short visit from L.A. He’s just popped out for a couple of hours to attend to some business.”

As she spoke there was a knock at the door. Once again Butch began his frenzied barking.

“It’s only me, Elmer, the mailman,” came the voice from outside. “Got a package for you...err, Miss Sontner...is that right?”

Miss Sontner went to the door, restraining Butch and took the package. All the while Butch barked and growled ferociously.

“Say, Lady...better do something about that dog of yours before the neighbors start complaining,” said the mailman.

“Oh, he’ll be a lot better after a week or so when he gets to know you. He’s just afraid of strangers. Once he trusts you, you won’t even know he’s here. Thank you.”

“Miss Sontner, please, could we get back to what happened?” I asked.

“Well as I was saying, I’d just been downtown. Adrian left to attend to some business.

“I was tired so I lay down to have a little catnap. I only dozed lightly for about ten minutes, but when I woke up my purse was gone. Someone must, somehow, have opened the door and taken it while I was dozing. But, I don’t understand how whoever it was got out of here without being torn limb from limb by Butch. Oh, what am I going to do?”

As she spoke there was the sound of a key opening the apartment door. Adrian entered.

Butch, as quietly as a mouse, ran to him wagging his tail and panting happily.

“Hey there, boy. Good dog!” said Adrian. “Well anything new happen while I was out? Say... Sarah...you okay?”

“No she’s not, Mr. Corney. While you were out someone helped themselves to her purse. But then I don’t need to tell you, do I? I think you know a fair bit about it already. I’d like to ask you a few questions down at the station.”

1. Write short answers below:

- (a) List the five characters in the story. _____
 - (b) What had been stolen? _____
 - (c) What breed of dog was Butch? _____
 - (d) How did Butch react to strangers? _____
 - (e) Which three things are we told were missing from Miss Sontner's purse? _____

 - (f) How long had Miss Sontner been in New York? _____
 - (g) Who had come to visit her? _____
 - (h) Who else came to the apartment while Detective Avila was interviewing Miss Sontner? _____

 - (i) What was Miss Sontner doing when the theft took place? _____
 - (j) What did Miss Sontner say she couldn't understand? _____
 - (k) How did Butch behave when Adrian Corney entered the apartment? _____
-

2. Because you are a clever detective you probably know why detective Avila is suspicious of Adrian Corney. Tell us why in a few sentences.

3. Write a dictionary meaning of THESAURUS. _____

4. Use a thesaurus (book or online) to find three synonyms for each of these words:

- (a) rebuke _____
- (b) wary _____
- (c) purse _____
- (d) conclusion _____

The Guilty Gambler

“Come quickly! I’ve just been robbed!”
panted Scott Spencer to the desk clerk
at Centerville Police Station.

“It all happened so quickly ... had to run all the way here ’cause I didn’t have enough money for the taxi fare. There’s a taxi stand out the front of my apartment.”

“Okay! Slow down! Take it easy!” said the police officer who entered moments after Spencer. “I’m Officer Nicholas Cook. Get in the car and I’ll drive you back to your place.”

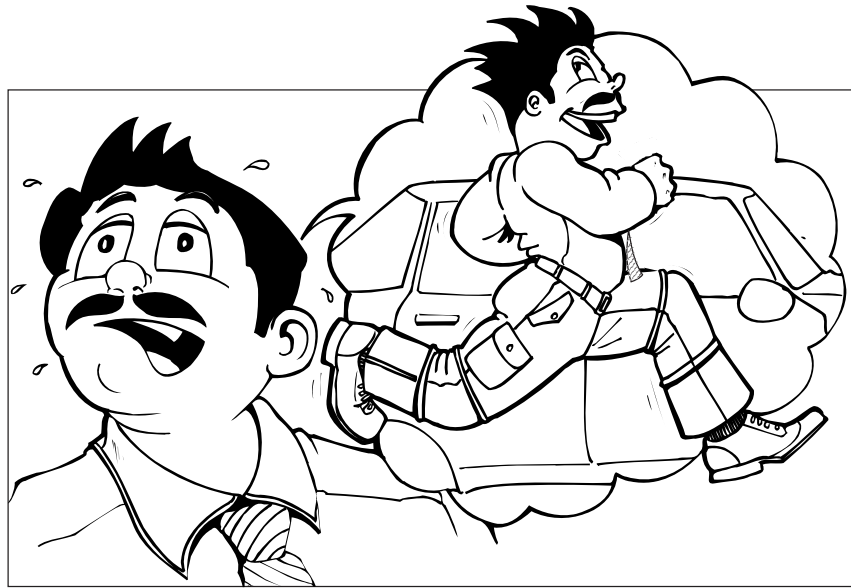
The young police officer ushered Spencer into the police patrol car.

“Now, take a deep breath, slow down, and tell me what happened.”

“It happened just now,” said Spencer. “I’d just woken up ... went to the casino last night. Won a lot, too! Oh boy, you should have seen me!”

“Okay, just tell me what happened this morning,” said Officer Cook.

“Well, as I said, I’d just woken up. I heard a knock and opened the front door. Next thing I’m grabbed by two men. One of them held me down while the other went through all my drawers and ransacked the place. I had some of my girlfriend Eleanor’s jewelry in a drawer...expensive stuff...over



ten thousand dollars worth. All gone! Ooooh, she’ll be mad at me! Luckily I’d hidden the money I won at the casino under my bed. They didn’t get that. Anyway, they ran off and I ran straight to the police station. Uh, just stop here, officer, my apartment’s in this building.”

Spencer showed the policeman into his apartment. It was a mess, with household items and clothing strewn everywhere.

“See the mess they made?” said Spencer.

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“Yes, and once you’ve cleaned up this mess there’s another one you need to clean up back at the station,” said the young policeman. “I think you might’ve sold your girlfriend’s jewelry to pay some gambling debts. Your story doesn’t add up.” 👁

Why do you think Officer Cook was suspicious of Spencer’s story? Gather all the evidence by answering the questions on the next page. They should help you see that Spencer wasn’t being entirely truthful.



1. Using different colors, draw lines to match the words with their meanings.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| patrol car • | • showed or guided someone |
| panted • | • building where gambling games are played |
| ushered • | • breathed with short, quick breaths |
| ransacked • | • a car driven by a policeman on duty |
| casino • | • hurriedly went through a place, stealing things and causing damage |

2. Write short answers to the questions below.

(a) Who claimed he had just been robbed?

(b) How did Spencer get to the police station?

(c) Why hadn't he caught a taxi?

(d) What was out in front of his apartment?

(e) Who drove Spencer back to his apartment?

(f) Where did Spencer say he'd been the previous night? _____

(g) What did Spencer mean when he said, "Won a lot, too!"?

(h) How many men grabbed Spencer when he answered the knock at the door?

(i) What did he say they had stolen?

(j) Why didn't the robbers find the money Spencer said he had won at the casino?

3. If you have studied the evidence, you will probably have decided that, like many gamblers, Scott Spencer is a dishonest booster. He had been to the casino that night but certainly hadn't won anything. He had, as Officer Cook said, gone to the casino to settle some outstanding debts from earlier losses. His need to be seen as a "winner" caused him to wind up a big-time loser in prison.

Tell how Officer Cook knew Spencer's plan for the big "fix up" had become a big "mix up."

The Breakfast Break-in

“I’ll lose my job for sure,” moaned the young man in the business suit. “What a way to start a Monday morning!”

His name was Alan Longmire, a slick salesman who worked at Hammo’s Used Cars.

“Settle down, Mr. Longmire. We’ll get to the bottom of this,” said Officer Ebony Robinson.

“Just drink this cup of tea and tell us when you’re ready,” said her partner, Officer Sam Stubbs.

“Ahh! That’s good!” said the young salesman. “Well, it all happened so quickly I don’t know where to start. I’d just finished getting ready for work. I had my usual scrambled eggs and toast for breakfast. After cleaning up I was just relaxing a little—reading the paper. Next thing, without any warning, three men pushed my front door in. They ripped the locks clean off! Two of them held me down while the other one went to my safe. He must’ve been experienced at safecracking—only took him about a minute to open it. Whoosh! Sixty thousand dollars gone, just like that!”

“You said sixty thousand dollars?” gasped Officer Robinson. “Do you usually keep that much at home?”



“No! Never! We had a terrific day on Friday—sold a record number of cars. I worked late. The bank was closed so I called the boss and told him I’d look after the money for the weekend,” replied Longmire.

“And you say this break-in happened half an hour ago?” said Officer Stubbs.

“Yes! After they left, I got into my car and drove straight here.”

“You show us the way,” said Officer Robinson. “We’ll follow in the police car.”

After a short drive, Longmire pulled into his driveway. He unlocked the front door of his expensive looking house and signalled to the police officers to follow him inside.

“What do you think of his story?” the officer asked her partner.

“It’s got to be a lie. I know this fellow. They call him ‘Big Al’ - a mad gambler. I’d say his boss’s money was lost on the racetrack or at the casino on the weekend. The rest is a cover up.”

“What do you suggest we do?” asked Officer Robinson with a smile.

“Arrest him,” said Officer Stubbs.



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You must now look at all the information. When you have done this you will find why Officer Robinson does not believe Longmire’s story.

1. Write short answers to the questions below.

(a) On which day of the week does the story take place?

(b) Where did Alan Longmire work?

(c) Which two police officers handled the case?

(d) What was Longmire doing just before the crime took place?

(e) What did the three men do to gain entry into Longmire's house?

(f) What happened to the door locks?

(g) Why did Longmire think that the man who opened the safe was an experienced safecracker?

(h) How much money was stolen?

(i) Why wasn't the money taken to the bank?

(j) How long, before Longmire contacted the police, had the break-in taken place?

(k) How did Longmire enter his house when he brought the police officers back?

(l) What was Longmire's nickname?

(m) What did Officer Robinson think had really happened to the money?



2. You have gathered a lot of vital information. Officer Stubbs took particular notice of some of the answers before Longmire was arrested. What was wrong with Longmire's story?

Mental Muscle Flexing.....Page 7

radio

Follow the Clues.....Page 8

- 17 muffins
- 18 runs
- 45 marbles
- 1 goal

The Case of the Pilfered Purse.....Page 9–10

- Detective Avila, Sarah Sontner, Elmer, Butch, Adrian Corney
 - Sarah Sontner's purse
 - poodle - Maltese cross
 - barked and growled at them
 - ID, cards, \$5000 cash
 - one day
 - her boyfriend, Adrian Corney
 - Elmer the mailman
 - dozing, sleeping
 - how the intruder had escaped harm at the spiteful jaws of Butch
 - Walked across to him quietly wagging his tail
- Miss Sontner had only been in New York for one day, not long enough to befriend anyone. Butch barked and growled at strangers but did not behave like this when he knew someone well. There was no sign of Butch having attacked an intruder and there had been no barking to wake Sarah up. It is likely, Detective Avila reasoned, that the intruder was known by Butch and that he did not create a fuss, just as he didn't when Adrian entered the apartment.
- A book that lists words in groups of synonyms.
- Teacher Check.

Eliminating Suspects.....Page 11

- Stanley
- (a)

Grubby Gregory.....Pages 12–13

- messy
 - left them on the floor
 - baseball bat, football, toy
 - put anything back in its place
 - she could clean her house
 - exhausted
 - go straight to bed
 - brush his teeth
 - ironing
 - under the sink
 - in the rack
 - in the rack
 - her house was tidy
 - brush his teeth
- Gregory never put anything back in its place yet his toothbrush was in the rack and the toothpaste was in its place under the sink.

The Fast-footed Felon.....Pages 14–15

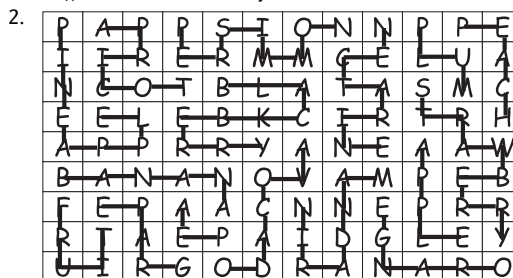
- lazy, untrustworthy
 - quite clever, a good runner
 - too lazy to cope with the hard training
 - snatching wallets, purses, etc.
 - motorcycle
 - to register the motorcycle
 - turned the handle; pushed
 - keys and a wallet
 - turned the handle and pushed
 - before he left the motor registry
- bee
 - nails
 - bat
 - mouse
 - hills
 - daisy
- Denver pushed open the door when entering the motor registry. When he tried to leave he also pushed it. He should have pulled.

Colin, the Coin Con Man.....Pages 16–17

- coins
 - more than a year
 - over \$200
 - to buy some coins for his collection
 - Mr. Colin Ryan
 - American coins
 - old American dollars
 - small; dull-colored
 - Ancient Rome
 - Julius Caesar
 - 55 B.C.
 - a crook
- obverse – the side of a coin showing the head or main design
reverse – the side of a coin bearing the value and secondary design
- B.C. – before Christ
A.D. – Anno Domini (indicates the number of years after Christ's birth)
- Coins were never dated "B.C." How could they be? That would mean they knew in advance that Jesus was to be born on a particular date. The first European coins with dates on them appeared in the mid 16th century (1550s), 1,500 years after Julius Caesar's time.

Fresh Fruit-O for Sale-O!.....Pages 18–19

- Mr. George, Samantha O'Brian, Evan Gussey
 - Mr. George
 - stealing strawberries from his shop
 - a lunchbox
 - his Uncle Paul's farm
 - his uncle's strawberry tree



- low growing plant which produces soft red fruit with a seed-studded surface
- Strawberries do not grow on trees.

The Big Strike.....Pages 20–21

- they felt they were underpaid
 - they were paid handsome salaries
 - go on strike immediately
 - to stop working
 - a big rally
 - a protest sign
 - Man can not live on chalk alone.
 - dogcatcher
 - paint signs
- teacher check
- The workers decided to go on strike immediately. To go on strike means to stop working. A signwriter's job entails painting signs. Since they were on strike, the signwriters could not do their jobs, so their placards had nothing at all painted on them.

The Man in Red Sneakers.....Pages 22–23

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| testimony | • | the person on trial for a crime |
| prosecutor | • | doing something with belief in oneself |
| accused | • | paved path for pedestrians on the side of a road |
| pavement | • | a statement made in a court of law |
| confidently | • | a public official who is in charge of the case against someone accused of a crime |
- Joshua Ballico
 - Jordan Greenwood
 - fifty thousand dollars
 - in the safe
 - Dayne MacDougal
 - it was stolen
 - Joshua Ballico
 - in his car
 - sped away
 - a red sneaker
 - he was only wearing one sneaker
 - in his car
- Greenwood said he saw Ballico sitting in his car with only one sneaker on. If he was sitting in his car it would not be possible for Greenwood to see what Ballico was wearing on his feet.

The Guilty Gambler.....Pages 24–25

- | | | |
|------------|---|---|
| patrol car | • | building where gambling games are played |
| panted | • | a car driven by a policeman on duty |
| ushered | • | breathed with short, quick breaths |
| ransacked | • | showed or guided someone |
| casino | • | hurriedly went through a place, stealing things and causing damage. |
- Scott Spencer
 - ran
 - didn't have enough money to pay a taxi fare
 - taxi stand
 - Officer Cook
 - casino
 - he had won a lot of money
 - two
 - his girlfriend Eleanor's jewelry
 - hidden under his bed
- He boasted that he had won a lot of money at the casino and yet he didn't have money to pay for a taxi fare to the police station.

Snow Job Pages 26–27

- to escape the city rat race
 - Detective Mitchell Bagwill
 - there was a light steady snow
 - a beautiful white carpet
 - the Hindmarsh brothers
 - flashlight; brick
 - Mavis Bagwill's expensive video camera
 - to their shack
 - Mavis Bagwill
 - deserted, beautifully covered with snow
 - seeing the smashed side window of the car
 - about fifty yards
- It had snowed during the night and then stopped because the deer's footprints remained visible. Detective Inspector Bagwill just followed the footprints left by the Hindmarsh brothers from his car to their shack.
- Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, Ontario

The Big Burger Bungle Pages 28–29

- painters
 - eleven o'clock
 - the bench seats
 - World of Grease Burger Bar
 - chief cook and bottlewasher
 - Mr Sparrow
 - to pick up an onion ring he had dropped
 - a young man rifling through his cash register
 - surveillance footage taken by the mall's video cameras
 - running shoes and pink track pants
 - cameras didn't cover World of Grease
 - it would have proved his innocence
 - on the benches near World of Grease
 - prison food
- teacher check
- Benton said he sat down on the benches near World of Grease. They had just been painted at the time of the robbery. Benton's track pants would have been marked by the paint.

Farmer McSwine Pages 30–31

- misbehavior; misdeed; a less serious crime
- sixty
 - shot him in the leg
 - pellet gun
 - roosters
 - more than a dozen times
 - eggs
 - sold them to stores
 - said they were too busy, understaffed, etc.
- McSwine said Bo was stealing eggs and selling them. He raised roosters, which do not lay eggs.
- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| A bird in the hand | • | that lays the golden egg |
| Birds of a feather | • | before they are hatched |
| Don't count your chickens | • | is good for the gander |
| Don't kill the goose | • | catches the worm |
| One swallow | • | is worth two in the bush |
| The early bird | • | flock together |
| What's good for the goose | • | does not make summer |

Good Morning, Sunshine Pages 32–33

- Teacher check
- Los Angeles
 - 6:00 a.m.
 - putting out the display in the shop's front window
 - to get a cup of coffee
 - a handful of expensive watches
 - white; surfboard on top; Florida number plates
 - "Tiny" Hicks
 - on a surfing holiday
 - on the beach
 - the sun rising over the ocean
 - the Pacific Ocean
- east
 - west
 - south
 - north
- Hicks had probably slept on the beach and watched the sun rise over the ocean in Florida, which is on the eastern side of America. In Los Angeles, however, the sun rises over the vast mass of land of the North American continent, not over water.

The Botched Birthday Theft Pages 34–35

- postal security investigator
 - an expensive watch
 - parcels and packages
 - December 9
 - an expensive gift
 - December 8, 9, 10

- hundreds of packages were handled there every day
 - a watch
 - for 30 years of honest service
 - her purse had disappeared
- Laura Graham because her purse had been stolen, leaving her short of money
 - Ruth O'Rafferty because she had been acknowledged for service and honesty
 - Ruth O'Rafferty is the thief. Amy Fealy told each worker only that the stolen gift was valuable. O'Rafferty, however, knew that the stolen item was a watch.

The Great Diamond Grab Pages 36–37

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| mansion | • | a group of people considered to be the best elite |
| elite | • | the study of what is right and what is wrong |
| intercom | • | a two-way radio or communication device |
| verify | • | a large impressive house |
| ethics | • | to demonstrate that something is true |
- Van Loon mansion
 - to their rooms
 - beds, expensive furniture, whirlpool, workdesk, computer equipment
 - the lights went out/power cut
 - one hour
 - the Van Loon Diamond
 - Kiefer Brown
 - using the computer to do an assignment on ethics
 - schoolmaster in charge of the touring group
 - the police
- Brown said that he was working on the computer doing his ethics assignment during the blackout. A computer needs electricity to work.

The Breakfast Break-in Pages 38–39

- Monday
 - Hammo's Used Cars
 - Ebony Robinson, Sam Stubbs
 - reading the paper
 - pushed in the front door
 - they were ripped off
 - it only took him a minute to open the safe
 - sixty thousand dollars
 - the bank was closed
 - half an hour
 - unlocked the front door
 - Big Al
 - gambled it away on the racetrack
- Longmire said the locks had been ripped off his front door yet he unlocked the door to enter the house. As the crime had allegedly occurred only half an hour earlier, this would not be enough time for the doors to have been repaired.

Who Got the Job? Pages 40–41

- someone who studies insects
 - left the lid off the jar containing a poisonous insect
 - newspapers, Internet
 - four
 - beetles, butterflies, and spiders
 - a bull ant
 - South Pole
 - winter
 - had worked at several universities over the past 30 years
 - three
 - six
 - Godwin Austen
- John MacMillan – thought spiders were insects
 - Mary Judd – said bull ants have four legs
 - Kevin Boston – claimed he was studying insects during an Antarctic winter. There are no insects at the South Pole.

Save the Panther! Pages 42–43

- evidence that one was elsewhere when a crime was committed
- July 4th
 - summer
 - New York Times
 - the Panther
 - dressed in black, moved quietly, quickly disappeared into the darkness
 - a diamond necklace
 - Australia
 - one week
 - Melbourne
 - sunbathing on St. Kilda Beach
 - a week earlier
 - northern
 - southern
- Teacher check
- July is summertime for countries in the northern hemisphere but winter in the southern hemisphere. Flett would have presented an odd image, sunbathing on St. Kilda Beach in the middle of winter, and the beach certainly would not be packed "sardine-tight."