



The more laws and order are made prominent,
the more thieves and robbers there will be.

~Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*

The Cloak & Dagger Compendium

A HANDBOOK OF PRACTICAL SKILLS
AND INVALUABLE KNOWLEDGE
*FOR THIEVES, ROGUES, SCALLYWAGS,
& OTHER DISREPUTABLE PERSONS*



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Issue #1: Thieving Fundamentals,
Shoplifting, Expropriation

BY A COLLECTIVE OF ANARCHIST THIEVES
EDITED BY ROBIN MARKS

An educated convict said to Mr. Davitt: "The laws of society are framed for the purpose of securing the wealth of the world to power and calculation, thereby depriving the larger portion of mankind [sic] of its rights and chances. Why should they punish me for taking by somewhat similar means from those who have taken more than they had a right to?... Compared with this," he concluded, "thieving is an honorable pursuit."

Verily, there is greater truth in this philosophy than in all the law-and-moral books of society.

~Emma Goldman,

Prisons: A Social Crime and Failure

AFTERWORD, FUTURE ISSUES

Well, dear reader, this concludes the very first issue of *The Cloak & Dagger Compendium*. Bear in mind that the tools and tactics mentioned herein are but a sampling of the vast arsenal available to the modern thief. Please learn and use the techniques within, but seek out new sources of shoplifting knowledge as well. Learn from others, develop your own methods, and pass on what you know.

Readers may be excited to know that future issues of *The Cloak & Dagger* are well on their way to completion. The second issue is dedicated to the delicate, graceful, empowering art of picking locks. It will explore the mechanical innerworkings of pin and tumbler locks, wafer tumbler locks, and warded locks, and will teach the aspiring thief how to bypass and defeat each of these. Issue #2 will also contain thorough instructions for the creation of lockpicks, tension tools, skeleton keys for warded locks, bump keys, and padlock shims from common materials.

We anticipate the release of Issue #2 within the month. Please check the Yggdrasil Distro website for updates: <http://yggdrasildistro.wordpress.com/>. Or, check in with Zine Library, where we also post our materials: <http://zinelibrary.info/>.

We wish you good fortune and happy hunting in all your endeavors.

Bene-Darkmans,
The @uthors

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Disclaimer

The authors and editor of this publication disavow any connection to or endorsement of criminal organizations, including, but not limited to, governments, police forces, military forces, nation states, empires, colonizers, industrialists, imperialists, capitalists, and big businesses. Quite to the contrary, we wholeheartedly decry, detest, disdain, and wish to abolish all such organized criminal activity.

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR:

Dearest Ne'er-do-wells,

April 19, 2010

Greetings! The pamphlet you now hold (or gaze at, in the case of readers using the internet) is the culmination of many months work. More realistically, it is the result of many collective lifetimes spent thieving, swindling, adventuring, and pursuing the finer points of politically-motivated roguishness.

Thieving is as old as civilization itself, and, I would dare say, is both a result and symptom of such an idiotic means of social organization. Indeed, one would be hard pressed to discover an instance of thievery in non-civilized, non-industrialized peoples, as resources, work, reward, "wealth", and celebration are generally shared equally among all. Certainly, thievery does exist in such societies, but when it does occur, it is usually a cry for attention or a childish prank, and it is dealt with through fair mediation, understanding, and wisdom. If only modern Western society operated in kind.

But, obviously, it cannot do so. Exploitation, harsh adjudication, ever-changing and incomprehensible penal codes, a submissive working class (ie, wage slaves), and the veneration of Private Property are crucial to its very existence. If we all were to stop working and start ignoring the laws that keep us in place, how would this type of society continue?

By force, of course, as it always has. But despair not, gentle Hooligans! We Guttersnipes and Paupers have force of our own. It is my sincerest hope in editing a handbook of this caliber that all those who feel broken, battered, and disempowered will learn to harness one aspect of this force: that of Stealth, Subterfuge, and Secrecy! As long as insane Propertarians continue to dominate this glorious planet, may we continue to steal, burgle, rob, swindle, and trespass!

Good hunting,
- Robin Marks

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RESOURCES

In Which We Provide Materials for Further Study

Thieves' Cant

- 18th Century and Regency Thieves' Cant:
www.pascalbonenfant.com/18c/cant/
- Nathan Bailey's Canting Dictionary of 1736:
www.fromoldbooks.org/NathanBailey-CantingDictionary/transcription.html
- Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue:
www.fromoldbooks.org/Grose-VulgarTongue/

EAS Tags, Booster Bags

- electronics.howstuffworks.com/gadgets/high-tech-gadgets/anti-shoplifting-device2.htm
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booster_bag

Shoplifting & Dumpster Diving

- *Evasion* by Crimethinc. Books
full text at: scavengeuk.mine.nu/evasion/evasion.html
- *Shoplifting, the art and science*
full text at: zinedistro.org/zines/54/shoplifting/by/an-unknown-author

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- Liberate (v.): to steal, particularly from big business or corporations; used heavily by radicals
- Lift (v.): to steal, to shoplift (1811)
- Mark (n.): a target, an intended "victim"; very common word among modern rogues
- Pilfer (v.): to steal
- Pinch (v.): to steal, to lift
- Scamouflage (n.): portmanteau of "scam" and "camouflage"; describes clothes and effects used to give false appearances, thus allowing one to steal and swindle more easily
- Sketchy or Sketch (adj.): dubious, shady, or questionable
- Swag (n.): goods obtained by theft or swindle (1737, 1811, 1819)

Historical Cant

- Bastile (n.): house of corrections (1819)
 - Bing-avast (v.): to haste away; also Bing-awast (1737)
 - Bob (n.): a shoplifter's assistant, or one who receives and carries off stolen goods (1737, 1811)
 - Dub (n.): a lockpick or masterkey, a key (1737, 1811, 1819)
 - Fart-catcher (n.): a valet/footman who walks behind his master/mistress; ie- a servant (1811)
 - Hoof it (v.): to walk or go by foot (1737, 1811)
 - Nab the stoop (v.): to stand in the pillory (1811)
 - Nask (n.): a prison or bridewell (1737, 1811)
 - Norway neckcloth (n.): the pillory, usually made of Norway fir (1811)
 - Rum (adj.): exceptional, very good, outstanding (1737, 1811)
 - Scamp (n.): highwayman (1811, 1819)
 - Scuttle (v.): to scuttle off, to run away (1811)
 - Sheriff's hotel (n.): jail, prison (1811)
- Devilish Bad Darkmans for the Game, Bene Coves, Oliver Is In Town: translates to "very bad night for stealing, dear fellows, the moon is shining bright"

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THE POLITICS & ETHICS OF THEFT

In Which We Peruse a Short Manifesto

As the astute reader will have noticed, this work is authored by a collective of anarchists, who also happen to moonlight as thieves. "Anarchists?!", the reader surely gasps in horror. "Ah, so you only steal because you believe in Chaos, Destruction, and Violence, right?!" Not exactly.

Anarchism is an Ancient and Venerable political tradition, rooted in critical thinking, dissidence and rebellion, and concern for an ethical life. Certainly, there are many fine publications in a variety of media that detail anarchism's history, general tenets, and schools of thought. We do not intend to expound upon anarchism beyond this little manifesto. However, being anarchists, and thus being politically and ethically oriented, we cannot ignore the politics and ethics of Theft.

Let us first say that we are not strictly allied with one, and only one, school of anarchism. Rather, we seek to be inclusive and supportive of many schools of anarchist ideology.

We are Green/Anti-Civ Anarchists, because we oppose industrial civilization and the mass ecocide that goes hand in hand with it.

We are Red Anarchists & Anarcho-Communists, because we understand the ill fortune of workers and wage slaves, and we support their organizing, agitating, and giving the bosses a what-for. We also support the life communal, the sharing of resources and labor.

We are Anarcha-Feminists, because we despise Patriarchy, Sexism, and the general plight of non-males in a society bent on oppressing half the world based on what's between their legs. (Male, female, and otherly-identified persons of fainter dispositions will please pardon the Lewd Language and Lack of Propriety.)

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In addition to those traits already listed, we also despise and oppose racism, imperialism, colonialism, ableism, transphobia, homophobia, heteronormativity, and so many other isms, it would surely require tomes to list them all. We are Insurrectionists, Organizers, Communalists and Individualists. We support Direct Action, and we oppose Indirect and Direct *Inaction*.

"Yes, that's nice," says the reader, "but what does any of this have to do with Thievery?" The answer, beloved reader, is everything. The applications of Stealth are multifarious in the fight against all of the isms that are the anarchist's sworn enemies. And thievery certainly makes survival in a stifling and oppressive capitalist society much easier.

As with everything else we anarchists do, we must consider the ethics and politics of Stealth. To some, stealing of any kind is unethical. If you happen to fall into this camp, then please, by all means, don't use the information provided herein for less-than-legal activities.

For all those who find the acts Stealth to be acceptable and ethically permissible under certain circumstances, here is a suggested list of guidelines to remain within the bounds of Morality when plying the Shadowy Arts:

- Don't steal from the poor, the marginalized, or the viciously oppressed, unless there is good and justifiable reason to do so.
- Target mainly the middle classes and the rich.
- There *is* honor among thieves: avoid stealing from one's fellow thieves, unless said thieves are known to be unethical, unwise or foolish, politically wretched, or in a general state of jerkishness. Such thieves are permissible marks.
- In the instance that you are caught in the act, DO NOT rat out, turn on, or otherwise betray your fellow thieves and conspirators. This is most important in the case of using Stealth and Secrecy to

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or befuddling their foes. Thieves and radical agitators today are no different.

This text and all forthcoming issues of *The Cloak & Dagger Compendium* make use of modern and historical underworld cant. So, at the end of each issue, a glossary of terms will be included to define canting words and phrases. Such words and phrases are taken from the authors' direct experiences in the underworld, as well as several 18th and early 19th century sources. These include the *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (Francis Grose, 1811), *The New Canting Dictionary* (Nathan Bailey, 1737), and *Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux* (1819). Links to these sources and others can be found in the *Resources* chapter.

Following below is a glossary of terms used in this issue of *The Cloak & Dagger Compendium*. Similar glossaries will be found in each following issue, and it is likely that a compilation of canting words and phrases of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries will be published in zine format in the future. The years listed beside some entries correspond to the works listed above. When listed with a modern cant word, this indicates that the word was used in one of the previously mentioned works, NOT that the word came into usage in that year.

Glossary of Cant Used In This Issue

Modern Cant

- Bolt (v.): to hasten away, to run (1811, 1819)
- Boost (v.): to shoplift or steal
- Booster bag (n.): a foil-lined bag used for shoplifting
- Buy-None-Get-One-Free Sale (n.): see Five-finger discount
- Filch (v.): to steal (1737)
- Five-finger discount (n.): an item acquired by hand, thus an item that has been shoplifted; also describes the act of stealing: *Trader Joes was having a five-finger discount today.*
- Hero (n.): a civilian (ie, non law-enforcement) who acts to thwart crime; usually a privileged, wealthy, white male with a very low IQ

religion. Although it is illegal in the present era (i.e.: trespassing, theft, etc.), most farmers pay little attention to their fields once harvests are finished.

Gleaning is still a viable option for feeding the rural thief. However, because once-varied horticulture has become industrial monocropping, most crops that can be gleaned are tainted with a host of toxic nasties. Beware pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, and petrochemical fertilizers when gleaning. The rural thief does well to seek out organic and small-scale horticultural operations that grow a variety of crops.

Furthermore, gleaning is occasionally a possibility for the urban thief. Urban gardening, guerrilla gardening, and CSA (community supported agriculture) have become increasingly popular in the Western world. In cities and semi-urban areas where such practices are in vogue, the urban thief can supplement a dumpstered diet with gleaned goods.

THIEVES' CANT: A GLOSSARY OF HISTORIC AND MODERN UNDERWORLD SLANG

Devilish Bad Darkmans for the Game, Bene Coves, Oliver Is In Town

"Cant" is defined by the pedantic writers of one modern dictionary as: "the private language of the underworld". Wikipedia describes cant as the "jargon, argot or cryptolect of a group, often implying its use to exclude or mislead people outside the group". These both sum it up pretty well.

Throughout the decades, thieves and social dissidents have used secretive language to communicate ideas and plans while misleading

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advance socio-political goals. To turn on one's comrades is cowardly and unthinkable, and deserves at least a vigorous thrashing.

- When possible, steal first from businesses, corporations, and organizations and second from individuals.
- Before implementing violence in a stealthy pursuit, make sure it is absolutely necessary, desirable, and ethically justifiable.
- Take caution to avoid stealing necessities of life when stealing from individuals: neither an expensive set of diamonds nor a Lexus SUV is necessary to human existence, but food, water, and shelter are. Obviously, this suggestion applies mainly to lower-class marks; it does not apply when depriving oppressors and dominators of necessities, and especially does not apply when stealing from businesses.
- Learn to trust your own feelings: if you feel it is unwise or unethical to steal in a particular instance, don't!, most especially if you feel likely to get caught.
- When working in a group, take into consideration the feelings of all members of the cell. Also never pressure other thieves into action, and never allow yourself to be pressured into action. In other words, when working as a group, make decisions by consensus.
- Before engaging in any act of stealth or secrecy, learn well the ins and outs of Security Culture.
- Above all else: MAKE TOTAL DESTROY!!!

GETTING CAUGHT

In Which We Discuss What Every Thief Fears

Ours is a post-modern world, and we thieves are therefore faced with a many-headed hydra of security devices, "loss prevention" agents, and- because the entirety of the Western world is now a vast police state- cops and other agents of the state. This means that our trade is now, more than ever before, a very difficult one.

With surveillance cameras, cell phone cams, electronic security systems, and the agents of control and oppression everywhere about

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us, the slightest misstep or fumble often lands one in a heap of judicial excrement. There are many precautions one can take to avoid getting caught: maintaining good security culture, being aware of one's surroundings, following one's gut instincts and feelings, and running like your life depends on it when all else fails (especially when it does).

Even if one follows such safe practices, the chance of getting caught diminishes but is still omnipresent. There's always a possibility of getting caught. Allow me to repeat, for emphasis: there is ALWAYS a chance of getting caught. Never forget this.

Before you consider the thrilling, adventurous, charming, fun, and dark world of thieving, ruminate long and hard on the consequences and likely results of such a life. You may well end up on extended vacation to the sheriff's hotel or with a sore neck nabbing the stoop.

If you're sure you're going to get caught, one other important thing to keep in mind is the degrees of legal repercussions. For example, getting caught trespassing (at least in the States and in the UK) is a relatively minor infraction, one that is likely to be thrown out of court. However, trespassing AND possessing lockpicks will land a scamp a heavy Norway Neckcloth for many a month.

If capture is eminent, hide, toss, or dispose of anything incriminating, especially burglary tools and accessories to crimes. Possession of a booster bag is a felony; possession of lockpicks with the intent to use them criminally is a felony (in the US) and simply carrying them in the UK without a license can lead to 5 years imprisonment; carrying a concealed weapon and getting caught in the commission of any crime is not only a felony but can also turn other offenses into felonies.

To avoid unnecessary trouble when committing theft and other stealthy acts, take only the items you need and leave behind any items

When not hunting for food, there are many options for dumpstering goods. Bicycle shops typically have lucrative dumpsters. Apartment complexes and townhouses often conceal treasure chests within or behind them. Leather companies, Goodwills, Salvation Armies, discount stores, dollar stores, bookstores, college campuses and housing, clothing stores, sticker and poster companies, music stores, scrap metal companies, knife and multitool manufacturers, shoe companies- anything you desire can be yours, brand new and completely free, from the trash.

Also, in large cities that have alleys, check the alleyways daily. It is truly astonishing what urbanites toss into alleys and the trash bins therein.

Besides dumpstering for sustenance and goods, trash diving can also be used as a tool for gaining information. In this sense, dumpstering can be considered Social Engineering. The CIA, FBI, and other intelligence-gathering criminal gangs are fond of this tactic. Individuals, businesses, corporations, and even government agencies all throw away documents that reveal invaluable information about themselves. By means of dumpstering, the thief and social engineer can acquire credit card numbers, bank statements, expenditure reports, receipts (to be used with return scams), personal correspondences, and all manner of other incriminating and juicy information. Readers should look to future issues of *The Cloak & Dagger Compendium* for detailed information on social engineering and information theft.

Gleaning, Rural & Urban

Gleaning, in the strictest sense, is the practice of harvesting surplus crops and foodstuffs from horticultural fields after farmers have finished their harvest for the year. This is an ancient practice, endorsed by many historical agricultural societies and at least one major

practice, *very* few police and other officials enforce such laws.

Therefore, dumpstering is a semi-legal, easy form of theft that is better thought of as expropriation. Learning to dip into the waste stream- at least as long as extractive, wasteful industrial civilization persists- is a temporarily sustainable practice that exercises our animal instincts and facilitates a life free from the burden of purchasing necessities.

The first step in learning to dumpster is conquering the acculturation that convinces us that trash is filthy, hazardous, dangerous, and untouchable, and that if we delve into such refuse, we surely will take ill and perish. It can take many years to overcome such brainwashing, but doing so is a worthwhile and empowering venture.

When the novice dumpsterer has overcome her mental reservations, the next step is scouting locations and finding prolific trash bins. This requires at least moderate familiarity with an area OR a knack developed after years of dumpstering. Most stores have dumpsters that yield on occasion, but some stores (especially food stores and distributors) yield most every night.

Larger retailers and box stores almost always have trash compactors these days, presenting a difficult and complicated obstacle to even the seasoned trash picker. When considering location, find stores without compactors that discard a great deal of trash. In the US, stores like Trader Joes, Whole Foods, Earthfare markets, produce markets, pizza joints, and bakeries will easily see one through the year without ever paying for food.

Perhaps the best locations for dumpstering food and beverage are large distributors. Several of the authors routinely hit a coffee distributor whose skip is roughly 10' x 10' x 5', and is *always* full of coffee beans. The same authors frequent a factory whose dumpster overflows with tofu, soy milk, almond milk, and other jewels.

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that are non-vital and felonious. Also, if capture is unavoidable, abandon all incriminating items. Time permitting, this includes any swag acquired in one's adventures.

Yes, it is awful to toss one's trusty lockpicks, or to dump a fat haul and bing-avast, but it is far worse to spend a fiver in the nask on account of possessing tools. One can always make or acquire another set of rum dubs, but one cannot regain years of one's life spent rotting in the Bastille. Plus, there's always the chance that, after interrogation, the cops will let you free, and you can return and fetch your goods at your leisure.

Bear in mind if you do get caught that you'll live to steal again, unless, of course, you're in for the big one. Jail and prison are unspeakably horrible, even if imprisoned for only a short time. There is much excellent discourse on the matter of jails, prisons, and police, and why they are all abhorrent and unnecessary in a truly just, equitable, free society. Here is not their place to discuss such weighty subject matter.

So, for those who get captured, stay strong and be resilient. On the subject of getting caught, I leave you, gentle reader, with these words of wisdom from communist hip-hop duo Tha Coup:

"Never let they punk-ass *ever* defeat you!"

THIEVING FUNDAMENTALS, POINTERS & PROPS FOR THE NOVICE

There are a few easy lessons to learn that can be applied to every type of theft and every thieving situation. Learning these is an excellent prerequisite to the specialized forms of the shadowy arts listed in following pages and in subsequent issues of *The Cloak & Dagger Compendium*.

Confidence & Courage

The importance of these attitudes cannot be overstated. If you look suspicious, people will treat you with suspicion. If, however, you look as if you're doing what you're supposed to be doing, people will more often than not ignore you entirely. This effect is even stronger when courage and confidence are combined with the *Tools & Disguises of Authority* as described next.

Tools & Disguises of Authority

It seems odd in an anarchist text to praise tools of authority, but bear with us, reader. It is not authority itself that we are encouraging, but rather the use of tools that, due to their association with authority figures, allow the user greater impunity in the eyes of the public.

The tools and disguises of authority are situation-specific. For example, hard hats and yellow safety vests will allow the thief greater access in areas of construction, maintenance, and so on. Wearing such an outfit while sneaking into an office complex at night would be idiotic. When considering which tools, props, and disguises to use, take into account what kind of environment you'll be working in.

Following below is a short and incomplete list of tools and disguises that give the appearance or air of authority:

Security guard uniforms; any "official" looking clothing with nationalistic or authoritarian insignia (flags, logos, etc.); fake IDs or legit IDs belonging to others; suits or businesswear; "scamouflage" (see below); clipboards (see below); briefcases and attachés; safety gear (hard hats, vests, etc.); official uniforms (cops, locksmiths, etc.); large flashlights (UK- torches); environment-appropriate disguises; wigs, sunglasses, and other concealers; anything else that's appropriate

Yuppie Camouflage, "Scamouflage"

In areas of great affluence, looking the part of the bourgeoisie can mean the difference between success and failure in illegal endeavors.

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kept and considered purchased at an intense discount.

Refund scams are best performed at stores that offer cash refunds for their goods. The wise thief will investigate stores before attempting a refund scam, as many stores implement counter-measures for receipt theft these days.

DUMPSTER DIVING, TRASH PICKING, & GLEANING

In Which We Detail Plucking Treasure From Rubbish

With industrialization and global capitalism comes a steady waste stream. Due to planned obsolescence, wastefulness, profit-maximizing behaviors, expiration dates, and the constant flow of goods between urban and rural areas, there are in-tact and useful items in every dumpster in the Western world. And for those gentle scoundrels who occupy the countryside, there are always leftovers to be harvested in the fields of agriculturalists.

Dumpster Diving

Dumpstering, trash picking, binning, skipping, alley surfing, aggressive recycling, wastebasket recovery, garbage picking- this simple act knows many names. In a society that teaches us to revile trash, to fear scavenging, to hate our natural tendencies to forage, leaping into a skip and feasting on its contents can be a daunting task. But the fact is, much of what is thrown away is in perfect or near-perfect condition.

Although the thief can easily obtain most items through theft, he can often obtain the very same items via the trash. In the strict legal sense, dumpstering *is* illegal in many places, as trash is the "property" of its discarder, and therefore constitutes theft when taken. However, in

businesses, the thief can obtain a cash refund using a receipt and matching item from the shelf. Many larger businesses and corporate box-stores, however, are penny-pinching prudes and have caught on to this swindle. And so, when returning items with a found receipt, these stores often issue a gift card rather than dole out money. Gift cards are still useful, as they can be sold for cash, or used to obtain other items from the same store. Accumulating enough gift cards can allow a thief to turn several small receipt thefts into a large, expensive item, such as a pennyfarthing or fine eveningwear. Such gift cards can also sometimes be used to purchase hard-to-steal items, like alcohol.

Another option, when acquiring a receipt for a specific item is difficult, is to actually purchase the desired item, gaining a receipt in the process. Then, the thief or his bob enters the store and filches an identical item with the receipt in hand to avoid getting caught. Thus, two items are obtained AND a receipt is gained in the process. The receipt can then be used to return one or both of the items. It is best to return items at a different store to avoid suspicion and getting nabbed.

A variation on the methods listed above is to acquire an item through legal purchase or receipt scam. Once the item is obtained, the thief removes the packaging, takes out the item, and replaces the item with another item or pile of rubbish of identical weight. The item is then repackaged to make it appear as if it has never been opened. Properly repackaged, the item is returned to the store using the receipt. In this way, the item is gained for free and the money returned. Or, if a gift card is given, a second item of identical type can be obtained. Repeat as necessary.

Another method involves switching UPC codes from a cheap item onto an expensive one. The item is then paid for, usually at a self check-out. The UPC of the cheap item can be removed, and the item then returned with the receipt for a full refund. Or the item can be

Such camouflage includes, but is not limited to, khakis, polo shirts, fancy skirts and blouses, brand name clothing, expensive cars and bicycles, and gender-normative styles of acting and dressing for men and women. Adopting such hideous nonsense can make theft much easier, and also demands better treatment if caught in the act.

The Almighty Clipboard!

Of all the props we have used in our various careers, the authors recommend the clipboard as one of the finest tools of the modern blackguard. It seems strange that such an innocuous piece of Masonite and metal can do so much to normalize a body, but it does. Perhaps because it is used by such a wide variety of workers, officials, and businesspeople, the clipboard does more than any other single prop to conceal the thief. Carrying a clipboard and looking at it or fumbling with it every once in a while makes a thief into a worker, and workers are generally allowed access to any place if they fabricate a solid excuse or reason. Coupled with official-looking or situationally-appropriate documents and disguises, this effect is maximized. Best of all, in the worst of situations, the clipboard doubles as a bludgeon!

Playing Stupid & Apologizing

These tools are mighty weapons in the arsenal of the thief. Pretending to be daft can get the modern thief out of even the most difficult situations. Apologies go a long way too. Pretending to be a fool *and* apologizing is golden. If trapped in a sticky situation and faced with a vehement accuser, apologize, agree with any accusations of being a fool or idiot, and promise never to do such and such a thing again. Rather than risk getting caught and facing imprisonment, swallow your ego temporarily. If you feel wronged and wish to speak out, save it until you've trapped *them* in a dark alley.

Deceive the Sky to Cross the Ocean, Act As the Shinobi

Darting about stealthily, jumping from shadow to shadow in black clothes, walking on tiptoe when stealth is uncalled for, and slinking

about like a weasel are surefire ways to get nabbed. Acting suspicious attracts suspicion. Know when to appear normal and steal in plain view, and you will succeed.

That is not to say there's no place for sneaking and nighttime stealth, because there certainly is. You simply must know when and how to use such behavior appropriately. The shinobi, or ninja, of feudal Japan- renowned for their abilities in the shadow arts- are commonly portrayed as black-clad warriors who slip from darkness to darkness. This is a myth. More often, the ninja imitated the *bushi* (samurai) ruling class and remained hidden because of the privilege of this caste. When the ninja did don black clothes and stick to the shadows, his mission was commonly at night AND allowed for the killing of enemies to prevent detection.

Likewise, imitate the bourgeoisie and yuppie ruling class, and you will be invisible in Western society. When you must dart about in shadow and dark clothes, be prepared for combat if you are discovered, and prepare for the consequences of such conflict. Reserve ninja-like stealth for serious missions, dire situations, and all times when you wish to remain unseen, unheard, and undiscovered. This is especially true for avoiding the agents of control (ie: cops, the military, feds and freddies).

Take the Opportunity to Pilfer a Goat, Be Flexible

Opportunities to steal will often present themselves without being sought out. The wise person knows how to take advantage of such opportunities. Be flexible, and be aware of hidden opportunities that make themselves known. Also, learn to make failure into success by making the best of bad situations.

Some Ideal Locations for Thievery

Although any place that can be stolen and escaped from is a good target, some places are better than others. Listed below are some of the authors' recommendations.

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several of her own books, notebooks, or periodicals. This is not unusual, since individuals frequently walk in and out of the store with books in hand.

Rather than bag items as in the cafe scam, the thief using this method grabs what she desires, mingles them with her own materials, and exits the store with merch in hand.

Make sure to remove all EAS tags and/or utilize a booster bag when performing either of these scams. Since bookstores almost always install and use sensors at entrances and exits, the thief can also walk out with a crowd or frame a mark to set off the sensor as described previously.

Receipt Scams, aka Return Theft or Refund Scams

This family of techniques isn't technically shoplifting, but actually falls under the domain of fraud. There are many forms of receipt scam or refund theft, and we shall detail several of the more popular forms.

Most of these techniques require a physical receipt to enact. Receipts are easy enough to obtain, as very few people hold on to them after exiting a store. Look in the trash bins outside stores, check the ground, and keep an eye open in-store as well. You're bound to find a receipt if you linger around a store long enough.

The first receipt scam is the easiest. First, one obtains a receipt. Then, one enters a store and finds an item in the store that is listed on the receipt. Once this is accomplished, the thief has two options. He can either attempt to leave the store with item in hand, as he has the all-powerful slip of white paper justifying his "purchase", or he can attempt to swindle the store's refund department for a refund or gift card.

If using the latter method, in many smaller stores and non-corporate

Bookstore Scams: the Cafe Scam and the Amazing Stack of Books!

Retailers of books get their own section, because they are a huge source of profit and they're easy to steal from. The bookstore-related scams we shall discuss herein are the Cafe Scam and the Stack of Books Scam.

Most large retail booksellers have cafes within them. This includes Borders, Barnes & Noble, Books A Million, and larger independent stores like Powell's in Portland, OR. Many smaller stores also have cafes nowadays.

Any bookstore equipped with a cafe is an ideal location for the clever thief. In every bookstore that houses a cafe, shoppers and browsers routinely unshelve books and periodicals and take them into the cafe to peruse. Therefore, a thief who takes merch off a shelf and into a cafe attracts zero attention.

Once in a cafe with desired goods, the thief sits and reads for as long as he pleases. Ordering a drink or bite to eat can help conceal the thief's activities in such situations, but is not necessary. In order to execute the cafe scam, the thief must have some kind of bag or satchel. It is also helpful to have books of one's own within the bag.

When the thief is ready to exit, he simply opens his bag and deposits the desired materials within. In the event that the thief has brought his own books, he should take them out upon entering the cafe as if working on something or reading something from home. Then, when exiting, the thief hides the desired books between, on top of, or under his own books or materials, then transfers the whole pile into the bag. Bolting soon thereafter is a good idea.

Where a bag is not available, or for thieves who prefer more audacious methods, there is a bookstore filch known as the Amazing Stack of Books. With this method, the thief walks into the store with

The bookstore makes a wonderful target because books are small, easily portable, and absurdly expensive. Plus, stealing books for one's own education is empowering and beautiful.

College students are perhaps the most gullible, ignorant, wasteful, decadent, and oblivious marks a thief can hope for. Thus, college campuses are packed with wealthy suckers. Colleges also usually lack a dedicated or effective security presence. This makes them prime territory for stealing and dumpstering.

Beyond bookstores, colleges, and college bookstores, busy public places are fertile ground for the enterprising thief. This includes any place with crowds, public transit, bars, arcades, theaters, dances, clubs, and parties. Bars, clubs, and other establishments that serve alcohol and/or involve flashing, distracting objects are ideal locations. Drunk marks are easy to steal from; drunk marks who are distracted by flashing screens and booming noises are child's play. Thus, bars are good; arcades and theaters with bars are better.

Dances and, more specifically, punk, hardcore, hipster, and metal shows, are gems. People are packed into tight quarters, and expect to run into others and to be run into rapidly and frequently. They are also usually drunk or otherwise intoxicated. This makes the swift hand to the pocket unlikely to be noticed, and, if it *is* noticed, it makes the ensuing conflict easier to navigate.

Public transit, though risky, is in a league of its own. In most large, busy cities and urban areas, public trains and buses are typically packed tight. People anticipate close proximity to other persons, and often ignore or forget to check on their effects or baggage. Be careful choosing transit as your favored haunt, because, although it may be easy pickings, most public transit vehicles and stations now come equipped with cameras, fare inspectors, and security.

If All Else Fails, Retreat!; The Virtues of Running

There is no dishonor in flight. There *is* dishonor in the arrogant refusal of flight. Running- or walking away calmly when running would attract undue attention- is the thief's best friend in hopeless situations. Never be too stubborn to exit a scene post haste. Remember though, civilians in a police state (excepting joggers) move slowly and calmly. Running, in many instances, will draw the agents of repression to the thief like flies to a carcass. Know when to run and when to walk away.

Collaboration...

is unacceptable! Never, NEVER, sell out your friends and comrades to save your own skin. Never give tips or information to the authorities, never teach them our ways. Traitors and snitches are the lowest form of life, and should be cast out and named as the cowards and yellowbellied jackanapes they are.

SHOPLIFTING & RECEIPT SCAMS

In Which We Discuss the Five-Finger Discount, or Buy-None-Get-One-Free Sale

As children, many of us delighted in pocketing candy at the local grocer or filching a picture book from the ol' five and dime. Admonished by our parents for petty theft, and assaulted and indoctrinated by a society that values property over people, many of us then grew up to believe that stealing from businesses is wrong. And so, we stopped.

However, a select few of us, impervious to the mental conditioning and fearmongering that this society drills into its populace, have continued to steal. Some others stopped, and have learned to steal again.

This chapter intends to illuminate the wide, wonderful world of shoplifting, and its many techniques and tactics.

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upon them, carried a clipboard, and pushed a hand truck (dolly) into a store. He loaded the dolly with boxes of Odwalla juice and left the store, no one suspecting a thing.

This type of scam can be extended beyond shoplifting into the realm of social engineering and burglary. Wearing the proper uniforms and carrying the proper tools (clip board, name tag, etc.) can be a powerful means of entry into a number of restricted places and heaps of restricted information.

Clearly, getting caught in the act at such an elaborate swindle will probably result in many years imprisonment. Be careful using this type of con.

Bike Parade, Bloc Activities

It is a persistent urban legend among cyclists that Critical Mass- everyone's favorite velocipede spectacle- has taken to stores and caused hundreds or even thousands of dollars of loss by encouraging mass theft. None of the authors has ever been present for such a happy event, but the persistence of the rumor deserves mention.

The idea behind this type of theft is to amass a large group of cyclists, or any other mounted or pedestrian bloc (ie: black bloc, clown bloc, businessman bloc, etc.). Once gathered, the group all take to a target store and wreak havoc, all the while liberating as much as possible.

Being mounted makes capture much more difficult and evasion simple. However, this type of activity can certainly be pulled off by pedestrians. Since bikes act as a unifying agent and make identification more uncertain, pedestrians who have no bikes should bloc up to avoid persecution.

the gig is up, and all parties must escape. Verbal and non-verbal communication are perfectly acceptable when this occurs.

While the suspicious party goes about making a great hullabaloo, the normal-appearing party cleans house. It is not necessary for the sketch party to actually make noise or act in any way that is disturbing, provided they look questionable enough to attract and keep the attention of security agents and employees.

Once the shoplifter has obtained whatever items she desires, the entire party exits the establishment. It is important, in order to avoid being pinned as a group, for the parties to exit separately, just as they entered.

Partners can also be useful in small establishments that are personned by only one or two employees and that likely have no security. In such businesses, one (or more) partner can distract an employee by asking questions, discussing the price of some object, or making some other kind of vapid banter. Thusly distracted, the employee is unable to pay attention to the shoplifter, who pockets or bags a number of goods and departs. In the case of several employees, several partners, working individually and making no visible contact, can distract all employees at the same moment, opening an avenue for the shoplifter.

Masquerading as a Worker, Repair Person, or Delivery Person

This technique is perhaps the most difficult and most incriminating shoplifting method listed with these pages. The authors do not endorse it, but, because a reputable source lists it as reliable method, we felt it should be included.

The crux of this scam is pretending to be a worker or maintenance person to gain easy access to restricted areas or goods. The method introduced to us involved a young and talented thief dressing as an Odwalla delivery man. He wore coveralls with a name embroidered

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Basic Techniques, Tactics, & Tools

In this section we shall begin to explore lifting goods from stores and other capitalist establishments. The techniques herein are meant for the novice, but they are also employed by the veteran with comfort and confidence. Learn well the methods within this section, dear reader, for, whatever level of shoplifting expertise you achieve, they will serve you well.

Snatch & Run

The first, easiest, and most obvious manner of shoplifting is quite simple: snatch what you want and walk out the exit! Obviously, this technique has many drawbacks and few positives. Perhaps the finest points are its simplicity to learn and implement, save, of course, for building up the courage to attempt such a maneuver. Downfalls of this technique include its obviousness, the high likelihood of getting caught, and the high likelihood of being observed by security personnel and surveillance devices.

Containers- Pockets, Purses, & Bags

A slightly more difficult but far more commonly employed method is the use of containers to conceal items while extracting them from a store. This includes pockets, bags, backpacks, purses, and other accessories. This can also include specialized tools such as the "booster bag", and situationally-appropriate items like a stack of books or notebooks. Such information is covered in the following section, *Advanced Techniques, Tactics, & Tools*.

Use of a container to remove items from a store requires at least a marginal talent using sleight of hand. That is, to secretly and safely slip desired items into a bag or pocket requires that the thief be swift and unseen in her actions, lest she will be observed and thus likely caught.

It also demands great situational awareness. To pocket or bag items, one must know where security personnel, surveillance devices, and

potential "heroes" are in relation to himself. Heroes (and less commonly heroines, due to the patriarchal nature of Western society) are those foolish civilian do-gooder types who take pride and pleasure in thwarting would-be thieves. It is safe to assume when shoplifting (and, really, when engaging in any illicit activity) that *every* civilian is a narc or possible plain-clothes cop/agent. Thus, strive to avoid being seen pocketing or bagging items at all costs.

Alternatively, and entirely contrary to what was just written on the subject, there are times when being observed and stealing in plain sight are not only acceptable, by desirable. To learn about such instances, refer to the next section, *Advanced Techniques, Tactics, & Tools*.

When stealing by means of a container, there are some important considerations to keep in mind. First, and most obvious, is the container itself. The most readily available thieflly container comes sewn into or onto most modern apparel: pockets! The method of slipping goods into pockets is self-explanatory, and requires only practice to learn.

The disadvantages of this technique are the limited carrying capacity of pockets and the observability of the maneuver. One advantage is, in kind, its observability. That is, reaching into one's pockets is a common behavior that attracts very little attention. If one is observed pocketing an item and it *does* attract attention, it often dispels any suspicion to take out change, bills, fake (or authentic) credit cards, receipts, or similar props that justify digging in one's pockets in a store.

Backpacks are handy in the amount of goods they can accommodate, but the shoplifter's best friend and time-trusted companion is the messenger bag, also called a side bag or satchel. Especially nice are those messenger bags without a top flap. Because they are open on top, it is a simple feat to slip items into the bag unnoticed. These bags are also more maneuverable than backpacks, and are harder to spot.

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Partner Techniques

In many instances, working in a pair or group of thieves is much easier than working alone. The shared solidarity of purpose and action is inspiring, and, as the old expression goes, there *is* safety in numbers. There are also a number of maneuvers that are partner-specific.

This sub-section details some of those maneuvers. When using the following techniques, make sure all members of the group understand and consent to the thievery. This is most important when executing maneuvers that use close physical contact. Be respectful and communicative.

The first of these involves embracing. This can be a hug, impassioned kiss, extended handshake, or whatever. If relying on a kiss or other intimate/romantic gesture, heteronormative couples (ie: male/female) attract the least attention in most places.

The form of embrace is unimportant; the close physical proximity is key. Once a couple of thieves has begun embracing, they take the opportunity to slip goods into each others' pockets, clothes, bags, or other receptacles. When the embrace concludes, they exit the store.

Another partner technique even simpler than the first involves two or more companions. One of these thieves must pass as normal by conventional fashion standards. This person should dress and act the part of the everyday shopper. At least one other thief appears and acts as sketchy as possible. Dressing and acting "punk" or "crusty" or otherwise outlandish works well.

The sketchy party must enter the establishment first and make as much of a scene as they're able. The "normal" party enters second and independently. It is very important that the two parties enter separately and DO NOT make eye contact, speak, or communicate with body language while in the store. The one exception to this is if

This method is performed exactly as it sounds. A product is intentionally damaged, scuffed, marred, dented, marked upon, or otherwise "ruined", to force the store or business to discard it. Then, later that night or the following day, the thief returns to the store and rummages through its trash, ideally discovering the desired item. No actual damage is necessary, only enough mishandling to ensure the item is thrown away. Removal of labels on food items and alcohol is sufficient.

There are several downfalls to this tactic. The first is that one must dig through trash. For those socialized to believe that skips and trash bags are filthy objects, and for those concerned with the social stigma of being witnessed digging through waste, this can be a difficult first step. The concerned reader will please refer to the chapter entitled *Dumpster Diving, Trash Picking, & Gleaning* for advice on this topic.

Another difficulty with this tactic is actually obtaining the item desired. Some stores will mark damaged items at a reduced rate, while some others will return such items to the manufacturers. More often, stores will toss out these items, but they will break or otherwise be rendered unusable in being thrown out. Many stores now have locked compactors, which makes this tactic undesirable and difficult.

Throwing In-store Items Away and Dumpstering Them Later

This is identical to the technique above, except that an item is selected and tossed into an in-store trash bin rather than damaging it in some way. Then, as above, the thief later returns and dumpsters the item. Be cautious not to be observed executing this move.

Often, security personnel and gung-ho workers will adamantly demand the removal of bags upon entering a store. The messenger bag, because it is more difficult to see than a backpack, sometimes escapes the scrutinizing eye.

In addition to their ample space, backpacks also provide several benefits not found with a messenger bag. With excess pockets and a bulky middle, backpacks allow a user not only to steal a great deal but also to carry tools, props, and disguises within the pack itself. Several of these applications are discussed in the following section. Backpacks are also a good deal more stable and, typically, more durable than messenger bags, making them ideal for situations that require flight and possible struggle.

I hear from several companions that purses and handbags make handy stealing accessories. I have observed purses in action and can attest to their efficacy. However, being male-bodied and wishing to attract as little attention to myself as possible when in the field, I have never utilized a purse myself. For those male-bodied and male-identified persons who want to use a purse, more power to you, comrades.

Electronic Article Surveillance (EAS) Tags

Whether blatantly exiting a store with product in hand or pocketing or bagging items to avoid detection, shoplifters and bobs will do well to look for electronic security tags, bane of many a modern thief. These wee labels come in several forms, including small white rectangles, larger white squares with visible electronics on the rear, and the tags common in apparel stores and haberdasheries that are usually yellowish/tan, circular, and hard plastic. These tags correspond to giant off-white sensors, typically found at entrances and exits. See the inlaid photographs for visuals of tags and sensors.

Removal of these tags is paramount if one intends to exit a store without engaging the sensor. In most cases, removing these tags is

simple since they are usually affixed to the outside of products with a light adhesive, making them easy to spot and pull off. Occasionally, businesses and manufacturers wise up to the ease of removing these tags and package them *inside* products. Removing these tags is still possible but is more difficult. Sometimes tags are also well concealed, as in the inside of book bindings. All such obstacles can be overcome by various means, some of which are described in the following section.

Removing the larger, hard plastic tags (or "alligators") commonly found in clothing stores requires a powerful magnet. Or, if the would-be shoplifter has no regard for the integrity of the clothing, she can simply rip the tag off with adequate force and mend the clothing later.

One final obstacle to be aware of is subtle EAS devices. Some of these are known as "benefit denial tags". These work by releasing ink when tampered with. The ink serves to render the affected product unusable, based upon the assumption that one will not wear an ink-stained garment and that such a garment is unsalable, thus denying the shoplifter any benefit from stealing the item. The best way to remove such tags is to cut *around* them and avoid contacting them entirely. The garment or product is probably damaged in the process, but can certainly be mended and used or hawked off later.

Another, more insidious type of subtle EAS tag is usually found on or as a component of the packaging of products. These tags are difficult to detect and little is known about them. They work by sending an inaudible signal to a receiver in a store's security department when they are tampered with or removed. This is usually used in tandem with EAS tags on the inside of the packaging which activate the arch-style sensors. Booster bags are recommended to deal with such a threat.

Finally, and most frightening, are RFID tags, which are beginning to gain a foothold in retail surveillance and "loss prevention". Radio

chance of accumulating enough swag to constitute a felony (or similar charges in other countries).

One advantage to this tactic is the ability to abort it at any time *before* exiting the establishment. Unless a thief uses this technique alongside pocketing or bagging goods, nothing has actually been stolen and no laws broken until the thief attempts to escape. So, when performing this tactic, pay close attention to your surroundings, and trust your instincts, eyes, and ears. If you feel or observe that security or store agents are moving in to apprehend you, drop the basket or cart, walk out calmly and casually, and show some sign of acknowledgment to the diligent workers (the finger, the two-finger salute or the vicky, and chunky expectoration are all appropriate).

If one tries this technique and succeeds, bolting is recommended. Goods can be swiftly packed into a bag, or the cart can be pushed quickly and ridden out of the vicinity. One author and some friends managed to pull off this maneuver using an SUV. A cart was filled in-store, and, before finishing, one bob left the store and brought about the carriage. The cart was pushed through the exit calmly and with composure, then, upon exiting, the entire cart, goods and all, was hoisted into the vehicle, and the companions escaped without store employees batting an eyelash.

The authors recommend performing this tactic with several individuals. This not only makes the entire group appear more legit, but also ensures numbers if employees or guards resort to fisticuffs.

Intentionally Damaging Goods and Dumpstering Them Later

This technique carries with it minimal risk of getting caught or captured, but also has only a moderate chance of producing results. Since it can be perceived as an intentional financial attack on targeted businesses and it may result in benefit or profit for the thief, the authors encourage its use.

CLOAK & DAGGER #1 – 25

"first" world is familiar with cellular or mobile phones. Because these atrocious pieces of plastic and coltan are so commonly used within stores and businesses, they make delightful props for the shoplifter.

The use of cellphones can be combined with just about every other shoplifting technique within this manual. When a thief is engaged in any stealing effort, a cell phone can be produced from the thief's effects (which generates an excuse for fumbling in a bag or pocket). Then, the thief can actually make a call, or, if the phone is dysfunctional or the thief doesn't wish to use it, the shoplifter can pretend to be engaged in a phone call.

Whether the call is real or acted, talking on the phone not only distracts store agents and customers, but it also furnishes a handy excuse if caught lifting goods. "I'm *sooo* sorry, Mr. Security Asshat, I just received this call, walked outside to take it, and forgot to pay. *Of course* I'd be happy to step back inside and pay."

It may seem to the nascent thief that this technique holds little merit, but take it on good credit, dear reader, that it works like a charm!

Fill a Cart and Leave!

This maneuver is perhaps better named "Brazen Idiocy", but it is sometimes effective. Because store agents and security people are so conditioned to seeing legitimate shoppers push carts (or carry baskets, etc.) through the exit, they will sometimes ignore the thief who fills a cart/basket, *neglects to pay!*, and exits the store in just the same fashion.

This technique has obvious pitfalls. First, and most apparent, is its stunningly visible nature. Even a system of simple surveillance devices and simpleton security guards will can see this tactic coming a mile away. It also has the potential of being deeply incriminating. That is, since carts/baskets can hold so many goods, the shoplifter has a

frequency identification can be small- microscopic, in fact. Such tags can also be implanted under, on top of, or within products using methods that make them invisible to the naked eye. This is clearly a dangerous and potent weapon in the arsenal of the forces of control and subjugation.

Defeating RFID tags can be done by means of booster bag (as described in the next section), but doing so does not adequately stop the device. Because RFID tags broadcast information, and can be programmed to broadcast a great deal of information, they must be located and removed once an item is purloined from a retailer. Otherwise, the RFID is still active, and can be used to identify, incriminate, and indict shoplifters and bobs.

This is all the knowledge and advice the authors have to give on the subject of novice shoplifting. To be sure, there are many things the authors do not know, and new and terrifying technologies being developed every moment of every day to aid in theft prevention. Therefore, be ever vigilant and perceptive when shoplifting, lest you fall prey to a trap not listed herein.

When the reader feels she has adequately studied and mastered these techniques and tools, she should begin her exploration of the following section.

Advanced Techniques, Tactics, & Tools

In this section, we shall cover deeper, more complex, more delicate, and finesse-demanding stratagems used in pinching from proprietors. These maneuvers require a subtle but swift hand, a mind that follows suit, an unshakable nerve, and usually some manner of prop or deceptive device. Such methods take great time and devotion to learn. Be patient and dedicated in your drive to master them.

Booster Bag

Because it has a variety of applications and is easy to fabricate, the Booster Bag seems an excellent place to begin our discussion of advanced tools. To the science-saavy and the steampunk, the Booster Bag is more commonly known as a Faraday Cage or Faraday Shield. Farraday Cages block out external static electrical fields and, if they are thick enough, electromagnetic radiation.

To the layman, the booster bag is nothing more than a common bag lined with aluminum foil. This is excellent news for the enterprising thief, since the booster bag blocks the communication between sensors and EAS tags! Such communication is necessary to activate the sensor. No communication, no sensor beeping.

Booster bags are considered a felony accessory in many locales within the States, and are probably treated similarly in many other countries and provinces. Some retailers are aware of the existence of booster bags, and use metal detectors near entrances to detect thieves entering with such devices.

Although it will do nothing to stop metal detectors, thieves can take a simple measure to ensure their booster bag is not easily discovered. This is done by lining a bag with aluminum foil, then sewing or otherwise attaching *another* bag to the inside of the booster bag. This creates a layered booster bag in which the foil is sandwiched between two layers of cloth or other material. This not only conceals the foil from prying eyes, but serves to silence the crinkling and moving of the noisy foil.

Layering a bag may interfere with the effectiveness of the Faraday effect. To combat this, use many layers of foil inbetween the layers of bag. This not only combats any potential (though unlikely) decrease in functionality due to layering, but also helps ensure that the booster bag will function against stronger transmitters and more powerful

and incriminating knife or other blade.

The razor finger is precisely what it sounds like, a razor blade attached to one finger. The razor is attached to the index finger (ie: pointer finger, between thumb and middle finger) leaving the slightest amount of razor surface protruding from the end of the finger. Razors are attached using gauze, medical tape, or other bandage-like materials that give the appearance of a wounded finger. Whatever material is chosen, it should secure the razor firmly to the finger while also concealing the razor and giving the appearance of a wounded appendage.

So attached, the razor is invisible to any casual observers. In fact, upon observing the "wounded" finger, many persons, potentially including security guards and store employees, will take pity on the thief.

The very edge of the razor that protrudes ever so slightly from the terminus of the finger is used to covertly slice open packaging and remove security devices or the packaging itself. Because it is an invisible ally, the razor finger can be used without attracting attention. Desired items can be held with both hands while the razor finger goes to work beneath the package, keeping it out of plain view.

One negative aspect of the razor finger is the difficulty of quickly removing and discarding such a tool should it be necessary. Although shop personnel will most likely be unfamiliar with the razor finger and overlook it as a bandage, being caught with such a tool could bring about a felony charge.

Razor fingers can be used in correlation with the *Intentionally Damaging Goods...* technique as detailed later.

Cellphone Prop

In the world of industrial uber-technology, most everyone in the

Kill with a Borrowed Knife, or Frame a Mark to Set Off a Sensor

This is a crafty ruse that one of the authors discovered as a wee lad, long before he borrowed the name from the *Thirty-Six Strategems*. Like the previous tactic, it involves creating a chaotic and confusing situation and using it to advance one's own goals.

This maneuver is performed by finding an EAS tag in store and removing it. Then, rather than discard the tag as per usual, the thief attaches the tag to a mark or that mark's effects (bag, briefcase, etc.). Then, the thief waits for the mark to exit the store, at which time he will unknowingly but surely set off the sensor. The thief follows close behind the mark. When the mark sets off the sensor, the thief can escape in the ensuing confusion. This usually holds true even if the thief herself sets off the sensor, since the mark has already set off the sensor and will be the first suspect.

A more clever and arguably less ethical variation on this theme is to actually place tagged merchandise in a mark's bag or effects. Thus, when he exits, the sensor will most likely be set off AND there is a great possibility that he will be detained, questioned, and so forth. Since, obviously, the mark has no recollection of stealing the item, he will certainly deny doing so, and thus create a scene. This facilitates easy escape for the thief.

Since this method has the potential to place a mark in the hands of the authorities (to whom all thieves should be unwaveringly opposed), it should only be used on those who are themselves oppressive fart-catchers. This includes businesspeople, outright capitalists, industrialists, ecocidal maniacs, and so on. Use your best judgement.

The Razor Finger, The Talon

This secretive tool is used to remove packaging, EAS tags, and other unwanted material from target products without attracting attention to the thief and without the necessity to carry a cumbersome, overt,

types of tags.

Messenger bags, backpacks, and purses are all easily converted into booster bags.

The Left Hand of Darkness, The Invisible Hand

Although this method is called the "left hand", it can be performed with either hand, or even an elbow or the underarm. To perform this technique, one must be prepared to actually pay for some item or another. The technique is executed when checking out. The targeted item is held in the hand that one is *not* using to pay, and is held well below the line-of-sight of the attendant or cashier. Because there is typically a wall between the cashier and "customer", it is very difficult for the cashier to spot an item being held so low.

This is commonly called the "left hand technique" because most individuals are right handed, and thus handle money with their right hand. This leaves the left hand free to slip an item under the nose of the merchant who is none the wiser. For those who prefer their right hand or when situations necessitate the use of the right hand, it obviously isn't the "left" hand technique. Semantics aside, the method is the same with either handedness.

As mentioned previously, there are a few variations on this method. A small item can be tucked under one's arm or into the crook of one's elbow as if one owns or has already paid for the item. Executed with proper confidence and courage, the attendant will rarely question the thief disguised as purchaser.

In the rare event that the attendant is astute and questions the thief about a concealed item, or, worse, accuses the thief of stealing, the thief must remain calm under pressure. Apologizing, laughing, smiling and shaking one's head, and other gestures indicative of forgetfulness should be employed. Then, of course, the item must be paid for to

avoid suspicion.

Several of the authors have been caught at this technique in the past, and never has an employee called security or insisted on legal recourse. Offering to pay will almost certainly resolve this issue. To prepare for this eventuality, make sure to have enough cash, credit cards, or bogus checks on hand to cover the cost of the targeted item(s). Or, be prepared to scuttle.

*Sacrifice Silver to Gain Gold,
or Pay for Cheap Goods to Obtain Expensive Ones*

This technique takes its first name from the ancient Chinese manual of generalship and obfuscation, 三十六計, or the *Thirty-Six Stratagems*. The idea behind this technique is to sacrifice a short term or unimportant goal (in this case, a bit of money for a small, inexpensive item) to secure a long term or serious goal (in this case, a larger, more expensive item).

This technique, like the left hand of darkness, requires the thief to check out at a register. The thief thus appears to be within the law. Before checking out, the thief makes his rounds about the store, finds an expensive item and pockets or bags it (potentially in a booster bag), then finds an inexpensive item and takes it to the register. The small item is then paid for, a receipt obtained, and the thief leaves the store with the item in pocket or bag. If stopped by security personnel and asked for a receipt, the thief seems to have everything in order.

The "sacrifice" in this ruse is the money used to pay for the legitimizing item. The more important goal is the acquisition of the expensive item. Since this type of lift involves the exchange of money, it can be thought of as a shadow-alchemy, transmuting a lesser item into a superior one, or less money into more.

This method is not without risks. The thief must be cautious not to be

observed pocketing or bagging an item, as always. The thief must also be aware of EAS devices and counteract them, lest the sensor reveals the ruse on the way out.

*Catch a Fish While the Water is Disturbed,
or Walk Out With a Crowd*

This technique is also adapted from the *Thirty-Six Stratagems*. The essence of this maneuver involves creating chaos and confusion and using these frenzied states to escape undetected.

In relation to shoplifting, this is done by walking out of the store with a crowd. This isn't always necessary, and works best when a sensor is present at the exit. In the event that one has overlooked an EAS tag and it sets off the sensor, an entire crowd is suspect, rather than one individual. Since the average citizen will halt and will happily speak to store agents when a sensor sounds, the thief can escape unnoticed.

In the event that the sensor sounds and no one in the targeted crowd stops, it is still highly unlikely that the thief herself will be stopped and caught. If a security guard does attempt to stop the thief in such a case, the thief has the options of fast-talking and swindling the agent or simply walking off and ignoring commands just as the crowd has done.

The best scenario with this tactic is that the sensor doesn't go off at all, and the crowd walks out with the thief among them, completely unaware of his presence.

If sensors and tags are not a concern, this tactic can also be employed in stores in which security personnel check receipts as shoppers exit the store. In such a case, a thief can exit such a store without a receipt but with a crowd, ensuring that all checkers are occupied with other members of the crowd before hoofing it out.