

# The Man Who Got Away With It

*by* Peter Cherches

There once was a man who robbed a bank and got away with it. But he wasn't happy about it. No, he wasn't happy at all. He felt guilty, and he was afraid.

He felt guilty because he knew it was wrong to steal, and he was afraid because he knew he'd be caught. Nobody robs a bank and gets away with it; maybe in the movies, but not in real life. He knew the police would catch him, and then he'd be sent to jail. He was afraid of jail. Life became utter misery for this man. Every time he heard a police siren he was sure they were coming to get him. He became a nervous wreck. He was shaking all the time and he had trouble sleeping.

Finally it became too much for the man to bear. He decided he had to turn himself in. He knew he would find no peace unless he confessed his crime.

So the man went to the bank to make his confession.

He walked up to the receptionist and said, "I would like to see the president of the bank."

"The president only sees people by appointment," the receptionist said. "Do you have an appointment?"

"No, I do not have an appointment," the man said, "but I must see the president because I have robbed this bank and I must confess."

"I see," said the receptionist, and she called the president's office. "Excuse me sir," she said into the phone, "there's a man to see you who claims he robbed this bank."

"Send him in," replied the president.

"Second door to your left," the receptionist said and pointed the man toward the president's office.

The man entered the president's office. "Have a seat," the president said, and the man sat down.

"Now am I to understand you claim to have robbed this bank?" the president asked.

"Y-y-y-yes," the man answered nervously.

"But I've had no report of any bank robbery," the president said. "Surely I would know if my own bank had been robbed!"

"Nobody knows I did it but me!" the man said, and then he burst out crying. The president handed him a handkerchief.

"I don't understand," the president said.

The man composed himself. "You see," he said, "I was here the other day to make a deposit to my account, and when I was finished filling out the deposit slip I put the pen in my pocket. I know I shouldn't have done it! I don't know what came over me!" And he began crying again. Then he took a pen out of his pocket and handed it to the president. "Here it is," he said.

It was a cheap plastic ballpoint pen on which were printed the following words: Property of Third National Bank. "I suppose you'll have to call the police now," the man said.

"Oh, I don't think that will be necessary," the president said, as long as you promise never to do it again."

"I promise, I promise," the man said gratefully.

"Very well, we'll leave it at that," said the president. "Now did I hear you say you have an account with our bank?"

"Yes I do," the man replied.

"Well, then," the president said, "to show our appreciation for your business, I'd like to give you a little gift." And he handed the man a small, oblong box.

The man opened the box. Inside was a bright, shiny fountain pen on which were engraved the following words: Thank You!

