

THE GRIFTERS

Can't fool God? Maybe not, but as old P.T. Barnum once said, you can fool most of the people most of the time, and he was right. Your game is the gift, the con, the sting. You're a short-con operator and a good one, at that. And though you thought L.A. was a big enough town to escape detection, you quickly found out that it wasn't; it's just full of people, and they soon put their heads together, and figured out your scam. You got caught, and plea bargained your damn best for a five year stretch in the joint. It gave you some time to think, and by the time you got out, the last thing on your mind was living the meager existence of some law abiding ex-con sacking groceries or selling used cars.

Besides, who would give you a job, anyway? The one thing you learned in prison had little to do with rehabilitation; you had perfected the scheme for the perfect gift. Your target: God's flock. Your partner plans on running a fake charity fund drive for a non-existent religious order and you are to pose as priests. But first, it is time to sharpen your skills before raking in all those ill-begotten millions from unsuspecting and devout churchgoers . . .

1. They know you here, so caution, beware.
Put on your glasses and pull the 20's. Remember, nothing fancy, just keep it simple. The first thing you have to do is greet your bartender courteously:
" I've changed my ways, I've done my time,
I'm now devoted to a life without crime,
A little celebration is a must,
I'm now a worthy patron you can trust,
Tab, ol' boy, I'll have a drink,
This twenty should cover it, don't you think?"

Here comes the gift: there's two ways to do it.
Buy something cheap, like a beer.

Pretend you don't have change. Pull out a twenty dollar bill. Ask for change. After he asks for change, give him the original amount and ask for your twenty back. The mark had best be pretty stupid - I usually recommend pulling this only in the Midwest. In the city, I would suggest holding up a twenty with a ten folded behind. Make sure he

sees the 20. Keep eye contact as you give him the ten. Ain't grifting simple?

2. No rest for the wicked. Things could be worse, You could be dead. Your partner has a mob job to do. You are Del Mar bound. There's nothing like a day at the races to get your old blood flowing again. Your task is to lower the odds on long shots by betting large amounts of cash. Not your own, but the mob's money. But hey, why waste all that cash? Why not counterfeit? Cash is too valuable a commodity to waste betting for the mob, right? You've got plenty of other things to spend it on, like this rally. There is a machine for your need here. Hold your new toy with the knobs on the right, and then insert a blank bill in between the rollers. Turn the lower knob away from you and presto! not even experts will be able to distinguish these doctored greenbacks from the genuine dollars. Take the 5 south to Via de la Valle Rd. Take a right. You're off to the races!

3. The last time you were at a place like this, you were savagely attacked by a competing grifter who wanted you permanently out of the way for taking up too much of the market. For a scam artist of some repute, she was clearly an amateur when it came to murder - at least the murder of another more devious grifter, such as yourself. She made so much noise sneaking into your hotel room you just couldn't help rearranging her face with a shot from your trusty .38 revolver. And what a perfect way that was to disappear from the face of the earth. Of course, dressing her up in your clothes and leaving her in that bed didn't completely fool the coroner; rumor has it you left your gun there near the phone with your prints all over it! If you want to beat them to the punch, you better head over there and recover the gun before your game is up. As you recall, it was on the eleventh floor.

4. Pick up a tie under the name, Justus. Remember, a cat is very skilled at capturing its prey. Crouching low, it can leap in any direction. pursuing whatever it is after. But when its attention is focussed on such things, it can

easily be caught. The tie is the mark of distinction of a square Joe with an office job, an apartment, and a girlfriend. That small sliver of American pie that reads " I'm a real 9 to 5'er, respectable rule reading and law abiding." The mark of any good grifter is the ability to pass as one of these, not as a slick wheeler dealer. Put the tie on.

5. It's time to meet Bobo, your boss, your mob boss. The man whose money you were supposed to bet at the track. Bobo is famous for insurance scams with oranges. Let me explain. Beaten with a bag full of oranges, a person bruises far out of proportion to actual injuries. That's what makes it good for insurance scams. But, if done too hard, internal organs can be smashed and you'll never shit right again. Now Bobo's goons want to talk to you. Mitch, thankfully, is out of pocket fitting another grifter with a pair of cement shoes. Try to find his cohort Chris aka The Circulator. He's waiting for you near the Dipper. And make sure to apologize.

6. To hell with the mob, it's time to pull a Jim Bakker and defraud some real idiots. Your acting classes from college have always come in pretty handy, and your partner can really ham it up when he needs to. So what better scam than faith healing at the local church? You play the preacher with the magic touch, and your partner the invalid who dramatically recovers after donating a few grand to the cause of worship. There's nothing like preying on the naivete of a few disabled religious zealots to fill up a grifter's coffers. Just make sure there's a "delayed" reaction so you can make a clean escape before even these airheads catch on. Sadly, party crashing busybody religions fail to appreciate the beauty of what appears before them, so they put it behind them. Jesus, this is hard work.

7. To escape Bobo's wrath, it's time to get the hell out of Dodge. You have some jewels to sell, but your fence doesn't exactly advertise his location. However, a shady casino owner you know can give

you a hint, but only if you help him rig one of his slot machines. Only then will he help you pinpoint the hub of your black market.

Of course, the jewels you have to sell are nothing but costume plastic; you're more interested in the real gems you can switch them for. Even people you work with are not immune from your stings. What the hell, life's a real grab bag of opportunity.

8. Well, you've managed to skim from the mob, counterfeit some petty cash and fleece some folks in their best Sunday clothes. You've even left a fence with gems worthy of a Halloween block party. But Bobo is after you and you better start thinking about leaving the country . . . permanently. And that's gonna take some extra bucks. So why not try that old standby from your direct mail days: "Gee, Mr. Consumer, we picked your name out of a hat, and you have won the grand prize: a luxury cruise for two to Hawaii. All expenses paid, except . . .Gee, can we get your American Express Card no. for handling charges"? Of course, you're going to have to show them a little something just so they know this is legit. Even your contact at the Better Business Bureau won't do it for you. So why not take them on a tour of their would-be cruise ship on Harbor Drive? The captain always enjoys a healthy kickback. Pick the one named after a school near San Francisco.

HOTLINE:

Little Clues

1. To Tab at Saloon:

Tab, 2-4 people will walk in with Groucho sunglasses on and apparently scheme with] some fake money to get you to think that you owe them change for a twenty (they'll ask to buy a beer, say they don't have change, show you a twenty, and instead slip you a ten). Being no fool, you should then turn redfaced and irate and hit them over the head with a fake bottle that we'll leave for you on Fri. or Sat. the 4th or 5th of Sept. This bottle is actually a trick piece of water and sugar that will shatter instantly without damage to anything or anyone. Before any of this happens, they will have to say to you:

I've changed my ways, I've done my time,
I'm devoted now to a life without crime,
A little celebration is a must,
I'm now a worthy patron you can trust,
Tab ol' boy I'd like a drink,
This twenty should cover it don't you think?

The paper clue will be in the bottle. They'll have to figure it out. Also, there's a little so-called "party animal" they need to find as

well. Just set it out on the bar before they come.
They'll be arriving between 10:00 a.m.
and 11:00 a.m. Sat. morn. Afterwards, you can tell
them to get lost.

1. In bottle with Tab

A reformed ex-con you pretended to be,
But did not expect such a welcoming committee,
This saloon you've grifted many times before,
Now the bartender knows how to show you the door,
You need cash now, so learn some new tricks,
There's a horse race the mob wants you to fix,
Near the entrance there you'll prove you're a pro,
At the Del Mar Flower and Garden Show,
Near the track you'll find a rusted wagon,
Where money's to be made in more ways than one.

2. On dollar bill & Racing form

3777 La Jolla Village Drive

3. At Hyatt under phone table
In gun, photo and receipt.

Bobo wants you to wear the clothes,
That give you a less suspecting pose,
So pick up his designer tie,
Back over the five you must now fly,
Down N. Torrey Pines you're LaJolla bound,
This Fay location should be sound.

4. Inside tie at Silver Coin

South down La Jolla you should now lunge,
And your Mission takes you south of the Plunge,
There Bobo's henchman Mitch does await,
To him your punishment they delegate,
The Mafia should find this rather amusing,
It's you of skimming they're accusing,
To him you should boldly say,
" I guess it's time for judgment day,
I'll take my comeuppance but please understand,
I can't deal with that cigarette burn on the hand
A fairer way to pay you back,
Would be a few turns on your rack,
And I promise then to never con,
The likes of another Mafia don."

5. With Chris at Circulator in Belmont Park

Here's the deal, you take a little, you leave a
little, cause if you're not stealing a little,
you're stealing alot. Hey, I'm not the one who
told Bobo.

Now that your balance is all awry,
Down Mission Bay you should now fly,
To an Old Town don't hesitate,
Take a quick left on Highway eight,
A right on five and an Old Town left,
Or of your new scam you'll be bereft,
You now envision in your perception,

A chance for an immaculate deception.

6. At Old Town behind Jesus at Church w/
slot machine

The religious handicapped now await,
The healing process you did demonstrate,
Before they wise up to your scheme,
Down five south you must careen,
It's time to head to Balboa Park,
Where your fence is in the dark,
About the next plot that you'll hatch,
But does he have the rocks to match?
Pay for the bag marked with an "x",
Or mineralogy you might vex.

On slot machine

Spanish	Village	ART
Center	No. 3	on Map

7. In grab bag at Minerology

It's time to now impress your prey,
With the cruise ship of the day,
It's near where buildings rise,
But in the water you must surmise.
Your clue must now be pulled in,
Discreetly now with adrenaline,
UP on the deck just pull the rope,
To now find where you must elope,
Before you go to number eight,
To your next boat don't be late,
After all this is your life,
With corruption it is rife.

- 7.5 Old lifeboat - Star of India

8. With map under lifeboat in Star of India

You're off, you're off to a running start,
But you've still got 70 miles to dart!
I know it's a pain,
But then no work is just no gain,
To escape the mob's censure,
Make sure to stop and insure,
You've got a posse after you,
Religious zealots are just a few,
There's a bartender and a fence,
And cruise customers looking for recompense,
Before to your vacation home you peel,
On the premises look underneath a wagon wheel,
And with your hosts please don't be miffed,
You've just been had by a better grift!

9. At wagon wheel
with lots of cash

To the oceanfront house that is northernmost,
Is the place where you must boast;

" From the Bars of Encinitas, to the decks
of the Berkeley,
Our cons and grifts have rattled
Gullible flocks from which we flee,
We have tricked the Mob, we have stung the Church,
We have left consumers in the Lurch,
Though they've paid us back,
With a bottle and rack,
We're still the Grifters Three!!"

Sung to the tune of "From the Halls of Montezuma"