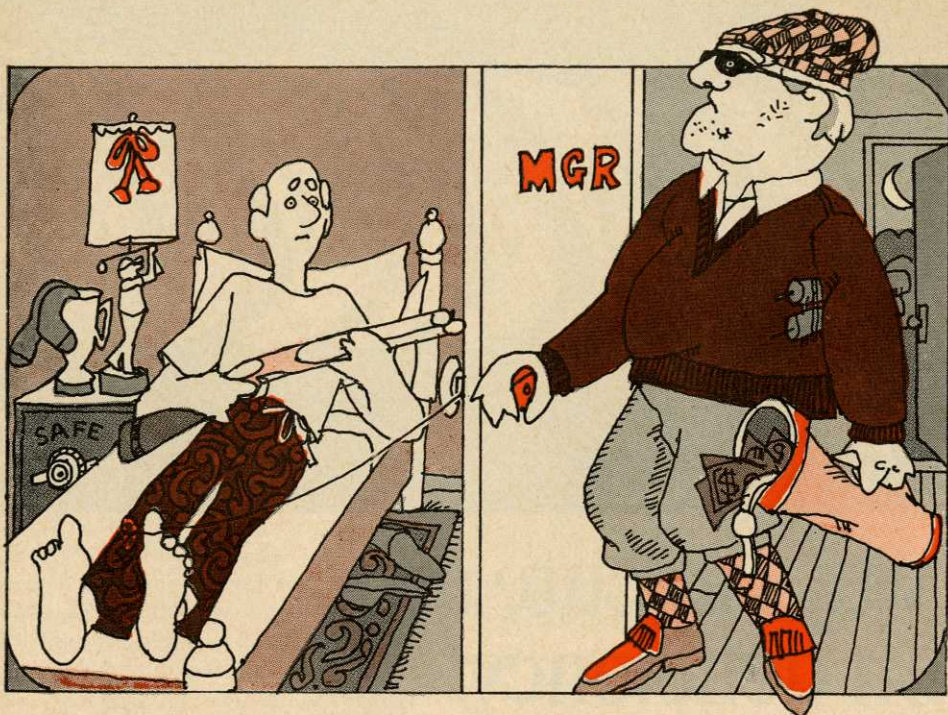


Clubhouse security



Pro

By G. V. MARLATT, CCM

Manager, Northmoor CC,
Highland Park, Ill.

All too often country club security is at its best immediately *after* a pro shop robbery, a missing wallet in the mens lockerroom or an unexplained food cost increase of over 20 per cent.

Often, we find that this security takes the form of protecting our clubs from the outsider or total stranger, but I hope to also delve into what I consider "legitimate invasion" by an outsider, as well as "internal theft and pilferage."

Nothing detracts a would-be thief more than an abundance of light. Power companies will be quick to tell you that this is a most economical form of security. Bathing the pro shop with floodlights, both inside and outside, will help to

Con

By HARRY HEARTWELL

#81432

As a long time professional, I have probably "played" more courses around the country than any dozen golfers put together. However, my game was always played at night, and I was shooting for loot instead of birdies. I was a professional burglar. My specialty, country club "knock offs."

Even though I made a good living at this for 15 years, I could never claim any monopoly on the racket, or even much originality. Country clubs offer certain attractions that many burglars find almost impossible to ignore. Most obvious is the fact that they contain a great deal of valuable merchandise that can be easily converted into cash. A pro shop can yield a

deter break-ins, as will entrance lights over every entry to your club, from sundown until the employees have begun their work day. Parking lots, swimming pools, grounds sheds, and off-location buildings can all benefit from this inexpensive form of protection.

While on this subject, most supermarkets and other establishments have found that placing the safe where it can be seen through a window from the outside, and illuminating it, will help to deter would-be safe crackers. If the safe is small, embedding it in concrete or welding the entire safe to structural steel will also make removal much harder.

It is also a good idea to keep only small amount of money, in several locations where needed, and make a few more trips to the bank than to have all the club's cash in one location.

If cash registers are used in your club, it is best to remove the cash at night, place it in a safe, and leave the register drawer open with a light nearby. This will save the inconvenience of having a damaged register on the morning following a break-in.

One of the easiest ways of deterring most "outside" crime in the club can be accomplished by challenging all strangers seen in or around the club. Inform your club employees, through group meetings, who works in all departments. Then, if a stranger is seen in the basement or locker room or pro shop, he will feel that your staff knows an outsider and will hinder his "casing the joint" as well as his unauthorized later entry.

It is also a good idea to inform your employees that only employees who work in the lockerrooms and pro shop will be permitted in those areas.

It is not unusual, when holding a "post mortem" after a lockerroom theft that many employees had seen people they did not recognize, in the lockerroom on that day. Teach your employees to *know* their members, know who works in their departments, and to keep other employees

small fortune in clubs, balls, sportswear, accessories and money. Lockers are good for more clubs, more money and sometimes, jewelry.

Just as attractive from the burglar's point of view, golf courses are set in pleasant rural surroundings—happily devoid of pedestrian traffic and difficult for the police to keep an eye on. As a rule, they are also easy to enter. The locks are none too sturdy and many places don't even have an alarm system or a regularly assigned watchman.

Every year more thieves are taking advantage of such weak points and turning their larcenous attention to golf. I've known some men who worked in garages and used a truck. When they found a club especially wide open, they would strip the pro shop and the clubhouse right down to the last tee.

While I always preferred to work alone, I sometimes teamed up with another burglar named Herman whose job it was to case the clubhouses and figure out how we'd get in and what we'd take!

One problem was that Herman *looked* like a burglar. He had a jaw like a cigar-box and a wicked squint that just didn't go over very well with timid types. But even more of a handicap was his notion of proper golfing attire: argyle socks, plus fours, raglan sweater, a cap with two-inch checks "an' don't tell me no different."

Damon Runyon would have loved him.

When Herman waltzed up to a clubhouse in those plus fours everything stopped. As conspicuous and bungling as he was, though, he always found out what we wanted to know. And, when we returned at night we generally got what we were after.

A typical job was one we pulled at a club in New Jersey. Herman had cased the place and made a favorable analysis: no alarm system, no watchman and nothing but a spring-type lock on the pro shop door. This meant we could either kick the

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and delivery men out of the lockerroom and you will be well on the way to sound lockerroom security.

All head lockerroom men should lock all open lockers while the members and guests are on the course, and reopen them for the person following the round of golf. While inconvenient to the member to ask to have it reopened, he will appreciate this security.

Another form of low cost security in clubs can be accomplished by placing mirrors at the ends of the lockerroom so that a locker man working in a shower or shoe room can observe persons entering or leaving the "back entrance."

Not all theft in a lockerroom, clubhouse or bar can be attributed to the "outsider," however. Some form of security must exist against the outsider whom you invite into your club each day as a delivery man, repair man, or salesman.

One central place of delivery is the best form of security, with a receiving clerk for all deliveries. This person can then record all deliveries, and take them to the departments involved without the outsider going past the delivery entrance.

Repair men can be asked to wait until the maintenance man or department head is summoned, and then accompany the man to the area where his services are required in the clubhouse.

Salesmen can be told to report to one area in the club, and remain there until summoned by a manager, a chef, or department head—and *not* be allowed to roam around the club.

Milk men who are permitted to make deliveries to the kitchen and remove cases or empty milk cans only invite theft, as the empty container can well conceal a pound of butter, a ham, or a few steaks.

Informing delivery men of the authorized persons who may sign delivery tickets, and sending a copy to his company, will discourage leaving cases of liquor

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door open or trip the lock with a strip of celluloid. Had there been security frames on the windows and a solid lock on the door *we probably would have passed it up.*

We waited until two in the morning parked our car in the club's lot and made short, simple work of the pro shop's lock. It took about 10 minutes to pick out everything we wanted and pile it in the middle of the floor. Then we borrowed a couple of electric golf cars and *drove* the stuff out to our car.

The safe we had to leave behind. Some burglars double as safecrackers, but "busting a pete" is an art I never mastered. I once tried to cut one open with a torch—and all I got for my pains was a puddle of melted silver and a stack of banknotes charred beyond redemption. In my business you develop a tolerance for "hot" money, but this was ridiculous!

Many country clubs, however, make it easy for characters like me by installing small, portable safes or the wall types that can be carried away and beaten open with a sledge hammer. Club managers could reduce the danger of safe-cracking 90 per cent simply by installing heavier safes and taking advantage of the club's built-in protection. Because of location, golfing burglars usually have to park their getaway cars some distance from the clubhouse. They count on making three or four trips for their loot—but you can't split a 500-pound safe into more than one trip. And even the strongest burglars can't carry a load like that across soft ground.

By concentrating mainly on merchandise, I did fairly well. But burglary is like any other business, and very much like golf—there are certain hazards, and on more than one occasion I was sorely tempted to go straight.

You think a water hazard is tough when you're trying to slam across it into the teeth of a 20-mile head wind? Well, you should try *walking* across one on a

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with *any* person he might see at the club. It will also prevent deliveries arriving too early or too late for their being put away for safe keeping by persons who have access to such storage facilities.

Internal theft, pilferage, and petty stealing on the part of club employees, like in any business today, has reached an all time high because of the lessening of standards as far as morality is concerned.

Let me explain this by saying that most employees no longer feel it stealing to take a bottle of soft drink because they know it only costs the club pennies. They also feel you give the members razor blades, hair tonic, deodorant, combs, brushes, shaving cream and other toilet articles. You expect them to be neat and clean, so what is wrong with taking a can of shaving cream or a comb home once in a while?

When there are lots of desserts left over after a Sunday night buffet, wouldn't a lemon cream pie spoil if it were kept in the ice box until Tuesday? Hundreds of bar glasses are broken each season in the club, and yet a waitress only wants four of each kind for a home bar she is building in her basement? With four hundred letters going out on a mailing, why couldn't I put my three letters through the postage meter too?

These are the questions that employees ask in our new "morality," but they account for hundreds and thousands of dollars loss in clubs each year. Yet, you would think twice about firing a person in today's depleting labor market if he was caught for such a small theft.

These practices can be discouraged, and the temptations removed, if you will think in terms of your employees and then see what you can do for them to remove such temptations. Give your employees' lockerrooms or dormitory the same articles for use as you supply for your members with the understanding that they will continue there as long as

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dark night. You have no idea just how hazardous a water hazard can be until you've dropped out of sight clutching five sets of matched woods!

Sand traps are not one bit safer. One of them ended my partnership with Herman—though it was his passion for sports clothes, as much as it was the sand trap, that ultimately undid him. We were leaving a job one night, and Herman was lugging such a mountain of sportswear that I had to lead him along like an ambulating haystack. We had just cleared the building when the club's mascot—a singularly vicious Doberman—finally decided we weren't supposed to be there. So we lit out down the nearest fairway with this beast snarling at our heels.

We hadn't gone 50 yards when Herman barreled full tilt into a bunker. The abrupt transition from nice hard fairway to knee-deep sand was too much for him. Poor Herman wound up in a prison infirmary with his leg in a cast.

My "burglar tools," as the papers are always calling them, consisted of nothing more complicated than an ordinary pair of sidecutter pliers and a screwdriver. With these I could spring most locks and get through any screen or window. These are basic tools of the trade, and no burglar with half his wits about him would ever lug around a satchel full of sledgehammers, explosives and drill presses like something out of a comic strip. Occasionally, when I figured a job to be really tough, I took along a pair of bolt cutters. They are pretty suspicious looking items, but I found that an old golf bag made a perfect carrying case.

Contrary to common belief about burglars, I also carried a gun. It was a big gun and it was comforting because I didn't have to worry about any golf course superintendent trying to arrest me with a rake. But it was only for show and never loaded. I hardly knew one end of the thing from the other, and I would

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they are not removed for personal use.

Let them feel that these things are available *without* their having to steal them or go into a lockerroom to use them.

Let your employees have a soft drink anytime they want it, but make them SIGN FOR IT, just as a member does. Then, if any employee abuses the privilege he can be dealt with individually.

The morale of the employees will be better if they know they can have a soft drink or a dish of ice cream without having to steal it. Give your unused pastries, rolls to your employees on a Sunday night to take home, but make such leftovers available to all, on a sharing basis, and be sure to provide them with "package slips" to get out of the door.

Let your employees purchase from the club such items as glassware, liquor, etc. on a COST BASIS and perhaps they will not feel they are entitled to them. When changing glassware styles, make the old glassware available to the employees at "bargain prices" rather than storing it in areas where they will feel you never use it. Let them know you feel they are honest and would rather operate by the rules. On the other hand, don't make the rules so outrageous as to be comical or so harsh as to *create* temptation.

Nothing of course can help more in the area of club security than a receiving clerk or storeroom man and a night watchman. But, all too often the laxity of the employee might only invite the intrusion of the club by outsiders. If the storeroom man does not "count, weigh, or see the merchandise," store it under lock and key until he disburses it, and record it, then you may as well save his salary.

A watchman who does not have a time clock, and a programmed round to punch which includes all areas of the club might better be replaced by a toy poodle! Flexibility in his rounds must be built in so that observers will not be able to predict his pattern of patrolling, and a dis-

have been a cinch to blow my leg off the first time I tried climbing through a window with it.

A great many burglars, however, *do* carry loaded guns and they're not at all slow about using them if they think it's necessary. Those who don't carry guns share the same strong prejudice against going to jail—so they seldom hesitate to improvise a weapon from a screwdriver or even a handy niblick.

There are only two sensible things to do if you encounter a burglar at your country club: Sneak away and call the police, or make a bit of noise. When the intruder realizes that he is not enjoying strict privacy, he will clear the premises at once. Just be certain you're not between him and the exit!

Other types who devote much of their professional careers to golfing are known as club hustlers. These guys actually play the game, but the only handicap that concerns them is the one imposed by potential witnesses. A day of golf, for them, is divided between lockerrooms and parking lots where they keep an eye out for clubs, watches and billfolds.

The club hustler depends entirely on the carelessness of individual golfers: Those who don't bother to secure their lockers when they are out on the course; Those who stack their clubs in a corner and go off for refreshments before tackling the last nine, and those who leave everything in their unlocked cars while socializing in the clubhouse.

On tournament days, when there are lots of golfers and plenty of non-participants all over the place, there are bound to be one or two club hustlers in the crowd. Frequently they work in pairs. One of their favorite techniques is to enter a lockerroom posing as strangers. While one goes through lockers, dumping everything of value into his golf bag, the other acts as a lookout. If a player sees what is happening and tries to stop it, the

charged employee cannot tell someone in a tavern exactly how he makes his rounds.

He should maintain a Log of license numbers observed in the parking areas each night, so that, in case of a break-in, these could be checked out. He might also learn when the local police are in the area, and invite them in for coffee at times. Their occasional appearance will deter many a would-be thief.

Since I had the opportunity of reading my companion's story before I wrote mine, I must say that he must have been behind bars for a few years now. If he were to enter most pro shops today he would find some surprises awaiting him.

Confidence men today present one of the big threats to the professional, for in his endeavor to be of service to the member, quite often he can be had.

Lockers no longer yield the cash they used to, for in our "cashless society," money has all but disappeared. Most clubs today can hardly cash a \$100 check for a member because we do not keep much money on hand. Golf clubs are usually removed by the car man and taken directly to the shop, or to the guest rack after a round of golf. While parking lots are still loaded with unlocked cars containing golf clubs, cameras, and other valuables, these become the *members'* responsibility and not the clubs. We do however patrol this area to discourage theft.

But try as I may, I do not think we have any security for a person who might decide to steal two of our greens or 18 of the cups. But if night sprinkler men could be authorized to carry a 12 gauge shotgun I am sure a person attempting such an act would leave the premises with more than 18 holes! •

About The Author: G. V. "Jerry" Marlatt has worked "part time" during his early years as a club employee, for the Pinkerton Detective Agency. For 10 points to ponder, see page 110.

lookout is right there to trip him flat on his face, then help him up and thoughtfully dust him off while his partner heads for the rough.

Every year thousands of valuable items are lost to club hustlers just because golfers don't realize what easy marks they make of themselves. But club hustling can be almost eliminated by posting three simple rules on the club bulletin board: 1) When you put your clubs in your car, lock it; 2) If you leave anything of value in a locker, lock it; 3) Don't leave your clubs unguarded for any length of time.

Over the years I've managed to abscond with just about everything in golf except a caddie. But the oddest job I ever pulled was when I heisted the 17th and 18th greens from a course in Illinois. This was a commission job. I figured the weirdo wanted a fancy lawn. An associate and I worked all night with sod cutters and by morning we had both greens stacked up in our customer's backyard. It was only then that we found out he wanted a private putting green—and before he'd pay us I had to go back and steal 18 cups.

This deal almost cost me my professional reputation, and some of the guys still refer to me as "the chump that steals holes."

Actually, I'm the chump who *used* to steal holes. I finally pulled one job too many and caught a 10-year jolt in the state penitentiary that will keep me out of action for a long time. But burglary is still big business.

Clubs that fail to take the most basic security precautions and players who leave their belongings unprotected are soft touches in any thief's book of crime—and even the clumsiest burglar can cost somebody plenty of money and headaches before the law catches up with him, and puts him in the cell next to mine. •