

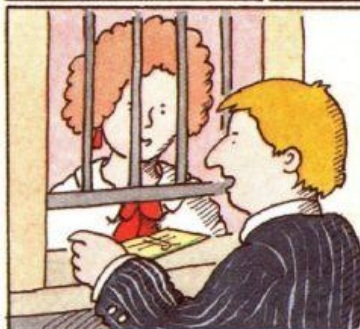
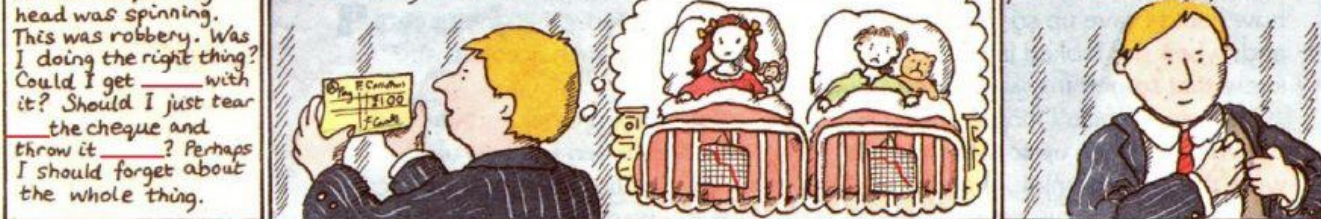
C H A P T E R E L E V E N

At the age of 45 I was _____ to commit my first crime. I looked at the cheque. My head was spinning. This was robbery. Was I doing the right thing? Could I get _____ with it? Should I just tear _____ the cheque and throw it _____? Perhaps I should forget about the whole thing.

But then I thought about the children in the hospital. They needed the money more than the bank. I was stealing it for them.



So, I took a deep breath, folded the cheque _____ and put it _____ my pocket.



I left the office and took a taxi to another branch of the bank. I knew one of the cashiers there. We chatted for a while. And then, with my heart pounding, I paid the cheque _____ my current account. Three days later the payment cleared. I had stolen my first £100.

The following week I did the whole thing again. Another cheque. The same branch. The same cashier. The same fear. The same excitement when the money was cleared _____ my account.

And so it went _____. Week after week I stole money from the bank and each cheque was a little bigger than the last.



You've no idea how I felt. I was risking everything I had - my career, my family life, my reputation. But, nothing was going to stop me now. The image of the little boy crying on his pillow haunted me. I couldn't get it _____ of my mind. And I had to do something to help.



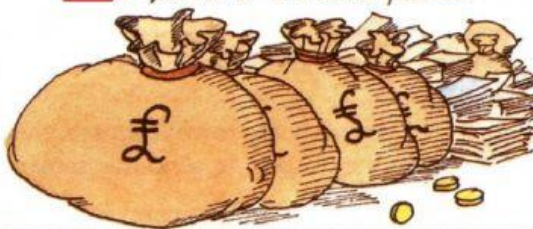
I think the next few weeks were the most exciting of my life. In some strange way I'd suddenly come alive. I was sharp, human, burning with anger. And I suppose I got a bit carried _____.

I was soon writing cheques for five and ten thousand pounds. It was crazy. Sometimes, the cashier seemed a bit suspicious. She couldn't work _____ what the payments were for. But - each week - I made some new story to explain the cheques away. And she fell _____ it every time.



I suppose it never occurred to her that Frederick Carruthers - her punctual, conscientious friend - could have turned _____ a common thief, an embezzler, a liar, a man obsessed.

By that summer I'd managed to save _____ a quarter of a million pounds.



One morning I didn't go _____ work. I walked _____ the hospital and wrote a cheque for every penny I had. The manager went straight _____ and bought six new kidney machines.



A few days later we had a small ceremony in the ward. It was a bit like launching a ship, or opening a bridge! I unwrapped the machines, plugged them _____ and switched them _____. And then as the lights flashed the children gave me a round of applause that seemed to go _____ forever. I felt very proud. It was the best moment of my life.

