

The story continues...

But then – inevitably, I suppose – my luck failed.

Someone at Head Office became suspicious. How could a branch manager afford to donate £250,000 to a hospital?

The Head of Finance went to the central computer and started going _____ my account. She noticed that I'd been building _____ large amounts of cash. But how could I save _____ so much money on the salary I earned? She smelt a rat and, when she looked _____ the strange dealings on the branch account, she knew that something was wrong.

Anyway, it wasn't long before she'd put two and two together and worked _____ what I'd been _____ to. She tipped _____ the police and, when I turned _____ for work the next morning, there were three detectives waiting in my office. They took me _____ to the police station and that was it. I was charged _____ theft and my world just fell _____. The trial was fixed _____ December 18th – just one week before Christmas!

Two days before I was due in court, a director of the bank came to see me. He came straight to the point. He offered me a deal. He said they would drop all the charges if I paid the money _____.

"But how can I do that?" I asked. "The hospital have spent it all."

"That's simple," the man said. "Tell the hospital that you've changed your mind. Tell them it was all a mistake. Just tell them to send the machines _____."

"But what about the children?" I said.

The man shrugged his shoulders. "Our bank is a business, Mr Carruthers. It's not a charity. And if you don't get our money _____, you'll end _____ in jail. It's as simple as that. It's up _____ you. But you can't have it both ways."

He stood _____. "We're going to give you twenty-four hours to think it _____," he said. "You don't have to decide right away. You can sleep _____ it. I'll come _____ tomorrow and you can tell me what you've decided. But just remember one thing, Mr Carruthers. You can't rip the bank _____ and expect to get _____ with it. Life's not like that. And we will hunt you _____ until we get every penny of our money _____. I trust I've made myself clear. Good afternoon."

That night, I lay awake in my cell and thought the whole thing _____. Was I being stupid? Should I save my own skin? Was it all worth fighting _____? I went _____ it again and again.

The man from the bank came _____ the next day. He walked _____ my cell with a stupid smirk on his face. He was so sure of himself. So confident. He thought I was going to give in without a fight. He sat _____ and grinned _____ me. And at that moment, I noticed he had false teeth.

"So, Mr Carruthers," he began. "I trust that you've come to your senses. I've prepared this letter for you to sign. It instructs the hospital to send the items in question _____ to the factory and..."

I held _____ my hand and the man from the bank stopped talking.

"You can save your breath," I said. "Put the letter _____. I've got no intention of signing it. I've decided to go _____ with the trial. I can't let the children _____. I promised them six kidney machines and I'm not going _____ on my word."

The man from the bank gaped _____ me and his false teeth fell _____. They crashed noisily _____ the floor and rolled _____ my bed. I bent _____, picked them _____ and handed them _____ to him.

"I believe these are yours," I said. You should have seen his face!

And so the trial went _____. I pleaded guilty, the judge sentenced me to three years in jail and that's how I ended _____ in... Frederick paused and took a deep breath, "...in Newtown Prison...from where I escaped at eleven o'clock last night."

Lady Prescott blinked twice. She didn't seem at all shocked or upset by the fact that Frederick was a convict on the run from her husband's jail. In fact, her one and only concern was for the children in the ward.