

The culprit 2.

SOMEONE was knocking on the door of the apartment next to Codell's. Codell stood just inside his door and listened. No response. After a long pause, metal clanged against metal and with each blow came the sound of splitting wood and then nothing.

Several minutes later, quick footfalls echoed in the hall and down the stairway. A few more minutes passed in silence and Codell opened the door of his apartment. His neighbor's door was wide open, the jamb ripped out and pieces of wood on the floor. Codell closed his door and went to sleep.

A couple of hours later heavy footsteps and voices in the hallway woke him. A knock came on Codell's door. "Police, this is the police."

Codell, half asleep and yawning, opened his door. Two uniformed officers identified themselves. "Your neighbor was broken into this afternoon. Have you been home?"

"Yeah."

"All afternoon?"

"Yeah."

"Did you hear anything?"

"Of course I heard." Codell glanced sideways up at the ceiling like the cop was an idiot.

"Don't get smart with me."

“No, ma’am. Just the facts, ma’am.”

“You heard the break-in and you didn’t do anything? You sat here and did nothing?”

Codell stiffened, arched his back, and screwed up his eyes incredulously. “Can you do anything if you don’t know what you’re jumping into? Can you do anything like that? Something’s going down, you have no idea what; nobody’s going to jump into that. I have no gun and no phone. Would you jump into something like that? Would you?”

“You don’t need a phone to do something,” said the officer. “Make some noise. Scare him away. You’re a big dude.”

“ ‘Make some noise’,” Codell mimicked. “ ‘Boo, run away.’ The dude’s got a crowbar, far as I know. Get myself killed.”

“Now we understand,” said the lead officer. “Now we understand. Maybe next time it’ll be your apartment. I’ll make sure to write you into my report.” To her partner: “It’s Friday, Joe. Let’s get out of here.”

Joe sneered at Codell. “Chicken shit.”

“Whatever.” Codell closed his apartment door and locked it. He stood just inside his door and listened.

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