



The Signal

Adapted from the story by Alan Robbins

The robberies all took place at Mallview Towers, one of those big new high-rise apartment buildings. Some members of the co-op board had called me in to investigate.

They met me at a courtyard in front of the building, where we almost collided with a young woman on rollerblades. She was doing some fancy skating moves in front of the building, a familiar sight, and the group that hired me had to relocate my box to the far edge of the yard to avoid her.

As they explained the situation, there had been seven robberies over a two-week period, each taking place during the day and always when the tenant was out. But the strange thing was that all the tenants in question worked at home and they were only gone from their apartments at odd hours during the day.

This meant that it had to be an inside job by someone who knew when people were out. The only person who was in a position to know the comings and goings of all the tenants was the doorman. But he had worked there for twenty years and the victims refused to believe that he could be part of it.

So it was up to me to figure out what was going on. I did naturally. And it did not involve the doorman but instead a rather elaborate scam. Do you know what it was?

[HERE, STOP AND ASK THE STUDENTS IF THEY KNOW HOW]

“That skater! She wasn’t out for exercise. She knew the people in the building. As soon as she saw the departure of a likely victim, she figure-skated the apartment number on the courtyard floor. Her accomplice, on one of the floors above, could easily see it with binoculars and slip into the empty apartment.”