



# Theft Thwarts Thieves

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## It happens plenty in fiction.

Thieves or ex-thieves like John Robie (“[To Catch a Thief](#)”), Alexander Mundy (“[It Takes a Thief](#)”), and Slippery Jim DiGriz ([The Stainless Steel Rat](#)) are among the many beloved reformed or semi-reformed criminals who thwart the criminality of others.

It happens in real life too. Con artist Frank Abagnale eventually taught people how to spot fraud (though apparently [still committing it](#) in his memoir *Catch Me If You Can*). Former black-hat hacker Kevin Mitnick taught people how to protect themselves from hacking and social engineering.

The role of criminals stopping criminals can also be played entirely accidentally.

Last Saturday, three armed men [robbed a business](#) called Hi Lo Check Cashing out in Commerce

City, Colorado.

“In an unexpected and ironic twist,” says a [Facebook post](#) by the Commerce Police Department, “as the trio was robbing the business . . . a fourth criminal stole their getaway vehicle . . . which may have already been stolen.

Police are seeking the third robber and the car thief. I guess they may offer a curt “Thanks” to the latter bad guy just before jailing him.

The Goddess Fortuity won’t always intervene thus. And we don’t want to people to start stealing cars on the off chance that one of their thefts will foil some other theft.

On the other hand, it would be criminal to decline any strokes of crime-stopping luck that come our way, since the politicians and prosecutors aren’t really doing it for us these days.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.