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MADRAS RECORD OFFICE.

Government of Madras.

Financial DEPARTMENT.

G.O. No. 1865 Press Mis.

128-179

Dated 20-12- 1873.

14/15

Not to be folded or roughly handled

No. 178. Read the following letter from Captain C. L. HIGHMOOR, for the Acting Inspector-General of Police, to the Hon. W. HUDLESTON, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Madras, 11th December 1873, No. 3976 :—

Adverting to G.O., No. 1596, dated 30th October 1873, Financial, I have the honour to enclose, for the information of Government, a report, in original, from the Superintendent of Police, Nellore, detailing the action of the Police with reference to the mail robbery which occurred between Vencatachellum's Chuttrum and Nellore on the evening of the 19th idem.

2. The contents of the mail, which were chiefly book-parcels, were all recovered near the scene of crime, including a pair of binoculars and spectacles, which seem to have been the only articles of value in the mail-bag.

3. The Superintendent states that the conduct of the postal runners is open to grave suspicion, and bases his opinion on their behaviour after the robbery and the manner and state in which the binoculars were recovered, whilst the facts of the spectacles being discovered in the house of the brother-in-law of one of them and the cloth stated to have been left by the robbers being identified by the village washerman as the property of another runner appear to have led him to the same conclusion. Captain Chrystie adds, as a further reason for suspecting the runners, that he had recently rescinded an order regarding the mail being accompanied by a police escort, which he had extended to that portion of the road in ignorance of the Inspector-General's disapproval of the practice, and he supposes that the robbery was concerted with a view to the restoration of the same.

4. Two postal runners and five of their associates were arrested and placed before the Magistrate, who, however, deeming the evidence inconclusive, directed their release from custody.

From Captain G. CHRYSTIE, Superintendent of Police, Nellore, to the Inspector-General of Police (through the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Central Range), dated Nellore, 27th November 1873, No. 533.

With reference to G.O., No. 1596, dated 30th October 1873, Financial Department, communicated to me, I have the honour to report as follows.

2. Early on the morning of the 20th October I received information that the banghy mail from the south had been plundered the previous night near Vencatachellum Chuttrum Station of Gudur Taluq, and the same day I proceeded to the scene of the crime.

3. The robbery was committed close to the 96th milestone on the Madras Road, *i.e.*, twelve miles south of Nellore, and about two miles south of Vencatachellum Chuttrum Station, where the first information was received about an hour after dark.

4. The party with the banghy consisted (besides the runner) of an off-duty runner, two young Brahmins, and a Soodra lad ; these three latter were casual travellers, and had joined the runners on the way. Both the runners had their kavedi bamboos—strong substantial sticks.

5. The information was first given by the runners who arrived at Vencatachellum Chuttrum Station, with an interval of about half-an-hour between the coming of the first and the second. Each stated that he had been left tied and blindfolded by the robbers near the scene of the robbery, and had managed (independent of the other) to release himself and come in. On the V. C. Police going to the spot they found one of the young Brahmins still lying there, too much frightened probably to move, as he was only very slightly hurt. The other two travellers ran away back, and were not found for two or three days.

6. The statements of these persons were that they had been attacked by one, two, or at most three robbers, who had overpowered them, and it was a peculiar feature from the very first that the runners, armed with good sticks, and with the three travellers at their backs, should have succumbed without resistance to such a small number of robbers. One runner had a cut from a stick, not severe, above the forehead ; the other was unhurt.

7. On the morning of the 20th all the property taken from the mail, with the exception of one parcel and the contents of a small tin box found empty, was discovered thrown away in the bush jungle to the west of the 96th milestone. It consisted of book-parcels and other things apparently not of considerable value. On the 21st, on further search in the jungle, some opium was found near the same spot ; this had evidently formed the contents of the empty tin ; so only one parcel remained to be accounted for.

8. On the 22nd a telegram was received from Bombay that the contents of the missing parcel were a pair of binoculars to the address of G. Mackenzie, Esq., C.S., at Nellore, the same having been received by parcels post from England. On the same afternoon, a more extended search having been made, the canvass bag and some paper wrappings of the parcel were found to the east of the road not far from the 95th milestone. It had been raining very heavily all the forenoon, but the canvass bag and paper wrappings, though damp, were not saturated as they must thoroughly have been had they been out in the rain. There were fresh foot-marks also, apparently those of the persons who had deposited the articles, and on these also it was clear that rain had never fallen. It was obvious that they had been thrown down, since the rain ceased at noon, by some persons close in the neighbourhood, and suspicion, which from private information had already attached to the runners and their associates, now became so strong that the two men who had been with the banghy and four of their relatives were arrested, and their houses in the village of Ramdoss Chuttrum (between the 95th and 94th miles) searched. Nothing was found in the searches.

9. On the 23rd the binoculars themselves were found also not far from the 95th mile, but to the west of it. There were fresh foot-marks near these also. On the cloth, which one of the runners had said belonged to the robbers and had been used by them to bind him, being shown to the man who washes for the people of Ramdoss Chuttrum, he declared it to belong to the runner himself.

10. The same day (23rd) I communicated to first-class Inspector Divianada Pillay, who was conducting the inquiry, that two pair of spectacles also were in the parcel with the binoculars ; he received this news in the evening after the binoculars were found. It was determined to search the runners' houses again. In a basket in the fourth house searched, that of an elderly man named Kondappah, the brother-in-law of the runner who carried the banghy, the spectacles and the leather strap of the binocular case were found. This man was not one of those who had been arrested. On the spectacles being discovered and held up, Kondappah's wife said they had been "acquired by their ancestors," and the man himself stated that the strap was one he had used to tie up a calf. On the absurdity of these statements being pointed out, they said they had come into the house without their knowledge.

11. The seven accused were placed before the Gudur Taluq Sub-Magistrate on the 27th, but no investigation was commenced, nor evidence recorded, until the 7th November, when the inquiry was taken up by the Deputy Magistrate of Naidupett, C. Cundaswamy Mudelliar.

12. The case was dismissed and the accused released by him, of which I received intimation on the 24th instant.

13. The evidence has been held inconclusive for the committal of the accused, but, in my opinion, there can be no reasonable doubt that these runners are the culprits. In acquitting them it must have been considered that the spectacles and strap were possibly put into Kondappah's house by police agency without his and his wife's knowledge ; but, while not contesting the possibility of this, I consider it highly improbable. To begin with the accounts offered by the house inmates on the articles being found—accounts which they indisputably did offer—are incompatible on any reasonable theory with those things being where they were without their knowledge.

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Financial Department,
20th December 1873.

To carry out the theory, the articles must have been found by the Police at sometime when the remainder were being discovered in the jungle, but the search was conducted in a most public manner, the neighbouring village heads and some twenty or thirty Yanadies being employed, and it would have been most difficult for them to have concealed the fact. Inspector Divianada Pillay was present at the instant when the canvass bag and wrappings were found, and he has earned the very highest character for trustworthiness and honesty. I myself questioned the Yanady who discovered the binoculars, and am satisfied, from his manner and answers to my questions, that the spectacles were not found then. Lastly, granting that two police officers of the best reputation in the district would adopt such a "stale dodge," the difficulty of getting the articles into the house without the knowledge of the inmates remains to be disposed of.

14. The fact of the house having been searched before cuts both ways, as, on one hand, it may be urged that the people knowing they were suspected would not keep anything, and on the other, that the house having been once searched they would feel secure against a repetition of the process.

15. As to the motives of the runners in committing the crime, besides the ordinary one of cupidity, the following throws a light on what their intentions may have been. Shortly after the arrival of the new Inspecting Postmaster, Mr. Theobalds, my attention was drawn specially to the arrangements for guarding the banghy mail. In some divisions it was the custom for the high road patrol constables to accompany the banghy throughout their beats when it passed at night. I resolved to make this practice uniform over the district, and passed orders to this effect in the month of August. Subsequently I considered the practice a wrong one, as giving the whole benefit of the road patrol to the banghy at the cost of the rest of the traffic. A letter of Mr. Robinson, the late Inspector-General of Police, was found in my office records entirely confirming my opinion and denouncing the practice, which, as I found to be distinctly a wrong one, I stopped by an order dated 25th September 1873. The practice had not formerly obtained in Gudur Taluq, where this crime occurred ; but still, no doubt, the runners for the brief period would have found the company of an armed constable a great solace to their physical and superstitious terrors, and would feel much disgusted at being deprived of it. I actually said to the Assistant Superintendent, who was with me at the time I wrote the order, that I feared a banghy robbery got up by the runners would follow, but this did not, of course, deter me from what appeared clearly right.

16. The property having been entirely recovered, it is improbable that anything further will ever be made of the case.

No. 179. ORDER THEREON, 20th December 1873, No. 1865.

Communicated to the Postmaster-General.

(True Extract.)

Chief Secretary.

To the Inspector-General of Police.
,, Postmaster-General.

Exd. J. Wright.

Office of the Superintendent of Police,
Nellore: 27th Novr: 1873

No. 533

From

The Superintendent
of Police,
Nellore

To

The Inspector General
of Police
Madras

Thro'

The Dy. Inspector
General of Police
Cuddapah Range

Sir,

With reference to G.O. No: 1596, dated 30th October 1873, (Financial Department) communicated to me, I have the honor to report as follows.

2. Early on the morning of the 20th Octr: I received information that the Bangalore Mail from the South had been plundered the previous night near Venkatachellum Chatram Station of Gudur Taluq,

and the same day I proceeded to the scene of the Crime.

3. The robbery was committed close to the 96th mile-stone on the Madras Road, i.e. 12 miles South of Nellore, and about two South of Venkatachallam Chuttrum Station, where the first information was received, about an hour after dark.

4. The party with the Baughy consisted (besides the runner) of an off-duty runner two young Brahmins, and a Coodra lad: these three latter were casual travellers, and had joined the runners on the way. Both the runners had their Kaudi bamboos - strong substantial sticks.

5. The information was first given by the runners who arrived at Venkatachallam chuttram station, with an interval of about ½ an hour between the arriving of the first and the second. Each stated

that he had been left tied and blindfolded by the robbers, near the scene of the robbery, and had managed (independant of the other) to release himself and come in. On the V.C. Police going to the spot they found one of the young Brahmins still lying there, too much frightened, probably, to move as he was only very slightly hurt. The other two travellers ran away back and were not found for 2 or 3 days.

6. The statements of these persons were that they had been attacked by one two or, at most, three robbers who had overpowered them, and it was a peculiar feature from the very first, that the runners, armed with good sticks and with the three travellers at their backs, should have succumbed without resistance to such a small number of robbers - One runner had a cut from a stick.

not severe, above the fore-
-head; the other was unhurt.

7. On the morning of the
20th all the property taken
from the mail, with the
exception of one parcel and
the contents of a small
tin-box found empty, was
discovered thrown away
in the bush jungle to the
west of the 96th mile-stone.
It consisted of book-parcels
and other things apparently
not of considerable value.
On the 21st on further search
in the jungle, some opium
was found near the same
spot - this had evidently
formed the contents of the
empty tin; so only one
parcel remained to be
accounted for.

8. On the 22nd a telegram
was received from Bombay
that the contents of the
missing parcel were a
pair of binoculars to the
address of G. Mackenzie
Esq. C.S. at Nellore - the
same having been received
by parcel post from

95

England. On the same after-
-noon a more extended search
having been made, the canvas-
-bag and some paper wrap-
-pings of the parcel were
found to the east of the
road, not far from the
95th mile-stone. It had been
raining very heavily all the
forenoon but the canvas
bag and paper wrappings,
though damp, were not
saturated, as they must
thoroughly have been, had
they been out in the rain.
There were fresh foot-marks
also, apparently those of
the persons who had depo-
-sited the articles, and on
these also it was clear that
rain had never fallen.
It was obvious that they
had been thrown down since
the rain ceased at noon,
by some persons close in
the neighbourhood, and
suspicion, which from
private information had
already attached to the
runners and their

associates, now became so strong that the two men who had been with the haughy and four of their relatives were arrested and their houses in the village of Ramdoss Chuttram (between the 9th and 9½ miles) searched. Nothing was found in the searches.

9. On the 23rd the binoculars themselves were found, also not far from the 9½ mile but to the west of it. There were fresh footmarks near these also. On the cloth, which one of the runners had said belonged to the robbers and had been used by them to bind him, being shown to the man who washes for the people of Ramdoss Chuttram, he declared it to belong to the runner himself.

10. The same day (23rd) I communicated to Fl. Class Insp^r., Viriamadu Pillai, who was conducting the enquiry, that two pair of spectacles also were in the

parcel with the binoculars. he received this news in the evening after the binoculars were found. It was determined to search the runners' houses again. In a basket in the 4th house searched, that of an elderly man named Kondaspeah, the brother-in-law of the runner who carried the haughy, the spectacles and the leather straps of the binocular case were found. This man was not one of those who had been arrested. On the spectacles being discovered and held up, Kondaspah's wife said they had been "acquired by their ancestors." and the man himself stated that the straps was one he had used to tie up a calf. On the absurdity of these statements being pointed out, they said they had come into the house without their knowledge.

11. The seven accused were placed before the

Goodoor Taluq. Magistrate on the 27th, but no investigation was commenced, nor evidence recorded, until the 7th Nov: when the enquiry was taken up by the Dy. Magistrate of Vaidupetta, C. Cundaswamy Mudaliar.

12. The case was dismissed and the accused released by him, of which I received intimation on the 24th Inst:

13. The evidence has been held inconclusive for the Committal of the accused, but in my opinion there can be no reasonable doubt that these persons are the Culprits. In acquitting them it must have been considered that the spectacles and straps were possibly put into Kondaspah's house by Police agency without his and his wife's knowledge, but while not contesting the possibility of this, I consider it highly improbable. To begin with,

the accounts offered by the house inmates on the articles being found - accounts which they indisputably did offer - are incompatible with or any reasonable theory with those things being where they were, without their knowledge. To carry out the theory, the articles must have been found by the Police at sometime when the remainder were being discovered in the jungle, but the search was conducted in a most public manner, the neighbouring village heads and some 20 or 30 Panadies being employed, and it would have been most difficult for them to have concealed the fact. Inspr. Divianada Pillay was present at the first find when the canvas bag and wrappings were found, and he has earned the very highest character for truthworthiness and honesty. I myself questioned

the gauady who discovered the binoculars and am satisfied from ~~the~~ his manner and answers to my questions, that the spectacles were not found them.
Lastly granting that two Police officers of the best reputation in the District would adopt such a "Stale dodge" the difficully of geting the articles into the house without the knowledge of the inmates remains to be disposed of.

The fact of the house having been searched before, cuts both ways as, on one hand, it may be urged that the people knowing they were suspected would not keep anything, and on the other, that the house having been once searched they would feel secure against a repetition of the proceed.

12. As to the motives of the runners in committing the crime, besides the ordinary one of cupidity the following throws a light on what their intentions may have been.
Shortly after the arrival of the new Inspecting Post Master, Mr. Theobalds, my attention was drawn specially to the arrangements for guarding the Banghy mail. In some divisions it was the custom for the Regd road Patrol Constables to accompany the banghy throughout their beats when it passed at night. I resolved to make this practice uniform over the District and passed ~~an~~ order to the effect in the month of August. Subsequently I considered the practice a wrong one as giving the whole benefit of the road patrol to the Banghy at the cost of the rest of the

traffic. A letter of Mr. Robinson, the late Dep.r. General of Police was found in my office Records entirely confirming my opinion and denouncing the practice, which, as I found to be distinctly a wrong one, I stopped by an order dated 25th Septr. 1872. The practice had not formerly obtained in Goodoor Zulay where this crime occurred but will no doubt the runners, for the brief period, would have found the company of an armed Constable a great Solace to their physical and superstitious terrors, and would ful much disgusted at being deprived of it. I actually said to the Asst. Superintendent who was with me at the time, I wrote the order, that I feared a laughy

robbery got up by the runners would follow, but this did not of course deter me from what appeared clearly right.

15. The property having been entirely recovered, it is improbable that anything further will ever be made of the Case.

I have the honor to be
Sir,
Your most obedt. Servt.
Jno. Christie Capt.
Supt. of Police

2.12.73 P.C.

JMD

From

The Supt: of Police
Nellore

To

The Inspr. General
of Police
Madras

Thro' The Dy. Inspr:
General of Police
C. R.

Dated 27th Novr: 1873
Desp.d 29th Do
Rec.d

No: 533
Encls: none

Reporting the
result of the
Bangley Dacoit Rob-
-bery near Venkata-
chellum Chatrum
Gudiur Talq. Nellore
Dist.

1873 Dept 86

Enclosure
to letter from the Ag
Inspector General of Police
dated Madras 11 Decr 1873
No 3976

From
The Supt of Police
Nellore.

G.O. 20th Decr 1873 Nos 178-179

Reports on the action
of the Police on the occasion
of the mail Robbery which
occurred between Venkata
chellum Chetteroo and
Nellore.

In Fort 2347/73.

No. 3976 Chief Office of the Inspector General of Police.
Madras, 11th December 1873.

From
The Inspector General of Police.

To
The Chief Secretary
to Government
Fort Saint George.

Sir,

Enclosure One. Adverting to G.O. 1596, dated 30 October 1873, Financial, I have the honor to enclose for the information of Government a report in original from the Superintendent of Police Nellore, detailing the action of the Police with reference to the mail robbery which occurred between Venkatachellum's Chetteroom and Nellore on the evening of 19th idem.

2. The contents of the mail which were chiefly book parcels were all recovered near the scene of crime, including a pair of binoculars and spectacles which seem to have been the only articles of value in the mail bag.

3.

3. The Superintendent states that the conduct of the postal runners is open to grave suspicion and bases his opinion on their behaviour after the robbery and the manner and state in which the binoculars were recovered whilst the facts of the spectacles being discovered in the house of the brother in law of one of them and the cloth stated to have been left by the robbers being identified by the village washerman as the property of another runner appear to have led him to the same conclusion. Captain Chrystie adds as a further reason for suspecting the runners that he had recently rescinded an order regarding the mail being accompanied by a Police escort which he had extended to that portion of the road in ignorance of the Inspector Generals disapproval of the practice and he supposes that the robbery was concerted with a view to the restoration of the same.

4. Two postal runners and five of their associates were arrested and placed before the magistrate who however deeming the evidence inconclusive directed their release from Custody.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your Most Obed[t] Servant,
Chrichton
for Ag. Inspector General of Police.

Final 1873 Dept.

From

The Inspector General

of Police,

To

The Chief Secy

to Govt

No. 2347 Fort St. Geo.

Dated 11 December 1873

Rec'd 15 Dec

No. 3476 /E

Submits a report in original from the Supdt of Police Nellore detailing the action of the Police with reference to mail robbery.

With an Order

2 to Genl Dy. Ro 1865

Genl A to P Supdt Nellore

C 18/12 Rec'd

Genl Dy 30 Sept 1873. No 596.

Court of {1873} Madras.

Financial

The Inspr. Genl of Police

for

Dated 20th Decr
Recd. /71

Rd.

G.O. 20th Decr, 1873, No. 1868

Nos. 178-179

Postal. Letter from the Inspr
General reporting the action
of the Police with refce to the
robbery of the mail between
Venkatachellum's Chutteram &
Vellore on Octo last, com.
to the Post Master Genl.