

To catch a thief

"Keys? What keys? I don't got to show you no stinking keys!"

At that, Roy reaches for the phone and dials 911. And waits... And waits...

There's never a cop when you need one, even when you call their office. The thief makes a break. Roy takes after him with Kevin Leach in hot pursuit.

Finally, it's Leach who corners the thief. The cops eventually arrive, confiscate the keys and the thief's crack pipes and cart him off to jail.



artwork by Carl Angel text by Geoff Link

NEXT: Wheels of justice just won't turn.

This photo cartoon, excerpted from the one published in *The Extra* in June 2002, depicts the capture of Ronald Salkin, a thief who plagues the Grant Building like a bad cold. It stars Roy Crew and Kevin Leach of the Office of Self Help, favorite target of the "live-in thief."

Grant Building tightens security – finally

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front door is locked.

On the fourth floor, Transportation for a Livable City said it too is moving in mid-March, after two years, to 995 Market. Through an unforced entry, it had lost a laptop in October. It distributed flyers about it and the office's Jeremy Nelson said the non-profit complained bitterly to management but got no satisfaction.

"Access is poorly controlled and there's no on-site security over the weekends," Nelson said. "In my opinion it's a poorly managed building, I wonder if they are trying to evict people out of neglect."

On Feb. 23, the building's occupants received another distressing flyer. Lawyer Fred Roesti's office had been hit hard over the previous weekend. Someone entered his offices on the fourth floor with a key and took two computer towers that contained all his records, a keyboard, a fax machine, a printer and his checkbook. He speculated the thief—certainly not Salkin, who was in jail—entered the building as someone was leaving by the front door, or he came up the fire escape in back.

Roesti thought the towers could still be stashed away in the building. He asked management to show him video tape from the lobby's surveillance camera to show the stuff leaving the building. It could offer a glimpse of the thief, too. Or, he suggested, management should thoroughly search the building. After a week, management had done neither.

Following up their thefts, Transportation for a Living City and Study Center representatives had viewed surveillance tapes and

found the quality unreliable. In one instance, the camera had run out of tape during crucial hours.

"I'm contemplating a lawsuit," Roesti told *The Extra*. "And I'm also very reluctant to talk about this. It's a management issue. I've offered to pay for replacing the information I lost if management replaces the towers. I'll assume 50% of the responsibility."

If the items were still around, and set out in the hallway for him, Roesti made it clear in his letter there would be no questions asked or action taken. What aggravated him further was that the building management months ago had moved its operations out of the 8th floor and into another building.

"You want a metaphor?" he asked. "The Grant Building is a ship adrift on a sea without a captain. It has been deserted. That sends a message."

His letter urged his fellow tenants to deadbolt office doors "until further security is put in place by building management."

The day after his letter went out, things changed. Tenants were met at the door by building super Steve Decker, requesting that everyone sign in. He said in the future guests would have to show picture ID, sign in and be escorted to their destinations by their host. More security officers had been added, he said, and soon a magnetic front door lock system — opened by individual access cards — would be installed. In the meantime, a

temporary lock would go in the next day and everyone holding a front door key would get a new one free. An alarm system will be added to the back fire escape door, he said, plus camera surveillance of the alley.

"We're going to totally supervise the whole place like a hotel," Decker said. "There have been way too many problems."

A notice at the door from property manager Will Arnett acknowledged most of the changes and emphasized that guards will regularly check the building at night.

"Every lock in the building is in the process of being changed," the notice said. ■



TENDERLOIN AIDS RESOURCE CENTER

Outreach and Community Events March 2005

Health Education Forum

Topic: Homelessness and Health Promotion in the Tenderloin

Speaker: Katie Burk and David Leiva

Date/Time: Wednesday, March 23, 6:00 - 7:30 pm

HIV Education Forum

Topic: HIV and TB

Speaker: To Be Announced

Date/Time: Wednesday, March 16, 6:00 - 7:30 pm

Location for Forums: 175 Golden Gate Ave. (St. Boniface Marion Group Room); light meal will be provided

Client Advisory Panel CAP

Come talk with Alexander Fields, Consumer Board Representative; Tracy Brown, TARC's Executive Director and program managers about plans for TARC. Also provide input on new services and how we can improve.

Date/Time: Wednesday, March 23, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Volunteer for TARC

Orientation: March 16 - 18, 6:00 pm - 8:15 pm; March 20, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm; 183 Golden Gate Ave.

You must pre-register for volunteer trainings. Stop in or call Ned at (415) 934-1792.

National Healthcare for the Homeless Week March 20-26

For the current groups' schedule or more information, call 415.432.7476 or go to www.tarcsf.org

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