

# CLASSIC CONS

## Classic Cons - THE PIGEON DROP

Many thousands of cases of the classic 'pigeon drop' con games are recorded in the annals of police departments everywhere. It is an enduring scam, and, to the perpetrators, one which can promise a very high rate of return in exchange for some amateur dramatics set against a carefully prepared 'plot', designed to involve a special kind of 'audience participation'.

The 'audience' of one, is usually an elderly woman who has means but no husband and is unaware that she is about to audition for a playlet specially written for her. If she plays her role as anticipated she will pay dearly for the privilege of being part of this unsolicited dramatic performance.

**Let the action begin:-**

*Dramatis Personae...(in order of appearance)*

**The LAME** Elderly, respectable, female member of the public (spinster or widow) with financial means - likely to be involved in voluntary work.

**The STREET PLAYER** Typically a young woman working in a caring profession, ideal role is that of a nurse whose life is devoted to the care of elderly women not dissimilar to women like 'the lame'.

**The TALKER** Friend of 'street player' - epitome of masculine power and knowledge of the world of money, ideally a banker or brokers whose professional advice has great credibility.

### TYPICAL PROPS

*Nurse's uniform/Nun's habit perhaps! (for the street player.)*

*The 'Pack' - (Ideally a leather portfolio containing cash and securities, and other interesting documents/letters as necessary to the 'scam')*

*A Telephone*

*A Safety Deposit Box*

**Based on the Classic Cases of U.S. v Tyrone Stephen 3/6/86 and U.S. v SIDNEY JONES et al., 8/10/86 United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.**

### Scene 1: Street Scene

The lame is on her way to work as a volunteer at the Lighthouse for the Blind.

She is stopped by the street player who asks her if she has dropped a leather portfolio in the street. The lame has not done so, of course, and saying so prepares to continue on her way. However, with the street player's encouragement, they examine the pack together. The contents turn out to be a range of high denomination notes and negotiable securities. In the classic Jones performance, there is also a document that makes obvious reference to the P.L.O. & Iran. The street player in this case quickly establishes her honesty and integrity by pretending to be a nurse who cares for the elderly.

### Scene 2: Shop doorway/bench/or quieter part of same street

The street player has persuaded the lame that they must examine this portfolio very carefully indeed, away from the hustle and bustle as she wants advice on what they must do with such an important and valuable find. The street player is concerned that references in the portfolio both to the PLO and Iran imply that the cash and securities were destined to help terrorism and no doubt to further violate human rights in that part of the world. By implication, the real owner of this portfolio must be amoral and is not in a position to make any claim on it.

In other words, this is a find that can be redirected to help those more worthy - they can accept this valuable stroke of luck with clear consciences and even turn it to great fortune by careful investment. It must be worth millions, suggests the street player.

*(Aside) From this moment on, a complex web of deceit and trickery is woven around the lame who has been drawn into what is presented as a once-in-a-life-time opportunity to turn someone's evil intentions into a highly acceptable opportunity to make money. The virtuous street player wants her to share equally in her 'find'.*

### Scene 3: A telephone booth

The street player has an idea. She has a friend who is a highly respected international banker who will help them decide what to do as they obviously cannot carry this around with them - and the lame is already late for her work at The Lighthouse. The street player telephones the talker, and explains the situation. She then asks the lame to speak to him. The talker suggests that he will take care of the 'investment difficulties' and will be able to guarantee to provide a good income from this fortuitous situation. Of course, it will now be a three-way split! In fact, it is decided that the lame shall have her split in cash - he can deal with the securities.

### Scene 4: A safety deposit facility

The street player and the lame hire a safety deposit box in order to keep the lame's money safe for the time-being. Unfortunately the lame does not notice that her money has become cut paper on entry to the box!

### Scene 5: A coffee shop or similar venue a few days later

As accomplices in this exciting find, the street player and the lame have arranged to meet to finalise the investment details. Here is the final and crucial stage of the pigeon drop con. The lame is persuaded to place the contents of her own savings account in the hands of the talker, as this substantial sum combined with that safely nestling in the recently hired deposit box will most certainly yield a fortune which she would be foolish to ignore.

**Foolish indeed becomes the operative word from now on in the lame's disrupted (and poorer) life.**

THE END

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