

Henry King, 186, *Mermaid*

Marcia Watson

Central Criminal Court, 26 November 1849

120. WILLIAM ROLLS was again indicted, with HENRY KING , for stealing, on 19th Oct., at St. George's, Hanover-square, 3 watches, value £40; 2 sovereigns, and 2 half-sovereigns; the property of John Killick, in his dwelling-house. MR. O'BRIEN conducted the Prosecution.

JOHN KILLICK. I am a jeweller and watchmaker, at 9, Knightsbridge-terrace. On 19th Oct. last, at nearly half-past twelve o'clock, I was standing behind my counter, and the prisoner Rolls called me to the door, and asked me to tell him the price of three dressing-glasses that were placed outside one of my shop-windows, on an elevated step from the pavement—I saw no one with him—I went out, and he asked me the price of the glasses, and kept me talking for two or three minutes—there were no prices marked on them—he asked me the price of all—he said he dare say that either this or that (pointing to two of them) would suit, but he would bring his old woman in the evening, and have one—I told him I had a great many more inside the shop, and I thought I might be enabled to sell him one then, and I induced him to enter the shop with me—I think I stepped on one side, and he went in, and I followed him—I took a dressing-glass from off a chair, and placed it on the counter, and at that moment I saw a row of gold watches in a different window to the one we had been out to, swinging about; it was not an open window—my shop stands at the corner of two streets; the door is at the corner, and one window in each street; it is immediately opposite the Albert-gate and Mr. Hudson's house—the looking-glasses were in the window in front of William-street, and the watches in the window looking into the Knightsbridge-road—the watches were in motion, as if the string was shaken; they were in full swing, giving strong evidence of having been recently disturbed—I discovered two tickets swinging without the watches, and this ticket, which I produce, had disappeared, with a gold watch, altogether—that ticket was found behind the counter—I missed three watches—a person behind the counter could get to the Knightsbridge-terrace window—whoever robbed me of the watches robbed my till also, and this ticket was found close behind the counter where the till was—the till was robbed at the same time I lost the watches—a person would have to go behind the counter to get at the watches—I have a key to the till, but never keep it locked during the day—it was a long distance from where the watches hung—the till was at the extreme end of the counter—when I saw the watches swinging, Rolls was in the shop—I said, "I have been robbed," and ran out in an agitated manner, and returned again, thinking I might see something, and on my return a man told me, in Rolls's presence, he was just at the door; that he had seen him in company with another man, and advised me not to let him go—I left the shop again, and returned, and the prisoner had then gone some distance across William-street, nearly as far as the shop on the other side of the way—I told him I could not part with him, and brought him back to my shop—I had left him in the custody of my wife in the shop: there was no opportunity for robbing the till then—the man who had. advised me went and brought a policeman—the prisoner was taken to the police-office—after I returned from the examination my man asked me if I had paid the money away, as there was none in the till, and I then found the till empty of the gold—I am certain there were two sovereigns and two half-sovereigns in the morning—I did not miss any silver; there was nearly 2l.-worth—the gold was kept in a bag, and the silver in a wooden bowl—the gold bag was not gone, but there was no gold in it—the shop forms part of my dwelling-house, and is in the parish of St. George, Hanover-square.

Cross-examined by MR. ROBINSON. Q. Did not the prisoner give you his address?

A, Yes; he said his name was William Rolls, residing at Sunbury—I do not know that his father is an extensive farmer there—I should not like to say all I have heard about him—it was the second time I ran out that Bidy spoke to me—I think the prisoner must have been quite three minutes outside with me,

perhaps rather more—I saw the watches swinging immediately I placed the looking-glass on the counter—I was not more than half a minute doing that.

Cross-examined by MR. COCKLE. Q. You did not see King?

A. No; I think Bidy gave a description of the man's height he had seen going in and coming out of the shop, to the police—I did not hear the description—I saw King before the Magistrate—I cannot tell what his height is.

MR. O'BRIEN. Q. How soon before you were called out of the shop had you seen the gold safe? A. About a quarter of an hour—the watches were safe when I was called from behind the counter by Rolls.

MR. ROBINSON. Q. Did you look at them?

A. They were immediately close to me—about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour before Rolls called me out I had sold a man a signet ring, and I put the money into my bag, and the rings are immediately beneath the watches—if they had been disturbed then, I must have seen them—that was the last transaction in the shop before this occurred.

THOMAS BIDY. On 19th Oct., about half-past twelve, I was standing at the corner of William-street, in Knightsbridge, opposite the Albert Gate, about three yards from Mr. Killick's shop—I saw both the prisoners together—they passed by me abreast, went about six yards from me on the kerb, and stood together five or six minutes, about two yards and a half from Mr. Killick's shop, with their backs towards it, like men in conversation together—they then turned round and looked hard at me, as if they knew something of me—I had never seen them before, but I stared at them—I then saw Rolls turn to his left and go to Mr. Killick's door, and King walked leisurely towards the window in Knightsbridge as a person going to look at anything—I saw Mr. Killick come out and go with Rolls to look at some glasses under the window in William-street, and while they were so doing, I saw King walk leisurely into the shop, as a person going in to buy—I should say he might have been in a minute or a minute and a half, I cannot say exactly when I saw him come out, and he turned to his right and walked off at a brisk pace towards Hyde Park-corner—in about a minute I saw Mr. Killick go into his shop and Rolls follow him—he had been in the shop about a minute or a minute and a half, when I saw him come out again and run into the next shop in a frightened manner, like a man excited—he appeared alarmed, as if something was the matter with him—as he ran out I said, "Is anything amiss?" but he did not hear me—when he came out of the shop again, Rolls was outside—I said, "Is there anything amiss?"—he said, "I have lost three gold watches"—Rolls was standing close by, about a yard away—I said I saw a man go into his shop and come out again during the time he was with Rolls at the looking-glasses; and I said, "That man," alluding to Rolls, "must know something about it, for he was in conversation with the man that went into the shop before he called you out to look at the glasses"—I did not hear Rolls say anything to that—Mr. Killick ordered me to get a policeman, and I went and got one—Rolls was stopped, crossing the road—I saw Mr. Killick take him by the arm and detain him.

Cross-examined by MR. ROBINSOW. Q. You did not hear Rolls say that he knew nothing about the robbery?

A. No; I swear that—I was standing about two yards and a half from Mr. Killick's door—there is only one door to the shop, and that is at the corner—I continued standing there the whole time—Mr. Killick passed me when he went to the butcher's next door—the two men, stared very hard at me, when they passed me; I thought that a little singular; they talked together on the kerb—I was at the corner and they were six yards further on, on the same side of the road—I am a labouring man, one of Her Majesty's enrolled pensioners—I have been in the array and have £18 a year—I am liable to be called on to re-enter the service—it is six years and a half since I served—I am called on for twelve days every year now—I have worked for Mr. Suttaby, the auctioneer, and Mr. Taylor, about twelve months ago, and three months ago I worked two months at the Egyptian Hall; that was the last regular work I had—I work at anything I can get; sometimes at beating carpets, cleaning windows, or running with letters for gentlemen—Mr. Newton, the solicitor, often employs me—on this morning I was looking out for a job—I have never been a caiman, and never drove a cab—I know as much about horses as a horse knows about me—I have never been waterman at a cabstand—I have jobbed on and off for Mr. Newton, I dare say twelve months—I live at Mr.

Steven's, 12, Bull Inn-court, Strand—I was a non-commissioned officer in the army, but was discharged a private—I only know Mr. Killick by seeing him and his shop—I never spoke to him before this time.

Cross-examined by MR. PARRY. Q. What was the job at the Egyptian Hall?

A. Turning the cylinder, for Mr. Banvard's panorama of American scenery—that is the only regular job I have had for the last twelve months—before that I worked on the roads for St. George's parish; not at breaking stones, but laying stones, repairing and cleaning—I was paid as a workman—I dare say that is two years ago—the work at Banvard's was too heavy for me; I cannot do heavy work—I have had fifteen years out in a hot country—it was two hours twice a day, without leaving off—I was eighteen months employed at mending the roads for St. George's parish—I did not see King after the transaction till 6th Nov., about eighteen days after—he was then in Worship-street station-house—Morrell came for me, and told me, he had got a man in custody, and wanted me to look at him to see if I knew him—he did not say he had got the man in custody who robbed Mr. Killick—he said nothing about Mr. Killick—I suspected what it was about—he found me in Mr. Killick's shop—I had been told that Rolls's examination was not coming on, and went to Mr. Killick's to see if it was correct—I had given Mr. Killick my address—I never saw Morrell before that day—I had never described the man to him—when I went with Morrell, King was sitting in a chair by the fire—I cannot say whether he had just been apprehended—I knew him as soon as I went in—he was not dressed as he was when I saw him before—both the prisoners were dressed like gentlemen then—King had not a flannel jacket on—the moment I got in I recognized him without any hesitation—I had said it was a man I believed to be about five feet five and a half high—I am sure I did not say he was five feet five one-eighth—looking at him now I should say he is about five feet two, but then a person standing in boots and with a hat on makes a deal of difference—any man can put an inch on in standing.

MR. O'BRIEN. Q. How long have you been in her Majesty's service?

A. About twenty years; King had a coat something similar to my own, only rather cut off round; it was a dark frock-coat—I cannot say whether he wore boots—I have not the least doubt he is the person—sometimes a man will stand two inches taller in boots and with a hat on.

WILLIAM MORRELL (policeman, N 185). On Friday, 2d Nov., I went to the House of Detention to see Rolls, and from seeing him, I knew the whole of his companions, and, in consequence, I took King at the skittle-ground of the Royal Oak, in Bird-cage-walk, Bethnal-green—I had been looking for him some days—I had seen King and Rolls in company together, almost every night, for five or six weeks previous, and in the daytime too—I have sometimes followed them for hours together—when I apprehended King, he was dressed as he now is, but I never saw him in that dress before—he used to wear a black frock-coat, or a very dark-green shooting-coat, a black hat, and black handkerchief, with coloured ends—he was always well-dressed—I am always in plain clothes—I said, "King, I want you"—he said, "Whit for?"—I said, "For stealing some watches from Knights bridge"—he said, "I know nothing about it"—I said, "You must come along with me"—he said, "Very well, so help me Jesus Christ I know nothing about it"—I searched him, and found a silver watch, two half-crowns, a penny, and a bad halfpenny on him—I observed that the maker's name had been erased from the watch—I have not been able to find the owner.

Cross-examined by MR. PARRY. Q. Is it Mr. Killick's watch?

A. I believe not; Mr. Killick says it is not—I had some days before received a description of King with reference to this business—I cannot say who from—I had seen an inspector of the B division—I had not received any information from Bidy—I did not see him till I had apprehended King—I then saw him in Mr. Killick's shop, and told him I wanted him to come down to the Hoxton station to see a party that was in custody there—when we got there, King was sitting in a chair opposite the fire with another party—I rode to Hoxton inside the omnibus with Mr. Killick, and Bidy rode outside—when Bidy saw King he identified him immediately, without any hesitation whatever.

DAVID CRIPPS (policeman, N 340). I generally go about in plain clothes. I know both the prisoners—before 19th Oct. I saw them together several times—I never saw King dressed as he now is till he was taken—he

used to have a coat with pockets at the side, and a Paris-napped hat, and I have seen a ring on his finger—I should say I saw them together at different times, in different parts of town, for eight or nine weeks before 19th Oct.

THOMAS CARMODY (policeman, B 148). On 19th Oct., Rolls was given into my custody—on searching him I found thirteen sovereigns, £2 13s. 6d., in silver, a silver watch, which was going, a plated chain, a gold ring, a pocket-book, and two knives.

ROLLS— GUILTY. Aged 24.

KING— GUILTY. Aged 21.

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Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 8.0, 29 December 2020), November 1849, trial of WILLIAM ROLLS HENRY KING (t18491126-120).