

Special Collections Security: Problems, Trends, and Consciousness

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THE FORMATION OF RARE BOOK FACILITIES in American university libraries was a fairly recent development when *Library Trends* published its last issue on "Rare Book Libraries" in 1957. Special areas with controlled access provided improved security and better conditions for preserving materials. Georgia Haugh's *Library Trends* article reviewed access policies and described users' resistance and hostility to protective measures taken by libraries.¹

Thirty years ago rare book departments of university libraries and independent rare book libraries used policies and procedures as the primary means of controlling access to and use of their collections. Admissions interviews were customary. Application forms and presentation of credentials and letters of introduction were often required. The number of items a reader could use at once was limited. Rare book collections were shelved in locked stacks, browsing was prohibited, and circulation of materials was forbidden. Readers signed daily registers which were helpful in tracing lost books. "The effectiveness of all these various precautions is demonstrated by the reports of little mutilation and few losses. . . . One can safely conclude that rare book custodians have carried out their major responsibility of care and protection with marked success."² Policies and procedures seemed adequate protection against the remote possibility of theft. Ten years previously, Lawrence Thompson had written his famous "Bibliokleptomania" for *The New York Public Library Bulletin*, but library theft seemed to be neither a burning issue nor a trend. The confidence and security of those days

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have disappeared in a period of major change in libraries, universities, and their environment.

Environmental Change

The consolidation of rare books and manuscripts into special collections departments has continued in colleges and universities with many institutions systematically surveying general collections to identify books that have become rare simply with the passage of time. Library friends groups and other donor relations efforts have brought new collections into libraries. Major private collections have found their way into institutions, decreasing the availability of rare books on the market and driving up the price of what is for sale. Over the past thirty years the values of rare books and other artifacts have skyrocketed. Publicity has made this widely known. This increasing value of rare books and their scarcity have been accompanied by major thefts and growing concern over library security.

The teaching of history and literature has changed dramatically over the past thirty years. Assigned readings in textbooks and reserved reading rooms have given way to study and analysis of primary materials, not just among college students but in high schools as well (see Laura Linard's article in this issue). Students at all levels are seeking primary materials and early printed sources in libraries and historical societies. An outburst of interest in genealogy occasioned by the publication of *Roots* and popular enthusiasm engendered by the U.S. Bicentennial have brought numerous new readers to rare book libraries and archival collections.

Increasing numbers of people need and want to use special collections, placing new demands on service and creating new security risks. Their new interests and enthusiasms arose at a time when our society as a whole was becoming less accepting of elite institutions and authoritarian structures. Admissions policies and procedures have generally become more liberal in response to growing service needs.

Parallel with the growth of institutional rare book and archival collections and their increased use, the past thirty years have also witnessed a dramatic increase in property crime of all sorts. A national alarm system firm's radio advertising campaign states that one in four households without alarm systems is burglarized each year. Electronic protection of retail establishments is the norm. Thieves have victimized rare book libraries both randomly and systematically including Harvard, Yale, the New York Public Library, Stanford, the Newberry Library, and the John Crerar Library. James Shinn, convicted and

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imprisoned for thefts from the Oberlin College Library, identified and searched out rare books in libraries that had not sequestered their rare books. At the same time, large libraries with long-standing practices and procedures for segregating and protecting their rarities were victims in major cases of theft.

Major Cases of Rare Book Theft

In 1966 thieves broke windows on doors and moved an exhibit case at the University of Illinois Library to steal three rare books then valued at \$75,000. Robert B. Downs, the dean of library administration, thought that the books would be difficult to sell unless the thieves were professional and had stolen the books on commission from a buyer.³ The same year, manuscripts were stolen from the Vatican Library by thieves who scaled walls, crossed gardens, and climbed a drain pipe to break in. The manuscripts were found abandoned in a nearby field. The fact that the thieves did not steal other manuscripts of higher value led officials to speculate that this theft was also commissioned by a collector wanting specific manuscripts.⁴

Topkapi, a movie thriller about thieves trying to steal a priceless emerald from the center of a harem in Istanbul, seems to have been the model for a thief who tried to steal Harvard University's Gutenberg Bible in 1969. Fortunately for Harvard, the thief did not take the weight of the volumes into account when he planned to swing himself out of a window on a rope and instead of escaping he fell to the ground wounded and knocked unconscious. The tale of this theft was recently recounted by W.H. Bond in *Harvard Magazine*.⁵ Harvard immediately reviewed its security precautions. Robert R. Walsh, an architect-librarian who worked for Harvard in planning for new systems, has reported that in his investigations he contacted major libraries and museums; without any inquiries to verify his identity or authority, officials freely described their systems with details about what they had, what was alarmed, and what was not.⁶

Harvard's Zoology Library lost rare books and valuable plates in 1979 including works of Audubon, Captain James Cook, Lewis and Clark, and Charles Darwin. Lists of lost books were published in the *Antiquarian Bookseller*.⁷

A San Francisco bookseller alerted the University of California to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century books that were stolen from them. Police recovered 260 stolen books from the suspect's residence, and he was identified in a lineup by several antiquarian booksellers.⁸

In 1978 Yale University recognized its own maps in a group of maps presented for sale by a dealer. Also presented were maps belonging to the Newberry Library. Working in cooperation with the FBI, the libraries established that Andrew Antippas had stolen the maps; he was convicted and imprisoned. The maps stolen from the Newberry had been travelers' folding maps which Antippas pocketed during a visit to the library during a Modern Language Association convention. The theft reinforced the importance of security as a major objective in construction, renovation, and program planning for the Newberry Library.

Stanford University recovered \$100,000 worth of rare books in 1976, and James Wilson Mull, a former graduate student, was sentenced to prison for grand theft. In sentencing Mull, Judge John S. McNerny said: "If you'd taken the books and just kept them at your home to get whatever enjoyment out of them, I'd have a different view, but you treated them as a commodity."⁹

An out of court settlement secured the return of over 400 rare books and manuscripts stolen from the John Crerar Library in Chicago in 1985. Joseph Putna was sentenced to two years in prison for theft of materials that included works by Copernicus, Galileo, William Harvey, and Leonardo da Vinci.¹⁰

Summary as these accounts are, they are symptomatic of a far more complex and difficult rare book security situation than what was known in 1957. Libraries that once seemed secure have been victimized from without as well as from within.

Thieves and Their Methods

Books are stolen by a variety of people with different motives. John H. Jenkins, security chairman of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America, has categorized book thieves as: (1) the kleptomaniac, suffering from a compulsion to steal books, (2) the thief who steals books for his own use or possession, (3) the thief who steals in anger and is likely to destroy materials, (4) the casual thief who steals when an opportunity presents itself, and (5) the thief who steals for profit.¹¹ Over the past thirty years there has been increasing activity in the last category. Among the thieves have been scholars, librarians, writers, and professional thieves. There have been outside and inside jobs. "Bona fide researchers, students, and faculty members with impeccable credentials have been thieves. Con artists posing as scholars, book dealers, librarians, archivists, and even clergymen have been caught stealing. . . . There is strong evidence that many other major thefts have involved insiders."¹² Whether thieves have been actual insiders or not, the major

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cases reported in the last thirty years have involved thieves who developed an inside understanding of both libraries and the antiquarian book trade.

Andrew Antippas, a popular English professor at Tulane University, had extensive experience as a scholar in libraries. He developed an interest in early maps and came to know them through visiting dealers in New Orleans. At first he began to steal maps from libraries he visited during professional meetings and he kept them for his personal collection. It was only when he began selling them that ownership of several maps was traced to Yale and to the Newberry Library. At the Newberry he wandered away from a reception into a "staff only" area where he found pocket maps made to order for passing through the library's checkpoint as he left. Concealment and his own scholarly credentials were key to his operation.

Joseph Putna, a long-term user of the John Crerar Library in Chicago, befriended an elderly and lonely staff member who allowed him to work unattended in the rare book vault. Putna was using the Crerar to do medical research, initially as the employee of an advertising agency and later as a free-lance writer. He looked for illustrations of early medical procedures and had copies made for reproduction. Dissatisfied with Crerar's copy quality he first illegally borrowed books so that he could have better copies made; he actually returned the first batch of books to the shelves—with some trepidation. Then, getting used to the idea and the ease of stealing, he set about systematically stealing rare books and found a dealer to sell them to on a regular basis. Putna's *modus operandi* was to leave his briefcase and coat in the library's public reading area, go to work in the vault by passing through a secure staff area; left alone in the vault he would hide books on his person, then take them to his briefcase, put them in envelopes, seal them, place them with other envelopes and papers in his briefcase, present the briefcase to the guard for inspection, and pass out of the library. When questioned by Warren Howell, the San Francisco book dealer to whom he sold books, Putna said the books were inherited from his father-in-law who was killed by Nazis in East Germany after World War II. Joseph Putna used concealment, ingratiation with employees, and misrepresentation to steal nearly 500 books and to sell over half of them to one of the country's most prominent book dealers.

James Wilson Mull, a graduate student, stole nearly 200 books from Stanford University's rare book collection in the early 1970s. Mull took advantage of his identity as a student and the vulnerability of an unsupervised access point.¹³ He cut a link from a chain securing an unsupervised gate and fastened it with his own padlock and then was

able to come and go over a period of time, concealing books in his knapsack. Later he tried to sell books in Europe and in San Francisco where a bookseller recognized some titles as ones he had sold to Stanford.

George B. Davis, librarian at the Virginia Military Institute, was fifty-one when he was arrested for stealing books valued at \$100,000 from the library. He and his wife had set about establishing a rare book store, Copper Fox Farm Old and Rare Books, in Millbrook, New York.¹⁴ Davis had previously been librarian at Bennett College. This is a case where the guardian became a predator, violating his professional trust.

Although high on the scale of those considered to be trustworthy citizens, even ministers have been book thieves. In 1977 residents of Big Sandy, Texas were shocked when Rev. Craig Dwaine Lacy was arrested after trying to sell rare materials stolen from the Jefferson Historical Society and Museum. At the time of his arrest he had a detailed list of 108 museums, university libraries, public libraries, and antique shops he had stolen from including Southern Methodist University and the Sam Rayburn Library. John Jenkins, a bookseller mentioned earlier, traveled across the state to help identify ownership.¹⁵

The cases summarized here are only a few of those reported over the past thirty years. They illustrate how the thief may be someone who is least suspected. In fact each of these took particular advantage of his seeming trustworthiness and of his position in the community. Each also took advantage of vulnerabilities in the institutions they stole from. Wider experience with book theft in general and with rare book theft in particular has led to libraries and archives as well as their professional organizations examining and attempting to deal with such vulnerabilities and risks.

Library Theft Prevention—Organized Responses

Theft of rare books is part of a larger pattern of loss in libraries. Actual theft (or greater awareness of its extent) has produced responses from institutions, professional groups, and the security industry. Systems have been developed and diagnostic and prescriptive articles have appeared. A number of associations have taken organized approaches to preventing theft and recovering material that has been stolen; broadly based prevention programs have been proposed and some have been implemented.

Electronic security systems first appeared around 1965 with both Checkpoint and Sentronic well established by 1970 when "Library

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protection systems" first appeared as a heading in *Library Literature*. These systems generally involve insertion of targets in books or in the spines of books and have therefore not been used for protecting rare books and cannot be used for leaves of manuscripts. Although there has been much discussion of electronic checkpoint security systems both pro and con, they have not been seriously considered for special collections. Other electronic devices such as motion detectors, intrusion alarm systems, and closed circuit television cameras have been employed increasingly for after hours security.

The library profession's growing concern with security is dramatized in the growth of literature on the subject. In its 1955-57 cumulation, *Library Literature* cited three articles on library theft; in 1967-69 there were thirty-six; in 1974-75 there were forty-four. Among the indexed articles there are frequent notices of thefts in *AB Bookman's Weekly* but the incidence of titles specifically concerned with rare book theft and security is small. *Library and Archival Security* began as a newsletter and is now a quarterly journal, publishing articles, news items, and bibliographies covering library security and preservation issues. An exhaustive review of rare book and manuscript security literature, cases, and issues by Slade Richard Gandert—a book collector, librarian, and security consultant—appeared as two numbers of the journal in 1982.

Although the specific literature for rare book security is thin, groups of professionals have gathered together to grapple with these problems, to prevent theft, and to ensure recovery of stolen property. With support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Society of American Archivists carried out an archival security program in the mid 1970s. Timothy Walch led the effort that produced a series of basic manuals for institutional security programs and established a registry of missing manuscripts. Publications and consultant services of this program were aimed at heightening awareness and establishing local security programs.

Within the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries, a Security Committee was formed in 1979 under Terry Belanger's leadership. The group has worked on developing and refining guidelines and establishing liaisons with archivists, the antiquarian book trade, and with book collectors. In 1982 the RBMS approved "Guidelines for the Security of Rare Book, Manuscript, and Other Special Collections."¹⁶ More recently they have been working on guidelines for what to do before theft occurs and checklists on what to do after theft occurs as well as drafts of model legislation on theft and mutilation of library materials.

Although booksellers have often been victimized as a consequence of library theft and have expressed impatience with some libraries for their reluctance to publicize losses, in 1981 the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America, working with libraries and private collectors, established a computer system to register missing books and manuscripts: BAM-BAM (Bookline Alert: Missing Books and Manuscripts). Libraries and collections can list their missing materials and dealers and libraries can search the file when materials are offered for sale. John Jenkins's booklet cited earlier outlines details for BAM-BAM which is operated in cooperation with *American Book Prices Current*. Speaking at the Oberlin conference in 1983 on library theft, Katharine Leab said that few libraries were using the service: "The dealers are checking a lot, but the libraries are not reporting their stolen books."¹⁷

Oberlin College, the scene of James Shinn's capture, was host to the First North American Conference on Library Theft. Over sixty participants and observers attended the conference including directors and curators from research libraries, antiquarian book dealers, and law enforcement officials. Participants presented papers reflecting on causes of increasing rare book theft and discussing responsibility for prevention and steps for recovery of lost property. Lawrence W. Towner, in his keynote address, deplored the destruction of "the republic of letters" and the damage to the trust characteristic of American cultural institutions.¹⁸ Terry Belanger discussed thieves and said that they are more likely to be students, professors, librarians, staff members, or custodians rather than professional criminals.¹⁹ Recommendations proposed during the conference included restricting access, closing stacks, requiring positive identification of patrons, immediately publicizing thefts, prosecuting apprehended offenders, and improving relationships with law enforcement agencies. Conferees also discussed the idea of establishing a national register of library ownership marks and strongly advocated indelible marking of library materials.²⁰

Security Programs and Policies

Many articles and books in the growing literature on library security provide frameworks for planning security programs, for entire systems as well as for special collections. Timothy Walch's manual prepared for the Society of American Archivists Archival Security Program is an important planning tool in developing a security program for special collections. The manual lays out four planning checklists, one each for staff, patrons, collections, and the building.²¹

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Such checklists are, in fact, common in the literature on library security and by reviewing them a library can develop its own checklist or security audit form for planning a security program and for reviewing progress.²²

Mary J. Cronin developed a workshop package to help libraries in the Milwaukee area plan for security; this method could be used to identify local security needs and then could be followed up by developing policies and procedures.²³ The Security Committee of the RBMS of the Association of College and Research Libraries published guidelines for security in 1982 and continues to develop guidelines in this field.²⁴

The importance of appointing a security officer is emphasized throughout the literature. Controlling access to collections and building areas—for both patrons and staff—is a key element along with physically segregating valuable and unique materials. Adequate records of ownership must be kept and photocopying is recommended for the most valuable items; inventories are recommended, though costs have often become prohibitive. The RBMS guidelines lay down standards for marking rare materials. Procedures to follow when theft is suspected or detected need to be worked out and relations with local law enforcement officials should be maintained so that recovery and prosecution can proceed effectively.

Trends in Special Collections Security

This review of security since 1957 has shown that theft has become a much more acute problem. The problem has been the focus of conferences, articles, and books. Preventive measures have been suggested and over time some of them have been implemented. The idea of national registers of missing books was suggested and now there are several media for published lists as well as computer databases for both listing lost books and checking to see that titles offered for sale are not stolen property. Marking rare books and manuscripts, not a common practice in American libraries thirty years ago, has been officially accepted by the American Library Association. Disclosure and publicity about thefts have become more acceptable to librarians it seems, and crisis public relations was one of the topics of the Oberlin conference. Current concern and activity are focused on legislation governing library theft, working closely with local rare book dealers, and reviewing general collections in order to transfer rarities to secured areas.

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Office of Management Studies Systems and Procedures Exchange Center has published

kits on theft detection and prevention (1977), special collections (1979), and on security (1984), which give a picture of trends at the institutional level. Electronic systems have been usually applied to general collections in ARL libraries with the protection of rare materials depending on restricted access.

Special collections goal statements as well as policies and procedures are among documents in the ARL special collections kit. Protection and security for rare materials is a function of special collections departments, and procedures for protection against theft are laid out in the assembled policy and procedure statements. Precautions include daily registration of readers; special applications for manuscript use; limitation of items that can be used at one time; and prohibiting outer garments, briefcases, parcels, books, and umbrellas in reading rooms (and searching containers such as handbags and shoulderbags on departure). A renovation program document for a university special collections department calls for isolating special collections from the rest of the building, a separate key system, only one entrance and exit for patrons, and an electronic theft detection system (presumably intrusion alarms and motion detectors); maximum access control is emphasized.²⁵

A RBMS questionnaire on security was used as the model for the survey reported in the most recent SPEC Kit on collections security. The eighty-nine responding libraries (76 percent of the ARL membership) reported as follows: 31.5 percent were marking special collections materials, 71.9 percent thought they could quickly answer an inquiry to determine whether an item had been stolen from them, and 14.6 percent had security policies. The policies collected cover a range of security and emergency concerns with more emphasis on dealing with theft after the fact than prevention through policies and procedures. The compiler of the kit found that most libraries did *not* address of these issues: stack access, surveying collections for material to be moved to a restricted access area, systematic inventories, staff training in observation techniques, procedures for dealing with suspected theft, comprehensive marking of materials, tracking loss rates, and designation of security officers to coordinate security activity.²⁶

Collection security is being addressed widely in conferences, national committees, and institutional committees; policies and procedures are being developed. Librarians and booksellers whose institutions and firms have been victimized are sharing the hard learned lessons. However, increased theft and a seeming slowness to address security issues paint a less than optimistic picture.

Problems

Vulnerability to theft is a modern condition for libraries. It is a problem with many facets—access competes with protection; staff are suspect and security mindedness is difficult to foster; service demands undermine surveillance efforts; bibliographic control of rare materials, from identification to marking, is impeded through institutional inertia and enormous processing backlogs; libraries and librarians become so overextended that they lose consciousness. Controlled or restricted access to special materials is the principal means of preventing theft and mutilation. However, once access is restricted, demands of various kinds create new problems. Class assignments or other activities may bring in more readers than the facility can seat or than the staff can properly supervise. Curators conscientiously trying to maintain security may be faced with criticism from faculty and administration for being too restrictive, and they may have little time or space for arriving at acceptable compromise solutions. Restricted access seems to invite exceptions and pleas for special privileges; if responsibility and authority are not clearly delegated to staff immediately responsible for access control and if privileges are granted by library directors or university administrators distant from the situation, control is lost. By the same token, if standards for access are not closely monitored, procedures may slip, especially when long-term users become “insiders” after years of familiarity.

Staff, who are insiders, have been held accountable for all but 25 percent of major library thefts.²⁷ Careful screening including background checks is recommended in selecting special collections staff. Timothy Walch recommends discussing applicants' interest in rare books and collecting, remaining alert to the fact that staff members may be tempted to steal for their own collections or for profit. He also recommends bonding employees under a theft insurance plan.²⁸ These precautions deal with the new employee, but there seems to be nothing in the library literature on theft that deals with the employee of fifteen or twenty years who may change over time and steal out of anger, greed, or mental imbalance. In his talk at Oberlin, Lawrence W. Towner reported how a longtime employee removed uncataloged books from the Newberry Library in shopping bags as she was gradually coming apart emotionally.²⁹ Testimony in the trial to recover books stolen from the John Crerar Library recounts how an elderly employee with the keys to the vault was befriended over several years and how he, in violation of policies and rules, granted access to the rare book vault, even continuing

to do so after being reprimanded by the library's director.³⁰ These employees were no doubt trusted and trustworthy when they were hired.

Staffing for security is a problem for libraries. The friendship or simple familiarity that door checkers have with many patrons may make them reluctant to check the patrons' bags and cases. If they are students, they may also be intimidated by faculty and staff to whom they feel subordinate. Also, the very dullness of the job can make checkers ineffective.³¹ Professionals with law enforcement backgrounds may be sought for security work, but libraries find that they do not often have sensitivity to institutional service values. The Newberry Library even had a compromising experience with an impeccably credentialed security consultant who managed to leave proposed security equipment layouts of the library at a public bus stop.

Funds for staff positions are limited and this seems particularly acute in bibliographic control. To be protected and easy to recover, materials need to be cataloged and marked. Large collections need to be surveyed to ensure that rarities are gathered together where access can be controlled. Libraries have scattered rare books in general collections; they have also accepted gifts that then remain uncataloged and unmarked for generations.

Collections have grown so large that few libraries do systematic inventories. Before accepting responsibility for the rare book collection of the John Crerar Library when it merged with the University of Chicago, Robert Rosenthal insisted on enough funding to thoroughly inventory the 27,000 volume collection. During the eighteen-month search, a pattern of missing books emerged and just as analysis began, a European scholar established that a fourteenth-century manuscript in the Berlin State Library was in fact a Crerar manuscript. The inventory, at a cost of nearly \$100,000, was crucial in breaking open the case against Joseph Putna.³²

Although marking has been endorsed in the profession, it is not being done systematically nor, as indicated in the ARL survey, does it seem to have been fully accepted at the institutional level. Retrospective marking, like cataloging backlogs and complete inventories, seems to be an overwhelming task. James B. Rhoads, who in 1966 advocated marking archives, estimated that the manpower expenditure needed to mark the holdings of the National Archives would be 5000 years but suggested that long-range, well-conceived, selective marking programs be undertaken.³³ Even though traditional resistance and the difficulty of the task militate against marking, proof of ownership is extremely important to recovering materials after theft; visible and indelible mark-

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ing of the most valuable items in collections is a deterrent to theft. Librarians need to make this a priority in their security programs.

The problems of security programs point to a larger issue in the library profession. With inadequate support, libraries can grow beyond the grasp of their guardians. As higher education has retrenched, libraries have competed for funds with faculty and research staff. Funds for collections supporting institutional programs, for processing collections, and for service to readers have been cut back. Programs to gather special collections and mark them are stalled. When systems on all levels become overloaded, directors hope that theft—like fire and flood—will not happen here. By a kind of protective aversion they turn their eyes away from certain problems, particularly the ones that are not visible and obvious like theft. Librarians, curators, guards, and staff at all levels lose sensitivity, not seeing problems, or perhaps even wishing them away. Because of slow institutional and cultural change, staff may not even realize that significant items in their collections have appreciated in value.

Loss of awareness as it affects rare book security may take place at many levels. A bored door checker may not observe suspicious characters lurking around the corridors and may become perfunctory in performing briefcase searches. Reading rooms may become so busy that manuscript files are not counted before returning them to their boxes. Administrative staff burdened by fund-raising and public programming activities may not get around to reviewing procedures and checking to make sure that new staff are trained in observation techniques. What is referred to here as loss of consciousness might also be described as psychological denial, suspension of disbelief, protective aversion, passing the buck, or burnout.

Averting the eyes, even loss of awareness, seems to be a thread throughout the John Crerar Library case. Each principal in the case seems to have had a suspicion threshold which was exceeded. Years of friendly attention made the elderly staff member trust Joseph Putna and other staff also accepted Putna. William Budington, the library director, reprimanded the staff member and, because he had known him for years, trusted that that was the end of the matter. Warren Howell, the San Francisco dealer, asked where the books came from and was told they were inherited from a father-in-law in East Germany; the Iron Curtain became like a blind that was pulled down on further inquiry or consciousness. Kenneth Nebenzahl, a Chicago dealer, who was involved in early transfers of cash with Putna, questioned the procedure and early on refused to continue, but since cash transactions are not unknown in

the business, he did not press to know more at that time. Even in Putna's own testimony, one can sense a shift in consciousness; the reader senses the transition from illegal "borrowing" to outright stealing.

As an institution, the John Crerar Library began to lose consciousness of its rare book collection when it moved to the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1962. Its mission shifted from the comprehensive acquisition of science materials, including rarities, to timely provision of current technical and scientific information. No one on the staff was a specialist in the history of science and thus no one was seeing catalogs offering Crerar books for sale or even ads placed by Warren Howell asking libraries to examine their copies of specific titles. It is as if the books were placed in a locked room and lost from institutional consciousness; in a sense Joseph Putna did "inherit" them from behind an iron curtain.

A similar lack of awareness made forty or so libraries easy targets for James Shinn, made the Newberry Library a target for Andrew Antippas, and laid Stanford open to the depredations of a graduate student. It may be that examining our goals in relation to our resources to ensure that we are not overextended and finding new ways to remain conscious constitute the only means we have for fulfilling our responsibility as stewards of culture.

Security Consciousness and Regular Security Audits

Libraries need to assign staff members to take charge of security; they need to develop programs, policies, and procedures; they need to train staff at all levels and to ensure security consciousness. A first step in planning should be making a security audit with a checklist compiled with broad staff involvement. This will identify weaknesses and vulnerabilities for which corrective action must be taken. Then programs and policies can be written and implemented, but once they are in place there is a danger that a library may have a false sense of security.

Each library needs to do a full security audit once a year and should examine other phases of its security program on a more frequent basis, some quarterly, some monthly, and some daily as with opening inspections and closing procedures. When security is a matter of staff consciousness, it should be considered in doing annual personnel service reviews. Is this staff person still honest? Is there evidence of withdrawal, anger, emotional instability? are questions that supervisors need to consider.

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Last of all, each person responsible for collections, from shelvers to the director, needs to examine himself or herself each day to maintain alertness and awareness of security responsibility. A responsible officer in a research library who had been involved in recovery of stolen materials and planning state-of-the-art systems recently reported handing over an electronic access card to stack areas in the bustle and excitement of a fund-raising dinner so that donors could be given a tour. Guards at a national repository chattered on about alarm system configurations to someone who said he was in charge of security at another major library. Lack of awareness, looking away from problems, simple thoughtlessness, and loss of consciousness are the greatest hazards to rare book security.

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