EXAMINATION OF MICHNER

ALLEGED ABSTRACTION OF MONEY FROM DEAD-LETTERS.

TESTIMONY OF SPECIAL AGENTS ISAAC MYERS AND J. L. MCPHAIL—THE ACCUSED HELD TO AWAIT THE ACTION OF THE GRAND JURY.

The case of Captain John K. Michner, charged with abstracting money from letters in the dead letter office, where he was employed as clerk, came up for examination before United States Commissioner J. J. Johnson yesterday morning, at 11 o'clock, Mr. Richard Herrington appearing for the Government, and A. G. Riddle, esq., for the defence.

Mr. Herrington stated that he expected to prove that the accused had taken money from letters while entrusted with their examination. He then read the section of the postal laws and regulations of 1875 governing such cases.

Mr. Hagans, Jr., was the first witness sworn, and testified that he was employed as a special agent for the Post Office Department; that he knew Mr. Michner as an employee in the dead letter office. On the 15th of December last Mr. McPhail sent for witness, and directed that he keep a close watch on that office, as he believed something was going wrong. The next morning, Saturday, witness went to the office, as usual, and placed himself in a position commanding an entire view of the room, especially the opened table, which was near the centre of the room, and every note examined by witness at it. He desired to satisfy himself as to whether any clerk was taking money from letters or not. He had not been there but a short while before he came to the conclusion that Mr. Michner's manner of opening letters was different from the rest. He saw him take something out of them that looked like money, but the first attempt was done so quick that he was not satisfied, and he gave up the work for that day. On the following Monday he was at the office by 9 o'clock and took his position. Michner, after getting through his books, brought a bundle of letters from the little safe that stood at his right hand, felt them carefully, and proceeded to divide them into piles. Some he returned to the original box, and the others cut open, during which a coin dropped from one on the desk. He continued to open letters, and then suddenly stopped and stooped, as if picking something from the floor, and then took the coin from his desk and put it in his pocket. He then went on opening letters until he came to one containing one or two bills. This was carefully examined, then the bills folded, placed in the letter and laid in the box in the safe. A few more letters were opened, when he stopped, arose from his chair and walked to the window, where he remained about three minutes; he returned to his desk, sat down, reached his hand within the safe and jerked something from the letter and put it in his pocket; he then resumed work and opened a few more letters, when he stopped, and, rising up, he went out to lunch; witness had arranged with a party, another clerk in the office, a set of signals by which he was to be notified when they saw Michner taking money from letters. Witness followed him to lunch and went to opening letters; he came to one with a $5 bill and a $20 or $50 bill; took it out, read the letter, folded the money up right, slipped it back and put it in the pocket of the box in the safe; he resumed opening letters, but after finishing three or four, arose and walked to the window; then came back, opened two more, and reaching into his right hand pocket, he took out a five and a checkout; the former he put in his pocket and the other in his mouth; he then continued opening letters, until he came to one with a large note in it, which he put in his left hand; he took it out, tore the letter up, but the money was not produced; he then, in opening, came to a letter with twenty-five cents, which he laid on his desk; after this he opened one more, and took another letter and placed it on the box with the twenty-five cents; three minutes afterwards he was arrested.

The night before they called the superintendent to witness that they were going to search his safe, and desired him to see that they took nothing out. Mr. Michner, after being arrested, was brought over to witness's place of business, but taking the coin. On searching his person some small change was found first and then two packages of $10 each, consisting of a $10 and $5 bill, which were tightly doubled up. Mr. Myers said that all the money taken from letters was given to the clerks around the table.

By Mr. Riddle: Witness' badge was in Baltimore; was in the service a year; had been now anything for a living; was a peddler for Bruger & Co. for some time. Since 1865 had kept a grocery store on Baltimore street. After that worked at his trade as a shipwright and caulker. Could not name any witness or city who suspected you; knew that he had worked on them though. Met Mr. McPhail when he was marshal of Baltimore. Did not know how he came to be appointed a special agent. Had only a night's acquaintance with the Postmaster General. He had been in the service about two years and a half. Could not recollect his first case; guessed he had had fifty into himself. Did not remember one particular Harrington, Delaware, [laughter,] whom he had arrested, and three in Maryland. His attention was called to Michner on the 12th instant. There were about 15 or 20 clerks working in that office. Mr. Phail wanted assistance in detecting the thief, and witness was called on and directed to watch.

Colonel Henderson, another special agent, was also detailed. Witness had kept a light burning immediately over Michner's head. Was about thirty or forty feet above him. Another, a lady named Gray, was in the gallery over Michner's desk, also watching. Witness had a powerful glass. Could tell the money taken on Saturday, but thought it small. Did not see any other person take money but him. Miss Gray, when satisfied that he was abstracting money, was, as a signal, to pull a bell hung in a corner on a string, and continue that signal every time she saw him abstract any from a letter. On Monday had a powerful field-glass. Had eyes on Michner all the time, and saw him get the coin. The other clerks, when he passed, arose from his chair and walked to the window, where he remained about three minutes; he returned to his desk, sat down, reached his hand within the safe and jerked something from the letter and put it in his pocket; he then resumed work and opened a few more letters, when he stopped, and