

The Lavender Hill Mob

Written by T. E. B. Clarke

Sequence 1

A fancy hotel in Rio de Janeiro. HOLLAND cashes a cheque and the money is brought to his table by a waiter, where HOLLAND sits with a man. HOLLAND uses some of the cash to tip the waiter. A woman stops by the table, complimenting HOLLAND on a recent party he threw. He hands her some cash, then also to an appreciative young woman, saying, “You run along and get yourself that little birthday present.” “You seem to have accomplished quite a lot in one year,” says the man. HOLLAND explains that he had, for years, dreamed of a life like this.

Sequence 2

London (flashback). HOLLAND (voiceover) describes himself as a “nonentity,” one “among all those thousands who flock every morning into the city.” But HOLLAND says he was in “the unique position of having a fortune” within his grasp, because his job was to supervise delivery, by van driven by armed guards, of gold bullion from the refinery to the bank. HOLLAND explains that he was trusted unconditionally by his employers and regularly ridiculed for the caution with which he undertook his job. “That was precisely what I had striven for years to achieve” During one trip, HOLLAND, sitting in the back of the van, rings an alarm bell and summons one of the guards. He explains that he is certain they are being followed by a car, and that the guard should check around the corner in case the car is waiting there. The guard does so. HOLLAND notes that his primary goal became to find a method of smuggling stolen gold abroad.

Sequence 3

HOLLAND’s superiors are dismissive of him. “He has no imagination, no initiative.”

Sequence 4

At his boarding house in Lavender Hill, HOLLAND reads a police thriller to MRS. CHALK, another lodger. PENDLEBURY, a new resident, arrives with his belongings, including artwork and a metal sculpture that he made himself. He shows HOLLAND his place of work, a foundry that produces tourist souvenirs, including Eiffel Tower paperweights, which are shipped weekly to France. HOLLAND realises that the process of creating PENDLEBURY’s gift items is exactly the same as that of casting gold bullion.

Sequence 5

HOLLAND and PENDLEBURY discuss how the van that delivers the gold might be successfully robbed and bullion taken out of the country.

Sequence 6

HOLLAND is told by his supervisor that he is to be promoted. “No more uncomfortable journeys in that dreary van.” HOLLAND is resistant, but can do nothing about it. Back at the boarding house he tells PENDLEBURY that the robbery has to take place immediately, before he is transferred. They set about finding two accomplices, and decide to set a trap.

Sequence 7

A crowded London tube train, followed by the race track. HOLLAND and PENDLEBURY have an intentionally loud conversation about the safe in PENDLEBURY’s office, which has a broken lock and is full of money. That evening, LACKERY tries to open the safe in PENDLEBURY’s office. He hides when HOLLAND and PENDLEBURY enter. After some time, SHORTY comes through the window and is grabbed by HOLLAND and PENDLEBURY. LACKERY reveals himself. Both are “professional criminals,” and HOLLAND and PENDLEBURY explain the job to them. The Lavender Hill Mob has been formed.

Sequence 8

HOLLAND is told by his supervisor that tomorrow’s delivery is larger than usual, more than two hundred gold bars. Meanwhile, PENDLEBURY is teaching LACKERY to ride a bike and SHORTY how to draw. The four discuss the robbery.

Sequence 9

The following day, HOLLAND gets into the back of van to accompany the gold bars. On a nearby street, the crew awaits the van. PENDLEBURY is arrested by the police for accidentally taking a painting from a street stall. HOLLAND rings the alarm bell and the van stops at the exact spot where SHORTY and his artwork are spread out on the pavement. HOLLAND tells one of the guards that he believes they are being followed by a car, and that he should check around the corner in case the car is waiting there. The guard does so. LACKERY cycles past the van exclaiming, “You’ve got a flat tire there!” The second guard exits the van and SHORTY jumps in, driving it away, with the police in pursuit. SHORTY drives the van to a nearby dockside warehouse. LACKERY arrives, telling the others that PENDLEBURY has been arrested. The three empty the van of the gold and transfer it into PENDLEBURY’s truck. HOLLAND asks LACKERY and SHORTY to tie him up before they drive off with the gold. The police, searching the warehouse, find HOLLAND when he falls into the Thames. At the police station, HOLLAND, who is giving a statement to a POLICE INSPECTOR, runs into PENDLEBURY, who is being booked for stealing the painting. Each think the other has been arrested for bullion robbery. The charges against PENDLEBURY are suddenly dropped after he

tells the owner of the painting that it's worth £10. Meanwhile, at PENDLEBURY's foundry, LACKERY and SHORTY are unpacking the gold bars from PENDLEBURY's truck. PENDLEBURY returns with news that HOLLAND has been arrested. SHORTY and PENDLEBURY go to the boarding house to retrieve incriminating evidence, but the police are already there, talking to MRS. CHALK, who, because of her love of police thrillers, surprises the officers with her knowledge of criminal lingo. PENDLEBURY is about to sneak upstairs to get the incriminating evidence when he encounters HOLLAND. Both are overjoyed to see each other.

Sequence 10

The heist hits the newspapers. One headline: "Bank official hero of hold-up. £1,000,000 bullion stolen in street." HOLLAND is welcomed back at the bank a hero.

Sequence 11

The crew are smelting the gold and filling Eiffel Tower molds. PENDLEBURY explains to HOLLAND that there are boxes in the foundry full of lead Eiffel Towers, and others, marked "R EXPORT," to be filled with gold Eiffel Towers. HOLLAND meets with the police and feeds them false information as the smelting continues. The police are on the case, but the boxes of gold Eiffel Towers have already left the country. The Lavender Hill Mob has a celebratory drink in a local pub.

Sequence 12

Paris. HOLLAND and PENDLEBURY visit the Eiffel Tower and discover, in the souvenir store, a crate marked "R EXPORT." A terrible mistake has been made. Six towers have already been sold to a group of English schoolgirls. HOLLAND and PENDLEBURY unsuccessfully chase after the girls.

Sequence 13

London. HOLLAND returns to the boarding house, where the POLICE INSPECTOR tells HOLLAND that a truck from PENDLEBURY's foundry was seen near the scene of the crime. The following day, PENDLEBURY flies back to England and is met by HOLLAND at the airport. HOLLAND says that he has traced the five missing towers to a school in Hendon. HOLLAND and PENDLEBURY manage to persuade five of the girls to swap their souvenir towers with different ones, but one girl refuses.

Sequence 14

The POLICE INSPECTOR visit PENDLEBURY's foundry and is told that PENDLEBURY is in Paris.

Sequence 15

HOLLAND and PENDLEBURY follow the girl with the gold Eiffel Tower. She walks to the Metropolitan Police Training School. HOLLAND and PENDLEBURY enter, where an exhibition ("Police at Work") is taking place. The girl finds her favourite local policeman and gives him the Eiffel Tower. At that very moment, the POLICE INSPECTOR is demonstrating a chemical process "that will dissolve any metal with the exception of gold." He tests the Eiffel Tower. PENDLEBURY grabs it and he and HOLLAND escape by stealing a police car. PENDLEBURY is caught but HOLLAND escapes.

Sequence 16

Rio de Janeiro. HOLLAND tells the man sitting with him that the six gold Eiffel Towers brought him £25,000, before standing up and revealing that the two of them are handcuffed to each other.