

An Electric Experience

By Cst. T. W. HODGSON

At 11:24 PM, August 26, 1975, we were notified at the Dawson Creek Detachment that a break and entry was in progress at a house trailer in Pouce Coupe, B.C., a small community 6 miles south of Dawson Creek.

During the summer there had been a rash of break and entries within the detachment area into homes left unattended while the owners were on holidays. On several occasions, our members had narrowly missed catching the culprits in the act. Our frustration seemed to increase with every new B. and E. complaint. In fact just the night before, Cst. T. J. Glen and I had arrived moments too late to arrest a culprit who had managed to evaporate from a house despite the fact that neighbors, who had been alerted by noises the culprit made when entering, were supposedly watching it on all sides.

When the call was received from Pouce Coupe, Cst. Glen, Aux/Cst. Germaine and I left immediately, most anxious to apprehend the elusive culprits this time.

We were met by the complainant who advised us that the owners of a house trailer, Mr. and Mrs. Hunter, were away on holidays. He said he had watched while two men unsuccessfully attempted to open the trailer's front door; they had then walked to the rear of the residence and the complainant felt sure they were successful this time.

We approached the residence quietly, but when about a hundred yards away, the light in the front room was turned off. We immediately surrounded the trailer and checked it for signs of possible entry. Sure enough, the screens on three rear windows were cut. Apparently, the culprits had gained entry through one of these windows which was then locked again from the inside. Meanwhile the complainant, who had been checking with

neighbors, reported back that the trailer key had not been left with anyone there.

We were certain we had finally bagged the culprits, especially when Aux/Cst. Germaine reported hearing "footsteps" inside the trailer. We shouted for culprits to come to the door and give themselves up, however, to no avail. We tried again, and still, no response. Obviously we would have to force entry and go in to flush the perpetrators out.

With as much care as possible so as to minimize damage, we forced the front door. The main floor was thoroughly searched, but there was no sign of the elusive culprits. The half-basement was also checked with the same results. Once again we felt the familiar mounting frustration. Where could they have gone? Was this to be a repeat of the night before?

We located a crawl space under the trailer, and although we could see the area quite easily with our flashlights, we were not about to give up. After all, *someone* had turned out the lights as we first approached the trailer. Cst. Glen, after a brief discussion about length of service, volunteered to crawl under the trailer and take a look. But first, he wanted just one more look upstairs before beginning his expedition.

In the living room, we noticed that the light which had gone out as we approached the trailer, was powered through a white cord leading directly under a nearby end table. However, the only cord leading out from under the end table was brown. Checking closer, we found that the cords led to and from a timing device which was set to turn the light on and off. The time set to turn the light off was 11:30 PM, the exact time when we were approaching.