

“CRIMES” SHOULD BE PUNISHED.



Define “crime” in bridge terminology. A criminal action was certainly committed on the following board and should probably have made it easier for a partnership to have bid a slam in safety.

The North players did indeed have a wonderful hand, a “two loser” by everyone’s definition:

♠ A K Q J 10 9
♥ A K Q 10 3
♦ —
♣ 8 4

and just about all the North players got to open the above 2♣, even though they were in 4th seat. They heard (nothing from the opposition), a negative or waiting 2♦ from partner. Starting with the suit with more than 150 for honours (and why shouldn’t the 9 be counted as an honour in such exalted company!), they heard their partner raise to 3♠, a support bid showing some value.

Blackwood would not help unless partner produced both missing aces. So, try a 4♦ cue bid which should get partner thinking about the suit you did not cue, clubs.

Board 6 ♠ A K Q J 10 9
East Deals ♥ A K Q 10 3
E-W Vul ♦ —
 ♣ 8 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 8 5 4
♥ 8 7 4

♦ A J 9 8
 ♣ K 10 5

Surely with an ace and a king you owe your partner a positive action now? Unfortunately, if you cue the ace before the king, North will still be wondering about the club suit. North can really only bid 5♥ at this point and South must now value that ♣K. South can anticipate that North's diamond cue was a void...a strange cue otherwise holding neither of the top two clubs. If South decides to go for slam, it becomes 50-50 on the position of the ♣A. Five punters took their chances and were rewarded.

What, though, of the "criminal"? They sat West and decided to contribute to the auction:

<p>Board 6 East Deals E-W Vul</p>	<p>♠ A K Q J 10 9 ♥ A K Q 10 3 ♦ — ♣ 8 4</p>	<p>♠ 6 3 2 ♥ J 9 6 ♦ K 10 2 ♣ A 9 7 6</p>									
<p>♠ 7 ♥ 5 2 ♦ Q 7 6 5 4 3 ♣ Q J 3 2</p>	<div style="border: 2px solid green; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; text-align: center; font-size: 12px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	<p>♠ 8 5 4 ♥ 8 7 4 ♦ A J 9 8 ♣ K 10 5</p>										

It could not have been the vulnerability or the suit texture which encouraged them to start proceedings with 3♦. Their motive may have been to play the "beer card" at trick 13 in the contract of 3♦x. No other reason comes to mind.

North was able to start describing their hand with 4♦ and South bid their better major expecting matters to subside quickly. However, North was not giving up that easily (*I should report that West did use the pass card second time round...wimp!*) and tried 5♦. South was in a "will I, won't I" dilemma. Majors were not that wonderful and the value of the ♦A was dubious. South knew their partner was good..but that good?

They retreated to 5♥ and played there. On some days, like when West had a diamond pre-empt (this day was not one of them!), East might hold ♥Jxxx and slam would fail. Alas for South, not this day. The pre-empt enabled the slam to be played from the safer South hand even if the wrong suit was trumps. A shame for South... and West is still, we believe free to commit further ghastly crimes.

One further crime went unpunished a little later in the evening by a different villain. Your bid as South in this auction:

Board 20			
West Deals			
Both Vul			
	N		
W		E	
	S		
			♠ A J 10
			♥ K Q 10 3 2
			♦ K Q J 9 5
			♣ —
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 ♥	Dbl	?

2♠ showed a five-card spade suit and a five + card minor with less than opening values. 2NT enquired as to strength and the minor suit of opener with 3♥ showing a maximum hand with clubs.

Did you notice East's double? Sometimes, such doubles from a hand not in the auction can be missed. Assuming you have spotted the double, what would you do next?

At the table, South rather wimped (yes, we used that same word to describe this player in the first hand above!) out by passing to a surprised North who pulled to 4♣ with 4♠ ending the bidding. ♦A lead gave declarer an easy run to 10 tricks...but...

Board 20			
West Deals			
Both Vul			
			♠ K Q 7 4 2
			♥ 6 5
			♦ 6
			♣ A 10 8 7 3
♠ 8 6 5 3	N		♠ 9
♥ 9 8		E	♥ A J 7 4
♦ 10 7 2	W		♦ A 8 4 3
♣ K Q J 6	S		♣ 9 5 4 2
			♠ A J 10
			♥ K Q 10 3 2
			♦ K Q J 9 5
			♣ —
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 ♥	Dbl	?

Please await my first million dollar copy best selling book which one day will be published with such a jazzy title as "The 100 worst lead directional doubles of

part-scores I have ever seen.” You can place a sizeable deposit with me as soon as you like!

South gave a limp (no, not wimpy) excuse that they could not sit there for the next 37 minutes watching me agonize over playing 3♥xx. I would certainly have accepted the challenge. The criminal paid for his crime by making 4♠ such an easy hand to play, though it was never going to be very hard.

You can now vote for which you think was the bigger crime, the opening 3♦ bid or the double of 3♥. It seems neither criminal was really made to pay for their offence.

Richard Solomon