

When are you coming?

A telephone conversation

Homeowner: Hello, is that Bill?

Bill: (in a gruff voice) Who wants to know?

Homeowner: Sorry no offence meant. I know you like to keep your identity pretty much to yourself I your err....line of work.

Bill: What's your game, mate you got something to say or are you some kind of time waster? If you are, you can just bog off. (*Slams down phone*)

Pause

Homeowner redials

Homeowner: Err, hello. It's me again

Bill: (*Coldly*) Right. How did you get this number anyway?

Homeowner: Yellow Pages actually. Under "Fences".

Bill: I knew that was a mistake to advertise. I told them I was a fence and they put me in the garden accessories section. I mean, I ask you.... (*More warmly*) So, you got some kind of special request then... some nice little trinket you'd like me to acquire? 'Cos if you do, you have come to the right place. Burglar Bill at your service.

Homeowner: Well, I'm not asking so much about acquiring as keeping actually.

Bill: How do you mean, mate? I don't quite follow your drift.

Homeowner: Well, let me fill you in. The name's Arthur, Arthur Blenkinsopp from Tulip Mews.

Bill: (*appreciatively*) Nice one, Arthur. Nice gaff. Very tasty places in Tulip Mews. I admire your taste.

Homeowner: Err, yes, I thought you might. That's kind of why I telephoned.

Bill: Huh?

Homeowner: Well, thought you might admire my things just a bit too much as it were. Professionally.

Bill: I begin to get your drift, Arthur, old son. You are thinking, might have an eye on one or two of your little nick-nacks, shall we say. Your rather nice flat screen telly or that recordable DVD/video combi you just had for Christmas.

Homeowner: Oh, so you know about that then?

Bill: 'Course, it's my business to know

Homeowner: Just as well I telephoned then. The thing is, to cut a long story short, Bill, I thought I might be in some kind of danger of attention from you in the near future. Or at any time really. And indeed that does now seem to be quite a possibility. And I was wondering, if you might see your way clear to providing me with an envisaged date for...shall we say one of your visits. In short when might you be dropping in to relieve me of some of my hard earned possessions?

Bill: Funny kind of a question. Why do you want to know?

Homeowner: Well, Bill old mate, my thinking is...if I had some kind of date maybe I should be able to take some precautions.

Bill: Oh, I see.

Homeowner: I mean I don't expect an exact time and date. I dare say that would be quite tricky even for you to give with the pressure of your err...workload. Just some kind of range

within which. Maybe give or take a week. A few days either side. That wouldn't be unreasonable, would it?

Bill: Err.. well I suppose not, if I were to see it from your point of view.

Homeowner: So how about it then, Bill....old mate?

Bill: Hang on. Let me just summarise your little request. You want me to tell you the precise time and date

Homeowner: Give or take a few days...I don't want to me unreasonable.

Bill: ...when I shall be visiting your rather nice pad in Tulip Mews to salt away some of your tasty worldly goods.

Homeowner: Bill, in a nutshell, you have it.

Bill: Yes, just one question Arthur...

Homeowner: Yes, Bill?

Bill: What business is it of yours?

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