

The Long Arm of Coincidence

By Richard Marsh

I. THE PORTMANTEAU

Mr. Bidder had a telegram in his hand. Here it is:

“Come up at once. Stone, Scotland Yard.”

Mr. Bidder was the senior partner in the firm of Bidder, Tuxwell, and Harris, of Birkenhead. A confidential clerk—one Raymond Hastie—had been discovered in extensive system of embezzlement. Mr. Hastie had disappeared, and with him some books and a considerable sum in cash as well. The affair was in the hands the police, and the above curt telegram been just received from that well-known officer, George Stone, of Scotland Yard.

Mr. Bidder left for London almost immediately after its receipt. He journeyed by the train which leaves Liverpool at 4.5 p.m., and is due at Euston at half-past eight. He took with him a black portmanteau. It was one of tolerable size. He was a spruce gentleman, and as he might be detained in town for a day or two he thought it would be as well to go provided.

In his first-class compartment there was but one other passenger. This was a slight, weedy-looking gentleman, who was enveloped in a voluminous overcoat which was obviously not of English manufacture. The afternoon was dull, there was more than a suspicion of mist in the air; but though it was cool, it was still not cold enough for the average Britisher to sit muffled to the chin in a curiously shaped garment made of Irish frieze, apparently about an inch in thickness. Mr. Bidder eyed his fellow-passenger, though there was not much of him to be seen; for, in addition to being muffled to the chin, he wore a soft felt hat which he had pulled down to his eyes. Mr. Bidder was conversationally inclined, but he felt persuaded that there was little in the shape of social intercourse to be got out of the gentleman who crouched at the other end of the carriage. Still he thought he would try.

“Going through?”

Mr. Bidder flattered himself that the tone in which he put this inquiry was genial. But the fact is, he was used to public speaking of a kind—teetotal and down-with-everything-pleasant platforms, and such like—and in spite of himself his manner was pompous, and, perhaps, a trifle dictatorial. Still, this was not sufficient to account for the behaviour of the gentleman addressed. That individual sprang from his seat and turned towards Mr. Bidder with a gesture which was distinctly threatening. For a moment it really appeared as though he was about to assault him. If such was his intention he very wisely thought better of it, and sank back into his corner.

“What’s that to do with you?” he growled. Mr. Bidder was conscious that it had nothing to do with him; still, the fact might have been stated in more courteous fashion. He began to consider whether it would not be advisable at the first stopping station to get into another carriage. But when they did stop other passengers got in who appeared to be quite as much disposed to talk as he was.

At Euston, in connection with this gentleman, something really remarkable happened. Mr. Bidder was going along the platform in search of his portmanteau when he met a porter bearing the identical article aloft upon his shoulder. By his side walked the gentleman in the overcoat. Mr. Bidder stopped.

“Porter, that ‘s my portmanteau! What do you mean by walking off with it?”

The porter seemed to be a little surprised.

“Yours? Why, this gentleman says it’s ’is.”

“It is nothing of the kind. Take it to my cab. It’s mine!”

“Yours!” The gentleman in the overcoat stepped in front of him. He seemed to be literally shaking with rage. “If you don’t stow that I’ll make you sit up sharp. Give me that portmanteau!”

He stretched out his hand to take the portmanteau from the porter; but Mr. Bidder was not to be bullied out of his property quite so easily as that.

“You will do nothing of the kind, porter. I tell you that portmanteau’s mine. Call a constable. Officer!”

There was a policeman standing a little distance off Mr. Bidder beckoned to him. Directly he did so the stranger’s face assumed a peculiarly ghastly hue. Without a word he slunk off and disappeared in the crowd.

The porter was amazed.

“Well, that beats anything. That’s the coolest hand I ever see. He came to me and says, ‘Put that portmanteau on a cab,’ as though he was a dook. Are you going to give him in charge?”

“I ought to, but I’m in a hurry. I’ll let the scoundrel go scot free this time.”

Off went Mr. Bidder in triumph with the porter and portmanteau. He told the cab-man to drive to a certain well-known hotel. When he reached it a man suddenly appeared at the side of the cab and looked at him. Mr. Bidder stared in return, for the man was a perfect stranger. He was one of the tallest men he had ever seen, six foot five or six, with a moustache of the most extravagant dimensions. The hotel porter coming to take the luggage from the driver, the man stood aside on the pavement. But as he went up the steps Mr. Bidder not only saw the fellow wink at him, but even hook his finger on to the bridge of his nose with a gesture which was not only familiar but impertinent. Mr. Bidder, who had not yet altogether recovered from his adventure with the gentleman in the overcoat, told himself that the man was drunk.

It was considerably past nine o’clock. Mr. Bidder was hungry. Giving instructions to have some dinner prepared for him, Mr. Bidder followed his portmanteau to his bedroom. The hotel porter having removed the strap, all he had to do was to insert the key and turn the lock. But this was exactly what he was unable to do. There was something the matter either with the key or the lock, for the key would not turn. Mr. Bidder began to lose his temper. It was long past his regular dinner-hour, and he was very hungry indeed. He examined the key; it seemed to be all right. He put it again into the lock; but no, it would not turn.

“I wonder if that scamp has been playing any tricks with the lock?”

He alluded to the gentleman in the overcoat; but a moment’s reflection showed him that that was scarcely possible. He had seen the portmanteau put into the luggage-van with his own eyes; it had reposed in the luggage-van throughout the journey; certainly the gentleman in the overcoat had not stirred from his own corner of the carriage. On their arrival scarcely a moment had elapsed before he had detected the enterprising traveller in the act of escorting his prize. It was impossible that it could have been tampered with by him.

Mr. Bidder tried again. He gave the key an extra twist: it turned—indeed, it turned with a vengeance. But that was not the only cause which induced him to so precipitately assume an upright position on his feet. It was perhaps a little surprising that the key should all at once have turned so readily, but it was much more surprising that, simultaneously, such a peculiar sound should have begun to issue from what might, metaphorically, be called the bosom of the portmanteau, and not only begun, but continued—in fact, was continuing as Mr. Bidder stared down at the receptacle of his belongings.

“Whatever have I put inside to make such a noise as that?”

He knelt down to see, but the portmanteau refused to open. The key was still in the lock. He felt quite sure he had turned it; still, he might be mistaken, so he made another trial. Whether he had or had not turned it before, it turned quite easily again, and instantly the noise redoubled. The thing might have been alive, and resenting the touch of its owner’s hand. Mr. Bidder sprang to his feet again; he was not only surprised, he was even startled.

“It sounds exactly as though someone had set the mechanism of some clock-work going. Good—” He hesitated before he let the word come out, but it did come out. “Good heavens! I don’t believe that after all the thing is mine.”

By “the thing” he meant the portmanteau. When the thought first struck him the perspiration stood upon his brow. Was he the thief? Had he robbed that other man? What a barefaced scoundrel the gentleman in the overcoat must have taken him to be! The idea was horrible, but close examination showed that it was true: the portmanteau was not his. It bore a strong superficial resemblance to the genuine article, but none the less it was not the real thing. It is not difficult, especially at night, to mistake one portmanteau for another—a fact which was acutely realised by Mr. Bidder then. He was aghast. He was a man of some imagination, and a mental picture was present to his mind—what must the gentleman in the overcoat be thinking of him then? And he had beckoned to a policeman too!

As he was still trying to realise the situation someone tried the handle of the bedroom door, and, finding it locked, tapped at the panel. Mr. Bidder opened. A stout, middle-aged man immediately stepped inside and closed the door behind him.

“I’m a detective.”

“A detective!” cried Mr. Bidder, his brain in a whirl. “The very man I want.”

“Indeed,” rejoined the new-comer with a noticeable dryness. “That’s odd, because you’re the very man I’m wanting too.”

Mr. Bidder was the very man he wanted! A detective!

Was it possible that the gentleman in the overcoat had already laid information, and he was actually suspected of crime? The situation was distinctly not a nice one, but it was obvious that it only required a few words of explanation.

“It is absurd; one of the most absurd things of which I ever heard, though I own that at first sight it must have a suspicious appearance to a stranger’s eye.”

Mr. Bidder laughed uneasily; he was scarcely in a jovial frame of mind.

“I suppose you know what I want you for?”

“I suppose I do—if you put it in that uncomfortable sort of way. But, my dear sir, if you will allow me to explain—”

“You can make a statement at your own risk, and I shall take it down. But perhaps first you’d better hear the warrant read.”

“The warrant!” Mr. Bidder stared.

“The warrant.”

“You don’t mean to say there has been a warrant taken out already?”

“I don’t know what you call already. The warrant has been out three months.”

“Three months! Why, the thing has only just occurred!”

The detective gave quite a start.

“You don’t mean to say you’ve been up to any of your tricks already?”

“My tricks, sir! What on earth do you mean?”

“I don’t want to have any talk with you. We expected you over three months ago; we’re not so fast asleep as some of you fellows seem to think. I don’t know how it was I missed you at Liverpool, but I was on your track directly afterwards, and you only slipped me at Euston by the skin of your teeth.”

By this time it began to dawn upon Mr. Bidder that a certain amount of confusion existed either in his or in the detective’s mind.

“Will you be so good as to tell me who and what you take me for?”

“I’m going to arrest you on the charge of bringing over an infernal machine from America to England.”

“An infernal machine!” gasped Mr. Bidder.

“From information received, I believe the thing is called a dynamite portmanteau.”

“A dynamite portmanteau!” Mr. Bidder turned to the portmanteau on the floor. “You don’t mean to say that this—that that fellow’s portmanteau——Good heavens! you don’t mean to say that this apparently innocent-looking piece of luggage is a dynamite portmanteau?”

“Is that the article? What’s that noise?”

“It’s—it’s the portmanteau.”

“You infernal villain! you don’t mean that you’ve set it going?”

The detective made a bolt for the door, dragging Mr. Bidder with him. He flung it open, but he was just too late to get outside, for there was a vivid flame, a blinding smoke, a loud report, and the next thing Mr. Bidder and the detective were conscious of was that they were lying on the top of the landing in the centre of a crowd of excited people.

“They’re not dead,” said someone.

“Nor likely to die!” exclaimed a voice at Mr. Bidder’s side, and the detective staggered to his feet. Mr. Bidder felt that he would rather lie a little longer where he was. The detective pulled himself together.

“I’m a detective. There’s been an explosion. This man has tried to blow the place up with an infernal machine.”

“I protest!” cried Mr. Bidder, struggling to stand up straight to deny the charge. The detective, thrusting his fingers into the collar of his shirt so as to almost choke him, nipped his denial in the bud.

“Are there any constables here?”

“Heaps,” replied one of the bystanders. “The house is full of them, and the Street as well.”

As a matter of fact a couple of constables immediately advanced.

“You know me?”

“You’re Mr. Humes, sir. We know you very well.”

“Is there an inspector here?”

“Inspector, sir, is downstairs.”

“I’ll go down to him. See that no one goes inside that room; for all I know, there may be another explosion still to come.”

Mr. Humes went down; Mr. Bidder went with him—with Mr. Humes’ fingers in his collar. In the hall they encountered an inspector. The trio adjourned to a little room upon one side. Here they were immediately joined by the manager of the hotel.

“What is the meaning of this?” inquired that gentleman. “It means that this man has brought an infernal machine over from America and exploded it in your hotel.”

“It is false!” gasped Mr. Bidder. “Officer, I insist upon you taking your hand away from my throat.”

Mr. Humes nodded to the inspector; the inspector approached, his hands to his pocket. In an instant Mr. Bidder had a pair of handcuffs on his wrists. Then Mr. Humes removed his fingers. Mr. Bidder was almost inarticulate with rage. He put great pressure on himself in order to retain a degree of self-control.

“You are making a hideous mistake. I tell you I know no more about what has occurred than you do.”

“I suppose the thing went off before you meant it to; and that you didn’t intend to be right on top of it when it did go off I can easily believe.”

Mr. Humes smiled at his auditors.

“The thing went off before I meant it to! I am James Bidder, of the firm of Bidder, Tuxwell, and Harris, of Birkenhead. If you will let me get at my pockets I will give you proof of every word I say.”

“You can do that equally well at the station,” said Mr. Humes.

“You had better take him the back way,” suggested the inspector. “There’s an ugly crowd in front:”—he pointedly addressed himself to Mr. Bidder—“if they got hold of you they might tear you to pieces.”

“Tear me to pieces!”

“Dynamite’s not popular in an English crowd.”

“But, my dear sir, I tell you that the whole thing—”

“Come along; we’ve had enough of that.” Mr. Humes opened the door. He spoke to the constable without. “Get me a cab round at the back.”

“There’s one, sir, waiting for you already.”

“All right. Come along now.”

Mr. Bidder went along, escorted by the guardians of the law. It seemed to him that he was in a dream. He was too bewildered to be entirely master of his thoughts, but a hazy idea presented itself to his mind—what a subject to ventilate in the *Times*! He would have deemed it incredible that any respectable man, entirely innocent of anything but a deep-rooted abhorrence of any sort of crime, could have been subjected to the indignities which were being heaped upon him then. When they reached the door they found that a hansom cab was waiting them in the street. It was a little narrow Street, not too well lighted. There were a few loiterers about, but nothing in the shape of an ugly crowd. When Mr. Humes saw it was a hansom he drew back.

“Why didn’t you get a four-wheeler?” he asked.

“There wasn’t one to be had.”

Without another word the detective hurried Mr. Bidder across the little strip of pavement. When they were seated he gave the direction to the driver, “Bow Street Police Station,” and the cab was off.

“If anyone had told me,” said Mr. Bidder, who found it impossible to keep still, “that a person in my position could have been the victim of such a blunder as this, I should have been prepared to stake all that I possess in the world on the fact that the man was lying.”

“That’s right. Pitch a yarn or two, only don’t throw them away on me.”

“A dynamite portmanteau!”

“Just so—a dynamite portmanteau.”

“I never heard of such a thing.”

“I don’t suppose you ever did.”

“What we hear about the blunders of the foreign police is nothing compared to this.”

“I daresay you know more about the foreign police than I do.”

“ Sir!”

“Now, then, sit still. Stow that! What on earth—Driver!”

To this day Mr. Bidder does not know exactly what it was that happened. They were going up a narrow, ill-lighted street; suddenly someone sprang off the pavement and leaped at the horse's head; this person was followed by others, dark figures seen dimly in the night. They did something to the horse; the animal swerved violently to one side; the hansom was overturned. Mr. Bidder was conscious that it fell on one side, with him inside it, then consciousness forsook him.

II. THE PORTMANTEAU'S FRIENDS

When Mr. Bidder regained consciousness he was lying on a sofa. The room was strange. It was a small, ill-furnished room, lighted by a common oil-lamp, which stood on a small square table, which was covered by a gaudy green tablecloth. A man was bending over him. When this person perceived signs of reviving, he announced the fact aloud.

“He's coming to. How are you feeling now?”

“Thank you, I—I'm feeling rather queer.”

“I guess you oughter.”

The man was smiling down at him. He was a big, stout man, with profuse red hair and whiskers. He spoke with that curious twang which we associate with that latest example of cross-breeding in races, the Irish-American.

“Where am I?” inquired Mr. Bidder.

“You're here, that's where you are. And you're safe along with us.”

Mr. Bidder sat up on the couch. He then perceived that his companion and he were not alone; three other men were in the room. Mr. Bidder stared at them, and they stared at him, then they exchanged a curious glance. Mr. Bidder put his hand up to his forehead, feeling as though he were seeing things happen in a dream. The red-haired man went on—

“Didn't I do it neat?”

“Do what neat?”

“Bust up that one-horse show.”

“I'm afraid I don't quite understand you.”

“When we heard that you were nicked, I said to the boys, ‘The only thing we can do is to spoil the procession.’ So I kinder stood the cab on its head.”

Mr. Bidder stared at the speaker with all his eyes.

“You don't mean that you upset the cab on purpose?”

“I guess I did. Very much on purpose too.”

“Good heavens! You might have killed me.”

“That is so. It was kill or cure. We ran for cure, and scooped the pool.”

Mr. Bidder continued to stare with bewildered eyes.

“May I ask what interest you took in me, a perfect stranger, which could justify you in precipitating me from a hansom cab which was going at full speed through the public streets?”

The red-haired man laughed; the three other men laughed too. One of them came and stood in front of Mr. Bidder. He was a man of gigantic stature, and wore a moustache of quite preposterous dimensions, one of those moustaches which burlesque villains wear upon the stage. Mr. Bidder thought that he had seen that gentleman before. The man hooked his finger on to his

nose; then Mr. Bidder knew he had. It was the man who had stared into the cab on his arrival at the "Golden Cross Hotel."

"Castle Garden," said the man, still with his finger on the bridge of his nose.

"I beg your pardon."

"Castle Garden," repeated the man.

Mr. Bidder stared about him, feeling that these things must be taking place in a dream.

"What about Castle Garden?" he murmured, as though he were playing a game of questions and answers.

"Have they changed the countersign?" asked a slight, dark-faced man who was standing at Mr. Bidder's back.

"The countersign? I don't understand." The red-haired man spoke next. "You're cautious, but don't you think you carry it a bit too far? We're safe."

Mr. Bidder stood up. He let his eyes travel slowly round the room. Then he eyed each of the four men; they were strangers to him.

"There is some hideous mistake! Where am I? Is this a lunatic asylum?"

A distinct pause followed this remark:

"A lunatic asylum!" exclaimed the dark-faced man.

"It can't be a room in a gaol!" repeated the previous speaker.

Suddenly the giant with the preposterous moustache laid his great hand on Mr. Bidder's shoulder, and, bending down, looked closely into his face.

"Who are you? Aren't you the Scorcher?"

"The Scorcher?" Was the man a lunatic? "The Scorcher? I'm James Bidder!"

"And who in thunder is James Bidder?"

"Well," replied the owner of the name in his perplexity, "I'm beginning myself to wonder who he is."

The fourth man, who had not yet taken part in the discussion, interposed. He was a little, wiry man, with an excited manner.

"See here, let's see this hand. Did you bring over that portmanteau, or didn't you?"

"Portmanteau! What portmanteau?"

"That dynamite affair."

"Upon my faith as a Christian, and my honour as a man, I know nothing of the thing."

The language was melodramatic, but its result was effective. The countenances of Mr. Bidder's four listeners perceptibly changed.

"You're not playing it off on us?"

"I don't know what you mean. I tell you there's some hideous mistake. I don't know who you are and where I am. Who are you?"

"I reckon we'll know who you are, anyhow." The wiry man went to the door, locked it, and slipped the key into his pocket. "General, let's see his papers."

The big man seized him by the shoulder.

"Shell out!" he said.

"What do you mean?"

"Empty your pockets upon that table."

"Are you going to rob me?"

"We are not. We are going to conduct a little inquiry. There has been a slight mistake made somewhere, and we're going to ascertain where it just comes in."

Perceiving that resistance would be useless, Mr. Bidder emptied the contents of his pockets out upon the table. The big man took up his pocket-book; from it he took a slip of paper. It was the telegram in which Mr. Stone had summoned Mr. Bidder up to town. Directly the big man read it his hands dropped to his side.

“Good God! we’re sold!” he cried.

There was silence. In the silence Mr. Bidder became conscious that each of the four was holding a revolver in his hand.

“What do you mean?” asked the red-haired man.

“It’s a plant! We’ve given ourselves away! He’s a spy—that’s what our friend here is. Here’s a telegram from Stone at the Yard, instructing him to come up at once to town. If you move, or open your lips to give a sign to your friends outside, you’re gone!”

The big man raised his revolver and pointed it at Mr. Bidder. Mr. Bidder had read in books of such things happening, but he had never realised the possibility of the muzzle of a six-shooter being within six inches of his head, and that in the London of to-day.

“You—you wrong me,” he stammered; “you—misjudge me. You misconstrue the telegram entirely.”

“Do we? We’ll misconstrue you if you don’t dry up. How much do you know?”

“Know? Nothing!”

“Don’t try that barney on with us. Tell us straight out how much you know, or you’ll know everything—on the other side.”

“But I assure you that the whole thing, from first to last, has been a chapter of accidents. First the police mistook me for somebody else, and now, apparently, you are making the same mistake as the police.”

The four men listened. Perceiving that he was being listened to, Mr. Bidder, gathering courage, did his best to throw some light upon the subject.

“I am James Bidder, of the firm of Bidder, Tuxwell, and Harris. If you will examine those papers you will find that is so. A clerk, a man named Hastie, has been defrauding us of a large sum of money. The case is in the hands of the police. With reference to it this morning I received that telegram, which brought me up to town. At Euston I thought I saw a man walking off with my portmanteau. I threatened to give him into custody. He immediately slunk off, leaving the portmanteau with me. I took it with me to the hotel.”

“I saw your arrival,” the giant said.

“I know you did. I didn’t know who you were from Adam then, and I don’t know who you are from Adam now.”

“Go on,” said the red-haired man. “This tale is getting funny.”

“When I began to unlock the portmanteau, I found that it wasn’t mine. It could be easily mistaken for mine, and I had mistaken it. In trying to unlock it I seemed to have set some sort of internal machinery in motion.” The red-haired man chuckled. “While I was wondering what the noise could be, and what I had better do, the door opened and a man came in. When he said that he was a detective, and that he wanted me, I immediately jumped to the conclusion that it was for the theft of the portmanteau.” The red-haired man burst into a roar. His friends were smiling. “When he said it was for bringing over an infernal machine from America, I thought that he was mad. While I was endeavouring to explain the mistake that he had made, there was an explosion.”

“From the portmanteau?”

“From the portmanteau— at least, I suppose it was.”

“Did it do much damage?”

“That I cannot say. We did not stay in the room to make inquiries. We fell over each other on the landing. In spite of all that I could say, that idiot of a detective persisted in taking me to the station. While I was still remonstrating with him in the cab, according to your own account, you appeared and turned it over.”

“We mistook you for a friend of ours,” observed the red-haired man.

“It was very kind of you, I’m sure. Mr. Bidder’s tone was rueful. “Gentlemen, if you will examine those papers which are lying on the table, you will find that the account I have given of myself is the correct one.”

They examined the papers, whispering among themselves as they did so. Then the big man turned to Mr. Bidder.

“Mr. Bidder, there is only one part of this unfortunate business on which we can congratulate ourselves—that it has given us the pleasure of your acquaintance.”

“Don’t mention it,” said Mr. Bidder with a groan.

“We were expecting a friend from America. He was, personally, a stranger to us, but he was to travel to London by the same train by which you travelled. He was to bring a black portmanteau, and he was to go to the ‘Golden Cross Hotel.’ When I saw you turn up there to time, with the black portmanteau outside your cab, I took it for granted you were he; when we heard that you were in the hands of the police we concluded that the best service we could render you would be to stop the show.”

“I understand exactly.”

“We are not going to ask you to make any promise not to endanger our liberty by revealing what has taken place this night. We are going to put it out of your power to do so.” Mr. Bidder started. “No, we are not going to murder you; we are going to ask you to drink this.”

The big man produced from his waistcoat pocket a small phial containing a colourless liquid.

“What is it? Poison?”

“Not poison. It is a drug which will stupefy you for the next four-and-twenty hours. By that time we shall be out of danger, and you can tell what tales you please.”

“What? Good heavens! Do you ask me to drink, of my own free will, stuff which will make a dead man of me for at least the next four-and-twenty hours, perhaps never to rally again?”

“As it is a matter in which time presses, we must trouble you to drink it now. It is, you understand, a case of necessity. It is either this or this.”

The big man handled his revolver, suggesting that the choice lay between that and the contents of the phial.

“But, my dear sir, I assure you—”

“You need not. Remonstrances are thrown away on us—as on the detective.”

“Was ever a man of my commercial, moral, and social standing placed in such a position before? I do beg of you—”

“Which is it to be?”

“Which is it to be?”

The big man brought his revolver breast high. Mr. Bidder saw that the others were raising their revolvers too.

“Give me the phial!”

It was given him. Drawing the cork he sniffed at the contents.

“Quickly, please.”

Mr. Bidder saw that the men were closing in. He put the phial to his lips, and drained its contents to the dregs.

* * *

When Mr. Bidder again regained consciousness—for the second time—he was lying under a railway arch at Parson’s Green. He was unable to give any account of how he arrived at that somewhat remote district of London. A railway porter found him just as he was regaining consciousness. His watch, chain, money, and papers were in his pockets, even the telegram which had summoned him to town—nothing was gone. He went immediately to the local police-station, thence to headquarters, and at both places he told his tale. It created some sensation, but the rogues were never caught; the affair of the dynamite portmanteau is to this day a mystery.

All this happened some time ago, when dynamite was in the air. A year or two afterwards, Mr. Bidder, who happened to be spending a few days in town, relaxed his rule so far as actually to go and see a play. The hero made some allusion to the “long arm of coincidence”; critics said that that long arm of coincidence was about as much as they could swallow. That same night, when the play was over, Mr. Bidder made the present writer his confidant, telling him the tale which now is told, prefacing it with the remark—

“Talk about the long arm of coincidence, what do you call this?”

I told him when the narration was finished that I called it a case of the “long arm of coincidence” too.