

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow  
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil  
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus  
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus Moltke  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo  
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht  
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz  
Marx vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
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# **Jim Cummings Or, The Great Adams Express Robbery**

A. Frank [pseud.] Pinkerton

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Author: A. Frank [pseud.] Pinkerton  
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# **JIM CUMMINGS**

**OR**

## **THE GREAT ADAMS EXPRESS ROBBERY**

With a portrait of the notorious Jim Cummings and illustrations  
of scenes connected with the great robbery

By

Frank Pinkerton



## CHAPTER I.

### THE CONSPIRATORS – THE FORGED LETTER – THE PLAN.

In the rear room of a small frame building, the front of which was occupied as a coal office, located on West Lake street, Chicago, three men were seated around a square pine table. The curtains of the window were not only drawn inside, but the heavy shutters were closed on the outside. A blanket was nailed over the only door of the room, and every thing and every action showed that great secrecy was a most important factor of the assembly.

The large argand burner of a student's lamp filled the small room with its white, strong light. The table was covered with railroad time-tables, maps, bits of paper, on which were written two names a great number of times, and pens of different makes and widths of point were scattered amidst the papers.

One man, a large, powerfully-built fellow, deep-chested, and long-limbed, was occupied in writing, again and again, the name of "J.B. Barrett." He had covered sheet after sheet with the name, looking first at a letter before him, but was still far from satisfied. "Damn a man who will make his 'J's' in such a heathenish way."

"Try it again, Wittrock," said one of his companions.

"Curse you," shouted the man called Wittrock. "How often must I tell you not to call me that name. By God, I'll bore a hole through you yet, d'ye mind, now."

"Oh, no harm been done, Cummings; no need of your flying in such a stew for nothing. We're all in the same box here, eh?"

"Well, you be more careful hereafter," said "Cummings," and again he bent to his laborious task of forging the name of "J.B. Barrett."

Nothing was heard for half an hour but the scratching of the pen, or the muttered curses of Cummings (as he was called).

Suddenly he threw down his pen with a laugh of triumph, and holding a piece of paper before him, exclaimed: "There, lads, there it is; there's the key that will unlock a little mint for us."

Throwing himself back in his chair, he drew a cigar from his pocket, and, lighting it, listened with great satisfaction to the words of praise uttered by his companions as they compared the forged with the genuine signature.

These three men were on the eve of a desperate enterprise. For months they had been planning and working together, and the time for action was rapidly approaching.

The one called "Cummings," the leader, was apparently, the youngest one of the three. There was nothing in his face to denote the criminal. A stranger looking at him, would imagine him to be a good-natured, jovial chap, a little shrewd perhaps, but fond of a good dinner, a good drink, a good cigar, and nothing else.

One of his colleagues, whom he called "Roe," evidently an alias, was smaller in size, but had a determined expression on his face, that showed him to be a man who would take a desperate chance if necessary.

The third man, called sometimes Weaver, and sometimes Williams, was the smallest one of the conspirators, and also the eldest. His frame, though small, was compact and muscular, but his face lacked both the determination of Roe and the frank, open expression of Cummings.

After scrutinizing the forgery for a time, Roe returned it to Cummings and said, "Jim, who has the run out on the Frisco when you make the plant?"

"A fellow named Fotheringham, a big chap, too. I was going to lay for the other messenger, Hart, who is a small man, and could be easily handled, but he has the day run now."

"This Fotheringham will have to be a dandy if he can tell whether Barrett has written this or not, eh, Jim?"

"Aye, that he will. Let me once get in that car, and if the letter don't work, I'll give him a taste of the barker."

"No shooting, Jim, no shooting, I swear to God I'll back out if you spill a drop of blood."

Jim's eyes glittered, and he hissed between his teeth:

"You back out, Roe, and you'll see some shooting."

Roe laughed a nervous laugh, and said, as he pushed some blank letter-heads toward Cummings, "Who's goin' to back out, only I don't like the idea of shooting a man, even to get the plunder. Here's the Adam's Express letter-heads I got to-day. Try your hand on the letter."

Cummings, somewhat pacified, with careful and laborious strokes of the pen, wrote as follows:

"SPRINGFIELD, Mo., October 24th, '86.

MESSENGER, TRAIN No. 3, ST. L & ST. F. RTE:

DR. SIR: You will let the bearer, John Bronson, Ride in your car to Peirce, and give him all the Instructions that you can. Yours,

J.B. Barrett, R.A."

"Hit it the first time. Look at that Roe; cast your eye on that elegant bit of literature, Weaver," and Cummings, greatly excited, paced up and down the room, whistling, and indulging in other signs of huge gratification.

"Well done, Jim, well done. Now write the other one, and we'll go and licker up."

Again Cummings picked up his facile pen, and was soon successful in writing the following letter, purporting to be from this same J. B. Barrett.

"SPRINGFIELD, Mo., Oct. 21, '86.

"JOHN BRONSON, Esq., St. Louis, Mo.

"DR. SIR: Come at once to Peirce City by train No. 3, leaving St. Louis 8:25 p.m. Inclosed find note to messenger on the train, which you can use for a pass in case you see Mr. Damsel in time. Agent at Peirce City will instruct you further.

"Respectfully, J. B. BARRETT, R. A."

Jim drew a long, deep sigh of relief as he muttered:

"Half the work is done; half the work is done."

Drawing the railroad map of the Chicago & Alton road toward him, he put the pen point on St. Louis, and slowing following the St. L. & S. F. Division, paused at Kirkwood.

"Roe, here's the place I shall tackle this messenger. It is rather close to St. Louis, but it's down grade and the train will be making fast time. She stops at Pacific—here, and we will jump the train there, strike for the river, and paddle down to the K. & S. W. You must jump on at the crossing near the limits, plug the bell cord so the damned messenger can't pull the rope on me, and I will have him foul."

Roe listened attentively to these instructions, nodding his head slowly several times to express his approval, and said:

"When will we go down?"

Jim Cummings, looking at the time-table, answered:

"This is—what date is this, Weaver?"

"October 11th."

"Two weeks from to-day will be the 25th. That is on—let's see, that is Tuesday."

"Two weeks from to-day, Roe, you will have to take the train at St. Louis; get your ticket to Kirkwood. I see by this time-table that No. 3 does stop there. When you get off, run ahead, plug the bell-cord, and I will wait till she gets up speed after leaving Kirkwood before I draw my deposit."

Thus did these three men plan a robbery that was to mulct the Adams Express Company of \$100,000, baffle the renowned Pinkertons for weeks and excite universal admiration for its boldness, skill, and completeness.

The papers upon which Cummings had exercised his skill, were torn into little bits, the time-tables and maps were folded and placed in coat pockets, the lamp extinguished, and three men were

soon strolling down Lake street as calmly as if they had no other object than to saunter into their favorite bar-room, and toss off a social drink or two.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE SUCCESS OF THE LETTERS – THE ATTACK – THE ROBBERS – THE ESCAPE.

The Union depot at St. Louis was ablaze with lights. The long Kansas City train was standing, all made up, the engine coupled on, and almost ready to pull out. Belated passengers were rushing frantically from the ticket window to the baggage-room, and then to the train, when a man, wearing side whiskers, and carrying a small valise, parted from his companion at the entrance to the depot, and, after buying a ticket to Kirkwood, entered the smoking car. His companion, a tall, well-built man, having a smooth face, and a very erect carriage, walked with a business-like step down the platform until he reached the express car. Tossing the valise which he carried into the car, he climbed in himself with the aid of the hand-rail on the side of the door, and, as the messenger came toward him, he held out his hand, saying:

"Is this Mr. Fotheringham?"

"Yes, that's my name."

"I have a letter from Mr. Bassett for you," and, taking it from his pocket, he handed it to the messenger.

Fotheringham read the letter carefully, and placing it in his pocket, said:

"Going to get a job, eh?"

"Yes, the old man said he would give me a show, and as soon as there was a regular run open, he would let me have it."

"Well, I'm pretty busy now; make yourself comfortable until we pull out, and then I'll post you up as best I can, Mr. Bronson."

Mr. "Bronson" pulled off his overcoat, and, seating himself in a chair, glanced around the car.

In one end packages, crates, butter, egg-cases, and parts of machinery were piled up. At the other end a small iron safe was lying. As it caught Bronson's eye an expression came over his face, which, if Fotheringham had seen, would have saved him a vast amount of trouble. But the messenger, too busy to notice his visitor, paid him no attention, and in a moment Bronson was puffing his cigar with a nonchalant air, that would disarm any suspicions which the messenger might have entertained, but he had none, as it was a common practice to send new men over his run, that he might "break them in."

The train had pulled out, and after passing the city limits, was flying through the suburbs at full speed.

Fotheringham, seated in front of his safe, with his way bills on his lap, was checking them off as Bronson called off each item of freight in the car.

The long shriek of the whistle and the jerking of the car caused by the tightening of the air brake on the wheels, showed the train to be approaching a station.

"This is Kirkwood," said Fotheringham, "nothing for them to-night."

The train was almost at a standstill, when Bronson, saying "What sort of a place is it?" threw back the door and peered out into the dark.

As he did so, a man passed swiftly by, and in passing glanced into the car. As Bronson looked, he saw it was the same man that had bought a ticket for Kirkwood and had ridden in the smoker.

The train moved on. Bronson shut the door and buttoned his coat. Fotheringham, still busy on his way bills, was whistling softly to himself, and sitting with his back to his fellow passenger.

Some unusual noise in the front end of the car caught his ear, and raising his head, he exclaimed:

"What's that?"

The answer came, not from the front of the car but from behind.

A strong muscular hand was placed on his neck. A brawny arm was thrown around his chest, and lifted from the chair, he was thrown violently to the floor of the car.

In a flash he realized his position. With an almost superhuman effort, he threw Bronson from him, and reaching around felt for his revolver. It was gone, and thrown to the other end of the car.

Little did the passengers on the train know of the stirring drama which was being enacted in the car before them. Little did they think as they leaned back in their comfortable seats, of the terrific struggle which was then taking place. On one hand it was a struggle for \$100,000; on the other, for reputation, for honor, perhaps for life.

Fotheringham, strong as he was (for he was large of frame, and muscular) was no match for his assailant. He struggled manfully, but was hurled again to the floor, and as he looked up, saw the cold barrel of a 32-calibre pointed at his head. Bronson's face, distorted with passion and stern with the fight, glared down at him, as he hissed through his teeth:

"Make a sound, and you are a dead man."

The messenger, seeing all was lost, lay passive upon the floor. The robber, whipping out a long, strong, silk handkerchief, tied his hands behind his back, and making a double-knotted gag of Fotheringham's handkerchief, gagged him. Searching the car he discovered a shawl-strap with which he tied the messenger's feet, and thus had him powerless as a log. Then, and not till then, did he speak aloud.

"Done, and well done, too."

The flush faded from his face, his eye became sullen, and drawing the messenger's chair to him he sat down. As he gazed at his discomfited prisoner an expression of intense relief came over his features. His forged letters had proved successful, his only formidable obstacle between himself and his anticipated booty lay stretched at his feet, helpless and harmless. The nature of the car prevented any interruption from the ends, as the only entrance was through the side doors, and he had all night before him to escape.

Now for the plunder. The key to the safe was in Fotheringham's pocket. It took but a second to secure it, and but another second to use it in unlocking the strong-box. The messenger, unable to prevent this in any way, looked on in intense mental agony. He saw that he would be suspected as an accomplice. The mere fact that one man could disarm, bind and gag him, would be used as a suspicious circumstance against him. Although he did not know the exact sum of money in the safe he was aware that it was of a very considerable amount, and he fairly writhed in his agony of mind. In an instant Cummings (or, as he had been called by the messenger, Bronson) was on his feet, revolver in hand, and again the cruel, murderous expression dwelt on his face, as he exclaimed:

"Lie still, damn you, lie still. If you attempt to create an alarm, I'll fill you so full of lead that some tenderfoot will locate you for a mineral claim. D'y'e understand?"

After this facetious threat he paid no further attention to the messenger.

Emptying his valise of its contents of underclothing and linen, he stuffed it full of the packages of currency which the safe contained.

One package, containing \$30,000, from the Continental Bank of St. Louis, was consigned to the American National Bank of Kansas City.

Another large package held \$12,000, from the Merchants National Bank of St. Louis for the Merchants Bank of Forth Smith, Arkansas, and various other packages, amounting altogether to \$53,000.

With wonderful sang froid, Cummings stuffed this valuable booty in his valise, and then proceeded to open the bags containing coin. His keen knife-blade ripped bag after bag, but finding it all silver, he desisted, and turning to Fotheringham, demanded:

"Any gold aboard?"

Fotheringham shook his head in reply.

"Does that mean there is none, or you don't know?"

Again the messenger shook his head.

"Well, I reckon your right, all silver, too heavy and don't amount to much."

As he was talking, the whistle of the engine suddenly sound two short notes, and the air-brakes were applied.

The train stopped, and the noise of men walking on the gravel was heard.

As Fotheringham lay there, his ears strained to catch every sound, and hoping for the help that never came, his heart gave a joyful throb, as some one pounded noisily on the door. Almost at the same instant he felt the cold muzzle of a revolver against his head, and the ominous "click, click" was more eloquent than threats or words could be.

The pounding ceased, and in a short time the train moved on again.

Apparently not satisfied that the messenger was bound safe and fast, Cummings took the companion strap to the one which pinned the feet of his victim, and passing it around his neck, fastened it to the handle of the safe in such a way that any extra exertion on Fotheringham's part would pull the safe over and choke him.

Opening the car door, he threw away the clothing which he had taken from his valise.

Returning to the messenger, he stooped over him, and took from his pocket the forged letter with which he gained entrance to the car.

Fotheringham tried to speak, but the gag permitted nothing but a rattling sound to escape.

"I know what you want, young fellow. You want this letter to prove that you had some sort of authority to let me ride. Sorry I can't accommodate you, my son, but those devilish Pinkertons will be after me in twenty-four hours, and this letter would be just meat to them. I'll fix you all right, though. My name's Cummings, Jim Cummings, and I'll write a letter to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat that will clear you Honest to God, I will. You've been pretty generous to-night; given me lots of swag, and I'll never go back on you.

"Give my love to Billy Pinkerton when you see him. Tell him Jim Cummings did this job."

As he uttered these words, the train commenced slacking up, and as it stopped, Cummings, opening the door, with his valuable valise, leaped to the ground, closed the door behind him, the darkness closed around him and he was gone.

Inside the car, a rifled safe, a bound and gagged messenger, and the Adams Express Company was poorer by \$100,000 than it was when the

'Frisco train pulled out of the depot the evening before.

## CHAPTER III.

### PINKERTON TO THE RESCUE.

The next day the country knew of the robbery. Newspapers in every city had huge head lines, telling the story in the most graphic style.

JESSE JAMES OUTDONE! The Adams Express Company ROBBED OF \$100,000!

#### **THE EXPRESS MESSENGER FOUND GAGGED AND BOUND TO HIS OWN SAFE—THE ROBBER ESCAPES—ABSOLUTELY NO CLEWS—PINKERTON TO THE RESCUE!**

Mr. Damsel, the superintendent of the St. Louis branch of the Adams Express Company, was pacing anxiously up and down his private office. Fotheringham was relating his exciting experience, which a stenographer immediately took down in shorthand. At frequent intervals Mr. Damsel would ask a searching question, to which the messenger replied in a straightforward manner and without hesitation. It was a trying ordeal to him. Innocent as he was, his own testimony was against him. He knew it and felt it, but nothing that he could do or say would lighten the weight of the damaging evidence. He could but tell the facts and await developments. When he was through Mr. Damsel left him in the office, and immediately telegraphed to every station between Pacific and St. Louis to look for the linen and underclothing which the robbers had thrown from the car. The wires were working in all directions, giving a full description of Cummings and such other information as would lead to his discovery.

Local detectives were closeted with Mr. Damsel all day, but so shrewdly and cunningly had the express robber covered his tracks, that nothing but the bare description of the man could be used as a clew.

Fotheringham was put through the "sweating process" time and again, but, though he gave the most minute and detailed account of the affair, the detectives could find nothing to help them.

That Fotheringham "stood in" with the robber was the universal theory. The story of the letter and order from Mr. Barrett was received with derision and suspicion.

Mr. Damsel himself was almost confident that his employee had a hand in the robbery. It was a long and anxious day, and as it wore along and no new developments turned up, Mr. Damsel became more anxious and troubled: \$100,000 is a large sum and the Adams Express Company had a reputation at stake. What was to be done?

Almost instantly the answer came: telegraph for Pinkerton.

The telegram was sent, and when William Pinkerton wired back that he would come at once. Mr. Damsel felt his load of responsibility begin to grow lighter, and he waited impatiently for the morning to come.

The next morning about 10 o'clock Mr. Damsel received a note, signed "Pinkerton," requesting him to call at room 84 of the Southern Hotel. He went at once. A pleasant-faced gentleman, with a heavy mustache and keen eyes, greeted him, and Mr. Damsel was shaking hands with the famous detective, on whose shoulders had fallen the mantle of his father, Allan Pinkerton, probably the finest detective the world has ever seen.

Mr. Damsel had his stenographer's notes, which had been transcribed on the type-writer, and Mr. Pinkerton carefully and slowly read every word.

"What sort of a man is this Fotheringham?"

"He is a large, well built, and I should say, muscular young fellow. Has always been reliable before, and has been with us some years."

"Has he ever been arrested before?"

"He says twice. Once for shooting off a gun on Sunday, and again for knocking a man down for insulting a lady."