

Chapter 27

In Chapter 27 of "The Art Thief," we delve into a tense night for thief Breitwieser, who finds himself imprisoned once again in a Swiss police station, echoing his earlier arrest four years prior. The next day, on November 21, 2001, a police inspector named Roland Meier arrives to interrogate him. Both men share a similar age and background, conversing in their native Alsatian accents. Meier perceives Breitwieser as a mere petty thief, having studied his past arrest in Lucerne.

The interrogation occurs in a stark, sterile room as Meier questions Breitwieser about the recent theft of a historical bugle from the Wagner Museum. Breitwieser adamantly denies involvement, despite Meier's calm persistence. The day of the theft had been quiet, with few visitors. Esther Jaerg, the sole employee present, discovered the theft after a patron, donned in a distinctive long green coat, left. After Jaerg's call to the police, additional details emerged when a nearby dog walker alerted authorities upon seeing a suspicious individual.

As evidence against him mounts, including fingerprints and possibly video recordings, the pressure on Breitwieser escalates. However, he catches on to Meier's bluff; no definitive evidence exists linking him to the crime. This gives Breitwieser a glimmer of hope—if he can reach out to his accomplice, Anne-Catherine, he believes they might return the stolen bugle to exonerate him.

After the brief interrogation, he is returned to a high-security cell, where he learns he is classified as a high-security inmate and may not make calls. Meier's initial assessment of Breitwieser as a minor criminal now seems naïve, as he recognizes Breitwieser's cunning during the questioning. The possibility of him being a serial thief looms, prompting Meier to seek judicial approval to keep him detained and to pursue an international search warrant, leading to investigations in France regarding Breitwieser's past crimes .