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Tekst 11

Science solves 'Italian Job' cliffhanger

By Steve Connor, Science Editor

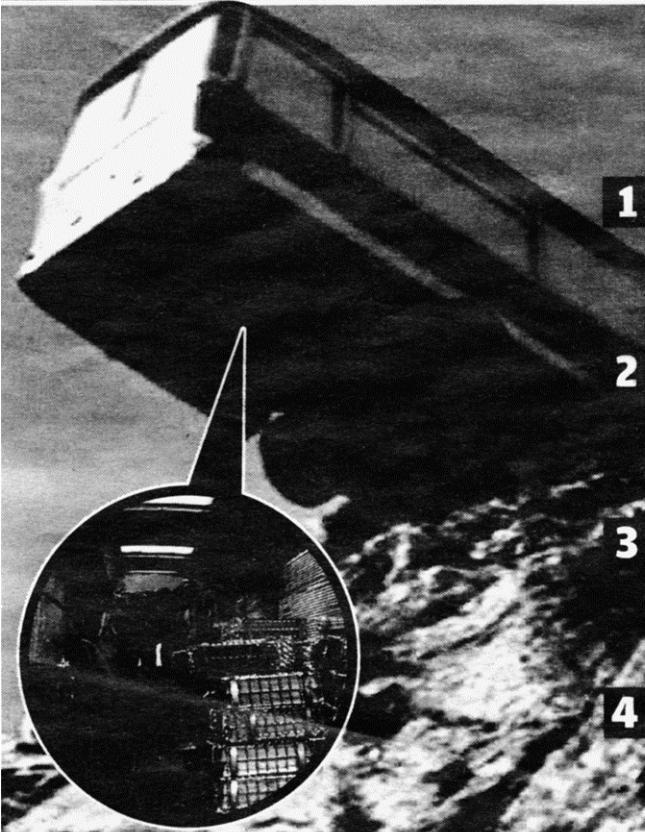
It was probably the greatest cliffhanger in cinema history, leaving fans of *The Italian Job* wondering how the mobster Charlie Croker could have liberated his gang — and the gold bullion — from a bus hanging dangerously over the edge of a mountain road.

The getaway complete, the robbers were celebrating on the road to Switzerland when the bus went into a skid leaving the gold bars at the back end of the vehicle, perfectly balanced against the weight of 10 people at the front, who were unable either to leave

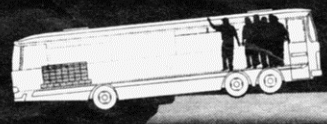
the bus or collect the loot. "Hang on a minute lads — I've got a great idea," says Croker, played by Michael Caine. But before he unfolded his plan, the film ended and viewers were left thinking up theories of how Croker and his gang could have extracted the stolen gold safely.

Now an IT specialist has come up with a solution, and won a competition organised by the Royal Society of Chemistry. John Godwin, of Godalming in Surrey, breaks down the task — which must take no longer than 30 minutes — into three steps.

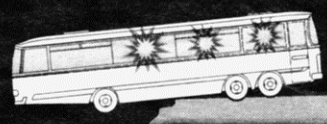
How the gold – and the robbers – could have got to safety



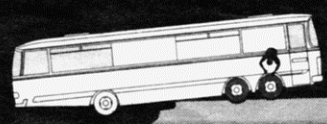
Problem: Gold bars at one end of the bus, 10 people at the other



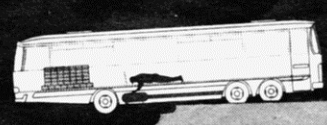
1 Middle window smashed out, others smashed inwards



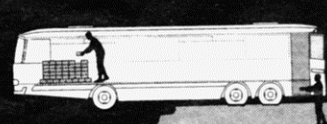
2 Crew member leans out to deflate tyres, stabilising front of bus



3 Fuel tank emptied from inside, ridding weight from back of bus



4 Man able to bring rocks on board to build up ballast and allow gold to be retrieved



The first step involves punching out the third set of windows in the middle of the Bedford bus with the heel of Croker's shoe. This would relieve some weight from the back of the bus hanging over the cliff edge, but more importantly it would allow the crew to lean out and punch in the front windows, so the weight of the glass would not be lost from the front.

The next step is to lower one of the crew from the broken windows so that they can let down the front tyres, to reduce the vehicle's rocking motion and make the front end more stable.

The third stage is to open the access panel to the fuel tank, sited inside the bus halfway along its axis, and to drain the tank of its 36 gallons of petrol,

weighing nearly 140kg, which is stored under the rear floor. Once this fuel is drained, there should be enough weight in the front of the bus to allow one crew member to leave and bring back the necessary ballast to counter the effect of someone crawling along the floor to retrieve the gold bars, which could be piled up at the front end before being carefully removed, along with the crew.

Richard Pike, the society's chief executive, said that he received about 2,000 entries to the competition and many were ingenious, devious, sophisticated or just outrageous. Mr Godwin's prize is a holiday in Turin, the city where the 1969 film was made.

The International Independent, 2009

Lees bij de volgende opgaven steeds eerst de vraag voordat je de bijbehorende tekst raadpleegt.

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- 1p 42 Wordt er in de tekst van het artikel een voorwaarde genoemd waaraan oplossingen voor het probleem waarmee de film eindigt, moesten voldoen?
Zo nee, antwoord “Nee”. Zo ja, citeer het zinsdeel dat deze voorwaarde noemt.

Bronvermelding

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