

Lawyer's Bag

It all started so simply ...

A Saturday afternoon and I decided to walk over and cruise the local thrift shop. Once inside, I almost gave up, but across the store, on an upper shelf, I saw something interesting. The leather was light brown, looked in good condition. I walked across and stood in front of the shelf. Sitting upright stood an old style leather briefcase, a standup model, with a "belt' loop for the locking closure, best described as an old belting classic leather brief case.

As I picked the case up off the shelf, I noticed overall, the brief case was not very dusty, possibly a newer addition to the store. The tag clipped to the handle read \$10.00. Quite sure genuine leather and not scratched at all. I wondered why only ten bucks. Then I discovered why. Locked. I could not work the latch, obviously locked and apparently no visible key.

At the front desk, I asked the lady doing the checkout, if the price was right and if possibly there was a key.

"Sorry honey, no key. That Lawyer's Bag came in a day or two, maybe three days ago, with no key. And why it is only ten dollars.

"Lawyer's Bag?"

The woman looked at me and smiled.

"Sorry honey, what we called those bags in my day. Why, what would call the bag?"

"A brief case."

"Right. Sure. We have a bunch of those box cases on the shelf over there. We call those brief cases."

I looked to where she pointed and nodded.

"It's okay honey, I'll put it back on the shelf for you."

I thought for a moment, but the condition and the shape still convinced me.

"No, actually I'll take it, but I insist, I'll give you a twenty. This is in really good condition otherwise. Hard to pass up regardless."

"If you insist. Right nice of you. We can always use the donation."

The lady took my twenty, gave me a quickly penciled receipt and turned her attention to the next person in line.

I left the store and walked down the street, with what I thought to be a brief case swinging at my side. As luck would have it, I passed a locksmith shop and to my good fortune open on a Saturday, closed Sundays and Mondays. The white haired gentleman inside looked at me, the case and back at me.

"Lost the key, did ya?"

"What? No. I just bought this and it didn't have a key."

The old man nodded and reached for the case.

"Nice case, not one of these cheap things you see now-a-days. Hell, I could open one of those new ones by just jiggling the strap. This here might take a minute or two."

He reached for a leather bound tool from the counter behind him, opened it and reached inside. Not sure what he had in his hand but after a couple of minutes he had my brief case open.

"There you go. Since you don't have a key, you really can't lock it, so no worry there, but if somehow you do, just come back and I'll get her open again." He paused for a moment. "You need me to make a key?"

"No, I don't think so. If, as you say, I can't lock it without one."

"Mind if I ask what you paid for it?"

"Twenty dollars, largely because it was locked."

The white haired man nodded approvingly.

"So, what do I owe you for the, you know, opening it."

The man looked at the case, at me, back to the case.

"Naw, enjoy your Lawyer's Bag. Haven't seen one of those in quite some time, I mean one that well made and in great condition. Matter-of-fact, last one I saw, not near as good, but still old enough. I had to open the damn bag for an elderly gentleman. Said he lost his keys. No, just be happy you got such a damn fine bag for a twenty."

I nodded, said thanks and left the store. I was anxious to get home and see what sat in there. Once the old man opened it, I briefly saw several papers, probably nothing important, but still anxious to find out.

I laid everything out on the kitchen table. Two file folders, some notes and a large stack of pages with a handwritten note stapled on the first page: "Review for Louise Maywood," which might be some kind of manuscript.

The first file folder contained several letters which appeared to concern a real estate dispute. However, the last letter suggested the matter had been settled to each parties' satisfaction. That letter was signed Wilbur Mars, Attorney-at-Law and the top of the letter showed exactly that: Wilbur Mars, Attorney-at-Law.

So, maybe, this was his "Lawyer's Bag."

The second file folder contained several notes pertaining to other cases. Nothing specific, just random notes, maybe referring to, or considering new clients, things of that nature.

But the big stack of papers with the note attached, didn't look lawyerly. Maybe he needed to give the woman a legal opinion on her story. I read the first few pages and first blush looked like a life story type of work. Maybe this is nothing after all. Some old lady writes her life story and asks old Wilbur Mars to check the work for legal reasons. Not the page turner, great American novel I hoped it would be. Actually, I found the work rather boring.

I looked through the bag again. Inside contained a zippered pouch at the back side, not the belted side, which contained a crumbled business card for Wilbur Mars, a rather clean, but old looking ten dollar bill and some more hand notes on torn sheets of paper I spread out on the table.

A ten dollar bill. Wow. Got half my money back. I looked closer at the bill. Next to the portrait, it said: Series of 1934. I compared it to a current ten dollar bill and the difference appeared quite striking. Well, maybe I had something here. I set the bill to the side.

Upon looking through the scraps of notes I discovered none were later than 1938. I grabbed the file folder with the letters and scanned through. The first letter had been dated 1932, and the last letter carried a date of 1935. I checked the second file folder. Same result. Nothing later than 1938. I put those scraps of notes in the second file folder.

Once more I dug through the zippered slot and the case, but nothing more discovered. I wondered where this case had been all these years, especially in this condition and what happened to good ole Wilbur.

As I looked at the now unlocked and empty bag, I thought I could go back to the locksmith, have a key made and possibly. Possibly what? Sell it? Give it away as a gift? No. I could never do either of those. Maybe I could use the bag for my own brief case. Yes, brief case, because I'm not a lawyer, so I can't call my bag a Lawyer's Bag. I waved my hand in the air to clear my thoughts and forget this nonsense.

I left the bag on a chair next to the kitchen table and the papers, scattered on top. I had plans for the evening, to meet up with some friends for drinks later.

On Sunday, I took the opportunity to read further into the, let's call it: "the manuscript," for now. The story quickly became pretty dark and I choose not to continue further.

On Monday, I called an old high school buddy of mine, Jared Wilcox, Jerry, to his friends, who is now a local attorney. Jerry and I were only a few years out of High School, but he already had a Law Degree, three extra years of schooling, but I heard he finished early, and I did have a business degree. Hell, where did the years go? His secretary took a message and assured me, Mr. Wilcox would get back to me today, which he did that afternoon.

"Evan, how the hell are you?"

"Jerry, so good to hear from you. Fine, just fine. Listen I have a question or two."

"You are not in any kind of jam? Are you?"

"No. No. Nothing like that. Last Saturday, I was cruising a local Thrift Shop, found and bought an old Lawyer's Bag."

"Lawyer's Bag? Damn, I haven't heard that one in awhile. Only the old timers call it a bag, but to the rest of us we say brief case."

"Well, the lady at the thrift shop called it a Lawyer's Bag, as did the white haired locksmith. who got it open for me. Anyway, here's the deal. Inside were some papers. a file folder about a real estate deal that appears to have been solved. Another folder with notes and such and finally a stack of paper that looked to be possibly a manuscript. All of which appear to be from the late '30s, you know, the 1930s."

"So, what's the question?"

"Well, the first is the manuscript. Since I found it, can I claim ownership now? Not sure if I would ever do anything with it, but just to be on the safe side. What's the deal on that?"

Jerry was quiet on the other end for a moment.

"Gray area on that one, buddy. The manuscript obviously belonged to somebody and because you are describing it as a manuscript it appears to be in what's called a tangible medium, meaning it has been established work. Can you see a copyright on it or any other markings?"

"No, nothing on the manuscript. But, there is a note stapled to it that says: "Review for Louise Maywood," and it was in this Lawyer's Bag, so maybe she wanted some legal advice on her manuscript, but no matter, after what you just said, she or her heirs obviously own it. And that settles that."

"Tell you what, Evan, give me the names you have and I'll see what I can find out. But the thirties? They may all be dead by now. Eighty plus years ago, not sure what I can find."

"Thanks, I'd appreciate it. The lawyer's name is: Wilbur Mars, Attorney-at-Law, sorry you don't need that. The ladies' name is: Louise Maywood. I presume it is her manuscript."

"Got it. I'll let you know what I find out. Might take a few days, got a lot on my plate. Hopefully, my secretary can track some of this down. Maybe we can get together for lunch or coffee when I know."

"Sure, that would be great. Thanks for looking into this for me."

The phone went dead. I sat back into the chair and looked at the stack in front of me. Why do I care? I certainly don't want to publish, or even get involved with a manuscript so dark. But. But, maybe the family would like this stuff back. Well, let's see what Jerry digs up and I'll decide then what to do.

At the end of the week, Jerry called and said he had the info. We arranged to have dinner and drinks on Friday night by his offices. I met him at the restaurant he suggested. He looked the same, maybe a touch older, but still trim and fit.

"Jerry, High School seems like yesterday. Heard you finished Law School early."

"Not really early." Jerry smiled. "I just did more in less time, nights, online, anyway I could. I almost joined a big Law Firm, but a good friend of my father's had a local practice. Said he was looking to retire. He helped me through Law School and the Bar. Still Practices, helps me when he can, but I basically run the office now."

"Wow. thanks for the update. Sounds like you're doing okay. I secured a Business Degree and I am actually doing consulting work. Pays the bills and seems a lot less stressful."

Jerry nodded. "Let's eat. I'd recommend anything on the menu."

After dinner, over coffee and Cognac, we got down to business.

"Evan, I will admit, this was a bit harder than I thought it would be, mainly because of the time frame. Records weren't all that good back then, and even if they were they were hard to find. Anyway."

Jerry opened a folder and removed several papers.

"Let's start with Wilbur Mars. Yes, he was an attorney. Died suddenly in 1938 of a heart attack right there in his office. Tough business this profession. So, yes, that brief case is no doubt his. Interesting, as to where it has been all these years, don't know that answer. But, I would suspect possibly a grand child or great grandchild found the case in an attic, or basement, or closet and dropped it at a thrift shop to be rid of it."

Jerry put that paper to the side and picked up another. He looked at me as he held the paper.

"Louise Maywood. Louise Maywood vanished in 1938, shortly after old Wilbur died. No record of her death, divorce or remarriage, nothing. She was there, then nothing. We, I should say my secretary, looked high and low for anything about her. Nothing. However, she did have two children, both boys. What I presume to be the older boy, Edward Maywood Jr. died in 1983, with complications from cancer. The younger boy, Rufus Maywood also disappeared in 1938. Best guess, the older boy was no longer living at home and not there when something may have happened to the mother and younger boy. The fact that we could not find death certificates for either is not all that surprising. They may have had an accident and were never found. I would have thought the older boy might have inquired, but who knows what their situation may have been. The father, Louise's husband died in 1930. I don't remember the cause of death and I don't have a note on it here, I just know he did."

Jerry set that paper aside and picked up the next one.

"Copyright law states:

Under U.S. law, the simple act of fixing the work in a 'tangible medium' is sufficient to establish the creator's copyright in unpublished material -- no copyright statement is mandated, nor does the item need to be registered with the Copyright Office.

Sorry to say, no question she owns the manuscript. It's hers or her heirs, if you can find one and even if you can't, it's still hers. Now, you may want to take a chance and run with it and hope no one contests it, but it has been my experience some one always comes out of the shadows. My suggestion would be to leave it alone, forget about it."

Jerry set that paper aside and looked over at me.

"As to the two file folders of notes and letters. If you want, you can give those to me and I will see that they are properly shredded. Lawyer stuff and all. Probably should be discreet with that information."

I sat back in the chair and sipped the coffee, which had been refilled several times. The Cognac long gone.

"Yeah, sure, that makes sense. I mean, what the hell would I do with them. But the manuscript. I hate to just destroy it. I mean it's her work and. Well, let me think on it for a few days."

"Sure, just suggestions. Maybe you can jump on the old internet and see if you can find an heir. We just did preliminary searches, nothing deep. Maybe you can do more, see what you come up with. Sorry Evan, I really should go, it's getting late."

Jerry stood up, put his papers back in the folder and handed the folder to me. He reached across the table and we shook hands.

"These are for you, we have copies. Thanks again for dinner and drinks.

"Sure, least I could do for all your help. Really good to see you again and thanks. Tell your secretary I said thanks as well."

"Will do."

Jerry left. I finished the rest of the coffee and waved the waiter off when he walked toward me with the pot in his hands. I signed the check and left a hearty tip for hanging unto the table so long, packed everything up and left.

Not that I ever had any thoughts of publishing the so called manuscript, but realizing I have no claim to it puts an end to the thought anyway. On the ride home I couldn't help but wonder what happened to Louise Maywood and why nothing further ever happened with her manuscript. I had my answer the following week.

Jerry called and said, a man had contacted him expressing interest in the, "found," as that man said, leather briefcase and could I meet with him at Jerry's offices on Friday morning at 10:00am. Jerry also said he would be happy to represent my interests, as needed.

I arrived at Jerry's offices on Friday morning a little early, to meet with Jerry first. I was both excited and nervous to find out who this person is and what his interest is in the briefcase. Of course I brought the briefcase along as well as all the papers inside.

"Might be a good thing we didn't shred anything," I said.

Jerry nodded.

Right at ten o'clock his secretary escorted two gentlemen into Jerry's office. The older man walked with a limp and carried a cane. I stood and shook the older gentleman's hand, but the other gentleman stayed in the background. I noticed Jerry take note of that as well as look that man over. I nervously sat back down.

"Gentlemen, let me start off the introductions. My name is: Reginald Thurgood III. The man behind me is: Frank Rossi. He is my bodyguard, chauffeur, and my personal assistant. He has been with me for many years and as of late, I don't go anywhere without him. The ravages of age I'm afraid."

The old man leaned his cane against the desk and slipped back into the chair, a grimace on his face.

"I'm Jared Wilcox, the Attorney you spoke with and this is Mr. Evan Slater, the man who found the briefcase."

The old man nodded.

"I suppose you are wondering what my interest is in all of this. Specifically, the so-called manuscript that I believe is in that briefcase. Have you read any of it, sir?"

I shook my head. "No sir, I have not. I did read the first few pages, but I stopped and contacted Mr. Wilcox to see if I could gather any information about the manuscript's rightful owner. I should also tell you the case was locked when I found it."

"Thank you for your candor. I suppose I owe you both an explanation. More specifically, the story behind my visit here." Thurgood turned to look at the man behind him. "Frank, would you mind excusing us for a bit. I'll be okay here. These gentlemen look friendly enough."

Frank smiled as he left the room.

"Gentlemen, I apologize for my little joke, but sometimes, Frank can be a bit much."

Reginald Thurgood III took a deep breath and began his story.

"Son, had you read the complete document you would have discovered Louise Maywood had admitted to shooting and killing her live in boyfriend, as well as disposing of his body, among many other disclosures, which on the surface might sound horrifying, gruesome even, but I'm here to tell you, none of which is true."

The old man took a breath and before he could ask, Jerry pressed the intercom and ordered waters for each of us. Thurgood grateful, and nodded his thanks to the secretary.

"Gentlemen, I must go back in time to bring you all the facts. I beg your forgiveness and thank you for your patience." He took a breath. "Louise Maywood married Edward Maywood in the early '20s, and had two sons, Edward junior and Rufus, named for a grandfather, poor boy. The father died early when the boys were quite young. I don't know the cause, only that he did. Louise struggled for a couple of years raising the boys, but then met Leonard Fritz. First couple of years were good or so I was told, but Leonard couldn't hold a job, what few there were, and became good friends with the bottle. Man could drink his whiskey. Fritz was a mean old son-of-a-bitch and worse when he would drink. In fact the whole Fritz clan was no good."

He paused took a hefty swig of water and continued.

"Fritz took to using Louise for a punching bag on a regular basis. Well, one afternoon when the boys were 12 and 14 respectively they came home from school to find their mother naked, most likely raped and beaten unrecognizable on the floor in the living room. Her clothes torn from her and strewn about. The older boy, Edward junior heard Fritz in the kitchen. Edward was well developed for his age and might have excelled in sports had he been able to participate. Realizing Fritz still home he lit out after him, saw him standing there. Well, he bull-rushed him, drove him through the back screen door, across the porch and onto the hard ground below. He managed to get in a few good punches before Fritz got him off and began to return the blows. The younger boy, Rufus, who was slight of build, yelled for him to stop and when Fritz looked up, Rufus had a pistol pointed at him. Don't know who's gun. Best guess would be Fritz's gun. Either way the gun now pointed at Fritz. I don't have the exact detail on this part, but Fritz wound up with six shots in his chest before Edward could get the gun away from Rufus. Didn't matter though, the gun empty now."

The old man rubbed his fingers across his eyes, took more water, a deep breath and continued.

"How they devised the plan I surely don't know, only that they did. They packed an old grip with Fritz's clothes, threw that in the trunk of Fritz's old Plymouth Coupé, loaded him in as well and the gun, drove down to Grover's Dan and pushed the Coupé in. I heard tell the water on the dam side runs thirty to thirty-five feet deep and as far as I know that is where the Plymouth still sits."

"Mr. Thurgood, that is a remarkable story, I can only imagine."

"Yes Mr. Wilcox, it surely is. But, if I may, I'd like to finish."

"Yes, of course, sorry." Jerry motioned for the old man to continue.

"When the boys got back home, about a five mile walk back, they cleaned up their mother and burned the torn up clothes." Thurgood paused and took a deep breath. "I can't imagine finding my mother naked, most likely ravaged and beaten to a pulp, and what I may have done. Anyway, they told her, Fritz up and left and they would be okay now. When the Fritz clan came looking for Leonard, the boys told them the same story, Leonard Fritz had just up and left. A year, maybe or more later, Louise Maywood wrote that document. Why I don't know. I can only imagine she discovered the true story of what happened that day and somehow wanted to protect the boys. The older boy, Edward left soon after. Never said why. Held odd jobs off and on for the rest of his life. Edward died in 1983 from lung cancer. Like everyone from that time

a heavy smoker. I was at his side when he died. He told me this story on his death bed, which means I do believe every word of it."

The empty water bottle still clutched in his hand.

"I was also told by Edward, when Wilbur Mars died, Louise tried to get her document back. When she couldn't, she left town. Hell, left the whole damn area. Retook her maiden name of Eloise Atwill, and changed the younger boy, Rufus Maywood, to Joseph Atwill."

Thurgood looked at Jerry, then at me before he continued.

"When I asked Edward's younger brother, now Joseph Atwill about the story Edward told me on his death bed, he got real quiet, paced the room several times. Finally, turned to me and said simply: 'Rufus Maywood no longer exists' and left the room. We never spoke about any of this again. That boy said it plainly enough, Rufus Maywood and for that matter Louise Maywood no longer existed."

"Well, that certainly answers that question," Jerry said.

"What question, Mr. Wilcox?"

"Evan asked me to see if I could find Louise Maywood and the best I could determine, she just disappeared in 1938. But, you are suggesting she simply changed her name and her younger boy's name to Atwill and you knew her as Eloise Atwill. No wonder we couldn't find her."

"Yes Mr. Wilcox. To be frank, I'm not sure how she managed the paperwork, but she did have a birth certificate in the name of Eloise Atwill. In fact I saw it, still have it. And no doubt, back then, able to get a birth certificate for Joseph Atwill, her youngest child somehow."

"Thank you for clearing that up for us, Mr. Thurgood."

Thurgood paused and looked at both of us, bowed his head and continued.

"Reginald Thurgood II, my father, met Eloise Atwill a couple of years later. They married and after a proper time had me. Yes, the woman you know as Louise Maywood, also my mother, who Leonard Fritz, beat and raped and I swear if those two boys had not taken care of him back then, I surely would have, with or without Frank."

Thurgood's voice broke. He gathered himself and continued.

"Joseph Atwill went on to have a good life, finished school, college and law school. Became a State Senator, and ran for U.S. Congress. Unfortunately, he died not more'n ten year after his older brother. May he rest-in-peace."

Thurgood, after a time, turned and looked at me.

"Son, I'm prepared to give you the \$10,000 for that briefcase and all it's contents. I'll also go your legal fees Mr. Wilcox."

"Mr. Thurgood, you don't have to," I tried to protest.

"Please son, I do have to. It is important to me, to my family, to my mother, Eloise Atwill, my brothers, Joseph Atwill and Edward Maywood, that I do. I'm sure you can understand."

"But, \$10,000?"

"Son, I put up that much for the reward to anyone who found the briefcase." He held up his hand. "Let me explain. When Edward, told me his story I knew I had to get the document back, which Edward knew was in that bag as he called it. Edward said, his mother told him about the document and that a lawyer would look it over for her before she did anything. Promised her he would keep the document locked in his bag until such time as he could review the document and offer his advice on how to proceed. Wilbur Mars died two days later. His reclusive daughter had possession of the briefcase. The daughter refused to talk to me, let alone meet with me. I tried everything short of violence and let me tell you Frank had some mighty peculiar ideas about what we should, or could do. Instead, we kept tabs on the daughter. I would occasionally inquire to no avail. She died last month and when I inquired about the brief case, a niece, I believe, said, and I quote: 'we gave all that shit to a thrift store.' We started searching all the thrift stores in the area. I posted the reward for anyone who found the brief case, which I also believed had the document still inside. Well, here you are."

"Mr. Thurgood, I can't take your money. I only paid twenty dollars and found a ten dollar bill inside. Really, I'm only out ten bucks."

"Tell you what son. you keep that ten dollar bill and I'll still give you the \$10,000 reward. We'll let your Lawyer, Mr. Wilcox here, draw up the papers right now. Plus, you must swear not to ever mention what you saw, you did not, nor do you have copies of that document, or anything I told you here today. I, the family, would be most grateful."

"You're serious?"

"Yes son, I am. Mr. Wilcox, if you would be so kind as to draw up the paper and include an invoice for your services I believe we can settle the matter right here and now. What do you say?"

"Evan, I believe Mr. Thurgood will not bend on this matter, so I suggest I do as he asks and we can proceed."

I looked at Jerry, then at Mr. Thurgood and nodded.

"Would you ask your secretary to send Frank back in please."

Jerry pressed the intercom, delivered the instructions and Frank Rossi entered the room.

"Frank, give him the money, I believe we have a deal."

He looked at me and I nodded. Frank handed me a ban wrapped stack of new 100s stating \$10,000. I set the stack on the desk. The secretary came in and Jerry dictated the details. She left and what seemed like a long time, but probably only a few minutes, she came back. All three of us signed the three copies of the agreement, each of us receiving an original copy per Thurgood's instructions. The secretary notarized the signatures on all three original copies. I handed over the briefcase and swore that everything I found in there, still there, except for that ten dollar bill. Mr. Thurgood handed the briefcase to Frank.

"Gentlemen, thank you for your time. I truly appreciate your understanding and candor in this matter."

He glanced at the invoice Jerry handed him and nodded to Frank, who laid 10 brand new one hundred dollar bills on the desk.

"Mr. Wilcox, before you say anything, I believe that is more than fair for all your efforts in this matter. I can never thank you enough for the successful recovery. Thank you both."

I glanced at the bill, only \$325.00 as the old man got up, secured his cane and put his arm in Frank's, who escorted him out with the brief case in his other hand. I looked at Jerry, who just shook his head. When the door to his office closed and we were alone again, Jerry looked me and smiled.

"So a twenty dollar thrift store find of an old leather briefcase, with some old papers and you just netted \$10,000 for it."

"Lawyer's Bag, if you please. \$10,000 and that 1934 ten dollar bill, may I add. And you got what, a grand for a \$325 fee."

"Right. Yes I did. You heard Thurgood, he thought the fee payment to be fair. Now about that ten dollar bill. Do you have it? Can I see it?"

I pulled the ten out of my jacket pocket and handed the bill to him.

"It's old alright. And surprisingly this ten dollar bill is exactly my fee for your services."

"Really? That ten? Well, the least I can do for your all you efforts. Somehow, old man Thurgood found out you were digging and made contact. I believe I should thank you for that."

Jerry smiled and pointed at me. I picked up the stack of banded bills and Placed them into my jacket pocket.

"Well, Jerry, it has been a pleasure doing business with you."

Jerry sat back in his chair and smiled lifting his index finger to his forehead and saluting. I nodded to the secretary as I left.

Before I entered my bank, I took out five hundred and deposited the rest into my checking account avoiding the paper work. As I walked back home I passed the thrift store and something possessed me to go in.

I took a quick look around, but the shelf I focused on stood empty. However, the lower shelves did have more of those box cases, as the woman had called them. I nodded acceptance and understood how rare my find of a couple of weeks back.

The store seemed almost empty as I walked to the check out and the same woman stood there.

"Hi, remember me? I bought the brief case a couple of weeks back. You know, the one you called a Lawyer's Bag."

She looked at me for a bit, then smiled.

"You mean that Lawyer's Bag you were so found of? Yes, I remember. How can I help you, honey?"

"You said then, you could always use the donation, because I insisted on paying twenty instead of ten for that bag. So, can I just give you a donation?"

"Sure, what are you buying this time?"

"Not buying anything. I just want to give you a donation."

She looked at me and called for another lady, who approached.

"This gentleman wants to make a donation, but he says he doesn't want to buy anything this time."

The other woman looked at me.

"A couple of weeks ago, I bought a brief case and paid double, which she considered a donation, maybe I could add on to that donation."

"I think we could do that. Just give him a receipt for the amount and mark it additional donation for the bag. Let the power's that be figure out the paperwork."

She left and the check out woman grabbed the receipt book. I laid the five brand new 100 dollar bills on the counter. She gasped.

"That must have been some Lawyer's Bag."

"Oh, it certainly turned out to be."

Her hand shook as she handed me the receipt.

I took the receipt and left the store minus my Lawyer's Bag.