

# GOLD DEALER LOSES \$60,000 IN HOLD-UP

## Beaten in John Street Shop— Haul Is Largest in Jewelry District in 15 Years

Three robbers in a carefully planned hold-up got away with \$50,000 in gold and platinum bars and \$1,000 cash after beating Thomas J. Petrucci, a gold refiner, in his shop at 11 John Street yesterday morning. The police said that it was the largest theft in the jewelry district in the last fifteen years.

Mr. Petrucci, who is 56 years old and lives at 321 Eighty-sixth Street, Brooklyn, buys gold dust and filings and smelts it into gold bars, which he sells to jewelers. On Monday a man came in with some gold he wanted refined. The customer arranged to return the following day for the gold bar.

Normally Mr. Petrucci transacts his business from behind a steel and glass partition and the outer door, of steel, is equipped with a peephole and push button so that none but customers can enter the anteroom. Yesterday his pseudo customer returned for his gold bar at 11 A. M.

When he entered the outer room two other men were with him. As the refiner opened the door to the inner office to admit his supposed customer the telephone rang. The gold refiner tried to close the door but the "customer" and his two companions pushed into the office.

### Pistol Fails to Go Off

One of the three had a pistol. Petrucci reached for a pistol he keeps in a drawer and snapped the trigger with the weapon against the body of the foremost man. However, the weapon failed to fire and the robber wrested the pistol from the victim and beat him on

the head with it, inflicting a deep cut. They continued to struggle but the three overpowered the plucky gold dealer and tied him with clothesline they had brought for the purpose. They stuffed two handkerchiefs into his mouth and left after cleaning out the safe of ingots and cash.

Mr. Petrucci rubbed his face in the carpet until he loosened the handkerchiefs and then screamed for help. Louis Gaspari, an optician on the third floor of the building, finally located the sound and went to the floor above to release Petrucci and call the police.

The concentration of police radio cars and detectives at the busy John Street address, just a block from Broadway, caused a large noonday crowd to collect. Mr. Petrucci was dazed and groggy, and he was taken to Beekman Street Hospital in an ambulance.

### Not Covered by Insurance

There detectives from the Old Slip station interviewed him and obtained a meager description of the robbers. Mr. Petrucci furnished the estimate of his losses and said that it was not covered by insurance.

It developed that the telephone call that came when the robbers were about to enter was from his daughter, Mrs. Rosalyn Tasso of 502 Ninetieth Street, Brooklyn. She kept calling when she got no answer and the telephone was answered by Gaspari when he released Mr. Petrucci. Mrs. Tasso hurried to her father's office. She had called to tell him of an improvement in the condition of Mrs. Petrucci, who is ill.

The area in which the hold-up occurred is in the district below what was at one time the "deadline" established years ago by Inspector Thomas F. Byrnes. Below the deadline all suspicious characters were arrested on sight. However, in recent years no one area is reserved for this treatment but the financial district remains a hazardous area for criminals because of the congestion and heavy policing.