

13 Stories III  
Story Options 2022

Option #6: Fred Gruber and Harry Hinton Escape Attempt

In the midst of World War I, the Red Cross looked to prison inmates for aid. "Trustys" were given yarn to knit sweaters for soldiers serving in Europe. Two convicts, Fred Gruber, serving a life sentence for murder, and Harry Hinton, serving a five to fifteen year sentence for robbery, stole enough yarn to make a 25-foot long and 1 inch thick rope. They attached a metal hook at the end that they covered with a sock to deaden the sound of the metal against the iron guard rail on the other side of the wall. Working as dining hall attendants, Gruber and Hinton began their days earlier than the other inmates to prepare breakfast. Once released from their cells at 6:00 a.m. they hurried to the wall and cut the electrical wire that fed the yard lights. They tossed the rope over the wall and made their escape. The warden, discovering the two men missing in the afternoon, used bloodhounds to follow their tracks. The hounds led the guards to the Boise Payette Lumber company at third and Railroad Street. Gruber and Hinton hopped onto the westbound train that left at 11:45. Fred Gruber was arrested in San Diego, California for stealing an automobile, and sent back to the prison in late 1919. Hinton never returned to the penitentiary.

