

## A Forgotten Reminder

Years ago, probably many years ago, I bought a bicycle chain that had a 3-digit combination lock on it. I don't even remember why or when this was purchased... Maybe it was for one of my kids? Maybe it was in my college years before I sold my bicycle to a one-legged man (that is a story for another day).

The bicycle lock came with a tiny reminder of the combination -- a well-crafted tiny metal plate with the 3-digit combination inscribed on it that would easily fit on your keychain. I duly put it on my keychain and carried it around for many years. In fact, I carried it around so long on my keychain that I finally couldn't remember what the little plate meant! I remember asking my wife: "Why do I have a little metal plate with 3 numbers on my keychain?" She usually remembers the things I forget, but this time she did not remember either. Finally, a year or two ago, as I was downsizing the keys on my keychain, I removed it from my keychain and from my life. I was proud of myself. And I never missed it... until now.

In the last few days, we were cleaning out our garage/shed, looking through piles of things that hadn't been disturbed for many years, and I found my locking bicycle chain... with the 3-digit combination lock. I felt a little like Indiana Jones unearthing a long-forgotten Egyptian artifact. A little light went on in my mind -- THIS is what the little 3-digit plate was for! But... what did I do with that little plate with the 3 numbers on it?

I looked in all the obvious places, and although I found lots of other interesting treasures, I could not find the little plate. Last night, I sat on the front porch and played a game of dialing up various 3 digit combinations I thought I remembered only to have the lock reject each one. I know, in the great scheme of things, who cares, right? It is probably a \$5 bicycle lock at Wal-Mart... But what frustrates me most is that I carried around a 3-digit number in my pocket for 20 years -- I probably looked at it every day as I used my keys -- and yet now I can't recall this number when I finally need it! Am I that unobservant in life?

I'm pretty sure Sherlock Holmes would have noticed and remembered any 3-digit number that happened to be on his keychain -- and he never would have forgotten it. In fact, he would probably have used that number to solve an important murder case.

Me? No, I probably will never remember it. Unlike Sherlock, my philosophy of life usually is: "If it is written down somewhere, then why should I bother to remember it?"

So, be advised... if you are murdered somehow with this bicycle chain, don't expect me to solve the mystery of your death by opening the lock. I just do not function on that level.

By the way, would any of you like to buy a slightly used 3-digit bicycle chain lock?

(Originally written: September 22, 2018)

[Post-script: Almost a year later, I FOUND IT! I now know the combination!]