

THE KILLER SPEAKS

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WRITTEN FOR AND RELEASED BY CENTRAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

although I was sure he was wrong in some respects. "It looks all the more like I'm guilty, doesn't it?" He shook his head. "No, no, Strickland. I'm not trying to drag you into it again. You were up stairs. Several witnesses proved it. You couldn't have come down the light well to the garden, because Tony and the servant girl were sitting in the kitchen then and would have seen you. Our alibi isn't broken. Don't worry about what Coroner Silver may think. He's young yet."

"How about a motive?" I inquired. "Why was he killed? If there seems to be no reason for his death, couldn't he have just encountered some river rat, like I did?"

"Do you think we ought to blame it on some river rat and forget it?"

"That looks like your best bet," I told him. "You haven't even established a motive—and I thought that was always the first thing the police have to do."

"Why do you keep saying we don't know the motive? Why do you think there wasn't any?"

"Why, I—I didn't think there was one." I said in confusion. "You haven't said—"

"We don't go around telling everything we have discovered. As a matter of fact, the newspapers already have mentioned one motive. We tried to keep it quiet, but it's out now. You forget, maybe that Markham was a jeweler. He had jewels on him."

I gasped in surprise. "Jewels!"

"Yes," he nodded. "Diamonds." As we drew near the door again he wore a half grin, amused by my consternation. "You will discover more about it at the inquest tomorrow. The motive may have been robbery."

"But, if he had jewels on him, the robber didn't get them. How could it have been robbery? It isn't logical."

"Nothing is logical. Frankly, Strickland, the case is a hash." (to Be Continued)

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READ THIS FIRST:
I, Bill Strickland, am suspected by Coroner Silver in the murder of Alfred Markham, rich young jeweler who was my friend in the garden of the Rio Vista club. Captain of Detectives Clyde McDonald, going over the scene of the death with me the next night, investigates the footprints of a man who had attacked me there shortly after Markham's death.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN
"It's a cinch the guy who attacked you was trying to hide something," said one of the detectives with Captain McDonald. "What I can't figure is, he came in a boat but the body was dragged away from the river."
"Markham wasn't killed beside the river," I objected.
"No, I mean, he was dragged from the rose arbor, where he was killed. Toward the clubhouse instead of toward the river."
Captain McDonald rolled his ever-present cigar from one side of his mouth to the other. "Even if the killer came from the clubhouse there's no reason why he would want to drag the body back the way he came, is there?"
No one answered his question. He started back toward the lily pond and began studying the ground there with his flashlight. "What do you hope to find?" I asked, coming up behind him.
"I was thinking that the murderer was going somewhere with that body. He dropped it. That means he was interrupted—probably by Mr. Montclair coming out the door. He must have ducked somewhere to hide. I'm looking for his tracks at the side of the path, but so many people have walked around here I guess it's hopeless. There aren't any tracks of hobnailed shoes, and I could have sworn there weren't any here last night. It's hard to tell without good lights. This place ought to have electric lights. How is it lighted, anyway?"
"I thought there used to be a string of electric globes overhead," said the detective named Sullivan. The captain called to the man on guard at the boat landing. "Oh, Charlie, ever been past here on the river boat at night? Ever see any lights in this garden?"
Charlie yelled back, "Sure, there's a string of lights on a wire clear across the court. Must be right near your head."
The captain waved the beam of his flashlight skyward. "That's funny. There sure isn't any wire here now, or any lights, either." The beam of light swung around to the wall of the south wing of the clubhouse. "But there's something interesting!"
A moment later he was standing next to the wall, fingering a short wire that dangled from an iron staple at the height of the second story windows. "Somebody pulled the wire down. This is the end of it." He glanced toward the north wing, throwing his light that way. "And it passed pretty close over the spot where Markham was killed. See the other end over by that window across the way. I wonder if the wire could have been pulled down last night . . . if it could have had any connection with the murder—"

"I—I couldn't say," I stammered. "It—it sounds fantastic."
"You never can tell," the captain persisted. "This may be important. I'm going to get in touch with some of the servants and find out if this happened during the party. I don't see the wire lying around anywhere."
We searched the ground for several minutes with flashlights, but there was no wire. Then he went indoors to the telephone. He located the number he wanted. "Hello," he said after a pause. "Is this Tony Pappini? Do you know anything about the electric light wire across the court back of the clubhouse? . . . It's broken! . . . No, it's broken! . . . No, I don't want to fix it. I want to know who broke it. . . . Well, then, when did you see it last? Were the lights

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



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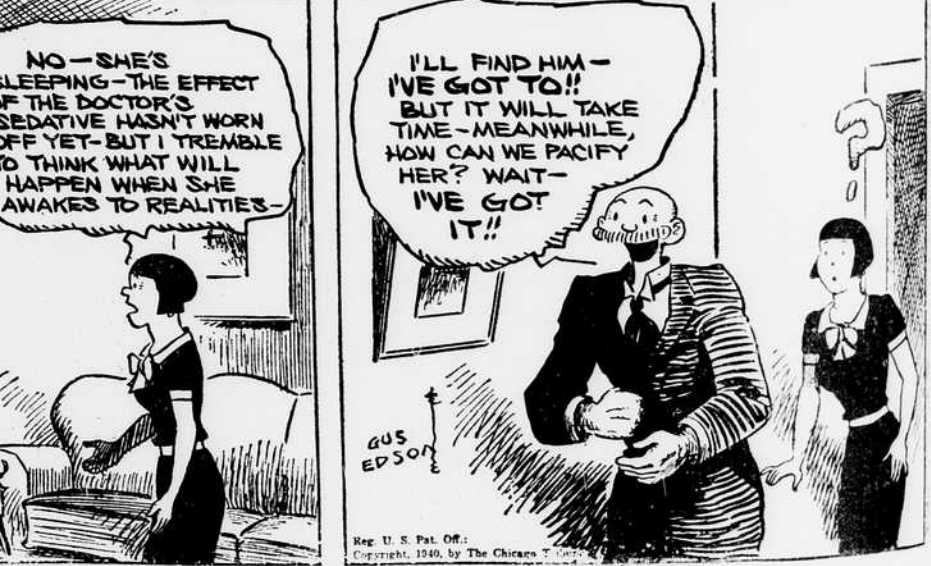
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