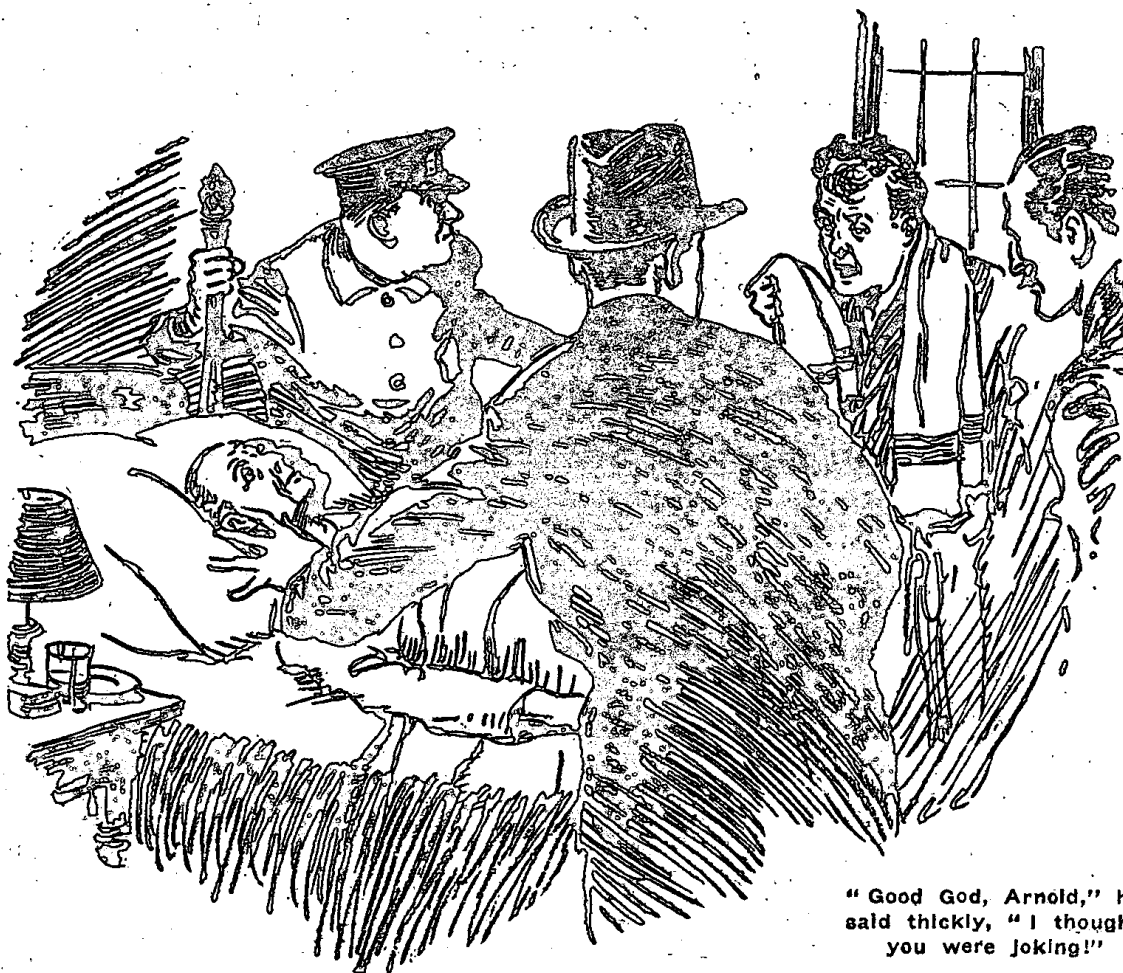




*Can You Spot the One Clue That Will Break the Case of the Foot-Print
on the Side of a Dead Man's House? You Can if You Are*

Too Dumb to Be Fooled

By Robert Arthur

THIS is why I am peeved at Solly Evans.

It is a big murder, this murder of Andrew Jenkins. Solly and I, Sergeant Ed Gore, are doing our morning patrol tour in L. C. P. P. C. 33, which is Lake City Police Patrol Car 33.

Being only a ordinary officer, Solly

is driving. Being a sergeant, I am thinking.

Solly is a big, thick mug with a flat, expressionless pan, and even for a cop he is dumb. But I do not mind; he is a good driver, and I have the brains.

And then, when we are just at the corner of High Road and North Boulevard, the radio starts in.

"Calling Car 33," it says. "Calling Car 27. Calling Car 41. Go at once to 1717 North Boulevard. Signal thirty. Signal thirty. Calling Car 33. . . ."

We had to slow for traffic at the turn. Before we pick up speed again I see a guy dashing down a lawn for us. It is Anderson Hopkins, who is Lake City's D. A. He hops on our running-board.

"Make it snappy, men!" he yells. "Thirty is murder! And it's Andrew Jenkins' home. Let's go!"

Solly puts one big foot on the accelerator, and 33 leaps like a jackrabbit kicked in the pants.

This Andrew Jenkins is a big shot business man in Lake City. He owns a couple of big factories. He has a million dollars, a heart of granite, and two sons, Hank and Arnold. Arnold is a slim, dark, snaky kind of guy you expect to abduct with the funds on a dark, rainy night. Hank is big and shaggy. He played football for Yale until one year he was tossed off the team for dirty playing. He looks dumb, but he isn't because he got through school with good enough marks. He is always having accidents while drunk, picking fights with taxi drivers, and making girls walk home.

In two minutes we skid to a stop in the gravel drive in front of the Jenkins' shack. Behind us I see 27 and 32 coming up fast. The D. A. is up the steps before we stop, and I and Solly are on his heels. There's a butler waiting, a tall solemn geezer with a dead-fish pan.

"What is it?" the D. A. yells. "Who's killed?"

"Mr. Jenkins, sir," the butler says, cool as an Eskimo igloo, "has been murdered."

He leads us inside into a library, where Arnold Jenkins is waiting.

"I caught the police broadcast at

breakfast, Mr. Jenkins," the D. A. snaps. "And hopped a prowler car. Your father's been killed?"

"Murdered!" Arnold Jenkins answers crisply. "Norfolk discovered his body at nine o'clock when taking him breakfast. He called me, and I notified Police Headquarters at once. It's obviously murder."

"Right," says the D. A. "Who else is in the house?"

"My brother Henry, Norfolk, and the cook, Martha."

"They know anything?"

"They say not."

The boys from 27 and 32 come busting in, and the D. A. waves 'em back.

"Watch the doors, boys," he says. "Front and back. Where is the body, Mr. Jenkins?"

"This way." Arnold Jenkins leads us out of the library and down a hall. "It's a first floor bedroom. Nothing has been touched."

On the way I look at Solly. His round blue eyes are bulging out with excitement.

We come to a stop. Arnold Jenkins opens a door. We look in.

Old Andrew Jenkins was inside, stretched out on a bed, staring upwards with open eyes. His throat had been cut.

AFTER a couple of seconds we stepped in and looked around.

"Hmm," the D. A. said. "No struggle. Weapon not visible. Probably attacked in his sleep and failed to awaken."

He and I began our investigation by examining the room, and around the bed particular. Beside the bed was a small table, an alarm clock set for twelve, on which the alarm was slightly run down, and an empty saucer.

Also a black pill box with a dozen capsules in it.

The D. A. put all this down in a notebook.

"Also," he said, "deceased is an elderly man. We'll have trouble deciding how long he has been dead. *Rigor mortis* is tricky in such cases. However, he's been dead a fairly long time. Sergeant, call the medical examiner for me. Also report to headquarters, and tell them I'm supervising this case."

It wasn't in his department, but he had the pull to do it if he wanted. I saluted.

"Norfolk," Arnold Jenkins put in, "will show you the telephone."

I followed the flunky down the hall. Already I was beginning to put two and three together. For a man whose father had just been murdered, Arnold Jenkins was a cool customer. And the butler. There was something about his face I didn't like. He was cool too—a human icicle. I had a hunch somebody knew a lot about this business we weren't being told.

I put through the call and then went back to the bedroom. Solly was there alone, standing at one of the four big French windows that led out on a long porch.

"Gee, Ed," he whispered to me, "this is sure a big case."

"You bet it is, Solly," I told him. "You just watch me, though, and you'll see how a big case is handled. It's a deep one. I'll tell you that. Tough."

"I bet it is," he said. "You think you and the D. A. can break it, sarge?"

"The D. A. is a smart guy," I told Solly, "and if I miss anything he'll catch it. You'll see how it's done."

The D. A. and Arnold Jenkins were out on the porch. The D. A. was pointing up at one of the tall white posts

that held up a second story porch that rang along above this one. It was snowy white, but a black mark had dirtied it halfway up.

"That mark was not there yesterday, I'm positive," Arnold Jenkins said.

"It looks," the D. A. muttered, "to me as though a man's foot had rubbed against that post."

"That's a strange way for a porch pillar to get dirty," the dead man's son answered.

"Maybe so, maybe not," the D. A. told him. "Where is your brother Henry?"

"I think he's coming now," Arnold Jenkins said. "Yes, here he is."

Henry Jenkins, wearing a bathrobe, appeared in the French windows behind me. On his face there was a look of blank horror.

"Good God, Arnold," he said thickly, "I thought you were joking!"

"Joking isn't in my line, Henry," his brother answered him coldly. "Pull yourself together. This is the district attorney."

The young man was suffering from an awful hangover. I could tell. I've seen enough of them. We could all see he must have made a big night of it.

"I'll—I'll be all right in a minute," he said. "As soon as I get something to eat. I'm—badly shaken up by this."

He dropped into a porch chair.

"I'm sorry," he said to the D. A. "I didn't—didn't anticipate what was going to happen. So I got tight last night."

The butler hurried away to bring him some black coffee.

"Oooh," Henry Jenkins groaned. "I can hardly—hardly realize this thing, my head hurts so. I'm afraid I must have been completely blotto last night."

While the butler was fixing the coffee, the D. A. went ahead with questioning both the men. The points he learned, as I explained carefully to Solly, were these:

Old man Jenkins had gone to bed at ten thirty.

Arnold and Henry were together in the downstairs living room until ten fifty, when Henry made a telephone call to some friends, suggesting they go partying. At eleven he went upstairs to dress.

Henry came downstairs at eleven twenty, dressed, his friends called for him at eleven thirty, and he left. He was with them until three. At three they brought him home, out on his feet. The butler helped Henry upstairs and put him to bed. And he was ready to swear Henry was unable to move a finger for himself. We could have guessed that much from the way he looked next morning.

Arnold went to bed at eleven forty-five, after Henry had left.

Norfolk went to bed at twelve, after locking up and turning out the lights. After putting Henry to bed when he rolled home at three, Norfolk went back to bed again.

The cook hadn't heard anything during the night either, according to Norfolk. She was his wife, and he should know.

II

THE D. A. frowned at the three of them — Henry, Arnold, and Norfolk.

"All right," he said. "We've got to have a motive. You don't know *who* killed Andrew Jenkins. Maybe you can guess *why* he was killed?"

Henry shook his head. Arnold shook his head. Norfolk shook his head.

"Damn it!" the D. A. exploded.

"Haven't you *any* ideas? For instance, has your father gotten the best of anybody in a business deal lately? That might be an angle."

Arnold Jenkins smiled frostily.

"If we investigated everybody father cheated on a business deal," he said, "it would take until doomsday."

"Well, how about a quarrel?" the D. A. wanted to know. "I've heard he had a nasty temper—with all due respect for the dead. Who'd he quarrel with last?"

"I don't know of any quarrels that might have any significance," Arnold Jenkins said quickly.

I saw Norfolk hesitate. He opened his mouth and shut it again. And I saw him shoot a crafty look at the two brothers.

"Go on, guy, spill it!" I ordered him.

"Perhaps," he said, "we should tell Mr. Hopkins about last night's argument."

A distinct trace of annoyance flashed over Arnold Jenkins' face. But Henry Jenkins finished off a cup of black coffee with a gulp and set it down.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "That's right. Perhaps we should, Norfolk."

"I'm sure the matter is completely extraneous to this investigation," Arnold Jenkins said testily.

The D. A.'s face lit up and he opened his notebook again.

"I think not," he said grimly. "In fact I consider it very pertinent to this investigation. The details, please, Mr. Jenkins!"

With the D. A. prodding him with questions, young Arnold Jenkins finally came across with the whole story. I took Solly to one side and explained to him in easy words what it was all about. It went like this.

Last night there had been practically

a free-for-all fight between Hank, Arnold and old man Jenkins. All of them have nasty tempers and dispositions. The language got pretty bitter and vindictive.

Old Jenkins started by bawling Henry out over his drunkenness and extravagance. Then he turned on Arnold and pitched into him for some business reasons—because he had fired some men at one of the factories.

Henry had gotten back by saying there was no use him working: he had such a good business man—his brother—in the family that there wasn't really room for two. That made Arnold say that he approved entirely of Hank's drinking and reckless driving, inasmuch as it was sure to kill him quickly, which would be a blessing to the whole family and the world.

Henry came back with the crack that a business man who used underhanded tactics was worse than a drunkard, who harmed himself only. The old man got mad at Henry for saying that, taking it as a reflection on himself. Henry told his father that if the shoe fitted he could wear it.

The old man turned on Arnold and told him he would brook no deviations from orders. Production was to be increased, starting immediately. Arnold told him he was crazy. That the Jenkins factories would be bankrupt in six months if they did.

Old Andrew Jenkins almost frothed at the mouth. He said that his son could get out of the business entirely. If he didn't, he'd throw him out. Arnold came back by saying if he did he wouldn't have any business inside of a year.

"Well," the D. A. said, "it sounds like a very pretty fight. And where does Norfolk enter into it?"

"He came in," Arnold Jenkins said,

"as a referee, in a manner of speaking. Father said we'd have *his* opinion about the whole affair—whether to expand or reduce production."

So the D. A. turned to the impassive flunky.

"What'd you tell him, Norfolk?" he asked.

"I advised him against expansion, sir," the butler answered.

"Well!" the D. A. exclaimed. "So you advised a millionaire business man his ideas were wrong, eh? You knew all about it, eh?"

"Yes, sir. I explained that in my opinion America already had too great a producing capacity. I further stated that I considered it likely all production would soon be taken over by the government, anyway."

"You did, huh? And what happened then?"

"It was like exploding dynamite, sir," Norfolk said calmly. "Mr. Jenkins quite lost his head. He accused me of being a communist, a radical, a bolshevist, and he told me I was discharged."

"And what was the final outcome of it all?" the D. A. demanded of Arnold.

"Rather painful," the young man admitted reluctantly. "Father went to bed in a towering rage. He swore he would remove me from his business and cut me out of his will with five thousand dollars. He swore he'd cut Hank also out with five thousand, and we were both to get out of the house inside twenty-four hours. Norfolk, whom he had down in his will for fifty thousand dollars in consideration of long service, was not only discharged but was to lose the fifty thousand bequest."

"And you really think," the D. A. asked, looking him in the eye, "that

quarrel is not pertinent to this murder investigation?"

"Certainly not," Arnold Jenkins said, but not very certainly. "We didn't take father seriously, of course."

"No?" the D. A. said sarcastically. "I think we can begin looking for the murderer right here in this house."

THE Jenkins boys seemed to want to argue, but the D. A. shut 'em up and sent 'em into the dining room to get breakfast.

"See, Solly," I said, "how deep this thing is? Hank now might have killed his father to save maybe five hundred thousand dollars he was due to get in the will. Arnold might have done the same thing. He had five hundred thousand at stake. And Norfolk, the butler, had fifty thousand at stake, coming to him after thirty, forty years' hard work. It would look like a lot for him to lose."

"Gosh," Solly whispered, "things sure get complicated, don't they? How you ever figure you'll find out the facts in this case, sarge?"

"Just wait and watch, Solly," I told him. "You'll see."

"Come on, boys," the D. A. said, when he'd gotten rid of the two young men. "We'll take a prow around upstairs."

Upstairs we found a hall ran the length of the house, and several rooms opened off it. On the north side of the house there were three bedrooms. One wasn't in use. The boys had the other two. Each had a private bath. Each also opened onto the long porch that ran above the one outside the dead man's windows.

We went out on the porch and leaned over the rail. The D. A. pointed down.

"I'm damned," he said, "if I don't

think that if a man were to let himself down by a rope from here his foot would likely hit that post. And that would explain the dirt mark."

We looked closer. The fresh paint on the rail was a bit marred. And in Henry's bedroom we found a rope. It was really a lariat, and was hung on the wall for a decoration. But when we took it down and uncoiled it we found tiny specks of white paint caught in the fibers near one end.

"So!" the D. A. said grimly. "Let's look a little further."

There were a bunch of shoes in the closet. We looked 'em over closely. One had a very faint splotch of white along the sole of the toe. And on the side of the shoe was a round, dark mark.

"Paint on the sole," the D. A. muttered. "And a drop of blood."

Along with the lariat, an Indian hunting knife that could have cut a man's throat as easily as a loaf of bread was hanging in a sheath. We got it down. There was no blood on it.

"But no dust either," the D. A. remarked. "And it looks too damned clean. See here."

On the rough horn handle were two tiny threads. They might have been threads from a bath towel used to wipe it after somebody had washed it—washed blood off it, say.

We looked, but didn't find anything more in that room. The next room was Arnold Jenkins'. We combed that, too. Nothing doing in there.

The D. A. turned to me.

"Well, Sergeant," he said. "Pretty conclusive evidence, don't you think?"

"Pretty damned conclusive," I told him. "It would take a pretty dumb guy to leave all that evidence, no matter how much hurry he was in."

"Something of the sort occurred to

me," he mentioned. "Let's go down to the library. I want to think this out."

III

IN the library the D. A. dropped into an easy chair and began to study his notebook. I took another chair and was just getting ready to do some figuring myself when Solly came over, his eyes almost popping.

"Sarge!" he whispered hoarsely. "I got it! I got it!"

"The itch, Solly?" I asked him humorously.

"No. Who done this!" he told me. "I been thinking."

"Dangerous work for a cop, Solly," I tells him serious. "Better stick to shooting it out with mobsters. It's safer."

"No, listen, an' I'll explain it to you," he says eagerly. "It hit me all of a sudden, right between the eyes, I know who killed him!"

"No, Solly!" I exclaims. "Do tell me, quick!"

"It's like this," he whispers. "I just been considering over what we found up in that Hank's room. Now that paint on th' rope—he might of tied that rope to th' rail there where th' paint was dirtied!"

"So he might," I agreed. "Then what?"

"Well, look," Solly goes on. "He went upstairs at eleven, an' he comes down at eleven twenty. If he dressed fast an' didn't shave or wash much, he could dress in maybe six minutes. That would leave him fourteen."

"Absolutely correct," I admitted.

"So," Solly hurried on breathless, "he's a strong guy. Suppose, knowin' th' old man was asleep, an' bein' desperate to save that five hundred thousand' he was bein' cut out of th' will, he ties that rope to the rail and shinnies

down it in a hurry. He has that huntin' knife in his teeth. He goes in those big windows, and he slashes th' old man's throat with th' knife. Then he wipes th' knife, maybe with a handkerchief or somethin', and shinnies back up th' rope. But unknowin', he hits that post with his foot—that's where he gets a white mark on his shoe—and he gets one drop of blood on his shoe too. He doesn't notice that. Back up, he coils up th' rope an' hangs it up again, washes th' knife good and dries it on a towel. Then he puts it back. Then, thinkin' he hasn't left any clues, he goes out on a party. In order to prove he's innocent, he gets tight as a drum, so that when he gets back he's helpless, and so couldn't have did it.

"Ain't that a lulu of a scheme, sarge?"

"It's a beaut, Solly," I concedes. "Th' guy that thought that up is bright."

"Shall I go arrest him?" he wants to know, all eagerness.

"Not yet, Solly," I tells him, mysterious. "We got to wait."

"Wait for what?"

"You'll see, Solly," I tells him, grinning to think how surprised he's gonna be when we arrest the murderer of Andrew Jenkins. "There's more to come."

"Gee," he says, "I guess there's a lot to learn about this detectin' business I never guessed. Well, anyway, I'm gonna keep a eye on him so he doesn't take it on the lam."

He goes on out to watch Hank Jenkins eat breakfast just as the D. A. called me over.

"Sergeant," he says, "I think we're agreed about that evidence we found."

"I think so," I told him.

"Evidence like that," he went on, "is easy to plant. Awfully easy. It

wouldn't surprise me to find even more pointing in that same direction."

"Nor me," I agreed.

"The trouble with framing a man, though," the D. A. said, "is that the evidence has to be obvious, and it takes a pretty stupid man to leave obvious evidence. On the other hand, there's no evidence against anybody else. So far as the evidence goes, Hank Jenkins killed his father in that interval when he was supposed to be dressing—which would be possible. Now if we could only establish the time of death accurately we'd know whether he did or not. After eleven thirty it would be impossible for him to have done it. But after twelve it would be possible for anybody *but* Hank to kill old Jenkins—with particular reference to Arnold, or even Norfolk."

"It sure would," I agreed. "And I got my ideas who it was."

"So have I," he said. "But we can't get around the evidence that points to Hank Jenkins. And if any more of it turns up—"

Norfolk, the butler, came in.

"Beg pardon, sir," he says. "But Martha, my wife, has just discovered that someone burned something in the bake stove last night. It would appear to have been a handkerchief with blood on it, sir."

The D. A. gave me a look.

"And I have it noted down in my book that Hank Jenkins was observed to go out to the kitchen for ice and for a drink at eleven thirty last night, just before leaving!" he said despairingly.

WE looked at the stove. It was a little coal burning stove that Martha, the cook, a big red-faced woman, used only for baking. Norfolk lifted the round iron lid and we looked in. On the cold coals was a

thin sheet of ash. On the edge of the iron fire box a tiny corner of white cloth hadn't been burned. On it was a tiny spot that might have been blood.

"Someone," the D. A. said, "came out here last night and dropped a handkerchief on the live coals."

Solly Evans peered interestedly into the stove.

"My old lady has one like this, only not so new," he said. "She likes to bake with a coal fire."

"I wouldn't bake with any other," Martha the cook said excitedly.

"That's what my wife says," Solly agreed.

We went back into the library, me and the D. A. very thoughtful. Even Solly was subdued. Until suddenly he burst out:

"Well, sarge, does that prove my theory or doesn't it? Didn't I say he wiped the knife with a handkerchief? Then he had to burn th' handkerchief!"

"Yes, Solly, it proves something or other," I answered, a little sore.

"And that ain't all," Solly went on. "That stove now. I can tell you something about those stoves. They—"

"Solly, will you kindly shut up and let me think!" I barked, exasperated. "You're too dumb to realize it, but there is some tough thinking to be done on this case yet."

"Okay, if you say so," he mumbles, and clams up.

I have the whole thing figured out to my satisfaction soon—who done it, what the evidence meant, and all; but there is still one thing all to the bad. It is impossible to prove the evidence we found is phony, which any guy who is not totally deficient in mentality can see it is. Nobody could be so dumb as to leave all *that* evidence. And still there ain't a clew pointing towards the guy I am sure did leave it.

"It's a question of time, Sergeant," the D. A. says. "Yes, damn it, the time. If we could only find some way to establish definitely the time of death—"

But we couldn't, even when the M. E. came a few minutes later. He looked at the body, then shook his head.

"I'd hate to guess," he said, "I really would. Old people who die violent deaths show deceptive indications. Rigor may or may not set in quickly. Anywhere from six to ten hours is the best I can do."

"I was afraid of that," the D. A. sighed gloomily.

"I see the old fellow suffered from a bad digestion," the M. E. said casually, picking up the black pill box on the bedside table. "I suppose he had to take one of these things just before he was killed," he added, looking at the half empty glass of water.

"What's that?" the D. A. exclaimed.

"I say it seems he took one during the night before he was murdered. Sometimes the poor devils who suffer from this type of indigestion have to be awakened at night to take their capsules. It's rather inconvenient."

"Sergeant," the D. A. said tensely, "get that butler here quick!"

I popped out. I found Norfolk and Solly Evans in the kitchen, having some kind of a gab feast. I heard 'em say something about "going out early" before I broke up the huddle.

"Untangle, boys," I said. "Neither of you is going out or any place else, early."

"Sarge," Solly beams, "this guy and me has been comparing notes, and, say, I wasn't mistaken. Lemme tell you I can prove who killed—"

"Stow it, Solly, bury it," I said peevishly. "This is no time for foolish-

ness. Come along, butler, the D. A. wants you."

I took him into the dead man's bedroom, Solly following along, looking disappointed, but of course I didn't have time to kid him along now.

"Norfolk," the D. A. said, fixing the flunky with his eyes, "tell us about Mr. Jenkins' treatment for his indigestion."

Norfolk looked startled.

"His treatment, sir?"

"How often did he take these pills?" the D. A. demanded, pointing to the box.

The butler looked flustered.

"Well, sir," he said, "Mr. Jenkins ate only breakfast and dinner, and he was required to take one capsule an hour after each meal, then two more at two-hour intervals after the first. That meant that, eating breakfast at nine, he took a pill at ten, then twelve, then two. Eating dinner at seven, he took a capsule at eight, at ten and at twelve."

"At twelve?" the D. A. said, his eyes half shut.

"Yes, sir," Norfolk said. "As he retired early it was necessary for him to wake to take it. He kept this small alarm clock beside his bed. Each evening when I turned the bed clothes down I wound the clock and put the glass of water on the table. In the saucer I would put a pill. He would wake at twelve when the alarm clock rang, turn off the alarm, take the capsule with a swallow of water, and fall asleep again."

"Thanks, you can go now," the D. A. said. The butler beat it with relief.

The D. A. picked up the clock.

"The alarm is set for twelve, and the alarm wind has slightly run down," he said. "The pill in the saucer is gone."

Some of the water has been swallowed. The inference is unmistakable."

"That he was alive at twelve," the M. E. said. "Yes, of course. He woke and took the capsule. That proves he died *after* twelve—maybe any time up to three thirty."

"He was alive at twelve," the D. A. said exultantly, "and that means we know who killed him!"

IV

HE was right. Solly looked blank, but of course I got it. We knew Hank Jenkins was out of the picture from eleven thirty onward, which made the evidence against him phony. Which meant—well, I knew what it meant!

The D. A. turned toward us with a grim smile.

"Do you get it, boys?" he asked.

I nodded. Solly nodded. Even Solly could see it by now, it was so plain that somebody, seeing Hank come in at three dead to the world had taken the opportunity to kill old Jenkins and frame Hank for it.

"Then go get him and bring him here, boys!" the D. A. snapped.

We went toward the dining room, without seeing anybody. Hank and Arnold had finished their breakfast and disappeared.

"Scout around, Solly," I said, "and have your gun ready. I'll look in the kitchen."

Solly headed toward the library and I took the kitchen. Out there in a little pantry I found Norfolk the butler. I closed in on him. He was just pouring himself a drink from a bottle.

"Is that whisky?" I asked him.

He nodded and even ventured a sort of weak smile.

"Detective work must be very exciting, Mr. Sergeant," he said. "I've

always wanted to meet real detectives."

"Bo, you're gonna have plenty of chance," I hinted.

He held the glass towards me with a shaking hand.

"What—what do you mean?" he faltered.

"Before they electrocute you," I growled at him.

He gave a sort of gurgle and his hand went up in alarm. The whisky hit me square in the top button of my uniform. I smelled like a speakeasy.

I was mad. I grabbed a hold of him.

"Come along!" I snarled. "This is the pay-off."

He started to babble something, but I shut him up and dragged him along to the bedroom. Because I had figured from the very first who was guilty. Who knew Hank was so tight he couldn't wake up? Who knew the opportunity was made to order for framing him? Who saw his chance to kill the old man and have his legacy, and get somebody else pinned with it? Who but Norfolk?

With one hand around his skinny windpipe, I shoved Norfolk ahead of me into the dead man's bedroom. The D. A. was there, and the M. E., and Arnold Jenkins, and two of the boys from 27. Solly wasn't in sight. Neither had Hank Jenkins appeared yet.

"Sergeant," he yelled when I came in with my prisoner, "what the hell are you doing, choking that man?"

"I'm not choking him, sir," I beamed, letting up on Norfolk's windpipe so he could breathe a little. "I'm just making sure he won't get away. Here he is, sir—th' guy who killed Mr. Jenkins."

The D. A. turned a little purple.

"Are you crazy, Sergeant?" he belted. "Let that man go! And arrest this man immediately for murder!"

He pointed to Arnold Jenkins.

He was pointing when Solly Evans came lumbering into the room. Over Solly's shoulder, like a bag of potatoes, Hank Jenkins was slung, as cold as an iced fish.

"Here he is, sir," Solly said. "He gave me an argument, but I brought him. Here's th' guy who done the murder, sir!"

FOR a minute the D. A. was silent. Then he broke loose. Before he finished I had let the butler loose and my face was getting red. Solly, looking badly puzzled, had put Hank Jenkins down. The M. E. brought him to with spirits of ammonia. But Solly didn't seem to be getting it. He just looked blank.

"Of all the imbeciles I have ever seen," the D. A. yelled, "you two take the cake!"

"But" Solly began, "th' evidence—"

"The evidence!" the D. A. gritted. "For you, Sergeant Gore, there is some excuse. The butler undoubtedly was a possible suspect, though anyone with common sense should have realized that only Arnold Jenkins could formulate such a diabolical plan for killing his father and getting rid of his brother, too, via a murder charge.

"But you, Officer Evans! It seems that you can't see when a frame-up is being pulled.

"If this case had been left in your hands Arnold Jenkins would have succeeded. Properly estimating the intelligence of at least some of the police, he, after awakening to see his brother brought home drunk and helpless at three in the morning, faked the clews of the rope, the spots on Henry's shoes, and the mark on the porch pillar so that the train of evidence against

Henry was unmistakable. Do you comprehend, Evans?

"As a final touch, the murderer had to get rid of a bloody handkerchief used to wipe the murder weapon. And, recalling that his brother had been alone in the kitchen at eleven thirty, he even twisted this fact to his purpose by going out and dropping the handkerchief on the live coals in the bake stove, so that it would seem his brother had so disposed of it hours earlier.

"And now do you see the scheme by which Arnold Jenkins tried to railroad his brother to the electric chair, Officer Evans?"

"Nope," Solly said stubbornly, shaking his head. "That ain't right."

"What isn't right?" the D. A. howled.

"About that handkerchief," Solly insisted. "You was just sayin', Mr. Hopkins, that the old fellow was killed after Hank came home tight at three in th' morning. But if that handkerchief was put in th' stove after three A.M. in th' morning it wouldn't never of burned up.

"You see, Mr. Hopkins, like I kept tellin' th' sergeant here, I knowed all along this Hank was guilty, after I seen that evidence in his room. Yes, sir! And when we found th' handkerchief in th' stove, then I was certain.

"Because that coal stove is just like one my old lady—my wife—has, and they go out early if you don't put more coal in 'em. If that stove was used at dinner time it would of gone out long before three A.M. in th' morning. In fact it would be gone out about midnight. So if anybody burned a handkerchief in it they had to do it before midnight. That's how I knew this guy Hank put th' handkerchief in when he was out there at eleven thirty—"

He was interrupted. Hank Jenkins

tried to get out of the room. And Solly hit him again—one clean swing on the button.

"So you see," Solly said, while Hank Jenkins lay on th' floor, cold as a fish again, "this is got to be th' guy that killed th' old man!"

HE was right, too! What had Hank Jenkins done but leave those other clews himself to make it look as if he was being framed!

He figured nobody could be dumb enough to believe *he* was dumb enough to leave so much plain evidence behind him. He was cagy; knew we would figure it just exactly as we did. Actually, he had killed the old man just the way Solly had doped it out. But he

made it look as if he was being double-crossed. That would prove he was innocent. Then, if he could frame some evidence on Arnold he could have all the property.

That is why I am peeved at Solly Evans, the dumbbell. The D. A. smelled the whisky Norfolk had spilled on me.

"If you did less drinking on duty you might be able to appreciate the information your subordinates gather, Sergeant Gore!" he said coolly. "I'll see matters are properly adjusted, however."

So now I am Officer Gore of Car 33, and it is Sergeant Evans who sits beside me. And I am pretty peeved to think of it because Solly, the big lunk, was just too dumb to be fooled.

Two Thrilling Novelettes

The Kid Steals a Star

By ERLE STANLEY GARDNER

The Patent Leather Kid fights daring racketeers that are cleaning up a million a week! Their scheme is diabolically clever—but the Kid is clever, too.

Four with One Face

By HERMAN LANDON

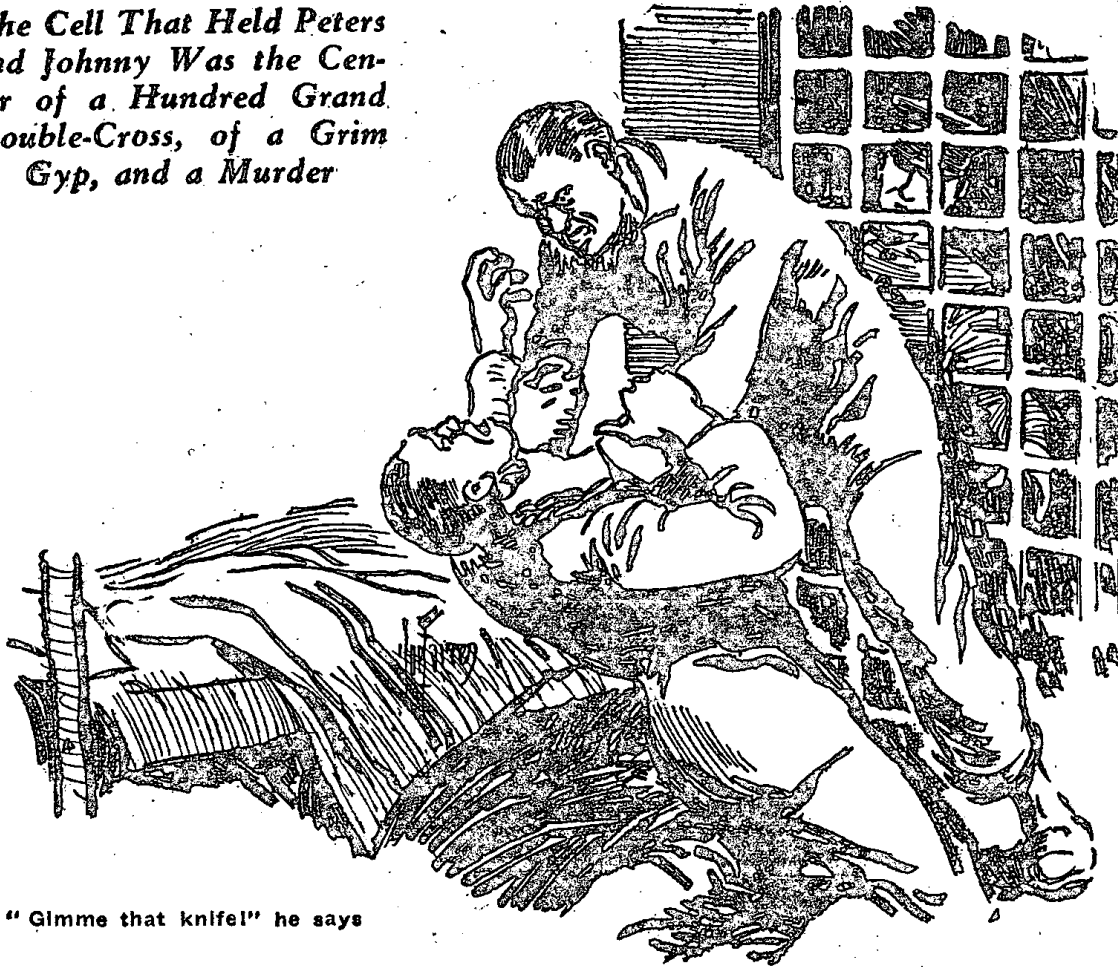
The headless corpses of two beautiful girls were left to mystify the police. What horrible, what fiendish plot was succeeding? For only *one* face, *one* head, fitted both those bodies!

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE OF DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY

Peters

By Thomas Topham

*The Cell That Held Peters
and Johnny Was the Cen-
ter of a Hundred Grand
Double-Cross, of a Grim
Gyp, and a Murder*



"Gimme that knifel" he says

I COULDN'T make out this guy Peters, who was my cellmate. Big bird an' tough-lookin', and at first sight I figgered he'd mebbe done a couple stretches. When I first git my lamps on him we're all lined up fer the evenin' lock-up. Then when the gong rings fer us to pop in our cells, what does he do but beat me in, which gits my goat, so I give him a shove that sent him clean to the back wall.

"What'd you do that fer?" he wants to know, rubbin' his elbow where it had hit the wall.

"Lissen, big guy," I tell this mug, "I guess you're a fish or you wouldn't a-done it, but I come in first, see, when the *ding-dong* clangs. Get yer paws up here fer the count. The screw's comin' down the line an' we don't want this cell chalked. See?"

If anything wasn't exactly reg'lar, the screw would put a chalk mark on the lock an' both the guys in there would come in fer regulation, whether they was both guilty or not. So I wasn't aimin' fer him to git me in no jam.

Peters gits his fists up fer the count