

Money Talks About Murder

by Ray Black

A minute mystery to test your detective ability. Can you find the answer? There are several clues. When you know the answer check on page 3

“LOOKS like this gent was trying to leave us a clue to who knifed him,” said Patrolman Kindellen.

He pointed to the two blood-smearred one-dollar bills clutched in the dead man’s hand. Sam Frasier’s wallet, which he apparently had withdrawn from his left hip pocket just before he died, lay beside him on the floor of his apartment. Detective Inspector Jennings, the gleam in his cool grey eyes sharper than usual, nodded. “Indubitably,” he said.

“Hunh?” Kindellen began, then, reddening, pawed in his pockets for his notes. “While you were getting out here,” he announced pompously, “I dug up all the background on this case. Want me to wise you up?”

Jennings, meanwhile noting the bronze letter knife protruding from the middle-aged victim’s breast, grunted assent.

“This Sam Frasier here was a gambler by trade,” Kindellen said. “He liked to have some of the folks living here in the building come into his apartment occasionally for what he claimed were sociable games. Well—it seems they wasn’t.”

“Meaning?” asked the inspector.

“Tonight he had a poker game in here. Three gents played with him—all of ’em neighbors in the building and all of ’em heavy losers to him lately. To make a long story short, they caught him dealing from the bottom and the game broke up.”

The rotund policeman paused to grin.

“There were fighting words passed,” he went on, “but Frasier gave ’em back what they had lost tonight and the three of ’em left without any blows being struck. Or so they all claim. So it narrows down to this—one of them three sneaked back, talked his way into the apartment and got even with Frasier with a poke of that paper knife.”

Jennings shot his co-worker a sharp look.

“Has to be,” Kindellen insisted. “The clerk downstairs says nobody from outside went up after 11 p.m., when the game broke up.”

“Who are these suspects of yours? Jointly and severally, I presume, they deny knifing the late Mr. Frasier?”

The patrolman nodded, referring to his notes. “One was Frank Mattison, next floor up, who said he was a numismatist, whatever that is.”

“A coin and currency collector,” the inspector defined.

“Say! I’ll bet he’s...”

Jennings motioned to him to read on.

“Symmes Perry, next floor down, insurance man.”

The inspector made no comment.

“The third guy was Bill Joiner, same floor as this, a stationery salesman for a paper company.” Kindellen rubbed his bald spot, ruminating. “Hey!” he broke out. “How about this last one? His first name’s Bill, see, and he sells paper.”

Inspector Jennings thumbed the honor

society medal on his cross-vest watch chain. “Where do these suspects work?” he wanted to know.

Puzzled, Kindellen read: “The coin and money collector has an office in the Flatiron Building. The insurance bloke works for the Guarantee Mutual and the stationary shop out of which the salesman operates is at 210 Main.”

Jennings’ eyes twinkled. “I’ll keep a lookout here while you go get our killer.”

Kindellen spluttered, “But who— which—?”

“Plain as the pug nose on that moon face of yours,” the inspector chuckled. “Go on now—you’ve got your orders.”

(Solution on next page)

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Solution:

For Inspector Jennings, this was a simple puzzle in the association of ideas. True coincidences in names and occupations added to its zest.

Mattison might be suspected because he was a numismatist. But why not a handful of coins, then, or a sheaf of bills?

A single bill also might have pointed to Bill Joiner, the stationer's salesman. Two bills made that allusion far fetched.

The insurance man was clearly meant. Perry of the Mutual. The two dollar bet is the unit on pari-mutuel machines at the race tracks, as the gambler knew from long experience.