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The Man Who Wouldn't Die

By Arnaud d'Usseau

- Kay.

- Anna.

How are you, darling?

Gee, it's good to see you.

And you too, Kay.

- Where's Phillips?

- He's gone to the movies.

- They're giving away an automobile.

- With tires?

It was nice of you to let me in.

How did you know I was at the front door?

- I heard the bell.

- But I didn't ring it.

Didn't you? Well, then,

I guess it was my imagination.

- Let me have your coat.

- Thanks.

- Where's Dad?

- He's- He's gone to the village...

on an errand

with Dr. Haggard and Dunning.

- On a night like this?

- Would you care for something to warm you up?

Well, I was on the wagon, but I think I'll step off
and give my seat to a gentleman.

Make it a weak one.

Listen to that wind howl. Boy,

it's got my goose pimples popping overtime.

It's a perfect night for a nice, juicy murder.

- What's this about murder?

- Hi, Dad.

Hello, Doc. How are you, Dunning?

How are the three musketeers?

Where the devil did you come from?

Dad, that's no way to greet your prodigal daughter.

I thought you were supposed to be staying
with your aunt in Washington.

Well, I- I was, but,

uh, when I read about...

all the trouble you're having with that
mean old Senate investigating committee...

I thought I'd better come home

and see if I couldn't help.

All right. What's the catch?

Isn't it funny? Dad always thinks there's a catch to everything.

Come on. Out with it.

What is it?

Well, all right.

Now watch your blood pressure.

- I'm, uh, engaged.

- Engaged. What, again?

Well, I'm not engaged exactly.

You see, I'm more than engaged really.

Now how can you be

more than engaged?

- Well, I'm married.

- Oh, well, make up your mind.

- What-Which is it?

- I'm married.

- Why, Kay, darling, that's wonderful.

- Married.

As if I didn't have enough trouble.

- Well, what's this idiot's name?

- Roger. Roger Blake.

Dunning, get my lawyer.

Dad, don't be silly. You can't sue a man just because he married me.

He may have married you,

but it's my money he's after.

Oh. Give me that.

I suppose a man wouldn't marry me unless I had money?

Not the last six no-account nincompoops you've been engaged to.

Well, Roger's different.

He works.

- For the government.

- Dudley, why don't you at least meet Kay's husband?

- See for yourself what he's like.

- Why should I?

Perhaps you'd like

to give them a honeymoon.

To South America.

Maybe I will.

All right, Kay. Trot him out.

Where is he?

Well, I-I made him stay

in Washington.

I thought tomorrow he'd drive up,
and you could meet him then.

At least I'll have the pleasure
of insulting him personally.

You're an angel with a shining halo.

Thanks a million.

That's probably just about
what it's going to cost me.

I know you'll like him.

I'm going up and call him right away.

- Well, good night, everybody.

- Good night, Kay.

- It's good to have you home again, Kay.

- It's good to be home, Anna.

And if anyone ever tries to tell me
about how mean stepmothers are...

I'll just tell them
that I know better.

- Good night, Anna.

- Good night.

My daughter is to know absolutely nothing
of what happened in this house tonight.

- Is that clear?

- Yes, sir.

I told him, Roger, darling,
and he was an absolute lamb.

When? Oh, but that's
three whole days.

Can't it wait?

All right, hon. If you think your business
is that important.

Good night, sweetheart.

I love you.

Who's there?

Kay? Kay!

- What's the matter?

- Let us in, dear.

Yes, dear. Open the door. Let us in.

- What happened?

- What frightened you, Kay?

There! A ghost. I saw a ghost.

He tried to kill me.

- Oh, now, now.

- A ghost. I saw him.
He had a gun in his hand.
There isn't any ghost in there.
You must have been dreaming.
Oh, I wasn't dreaming. He had a gun
in his hand, and he fired at me.
- We didn't hear a shot.
- I tell you he fired at me. He did.
If he took a shot at you,
there'd be a bullet hole.
- And there's none here.
- There. You see, dear?
It's probably just the storm.
You go back to bed, Dudley.
I'll take care of her.
Come, dear. Try and get some sleep.
I wish you'd believe me. He was standing
right there in that doorway, and I saw him.
Don't leave me alone, please.
- You told me he was dead.
- But he was dead.
Then how the devil
did he get out of this grave?
Mike.
- Mike, please stop clowning. This is serious.
- You don't like it?
I couldn't tell you everything
over the telephone.
What's it this time? You tryin'
to snag a husband or unload one?
- It's worse than that. It's murder.
- Hmm?
- Well, anyway, an attempted murder.
- Well, go ahead. Let's have it.
All right.
I'll tell you on the way
up to the house.
Just climb right in, Miss Wolff.
And I told Dad I'd seen this ghost,
but he wouldn't believe me.
- What about the shot? Didn't he hear that?
- Nobody heard it.
Because just as the ghost fired at me,
there was a terrific crash of thunder.

Oh. What'd your dad say
when you showed him the bullet?
Well, that was the funny thing.
There wasn't a sign of a bullet.
Hey, now wait a minute. You say
that this ghost took a shot at you...
- and there was no sign of a bullet?
- Yes.
You sure it wasn't Cupid
with his little bow and arrow?
- Mike, I'm not kidding.
- Uh-uh.
I've handled a lot
of screwy scrapes for you.
But not this one.
No, thanks.
- Why not?
- For a very good reason. I don't believe in ghosts.
Yet.
Now do you believe in ghosts,
Mr. Shayne?
For \$200,
I would believe in anything.
Thank you.
You were saying, Miss Wolff?
I wanted to call the police,
but Dad wouldn't let me.
In fact, when I suggested it,
Dad almost had a fit.
- How come?
- Well, ever since the Senate's been investigating him...
he hates policemen and reporters.
What about private investigators?
That was one of the things
I wanted to tell you.
- Mike, you can be my husband.
- Okay, but that'll cost you an extra hundred-
Your husband?
Isn't this kinda sudden?
Well, you don't understand.
I'm already married.
I was married yesterday,
but Daddy hasn't met my husband yet.
- Oh, and you want me to take the poor guy's place.

- Mm-hmm.

That'll still cost you
an extra hundred, and that's wholesale.
\$300? That's my entire allowance.

Oh, you poor kiddie.

What, for a month?

Or does it have to last you
a whole week?

All right. You win.

Now, you'll have to get some clothes
and a toothbrush-

No, no.

Not Michael Shayne and Company.

His office is in his hat. His home is in his car.

Take a look in the backseat.

Oh, Mike.

You think of everything.

Well, that's why you pay me
the extra hundred.

- Oh, wait a second.

- Hey, what's the idea?

This is the old custom of carrying the bride
across the threshold.

This service, I throw in free.

- Oh, now! Stop! Please! Hold me!

- Let go of my head!

Oh!

Lfr-Ifr you'll just trust me...

- it'll be all- all right!

- Wait! Wait, wait! Oh!

You know,

you almost dropped me.

- Oh, well, it was a silly custom anyway.

- Oh, hello, Phillips.

- Uh, this is my husband, Mr. Blake.

- How do you do, sir?

- Roger, Phillips.

- Hello, Phillips. Here, let me help you.

You know, that's

an extraordinary name for a butler.

It's usually Jeeves or Hawkins.

Permit me to offer

my congratulations, sir.

- Oh, thanks, Jeeves- Uh, Phillips.

- Where's Dad?

- In his den, Miss Kay.

- Good.

That's the best place to beard a lion.

- Maybe I need a whip and a chair.

- Oh, Phillips.

- Yes, miss?

- Mr. Blake's things are in his car.

- Will you take them up to my room?

- Very good, Miss Kay.

Mmm. Very, very good.

Park that gleam in your eye,

Mr. Roger Blake.

Now don't let Dad throw you.

His roar is much worse than his bite.

Oh, I see. Beneath all those millions
beats a heart of ice, huh?

Dry ice.

Well, here we are. You know,

Roger's always very neat.

Uh-huh. Oh, say,

does your dad like stories?

- I got a couple of pips-

- No stories.

- No stories. Okay.

- This investigation...

which is simply one more attempt on the part
of the present administration to-

- Well, what is it?

- Uh, uh, Dad, this is my-

This is Roger, my husband.

I'm awfully glad to meet you, Mr. Wolff.

Kay was telling me-

- All right, Dunning. We'll pick it up later.

- Very good, sir.

- Mr. Blake, may I welcome you?

- Oh.

- Roger, this is my mother.

- Your mother?

You look more like sisters.

- Thanks. I'm Kay's stepmother.

- So you're Blake?

Yes, sir.

Of the Westchester Blakes.

All right.

How much do you want?

- Dudley.

- You got it all figured out, haven't you, Pop?

- Don't call me "Pop. "

- Okay, Pops, but would it surprise you...

if I were to tell you that I don't want a cent
of your hard-chiseled dough.

And the sooner you get that into your head,
the happier our little family circle's gonna be.

Remember, Dad?

I told you Roger was different.

- Mr. Blake, I understand
you're with the government.

- Oh, yes. That's right. Yeah.

- What department?

Uh, uh- Oh, I'm afraid I can't tell you that.

That's a military secret.

Yes, well, I don't like anybody
who works for the government.

Oh, I wouldn't say that, Pops.

I mean, Dad.

You know, there's an awful lot
of nice people in Washington.

Matter of fact, I might be able to put in
a good word for you in that investigation.

- Why, you-

- Come on, darling. I'll show you our room.

- Room? I thought we'd arranged-

- I forgot to tell you...

that Roger and I have decided
we don't want to go to South America.

No. We thought it'd be
much more comfy if we spent...

the first couple of weeks
of our honeymoon right here.

- And give you both a chance to get better acquainted.

- That's right.

Well, it's been awfully
nice to meet you, Mr. Wolff.

Yes, sir. You and I are gonna get along fine.

I can see that right now.

You'll excuse us,

won't you, Mrs. Wolff?

You know, you've really been
a great surprise to me.
You're not half as bad
as people said you were. I mean it.
Well, see you later, Pop.
Mike, you were wonderful. You're the first man
I've ever seen really stand up to Dad.
Now don't build me up
too much, kid.

- It's liable to cost you an extra hundred.
- It'll be worth it.
- I don't know. He's a tough old cookie.
- Don't be so hard on him.
- He's really very sweet.
- Oh, yeah?

Well, so is arsenic.
I understand it tastes just like sugar.
I've taken care
of Mr. Blake's wardrobe, miss.

- Oh, thank you, Phillip-
- Oh, be careful of that suitcase, Phillips.
- That's been in the family for years.
- I can well believe it, sir.

No sense of humor.
Well, look what I married into.
This is quite a playpen
you got here.
Hey, where'd you get
the oversized army cot?
Big enough to hold a rodeo in.
Which side do I sleep on?
Right in that guest room,
Mr. Shayne.
It's a fine thing. A brand-new bride
telling her groom to sleep in the guest room.
Why, in rule four of Emily Post's book-

- I go by the Marquis of Queensberry rules.
- Oh.
- Is that where you saw the ghost?
- Standing right in that doorway.

Mmm. DeMille have somethin'
to do with this?
No. Uh-uh.
Where does this door lead to?

Oh, that's the guest room

I was talking about.

Does that door over there
open into the hall?

- Yes.

- Yeah?

- Mm-hmm.

- Do you think that the ghost...
could have come
through that guest room?

Well, I don't know.

But it's a cinch he didn't enter through
this window, unless he had a parachute.

I see you've got a burglar alarm system
in the house.

Oh, yeah. But it was such a nuisance,
Dad had it disconnected.

Well, that's great. Of course, the system
lasts much longer if you don't use it.

If it was a real ghost,
a burglar alarm wouldn't stop him.

- That's right.

- All he'd have to do is just float through a wall...

- or pop out of a faucet.

- Yes. Out of a faucet.

Now, you say he stood here and you
were in bed when he took a shot at you.

- That's right.

- About how tall was he?

Why, I don't know.

He looked about eight feet to me.

- In his stocking feet?

- He had shoes on.

- Oh, he had shoes on, hmm?

- Mm-hmm.

Now do you know of anybody who might
have a good reason to kill you?

Well, no, not offhand.

What about that Balkan prince you jilted
last year? The one that made all the fuss.

Oh, he only threatened
to kill himself, not me too.

Well, he's either very considerate
or just plain lazy, huh?

Say, you don't think Gregory
tried to kill me, do you, Mike?

I don't know.

You gave him an awful runaround.

Hey, look. Well, no wonder
you couldn't find the bullet.

It smacked into this loose knob
and turned it around. See?

Well, at least that proves
I wasn't dreaming.

Wait till I tell my dad
a thing or two.

- You're not gonna tell your dad anything, young lady.

- Don't bark at me, Mr. Shayne.

- We're not really married, you know.

- Yeah. Lucky me.

- Can you get it out?

- Now we're beginning to get someplace.

It's a . 32, and from an automatic.

Now all we have to do
is find a . 32 automatic.

Say, what do you use for brains-
feathers?

Now what have I done?

I don't know who should be sore-
Roger or me.

- I'd say Roger.

- Suppose somebody should see that?

Then we'd be in a fine-

Darling, I love you.

- I adore you.

- What's the idea-

You make me so happy.

I think you're the cutest, the sweetest...
most adorable girl... in the world.

Shh! The door.

The- Huh?

Roger, you're so sweet.

And I'd rather be married to you
than anybody in the whole world.

Keep on talking.

Only try and make it sound sincere.

My darling.

Mmm.

Promise me

that you'll always love me...

that we'll always be together.

I didn't intend to disturb you,

Mr. Blake.

Oh, no. No, you was quiet as a moose-
mice- mouse.

I'm Dunning, Mr. Wolff's secretary.

If I can be of any service,

please let me know.

I'll send up a flare.

- Who's that? Dumbo?

- Oh, no. Dunning.

Well, he's been with Dad 25 years.

- I wouldn't worry about him.

- Oh, I'm not worried.

He was just wandering by
and got his ear caught in the door.

- Oh.

- Let's take a look at the rest of the house. Hmm?

Say, how 'bout the servants? Do you think
any of them might have played ghost?

Oh, no. They've all been with us
for years and years.

- Course, Dr. Haggard hasn't, but-

- Who's Dr. Haggard?

Well, Dad has him working
on some experiments.

He's even fixed up a laboratory for him
in the basement.

Let's go down

and take a look at it. Hmm?

- Oh. No, I think we better ask the doctor first.

- No.

Let's say we don't ask the doctor.

Huh? Come on.

Here it is.

Say, this is some little layout

Dr. Jekyll's got here.

It's cost Dad a young fortune.

What, no electric trains, huh?

Oh, lookee.

Hey, what's

all this stuff for, huh?

Well, Dad hates the idea
that someday he's going to die.

- Simply can't stand it.
- Somebody must have told him the good die young.
- Go ahead.
- So for a long time, he's had Dr. Haggard...
experimenting with methods
to prolong life.

Most guys are satisfied to live
on borrowed time, but not your dad.

- No, he wants to buy it.
- All this equipment is supposed to give you...
vitamins "A" to "Z" in one jolt.

Uh-oh.

Here's something
that's not supposed to prolong life.

- What is it?
- .32s, and most of 'em missing.

Holy smoke!

Then it was Dr. Haggard
who shot at me.

Now, take it easy, Kay.

Take it easy.

Don't get excited.

Here. Have a cigarette?

- No, thank you.
- No?

We mustn't jump
to conclusions like that.

Well, have a cigarette, Mr. Bones?

- Don't care if I do.
- Aw, I saw your lips move.
- Sorry.
- There you are.

Well, I still don't see
why he would want to kill me.

Course, I've always thought
he was an awful phony.

I've even told Dad so.

- That gives him a pretty good reason right there.
- Oh, but that's too fantastic.

Well, you see, maybe he figured
that with you out of the way...
he could go right on

fooling your old man.

Sounds logical, doesn't it?

Hey, look at this gadget.

Heh. A built-in radio.

- Maybe we can tune in on Buck Rogers.

- Oh, Mike...

- I'd get out of there if I were you.

- Aw, nonsense, my dear.

Why, in high school,

I was known as the young Steinmetz.

All you got to do

is understand electric-

Mike. Mike, look out.

Mike. Mike.

Mike, get up! Get up outta that ch-

Mike. Mike-

Oh, Mikel Mikel

Mike!

Mike! Mike, can you hear? Oh!

Mikel Mikel

Mike! Mike!

Oh, Dr. Haggard.

How do you feel?

I feel just like a neon sign.

You were very fortunate.

If that voltage hadn't have been so high,
you would have been electrocuted.

Say, if that's your idea of a practical joke,
I don't like it.

Practical joke? May I ask what you two
were doing in my laboratory?

Why, yes. Uh-

Oh-Oh, by the way, Dr. Haggard...

this is my husband, Roger Blake.

- How do you do, Mr. Blake?

- Maybe I better not...

shake hands the way I'm charged up.

Here. Drink this.

Go ahead. Drink it.

It'll do you good.

- Is my face changing?

- Well, you do look sort of funny.

Oh. There's no change then.

You see, I was telling Roger

about the ghost I saw last night...

and, well, we were just
looking over the house.

I can't imagine what my laboratory
would have to do...

with your fanciful story
about seeing a ghost.

Oh, but I did see one.

We even found the bullet.

- Oh, really?

- Uh, yes.

And as a matter of fact,
it was of the same caliber...
as the bullets we found
in this box.

- Those are mine, I believe.

- Oh, you own a .32 automatic, eh, Doctor?

Why, yes. Or to be more precise,
I did own one.

You see, I lost it about three months ago
when I was out target practicing.

Hmm.

Planning on joining the army?

- No. Shooting's merely a hobby.

- Oh, I see. Mm-hmm.

Is there anything else
you'd like to know, Mr. Blake?

Uh, no. No, not right now.

Thanks. Come on, Kay.

Come here.

Just what did I tell you about
not mentioning this bullet to anybody?

Gee, Mike, it just slipped out.

Well, now, the next time it happens,

I'm gonna start charging you double.

I'm sorry. Really I am.

- What are we gonna do?

- I don't know.

I guess we'll have to tell your father
we found the bullet.

If we don't,

Haggard will anyway.

I'm glad

you showed me this, Roger.

Yeah, but why should anyone
want to take a shot at Kay?
I suppose I should have
mentioned this earlier...
but I didn't want
to frighten anyone.
Last night, I had a visitor.
He was a partner of mine
many years ago.
Our association
wasn't any too happy.
I finally found proof
he tried to cheat me.
To save myself,
I pulled out of the partnership.
Well, what did he want, Dad?
Money.
For years, he'd been broke.
Occasionally I tried to help him.
He was harmless.
- I felt sorry for him.
- And what happened?
Well, last night, he wasn't satisfied
with what I gave him.
Demanded an outrageous sum.
When I told him to go to the devil,
he became violent.
Blamed me for the death
of his wife and daughter.
Started to shout
as if he were crazy.
- Threatened me and my family.
- Why didn't you call the police?
Well, with this Senate investigation
going on...
I didn't feel
I could afford the notoriety.
But this man
may come back again.
I wouldn't worry about it, Kay.
We've already taken
the necessary precautions.
You called the burglar alarm company,
Dunning?

Yes, sir. The alarm
has been connected again.
So you see, Roger, should
our midnight visitor pay us another call...
- we're all ready for him.
- I hope you're right.
But personally,
I'm still a bit worried.
Naturally. Kay's your wife.
She's my daughter.
We both share
an equal responsibility.
Now if you will excuse me,
I have work to do.
Oh, Mr. Blake.
I hope Mr. Wolff's explanation...
takes care of your curiosity
about my gun.
Oh. Yeah, sure. My curiosity's
always getting me in trouble.
Don't give it another thought.
Well, I guess that accounts
for my ghost.
Yeah. Guess it does.
- Why are you locking the window?
- To keep the ghost out.
- Well, what about the burglar alarm?
- Oh, that's okay.
But suppose the ghosts
are already in the house.
Can't afford to take
any chances, you know.
- Oh.
- Of course, it might be a little stuffy for us.
- Us?
- Personally, I don't need much air.
Well, how 'bout it?
Shall we go to bed?
Mike.
- Mike, what are you looking for?
- Looking for my slippers.
Where'd Phillips put my slippers?
Oh, here they are.
Uh-oh.

- Mike, you don't think-

- No, I never think, honey.

Hey, wait a minute.

- What are you after?

- Say, is this a union-made mattress?

- Well, I don't know.

- Oh.

I thought not.

And I refuse to sleep in it.

Good night, kid.

Good night, pal.

Mm-hmm.

Can't use it.

Whoa.

I take, I take,

I take, I take.

Mm-hmm.

Mmm.

Oh, no. Oh, no.

That does it. Gin. Gin.

Discard.

Oh, boy, did you catch me
with a load of tomatoes.

All right. Give me that gun, you-

Hey. Who are you?

- I'm the caretaker.

- Did you see somebody running through here?

Uh, no, sir.

Uh, may- may I ask who you are, sir?

- I'm Mr. Wolff's son-in-law. Blake's the name.

- Oh, yes, sir.

- Did you see anybody around here earlier tonight?

- Uh, no one.

- No one.

- Uh-huh.

You sure about that?

Dr. Haggard?

He's dead.

- What about the alarm?

- It didn't go off.

Then the ghost

was in the house all the time.

- Roger was right.

- Where is your husband, Kay?

- I don't know, but-
- Here I am, Dad.
- Where have you been, Roger?
- I've been out chasing the ghost. He got away from me.
- Say, where's Haggard?
- He's dead.

Dead?

Well, that makes this a case for the police.

I better call them.

- No, Roger. L-
- Let him, Dudley. Let him call the police.

We're all in danger.

We've got to have protection.

All right.

Dunning, call the police.

Right away, sir.

- Mighty important case.
- Yeah. I'm sure glad to be in on it, Chief.

I've been wanting to see
the inside of Dudley Wolff's house...
as long as I've lived around here.

How do?

I presume you gentlemen
represent the local constabulary?
Who? No. I'm the chief of police,
and this is Tim Larsen, the coroner.

If you'll come in,
I'll show you the body.
First case I ever covered
where they had a butler show you the body.

Follow me, please.

If I owned this, I'd subdivide it.
What a beautiful funeral parlor
this would make.

Make a better courthouse.

Would you care
to question the servants now, sir?

Yeah, yeah.

Better get 'em all together.

- They're already assembled in the dining room, sir.
- They are?

Glad I thought of it.

Yes, sir. Follow me, please.

You folks know anything,

you better own up right away.

Wait till later, it might not be healthy.

- Who are you?

- This is Mr. Blake, sir, Mr. Wolff's son-in-law.

You mind if I sit in

on the questioning, Chief?

I like to dabble in amateur detective work.

I got a couple of ideas on the case myself.

I ain't runnin' no school,

but if you stand there and keep quiet...

you might learn somethin'

about detectin'.

You. Where were you all night?

My eyes have been closed

since 8:

- Answer yes or no.

- But it- it-Yes.

That's better. What do you know?

Uh, nothing. Nothing.

I can guarantee that.

I had a talk with him before you came.

- Suppose you let me do the questioning from now on.

- Hmm.

- Hello, Peggy.

- Hmm!

Peggy, I got to ask you

a few questions.

Just be careful what you ask,

Jonathan Meek...

or it may be embarrassin'

for the both of us.

Now, Peggy, uh,

what do you know about this murder?

- You know as much as I do.

- Interesting witness, eh, Chief?

Quiet, or out you go.

Anything else you want to know,

Mr. Snoop?

Well...

I guess that's all the questioning

I'll do around here for a bit.

I would think so.

- Where'd you say Mr. Wolff was?

- He's in the library, sir.
That's all right, Phillips.
I'll take the chief in to meet the folks.
Comin', Chief?
- Right over there.
- Can't figure Peggy out.
She's been sore at me ever since
I took her to that Halloween dance last year.
- Yeah?
- Yeah. She forgot her mask.
All I said was, "You don't need one. "
Women's funny critters.
You know, I can't understand
why she should be sore.
I guess all cooks
are temperamental, huh?
You first, Chief. Oh, wait.
- This yours?
- Sure. Excuse me.
Dad, I want you to meet
"Monathan Jeek. "
- Jonathan Meek's the name, the chief of police.
- Good evening, Chief.
Hiya, Mr. Wolff. I'd like to ask
a few questions if I might.
- Go ahead.
- Did any of you hear the shot?
- Yes.
- We all heard it.
Did any of you see who fired the shot?
Well, my husband
was the only one who saw the ghost.
- Ghost? What ghost?
- Well, you see-
- I don't mean-
- How do?
- What's the verdict, Tim?
- He was shot above the heart. Died almost instantly.
- Did you find the bullet?
- Was he shot with a .32?
- Oh, you-
- What do you know about a .32, ma'am?
Oh, well, you'll have to ask
my husband. He-

- Mr. Blake, you own a .32?
- No. But, uh, Dr. Haggard did.
Oh. Well, maybe the deceased
was shot with his own gun.
Say, I wouldn't be a bit surprised.
I'm the one who'll be
surprised around here, young fella.
I wouldn't be a bit surprised.
Oh, I'm sorry.
- What's that?
- The burglar alarm.
Someone's trying to break in!
Someone's trying to get in!
Kay! Kay, get down!
There he is!
Come on, Chief!
Look out!
Keep shooting!
Stop him! That's my car!
Hey, Chief. Come on.
Hold on to your hat, Chief.
Oh, get out.
You're always worrying about my hat.
- See if you can stop him. Take a shot at his tires.
- Sure. His tires.
His tires?
Those are my tires.
- Okay. Forget it.
- Can't get any more.
There's a shortcut right ahead.
Maybe we can cut him off.
- Okay. Say when.
- Right over there.
- Let go, will ya?
- Don't drive so fast.
Oh, gosh.
His head's caved in.
He's done for.
This'll make it official.
No sign of breath.
- Deader than a mackerel.
- Well, I guess this winds up your case, Chief.
- You go get the coroner. I'll stay here and watch the body.
- All right.

My car.

And my tires.

- Hello, Charlie.

- Hello.

- Say, is, uh, Merlini on yet?

- No. He's in Number 1 dressing room.

Okay. Thanks.

- Come in.

- Hello, Gus.

- Mike! Good to see ya.

- Thanks.

- Where have you been?

- I've been playing hide-and-seek with a ghost.

Same old Mike.

Always talkin' in riddles.

- How's the detective business?

- It's full of riddles.

- So you're still giving out with the Merlini malarkey, huh?

- Finest in the world.

It's got me 14 weeks in this nightclub-

all due to my new routine.

Greatest thing since Houdini.

I tell you, Mike.

- I transform three eggs into three full-grown hens.

- Right.

Now hold it.

Hold it, will ya, Gus?

- Right now, I happen to be interested in an old routine.

- Oh.

- Three minutes, Merlini.

- Thanks. Excuse me, Mike. I must hurry.

Yeah.

Here. Hold Caspar for a minute.

You, uh-You were saying something
about an old routine?

Yeah. Uh, did you ever do
the "buried alive" act?

No, Mike.

That's too tough for me.

You have to master a trick
called "shallow breathing. "

- And that's a talent that very few people possess.

- Well, did you ever see it done?

Yes. I saw it done twice- once by Houdini...

And once by an Assyrian illusionist
named... Zorah Bey.

What's this Zorah Bey look like?

Well, he's a tall, dark,
effective-looking man.

- Mm-hmm.

- Well, there goes my music.

I'll tell you more about him
when I get through with my act.

- In the meantime, make yourself at home.

- Thanks.

Uh, you might find a couple of pictures
of him in that scrapbook.

See you later.

Mighty slick piece of detectin'.

Fastest job this country's ever seen,
even if I do say so myself.

Case like this might have gone unsolved
for months if it hadn't been for you.

- Calls for a little celebration.

- I knew the minute I entered that house...

the doc wasn't killed
by anybody there.

- Did you say celebration?

- You'll be the most popular man in the country.

Wouldn't surprise me

if you couldn't be elected sheriff.

Especially with Wolff behind you.

That's goin' pretty far.

Why not?

Here's to Mr. Wolff.

Say, I can just see the headlines
in the New York papers.

"Chiefr ofr Rolice Meek Traps Murder Maniac. "

Larsen's Mortuary.

Uh, yes. Yes.

Foley of the New York Bulletin?

Uh, just one second.

He's right here.

Hey, what did I tell ya? The New York Bulletin
wants to talk to you personally.

Yeah? Chief of Police Meek.

Hello, Chief.

Say, I understand you did a swell job

on that Haggard case.

Now, the Bulletin wants to give the story a big play. You know- pictures, the works.

Oh, it ain't nothin'.

All in a day's work.

I'd like to get a description of the murderer for the next edition.

- Now, tell me. What's his name?

- Oh, uh, haven't exactly found out yet.

Could you tell me

what he looks like?

I'd say about six feet, weighs around 160 pounds.

Sort of dark-complected, kind of a skinny guy.

But mighty powerfrul-

most dangerous criminal I ever tackled.

- Think the story'll make the front page?

- Oh, sure, sure. Big headlines.

Now, uh, tell me.

What's the color of his eyes?

Funny thing. I never noticed that.

Why do you want to know

the color of his eyes?

You always gotta know

the color of a murderer's eyes.

You know, blue-eyed Dillinger, brown-eyed Floyd.

Oh, you're right.

I never quite thought of it that way.

What's the color

of the killer's eyes?

- I'll have to go look.

- Hey.

- You sure you got him there?

- Sure I'm sure. He's dead, ain't he?

I'm askin' you, copper. Now go on.

Give me the color of his eyes.

Yes, sir. Hold the phone a minute, and I'll look.

The body's gone.

Hello?

Somebody's stolen the body.

Oh, now, Chief. You wouldn't kid me, would ya?

Who would want to snatch a dead body?

I don't know,

but the body's gone, I tell ya.

Well, I never heard of such insufficiency.

Wait'll I print this yarn.

You'll be the laughingstock

of 48 states.

Hello. Is Mrs. Blake in?

Who shall I say is calling, sir?

- Mr. Blake.

- Mr. Blake.

- Whom did you say was calling, sir?

- Mr. Blake. Mr. Roger Blake.

That's what I thought

you said, sir.

Would you mind

waiting here, sir?

I'd certainly like to know

where that husband of yours is.

- Maybe he's been detained by the police.

As a witness, I mean.

I'm sure we'll hear from Roger very soon.

- Stop coughing, Phillips. What is it?

- It's Mr. Blake, sir.

- Mr. Roger Blake.

Well, show him in. What are you waiting for?

- Yes, sir.

- Uh, just a moment, Phillips.

I think

I better see Mr. Blake alone.

- Nonsense! Show him in, Phillips. And hurry up about it.

- Yes, sir.

Uh, Dad, I-

I think I'd better tell you something.

- It can wait.

- But, Dad, you've got to let me explain-

Some other time.

This way, Mr. Blake.

Kay, darling.

How are you, dear?

- Get my telegram? My business didn't-

- Roger, I-

- What is it, Kay?

- Roger?

- What Roger?
- Oh, pardon me, sir.
You must be Kay's father.
And this must be Mrs. Wolff.
Sorry about arriving so late
at night, but I thought-
I'm her father,
but who are you?
Dad, I tried to tell you.
This is my husband.
- Your what?
- My husband. I mean my real husband.
Oh, Roger, don't look so troubled.
- I can explain everything.
- How many husbands have you?
- Kay.
- Dad, if you'll just listen-
This better be good. That's all I've got to say.
It was this way. Roger told me
he'd have to stay in Washington-
- Hello, Phillips. Where's Mrs. Blake?
- Inside, sir.
- Good.
- Uh, pardon me, sir. If I may be permitted to say so...
I don't think Mrs. Blake would like
to see you at the moment.
Oh, nonsense, Phillips.
She's always anxious to see me.
Hello, folks.
Well, the prodigal son returns.
Gosh, it's nice to be home again.
I'm sorry I was so late, darling.
How are you, sweetheart?
Hello, Dad. Hello, Mom. What's the matter?
Gosh, you'd think that-
Uh-oh. Is it?
Uh, I bet I know who you are.
I'm sorry, Mike. I've been trying
to explain to Dad what happened...
but he wouldn't listen.
You explained who he is,
but who is he?
- Who are you?
- I'm- I'm Michael Shayne.

- And who is Michael Shayne?

- A private investigator.

Now let me get this straight. You told your father this man was your husband.

- We just went all through that.

- And that he worked for the government.

That was only because we wanted to catch the ghost.

He even went so far as to spend a night in your bedroom.

It was only an evening.

What do you mean by "so far"?

What's his working with the government got to do with spending a night in my bedroom?

- Where are you going?

- To find a lawyer and get a divorce.

Wait a minute, pal.

Don't let's lose our heads.

You'll lose your head if you don't take your hands off me.

- Mr. Wolff, will you explain to your brand-new son-in-law- - Get out.

Oh, now, I wouldn't kick him-

Oh, you mean me.

- Yes, you! Go on. Get out.

- Oh, well. Okay.

Just as you say, Pops.

I mean Mr. Wolff.

L- I never changed relatives so fast in my life.

Well, thanks for the job anyway, Kay.

I mean Miss Wolff.

I mean Mrs. Blake.

It's all so confusing.

I'm sorry, Mike, but now that the ghost is caught and all...

perhaps it's better that you do go.

Yeah. I guess so.

Well, good-bye, everybody.

And, uh, it's been-

Yeah. You know.

- Oh, hello, Chief.

- Hello.

- You find the body yet?

- Not yet, Mr. Blake.
- No?
- How'd you know the body was gone?
- You told me.
- Oh, I did?
- Mm-hmm.
- Oh, that's all right then.
- When did I tell you?
- Over the phone.
Over the phone?
Oh, that's right. I did.
Over the phone?
Oh, you're that reporter
- the one who's gonna make me the laughingstock of 40 states.
- No, no. Forty-eight states. Remember, "Jeep"?
- Meek!
- Uh, Meek.
- Now listen here, Mr. Blake.
You may be Mr. Wolff's son-in-law,
but you're tampering with justice.
- He's not Mr. Blake.
- And he's not my son-in-law.
- I'm not quite certain who I am.
- Hmm! One of them smart-aleck reporters...
wanting to know the color
of the killer's eyes.
Uh, Mike's not a reporter.
He's a private investigator.
Not a reporter? Then wh-Then why'd
you want to know if I still had the body?
I just wanted to see ifr you were on your toes.
- The body's missing?
- Somebody stole it.
- Or else it just got up and walked away of its own accord.
Who ever heard of a body
getting up and walking away of its own accord?
I wouldn't be surprised at anything
that happens around here.
Once before,
it was supposed to be dead.
What do you mean,
once before, it was supposed to be dead?
Just talking. Just a flight of fancy.
That's all. Well, bye-bye, folks.

- Just a second, Shayne.
- Yeah?
- I'd like to speak to you alone.
- Oh, is that so?
- That okay with you, Chief?
- Oh, yeah. That's all right. Whatever Mr. Wolff says.
Uh-huh. You're, uh-
You're sure it's not putting you out?
- Uh, suppose we go in your den.
- Very well.
- And maybe Mrs. Wolff would join us.
- Yes. Of course.
- Fine.
- Don't you want me too, Mike?
No, no. You stay here
with the chief.
Maybe he can help straighten you out
with jolly Roger here.
Don't look so glum, chum.
- Excuse me.
- Oh, Dunning. Just a second.
I'd like to have you
sit in on this too.
Stay here. Sit down, darling.
Well, Shayne, I'm going to come
right to the point.
- Just exactly what did you mean by that remark?
- What remark?
You said that partner of mine
was supposed to be dead once before.
Oh, yes. Yes. That's right.
The first time was last night
when you buried him in the woods.
- How did you know that, Mr. Shayne?
- Oh, no.
You see, a good investigator,
like a good reporter...
never reveals the source
of his information.
Now I'll come to the point.
Mr. Wolff, just exactly what do you know?
Tell him, Dudley.
He may be able to help us.
You understand, Shayne, that what

I tell you is in strictest confidence?

- Let's hear it first.

- Well...

that man

was not my partner at all.

As a matter of fact,

I never saw him before last night.

- Who was he?

- Claimed to be a government agent.

- What did he want?

- Came to blackmail me.

Said he had certain papers

in his possession...

that would expose me

to the Senate investigating committee.

I asked him,

"Show them to me. "

He took them out of his pocket,

but that's as far as he went.

I made a grab for them.

He hit me. I hit him.

- My blow knocked him to the floor.

- Go on.

At first, I thought I had

merely knocked him out.

So I called in Dunning and Dr. Haggard.

When Haggard examined him,

he said the man was dead.

- That all?

- I've already told you why I didn't go to the police.

What about those papers

you grabbed?

Absolutely worthless.

If you'd like to see them- Dunning, get-

No, no, no. Sit down, Dunning.

I'll take your word for it.

- Well, is there anything else?

- I've told you everything.

Why did you and Haggard and Dunning here
go back to the grave a second time?

I knew my daughter

was telling the truth about that shot...

when I found a clump of pine needles

on the bathroom floor.

Oh.

- And you went to see if the body was still there. Hmm?

- Yes.

- That right, Dunning?

- Why, uh, yes. Yes. That's right.

Mm-hmm.

And was the body there?

No. It was gone.

Hey, now. What kind of double-talk is this?

First you say you killed a man,

then you buried him...

and then several hours later

he disappeared.

That's just the point.

I don't believe I killed him.

Well, now, don't tell me that you're all

beginning to believe in ghosts too.

Well, I'll admit, Shayne,

it sounds fantastic.

Fantastic, huh? Well, that's a masterpiece

of understatement.

You know, I think you're just about

as wacky as your daughter.

I'm sorry now that I ever

got mixed up in this.

What you need is a Ouija board.

I'm quittin' right now.

Please, Mr. Shayne. You've got to help us.

All our lives are in danger.

No, no.

This is a job for the police.

Now, don't worry. Whatever I know,

I'll keep under my hat.

I don't want people

to start thinkin' that I'm crazy too.

Just a minute, Shayne.

Where are you going?

Oh, Chief. You're just the man I wanted to see.

I thought you might like to know.

I'm bowing out,

and I'm leaving all the honors to you.

Not so fast.

What about the body?

- What body?

- Now, no stallin' now. You know what body I mean.

Sure. Of course. That body.

I didn't quite get you at first.

Well, uh, I tell you.

Why don't you ask Mr. Wolff?

I'm sure he could

give you some information.

As a matter of fact, he might

be delighted to confide in you.

- You think so?

- Why, certainly. Go ahead. Go right in.

- Thanks.

- Oh, oh. Wait.

- I forgot again.

- That's okay, Chief.

Dudley, what are we going to do?

Come in.

- Mr. Wolff, about the body-

- Have you found it?

- Have I? Why, no. I thought you- He said-

- Now see here.

I'm going to ask you to keep

a particularly close watch tonight.

- Ifr that body shows up, it'll be somewhere around this house.

- Yes, sir.

- Around this house?

- That's right.

Well-

Well, leave everything to me,

Mr. Wolff.

Zorah Bey.

Zorah Bey, don't kill me.

I didn't do it. It was Dr. Haggard.

He double-crossed you.

Please don't kill me.

I'll do anything you want.

I'll go away with you. I'll-

Thanks for the use

of the body.

Don't move.

Stay where you are, all of you.

Hey, now.

Go ahead and shoot.

Bullets are all gone.

You wasted them on the mirror.
Anna. Anna, what happened?
What are you doing here with that gun?
- I think your wife can tell you.
- He broke into my room. He tried to frighten me.
- You sure you weren't frightened by Zorah Bey?
- Zorah Bey? Who's Zorah Bey?
Here. Take a look at this.
Go ahead, Mrs. Wolff.
You better tell him.
I'm sorry, Dudley. I should have told you
everything long ago.
I was married to Zorah Bey...
and worked with him
in his magic act.
He was on the steamship Morro Castle
eight years ago...
when it burned
off the Jersey coast.
He was reported missing. So, later, when
I met you and you asked me to be your wife...
I thought I was free to marry you.
But six months later, Zorah Bey turned up.
He demanded money.
Threatened to tell you
I was still legally his wife.
- Why didn't you tell me this?
- I loved you, Dudley. I was afraid to lose you.
And you've let this man
blackmail you all these years?
Yes. But the last time, he demanded
such a huge sum, I- I was unable to pay.
I was desperate.
I told him to do whatever he wanted.
So that's the real reason
he came to see me last night.
Didn't have the nerve
to tell me the truth...
so he tried to blackmail me
with phony papers.
It's all right, dear.
It's all right.
It's all over now.
Well, Shayne, I guess that finally

clears up our mystery.

Yeah? Well, maybe it does,
and maybe it doesn't.

What do you mean? Aren't you satisfied
with my wife's explanation?

No. You see,

I happen to know...

that Zorah Bey didn't return to this country
until one month ago.

- Don't believe him, Dudley. He's lying.

- Mr. Wolff...

ask your wife if she knows a magician
called the Great Merlini.

Do you know him, Anna?

Yes. I do.

And who is this Merlini?

He's a friend of mine
that knew Zorah Bey and your wife.

He gave me
some very interesting information.

Go ahead, Shayne.

Well, when Zorah Bey
returned to this country...

he located his wife and found out
that she was married to you.

He also found that
she was very friendly with Dr. Haggard.

Zorah Bey came to Anna
and demanded money.

She and Dr. Haggard agreed to put him
in a position to blackmail you.

- How?

- Well, he was to try to frighten you...
with that set of phony papers about the Senate
investigation- to get into a fight with you.

You were to hit him, and then Dr. Haggard
was to pronounce him dead...

taking advantage ofr Zorah Bey's ability
to go into a trance...

part ofrhis famous "buried alive"trick.

They had it all figured out

that you couldn't stand...

the notoriety ofr a murder

ifr it was to be made public...

and that you would try
to dispose of the body.
And they were right.
Then, without your knowledge...
they were to arrange for Zorah Bey's escape
and hold his murder over you.
But these two had already plotted
to double-cross Zorah Bey...
by really burying him alive,
four feet under the ground.
That's right, isn't it, Mrs. Wolfrf?
A very neat plot.
And it might have been successful...
if it hadn't been for
that curious caretaker of yours.
Once he was free, naturally,
Zorah Bey's motive became revenge.
He came back to the house to kill your wife,
but he got into the wrong room.
That's why he took a shot
at you, Kay.
He came back the second night
to kill Dr. Haggard.
He found out
that he hadn't killed Anna...
and that was why
he came back the third time.
Where is everybody?
I said where is everybody?
Well, you might at least
give me a civil answer.
What's the matter? You asleep?
Gosh.
Who put that body
out in the hall?
Chief, congratulations.
- What for?
- For solving the case. Say, you did a great job.
- There. There's your prisoner.
- What, her?
Can't you see your name
in all the headlines?
"Mysterious Murder
Solved by 'Monathan Jerk. "'

- "Jeek"! I mean Meek!

- Yeah.

- Here. You'll be wanting this.

- No.

That's all right. It's empty.

- Hey! Why don't you be careful?

- I thought you said it was empty.

Oh, yeah.

I did.

- You did.

- Well, I-

- So long, people. I'll- I'll be seeing ya.

- Where you goin'?

Back to school

to learn to count up to six.

- Mike.

- Yeah?

- You were wonderful the way you solved this case.

- Well, thanks.

But how on earth did you get all those facts
about Zorah Bey and Anna and Dr. Haggard?

Mrs. Blake...

a good detective never reveals
the source of his information.

- Oh.

- Mmm.

Oh, I've been wantin'

to do this for-

So long!

Whoa!