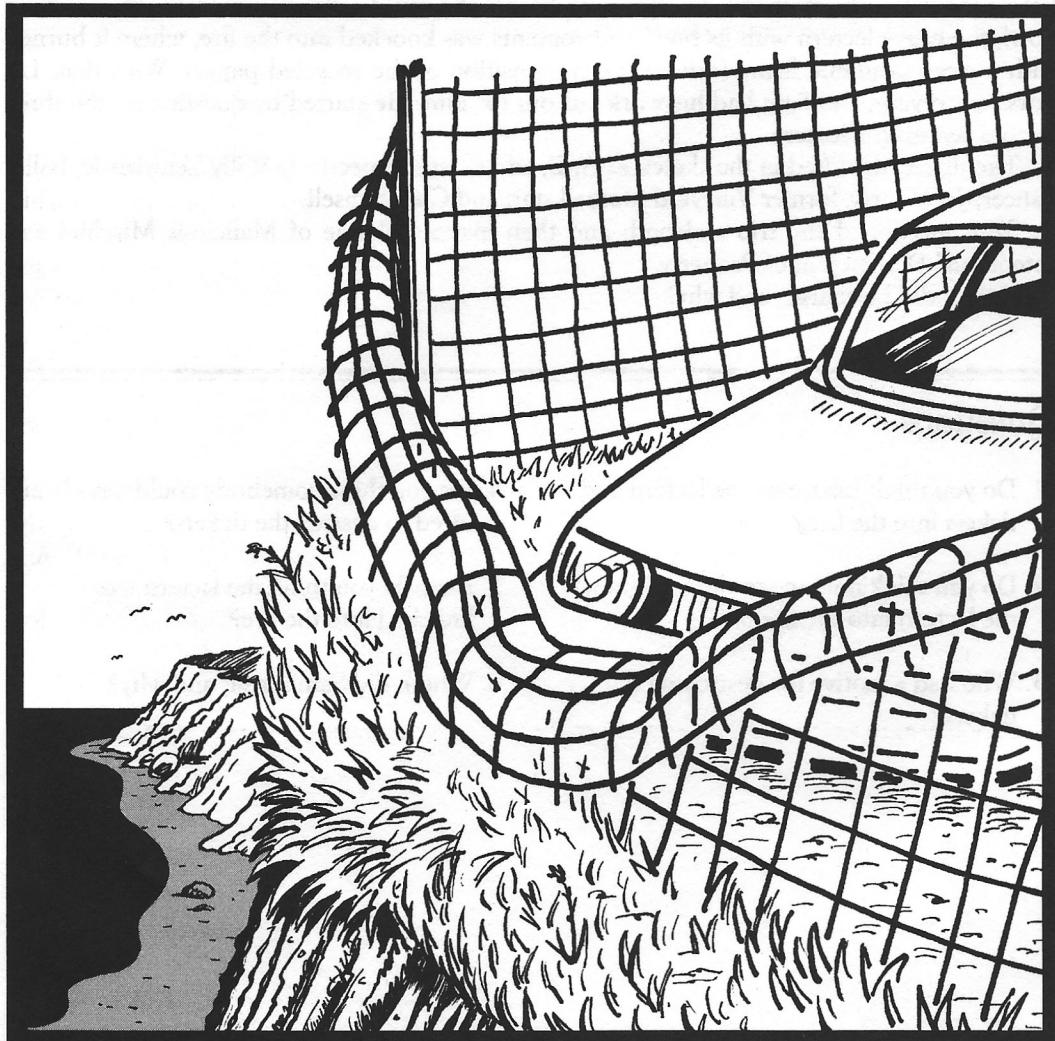


OVER THE CLIFFS AND DOWN WE GO



Sonny Day was far from sunny. As his wife, Dawn, pointed out, he was stupid, obese, obstinate, cantankerous, and had a ferocious temper, but he had one redeeming feature: he had money. Thanks to which she and her brother, Sherman Willingly, lived with Sonny comfortably and in apparent harmony until early one morning when a fisherman found Sonny's body lying face down on the beach below the Gay Head cliffs.

Sam, summoned before he'd even had breakfast, drove his jeep to the spot where the body had been found and made a preliminary inspection. It showed a badly bruised body, with bits of clay and twigs embedded in the clothing.

Leaving Officer Pudge Bartlett to guard the body, Sam made the long, circuitous trip from the beach to the top of the cliffs, where he saw what you see in the sketch. A half hour later, after a thorough investigation, he went to interview Sherman. He was breakfasting alone, and he showed more surprise than grief. Questioned, he stated that the Knights (August and June), who controlled Sonny's fortune as sole trustees, had been visiting last night, and after the second bottle of scotch, the conversation turned to finance.

In the middle of the discussion Sonny blew his top. In a sudden outburst he called Sherman a sponge and ordered him to get out of the house by morning. He then turned on the Knights, and told them he had evidence to prove they'd been embezzling and was going to present it to the D.A. the next morning. After a final diatribe against Dawn, he stormed out of the house and said he was going to the Gay Head cliffs where he could at least get some clean ocean air.

As Sherman finished his account, Dawn, only half awake, staggered into the dining room and said she'd heard what Shermy had said and it was God's honest truth. She then burst out crying and flung herself weeping on Sam's shoulder, soaking his shirt in tears. He waited her out and asked if he could go to the bathroom and wash up. She nodded sadly and said, "Please use the pink guest towel."

Sam cleaned up and drove to the Oak Bluffs Inn, where the Knights were staying. They corroborated Sherman's account of the drinking bout but stated that after Sonny's abrupt departure, Sherman had jumped up angrily and said, "Call me a sponge? I'll show you!" And he'd headed for the cliffs. The Knights, however, said they'd gone straight back to the inn.

Sam, faced with contradictory stories, sat down to think. What do you think he concluded, and what did he do about it?

Questions

1. Did Sonny fall to his death?
2. Was the fence damaged by the car?
3. Was it difficult to climb the fence?
4. Was the perpetrator under pressure to leave the scene?
5. Why do you think the fence was bent down to the ground?
6. Was this a one-man job?
7. Who killed Sonny?

Solution on page 62.