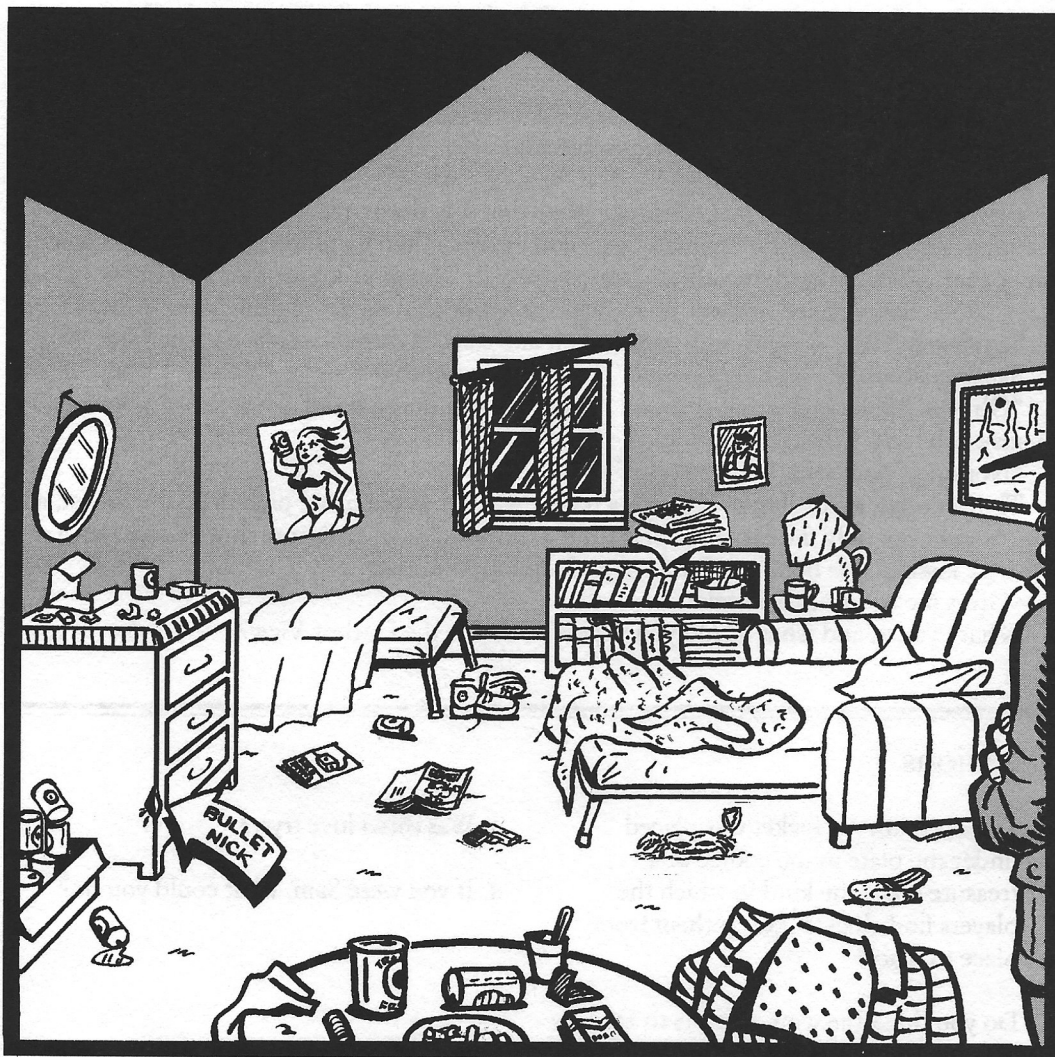


THE NIGHT OF THE CRABS



Summer jobs on the Vineyard are at a premium, but the catch is that when you get there, where do you sleep? With rentals out of reach of most seasonal salaries, a few men or women often band together and lease a house, and there are some strange combinations. Typical was this group of five—Jim, Ewald, Bo, Rudy, and Max—who rented a cottage last summer in Oak Bluffs.

They had little in common except inflated egos, which simmered most of the month but never got out of hand until Bo came back one afternoon with a bucket of large angry crabs, which he left on the kitchen floor before he went to work at the Harborside Hotel.

Since all five worked late, they'd established the custom of sitting around and having a few beers before going to sleep. On the night of the crabs, Ewald showed them a gun.

"I don't know whose it is," he said, "but I found it behind one of the books. Could have been lying there a long time." They passed the gun around and left it on the table when they decided to go to bed.

Jim was the first to turn in, but he bounced up with a yell and with a crab hanging on to his big toe. The incident brought a big laugh, until Rudy pulled back his bed covers and found another crab. Cursing, he sent it skimming across the floor, straight for Ewald's shoe. Ewald rescued the shoe and dashed off, but he tripped over the lamp cord, plunging the room into darkness. The result was a free-for-all that ended with a gunshot.

When the light was restored, Max had a wound in his foot and the gun was lying on the floor, as shown. Between his groans, Max accused Jim, who accused Rudy, who accused Bo, who called the police.

Sam, with Officer Nancy Nashawena, answered the call. After the usual preliminaries, he took each of the group into the next room and questioned them separately. They all denied ownership of the gun and denied using it.

Jim said, "It wasn't me. I was on the floor chasing one of those damn crabs." Rudy said, "Not me, I was finishing my beer." Bo said, "Not me. I was wrestling with Ewald, who was trying to choke me." Ewald said, "Not me, I wouldn't choke anybody. I had Bo by the neck because I thought he was a crab." And Max said, "Not me. Think I'd shoot myself?"

Under the circumstances, what do you think Sam did?

Questions

1. Did the bullet hit Max directly?
2. Describe the trajectory of the bullet.
3. Where was the perpetrator when he fired?
4. Who shot Max?

Solution on page 64.