

Detective Anderson: How did you come to find Mr. Robner?

Mrs. Robner: When I woke up this morning, I noticed that Marshall was not in bed. I wasn't alarmed, really, as it was not unusual for him to work late at night in the library and fall asleep there. I went down the hall to the library and knocked on the door. He didn't answer, so I knocked even harder. When that didn't work, I started calling his name loudly. So loud, actually, that I woke up Ms. Dunbar and George. We all were gathered there, knocking and yelling, and finally Mrs. Rourke, our housekeeper, was alarmed enough to come upstairs. She suggested calling the police, which we did. They arrived about twenty minutes later, and started breaking down the door with axes. When we entered the room, we found Marshall lying on the floor, face down.

Anderson: Did he usually keep his door locked when he worked?

Robner: Almost always. He was pretty secretive about his work, and he liked to be alone when he worked.

Anderson: Do you know of any reason why your husband might have wanted to take his own life?

Robner: He's been very depressed lately, you know. His business, Robner Corporation, is not doing well, and there is talk of selling out to a larger firm. Marshall founded the company, what, about twenty six years ago, and he has been desparately trying to find some way of saving it.

Anderson: The pills we found by his body, do you know what they are?

Robner: Yes. They were Ebullion tablets. It's an anti-depressent his doctor prescribed for him just last week.

Anderson: Had he been acting less depressed since then?

Robner: I really don't know. I haven't noticed much change.

Anderson: Did your husband ever talk of suicide?

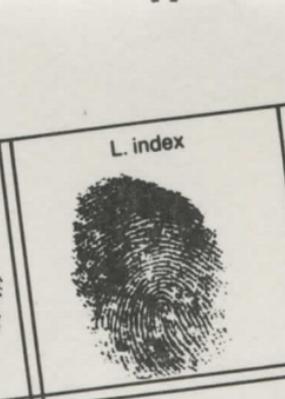
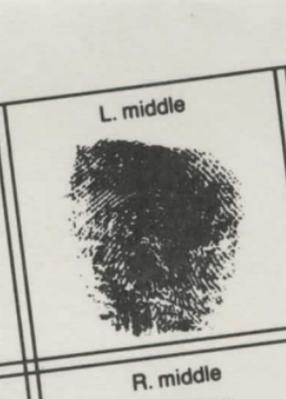
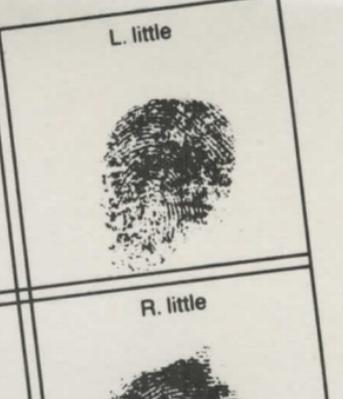
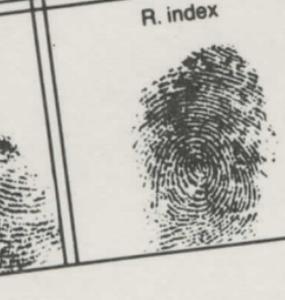
Robner: He did, actually, though I never took it seriously. He would talk about how everything would be easier if he were dead, but then he would start again talking about how he was going to have to keep the business going. I'm ... I'm stunned, really.

Anderson: Mrs. Robner, do you know of anyone who might have wanted to kill your husband?

Robner: Why, no. Of course not. He wasn't a very friendly man, he was very quiet. But he was a great philanthropist, you know, and everyone that knew him respected him. I can't imagine anyone wanting to hurt Marshall. Do you really suspect he didn't commit suicide?

Anderson: I don't suspect anything. I just want to understand what's happened

happened.

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Detective Anderson: You were Mr. Robner's personal secretary, is that right?

Ms. Dunbar: Yes, sir.

Anderson: I understand that you were the last person to see Mr. Robner alive. Could you tell me about that?

Dunbar: Why, yes. I brought him some tea at about 11 PM that night. On nights when he expected to work late, he would always expect tea at that hour. I brought him the tea and he asked me to leave. That's all.

Anderson: Did Mr. Robner seem at all upset?

Dunbar: He did appear quite nervous, but he had been upset for some time, as you know.

Anderson: Do you know what he was working on that evening?

Dunbar: No. I wasn't with him, except for that one time.

Anderson: Do you recall whether the pills, the Ebullion pills, were on the desk when you came in?

Dunbar: No, I don't remember that.

Anderson: Ms. Dunbar, were you with Mrs. Robner when the door was opened by the police?

Dunbar: Yes.

Anderson: Do you remember her reaction? Anything she might have said?

Dunbar: She didn't really react much. I don't think she said anything except "He's dead." or something of that sort. She just stood there with the rest of us until you people arrived.

Anderson: How were the Robners getting along? I mean, were they happily married?

Dunbar: I don't think so, really. He was so quiet and, well, dreamy. She was always scolding him for paying too much attention to the business and to his "good works". They rarely went out lately, which seemed to upset Mrs. Robner quite a bit. She had friends of her own that she used to visit. I think she would have gone insane, otherwise.

Anderson: Thank you, Ms. Dunbar. Oh, one last thing. You prepared the tea for Mr. Robner?

Dunbar: Yes, I started the water boiling about a quarter of, and then poured the tea when I heard the whistle from the living room.

Anderson: You weren't in the kitchen during that time?

Dunbar: I just told you no.

Dunbar: I just told you, no.

Anderson: Was anyone else awake in the house while you were waiting?

Dunbar: Yes, I believe that both George and Mrs. Robner were awake. I remember George coming down, reading for a bit, then retiring.

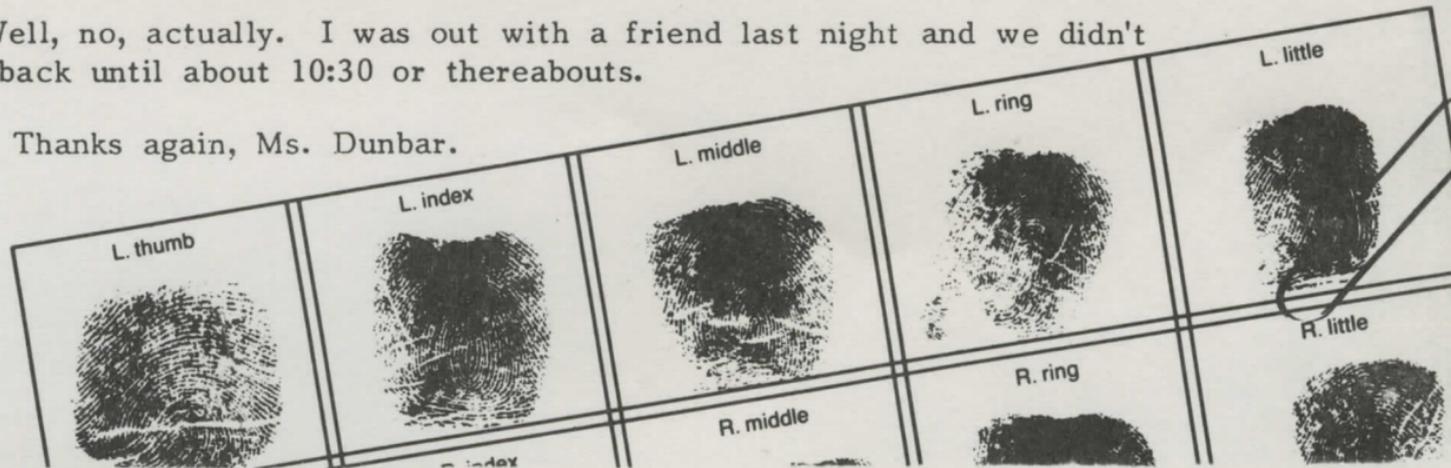
Anderson: Do you believe anyone might have a reason to kill Mr. Robner?

Dunbar: No, I can't imagine it.

Anderson: Thank you, Ms. Dunbar. Oh, Ms. Dunbar, were you at home all night, last night I mean?

Dunbar: Well, no, actually. I was out with a friend last night and we didn't get back until about 10:30 or thereabouts.

Anderson: Thanks again, Ms. Dunbar.



Detective Anderson: You were Mr. Robner's business partner, is that correct?

Baxter: That's right.

Anderson: How long have you and Mr. Robner been partners?

Baxter: For about twenty five years now. I was his partner almost from the start of the business.

Anderson: Mrs. Robner tells me that there have been problems lately with the business. Could you tell me what that's all about?

Baxter: Yes, the business has its problems, some of them quite large. Marshall and I were working on a plan to solve those problems and get the company back on its feet again before we would be forced to take drastic action. I hope that I can hold things together now that Marshall is dead. He was the founder of the business and controlled many things by himself.

Anderson: Did Mr. Robner ever talk to you about personal problems, or how he felt?

Baxter: No, we were business partners, not intimate friends. I don't think he really had any close friends. I know he had gotten himself very upset about the business, but that's the extent of it.

Anderson: When was the last time you saw Mr. Robner?

Baxter: Yesterday afternoon, at our office in town.

Anderson: And where were you after work?

Baxter: Last night was my concert night at the Hartford Symphony. I go there quite regularly. After the concert, at about 10 o'clock, I went home. I received a call from Ms. Dunbar this morning telling me of the tragedy, and I arrived here just a few minutes ago.

Anderson: Were you at the concert alone?

Baxter: Quite alone.

Anderson: Do you know of anyone who might have wanted to harm Mr. Robner?

Baxter: No. Except for George, of course. During some of their shouting matches I've heard George threaten Marshall, but I don't really think he ever would have followed through.

Anderson: Shouting matches?

Baxter: George and Marshall were always at odds. You see, George has been living like a spoiled child all of his life. He's twenty five now and has never held a job. Just spends money, or gambles it away. Being the Robners' only child, he gets away with murder. Marshall would

lecture him and threaten to cut him off without a cent, and then the yelling would start. Eventually Marshall would give in.

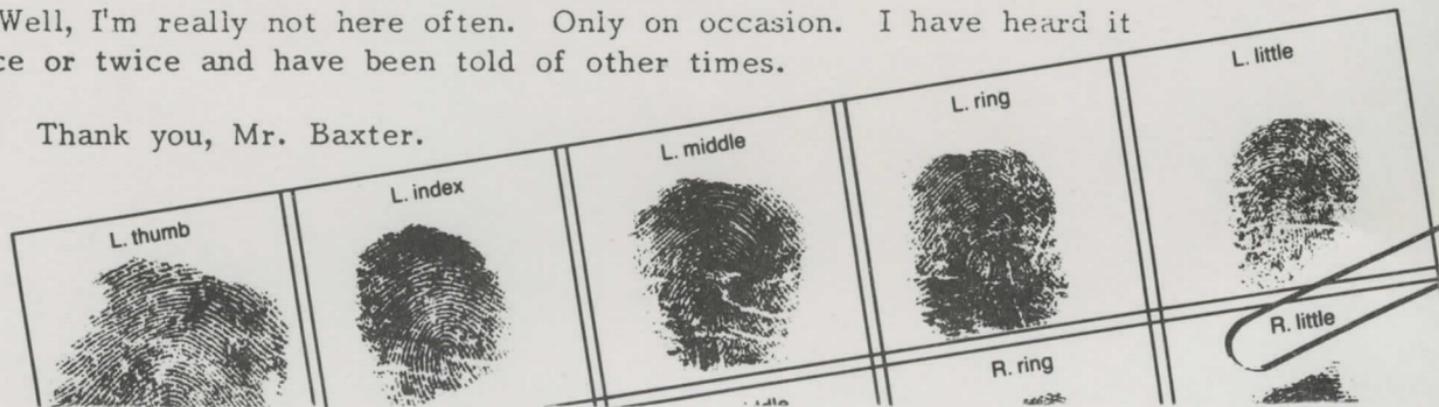
Anderson: When was the last time you heard this?

Baxter: Actually, I heard it again just last week. Strange, now that I think of it, they went at it just last week. I hear that Marshall told George that he had decided to disinherit him. He even mentioned it to me at the office the next day. He seemed pretty serious. I suppose that the financial troubles at the company may have been responsible for his attitude.

Anderson: Are you at the house often? You say you have heard some of these 'shouting matches'.

Baxter: Well, I'm really not here often. Only on occasion. I have heard it once or twice and have been told of other times.

Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Baxter.



Excerpts from Interview with George Robner

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Detective Anderson: Mr. Robner, I have been told by Mr. Baxter that you and your father had some serious arguments lately. Could you tell me what they were about?

George Robner: I don't think that's your business.

Anderson: I'm told they had to do with your habit of wasting or gambling away your father's money.

Robner: So?

Anderson: I've even been told that he threatened to disinherit you.

Robner: Yeah. He said he was going to. I'll bet he didn't, though. He never has.

Anderson: Mr. Robner, let me be frank. I'm told that you threatened violence against your father as recently as a week ago, and now he's dead.

Robner: Look, I don't get what you're driving at. You find the poor guy dead in his room. The room is locked. His bottle of medicine is nearly empty. What sort of detective are you, anyway?

Anderson: I'm doing the asking, if you don't mind.

Robner: Then ask someone else.

Note: G.R. left abruptly at this point.

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L. index



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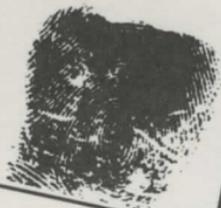
R. thumb



R. index



R. middle



R. ring



R. little



Anderson: Mrs. Rourke, how long have you been working as housekeeper for the Robners?

Rourke: Ever since the house was built, six years ago.

Anderson: Tell me all you remember from the night of the murder.

Rourke: I remember that by about 10:30 or so ...

Anderson: You mean 10:30 PM.

Rourke: Yes. By 10:30 when I went to my room to do some reading, everyone was upstairs excepting Ms. Dunbar, who had just returned home. She went upstairs at about 11, bringing Mr. Robner his tea. He almost always takes his tea at 11. I remember saying goodnight to her on her way up, and that's the last I heard until this morning, with all the shouting and banging going on upstairs. No, that isn't right. George was downstairs also for a while, only about 10 minutes or so.

Anderson: Could someone have gone upstairs during the night?

Rourke: I don't rightly think so, at least not before 3 or 4. You see, I like to do some reading late at night, and I was reading this really exciting mystery story, and, lord, I was up until nearly 4 o'clock before I finished. And who do you think the murderer was?

Anderson: Really, Mrs. Rourke, let's stick to the matter at hand. Do you keep your door closed at night when you are reading?

Rourke: Yes, sir.

Anderson: So then it's possible that someone might have entered the house and gone upstairs without your knowledge.

Rourke: No, sir. I don't believe so. Why don't you try the stairs yourself? For a new house, these stairs are the noisiest I've ever heard. My door's right beside it, too. When the Robners owned a little cat, I can remember hearing every footstep creaking up the stairs. Don't know why they don't ever fix it up. I guess it don't bother them any.

Anderson: But it is possible that someone might have entered after you went off to sleep.

Rourke: Well, I suppose it might be, but not before.

Anderson: How long has Ms. Dunbar been living here?

Rourke: Ever since the place was built. She does an awful lot of work for Mr. Robner, you know. I don't think he could have gotten along without her, although that's not my business to say. He was always so nervous, fretting about everything, and forgetting to do this and that. It seemed that she was always covering his tracks, if you get my meaning.

Anderson: Do you have any reason to suspect anyone of wanting to harm Mr. Robner?

Rourke: Well, of course I've heard all of the screaming and fussing with George and Mr. Robner. That's been going on for years, now, so I don't make much of it anymore. No, I can't imagine anyone wanting to hurt poor Mr. Robner. He was such a sweet man.

Anderson: Thank you, Mrs. Rourke.

