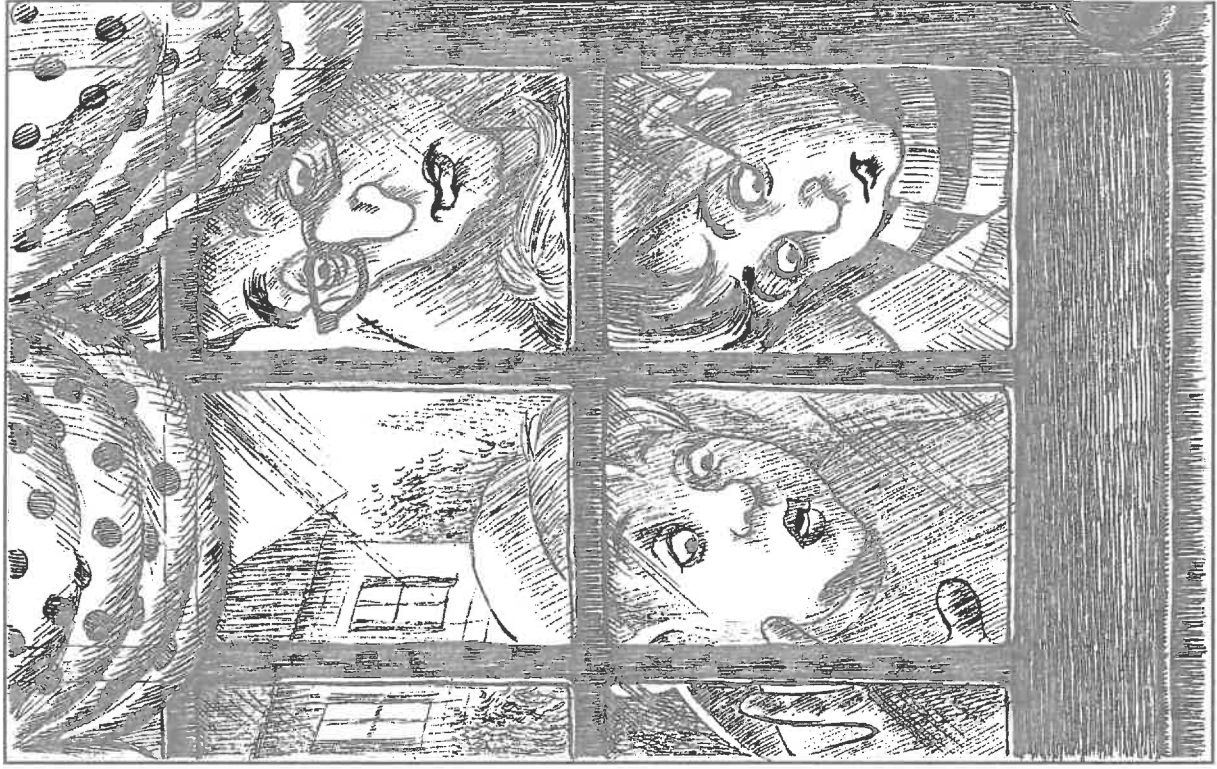


One Strike, You're Out



THE PROSECUTOR WAS doing her best to make the meek bantamweight look like a monster.

PROSECUTION: Glen Weaver's plan was diabolically simple.

For weeks, the neighborhood of Regal Park had been plagued by burglaries. But Glen's wife, Dora, wasn't worried. A first-rate alarm system protected their home. Then, so very conveniently, on the morning of her murder, the alarm broke down. Dora stayed home from work that day waiting for a repairman who never showed up, a repairman that her husband had never called. And with good reason. For if the alarm had been fixed, Glen Weaver would never have been able to bludgeon his wife to death and try to blame it on a nonexistent burglar.

The murder had been discovered by Jimmy and Johnny Hall. At 5:30 p.m., the teenage brothers had just started batting baseballs in the park behind the Weaver home. Jimmy hit a long one and, as bad luck would have it, they heard the shattering of glass. Being honest boys, Jimmy and Johnny began walking toward the row of houses. A man in the house next door had also heard the crash. He came out onto his patio and looked around. "Looks like you boys are going to have to deal with Dora Weaver," he said, pointing to the kitchen door in the Weaver house. There was a hole in the lower left of the door's window. The man joined the boys and was about to knock on the door when he happened to glance through the window. "Good heavens!" Dora Weaver was lying in the middle of the kitchen, her head surrounded by a pool of blood.

Both the neighbor and the boys stared at the body, then glanced up. Glen Weaver was standing in the dining-room doorway, a bloody rolling pin clutched in his hand. He seemed dazed and shocked. On seeing the three faces in the window, Glen dropped the weapon and hurried away. "Where's my ball?" Jimmy asked as he scanned the kitchen floor. His brother told him to shut up.

PROSECUTION: The Defense is going to tell you that Glen Weaver had just arrived home from work, that he had just poured himself a scotch in the living room, that he heard the crash of glass and that when he walked into the kitchen, his wife's body was already there. They're going to tell you that a stunned Mr. Weaver picked up the rolling pin, not realizing that it was the murder weapon.

Well, our response is simple. We will show that the Weaver home had been sealed, every door and window locked from the inside. Even if Mrs. Weaver had admitted her killer, she couldn't very well have bolted the door after he left. Plus, there was no sign of forced entry. A witness, Mrs. Weaver's aunt, was in the house, in her wheelchair by a second-floor window. She will testify that no one even approached the front door until Glen Weaver unlocked it at 5:25 p.m.

The evidence is simple and straightforward. Had it not been for the baseball, Glen Weaver would have had all the time he needed to wipe his prints off the rolling pin, force a door or window and create the charade of a brutal murder occurring during a robbery attempt. Thank heavens for baseball! It's baseball that will help us convict a cold-blooded killer.

The Defense waives its opening statement and you feel sorry for little Mr. Weaver. He certainly doesn't look cold-blooded. But if he didn't kill his wife, who did?