A FREE MURDER MYSTERY LOGIC PUZZLE

The Nine O'Clock Note

Hollywood, 1950s. The most feared gossip columnist in town sends five people the same note: **"Nine o'clock sharp. This changes everything." At ten to nine, he's found dead.**

Everyone tells the truth. Nobody tells all of it.

1. Print pages 2 to 6 (any printer, "fit to page" works for A4).
2. Read the story and the statements. Every statement is true.
3. Mark the evidence sheet: X rules a pair out, O proves it.
4. Name the killer, the weapon and the place.
5. Check your answer on page 8. No peeking!



Case 30 of 50 from Killibi, a paperback of murder mystery logic puzzles

How to solve a case

One of the suspects is the killer. Each suspect had exactly one weapon and was in exactly one place (in Chief Inspector cases, each also had exactly one motive), and no two suspects shared any of them. Everyone tells the truth, but nobody tells all of it.

1. **Read the story and every statement.** Statements are your clues. They are all on the page after the story, numbered ❶ ❷ ❸ and so on.
2. **Mark the evidence sheet.** Each square pairs two things, such as a suspect and a weapon. Put an **X** when a statement rules a pair out, and an **O** when you know a pair is true. The murder board lists everyone's traits: height, hand, eyes, hair, what a weapon weighs and is made of, and whether a place is indoors.
3. **After every O, clear its row and column.** An O means nobody else had that weapon and that suspect had nothing else, so put an X in every other square in its row and column of that block.
4. **Where to start.** Begin with the statements that name someone. Then look up the traits for the rest. A weapon was wherever its owner was: if Mabel had the rope and was in the cellar, the rope was in the cellar too.
5. **Stuck? Ask "what if?"** In harder cases, pick a square with two choices left in its row and suppose one is true. If the statements then contradict each other, that square is an X.
6. **Name the killer, then pin it.** The evidence fits exactly one suspect. On the murder board, run a string from each suspect to their weapon and their location. The solutions at the back explain every step.

AN EXAMPLE

Statements ruled out the rope and the vase for Mabel, so the pistol was hers: O. Nobody else had the pistol, so the rest of its column gets an X.

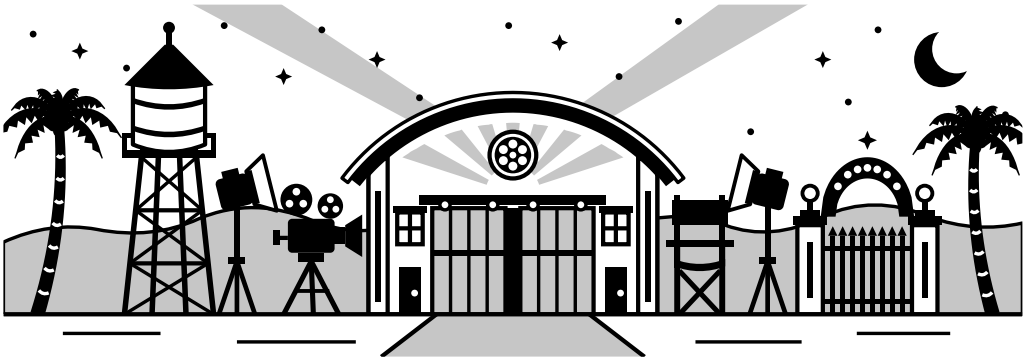
	rope	vase	pistol
Mabel	X	X	O
Ivo			X
Nell			X

RANKS



Constable · Sergeant · Inspector · Chief Inspector

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30 | *The Nine O'Clock Note*

CASE 30 · INSPECTOR · STUDIO NINE

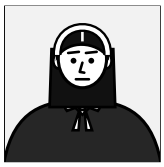
"NINE O'CLOCK SHARP. This changes everything. C.M."

Mr. Clifton Moody sent that note to five people at Studio Nine the night before. He wrote the most feared gossip column in Hollywood, and one paragraph from him could end a marriage, a contract or a career.

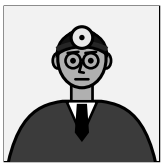
At ten minutes to nine, a runner found him dead. The morning's rehearsal was called off, and the medical examiner was there within the hour.

All five people who got the note said how sorry they were to miss the meeting. One of them had made sure it never began.

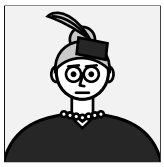
UNDER SUSPICION


Yuki Arakawa


Clementine Hart


Silas Okafor


Bertrand Lisle


Winifred Ashby

EVIDENCE

The murder took place indoors, and the medical examiner says the murder weapon was made of metal.

All 8 statements are on the next page.

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Statements

8 IN ALL

Everyone is telling the truth. Nobody is telling all of it.



Yuki Arakawa

A concert pianist who remembers every word said within earshot.

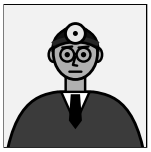
1 "A pianist practices one phrase until it is perfect. Here is mine. Whoever had the makeup mirror did not have brown eyes. Your sergeant hummed in the corridor, by the way. Flat, twice."



Clementine Hart

A society columnist who knows everyone's secrets and sells a few.

2 "Rivals, Inspector, never enemies. There's a difference in my business. Whoever was in the Prop Warehouse was taller than me. If his notebook turns up, I'll pay handsomely for a look."



Silas Okafor

A country doctor who signs death certificates without looking up.

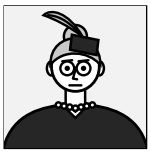
3 "I've signed a thousand death certificates, Inspector. This one isn't mine to sign. I either had the director's riding boot or was in the Commissary, but not both. Whoever had the prop sword was shorter than me. Your medical examiner is awfully thorough. Back home we're done by lunch."



Bertrand Lisle

A gentleman gambler whose luck runs out on the last hand.

4 "Deal me in, Inspector. I've played for worse stakes. Whoever had the director's riding boot did not have black hair. Care to wager on who did it? No? Pity."



Winifred Ashby

A dowager who has buried three husbands and kept their fortunes.

5 "I have buried three husbands, young man. A columnist hardly rattles me. I either had the director's riding boot or was in the Makeup Room, but not both. Fetch me a chair. These studio people have no manners at all."

THE FILM CREW

6 **The wardrobe mistress**: "Every costume at this studio passes through my hands twice a day. Whoever had the director's riding boot was indoors. Forty extras to dress for the rehearsal, and now this."

7 **The stage manager**: "I've got a crew standing idle at union rates, so make it quick: Whoever had the sandbag did not have black hair. Whoever had the sandbag was indoors."

8 **The runner**: "Fetch this, carry that. Nobody notices a runner, Inspector. Whoever was in the Parking Lot did not have black hair."

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The murder board

Sandbag
Heavy · canvas
Used to hold the scenery down.

Prop sword
Medium weight · metal
Blunt, but heavier than it looks.

Film canister
Medium weight · metal
Contains the only print of a flop.

Makeup mirror
Medium weight · glass
Cracked down the middle.

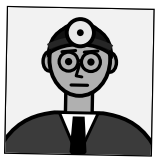
Director's riding boot
Medium weight · leather
Polished to a mirror shine.



Yuki Arakawa
5 ft 4 in
Right-handed
Brown eyes
Black hair



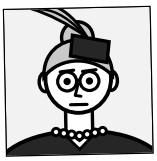
Clementine Hart
5 ft 3 in
Right-handed
Blue eyes
Blond hair



Silas Okafor
5 ft 11 in
Right-handed
Brown eyes
Black hair



Bertrand Lisle
6 ft 3 in
Right-handed
Gray eyes
Brown hair



Winifred Ashby
5 ft 0 in
Right-handed
Blue eyes
Gray hair

Parking Lot
Outdoors
Convertibles and a guard who naps.

Water Tank
Outdoors
For shipwreck scenes. Deeper than it looks.

Makeup Room
Indoors
Mirrors, powder and harsh bulbs.

Commissary
Indoors
Where stars and extras eat the same bad soup.

Prop Warehouse
Indoors
Everything from swords to stuffed bears.

When you have solved the case, pin it: run a string from each suspect's top pin to their weapon, and from their bottom pin to their location.

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Evidence sheet

SUSPECTS	WEAPONS: Sandbag	WEAPONS: Prop sword	WEAPONS: Film canister	WEAPONS: Makeup mirror	WEAPONS: Director's riding boot	LOCATIONS: Parking Lot	LOCATIONS: Water Tank	LOCATIONS: Makeup Room	LOCATIONS: Commissary	LOCATIONS: Prop Warehouse
Yuki Arakawa										
Clementine Hart										
Silas Okafor										
Bertrand Lisle										
Winifred Ashby										

LOCATIONS	Sandbag	Prop sword	Film canister	Makeup mirror	Director's riding boot
Parking Lot					
Water Tank					
Makeup Room					
Commissary					
Prop Warehouse					

X = ruled out **O** = proven After every O, cross out the rest of its row and column.

NOTES

YOUR VERDICT

Who? _____ With what? _____

Where? _____

Solution on page 8

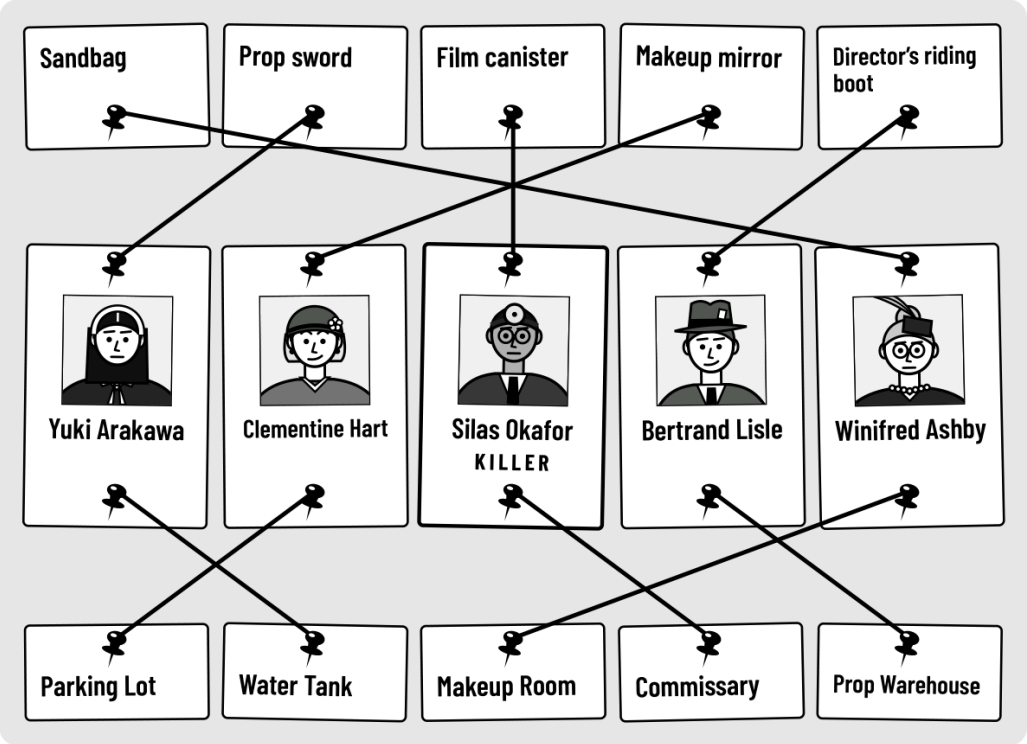
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Solved it?

The answer and the full reasoning are on the next page.

Not yet? Go back and look at what each suspect leaves out.

CASE 30 · THE BOARD, PINNED



CASE 30 · THE NINE O'CLOCK NOTE

SUSPECT	WEAPON	LOCATION
Yuki Arakawa	Prop sword	Water Tank
Clementine Hart	Makeup mirror	Parking Lot
Silas Okafor	**Film canister**	**Commissary**
Bertrand Lisle	Director's riding boot	Prop Warehouse
Winifred Ashby	Sandbag	Makeup Room

The murder took place indoors, and the medical examiner says the murder weapon was made of metal. Of the suspects indoors, only Silas Okafor had a weapon made of metal. So the killer was Silas Okafor with the film canister in the Commissary.

Silas Okafor once signed a young actress's death certificate without looking up, and Mr. Clifton Moody had finally learned what really killed her. The nine o'clock meeting would have finished the doctor for good. So Silas Okafor reached the Commissary first and struck the columnist down with the film canister before anyone else arrived.

1. Silas Okafor had the film canister: no other weapon is left for Silas Okafor (statements 1, 3, 4, 7).
2. Yuki Arakawa had the prop sword: no other weapon is left for Yuki Arakawa (statements 1, 4, 7; Silas Okafor had the film canister).
3. The makeup mirror was in the Parking Lot: no other weapon is left for the Parking Lot (statements 6, 7; Yuki Arakawa had the prop sword but was not in the Parking Lot; Silas Okafor had the film canister but was not in the Parking Lot).
4. Statement 3 says exactly one of its two halves is true. Silas Okafor did not have the director's riding boot (statement 4), so Silas Okafor was in the Commissary.
5. The prop sword was at the Water Tank: no other weapon is left for the Water Tank (statements 6, 7; Silas Okafor had the film canister but was not at the Water Tank; the makeup mirror was in the Parking Lot).
6. Yuki Arakawa had the prop sword and the prop sword was at the Water Tank, so Yuki Arakawa was at the Water Tank.
7. Bertrand Lisle was in the Prop Warehouse: no other suspect is left for the Prop Warehouse (statement 2; Yuki Arakawa had the prop sword but the

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prop sword was not in the Prop Warehouse; Silas Okafor was in the Commissary).

8. What if Clementine Hart was in the Makeup Room? Following the statements from there, statement 5 could not be true. So Clementine Hart was not in the Makeup Room.
9. Clementine Hart was in the Parking Lot: no other location is left for Clementine Hart (statement 2; the prop sword was at the Water Tank but Clementine Hart did not have the prop sword; supposing Clementine Hart was in the Makeup Room leads to a contradiction; Silas Okafor was in the Commissary).
10. Winifred Ashby was in the Makeup Room: no other suspect is left for the Makeup Room (Yuki Arakawa had the prop sword but the prop sword was not in the Makeup Room; supposing Clementine Hart was in the Makeup Room leads to a contradiction; Silas Okafor was in the Commissary; Bertrand Lisle was in the Prop Warehouse).
11. The makeup mirror was in the Parking Lot and Clementine Hart was in the Parking Lot, so Clementine Hart had the makeup mirror.
12. Winifred Ashby had the sandbag: no other weapon is left for Winifred Ashby (statement 5; Yuki Arakawa had the prop sword; Silas Okafor had the film canister; the makeup mirror was in the Parking Lot but Winifred Ashby was not in the Parking Lot).
13. Bertrand Lisle had the director's riding boot: no other suspect is left for the director's riding boot (statements 4, 5; Clementine Hart was in the Parking Lot but the director's riding boot was not in the Parking Lot).

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That was case 30.

There are 49 more.



Killibi: 50 Murder Mystery Logic Puzzles · G. Lariva

Five settings · from 3-suspect warm-ups to medium-hard · no gore · solutions in the back

Paperback $12.99 on Amazon

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or search "Killibi" on Amazon