

Side # 30 3

GUILTY CONSCIENCE

Arthur
+
Prosecutors

ARTHUR. That's a dangerous assumption.
PROSECUTOR. Dangerous for who, Mr. Jamison?
Your wife?

ARTHUR. Objection!
PROSECUTOR. (pressing) Fifteen minutes to walk to
your house, ten minutes to do whatever had to be
done—

ARTHUR. Objection!
PROSECUTOR. (overriding him) and then another
fifteen back to the hotel. You would have been gone, at
most, no more than forty-five minutes.

ARTHUR. Your honor, this is a grant grandstanding.
The prosecutor is not only violating every rule of court-
room procedure, but in essence he's accusing me of
nothing more serious than the crime of convenient
geography. Am I to be held responsible for the proxim-
ity of a hotel to my home?

PROSECUTOR. Yes, sir, you are! A young man named
Bill Keith was the banquet chairman, and he's prepared
to testify that *you* suggested the location for the dinner.
He will also tell us that your acceptance was conditional
on the availability of *nearby* accomodations. He will
further testify that you asked to be the first speaker.

ARTHUR. (ruefully) Not very clever of me.

PROSECUTOR. No.

ARTHUR. (a sigh) Unfortunately, arrangements can't
be made without other people being aware of them.

PROSECUTOR. (turning to the jury, a summation:)
Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, the elements of a
crime are means, motive, and opportunity, and if you
consider Arthur Jamison in this light you will see that he
had the means—a fraudulent burglary that never took
place; he had a motive—his wife wanted a divorce and
was demanding a large financial settlement; and he had

the opportunity; a dinner near his home that was intended to serve as an alibi. But it's a phantom alibi, ladies and gentlemen. And this "burglary" outrages logic in every way. Here is a terrified woman who calls the police and reports an intruder. Does she then lock herself in her room and wait for them to arrive? No. Instead, she makes a totally irrational trip downstairs to confront the thief. Irrational, that is, unless there was no thief and she *knew* the intruder, unless she was lured by a familiar voice—

ARTHUR. (*annoyed*) All right, it won't work. I'll have to do it another way.

PROSECUTOR. Absolutely.

(*The courtroom suddenly disappears and the living room is now bathed in the glow of late afternoon. Everything is as it was in Scene One—the tapestry is back on the wall, the lamp is unbroken, and the jimmy is no longer on the carpet. The suitcase stands in place with the raincoat thrown over it. The light has gone out over the portrait of the judge. LOUISE's body is gone.*)

ARTHUR. (*moving away from the witness stand*) I could plug some of the holes, kill her upstairs in the bedroom . . . but the alibi . . .

PROSECUTOR. Very weak.

ARTHUR. Can't be in two places at the same time, can I? The illusion won't hold.

PROSECUTOR. (*drifting off-stage*) Unacceptable risk. You'll need something better.

ARTHUR. (*Gods*) And reasonably soon.

(*LOUISE enters with the silver ice bucket.*)

LOUISE. Would you like some?