COLUMBO
MYSTERY
PUZZLE
GAME

Read the booklet inside then you be the detective. Assemble the puzzle and piece together the hidden clues, just like Columbo did!

DEATH
FORETOLD
Jeff Wilder was lifting his makeup brush to his face when his eye caught the image of a man in a crumpled raincoat in the mirror. Startled, he twisted around in his chair and yelled, "What in the Devil's name are you doing in my dressing room?" He was answered with an innocent smile and a trite apology. "Oh, I'm very sorry, sir. I didn't mean to startle you. You see, I've always been fascinated with the way magicians create illusion, and I was so distracted with all the backstage goings-on that when I wandered—"

"How did you get backstage?" Wilder interrupted. "Do you have a pass? Do you have written permission?"

"No, sir, I have this."

The performer examined the I.D. card and the badge with some suspicion. "I see," he began. "And is it your hobby, Lieutenant Columbo, to go snooping around dressing rooms?"

Actually, sir, I'm here on official business," said the detective. "You see, sir, I'm investigating a death that occurred yesterday in a small studio apartment uptown. There was nothing unusual about the body or the gun dropped next to it, but the suicide the victim was slumped over had all sorts of fortune-telling stuff on it. This is what it looked like," finished Columbo, taking a photo from his pocket and offering it to the magician.

Wilder remained still, not even looking at the photo. "Let me tell you something, Lieutenant," Wilder began. "Fortune-tellers are among the most deceptive people on Earth. They have no compunction about betraying their clients after winning their trust. So if one of them managed to get herself killed it does not surprise me in the least. And it saddens me even less."

"Well, sir," Columbo persisted, "I would appreciate your help in this case. I've seen you on those T.V. talk shows lately, 'The Spookbuster'. You're the man who exposes false mediums and quack healers. I tell you, it's even more interesting than your old magic act. I hear you've made a remarkable show biz comeback because of it."
“Really, Lieutenant,” snapped Wilder. “The details of my career are none of your business.” Wilder grabbed the photo from Columbo with a quick, rough motion. “Now, if you want my appraisal of this photograph I will give it to you so that you can go on your way.”

The magician scanned the photo for a moment. “This is standard fortune-telling equipment: A mass produced deck of Tarot cards which can supposedly predict the client’s future, a cup containing used tea leaves for the same purpose, a ouija board which they claim enables spirits to speak to our world, and a text on Spiritualism by some charlatan named ‘Jewil.’

“This is about what I would expect a fortune-teller to use as the tools of the trade. But I don’t think I can give you any insight into how the woman died. Now, will you please take your picture and leave?”

Columbo pocketed the photo, mumbled a thank you and an apology, and walked out. Wilder watched the door slowly move back into its frame. It stopped a few inches short of closing. The magician held his breath. For a moment there was no sound, and the only motion was the wisp of smoke from the detective’s cigar filtering back into the room.

Then Columbo’s face reappeared in the doorway. “Excuse me, sir,” he said, stepping back into the room while holding up a page from his notebook for Wilder to see. “One more thing. The victim’s name was Sonia Brodsky, she lived alone in the apartment, and death was from a single bullet to the abdomen.”

“So,” said Wilder indignantly.

“Well, you didn’t ask me anything about the victim, sir. So I thought I’d fill you in. I sure could use some advice on this murder,” muttered Columbo.

“Perhaps you should consider the possibility of suicide, Lieutenant. Other than that I’m afraid I can’t help you. Now—goodbye!”

Columbo repeated his apology, his thank you, and his slow walk out the door. Wilder watched the wisp of smoke again. It did not dissipate. He felt a deep feeling of dread well up inside him.

“That’s just what I was thinking, sir,” Columbo said, returning to the room. “What if it was a suicide. Let’s say the woman sat all alone and did all these mystical readings about her own future. And maybe she saw something terrible ahead, which she couldn’t face. So she took out the gun and ended it all.”

Wilder looked a bit relieved. “That sounds very probable to me, Lieutenant.”
“Maybe that’s what I’ll write up in my report.” Columbo turned towards the door and tossed Wilder a backhanded wave. “Well, thank you again, sir.”

“Please, Lieutenant, I have one thing to ask of you,” began Wilder. Columbo turned around, and the magician smiled at him for the first time. “I’m asking that you really do leave. I am very glad I could be of assistance, but I must prepare for my performance. Now, are you sure you have no other questions?”

Columbo smiled back. “No, sir, I don’t.” He paused, contemplating his cigar for a few seconds. “Except…” The lieutenant took out the photo again. Wilder’s smile vanished.

“You didn’t make any comment on this, sir. The pad of paper in the photo. It was blank, but when I rubbed it with a pencil I was able to bring up the numbers that had been written on the page above it. What do you make of that?”

Wilder scowled. “Oh, I can’t imagine. Each fortune-teller devises his own mumbo-jumbo system. These numbers could mean anything.”

Columbo pointed to the picture and said aloud, “9, 9, 5, 0, 1.” Could that mean something in numerology, perhaps?”

“If you did use the standard practice,” began Wilder, suddenly friendly again, “of ‘A’ equals 1, ‘B’ equals 2, then this would be ‘I, I, E,’ then a zero or an ‘O’, then an ‘A’. But it seems whatever contrived code Ms. Brodsky had created will remain her secret! It’s a dead end.”

Columbo sat down on the sofa without asking to, leaned back comfortably, and pointed his cigar at the magician. “Tell me something, Mr. Wilder.” He was almost whispering. “What is your greatest fear?”

“I don’t know what you mean, Lieutenant,” responded Wilder.

“I mean, you make your living now exposing con-men and false prophets. You destroy their careers. But do you have any secret that would destroy your own career?” the lieutenant asked.

“I think I’ve had enough, Lieutenant,” shouted the magician. “I suggest you get out, and, this time, stay out!”

“And I suggest that you’re not Jeff Wilder!” Columbo shot back. “You had a different life years ago, with a different name. You made a fortune doing the things you crusade against today. And poor Sonia Brodsky was the only one who shared your secret. I’ll bet you never stopped going to her, for readings and ceremonies and all sorts of weird things—any one of which would ruin your reputation as a ‘Spookbuster’ if it was made public knowledge.”
“My guess is she got greedy. There’s nothing like blackmail to ruin a love affair. And there’s no better solution to blackmail than murder. Unless, of course, you get caught.”

“Sonia Brodsky spent her last night with you. The evening started with the usual fortune-telling, but it ended in murder.”

* * * * *

What led Columbo to the conclusion that Jeff Wilder murdered Sonia Brodsky? Put together and examine the jigsaw puzzle, then see if you can deduce why:

1. Sonia Brodsky was not alone the night she died.
2. She lived long enough to leave a hint as to the identity of her killer.
3. There is an undeniable, if not obvious, connection between Jeff Wilder and the items on the table.
4. Wilder knew of the murder before Columbo discussed the details with him.
SOLUTION

I centrifuged Colombo propelling the photo.Genesis the gene.

Which is a

backpack.

(1) "You see, Sir, the first thing I noticed was the creases butt in the

backpack.

(2) "I now take a look at the one card that is not touching the others.

It is the Mexican! If you look in the center of it, you'll see a bloody

indented print. Presently, Mr. Brodyi invoking long enough to pour out

his card and Wolf examining the score of pet germs. Well, sir,

this card was wrought. When I looked around for blood spots I found

two on the coin board—on the letters 'W' and 'I.' Since the spot on the 'W'

stands off or I assumed that the struggle to touch it with the top of

strength, then tell back to the floor. So I laid me beside the

(3) "After that I took the bag and I say, I'm adapted it with a packet to

print out what had been written on the page before. And I must confess,

that I was missing you when I saw the number on it was 39201.

I knew I was doubtful. [Back] But I wanted to hear your experience

the system of untimeliness without noticing you were revealing your

name. Using the system you mentioned—A = I, B = 2—the numbers

10 - 2 - 0 - 0 - 3 - 9 - 2 - 0 - 1.

Mr. Bush's answer is a guess. Colombo voiced "I don't know. I didn't

realize that anyone could connect it with me."

"Well, sir, Colombo picked up Mr. Brodyi's coat and dropped him into it. "Well, sir,

that's the one thing I've learned since life. No matter how far you try,

you just can't hide it. What the future will bring,"

"Now to get back to my investigation. I have to tell you that I was looking

at the book 'Significance.' So when I saw the number, I

looked up. I said, 'What?' And I took a few minutes with Brodyi and Brodyi and

numbered the letters to spell 'JULIA.'"
"That led me to your. And I tell you, sir I wasn't a lunatic because I knew that you were going to tell me exactly what that meant. When I told you of the number I didn't mean that you were going to tell me that the victim of that man was a woman. But you said you were concerned that... some sort of killers killed her. Well, that clinches it for me.

"The broken car is outside, sir. Would you like to get your coat?"