

FILE. 10

CHECKMATE







THEN THE BACK OF HIS HEAD ACCIDENTALLY HIT AGAINST THE OBJECT THAT HAD PREVIOUSLY FALLEN DOWN FROM THE BOOKSHELF. HE WAS DEAD BECAUSE OF THE COLLISION.

MASAMI HIROTA CLIMBED UP THE BOOKSHELF TO GET SOMETHING. HE LOST HIS BALANCE AND FELT DOWN ALONG WITH THE BOOKSHELF.



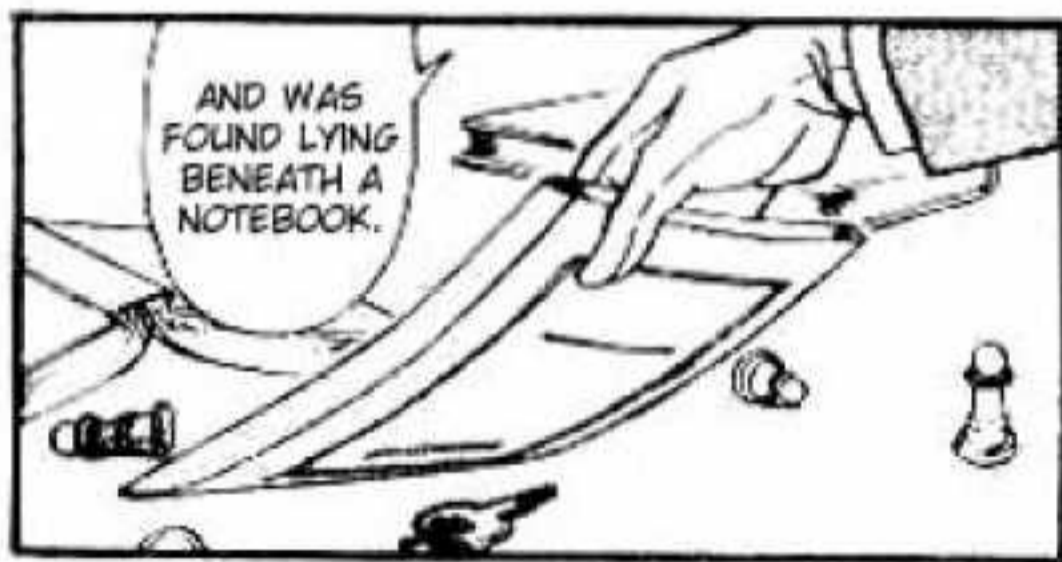
FELT ON THE FLOOR ALONG WITH THESE SCATTERED BOOKS...

AND THE ONLY KEY OF THIS ROOM...



THE DOOR WAS LOCKED AND SO WERE ALL THOSE SMALL WINDOWS ABOVE IT!

THE CLUES ARE ...



AND WAS FOUND LYING BENEATH A NOTEBOOK.



IT'S POSSIBLE HE WAS MURDERED BY SOMEONE ...



STILL...

YEP.

HMM.. IT MAKES SENSE. PROFESSOR HIROTA LOCKED THE DOOR AND THEN DIED BECAUSE OF AN ACCIDENT, RIGHT?



HE'S MY RELATIVE'S SON...

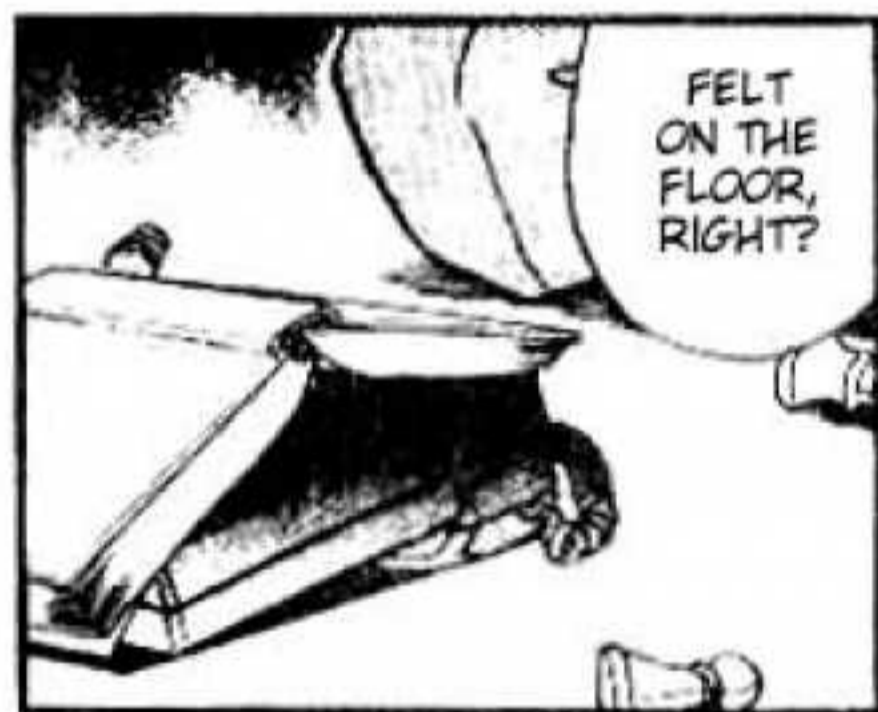
YOU'RE THE KID FROM DETECTIVE MOURI'S PLACE, AREN'T YOU?

LOOK AT THIS PHONE ...



WHO DISGUISED IT AS IF IT WAS AN ACCIDENT ...

HUH?



FELT ON THE FLOOR, RIGHT?



WA-WAIT! IF IT'S TRUE, THEN ...

THEN, THIS IS A MURDER ...?

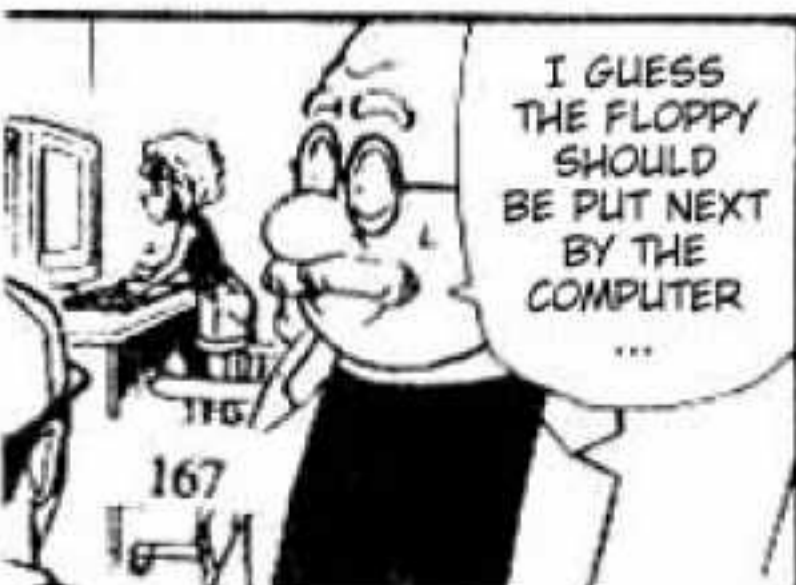


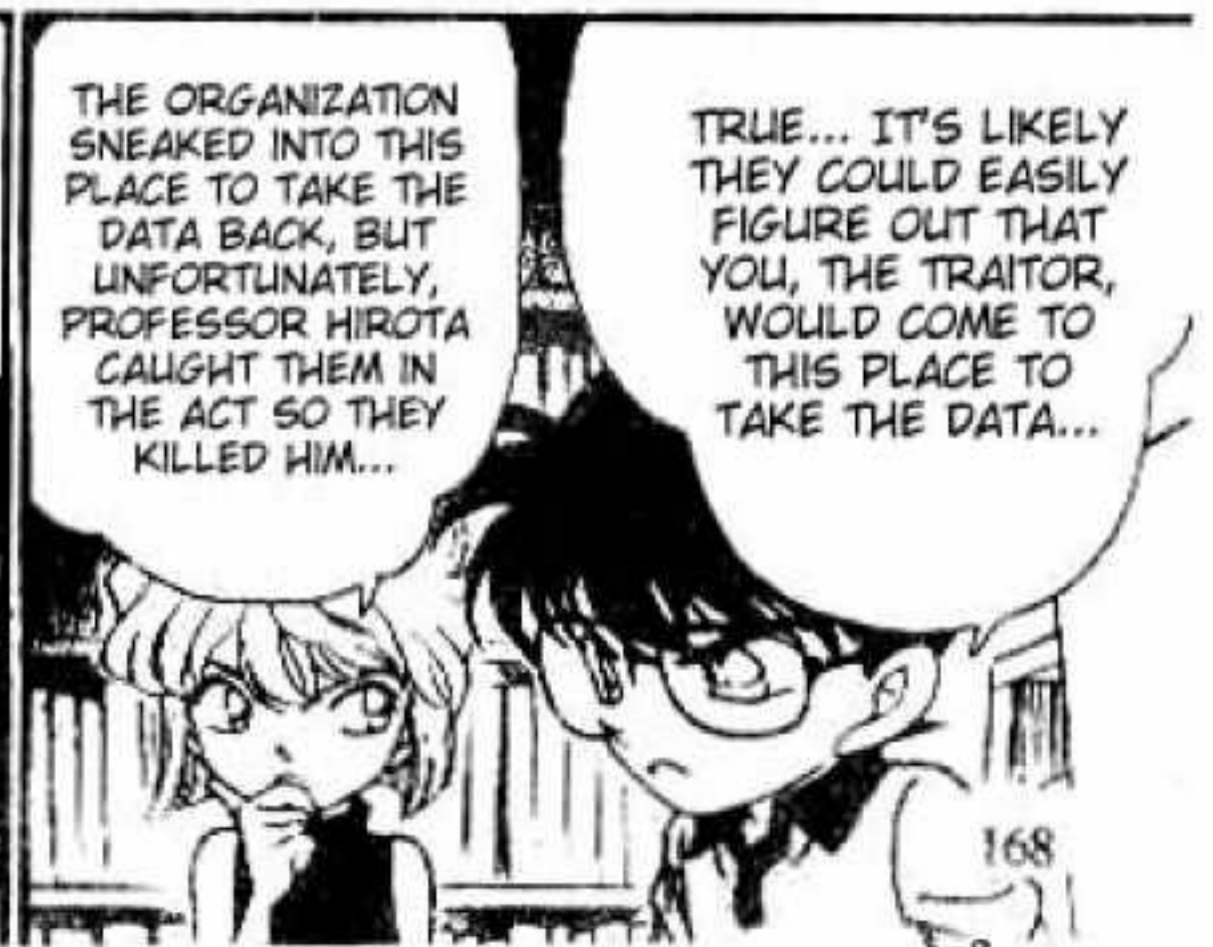
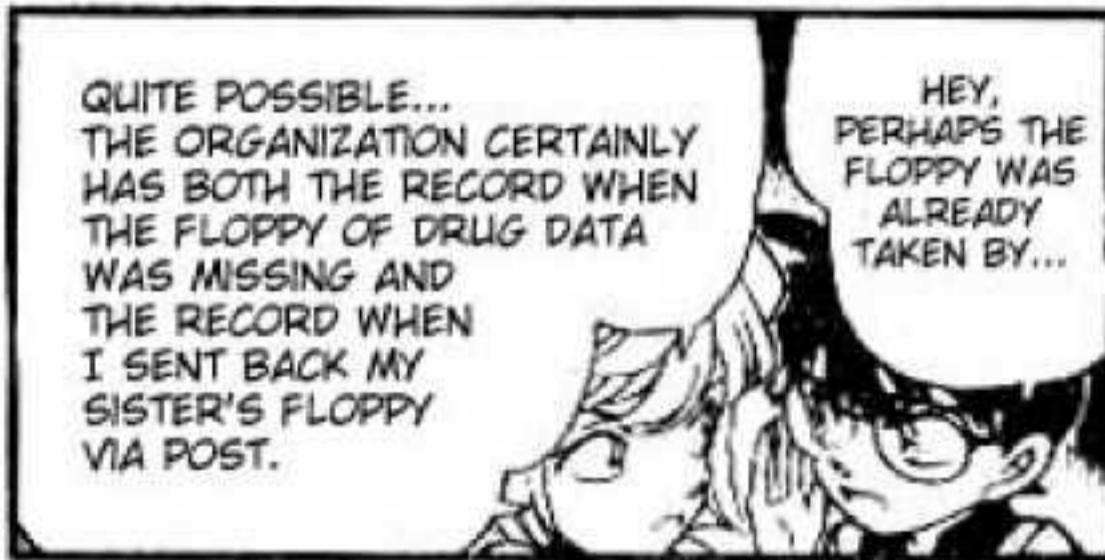
SOME-ONE DELIBERATELY MADE THIS ROOM LIKE SUCH A MESS... IT'S A CAMOUFLAGE BY TOPPLING THE PHONE ON THE FLOOR AND COVERING IT WITH A BOOK...



IF THAT WAS THE CASE, THEN WHY IS THE PHONE RECEIVER STILL ATTACHED?

IT WAS BECAUSE THE PHONE WAS DRAGGED ALONG BY THE FALLING BOOKSHELF ...









I ONCE MET HIM. HE'S A YOUNG MAN...

WHO IS THIS SHIRAKURA GUY?

Tiiit ... Hel..lo.. This is Shirakura... Mr. Hirota? Our appointment is tonight,.. right?



13 MESSAGES ...?

13 messages ...



I KNOW HIM, TOO. HE WAS ONE OF MY HUSBAND'S FIRST STUDENTS... HE DROPS BY HERE PRETTY OFTEN...

AND THIS GUY ...?

Tiiit... This is Morioka... Tonight, what time exactly should I go... there?



THE VOICE SOUNDS BROKEN ...

THIS RECORDING IS SOMEHOW STRANGE ...



LMM... EXCUSE ME, I AM AKIRA SHIRAKURA...

YES...

DO YOU KNOW THEIR ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS?



WHA-AAT!?

MURDER-ED...



PROFESSOR HIROTA IS DEAD...!



WHAT HAPPEN-ED?

WHAT'S THIS COMMOTION ALL ABOUT?

AKIRA SHIRAKURA (25) MODEL

170



HMM...
SHIRAKURA
10 TIMES,
AND MORIOKA
2 TIMES...

Tiiit... Hello, this is
Shirakura... I'll have some-
thing to do tomorrow, so
I'm afraid I have no choice
but to go there right now...
Oh yeah, beside that...



THIS IS THE
THIRTEENTH...
THE LAST
MESSAGE...

Tiiit
...

BUT...
WHY DID
THIS
HAPPEN
...?



I TOLD YOU,
DIDN'T I?
I CALLED HIM
SEVERAL TIMES,
BUT HE DIDN'T
ANSWER...
THAT WAS
THE REASON
I CAME HERE
AT ONCE!

WHY SO
MANY OF
YOURS?



HE
CHANGED
HIS VOICE
BY THE
MEAN OF
A DEVICE

WRONG!

AN
INSURANCE
SALESMAN,
EH?

I'll
ca..ll
you
again...



Do...
you
have
ti..me?

Err...
I am from Kuro
Life Insurance...
I want to me..et you
to talk about our
new insurance
pro..gram...

EH?



THIS
VOICE
BELONGS
TO...

THE
TONE
...





ALL THE TIME...

BECAUSE THEY HAD BEEN HERE..



ME NEITHER. HE WAS SAFE AND SOUND BACK THEN...

HAHA... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT ...

KAZUHIRO HOSOYA (43) DIVISION HEAD OF A STOCK COMPANY

MICHIO MORIOKA (48) VETERINARY



PROFESSOR HIROTA WAS KILLED!?

HAA AAA AAH !?



Y.. YES...

I GUESS YOU WERE THE ONE WHO MET MRS. HIROTA WHEN YOU CAME HERE, RIGHT?



CHESS !

SO, MR. MORIOKA, ACCORDING TO YOUR MESSAGE IN THE ANSWERING MACHINE, YOU ALSO HAD AN APPOINTMENT WITH PROFESSOR HIROTA ...



YES, SINCE THIS AFTER-NOON ...

WAS HE DRINKING ?



BUT, I WENT HOME IMMEDIATELY BECAUSE HE WAS DRUNK AT THE MOMENT...

I CAME TO ASK PROFESSOR HIROTA A RECOMMENDATION PAPER SINCE MY DAUGHTER IS GOING TO ENROLL NANYO UNIVERSITY.



BECAUSE THE TIME HADN'T DECIDED YET, I CALLED HIM, TWICE, BUT NOBODY ANSWERED...

LOOK! ON THE FLOOR THERE ARE CHESS PAWNS SCATTERED, RIGHT? WE ALWAYS PLAY IN THIS ROOM!



HE ASKED ME TO PLAY CHESS TONIGHT!!

PROFESSOR HIROTA AND I USED TO PLAY CHESS TOGETHER!



SO, YOU WERE HERE TOO TONIGHT?

THEN I WENT TO ASK HIM!



BUT THIS ROOM WAS LOCKED. ALTHOUGH I HAD KNOCKED, STILL, I GOT NO RESPONSE. EVENTUALLY I GAVE UP AND WENT HOME!

SINCE NOBODY OPENED THE DOOR ALTHOUGH I HAD RANG THE BELL COUNTLESS TIMES, I JUST WENT IN BECAUSE I THOUGHT HE FORGOT OUR APPOINTMENT AND EVEN FELT ASLEEP.

YES, I ARRIVED AT 9.30 ...



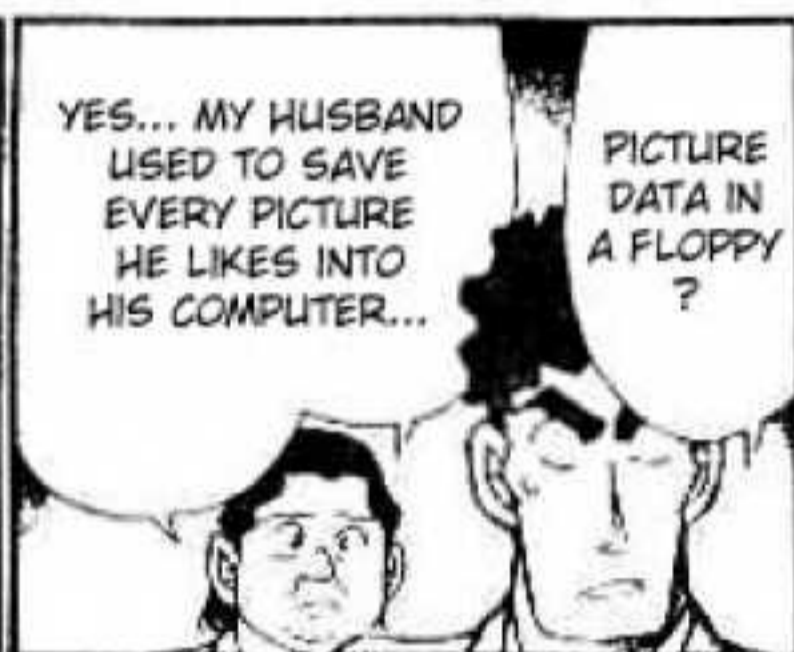
ALRIGHT... ACTUALLY I WORKS AS A MODEL ...

YOU HAVEN'T TOLD US WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS HERE TONIGHT, HAVE YOU?

OH YES, HOW ABOUT MR. SHIRAKURA WHO CAME HERE RIGHT AFTER US?

YES, THAT'S RIGHT ...

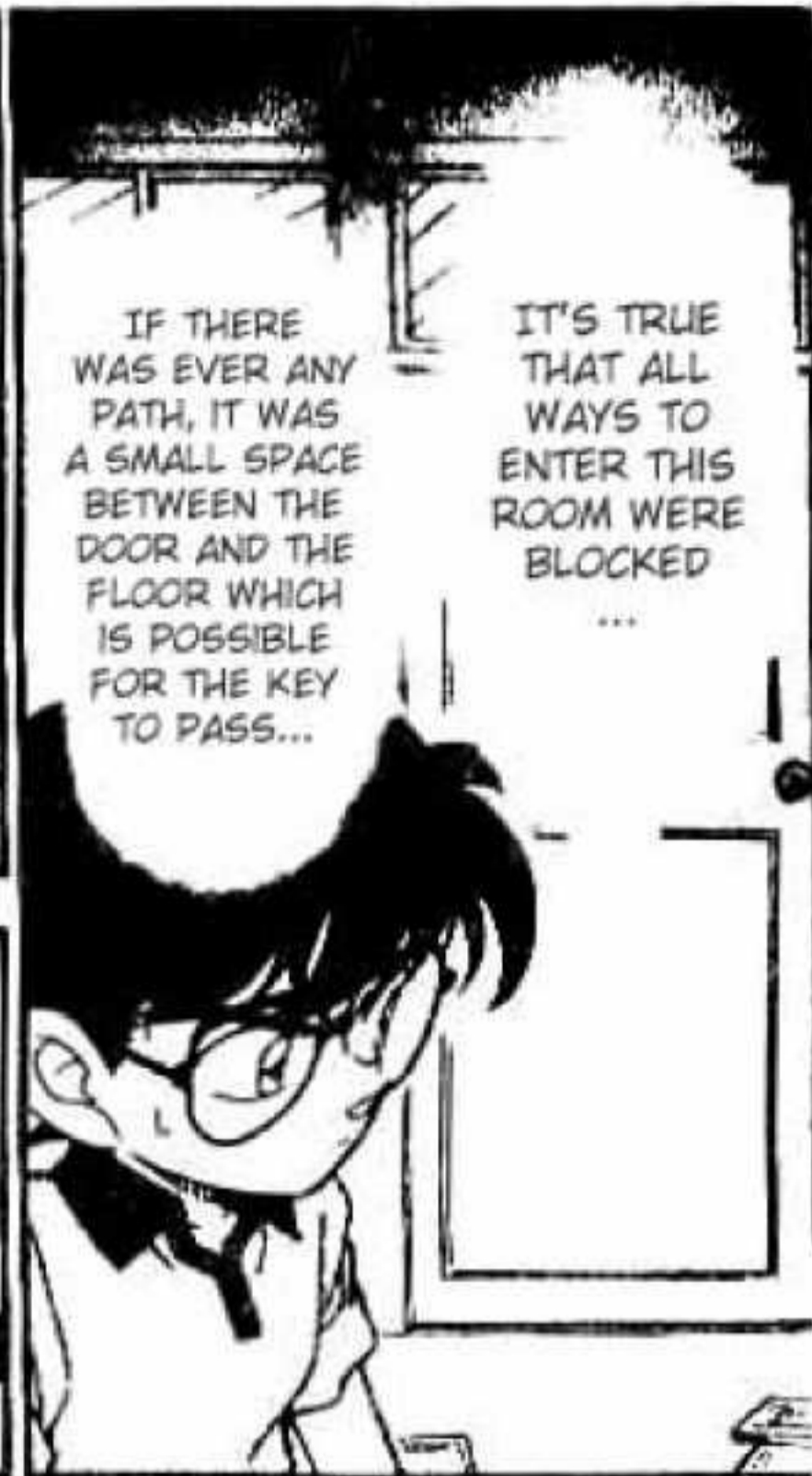
SO THEN... HALF AN HOUR LATER, MR. AGASA CAME AND BROKE THE DOOR AFTER REALIZING SOMETHING STRANGE IN THIS ROOM, AND THEN FOUND HIS BODY...





IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT AFTER THE CULPRIT KILLED PROFESSOR HIROTA, THE KEY WAS TAKEN AND THEN THE DOOR WAS LOCKED FROM OUTSIDE AND THE KEY WAS SLID IN BACK.

IF USING A WRIST RUBBER OR A STRING...



IF THERE WAS EVER ANY PATH, IT WAS A SMALL SPACE BETWEEN THE DOOR AND THE FLOOR WHICH IS POSSIBLE FOR THE KEY TO PASS...

IT'S TRUE THAT ALL WAYS TO ENTER THIS ROOM WERE BLOCKED ...



BENEATH THE NOTEBOOK.

STILL... IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SLIDE IT...



AND THEN... THE DEFECTIVE VOICE OF THE RECORDING ...



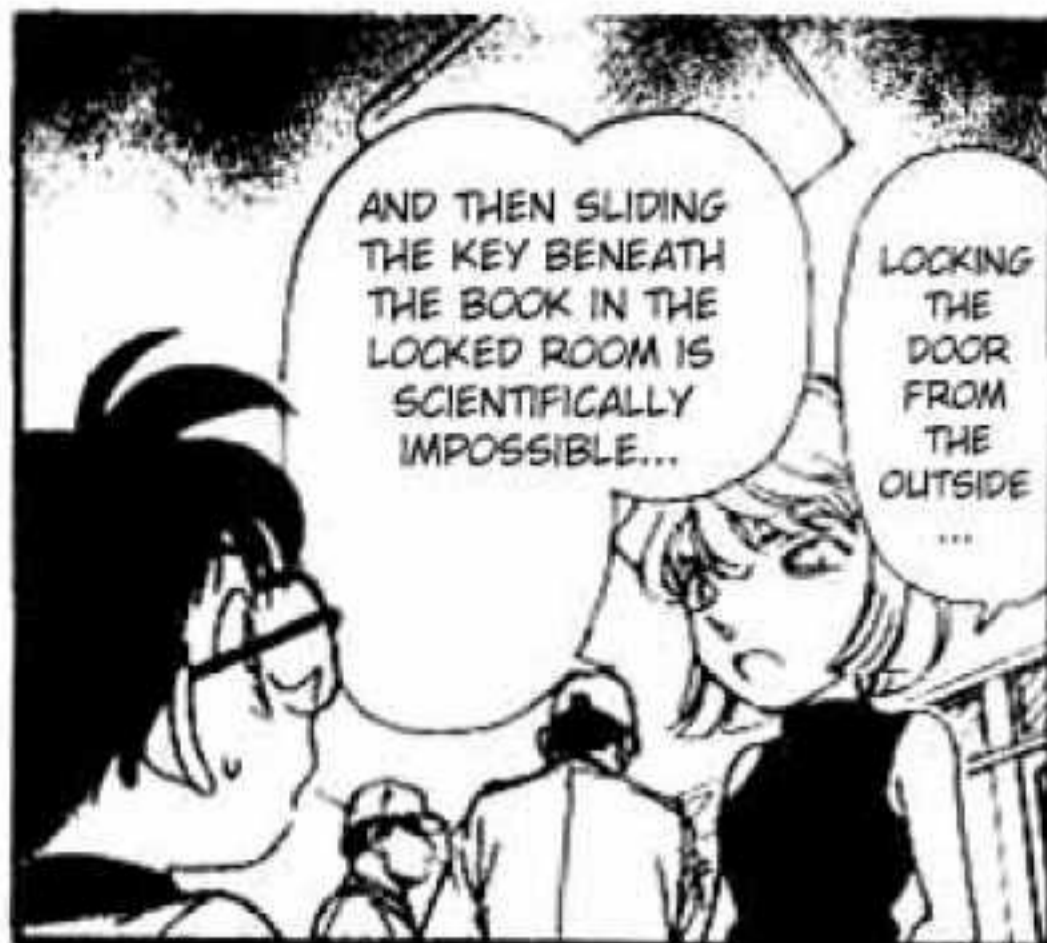
BUT WHY ONLY THAT PARTICULAR NOTEBOOK IS LYING RIGHT AT THE STRAIGHT LINE BETWEEN THE DOOR AND THE PHONE...?

WHAT KEEPS BUGGING ME IS, BOOKS ARE SCATTERED ALL OVER THE ROOM...



BUT... EVEN BY USING THESE DEVICES, AGAIN, IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO PUT THE KEY BENEATH THE NOTEBOOK...





16





CHECK-
MATE

...



CHECKMATE

...



WAIT!

WE'RE
GOING
THROUGH
THE BACK
DOOR...



...THAT
THIS CASE
IS...

I TOLD
YOU,
DIDN'T I?



EH?

BEHIND
THIS
CASE?

DON'T YOU
WANT TO
KNOW THE
TRUTH...



WHAT
A TRUTH
REALLY IS
...

JUST WAIT
AND SEE.
I'M GOING
TO SHOW
YOU...



AFTER PROFESSOR
HIROTA WAS
MURDERED, BY USING
A TRICK, THIS ROOM
WAS MADE UP AS IF
IT HAD HAPPENED IN
A LOCKED-ROOM
SO THAT IT LOOKED
LIKE AN ACCIDENT...

NOT AN
ACCIDENT,
BUT A
MURDER
...

18



ONE
TRUTH!

BECAUSE,
THERE IS
ONLY...

180