

96 and Not Dead Yet: Two Nasty Murders: One Fictional, the Other all too Real

by [Reg Green](#) (August 2025)



The Suicide (Edouard Manet, 1880)

The forthcoming trial of Luigi Mangione for allegedly premeditatedly and barbarically shooting the CEO of UnitedHealthcare in the back reminded me of Edward G. Robinson's mesmerizing speech in the black-and-white movie *Double Indemnity* arguing that a client of his insurance

company didn't commit suicide so as to leave his wife a fortune.

Here he is talking to his boss:

"You know, you, uh, oughta take a look at the statistics on suicide some time. You might learn a little something about the insurance business...

"Why they've got ten volumes on suicide alone. Suicide by race, by color, by occupation, by sex, by seasons of the year, by time of day. Suicide, how committed: by poison, by firearms, by drowning, by leaps. Suicide by poison, subdivided by types of poison, such as corrosive, irritant, systemic, gaseous, narcotic, alkaloid, protein, and so forth; suicide by leaps, subdivided by leaps from high places, under the wheels of trains, under the wheels of trucks, under the feet of horses, from steamboats.

"But, Mr. Norton, of all the cases on record, there's not one single case of suicide by leap from the rear end of a moving train."

That did it. Mr. Norton capitulated. Who wouldn't?

The takeaway: never choose for an assistant a smartass like Edward G. Robinson: He'll take your job and drive you batty while doing it.

P.S. The word from Hollywood (if you can trust a word from anyone in show business) is that the speech was not filmed from start to finish, which is what gives it such power, but in several takes and then spliced expertly together.

Even so, it's a world away from another star who insisted on always having cue cards held up behind the camera. Came the

day when one frustrated director was driven to plead with him. "Can't you, just once, learn the words? It's only one line." Our man was immovable. "Do you think I want that shit in my mind?" he demanded.

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Reg Green is an economics journalist who was born in England and worked for the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Times of London*. He emigrated to the US in 1970. His books include *The Nicholas Effect* and his website is nicholasgreen.org.

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