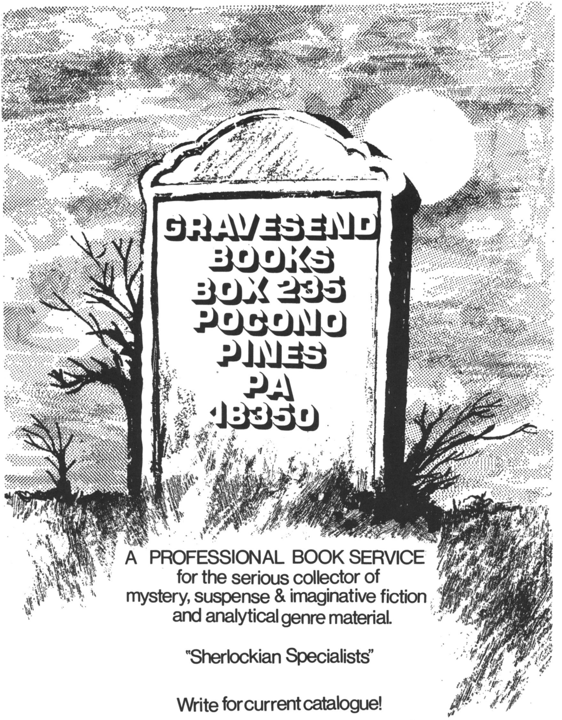
Volume 12 Winter 1979 Number 1

THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

Gahan Wilson


GRAVESEND
BOOKS
BOX 235
POCONO
PINES
PA
18350

A PROFESSIONAL BOOK SERVICE
for the serious collector of
mystery, suspense & imaginative fiction
and analytical genre material.

"Sherlockian Specialists"

Write for current catalogue!

THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

Cover art by GAHAN WILSON, showing the insidious Dr. Fu Manchu injecting something particularly nasty into the arm of his victim.

PUBLISHER
Mysterious Press
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Allen J. Hubin
MANAGING EDITOR
Otto Penzler
ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR
Patricia Guy
ART DIRECTOR
Dennis J. Grastorf

Subscriptions to *The Armchair Detective:* $16/year in the U.S., $20 elsewhere. Subscriptions and advertising correspondence should be addressed to: The Mysterious Press, 129 West 56th Street, New York, New York, 10019, U.S.A. Submissions of material for publication are welcome and should be addressed to The Editor: Allen J. Hubin, 3656 Midland Ave., White Bear Lake, Minn. 55110, U.S.A.

The Armchair Detective, January 1979. Vol. 12, No. 1. Published quarterly by The Mysterious Press, 129 West 56th Street, New York, New York, 10019.

Copyright © 1979
by The Mysterious Press

Second-class postage paid at New York, New York.

3 We Tell Stories: A Talk Given at a Monthly MWA Meeting in New York
Pete Hamill

14 W. T. Ballard: An Interview
Stephen Mertz

20 Lord Peter Views the Telly
J. R. Christopher

28 The Many Rises and Falls of J. Rufus Wallingford
Albert Borowitz

34 Margery Allingham's Albert Campion. Part XI.
B. A. Pike

40 Classic Corner: Rare Tales from the Archives
"The Eleventh Hour," by Edwin Balmer and William MacHarg

57 Julian Symons and Civilization's Discontents
Steven R. Carter

64 On Reading Detective Fiction
John M. Reilly

66 Rex Stout Newsletter
John McAleer

69 John Dickson Carr on British Radio
Douglas G. Greene

72 Introducing Paul Cain and His *Fast One*: A Forgotten Hard-Boiled Writer–A Forgotten Gangster Novel
E. R. Hagemann

83 Dicks on Stage: Form and Formula in Detective Drama. Chapter 3.
Charles LaBorde

Departments

2 The Uneasy Chair

6 AJH Reviews

30 Paperback Revolution
Charles Shibuk

32 Catalogue of Crime
(Supplement Ten)

62 Series Synopsis

77 Retrospective Reviews

81 Movie Notes

82 Crime Crossword

89 Checklist
M.S. Cappadonna

91 Letters

94 Current Reviews

96 Mystery Marketplace

THE UNEASY CHAIR

Dear TADian:

Here is another page devoted to explanations and information about THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE which really ought to bear intoxicatingly enlightening messages relating to mystery and detective fiction. I believe it will in the future, but ask you all to bear with me once again.

As you know (if you read "The Uneasy Chair" in the October 1978 issue of TAD) the publication of this magazine has been transferred from Publisher's Inc. in Del Mar, California, to The Mysterious Press in New York City.

The transference has been neither as swift nor as smooth as we would have preferred, resulting in a delay in publication. Editorial matter, for example, did not arrive from California until January, at which time we had to design the issue, send it to Colorado to be typeset (The Aspen Press does faster and better work than most typesetters in New York–or anywhere else, for that matter), proofread it, paste up the galleys and the artwork, send it off to be printed and bound, and mail it. This should explain the lateness of the issue.

Also mailed from California, arriving at The Mysterious Press in the middle of January, was a series of packages with letters from subscribers. Some angry letters. Some downright irate letters. Some threatening bodily harm. Sometimes two or three or even four letters from the same subscriber, each with an apparently valid complaint . . . copies of the magazine lost in the mail . . . subscription checks cashed but no magazines received . . . and so on. Some of the letters are dated January. Some December. Many November. Many October. A few are even dated September. They all turned up in the same week, and they will each receive a response.

While it is reasonable to be irritated with Publisher's Inc., in all fairness I should point out that they hired a service to attend to many of these matters. As many of you will have discovered, this service was not always provided with fanatic attention. When you combine the subscription service's lack of even rudimentary service with Publisher's Inc.'s loss of interest in the magazine which it no longer published, you can see how the breakdown to so many subscribers occurred.

This will change.

Effective with this issue, TAD will be mailed by The Mysterious Press. We will not employ a subscription service, because they don't really care about a magazine with a subscription list as small as this one. Thus, if something goes astray, we will not point a finger at some vague company and blame them. We can't control what the post office does, but we will answer your letters and try to help you in every way possible.

To let you know what is going on even more specifically, you should know that missing issues of April and/or July 1978 will be sent by Publisher's Inc. I have sorted all the letters complaining of these missing issues and offered to send the back issues myself, but have been assured by Publisher's Inc. that they will attend to this at once. Although the October mailing emanated from California, I will supply the missing copies. The Mysterious Press will also attend to all other problems, even if they began before we took on the responsibility of TAD.

Please understand that we do not have the time or the staff to become pen pals with all our subscribers, but we do honestly value your remarks and will welcome your suggestions, and will do everything we are able to do to keep you (or make you once again) happy with the magazine in every way.

In the next issue, this page will be turned over to lighter, more pleasant, and less mysterious topics.

Warmest wishes,

Otto Penzler

Otto Penzler
President, The Mysterious Press

We Tell Stories:

A Talk Given at a Monthly MWA Meeting in New York

By Pete Hamill

It is a measure of the way some people see crime fiction that when I told some people last year that I was planning to write a series of novels about a continuing character named Sam Briscoe, the first question was always "under your own name?"

Yes, I said. Under my own name. I've been a professional writer for 18 years and wouldn't have it any other way. For me, the kind of books you write and which I've started to write are an honorable form. In some ways, they are more mainstream than the so-called mainstream books that so fascinate the editors of book sections and so thoroughly bore the vast number of readers in this country.

I don't have to repeat the arguments that justify the writing of crime fiction. I just think that we should all be proud of a form that has been practiced at various times by such writers as Dickens, Balzac, Dostoevsky, Chandler, Hammett, the three—is it four?—MacDonalds, James Jones, Gore Vidal, Graham Greene, Eric Ambler and dozens of others: Balzac once said that behind every great fortune lies a crime. We might make the argument that in every great novel lies a body.

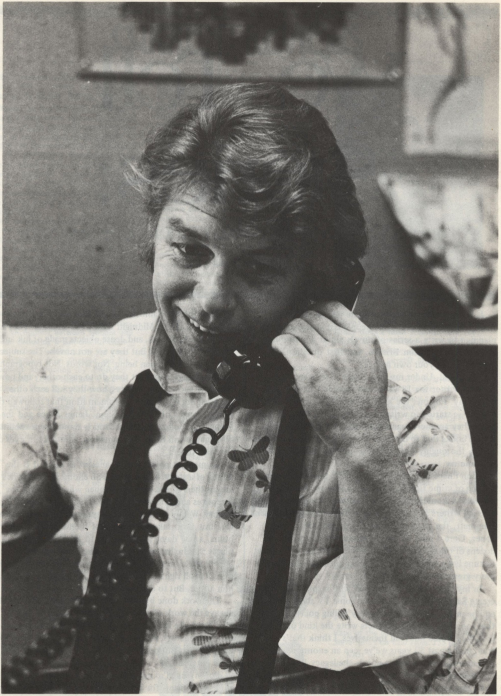
In my case, it was Gore Vidal who inspired me to create Sam Briscoe. I saw him on some TV show one night and he made what I think is a very telling point. He said that too many American writers write the kind of books that they would not read themselves. I think that's very true. In the past 30 years we've seen an enormous growth of a new kind of academic novel—the legacy I'm afraid of the college literature courses with their insistence on analyzing text into dust.

Those novels—we all have our favorites—have cast aside the conventions of the novel and gone in other directions. Some of them are amusing, in the way that the codes at the end of Captain Midnight used to be amusing. They are puzzles, at their best, and dense objects made of ink and paper at their worst. But they are not novels. The subject of novels is the human being. Not words. Not typography. Human beings, and what they do to each other, and how they love each other, and yes, how they kill each other. In the great era of literary experimentation that followed the breakthroughs of Gertrude Stein, James Joyce and the French symbolists, we learned much about the possibilities of language and form. But somehow, we took our eyes off the main object.

To me that object was as ancient as man. It is the telling of a story. Those of us who choose to tell stories are brothers of the men and women who sat beside the campfires and told stories to the tribe in the years before history. We are, before we are anything else, entertainers. Our task is to take people out of themselves for a few hours, a few days, a few weeks, to take that reader to places that he has never been, in the company of people he will never meet. We must amaze him. We must astonish him. It is all right to make him cry, or laugh, or to make him afraid. But to do those things, we must tell stories.

The work done by the members of this club is almost always the work of storytellers. Through our books, we can illuminate injustice, we can define a society, we can expose predators, we can, if we are good enough, construct works of art. But before we do any of those things, we must entertain.

For myself, I'm not interested in the novel as a vehicle for essay writing, for political manifestoes, for intellectual razzle dazzle. I have journalism to do those things. I have the essay. We do not essentially go to the novel for en-



Pete Hamill, a columnist for the *New York Daily News* and *Chicago Tribune* Syndicate, is the creator of Sam Briscoe, a tough journalist who functions as an unpaid private eye. The first volume of a projected trilogy is *Dirty Laundry*, recently published by Bantam.

lightenment. If we want to think, to have our intelligence challenged or honed, or our social consciences aroused, we would be far better off in the company of Freud, or Wittgenstein, Darwin or Marx. We go to the novel to feel. A novel can make us feel fear or delight, love or hate, bitterness or despair. It can provide insight into the secret recesses of our hearts.

But too many novels these days refuse to do such things. They have discarded plot. They have gotten rid of character. They have discarded conflict. We are left with words. Who is the hero? you might ask. The answer is simple: the writer is the hero. We are asked to admire the writer for his daring, for his technical pyrotechnics, for his manipulation of language. This is what I call the "Look Ma I'm Writing" school. And its heroes come and go. Thomas Pynchon, whose last book was about as interesting as reading a brick, is one of them. The latest hero is Peter Handke, whose claim to fame is that he does not know how to finish a book, and thus gives the critic some employment.

The critics—and I speak as one who has received many good reviews for my work—have a difficult task. If a novel is written clearly, if the characters and the conflicts are laid out carefully, if the language is "as clear as a window pane"—in Orwell's phrase—the critic has very little to do. So the critics have brought us the book that must be explained. The easiest word of contempt in many critics' armory is "readable." Since many critics have never written novels, have never spent nights bleeding over paragraphs to make them clear, it is understandable why they sneer at readability. If a book is unreadable, then a critic can come along with his Captain Midnight codeograph and decode it for us. The message might be quite banal: Ivan Shark is landing on a seaplane. But the breaking of the code is all.

This would be funny if it had not deprived so many readers of the joy of reading, and if it had not deprived many good writers of the ability to earn an income. Too many young people are shoved through the English lit courses at universities—where a lot of these busted valises now teach—and are given the impression that reading novels is one of the more difficult tasks assigned to mankind. If they ever read another novel after graduation, I would be pleasantly surprised. They might buy certain novels, hailed as masterpieces that week, but I mean reading. I don't think they read much after the joy of rushing along with a great story has been taken from them. We are in a time wherein two kinds of novels are being written: those to be read, and those to be reviewed.

I think mystery writers prefer to read, and to write, those books that are meant to be read.

In my case, I've tried to do something else. I wanted to create a hero, not a protagonist, and Sam Briscoe is therefore a reporter. It is very hard these days to make heroes out of spies, secret agents or cops. Particularly if you are aiming at the audience that wants literate entertainment. The legal profession took a fall with Richard Nixon. The military is full of very strange people. For all the flaws of the press in this country, and there are many, I felt that one of the few clean institutions was that of journalism. So my man Sam Briscoe was to be a reporter.

And as a reporter, he must see the world in a certain way. He of course reflects many of my own tastes. In food, music, women, and countries. He shares my own love for New York, its changes, its secret places, its eerie underground river of craziness. But he expresses all of these feelings in a tone that is urban and skeptical, without being cynical.

All of this is part of my own task as I write these books. The form has been established by masters of the language. My task is to use my own language, and inform the books with the immediacy of journalism. One way to do that is through reporting. I think too many novelists these days fail to go out and look at the world. But it was not always that way. When Dickens had to describe a poorhouse, he went to a poorhouse. When Zola had to describe a coal mine, he went to a coal mine. The writers I admire share that instinct: they give us the world in a special way. And you believe that they have been there. They are not writing out of formulas, but out of experience. They are not creating anthologies of their favorite movie moments; they are telling you a story about the way they have seen some people in this world.

The way a narrator describes that world also tells you something about him. If a writer describes a woman by starting with her breasts, you know something about that writer. If he starts with her eyes, it tells you something else. All good writers are good editors. They are editing out that which is irrelevant in the world. They are like painters, in some respects, placing a frame around the visible world and describing what is seen within that self-chosen frame.

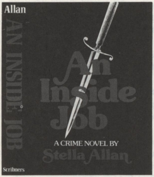
But to exercise those gifts, the writer must look at the world. There are very few stories inside the skull. The best stories require a walk around the parish. Years ago, a great editor named Paul Sann gave me some crucial advice: If you have the story, tell it. If you don't have the story, write it.

I think that advice—given to a young reporter—applies equally well to fiction and journalism. We tell stories. It's a difficult trade. There is always someone in the back of the room ready to throw an ashtray at the speaker. But it is one of the most satisfying of all tasks. We who are in this society have extraordinary privileges, and almost no responsibilities. We can write like Graham Greene and live like Dean Martin. We can stiff the loan companies, we can marry the wrong women, we can drink too much and smoke too much and fail to be kind to old people in the winter. But all of those things are irrelevant if we perform our basic task. To tell stories. Preferably with beginnings, middles, and ends. We are the people who bring others dark dreams. There might be more fun to be had somewhere on this poor battered earth, but if there is, I haven't found it yet.

AJH REVIEWS

Short notes, mostly alphabetical, on the current crop . . .

Stella Allan's *An Inside Job* (Scribners, $7.95) offers nothing startlingly fresh, but it's a sound first mystery, particularly effective in portraying a scheming stud and a thawable businesswoman. The former, married to a loving wife, uses Sheila, the latter and a schoolchum of his wife's, to get a job with Sheila's multinational London employer. While breaching Sheila's defenses (and other defenses not guarded at all) he draws her, now besotted, into a plot to defraud the company of $1,000,000. Murder intervenes, the scheme begins to unravel, and Justice lifts her blindfold. A worthy tale.



Another very sound first mystery is Thomas Atkins' *The Blue Man* (Doubleday, $7.95). The effectively limned setting is Roanoke, Virginia, 1952. Here, using an antique rifle, someone kills a drive-in theater projectionist. Transplanted Baltimore cop Neil Condon has an uneasy feeling the the killer is only practicing. Another murder takes place, and this time there's a witness who insists the killer is blue! What madness brews in those Virginia mountains? Condon fears he will find out when Republican presidential candidate General Dwight Eisenhower passes through Roanoke on his whistle-stop campaign tour . . . Exciting, credible, engaging story.

Allen J. Hubin, Editor-in-Chief.

Photo: Robert Smull

Spy stuff from Britain: Dennis Bloodworth's *Crosstalk* (Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, $8.95). This is a complex affair, with so many layers of illusion that both players and readers may be forgiven for losing track. The Chinese and Russians are becoming disturbingly palsey. An American effort to sow suspicion between them is compromised. British intelligence hatches its own plot to do the same, with the lend-lease help of the U.S.'s Zoe Snow, a dyslexic who seems to see the future—a terrifying future—in her dreams. Max Magnus, leading the operation, finds his emotions involved and Crosstalk becoming doublecrosstalk. Well, done this novel, and neatly integrated with actual news reports from recent years.

I found James Crumley's first private eye novel, *The Wrong Case*, a superb piece of work. His second, *The Last Good Kiss* (Random House, $8.95), is equally good: individualistic, evocative, grimly humorous, plaintive, intense, bittersweet, fascinating. Sughrue, occasional private investigator operating out of an occasional office in Meriwether, Montana, is hired by Catherine Trehearne to find her ex-husband, the novelist and poet Abraham Trehearne. Trehearne leads Seghrue a wild alcoholic chase across the west, from saloon to whorehouse to saloon, finally to rest in Sonoma, California. There he collars Trehearne, a boozing bulldog, and a new client: a bar owner pays him $87 to find her daughter, gone these ten years. The two affairs stick to Seghrue like bloody glue, compel him ferociously from Colorado to Montana to California to Oregon, and engage his heart. Unforgettable storytelling.

I haven't read Clive Cussler's *Raise the Titanic!*, so I can't make a direct comparison. But judged on its own and as a first novel, another Titanic story, *The Memory of Eva Ryker* by Donald A. Stanwood (Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, $8.95), is a virtuoso performance. A crusty old millionaire is financing a salvage operation on the Titanic, and successful writer Norman Hall is lured into doing the story for troubled *World* magazine. Why? What possible connection have a contemporary writer, a self-made financier, a 1940 Hawaiian double murder case, and a 1912 shipwreck? Connections, deadly connections, intricate connections . . . This tale should not be taken up by anyone preferring to do a chapter at a reading.

William Diehl, with his *Sharky's Machine* (Delacorte, $8.95), succumbs to the popular notion that to be successful a (first) novelist must ladle in the sewage, providing for the verbal voyeur extended sex scenes that can happily be skipped. But as a result his novel, essentially a powerful, imaginative, cinemagraphic work, is cheapened, soiled. Threads leading back to an abortive World War II mission in which $4 million in gold bullion was lost come together in 1975 in Atlanta, where Sharky, a cop in trouble with his bosses and demoted to the pits of the vice squad, takes an interest in an apparent extortion scheme. Involved are prostitutes, a behind-the-scenes millionaire businessman, a new pleasure palace, and various individuals who get their kicks in various ways, including an aging and spaced-out killer-for-hire. At stake: the presidency of the United States.

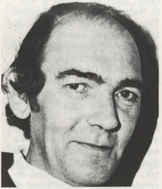
Aside from a bit of gratuitous sexual titillation, *The Scourge* by Thomas L. Dunne (Coward, McCann

& Geoghegan, $9.95) is pure driving suspense, an irresistible blend of intrigue and disaster fiction. A National Institutes of Health statistician notes an unexpected rise in the incidence of cancer in the U.S. He has difficulty convincing officials, but the rise continues, accelerates, and is noted in England and elsewhere in the free world—but not in Russia. The President, a weakling, dips deeper into his bottle and embraces paranoia. The NIH searches for a clue, any clue, to the cause. What will the American people do when they realize a quarter of the population is dying, in hideous pain, of cancer?

It's been a goodly while since last I read Elizabeth Linington in any of her guises, but especially as Lesley Egan. Now in hand is *Look Back on Death* (Doubleday, $7.95), another case for attorney Jesse Falkenstein and, to a lesser extent, for his brother-in-law, Sgt. Andrew Clock. Eight years ago Richard Tredgold went to prison for murder. He persists in claiming his innocence, and has now refused bail on the grounds that a tacit admission of guilt is involved. Tredgold's family throws up its hands, and as a last resort ask Jesse's help. This is quite an engaging story, with an intriguing, carefully integrated thread of the supernatural.

LESLEY EGAN
LOOK BACK ON DEATH
A CRIME CLUB SELECTION

Robert L. Fish almost forsakes our genre entirely with *Pursuit* (Doubleday, $10.00), a long (379 pp.), interesting, slow-moving account of a Nazi war criminal's scheme to avoid Allied justice as he sees the war coming to an end. Colonel von Schraeder, gas oven engineer, arranges plastic surgery, assumes a Jewish identity, and sends himself to a detention camp he expects the Allies to liberate soon. But his plans misfire and only the strong friendship of "fellow Jew" Max Brodsky keeps him alive through the horrors of Belsen. After VE day his efforts to reach his secret Swiss bank account fail and he finds himself an essential cog in the survival of the fledgling state of Israel. But the past cannot be outlived . . .



John Gardner

John Gardner's *The Dancing Dodo* (Doubleday, $8.95) has a fascinating premise. Children find the wreckage of a World War II American war plane in England's Romney Marsh. Inside are the remains of five airmen, identifiable from their dogtags. But . . . war records indicate the plane never crashed, and all five corpses are still alive and well 32 years later. Dobson, British Intelligence, and Hackstead, CIA, are teamed to investigate the affair, which soon involves putrescent, ambulatory, deadly corpses. But after these fine beginnings, Gardner is not able completely to sustain the pace, is not able fully to convince me of his denouement, so that what should have been a stunning tale becomes only pleasant and diverting.

Thomas Gifford

Pleasurable and imaginative though Thomas Gifford's *The Glendower Legacy* (Putnam, $10.00) is, it is weakened by seeming to fall between two chairs. Gifford appears uncertain of his objective: a comic novel, or one of taut intrigue. A Harvard student finds an old scrap of paper seeming to prove that George Washington had traitorous connections with the revolutionary enemy. The KGB chief, a man of peculiar humor, decides this is a chance for fun at the expense of his opposite number, the CIA head. But the former's U.S. minions, either double agents or incompetent mercenaries, start slaughtering people until they run afoul of a pair of sedentary Harvard professors turned wrathful marauders. On the whole, the effect of this tale tends more to the comic; with a little adjustment in emphasis, the impact could have been cleaner and stronger.

Good as were Bartholomew Gill's first two stories about Chief Inspector McGarr of the Irish Police, I think the author has surpassed himself with *McGarr on the Cliffs of Moher* (Scribners, $8.95). Intense, colorful, compelling is this novel of the IRA and the Irish girl who made good in New York and came home to a pitchfork in the chest Her body is discovered in a field by a drunken IRA bagman, who lies and protests his innocence. McGarr is personally engaged by the affair; an IRA friend is involved, and McGarr brilliantly walks a deadly tightrope all the way to New York and back.

Perhaps I've had enough of psychopaths; in any event, Dan Greenburg's *Love Kills* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $7.95) did not excite me greatly, though some flashes of humor usefully contrast the carnage. The Hyena is loose in New York, carefully researching single women and then expressing his love for them in unlovely lethal ways. Max, a Jewish cop freshly in Homicide by accident, has the impossible task of tracking the random killer, waiting for him to make a mistake, while the bodies accumulate. And while Max tries to figure out if his new girlfriend's visions are precognitions or delusions.

Love
Kills
A Novel by
Dan Greenburg

Insurance investigator Dave Brandstetter's fourth case, *The Man Everybody Was Afraid Of* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, $7.95) by Joseph Hansen, takes him to La Caleta, where everyone is afraid of Police Chief Ben Orton. Even after Orton is killed and a homosexual activist is arrested, fear remains. Brandstetter's company had insured the cop, so Dave pokes around, convinced the accused is wearing a frame. Orton proves to have been unsavory indeed, and Dave takes his ritualistic lumps on the way to a satisfactory solution. Professional storytelling; homosexual orientation not obnoxious.

There might be the germ of a publishable short story in Leonard Harris' *Don't Be No Hero* (Crown, $8.95); as a novel, forget it. It presents: (a) a dull, empty Sam Shroeder, who takes his children, his mother and his mid-life crisis to Nantucket Island, where he dumps endless internal monologues on us; (b) a dollop of pointless sex, intended, presumably, to titillate; (c) page upon page upon page of people—especially married friends of Sam's—verbally cutting each other to ribbons; and (d) the hopelessly unconvincing matter of an incompetent Boston prosecutor who happens on hot evidence, for which he is killed and with which his daughter flees for her life to—you guessed it—Nantucket.

Another espionage import from England, with considerable (but insufficient) textual modification from first publication by Hale in 1977, is *The Mexican Assassin* (Scribners, $8.95) by "Hartshorne," once occupant of a "senior Intelligence post." Some messy doings in Mexico, involving drugs and the murder of a provincial police chief, have aroused CIA attention. Management views this as an opportunity for personal leverage toward the scuttling of hierarchical competitors. At any event, agent Lee Barber is sent to Madre Dolorosa to nose around. The resulting affair is improbable and juvenile.

William Hjortsberg has written four mainstream novels; his fifth, *Falling Angel* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $8.95) is a bewitching blend of the occult and the private eye tale. It's the late 1950's. Harry Angel operates out of Manhattan. He's hired to locate a popular singer, who came back from the war as a vegetable and has been institutionalized all 15 years since. Or maybe not. Angel finds it's not, and encounters his first corpse. Harry digs further: more corpses, heavy doses of voodoo and satan worship. Who's doing the killing, and why? And what became of the singer, and why? Masterful narration—except that I still don't know the answer to one of those questions. The fact that I don't believe some of the others doesn't seem to matter.

A Pinch of Snuff (Harper & Row, $9.95) by England's Reginald Hill brings back Inspector Pascoe and Superintendent Dalziel in a tale rich in plot and conflict and irony, if somewhat underrealized in impact. Pascoe's dentist advises that a porn flick he's seen locally portrays a real killing—it's a "snuff" film. Dalziel isn't much impressed with the story, but Pascoe probes anyway. What results involves female liberation, politics, infidelity, the SM industry, corruption and unseemly nocturnal practices. I reckon you'll enjoy it muchly.

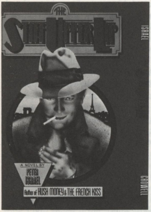
Robert Holles' *Spawn* (Doubleday, $7.95) reminds me overmuch of Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby* and more particularly of Levin's *The Boys from Brazil*, though *Spawn* is smoothly written and has its own well-wrought denouement. Israeli Intelligence interests itself in a British gynecologist and his secluded rural clinic because an unpleasant German industrialist visits there, bringing a cryogenically refrigerated container. A young American becomes concerned when his girlfriend, admitted to the clinic for fertility testing, becomes inaccessible to him. You can probably work out the rest of it.

I expected great things from Geoffrey Household and *The Last Two Weeks of Georges Rivac* (Atlantic—Little, Brown, $9.95), but although pleasantly readable this intrigue caper never rises above the level of a congenial game; despite multiple death, I was not engaged by a sense of peril. Rivac, an import

William Hjortsberg
HBJ

agent, innocently gets entangled in something having to do with the willingness of certain eastern European military units to overthrow the Russian yoke. Various sections of British Intelligence play roles, and Rivac spends much of his time scrambling about rural England with a fetching lass from Hungary.

The Stiff Upper Lip (Crowell, $8.95) is the third of Peter Israel's novels about American-private-eye-in-Paris B(enjamin) F(ranklin) Cage. I don't know what the first two (*Hush Money* and *The French Kiss*) were like, but this is an insubstantial and unmemorable affair. Expatriate black Americans with dual careers in basketball and drug smuggling are here; so too the "French Mafia" and some U.S. brethren. Also internecine warfare and murder. And sex and a child-like pleasure in four-letter words. It's a muddle.



Another psycho is abroad, this time in Britain, in *Death Stalk* (Doubleday, $7.95) by Bob Langley. At first this isn't clear at all, as four unrelated people are kidnapped and not heard from again. Then the fifth, the head of the BBC, is taken and a colleague murdered. Commander George Steiner of the Yard can make nothing of it–not even when a set of macabre instructions arrive, together with a demand that TV reporter William Mellinger be made available. Steiner hatches a plot; it comes bloodily apart. What sense *is* there in this? Not much, it proves, but a thread is discerned . . . Vigorous story-telling in this first novel, good use of mountain settings; but I could wish for a more persuasive "rationale."

A favorite ploy in crime fiction over the years has been the apparently random, motiveless series murder. Rarely–if you accept the basic premise involved–has it been done better than in *The Random Factor* (Doubleday, $8.95) by Linda J. LaRosa and Barry Tanenbaum. Savage murders take place in New York, one after another in quick succession, with absolutely no connection among the victims–except that some identifying object or document has been removed from each corpse. In desperation, police turn to criminologist Noah Aikman, who specializes in spotting obscure relationships. He pieces together what little is known–while the toll rises and the city's in uproar–but there really *is* no connection between the killers and their victims. How then . . . ? Fascinating!

The 17th John Putnam Thatcher story by Emma Lathen is *Double, Double, Oil and Trouble* (Simon & Schuster, $8.95), a topical, entertaining, well-told novel without the glistening phrase and humor of the best in the series. The setting is divided between Europe–mostly London–and Houston. A Texas firm, bidding for a huge oil drilling contract in Scotland, has its European negotiator kidnapped by terrorists. Ransom is paid, the Texas firm unexpectedly (since minus its best man) wins the contract, and the kidnapped man turns up with a tale unanimously disbelieved by the police of three countries. Thatcher's Sloan Guaranty Trust underwrites the Houston company, and he is drawn in at the outset when prodded into the indignity of serving as bagman for the ransom. Intrigues, marital infidelity, murders accumulate, till Thatcher senses whodunit.

Perhaps we need periodic reminders of the Nazi butcheries as an antidote to complacency, and *The Climate of Hell* by Herbert Lieberman (Simon & Schuster, $9.95) provides this. Perhaps we should not expect to be entertained in the process, and we aren't; revulsion is the primary reaction. But here it's revulsion not only against Nazis grown bloated and powerful in Paraguay, but also against the Israeli who goes in to kill one of the most vile of their number, Doctor Gregori. And maybe this too is the author's intent, for he shows the Israeli agent destroying the innocent in the process of exacting "justice" for a German who specialized in destroying the innocent. Suspense, there is; gore, there is; on the whole, I don't recommend *Climate.*

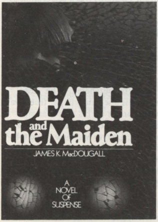
Herbert Lieberman

I have some difficulty taking seriously David Linzee's *Discretion* (Seaview, $8.95)–which in part is the author's intent. Sarah Saber and Chris Rockwell are lovers and agents for Inquiries, Inc., which practices discretion to the point that it doesn't even talk to itself. The result is that Sarah is hired to commit a robbery in Italy, ostensibly to test a museum security system, and Chris is hired to solve the caper when she (apparently) succeeds. Linzee provides pleasant and humorous moments with his good idea, but the net effect is not memorable.

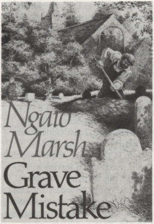
If Susan Isaacs' recent *Compromising Positions* was a celebration of the "joys" of suburban adultery, Ed McBain's *Goldilocks* (Arbor House, $8.95) is a telling, compelling portrait of the destructiveness of that community pastime. Dr. James Purchase, Calusa, Florida, arrives home one midnight to find his wife and daughters butchered. The dead woman is a second wife, a "true love" which broke up his first marriage. Except that he now has a new true love . . . Lawyer Matthew Hope tells the story; he too has found a second bed. The wrenching and wretching of wretched, ordinary people does give pause.

John D. MacDonald's Travis McGee has been, for some 16 books, a self-appointed, one-treatment sex therapist who's a social critic and salvage-man-for-hire on the side. In *The Empty Copper Sea* (Lippincott, $8.95) he does a bit of growing up (in his own words) and the result is attractive greater depth in characterization. McGee has long been a casual humper; here early on he takes to bed, on an hour's acquaintance, a comely lass, who then exhibits a distressingly puritanical inclination to desire a connection between sex and love. McGee dumps her, and discovers (a) he doesn't like himself very much, and (b) an alarming twinge of the same desire. So off to another girl . . . The mystery, by the way, has to do with an old friend, a sea captain, who's been stripped of his license for negligence. McGee sets out to restore his integrity. Involved is Hub Lawless, wealthy entrepreneur whose Florida empire is toppling and who dies at sea. Except that he liquified his assets just before, and everyone is convinced he, his mistress, and his money disappeared over the horizon via plastic surgery in Mexico. MacDonald is a super stylist; I fancy *Copper Sea* greatly.

Welcome to James K. MacDougall and his private detective David Stuart, whose second case is *Death and the Maiden* (Bobbs-Merrill, $8.95). MacDougall writes with feeling and insight; his sleuth is compassionate, human, believable; his midwestern setting fresh and engaging. Stuart is asked by an old friend to help a college professor and his wealthy wife, whose daughter has just been kidnapped. From the start things aren't right: the professor's attitude, that of his wife, the crooked and incompetent sheriff, a mess-up in delivery of the ransom. Stuart comes to feel death a personal burden . . .



Aside from the key to the affair being a trifle obvious, *Rest You Merry* (Doubleday, $7.95) by Charlotte MacLeod is a thoroughly enjoyable detective tale, set with loving malice in small-town academia. The characters are charmers: Prof. Peter Shandy, inventor of a rutabaga, iconoclast with heart, and amateur sleuth. Jemima Ames, defective librarian and proficient busybody, who serves as corpse No. 1. Balaclava Agricultural College President Thorkjald Svenson, of heroic dimensions. And many others. Shandy has long resisted participation in the college Christmas fundraiser, the Grand Illumination. Now, driven to madness, he has his house covered with a revolting spectacle of lights and reindeer, and leaves on vacation. From which he returns to find the dead librarian in his living room . . . Don't miss this one, a bright spot at Christmas or any other time.



With consummate charm Ngaio Marsh tells *Grave Mistake* (Little, Brown, $8.95). With glowing strokes she paints the village of Upper Quintern and its living people; murder would be an intrusion. But it does intrude; Sybil Foster of Quintern Place dies, and there are several suspects worthy of the act: a hokum doctor, a jealous woman, a worthless sponging relative, several who inherit, a prospective but unwelcome son-in-law. I read *Grave Mistake* with vast pleasure and regretted that Chief Inspector Alleyn, with Br'er Fox on hand, had to bring the narrative to a close.

By a curious coincidence, another effective first novel of suspense dealing with cancer has appeared: *The Discovery* by James Parry (Crowell, $10.95). Dr. Paul Justin, cancer research scientist, has for years been in semi-clandestine pursuit of an avenue of inquiry completely discredited by all authorities. But he has just effected rapid and total cures of cancer-infested test animals. Meanwhile, his wife has discovered a lump in her breast; his neighbor—a reporter who serves as investigator in this tale—has begun to sense a story; Dr. Christopher Ives, whose pharmaceutical company has fallen in ruins about him, sets in motion his scheme to become a billionaire; and Ray Ryker plots to wrest control of Matt Ash's empire from the aged and irascible old man, who's consumed with cancer and pain. James Parry brews his suspenseful tale with the skill of a seasoned novelist.

David Atlee Phillips, author of *The Carlos Contract* (Macmillan, $8.95), knows whereof he writes: he was with the CIA for 25 years, rising to head the Western Hemisphere Division. Carlos, international terrorist, is a real person; the others, we are assured, are fictional. An oil company whose executives are Carlos' special targets hires retired CIA agent McLendon to solve their problem. McLendon puts together a band of former agents and begins the deadly quest, but it seems that Carlos has a pipeline into their deliberations from the first . . . Phillips' story strikes sparks of authenticity and tension.

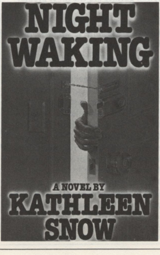
The truly satiric and funny detective story must be one of the most difficult challenges in our genre. *Murder by Microphone* by John Reeves (Doubleday, $7.95) makes a fine run at this elusive target. His focus is on the Canadian Broadcast Corporation, and deadly are his thrusts. So too are those of the unknown killer who dispatched Henry Midden, General Manager of CBC radio. Midden was loathed by all who knew him, for he had brought incompetence to new heights while making a career of fornication, rape and cuckolding. We are treated to a dazzling tour of the AM and FM wasteland as Inspector Coggin and Sergeant Sump apply their synergistic talents to the matter. Never have I enjoyed a corporate dismemberment so much as Reeves' surgery on the CBC.

Ruth Rendell's latest about Inspector Wexford, *A Sleeping Life* (Doubleday, $7.95), is fine indeed, one of her very best, a tantalizing puzzle ingeniously wrought among the people and settings of Kingsmarkham and London. Rhoda Comfrey, fifty, down from London to visit her ailing father, is stabbed to death on a footpath. Curiously, no one knows her city address, or anything of her life there. The roots of her death appear to lie in the city, but there—except for a teasing hint or two—she seems not to have existed, and soon Wexford is lured down several embarrassing false trails . . . Until his daughter, in the painful throes of feminism, provides a key clue.

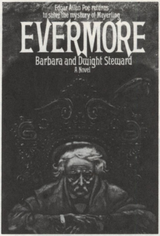
Aside from some unnecessary sex and gore, Chuck Scarborough's *Stryker* (Macmillan, $8.95) is a striking novel making most intriguing and imaginative use of Nixon-era political developments. Ben Stryker is a TV newsman whose star is rising toward zenith when he trips over his temper and big mouth and falls into limbo, consumed by a hatred of Nixon, the "cause" of his decline. He schemes revenge—the death of Nixon—while unaware that the director of his TV network is playing him like a virtuoso violinist. The director has his own agenda; ends justify means, even murder, though someone is also getting extracurricular jollies from homicide. And even after we think we understand it all, the crafty author still has two surprises to spring.

I'd read two previous books by Britain's Jack S. Scott, but accomplished as they were they didn't prepare me for *The Shallow Grave* (Harper & Row, $7.95), an exceptional tale of police and people and weakness in rural England, a novel full of nuance and close observation and fresh turn of phrase. A school teacher, Miss Beavis—demure, quiet, unhappily three months pregnant—turns up in the titular grave. Inspector Rosher, aging and in terror of it, is dispensed to the scene, followed by his ailing superintendent. All is not well in the police ranks, all is not well in the village, all is very well with Scott's storytelling.

I called director-producer Sidney Sheldon's first book, *The Naked Face*, the best first mystery of the year (1970). His fourth, *Bloodline* (Morrow, $8.95), is another spellbinder, a wide-screen tale of family ties, multinational corporate deceit, and murder. Sheldon's plotting is intricate and expert, his people fully alive. My only reservation is that in describing his characters' weaknesses and depravities in largely sexual terms, the author shows unseemly relish in detail. Samuel Roffe, with his sons, built his hugely successful pharmaceutical empire from the most unpromising beginnings in the Krakow of the 1870's. The company remains family held to this day, but all Roffes except the president, Sam, want to go public to solve their desperate personal money needs, at the same time as public confidence in Roffe and Sons is waning. Then Sam dies while mountain climbing, and the mantle falls upon his daughter Elizabeth, in whom the strong Roffe blood line proves to flow true. She stumbles upon the treachery Sam had uncovered; the guilty is a Roffe, but which one?—and whom can she trust?—and how can she save the company, beginning its descent in ruins about here? Almost in passing, Sheldon offers us a fascinating Swiss detective—Max Hornung—who positively demands an encore.



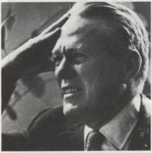
Night Waking (Simon & Schuster, $9.95) by Kathleen Snow is raw, wallowing carnage about a New York psycho—a necrophiliac—and his pleasures, three girls and their sexual antics and fantasies, and cops. Not recommended for anything except combustion.



Evermore by Barbara and Dwight Steward (Morrow, $7.95) has a delightful idea, captivating in execution. Edgar Allan Poe did not die in 1849, as supposed, but fled for his life to Paris, where as Henri Le Rennet he lived on in monumental eccentricity, awash in alcohol, entombed in a decayed mansion that once was a madhouse, occasionally of assistance to the Prefect of Police. It is now 1889, and Le Rennet is a pickled 80 years old, though his mind seems largely to have escaped the ravages. In the company of a pureveyor of hair restorer from Maryland, one Wilmot Rufus Griswold, a descendant of Poe's mortal enemy, Le Rennet tackles the mysterious deaths of Crown Prince Rudolph and his mistress—an affair which certain powers wish left to rest as a suicide pact. The blend of fantasy and fact is fascinating, ingenious, and certainly recommended.

Julian Symons does not repeat himself: each novel stands alone on its own credentials, which are usually impressive. Thus *The Blackheath Poisonings* (Harper & Row, $9.95), "A Victorian Murder Mystery." So effectively does Symons conjure up the Blackheath suburb of London, with Albert House and Victoria Villa and the family that lived and died—of arsenic—there in the 1890's, that the join between fiction and history is seamless. First to die is Roger Vandervent; the family doctor senses no evil. Then another, and suspicion in Roger's son Paul hardens into certainty. The police are moved to take a simplistic interest; the person they arrest is certainly not without guilt . . .

Since I'm not ordinarily favored with Doubleday review copies, it's been some years since I read Hillary Waugh. In the meantime he's departed procedurals for gothics, both under his own name and a pseudonym (Elissa Grandower). But his latest, *Madman at My Door* (Doubleday, $7.95), is pure gut-grabbing suspense. Psycho Orville Elliot butchered three women, and was caught in the act by the husband of the third and wounded (castrated) in the scuffle. Elliot was judged insane and committed; he escaped repeatedly with one objective: slaughter the husband, Herbert Murdoch. Now nine years have elapsed; Orville, deemed cured, is released. Murdoch, remarried with two young children and teaching in a nearby city, is terrified; he's convinced Orville is no more cured than he ever was, that his intent is to strike at Murdoch through his family. The court advises Murdoch to relax, the police do the same and refuse a gun permit, Murdoch's life collapses about him, and Orville makes his plans . . .


Hillary Waugh

Gus Weill's *The Bonnet Man* (Macmillan, $8.95) is strong stuff. A white, fiftyish New York cop is asked by an old army comrade to spend his vacation in Black Bayou, Mississippi, where the comrade is mayor. Black Bayou's 2200 people are all black and all terrorized by the nocturnal bonnet man whose ax has claimed four victims. The cop, Brendan Cassidy, has ambivalent feelings about black folks; the people of Black Bayou are less than enthusiastic about a white man prowling their streets and homes. But Cassidy goes, and Weill paints his Mississippi portrait in slashing strokes, bringing people to sweating, loving, hating life, providing a denouement that is old, fairly clued, and tellingly effective.

Pauline Glen Winslow goes from strength to strength: now comes *Copper Gold* (St. Martin's, $8.95), a magnificently solid, complex, searching story of considerable depth. Superintendent Merlin Capricorn is trying to find a way to trip up Brixton Jim, a publicly blameless London businessman about whom he has dark convictions. Meanwhile Capricorn's good friend Inspector Copper has got himself in a sorry mess: his bedmate owns an unsavory club, consorts with—is even funded by—an American export Mafioso, and Copper is so besotted he doesn't seem to care that his career is a shambles. Capricorn agonizes over this situation, which moves from unpleasant to desperate, becomes a personal target for violence, ponders where England is headed, and has to solve a murder to save a life. A very effective sad-comic note is struck by Capricorn's trio of unlikely aunts, part of his show business background.

It seems to me that of all mystery fiction gothics are the most predictable; certainly I found that true of *The Barrancourt Destiny* by Anne Worboys (Scribners, $8.95). But Worboys' skill is not insignificant, and I sank comfortably into this story of an American girl, now bereft of all kin, who is seeking her English roots in Kent. She comes under false pretenses to the vast estate and mansion of Alconleigh, where intrigues abound, a ghost flits, and storks portend death. Who was her mother, what was her connection to Alconleigh, what forces tear at the Barrancourt family?

Fred Zackel debuts with a San Francisco private eye tale, *Cocaine and Blue Eyes* (Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, $8.95). Michael Brennan, fired from his job with a detective agency and unsure about life as a private peeper, is asked by Joey Crawford to find his missing girlfriend. Crawford soon dies in a car wreck, and, driven by some obscure sense of duty, Brennan begins looking for Dani Anatole. She proves to be the wayward daughter of an old city family, one with fishing interests and some sort of link with Chinatown. Brennan's probing raises hackles everywhere: skeletons abound, and everyone fears Mike has been hired to expose his own set of stinking bones. Zackel's novel is colorful, slangy, a bit murky; it achieves a goodly vitality in its own way.

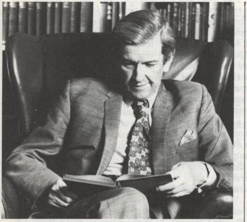
Kriminal Roman Fuhrer (Stuttgart, Germany: Philipp Reclam) by Armin Arnold and Josef Schmidt (both in the Department of German, McGill University, Montreal) is mindful of Penzler & Steinbrunner's *Encyclopedia,* though it lacks the illustrations of that work. A 30-page introduction provides a historical overview of crime fiction. Then comes the principal section: a 315-page "Lexicon of Authors," an alphabetical listing, with biographical sketches and bibliographic data on hundred of writers. This section is particularly valuable for its extensive information on European authors, and I derived a number of intriguing leads. But it is not without error in respect at least to American and British writers, perpetuating some (like the confusion over Joanna Cannan and Josephine Pullein-Thompson) and creating others (to John Creasey is attributed the pseudonym M.E. Chaber, which will displease Kendall Foster Crossen). Then 38 pages offer brief essays on the state of crime fiction in nine countries (or groups of countries) of interest around the world. The compilers follow with their list of the 100 best and most significant crime fiction volumes, from the standpoint of the German reader. An alphabetical list of characters and their creators (17 pages), bibliography (5 pages) and index complete this 455-page volume. All in all, quite a useful addition to the reference shelf for fanciers of our genre with reading knowledge of German. Alas, I don't know what the price is.

—AJH

In Memorium

EDMUND CRISPIN

1921-1978



credit: Walker and Company

Edmund Crispin

Edmund Crispin's brilliant mind and literary gifts were evident from his early years in the Merchant Taylors' School and at St. John's College, Oxford; they broke upon the wider world in 1945 with his first detective tale, *Obsequies at Oxford* (*The Case of the Gilded Fly*), which he wrote in fourteen days. It established the figure of Gervase Fen, professor of English at Oxford, who in another eight long stories and a dozen short ones provided first-class detection in always original settings and to an accompaniment of satire and farce unequaled in crime fiction.

But writing was only one half of Edmund Crispin's endowment. As Bruce Montgomery—his real name—he was an accomplished organist and composer. During the early part of his career he supported himself by writing music for films, and he composed in other genres for his own and his friends' pleasure. At the same time, he was producing *The Moving Toyshop* (1946), *Dead and Dumb* (1947), *Love Lies Bleeding* (1948), *Buried for Pleasure* (1949), *Frequent Hearses* (1950), and his masterpiece *The Long Divorce* (1951). The short stories collected under the title *Beware of the Trains* were offshoots of this intense activity, since the book came out in 1953.

As a critic, his work appeared in numerous English periodicals, including *The New Statesman* and the *Times Educational Supplement,* and he soon became the regular oracle on detective fiction in *The Sunday Times.* In everything Crispin wrote his high cultivation and wide-ranging perceptiveness find expression in a prose style that combines modern directness with Augustan virtuosity. He never wrote an unreadable sentence and could not be dull. When after a lapse of a quarter-century he turned again to crime and wrote *The Glimpses of the Moon,* it was a superabundance of wit and verve and human observation that weighed down the form and eclipsed the murder and its investigation by Gervase Fen. The work is nonetheless worth reading, for it is a brilliant, often hilarious, and sometimes bitter rural panorama. Still another energy of his mind was embodied in a small group of sardonic poems, as yet unpublished but circulated among his friends.

In tete-a-tete, Bruce Montgomery was as entertaining as on paper. Reserved and outspoken at the same time, he was witty without effort and anything but self-centered in his interests. To partake of conversation with him and his friend Kingsley Amis was exhilarating exercise. In mid-career, Bruce Montgomery retired to Devon, and there he married a neighbor, Ann Clements, whose own musical talents and high intelligence made her an ideal companion.

Last September, after an accident to his leg, he died of a heart attack. His wife writes that "he was still so full of ideas and plans that one has to regret that he was unable to carry out at least some of them." One such idea was that of another crime story, to be called *The White Knight,* which in his generous friendliness he declared to be "mine," that is, intended to satisfy my particular preferences in the multiform genre. All connoisseurs will miss the elegance and power of his fictional imagination as his friends will miss a rare spirit.

—*Jacques Barzun*

December 31, 1978

W.T. BALLARD:

An Interview

By Stephen Mertz

I first made contact with W.T. Ballard early in 1976. I was researching an article on the detective pulp magazines for which Ballard wrote extensively during the thirties and forties, and his response to my questions was generous, informative and entertaining. Since I'd been a fan and collector of his work for some years, I felt that the next logical step should be a piece dedicated to the man himself. This interview is the result.

Willis Todhunter Ballard was born in Cleveland in 1903. His career as a professional writer began in 1927 and since then he has produced 95 novels, about fifty movie and TV scripts and more than one thousand short stories and novelettes which have appeared in the pulps as well as such "slicks" as *The Saturday Evening Post, Esquire, This Week* and *McCall's.* His most recent work has been primarily in the western field. He is past vice-president of the Western Writers of America and his novel, *Gold in California,* won that organization's award as Best Historical Novel for 1965. His latest book is *Sheriff of Tombstone* (Doubleday, 1977) and he's presently at work on a new one, also a western.

His importance to the mystery field is that he was one of the original contributors to *Black Mask,* that famous detective pulp which, during the thirties under the editorship of Joe Shaw, pioneered the then-revolutionary American hard-boiled detective form.

Ballard, along with Chandler, Hammett and Erle Stanley Gardner, was one of that magazine's most popular contributors among contemporary readers. His series starring Bill Lennox, troubleshooter for General Consolidated Studios, set the tone and laid the ground rules for countless Hollywood-*milieu* mysteries to follow.

"My life is not particularly interesting," Ballard wrote me when agreeing to this interview. "As Dash Hammett used to say, there are two types of people in the world. Those who make news and those who write about them."

What follows is proof positive that W.T. Ballard is as self-effacing as he is important to the development of the American detective story.

In the interview that follows, I = interviewer, B = W.T. Ballard.

I: First, the traditional question: How did you come to be a professional writer?

B: As a child when I was asked what I wanted to do I said I would live in a library and write books. At age twelve I "sold" my first offering to *Hunter Trader Trapper,* the saga of a twelve-year-old on vacation at a Canadian trout stream with my family. I received in return for it ten copies of the issue in which the masterpiece appeared. However, the progess to writer was hit or miss for a long time. My father owned an electrical engineering office. They also published a magazine electrically oriented, on which I worked. When I got out of college I was taken into the office to be taught the business, whether or not I liked it. They sat me at a drawing board. I was not a particularly good draftsman. A whole set of handbooks told me precisely what generators were required in any given situation. Thoroughly bored, I looked for another outlet.

Through a friend I found a job with a small group of local newspapers, the Brush-Moore chain in the Midwest. It was a constant hassle. In eight months I was fired at least eight times. Besides arguments with the printers I had them with the old battle-axe who ran the front office. She had been secretary to the Brush boys' father and considered that she owned the company more than the boys did. It became a routine. She would call me in and fire me, but before I could clear out my desk one or other brother would show up from Europe and rehire me. This went on until one time no one appeared and I stayed fired.

About that time the stock market crashed in '29 and we were sunk in the Depression. Dad was forced to close his business and I was out of that job too. I couldn't find anything in the East and decided it was a good time to go to California where at least it was warm for sleeping on park benches. I got there on Armistice Day with twenty-six dollars. On the way west I broke out with an infection in the lymph glands and spent three weeks in an Albuquerque, New Mexico, hospital, which cost me most of what money I had.

I walked down Hollywood Boulevard like any tourist. There was a big parade in downtown L.A. and the Hollywood streets were all but empty, most businesses closed. But a cigar store newsstand was opened and I stopped to gawk in the window. I had been writing and submitting copy to New York without much success, but there before me was a copy of *Detective Dragnet* featuring a story I had written months earlier. I didn't take much notice. I had been paid long before and the money was spent. I wandered on and was crossing Cherokee Street when a voice called, "Tod. Tod Ballard. . . ." I looked down the side street and coming toward me I saw Major Harry Warner.

Warner. I had known him in Cleveland where his family was making movie trailers for Community Chest and other local organizations. They came from Youngstown where the old man was a tailor, a really sweet guy, and when I was with the Brush outfit I had handled some publicity for them as a favor. That was my only connection with them. The Major wanted to know what I was doing in Hollywood, a question I was beginning to ask myself. I hated to admit that I was out of a job and nearly broke, that I had no real hope of finding work in a strange town. Then I remembered the magazine in the window. I lied gracefully. "I'm freelancing, working for magazines . . . here, I'll show you. . . ." I led him back to the cigar store, went in, bought the *Detective Dragnet,* took it out and presented it to him.

Why the Major was impressed by a dime pulp I'll never know, but he was. The meeting culminated in his offering me a job writing for the studio at seventy-five bucks a week. A bonanza at that time. He and his brothers had just taken over First National Studios from Commodore (Commy) Blackton who had gone broke in New York real estate. I lasted with Warners for eight months, learning a lot about screenwriting from a couple of wise old-timers, before I forgot to watch my back. I made a derogatory crack about Jack Warner, turned my head to find him at my shoulder, and the pink ticket beat me back to my office.

From there I went to Columbia, an eye-opening experience. Sam Cohan, who owned the studio with his brother, had worked out a crummy deal. A Hungarian, he had brought eight of his relatives over to this country, with no intention of personally supporting them. Instead he set up an ingenious company, gave each relative a share in the stock and titular title of producer to make pictures as independents. Then he would buy these productions and divide any profit with each contributing relative.

The snag was that the first man he made a "producer" spent more money on his pictures than he could hope to realize from their "sale." I was hired to recoup the losses, to bring in new films for a very low budget of ten thousand dollars each. We were in the bottom of the Depression but the job still wasn't easy. I had to write the script, direct, produce the picture and even move the sets and scenery . . . it was before the days of powerful unions. The camera was housed in a heavy concrete booth mounted on piano casters, the sound table in the same booth. When you needed to move the apparatus everyone, grips, juicers, stagehands, actors including stars, put their shoulders to the booth and wrestled it into the new position.

Most of our shooting was done inside. We couldn't afford to go out. The studio was located on Gower Avenue, known locally as Gower Gulch because of the preponderance of westerns being made on the lots that lined the street and the horde of unemployed actors who gathered outside the gates. When we needed a couple of extras we opened the window and yelled, then stood out of the stampede.

The job lasted six months and exhausted me. I never cared for studio work. I hated having my scripts torn apart by producers, directors, even the actors who had any clout. I returned to freelancing and made a living, but barely.

I: How did you come to write for *Black Mask?*

B: I caught *The Maltese Falcon* on radio. My uncle, with whom I was living, was head of the West Coast Customs Bureau and would come home at night worn out, collapse in his favorite chair, turn the radio up full and go to sleep. I wrote in a small study off the living room and could not escape hearing every sound from the box. I had learned to tune it out of my consciousness, but this night excerpts of dialogue forced themselves through to me. Dialogue the way I had always wanted to write it. I had been trying to please Dorothy Hubbard at *Detective Story Magazine,* a lady who favored the Mary Roberts Rinehart and Agatha Christie styles and types of material. This was something else again. I went to the living room and listened. What I heard was an ad, a teaser for a movie playing at Warner Brothers' downtown theater. I caught a streetcar down and saw the show.

This was not the later Bogie version, but an earlier one starring Ricardo Cortez, who took his stage name from a cigar and acted like it. But I had no interest in the acting. It was the dialogue that enthralled me: Hammett's ear for words that sounded the way I thought criminals and detectives should talk. It rang true, the way I wanted mine to do.

The ad gave a credit to *Black Mask Magazine,* which was the first I had heard of the publication. I left the theater, walked to the corner, bought a copy of the then current issue and read it on the ride back. I felt that I was coming home. The story I most remember was written by a boy from Oregon whose family, I later learned, owned the biggest whorehouse in the state. His work sounded authentic.

I: Bill Lennox was the first hard-boiled series character who worked exclusively against a movie industry setting. Can you tell us something of how you went about creating the series?

B: The heroes of most of the *Black Mask* stories were newspaper crime reporters, which I thought could get monotonous. I scratched my head for an alternative and came up with the idea of a troubleshooter working for a studio. I could use my experience in the movie world for realistic background.

By the time I got back to my uncle's house around midnight I had worked out the basic framework in my mind. A friend, Jim Lawson, was head of the foreign department at Universal. Poor Jim. Every time Junior Laemmle or his sister Rose Mary got into trouble, which was often, Jim had to get out of a warm bed, go to Lincoln Heights jail and bail them out. I couldn't use the name Lawson so I went through the L's in the phone book and came by Lennox. I then needed a name for the head of the studio and wanted something that sounded Jewish but not obviously so. The phone book yielded me Spurk; there was only one of those. Much later I learned Spurk was a lady and not at all Jewish, but she sufficed well for me. Just after midnight I began the first Lennox story. It ran ten thousand words and I finished at five in the morning. At seven-thirty I took my uncle to work, mailed the manuscript and went home to bed.

I had been nickel and diming along, selling an occasional story to Street & Smith, *Short Stories, Argosy* and so on for a quarter of a cent to a cent per word, supporting my parents and an aunt, long since regretting losing the regular salary from Columbia and having quit my job, much as I had hated it. Along with writing I was looking for another spot, with no luck.

A week after I mailed the story to *Black Mask* I received a letter from Joe Shaw. He wanted some changes made, but he sent along a check with the letter, an unheard of generosity and compassion among editors at the time. The major change he asked for was that Bill Lennox not carry a gun as other fictional detectives did, even newspaper reporters. That reporters went armed seemed odd to me, and that a troubleshooter should go naked seemed odder, but it was not a time to argue with an editor. No one with sense argued with Shaw. So Lennox went without a gun.

I: Joe Shaw was a strong guiding force where many of his writers were concerned. Did you have any memorable experiences in your relationship with him as an editor?

B: I loved Shaw better the more I knew him. He was a curious bastard who wanted to write himself and couldn't. He had been president of a highly successful manufacturing company before the First World War. How he got to Europe for that I don't know, but Hoover used him to deliver relief in Belgium after the armistice, then sent him to Greece.

When he came home he had a manuscript that he took to Phil Cody at Warners Publications. He did not sell the story but he so impressed Phil that Cody hired him to edit *Black Mask* on the spot, and he made a fine editor. He could point the way for his writers, contribute much to helping work out their problems with sympathy and understanding, but he could not do the same for himself though writing was what he most wanted to do.

He wrote two books both of which Knopf published, not because they were worthy of publication but because Joe wrote them; he was that much appreciated. Both books were bad. I can't remember both titles but one was *Blood on the Curb.* At his request I worked over it with him trying to point out where he had gone off base, but I was not the editor he was. It was an experience, believe me, trying to teach my "father" how to write.

As I said, I loved him. I sold him more copy than anyone else did, an average of ten stories a year, more than that including characters other than Lennox. Erle Gardner never forgave that I sold one story more to *Black Mask* than he did during a given period.

Through the years I have worked with the leading editors of the business. Ray Long, Fanny Ellsworth, Dorothy Hubbard, Erd Brandt, Ken McCormick, Ken Littaur, Ken White, you name them. But none of them offered the help, the assurance, the patience that Joe Shaw gave to his writers. It is too bad he has been so overlooked in the history of the craft.

Following that first *Black Mask* sale I wrote and sold seven more within three weeks, Joe buying everything I submitted until Phil Cody told him to quit Lennox for a while. At Joe's suggestion I began a new series and wrote six Red Drake stories about a race course detective working for the state racing commission. When that wore thin I switched to several manuscripts on Don Tomasa, a Mexican adventurer working out of Tijuana.

Finally Shaw left *Black Mask* because Warner and Cody decided to cheapen the quality of the content. Fanny Ellsworth took over and I went along. It was a living. But although Fanny was a good editor it was never the same as with Joe. At the risk of sounding euphoric, there never was a relationship between editor and writer to equal my connection with Cap Shaw.

I: Your reminiscences of Raymond Chandler are quoted by Frank MacShane in his biography of Chandler. Did you know Dashiell Hammett?

B: Yes, and quite well. Until the time he took off with Lillian Hellman. She saw to it that he was cut off from his old friends, even Horace McCoy who had been closest to him. McCoy had been a police reporter in El Paso, a genuine tough guy. He and Dash shared an apartment in San Francisco and at one time were virtually broke. Dash was, as many writers are, a compulsive gambler. Joe Shaw finally sent them a check for $250. Their funds were so low they didn't even have a bank account and Dash took the check downstairs to the Chinese restaurant below their rooms to get it cashed. He did not show up for so long that McCoy became worried enough to go looking for Hammett. He arrived at the restaurant just in time to see Dash put the last dollar into the claw machine and lose again. The Chinese felt so bad about the loss that he unlocked the box and gave Dash a tin cigarette case from it. Thereafter McCoy called the tin piece Hammett's $250 extravagance.

McCoy wrote *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* Jane

Fonda made a picture from the story a few years ago. He married some dame who owned a couple of apartment houses at Vine Street and Beverly Boulevard and I lost all track of him. He was a nice guy and a good writer.

I: Jumping to the other end of the spectrum, did you know Robert Leslie Bellem? He's been called "the worst writer of the pulps," yet I've always viewed his Dan Turner, Hollywood Detective series as superb private eye parody.

B: Yes, I knew Bob I suppose as well as anyone. I can't give you the exact date of our meeting, sometime in the mid-1930's. Soon after that we took adjoining offices in an old corner building on Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena and worked there until I left for Wright Field during the Second World War, in 1942. During that period we collaborated a lot on Frank Armer's *Super Detective Stories* and a number of other mags. Bob was always a good word man but had trouble with story, which was my field, and he did not work well under pressure. Frequently he would blow up, come apart and throw the thing in my lap. That was especially true when the longer pieces became popular. His best work was in short material. He was a pugnacious, small man but easy to collaborate with, never pretentious about his prose, and we edited each other without many battles.

After the end of the war I returned to the Coast and we again got together writing the *Death Valley* shows for Ronnie Regan and also a number of magazines. But that market was sinking, TV taking its place. TV was never my forte. It was too restrictive and I had not the patience to go around and around on endless story conferences with producers who didn't know what they wanted but had to have an oar in. On the other hand Bob loved it and thrived on it. He was great at talking, but was never what they called a "talking writer." He was one of the hardest workers in the field, kept as regular office hours as if he punched a timeclock and stayed at his machine until he finished a predetermined number of pages a day. He had a delightful sense of humor that relied a lot on play on words. I recall one lunch-long game we played using the names of American Indian tribes, using the verbal sounds for different word meaning. An example: "Shawnee(ds) more action in this story," Shaw being Cap Shaw. I guess we used up every tribe in the land.

Bob was also a mighty hypochondriac, forever taking pills, medicines, asthma inhalations, anything he could find. He fell into the clutches of the Beverly Hills "heart attack doctor," a man who treated many writers and studio people, all of whom he diagnosed as having had or soon to have heart attacks, and some even did. Most did not. However, Bob decided he was a prime candidate and suffered realistically for a couple of years. I never took his complaints seriously—until the day he died of a heart attack in the new home he had worried himself to death building.

Incidentally, Bob was not nearly as bad a writer as you make him out. He looked over the markets, chose one he could handle fast and easily, and hewed to the line. And was highly successful in so doing. When he went into television, he was one of the most successful story editors in the trade. He was a generous man, even professionally. Always busy with his and our work, when Cleve F. Adams had a grave illness while in the middle of a detective book manuscript Bob suggested that the two of us finish it for him. We did that. Cleve was a father figure to the fiction writing group, much loved but a porcupine nevertheless. His comment on reading the finished copy: "It's a beautiful . . . typing job."

I: For all his popularity with private eye readers during the forties, surprisingly little is known about Adams.

B: I met Cleve in '31. He and his wife, Vera, had a candy store in Culver City but he had always wanted to write, and broke in with the old Munsey magazines. With varying success he continued selling the pulps until he wrote his first book, *Sabotage.* That was an instant hit and on the strength of it he did seven or eight others. He was good, though hardly in a class with Ray Chandler. He had an exalted regard for his own ability and seldom discussed his work with anyone, including family. I knew him intimately until he died. His son phoned me at four o'clock that morning to tell me Cleve had had a heart attack. He was dead before I could drive over.

He and Glen Wichman and I founded the Fictioneers organization, selecting some twenty men as original members. It was an entirely social group with neither rules nor by-laws. Cleve ran it through the first years as secretary, the only office we had, sending out notices of where and when the next meeting would be held. We paid for cards and postage. I have no idea how many members there were for we kept no records and charged no dues, but I would say the number ran into the hundreds. Any writer, fixed or just passing through, was welcome if he cared to join and at times we had more members than the Authors' League. However, our monthly dinners seldom turned out more than thirty or forty at one gathering. It held together until the war when a lot of the boys went into the services. Although several efforts were made to revive it after the war they were largely unsuccessful because most of us had moved into the slick markets and the book field, and had scattered.

I: One *Black Mask* writer who seems shrouded in mystery is Raoul Whitfield, who just seemed to vanish at the height of his career.

B: He died in North Hollywood in the early forties. I don't recall what he died of or what he was doing at the time.

I: Would you tell us something about the lifestyle of a pulp writer living in L.A. during the thirties and forties?

B: We all worked hard, played hard, lived modestly, drank but only a few to excess, gambled some when we had extra cash. Most of our friends were other writers. In the

Depression when any of us got a check he climbed in his jalopy and made the rounds to see who was in worse straits than he and loaned up to half what he had just received.

I: More and more interest is being shown these days in the detective pulps and those who wrote for them. Are there any pulp writers who are generally ignored today whom you think deserve recognition?

B: Here are a few from memory. Norbert (Bert) Davis was one of the best with a light style and humor. He killed himself in the mid-forties. John K. (Johnny) Butler who wound up at the studios. Dwight Babcock. Carroll John Daly. Fred Nebel, who was very good.

I: What was your yearly average word output for the pulps?

B: My files are at the University of Oregon library, but a shotgun guess would be about or over a million words per year.

I: Would you tell us something about your work habits both then and now?

B: I tried to do about ten pages a day after that first *Black Mask* flush, sometimes more, sometimes less. I tried to work regularly, something every day even if I later threw it away. These days my wife, Phoebe, does the typing since I'm a lousy typist and in so doing edits the copy. I seldom objected to requests for rewrite but sometimes stood my ground. A late example is a western called *Sheriff of Tombsone.* Both my agent and my Doubleday editor, Harold Kuebler, held their noses at the first submission and Harold only accepted the altered copy grudgingly. Both let me know in no uncertain terms that they considered it a bad work. It has outsold all my more recent books and is rated second from the top of the list in Western Writers of America's scoring for the last year.

I: How about the marketing of pulp fiction? I've heard that many of the magazines (such as Frank Armer's) were closed to most freelancers. Was this a widespread practice?

B: How did we market pulp fiction? Like selling any other commodity. No magazine I remember was tightly closed to submissions, although a couple of them were written entirely by one or two men for long stretches. It was largely governed by how lazy the editors were, how much they were willing to read.

Frank Armer was no worse than others, but his editors were crooked. They were pulling old copy out of the files, slapping a current writer's name on as author, and drawing checks to the new names, cashing them themselves at the bar on the corner. Bob Bellem and I combined to send them to Sing Sing for five years each. We discovered the ploy after I received a notice from the IRS that I had failed to report $35,000 paid me by Armer Publications. Since I had sold them no copy for that year I checked with Bob. He had sold to them but he was being charged with not reporting twice what he had been paid. We contacted Frank, then blew the whistle. Armer was an open market but Bob did have the edge by a large margin.

I: After a highly successful career in the detective magazines under your own name, much of your later work has been pseudonymous. Why the switch?

B: Frankly, the market for detective, especially from picture studios, became very slim and when I was forced into westerns I chose to use my middle name, Todhunter, to begin with. But unlike the detective publications the westerns would not absorb enough copy under a single byline to support me. Especially when I jumped to books. The houses would take only one a year and a name was tied up solely by one house. Therefore the shift to a long series of pseudonyms under which I could work for several houses at once. They didn't like it, but the practice became common and they had to go along or do without sufficient submissions. Later, resales to paperback as they have reverted to me have been reissued under only one or two noms.

I: The private eye series starring Tony Costaine and Bert McCall, which you did for Gold Medal Books during the fifties and sixties under the pseudonym of Neil MacNeil, was unusual in that it featured two lead protagonists instead of one. I thought it was a good idea, well executed. What happened to the series?

B: I developed the idea and editor Dick Carrol was enthusiastic. Then he died and Knox Burger took over. Burger was chary of the MacNeil byline because he knew the real Neil MacNeil of Washington, D.C., and my use embarrassed him although it was an honest family name for me. Knox did his best to kill the series. However, the books were popular and went back into reprint over which Knox had no control. It dragged on until Knox felt it was safe and then did kill both the nom and the series. I had no recourse. Knox left the house soon afterward, but the series was gone.

I did two books for Fawcett on the Mafia under my wife's initials, P.D. Ballard. We already had a couple of titles out under P.D. which were highly successful. Then the Mafia market collapsed, the old-time editor, Ralph Deigh, retired, a woman came in as managing editor and my boy who had replaced Knox was fired.

I: Is there a single work you look back on as the highlight of your career?

B: The single piece of my work that gave me much satisfaction is called *Gold in California.* It's a good book. It sold over 30,000 copies, which is a huge sale for a western and I am proud of it. I like also a sort of sequel, same locale and time frame, called *The Californian.*

I: Do you prefer writing westerns over mysteries?

B: In a way, yes. Most crime fiction is phoney. Hammett made it believable because he wrote about people he knew from his experience with the Pinkertons in Baltimore and San Francisco. He avoided the mistake Chandler and his imitators made and make in going psychological, with Little Sisters sucking their thumbs. Westerns are of course exaggerated but there are many classics, and the better recent books such as Elmer Kelton's *Time It Never Rained* are as near factual and convincing as you can get. When I wrote my first western I knew practically nothing about the West and its history. Since then I have researched, learned a lot and had a lot of fun doing it.

I: For nearly fifty years you've remained popular in a most precarious profession while other careers have come and gone. To what do you attribute this staying power? Would you share some of your views on the writing business with us?

B: My views on writing as a business? That it is not much different from any other. You have to keep swinging, rolling with the punches, keep alert and attuned to the changes that take place suddenly or gradually, but always constantly. Copy written in 1930 would not sell today because it is dated and shows it glaringly.

I: In *Say Yes to Murder* you describe the library of one character as containing books "kept by one who loved reading for the joy that only reading can afford." What do you read for enjoyment?

B: What I read now is very little. I enjoy history but my eyes don't take kindly to too much strain. I try to keep abreast of the current best sellers to sample the wind and let it go at that. Very few current mysteries, only an occasional John or Ross Macdonald, and neither of those men give me much pleasure.

I: What can you tell us of your current projects? Is there any chance of a new Lennox yarn or has Bill's day come and gone?

B: Currently, I have done nothing since a major operation a year and a half ago. I have been long in regaining strength or enthusiasm. I have just begun another western . . . not a Bill Lennox who, I fear, has outlived his usefulness. We'll let him rest in his own time frame.

W.T. Ballard: A Checklist

(Including Miscellaneous Reading Notes)

This checklist concerns itself only with Ballard's crime and detective fiction. A complete listing of his novels may be found in the library reference work, *Contemporary Authors.*

The best of Ballard's novels, such as *Say Yes to Murder,* are highlighted by a crisp, clean prose style, vivid characterization, rapid plot development and a singular humaneness.

The Death Brokers is a prime example of his talent for introducing complex, fully dimensioned characters who get under your skin and make you care about them after only one page, involved in a twisty, imaginative story line. Originally packaged to cash in on the Mafia fad which infested paperback publishing during the early seventies, the book stands on its own as a superb evocation of the all-pervasive fear, treachery and moral decay that is life in the Brotherhood.

Murder Las Vegas Style is neo-*Black Mask;* a beautifully written private eye novel that Raymond Chandler would have enjoyed. This one is highly recommended.

Many of Ballard's books are set either completely or partially in Las Vegas and he always does a convincing job of portraying this fascinating, seldom utilized desert locale with its swinging casinos, its moral ambiguity and the uneasy alliance between gamblers and police.

A. The Bill Lennox Series

1. *Say Yes to Murder.* Putnam, 1942. Penguin pb, 1945. Also published as *The Demise of a Louse* (as by John Shepherd). Belmont pb, 1962.
2. *Murder Can't Stop.* McKay, 1946. Graphic pb, 1950.
3. *Dealing Out Death.* McKay, 1948. Graphic pb, 1954.
4. *Lights, Camera, Murder* (as by John Shepherd). Belmont pb, 1960.

B. The Tony Costaine/Bert McCall Series

(All as by Neil MacNeil)

1. *Death Takes an Option.* Gold Medal pb, 1958.
2. *Third on a Seesaw.* Gold Medal pb, 1959.
3. *Two Guns for Hire.* Gold Medal pb, 1959.
4. *Hot Dam.* Gold Medal pb, 1960.
5. *The Death Ride.* Gold Medal pb, 1960.
6. *Mexican Slay Ride.* Gold Medal pb, 1962.
7. *The Spy Catchers.* Gold Medal pb, 1966.

C. The Lieutenant Max Hunter Series

1. *Pretty Miss Murder.* Permabooks pb, 1962.
2. *The Seven Sisters.* Permabooks pb, 1962.
3. *Three for the Money.* Permabooks pb, 1963.

C. Non-Series Books

1. *Murder Picks the Jury* (as by Harrison Hunt). Curl, 1947.
2. *Walk in Fear.* Gold Medal pb, 1952.
3. *Murder Las Vegas Style.* Tower pb, 1967. Unibooks pb, 1976.
4. *Brothers in Blood* (as by P.D. Ballard). Gold Medal pb, 1972.
5. *The Kremlin File* (as by Nick Carter). Award pb, 1973.
6. *The Death Brokers* (as by P.D. Ballard). Gold Medal pb, 1973.

Reflection Muttered Over a Bottle of Beer (or Stout)

Each taste is symbolized
in flowers, willy-nilly:
Wolfe may have his orchids,
but Archie has his Lily!

—Joe R. Christopher

LORD PETER Views the Telly

By J. R. Christopher

Ian Carmichael played Lord Peter Wimsey in a series of faithful adaptations of the novels by Dorothy L. Sayers.

Lord Peter Wimsey—as every fan of Dorothy L. Sayers' mysteries knows—appeared in a play, *Busman's Honeymoon,* by Sayers and Muriel St. Clare Byrne, in 1936, a year before Sayers turned the playscript into her last Wimsey novel. What is generally forgotten is that Sayers first presented Wimsey in dramatic form in 1935, a year earlier, when she wrote the screenplay, or at least provided the "theme," for *The Silent Passenger*—which William K. Everson has called "a high-class 'B' [movie] . . . with a good story, some interesting character players . . . and an exciting climax of a chase after the murderer through a shunting yard at a London railroad station. Done entirely on location [Everson continues], this sequence was a real thriller, with good sound effects, excellent photography, and one really classic shock cut in the editing contributing to its effectiveness."[1] However, Everson adds that, while Wimsey did the detection, he was played mainly for humor and was not much involved in the action of the film.

Perhaps it should be added to these early dramatic versions of Wimsey that MGM made a movie from *Busman's Honeymoon* after the novel came out, retitling it in the U.S. *Haunted Honeymoon.* Everson calls it "a most enjoyable light thriller." The screenplay was not by Sayers, so perhaps this second movie provides a suitable transition to the most recent dramatic versions of Sayers' mysteries, the BBC serials presented in the United States over PBS on its "Masterpiece Theater" series. In what follows, I will not be interested in details of casting—whether Ian Carmichael fit Sayers' description of Lord Peter, for example—nor, for the most part, in details of presentation. For example, much could be made of Alistair Cooke's introductory comment to one of the presentations that the BBC, which prides itself on the accuracy of its costuming and backgrounds, decided that, despite the nominal setting of all of Sayers' stories in the thirties, all details would reflect the twenties: the earlier period was closer to social relationships depicted in the novels.[2] But I wish to discuss a perhaps more limited topic, primarily considering the changes in plot in the first four adaptations, with some discussion of the "plot"—if it can be considered such—of the four as a whole. No doubt I shall digress from time to time. (When this essay was written, *Five Red Herrings* had not yet been filmed and shown. I plan a separate, later essay on it.)

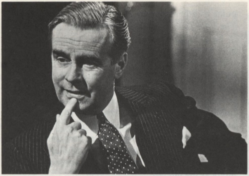
The first serial, *Clouds of Witness,* was a five-part dramatization presented in the U.S. in the fall of 1973. Why the BBC did not begin with *Whose Body?* I do not know and have not inquired, but certainly the second novel has the advantage of clearly introducing the Wimsey family. Erik Routley has written that Sayers introduced the family and then, for the most part, abandoned upper-class settings in the later novels—far more than Agatha Christie avoided them, for example.[3] I must admit that I am dubious of this; certainly in this series of dramas, a love of ornate settings seems to appear almost as counterpoint to other locations. An instance is the opening of *The Nine Tailors,* which will be discussed later.

Here, in *Clouds of Witness,* the opening is also of interest. In the novel, most of the first chapter is given over to a lengthy summary of the inquest. The drama, on the other hand, opened with a hunting scene on the moors near Riddlesdale Lodge—a shooting of birds. It certainly established the milieu quickly and visually. This was followed by a scene that evening at Riddlesdale—the billiard room setting was used effectively, giving the men something to do with their hands as they were introduced again in these expository scenes. What followed was the dramatic presentation of the factual parts of the testimony at the inquest.

I do not propose to go through this serial in detail, for I found it to be fairly close to the novel through most of the presentation. One reviewer—Lois Newman—said that the adaptation was "about one episode short to do full justice to the book, particularly at the end."[4] I must confess I did not find it quite so cramped, although the ending will have to be discussed. In general I found the adaptation interesting for its minor variations: for example, the invention of a pub at Stapley called The Duke's Head enlivened some dialogue between Lord Peter and Bunter on their way to that market town. Perhaps I should add that the under-gardener, Wilkes, who accompanies them in Chapter XI of the novel, does not appear in the dramatization.

But it is the ending of the drama which has the major differences. Several changes were made in the attack by Grimesthorpe after the trial. He tries to kill his wife instead of the Duke of Denver; he is wounded—only wounded—by his own gun instead of being killed by a taxi; and Wimsey sends Mrs. Grimesthorpe off to Italy instead of her going to her people in Cornwall. The first of these changes, Grimesthorpe's attack on his wife, seems more psychologically realistic than Sayers' original version: he has been a bully, suspicious of his wife throughout, and while he certainly has been unfriendly toward visitors, this is an aspect of his jealousy of his wife. His drunkenness in the market town suggests he did not reject all masculine companionship. Thus it is fitting that he should attack the wife who betrayed him. The subsequent wounding, while somewhat forced, is hardly the *deus ex machina* of the novel, in which the *machina* is an automobile. And of course the lack of Grimesthorpe's death meant that his wife could hardly be left in England for him to hunt down—thus an Italian house owned by the Wimsey family is invented, for her to become its housekeeper. In general, I would call the first two of these changes more realistic.

But there is one further change. The novel ends with Lord Peter, Parker, and Freddie Arbuthnot drunk in Parliament Square, celebrating the success of the case; the drama instead ends with Parker taking Lady Mary out—a romantic conclusion, not a humorous one. But I believe it is also part of the continuing plot of the series.



Ian Carmichael as the aristocratic detective

Mark Eden as Inspector Parker in *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club*

Lady Mary does not appear in the second serial, but she and Parker are married and with a baby in the third—thus this preparation is necessary. I suppose, but I do not know, that this continuity was planned by the producer, Richard Beynon, for he was the script editor of another series, and the directors and writers of the first and third serials are different.[5] On the other hand, if it was just chance which led to the substitution of romance for humor at the end of *Clouds of Witness,* it was a chance which helped tie the dramas together.

The second serial, *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club,* was shown over PBS the next spring. One reason for BBC's passing over the intervening novel, *Unnatural Death,* can be conjectured: it would be difficult to translate the visual humor of Miss Climpson's letters into a dramatic form. At any rate, the next done was *The Unpleasantness,* in four episodes.

The television version has a number of minor adjustments for the new medium. For example, the business of the members of the Bellona Club standing at attention on the balcony, during the two minutes of silence on Armistice Day, was dramatized—as, indeed, it almost had to be, for a modern generation to realize the possibilities for General Fentiman's mysterious appearance. Three instances of dramatic development appeared in the third installment which interested this viewer: first, the dialogue between Lord Peter and Parker at the first of Chapter XV—a case-summary page—was kept in the drama. But the reader of the novel hardly notices that Sayers puts no setting behind the voices, nor actions to accompany them; in the dramatic version, the two men are in Lord Peter's flat, Wimsey in a dressing gown, Parker with a cup of tea, and before they are through the action of list-making is shown on the screen. The following scene in the drama contains an interview of Dr. Penberthy, as did the end of that same chapter in the novel; but Parker is the interviewer in the book and Wimsey on TV; further, the dramatist added a phone call, obviously though not stated from Ann Dorland, in the midst of the interview. Dr. Penberthy tries to get Wimsey's attention away from the call by suggesting he get himself a drink. Another touch of specific detail, and of wealth, in this installment is the mention two scenes later that George Fentiman has become a salesman of the Silver Ghost, and has taken one of these Rolls-Royces out for a customer to see; probably there were those viewers who had already recognized the car in the brief previous scene.

In the fourth installment, there was a four-scene sequence interspersed through the drama which again showed the need to visually present the detection. When Wimsey and Parker look over Ann Dorland's studio, Bunter is there taking photographs; specifically, he takes a photograph of her one portrait of a man. (There is also in this scene an introduction of a red herring not in the novel; the detectives discuss the foxgloves in the garden, and foxglove leaves are a common source of digitalis.) In the next scene of this sequence, Bunter is shown with the resultant photographs; he is singing one of Kipling's verses, perhaps to further date the setting. The third scene in this series shows Lord Peter looking at the photographs, and the final one involves Parker and Lord Peter. It is a breakfast scene in which Parker consumes Lord Peter's meal, but the visual point of the sequence is made in what is called a "corrected" picture, in which the fairly abstract portrait is retouched into one of Dr. Penberthy.

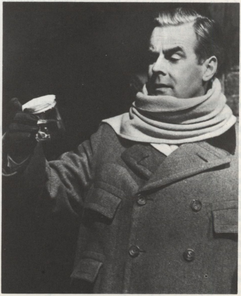
There are several other interesting scenes in this last installment—for example, not in the book is one in which George, while he is mad, meets a tramp. I also noticed that the dramatist had not provided an explanation of why Dr. Penberthy was there when George goes to sleep after his confession—perhaps he was simply considered the family doctor; also, Sayers' romantic conclusion of Robert Fentiman's interest in Ann Dorland is omitted. But I must say that the detail in the serial which surprised and pleased me most, visually, was Marjorie Phelps's studio. I suppose I had vaguely pictured it as being somewhere in Bloomsbury; Sayers does not give any details about its outer appearance, I believe. But on the screen her home turned out to be a houseboat. It is an image which suggests the lack of a fixed station in life of the artist, the lack of money to buy land in London, and the freedom—both aesthetic and perhaps sexual—of the modern artist, all at once. That the houseboat was clean and well cared for said something about Marjorie Phelps also; but the basic image is a bohemian one.

The third serial, *Murder Must Advertise,* was shown over PBS in the fall of 1974. The adaptation is done more by tightening the plot and eliminating extra characters than by any major changes. Perhaps the episode which readers will have missed most is the cricket match of Chapter XVIII, with Pym's Publicity playing the firm of Brotherhood. Allegorically enough, due to a player named Death, a copywriter in fact, Publicity overcomes Brotherhood in the modern world. But this, or any other reading of the episode, is lost in the television version.

But I should begin with the first installment. Again, there are changes at the first in order to establish the situation. The novel opens inside Pym's Publicity with a mention of the new copywriter who is coming to work. The drama opens earlier, and with a more general establishing shot. A man (the viewers do not know who he is yet) gets out of a cab and enters a building; the camera shows the listing of Pym's Publicity Ltd. The man goes up in an elevator—a lift. Then the camera shifts inside an office, and Victor Dean is shown writing a note. Before the viewer learns about the note, the iron staircase is also shown, with a man going down it and a woman saying, "Don't run." The danger of the staircase is thus established. In this drama, there is no secret about what causes Dean to go down the stairs. After the viewer has learned about the contents of the opening of the note, Dean is shown getting a phone call, picking up the atlas and other materials, and starting off. And, after a brief introduction of the typists, he is seen falling down the stairs.

I could go on with the dramatization, but this indicates how events which happened in the past in the novel are shown directly. This had been done to a lesser degree in *Clouds of Witness* and *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club* and will be done much more thoroughly in *The Nine Tailors.* And, indeed, the second strand of the plot of *Murder Must Adverise* is introduced immediately after these opening scenes in Pym's Publicity with an immediate cut from Dean's fall to Lord Peter and Charles Parker talking about cocaine smuggling. They are in Parker's apartment, with a baby crying in the background, and the conversation is enlivened with the "business" of their tossing of paper airplanes. And the following scene begins the bringing together of the two plots with "Mr. Bredon's" introduction into the advertising agency. There is one interesting visual shift in Lord Peter's appearance in this role when he appears on television. Readers remember that Sayers gave Lord Peter a monocle; in the novel he shifts to horn-rimmed glasses when he appears as Death Bredon. But in the television version he shows up with a monocle as Bredon. I think that the monocle is a humorous image in both cases. Sayers began Wimsey as something of a Wodehouse figure, so the monocle was part of the role. In the BBC serials, perhaps due to a changed image of Wimsey, influenced by Sayers' development toward seriousness—and despite the episode of paper airplane throwing which I just mentioned—the monocle is more appropriate for Bredon than Wimsey: Bredon is played as an extreme Public School type, in a checkered suit and monocle. One indication of this emphasis comes when Bredon, illustrating for Miss Meteyard a googly in cricket, hits Mr. Armstrong with his improvised ball. In the corresponding episode in Chapter III of the book, Bredon "nearly caught Mr. Armstrong on the side of the head"; in addition to the fact of missing him in the book, Bredon's whole demonstration is recounted in one sentence of summary narrative, with Armstrong's part of it coming in a parenthesis. The touch of slapstick is thus emphasized in the drama.

In the second installment, which includes the Harlequin's leap of Death Bredon—one of the visual highlights of the filmed version—the changes are again of several types. One scene, in which Bredon shows up at Pym's Publicity with a yoyo, is part of the playing of Bredon as a Public School ass.[6] A second change, in which Bredon suggests to Copley that the headline on the suggestive Nutrax ad be rewritten, is simply the dramatist's attempt to unify the TV version by keeping the major characters in the action when possible. The same impulse leads in the third episode to the dropping of Sergeant Lumley and Police Constable Eagles from the chase after the journalist Hector Puncheon and the criminal later learned to be Horace Mountjoy; instead, Parker and Wimsey are directly called to the Natural History Museum by Puncheon. A third type of change in the second installment is the direct introduction of a scene not in the book at all: in this case, one in which Major Milligan is threatened by a bald man



Ian Carmichael in one of his many portrayals of Wimsey when the drug supplies do not show up. In the book, Dian de Momerie mentions that a woman—Babs Woodley—scratched Milligan's face; but this dramatic scene perhaps makes for a stronger threat of violence while visually showing the failure of the distribution system, which is important to the plot.

In the third installment, most of the changes are simplifications, as in the dropping of Lumley and Eagles, already mentioned. For example, the letter which Lord Peter sends Dian de Momerie is shown, and the decision to crash the Duchess of Denver's party is made before Dian and Todd Milligan start driving. (Of course, the reader of the novel learns later that de Momerie had received the letter and knew where she wanted to go when starting out to crash a party; but in drama, when the viewer cannot pause to rethink relationships because he will miss the next few lines of dialogue, this type of preparation is superior to the usual mystery-plot surprises over minor matters.)

Two other minor changes appear in the party scene. First, Lord Peter's sister, Lady Mary—Charles Parker's wife by the time of this drama—is introduced into the party; this gives Lord Peter someone to confide to, and at the end of the sequence he mentions to her the letter he sent to de Momerie, thus clarifying for the viewer the significance of the letter seen earlier. (In the novel, one cannot help wondering if Sayers did not introduce the mention of the letter in Chapter XV, after the party crashing four chapters earlier, just to keep some critic from complaining that the plot depended on luck, rather than Aristotelian cause and effect.)

The other interesting variation from the book is a brief cut to the library, when Wimsey is talking to Milligan and de Momerie there, to the Duchess of Denver, who asks the butler whether Lord Peter has gotten rid of the gate-crashers, as she asked him to do. The butler replies that Lord Peter has taken them to the library and ordered drinks for them. This brief touch of humor is a way of breaking up the discussion scene, of course; I request the reader keep it in mind when I complain about the fourth installment of the fourth serial, *The Nine Tailors.*

Other simplifications in this third installment of *Murder Must Advertise* involve such things as the dropping of the two lorry drivers from the White Swan scene at which Puncheon receives the cocaine; also he goes directly to Scotland Yard with it, rather than going to his editor and his editor calling in the Yard. Later, after Puncheon phones from the Natural History Museum, another simplification is the dropping of Dr. Garfield. But this is enough about the third installment; in the fourth, as has been said, the major revision is the elimination of the cricket playing. This, so far as the plot is concerned, does not alter many emphases: Bredon can be "arrested" at Pym's as well as at the cricket field. The only evidence the omission disturbs is that of Tallboy's athletic prowess, which is part of the preparation for his being Dean's murderer. But this evidence is more confirmatory than necessary, and perhaps a cricket match is slower in action than a television drama allows.

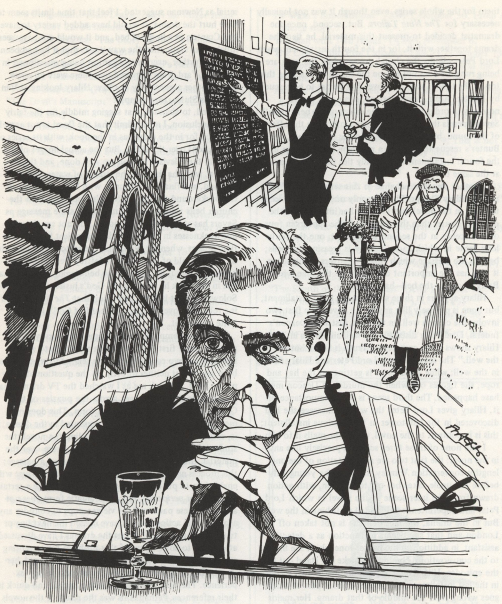
The other important changes in this fourth installment are three brief scenes in which the criminals are introduced: two of these are conversation between Cummings and Major Milligan; the third is an attempt to run down Lord Peter with a car disguised as a taxicab. This latter episode was probably suggested to the dramatist by Milligan being run down by a lorry—a truck—in the novel. At any rate, it provides a dramatic image of the danger Lord Peter is in which the book does not have.

This discussion of the variations in the two versions of *Murder Must Advertise* has been fairly detailed. I will try for more of an overview in dealing with the final serial. Both approaches are valuable: the first, for indicating the technique of the drama; the second, for seeing the general effect. And, further, I suspect it would be tedious for me to try to go through both works in detail.

But, before I consider *The Nine Tailors,* perhaps I should continue with the topic I raised about other works before: that is, why certain novels were not filmed. It is obvious that the BBC decided not to attempt the Wimsey and Harriet Vane meeting, courtship, and marriage, told by Sayers in a sequence of four novels beginning after *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club.*[7]

The Nine Tailors, the fourth of Dorothy L. Sayers novels adapted by BBC television, was shown over PBS in the spring of 1975. The major difference between the book and the drama, outside of the severe condensing necessary to fit the book into four television episodes, was in the opening installment. Again, the drama went back in time to present the original situation for the audience. The novel opens with a car accident, and Wimsey thus being introduced to Fenchurch St. Paul; there he learns of the theft of Mrs. Wilbraham's jewels, which had taken place before World War I. But in the dramatic version, the first installment *ends* with the car crash. It shows the wedding party before the war, with Jeffrey Deacon in charge; and, in order to bring the detective in early, has a younger, moustached Lord Peter attending in place of his brother, who had been laid up by a hunting accident. The theft follows the events in the book, with the addition of Lord Peter auto-chasing Cranton, who was believed to have the jewels.

The middle part of this installment involves cuts back and forth between Lord Peter and Bunter in the trenches in France and Deacon escaping from prison. Deacon's trip to France, after his murder of the soldier and taking of his identity, has to be handled differently in the drama, since his getting drunk and not knowing when he is put on the troop-ship is hardly dramatically effective. In the television version, he is asked for his papers by an officer, found to be on the last day of leave, and hustled off to make his connection—by the officer. The setting of this meeting with the officer, a pub, with a number of soldiers singing "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary," fitted into the war background very effectively.



An artist's conception of Ian Carmichael in the role of Lord Peter Wimsey. The noted British actor was not suited to the part physically, but his portrayal was much lauded in every other way. Several multi-part teleplays were produced by the BBC and were shown to American audiences on PBS' *Masterpiece Theatre*.

I have already mentioned Wimsey and Bunter in the trenches. The drama here picks up background on Wimsey from the earlier novels. We have a brief scene in which Wimsey is telling Bunter about the case and the lack of the recovery of the jewels; then, just after Bunter has left the trench headquarters, a shell hits it, and Bunter rushes back to dig Lord Peter out. The latter part of this first episode involves Bunter's application to become Lord Peter's gentleman, both of them shown with their wounds; but I would like to concentrate on this rescue. Two things may be said about it. First, and most generally, it visually sets up the emotional relationship between them for the whole series, even though it was not logically necessary for *The Nine Tailors*. But, second, once the dramatist decided to present this material, he tied the drama together with it, for in the fourth installment when Lord Peter climbs the church tower while the bells are being rung, he does not escape the sound by reaching the top of the tower, as in the novel, but he has to be rescued by Bunter. Again, some sort of rescue was almost a necessity in order to present the effect of the bells visually; Sayers spends three long paragraphs indicating the effect of the sound, but the drama has to use images, not words. Bunter's rescue thus solves a problem of technique in the fourth installment and visually ties the series together at the same time.

Another structural change in this serial involves the role of Hilary Thorpe. She is in only one additional scene to those in the novel, but I believe her influence on the drama is greater than that suggests.[8] She appears in four or five scenes in the second installment, one the fairly long scene in which Jack Godfrey is greasing the bells; besides the message which Hilary discovers in this scene, it also has the important discussion of the men which Batty Thomas–the bell–has killed.

Hilary appears in three scenes in the third installment, but none is precisely like any in the novel. The first two involve the church well: in the first, just after Deacon's funeral, Lord Peter discovers the well and looks in, and Hilary shows up to comment, "Truth is at the bottom of the well." The second shows Lord Peter and Hilary fishing in the well; while Lord Peter is getting up the hat and rope, she figures out when the murder of Deacon must have happened. The third scene is of less importance: in it, Hilary gives Lord Peter the written message she had discovered in the bell-tower in the previous installment; this is in contrast to the novel, where she mails it to him.

I said none of these three scenes is precisely like any in the novel: the first two are an adaptation of the one lengthy conversation Wimsey has with the young lady before her uncle takes her off to London, with action drawn from the later scene in the novel in which Lord Peter and Superintendent Blundell go fishing in the well. But in the drama, the fact that she is not taken off to London and that she begins to function as a detective assistant, in addition to the lighter tone which she brings to the conversations, combine to make her stand out in the episodes. Hilary only appears in one or two scenes in the last installment, and I believe this is part of what goes wrong with the middle of that drama. Her major scene comes at the first of the episode, when she rejects the emeralds; and then she vanishes.[9]

But the middle of this final episode sags for a reason beyond the absence of Hilary Thorpe. The central interrogation scene at Scotland Yard was the longest, most static scene in the serial. It is the combination of two scenes in the novel: first, the questioning of Cranton in an infirmary, and second, the tricking of the Thoday brothers at Scotland Yard. Here, rather than with the first serial as Newman suggested, I feel that time limits seem to have hurt the drama: it would have added variety to have had Cranton in a hospital bed, and it would not have been much more static than the way it was shot if he had been in bed. Further, even with Cranton being questioned in Scotland Yard, I am surprised that there were no quick cuts to other scenes. Why not have Hilary looking at Van Leyden's Sluice, for example?

Indeed, to abandon that sagging middle for the fairly firm conclusion, I must admit that the flood is not as well prepared for in the drama as in the book, with its series of meditations over the sluice. But the actual images of the flood in the televised version are well done, and the conclusion, with the shots of the stretch of water, and then the land, and finally the church, with Wimsey's voice in the background reading of Noah's flood and then the church bells ringing, carries much the same message as Sayers has at the end of the novel. I do not say there are not weaknesses in the televised version: just before these final images, when Mr. Venables, the rector of Fenchurch St. Paul, is told of the means of Jeffrey Deacon's death, he worries about his pride in the bell-ringing in the drama, but in the book he pronounced God's justice. If Sara Lee Soloway is right in her dissertation that *The Nine Tailors* is a religious novel,[10] then the motif of God's justice is quite important.

With that comment I have finished my survey of the plots of these first four television serials. But I would like to draw two conclusions, both related to what I have been saying but neither directly on the question of technique. First, it struck me as I watched the TV dramas that it was quite difficult to get across the puzzles of the Golden Age mysteries in a visual form. This does not mean that all the plot cannot be presented in the drama; it is, rather, a matter of tempo. In reading the novel, the student (in the etymological sense) can pause over the material, think about it, and perhaps re-read a passage; this process need not be a long one–just a brief pause will enable him to pin down a character or appreciate a certain discovery or *peripeteia*. But the dramatic form does not allow for these pauses: if the viewer stops to consider any aspect of the action, he will have missed the next line or two of dialogue. I realize that the dramas I have discussed attempted to solve some of this problem by presenting events which had occurred before Sayers opened her novels. But this did not solve the problem in my experience. The dramas were still very compact and quick in their references. Perhaps this was the result of the novels being condensed into shorter serials; at any rate, I found the dramas more enjoyable the second time I watched them. I do not draw the conclusion that this indicates puzzle mysteries cannot be dramatized, only that the result will be less of a mass-media entertainment than the various private eye shows on commercial networks in the United States, simply because the puzzles will take greater concentration from the audience. The short runs of *Banacek* and *Ellery Queen* in the 1970's, both puzzleplotted mystery series on commercial stations, support this view.

One of my colleagues—William B. Martin—told me that he thought the loss of emphasis on plot was due to the filming technique. The camera dwelt so lovingly (if a personification is permissible) on the clothing and other details of the earlier period—in many ways a genteel existence now vanished from England and never widely known in the United States—that the viewer was led to enjoy the images rather than attend to the plot. Of course, there need be no contradiction here: both the tempo and the visual technique could combine to distract the viewer's attention from the plot.[11]

Second, I conclude that there is an interesting type of unity in the four serials presented, a unity based on milieu. Two of them—*The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club* and *The Nine Tailors*—are directly tied to World War I through George Fentiman's nervous problems in the first and Wimsey's near-death in the second. *Murder Must Advertise* follows the war historically with its depiction of an extreme group among the Bright Young Things, the equivalent of the American flappers and their boyfriends. Only *Clouds of Witness* is set in that timeless milieu of the puzzle mystery, the country house, and this is complicated by Lady Mary's first fiance being a Marxist. Other details—Lady Mary's rebelliousness, Lord Peter's visit to the Soviet Club, and his return from America in a rather primitive aircraft—also tie the work to the period. Besides, *Clouds of Witness* introduces the Wimsey family, and so is an appropriate opening serial. I do not, of course, claim that this unity of time which I find in the dramas is not inherent in Sayers' original novels; but the selection of these four novels for dramatization emphasizes this side of her writing.

All of this, then, suggests the television adaptations of these four Lord Peter novels are generally successful in capturing their complexity of plot for the attentive viewer, even when it has to be done with changes for a different art form; in creating images which illuminate the novels; and in sustaining more than unity of hero among the serials—in short, these adaptations retain in their visual way much of the artistry of Dorothy L. Sayers.

Notes

1. William K. Everson, *The Detective in Film* (Secaucus, N.J.: The Citadel Press, 1972), p. 193. The discussion of both Wimsey films is on pp. 192-93. Charles Shibuk, in "Cinemania," *The Armchair Detective*, 2:2 (Jan. 1969), 112, says that Sayers wrote the screenplay; but in *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection*, ed. Chris Steinbrunner and Otto Penzler—Charles Shibuk is listed as a Senior Editor—(New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976), p. 424, a note says, "Miss Sayers provided the 'theme' for this film under a 1934 agreement with the film company."
2. Unfortunately, I did not note in which introduction Cooke made the point; I am relying on my memory here (the other points made in this paper come from notes made during or just after the individual programs—there may be inaccuracies, although I hope not, but they do not come from relying on my memories of the shows).
3. Erik Routley, *The Puritan Pleasure of the Detective Story: A Personal Monograph* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1972), p. 141.
4. Lois Newman, "Media Reviews," *Fantasiae*, 1:8 (Nov. 1973), 6.
5. I received various program notes from KERA, the educational TV station in Dallas, Texas. Those for *Clouds of Witness* identify the producer as Richard Beynon, and indicate he was the script editor for the "Softly, Softly" series; the director as Hugh David; and the writer as Anthony Steven. The program notes for *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club* give no facts about the producer, director, or writer. Those for *Murder Must Advertise* list the producer as Richard Beynon, the director as Rodney Bennett, and the writer as Bill Craig. The notes for *The Nine Tailors* do not mention the writer, but the producer again is Richard Beynon and the director this time is Raymond Menmuir. (I wish to thank Michael J. Levin, Coordinator of School Services in 1974, and Steve Martin, both of the KERA staff, for sending me this information.)
6. The yoyo was probably suggested to the dramatist by the yoyoing criminal in the middle of Chapter XVII.
7. Two letters were published in *The Armchair Detective* after *The Nine Tailors* had been shown which indicated that the BBC was planning to film the four novels of the Wimsey-Vane courtship, but obviously the plans, whatever had been worked out, have been delayed.
8. Perhaps her effect on the drama is simply due to the traditional stage and movie "fact" that children automatically take the attention away from the adults in a scene.
9. My notes for this installment indicate that Hilary Thorpe appears only in the second scene, but I suspect that she is also shown in the church during the flood—so I use the phrase "one or two" about her appearance(s). My point is still that she does not appear in the center of the installment.
10. Sara Lee Soloway, *Dorothy Sayers: Novelist* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1975 [1971 dissertation]), pp. 203-214. (I wish to thank the Research Committee of Tarleton State University for a grant in 1974-75, part of which went for the purchase of this dissertation.) This religious reading of the novel has recently been independently rediscovered: see John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 120-25.
11. I wish to thank Dr. Martin and Mr. Gene Atkinson for reading this paper and offering several suggestions for improvements, and Mr. Harvey Gover, of the Tarleton State University Library staff, for finding some specific information for the paper.

MOVING?
Don't make it
a mystery to us.

To avoid missing an issue
of TAD, send us your
change of address
at least 4 weeks before
you move.

Please send your old
TAD address label
and your new address.

Mail your address change
to

TAD
129 West 56th Street
New York, N.Y. 10019

The Many RISES and FALLS of J. Rufus Wallingford

By Albert Borowitz

Many years ago, a young man named Wallingford encountered a disreputable acquaintance on a street corner of a small inland town. It was Doctor Quagg offering his quack medicine Sciatacata to the local crowd as a cure for sciatica and all the other ills to which the flesh is heir. Wallingford conceived and carried out a scheme to promote the medicine on a grand scale through a new company, The Quagg Peerless Sciatacata Co., whose shares he had no difficulty selling to rich friends he had acquired in the town. The Board of Directors consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Wallingford, Doctor Quagg and two "outside" directors, the night clerk and head dining room girl at the hotel where Wallingford was staying. Wallingford issued himself promoter's stock and invested most of the company's funds in a massive advertising campaign. Billboards, streetcar signs and newspapers ordered the public to LAUGH AT THAT WOOZY FEELING, but beneath that command was a blank space for the name of the wondrous product to be supplied. Before the great name of Sciatacata was added, its inventor Doctor Quagg disgraced the new investors by getting publicly drunk and (still worse) contracting sciatica. The company shareholders panicked and, in the face of Wallingford's feigned protests, sold out for a pittance to a smooth Boston tycoon who in reality was Wallingford's accomplice, "Blackie" Daw. Wallingford then filled the blanks on the company's signs with the name of a new brand of ginger ale and was well on his way to a fortune. He even began to dream of selling ginger ale stock to his former Sciatacata associates.

The Sciatacata deal was one of the inventive business campaigns dating from the vigorous youth of J. Rufus ("Get-Rich-Quick") Wallingford, the fictional company-promoter and swindler created by Ohioan George Randolph Chester (1869-1924). The professional promise shown by Wallingford in this early scheme was amply fulfilled in his mature years in the Universal Covered Carpet Tack Company fraud and the Battlesburg real estate and traction boom, which are the subject of George M. Cohan's 1910 play based on the Chester stories. Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford and his nickname have become a part of the folklore and popular vocabulary of America. He is our nation's most famous entry in the legion of comic confidence men which includes Plautus' Pseudolus, Shakespeare's Autolycus and Thackeray's newly famous Barry Lyndon. The turn-of-the-century era in which Wallingford flourished was the Golden Age of American Commerce, when there was no SEC to slow you down while you were getting rich quick and no IRS to keep you from staying rich long.

Wallingford's creator, George Randolph Chester, left home at an early age and acquired by travel and varied work first-hand knowledge of the urban scenes and business settings described in his stories. He first supported himself by odd jobs as millhand, plumber, paper hanger, clerk, cook, waiter and pen-and-ink artist. He later worked on the *Detroit News* and served as Sunday editor of the

Cincinnati Inquirer. He had great success as a syndicate and magazine writer, and produced and directed motion pictures (including one picture entitled *The Son of Wallingford*!).

Chester was particularly drawn to the business story. In his book, *The Art of Writing,* published in Cincinnati in 1910, he wrote:

> The same thrill which used to characterize stories of adventure, the same intensity, the same struggle to win now appears just as effectively and picturesquely in depicting the commercial and political battles of this financial age.

Chester added that it was at the crossing of the line "between business trickery and business cleverness" that "the most dramatic business stories will be found." It was at this dramatic crossing that Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford spent his fictional business career, always maintaining that he never "stepped outside the law" but reminded by his associate Blackie Daw that he "leaned way over the fence." The Wallingford stories originally appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* and later were published in book form beginning in 1908.

As is true of many great promoters, Wallingford's most important product was himself. He sold a calculated image of power, wealth, credit and success. He was a big man and the very breadth of his shirtfront, adorned (in good times) by a large diamond scarf pin, inspired confidence. He attracted investors by extravagant dinners in opulent settings, by rides in luxurious cars which he did not own, by cigars which people figured must cost at least three for a dollar, and by a false heartiness and condescending democracy. In fact, Wallingford was usually broke and never paid cash if he could help it. "I never give up cash," he often stated dogmatically, for dollars, to Wallingford, were "American passports."

In addition to Wallingford's preference for using other people's money, his promoter's creed was based on certain principles to which he steadfastly adhered. He shunned the offering of nonexistent gold-mines and properties in exotic distant climes (projects in which his friend Daw specialized) and favored promotions of everyday objects which would appeal to the American passion for the practical. In support of his Universal Covered Carpet Tack promotion he told Blackie:

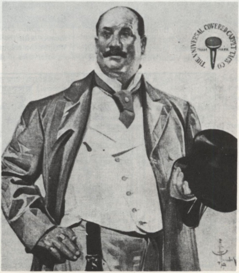
> You can get anybody to buy stock when you make them print it themselves, if you'll only bait up with some little staple article that people use and throw away every day, like ice cream pails, or corks, or cigar bands or carpet tacks.

Wallingford, in planning his misdeeds, put aside the blatantly criminal methods which were continually landing Blackie in jail. Wallingford relied on the abuse of corporate and business procedures: organization of new companies and the issuance and rapid unloading of promoter's shares; the manipulation of patents; and the use of ambiguous advertising. Furthermore, the great promoter found that the "soft sell" was better than high-pressure tactics as a means to defraud the unsuspecting victim, or as Chester puts it more politely, "to rescue and put carefully hoarded money back into rapid circulation." Finally, Wallingford applied the keen insight that potential investors may more willingly part with their money if they can be made to believe that the success of the bonanza being offered to them is partly dependent on their own business acumen, a lesson not lost on the inventors of some of the "pyramid" franchise promotions of our own day. The disciplined consistency of Wallingford's methods won him a stirring encomium from one of his intended victims: ". . . you're not an individual criminal at all. You're only the logical development of the American tendency to 'get there' no matter how."

A redeeming trait of Wallingford and Blackie Daw is that they share with their victims an unbounded optimism and a belief in easy money. Although ferocious as biters, Wallingford and Daw are often bitten. In Chester's story, the proceeds of the Universal Covered Carpet Tack Company promotion are lost by Wallingford to a bucket-shop broker and Daw, at the same time, is wiped out by a crooked card player. Chester's stories are written with sympathy for his "American business buccaneers" as well as for the business community in which they search for their prey. It is this wide community to which Chester pays his tribute in the dedication to *Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford* (1908):

> To the live businessmen of America—those who have been "stung" and those who have yet to undergo that painful experience—this little tale is sympathetically dedicated.

In light of the great financial frauds of the past decade, it appears that Chester's dedication still remains apt.


THE UNIVERSAL COVERED CARPET TACK CO.
TRADE MARK

THE PAPERBACK REVOLUTION

By Charles Shibuk

This quarter's large and varied selection of contemporary material is highlighted by the first paperback edition of a major history of the genre.

GEORGE C. CHESBRO

Dr. Robert Frederickson is a professor of criminology, and a private eye who narrates his own cases. He's also a master of karate and, believe it or not, a dwarf. *Shadow of a Broken Man* (1977) (Signet) is an unusually promising first novel that starts as a hard-boiled detective story but turns into science fiction at the 2/3 mark.

ROBERT L. DUNCAN

A famous writer travels to Japan in order to learn the exact conditions of his son's demise. His quest leads to a plot involving possible nuclear holocaust in *The February Plan* (1967) (Ballantine) which was originally published under the pseudonym of James Hall Roberts. Very long and straightforward; low-key and thoughtful.

DICK FRANCIS

A robbery with the murder of his cousin's wife and a second robbery with arson seem to have a common denominator that sends painter Charles Todd on a journey to Australia and New Zealand. Stark, tense, and always compelling is *In the Frame* (1976) (Pocket Books). Although there is much art and little racing, this novel is another winner from a dependable and very high-caliber performer.

Bonecrack (1971) and *Smokescreen* (1972) have just been reissued by the same publisher, and both are worthy of your attention.

PETER LOVESEY

A young lady takes a midnight bathe to relieve the tedium of academic work and is disturbed by three men in a boat–plus a dead body that betrays signs of violence–in *Swing, Swing Together* (1976) (Penguin). This Victorian detective novel is probably Lovesey's most readable and entertaining work, but doesn't represent a triumph of plot, puzzle, or detection.

JOHN D. MacDONALD

The best-selling blockbuster *Condominium* (1977) (Fawcett) is hardly crime fiction, but it does generate suspense in its latter portions. Unfortunately, it suffers from an excess of verbiage, characters, lists, technical jargon, and apocalyptic visions–to say nothing about awkward plotting. Yet MacDonald's narrative drive is such that it's really pretty difficult to put this book down before completing it.

GREGORY MCDONALD

Fletch's Fortune (Avon, 1978) is illegal and has not been mentioned to the IRS. Therefore, he is blackmailed into accepting an assignment to bug the private conversations of participants in a journalistic convention–which is almost preempted by the murder of its president. Unsubstantial plotting is more than offset by recourse to the fun-and-games department.

NGAIO MARSH

Two publishers have reprinted three novels by this veteran author who continues to produce meritorious work. *A Man Lay Dead* (1934) (Jove) marks Roderick Alleyn's debut in a house party murder problem. *When in Rome* (1971) (Berkley) is set further afield as Alleyn's holiday is disrupted by violence. *Black as He's Painted* (1974) (Jove) finds Alleyn assigned to protect the life of an old school friend who is now president of an African nation.

LAWRENCE MEYER

A Capitol Crime (1977) (Avon) commences with the murder of a famous Washington columnist, and continues as a reporter tries to discover the underlying circumstances. His investigation spirals into possibilities of national corruption in this dynamic and impressive study of political malfeasance on the highest level that climaxes during the Democratic National Convention.

JAMES MITCHELL

The complex and often dirty world of spying is neatly limned in *Smear Job* (1975) (Berkley), wherein reluctant exagent David Callan is "persuaded" to travel to Sicily in order to steal a paperback copy of *Das Kapital* and cheat a man out of a large sum of money in a card game. The pay is good, and the mission does not seem too difficult or dangerous, but little does Callan realize that this is only the beginning.

MARCIA MULLER

The oddly titled *Edwin of the Iron Shoes* (1977) (Penguin) concerns the efforts of private eye Sharon McCone to investigate and solve two murders set in San Francisco among a group of minor antique dealers. This first novel is an agreeable and pleasant work, but its use of the least-likely suspect is not augmented by any fair-play detection.

H. DOUGLAS THOMSON

Masters of Mystery (1931) (Dover) is the first full-length study (in English) of the history and aesthetics of the detective story. Most of this work, written with wit and a sense of style, is devoted to British authors and contains much material that cannot be found in either Haycraft or Symons. *Masters of Mystery* is a major effort that really deserves a more thoughtful review at much greater length and is a "must" for serious students of the form.

E.F. Bleiler has provided a cogent introduction and corrected some of the factual errors, but take warning: too many mystery stories, classic and otherwise, have had their hidden secrets flagrantly exposed.

GOD SAVE IAN FLEMING

A Long Over-due Thank You to a Master Storyteller

By Michael Avallone

In 1956, long before Presidents and *Playboy Magazine* and then the World discovered him, a small band of us Reader-Writers *found* James Bond. We delighted in his *"comma of hair,"* the ultra-sophisticated weapons and the literally nostalgic Fu Manchu-Super Sleuth aspects of all the adventures in the Espionage Universe. All writers are children of some kind, fascinated and beguiled by the wonders of other countries, life styles and characters larger-than-us. So—decidedly under the influence, I planted my series private eye figure *Ed Noon* smack into the center of two novels—*The Alarming Clock* and *The Living Bomb*—both of which are nothing less than hybrids, for they are *Hardboiled Plus Spy,* and as such, *at the time,* completely alien to the field.

I didn't sell either of those books for the succeeding five years—that is, until Mr. Ian Fleming made his mark of 007 on the consciousness of the publishing, editing and $$$$$$ world out there. Both of my novels ultimately sold, were reprinted, book-bonused, condensed and have stayed in print in some form or other ever since. Later, pretense was no longer necessary and Ed Noon became a U.S. President's unofficial favorite spy in a dozen other casebooks. But that is all yesterday's martinis. I simply wish to say *Thanks, Ian,* in print, after all this time, officially.

And before I go, one point more.

The improper critical assessment of Ian Fleming-as-author has always underlined the failure of some "serious" critics everywhere, to understand Fleming's obvious grasp of a very simple notion: *a spy novel is a lark and an entertainment.* Escapist literature in the purest, non-complex sense.

As for me, I shall remember *Goldfinger, Doctor No* and *From Russia With Love* far longer than the deadly grim and solemn works of half a dozen more highly rated authors of the same English school. And not because they were movies, either.

The movies weren't really as good as the books.

They couldn't be. 007 would have taxed the skill of a Fritz Lang.

James Bond *lives* on the pages of Fleming novels; the handsome hipsters of the Broccoli-Saltzman epics are all fun-and-games. Charming, clever, resourceful, yes. Connery, Lazenby and Roger Moore are sheerly cinematic representations.

But never the cold, highly expert, no-nonsense superhero who only seems to be of flesh-and-blood on imagination's pages. Which is what writing, Storytelling, is really all about.

Fleming knew.

The final verdict has been his fame and long life in print.

"Good evening, Double O Seven."
James Bond will never say goodbye to M.
Or to the reading generations of the future, either.

A CATALOGUE OF CRIME

By Jacques Barzun and
Wendell Hertig Taylor

S78 Aird, Catherine (pseud. of Kinn Hamilton McIntosh)
Parting Breath
CCD 1978

For a dozen years readers who enjoy the more conventional kind of British detection have welcomed the biennial appearance of the competent Inspector Sloan as presented by Miss Aird, the talented daughter of a physician. Each tale has had at least one clever idea: see for example in the relatively weak *Slight Mourning* (1976) a modus operandi that makes it unnecessary for the murderer to care which of two people gets the poison. In the present book the author has produced anything but a slight work. She supplies a near-surfeit of incident, all neatly related to a complex plot involving a couple of murders at a provincial university. The sit-in by the Students' Direct Action Committee turns into a lock-in that provides alibis for a host of potential suspects. Ecology projects, government-supported research on defoliants, and the supposed finding of a letter naming Jane Austen's long-sought lover attest to the author's versatility. The first victim whispers "Twenty-six minutes" with his parting breath, a reference the astute reader may tumble to more quickly than does Inspector Sloan.

S79 Brock, Alan
The Browns of the Yard
Harrap 1952

In a nice mingling of a little fact and much fiction the author presents the fortunes of four generations of Browns serving in the police force, C.I.D. The story begins with a close approximation of the Constance Kent case (1860), in which Inspector William Brown is discredited even more thoroughly than was the actual Inspector Whicher. The author then embarks on a tale that carries us via the exploits of son John (who comes to grief) into those of grandson William whose investigation of the Merstham Tunnel murder brings him to the trail of the mysterious "Mrs. Monitor," but he too suffers much in the line of duty. Finally great-grandson Jack, by means of a clue dating back to the Constance Kent case, is able to bring that crime and several others home to the perpetrators. All in all, a tidy and imaginative book.

S80 Bruce, Leo (pseud. of Rupert Croft-Cooke)
Neck & Neck
Ian Henry 1976/ orig. 1951

S81 *Cold Blood*
Ian Henry 1976/orig. 1952

Why some original and highly gifted tale-spinners who have a following in remains a mystery. Regardless of nationality, discriminating readers of crime fiction should know the work of Leo Bruce. It comes in two series, the earlier using Sgt. Beef as investigator, the later the schoolmaster Carolus Deene. (See COC, where *Cold Blood* is misclassified and additional titles are listed.)

Sgt. Beef is undoubtedly the first incarnation of Joyce Porter's Dover, whether or not Miss P. consciously modeled her man on the large, ungainly, blunt and underbred sergeant. Beef, it must be added, is not made disgusting or despicable. Uncouthness is enough, and it has a purpose, which is to show how intelligence cuts through conventions. In the two cases here reissued by a small reprint house, Beef shines and so does his creator. There is excellent plotting, wit, dramatic situations, plausibility and surprise. The ploy to make murder safe in *Neck and Neck* is foreseen by the acute reader, but its details are so well scattered that guessing only enhances suspense. In *Cold Blood* the overturn of reasonable expectation is likewise original—both tales are over a quarter-century old and yet make fresh reading. They mark moreover the beginning of "good Beef"; three previous ones in which he throws his weight about are less assured and satisfactory.

S82 Ford, Leslie
Trial by Ambush
Scribner 1962

One associates this author with genteel settings in which crimes do indeed take place, but in the spirit of agitated make-believe rather than genuine horror. Late in her career L.F. decided to change, not her setting, but its atmosphere. *Trial by Ambush* is a story of rape in the neighborhood of Baltimore. The victim is young, well-born, and beautiful, but also a woman of strong feelings. The main event, the murder threats, the damning but false clues, the harrowing trial and its motives, and generally the behavior of all concerned, police included, are contrived with great force and skill. It all rings true. Unfortunately the effect of so much novelistic power is compromised by two narrative faults—a colloquial prose so chopped up and allusive that it is often obscure, and an excess of unspoken thoughts in italics. Both turn this otherwise fine tale into a piece of hard reading: try it just the same.

S83 Franke, David
The Torture Doctor
Hawthorn 1975

Connoisseurs of true crime are not the brutes that they are often thought to be. They do not relish the bashing or poisoning disclosed at the trial, though once in a while they do sympathize with the accused. In any case it is the tangle of motives and events and the uncertainty of mute or spoken evidence that sustain interest in what, considered too abstractly, can be dismissed as a sordid affair.

Even so, some crimes are so repellent that the connoisseur may confine himself to one account, preferably in bare outline. Such a case is that of H.H. Holmes, whose only conceivable excuse for his abominable acts is that his real name was Herman W. Mudgett. He flourished as a criminal in the mid-1890's, murdering and wreaking cruelty on an indefinitely large number of persons, of whom three were young children. Some of his other actions, though bloodless, were equally cynical and the whole saga can only be called loathsome. What Mr. Franke has done to make it, not attractive certainly, but tolerable, is to turn the facts into a piece of detection, using newspaper and other contemporary reports to show how the wretch was finally tracked down. The pursuit and the telling of it are equally brilliant feats.

S84 Queen, Ellery (ed.)
Japanese Golden Dozen
Tuttle 1978

The editor's introduction to this anthology provides rather more information about the emergence of detective fiction in Japan than was available in Katsua Jinka's brief article in TAD (February 1976). Only within the last half-century have the Japanese equivalents of the Western mystery tale appeared with the "pure puzzler," science in detection, the police procedural and emphasis on political and social evil, following the sequence already well known to us. The Japanese talent for imitation comes at once to mind but it would be a mistake to see it as a sole cause. In the same period as that of the rise of detective fiction, Japan has dramatically transformed its technology from a producer of shoddy wares into a highly respected and competitive innovator in such diverse fields as electronics, optics, and transportation.

To come to the tales selected by Mr. Dannay for this attractive volume, he must be congratulated for having achieved great variety and for having largely avoided the sensational or the purely picturesque. There is good detection here and there (notably in Eitaro Ishizawa's "Too Much About Too Many" and Seicho Matsumoto's "The Cooperative Defendant"), while in Yoh Sano's "No Proof" we enjoy a clever combination of police procedure with a remarkably ingenious plot. There are bits of rather low-keyed sex, a minimum of rough stuff, and practically no humor. Most of the stories derive additional interest from the palatable, not over-concentrated Japanese broth in which the plots swim. The prevalence of noodle-shops and mahjong parlors, as well as the high incidence of suicide (involved in about half the tales) reminds the reader that he is away from home, while the quite competent and down-to-earth translation bridges the culture-gap admirably. No translator's name is given, which seems a pity—nor are the tales given dates.

S85 Tack, Alfred
Interviewing's Killing
Jenkins n.d. 1947

Investigators of crime in fiction have been of nearly every sort, from timid maiden ladies to incurable drunkards, and from ex-pugilists to Siamese cats. The idea is to make genius stand out from a background of improbability. Yet the species Business Man has not been much drawn upon. One of the earliest to tap that profession was the English industrialist Alfred Tack, whose first efforts were primitive in the extreme. But he improved steadily and has done enjoyable tales with one-shot hero-executives and also with a series character, John Harley, Sales Manager of Hewden Patents, Ltd. The present story comes after *Selling's Murder* and *The Prospect's Dead* and tells a good deal about competition and internal politics as integral parts of a murder story. Harley's fiancee helps in the investigation, which is of the ask-questions-and-put-together-answers variety, rather than ratiocination from clues. Another series, begun with *P.A. to Murder* (1966), features Neville Clifford, Personal Assistant to a tycoon and adept at figuring in every sense. Tack's works are not of transcendent merit, but they are lively, plausible, and they open up a different world from the usual.

S86 Thomson, June
A Question of Identity
CCD 1977

This lady, who made an auspicious beginning with *Not One of Us* (1971) despite some criticism of its unconventional ending, has progressed in charm and technique since her introduction of the sensitive yet pertinacious Inspector Rudd. Here Rudd faces the problem of identifying a corpse two years dead, unearthed by amateur archaeologists. He has many reasons for thinking that the dead man was a ne'er-do-well younger brother of a neighboring farm tenant. Then Rudd's case collapses and the author shows her skill as she sustains and even heightens interest when her detective has to start all over. A striking and tense smash ending includes the satisfying solution of the mystery.

S87 Van Gulik, Robert
The Chinese Nail Murders
Chicago U. Press 1977/orig. 1961
Introduction by Donald F. Lach
Illus. by the Author

S88 *The Chinese Bell Murders*
Chicago U. Press 1977/orig. 1958

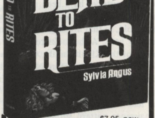
S89 *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee (Dee Goong An)*
Dover Publications 1976/orig. 1949
Trans. with Introd., Illus., & Notes by Robert Van Gulik

Those who like and admire the detective and judicial adventures of Judge Dee are glad to know that two of his earliest cases have been reprinted by a university press and graced with an informative commentary by a sinologist. This is for us an occasion to amend the hasty and adverse remarks published in COC about these two tales. Van Gulik (experts pronounce his name van *Hulik*, with a strongly aspirated *H* and a Continental *l*) was like Wordsworth in having to create the taste by which he came to be appreciated. The *Nail* and *Bell* murders are enjoyable by anyone who knows what to look for in the depiction of Chinese manners and topography, and who does *not* look for what the species can't provide.

As for *Dee Goong An,* it is the genuine article, dating from the 18th century and barely modified by the translator to make it intelligible today. Like the others, it adroitly intertwines three plots and shows the Judge and his aides in their now familiar guise. The introduction and notes (including Chinese ideograms for the skeptical) are as entertaining as the tale, once the reader has become a Dee-votee.

"Welcome portly, bossy, nosey Mrs. Wagstaff to the company of admirable lady detectives"
—Publishers Weekly

"DEAD TO RITES is very well written with a great deal of perky expertise and a masterly handling of plot material."
—DAME NGAIO MARSH



$7.95, now
at your bookstore
CROWN

◆

MARGERY ALLINGHAM'S ALBERT CAMPION

A Chronological Examination of the Novels in which he Appears

Part XI

By B. A. Pike

After *Hide My Eyes,* there was an unprecedented gap of five years before the appearance of *The China Governess* in 1963. It would be instructive to know if this infinitely subtle novel was the full five years in the making and, if so, to what extent the author found her material intractable. It's one of the oddest books in the canon, described on the dust-wrapper as "a Mystery of Today" and with an intelligent awareness of contemporary tensions, but firmly in a characteristic Allingham world, cosy, eccentric, sentimental, and, above all, permanent: the sons of important families are still sent to Totham, and even an East End factory worker proves to be employed by Alandel.

It is pre-eminently a novel of contrasts: between Ebbfield past and present, the Turk Street Mile and the Phoenix estate; between the Well House at Scribbenfields in London and the Keep at Angevin in Suffolk; between two ways of life, one coldly aesthetic, one passionately altruistic; between a deluded older generation and a bewildered younger one; and between romance and reality, semblance and truth.

The novel is rooted in this old, pervasive literary theme: appearance and reality, the difference between what seems to be and what actually is. Most of the principals in the action are either deceiving or deceived, on a scale that shapes their lives: by the end of the novel, several mysteries have been resolved, but it seems even more important to the author that essential truths have been told, so that life may begin again on a more trustworthy basis. As he looks round the Well House, the home of the Kinnit family, Campion, finally, is "comforted": "It was a picture of beginnings, he thought. Half a dozen startings: new chapters, new ties, new associations. They were all springing out of the story he had been following, like a spray of plumes in a renaissance pattern springs up from a complete and apparently final feather."

At the centre of the new beginnings is the coming together of Timothy Kinnit and his father. Tim's identity crisis is the main concern of the novel and the most extended development of the theme of appearance and reality. As heir to the Kinnit fortunes, he has always believed himself the bastard son either of Eustace Kinnit or his dead brother, "the original Timothy." When his fiancee's father suddenly objects to their marriage and he discovers that his parentage is in fact totally obscure, he is "shattered" and becomes obsessed by the need to establish his origins: "I've been thinking I'm a Kinnit ever since I've thought at all and now suddenly I find I'm not. Naturally I want to know who I am." To Julia, his fiancee, he is the Timothy she loves "and nothing and nobody else," but for Timothy himself this is an evasive irrelevance.

Divorced from his familiar identity, he is totally at a loss, "like an untethered balloon" floating "unattached and meaningless." His experience has been like "a sort of . . . birth": "I feel that until today I've been in a . . . an eggshell. But all through today I've been breaking out of it. Everything I've ever taken for granted has come apart in my hand." To Julia, he has "become completely insane on the subject," "*mad* to know" his origins; but Timothy himself argues cogently in defence of his need to establish a heredity to replace that he has lost: "I'm a component part. I'm the continuation of an existing story, as is everybody else. I thought I knew my story but I don't. I have been misinformed in a very thorough way. I've got to go on and find out who I am, or I'm unrecognizable even to myself." When, at the end, Timothy's true father remarks that Barry, his surrogate son, "takes his papers very seriously," Timothy's reply is "momentous and completely enlightening": "He takes his identity seriously. . . Naturally. It appears to be all he has." It is ironic that Timothy's discovery of his own identity deprives Barry of his.

Timothy's quest governs the action and impinges on almost everyone involved in it. By employing detectives to investigate his paternity, Eustace and his sister Alison precipitate a terrible violence that even enters their homes Julia is bewildered to find her lover's energy "diverted from her to meet this new demand." Timothy's real father undergoes extreme distress of mind; and his established son breaks out into extravagant acts of destruction in an effort to preserve his own achieved identity.

The novel's exploration of heredity becomes an extension of the conflict between the seeming and the actual. Two views emerge, the false, advanced in the main through spoken arguments, and the true, surfacing irresistibly from resemblances between Timothy and his parents. Joe Stalkey, the Kinnits' detective, sees the transfer from "a vicious slum" to "something plushy" as harmful. He takes Timothy's pugnacious reaction to provocation as proof of his slum origins and an indication that he wrecked the flat in which Stalkey's brother was staying. Timothy's father accounts absurdly for the deficiencies in his false son by the experiences of his earliest infancy: "What sort of chance has a child whose mother . . . came from the most dreadful of slums? . . . Wouldn't that account for him, whatever he's become?" Charlie Luke wonders whether Tim's plebeian origins might not be a factor in his reaction to the loss of his identity. He argues that Timothy is not "specially bred . . . , conditioned over the generations to withstand a bit of cossetting, like a prize dog, but an ordinary tough boy," who must therefore be more vulnerable to such a shock. The idea of his "reverting to type" is even applied in malice when Basil Toberman, the Kinnits' business associate, uses it to colour the suggestion that he has contributed to a servant's death.

Nanny Broome, the Kinnits' nurse, predictably discounts heredity. For her it is a "scientific fact" that "If you have a child until he's six it doesn't matter who has him afterwards": because she has trained him, she can vouch for Timothy, whatever his origins. (With unconscious irony, she talks of the infant Timothy as having resembled "a changeling in the fairy tales.") She maintains that "As long as a boy has a home behind him no-one's going to ask what church his mother and father got married at." Her comfortable view that "he's got a perfectly nice family of people he's very fond of and knows all about and takes after by this time!" copes with the crucial issue by simply ignoring it (like Julia's resolve to love him whoever he proves to be).

Timothy himself is intellectually doubtful about theories of heredity—"I've never believed in heredity consciously before and I don't know that I do now"—but he finds in himself an instinctual need to "know what is behind" him and to "belong to someone's line." In conversation with Julia, he reminds her of the possibility of hereditary mental weaknesses and "other diseases one doesn't want in a parent," and he finally acknowledges to Campion that he believes in his heart that her father is right to keep them apart until the matter is resolved.

The novel asserts repeatedly that heredity will out. The family resemblance between the Kinnits and their niece Geraldine Telpher is so pronounced that observers are "made a little uncomfortable" by it. Basil Toberman drinks heavily "just like his father," and Mrs. Telpher's commiseration over the embarrassment he causes enforces the point: "Poor man, if it's inherited we should be sorry for him, I suppose." Campion is dismayed to find that Luke's daughter has the Scroop-Dory face, but reassured when he also sees Luke's "cockney intelligence blazing out of it." Barry and his real mother share similar strengths and weaknesses that confirm their kinship.

Once the initial contact is made, Timothy's own descent proclaims itself irresistibly. When Eustace reproaches him for being not like himself, Timothy replies that he is "not like anybody": but his resemblance to his father has already been observed by Tom Tray, the cobbler to whom he goes for information, and later by his stepmother. Campion is startled by a "raw force" in Timothy that seems "out of character in one whom he had assumed to be a typical young Oxford success-type"; and Julia and Timothy himself remark on a "curious gesture" that he shares with his father.

The effect of each man on the other is further confirmation. After talking to his father, Timothy feels "as if a skin had peeled from his eyes," and he is aware that "in the vast, blind, computing machine where the mind and the emotions meet and churn, something very odd indeed seemed to have taken place." Later, he is "astonished at his own vehemence" when defending him against denigration. With his own experience to guide him, the older man is more directly affected. He confesses to being "knocked . . . endways" by Timothy, less by seeing himself in the boy than by his amazing resemblance to his late wife: "People keep mentioning that he resembles *me.* My God. He not only looks like her but he *is* her. He's

Margery Allingham

treated his own poor little girl now just as she treated me. He's keeping her out of it, suffering all alone." Earlier, he has reacted with sudden hostility to a particular conversational trick of Timothy's, but only in a later scene with Julia is it made clear that this, too, is something Timothy shares with his mother. Barry's heredity resides solely in his papers: Timothy's emerges from his looks, his voice, his gestures and his temperament.

To the Kinnits, Timothy's identity crisis seems more an inconvenience than a cause for emotional concern. At "a moment of enormous danger," when Timothy is at his most vulnerable, Eustace reacts by changing the subject: "his protection was almost complete." Alison receives the news that Timothy is no longer helping the police with their enquiries with an "emphasis" that is "nearly generous": but she is clearly tempted to get on with ordering the luncheon, "only thinking better just in time." The subtlety of the author's treatment of the Kinnits is a constant challenge to the reader. They appear gentle and civilised, Alison "twittering" and "feminine," as delicate as "thistledown," Eustace "kindly" and urbane, with "shy charm" and a "disarming diffidence"; so that the reader warms to them instinctively as to cosy old dears in a traditional Allingham mould. But when their utterances are examined the picture that emerges is far from sympathetic, so that, again, the question of appearance and reality is raised.

Alison is "pink and girlish" and wears a "little-girl dressing-gown, splattered with pink roses." She hangs her head "like a delicate child" when she fears to have given offence. Like her brother, she is "utterly embarrassed" by a direct confrontation of Timothy's predicament, and she provokes Julia's anger by her total failure to understand his reaction to police suspicion: "It's so unlike him to be *awkward.*" But for all her fragility, there is "something a little frightening in the grey-eyed intelligence with which she confronted the world," and her eyes, though "innocent" are also "hard." When she is so minded, she is capable of subjecting Julia to a "ruthless dismissal."

Eustace, too, has an immature quality "as if the world had never touched him at all." He has a "schoolboyish and charming laugh" and at times "an innocence of expression which was almost infantile." Because his mind is "always unhappy and fumbling when emotions of any kind were involved," he persists in seeking a "rational explanation for Timothy's behaviour" and seizes on a "purely factual point gratefully." Yet, again, there is another aspect to Eustace, apparent in his ineffectual attempt to "pull strings" to free Timothy from being harried by the police, and in his confident determination to govern his unruly partner: "Basil must stop drinking and be quiet. I'll see to it myself." More "godlike" still is his decree that "to save us all embarassment" there shall be no post-mortem when a visiting servant dies suddenly.

Their niece, Mrs. Telpher, seems by nature enigmatic, a grave, remote, silent woman of "considerable elegance" with "all the Kinnit tolerance in her quiet voice." The suggestion of arrogance in her actions and attitudes reinforces the point made by her physical resemblance to her uncle and aunt: temperamentally, too, she is "exactly like any other Kinnit." She is ordinarily "unforthcoming," "aloof" and "preoccupied," appearing "relaxed and withdrawn" even in company "as if she were out of the circle altogether": even her voice seems "intentionally inexpressive." Only twice is she "startled out of natural calm" to the point where her eyes dilate and her face looks "grey and rigid."

All three Kinnits have the family "trick of making people feel slightly inferior without intending to or noticing that it had been done": they react to Basil's claim to connoisseurship with "exactly the same twinkling smile of good-natured derision." Even in the wider field of patronage, their celebrated benevolence is suspect, and their charity is bitterly attacked by Basil, who claims to be one of its victims. He regards the Kinnits as "natural sharks masquerading as patronising amateurs" and sneers at their kind of "philanthropy" which "always has an end product." The "Kinnit method" is to "take in lame ducks, don't ask too much about them but make devoted slaves of them ever after."

Even Timothy, who loves Eustace and Alison, agrees that the "Kinnit family *is* what Basil said it was. They do tend to capitalise their charitable acts since they do them for the wrong purpose. They don't keep helping folk for the warm silly reason that they like the people concerned, but for the cold practical one that they hope to see themselves as nice people doing kind things." Nanny Broome takes this a stage further and observes, more shrewdly than she knows, that they "put up with the most extraordinary people" as if "they were trying to work off some sort of sin they'd committed."

Basil sees Thyrza Caleb, the original of the China Governess, as a prototype Kinnit victim. While employed as governess to two of Eustace's great-aunts, she was tried for the murder of their music-master: after her acquittal, she drowned herself, having no longer any prospect of a future. Interestingly, she enforces the central theme of illusion and truth in both her manifestations, as a woman whose established history is false, and as a prettification of something ugly, an ornament to commemorate a murder. Her exploitation both as a woman and image intensifies our dislike of the Kinnit family: she loses her life from her association with them, and as a rare collector's piece considerably enhances their fortunes.

She has her revenge, both dramatically, when the truth of what happened to her is brought explosively to light, and more subtly, as a skeleton in the cupboard, a constant reminder to the Kinnits of the "basic living sin which the original crime exposed." She is "not so much a ghost as their minds playing the goat," creating such a climate of anxiety that Eustace reacts with panic to the sudden death of her modern counterpart, Miss Saxon, who is staying at the Well House with Mrs. Telpher. Because of the link with Thyrza, Eustace cannot get her under ground quickly enough, disposing of her with such furtive guilty haste that suspicion is inevitable. Miss Saxon, like Thyrza, is not what she appears to be: (even her dyed hair is an enhancement of the main theme). Her revenge is still to come when the novel ends. As Campion observes: "The world is certainly going to hear about the Kinnit family and their governesses . . . No-one on earth can prevent that now." By a final irony, it becomes an advantage to Timothy that, as Julia points out, he is "not a Kinnit."

The Kinnits are especially vulnerable to ugly publicity of the kind that is imminent because their lives are ordinarily so secure and so secret, so "very civilised" and "very covered up." They live in a "Tudor merchant's mansion" that is "completely out of place in a modern world"; and they scratch the surface of life with "literary, charitable or political interests" or "endless writing" on "various aspects of the china collector's art."

Alison and her friend Flavis Aicheson are conservationists concerned for "the Preservation of the London Skyline," and their conflict with an East End councillor offers a further metaphor for the central theme. Councillor Cornish is the motive force behind the Phoenix estate in Ebbfield, "an enormous block of council dwellings" resembling "an Atlantic liner swimming diagonally across the site." He is "a living flame of a man, as passionate and fanatical as Luke himself," with a restless social conscience deriving from his experience of pre-war London slums. Throughout, Cornish stands for reality, the kind of harsh, uncompromising discipline that imposes standards so severe that the chance to escape a daunting responsibility seems a delusion to be resisted. Yet he, too, is not wholly what he seems: his very stoicism and strength make him vulnerable and credulous, so that what he has accepted as truth for twenty years proves to be appearance only.

Though he is not what one would call a comfortable man, he has a grandeur and intensity altogether lacking in the Kinnits. They inhabit an earlier Allingham world; he is very much of the present. His commitment to his "great project" is total: "It's not a municipal venture, it's a social rebirth, a statement of a sincere belief that decent conditions make a decent community." Predictably, Alison and "Aich" are the enemy, more concerned for appearance than reality: "They don't like the look of the new flats. The silhouette is an affront to their blasted eyes, they say." Cornish allows that they "may feel that they're serving the Arts," but claims that his "life's work" is to "serve Humanity."

The author's detachment is admirable and it allows us to sympathise with either view or both. Neither side understands the other: to Aich, Cornish is "the poor wretched man with the dreadful temper," while to Cornish she and Alison are "half-baked intellectuals who never know when to stop." A comment by his wife shows that Cornish has drastically over-reacted to a single brief experience of a London slum, and yet the very force of his recollection threatens to make Aich and Alison seem trivial, their conservationist activities on a par with their attendance at an outre recital to make up the numbers.

Ultimately, the Kinnits are seen to negate life, to reject it, and even, in extremis, to destroy it. They lack the capacity to live other than intellectually, aware in themselves that they suffer the emotional limitations imposed by *their* heredity. In Timothy's words, they "know all about this and don't like themselves very much because of it . . . They know they're missing something by being so cold but they don't know what it is." Timothy comes finally to realise the absurdity of his desperate hope that he may after all prove to be Eustace's son. He sees not only that "Eustace couldn't be anybody's father," but that this is "what every adult must have felt about him." Significantly, it will fall to Timothy, who is "not a Kinnit," to perpetuate the family name.

Timothy's admission that he has clung to his false hope reminds us how tempting illusions often are, how necessary, even; but the idea of romance as a valid factor in life is repeatedly scorned. Eustace's unemotional dismissal of Timothy's appeal is like "a pail of cold water" washing away his "romantic swaddling-clothes" and leaving him "quivering and ashamed of himself for ever clinging to them." Flavis Aicheson dives even deeper into fantasy by suggesting to Timothy that his paternity "could be very romantic and exciting" because "one never knows": but even Alison ridicules this idea. For Cornish, reality beats romance at its own game, and he explodes at Eustace's suggestion that "facts . . . are dull and even a trifle drab compared with a tale of fancy, all moonshine and romance." He sees the truth as taking "the shine out of any old invention," and insists that to find romance one "must go to reality." Later, he shows himself sufficiently irritated by what the "old sissy" has said to repeat his conviction to Luke: "No nurse made up a tale like the real one."

Interestingly, there is no confrontation between Cornish and his true polar opposite in the novel, Nanny Broome, Timothy's childhood nurse. His apt description of her as "an old butterfly clinging to its wings in a bombardment" makes the essential point that reality is something she keeps at bay. She dislikes "people who are always seeing snakes" and believes that if you "don't pull pussy's tail" she won't "scratch you." When some failure of sympathy in Julia reduces "cosy chatter to the status of an old wives' tale," a "scared look" passes over her face "as she glimpsed reality's fleeting skirt." Whatever the pressures, her way of life deliberately excludes anything approaching an unpleasant truth. Timothy remarks that she "screams the place down" if she thinks "something is merely naughty . . . but once she perceives what she feels is Evil, she hides." She is "deeply frightened" when her coat is slashed, not so much because of "the physical attack" as because of an "unclean shadow falling across her bright nursery world." When reminded of the damage to her coat, she is startled into admitting that she "wasn't going to think about that until the morning."

She is a deliberate anachronism, whose conversation has "to be heard to be believed" in "the world of today." She actually tries to create romance in real life and seems to derive many of her ideas from a hazy mediaeval ideal of courtly conduct. Timothy has clearly been raised on this sort of principle, with the aim of making him a "chivalrous gentleman with a proper attitude toward women": "I used to tell him about the knights riding in the courtyard, jousting and saving ladies and killing dragons and so on." As her "little Prince Tim of the Rose-Red Castle," he has always been promised a princess, and when Julia arrives Nanny Broome welcomes her in exactly this spirit, "trembling with excitement" at the realisation of the dream of over twenty years. She has prepared the Bride's Room for her, a cold, white Victorian showpiece, "monstrous" in its arid formality. Her fervent hope for a betrothal between Timothy and Julia exactly shows her longing for something holy and mystic to seal their love: again, without "any clear idea what she was talking about," she harks back to Arthurian legend for her inspiration: "Long, long ago the man knelt praying before a sword all night." She is invincibly and unashamedly "romantically-minded": even the prosaic "private" rooms of high court judges take on the added fairy-tale fascination of "secret" chambers in her recollection.

She talks continually in a mindless nursery gush, reducing everything to kindergarten level: children are "kiddiewinkies" and Miss Saxon a "poor old girlie": Julie is instructed to stir her stumps, or invited to pretend that she's Cinderella. She herself is seen in juvenile terms: her character has "a child-like streak," her voice is "ever-young," and she moves with "the agility of a girl." Her "resilience" is "indefatigable," and after the momentary doubt that Julia inspires she is soon "talking away again as happy as a child uncovering a surprise"; understandably, her face is "never in repose in the ordinary way." She cries "like a baby, noisily, wetly, and with complete abandonment," and like a child keeps "one eye on the audience" when she knows she is being outrageous.

But beyond her role as arch-apostle of romance—arch, alas, in both senses—Nanny Broome is too often merely an irritant, a silly and embarrassing woman considerably less endearing than Miss Allingham presumably intended. Much of the "dismay" she initially inspires in Julia is increasingly felt by the reader. Timothy is conditioned to liking her but we have the advantage of detachment. She is another of the author's intensely feminine women and since she is also "possessive" and "tremendously authoritative," she is in danger of taking control. Campion calls her "the ubiquitous Mrs. Broome" and Luke agrees that she "keeps on cropping up," bossy, inquisitive, interfering, with the eye of a hawk and the disruptive force of a steam-roller. She horribly embarrasses Basil Toberman by reminding him publicly that he was always "an ugly little thing" afflicted by "that tiresome weakness," and, incredibly, reduces a blushing Luke "to half-pint size" with her parting shot. She has only to cry to inspire "terror" in men and render them "helpless," and her entry with Julia into Campion's flat has "the full force" of an "invasion," so that Lugg and Campion are "dispossessed in a matter of seconds." Though she is described as essentially "warm" and "unselfish," she makes quite a different impression: she is variously seen as "coy," "arch, affected," "smug," "cocky," "cross and prissy," "hard and obstinate," "sulky," "ruthless," "mutinous," "mindless" and "absurd."

Part of the trouble must be that we never see her in her element (not that one would particularly wish to do so). When the Keep was "invaded" by evacuee mothers and their eighty babies, she was clearly heaven-sent; and Luke's observation that it must have been "tremendous fun" to be brought up by her could well be true. But the action of the novel limits her to contact with adults, so that her relentless soppiness is inappropriate, unwelcome and finally tedious.

Despite the fact that meeting Nanny Broome explains to Julia "quite a lot about Timothy," he is largely kept clear of her whimsy (though he does at one point call Julia his "holy one"). He is drawn sympathetically and wholly as an adult (it is the young man he supplants who appears child-like). Julia, too, makes her position clear at the outset by the commendable "firmness" of her reaction to the bridal bedchamber. Miss Allingham is gamely concerned to show all aspects of their intimacy, attempting to define both the physical and emotional tensions they sustain. But for all her insight and experience as a writer, she invariably becomes self-conscious in such a context, so that a basic unease characterises their scenes together, even when a degree of conviction is achieved. Because they are lovers—and embattled lovers at that—some of the author's composure deserts her and she falls into over-emphasis. The reader is subjected to the full battery of endearments, sighs and breaks in the voice, the involuntary cruelties, the sudden panic, and the surges in the blood. Julia feels "on her tongue" the "poison" distilled by "love kept waiting." Timothy's cry is "as old as civilisation," his appeal "the ultimate . . . as young as childhood and as old as the world." His sudden fear that he may never be certain of Julia's love makes him pull back from her "in terror" to ask "the last question of all" (as if he has only to utter for everything to vanish).

Their bizarre encounter with Barry towards the end of the novel has a similar heightened quality. Timothy reacts to the first horrific sight of the intruder by laughing it off "in the only way left to this century's youth, which has had its fill of terrors." Barry's unexpected vaunting of himself as a reading man proves so startling that "it almost touched off hysteria." Even in the context of so weird an encounter, such observations seem excessive.

Though the development of the action does not need it, the scene is clearly crucial, since Barry appears nowhere else, and the theme of each generation's responsibility for itself is brought into focus. It is significant that only Timothy and Julia confront their contemporary: Barry's articulate, confessional mood is prompted by their closeness to him in years: "You're about my age, aren't you?" He explains his alienation from his supposed father by the fact that they are "not the same generation," and he dismisses the idea that "the old generation is responsible for the next": "It's your own generation that lives with you, isn't it? Blaming the bloody old fools doesn't help."

Timothy's acceptance of the responsibility of Barry seems a clear response to this belief: "He's our pidgin." When Julia objects that he "can't feel responsible for him," his reply is direct and conclusive: "Why not? He's our age and I caught him." A curious kinship develops between Barry and Timothy, subtly underlining our awareness that both have a claim to the same identity. Practically, it emerges in Timothy's reluctance to incriminate Barry and in his recognition that Barry's identity "appears to be all he has." Conversely, Timothy sees the attempt to kill Basil as "the older generation's headache": "We're not in that at all."

Though it is not made an explicit theme until so late in the action, the idea of conflict between the generations is implicit from the beginning in the coincidence that the violated flat in Ebbfield houses an elderly couple. It is seen in the interference of Julia's father in his daughter's life and the failures of communication between Timothy and his elders; and even, obliquely, in the Kinnits' constant expiation of the guilt of former generations.

The distance between age and youth is emphasized not only by Barry: the older generation has much to say on the matter. Joe Stalkey is the only one actually to say "I don't know what the younger generation is coming to," but both Luke and Cornish express concern on the subject. Julia's age alone is sufficient to make Luke "gloomy" with thoughts of the "teenage world" and some of the "young thugs" he encounters in his professional life. He detects "a frightening streak of efficiency in modern mischief" in the vandalism at Ebbfield and the fire in Stalkey's office: "They're very clever, these modern kids. They know how to gang up, too, better even than we did." Cornish is contemptuous of Timothy and his contemporaries who know nothing of true slum conditions: "Your generation doesn't know what that means. You call yourselves 'sick' don't you? So do I."

The idea of a "sick" generation with its own distinguishing marks emerges as a part of the author's observation. Timothy and Julia are momentarily frightened when Barry brandishes a monstrous "paw furnished with mighty bloodstained talons," but their shock changes to amusement when he uses it for an "offbeat joke which to any other generation must be indescribably shocking." Earlier, Timothy is described as a product of "an off-beat age" in which "absurdity as an escape-mechanism had been in fashion for some time."

When Julia sees Campion as a "natural goon, born rather too early," the author implies a kinship between him and the younger generation, and it is noticeable that he trusts them without question, whereas Luke is suspicious even of Julia (only when her distress at Timothy's defection reminds him of his own loss—of Prunella, who has died in childbirth—does he emerge as "unreservedly on her side"). Campion has a sufficiently "strong streak of sensitive interest in his fellow men" to relate with ease to all generations, and his encounters in the novel show him more as visiting sage and family friend than detective. He takes Julia out to lunch, talks shop with Basil, consoles Mrs. Telpher, and rescues Timothy from the Stalkeys. Julia finds him "very easy to talk to"; Eustace clings to him as to "the only spar in an angry sea"; and Nanny Broome agrees to talk to Luke in a pub only "if Mr. Campion says it's all right."

He is brought into the case by his friendship with Julia's father whom he has known since their Cambridge days, and an invitation to Angevin "to see some ceramics" confirms his involvement—though he is hardly involved in any real sense, since his watching brief allows him only nominal participation. Timothy's identity emerges largely through his own efforts, and the murderer is named by an eye-witness. Campion's concern for Nanny Broome's safety seems excessive in the light of the almost random attack that is made on her. Even in his advisory capacity he seems occasionally ineffectual: though Eustace welcomes him with glad cries to a discussion of legal representation for Timothy, his contributions to the debate are negligible (indeed, he is most conspicuously seen as "effacing himself with his usual success"). Later, he offers even a crucial observation with characteristic diffidence: "Mr. Campion, who had taken no part in the proceedings and who had been forgotten by everybody, now ventured to intervene apologetically."

Even in his earlier days, he was always modest and unassuming, a subtle variation on the theme of the great detective rather than a full, flamboyant development of it. Now he describes himself as "old-ladyish," and seems subdued by his unobtrusive role to a gentle, consoling wraith. Though Lugg is still at Bottle Street and the echoes of former days persist—the vigilance, the social address, the deceptively "formless" appearance—Luke begins to doubt whether Campion is "not a bit too nice" to come adequately to terms with "modern efficiency" in crime: his approach is like "riding in a Rolls" and, by implication, more suited to a vanished way of life. But it has always been a feature of their relationship that Campion should go at least one better than Luke, and he does so again, here, by providing the motive for Miss Saxon's murder and the attempt on Basil immediately after Luke has dismissed the likelihood of there being one. Not for nothing does Joe Stalkey call him a "legend."

CLASSIC CORNER
Rare Tales from the Archives

The Eleventh Hour

By Edwin Balmer and William MacHarg

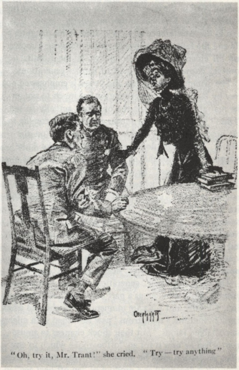
The Achievements of Luther Trant is one of the most significant volumes of detective fiction published in this century, although it has been entirely unobtainable for decades. In addition to providing the first piece of fiction ever to use a lie detector as an integral part of the story ("The Man Higher Up"), it is the first book in which the newly defined science of psychology plays a key role in the detection of crime. Luther Trant, then, is mystery fiction's first major psychologist-detective. Published in 1910 by Small, Maynard (Boston), this rare volume was selected for *Queen's Quorum*.

Edwin Balmer (1883-1959) was the editor of *Redbook* magazine for more than twenty years (1927-1949) but he is best known today for his few mystery works, particularly those in collaboration with William MacHarg (*The Achievements of Luther Trant*, *The Dead Man's Eyes*) and his science fiction novels, written both solely and in collaboration with Philip Wylie, especially *When Worlds Collide* and *After Worlds Collide*.

William MacHarg (1872-1951) produced a large amount of "straight" fiction, both for publication in the popular "slick" magazines and in book form, but it remains largely ignored today. His greatest achievements lie in the field of detective fiction. His best books are the two collaborations with Edwin Balmer (noted above) and the excellent example of the "hard-boiled" school of detection, *The Affairs of O'Malley*.

While the stories in *The Achievements of Luther Trant* are not as crisp as we might prefer, the mystery elements are generally first-rate, and the treatment of apparent pathology seventy years ago merits attention today.

—*Otto Penzler*



"Oh, try it, Mr. Trant!" she cried. "Try — try anything"

An illustration from the original edition of *The Achievements of Luther Trant*

ON THE THIRD Sunday in March the thermometer dropped suddenly in Chicago a little after ten in the evening. A roaring storm of mingled rain and snow, driven by a riotous wind—wild even for the Great Lakes in winter—changed suddenly to sleet, which lay in liquid slush upon the walks. At twenty minutes past the hour, sleet and slush had both begun to freeze. Mr. Luther Trant, hastening on foot back to his rooms at his club from north of the river where he had been taking tea, observed—casually, as he observed many things—that the soft mess underfoot had coated with tough, rubbery ice, through which the heels of his shoes crunched at every step while his toes left almost no mark.

But he noted this then only as a hindrance to his haste. He had been taking the day "off" away from both his office and his club; but fifteen minutes before, he had called up the club for the first time that day and had learned that a woman—a wildly terrified and anxious woman—had been inquiring for him at intervals during the day over the telephone, and that a special delivery letter from the same source had been awaiting him since six o'clock. The psychologist, suddenly stricken with a sense of guilt and dereliction, had not waited for a cab.

As he hurried down Michigan Avenue now, he was considering how affairs had changed with him in the last six months. Then he had been a callow assistant in a psychological laboratory. The very professor whom he had served had smiled amusedly, almost derisively, when he had declared his belief in his own powers to apply the necromancy of the new psychology to the detection of crime. But the delicate instruments of the laboratory—the chronoscopes, kymographs, plethysmographs, which made visible and recorded unerringly, unfalteringly, the most secret emotions of the heart and the hidden workings of the brain; the experimental investigations of Freud and Jung, of the German and French scientists, of Munsterberg and others in America—had fired him with the belief in them and in himself. In the face of misunderstanding and derision, he had tried to trace the criminal, not by the world-old method of the marks he had left on things, but by the evidences which the crime had left on the mind of the criminal himself. And so well had he succeeded that now he could not leave his club even on a Sunday, without disappointing somewhere, in the great-pulsating city, an appeal to him for help in trouble. But as he turned at the corner into the entrance of the club, he put aside this thought and faced the doorman.

"Has she called again?"

"The last time, sir, was at nine o'clock. She wanted to know if you had received the note, and said you were to have it as soon as you came in."

The man handed it out—a plain, coarse envelope, with the red two-cent and the blue special delivery stamp stuck askew above an uneven line of great, unsteady characters addressing the envelope to Trant at the club. Within it, ten lines spread this wild appeal across the paper:

> *"If Mr. Trant will do—for some one unknown to him—the greatest possible service—to save perhaps a life—a life! I beg him to come to—Ashland Avenue between seven and nine o'clock tonight! Eleven! For God's sake come—between seven and nine! Later will be too late. Eleven! I tell you it may be worse than useless to come after eleven! So for God's sake—if you are human— help me! You will be expected.*
>
> *"W. Newberry."*

The psychologist glanced at his watch swiftly. It was already twenty-five minutes to eleven!

Besides the panic expressed by the writing itself, the broken sentences, the reiterated appeal, most of all the strange and disconnected recurrence three times in the few short lines of the word eleven—which plainly pointed to that hour as the last at which help might avail—the characters themselves, which were the same as those on the envelope, confirmed the psychologist's first impression that the note was written by a man, a young man, too, despite the havoc that fear and nervelessness had played with him.

"You're sure it was a woman's voice on the phone?" he asked quickly.

"Yes, sir; and she seemed a lady."

Trant hastily picked up the telephone on the desk; "Hello! Is this the West End Police Station? This is Mr. Trant. Can you send a plain-clothes man and a patrolman at once to—Ashland Avenue? . . . No; I don't know what the trouble is, but I understand it is a matter of life and death; that's why I want to have help at hand if I need it. Let me know who you are sending."

He stood impatiently tapping one heel against the other, while he waited for the matter to be adjusted at the police station, then swung back to receive the name of the detective: "Yes. . . . You are sending Detective Siler? Because he knows the house? . . . Oh, there has been trouble there before? . . . I see. . . . Tell him to hurry. I will try and get there myself before eleven."

He dashed the receiver back on to the hook, caught his coat collar close again and ran swiftly to claim a taxicab which was just bringing another member up to the club.

The streets were all but empty; and into the stiffening ice the chains on the tires of the driving wheels bit sharply; so it still lacked ten minutes of the hour, as Trant assured himself by another quick glance at his watch, when the chauffeur checked the motor short before the given number on Ashland Avenue, and the psychologist jumped out.

The vacant street, and the one dim light on the first floor of the old house, told Trant the police had not yet arrived.

The porticoed front and the battered fountain with cupids, which rose obscurely from the ice-crusted sod of the narrow lawn at its side, showed an attempt at fashion. In the rear, as well as Trant could see it in the indistinct glare of the street lamps, the building seemed to fall away into a single rambling story.

As the psychologist rang the bell and was admitted, he saw at once that he had not been mistaken in believing that the cab which had passed his motor only an instant before had come from the same house; for the mild-eyed, white-haired little man, who opened the door almost before the bell had stopped ringing, had not yet taken off his overcoat. Behind him, in the dim light of a shaded lamp, an equally placid, white-haired little woman was laying off her wraps; and their gentle faces were so completely at variance with the wild terror of the note that Trant now held between his fingers in his pocket, that he hesitated before he asked his question:

"Is W. Newberry here?"

"I am the Reverend Wesley Newberry," the little man answered. "I am no longer in the active service of the Lord; but if it is a case of immediate necessity and I can be of use——"

"No, no!" Trant checked him. "I have not come to ask your service as a minister, Mr. Newberry. I am Luther Trant. But I see I must explain," the psychologist continued, at first nonplused by the little man's stare of perplexity, which showed no recognition of the name, and then flushing with the sudden suspicion that followed. "Tonight when I returned to my club at half-past ten, I was informed that a woman—apparently in great anxiety—had been trying to catch me all day; and had finally referred me to this special delivery letter which was delivered for me at six o'clock." Trant extended it to the staring little minister. "Of course, I can see now that both telephone calls and note may have been a hoax; but—in Heaven's name! What is the matter, Mr. Newberry?"

The two old people had taken the note between them. Now the little woman, her wraps only half removed, had dropped, shaking and pale, into the nearest chair. The little man had lost his placidity and was shuddering in uncontrolled fear. He seemed to shrink away; but stiffened bravely.

"A hoax? I fear not, Mr. Trant!" The man gathered himself together. "This note is not from me; but it is, I must not deceive myself, undoubtedly from our son Walter—Walter Newberry. This writing, though broken beyond anything I have seen from him in his worst dissipations, is undoubtedly his. Yet Walter is not here, Mr. Trant! I mean—I mean, he should not be here! There have been reasons—we have not seen or heard of Walter for two months. He can not be here now—surely he can not be here now, unless—unless—my wife and I went to a friend's this evening; this is as though the writer had known we were going out! We left at half-past six and have only just returned. Oh, it is impossible that Walter could have come here! But Martha, we have not seen Adele!" The livid terror grew stronger on his rosy, simple face as he turned to his wife. "We have not seen Adele, Martha, since we came in! And this gentleman tells us that a woman in great trouble was sending for him. If Walter had been here—be strong, Martha; be strong! But come—let us look together!"

He had turned, with no further word of explanation, and pattered excitedly to the stairs, followed by his wife and Trant.

"Adele! Adele!" the old man cried anxiously, knocking at the door nearest the head of the stairs; and when he received no answer, he flung the door open.

"Dreadful! Dreadful!" He wrung his hands, while his wife sank weakly down upon the upper step, as she saw the room was empty. "There is something very wrong here, Mr. Trant! This is the bedroom of my daughter-in-law, Walter's wife. She should be here, at this hour! My son and his wife are separated and do not live together. My son, who has been unprincipled and uncontrollable from his childhood up, made a climax to his career of dissipation two months ago by threatening the life of his wife because she refused—because she found it impossible to live longer with him. It was a most painful affair; the police were even called in. We forbade Walter the house. So if she called to you because he was threatening her again, and he returned here tonight to carry out his threat, then Adele—Adele was indeed in danger!"

"But why should *he* have written me that note?" Trant returned crisply. "However—if we believe the note at all—there is surely now no time to lose, Mr. Newberry. We must search the entire house at once and make sure, at least, that Mrs. Walter Newberry is not in some other part of it!"

"You are right—quite right!" the little man pattered rapidly from door to door, throwing the rooms open to the impatient scrutiny of the psychologist; and while they were still engaged in this search upon the upper floor, a tall clock on the landing of the stairs struck eleven!

So strongly had the warning of the note impressed Trant that, at the signal of the hour, he stopped short; the others, seeing him, stopped too, and stared at him with blanched faces, while all three apprehensively strained their ears for some sound which might mark the note's fulfillment. And scarcely had the last deep stroke of the hour ceased to resound in the hall, when suddenly, sharply, and without other warning, a revolver shot rang out, followed so swiftly by three others that the four reports rang almost as one through the silent house. The little woman screamed and seized her husband's arm. His hand, in turn, hung upon Trant. The psychologist, turning his head to be surer of the direction of the sound, for an instant more stared indecisively; for though the shots were plainly inside the house, the echoes made it impossible to locate them exactly. But almost immediately a fifth shot, seeming louder and more distinct in its separateness, startled them again.

"It is in the billiard room!" the wife shrieked, with a woman's quicker location of indoor sounds.

The little minister ran to seize the lamp, as Trant turned toward the rear of the house. The woman started with them; but at that instant the doorbell rang furiously; and the woman stopped in trembling confusion. The psychologist pushed her husband on, however; and taking the lamp from the elder man's shaking hand, he now led Newberry into the one-story addition which formed the back part of the house. Here he found that the L-shaped passage into which they ran opened at one end apparently on to a side porch. Newberry, now taking the lead, hurried down the other branch of the passage past a door which was plainly that of a kitchen, came to another further down the passage, tried it, and recoiled in fresh bewilderment to find it locked.

"It is never locked—never! Something dreadful must have been happening in here!" He wrung his hands again weakly.

"We must break it down then!" Trant drew the little man aside, threw his shoulder against it once—twice, and even a third time, ineffectually, till a uniformed patrolman, and another man in plain clothes, coming after them with Mrs. Newberry, added their weight to Trant's, and the door crashed open.

A blast of air from the outside storm instantly blew out both the lamp in Trant's hand and another which had been burning in the room. The woman screamed and threw herself toward some object on the floor which the flare of the failing lights had momentarily revealed; but her husband caught in the darkness at her wrist and drew her to him. Siler and the patrolman, swearing softly, felt for matches and tried vainly in the draft to relight the lamp which Trant had thrust upon the table; for the psychologist had dashed to the window which was letting in the outside storm, stared out, then closed it and returned to light the lamp, which belonged in the room, as the plain-clothes man now lit the other.

This room which Mrs. Newberry had called the billiard room, he saw then, was now used only for storage purposes and was littered with the old rubbish which accumulates in every house; but the arrangement of the discarded furniture showed plainly the room had recently been fitted for occupancy as well as its means allowed. That the occupant had taken care to conceal himself, heavy sheets of brown paper pasted over the panes of all the windows—including that which Trant had found open—testified; that the occupant had been well tended, a full tray of food—practically untouched—and the stubs of at least a hundred cigarettes flung in the fireplace, made plain. These things Trant appreciated only after the first swift glance which showed him a huddled figure with its head half under a musty lounge which stood furthest from the window. It was not the body of a woman, but that of a man not yet thirty, whose rather handsome face was marred by deep lines of dissipation. The mother's shuddering cry of recognition had showed that this was Walter Newberry.

Trant knelt beside the officers working over the body; the blood had been flowing from a bullet wound in the temple, but it had ceased to flow. A small, silver-mounted automatic revolver, such as had been recently widely advertised for the protection of women, lay on the floor close by, with the shells which had been ejected as it was fired. The psychologist straightened.

"We have come too late," he said simply to the father. "It was necessary, as he foresaw, to get here before eleven, if we were to help him; for he is dead. And now—" he checked himself, as the little woman clutched her husband and buried her face in his sleeve, and the little man stared up at him with a chalky face—"it will be better for you to wait somewhere else till we are through here."

"In the name of mercy, Mr. Trant!" Newberry cried miserably, as the psychologist picked up a lamp and lighted the two old people into the hall, "what is this terrible thing that has happened here? What is it—Oh, what is it, Mr. Trant? And where—where is Adele?"

"I am here, father; I am here!" A new voice broke clearly and calmly through the confusion, and the light of Trant's lamp fell on a slight but stately girl advancing down the hallway. "And you," she said as composedly to the psychologist, though Trant could see now that her self-possession was belied by the nervous picking of her fingers at her dress and her paleness, which grew greater as she met his eyes, "are Mr. Trant—and you came too late!"

"You are—Mrs. Walter Newberry?" Trant returned. "You were the one who was calling me up this morning and this afternoon?"

"Yes," she said. "I was his wife. So he is dead!"

She took no heed of the quick glance Trant flashed to assure himself that she spoke in this way before she could have seen the body from her place in the hall; and she turned calmly still to the old man who was clinging to her crying nervously now, "Adele! Adele! Adele!"

"Yes, dear father and dear mother!" she began compassionately. "Walter came back——" She broke off suddenly; and Trant saw her grow pale as death with staring eyes fixed over his shoulder on Siler, who had come to the doorway. "You—you brought the police, Mr. Trant! I—I thought you had nothing to do with the police!"

"Never mind that," the plain-clothes man checked Trant's answer. "You were saying your husband came home, Mrs. Newberry—then what?"

"Then—but that is all I know; I know nothing whatever about it."

"Your shoes and skirt are wet, Mrs. Newberry." The plain-clothes man pointed significantly.

"I—I heard the shots!" She caught herself up with admirable self-control. "That was all. I ran over to the neighbors' for help; but I could get no one."

"Then you'll have a chance to make your statement later," Siler answered in a businesslike way. "Just now you'd better look after your father and mother."

He took the lamp from Trant and held it to light them down the hall, then turned swiftly to the patrolman: "She is going upstairs with them; watch the front stairs and see that she does not go out. If she comes down the back stairs we can see her."

As the patrolman went out, the plain-clothes man turned back into the room, leaving the door ajar so that the rear stairs were visible. "These husband and wife cases, Mr. Trant," he said easily. "You think—and the man thinks, too—the woman will stand everything; and she does—till he does one more thing too much, and, all of a sudden, she lets him have it!"

"Don't you think it's a bit premature," the psychologist suggested, "to assume that she killed him?"

"Didn't you see how she shut up when she saw me?" Siler's eyes met Trant's with a flash of opposition. "That was because she recognized me and knew that, having been here last time there was trouble, I knew that he had been threatening her. It's a cinch! Regular minister's son, he was; the old man's a missionary, you know; spent his life till two years ago trying to turn Chinese heathens into Christians. And this Walter—our station blotter'd be black with his doings; only, ever since he made China too hot to hold him and the old man brought him back here, everything's been hushed up on the old man's account. But I happen to have been here before; and all winter I've known there'd be a killing if he ever came back. Hell! I tell you it was a relief to me to see it was him on the floor when that door went down. There are no powder marks, you see." The officer led Trant's eyes back to the wound in the head of the form beside the lounge. "He could not have shot himself. He was shot from further off than he could reach. Besides, it's on the left side."

"Yes; I saw," Trant replied.

"And that little automatic gun," the officer stooped now and picked up the pistol that lay on the floor beside the body, "is hers. I saw it the last time I was called in here."

"But how could he have known—if she shot him—that she was going to kill him just at eleven?" Trant objected, pulling from his pocket the note, which old Mr. Newberry had returned to him, and handing it to Siler. "He sent that to me; at least, the father says it is in his handwriting."

"You mean," Siler's eyes rose slowly from the paper, "that she must have told him what she was going to do—premeditated murder?"

"I mean that the first fact which we have—and which certainly seems to me wholly incompatible with anything which you have suggested so far—is that Walter Newberry foresaw his own death and set the hour of its accomplishment; and that his wife—it is plain at least to me—when she telephoned so often for me today, was trying to help him to escape from it. Now what are the other facts?" Trant went on rapidly, paying no attention to the obstinate glance in the eyes of the officer. "I distinctly heard five shots—four together and then, after a second or so, one. You heard five?"

"Yes."

"And five shots," the psychologist's quick glances had been taking in the finer details of the room, "are accounted for by the bullet holes—one through the lower pane of the window I found open, which shows it was down and closed during the shooting, as there is no break in the upper half; one on the plaster there to the side; one under the moulding there four feet to the right; and one more, in the plaster almost as far to the left. The one that killed him makes five."

"Exactly!" Siler followed Trant's indication triumphantly, "the fifth in his head! The first four went off in their struggle; and then she got away and, with the fifth, shot him."

"But the shells," Trant continued; "for that sort of revolver ejects the shells as they are fired—and I see only four. Where is the fifth?"

"You're trying to fog this thing all up, Mr. Trant."

"No; I'm trying to clear it. How could anyone have left the room after the firing of the last shot? No one could have gone through the door and not been seen by us in the hall; besides the door was bolted on the inside." Trant pointed to the two bolts. "No one could have left except by the window—this window which was open when we came in, but which must have been closed when one, at least, of the shots was being fired. You remember I went at once to it and looked out, but saw nothing."

Trant re-crossed the room swiftly and threw the window open, intently re-examining it. On the outside it was barred with a heavy grating, but he saw that the key to the grating was in the lock.

"Bring the lamp," he said to the plain-clothes man; and as Siler screened the flame against the wind—"Ah!" he continued, "Look at the ice cracked from it there—it must have been swung open. He must have gone out this way!"

"He?" Siler repeated.

The plain-clothes man had squeezed past Trant, as the grating swung back, and lamp in hand had let himself easily down to the ice-covered walk below the window, and was holding his light, shielded, just above the ground. "It was she," he cried triumphantly—"the woman, as I told you! Look at her marks here!" He showed by the flickering light the double, sharp little semi-circles of a woman's high heels cut into the ice; and, as Trant dropped down beside him, the police detective followed the sharp little heel marks to the side door of the house, where they turned and led into the kitchen entry.

"Premature, was I—eh?" Siler triumphed laconically. "We are used to these cases, Mr. Trant; we know what to expect in 'em."

Trant stood for an instant studying the sheet of ice. In this sheltered spot, freezing had not progressed so fast as in the open streets. Here, as an hour before on Michigan Avenue, he saw that his heels and those of the police officer at every step cut through the crust, while their toes left no mark. But except for the marks they themselves had made and the crescent stamp of the woman's high heels leading in sharp, clear outline from the window to the side steps of the house, there were no other imprints. Then he followed the detective into the side door of the house.

In the passage they met the patrolman. "She came down stairs just now," said that officer briskly, "and went in here."

Siler laid his hand on the door of the little sitting-room the patrolman indicated, but turned to speak a terse command to the man over his shoulder: "Go back to that room and see that things are kept as they are. Look for the fifth shell. We got four; find the other!"

Then, with a warning glance at Trant, he pushed the door open.

The girl faced the two calmly as they entered; but the whiteness of her lips showed Trant, with swift appreciation, that she could bear no more and was reaching the end of her restraint.

"You've had a little while to think this over, Mrs. Newberry," the plain-clothes man said, not unkindly, "and I guess you've seen it's best to make a clean breast of it. Mr. Walter Newberry has been in that room quite a while—the room shows it—though his father and mother seem not to have known about it."

"He"—she hesitated, then answered suddenly and collectively, "he had been there six days."

"You started to tell us about it," Trant helped her. "You said 'Walter came home'—but, what brought him here? Did he come to see you?"

"No." The girl's pale cheeks suddenly burned blood red and went white again, as she made her decision. "It was fear—deadly fear that drove him here; but I do not know of what."

"You are going to tell us all you know, are you not, Mrs. Newberry?" the psychologist urged quietly—"how he came here; and particularly how both he and you could so foresee his death that you summoned me as you did!"

"Yes; yes—I will tell you." The girl clenched and unclenched her hands, as she gathered herself together. "Six nights ago, Monday night, Mr. Trant, Walter came here. It was after midnight, and he did not ring the bell, but waked me by throwing pieces of ice and frozen sod against my window. I saw at once that something was the matter with him; so I went down and talked to him through the closed door—the side door here; for I was afraid at first to let him in, in spite of his promises not to hurt me. He told me his very life was in danger—and he had no other place to go; and he must hide here—hide; and I must not let anyone—even his mother or father—know he had come back; that I was the only one he could trust! So—he was my husband—and I let him in!

"I started to run from him, when I had opened the door; for I was afraid—afraid; but he ran at once into the old billiard-room—the store room there—and tried the locks of the door and the window gratings," the sensitive voice ran on rapidly, "and then threw himself all sweating cold on the lounge there, and went to sleep in a stupor. I thought at first it was another frenzy from whiskey or—or opium. And I stayed there. But just at morning when he woke up, I saw it wasn't that—but it was fear—fear—fear, such as I'd never seen before. He rolled off the couch and half hid under it till I'd pasted brown paper over the window panes—there were no curtains. But he wouldn't tell me what he was afraid of.

"He got so much worse as the days went by that he couldn't sleep at all; he walked the floor all the time and he smoked continually, so that nearly every day I had to slip out and get him cigarettes. He got more and more afraid of every noise outside and of every little sound within; and it made him so much worse when I told him I had to tell someone else—even his mother—that I didn't dare to. He said other people were sure to find out that he was there, then, and they would kill him—kill him! He was always worst at eleven—eleven o'clock at night; and he dreaded especially eleven o'clock Sunday night—though I couldn't find out what or why!

"I gave him my pistol—the one—the one you saw on the floor in *there.* It was Friday then; and he had been getting worse and worse all the time. Eleven o'clock every night I managed to be with him; and no one found us out. I was glad I gave him the pistol until this—until this morning. I never thought till then that he might use it to kill himself; but this morning—Sunday morning, when I came to him, he was talking about it—denying it; but I saw it was in his mind! 'I shan't shoot myself!' I heard him saying over and over again, when I came to the door. 'They can't make me shoot myself! I shan't! I shan't!'—over and over, like that. And when he had let me in and I saw him, then I knew—I knew he meant to do it! He asked me if it wasn't Sunday; and went whiter when I told him it was! So then I told him he had to trust someone now; this couldn't go on; and I spoke to him about Mr. Trant; and he said he'd try him; and he wrote the letter I mailed you—special delivery—so you could come when his father and mother were out—but he never once let go my pistol; he was wild—wild with fear. Every time I could get away to the telephone, I tried to get Mr. Trant; and the last time I got back—it was awful! It was hardly ten, but he was walking up and down with my pistol in his hand, whispering strange things over and over to himself, saying most of anything, 'No one can make me do it! No one can make me do it—even when it's eleven—even when it's eleven!'—and staring—staring at his watch which he'd taken out and laid on the table; staring and staring so—so that I knew I *must* get someone before eleven—and at last I was running next door for help—for anyone—for anything—when—when I heard the shots—I heard the shots!"

She sank forward and buried her face in her hands; rent by tearless sobs. Her fingers, white from the pressure, made long marks on her cheeks, showing livid even in the pallor of her face. But Siler pursed his lips toward Trant, and laid his hand upon her arm, sternly.

"Steady, steady, Mrs. Newberry!" the plain-clothes man warned. "You can not do that now! You say you were with your husband a moment before the shooting, but you were not in the room when he was killed?"

"Yes; yes!" the woman cried.

"You went out the door the last time?"

"The door? Yes; yes; of course the door! Why not the door?"

"Because, Mrs. Newberry," the detective replied impressively, "just at, or a moment after, the time of the shooting, a woman left that room by the window—unlocked the grating and went out the window. We have seen her marks. And you were that woman, Mrs. Newberry!"

The girl gasped and her eyes wavered to Trant; but seeing no help there now, she recovered herself quickly.

"Of course! Why, of course!" she cried. "The last time I went out, I did go out the window! It was to get the neighbors—didn't I tell you? So I went out the window!"

"Yes; we know you went out the window, Mrs. Newberry," Siler responded mercilessly. "But we know, too, you did not even start for the neighbors. We have traced your tracks on the ice straight to the side door and into the house! Now, Mrs. Newberry, you've tried to make us believe that your husband killed himself. But that won't do! Isn't it a little too strange, if you left by the window while your husband was still alive, that he let the window stay open and the grating unlocked? Yes; it's altogether too strange. You left him dead; and what we want to know—and I'm asking you straight out—is how you did it?"

"How I did it?" the girl repeated mechanically; then with sharp agony and starting eyes: "How *I* did it! Oh, no, no, I did not do it! I was there—I have not told all the truth! But when I saw you," her horrified gaze resting on Siler, "and remembered you had been here before when he—he threatened me, my only thought was to hide for his sake and for theirs," she indicated the room above, where she had taken her husband's parents, "that he had tried to carry out his threat. For before he killed himself, he tried to kill me! That's how he fired those first four shots. He tried to kill me first!"

"Well, we're getting nearer to it," Siler approved.

"Yes; now I have told you all!" the girl cried. "Oh, I have now—I have! The last time he let me in, it was almost eleven—eleven! He had my pistol in his hand, waiting—waiting! And at last he cried out it was eleven; and he raised the pistol and shot straight at me—with the face—the face of a demon with fear. It was no use to try to speak to him, or to get away; I fell on my knees before him, just as he shot at me again and again—aiming straight, not at my eyes, but at my hair; and he shot again! But again he missed me; and his face—his face was so terrible that—that I covered my own face as he aimed at me again, staring always at my hair. And that time, when he shot, I heard him fall and saw—saw that he had shot himself and he was dead!

"Then I heard your footsteps coming to the door; and I saw for the first time that Walter had opened the window before I came in. And—all without thinking anything except that if I was found there everybody would know he'd tried to kill me, I took up the key of the grating from the table where he had laid it, and went out!"

"I can't force you to confess, if you will not, Mrs. Newberry," Siler said meaningly, "though no jury, after they learned how he had threatened you, would convict you if you pleaded self-defense. We know he didn't kill himself; for he couldn't have fired that shot! And the case is complete, I think," the detective shot a finally triumphant glance at Trant, "unless Mr. Trant wants to ask you something more."

"I do!" Trant quietly spoke for the first time. "I want to ask Mrs. Newberry—since she did not actually see her husband fire the last shot that killed him—whether she was directly facing him as she knelt. It is most essential to know whether or not her head was turned to one side."

"Why, what do you mean, Mr. Trant?" the girl looked up wonderingly; for his tone seemed to promise he was coming to her defense.

"Suppose he might have shot himself before her, as she says—what's the difference whether she heard him with her head straight or her head turned?" the police detective demanded sneeringly.

"A fundamental difference in this case, Siler," Trant replied, "if taken in connection with that other most important factor of all—that Walter Newberry foretold the hour of his own death. But answer me, Mrs. Newberry—if you can be certain."

"I—certainly I can never forget how I crouched there with every muscle strained. I was directly facing him," the girl answered.

"That is very important!" The psychologist took a rapid turn or two up and down the room. "Now you told us that your husband, during the days he was shut up in that room, talked to himself almost continuously. Toward the end, you say, he repeated over and over again such sentences as 'No one can make me do it!' Can you remember any others?"

"I couldn't make much out of anything else, Mr. Trant," the girl replied, after thinking an instant. "He seemed to have hallucinations so much of the time."

"Hallucinations?"

"Yes; he seemed to think I was singing to him—as I used to sing to him, you know, when we were first married—and he would catch hold of me and say, 'Don't—don't—don't sing!' Or at other times he would clutch me and tell me to sing low—sing low!"

"Anything else?"

"Nothing else even so sensible as that," the girl responded. "Many things he said made me think he had lost his mind. He would often stare at me in an absorbed way, looking me over from head to foot, and say, 'Look here; if anyone asks you—anyone at all—whether your mother had large or small feet, say small—never admit she had large feet, or you'll never get in. Do you understand?' "

"What?" The psychologist stood for several moments in deep thought; then his eyes flashed suddenly with excitement. "What!" he cried again, clutching the chair-back as he leaned toward her. "He said that to you when he was absorbed?"

"A dozen times at least, Mr. Trant," the girl replied, staring at him in startled wonder.

"Remarkable! Yes; this is extraordinary!" Trant strode up and down excitedly. "Nobody could have hoped for so fortunate a confirmation of the evidence in this remarkable case. We knew that Walter Newberry foresaw his own death; now we actually get from him himself, the key—the possibly complete explanation of his danger—"

"Explanation!" shouted the police detective. "I've heard no explanation! You're throwing an impressive bluff, Mr. Trant; but I've heard nothing yet to make me doubt that Newberry met his death at the hands of his wife; and I'll arrest her for his murder!"

"I can't prevent your arresting Mrs. Newberry." Trant swung to look the police officer between the eyes hotly. "But I can tell you—if you care to hear it—how Walter Newberry died! He was not shot by his wife; he did not die by his own hand, as she believes and has told you. The fifth shot—you have not found the fifth shell yet, Siler; and you will not find it, for it was not fired either by Walter Newberry or his wife. As she knelt, blinding her eyes as she faced her husband, Mrs. Newberry could not know whether the fifth shot sounded in front or behind her. If her head was not turned to one side, as she says it was not, then—and this is a simple psychological fact, Siler, though it seems to be unknown to you—it would be impossible for her to distinguish between sounds directly ahead and directly behind. It was not at her—at her hair—that her husband fired the four shots whose empty shells we found, but over her head at the window directly behind her. And it was through this just opened window that the fifth shot came and killed him—the shot at eleven o'clock—which he had foreseen and dreaded!"

"You must think I'm easy, Mr. Trant," said the police officer derisively. "You can't clear her by dragging into this business some third person who never existed. For there were no marks, and marks would have been left by anybody who came to the window!"

"Marks!" Trant echoed. "If you mean marks on the window-sill and floor, I cannot show you any. But the murderer did leave, of course, one mark which in the end will probably prove final, even to you, Siler. The shell of the fifth shot is missing because he carried it away in his revolver. But the bullet—it will be a most remarkable coincidence, Siler, if you find that the bullet which killed young Newberry was the same as the four we know were shot from his wife's little automatic revolver!"

"But the ice—the ice under the window!" shouted the detective. "You saw for yourself how her heels and ours cut through the crust; and you saw that there were no other heel marks, as there must have been if anyone had stood outside the window to look through it, or to fire through it, as you say!"

"When you have reached the point, Siler," said Trant, more quietly, "where you can think of some class of men who would have left no heel marks but who could have produced the effect on young Newberry's mind which his wife has described, you will have gone far toward the discovery of the real murderer of Walter Newberry. In the meantime, I have clews enough; and I hope to find help, which cannot be given me by the city police, to enable me to bring the murderer to justice. I will ask you, Mrs. Newberry," he glanced toward the girl, "to let me have a photograph of your husband, or"—he hesitated, unable to tell from her manner whether she had heard him—"I will stop on my way out to ask his photograph from his father."

He glanced once more from the detective to the pale girl, who, since she received notice of her arrest, had stood as though cut from marble, with small hands tightly clenched and blind eyes fixed on vacancy; then he left them.

The next morning's papers, which carried startling headlines of the murder of Walter Newberry, brought Police Detective Siler a feeling of satisfaction with his own work. The detective, it is true, had been made a little doubtful of his own assumptions by Trant's confident suggestion of a third person as the murderer. But he was reassured by the newspaper accounts, though they contained merely an elaboration of his own theory of an attack by the missionary's dissipated son on his wife and her shooting him in self-defense, which Siler had successfully impressed not only on the police but on the reporters as well.

Even the discovery on the second morning that the bullet which had now been taken from young Newberry's body was of .38 calibre and, as Trant had predicted, not at all similar to the steel .32 calibre bullets shot by the little automatic pistol which had belonged to young Mrs. Newberry, did not disturb the police officer's self-confidence, though it obviously weakened the case against the wife. And when, on the day following, Siler received orders to report at an hour when he was not ordinarily on duty at the West End Police Station, where Mrs. Newberry was still held under arrest, he pushed open, with an air of importance, the door of the captain's room, to which the sharp nod of the desk sergeant had directed him.

The detective's first glance showed him the room's three occupants—the huge figure of Division Inspector of Police Walker, lolling in the chair before the captain's desk; a slight, dark man—unknown to Siler—near the window; and Luther Trant at the end of the room busy arranging a somewhat complicated apparatus.

Trant, with a short nod of greeting, at once called Siler to his aid.

With the detective's half-suspicious, half-respectful assistance, the psychologist stretched across the end of the room a white sheet about ten feet long, three feet high, and divided into ten rectangles by nine vertical lines. Opposite this, and upon a table about ten feet away, he set up a small electrical contrivance, consisting of two magnets and wire coils supporting a small, round mirror about an inch in diameter and so delicately set upon an axis that it turned at the slightest current coming to the coils below it. In front of this little mirror Trant placed a shaded electric lamp in such a position that its light was reflected from the mirror upon the sheet at the end of the room. Then he put down a carbon plate and a zinc plate at the edge of the table; set a single cell battery under the table; connected the battery with the coils controlling the mirror, and connected them also with the zinc and carbon plates.

"I suppose," Siler burst out finally with growing curiosity which even the presence of the inspector could not restrain, "I haven't got any business to ask what all this machinery is for?"

"I was about to explain," Trant answered.

The psychologist rested his hands lightly on the plates upon the table; and, as he did so, a slight and, in fact, imperceptible current passed through him from the battery; but it was enough to slightly move the light reflected upon the screen.

"This apparatus," the psychologist continued, as he saw even Walker stare strangely at this result, "is the newest electric psychometer—or 'the soul machine,' as it is already becoming popularly known. It is made after the models of Dr. Peterson, of Columbia

University, and of the Swiss psychologist Jung, of Zurich, and is probably the most delicate and efficient instrument there is for detecting and registering human emotion—such as anxiety, fear, and the sense of guilt. Like the galvanometer which you saw me use to catch Caylis, the Bronson murderer, in the first case where I worked with the police, Inspector Walker," the psychologist turned to his tall friend, "this psychometer—which is really an improved and much more spectacular galvanometer—is already in use by physicians to get the truth from patients when they don't want to tell it. No man can control the automatic reflexes which the apparatus was particularly designed to register when the subject is examined with his hands merely resting upon these two plates! As you see," he placed his hands in the test position again, "these are arranged so that the very slight current passing through my arms—so slight that I cannot feel it at all—moves that mirror and swings the reflected light upon the screen according to the amount of current coming through me. As you see now, the light stays almost steady in the center of the screen, because the amount of current coming through me is very slight, as I am not under any stress or emotion of any sort. But if I were confronted suddenly with an object to arouse fear—if, for instance, it reminded me of a crime I was trying to conceal—I might be able to control every other evidence of my fright, but I could not control the involuntary sweating of my glands and the automatic changes in the blood pressure which allow the electric current to flow more freely through me. The light would then register immediately the amount of my emotion by the distance it swung along the screen. But I will give you a much more perfect demonstration of the instrument," the psychologist concluded, while all three examined it with varying degrees of interest and respect, "during the next half hour while I am making the test that I have planned to determine the murderer of Walter Newberry."

"You mean," cried Siler, "you are going to test the woman?"

"I might have thought it necessary to test Mrs. Newberry," Trant answered, "if the evidence at the house of the presence of a third person who was the murderer had not been so plain as to make any test of her useless."

"Then you—you still stick to that?" Siler demanded derisively.

"Thanks to Mr. Ferris, who is a special agent of the United States government," Trant motioned to the slight, dark man who was the fourth member of the party, "I have been able to fix upon four men, one of whom, I feel absolutely certain, shot and killed young Newberry through the window of the billiard-room that night. Inspector Walker has had all four arrested and brought here. Mr. Ferris's experience and thorough knowledge enabled me to lay my hands on them much more easily than I had feared, though I was able to go to him with information which would have made their detection almost certain sooner or later."

"You mean information you got at the house?" asked Siler, less derisively, as he caught the attentive attitude of the inspector.

"Just so, Siler; and it was as much at your disposal as mine," Trant replied. "It seemed to mean nothing to you that Walter Newberry knew the hour at which he was to die—which made it seem more like an execution than a murder; or that in his terror he raved that 'he would not do it—that they could not make him do it'—plainly meaning commit suicide. Perhaps you don't know that it is an Oriental custom, under certain conditions, to allow a man who has been sentenced to death, the alternative of carrying out the decree upon himself before a certain day and hour that has been decided upon. But certainly his ravings, as told us by his wife, ought to have given you a clew, if you had heard only that sentence which she believed an injunction not to sing loudly, but which was in reality a name—Sing Lo!"

"Then—it was a Chinaman!" cried Siler, astounded.

"It could hardly have been any other sort of man, Siler. For there is no other to whom it could be commended as a matter of such vital importance whether his mother had small feet or large, as was shown in the other sentence Mrs. Newberry repeated to us. But to a Chinaman that fact is of prime importance; for it indicates whether he is of low birth, when his mother would have had large feet, or of high, in which case his women of the last generation would have had their feet bound and made artificially smaller. It was that sentence that sent me to Mr. Ferris."

"I see—I see!" exclaimed the crest-fallen detective. "But if it was a Chinaman, then, even with that thing," he pointed to the instrument Trant had just finished arranging, "you'll never get the truth out of him. You can't get anything out of a Chinaman! Inspector Walker will tell you that!"

"I know, Siler," Trant answered, "that it is absolutely hopeless to expect a confession from a Chinaman; they are so accustomed to control the obvious signs of fear, guilt, the slightest trace or hint of emotion, even under the most rigid examination, that it had come to be regarded as a characteristic of the race. But the new psychology does not deal with these obvious signs; it deals with the involuntary reactions in the blood and glands which are common to all men alike—even to Chinamen! We have in here," the psychologist looked to the door of an inner room, "the four Chinamen—Wong Bo, Billy Lee, Sing Lo, and Sin Chung Ming.

"My first test is to see which of them—if any—were acquainted with Walter Newberry; and next who, if any of them, knew where he lived. For this purpose I have brought here Newberry's photograph and a view of his father's house, which I had taken yesterday." He stooped to one of his suitcases, and took out first a dozen photographs of young men, among them Newberry's; and about twenty views of different houses, among which he mixed the one of the Newberry house. "If you are ready, inspector, I will go ahead with the test."

The psychologist threw open the door of the inner room, showing the four Celestials in a stolid group, and summoned first Wong Bo, who spoke English.

Trant, pushing a chair to the table, ordered the Oriental to sit down and place his hands upon the plates at the table's edge before him. The Chinaman obeyed passively, as if expecting some sort of torture. Immediately the light moved to the center of the screen, where it had moved when Trant was touching the plates, then kept on toward the next line beyond. But as Wong Bo's first suspicious excitement—which the movement of the light betrayed—subsided as he felt nothing, the light returned to the center of the room.

"You know why you have been brought here, Wong Bo?" Trant demanded of the Chinaman.

"No," the Chinaman answered shortly, the light moving six inches as he did so.

"You know no reason at all why you should be brought here?"

"No," the Chinaman answered calmly again, while the light moved about six inches. Trant waited till it returned to its normal position in the center of the screen.

"Do you know an American named Paul Tobin, Wong Bo?"

"No," the Chinaman answered. This time the light remained stationary.

"Nor one named Ralph Murray?"

"No." Still the light stayed stationary.

"Hugh Larkin, Wong Bo?"

"No." Calmly again, and with the light quiet in the center of the screen.

"Walter Newberry?" the psychologist asked in precisely the same tone as he had put the preceding question.

"No," the Chinaman answered laconically again; but before he answered and almost before the name was off Trant's lips, the light—which had stayed almost still at the recital of the other names—jumped quickly to one side across the screen, crossed the first division line and moved on toward the second and stayed there. It had moved over a foot! But the face of the Oriental was as quiet, patient, and impassive as before. The psychologist made no comment; but waited for the light slowly to return to its normal position. Then he took up his pile of portrait photographs.

"You say you do not know any of these men, Wong Bo," Trant said quietly, but with the effect of sending the light swinging half the distance again. "You may know them, but not by name, so I want you to look at these pictures." Trant showed him the first. "Do you know that man, Wong Bo?"

"No," the Chinaman answered patiently. Trant glanced quickly to see that the light stayed steady; then showed him four more pictures of young men, getting the same answer and precisely the same effect. He showed the sixth picture—the photograph of Walter Newberry.

"You know him?" Trant asked precisely in the same tone as the others.

"No," Wong Bo answered with precisely the same patient impassiveness. Not a muscle of his face changed nor an eyelash quivered; but as soon as Trant had displayed this picture and the Chinaman's eyes fell upon it, the light on the screen again jumped a space and settled near the second line to the left!

Trant put aside the portraits and took up the pictures of the houses. He waited again till the light slowly resumed its central position on the screen.

"You have never gone to this house, Wong Bo?" He showed a large, stone mansion, not at all like the Newberrys'.

"No," the Chinaman replied, impassive as ever. The light remained steady.

"Nor to this—or this—or this?" Trant showed three more with the same result. "Nor this?" He displayed now a rear view of the Newberry house.

"No," quietly again; but, as when Newberry's name was mentioned and his picture shown, the light swung swiftly to one side and stood trembling, again a foot and a half to the left of its normal position when shown the other pictures!

"That will do for the present." Trant dismissed Wong Bo. "Send him back to his cell, away from the others," he said to Walker, with flashing eyes. "We will try the rest—in turn!"

And rapidly, and with precisely the same questions and test he examined Billy Lee and Sing Lo. Each man made precisely the same denials and in the same manner as Wong Bo, but to the increasing wonder and surprise of Walker and the utter astonishment of Siler, for each man the light stayed steady when they were asked if they knew the other Americans named; while for each the light swung suddenly wide and trembling when Walter Newberry's name was mentioned and when his picture was shown. And for Sing Lo also—precisely as for Wong Bo—the light wavered suddenly and swung, quivering, a foot and a half to the left when they were shown the Newberry home.

"Bring in Sin Chung Ming!" the psychologist commanded with subdued fire shining in his eyes; but he hid all signs of excitement himself, as the government agent handed the last Oriental over to him. Trant set the yellow hands over the plates and started his questions in the same quiet tone as before. For the first two questions the light moved three times, as it had done with the others—and as even Ferris and Siler now seemed to be expecting it to move—only this time it seemed even to the police officers to swing a little wider. And at Walter Newberry's name, for the first time in any of the tests, it crossed the second dividing line at the first impulse; moved toward the third and stayed there.

Even Siler now waited with bated breath, as Trant took up his pile of pictures; and, as he came to the picture of the murdered man and the house where he had lived, for the second and third time in that single test the light—stationary when Sin Chung Ming glanced at the other photographs—trembled across the screen to the third dividing line. For the others it had moved hardly eighteen inches, but when Sin Chung Ming saw the pictured face of the murdered man it had swung almost three feet.

"Inspector Walker," Trant drew the giant officer aside, "this is the man, I think, for the final test. You will carry it out as I arranged with you?"

"Sin Chung Ming," the psychologist turned back to the Chinaman swiftly, as the inspector, without comment, left the room, "you have been watching the little light, have you not? You saw it move? It moved when you lied, Sin Chung Ming! It will always move when you lie. It moved when you said you did not know Walter Newberry; it moved when you saw his picture, and pretended not to know it; it moved when you saw the picture of his house, which you said you did not know! Look how it is moving now, as you grow afraid that you have betrayed your secret to us now, Sin Chung Ming—as you have and will." Trant pointed to the swinging light in triumph.

A low knock sounded on the door; but Trant, watching the light now slowly returning to its normal place, waited an instant more. Then he himself rapped gently on the table. The door to the next room—directly opposite the Chinaman's eyes—swung slowly open; and through it they could see the scene which Trant and the inspector had prepared. In the middle of the floor knelt young Mrs. Newberry, her back toward them, her hands pressed against her face; and six feet beyond a man stood, facing her. Ferris and Siler looked in astonishment at Trant, for there was no meaning in this scene to them at first. Then Siler remembered suddenly, and Ferris guessed, that such must have been the scene in the billiard room that night at the Newberrys'; thus it must have been seen by the man who fired through the window at young Newberry that night—and to him, but to that man only—it would bring a shock of terror. And appreciating this, they stared swiftly, first at the Chinaman's passionless and immobile face; then at the light upon the screen and saw it leap across bar after bar. And, as the Chinaman saw it, and knew that it was betraying him, it leaped and leaped again; swung wider and wider; until at last the impassiveness of the Celestial's attitude was for an instant broken, and Sin Chung Ming snatched his hands from the metal plates.

"I had guessed that anyway, Sin Chung Ming," Trant swiftly closed the door, as Walker returned to the room, "for your feeling at the sound of Walter Newberry's name and at the sight of his picture was so much deeper than any of the rest. So, it was you that fired the shot, after watching the house with Sing Lo and Wong Bo, as their fright when they saw the picture of the house showed, while Billy Lee was not needed at the house that night and has never seen it, though he knew what was to be done. That is all I need of you now, Sin Chung Ming; for I have learned what I wanted to know."

As the fourth of the Chinamen was led away to his cell, Trant turned back to Inspector Walker and Siler.

"I must acknowledge my debt to Mr. Ferris," he said with a glance toward the man of whom he spoke, "for help in solving this case, without which I could not have brought it to a conclusion without giving much more time to the investigation. Mr. Ferris, as you already know, Inspector Walker, as special agent for the Government, has for years been engaged in the enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws. The sentence repeated to us by Mrs. Newberry, in which her husband, delirious with fright, seemed warning some one that to acknowledge that his mother had large feet would prevent him from 'getting in,' seemed to me to establish a connection between young Newberry's terror and an evasion of the exclusion laws. I went at once to Mr. Ferris to test this idea, and he recognized its application at once.

"As the exclusion laws against all but a very small class of Chinese are being more strictly enforced than ever before, there has been a large and increasing traffic among the Chinese in bogus papers to procure entry into this country of Chinese belonging to the excluded classes. And in addition to being supplied with forged official papers for entry, as Ferris can tell you, the applicants of the classes excluded are supplied with regular 'coaching papers' so that they can correctly answer the questions asked them at San Francisco or Seattle. The injunction to 'say your mother had small feet' was recognized at once by Ferris as one of the instructions of the 'coaching paper' to get a laborer entered as a man of the merchant class.

"Mr. Ferris and I together investigated the career of Walter Newberry after his return from China, where he had spent nearly the whole of his life, and we were able to establish, as we expected we might, a connection between him and the Sing Lo Trading Company—a Chinese company which Mr. Ferris had long suspected of dealing in fraudulent admission papers, though he had never been able to bring home to them any proof. We found, also, that young Newberry had spent and gambled away much more money in the last few months than he had legitimately received. And we were able to make certain that this money had come to him through the Sing Lo Company, though obviously not for such uses. As it is not an uncommon thing for Chinese engaged in the fraudulent bringing in of their countrymen to confide part of the business to unprincipled Americans—especially as all papers have to be viséd by American consuls and disputes settled in American courts—we became certain that young Newberry had been serving the Sing Lo Company in this capacity. It was plain that he had diverted a large amount of money from the ends for which the members of the Sing Lo Company had intended it to be used, and his actions, as described by his wife, made it equally certain that he had been sentenced by members of the Company to death, and given the Oriental alternative of commiting suicide before eleven o'clock on Sunday night, or else the company would take the carrying out of the sentence into their own hands. Now whether it will be possible to convict all four of the Chinamen we had here for complicity in his murder, or whether Sin Chung Ming, who fired the shot, will be the only one tried, I do not know. But the others, in any case, will be turned over to Mr. Ferris for prosecution for their evasions of the exclusion laws."

"Exclusion laws!" exclaimed the giant inspector—"Mr. Ferris can look after his exclusion laws if he wants. What we want, Trant, is to convict these men for the murder of Walter Newberry; and knowing what we do now, we will get a confession out of them some way!"

"I doubt whether, under the circumstances, any force could be brought to bear that would extort any formal confession from these Chinamen," the Government agent shook his head. "They would lose their 'face' and with it all reputation among their countrymen."

But at this instant the door of the room was dashed open and the flushed face of the desk sergeant appeared before them.

"Inspector!" he cried sharply, "the chink's dead! The last one, Sin Chung Ming, choked himself as soon as he was alone in his cell!"

The inspector turned to Trant who looked to Ferris, first, in his surprise.

"What? Ah! I see!" The immigration officer comprehended after an instant. "He considered what we found from him here confession enough—especially since he implicated the others with him—so that his 'face' was lost. To him, it was unpardonable weakness to let us find what we did. I think, then, Mr. Trant," he concluded quietly, "that you can safely consider your case proved. His suicide is the surest proof that this Chinaman considered that he had confessed."

Julian Symons and Civilization's Discontents

By Steven R. Carter

Julian Symons has helped to increase the range and worth of crime fiction in many ways. For example, his crime novels, like Ross Macdonald's, combine ingenious plotting with psychological and social probing. In addition, he has a gift, like Nicolas Freeling, for wry humor and satire. However, the variety of his forms and techniques goes beyond that of any other crime writer. He has written conventional detective novels (*Bland Beginning, Bogue's Fortune, The Belting Inheritance*), a detective fiction parody (*The Immaterial Murder Case*), a political thriller (*The Broken Penny*), several psychological crime novels (*The Man Who Killed Himself, The Man Whose Dreams Came True*, etc.), some nightmarish portrayals of modern society (*The Thirty-First of February, The Players and the Game*, etc.), some acute social satires (*The Plain Man, The End of Solomon Grundy*), and a humorous novel about a contemporary incarnation of Sherlock Holmes (*A Three-Pipe Problem*). The success of many of his experiments in the form has shown that the mystery need not constrain a talented writer either technically or thematically. His main contribution to the crime novel is that he has proven how flexible a vehicle it is for presenting a personal vision of the stresses of modern western civilization.

In an essay on his mystery fiction, Symons stated:

> What I have consciously been trying to do in most of my crime stories is to use an act of violence to point up my feelings about the pressures of urban living. An advertising man becomes wholly psychotic, principally because of the meaningless and inhuman work he does [*The Thirty-First of February*]; the pressures of life in a "progressive" housing complex involve a rough-neck who lives there in acts of violence, possibly leading to murder [*The End of Solomon Grundy*]; when teenagers kill a man, retributory wheels are put in motion, but the people who turn them are not concerned with justice, only with finding a scapegoat [*The Progress of a Crime*].[1]

Symons is disturbed most by the narrowing of personality through western civilization's excessive emphases on order, respectability, mechanical routine, and material "success"; by lack of communication stemming from inhibitions of narrowed personalities, from efforts to maintain respectable images, and from fears of facing difficult and unpleasant issues; by society's moralistic attempt to eliminate relatively harmless games (sexual and otherwise) which offer an "unsuitable" release from social tensions; and by the lack of sufficient alternatives to the stresses of civilization. All of these serious concerns, appropriate for mainstream fiction, are treated in depth in Symons' crime novels.

I

In one of Symons' early novels, *The Narrowing Circle*, a character discusses Mildred Forster's "circular theory of personality":

> The circle of actions that may seem "natural" to the infant, she says, is boundless, because its concepts have not been compressed and distorted by the taboos of what we call civilized living. For the small child the possibilities of mind and imagination—of the personality, in fact—have no limits whatever. Mildred conceives the creation of the adult personality as a narrowing-down of the possibilities inherent in the infant mind. I am repressed, therefore I am. Every new taboo imposed by adults and tradition narrows the circle of the personality.[2]

Symons does not intend this reference to the "taboos" of "civilized living" to include only the moral and legal codes which societies set up. As the rest of the novel suggests, Symons is also pointing to social patterns which dictate how a person must behave in order to succeed. In Symons' eyes, the preference for money and social status over such things as spontaneity, creativity, meaningful work, etc., is a destructive one. A large part of the horror at the end of *The Narrowing Circle* comes from the reader's awareness that Dave Nelson is killing an essential part of himself by his decision to accept the sleazy material success which an ulcer-ridden entrepreneur offers him. He has already narrowed his personality over a long period by accepting a job in a publishing firm which puts out standardized, meaningless popular literature. He has further narrowed himself by striving for the only kind of achievement which is valued by this firm: that is, by sacrificing everything else for the sake of promotion, social status, and money. His pursuit of these goals leads to his increasing insensitivity toward his wife and other people and to his rejection of a more stimulating life as a freelance writer. His pattern of behavior fits Mildred Forster's definition of a psychopath as a person "for whom the circle [of possibilities] has been so narrowed by repression that only one action appears possible" and for whom "the complications of life have been eliminated by the destruction of choice."[3] However, even though his life has been simplified by his inability to consider any alternative to his narrowing career, he is not free from pressures. The stresses involved in the pattern of life he has accepted are revealed by the way he feels every morning with his "eyes crusted with unsatisfying sleep" and "a bad taste in the mouth behind the spurious freshness of the foaming toothpaste."[4] They are most fully disclosed, however, by Dave's perpetual headache which seems like a tight, circular band around his head.

Similarly, in *The Thirty-First of February,* the advertising copywriter Anderson pays a high price in tension for narrowing his personality to fit the mold of a successful agency man. The foundation of Anderson's life is hollow and easily crumbled because he can't believe in the value of what he is doing. No matter how well he does his job, he can't feel confidence in himself because he knows that his greatest successes are stupid and worthless. In addition, his constant need to mask his emotions in order to hold his job puts him out of touch with his deeper self. The games he plays take him too far away from reality and render him vulnerable to Inspector Cresse's games. Anderson can't cope with the little distortions of reality that Inspector Cresse arranges because he has no firm set of values—no firm self-view or world-view—which would enable him to shrug them off. The insecurity which Cresse provokes in Anderson is just an extension of the insecurity he has felt all along in the advertising agency.

The man who destroys Anderson is also a narrowed personality, one who believes in the moral and legal taboos of his culture and who seeks to impose them on others. Where Anderson sees too little meaning in the world, Cresse looks for too much. In a letter dated 6 December 1975, Symons wrote me that "in the THIRTY-FIRST OF FEBRUARY somebody like Javert or Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor was in my mind when I invented Cresse." Cresse is an absolutist, a fanatic, a believer in an impossible ideal of human behavior and justice. For him, chance does not exist, accidents do not happen. Mrs. Anderson's clumsy misfortune in falling down the stairs is an offense against his vision of the world. Because he can't accept the role which happenstance plays in human life, he must establish a human scapegoat for each catastrophe. Moreover, his self-righteousness enables him to decide that he is justified in pursuing and punishing through any means all those who violate his sense of orderliness in human affairs. As his statements in the last scene make clear, he is also a sadist who enjoys the cruel games he plays with "unrighteous" mice. Since he is convinced he is right, he can be vicious without any sense of guilt. He is a frightening man because he exercises—and abuses—power in the name of a narrow ideal.

One other major way in which personalities are narrowed in Symons' crime novels is through submitting to routine. In the letter of 6 December 1975, Symons told me:

> . . . another aspect of the books that you don't mention, but is certainly in my mind, is the mechanical nature of people's behaviour. When Anderson has sex he becomes a number, the structure of the firm in THE PLAYERS AND THE GAME is meant to imply a mechanical order, etc. There are a good many instances of this. Gilbert Welton [in THE MAN WHO LOST HIS WIFE] glimpses what seems a different reality, but returns to a life which may be "sane" but is essentially mechanical. And so on.

In a symbolic scene in *The Thirty-First of February,* "a small regiment of black Homburg hats marched down Bezyl Street."[5] The scene leaves little doubt that the men beneath the hats are cogs in a machine. Significantly, Anderson wears a hat while he is attached to the agency, but misplaces and eventually loses it when he is jogged out of his mechanical life into chaos and irrational terror. It is also noteworthy that Inspector Cresse, who is described as unimaginative, always keeps a firm hold on his bowler hat.

Symons' short story "An Experiment in Personality" in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Bag* indicates how much is surrendered by adapting to rigid morality and stultifying routine. The host of the party has set up the game of "Anonymous People" to show his friends and acquaintances what slobs they are under their veneer of respectability. When the game is over, he points out all the acts of petty destruction they committed because they were freed from their social identities by wearing rubber costumes. However, during the game, the main character, Melly, discovered an intensity of feeling she never knew before because one of the anonymous people stroked her rubber exterior with rubber-covered hands and tried to choke her. She stopped the choking with a knife stab to the arm "yet, before she lost consciousness, she wanted to express regret for this action and to make it known somehow that her predominant feeling had been one of pleasure, almost ecstasy."[6] Afterwards, she and the man who stroked her resume their social identities and restrictions so that when they marry "their lovemaking [is] infrequent, inhibited, and produce[s] no children."[7] She wonders then if there are "possibilities in her personality that remained unfulfilled?"[8] There are. Some of these possibilities are vicious and dangerous, some are vital and passionate, most combine the peril and the pleasure, and she—and everyone else—has cause to regret that society tries so hard to exclude all of them.[9]

II

In his letter of 6 December 1975, Symons suggested:

> I think that, just in general, I am more aware of, more keen to stress, the failures of communication between one human being and another, than seems to come through in your view of my work. Most of my husbands and wives are operating at what might be called emotional cross purposes. You might use Eliot as an epigraph:
>
> I gotta use words when I talk to you
> But whether you understand or whether you don't
> That's nothing to me and nothing to you.
>
> I think I'm very often implying that people don't understand other people. Certainly the question of *communication* is a central one for me.

As Symons points out again and again in his crime novels, maintaining a "civilized" surface in a marriage may conceal dangerous tensions and allow them to increase. For example, in *The Players and the Game,* Paul and Alice Vane create many difficulties for themselves by failing to talk to each other about anything significant. The reason they have never quarreled is that "when they were alone they avoided any delicate or controversial subject."[10] Above all, they have remained silent about the two incidents in which Paul made limited advances to little girls. Their reluctance to quarrel means that they keep too many thoughts to themselves, and Alice often claims that Paul doesn't know her and she doesn't know him. When the police begin to treat Paul as a murder suspect, Alice refuses to stand by him because she regards him as a stranger who has brought her much grief without letting her know why.

Similarly, in *The Man Who Lost His Wife,* Gilbert Welton damages his marriage to Virginia through his lack of vital communication with her. Virginia leaves Gilbert for a while, partly because he has run their marriage on a tight, mechanical basis, but also partly because he refuses to share his deepest feelings and fears with her. The two problems are connected since Gilbert's uncommunicativeness is tied to his desire to keep his marriage predictable and respectable. Even after he has sought her in Yugoslavia, discovered a fiercely emotional side to his nature, and possibly killed a man because of her, he remains reluctant to tell her anything important about himself. He has a chance to develop a more meaningful and exciting relationship with his wife when they are reunited after his return from Yugoslavia and he throws it away. When she notices that he is somehow changed because of his trip, she asks him to tell her about the adventure and she seems able to respond sympathetically and understandingly to a full explanation of his feelings and actions if he chooses to make one. Because he decides not to take advantage of her willingness to listen, he "loses" his wife again. She will stay with him, but there will be no real contact between them.

Probably the most ironic–and melodramatic–example of the dangers of noncommunication occurs in *The Plot Against Roger Rider.* To hide his money and murder schemes, Roger Rider acts like a hearty, naive fool. He reveals a little of his true character to his wife Amanda because he needs her help in his schemes, but he doesn't share many of his thoughts and emotions with her. Amanda thus has no qualms about killing him for his money since she regards him as a bore! Obviously, communication and understanding are important at times.

III.

One of the most intriguing and unusual aspects of Symons' work is his stress on games. In a letter dated 6 October 1975, Symons stated:

> It's most perceptive of you to notice the game element in my books. The BBC put out a half hour programme about them devised by a bright, and indeed brilliant, young man who called the whole thing "Games". Scenes from various books, using the same actors in each scene to suggest that the characters were variants of the same archetypal figures, were intercut with long (too long I daresay!) comments of mine. The games theme, anyway, with crime as a game turning into earnest, is a distinct and permanent–and intentional–feature of the books.

In Symons' eyes, games often serve as safety valves which enable people to endure the various pressures which civilization places on them and to cope with their insecurities. This function is extremely important since, as the company psychologist in *The Players and the Game* argues, "anything that causes insecurity is a breeding ground for crime" and "the 'bad elements' in our society are the ones on whom the greatest pressures have been applied."[11] For example, Bob Lowson, the Timbals Plastics managing director in *The Players and the Game,* is a tolerant and sympathetic man because he can escape from his business tensions by visiting a prostitute who caters to his masochistic impulses. Similarly, Brian Hartford, the deputy managing director at Timbals, can partially hold in check his worry-induced sadistic impulses by venting them in his War Game. In a comparable manner, Alice Vane is probably saved from suicidal impulses by her desperate involvement with bridge games.

As *The Players and the Game* suggests, a prime source of the insecurity which produces a need for games is the feeling that one's life is in the hands of another person or an institution. Esther Melandine's paper on "Job Enrichment" implies the importance of removing the status distinctions which make men on lower levels worry about being judged by men on upper levels and men on upper levels worry about being nudged out of their positions by men on lower levels. According to Esther, by making decisions the responsibility of groups with no bosses and no subordinates, the company would enable the workers and "managers" to function more effectively because they would be free of their sense of powerlessness. Ironically, however, the decision about whether Esther's proposal will be accepted at Timbals depends on the three highest ranking Plastics people. In addition, Julian Symons notes in his letter of 1 March 1976: "The point about what goes on in Plastics is that life steadily becomes more mechanical for us all. All the stuff about 'job enrichment' must therefore be seen ironically."

Any system which exercises enormous power and creates insecurities is potentially destructive. This statement is as valid for religion as for business and politics. True to the company psychologist's and Superintendent Paling's prediction, both of the killers in *The Players and the Game* were given strict religious training which has had a detrimental effect on them. One of the influences of their upbringing has been to inhibit them and make them shy so that they are hindered from seeking normal sexual outlets or feeling comfortable about the fantasies they have developed in compensation. Joan Brown, for example, once believed in her religion so much that she wanted to be "a white person," a vessel of purity. This attitude made her ashamed of her desires and created such tensions in her as a teenager that she then sought release by torturing a dog, a foreshadowing of her later delight in torturing human beings. Like a reflection of the youthful Joan Brown made through a glass darkly, the older Jonathan Darling is now concerned about the "purity" of their attacks on female victims and wants to remove all sexual overtones from them. Even in the midst of this realization of a fantasy, Darling remains inhibited and impotent.

Symons' idea that crime can be "a game turning into earnest" underlies the cruel and murderous attacks of Darling and Joan Brown. Darling's sadistic impulses were long held in check by his delight in fantasies of power simultaneously provoked and satisfied by Dracula films and Nietzsche's books about the "will-to-power." However, when he meets Joan Brown who also has fantasies of power exercised brutally over others, he decides to make his fantasies real. Significantly, he questions whether the torturing of Anne Marie Duport and Louise Allbright can still be called a game. The most important suggestion he makes is "that we may think things, yet must not do them, that the idea of the deed is permitted but not the deed itself. This is Behavior as Games."[12] Fantasy which is recognized as fantasy affords a relatively harmless release from pressures. Fantasy which turns "real" and which is no longer recognized as fantasy can render the fantasizer dangerous to himself and to others.

Another good example of "crime as a game turning into earnest" occurs in *The Pipe Dream.* Bill Hunter's kidnapping plot with Anthea starts out as an exciting fantasy which the two of them enjoy discussing and then becomes serious. Bill remarks at several points that he is only talking about the plot as a game; he doesn't intend to go through with it. However, he finally decides to convert the plan into reality and, of course, the results are disastrous.

Some further examples of the dangers of excessive indulging in fantasies occur in *The Color of Murder* and *The Man Whose Dreams Came True.* In the former, John Wilkins considers murdering his wife partly because of her failure to live up to his fantasies of what a wife should be and partly because of his desire to fulfill a new fantasy centered around Sheila Morton. In the new fantasy, he sees himself as more dashing and romantic than he is and Sheila as more interested in him than she is. Of course, his fantasies are checked when he discovers that Sheila only dated him out of pity for him and that she is now engaged to be married to someone else. However, if his fantasies had not been brought to earth so quickly by reality, then he might eventually have done the murder he imagined.[13] In this respect, he resembles Tony Jones in *The Man Whose Dreams Came True.* Tony also is led to the brink of murder because of his fantasies about a woman whom he really doesn't know. Tony's case is different from John's in that he is being manipulated by the woman who takes advantage of his misunderstanding of her to make him the patsy for a murder which she has committed. Yet Tony, like John, is simultaneously weak and capable of contemplating murder because he prefers his fantasy life to his real one. Both men are destroyed because they lean too heavily on fantasy and are therefore unable to protect themselves adequately in the real world.

Symons has implied often that anyone might become a criminal by being subjected to too much pressure, by having insufficient outlets for release from pressure, or by surrendering to his fantasies. In his letter of 1 March 1976, he noted:

> What was in my mind in relation to *Players* was—very much as you said—that sadistic impulses can be expressed comparatively harmlessly by Hartford, masochistic impulses by Lowson. It's when the impulse is almost totally frustrated that it may become psychopathic. I meant also to imply that the difference between "normal" people like Lowson and Hartford, and "abnormal" ones like Darling is small.

Next to *The Players and the Game,* the universal vulnerability to forces from within and without is suggested most strongly in *The Man Who Lost His Wife.* For example, in the scene in which the young hitchhiker David confronts the obnoxious Jerry Painter on a lonely stretch of road and points a gun at him, he laments that "it's so damned easy [to murder]. They shouldn't make it so easy."[14] Except for his temper, David seems a decent person, but he is sorely tempted to kill Painter because of his abuse and his sudden hate-filled decision to leave David and his girlfriend stranded. It couldn't have been a touchier situation; at that point, it would have taken little to make David pull the trigger.

The sense of frailty to violent tensions is also conveyed by the respectable Gilbert Welton's surrender to his feelings of jealousy toward Max Bomberg, his partner in a publishing firm, and by his attempt to murder Max. Welton is especially vulnerable to pressure because he lives such a tightly controlled life. He also fails to recognize or seek the release of games. Max points this out in connection with Gilbert's stand on telling Eugene Ponti that Angus Wilson will not translate his works. Max knows that Ponti is playing a game in asking for Wilson as translator, that all Ponti wants is to satisfy his vanity and to have his eminence as an author acknowledged. Gilbert, however, lacks the humor and the insight to recognize the truth of Max's argument and sees the situation as one which demands that he assert his moral rectitude, a rectitude that has become questionable in relation to other areas of his life. Max understands human nature and the nature of civilization better than Gilbert does.

To the extent that anyone is a "hero" in Symons' work, Max is, albeit his "heroism" often has ludicrous overtones.[15] He is a vital man, free from the kind of mechanical behavior that plagues those like Gilbert Welton who try to adapt to a rigid set of rules. Although he is not bound by excessive scruples, he is not a callous man and does not deliberately harm other people. It is possible, however, that his risk-taking attitude is responsible for the "accident" in which he and Flavia Orsini die. (It remains an open question whether the accident was caused by a faulty steering mechanism, by Max's speeding along a bad road in an unsafe car, or by Welton's removal of part of the brake fluid.) Max, of course, is prepared to face danger and to accept his own death by chance. He does not want to cut himself off from enthusiastic and adventurous living out of fear of death. The problem is that he risks not only his own life but also the lives of others who attach themselves to him. On the other hand, Flavia, who dies with him, is a risk-taker herself and is aware of what Max is like and what his way of life may lead to. Anyone else who got close enough to Max to be endangered would probably also be aware of his risk-taking and the possible consequences.

The concluding section of *The Man Who Lost His Wife* offers a satirically tinged paean of praise to the success of Max's risk-taking in business. His decision to send Dexter Manhood's manuscript to the famous lawyer-novelist pays off in the famous man's endorsement. His arrangement to sell the controlling interest in Welton's publishing firm puts new life into Welton's establishment. Max also succeeds posthumously in getting Eugene Ponti to sign with Welton's, though not before Ponti gets to play one last game with Gilbert (a game which Gilbert doesn't identify as one until Ponti concedes that Gilbert has passed his "test"). Max couldn't have accomplished all this if he hadn't taken chances–and if he hadn't been willing to play games (both his own and other people's).

In spite of the apparent example to the contrary set by Max, Symons places little emphasis on heroism in any form since he believes that all men contain a mixture of strengths and weaknesses and can be broken under too heavy a strain. He does, however, display a limited respect for the "heroic" labors of groups, provided that each individual shares in the responsibility and can make significant contributions to the final result. The activities of the police in *The Players and the Game* support Esther Melandine's thesis about the benefits of shared responsibility. Except for the lazy Hurley, all of the policemen from the most idealistic (Plender) to the most insensitive (the ambitious Charlie Brill and the thick-headed Chief Constable Dicksee) help in the solution of the murders and in the location and capture of the murderers. Moreover, most of them face the gunfire of the murderers in the attempt to capture them. Dicksee insists on dragging the pond in which Pamela Wilberforce's body is placed, Plender connects Joan Brown with Alberta Norman, Hazelton figures out that the murders were done in the barn near Darling's house, Brill suggests that something was going on at Darling's house the night Louise Allbright was killed so that the murder could not be done at the barn as usual, and Paling ties everything together in an all-encompassing theory. For all of these police officers, hunting criminals is a game in which they attempt to remove these particular pressures from society. (They do nothing, of course, to alter the stressful conditions which turn people into criminals.) For Paling especially, it is an intellectual game which occupies his mind in the same way and to the same extent as his coin-collecting and his reading. However, his theorizing fits the wrong man (Vane) as easily as it fits the right man (Darling). The use of reason in itself guarantees nothing: Hazelton's intuition tells him of Vane's innocence when Paling's theorizing convicts him. Fortunately, the group effort of the police balances out their individual weaknesses and leads to their ultimate success in this case. One should keep in mind the limitations of team effort, though; the policemen's earlier assumption of Paul Vane's guilt provoked the self-destruction of an innocent man.

The Plot Against Roger Rider implies that we can't go back to being "natural" men and that it isn't desirable that we should. Sheila Rider's series of reflections about "natural man" finally lead her to the conclusion that he is an aggressive, self-centered, ruthless slob. Civilized man has restraints placed on him and pays a high price for the benefits which they bring him, but he does have a way to ease some of the pain exerted by the restraints–he can play games. He can also learn to share power, to take more risks, to seek more adventure, and to allow himself more spontaneity. In addition, he can learn compassion by recognizing that he would be capable of committing the most hideous deeds if sufficient pressure were applied to him.

Notes

1. Julian Symons, "Progress of a Crime Writer," in *The Mystery and Detection Annual: 1973*, ed. Donald K. Adams (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Donald Adams, 1974), p. 242.
2. Julian Symons, *The Narrowing Circle* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1968), p. 92.
3. Symons, *Circle*, p. 93.
4. Symons, *Circle*, p. 5.
5. Symons, *The Thirty-First of February* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 4.
6. Julian Symons, "An Experiment in Personality," in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Bag: 27th Mystery Annual*, ed. Ellery Queen (New York: Manor Books, 1973), p. 143.
7. Symons, "Experiment," p. 146.
8. Symons, "Experiment," p. 146.
9. This interpretation should be tempered by an awareness of certain ironies. Melly never gets as far outside her inhibitions as she thinks during her state of "*almost* ecstasy" since her

experience takes place in a closet in which she is hiding from all the "wrong" behavior of the others. Moreover, throughout the experience, she is totally covered by her rubber suit and is aware that the rubber caressing cannot lead to sexual consummation. Nevertheless, she does feel more potent emotions during this time than during her highly restricted daily life.

10. Julian Symons, *The Players and the Game* (New York: Harper and Row, c. 1972), p. 6.
11. Symons, *Players*, p. 94. In his letter of 6 December 1975, Symons observed: "in THE PLAYERS AND THE GAME you are meant to get the idea that everybody plays games, and that (perhaps) these games are occupations that save them from some disastrous activity or other in 'real life'."
12. Symons, *Players*, p. 70.
13. In connection with John's fantasy of becoming a more adventurous person, one might note Symons' comments in his letter of 23 October 1975: "I think the essential thing–by intention at least–is that people try to turn into somebody else, to release some other 'self' which they imagine to exist, to obtain freedom through an act of violence. And that this never succeeds, that after the act they are still the same person. This is particularly evident in THE MAN WHO KILLED HIMSELF perhaps."
14. Julian Symons, *The Man Who Lost His Wife* (New York: Harper and Row, c. 1970), p. 147.
15. In his letter of 1 March 1976, Symons argued: "I don't see Max as a hero . . . any more than Grundy is a hero. The apparent spontaneity and adventurousness of Max operates only within the usual mechanical context of life, and it's purely coincidental that Max's reckless ideas work out well. But this is my only gloss on Max, and I don't wish to deny your interpretation." In support of Symons' viewpoint, it should be noted that Max's success at the end serves primarily as an ironic commentary on the irrationality of Gilbert Welton's attempt to destroy him and on the absurdity of Welton's pseudo-rational, pseudo-moral way of life.

SERIES SYNOPSIS

Jeff Meyerson

Matt Scudder by Lawrence Block

Lawrence Block's latest series, about Matt Scudder, is much more serious than his earlier works about Evan Tanner and Chip Harrison. Mat Scudder is billed as "New York's answer to Lew Archer," a not entirely false comparison. If you think of him somewhere between Archer and Tucker Coe's Mitch Tobin, you won't be far off.

Scudder was a cop for fifteen years until a stray bullet he fired at a holdup man ricocheted and killed seven-year-old Estrellita Rivera. Though he was exonerated, Scudder left the force and his family and moved into a midtown Manhattan hotel. He unofficially takes cases "as a favor" to people, and receives "gifts" for his work–ten percent of all the money he makes is tithed to whatever church is near. Matt drinks a lot (mostly bourbon and coffee), but it doesn't impair his effectiveness.

At this writing, Scudder has had three cases, of which the first and best is *The Sins of the Fathers* (discussed by Fred Dueren in TAD 10/1). As Scudder digs deeper and deeper into the affair, trying to find why Wendy Hanniford became a prostitute, and why Richie Vanderpoel killed her, a remarkable thing happens: the two dead people become real and alive before our eyes.

In the Midst of Death, the second book, finds Scudder investigating the murder of a call girl to get crooked cop (turned state's witness) Terry Broadfield off the hook. Matt is opposed by his former colleagues, including Lt. Eddie Koehler (a recurring character and friend), who would like to see Broadfield convicted even if he is innocent. An added complication is Matt's increasing involvement with Broadfield's wife.

Time to Murder and Create is not as good as its predecessors. Matt's client is "the Spinner," a petty crook turned blackmailer and then murder victim. Scudder must pretend to continue the blackmail to discover which of the Spinner's victims turned to murder.

Block writes very well and creates memorable, if often unpleasant, characters. The Matt Scudder series is well worth reading.

The Kid Glove Kid

Jerry Sullivan, ace crime reporter of the city's largest paper, went down on his knees and when he arose from near the culvert he carefully wrapped in his immaculate handkerchief the shining spectacles he had discovered, but he kept his find from the police. He wore kid gloves. He was known among the newspaper fraternity as the "Kid Glove Kid."

That night he gave his friend Professor Fordney a ring and later went around to see him. Wilson Hammet, 12 year old son of the multimillionaire, had been murdered that day. They discussed the crime for about an hour, during which time Sullivan explained that he went on the case just "on a hunch."

The next day the reporter learned by accident and coincidence that 23 year old Robert Pilter, also the son of a millionaire and a friend of the Hammet family, whose hobby was bird photography, had been out until 4 a.m. the night before.

A few hours later, when brought before him, Fordney requested Pilter to write the words *"I am sorry"* 15 times.

After reviewing the written slips he inquired, "Why is your writing so irregular?"

"Well, I'm nervous and . . ."

"Are these yours?" Fordney asked, showing the spectacles turned over to him by Sullivan.

"Yes, they are. I lost them about a week ago while photographing birds."

The criminologist turned to Pilter's father and said, "You may as well advise your son to tell the truth –*Murder Will Out!*"

WHAT DID HE MEAN?

Solution — Had Pilter lost his glasses "about a week ago," they would not have been *shining* when found by Sullivan, the Kid Glove Kid, the day of the murder. They would have been dirty.

ALIBIS

by Louis Phillips

By gumshoe detectives
In back alleys,
My private life
Is summed & tallied,
Tracked
To the sum total
Of human folly. . . .

("Yes, yes," said Hercule Poirot. "Of course the matter is serious.")

Blackjack alibis
Are upon me,
Sweet cooings
Of guilt & innocence,
Until I sense
A murderer
Has gone free,
A Valentine massacre
Walking away
In fine leather boots.

("The murderer is a madman," said Drummond. "Someone of the Jack the Ripper type.")

My trench-coat
Is tight about me,
Collar at my chin.
My cigarette
Is dangling
As conspicuous
As sin.

("Dr. Fell frowned. He maneuvered sideways through the door, his shovel hat on his head. . . .")

I detect
A singular crime
With a multiplicity
Of victims.
My clues:
Hair on the sill,
Footprints in the garden.
May I so harden
That I give
Neither justice
Nor pity.

("He sat beside Samuel Spade's desk, leaning forward a little over his Malacca stick. . . .")

From bedroom closets
Victims
Without names
Crash to the floor.
Now my sleuthing begins,
Midnight confessions
To fix the blame,
To reinstate
A brief order to things.

("Wolfe lifted his head. I mention that, because his head was so big that lifting it struck you as being quite a job.")

In deserted doorways
Justice begins
With a fist,
With a kick to the groin,
A gun to the skull.
A face at the window
Leers; a cop
Waits uneasily
At the back door.

("Simon Templar was in the perhaps rare position of being able to claim that he practiced what he preached.")

I follow
No man's laws,
Following each doubt
To its logical
Purple-skinned end,
Haunting
Narrow streets & sidewalks,
Rooms
Where the wallpaper
Peels.
As the mauled victim
Cries out,
I turn my head.
The badge
Has grown rusty in my hands.

("Della Street, Perry Mason's confidential secretary, entered the lawyer's private office and said, "There are two women in the outer office who say they have to see you at once.")

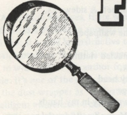
Twisting
Blonde clues,
Locks
From a young woman's hair,
I ask myself
Who made these victims?
What finger
Pointed them out,
Scribbled their names,
Figures in the carpet.

"Where was I
On the night of the 10th?"
I was in bed.
Let sleep be my judge.

I would capture
The culprit tomorrow
If I were not anchored
To my own weight,
To shadows & to vice,
Anchored to fright
& threat, those claws
In the trees.
I would capture
The mastermind tomorrow
If I were not held back
By my own weight,
Anchored to imponderable mercies
& big-boned sorrows.

Copper,
I ain't telling you nothing.

On Reading DETECTIVE FICTION



By John M. Reilly

Reading detective fiction is one thing; explaining our taste for it is another. The thrill of danger narrowly evaded, confirmation of fantasies we may entertain about the possibilities of being superior individuals, satisfaction with a witty or tough way of talking, the grace or peculiarity of characters' gestures may keep us reading, but when we have finished, and are challenged to justify our taste for literature that presents tales of actions that subvert human society, a good number of us–despite sophistication, or perhaps because we possess a certain variety of it–will say we find detective fiction realistic.

Of course, there are details of detective fiction that readily lend themselves to description as realistic. Poe may have depended for atmosphere upon unnamed streets and vague references to distant quarters of the city, but at least since the time of Conan Doyle writers of detective fiction have shown concern to use specific names for streets, railroad trains, airplanes, and sometimes buildings. If they must set their stories in totally fictional towns or country houses, they at least make the topography recognizable to readers who can use a map or who have traveled. In similar fashion the details of crime have specificity that might be accounted real, if not plausible. The Golden Age writers' devotion to technical accuracy in the means chosen to dispatch victims has its counterpart in the precision with which authors of police procedure fiction refer to the caliber of guns or the procedure of violent assault. Then, also, the concrete touches detective writers use to characterize their protagonists' appearance, patterns of speech, and leisure interests are joined with brief allusion to the detective's background to give the specificity to character portrayal generally associated with the popular magazine profiles we read to discover the truth about celebrities.

So compelling is the use of mundane fact by detective fiction that we can read it without being aware of those features of technique or authorial direction of which we are often conscious in "great" fiction. Paradoxically, the illusion of reality, while we are reading, does not encourage us to refer the story to the actual scenes and crimes it appears to describe. Pretending to represent familiar settings, known crimes, and plausible character, detective fiction produces a narrative that is pleasurable because it is detached from the real. It is only after the pleasure has passed that we attach the story once again to our familiar actuality and say that our taste for crime and detective fiction depends upon recognition of the way things are. In a sense detective fiction is like a photograph, using reality as the substance with which to create an autonomous substitute for reality and providing an adventure that satisfies in itself, even though one may later judge its accuracy against experience gained in other ways.

Reality in detective fiction, therefore, is a convention. The concrete details of setting, crime, and character are not intended to issue in theme, as they are in the school of literary realism we associate with Howells, Twain, or James. Moreover, the convention of reality works with other features of technique to assure distance that is necessary for crime to be tolerable and pleasant, when certainly we know it is anything but that in actuality. In the Golden Age variety of detective fiction–works of Christie or Sayers, for example–the distancing derives from characters chatting, mocking, alluding to themselves in comparison to other fictional detectives. In hard-boiled writers such as Chandler or John MacDonald distancing may be a result of the dominant presence of Marlowe's or McGee's critical outlook on the culture of the sun belt. And regardless of the variety of detective fiction we are reading there is the certainty that the detectives will make things turn out all right, for every detective story is controlled by the demand of closure. A newspaper report of crime often disturbs us, because even though the violence it describes may be unlikely to touch us the technique of newspaper reporting leaves the story open-ended. There is no satisfactory distancing, so we are inclined to relate the news account of crime immediately to our actuality. Some detective stories may invite us, as Chandler intended, to observe that we do not live in a fragrant world, but if we do so it is because we like the tone of Philip Marlowe speaking rather than because crime occurs in a novel.

Acknowledging that reality, and crime itself, is a convention of detective fiction, we might propose—tentatively—a way to describe the popular aesthetics of the form.

Until recently much of the best writing about detective fiction intended to legitimate the form, to give respectability to literature that people read in secret. Today, of course, respectability is hardly a problem. Still, the idea of secret readers of detective fiction may retain some significance. A secret reader of detective fiction is one who rarely admits the fact of his/her taste for detective stories into his/her public identity and then only to fans sure to share enthusiasm for killing time in this way. Other readers have a goal of utility. They read history, current affairs, and biography to understand how the world works. Critics and reviewers, and other socially defined intellectuals, read to keep up on literary developments, to gather data for their work. Reading classic, fine literature also has its utility, since we have all been taught that it gives us knowledge of life, and, if the knowledge is hard to apply, at least the classics improve our taste.

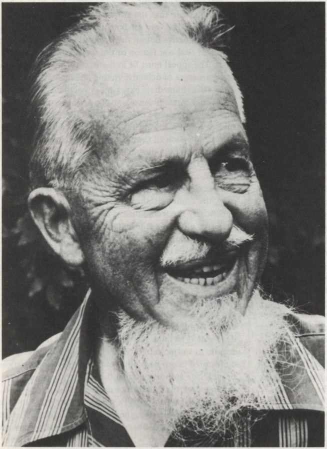
Even though reading detective fiction may no longer be of such low status, intellectually considered, that a taste for it is better kept secret, the fact remains that readers consume detective stories first of all because the stories make no utilitarian demands. One can simply enjoy the process of reading, just as a walker or swimmer may occasionally feel the pleasure of physical activity without a goal in mind. Attempts to legitimate detective fiction by explaining that readers are engaged by the detection puzzle miss the point. The laying out of clues, playing fair with readers, distinguishing false leads, and explaining the process of detection are not gratifying because they provide exercise in problem solving. The puzzle merely provides a form to the story and is a convention, like any other, to be enjoyed as an established part of the narrative. The analogy between enjoyment of detective fiction and enjoyment of movies or music is evident. Initially we bathe ourselves in sound and the visual environment of films without thought of gathering knowledge, becoming a better person, managing life, or even inferring a theme. The goals we may eventually set ourselves to collect musical, visual, or literary experiences emerge only if that initial pleasure remains strong.

All literature exists to be completed by readers. For detective fiction the conventions become the framework for completion. Authors employ conventions, such as the convention of reality as well as the conventions of plot and character, to organize narrative. Readers receive the conventions with expectation, knowing they will be used once again as they have been used before and that that is a source of pleasure. Admittedly there is additional pleasure in noting the signature individual authors give conventions in their books. Sometimes they may modify conventions, perhaps introduce a multiple cast of killers or reveal that the narrator is the murderer, but the essential detective story is unchanged, and it can be said that truly all detective stories are about the same thing.

Why isn't the repetition boring? Why is it, in fact, basic to our pleasure that the stories be, on their basic level, predictable? The very predictability makes it unlikely that we read detective fiction for vicarious experience the way we might read war fiction or the social fiction of naturalists. The appeal must lie in the resemblance between the basic structure of detective fiction and mental structures deeper than immediate experience of actuality. Suggestions about such a resemblance must be very speculative, but it is possible to observe that violation of order and adventurous progress toward restoration of order is the basic pattern to which all the conventions of detective fiction contribute. Within our minds we experience disruption as anxiety. Often the anxiety is free-floating. The source is unclear, so the resolution is uncertain. Detective fiction gives anxiety some specificity—a particular crime. Moreover, the crime, distanced as it is from immediate experience by the techniques of detective fiction narratives, preserves a relationship tenuous enough to be tolerable. The criminal problem of the story will not intrude upon our lives by making reference to occurrences we know directly, but it preserves the outline of feelings we know we have. The repetition of conventions from one story to another promises certain resolution to the criminal problem, and, doing so, promises as well a resolution to the feeling of anxiety so that we can experience the entire narrative as art. The detective story, thus, touches deep-seated feelings, just as all art does, but it does not require us to translate those feelings into problems to be confronted in our consciousness. The story alone suffices, because for authors devising the tales and readers consuming them the significance is pre-rational. Freed from the compulsions of utility, a specific anxiety that intrudes upon aesthetic pleasure, the audience of detective fiction gives itself over to the basic pleasure of reading, again and again satisfying itself with the ancient human aesthetic experience of the tale.

REX STOUT Newsletter

By John McAleer



Rex Stout

In 1903, on a visit to Kansas City, Rex saw William Gillette portray Sherlock Holmes in the popular play he had written about Doyle's immortal sleuth. Captivated by Gillette's performance Rex became a lifelong admirer of Holmes. In November 1899 Gillette's play, after a Buffalo tryout, had had its world premiere in New York City at the Garrick Theatre on West 35th Street. When Rex created Nero Wolfe it seemed fitting to him that Wolfe should be domiciled on the same street where Gillette's Holmes received his first acclaim.

* * * * *

In Henry Miller's *Air-Conditioned Nightmare* (1945), Miller, deploring what prison officials do to the art of a convict artist, scoffs, "Making a good convict into a potential Guggenheim prize winner! Pfui!" What's this? Is the celebrated author of *Tropic of Cancer* borrowing expletives from Nero Wolfe?

* * * * *

The protoype of Lieutenant George Rowcliff, in the Wolfe stories, was Gilbert Jonathan Rowcliff (1881-1963), naval aide to Theodore Roosevelt during the period when Rex was pay yeoman on the presidential yacht *Mayflower.* A spit-and-polish officer, Rowcliff was not popular with the men who served under him. Cadets under his command later, when he was head of the department of engineering and aeronautics at Annapolis (1925-1928), attest that he did not ease his standards with the passing of the years. After a distinguished career, Rowcliff retired in December 1945 with the rank of rear admiral.

* * * * *

In the April 1978 issue of *The Mathematics Teacher,* in an article entitled "Who Killed the Cook?" (pp. 263-66), James J. Corbet and J. Susan Milton, math professors at Radford College, Radford, Virginia, have teamed up to show that the Nero Wolfe novel *Too Many Cooks* provides an instance of the use of probability guaranteed to engross students who are intrigued by complete permutations. The logic of the piece is both awesome and impeccable, but at one point the authors assert that Wolfe weighs 312 pounds. How come? After the cook got killed did Wolfe gobble up all the leftovers?

* * * * *

James Keddie, a founder of Boston's Speckled Band, a chapter of the Baker Street Irregulars, counts among his prized possessions a copy of Rex's *How Like a God* (1929) inscribed by its former owner T.E. Shaw–Lawrence of Arabia!

* * * * *

Among the Wolfe titles published in hardcover by Farrar & Rinehart *Too Many Cooks* and *Some Buried Caesar* sold the most copies. *The Doorbell Rang* led the Viking list, with *Please Pass the Guilt* as runner-up. In paperback the first ten in order of sales are *The Doorbell Rang, The Silent Speaker, And Be a Villain, Before Midnight, In the Best of Families, Too Many Women, Triple Jeopardy, Murder by the Book, Prisoner's Base* and *Three for the Chair.*

* * * * *

From my mailbag–some comments on Rex by fellow writers:

"What Mr. Stout has written is literature. His books are not about crime at all, not even about action of any sort, they are about character. He has the magic. Its chief ingredient is wit."

—James Balfour

"For me, Rex Stout has always been a mainstay because of his unquenchable liveliness. He created his own engaging style in the thirties and has maintained it triumphantly ever since.

"And that little touch of Montenegro doesn't hurt!"

—Emma Lathen

"Rex Stout is a man who thinks. I found *Some Buried Caesar* and *The Doorbell Rang* not just brilliant and unputdownable but *serieux.*

"Nero's moral force, his deep and real respect for civilisation, ethics, history, anything 'real' are admirably contrasted with the childish petulant egoisms and love of petty cheating.

"Nero, Nero–when you finally go what a mighty crash there will be."

—Nicolas Freeling

* * * * *

On 19 August 1975 a private memorial service for Rex, presided over by Norman Cousins, was held at High Meadow, Rex's estate at Danbury, Connecticut. The eulogists included Marshall Best, Marion Anderson, Hi Brown, Samuel Grafton, Bill Goodman, and myself. Rex's wife, two daughters, and grandchildren were present. The others who gathered for this tribute (which took place on the patio adjoining Rex's own rooms) were Margaret Farrar, Elizabeth Janeway, Orpheus Fisher, Polly and Mel Evans, Mr. and Mrs. N.E. Derecktor, Mr. and Mrs. A. Searle Pinney, Margaret Adams, Nancy and Darrell Lutrus, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Grafton, Mrs. Goodman, and my wife, Ruth.

The tributes were uniformly fond and affectionate. Halfway through the service, Czarna, Rex's Labrador retriever (now twelve), rolled over on the grass and gave herself an exhilarating backrub. Apparently she didn't take the service too seriously. That wouldn't have bothered Rex. He thought memorial services should be delayed till those attending could remember the good times they had shared with the deceased and not be overwhelmed by grief. Rex's service was just as he wanted it. We came away smiling.

* * * * *

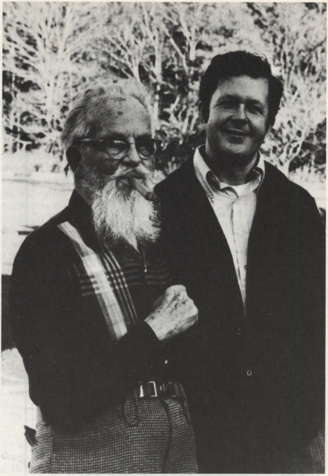
A membership drive for formation of The Wolfe Pack, a society devoted to perpetuating an interest in the Wolfe saga and its creator, now is under way. Members will receive a quarterly journal, have the chance to correspond with other Wolfe enthusiasts, and attend an annual dinner prepared from Wolfe's recipes.

Credit for the idea goes to Carol Brener, owner of the New York bookstore, Murder Ink. Those interested in joining should write to Ms. Ellen Krieger, Apt. 5-B, 28 W. 69th St., New York NY 10023.

* * * * *

My heartfelt thanks to the many readers who sent queries and good wishes when the first of these columns appeared. Your letters will reach me promptly at Mount Independence, 121 Follen Road, Lexington, Massachusetts 12173

—John McAleer



© Jill Krementz

Rex Stout is the creator of America's best-loved private detective, Nero Wolfe. Prof. John McAleer won an Edgar Allan Poe Award from the Mystery Writers of America for his monumental book, *Rex Stout: A Biography* (Little, Brown).

Freeman Memorial

Mr. Frank R. Archibald of Needham, Massachusetts, and Philip T. Asdell of Frederick, Maryland (and Editor of *The Thorndyke File*) announce a fund-raising effort to purchase a memorial stone for placement on R. Austin Freeman's unmarked grave in Gravesend, Kent, England. The Editor is pleased to join this most worthwhile effort which has the support of Mrs. Constance V. Briant of Bognor Regis, Sussex, England. (Mrs. Briant is Freeman's niece and, at 87 years of age, is Freeman's only living near relation.)

R. Austin Freeman was the creator of Dr. John Evelyn Thorndyke, the first and foremost scientific investigator in detective fiction. Thorndyke's first appearance, in *The Red Thumb Mark* (1907), was, in essence, a refutation of Sir Francis Galton's views on the infallibility of fingerprints to establish identity. *The Singing Bone* (1911), a collection of short stories, marked Freeman's invention of the so-called "inverted" form in which first the criminal is seen to do his dastardly deed and later the reader follows the steps taken by Dr. Thorndyke to identify the criminal. The innovations in these two books alone make a solid case for Freeman's claim to fame in the annals of detective fiction, but he went on to write a total of 21 novels and 40 short stories about Thorndyke, who "lived" at 5A King's Bench Walk in the Inner Temple in London. Norman Donaldson, Freeman's biographer, has written that Freeman himself carefully checked all Thorndyke's procedures before using them in his stories and that some of Thorndyke's methods were subsequently adopted by the police.

Freeman was born in London in 1862. He studied medicine at Middlesex Hospital, qualified as a physician and surgeon in 1887, and went to the Gold Coast as a medical officer in the Colonial Service. There he contracted blackwater fever and was invalided back to England without a pension, a circumstance which led to his career as an author. In addition to his detective fiction, Freeman wrote *Travels and Life in Ashanti and Jaman* (1898), in which he describes his life in Africa, and *Social Decay and Regeneration* (1921), a sociological study. Freeman died in Gravesend in 1943.

All contributions for a Freeman memorial will be most gratefully received. Please send them to:

Mr. Frank R. Archibald
76 Lawton Road
Needham, Massachusetts 02192
U.S.A.

or

Mr. Michael G. Heenan
1 St. Radigund's Street
Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AA
England

TO THOSE MYSTERIOUSLY MURDERED IN BOOKS

by Robert Aucott

1
Oh, murdered ones, unwept, unsung,
Cut down, all vigorous and young—
Or, anyway, still hale and spry—
How happily we see you die!
We feel no grief, we know no care:
We know, when needed, you'll be there.

2
Sometimes this is completely so,
And, almost, do we wish you'd go.
For years and years we heard it said,
"It's Fu Manchu! *He is not dead!*"
Old Holmes in Sussex *still* is seen.
But this is not just what I mean.

3
I mean that all those done to death,
Who gasp a clue with dying breath,
Or lie upon their library floors,
Or breathe their last behind locked doors,
Or fall as Wimsey (or Poirot)
Has just bounced in and cried, "Hullo!"

4
Though dead as mutton early on,
Though dead as pawn in "knight takes pawn,"
They jump up when the play is done,
And wait (again) in Chapter One.
They stand and wait, again to fall,
Yet are they honored not at all!

5
What could Poirot and Wimsey do
If nearly everyone they knew
Had not wound up a horrid sight
(Thus lulling us to sleep at night)?
Hercule had never gained such fame.
No one would know Lord Peter's name.

6
Yet of those stabbed and bludgeoned wights
Not many get their names in lights.
Name Ackroyd, Drood, Marie Roget,
Sir John Magill, Monsieur Gallet,
Green, Brice, another three or four:
We probably can name no more.

7
Enough. We can but thank these ghosts,
These great unknowns, the guests, the hosts,
The spouses, all most timely killed,
The mighty army which has filled
The stately homes of England, and
The mean streets of our native land.

ENVOI
Surely of them it can be said,
"Forever dying, never dead!"

John Dickson Carr

ON BRITISH RADIO

By Douglas G. Greene

Francis M. Nevins's superb article on John Dickson Carr's contributions to the American radio (TAD, October 1978) encouraged me to investigate Carr's work for the British Broadcasting Corporation. The following list is based on information from the BBC's play library and from the "Broadcasting" columns of *The* (London) *Times.* Many readers will notice that neither the BBC nor *The Times* confirms some of the statements about Carr in Ron Haydock's *Deerstalker* (Scarecrow Press, 1978), which is a study of Holmesian adaptations appearing in movies, television, the stage, and radio. According to Haydock (p. 87), Carr wrote a BBC serial in 1944 based on Doyle's *The Lost World;* the BBC play library, however, has no record that Carr was involved in such a series. In addition, Haydock says (p. 221) that "BBC Radio's 1954 *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* was adapted from the Conan Doyle tales by John Keir Cross, who was in reality John Dickson Carr." Briefly I thought that "Cross" might be a previously unrecorded Carr pseudonym, but with the help of Bob Briney and Mike Nevins I discovered that Haydock was mistaken. *The Times* printed Cross's obituary in 1967, and Cross's publisher wrote to me that there was no direct connection between Carr and Cross.

In the list below, Carr's British radio plays are arranged chronologically. If a script was also broadcast on the CBS programs *Suspense* or *Cabin B-13,* that information is included in parentheses. The initials "AWF" stand for *Appointment with Fear,* the great BBC program originated by Carr.

1939

"Who Killed Matthew Corbin? A Detective Problem by John Dickson Carr," episode 1, December 27, produced by John Cheatle, with Gordon McLeod, Geoffrey Wincott, Thea Holme, Valentine Dyall, and Barbara Couper. Three episodes; the first two for 30 minutes, the third for 45 minutes. Episode 2, "The Trial," was broadcast on January 6, 1940; episode 3, "The Solution," on January 13. The third episode also starred D. Clarke-Smith, Ivor Barhard, William Trent, Bryan Powley, Gladys Young, Vivienne Chatterton, and J.B. Rowe.

1940

"The Devil in the Summer House, a Problem in Detection," October 14. A one-hour broadcast which was shortened to 30 minutes for *Suspense,* November 3, 1942.

1941

"Speak of the Devil, Part 1 of a Serial Story;" eight 20-minute broadcasts, February 10, February 17, February 24, March 3, March 10, March 17, March 24, and March 31.

"Never Tell Parents the Truth." The play library lists this program as first broadcast on July 6, but *The Times* does not include it.

"Lord of the Witch Doctors," September 13. *The Times* lists this program as "a melodrama by Robert Southwell." Perhaps it was based on a Southwell story. The play library lists it by Carr, and it was re-broadcast on *Suspense,* October 27, 1942, as by Carr.

"Black Market–The Exposure of a Criminal Organization," October 7; 30 minutes.

"The Black Minute, A Detective Problem" October 18; 40 minutes.

"Britain Shall Not Burn, a Cautionary Tale," December 12; 30 minutes.

1942

"The Man in the Iron Mask, a Story by John Dickson Carr," January 5; one hour.

"Starvation in Greece," February 6.

"You're Not Behind the Plough," February 15. This script was broadcast on BBC's "Overseas" program, which is not listed in *The Times.*

"Civilians' War: Women on the Guns" (No. 41), February 27. Overseas.

"Europe in Chains: No. 9, Denmark Occupied," March 16. Overseas.

"Escape to Freedom: No. 1, The Adventure of the Three Students," March 21.

"Inspector Silence Takes the Underground," March 25. The play library includes this program, but *The Times* does not. Perhaps it was Overseas.

"Escape to Freedom: No. 4, Men of Sparta," April 11. *The Times* gives the title "The Man of Sparta." 15 minutes.

"Europe in Chains: No. 4, They Strike at Night," April 13. Overseas.

"Black Gallery: No. 4, Heinrich Himmler," June 4.

1943

"Cabin B-13" (AWF), with Constance Cummings, September 11. (*Suspense,* March 16, 1943.) All AWF programs were 30 minutes.

"The Pit and the Pendulum" (AWF), September 18. (*Suspense,* January 12, 1943; from the Poe story.)

"Into Thin Air" (AWF), September 21, with Hartley Power.

"The Body Snatchers" (AWF), with Valentine Dyall, September 30. (*Suspense,* November 24, 1942.)

"The Customers Like Murder" (AWF), with Ronald Squire and Belle Chrystall, October 7. (*Suspense,* March 23, 1943.)

"Will You Make a Bet with Death?" (AWF), with Franklin Dyall, Rita Vale, and Lewis Stringer, October 14. (*Suspense,* November 10, 1942.)

"The Devil's Saint" (AWF), with Martyn C. Webster, October 21. (*Suspense,* January 19, 1943.)

"Fire Burn and Cauldron Bubble" (AWF), with Harry Welchman and Richard Williams, October 28. (*Suspense,* April 6, 1943.)

"The Phantom Archer" (AWF), November 4. (*Suspense,* March 9, 1943.)

"The Man Who Died Twice" (AWF), November 11. *The Times* gives the title as "The Maid Who Died Twice."

"Menace in Wax" (AWF), with Molly Rankin and Lewis Stringer, November 18. (*Suspense,* November 17, 1942.)

1944

"Vex Not His Ghost" (AWF), January 6. *The Times* does not give the title of the episode, but says "Appointment with Fear (No. 1 of second series)." The play library says "not broadcast." Probably the show was pre-empted at the last minute. See November 30, 1944.

"The Tell Tale Heart" (AWF), January 13. From the Poe story.

"The Room of the Suicides" (AWF), January 20.

"The Sire de Malatroits Door" (AWF), January 27. From the Stevenson story.

NB: *The Times* lists "Appointment with Fear" as being broadcast on February 3, but no title is given. The BBC play library does not record a Carr play for that date.

"The Man Who Was Afraid of Dentists" (AWF), February 10. The play library says that this script was also used on *Radio Theatre,* March 6, 1944, but *The Times* does not include that program in its listings.

"They Saw Him Die," February 16. The first installment of *The Silent Battle* which was apparently a propaganda series; it will be cited as "TSB."

"The Day of the Red Army" (TSB?), February 23. *The Times* does not give a series title, but it is in the time-slot of TSB and was probably written by Carr.

"Death Whistles a Tune" (TSB), March 1.

"The Silent Battle," March 8. *The Times* does not name the episode.

"Blood Is our Repayment" (TSB), March 15.

"The Secret Radio" (TSB), March 22.

"Blood Is Our Repayment, Story from the Underground Front in Europe," April 12. Repeat from March 15.

"The Speaking Clock" (AWF), April 13. (Probably "Mr. Markham, Antique Dealer," *Suspense,* April 6, 1943.)

"Death Flies Blind" (AWF), April 20. (*Suspense,* May 4, 1943.)

"A Watcher by the Dead" (AWF), April 27. From the Bierce story.

"The Pit and the Pendulum" (AWF), with Marius Goring, May 4. Repeat from September 18, 1943, which is in turn a repeat from the *Suspense* series.

"Vampire Tower" (AWF), May 11.

"The Clock Strikes Eight" (AWF), May 18.

"New Judgement: John Dickson Carr on Edgar Allan Poe," May 22. 30 minutes.

"Magician's Progress: The Story of the Development of Magic," July 21. 45 minutes.

"The Scandalous Affair of the Queen's Necklace," with Phyllis Neilson-Terry and Malcolm Keen, August 25.

"I Never Suspected" (AWF), with Eric Portman, October 5.

"The Devil's Manuscript" (AWF), October 12. From the Bierce story.

"Death Has Four Faces" (AWF), October 19. *The Times* gives the title "Death Has Four Aces." The play library says that it was not broadcast; probably it was pre-empted at the last minute.

"The Purple Wig" (AWF), October 26. From the Chesterton story.

"He Who Whispers" (AWF), November 2.

"The Curse of the Bronze Lamp" (AWF), November 9. Probably pre-empted; see December 7. (*Cabin B-13,* November 14, 1948.)

"The Great Cypher" (AWF), November 16. From the Post story.

"Vex Not His Ghost" (AWF), November 30. Originally scheduled January 6, 1944.

"The Curse of the Bronze Lamp" (AWF), December 7. Originally scheduled November 9, 1944.

"The Gong Cried Murder" (AWF), December 14.

"Lair of the Devil Fish" (AWF), December 21. (*Cabin B-13*, November 21, 1948.)

"The Oath of Rolling Thunder" (AWF), December 28.

1945

"The Adventure of the Speckled Band," May 17, with Cedric Hardwick (as Holmes) and Finlay Currie (as Watson). From the Doyle story. 30 minutes. Repeated December 17, 1948.

"Corner in Crime: No 1: Silver Blaze, edited by John Dickson Carr," August 3, with Laidman Browne (as Holmes) and Norman Shelley (as Watson). From the Doyle story. 30 minutes.

"Into Thin Air" (AWF), September 11. Repeat from September 21, 1943.

"Fire Burn and Cauldron Bubble" (AWF), September 18. Repeat from October 28, 1943, which in turn was a repeat from *Suspense,* April 6, 1943.

"The Man Who Died Twice" (AWF), September 25. Repeat from November 11, 1943, but this time *The Times* gives the correct title.

"The Clock Strikes Eight" (AWF), October 2. Repeat from May 18, 1944.

"Cabin B-13" (AWF), October 9. Repeat from September 11, 1943, which was in turn a repeat from *Suspense,* March 16, 1943.

"Will You Make a Bet with Death?" (AWF), October 16. Repeat from October 14, 1943, which was in turn a repeat from *Suspense,* March 16, 1943.

"Corner in Crime: No. 9, The Bravo Mystery," October 18. Account of a famous 19th-century murder.

"He Wasn't Superstitious" (AWF), October 30. From a Bierce story.

"The Man with Two Heads" (AWF), November 6.

"The Case of the Five Canaries" (AWF), November 13. (*Suspense,* June 8, 1943, as "Five Canaries in the Room.")

"And the Deep Shuddered" (AWF), November 20. This is not included as a Carr script in the play library.

"The Case" (AWF), November 27. This is not included as a Carr script in the play library.

"Death at Midnight" (AWF), December 4. This is not included as a Carr script in the play library.

1955

(AWF returned for six episodes in July and August, 1955, before being replaced by Henry Cecil's "Course of Law" on September 6.)

"The Man Who Couldn't Be Photographed" (AWF), July 26. (*Cabin B-13,* July 12, 1948.)

"White Tiger Passage" (AWF), August 2.

"The Dead Man's Knock" (AWF), August 9. (*Cabin B-13,* November 28, 1948.)

"The Sleuth of the Seven Dials" (AWF), August 16.

"The Villa of the Damned" (AWF), August 23.

"Till the Great Armadas Come" (AWF), August 30.

Carr novels adapted for the radio by John Keir Cross:

"Fire, Burn!" July 5, 1958.

"The Hollow Man," January 10, 1959.

Mystery Manor Books

P.O. Box 135 • HUNTINGDON VALLEY, PA. 19006

ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS

Specialists in First Editions of Mystery & Detective Fiction

INTRODUCING
Paul Cain
and
His *FAST ONE.*

A Forgotten Hard-Boiled Writer
A Forgotten Gangster Novel

By Prof. E. R. Hagemann

I. Career

During his professional writing career, 1932-1948, he used Paul Cain for his fiction and Peter Ruric for his movie work, passing off the latter as his real name; yet he was born George Sims in Iowa, 30 May 1902. Nothing is known of his personal life and little of his professional life either before or after he broke into print in March 1932.

In a discarded Introduction (ca. 1946) to *The Hard-Boiled Omnibus,* Joseph T. Shaw, its editor known for his supervision of *Black Mask,* cites Ruric's "recollections of his boyhood experiences in Chicago where [he] saw something of life in its toughest phases. We suspect that Peter drew from these first-hand glimpses for his first published work, a book-length Black Mask serial titled FAST ONE."[1]

And it is for *Fast One,* and *Fast One* alone, his only novel, that Cain should be remembered but inexplicably has not been.

Having accepted Cain's Chicago youth (on Shaw's testimony alone), we next find that he came to Los Angeles in 1918 and entered the movie industry in 1923. He lays claim to have worked with Josef von Sternberg in 1925 on *Salvation Hunters* but there is no proof. Indeed, much of Cain's/Ruric's assertions for movies, books, etc., absolutely cannot be verified, either by title, publisher, or name–any one of his three names.

This much is known: In 1933 he was residing at 6650 Franklin Avenue, Hollywood. This was the Montecito Hotel Apartments, Franklin and Cherokee, situated on a steep hill and facing the hills to the north and overlooking Holywood to the south. It had opened in 1931 and is still in operation, but seedy and shabby. However, in 1932 it was a fine place to live (the entrance is a classic bit of Art Deco) and to work.

And work Cain did, in fiction and on screenplays for sixteen years. His (verifiable) fiction career began in March 1932 in *Black Mask,* the only magazine to print him, with "Fast One," the first installment of the serialization. Page 26 of the issue advertises "Lead Party," by Paul Cain, "another fast story around several of these same characters in APRIL BLACK MASK." Further back, page 120, editor Shaw speculates about "if and when 'Fast One,' 'Lead Party,' and their subsequent stories . . . are moulded into shape for book publication and brought out as one book."

There were five installments.[2] In May, "Black," Cain's first short story, was published. Black, first-person narrator, moves into a corrupt town to avenge successfully a murder committed over rum-running and to start trouble successfully among those who run the town. An average pulp piece, it reminds one, faintly, of Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest,* but it is nowhere as good. The second interlude was "Parlor Trick" in July, a brutal little tale which although damaged by some cheap coincidences is one of his better contributions. In December, Cain published "Red 71," his best (although marred) story. "'Am I a swell dick–or am I a swell dick?" asks Dick Shane. He is swell all right. He operates just beyond the fringes of the New York underworld and solves the murder of gambler Charley Rigas who ran a joint known as Red 71. The ending is ambiguous, to say the least, and the plotting is complicated.[3]

Ruric's precise work in the movies is open to dispute. His first (verifiable) credit was as author (story) of a Paramount flick starring Cary Grant and Benita Hume called *Gambling Ship.* Released 29 June 1933 and directed by Max Marcin, it was "derived" from the *Black Mask* version of "Fast One." But this is absurd; all that remains is a gambling ship with another name. Glenda Farrell and Jack LaRue, two Golden Oldies, were in the cast. The critic Abel in *Variety,* 18 July 1933, called it a fair job. "Of the gangster meller genera. . . . Film doesn't drag, save in negligible moments, but in toto it's a familiar formula of mob vs. mob."[4]

Ruric's first solo credit was his screenplay of *The Black Cat* (Universal), released 4 May 1934, with Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi in the leads. Edgar G. Ulmer was the director; Carl Laemmle, Jr., the producer. Edgar Allan Poe was billed as the "author"—another absurdity. *Film Daily,* 19 May, said: "Horror pix has two great exponents of the school, Karloff and Lugosi, doing grand thrill job. . . . It takes its place in the same category with *Frankenstein* and *Dracula,* and this brings them together for the first time. . . ."[5] About a week later *Affairs of a Gentleman* came out of the Universal lot. Ruric and Cyril Hume shared screenplay credits; Paul Lukas and Leila Hyams, two other Golden Oldies, shared top billing. *Film Daily,* 23 June, declared it "a fair drama of many loves given unconvincing treatment with Paul Lukas holding it up with good work."

So far, Ruric had hardly knocked them dead in the studios.

Marginally more successful was the publication of *Fast One* by Doubleday, Doran on 25 October 1933. Cain claimed it was written "on a bet." It tells complexly—fantastically so—the rapid rise and obliteration of tough-guy hoodlum Gerry Kells (not quite "kills") and his dipso lover, S. Granquist (she is graced with no prename, but she is a grand twist!), as they take over, or try to, Los Angeles in 1932.[6] The publisher worked hard to peddle it in the abyss of The Great Depression and dispatched paperbound advance copies with a hard-driving front- and back-cover blurb:

> You've read THE MALTESE FALCON[,] GREEN ICE[,] IRON MAN[,] hard, fast stories all, but now comes the hardest, toughest, swiftest novel of them all FAST ONE[.] Two hours of sheer terror, written with a clipped violence, hypnotic in its power. The author is PAUL CAIN whom we consider the greatest discovery in his field in many years. Not a detective story, not a mystery, FAST ONE is a brutal novel of passion and death. Kells, the hero; Granquist, the heroine, are two of the strangest figures in contemporary fiction. They will be talked about; their bullet-spattered love will arouse new emotions in the hearts of thousands of readers looking for something fresh, different, gripping. Read this special advance copy . . . see if you yourself can escape from the nightmare spell of these pages.[7]

I am not one to praise blurbs but this one, with pardonable hyperbole, is right on; it is a shame that neither it nor the novel attracted "thousands." Reviewers didn't help much. "The Criminal Record" in *Saturday Review of Literature* called it "the hardest-boiled yarn of a decade. So h.-b. it gets funny. But it moves like a machine-gun. Zowie!"[8] *The New York Times Book Review,* under the head, "Gangsters Gone Mad," attacked it, after acknowledging the blurb, as "a ceaseless welter of bloodshed and frenzy, a sustained bedlam of killing and fiendishness, told in terse staccato style." It concluded: ". . . There is no minute's let-up in the saturnalia of 'black-and-blue passion, bloodlust, death.' "[9] Los Angeles book critics shied away from it for the most part. There was enough real-life corruption in The City of the Angels. But one did take a shot at it. "Well! Well! *Fast One,* Paul Cain's tale of crime in Los Angeles . . . is the toughest, hardest, most ruthless crime story they have ever published, they tell me. However, it is only fair to state that *Kells,* the hero, is a thief and a murderer who hails from the Middle West!"[10]

In England *Fast One* was issued by Constable in March 1936 and given a reprint in a cheap edition in March 1937. *TLS,* 18 April 1936, had a review which is worth quoting in full:

> The jacket declares that this novel "has in America the reputation of being the most genuine gangster novel ever written" and although this may be a matter of opinion it is interesting to speculate on how the author gains such remarkable effects of verisimilitude in a story which, on recollection, seems so far from normal experience with its hundred-mile-an-hour speed, its baker's dozen of murders, its blackmailings, double-crossings and tortures.
>
> Kells was a "muscle-man" and he went West to enjoy a holiday and to "play" for a few years. He is rapidly dragged into a whirl of political jobbery in a gang-ridden city, and for those who can keep pace with the changing motives the book will not be easy to put aside. None of the familiar tricks of suspense or the clichés of characterization seem in evidence, and it is only when the book is finished that the reader will realize how completely the mannered style has bemused him into thinking the story real for a moment. American writers are becoming increasingly adept at this method of hypnotism and this author has obviously learned the various passes thoroughly.[11]

A decade later, Cain, in a letter to Shaw, advised that *Fast One* enjoyed "a spectacular critical reception [sic] but was not so hot at the box-office. In England, however[,] where he [Cain] didn't think they'd be able to give it away, it sold like sixty or seventy. Literary gents like Torquemada and James Agate waxed practically ecstatic." Where, he does not say—or when.[12] And "sixty or seventy" is exaggeration; yet a second edition is more than he managed over here.

However, in late 1944 or early 1945, there appeared a 25-cent paperback reprint, with some textual changes, by the Shaw Press, a subsidiary of The Saint Enterprises in Hollywood.[13] An epigram by The Saint, with his logo, says: "Never have I seen so many one-way tickets to the hereafter; there must be a convention in Hell." Of more interest is the blurb, and I quote in part: "This novel . . .

* * *

is the hardest, toughest, fastest moving yarn of the entire gangster era. It is a killer story to end all killer stories."[14]

In 1938, Peter Ruric had a hand in doctoring the script of an awful movie, *Dark Sands,* starring Paul Robeson, Henry Wilcoxon, and Wallace Ford, and distributed in England in late summer. He shared "original story" credit with Garret Fort, a well-known writer of gangster and prison movies, in 1939, for *Twelve Crowded Hours,* an RKO-Radio release with Richard Dix and Lucille Ball—yes, Lucy! *Film Daily,* 1 March, said, "It is all rather involved and the action is not very clear-cut nor productive of thrills carrying much tension." Shortly before World War II, Ruric wrote the screenplay for a low-budget little B-movie called *Grand Central Murders* released 24 April 1942. *Film Daily* liked it. Van Heflin was one of the leads.

In January 1943, Ruric went to MGM on a six-months' term-contract; from there he moved over to RKO again to collaborate with Joseph Mischel on the script of *Mademoiselle Fifi,* derived from tales by De Maupassant. The now respected (and deservedly so) Robert Wise directed; the now legendary (and deservedly so) Val Lewton produced it. Remember Simone Simon? She played the laundress. This was Ruric's movie highpoint when one considers the company he kept. From then on it was all downhill. His last credit was as author of something called *Alias a Gentleman* out of MGM in Culver City in 1948.[15]

To backtrack just a bit. From New York, on 29 November 1945, Shaw wrote Ruric in Los Angeles: "For the Black Mask anthology [*The Hard Boiled Omnibus*] . . . your RED 71 has been selected. . . . You mentioned this story and I agree that it is one of the best you did at that time."[16] In another letter on the matter, 10 January 1946, Shaw wrote: "In the forthcoming anthology they [Simon and Schuster] ask me to write some brief introduction on each story, so will you please give me a little background material. . . ."[17] Ruric's reply was in the third person and odd.

> Before "Fast One" Cain-Ruric had swung with roughly annual irregularity between the vast extremes of writing motion-pictures for large sums in gold, or writing privately printed "extra-surrealistic" novels, and stories, poems, articles for "advanced" European magazines, for nothing. His productive activities have followed the same spotty and obtuse pattern ever since—he has not, as yet, learned the "wondrous secret of writing what I want to write, for a living."
>
> He is the author of "Hypersensualism, A Practical Philosophy for Acrobats"; "Syncopaen"; "The Naked Man"; "Advertisement for Death"; "Broad"; "The Cock-Eyed Angel"; "Seven Men Named Caesar" and "The Ecstasy Department," a play to be produced in the Fall of '46—a couple of dozen films, here and abroad, and, under the Paul Cain *nom de shocker,* twenty odd short stories and novelettes. . . .
>
> He has traveled extensively in Central and South America, the West Indies, Europe, Northern Africa and the Near East, been a bo's'ns mate on tramps, a (successful, yet!) Dada painter, a professional gambler, editor, consulting gynocologist [sic], and balloonist.
>
> He is, at this writing, dividing his time between three plays, a definitive work on the sexual implications of Oncidium Fuchsias, and Warner Brothers.[18]

What is one to make of this jumble? The only "autobiographical" statement Cain-Ruric ever wrote? Allowing Ruric his fun, something he did not display in his fiction, we are still faced with absurd titles and dreamland achievements, not one of them to be vouched for. Allowing Ruric his parodying of the bio-bib headnote, we are still faced with a bewildering array of activities, not one of them to be confirmed, his fiction and film work excepted although he magnifies the output. The play, by the way, was not produced on Broadway.

In a P.S., Ruric asked that "Red 71" be sent to him for "p-reading and slight editing before inclusion in anth."; Shaw obliged and he emended oaths and profanity, etc. On 8 November Shaw sent him a check for $50. Meanwhile, Cain had been collecting seven of his *Mask* stories for a paperback called *Seven Slayers,* published by The Saint Enterprises.[19]

His career was ended two years later with the *Gentleman* movie. He died in obscurity on 23 June 1966 in Los Angeles of cancer. His death certificate stated that he had been a resident of the city on the ocean for forty-eight years and that he had been a writer for forty-three years.[20] This latter claim would put him back around the time he said he worked for Von Sternberg on *Salvation Hunters* and we are returned to our starting point. Intentionally or unintentionally, Cain-Ruric-Sims had effectively blocked all efforts to learn anything about him.[21] Ignorant of his birthname, Joe Shaw once mused:

> Why Peter chose a pseudonym at all, why he hit upon "Paul Cain"—before another Cain came into literary prominence—is a secret of Peter's. Being of a modest nature, we suspect that therein lay its cause, unsure because untried, hence reluctant to prevision success.[22]

Thus: Paul Cain-Peter Ruric-George Sims. Together as one "they" exploded in one flash of near genius—*Fast One.*

II. Autopsy

Why was *Fast One* so quickly forgotten after publication? And, basically, has remained forgotten since 1952?

It had waited for over a year for publication since its final installment in the September 1932 *Mask.* Therefore, the book appeared near the end of an "era" (commencing early in 1929) which had been studded with gangster novels, hard-boiled private-eye novels, gangster movies, *et al.* Preceding it had been Hammett's four great novels: *Red Harvest* (February 1929), *The Dain Curse* (July 1929), *The Maltese Falcon* (February 1930), and *The Glass Key* (April 1931); Raoul Whitfield's three fine hard-boiled pieces: *Green Ice* (July 1930), *Death in a Bowl* (March 1931), and *The Virgin Kills* (February 1932); W.R. Burnett's *Little Caesar* (June 1929), Donald Henderson Clarke's *Louis Beretti* (October 1929), and Armitage Trail's popular but terrible *Scarface* (March 1930).

Then came the figurative deluge of gangster-racketeer movies: *Little Caesar* (January 1931), *The Public Enemy*

(May 1931), and *Scarface: The Shame of a Nation* (March 1932), the classic though unintended trilogy. Edward G. Robinson, James Cagney, and Paul Muni were large on the screen and large in the Public Eye; they *were* gangsters to thousands of Americans, as were William Powell (*Street of Chance*, February 1930), Edmund Lowe (*Born Reckless*, May 1930; derived from Clarke's *Louis Beretti*), Lew Ayres (*The Doorway to Hell*, October 1930), Gary Cooper (*City Streets*, April 1931; script by Hammett), Walter Huston (*The Ruling Voice*, Oct. 1931), Jean Hersholt (*The Beast of the City*, February 1932), Warren William (*The Mouthpiece*, May 1932), and many more; but, truth to tell, the gangster genre was pretty well petered out by late 1933.

So it is quite likely that when *Fast One* made the shops in October 1933, many people were bored with the sight of yet another gangster novel. But *Fast One* was not just another; it was the best of its kind ever to appear. Sad to state: the best is often more difficult to sell than the worst. In his cast-aside *Omnibus* introduction, Shaw keenly appraised Cain's situation:

> At the time of its writing, Peter was a close associate of Raoul Whitfield and Dashiell Hammett, who were then in full stride, and found himself, indeed, in fast company. However, it has been said that, in the matter of grim hardness, while Raoul and Dash paused on the threshhold, Peter went all the way in *Fast One*.[23]

Judging by the reviewers' reactions, he went too far, too fast; readers were not yet prepared for the brutality Cain roistered in.

Finally, I must observe that no writer, except under extraordinary circumstances, finds reputation and fame with one novel. Cain stopped writing fiction in 1936. Memories are short. Competition, fierce and unending, came to Cain from other quarters and writers and not merely from his own kind. Perry Mason debuted in *The Case of the Velvet Claws* in March 1933 and returned in *The Case of the Sulky Girl* in September. He was an instant success. The Ellery Queen-Barnaby Ross duo (quartet?) published four novels in 1933, the fourth, *The Siamese Twin Mystery*, on 13 November. A condensation of Hammett's *The Thin Man* was in *The Redbook Magazine* in December and in book form in January 1934. Perry Mason was back (*Lucky Legs*) in February.

Then, on 19 February, came the other Cain—James M.—with *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. Two Cains meant trouble for Paul and one reviewer in Los Angeles, Wilbur Needham, was confused in his review of *Postman*:

> James M. Cain—who is, we believe, that mysterious bearded gentleman who wrote "A Fast One" [sic] under the name of Paul Cain last season—has a terse, savage and dynamic style. . . . [T]he speed of the narrative . . . spills the characters out into a smashing and bloody climax, not unlike that in Paul Cain's "A Fast One."[24]

So *Fast One* was forgotten. But not by everyone. Shaw, admitting (erroneously, now) that the novel was dated, felt it was "a story to be shuddered at and not easily forgotten." Raymond Chandler, who once met Cain and did not particularly like him, had nothing but applause for the novel:

> . . . His book *Fast One*, composed of four [sic] novelettes published in the *Black Mask*, is some kind of high point in the ultra hard-boiled manner. And the last episode in it is about as murderous and at the same time poignant as anything in that manner that has ever been written.[25]

And not forgotten by Southern Illinois Press which in September 1978 reissued *Fast One* as a part of the Lost American Fiction series under the general editorship of Professor Matthew J. Bruccoli.[26]

III. Afterword

I like to imagine Paul Cain in his elegant Montecito apartment on Franklin Avenue writing the episodes of *Fast One* for Shaw's *Black Mask*, bringing to life and to my memory (always) Gerry Kells and S. Granquist, evoking Los Angeles of a long-gone time as no other writer ever has. Maybe, through his windows, now and then he saw the Lido Apartments (6500 Yucca, at Wilcox), Musso and Frank Grill (6669 Hollywood Boulevard, near Cherokee), the Brown Derby on Vine (between Selma and the Boulevard), the Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel (at 1714 Ivar, just north of the Boulevard), and the Hollywood Division Police Station (1358 North Wilcox, at De Longpré). They all figure in the novel and only the station is gone, abandoned and demolished in November 1976. Hell! In those beautiful days every setting in The City of the Angels was a postcard come alive, and Cain could easily have seen the Ambassador Hotel down at 3400 Wilshire where Kells had a suite with a built-in bar, when it was one of the best hotels anywhere.

You could see *far* then—in 1932. And you could get killed, too, out there on the old Coast Highway on the way to Ventura in the treacherous night rain, like Kells and Granquist.

> He kissed Granquist's cold mouth and turned and crawled through the mud away from the light, away from the voices.
>
> He wanted to be alone in the darkness; he wanted the light to please go away. . . .
>
> There, after a little while, life went away from him.

Notes

1. From the Joseph T. Shaw Correspondence file, Special Collections, University of California, Los Angeles. Permission to quote was kindly given by Mr. Brooke Whiting. I wish to thank Mrs. Hilda Bohem and Mrs. Kayla Siegel, and the staff as well, for their generous help.
2. "Fast One" (March), "Lead Party" (April), "Velvet" (June), "The Heat" (August), and "The Dark" (September).
3. Cain wrote twelve stories for *Black Mask*; in addition to those mentioned, they were "One, Two, Three," May 1933; "Murder Done in Blue," June 1933; "Pigeon Blood," November 1933; "Hunch," March 1934; "Trouble-Chaser," April 1934; "Chinaman's Chance," September 1935; "Death Song," January 1936; "Pineapple," March 1936; and "Dutch Treat," December 1936, which terminated his fictional efforts.
4. All quotations from reviews of Ruric's movies with one exception are from the files in the Margaret Herrick Library,

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills, California. I extend my thanks to the staff for making my sojourn there so profitable.

5. One latter-day film historian supports *Film Daily*. Rose London, *Cinema of Mystery* (New York, 1975), pp. 36-38, calls it "the extraordinary Lugosi and Karloff film of 1934"; unfortunately she fails to mention Ruric!

6. I have refrained from a long plotting of the story; the novel needs a careful critical analysis and I am engaged on same.

   The first edition of *Fast One* is a rarity in the book trade. The dedicatee was actress Gertrude Michael who managed to make for herself a reputation in the 1930's in Hollywood, chiefly in B-movies. Her best known part was Sophie Lang, a lady jewel thief.

7. From the copy in the Guymon Collection of Detective and Mystery Fiction, Special Collections Room, Library, Occidental College, Los Angeles. I wish to acknowledge, with gratitude, the liberal help given me by Mr. Michael Sutherland, Head, Special Collections.

8. 10 (28 October 1933), 222.

9. 29 October 1933, p. 21. The review appears in the "Latest Works of Fiction" section. Perhaps this is what Doubleday, Doran preferred, for the firm published *Fast One* under its own name and not under The Crime Club. These two reviews are the only ones I have been able to find in major publications; Will Cuppy ignored it in *The New York Herald Tribune Books.*

   The first paperback reprint prints extracts from three newspaper reviews: *Philadelphia Ledger* ("a nervous novel full of fire and fever"), *Los Angeles Times* ("its short staccato sentences jet from the pages like black sparks"), and the *Cincinnati Times* ("all the sinister silence of Faulkner, the cryptic dialogue of Hemingway"). I searched diligently but never found the *Los Angeles Times* review.

10. "Book Stuff," *Rob Wagner's Script* (Beverly Hills), 10 (18 November 1933), 17; signed by a Mrs. Jack Vallely.

11. P. 335. *The Manchester Guardian* refused to notice it.

12. TLS, 13 January 1946; Shaw Correspondence file, UCLA. Cain possibly may have been referring to the London *Daily Mirror* or the *Irish Press* (Dublin) where the novel is known to have been reviewed.

13. A Bonded Mystery, No. 10; 144 pp., no date. The verso of the half title page says: "This edition is published by special arrangement with DOUBLEDAY DORAN & CO. INC[.] THIS IS A WAR TIME BOOK[.]" Does The Shaw Press suggest Joe Shaw himself? I don't know.

14. Such strenuous efforts produced few sales, for this edition is now scarce indeed. I purchased a copy some twenty-five years ago and consider myself fortunate to own it, tattered as it is. The textual changes, minor and few in number yet intriguing, indicate that Cain made them.

    Avon Publishing Co. reprinted it "by Special Arrangement with the Author" in 1948 in paperback, 189 pp. This, too, is rare. I own a 1952 imprint; so there was another printing. Its title page advertises Cain as the author of " 'Seven Slayers.' "

15. As I have said before, Ruric's movie work is disputable. In the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences library there is mention of his having contributed to treatments of six scripts, 1934-1940. None went before the cameras. Records at MGM show that he labored on seven scripts, 1940-1942, but only one, *Grand Central Murders,* carried his name.

16. Shaw Correspondence file, UCLA.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, 13 January 1946. See n. 12. As it turned out, Shaw wisely did not use any of this material in *Omnibus.* There was one Introduction wherein he stressed the importance of the hard-boiled style as developed in *Mask.*

19. *Ibid.* In the Shaw file, UCLA, are tear-sheets of eight stories by Cain from *Mask* with corrections, etc., in pencil and the name changed to Peter Ruric on each title page, a change not observed. From this came *Seven Slayers.* It was reprinted in 1950 by Avon, No. 268, and is practically unobtainable on the market.

20. I am indebted to Mr. Cliff McCarty, owner of the Boulevard Bookshop, Los Angeles, for these data. A close perusal of the *Los Angeles Times,* 23-30 June 1966, did not turn up an obituary or a news item. By a coincidence, on 24 June, when his death might have been noted, the *Times* was occupied with the memorial services for recently dead Ed Wynn, the comic.

21. In the summer of 1976, I visited and pestered both the Writers' Guild of America West, Inc., 8955 Beverly Boulevard, and the Guild's pension office up the street on San Vicente Boulevard in Los Angeles, hoping to find some information. Neither organization had any record of him.

22. Discarded introduction to *The Hard Boiled Omnibus,* Shaw Correspondence file, UCLA.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Saturday Night* (Los Angeles), 14 (17 February 1934), 10; the publication was a decent enough Pasadena ballyhoo sheet; Needham was the best reviewer in the Southland, next to Paul Jordan Smith of the *Times.* He remained confused about the identity of the two Cains for some time. In a review of P.J. Wolfson's *Is My Flesh of Brass?*, he comments on its "crashing climax, exactly like so many of these melodramatic finales in hard-boiled novels. Paul Cain, James M. Cain (twins?) and half a dozen others have carried their characters out of the story by automobile wrecks. . . ." *Ibid.*, 14 (7 July 1934), 10.

25. RC to James M. Sandoe; TLS; 4 February 1953; quoted by permission of Special Collections, UCLA.

26. Too bad, but the advertisement of *Fast One* by SIU Press in its catalogue, Fall-Winter Books, 1978-79, contains errors and questionable statements, e.g., the novel was ***not*** published in 1932 by Doubleday, etc. The Afterword by Irvin Faust is so-so.

RETRO REVIEWS

Where Did Charity Go? by Carter Brown (Alan G. Yates). Signet, 1970.

England is unique in producing prolific thriller writers who somehow work the American hard-boiled vein so successfully that they become every bit as popular in the U.S. itself as in their homeland or the Continent. Peter Cheyney, James Hadley Chase and Alan G. Yates come immediately to mind as being representative of this unusual species. One would think that American detective readers would be reluctant to accept such ersatz tough guy stuff when there is so much of the real thing around. But to date Yates, who writes as Carter Brown, has sold more than fifty million copies of his 179 novels, the major percentage of those sales consisting of the Signet paperbacks which have been appearing here since 1958. (The author's work originally began appearing in Australia, where he had moved from his native London in 1949 to find work as a salesman.)

Where Did Charity Go? is a quintessential Yates/Brown novel. Not unlike Richard S. Prather's Shell Scott stories, the Brown books are a deft, glib, pure-forties-pulp blend of ultra-fast pacing, a few chuckles and generally mild sexual titillation.

The hero of this one is Hollywood private eye Rick Holman, who tactfully bills himself as an "industrial consultant" to the movie industry. Here he's called in by a self-centered has-been star who's engineered his own hippie daughter's kidnapping as part of a publicity stunt to boost his moribund career. But things have gone wrong and backfired. Naturally, it's Holman's difficult job to sort them out.

Like any prolific pulpster, Yates has produced his share of duds. But this isn't one of them. The energetic telling of a good story never slackens, the handling of complex intrigues within intrigues is masterfully executed, and a last-minute surprise after everything is supposedly resolved–these all combine to make this a most satisfying job.

If you like private eye stories and have yet to sample Carter Brown, or if you've read him before and would now like to sample him in top form, this is the one to read.

—Stephen Mertz

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

In Such a Night by Val Gielgud. London: Macmillan, 1974.

Relatively few of Val Gielgud's numerous detective novels have been published in the United States. Of his series about Gregory Pellew, Scotland Yard man turned private investigator, I believe only 1964's *Through a Glass Darkly* (English title: *The Goggle-Box Affair*) has crossed the Atlantic. Though it is easily the best of the Pellew stories that I have read, all of the series are interesting, though more for the author's reactionary world-view than for their plots and characters.

In Such a Night is set in Venice and has a background of movie-making. In it, Pellew, senior partner in the private enquiry firm Prinvest, London, falls gooily in love with the secretary-companion of an international sex symbol. In a foreword, Gielgud apologizes for involving his detective in a romance, something few writers today would bother to do. In this case, however, the love affair is such an embarrassingly soggy business that the apology is appropriate. Perhaps Pellew, like Philo Vance, is a detective who really should stay aloof from romance.

When murder occurs on the offshore islet of Ladrona, Pellew's lady love not unexpectedly holds a smoking gun, which she had been wearing, no doubt uncomfortably, in her bikini. Assisting Pellew on the case is his silly-ass partner, Humphrey Clymping, whose wife Kate and aristocratic mother Lady Hannington are less in evidence than in some Pellew cases. The mystery gets resolved, not through any real detection in the traditional sense, and so, of course, does the romance. Pellew, never one of the brighter Great Detectives, seems positively dense at times in this one, perhaps under the burden of his great love.

One minor character I would like to have seen more of is the theatrical knight Sir Jeremy Bottle, who has a small role in the film being shot. He is said to have a "famous nose–almost as celebrated as that of Cyrano de Bergerac, implying for his admirers distinction, for his detractors bloody-minded arrogance." Later we are told that "he carried about with him an atmosphere of aloof certainty, together with the exasperating mannerism of a slight lifting of that arrogant nose, as if offended by some bad smell, which forbade familiarity." One suspects that Gielgud is having a bit of fun at the expense of his famous brother, Sir John.

But it is the author's xenophobic upper crust attitudes, expressed through his characters, that make his work most interesting. Gielgud may be the only writer operating in the seventies who would be worth a chapter to himself in a sequel to Colin Watson's *Snobbery with Violence.* Most of his characters seem highly unwilling inhabitants of the present decade, perhaps of the present century. Disparaging references to the unwashed young abound, and the foreign and "coloured" are to be tolerated at best. Long after hair length would seem to have stopped being a major controversy, long hair positively enrages the stodgy Pellew. "Progressive" and "permissive" are the principal dirty words. Pellew is never so bigoted as when he is supposed to be enlightened, as in a remark that he does not believe that Wogs start at Calais! (For a particularly horrible example of Gielgud's social views, see *The Black Sambo Affair,* a hideously racist item though probably not intentionally so. This one has as much chance of U.S. publication as I have of starring in the next James Bond movie.)

Not to be too negative, Gielgud writes decent English prose, can construct a good detective story plot (though not here), and creates characters that can attract the reader's interest and sympathy despite serving as mouthpieces for the author's antiquated views. Gielgud takes great care to fill in the background of his characters, which prevents the story from moving at any unseemly haste.

—Jon L. Breen

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Testkill by Ted Dexter and Clifford Makins. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976.

Many British mystery novels, including some good ones, never see publication in the United States. Often it is difficult to understand why, though not in this case. For enjoyment of the novel depends on an understanding of the game of cricket, a game few Americans know well and most have probably never seen played.

A Test Match between England and Australia is being played at Lord's cricket ground in London. The match lasts five days, Thursday through Tuesday with a day off on Sunday. We see the match through the eyes of cricketer-turned-journalist Jack Stenton, who also fills us in on several attendant murders, including the death during the match of the much feared Australian fast bowler Fitzgerald. From the outset the book is thick with closely described cricketing action, baffling to non-initiates of the sport. For example, "Hunt put the pressure on, bringing up third man and providing a suicidal silly mid-on."

A piece of dialogue from the book is quoted on the dust jacket: "May I say that the murderer–and I am convinced that there *is* one–is a cricketer, and, to be precise, a cricketer who is a member of one of the two sides playing in the present Test Match here at Lord's." This irresistible quote suggests a classical puzzle, but the promise is not fulfilled. In the Barzun and Taylor phrase, this novel offers "no detection."

Like narrator Stenton, co-author Ted Dexter is a former top cricketer turned journalist. Sad to say, this novel does not establish him as a Dick Francis of the cricket pitch. The biggest problem is not the lack of a formal puzzle but the fact that the characters merit little reader sympathy, least of all the narrator-hero, a bit of a bounder who is estranged from his understanding and devoted wife for reasons never adequately explained. The killer's motivation, explained away by madness, is also hard to accept.

Readers looking for a good mystery with a cricket background will be better served by Barbara Worsley-Gough's minor masterpiece *Alibi Innings* (1954), which can also be recommended to readers with no background in the pastoral English game.

—Jon L. Breen

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Murder at Government House by Elspeth Huxley. Harper, 1937.

Elspeth Huxley is not very well known to mystery fans. She has written only four mysteries, three published in the late thirties and one in 1963. However, she may be on the verge of becoming more widely known. There is a favorable discussion of her work in the new *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection* and Barzun and Taylor have selected her book *The African Poison Murders* as one of their *Fifty Classics* which are being published by Garland. She should be more widely known because, judging by *Murder at Government House*, her first book and the only one I have read, she writes beautifully.

Government House has all the typical qualities of a Golden Age mystery and then some. The Governor of Chania, a mythical British colony in Africa, has been strangled in his office at Government House. It is a locked room murder, with the usual set of suspects, all of whom had reasons for wanting H.E. (as the Governor is called) dead. Superintendent Vachell, the head of the C.I.D., makes his tortuous way through the evidence (there are a few more deaths along the way) until the culprit is brought to justice. The solution of the mystery is handled well, but not in a completely fair manner. Breaking an alibi requires some technical knowledge that none of us has, and that for all I know may not be true. But that is a small quibble, and the solution is not any more unfair than in hundreds of other 1930's mysteries.

I said earlier that the book offers pleasures beyond the typical thirties mystery. It does so in its picture of native and settler life in Africa. When the book was published such lives were exotic, but today, forty years later, settler society is extinct and the native life too has changed profoundly. One question that comes up, for example, is what the colonial government's response should be to a witchcraft trial. A tribe has tried, convicted and gruesomely executed one of its members as a witch. If the tribal elders who took part in the affair are punished, the elders' authority and the tribe's social structure will be destroyed. On the other hand, if the elders are not punished, the government is sanctioning murder.

Vachell's Watson is a woman anthropologist who does some field work in the back country. That gives Mrs. Huxley an opportunity for some beautiful, evocative descriptions of the African landscape. It also gives her an opportunity to introduce a witch-doctor who solves the murder by reasoning from first principles, and who identifies the murderer in a riddle he gives to the anthropologist.

In everything she writes Mrs. Huxley displays a knowing touch. When some disreputable dealings in Chania become front page news in England, she writes, "The Labour party used the incident to illustrate the irrefutable fact that British imperialism was rotten to the core. The German press seized on the case as proof positive of the corruption of the effete British rule. . . . Several English weeklies called for a world conference on international freedom of access to raw materials, and one newspaper accused the United States of having stolen a British island in the Pacific for a seaplane base." There is more, including an hilarious pronouncement by Mussolini.

There is one jarring note, and that is Vachell's language. He is given a Canadian background, presumably so he can talk like an American hard-boiled private eye. At one point, when interviewing a suspect he says, "Shoot, sir." Now Sam Spade says "Shoot," and Peter Wimsey says "Sir," but nobody says "Shoot, sir!"

But small quibbles aside, the book is a treasure, and I look forward to reading Mrs. Huxley's other mysteries.

—Michael Trombetta

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The Dead Are Prowling by Virgil Markham. Collins, 1934.

The reclusive Miss Iris Knoyle lived for 13 years in a house called Murmuring Lodge on Bolton Mountain, located near Burlington, Vermont, and spent much of her time brooding over her dead relations—whom she has tried to contact.

Her death is of interest since $600,000 awaits whoever is designated by her recently drawn will.

Newspaper reporter Ed Bond, in search of a story, inserts himself into a group of musicians whose task it will be to serenade the deceased with her favorite musical selections during the three days of her funeral.

Bond encounters strange visitations. Are they real people, or phantoms of Miss Knoyle's dead relatives? Is this a supernatural situation, or is there, somewhere, a logical explanation that will reconcile all the disturbing events that have occurred before and during the funeral celebration?

Virgil Markham is an unusual author, about whom little is known, and one who does not repeat himself from book to book. You never really know where you are with Markham, and it is difficult to predict what he'll do next.

The Dead Are Prowling is slightly overwritten, and at rare moments a note of facetiousness will enter into the dialogue. The author seems unwilling (or unable?) either to establish a doom-laden atmosphere or to promote tension for his scenes of apparent supernaturalism—which are matter-of-factly understated.

Much more effective (at least in the early portions of this work) is Markham's sense of romanticism. The charming Nurse Jennings is probably the most gorgeous heroine of any mystery novel written in the mid-30's, and her spellbinding witchery is immediately apparent to Ed Bond and this reviewer.

There are a few HIBK hints scattered here and there, some of which are misleading, but the crux of Markham's climax—which appears far-fetched at first—seems to be worked out with rigorous logic, and is worthy of John Dickson Carr—who would have done much more with such promising material.

—Charles Shibuk

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Murder Without Motive by R(aymond) L(eslie) Goldman. Coward, 1938.

Young Vincent Creel, a victim of depression unemployment, drifts into the midwestern city of Fairmont for the first time in his life. Forty-five minutes later, after alighting from a bus at its last stop, he is shot to death.

Why? What possible motive could his killer have had?

An eyewitness, Mrs. Oliver Embry, living in a nearby house, identifies the killer as wealthy industrialist Thomas Wendell, Fairmont's leading citizen and the power behind its political machine.

The district attorney and the police emphatically disbelieve Mrs. Embry and threaten institutionalization proceedings.

Wendell is then shot in his office, and ballistics determines that the murder weapon is the same as that which dispatched Creel.

That's only the beginning. As the police investigation into Wendell's death begins to unfold, the crime problems become much more complex.

Newspaper columnist (and Watson) Rufus Reed, who narrates, tells us that "This case started out crazy and it gets crazier as it goes along. We've got a lot of pieces, but they won't fit together. Two men have been murdered and in each case, apparently, the murderer and victim were strangers to each other."

Reed's easygoing boss, Asaph Clume, the shrewd and occasionally witty owner-manager of the *Express*, is a staunch political enemy of Wendell and his machine. He finds himself forced to play detective in order to change the political climate of Fairmont in a forthcoming election, and he is also obliged to keep his newspaper out of trouble caused by Reed's youthful exuberance.

Neither Reed nor Clume subscribes to the Ben Hecht school of journalism, and they stick closely to business without the aid of wine, women, or wisecracks.

The author, who deserves more critical exposure than he has heretofore received, tells his story in terse, medium-boiled prose, creates a puzzle whose deviousness is worthy of a Christie, and has Clume solve it by pulling a few logical rabbits out of Erle Stanley Gardner's best hat.

—Charles Shibuk

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The Great K. & A. Train-Robbery by Paul Leicester Ford. Dodd, Mead, 1897.

Any reader expecting a detective cum train story, as I did from the title, will be disappointed in this book. Only a few pages are devoted to the crime—a fake train holdup and the theft of letters containing proxies in a battle for control of the Kansas and Arizona railroad. The culprits are quickly discovered, partly due to their bad shooting, and soon the hero regains the letters against the machinations of an unscrupulous railroad magnate.

Most of this book, however, concerns the inhibited love of Dick Gordon, superintendent of the K. & A. R. R., for Madge Cullen, daughter of one of the directors of the railway. Gordon travels to Arizona with the Cullens in a special train heading for a meeting of stockholders. At this point elements of the western enter the story, and the cavalry does, actually, come to the rescue.

Unlike Wood's *The Passenger from Scotland Yard* or many of the tales in Whitechurch's *Stories of the Railway*, this story is a bit of pleasant fluff directed toward the turn-of-the-century feminine reader, because what was really stolen in the great K. & A. train robbery was Dick Gordon's heart. Though there is enough about trains to interest the railroad buff, the robbery element is overshadowed by the love story, so that *The Great K. & A. Train-Robbery* is only of peripheral interest to mystery readers.

—Edward Lauterbach

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Yellow Dog Contract by Ross Thomas. Avon, 1977.

One more literary effect of Watergate and the unzipping of some once tight lips within the FBI and the CIA has been the burgeoning of what may be called the conspiracy novel or the Washington thriller. Here one finds a meeting ground for ex-classified information or disinformation and the wildest invention, and the writers have their work cut out for them if they are to equal the daemonic schemes of the CIA.

Ross Thomas's new novel has the standard ingredients, sorted out as "corruption, chicanery, and greed," by the Washington *Post*, and who should know better. Harvey has come out of a quiet rustic retirement to carry on a sub rosa investigation into the disappearance of Arch Mix, nationally known head of the Public Employees Union. A well-financed plot is under way to influence the leadership of the union, in the absence of Mix, to call strikes of all public employees in twelve major cities about a month before a national election. The calculated effect of the strikes will be to swing the vote to a Reagan-like candidate whose chances are diminishing. Thomas makes it clear that the Republican party will be the beneficiary of this plot, although he is at some pains to put a long distance between the sources of the money and the actual "plumber." Still a very large sum of money has been raised among wealthy right-wingers just on their faith that it will be used for a worthy cause. For some people Watergate can be a hallowed memory.

It takes a great deal of good presentation and convincing motivation to sustain the Washington thriller; what Thomas has going for him are some fairly precious family stuff, three good chapters on union affairs and a union meeting in St. Louis, and a good ear for the talk of the hustlers that infest the nation's capital. Violence is confined to two scenes, one of which is shockingly alive. The other, the shoot-out ending, we have so often seen on television that a child addict could tell you move by move what is going to happen as soon as Harvey and his uncle step outside the back door of Harvey's farmhouse.

In addition the Washington thriller requires some special handling of its types, for the journalism of Watergate has raised the acceptable level of authenticity. Separately Thomas's characters are well articulated but conspiracies don't usually interlock people quite so smoothly as Thomas would have it.

A stronger objection to the Washington thriller as exampled here is that it is easy for the reader to see the immediate objectives of the conspiracy but not the long-range projections. For all the good it will do, the novel does show that the methods of conspiracy are truly excessive in the face of the pliability and ignorance of the public. It may be the novelist's belief that in a society where corruption is becoming the accepted mode not merely of politics but also of existence, a tiny streak of human decency will make the difference between dusk and daylight, or between death and life. In the hands of a Graham Greene or a John Le Carre this idea is going to be felt much more truly than in the writer who is mainly interested in matching his wits with the plot-makers of the CIA.

—G.A. Finch

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Key Witness by Frank Kane. Dell, 1956.

If Frank Kane is remembered at all these days it's probably as the creator of New York private eye Johnny Liddell who starred in 29 novels and dozens of short stories between 1944 and Kane's death in 1968. Liddell was a bargain basement hard-boiled shamus with virtually no distinctive characteristics: he operated out of a small Manhattan office, he could absorb incredible amounts of liquor and physical punishment, he was irresistible to the ladies, that sort of thing. Still, the books are of some interest today in that they offer pure, unadulterated examples of the private eye formula free of any frills. A few are also distinguished by a vivid portrayal of New York police methods of the time. Kane's brother was a cop and was credited as technical advisor on the series.

Key Witness was the closest Kane ever came to a Serious Novel and those who have sampled him through the Liddell tales, or those who have not tried him at all, will find this an interesting specimen.

It's a juvenile delinquent novel, a popular form in the decade following the success of *The Blackboard Jungle.* Fred Morrow, a semi-bigoted WASP from Brooklyn, is inspecting Harlem tenements for his employer, the landlord, when he witnesses the brutal broad daylight stabbing of a Puerto Rican youth by three teenage blacks. The victim whispers the name of his killer to Morrow with his dying breath. Although the street is crowded with by-standers, no one comes forward when the police arrive on the scene—except Morrow. *He* isn't going to be cowed by fear of retaliation! He's a good citizen and he wants to do his duty—he agrees to testify. The novel spans the 48 hours following the murder and concerns the repercussions of the crime on Morrow and several other people involved.

Doing his duty soon turns into a nightmare for Fred Morrow. He begins receiving late-night calls threatening his wife and children. His job is in jeopardy. His employer wants no publicity drawn to his slum real estate holdings. Before long Morrow wants out of the whole ball game, but a politically motivated D.A. seeking headlines pressures him every bit as much as the hoods and Morrow's employer. And stuck in the middle of it all—sitting on a racial powder keg, cogs in a political bureaucracy, and still trying to solve the crime—are the white Harlem precinct cops. As in the Liddell series, Kane's portrayal of these men, of their world and frustrations, has the hard, gritty ring of authenticity.

Frank Kane, to be sure, was a pulp writer, not a Serious Novelist, and his limitations and the high speed at which he wrote are in evidence. Some of the scenes and minor characterizations are a bit on the heavy-handed side and he did seem inordinately fascinated with describing people smoking cigarettes during each and every scene. Overall, though, it's a fine performance and Kane excels in juggling his large cast and their disparate interests. The style is terse and hard-boiled, and a claustrophobic air of fear permeates the book. A sharp edge of frustration and anger courses just beneath the surface, and it is this sense of conviction that lifts *Key Witness* several notches above the better-known Liddell stories. Recommended.

—Stephen Mertz

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The Mauleverer Murders by A.C. Fox-Davies. John Lane, 1907.

I had never heard or seen A.C. Fox-Davies' name until I found and read this novel, but on the basis of an "also by" page which lists two other titles (*The Dangerville Inheritance* and *The Average Man*), it seems a reasonable assumption that the author was a fairly popular practitioner of the detective story before World War I.

This particular novel opens in a very promising manner, with the seemingly unmotivated murders of three Mauleverer brothers and a number of attempts on the life of a fourth. The father of this family calls in Dennis Yardley, "the most famous private detective in Europe, a man in whose hands had rested the reputations of Sovereigns, and whose marvellous brain had unravelled the mysteries of Courts." This individual, assisted by the lover of one of the accused parties, solves the crime, uncovering along the way a set of elaborate international intrigues which would have done credit to the bizarre imagination of William Le Queux. It may be doubted, however, if even that Prince "through all the Realms of *Non-sense* absolute" ever constructed a piece of foolishness on so elaborate a scale as this.

The Mauleverer Murders is certainly entertaining as a period piece—with all of the flaws and limitations which that kind of faint praise implies. The public seems to have accepted this kind of thing, but tastes were soon to change, and the vanguard of the "Golden Age"—Bentley, Mason, Crofts, Christie—were to bring to the detective story qualities which were to dominate an entire generation. Even those who are not particularly enamored of the analytical nature, the disciplined structure and technique, of the typical Golden Age story may gain a new appreciation for those qualities after taking a look at a novel as unstructured, and at times incoherent, as this one.

Something else remains to be said, however. This utterly mad book ends up fascinating by its very excesses. Its use of coincidence and its complex use of timetables make it one of the most contrived books ever written, but what it lacks in plausibility and discipline it makes up for in its sheer ingenuity and energy. No reader could possibly swallow the notion that, *a la The Prisoner of Zenda,* there are three (or is it only two?) physically identical red-haired ladies running around London and, among other more mundane activities, striving to seat themselves on some of the more powerful thrones of Europe. The incredible variations which Fox-Davies works on this gibberish, however, make it terribly entertaining.

The book's problems do not end here. There are structural flaws—some clues are revealed or followed up rather too late in the day; and the sequence of trials which helps to expose some of the book's red herrings is far too long. The writing, too, is on occasion quite terrible. Again, however, there are some compensating virtues. The solution to the mystery involves a true, legitimate surprise, and the actual ending of the novel is a small masterpiece of sardonic humor. It should also be noted that the book's sexual frankness is both surprising and refreshing in a genre which, until recently, has been far too conservative in its dealings with the subject.

I enjoyed *The Mauleverer Murders* extremely. I cannot recommend it to everyone, but those willing and able to savor its perverse pleasures will be in for a good time. All others should beware.

—Peter Christensen

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The Drury Club Case by Sidney Williams. Penn, 1927.

For me this volume turned out to be a 15¢ treasure from a rural thrift shop. Unknown to Barzun and Taylor and nearly everyone else, Sidney Williams, whoever he was, has produced an excellent story, well written with many insightful lines, and set in a nostalgia buff's heaven. During a hot summer at a yacht club near Boston, the protagonists travel to their several pleasures by ferry boat and narrow-gauge railroad and constantly complain about the evils of prohibition, always wishing the rum runners success—and better taste.

The detective, medical examiner Dr. Beasley, who only gradually emerges in the role, is staying at the club while recovering from an infected hand, a casualty to his trade. Also spending the summer at the shore is a varied group known only by their first or last names, but rarely both. There is dissolute Hal, whose brokerage business faces bankruptcy and who will be murdered after nearly 200 pages; the slow, strong, and obstinately moral Steve (who has a last name); the oddly erratic psychologist Professor Eckstrom; two women, Flip and Lorley, who are predictably troubled; and a nice collection of golfers, loafers, bridge players, and real yachtsmen.

There is also one gigantic implausibility when Steve is allowed to retain a gram of cocaine taken from a wrecked rum runner's boat. The underlying problem is drug addiction, not bad alcohol, and Hal is murdered and Steve apparently framed for something stemming from this deeper and more sinister root. Dr. Beasley, chafing from enforced inactivity, now gives advice to Dr. Bennett, the local M.E., and the deeply local Mr. Cluff, chief of police. The ending is both neat and satisfying.

—James Kingman

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Retrospective Mini-Reviews

Mystery at Friar's Pardon by Philip MacDonald (Crime Club, 1932). A cursed house is bought by a fearless, but detested, authoress. After some poltergeist manifestations and a disembodied hand tapping at a window, death by drowning without water occurs in a locked room. Perhaps the most distasteful disposal of a murder weapon in the Golden Age.

Six Deadly Dames by Frederick Nebel (Avon, 1950). A sextet of *Black Mask* reprints from the early 1930's which justify paraphrasing Father Flanagan—"there's no such thing as a nice girl." The toughness of the stories holds up after nearly fifty years.

Murder Out of Mind by Ken Crossen (Green, 1945). A magician's $10,000 offer for failure to reproduce others' psychic phenomena brings an assorted group to a sponsoring millionaire's mansion. Murder results and Fuzzy Van Dyke (a cross between Nero Wolfe and Simon Brimmer) solves it. Entertaining, but not remarkable.

Mysteries of Blair House by Roy Eastman (Conjure House, 1948). Imagine an adaptation of ". . . the Norwood Builder" perpetrated by Milton Propper. Good grief!

Sorceror's Shaft by Francis Gerard (Stacey repr. 1973, orig. 1947). A self-proclaimed prophet promises to kill a satanist by the power of prayer, despite whatever protective measures the latter employs. Both a how- and whodunit. How could B&T in COC omit mention of Gerard?

Death Is My Dancing Partner by Cornell Woolrich (Pyramid, orig. 1959). When she does the Dance of Kali, someone always dies. As depressing as *Waltz into Darkness* and *Savage Bride,* but the reader is unsure until the last paragraph whether the ending will be happy or not.

Portrait in Smoke by Bill S. Ballinger (Harper 1950). A small-time collections agent falls for a girl from a 10-year-old photo and traces her from her sordid past to her prosperous present. In the later Woolrich vein, but not as oppressively so.

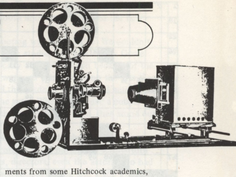
Museum Piece No. 13 by Rufus King (Crime Club, 1946). A wealthy young widow marries a widower with an unnatural passion for recreating famous murder scenes with the actual furnishings. One room is kept locked for his private pleasure. The astute reader will reach a point where he'll ask whether the author has something up his sleeve besides his arm.

Voodoo'd by Kenneth Perkins (Harper 1931). Has the young man injected with fluid from the glands of a recently deceased murderer become possessed or self-hypnotized into continuing the latter's alleged elimination of the wealthy Juvenal family of New Orleans? How did the murderer's fingerprints get on the throat of a later victim?

Barron Ixell: Crime Breaker by Oscar Schisgall (Longmans 1929). Four continental adventures of an American criminologist. In Bruxelles, he exposes corruption in the Ministry of Police; in Paris, he tracks down a murderous extortionist known only as "Monsieur Satan"; in Berlin, he apprehends a master jewel thief; in Geneva, two foreign diplomats there for an international conference are kidnapped. Oddly enough, these stories could have been easily adapted into Charlie Chan movies in the 1930's.

—Angelo Panagos

MOVIE NOTES



FURY (MGM, 1936).
Directed by Fritz Lang with co-sp credit;
Produced by Joseph Mankiewicz.

Cast: Spencer Tracy, Sylvia Sidney, Bruce Cabot, Edward Ellis, Walter Brennan. Complete credits in such references as the multi-volume edition of N.Y. *Times* film reviews and Paul Jensen's *Cinema of Fritz Lang* (1969).

In its self-confident 1930's, MGM usually based its prestige films on genres developed first at other, "lesser" studios. *The Thin Man* (1934), *Test Pilot* (1938), *Philadelphia Story* (1940) and a dozen other Culver City depression epics have their sources in earlier film successes shot at Warners, Paramount and Columbia. And the models MGM had in mind are only the more obvious because Metro tended to employ the key talents–stars, writers or directors–of the earlier successes.

Fury, both as the first U.S. anti-lynching film and as a socially conscious depression thriller, was not considered a typical Mayer-Thalberg production, then or now. Yet it follows this same studio rule of modeling itself on an established genre and on older film sources. For Norman Krasna's original film story, the original factual source was a publicized 1934 lynching: not in the redneck South but in small-town California. But *Fury's* Sylvia Sidney had played a comparable ingenue role in Mamoulian's *City Streets* back in 1931 at Paramount. And the star, Tracy, first held onto jail bars and screamed for the jailer, not in *Fury's* burning small-town prison, but on a stage-set jailblock in a 1929 John Howard Lawson play that drew Tracy his original (1930) film contract. *Fury's* California sheriff (Edward Ellis), a key role, was played by the same actor who had a comparably important part in *I Was a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* in 1932. I go into all this for the benefit of any reader who takes too seriously the recent efforts of film academics to treat pre-World-War-II U.S. fictional films as filmed journalism, factual history or sociology about what was happening at the time of some movie's release.

As a 1936 MGM release in the full tide of its Macdonald-Eddy-Garbo period, *Fury* struck contemporary reviewers as the last word in naturalist realism. In 1979 it is more obvious that it was produced and written with a craft discipline derived from contemporary commercial theater, films and magazine fiction. Each first-reel detail is planted to carry its last-reel payoff: from peanuts to Sidney's schoolteacher sewing her fiance's coat and correcting his spelling. A 1979 audience must be prepared to appreciate it as we enjoy a stanzaic poem by Keats or Dylan Thomas, with full consciousness of its rhymes and other rhetorical strategies.

Film historians treat the film, customarily, in terms of star and director. In fact, the film is untypical of Tracy's later "image" films in that he is no authority figure, wears no Roman collar, nor plays opposite a certified Hepburn-Lamarr-Dunne-Crawford glamour girl. *Fury's* last reel is of course all one-man closeup Oscar-baiting: with Tracy in the courtroom and soft-focus behind him, as he regretfully rescues the 22 "murderers." But he delivers his toughest climactic lines–about his regret in not letting them hang–more gently than a George Scott would today, or the 1954 Tracy would have, in *Bad Day at Black Rock*.

As for the director, *Fury's* prestige success (as a B production) may only have tracked Lang into doing B's or programmers during his twenty or so years in the U.S. In pre-Hitler Germany he had of course been permitted much more formal range, in shooting the first successful silent feature filmed saga, science fiction and (*M*) "socially conscious" thrillers. His contribution to *Fury* is unarguable–for example, the shot where Sidney staggers into town through a watchful, silent crowd, to see her fiance at the window of a burning jail: the mob quiet and post-coitally fulfilled, after an uproarious buildup. What *is* arguable, and what is unquestioned in Superstar-Director books on Lang like Paul Jensen's, is Lang's claim (at the expense of Norman Krasna) on a co-screenplay credit only two years after he began learning English. Krasna provided scripts in the post-1935 decade for Lang, Leisen, Hitchcock, Kanin and (later) Donen; and it was his original story from the 1934 lynching incident which was available for Lang and the ex-writer producer, Mankiewicz, to take over.

—J.M. Purcell

THE YOUNG AND INNOCENT (British, 1937); U.S., THE GIRL WAS YOUNG (1938).
Directed by Alfred Hitchcock; Screenplay by Charles Bennett, Alma Reville, *et al.*, from Josephine Tey's *A Shilling for Candles* (2043 in Barzun & Taylor).

Cast: Nova Pilbeam, Derrick de Marney, Percy Marmont. Full credits in Denis Gifford's *British Film Guide 1895-1970* (McGraw-Hill, 1973).

Categorically, *Young and Innocent* is recalled as the lightweight item in Hitch's "Golden Six," 1934-38. Its memory tag is the famous climactic overhead traveling shot across a seaside-resort ballroom toward the twitching eye of the blacked-up drummer in the dance band. The film has not escaped analytic, thematic treatments from some Hitchcock academics, but they generally avoid making clear that *Young and Innocent* is (a) a Nancy Drew movie because (b) it is obviously intended as a showcase for its ingenue lead, Nova Pilbeam, three years older than when kidnapped back in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. Within a basic Miss Fixit Durbin-Temple characterization, Nova gets to show a fair range of emotions, do back-chat comic dialogue (in character) and exhibit the physical agility necessary to escape an auto sinking into an abandoned mineshaft.

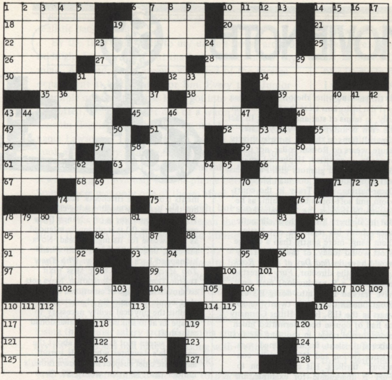
The screen plot is the one about the constable's daughter who finds herself aiding the chief suspect in her own father's murder case; in other words, *39 Steps* reshot for Nancy Drew. The suspect–Derrick de Marney, as an underemployed young actor involved with the bitch victim–is so believable as the resourceful escapee that he suggests another movie Hitchcock didn't shoot–a movie in which a really guilty murder suspect manipulates the sympathies of the cop's daughter for his own sexual and legal purposes. The comic highlight of the whole film is the girl's father (Marmont) adjusting an establishment smile on his face for the purposes of greeting this socially unacceptable potential son-in-law at the end of the movie.

Hitch is especially careful in this one with social detail, whether the behavior of the big sister in the constable's large family, or knowing that it was the drummer in the dance band who would be the most likely drug-taker. Actors tend to do set pieces to help pace the movie–the hero's poor-man's lawyer (marvelous), the hostess's husband at a brutally realistic children's party, the tramp who becomes the centerpiece in the ballroom sequence.

As for Miss Pilbeam herself, the rather specialized campus film-society crowd with which I saw the film tended to reject her characterization, but as I said above, it seemed to me coherent and believable. Like Diana Lynn and Donna Reed later in the U.S. film '40's, Nova may not have sufficiently appealed to the developing poor-white-trash taste in our mass film audience, which tends to be bothered by such things as brains, clear diction and social poise.

—J.M. Purcell

By Louis C. Mandes, Jr.



ACROSS

1 Vermicelli
6 Counterfeit
10 Beehive State
14 Bungle
18 Wallace's "The Lady of ——"
19 Stage in development
20 Kemp's "Heat —— Furnace"
21 Melody for 56 Across
22 He solved "The Murder of a Quack"
25 Rajah's spouse
26 Whale
27 Brick
28 She said there are "No Pockets in Shrouds"
30 Presidential monogram
31 Wentworth's "Ladies' ——"
32 Ice and Iron
34 Breakers
35 Carpenters
38 Fall mo.
39 Condescends
43 South American rodent
45 Alarm suddenly
48 Slow mover
49 Most abrupt
51 Increase
52 Vegetables
55 Moses' death mountain
56 Entombed Ethiopian
57 Pageboy
59 Direction determined by earth's axis
61 Strips of wood
63 Make another stab at
66 Boggy
67 Poetic contraction
68 He encountered "Horror on the Ruby X"
71 Mail from a tourist: Abbr.
74 Pell's "Hangman's ——"
75 Non-toucher's pole length
76 Dodge's "—— the Black Sheep"
78 Mitchell's "The Man Who Grew ——"
82 Merrick's "The Demon ——"
84 Common suffix
85 Writer Drummond
86 State, to Maigret
88 Knight's "The Affair of the Ginger ——"
89 U. of Oklahoma football team
91 Dick Francis thriller
93 —— Newcastle
96 Armstrong's "The —— Room"
97 Ashton's "Death —— a Guest"
99 Indicator of geographical measurement: Abbr.
100 Changeable
102 Eucalyptus
104 Halliday's "Heads You ——"
106 River islands
107 On the ——
110 He witnessed "The Death of Humpty Dumpty"
114 Pentecost's "The Evil That ——"
116 Fuller's "The —— That Kills"
117 Two-toed sloth
118 He supported "The Real Cool Killers"
121 Punch
122 Writer Goldsmith
123 Horatio
124 Capital of Ghana
125 Writer Talbot
126 German river
127 Jumble
128 "Murder Fantastical" author

DOWN

1 Taylor's "The Crimson ——"
2 Monteilhet's "Return from the ——"
3 He met "The Legacy Lenders"
4 Foley's "Dangerous ——"
5 Corne's "Death —— Masquerade"
6 Relative of goose pimples
7 Hensley's "The Color of ——"
8 Ad —— per aspera
9 Writer Arrighi
10 Without adequate cause
11 Lizzie Borden's axe, for one
12 Brand's "Suddenly —— Residence"
13 Inspector in "The House of the Arrow"
14 She got involved in "The Cabinda Affair"
15 USSR range
16 Gilbert's "After the —— Weather"
17 Eberhart's "—— Warning"
19 Bolton's "The Mystery ——"
23 Bourne's "The —— House"
24 Throw out
29 Very, in Vichy
31 Fenisong's "—— the Hand"
33 He captured "The Elusive Bowman"
36 —— elbows (ragged)
37 Like a bright night sky
40 Earth goddess
41 Pen points
42 Opening
43 Lovesey's "—— of Spirits"
44 Cunning
46 Cite
47 Schoenfeld's "Let Them —— Bullets"
50 Bakery item
53 Peter Lorre and Henry Silva
54 Christie's "The Man in the Brown ——"
58 Comparative ending
60 Urges: Scot.
62 Point of land
64 Faux pas
65 Hard rubber
69 Bitter drug
70 Ghostly greeting
71 He asked: "Who Benefits?"
72 French shepherd
73 Summit
74 He knew a family with "Too Many Cousins"
77 Bencolin
78 High-pitched sound
79 Bell's "Fall —— Cliff"
80 Erskine's "Sleep No ——"
81 Pouch
83 Music specialist
87 Hoop ——: Watson to 14 Down
90 Diamond calls
92 Greenland base
94 Holden's "Don't Go In ——"
95 Valencia and Seville
98 "Death's Old Sweet Song" author
101 Symons' "The Plot Against Roger ——"
103 Went astray
105 Writer Gaboriau
108 Sharp, to Poirot
109 Plateaus
110 "The Case of the Extra Grave" author
111 Wild ox
112 Instrument of torture
113 "Enter Sir John" author
115 Staples
116 Little, in music
119 Fonseca's "The Death Below the ——"
120 Wells' "Raspberry ——"

Solution on page 93

DICKS ONSTAGE

FORM AND FORMULA IN DETECTIVE DRAMA

INSTALLMENT III

By Charles LaBorde

Unity is an important feature of plot that is closely related to wholeness; however, the fact that a play has a definite beginning, middle, and end does not guarantee a unified rather than episodic plot. The key factor in the determination of unity is the degree to which the separate incidents are causally linked. Each succeeding incident should be related by causality and not by mere accident or coincidence to the previous incident. Thus, a tightly structured, well-unified play will contain no incidents that can be either removed or interchanged with other incidents. Such alterations would upset the causal chain. Furthermore, in a unified play a scheme of probability should be established. In the beginning of such a drama all events that occur should appear possible within the stage reality that the author has created. If the play has unity, the succeeding events will continue to evolve along lines that have been shown to be possible in the earlier causally linked scenes. Eventually, the unified play will develop so that a given outcome is not only possible, but probable and necessary.[31]

Unity is an essential in what Aristotle termed an artistically beautiful plot. Unity plays a special part in the beauty or effectiveness of the mystery drama because of the expectation of fair play. If the author is sincerely to present all clues on stage so that an observer has at least a remote chance of solving the msytery question, accidentals, coincidentals, and improbabilities must be outlawed. Any mystery play that depends on such factors violates the rules of fair play. This observation is one of the commonest principles of mystery writing and has been noted by virtually all who have set down guidelines for the mystery game. In "How to Write the Mystery Story," Stewart Beach warned "Never, never in a 'whodunit' . . . permit coincidence to play any part in the development of the narrative. There may *seem* to be coincidence . . . but before you have gone much further, you will have had to show [that the apparent coincidence] was directly connected with the events of the story."[32] Mystery historian Howard Haycraft echoed Beach's view, noting the "necessity of avoiding the use of coincidence, of making certain that every major episode subsequent to the opening crime proceeds directly and causatively. . . ."[33] Novelist Willard Huntington Wright, under his pen name of S.S. Van Dine, forbade the use of "accident or coincidence or unmotivated confession" to determine the solution.[34] Still more condemnation of the illogical came from Ronald A. Knox, who stated that "No accident must ever help the detective, nor must he ever have an unaccountable intuition which proves to be right."[35] Unity, causality, and probability are essentials to the mystery, according to those theorists. Since those same ingredients are necessary in any drama, they would seem to be particularly important to mystery plays.

For a characteristic that is so vital to a mystery that strives to play fair, unity is surprisingly lacking in murder-house plays. Part of the problem with unity in those dramas arises from their use of many brief action clues and activity-filled scenes. Such an array of short scenes is much more difficult to arrange in a causal pattern than is a succession of concrete clues found on the site of a crime or a series of longer, less complicated scenes. Another problem arises from the large number of characters, each of whom must have a scene in which he dominates in order to establish him as a potential murderer or victim. It becomes difficult to link one such scene to others, and often the order in which such obligatory scenes occur is arbitrary. While each is necessary and its omission would confuse matters, those scenes could easily be rearranged without detrimental effect. Still other obstacles to unity and logicality arise when the murderer is an insane man, as he often is.[36] While a number of illogical, haphazard acts may eventually be explained by using an insane perpetrator, unity will of necessity suffer. With such blocks to unity seemingly built into the murder-house formula, that type of play proves exceedingly difficult to construct in anything but episodic fashion. Seldom have the authors successfully met the challenge.

Of the plays discussed in this chapter, *The Bat* is the most unified. By the end of the last act most of the strange occurrences that have been frightening the characters are explained through a series of observations drawn from the action clues presented on stage. By the time The Bat is apprehended, his identity and capture have been made both probable and necessary by the clues and incidents depicted.[37] Nevertheless, the generally logical explanations and careful use of the probable and necessary aside, *The Bat* succumbs in part to the inherent murder-house problems: it includes scenes unrelated to the plot development, which are used merely for excitement;[38] many of its two- and three-character scenes could be interchanged.

Other murder-house plays have considerably less unity. *The Cat and the Canary* opts for thrills and surprise rather than probability and causality. In *The Ninth Guest* and *Ten Little Indians* most of the action is composed of a series of murders, the order of which seems arbitrary. Those three plays and *The Mousetrap*[39] employ insane agents of destruction, thus disposing of any pretense of logicality being at work. One feature in *Ten Little Indians,* however, gives it a semblance of unity that is unattained in the other plays. The unifying device used in that play is a nursery rhyme about ten little Indians who dwindle in number until none remains. Each of the murders in the play is patterned after a verse of the poem, the pertinent parts of which are read aloud shortly before or after each murder. Without the murders being committed according to the plan described cryptically in the rhyme, the play would be, like *The Ninth Guest,* simply a succession of deaths perpetrated haphazardly by an insane killer. Instead, the rhyme supplies the logicality of the progression and also functions to enhance not only the probability of the murders but also the probability of the manner in which they will occur.

Often a mystery play that is causally developed and that eschews the use of accidentals may give another impression during its beginning and middle. The reason for the illusion lies in the nature of the mystery drama, the object of which is to present the information to the audience while at the same time keeping that audience constantly baffled so that the solution is not easily perceived. Incidents that are eventually shown to be causally linked in the solution may appear to be unrelated when they occur in the early acts. Consequently, even a play as unified as *The Bat* may seem to rely on coincidence and accident. Although that deceptive appearance need not be viewed as a defect if it serves the purpose of preventing a too early solution by the audience, it does pose problems for unity. In the case of a murder-house mystery, with its other inherent unity troubles, such illusory disunity compounds an already difficult situation.

An unduly episodic play has the worst kind of plot, according to Aristotle, and is the product of either a bad poet or a good poet with material he is stretching beyond its capabilities.[40] That stretching of materials often results from the playwright's efforts to create complexity, a desirable quality of plot; however, in such instances the poet actually substitutes confusion and complication for complexity.

Complexity and complication are not synonymous. Complication is, in part, a product of an episodic plot. Complexity, on the other hand, can be more readily achieved in a unified play. A drama becomes complex when the action involves major discoveries and peripeties. Discovery is defined as "a change from ignorance to knowledge,"[41] while peripety is "the change of the kind described from one state of things within the play to its opposite,"[42] or, more simply, a reversal. The discoveries and peripeties that lend a drama complexity are of a special order. Although all plays contain pieces of knowledge that can be termed minor discoveries and changes of fortune that are peripeties, those major discoveries and peripeties that create complexity should "each of them rise out of the structure of the Plot itself, so as to be the consequence, necessary or probable, of the antecedents."[43] Thus, they are more easily achieved in a unified play. The finest form of complexity arises from a unified drama in which a major discovery precipitates a peripety that reverses the entire direction of the action. Such complexity is an artistically difficult achievement; therefore, the quality of complexity has been placed in high esteem by most critics and playwrights.

Mystery plays in general are famous for their numerous minor discoveries or clues and their last-act reversals. Most clues, however, are not of the sort that create complexity. Even the more detailed action clues are of the major variety only when they are the probable and necessary result of antecedent activity. A last-minute reversal comes too late in the play to create anything but a lopsided and artificial complexity. Actually an eleventh-hour peripety is more a function of the concealment factor of the mystery formula, which necessitates a final discovery and reversal. As already noted, when it occurs in an episodic mystery play, the final revelation is seldom the probable and necessary result of earlier incidents. Furthermore, a peripety that occurs in the last act is usually a simple character reversal rather than a major plot peripety.[44] The discovery and attendant reversal that result as the probable and necessary consequence of earlier plot developments and alter the direction of the plot are only infrequently found in mystery plays. They rarely occur in episodic murder-house mysteries.

Murder-house plays are far more complicated than they are complex. Seldom do they rise above the simple Aristotelian level of suffering, that is, merely being concerned with the thoughts and feelings of the characters. In *The Bat* the authors place a considerable emphasis upon suffering; the emotional excitation of the characters, especially of Lizzie, receives much of the focus. While there are many clues, most are simple. Although some arise as the probable and necessary result of earlier actions, they do not lead to peripeties. The plot contains no major reversals. Even the ending revelation of the killer's identity is a simple discovery without a reversal. While it may be a surprise (as it should be), no alteration in the direction of the plot accompanies that discovery. Most of the other murder-house plays display similarly simple plots. In *The Ninth Guest* suffering dominates, since the play emphasizes the rapid deterioration of each individual character as the probability of his own death increases. While the play contains the seed for a major discovery and reversal in the guests' realization that one of them is the murderer, the author handles the material in such a way that the opportunity for complexity founders. The possibility of the killer's presence is suggested throughout the second and third acts and is eventually accepted as true. Since the discovery is so gradual and is never pointed, its potential for lending complexity is lost. A similar fate befalls the potentially major reversal near the end of the play when the heroine, Jean, seems uncertain as to which of the two surviving men is the villain.

Agatha Christie

The Mousetrap abounds in clues but contains no discovery-reversals except for the concluding scene when the murderer reveals himself. That situation, however, is not a result of the necessary direction of earlier events. Furthermore, that late discovery of the killer's identity precipitates only a character reversal rather than a major plot reversal. The only change takes place in the villain, who transforms from a kind of policeman into an avenging lunatic. *The Cat and the Canary* serves as an outstanding example of the simple play of suffering. Its appeal lies entirely in the emotional impact that its frightening scenes have upon the characters, especially the heroine-heiress whom the villain tries to drive insane through fear. Not only are there no plot reversals, there are scarcely any minor concrete clues. All four of these plays are simple and at least partially episodic. Although they convey an impression of complexity, they actually contain only superfluous complication.

Unlike most murder-house mysteries, *Ten Little Indians* possesses at least a modicum of plot complexity. The early discoveries in the play lead to a single conclusion, that the judge is the murderer; however, his death at the beginning of the third act causes a major reversal, since the killer must then be sought elsewhere. The resurrection of the judge in the closing moments is precipitated by the fact that only one victim, the young woman, remains. At that point in the play it becomes probable and necessary that the killer reveal himself. If the woman is the murderer, she need no longer maintain the facade. If the killer is someone else, he can step forward to kill his final prey. Just when it appears that the surviving lady must be the murderer, the judge makes his reappearance, which is itself a major discovery and leads simultaneously to the final reversal that he and not the girl is the murderer after all. By comparison with the other plays of this type, the complexity of *Ten Little Indians* seems monumental.

Just as the artistry necessary to achieve complexity makes it a desirable ingredient of plot, the difficulty in developing appropriate magnitude makes that quality desirable as well. Part of the Aristotelian concept of beauty in an art work holds that the greater the task facing the artist, whether it be in handling length, complexity, or unity, the more beautiful the work will be when that task is successfully mastered.[45] In regard to mystery plays, that concept may be phrased as follows: "The greater the difficulty or magnitude of the problem to be solved (the mystery question), the more artistic the play will be when the solution is reached." Both the insufficiency of the magnitude of the problem and the lack of serious treatment of it in most mystery plays are in large part responsible for the low artistic reputation of that form of drama. Murder-house plays are no exception to the typical weaknesses of seriousness and magnitude found in mysteries in general.

Mysteries, whether in narrative or dramatic form, are seldom serious examinations of crimes. Since most mysteries dwell on the game-like nature of the problem, they are only seemingly serious. Although the novels and plays characteristically deal with the sober subject of death, the death depicted in them seldom receives serious treatment. The victims are usually sketchily developed characters. They die quickly and their apparent pain or anguish is minimal. In general, an air of clinical detachment or one of "good fun" permeates the death-related elements of a mystery. The seriousness only seems to be present because of the subject matter.

Murder-house plays seldom vary from such seemingly serious treatment. In *The Bat* not only is the main action treated in a seemingly serious manner, but a heavy dose of extraneous broad humor is also included to enhance the feeling that none of the deaths and thrills should be taken too gravely. Lizzie, the easily frightened maid, represents such an obvious attempt by the authors at lightening the events involving theft and Jack-the-Ripper murders. Death in *The Cat and the Canary* is not violent; instead it is an act performed imperceptibly and inaudibly upon a person drawn into a secret passageway by a Halloween-like costumed figure. The appearance of deadly events fills the play; however, it is only a semblance created by a considerable amount of discussion about dying and only a single death. People talk about death from fright (I.11), clocks striking the hour are called "gongs of death" (I.17), and there is yet more discussion of evil presences (II.43), haunted houses (I.11, 23) and dismemberment (I.31).

Seldom, however, does the seriousness go beyond mere talk. In *The Ninth Guest* the murders are more vivid and gruesome than in the other plays. Included in its repertory of homicides are an agonizing poisoning and a graphic on-stage electrocution. While such painful and violent death tends toward seriousness, the hunt- or game-like nature that the murderer creates as he pits his wits against those of his victims reduces the tendency. The seemingly serious nature of murder-house mysteries is nowhere so apparent as in the dramas of Agatha Christie. Murder in *Ten Little Indians* is again treated as a game. The people die no more agonizingly than do the china Indians that are found broken when the bodies are discovered. The parodistic approach of *The Mousetrap* allows for little in the way of seriousness. In the end it is learned that no one (except the dead woman, who deserved her fate) has been in real danger. The identity of the murderer has even been known by a policeman, who has only been waiting for the villain to betray himself. Probably the best indicator of the seemingly serious approach of Christie's plays occurs in *The Mousetrap,* where the knowledge that a killer is loose in the house receives less attention from the heroine than does the preparation of meals (II.59).

Not only the seemingly serious approach to the materials, but also the relative simplicity of the problems to be solved in murder-house mysteries make them dramas of rather insignificant magnitude. Instead of accepting that fact and attempting to achieve the full potential of the limited magnitude, many mystery playwrights have sought to lend their plays an outward appearance of significance and seriousness. One of the preferred methods for creating an impression of greater magnitude involves the complication of the situation by using several minor mysteries to augment the major mystery question. That technique of obscuring makes the mystery seem more perplexing. *The Bat* is a foremost example of such complication. In addition to the question of "Who done it?" other minor mystery questions must be answered. Among them are "Who is the embezzler?" "Who is the Unknown?" "Who is the gardener?" and "What is happening in the house?" Invariably with such a multi-leveled mystery, there will be the final question, "How do all these mysteries fit together?" The answer all too often is that they do not. In *The Bat,* however, the authors provide a satisfactory explanation for the baffling complication of events: not one, but two major crimes are being committed in the house; there is an ongoing attempt by two thieves to recover their embezzled bank money at the same time that another thief and murderer, The Bat, is trying to steal the loot from under the embezzlers' noses.

A second means of creating a sense of magnitude involves the use of extensive talk about either the seriousness of the characters' plight or about the mysteriousness of the events, when both danger and the perplexity of the problem are actually minimal. While *The Bat* makes some use of that approach in its talk of the supernatural, *The Cat and the Canary* serves as the best example of a murder-house drama using talk to enhance magnitude. As already observed, the play contains protracted discussions not only of the supernatural, but also of violence, death by fright, inherited insanity, and the general spookiness of the house. All of the speech-making increases the feeling or probability that many evils and assorted horrors are taking place, when, in fact, two villains are simply running a confidence game.

The great magnitude builder in all mysteries is the use of murder, the ultimate serious crime. Any play in which a murder occurs presumably takes on immediate import; therefore, authors include murder even when it is not an integral part of the major crime. *The Bat* contains two murders, both of which are never explained as being necessary to The Bat's successful thievery. The only reason given for the murders is that The Bat is a "bloodthirsty assassin" (I.9). *The Cat and the Canary* includes a single murder that is gratuitous at best. Owen Davis tries to enhance magnitude in *The Ninth Guest* by sheer quantity of bodies and variety in the means of dispatching the victims. In the course of the 72-page play, Davis provides one corpse in a closet, one beating, three druggings, three poisonings (not including one feigned poisoning), two shootings, one electrocution, and, for good measure, one near electrocution. In addition to the high body count, the author removes all humor and inserts extensive moralizing about death and theorizing about fear and willpower in his striving for magnitude. In one of his autobiographies Davis freely admitted that he had learned his lesson years before when audiences were filled with "bitter disappointment" at the absence of a human corpse in one of his mysteries. Taking that reaction as a warning against a lack of magnitude, he diligently provided corpses in bunches in his later plays.[46] While Agatha Christie also offers a multi-body play in *Ten Little Indians,* her *The Mousetrap* stands as an exceptional murder-house mystery in that there is no attempt to create a false sense of magnitude. As noted earlier, nothing in the play is portrayed as particularly serious or puzzling. The single murder receives the characteristic Christie unserious treatment by having it committed to the accompaniment of an overly melodramatic radio broadcast on the mechanics of fear (I.ii.33). Unlike other practitioners of the murder-house mystery formula, Christie learned early in her career that, as Howard Haycraft has observed, the mystery is "a frankly non-serious entertainment form of literature which . . . has . . . its own merits."[47] She was cognizant of those merits and tried only to achieve their full potential instead of attempting to present a false, overblown semblance of greater magnitude.

Whether its magnitude is great or small, every play has an opportunity to reach its own inherent potential. The process of a play's achieving its potential begins with the introduction of certain emotions. Those emotions are then fully developed within the play and are finally resolved in a satisfactory ending. In Aristotelian terms the play that makes such complete use of its emotional materials has achieved a catharsis.[48] The emotions characteristically introduced in a mystery play are fear, hate, suspense,[49] and bafflement, with the occasional incidental inclusion of laughter. All melodramas, including mysteries, typically arouse fear and hate. Fear is created by placing the hero in threatening, imminently dangerous situations. Attendant hatred of the villain results from his having placed the hero (or another patient-character) in such a perilous position. Suspense and bafflement are more nearly the emotions that are peculiar to mystery than to melodrama in general. Suspense is a by-product of fear. When the hero is placed in a fearful situation, suspense results from the delay of the anticipated dangerous outcome. The emotional tension is suspended indefinitely until either the feared outcome occurs or the fearful situation dissipates. Bafflement is simply that quality in a mystery that arises when the characters (chiefly the detective) are unable to explain logically the puzzling occurrences and clues. As has already been observed, such a state of perplexity is of paramount concern in a mystery and can be summarized in the form of a mystery question (usually "Who done it?"). In an effectively constructed mystery all four qualities–fear, hate, suspense, and bafflement–are relieved in the final solution. When the villain is revealed, bafflement disappears. When he has been dealt with, the fearful situation and its accompanying suspense are also removed. The hate, too, is vented with the capture of the villain, since the implied or stated outcome is that he will get his just deserts. Each mystery play should contain incidents arousing all of these qualities, but murder-house mysteries display particular diversity in their individual emphases of one or another of them.[50]

The Bat places great emphasis upon the creation of fearful situations. They play such an important part in the work that the authors begin establishing the probability of fear even before the presentation of any exposition. The opening lines of the play leave little doubt that dangerous situations will soon arise:

> LIZZIE is at the city telephone up C. When Curtain is well up, LIZZIE sets down the phone, with angry snap; hangs up receiver.
>
> LIZZIE. He says the reason they turned the lights off last night was because there was a storm threatening. He says it burns out their fuses. (Low rumble of THUNDER in the distance.) There! They'll be going off again tonight! (Step L., scared.)
>
> CORNELIA. Humph! I hope it will be a dry summer. Ask Billy to bring some candles and have them ready.
>
> LIZZIE. (Frightened, moves down to back of Table C.) You're not going to ask me to go out into that hall alone? (I.6)

Fear receives further bolstering from the suggestion of the supernatural. For example, a glowing cat's eye seemingly floats across the stage at several points in the play. Fear is thus created by using an inexplicable incident. Hate for the villainous Bat is minimal, as is characteristic of many of the older, thrills-in-the-dark plays. Hate does not appear to figure so prominently in the play as does fear. The fact that the complicated happenings are not clearly the work of a single villain dissipates the hatred.[51] Although hate is subdued, suspense appears strongly in *The Bat.* The authors demonstrate their keen awareness of the mechanics of suspense when they employ the highly effective repetition technique. In the first act a man is shot to death on the staircase in the dark. While some suspense exists in that scene, the effect is greatly intensified in the second act when the murder is re-enacted. The repetition sets up a strong anticipation of another murder, which is sustained until the lights are turned on at the end of the scene. The fact that there is no second murder has no lessening effect on the suspense created. Actually the absence of a gunshot extends the suspense by keeping expectation at a peak until the fearful quality is removed by the switching on of the lights. Bafflement is, of course, the chief ingredient in a mystery. For its effective catharsis, perplexity must be sustained until the end. While the mystery in *The Bat* can be solved by simple deduction, it is unlikely that a viewer would be alert enough to do so. The method used by the authors to assure bafflement until the desired moment is a simple one: they introduce so much physical activity after the presentation of the final clue that there is no time to think about the clues and arrive at a solution. By thus maintaining bafflement, the authors can bring about an effective catharsis, with fear, hate, suspense, and bafflement all disappearing simultaneously upon the capture of The Bat.

The Cat and the Canary also emphasizes fear and suspense. All the talk about danger intensifies the fear. After a fearful situation is created by the disappearance of Crosby, the lawyer, through a secret panel, suspense takes full reign. The second act is essentially a single extended suspense scene in which the heroine locks herself alone in a darkened room in a house known to be riddled with sliding panels and secret passageways. Bafflement is maintained in an expedient manner: no clues leading to a solution are provided. While that approach serves well to create confusion, it violates the fair-play rule. The conclusion to the play spreads the solution and capture over several pages. First, a conversation between the two villains rids the play of its baffling quality. Eventually the heroine is rescued from them and they are captured. Only then are the fear, hate, and suspense relieved. Essentially *The Cat and the Canary* uses theatricality and an absence of fair play to evoke a maximum of fear and suspense from a minimally suspenseful premise.

In *The Ninth Guest* Owen Davis opts for bafflement at the expense of the other emotional qualities. He never sufficiently evokes fear and hate in the play. As Davis himself once noted, fear can be created only for characters who are sufficiently developed to the point that their safety is desired by the audience.[52] In *The Ninth Guest* the characters are uniformly dislikable and never fully developed. In fact, most seem deserving of elimination.

Since there is no real desire created to keep them alive, their imminent deaths are never fearful and their murders are never hateful. Without fear, suspense also is lost. Only the puzzle aspect of the mystery remains, and Davis develops it in an almost clinical, disinterested, game-like fashion. The catharsis of the single emotion of bafflement is weak compared to those of either of the former plays.

Agatha Christie seems cognizant of the problems to be encountered in killing a host of people. In *Ten Little Indians* she spends almost the entire first act in personalizing and individualizing each of her characters. Therefore, the placing of those often likable, though guilty, people in danger of their lives without due process of law becomes a fearful and hateful proposition. A degree of suspense results from the anticipation of how the next murder will match the appropriate verse in the rhyme. Nevertheless, again the game-like quality of the murders dominates, and bafflement is the chief emotional ingredient. Its importance in the play is shown by the lengthy explanation given by the murderer to his last prey, Vera. Despite the villain's loquacity, the speech works effectively because a clear, detailed explanation befits such a baffling puzzle. The full dramatic potential of the material is then achieved when the hero, Lombard, revives from apparent death and dispatches the villain posthaste. Bafflement is relieved with the villain's speech, while his death ends the hate, fear, and suspense that have continued to build as he stalked his final victim. *The Mousetrap* adheres to a similar pattern of character development and resultant fear, hate, and suspense; however, bafflement again dominates the play until the revelation scene in which all emotions reach fruition with the villain's capture.

Laughter also plays a part in many murder-house mysteries. In most, as in *The Bat* and *The Cat and the Canary*, laughter is mainly an incidental used for comic relief. A single character elicits most of the laughter because of his or her excessive fears. In the drama of Agatha Christie, however, the comic ingredients become more integral. Each play has a thread of comedy that runs throughout, as if the author were trying to reiterate constantly that the events are only seemingly serious. In *Ten Little Indians* the comedy is rather grim, consisting largely of the pun-like nature of the verses in the nursery rhyme when they are compared to the murders.[53] *The Mousetrap* utilizes laughable materials more fully in that it broadly parodies earlier murder-house mysteries. While comedy is not extensively developed in these kinds of mysteries, it sometimes functions as an emotional adjunct to the four more important ingredients of fear, hate, suspense, and bafflement.

To be continued.

Notes

31. For Aristotle's discussion of unity, the probable, and the necessary, see *Poetics*, pp. 235-36.

32. Stewart Beach, "How to Write the Mystery and Suspense Story," in *Writing Detective and Mystery Fiction*, ed. Burack, p. 118.

33. Haycraft, *Murder for Pleasure*, p. 236.

34. S.S. Van Dine, "Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories," in *Art of the Mystery*, ed. Haycraft, p. 190.

35. Ronald A. Knox, "A Detective Story Decalogue," in *Art of the Mystery*, ed. Haycraft, p. 195.

36. The reason for using such a motif as the insane villain will be noted later in the discussion of character.

37. For example, the probability that the police detective is The Bat is established at the end of the second act, when only he and another character are not imprisoned by the killer. When in the final act the other character is found dead, it is necessary that the only living person not locked in the room, the detective, be The Bat.

38. For example, several of the characters are attacked by a real bat on one occasion (III.111).

39. *The Mousetrap* also has unity problems similar to those found in police procedurals because the second act of the play closely adheres to the procedural format. A further discussion of unity in procedurals is provided later.

40. *Poetics*, p. 236.

41. *Poetics*, p. 237.

42. *Poetics*, p. 236.

43. *Poetics*, p. 236.

44. This point is examined more fully later during a discussion of character.

45. Aristotle specifically states this concept in the *Poetics*, p.233, with regard to length: "the longer the story, consistently with its being comprehensible as a whole, the finer it is by reason of its magnitude."

46. Owen Davis, *My First Fifty Years in the Theatre* (Boston: Walter H. Baker, 1950), p. 95.

47. Haycraft, *Murder for Pleasure*, p. xii.

48. The passage in the *Poetics* that describes catharsis is rather cryptic. In the definition of tragedy on p. 230, Aristotle says that a tragedy contains "incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions."

49. Suspense can be viewed simply as a special kind of fear found in mystery plays—a combination of ignorance, concern, apprehension, and anticipation. For the purposes of this study, however, a separate consideration of suspense will facilitate the understanding of this essential ingredient in most mystery dramas.

50. Precise handling of the emotional materials does not come about by accident. The type of ending sought actually determines the sort of emotions that need to be developed earlier in the play. Such a controlled ending must be consciously worked toward by the author, who should know where his mystery is leading from the moment he begins to write. Numerous scholars of the mystery form have noted the necessity for the author to plan with a definite ending in mind. For example, see Jack Iams, "Getting Away with Murder," in *Writing Detective and Mystery Fiction*, ed. Burack, pp. 187-89.

51. In the strictest sense, hate actually is present in much of the play, since it is the primary material used by the author to create the fearful situations. Without any hate, no fear would exist. The hate created in the play, however, is undirected. Since the object of the hate, the villain, is unknown throughout most of the drama, the emotion is not directed at the specific individual but generally at whatever amorphous force is causing the fearful incidents. As will be seen later, the plays that best display hate are inverted mysteries, in which the identity of the murderer is known from the beginning.

52. Owen Davis, *I'd Like to Do It Again* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1931), p. 163.

    The writings of Aristotle give Davis support when fear is defined as being caused by that which has "great power of destroying us." See *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, in *Rhetoric and Poetics*, p. 104. Fear is related to oneself. Thus, characters must be shown to be like oneself in order to be worthy of one's fearing for them.

53. For example, the couplet, "Three little Indian boys walking in the zoo./A big bear hugged one, and then there were two," results in the victim's being crushed by a great bronze bear holding a clock (III.i.82).

CHECKLIST

By M. S. Cappadonna

Albrand, Martha: FINAL ENCORE. St. Martin's, 8.95
Alexander, David: THE CHOCOLATE SPY. Coward, 8.95
Allan, Stella: AN INSIDE JOB. Scribners, 7.95
Allen, Michael: SPENCE AND THE HOLIDAY MURDERS. Walker, 7.95
Ball, Brian: DEATH OF A LOW HANDICAP MAN. Walker, 7.95
Barak, Michael: THE ENIGMA SACRIFICE. Morrow, 8.95
Barnard, Robert: DEATH ON THE HIGH C's. Walker, 7.95
Bird, Al: MURDER SO REAL. Coward, 8.95
Block, Lawrence: THE BURGLAR IN THE CLOSET. Random, 6.95
Box, Edgar: THREE BY BOX: DEATH IN THE FIFTH POSITION, DEATH BEFORE BEDTIME, DEATH LIKES IT HOT. Random, 12.95
Breslin, Jimmy and Dick Schapp: .44. Viking, 9.95
Brett, Simon: AN AMATEUR CORPSE. Scribners, 7.95
Burke, J.F.: CRAZY WOMAN BLUES. Dutton, 7.95
Butterworth, Michael: X MARKS THE SPOT: A SYMPHONY IN BLACK IN FOUR MOVEMENTS. Doubleday, 7.95
Chesbro, George C.: CITY OF WHISPERING STONE. Simon, 8.95
Christie, Agatha: DESTINATION UNKNOWN. Greenway ed., Dodd, 6.95
Christie, Agatha: TEN LITTLE INDIANS. Greenway ed., Dodd, 6.95
Connolly, Ray: NEWSDEATH. Atheneum, 8.95
Conway, Laura: CAST A LONG SHADOW. Dutton, 6.95
Cook, Lennox: THE MANIPULATOR. Coward, 8.95
Craig, Mary: WERE HE A STRANGER. Dodd, 6.95
Creasey, John: PROPHET OF FIRE. Walker, 7.95
Crosby, John: DEAR JUDGMENT. Stein, 9.95
De Lillo, Don: RUNNING DOG. Knopf, 8.95
Dorland, Michael: THE DOUBLE-CROSS CIRCUIT. Grosset, 10.00
Duke, Madelaine: THE BORMANN RECEIPT. Stein, 8.95
Duncan, Robert L.: FIRE STORM. Morrow, 9.95
Egan, Lesley: LOOK BACK ON DEATH. Doubleday, 7.95
Egleton, Clive: THE MILLS BOMB. Atheneum, 7.95
Ellerback, Rosemary: ROSE, ROSE, WHERE ARE YOU? Coward, 8.95
Estleman, Loren D.: SHERLOCK HOLMES VS. DRACULA; or, the Adventure of the Sanginuary Count. Doubleday, 7.95
Finlay, Iain: THE AZANIA ASSIGNMENT. Harper, 9.95
Follett, Ken: EYE OF THE NEEDLE. Arbor House, 8.95
Foster, Tony: ZIG ZAG TO ARMAGEDDON. Ermine/Whirlwind, 10.95
Freeling, Nicolas: THE NIGHT LORDS. Pantheon, 7.95
Fremlin, Celia: THE SPIDER-ORCHID. Doubleday, 7.95
Gage, Edwin: PHOENIX NO MORE. Harper, 8.95
Gallant, Gladys S.: LIVING IMAGE. Doubleday, 7.95
Garve, Andrew: COUNTERSTROKE. Crowell, 8.95
Gatenby, Rosemary: WHISPER OF EVIL. Dodd, 6.95
Gifford, Thomas: THE GLENDOWER LEGACY. Putnam, 10.00
Gill, Bartholomew: McGARR ON THE CLIFFS OF MOHER. Scribners, 8.95
Godey, John: THE SNAKE. Putnam, 8.95
Grant, Charles L.: THE SOUND OF MIDNIGHT. Doubleday, 7.95
Green, William M.: THE MAN WHO CALLED HIMSELF DEVLIN. Bobbs, 8.95
Greenburg, Dan: LOVE KILLS. Harcourt, 7.95
Halley, Lawrence: SIMULTANEOUS EQUATION. St. Martin's, 7.95
Hansen, Joseph: THE MAN EVERYBODY WAS AFRAID OF. Holt, 7.95
Hill, Peter: THE FANATICS. Scribners, 7.95
Hoch, Edward D., ed.: BEST DETECTIVE STORIES OF THE YEAR, 1978. Dutton, 8.95
Holles, Robert: SPAWN. Doubleday, 7.95
Hubbard, P.M.: THE QUIET RIVER. Doubleday, 7.95
Israel, Peter: THE STIFF UPPER LIP. Crowell, 8.95

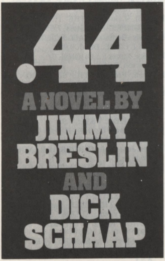
Dan Greenburg credit: Suzanne O'Malley

Jacoma, Richard: YELLOW PERIL; THE ADVENTURES OF SIR JOHN WEYMOUTH-SMYTHE. Marek, 8.95
Jeffers, H. Paul: THE ADVENTURES OF THE STALWART COMPANIONS. Harper, 8.95
Jeffries, Roderic: TROUBLED DEATHS. St. Martin's, 7.95
Kaplan, Howard: THE CHOPIN EXPRESS. Dutton, 8.95
Kemelman, Harry: THURSDAY THE RABBI WALKED OUT. Morrow, 8.95
Kenyon, Michael: THE MOLEHILL FILE. Coward, 7.95
Knickmeyer, Steve: CRANMER. Random, 6.95
Kyle, Duncan: BLACK CAMELOT. St. Martin's, 8.95
La Rosa, Linda J. and Barry Tanenbaum: THE RANDOM FACTOR. Doubleday, 8.95
Lathen, Emma: DOUBLE, DOUBLE, OIL AND TROUBLE. Simon, 7.95
Law, Janice: UNDER ORION. Houghton, 7.95
Lem, Stanislaw: THE CHAIN OF CHANCE. Harcourt, 7.95
Linzee, David: DISCRETION. Seaview, 8.95
Lovell, Marc: A VOICE FROM THE LIVING. Doubleday, 7.95
Luckless, John: THE DEATH FREAK. Summit, 8.95
Lynch, Frances: A DANGEROUS MAGIC. St. Martin's, 8.95
MacDonald, John D.: THE EMPTY COPPER SEA. Lippincott, 8.95
MacInnes, Helen: PRELUDE TO TERROR. Harcourt, 10.00
Mackenzie, Donald: RAVEN SETTLES A SCORE. Houghton, 7.95
Markstein, George: CHANCE AWAKENING. Ballantine, 7.95
Meynell, Laurence: THE THIRTEEN TRUMPETEERS. Stein, 7.95
Michaels, Barbara: WAIT FOR WHAT WILL COME. Dodd, 8.95
Murphy, James F.: QUONSETT. Rawson, 8.95
Neuman, Frederic: THE SECLUSION ROOM. Viking, 8.95
Page, Thomas: SIGMET ACTIVE. Times, 8.95
Paper, Gordon and Tony Aspler: CHAIN REACTION. Viking, 9.95
Parker, Robert B.: THE JUDAS GOAT. Houghton, 7.95
Philips, Judson: A MURDER ARRANGED. Dodd, 6.95
Price, Anthony: THE '44 VINTAGE. Doubleday, 7.95
Pronzini, Bill and Colin Wilcox: TWOSPOT. Putnam, 8.95
Pryor, Larry: THE VIPER. Harper, 8.95
Queen, Ellery, ed.: ELLERY QUEEN'S HONOR ROLL MYSTERIES. Dial, 8.95
Queen, Ellery, ed.: ELLERY QUEEN'S NAPOLEONS OF MYSTERY. Dial, 8.95

Quest, Erica: THE SILVER CASTLE. Doubleday, 7.95
Rivers, Gayle and James Hudson: THE FIVE FINGERS. Doubleday, 8.95
Roffman, Jan: ONE WREATH WITH LOVE. Doubleday, 7.95
Sagola, Mario: THE MANACLE. Macmillan, 7.95
Scherf, Margaret: THE BEADED BANANA. Doubleday, 7.95
Scott, Jack S.: THE SHALLOW GRAVE. Harper, 7.95
Sheridan, Anne-Marie: SUMMONED TO DARKNESS. Simon, 8.95
Simenon, Georges: MAIGRET'S PIPE. Harcourt, 8.95
Sinclair, Michael: THE MASTERPLAYERS. Norton, 7.95
Smith, Terrence Lore: THE MONEY WAR. Atheneum, 8.95
Snyder, Zilpha Keatley: HEIRS OF DARKNESS. Atheneum, 8.95
Spilken, Aron and Ed O'Leary: BURNING MOON. Playboy, 8.95
Stahl, Norman: THE ASSAULT ON MAVIS A. Random, 8.95
Stein, Benjamin: THE CROESUS CONSPIRACY. Simon, 8.95
Streiber, Whitley: THE WOLFEN. Morrow, 8.95
Sullivan, Eleanor, ed.: ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S TALES TO MAKE YOUR BLOOD RUN COLD. Dial, 8.95
Thornton, Francis John. SNAKE HARVEST. Coward, 8.95
Tynan, Kathleen: AGATHA. Ballantine, 7.95
Wainwright, John: THIEF OF TIEM. St. Martin's, 8.95
West, Amanda Wells: GLENROSE CALLING. Doubleday, 10.00
Whitney, Phyllis A.: THE GLASS FLAME. Doubleday, 8.95
Whitney, Stephen: SINGLED OUT. Morrow, 8.95
Williams, Mona. THIS HOUSE IS BURNING. Rawson, 8.95
Willis, Ted: THE BUCKINGHAM PALACE CONNECTION. Morrow, 9.95
York, Helen: THE VENETIAN CHARADE. Doubleday, 7.95
Zackel, Fred: COCAINE AND BLUE EYES. Coward, 8.95

Paperbacks

Adler, Warren: THE TRANS-SIBERIAN EXPRESS. Pocket, 2.50
Ambler, Eric: THE SIEGE OF THE VILLA LIPP. Ballantine, 1.95
Barley, Stephen: BLOCK BUSTER. Signet, 2.25
Berckman, Evelyn: JOURNEY'S END. Avon, 1.50
Braddon, Russell: THE FINALISTS. Bantam, 1.95
Burns, Rex: THE FARNSWORTH SCORE. Berkley, 1.95
Chandler, David: THE APHRODITE. Ballantine, 1.95
Chesbro, George C.: SHADOW OF A BROKEN MAN. Signet, 1.95
Christian, Nick: HOMICIDE ZONE FOUR. Signet, 1.95
Christie, Agatha: THE UNDERDOG AND OTHER STORIES. Dell, 1.50
Coffey, Brian: THE FACE OF FEAR. Ballantine, 1.95
Collins, Michael: WALK A BLACK WIND. Playboy, 1.50
Coppel, Alfred: THE DRAGON. Bantam, 2.25
Cronin, George: DEATH OF A DELEGATE. Condor, 1.95
Doyle, Richard: IMPERIAL 109. Bantam, 2.50
Duncan, Robert: TEMPLE DOGS. Ballantine, 2.25
Feegel, John R.: DEATH SAILS THE BAY. Avon, 1.95
Forrest, Robert: THE WIZARD OF DEATH. Pocket, 1.95
Garfield, Brian: DEEP COVER. Fawcett, 1.95
Gilbert, Michael: THE NIGHT OF THE TWELFTH. Penguin, 1.95
Greenfield, Irving A.: HIGH TERROR. Fawcett, 1.95
Grossback, Robert: THE CHEAP DETECTIVE. Warner, 1.95
Hitchcock, Alfred, ed.: DEATH BAG. Dell, 1.50
Lehman, Ernest: THE FRENCH ATLANTIC AFFAIR. Warner, 2.50
Lovesey, Peter: SWING, SWING TOGETHER. Penguin, 1.95
MacDonald, John D. AREA OF SUSPICION. Fawcett, 1.75
MacInnes, Helen: REST AND BE THANKFUL. Fawcett, 1.95
McConnell, Malcolm: CLINT IS ASSIGNED. Pocket, 1.95
Mcdonald, Gregory. FLETCH'S FORTUNE. Avon, 1.95
Melchior, Ib: THE HAIGERLOCH PROJECT. Bantam, 2.25
Mitchell, James: SMEAR JOB. Berkley, 1.95
Muller, Marcia: EDWIN OF THE IRON SHOES. Penguin, 1.95
Olesker, J. Bradford: NO PLACE LIKE HOME. Pocket, 1.75
Ottum, Bob: THE TUESDAY BLADE. Warner, 2.50
Paul, Charlotte: A CHILD IS MISSING. Berkley, 1.95
Rae, Hugh C.: SULLIVAN. Playboy, 1.95
Stern, Stuart: THE POISON TREE. Playboy, 1.95
Stout, Rex: THREE AT WOLFE'S DOOR. Bantam, 1.75
Thompson, Gene: LUPE. Ballantine, 2.25
Van de Wetering, Janwillem: DEATH OF A HAWKER. Pocket, 1.95
Van de Wetering, Janwillem: THE JAPANESE CORPSE. Pocket, 1.95
White, T.H. DARKNESS AT PEMBERLEY. Dover, 3.50
Whitney, Phyllis A.: THE STONE BULL. Fawcett, 2.25
Wolfe, John. THE WRONG TARGET. Major, 1.75



Dick Schaap and Jimmy Breslin

credit: Jerry Bauer

LETTERS

From David Doerrer:

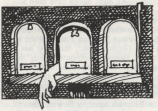
TAD 11:4 was another excellent issue. I was particularly pleased with the Richard Lockridge interview by the Filstrups, which seemed to anticipate Stephen Mertz's request. I too hope that TAD will be able to publish additional interviews and/or articles on the new (or at least contemporary) writers in the field. I did think that the interview ended somewhat abruptly, and I hope that the typesetters didn't repeat the error from TAD 11:2 when they dropped part of Pike's article. I was interested to learn that Lockridge wrote his early "chase" stories primarily for magazine sales, as I had wondered why they ceased. I have to disagree with Hildegarde Dolson's opinion on them as I enjoyed those I read very much and would enjoy re-reading them if I could find them again. As I recall, most of them evoked that sense of the instability in the everyday world that some others have seen in the works of Cornell Woolrich and John D. MacDonald.

Kittredge and Krauzer present a well-reasoned argument, but I think they have erred in postulating so lineal a descent from hard-boiled private eye to the protagonist of *Death Wish* and Mack Bolan. The relationship is there, and the many similarities aptly demonstrated, but I think a better case could be made for Bolan as lineal descendant from another western figure: the vigilante. Indeed, one might even make a not-too-tongue-in-cheek case for his descent from Robin Hood.

Congratulations on "Classic Corner"! This is truly an inspired idea, and one which I surely hope will be enthusiastically welcomed by all TADians. A reprint of the actual story gives much more of the flavor than a review could do, and in the author's own words and style. Having said that, I realize I must qualify it, for analytical articles such as B.A. Pike's also give flavor of a work and, through quotations, a sense of the author's style as well. However, I still think that "Classic Corner" will do this for many stories which do not warrant such lengthy treatment.

The rest of the issue was equally enjoyable for me, as they have all been since I began to subscribe. For what it is worth, I personally think the present mix of articles, reviews and letters is just right, in terms of space. I would not be averse to more reviews, but not at the expense of any of the other elements. I am, and probably will remain, primarily a reader and fan, hence for me (and I suspect for others as well) the letters are both interesting and informative, particularly those from readers like Jeff Banks, Brian Garfield, Stephen Mertz, John Harwood, William F. Nolan and Mike Nevins.

In closing, I should say that I also particularly value M.S. Cappadonna's "Checklist" and welcome back another installment of "Series Synopses." I'd like to see the latter appear more often; ideally as a regular feature. There are many series characters, in short stories as well as novels, that would make good subjects.



* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

From Frank D. McSherry, Jr.:

Enclosed is a check for $16 for a year's subscription to TAD; I can't do without it. One of the reasons is the current issue, starting with the melodramatically effective Steranko cover, one of the best in years. Five articles nearly tie for first: winner of the first place is the thoughtful and well-researched "Evolution of the Great American Detective," Kittredge and Krauzer's introduction to their fine anthology on the subject. Nevins' fascinating account of the many new John Dickson Carr radio plays, including unpublished ones, and Wolfe's work on Spade's relationship with his lovely client Miss Wonderly ("You'll want to see her, she's a knockout") take second and third, just barely missing first. Again Pike's fine examination of Campion's career and life is up there with the winners—in fact, I think I'll just tie it with Wolfe. LaBorde combines history with entertainment in the second installment of his original work on the detective onstage to take fourth.

My thanks for bringing me the long-longed-for account of how the lovely and larcenous Miss Fidelity Dove shoplifted the entire town of Swallowsbath. Beautiful, beautiful . . . For your next selection, how about "Broadway Malady" by John Lawrence, a hard-boiled tale of the Marquis of Broadway from *Dime Detective* for Feb. 1937, maybe photo-offset to give the readers a look at the John Fleming Gould illustration and the flavor of the wonderful pulps? (Maybe cut the expenses a bit too?)

Reader Watson and other Jack Vance fans will be interested to know of a very limited edition of two new Vance mystery novels, out in Jan., *The House on Lily Street* and *The View from Chickweed's Window*, the latter about an orphan girl arriving at San Francisco with a valuable vase from Shanghai and a cargo of murder traveling with it; both hardbound with a jacket by Fabian and limited to 450 copies each at $20. (Both are available from Robert Weinberg, 10606 S. Central Park, Chicago, Ill. 60655, and The Coven, 1059 W. Lill , Apt. 2F, Chicago, Ill. 60614; write for free catalogs; discounts available.) Also available from The Coven is a 100-page, 900-copy paperback edition of a complete Vance biblio, *Fantasms*, at $6.95, compiled by Daniel J.H. Levack and Tim Underwood.

Pulp fans will be interested in another limited edition, Nick Carr's paperbound, 160-page study of G-8, *The Flying Spy*, from Weinberg; digest size at $5.50; illustrated with cover reproductions and new illos and covers by Frank Hamilton; a study of the novels, the magazine and the characters. *Xenophile* no. 40 contains a fascinating picture of a thirties and forties pulp fan and her correspondence with many figures of the pulp world, including several letters from Spider author "Grant Stockbridge" (Norvell Page), one a seven-page account of the meeting of Richard Wentworth and Nita van Sloan, in effect the second Spider short story. The philosophy that attracts Nita impresses me as pure sophomore, but when I read it that old melodramatic black magic came back again. . . . Important material on The Spider and his major creator, in "A Remembrance of Early Pulp Collecting and Fandom, 1938-1943," by Virginia Combs (Nanek) Anderson and William Papalia, with ads, art, etc., from Nils Hardin, P.O. Box 9660, Kirkwood Branch, St. Louis, Mo., 63122, $2 a copy or $10 for six issues. Reproduction of some John Fleming Gould work (a full-page portrait of Wentworth on the back cover) and another full-page reproduction of a *Spider* cover.

Stephen Mertz and other Race Williams fans will eagerly seek out another pulp revival, a facsimile reprint of Carroll John Daly's 1935 novel featuring Williams, *Murder from the East*, with a new introduction by Tony Sparafucile; $4 from IPL, c/o the Guinn Company, 70 Hudson St., Hoboken, N.J., 07030. But the first reprint of a Race Williams story can be found in *The Great American Detective* (Mentor NAL, $2.25, xxxiv + 414 pp.). Kittredge and Krauzer beat IPL to the punch. They reprint the very first Race Williams tale, "Knights of the Open Palm," from *Black Mask*, June 1, 1923, calling Williams "the first fully realized hard-boiled detective." The story appeared in (I'm not making this up) a special Ku Klux Klan issue of *Black Mask*, with every story centering around what would today be called a terrorist organization . . . a revelation of the grip that murderous group once had—briefly—on our national life.

The book has some other firsts too: the first printing of a Shadow radio play, "Death Shows the Way," by Tom

McKnight and Jerry Devine, and the first The Executioner short story, "Willing to Kill." There's a surprisingly good Nick Carter tale, in which old Doctor Bolles introduces Nick to "A Clever Little Woman" from the backwoods. There's also a useful biblio of the cases the 15 detectives of the title appear in, with recommendations of the best ones.

Reader Mitchell asks for mysteries with Indians as the detectives; how about the Dakota series in paperback from Pinnacle, featuring a full-blood Shoshone Indian lawman in five novels: *Dakota Warpath, Red Revenge, Cat Trap, Murder's Money,* and *Chain Reaction*? Or the Penetrator series, featuring Mark Hardin, who is half Cheyenne and half Welsh? Some 25 novels by now, all paperback originals from Pinnacle. There's a full-length novel, "Apache Ranger," by Jay Lucas, in *Blue Book* for June 1944, featuring Tonto Jim Prescott, former Lieutenant in the Arizona Rangers, grandson of Chief Cochise, framed for taking a bribe, who gets a chance to clear himself by bringing law and order to Arizona Territory. Many *Blue Book* novels ended up in hardcover later; I don't know if this one did.

Readers who liked my article on you-the-reader-as-detective will at last get the chance to read the first story in that field, Cornell Woolrich's "Death Escapes the Eye," reprinted in its entirety for the first time since its original publication in *Shadow Mystery* in 1947, in Mysterious Press's *Angels of Darkness,* along with seven other rare Woolrich tales making up 100,000 words of mystery about ladies in appalling danger. Woolrich is known largely for his creation of compelling suspense and moods of terror; but several of these stories also demonstrate his equally capable ability at deduction, such as the excellent "Murder at Mother's Knee," in which a teacher deduces murder from a small pupil's classroom essay about a seemingly trivial incident at home; and "Library Book," in which a lady librarian's deductions from a damaged returned volume would arouse the admiration of Sherlock Holmes. Fact-crime fans might want to try identifying the face of the lady on my jacket, based on that of a famous murder victim whose killer was never caught. (Maybe not an easy task; changes have been made in dress, hairdo altered to that of a later generation, expression, etc., to fit the theme of the book.)

Another entry in the reader-as-the-detective is *Two Minute Mysteries* by Donald J. Sobol, from Scholastic Books, 1967. Inspector Haledjian does the honors in 79 two-page short-shorts, the author stopping the story to tell you when you have all the facts needed for a solution and the final paragraphs printed upside down . . . frequently clever and ingenious, particularly "The Case of the Locked Room." Popular, too; my 1970 edition is marked "Sixth Printing."

Reader Cowell, interested in these and related types such as the Harper Sealed Mysteries, will want a new series of paperback originals from Zebra books which combine *both* the themes of the detecting reader and the sealed mystery. The last chapter is "sealed" by having uncut pages, and the reader is given a chance to solve the mystery first. All are illustrated with several full-page drawings that include clues to the mystery (as does the cover illustration); eight novels have been announced so far. The concept is intriguing, but—in the one I am currently reading—not too well carried out. In at least one of the drawings for Jean Francis Webb's *Is This Coffin Taken?,* the artist has goofed, showing footprints exactly the opposite of those stipulated in the text and making it impossible for any reader to solve this portion of the mystery; and at least part of the plot is borrowed from a well-known novel by Howard Browne, recently adapted for a TV episode of *The Rockford Files.* Still, there is a likable heroine, girl reporter Ellen Tracy, a colorful background—Hawaii, with luscious flowers, valleys and erupting volcanoes—and the story gets better as it goes along.

Reader Panagos, interested in cases of unconscious plagiarism, might like to list an unusual example, Wolfe Kaufman's *I Hate Blondes,* Simon & Schuster, 1946, which (if memory serves me) has a couple of chapters taken word for word from an Eric Ambler spy novel; the book was withdrawn from sale and legal action taken. Kaufman stated that he had that rare quality of mind, total recall—and that this photographic memory had tricked him; he pointed out reasonably that if he had wished to steal another author's work he would certainly have chosen one not so widely read and easy to identify as Ambler's, and his argument was accepted. The suit was peacefully settled, though I do not recall the details; nor where I read this—probably Boucher's column . . .

Occurred to me recently that there is an even rarer sub-genre than that of the reader-as-detective, of which only a few examples exist (and for a while I thought there was only one example of that): namely, the Perfect Story, of which no examples exist at all yet. It was invented by Vincent Starrett in a letter to Ellery Queen, which is quoted in the introduction to Starrett's "The Unique Hamlet" (by far the best Sherlock Holmes pastiche) in *The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes*: "I've always wanted to do a synthetic Sherlock—the beginning of one story, the middle of another, and the conclusion of a third . . merged into a perfect Holmes tale. I may yet do it. The reason would be to produce a Holmes adventure that I could completely admire, and which would contain everything I like—the opening at the breakfast table, with a page or two of deduction; the appearance of Mrs. Hudson, followed instantly by the troubled client, who would fall over the threshold in a faint; the hansom in the fog, and so on. I find when I think of the Holmes stories that almost instinctively I think of just such a yarn, wonder which one it is, then realize it's . . . existing only in my mind."

Let us expand this just a bit, to include the Father Brown tales, the Uncle Abner tales, etc., any series of stories which are combined in such a way as to produce the ideal tale featuring their hero, containing the best parts of them all. But, as agreement on what the best parts are and what they aren't is a matter of opinion, perhaps the Perfect Tale will of necessity remain exactly where Starrett left it—in the mind. (In one meaning of the term, anyway.)

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

From John L. Apostolou:

As pointed out in Ellery Queen's introduction to his *Japanese Golden Dozen,* very few Japanese mystery stories have been translated into English. This is unfortunately true, especially for those of us who enjoy both mysteries and things Japanese.

It may be of interest to TAD readers that a few works by Seicho Matsumoto, Japan's foremost mystery writer, are available in English. These are the novel *Points and Lines,* published in 1970, and three short stories: one in the Queen collection and two others that I located recently. The two stories, titled "Just Eighteen Months" and "Evidence," can be found in *Japan Quarterly,* Vol. 9, No. 1, Jan.-Mar. 1962.

A suggestion for your new Classic Corner: "Professor Bingo's Snuff Box" by Raymond Chandler. Although not actually a classic, it would certainly be of great interest to Chandler buffs.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

From Ev Bleiler:

In the current issue of TAD—which by the way looked exceptionally nice—I am baffled by Randy Cox's letter.

So far as I know, I didn't write any introduction to Rohmer's *Dream Detective,* nor, in the same non-introduction, did I ever say that the Dover edition was the first paperback edition. Perhaps the blurb writer did—I don't happen to have a copy to check.

Randy has also raised the question about the contents of the Dover *Dream Detective*—as have several others. Let me answer it.

Of course I knew that the American edition had one story more than the British. I have owned firsts of both for the past twenty years, and even if I hadn't happened to remember the situation, I would have looked at both books automatically.

The solution is that one cannot always publish what one wants. The final story, which was published much later and under different circumstances than the stories in the British edition, was very tangled as far as rights went, and the rights were not cleared. Simple as that.

By the way, the little biographical squib under my article is very much out of date. I am no longer working for a New York paperback house, and I now take a completely different attitude about money.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

From John Harwood:

In the latest TAD (11-4, Oct. 1978), William F. Nolan points out a few errors in Jon Tuska's *The Detective in Hollywood.* While reading the book, I picked out another error.

According to Mr. Tuska, Boris Karloff appeared in *Charlie Chan at the Opera* because of the excellent work he had done in a previous Charlie Chan picture, *The Black Camel.* As far as I can determine, Boris Karloff never appeared in this film. I checked in Denis Gifford's *Karloff, the Man, the Monster, the Movies* and Forrest J. Ackerman's *The Frankenscience Monster* and neither of these books list *The Black Camel* as a Karloff movie. The Filmography of the Charlie Chan pictures in David Zinman's *Saturday Afternoon at the Bijou* doesn't list Karloff in the cast of the film. However, it does list Bela Lugosi, that other star of horror pictures. Would Mr. Tuska have mixed up his monsters?

David H. Doerrer asks about Indians as main characters in mystery novels. A few years ago there were two TV series with Indian detectives. *Hawk* starred Burt Reynolds as an Indian detective with the police force of a big city (was it New York?). Then there was another series, the name of which I have forgotten, about an Indian working for a police force or a sheriff's office in a town near an Indian reservation. Most of his cases dealt with crimes committed by or against Indians in town or on the reservation.

Did either of these characters originally appear in novels or were they created for the TV series?

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

From Kathy Klein (Dept. of English, IUPUI, Indianapolis, Ind. 46202):

I was interested to see your pairing of Kaplan's *Killing for Charity* and Mueller's *Edwin of the Iron Shoes* in a discussion of the female professional detective. Unfortunately, the super-sex-sleuth Charity Bay (Kaplan) is far more prevalent than the realistic portrait of Sharon McClure (Mueller). I am currently studying paid professional female detectives who are protagonists in their novels and would appreciate some help from TAD readers. I desperately need the G.G. Fickling novels about Honey West (1950's and 60's) and information about the protagonist of Victor Miller's *Fernanda* (and if she is a professional detective, I need to locate a copy of the book). Any help would be much appreciated.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

From David Henige:

From time to time I have noticed in TAD laments regarding the difficulty in obtaining the works of certain authors. For those who are interested in owning rather than merely reading, I have no advice, but for those who find their reading circumscribed by local lack of availability, I would suggest the use of the interlibrary system operated by both public and university libraries. I have used this very extensively myself, perhaps borrowing as many as 200 titles to date.

The various editions of the *National Union Catalog*, owned by most libraries, give details of holdings so that a given library can usually learn where a particular work is located and can then borrow it easily. The series of *NUC* covering works published before 1956 is particularly comprehensive in its coverage so that it is possible to borrow many if not most of the works of authors writing during the so-called "Golden Age," if that should be your taste. (Unfortunately, I have found that only a fairly small proportion of Herbert Adams' works seem to be available in this country.)

University libraries are generally the most liberal in securing these materials, at least if you are a member of the staff or a student; public libraries can, however, perform the same services, although they may charge for postage. It is particularly important that the intending borrower come with as complete information in hand as possible, hence my suggestion that he/she consult the appropriate volumes of the *NUC*

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

From J.W. Scheideman:

Readers of English academic mysteries, and students of popular culture, might enjoy two contrasting bibliographical notes in Jan Morris's delightful anthology *The Oxford Book of Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 290 and 376). The first note lists "some Victorian fiction set in Oxford," romantic, solidly earnest titles like H.C. Merivale's *Faucit of Balliol*, A. Sergeant's *Blake of Oriel*, and C. Lister's *The College Chums.* The second note offers "some twentieth-century fiction set in Oxford." Mysteries seem to solely comprise this list, delightfully, with titles like Michael Innes's *Death at the President's Lodgings*, Edmund Crispin's *Obsequies at Oxford*, and R. Robinson's *Landscape with Dead Dons.* Ironic contrast between romantic earnestness and detective entertainment offers some light-hearted insight on the difference between nineteenth and twentieth-century popular views of the university—a difference of perspectives most interestingly bridged by Peter Lovesey's *Swing, Swing Together*, a modern mystery novel (1976) set partially in 1890's Oxford within a frame of reference to Jerome K. Jerome's humorous *Three Men in a Boat* (1889) a best-seller of the period, not totally lacking in romantic earnestness. "Let Dons Delight!"

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

From Frank D. McSherry, Jr.:

Again the fine layout showcases a high-quality issue in 11/3, with the three top articles so close I'm tempted to call them a three-way tie. First place goes to Elaine Bander's study of the detective story between wars, its reassuring function and the traces of a sickness of society in it that would rise to an appalling era of horror in Hitler's Germany. Pike's smoothly combined literary criticism, social criticism and biography of Albert Campion, one of TAD's best long works in a long time, takes second, and Mary Groff's insightful look into the mirror the detective story provides for the times that produce it is a third.

The next three are also close enough for a second-place tie: Charles LaBorde's historical first on the detective on stage (TAD has run quite a lot of articles that are the first ever written on their subjects, as I imagine you've noticed) is easily No. 1 in this group, and not only for historical value; Bauska's examination of the deeper values in Dick Francis' works is both entertainingly written and thoughtful; and Dove on the police procedural is up to his own high standard.

Max Collins, who lists Will Eisner, creator of "The Spirit," as one of his favorite mystery writers, will find the revival of *The Spirit* (large format black-and-white comic magazine) good news: it is being continued (after being dropped by Warren after 16 issues) by Kitchen Sink Enterprises, P.O. Box 7, Princeton, Wis., 54968, quarterly, $1.50 each. Slightly larger size, slightly fewer pages, better paper, largely reprints of earlier (forties) Spirit Sunday supplements; but the latest (18) has a new story.

Readers interested in such people as Judge Crater, Dorothy Arnold, Sister Aimee McPherson and others (too many others for chance to account for them) who vanish mysteriously will be interested in Jay Robert Nash's *Among the Missing*, just out from Simon & Schuster. It's a large format book listing most examples of mysterious disappearances, some accountable for and some not. Jacket calls it (correctly) the most comprehensive work on this ever published, but coverage of individual cases is regrettably slight in many cases, some consisting of little more than name and date and place.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Solution to Crime Crossword

P	A	S	T	A	■	■	S	H	A	M	■	U	T	A	H	■	M	U	F	F
A	S	C	O	T	■	P	H	A	S	E	■	N	O	T	A	■	A	R	I	A
T	H	O	M	A	S	L	I	T	T	L	E	J	O	H	N	■	R	A	N	I
C	E	T	E	■	F	A	V	E	R	■	J	U	L	I	A	T	Y	L	E	R
H	S	T	■	B	A	N	E	■	A	G	E	S	■	S	U	R	F	■	■	■
■	■	J	O	I	N	E	R	S	■	O	C	T	■	■	D	E	I	G	N	S
A	G	O	U	T	I	■	S	T	A	R	T	L	E	■	■	S	N	A	I	L
C	U	R	T	E	S	T	■	A	D	D	■	Y	A	M	S	■	N	E	B	O
A	I	D	A	■	H	A	I	R	D	O	■	■	T	R	U	E	E	A	S	T
S	L	A	T	S	■	R	E	L	U	N	G	E	■	M	I	R	Y	■	■	■
E	E	N	■	P	A	T	R	I	C	K	A	B	B	O	T	T	■	P	F	C
■	■	■	H	I	L	L	■	T	E	N	F	O	O	T	■	S	H	E	A	R
T	O	M	A	T	O	E	S	■	■	O	F	N	O	O	N	■	E	T	T	E
I	V	O	R	■	E	T	A	T	■	L	E	I	■	S	O	O	N	E	R	S
N	E	R	V	E	■	■	C	O	A	L	S	T	O	■	T	U	R	R	E	T
G	R	E	E	T	S	■	■	L	L	I	■	E	R	R	A	T	I	C	■	■
■	■	■	Y	A	T	E	■	L	O	S	E	■	A	I	T	S	■	L	A	M
B	A	R	T	H	A	R	D	I	N	■	M	E	N	D	O	■	P	A	C	E
U	N	A	U	■	G	R	A	V	E	D	I	G	G	E	R	J	O	N	E	S
S	O	C	K	■	G	E	N	E	■	A	L	G	E	R	■	A	C	C	R	A
H	A	K	E	■	E	D	E	R	■	N	E	S	S	■	■	M	O	Y	E	S

CURRENT REVIEWS

Sherlock Holmes vs. Dracula by John H. Watson, M.D., as edited by Loren D. Estleman. Doubleday, 214 pp. $7.95.

During the last few years the literary world has been shaken by the discoveries of previously unpublished episodes in the career of Mr. Sherlock Holmes, most notably *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution* and *The West End Horror.* Surprisingly, and happily, editor Loren D. Estleman has recently unearthed another unknown chapter in the annals of the world's foremost consulting detective, as recorded by his close friend and associate, Dr. John H. Watson.

It is an amazing document that begins with the beaching of a deserted ship on a treacherous reef in an English harbor, its lifeless captain lashed to the wheel, its cargo fifty boxes of earth, its only passenger a huge black dog which vanishes into the night. The discovery of puncture wounds on the dead captain's throat, and a rash of bizarre nocturnal crimes all point to the satanic villain—Count Dracula himself.

The manuscript chronicles the hair-raising encounters between Holmes and Dracula, including a suspenseful chase across the land, leading up to the vampire's expulsion from England and his subsequent destruction by Professor Van Helsing. Loren Estleman's skillful blending of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* with the unforgettable milieu of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has resulted in an ingenious, thrilling, tongue-in-cheek adventure that will delight the fans of two of literature's most enduring characters.

—Amnon Kabatchnik

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The Holmes-Dracula File by Fred Saberhagen. Ace Books, 1978. 249 pp. $1.95.

This double pastiche is based on four assumptions: (1) that somehow Dracula is hit on the head and suffers temporary loss of memory; (2) that a giant rat has been brought from Sumatra to blackmail the British government with the threat of an outbreak of plague; (3) that the investigations of Sherlock Holmes uncover the rat-plague scheme; and (4) that members of the Van Helsing circle are villains.

Like many recent Holmes pastiches, *The Holmes-Dracula File* ingeniously combines many bits of information, as for example the resemblances between Holmes and Dracula as described by Doyle and Stoker in the original stories. Saberhagen's pastiche is close enough to Dr. Watson's style that most Holmes devotees will have little trouble suspending their disbelief.

The chapters alternate between Dracula telling his part of the story in first person and Dr. Watson recounting the Holmes portions. The Dracula chapters continue the first-person point of view developed in Saberhagen's earlier *The Dracula Tape* (1975), in which Dracula justified himself and demonstrated the malevolence of Van Helsing. Saberhagen dispenses with the eight-track tape of his earlier book, which despite its touches of Draculian humor, went on too long. The alternating Watson-Dracula chapters of *The Holmes-Dracula File* add variety as the two separate stories draw together. In the early Dracula chapters, the vampire tells his story with his memory still incomplete, almost as if he observed himself as a third person. When Dracula fully recovers all his powers, he helps a pathetic girl, at the same time gaining strength from her blood, and eventually revenges himself on his tormentors.

As in most mystery stories there are several questions that continue to arouse reader interest. Why does Dr. Watson make mistakes in identity? Can Holmes prevent the plague from infesting London? Why do Holmes and Dracula work together? What is the peculiar blood relationship between Holmes and Dracula? Why does Holmes allow Dracula to escape?

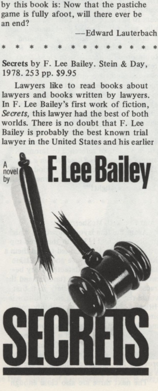
The final, suspenseful question raised by this book is: Now that the pastiche game is fully afoot, will there ever be an end?

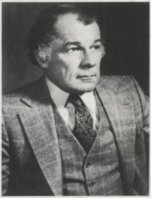
—Edward Lauterbach

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Secrets by F. Lee Bailey. Stein & Day, 1978. 253 pp. $9.95

Lawyers like to read books about lawyers and books written by lawyers. In F. Lee Bailey's first work of fiction, *Secrets,* this lawyer had the best of both worlds. There is no doubt that F. Lee Bailey is probably the best known trial lawyer in the United States and his earlier work of nonfiction, *The Defense Never Rests* (Stein & Day, 1971), which Bailey wrote with Harvey Aronson, was a national bestseller. In his first novel, Mr. Bailey does a most commendable job, mixing a combination of mystery and suspense, including an incredible chapter describing an aircraft incident which is second to none.





F. Lee Bailey

The basic plot of *Secrets* involves a well-known criminal lawyer, who himself is accused of murdering a former female client. All of a sudden, a lawyer needs a lawyer and he ends up with not just one, but four, including an export from the Inns of Court in England. An appointed prosecutor, who is manipulated by his powerful lawyer uncle, manages to acquire an indictment from the grand jury on the most circumstantial of evidence, including an absent corpse. The legal proceedings which subsequently evolve are accurate and portray the central theme of this book, which relates to the maneuvers, the trading and the secret deals which have infiltrated our system of justice in this country.

Bailey includes a surprise ending and even manages to leave one "secret" a secret, although the reader can enjoy perpetrating his own theory. *Secrets* is an excellent book; even the non-lawyer will enjoy it.

—Larry L. French

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Rape of the Nicollet Mall Mannequin by Steve Hall. Con Brio Press. 235 pp. $3.00.

What do you do if you've written about five novels, all roundly rejected by publishers, and nobody wants the sixth, a mystery, either?

What you do is, having rejected the thought of a vanity press, find yourself a printer who gets excited by the prospect of publishing your book, more or less on speculation. Then you talk local bookstores and distributors into handling the book, which has a local setting to make it more attractive to area residents. Then you arrange for publicity, such as in the newspaper with the largest circulation, even if a little mythology gets created in the process–a myth, after all, is as good as a mile.

Then you extend your efforts to posters in transit company buses, and wait for the orders to flood in. And, who knows, they might!

This is what 37-year-old Steve Hall has done. The printing was 5,000 copies, and I saw a generous display the last time I was in a nearby B. Dalton bookstore. Who says entrepreneurial spirit is dead? Hall says he might even do it again!

After all this, what's the book like? Well. . . . The writing style takes some getting used to: it's a sort of Morse code–saturated with dots (usually four of them ending each paragraph, with a few interspersed elsewhere) and dashes. In addition we're treated to a sort of regional litany: coined local (Minneapolis-St. Paul) slang, salted with puns. The mystery–if you stick with it long enough–proves to be the question of who is plaguing local department store owners, the Paytons, and why. Sabotage is the first problem, followed by murder; the suspect is a sexy black girl with a puzzling ability to be in two places simultaneously.

The sleuth is Aristotle Bantom (!); his Watson (more a Goodwin to Bantom's Wolfe) is Andy Saxon. And sandwiched in the narrative of their investigations is a little bit of everything–including an extended and bizarre satire on Twin Cities' TV quiz shows.

Rape has to be read, I think, to be believed. . . .

—AJH

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

The Memory of Eva Ryker by Donald A. Stanwood. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1978. $8.95.

If mention of the tragic Titanic still beckons to your imagination; if you enjoy a tightly written international suspense story; if you can't resist a 50-year-old unsolved crime, then *The Memory of Eva Ryker* is sure to captivate you.

A young rookie cop panics after discovering a grisly murder, quits the force, and after years of diligent hard work becomes a prize-winning author, Norman Hall, who is hired to report on a search for the Titanic and the subsequent salvage of the wreck. Already hopelessly entangled with the Titanic, since the murder of one of the survivors was the grisly event which precipitated his abrupt resignation from the Honolulu Police Force, Hall agrees to do the story with the aid of his wife, Jan, who does the background work for him.

Hall's search for details from the survivors of the wreck leads him into one mystery after another, to say nothing of the phantom murderer who stalks his footsteps, killing witnesses, and almost succeeding in killing Hall also. The key to the mysteries seems to lie in the mind of Eva Ryker, who was ten years old at the time of the shipwreck and had survived by some miracle of which she has no conscious memory. When Hall gets too close to the truth of Eva's horrible experience, Mr. Ryker, Eva's father, who is financing the salvage operation, tries to have Hall fired. Hall's personal investment has become too intense, however, and he manages to blackmail Ryker into letting him continue until Eva's memory brings the murderers to justice.

This is a fast-paced, action-packed suspense story based on a real life tragedy, accurately researched and documented. For a first novel, Donald Stanwood has achieved a masterful accomplishment in *The Memory of Eva Ryker* which definitely deserves an Edgar nomination.

—Mary Ann Grochowski

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Dead to Rites by Sylvia Angus. Crown, 1978. $7.95.

The group of American tourists viewing the ruins in Yucatan seem a fairly typical lot, all middle-aged or elderly, with the exception of the sexy young daughter of a famous archaeologist and her comparatively plain cousin. The archaeologist's daughter is more interested in leading on the men of the tour, as well as the tour guides, than in exploring the ruins. Therefore, it is not too much of a surprise when her nude body is discovered floating in the pool of the virgins at Chichén Itzá by the formidable female sleuth, Mrs. Wagstaff.

Her murder is the first in a series of apparent revivals of ancient Mayan ritual sacrifices. The police, as always, are baffled, but Mrs. Wagstaff, aided by her reading of mysteries and collaborating with Professor Michelson, expert on the Celts and admirer of the hard-boiled detectives, outguesses the villain and prevents a third murder on the top of the pyramid of Kukulcan. (Mrs. Wagstaff has a skill at mountain-climbing quite remarkable in a stout, aging widow from Minneapolis.)

Dead to Rites is a very amusing mystery without much substance. Ms. Angus's use of an unusual setting is remarkably good. Mrs. Wagstaff, whose first appearance this is, is not particularly outstanding, especially compared to other recent elderly female detectives. She is not as sophisticated as Lee Head's Lexey Jane Pelazoni nor as earthy as Anthony Mancini's Minnie Santangelo.

—M.S. Cappadonna

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Green for Danger by Christianna Brand. The Mystery Library/Publisher's Inc., 1978. 271 pp. $7.95.

It seems incongruous to those of us who have had the privilege of meeting her, but Christianna Brand is one of the greatest living masters of the demanding form of the classic fair-play detective novel. Her masterpiece (and I do not use the word lightly) *Tour de Force* (1955) is certainly one of the very best detective novels to be published after World War II.

The Mystery Library now pays a well-deserved tribute to Miss Brand by reprinting her second best work, *Green for Danger* (1944), which is almost as distinguished as *Tour de Force*, but far better known due to its celebrated film version.

Otto Penzler's introduction more than maintains The Mystery Library's usual high standards in this department. Its first two pages should make any reader anxious, if not desperate, to get on with the novel. (As a parenthetical note, I might point out that Penzler, as well as several other commentators, prefers *Green for Danger* to *Tour de Force*.)

A second introduction by the author discusses the wartime conditions under which this novel was created and adds some interesting sidelights on the writing and reading of detective fiction. The section of appendices starts with Penzler's excellent checklist of the Brand *opera* and is a model of how this sort of thing should be done. It's followed by Miss Brand's sketch of her series detective, Inspector Cockrill, originally published in Penzler's *The Great Detectives*. Anthony Boucher's introduction to the 1965 edition in Bantam's "The World's Great Novels of Detection" series is, of course, always welcome.

Also included are four of the original reviews, a copy of the dust jacket from the first British edition, and a charming photograph of the younger Christianna Brand that can be found opposite the title page.

—Charles Shibuk

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

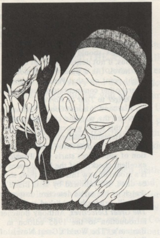
Masters of Mystery: A Study of the Detective Story by H. Douglas Thomson. Introduction and notes by E.F. Bleiler. Dover, 1978. 277 pp. $4.00.

Masters of Mystery was the first critical book on the detective story and it remains among the best. It is an excellent source on the early history of the genre and is valuable as a source of critical views of Thomson's contemporaries of the late twenties and early thirties. It is interesting to note the importance Thomson gives such writers as Lynn Brock and Philip MacDonald who have sunk into the oblivion of being out of print. His critical judgment of American mystery writers is interesting in retrospect, as he saw S.S. Van Dine as more influential and important than Hammett (the best critics are not necessarily the best prophets). Bleiler's notes correct Thomson's few errors and there are three indexes, including titles, authors and detectives.

—M.S. Cappadonna

* * * * * * * * * * * * * *

FU MANCHU PRINT



A letterpress print of Gahan Wilson's cover illustration of Dr. Fû Manchu is available from The Mysterious Press. Printed on hand dampened yellow Curtis Tweedweave 70-pound text stock, it was pulled on a hand press at The Angelica Press. Each print has been numbered and signed personally by Gahan Wilson and is offered in a 9- by 12-in. mat. This printing is strictly limited to 350 numbered and signed copies. The price is $20.00.

To order send a check or money order to The Mysterious Press, 129 W. 56th St., New York, NY 10019. You may use the postage-paid envelope in this issue of The Armchair Detective. Please add 75¢ for postage each order. New York residents please add appropriate sales tax.

THE NAME IS THE GAME

Readers are invited from the following clues (some of which are puns) to deduce the last names of 31 famous figures in the field of mystery:

1. Hefty limb.
2. Posh motor car.
3. Larger ones.
4. Obstacle.
5. Motor vehicle.
6. Ships' supplier.
7. British murderer.
8. Fuel.
9. Tom's drink.
10. Roosters.
11. Irish Parliament.
12. Arrow maker.
13. No slave.
14. Cultivator.
15. Sullivan's partner.
16. Overact.
17. Tie up a rooster.
18. Rhine wine.
19. Small areas of land.
20. Thumps.
21. Hamburger king.
22. Morass.
23. Nosey.
24. French skin.
25. Monarch.
26. Nomad.
27. Talkers.
28. Beer mug.
29. Pudgy.
30. One who sews.
31. Scottish bridge.

—Veronica M.S. Kennedy

ANSWERS

1. [Charlotte] Armstrong.
2. [E.C. or Phyllis] Bentley.
3. [Earl Derr] Biggers.
4. [Robert] Bloch.
5. [John Dickson] Carr.
6. [Raymond] Chandler.
7. [Agatha] Christie.
8. [Manning] Coles or [G.D.H. & M.] Cole.
9. [Wilkie or Michael] Collins.
10. [A.B.] Cox or [George Harmon] Coxe.
11. [Arthur or Adrian Conan] Doyle (Dail).
12. [J.S. or Lucille] Fletcher.
13. [R. Austin] Freeman.
14. [Erle Stanley or John] Gardner.
15. [Anthony or Michael] Gilbert.
16. [Dashiell] Hammett.
17. [Alfred] Hitchcock.
18. [Edward D.] Hoch.
19. [Francis] Iles.
20. [Ronald or Bill] Knox.
21. [John D., Ross, Phillip or Gregory] MacDonald/Macdonald/Mcdonald
22. [Ngaio] Marsh.
23. [Robert] Parker.
24. [Edgar Allan] Poe (pean).
25. [Ellery] Queen or [Rufus or C. Daly] King.
26. [Sax] Rohmer.
27. [Dorothy L.] Sayers.
28. [Aaron Marc] Stein.
29. [Rex] Stout.
30. [Phoebe Atwood] Taylor.
31. [Josephine] Tey.

MYSTERY MARKETPLACE

YOUR CLASSIFIED AD here will reach more than 3,000 of the most avid mystery-story readers and crime buffs in the world. Rate: $.20 per word. Minimum: 50 words or $10.00 per ad. Deadline for Spring 1979 issue: April 1. Send your ad with check or money order to: *The Armchair Detective,* 129 W. 56th St., New York, NY 10019.

The Armchair Detective. Vol. 1-3 complete, first 10 issues are photocopies. Vol. 7-11 complete, first issue of Vol. 8 is photocopy. Bibliography complete, separate, unbound. 7 different issues including **The Mystery Lover's Newsletter** including Vol. 1 complete. $150.00 postpaid. Murray R. Pearce, 410 Avenue B West, Bismarck, ND 58501.

"SHERLOCK HOLMES LIVES." Bumper stickers and decals adorned with the profile of the Master Detective. $2.00 each; 3 for $5.00; 10 or more $1.00 each. Price includes first-class postage. Send bank money order or cashier's check to: Cal Witt, 1156 West Ave. J-7, Lancaster, CA 93534.

MYSTERY & DETECTIVE TOUR OF BRITAIN
July 21-August 4, 1979

Walk in the footsteps of Homes & Watson, Miss Marple & Poirot, Father Brown & James Bond plus dozens of other great detectives of British fiction. Join a convivial group of mystery fans for 2 weeks of: discovering the real locations of British mystery stories, visits with some of the creators of modern British mystery and detective fiction, and other fiendishly clever surprises. For information contact:

British Mystery Tour
J.M. Norman
University of Wisconsin
River Falls, WI 54022
or telephone: 715-425-3169

Hardback Mystery & Detective Lists issued occasionally. Firsts, later editions and reprints moderately priced. For lists please send postcard to: Paula Coleman, 121 Snowball Dr., Levittown, Penna. 19056.

Major catalogue of Crime and Detection First Editions – British & American – available free from HOPES & DIXON, BUCKINGHAM HOUSE, HYDE STREET, WINCHESTER, ENGLAND.

MYSTERY MARKETPLACE

MANY CLASSIC MYSTERY & ADVENTURE MOVIES were presented on radio during the golden era (particularly the 1940's) as special radio versions, on such fine programs as Lux Radio Theater, Hallmark Playhouse, Academy Award Theater, Screen Guild Theater, Screen Directors Playhouse, etc. Most were done with the original movie casts; for example, LAURA, THE MALTESE FALCON, GASLIGHT, CASABLANCA, THE BIG CLOCK, THE UNINVITED, SUSPICION, HANGOVER SQUARE, THE LODGER, DRAGONWYCK, MURDER MY SWEET, THE DARK MIRROR, TREASURE OF SIERRA MADRE, LOST HORIZON, and scores more. We have a fine collection of these programs which we've put on quality cassettes and priced moderately. In addition we have a collection of those great SUSPENSE programs: also INNER SANCTUM, WHISTLER, MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER, SHADOW, SEALED BOOK, BLACK MUSEUM, many more. Plus the best SHERLOCK HOLMES series yet of the Conan Doyle classics as done on BBC. Our listings give a little background of the programs, broadcast dates, casts and a brief synopsis of each story. The list itself makes interesting and informative reading, and it is yours free if you'll send a business-size self-addressed stamped envelope. RARE RADIO, Box 117, Sunland, Calif. 91040.

GREY HOUSE BOOKS
12a Lawrence Street
Chelsea, London SW3, England
Telephone: (01) 352-7725

More than 2000 first edition detective stories and crime. Catalogues sent on request. Visitors welcome to see the books in an 18th Century private house near the Thames and Sir Thomas More's Chelsea Old Church. Telephone or write first.

DETECTIVE/MYSTERY Books: 1st and variant editions at reasonable prices with guaranteed satisfaction (all books returnable and we pay return postage). Send for free list. WEST'S BOOKING AGENCY, P.O. Box 406, Elm Grove, Wis. 53122.

MURDERERS–THIEVES–SWINDLERS OUTLAWS–LIBRARIANS–WRITERS BOOKSELLERS–AFICIONADOS!

My true (fact) crime library (collected 1946-76) is for sale at less than cost (as unit only). Over 300 volumes, US and British, mostly OP. All are hardbound, have original DJs; condition fine or better. Please send $1 for full listing by title, author, publisher, and year. JOHN RILEY BRANT, 2118 Iris Way, Monterey Park, CA 91754.

THE SILVER DOOR IS NOW OPEN AS A "SEARCH SERVICE"

SEND YOUR WANT LISTS (even if they are not mysteries) and we'll look for you as we do for many others. Write: The Silver Door, Box 3208, Redondo Beach, CA 90277, or call: Karen La Porte at (213) 379-3139.

THE NEW J.F. WHITT CATALOGUE will be ready in early March. Detective fiction, mysteries, fantasy, and science-fiction. Some 800 hardbacks–Victorian to present day–plus the usual selection of Penguin crime paperbacks. Catalogues are free and sent by air mail. Write for your copy now. J.F. WHITT, 4 Tudor House, Parson Street, London NW4 1TN, England.

COMMONSENSE BINDER

Use your powers of deduction to decipher my latest MURDER FOR MONEY list. Books for the mystery fan or the homicidally inclined. John L. Polley, 2745 California Ave. S.W., Seattle WA 98116.

NEXT 4 MYSTERY CATALOGUES $1. Also free search service for those elusive "golden oldies." We are constant buyers in this field. If you have books to sell, send us a complete description and prices wanted. Our specialties are Detective, Sherlockiana, and Science-Fiction. Aardvarks Detective Specialties,
Box 15070, Orlando, FL 32858.

WANTED!
Any/all GRAPHIC paperbacks to complete my collection.

Also
P.C. Richardson's first three cases
(Sir Basil Thomson, Crime Club)

and
Rupert Penny's *Policeman's Evidence* and *Lucky Policeman*

FOR SALE

Write for my For Sale list of older paperback and hardcover mysteries. Howard Waterhouse, Box 167, West Upton, MA. 01587.

Send for:

"SHERLOCK HOLMES & CO."

A list of over 250 books of Sherlockian interest, along with other mystery, science-fiction and fantasy titles. PAULETTE GREEN, BOOKS – 140 PRINCETON ROAD, ROCKVILLE CENTRE, NY 11570.

Bookhunter's Guides to West-Southwest, to Midwest-South-Canada and to Northeast list over 75 dealers with special interest in detective fiction. Biggest directories of used book dealers on the market. $5 each, plus 50¢ mailing. Ephemera and Books, P.O. Box 19681, San Diego CA 92119.

Ready! *The Checklist of Science-Fiction and Supernatural Fiction* by E.F. Bleiler. Revised, corrected, enlarged edition of the old Checklist. Bibliographic information for 5600 books, 1800-1948. System of 90 symbols and combinations indicates precise subject matter for 95% of books. Only book of its kind, indispensable for reading, dealing, planning collection. Library cloth. 6x9. 304pp. $20.00. CWO. Returnable within 10 days if dissatisfied. Dept. Armdet., Firebell Books, Box 804, Glen Rock, New Jersey 07542.

DETECTIVE FICTION CATALOGS

Our annotated catalogs of out-of-print detective fiction have been cited by many students of the genre as valuable secondary source material. We issue separate catalogs of first editions, hardcover & paperback reprints and reading copies, early & scarce paperbacks, and magazines. We also catalog older fantasy, adventure and historical fiction. Give us an idea of your interests and send for our free introductory catalog. THE ASPEN BOOKHOUSE, Box 4119, Boulder CO 80306. Also open by appointment: (303) 443-8346.

BOOK EXCHANGE

Bids are now being accepted for a copy of MYSTERY LEAGUE, Vol. 1, No. 1, and MYSTERY LEAGUE, Vol. 1, No. 2. Books are in good condition. Contact: David L. Godwin, Rt. 2, Box 119-B, Benson, N.C, (Phone: 919-894-5448). May 15 deadline.

WANTED: For some years now–would you believe 30 to 35?–I've been seeking The Blue Mask books by Anthony Morton . . . not very assiduously, I must admit. Anyway, I need three titles: *Salute Blue Mask, Alias Blue Mask, Challenge Blue Mask.* Reading copies are okay. Bob Jones, 205 N. Emerson St., Arlington VA 22203.

Mysterious goings-on at 129 West 56th Street.

Midtown lodgings become new haunt of The Mysterious Press.

After appearing to operate for several years entirely inside a post office box in Yonkers, New York, The Mysterious Press has suddenly surfaced on a quiet block in midtown Manhattan.

Mysteriously enough, neighbors have shown no alarm. Indeed, they have appeared pleased at the alacrity with which just another townhouse has been transformed into a tasteful publishing concern.

Entire floors transfigured.

On the first floor, designers and sundry gentlemen of the building trades have fashioned proper publishing offices, cozy quarters for visiting authors, and a library suitable for both editorial dialogue and autograph parties.

The Mysterious Bookshop appears in partial disguise.

Descending a spiral staircase from this mysterious renovation, one discovers strange bedfellows in the store below. The Rain-Dears plant shop is sharing its space with the new Mysterious Bookshop, which will take over the store completely at year's end. Meanwhile, mystery fans can explore a garden of paperbound novels and stories among the scheffleras Prickly tales behind the cactus. As well as lush hard covers and collector's rarities.

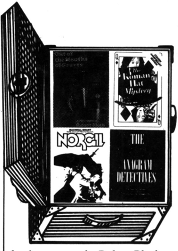
The Armchair Detective takes a seat.

The enterprise thickens. *The Armchair Detective,* last seen in California, has been spirited to New York as the new magazine affiliate of The Mysterious Press. Long recognized as the bible of serious mystery fans and scholars, *The Armchair Detective,* with its penetrating essays and reviews of the mystery genre, will undoubtedly find the mysterious surroundings most congenial. (Subscriptions to the quarterly are $16 per annum.)

The Armchair Detective

Four fascinating covers come to light.

Despite the inconveniences of moving, The Mysterious Press continues to move ahead with fine editions of four outstandingly mysterious works. The Golden Anniversary Edition of *The Roman Hat Mystery* — a replica (with new author's introduction) of the much sought-after first edition of the first appearance of Ellery Queen in print. *The Anagram Detectives* by Norma Schier — puzzle-pastiches of the fiction of such brilliant authors as Christie, Marsh, Sayers and Carr — with Introduction by Stanley Ellin. *Norgil: More Tales of Prestidigitection* by Maxwell Grant, creator of The Shadow. And *Out of the Mouths of Graves* — a sixteen-course menu of gore for the gourmet by Robert Bloch. Each available now at $10.



An invitation to the curious.

As you can see, there is a mecca of mysterious goings-on at 129 West 56th Street. To get to the bottom of any or all of it, please feel free to contact us for further information or a visit.

Otto Penzler
The Mysterious Press
129 West 56th Street
New York, N.Y. 10019

THE MYSTERIOUS PRESS