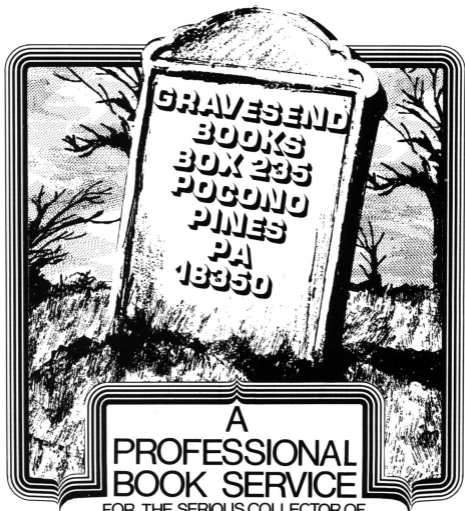


THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE





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AND ANALYTICAL MATERIAL ON THE GENRE

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THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

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THE UNEASY CHAIR

This issue of TAD completes 13 years, 52 issues, 4062 pages, and my tenure as editor. My principal purpose here is to express my heartfelt gratitude to TADians everywhere for what TAD has been through the years—and what it will be in issues to come, for I'm sure it will continue to bring enjoyment, information, and informed opinion under its new editor, Mike Seidman.

The story of TAD's beginnings has been told here before (10/2, pages 142-48) and need not be repeated. Suffice to say that my expectations, when putting out that 30-page first issue in 1967, were humble: I had no anticipation of all these years, or all these pages, or all the breadth of international circulation. And I certainly had not one clue concerning what would come my way as a result of TAD.

I believe that, besides directly bringing pleasure and information, TAD has played a sort of catalytic role in many things: the establishment of Bouchercons and of various other fan publications; in bringing together people who ultimately collaborated on projects (for example, the *Detectionary*); in giving people an early outlet for their writing who have now become established as professionals (for example, Mike Nevins); in stimulating interest in and recognition of crime fiction as a significant type of literature (perhaps resulting, in turn, in such things as increasing numbers of academic courses on the genre, in such projects as the Mystery Library, and—dare I suggest a catalytic role for TAD here, without of course taking anything away from the man himself?—in an honorary doctorate for Fred Dannay); in stimulating major individual accomplishments (for example, Bob Adey's *Locked Room Murders*).

If TAD has contributed in such matters, the credit belongs to you—you who submitted articles, reviews, letters; you who devoted great personal effort in reading and research and writing, and who conveyed

your knowledge of and insights into crime fiction in TAD's pages; you who faithfully subscribed, even through vicissitudes in ownership and publishing schedules and publisher responsiveness. I thank you!

For myself, TAD has led to such opportunities as: nearly three years as crime fiction reviewer for the NYTimes Book Review (1968-71); editorship of seven volumes in Dutton's "Best Detective Stories of the Year" series; writing of two encyclopedia articles; providing of introductions to several books in our field; participation in the Mystery Library; compilation of *The Bibliography of Crime Fiction*; active involvement in MWA; and, certainly not least, getting to know personally numerous friendly and knowledgeable people in the U.S. and overseas, people who have enriched my life. It's you, all of you, who made this possible. You can see that I have considerable reason to be grateful, and I am.

While I am ceasing some of my involvements in the field (my wife insists with some justification that I never become less active, for no sooner do I cease one activity than another one comes along to fill any void that might exist), I do not plan to pull out altogether. My bibliographic work continues (keep sending me your corrections and additions to the *Bibliography*!); if the Mystery Library revives I may have a role there; and at Otto's request (and my own desire) I will continue to write for these pages, at least in "Short Notes." Outside the field I have one or two projects, long dormant, that I may now be able to get back to.

Since, then, TAD is an expression of its contributors and supporters, I expect it to carry on as before after I step down, responding to your interests and desires as you express them, changing a bit here and there under your guidance and with the energies and perceptiveness of Mike Seidman.

Thanks again, and over to you . . .

—AJH



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COMIC CAPERS AND COMIC EYES

By David Geherin

Although such activities as murder, kidnaping, robbery and the like are serious business, you would have a difficult time convincing some writers that crime isn't a laughing matter. Mystery fiction has always contained certain comic elements—dotty characters, witty dialogue, amusing style—but for the most part these have remained in the background. However, in recent years the occasional smile has given way to the belly laugh as a variety of talented writers have sought to make comedy the central rather than the peripheral element in their crime fiction.

The most direct way of achieving humor in mystery fiction is at someone's expense, that is, by parodying well-known figures in the field. Sherlock Holmes, for example, has long been the object of parody. Perhaps the funniest of all the Holmes parodies are those of Robert L. Fish, who in *The Incredible Schlock Homes* (1966) and *The Memoirs of Schlock Homes* (1974) burlesques Watson's narrative style and Holmes' character brilliantly. (Among the pun-filled cases Dr. Watney, as he is called here, mentions are "The Sound of the Basketballs" and "The Adventures of the Big Schlepp.") Fish parodies are themselves spoofed, along with such other mystery notables as Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Rex Stout and Ellery Queen, in *The Anagram Detectives* (1979) by Norma Schier. The familiar tough-talking, wise-cracking styles of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett have often been imitated, most notably by S.J. Perelman in his classic "Farewell, My Lovely Appetizer." More recently, Ross Macdonald's characteristic use of striking similies has been ingeniously burlesqued by Ron Goulart in "The Peppermint-Striped Goodby," where private eye Ross Pewter is given to such overripe observations as the following:

Spent time is somewhat like the bird in that poem by Coleridge and we carry it around our neck like a gift that we have to wear to please the giver, who gave it to us like somebody passing out the second-rate wine now that the guests, who sit around like numbed patients in some sort of cosmic dentist's waiting room, are too unsober to know or care.

Then there are parodies of various mystery genres, most commonly either the caper novel or the private eye novel. The foremost practitioner of the caper parody is Donald Westlake, who takes the standard crime caper—bank robbery, kidnaping, jewel theft, etc.—and shows what happens when, contrary to the standard conventions, everything goes haywire.

THE Gramma Anagram ANAGRAM DETECTIVES

by Norma Schier

Introduction by Stanley Ellin



Jimmy the Kid (1974), one of four Westlake books chronicling the misadventures of the Dortmund gang (the others being *The Hot Rock* (1970), *Bank Shot* (1972) and the aptly-titled *Nobody's Perfect* (1977)) is a typical example. The gang is composed of John Dortmund, the dour brains behind each caper whose disposition regularly sours as he watches one brilliant plan after another collapse into ruin before his very eyes; Arnold Kelp, his left-hand man and full-time jinx; and Murch, the driver, whose main entertainment is listening to an album of sounds of the Indy 500. (Former members of the gang include a safecracker who was arrested when he absent-mindedly unlocked the lion cage while visiting the zoo with his kids and a driver whose car was hit by an Eastern airlines jet when he took a wrong turn on the expressway and ended up on a runway at Kennedy airport).

Considering his history of bad luck, Dortmund's involvement in another caper in *Jimmy the Kid* is a tribute to the adage, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." In his first caper in *The Hot Rock*, for example, a simple jewel theft turned into a wild fiasco as the gang was forced into not one but four attempts to steal the jewel, from such places as a police station, a museum, a bank vault, and finally from the Clair de Lune sanitarium. In *Bank Shot*, their next caper, Dortmund came up with another brilliant plan: robbing a bank by stealing it, by driving away with the mobile home being used as its temporary quarters. But, as usual, misfortune struck, and at the end of the novel Dortmund watched helplessly as the bank rolled down the road and off the end of a pier into the Atlantic. It is no wonder, then, that he wants nothing to do with Kelp's new plan in *Jimmy the Kid*.

And yet success appears guaranteed in this caper because Kelp brings Dortmund a seemingly foolproof plan: they will kidnap a child for ransom by following the exact scheme that worked perfectly in a novel entitled *Child Heist* by Richard Stark. (A bit of literary horseplay, this. Mystery fans know

that Westlake has published some sixteen crime novels under the name Richard Stark. He is, in essence, turning his own caper novel into a comic fiasco.) *Jimmy the Kid*, in fact, includes three chapters from the Stark book which detail for Dortmund the best way to select the victim, make the snatch, and collect the ransom. Nothing can go wrong this time, and even the skeptical Dortmund is excited by the real prospect of success.

However, life certainly does not imitate art in Westlake's world, for despite the theoretical brilliance of the plan, circumstances once again conspire against Dortmund: his twelve-year-old victim Jimmy is a child genius who reads *The New Yorker* rather than comic books and whose chauffeur-driven limousine doesn't fit into the getaway truck, as it did in the Stark book; Dortmund can't make the ransom call to the phone in Jimmy's father's car because the line is busy; and so on. In the end, Jimmy outsmarts them all and returns home with the \$150,000 ransom (although he generously leaves \$1,000 to Dortmund for his troubles). Frustrated once more, Dortmund can only moan, "This is not what I had in mind when I decided to go in for a life of crime."





It isn't only in Westlake's Dortmund books where capers go awry. In *Who Stole Sassi Manoon* (1969), a computer-planned kidnapping of a famous actress is fouled up when a second crew of kidnappers (an elderly couple planning to use the ransom money for their retirement) beats the first group to the punch. Westlake offers a comic variation on the prison-escape caper in *Help I Am Being Held Prisoner* (1974), where a gang plans a bank robbery for which they have the perfect alibi—they are all currently inmates of the state penitentiary who have discovered a secret tunnel which connects the prison gymnasium with a house across the street, allowing them to come and go as they please. (They escape at will to date local girls, join a bowling league, even open accounts in the bank they plan to rob.) Holmesian puzzles and locked-room mysteries are parodied in the aptly-titled *A Travesty* (1977).

Finally, there is *Dancing Aztecs* (1976), Westlake's comic masterpiece, which takes the theme of *The Maltese Falcon*, the pursuit of a valuable object by several characters, and inflates it to almost epic proportions. Three competing groups are in hot pursuit of a solid gold Dancing Aztec priest which has been placed in a box containing worthless copies, which are then distributed to sixteen unsuspecting people. As the various pursuers begin crossing paths with the owners of the sixteen statues, and with each other, the plot complications multiply hilariously. Westlake orchestrates the ensuing confusion with Dickensian skill to produce a masterpiece of farcical writing.

Westlake isn't the only writer of comic caper novels (Evan Hunter's *Every Little Crook and Nanny* comes to mind) but he is unquestionably the most prolific and inventive. By combining humorous characters with wildly inventive plots and a zany style, he turns the conventions of the caper novel askew and transforms conventional situations into hilarious misadventures.

Even more susceptible to parody is the private eye genre, partly because its conventions are so well known, partly because its tough-talking style of narration lends itself so easily to comic imitation. One of the most inventive and original of all such parodies is Thomas Berger's *Who Is Teddy Villanova?* (1977), which reads like a Raymond Chandler novel re-written by William Shakespeare, Franz Kafka, and S. J. Perelman. In many of his other works, Berger has shown an interest in parodying conventional forms of literature: *Little Big Man* imitates the Western, *Arthur Rex* the Arthurian tales. Similarly, *Who Is Teddy Villanova?* imitates many of the recognizable conventions of the private eye novel: the seedy office with the blonde secretary; the honest but down-at-the-heels private eye; a variety of mysterious and deceitful characters; urban decadence; an endless series of beatings, etc.

The plot of the novel defies synopsis; loosely described, it involves private eye Russell Wren's search for the mysterious Teddy Villanova who, on the basis of all the evidence he uncovers, appears to be Wren himself. Wren is an inveterate theorizer whose interpretations of facts, logical though they may be, prove inadequate in explaining his world or answering his questions. Untrustworthy characters are common in detective fiction, but in Wren's Kafkaesque world nobody is who he or she appears to be. For example, the policemen who come to investigate the murder of a man in Wren's office (who may or may not be dead) might be hoodlums. Or perhaps actors in a drama being filmed. Wren's girl friend, Natalie Novotny, appears to be a stewardess, but she might really be a hooker. Or an undercover Treasury agent, as she claims. No matter. The world in the novel never surrenders its real meaning.

Much of the humor in the novel derives from Berger's elaborate variations on conventional scenes. For example, the police come to Wren's apartment to interrogate him. To prove he is really Russell Wren, detective Zwingly (whose associates are appropriately named Knox and Calvin) devises a test in which he will award Wren points on the basis of how well he can identify the authors of passages he selects from the books in the apartment. (Wren confuses Emerson with Gissing, but impresses Zwingly with his knowledge of Ruskin.) Most private eyes simply dismiss the police as either corrupt or incompetent; Wren's more cerebral explanation for their behavior is that "like all contemporary art-forms, theirs is in its decadence, occupied solely with structure and not substance, more ritualistic role-playing."

What gives the novel its true cosmic character is its style. Wren is pedantic, verbose, grandiloquent, his narrative characterized by ornate diction, tortured syntax, overblown rhetoric, and Shakespearean phrasing. Like Howard Cosell, Wren never selects

the familiar and direct word when the obscure and archaic will do; thus a character isn't bald, he is "glabrous of crown"; eyes aren't simply blue, they are "cerulean." His narration is also weighed down by pedantic references to such writers as Virgil (quoted in Latin), Matthew Arnold, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Cardinal Newman, Racine, Christopher Marlowe (would that it were Philip) and the like. Wren occasionally stoops to the conventional private eye's stock in trade, the colorful simile. Upon discovering a dead body, for example, he remarks: "If he was not as dead as the cold lasagna on which the tomato sauce has begun to darken, I was a Dutchman." But then, chastizing himself for such lapses into the vernacular, he hastily adds: "The gaudy and, in the absence of blood, inappropriate metaphor actually came to mind at the moment, as a willed ruse to lure me away from panic—the fundamental purpose of most caprices of language, hence the American wisecrack—but it failed." It comes as a brisk breath of fresh air to hear a character tell Wren, "If you don't shut up, I'm gonna peel your skull like a peanut and I'm gonna grind your brains into peanut butter and put a gob onna window sill for the birds to peck."

Like Raymond Chandler, Berger is both attracted by the beauty of the language and amused by its variegated possibilities. But it would be misleading to dismiss *Who Is Teddy Villanova?* simply as a linguistic tour de force. It is that, of course, but it is also a marvelous comic novel which pays tribute to, at the same time it burlesques, the classic private eye novel.

Whimsical is the only way to describe Richard Brautigan's offbeat foray into the private eye genre, *Dreaming of Babylon* (1977). The year is 1942 and private detective C. Card (never to be confused with fellow private eye S. Spade) is one of the few

detectives left in war-time San Francisco, having been classified 4F by his draft board. One obvious source of humor in the novel is Brautigan's diminution of the hero, his portrayal of the private eye as schlemiel. Card has fallen on hard times: he can't pay the rent on his apartment; his office is a phone booth; he has no car, cannot even afford bullets for his gun. Things are so bad that he has been reduced to selling pornographic photographs to tourists and to stealing from blind beggars. His professional effectiveness is also seriously jeopardized by his habit of dreaming of Babylon, of escaping, Walter Mitty-like, into an imaginary world where he is transformed into such heroic figures as Ace Stag, master private eye.

But January 2, 1942 promises to be his lucky day. His landlady, who has been hounding him about his rent, graciously drops dead, and a prospective client phones. Card spends the first half of the novel trying to borrow some bullets so he will be prepared to meet his client, a beautiful blonde who wants him to steal the body of a murdered prostitute from the city morgue. His task is complicated by the arrival of two other groups also hired by his client to steal the body. However, he triumphs and ends up with the body in his refrigerator, although he never finds out why he was hired to steal it in the first place. Nor is he paid for his efforts. At the end of the novel he is left with the rueful conclusion that "I was right back where I started, the only difference being that when I woke up this morning, I didn't have a dead body in my refrigerator."

Dreaming of Babylon is a typical Brautigan novel in that the plot, what little there is of it, is of practically no interest or importance whatever, existing only as a structural device from which playfully waggish observations can be draped. Colorful figures of speech have long been a trademark of the private eye novel, especially in the works of Raymond Chandler and Ross Macdonald. Brautigan's idiosyncratic style is likewise characterized by the offbeat simile, and the private eye format provides him with an effective vehicle for the free exercise of his stylistic quirks. Thus, in his hands a rumped bed looks "like the gallows they hanged the people who'd assassinated Abraham Lincoln from"; a tough police sergeant speaks fatherly, "but he sounded like a father whose business was a pitchfork factory in hell"; the eyes of a character "looked as if Edgar Allan Poe had given them both hotfoots." Brautigan also uses the chapter headings, which at first glance appear to be wildly irrelevant to the book, for humorous effect. Each of the seventy-six chapters (most only a few pages long) is given a title: "Adolf Hitler"; "The 596 B.C. Baseball Season"; "A World Renowned expert on Socks"; "The Labrador Retriever of Dead People"; and so on. The humor in each case derives from the



imaginative way in which Brautigan works the title into the narrative of the chapter.

Very much in the Brautigan vein are the Chance Purdue parodies of Ross H. Spencer. In *The DADA Caper* (1978), *The Reggis Arms Caper* (1979), and *The Stranger City Caper* (1980), Spencer chronicles the misadventures of Chicago private detective Chance Purdue, like Brautigan's C. Card something of a loser. As in *Dreaming of Babylon*, the plots in Spencer's books meander listlessly and irrelevantly. Like Brautigan, Spencer achieves humor at the expense of his hero—Purdue is forever following the wrong suspect or beating up the wrong guy. And like Brautigan, style is everything. Spencer's novels are written almost entirely in a succession of one-sentence paragraphs whose deadpan style mocks the tough-talking style of the masters.

Candi Yakozi swept into the room.
She embraced me.
Passionately.
She kissed me.
Lingeringly.
She looked into my eyes.
Worshipfully.

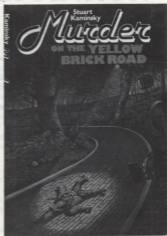
Spencer also introduces humor by including oddball characters (Myrtle Culpepper, a grandmother who terrorizes Chicago by embarking on a campaign of raping young men; Brandy Alexander, a randy C.I.A. agent who can't keep her hands off Purdue; Attila Honeywell, first baseman on a team composed entirely of left-handed players, etc.) and by beginning each chapter with a sagacious comment by Monroe D. Underwood. Ranging from Henny Youngman one-liners ("...my great-grandmother should of been canonized...by God she would of been if my great-grandfather could of got hold of a cannon...") to Will Rogers-type sayings "...a gigolo is a man what gets paid for doing what any idiot would be perfectly willing to do for nothing..."), these quotations serve to augment the stylistic silliness that is, as its best, nutty and humorous, at its worst, mannered and strained.

Also worth mentioning for their humor are the Toby Peters novels of Stuart Kaminsky. Far more faithful to the private eye genre than either Brautigan or Spencer, Kaminsky returns to the forties for his cases and achieves humor by placing famous real characters in fictional situations. For example, in *Bullet for a Star* (1977), Peters is hired to find out who is blackmailing Errol Flynn. His investigation uncovers crucial evidence hidden in the statue being used in the filming of a new Humphrey Bogart movie called *The Maltese Falcon*. In *Murder on the Yellow Brick Road* (1978), he is hired to solve the murder of a Munchkin on the set of *The Wizard of Oz*. He solves the case with the assistance of a writer by the

name of Raymond Chandler he meets in a shabby L.A. hotel. *You Bet Your Life* (1978) features the Marx Brothers and a young British agent by the name of Ian Fleming who is visiting Chicago. In *The Howard Hughes Affair* (1979) assistance is provided by British actor Basil Rathbone, who is given to speculation in the manner of the character he is currently portraying, Sherlock Holmes.

In all these books, the crimes are real, the plots well developed, the style straightforward. Kaminsky is not interested in ridiculing the genre. Rather he uses it ingeniously in combination with his affection for the movies of the forties to create a nostalgic and entertaining picture of the age. Furthermore, he inventively demonstrates the humorous effects possible by juxtaposing the real and the fictional to produce a most diverting hybrid form of the private eye novel.

Parody is always a tricky business, involving as it does taking a proverbial bite from the imaginative hand that feeds it. Consequently, there is inevitably a certain amount of disrespect involved in the pursuit of humor through comic imitation. And yet many of these writers—Westlake, Berger, Kaminsky especially—temper parody with respect for the original. Their efforts are reminiscent of the approach taken by the television series *Soap*, which spoofs the conventions of the soap opera while at the same time taking many of those same conventions quite seriously. What all these writers share in common is an infectious spirit of comedy, a thorough knowledge of the genres they are imitating, and an ability to convert the standard conventions into refreshing and entertaining works. But while mystery novels often promise to deliver a story that packs a punch, the only place these books assault is the reader's funny bone.





Criminious Christmases

Jane Gottschalk

What do detectives do at Christmas holiday time? What one could expect—they detect. When there are jangles in the jingle bells or mysteries in merrymaking, detectives have busmen's holidays. In considering some of the mysteries with a Christmas setting, one discovers that the season, with its customs, festivities and decorations, varies in its importance to the action. For those who consider mysteries as social histories, the more recent books give one pause.

However, the good will of the season inspired Sherlock Holmes, Father Brown, and Lord Peter Wimsey in tales of Christmas. Conan Doyle's "The Blue Carbuncle," claimed Christopher Morley, is "one of the most unusual things in the world: a Christmas story without slush."¹ And it is. Although Holmes discovers who stole the jewel and cached it in the Christmas goose, there is no prosecution. Doyle adds suggestion with the name of a character: John Horner. For those who think that Christmas is for children, remember Little Jack Horner? Jewels also figure in G. K. Chesterton's "The Flying Stars," diamonds so named because they had been stolen often. The story opens with Flambeau's claim that his most beautiful crime was his last, that this was planned, like others, to suit the season, in this case Christmas. On Boxing Day at the home of Colonel Adams, his daughter is given the diamonds by her godfather. During a wild and impromptu pantomime with guests, among them Father Brown, the diamonds disappear. They reappear from a tree after Father Brown seeks Harlequin there; the diamonds are returned and Flambeau disappears.² "The Necklace of Pearls" by Dorothy L. Sayers continues the Christmas-jewel motif. In this light-hearted fantasy, set in an ultra-modern country house, Christmas guests, including Lord Peter, defer to the

demand of their host, Sir Septimus Shale, for a traditional, old-fashioned holiday, complete with holly, mistletoe, evergreens, colored paper and parlor games. In another tradition of Sir Septimus, he gives the twenty-first perfectly matched pearl to his daughter for her birthday on Christmas Eve. During a game of Animal, Vegetable and Mineral, the necklace disappears. Lord Peter copes; the necklace is recovered, and, in the spirit of, there is no open confrontation or calling in of the police.³

Other tales involve equally famous detectives. "Maigret's Christmas" by George Simenon begins quietly at home for Inspector and Madame Maigret; other homes had the noisome merriment of children. Because a neighbor from across the street brings a story and another woman, the Inspector is soon involved in a case in which the "principals are a seven-year-old girl, a doll, and Father Christmas."⁴ After a long day in which the Inspector works his department, the case is concluded and Madame Maigret will have the little girl if only for a little while. Christmas brings a child to the Maigrets.

Not so quiet, as might be expected, is "The Christmas Party" by Rex Stout. Glitter and noise mark an office party at which Archie said that he intended to announce his engagement. But decorator Kurt Bottwell sips poison in his Pernod, served by a masked Santa Claus in the gold-leaf studio. Santa disappears and hue and cry are up. Only indirectly does Nero Wolfe admit he wore the costume and walked a mile in a snowstorm, and he solves the case without admission.⁵ The image of Wolfe as Santa? As fascinating as that of him in his yellow pajamas.

In Edward D. Hoch's fairly clued "Christmas is for Cops," Captain Leopold attends the Christmas party of the Detective Bureau to give a speech and to collect evidence from one policeman who had accepted bribes that another was involved. But the

BY THE AUTHOR OF
Death on the Nile
Agatha Christie
**A Holiday
for Murder**
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED AS MURDER FOR CHRISTMAS



officer is stabbed in the Men's Room. Captain Leopold deduces the whodunit and where the evidence had been hidden—a spot unique to a Christmas party (EQMM, Dec. 1970).

For Agatha Christie aficionados, there had been the pleasant anticipation of a Christie for Christmas, a pleasure ended, alas, with the publication of her autobiography. But what of Christmas for Christie? In one of the *Tuesday Club Murders*, Miss Marple recalls "A Christmas Tragedy," a happening in which she was involved, not in St. Mary Mead, but at Keston Spa Hydro. Christmas shopping figures in the plot, and though Miss Marple could not avert the murder she was certain would occur, she exposed the killer and had the satisfaction of knowing that he was hanged. "And a good job, too" (Dell ed., p. 144). Poirot has a like satisfaction in *A Holiday for Murder*. His host, Col. Johnson, assures Poirot that their visit will not be interrupted because of the season. Poirot, however, plays devil's advocate. He claims that the British are sentimental, that the festivities are charming, but that the facts of the good cheer and the gatherings produce an artificial strain. After a phone call, the colonel is fuming. He announces that he has a case of murder on Christmas Eve: Simeon Lee of Gorston Hall has been killed in the midst of the family he had assembled for the holiday. Although a guest is shown a store room housing edible goodies and tree and table decorations, the investigation changes plans; murder kills gaiety. "No, it was not a nice Christmas" (Bantam ed., p. 164). Much nicer, in fact, ideal Christmasmas were recalled by Agatha Christie from

her own childhood. With her mother, she spent these holidays at Abney Hall, Victorian Gothic in architecture and "a glutton's paradise." "Christmas was the supreme Festival, something never to be forgotten. Christmas stockings in bed. Breakfast when everyone had a separate chair heaped with presents. Then a rush to church, and back to continue present opening. At two o'clock Christmas dinner, the blinds drawn down and glittering ornaments and lights. First, oyster soup (not relished by me), turbot, then boiled turkey, roast turkey and large roast sirloin of beef. This was followed by plum a large roast sirloin of beef. This was followed by plum pudding, mince pies and a trifle of sixpences, pigs, rings, bachelors' buttons and all the rest of it. After that, again, innumerable kinds of dessert. In a story I once wrote, *The Affair of the Christmas Pudding*, I have described just such a feast.⁴ The affair is Poirot's, and at the feast he discovers an apropos bachelor's button in his share of the pudding. At Kings Lucy because of entreaties from "the highest quarters" and because of central heating, Poirot has a happier Christmas with holly, mistletoe, a Christmas tree, Midnight Mass and morning service, and children. And he is pleased: "The scandal is avoided, my princeling receives his ruby back again, he returns to his country and makes a sober and we hope a happy marriage. All ends well."⁵ As in the Christmas-jewel tales of Holmes, Father Brown and Lord Peter, Poirot had caught the spirit.

Like Poirot, Ellery Queen has a mixed bag of cases in which Christmas is essential to the plot, one of them a light-hearted tale involving a jewel: "The Adventure of the Dauphin's Doll." The doll of the title wears a 49 carat diamond and is part of a collection on display in a department store before Christmas. "Comus," a thief who leaves calling cards, warns of his intentions, and Ellery and the police force rally for protection, including a protesting Sgt. Velie dressed as Santa Claus. "Comus" succeeds in spite of the precautions, but the hilarious tale is successful; the doll is returned, sans diamond, and Ellery is sound in his inferences.⁶ The other case, *The Finishing Stroke*, is grimmer and longer—in its time span and in its ambitions. Discussing the novel in *Royal Bloodline*, Nevins thinks it was intended as a final work, a "last bow," because of the deliberate use of hackneyed situations and devices.⁷ Book One of *The Finishing Stroke* is a brief dramatization of the New Year holidaying of John Sebastian and his wife in New York City, of their return trip and accident in a storm after which a son is born prematurely on January 6, 1905, and of the parents' deaths. Book Two, the longest, opens with Ellery Queen driving his Deussenberg to Alderwood on December 24, 1929, for a house party of twelve to continue until Epiphany. His first book,

The Roman Hat Mystery, had been published the previous October. John Sebastian, Jr. will come into his inheritance on his birthday, marry, and surprise his guests, he claims. Twelve different zodiac-signs gifts are distributed by a Santa Claus unaccounted for, and the first eccentric gift and verse appear, in parody of the carole, "The Twelve Days of Christmas." Tension mounts when an unidentified corpse is found in the library, and the sandlewood ox is augmented daily by more puzzling gifts and verses. Triangles, blackmail, another corpse—and Ellery continues to cogitate ingeniously. The party disperses on January 6 with much remaining a mystery; feeling soulless, Ellery Queen returns to the city. Book Three deals with the summer of 1957 when chance revives the case. The headnote to the final chapter is: "In which Mr. Queen Confesses to the Folly of His Youth, and Brings the Story of the Twelve Nights, Albeit Belatedly, to Its End" (Signet ed., p. 183). He knows all, but lets the case rest.

House parties were settings for criminous Christmases presented by Sayers, Christie and Queen and seem favored by British authors. In *Envious Casca*, Georgette Heyer has Inspector Hemingway sent to Lexham Manor in Hampshire where the host had been found stabbed on Christmas Eve between tea and dinner times. Fairly clued, the novel presents a likely victim in the wealthy Scrooge who had "said that a real English Christmas meant, in his experience, a series of quarrels between inimical persons bound to one another only by the accident of relationship, and thrown together by a worn-out convention which decreed that at Christmas families should forgather" (Bantam ed., p. 4). Bah! Humbug! —and death.

The Christmas season is less vital to Michael Innes's *A Comedy of Terrors*, except that it is likely to be a time of family gathering and cold. For this romp, there is a Watson-narrator, and young John Appleby is first introduced as Mr. X. Parlor games are more literary, i.e. Shakespearean lines about bells, and additional literary allusions, clues and red herrings serve as decoration. The tone is set when Appleby arrives to be told that someone is shot: "When one dines out," he murmured, "one scarcely expects to be served with one's own pigeon as promptly as this" (Berkley Medallion ed., p. 54). In spite of its title, Innes's *Christmas at Candlehoe*, another romp but one without Appleby, is not about the holiday. In this novel, Christmas had been carver to the English navy, producing two monuments to Admiral Candlehoe, drowned in 1597. The monuments figure in the bizarre action around the decrepit manor, with thieves, visiting Americans, art objects and a chase.¹⁰

Cyril Hare selects Warbeck Hall, a great country mansion, for a snowbound house party at Christmas,

a party which mixes relatives, political figures, a sergeant from Scotland Yard and a Czech refugee. In *An English Murder*, after a grim dinner on Christmas Eve, the guests while the time with card games until champagne is served at midnight. The son of Lord Warbeck says he will make an announcement, drinks from his glass, topples and dies: cyanide. His invalid father is found dead the next day. With characteristic bits of humor and irony, Hare makes almost every character a suspect, adds suspense, and offers a parallel from the 18th century.¹¹ Christmas is convenient for the gathering, but is not integral to the plot.

Roderick Alleyn, Ngaio Marsh's detective, discovers that Christmas festivities at Halberds Manor are the core of the case in *Tied Up in Tinsel*. Initially reminiscent of *Final Curtain* in that Troy had been commissioned to do a portrait and that malicious practical jokes upset the household, *Tied Up in Tinsel* is unique in its eccentric characters and plot. In addition to Troy, Hilary Bill-Tasman had invited his aunt and uncle and his fiancée for an elaborate Christmas in the manor staffed by "oncners," one-time killers on parole. After detailed planning and preparation, Christmas Day begins with services in the chapel and builds toward a big party for those roundabout, including adults and children connected with the nearby prison. There is the lighting of the Christmas tree, a golden Druid instead of Santa Claus or Father Christmas, gifts for everyone — and a disappearance. Alleyn returns from abroad to locate a corpse and to discover whodunit.¹²

Among other British authors to use the Christmas season is Mary Kelly, whose *The Christmas Egg* opens on December 22 when Princess Karukhina dies in squalor in Bright's Row, London. In a case heavy with Russian overtones, Inspector Nightingale (supposed to sing *Love for Three Oranges* over the holidays) and Sergeant Beddoes find that jewels are the basis for theft, intrigue and murder. The main



jewel is the fabulous Fabergé Christmas Egg of the title. On Christmas Eve, a trap is set for the thieves, and as in other jewel tales, this one promises mercy for the most innocent of them after the recovery of the egg. "[I]ts surface [was] starred and patterned like a window in a hard frost, with a diamond monogram glittering in the middle. Diamonds, close set in a band of gleaming metal, encircled the egg lengthwise" and its interior was the receptacle for an even more lavish display of diamonds.¹³

More exotic for a Christmas setting is Gavin Black's *A Dragon for Christmas*. British narrator Paul Harris goes to Peking to sell Dolphin engines for use on junks, but he had another secret reason for the trip, not made clear until the end. Suspenseful action is shown against a Red China background with occasional HIBK for the narrator who survives being attacked by thugs, shot at in a canal site, and struck by a rifle butt on Christmas Eve at the theatre where he had gone to see the Kiangsi Opera. His Christmas dinner is at the home of a friend from his youth. Harris is successful in his mission, and there is a hint that Old China will survive, but there is also a hint that he must mistrust everyone because one cannot tell the good guys from the bad until action is complete.¹⁴ Peace and goodwill?

Less and less of Christmas appears in *Spence and the Holiday Murders* by Michael Allen, one of the recent British offerings to "celebrate" the season. An unsavory character who dabbles in sex, insurance and second mortgages is killed on December 21. Because his superior is on sick leave, Detective Superintendent Ben Spence is on the job alone, working with the locals of Downsea and his well equipped van to uncover unpleasantnesses connected with politics and a girls' school. The force hoped for and got the solution in time for the holiday,¹⁵ but any holiday would do; Christmas has nothing to do with the problem.

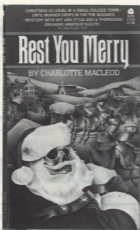
American authors also demonstrate a decline in the spirit of the season—to window dressing for a plot and to sensational life-must-go-on action. The title of Jack Iams' *Do Not Murder Before Christmas* has no relevance to the plot. With stock romantic types, the novel deals with the murder of Uncle Poot, an old Dutch toymaker, on Christmas Eve. Toys are pertinent to the season, and even more to the story are the records kept by the toymaker. The narrator is the city editor of the paper of a small city close to New York. Himself a type, a successful newspaperman not yet thirty, he fights against City Hall meanies, discovers a beautiful blond with an unknown background, and in finding who killed the kindly uncle has the aid of a friend on the police force and the society editor—a heart-of-gold, tough-talking woman of forty-five. Other stock romantic situations include the beautiful blond being

imprisoned in a house, the editor's being jailed, and a black doorman's being grateful for having his child at a Christmas party and thereafter aiding the narrator in a roughhouse finale at a notorious local club.

The Christmas Card Murders by David William Meredith plays with lines from Clement Clarke Moore's famous verse for chapter titles. In chapter 2, "When What to My Wondering Eyes," the narrator—journalist, family man and polio victim—receives a card in which *Wishing You a Merry Christmas* remains but *And a Happy New Year* is crossed off. Inside is typed: "You will die before the old year ends." Three other neighbors in the New Jersey town receive cards also, and one of them is stabbed on Christmas Eve. Before the murderer eludes capture and is killed by a train, there is a burst of psycho madness. As in *Spence and the Holiday Murders*, surfaces are scratched to reveal pasts affecting the present.¹⁶

Postmark Murder, by Mignon Eberhart, is a gothic with Christmas trim, mainly a Christmas tree for a girl child recently arrived from Poland. A will, murders, an imposter, chase scenes with courage and a bit of HIBK for the heroine in the Chicago setting work toward the happy solution (DBC, 1955). Christmas trim is also the description for *Dead Run* by Richard Lockridge. Michael Faye is now 20 and phones from college to say that he will be home for the holidays, driven by a friend on the way to visit her father in New York City. Because an ice storm hits Van Brunt and knocks out electricity, Inspector Heimrich and Susan take them to the Inn, where Michael's friend, Joan, witnesses a man being run over in the parking lot. On December 24, as she is driving toward New York, her Volks is forced off the road by a station wagon and is smashed. That evening, there is a tree, and charcoal broiled steaks, baked potatoes, fruit cake and coffee—preceded by the inevitable Lockridge martinis, a tradition not carried on by the younger generation. As Heimrich dresses the next day, he thinks of the station wagon: "Presumably it had been moved by now; was being driven, or possibly towed, to the barracks and the lab boys, to whom Christmas Eve was merely another evening and Christmas Day merely another Thursday."¹⁷ A policeman's lot is not a happy one.

In a continuation of the familiar, *Mr. Splitfoot* provides a snowstorm and a house party in an old country home near the Hudson River, with a "haunted" room and Christmas decorations everywhere. Helen McCloy's Dr. Basil Willing, forensic psychologist, stumbles into the problem with his wife, Gisela, when their car breaks down en route to a ski holiday. As one corpse follows another, suspense builds and Christmas is almost forgotten save that a decoration provides a clue in part of the unraveling.¹⁸



More in-depth probing is given by Thomas Chastain in *911*, a sensational police procedural. Deputy Chief Inspector Max Kauffman is on the job on Thanksgiving Day when the first bomb goes off in a giant balloon in Macy's annual parade. The Mad Bomber calls the emergency number, 9-1-1, to alert the police that another violent episode will occur, in perverted implementation of "The Twelve Days of Christmas." The suspense of the frustrating hunt mounts, and Manhattan preparing for the holidays is terrorized as one episode follows episode, with no partridges in a pear tree but plenty of gore in crowded places. The final episode begins near St. Patrick's Cathedral on Christmas Eve and culminates in a wild ride with subtle team work and in Kauffman's knifing the bomber early on Christmas Day. He is back at his desk at noon. His office has been remodeled, gifts for his mistress and family taken care of. Life goes on. An earlier Christmas had been the catalyst for the problems of this, and the ingenious plotting and surprise twist solvings are integrated.¹⁹

No more "Deck the halls with bows of holly" but possibilities in "Bring your torch, Jeanette, Isabella"? But there is hope that there can be contemporary merriment from the season. *Rest You Merry*, Charlotte MacLeod's witty satire,²⁰ offers chuckles with crimes as it exposes Christmas commercialism and the academic world of Balaclava Agriculture College, close to Boston. The annual Grand Illumination is the biggest fund raiser for the college: decorated faculty houses, fake gingerbread houses, elves in red and green cavorting with sleds, refreshment stands with coconut cowpads, and a Giant Marshmallow Roast with music by the Eskimo Piemen (for one dollar) attract tourists; profits are split fifty-fifty—half to the students who give up family Christmases to earn tuition and half to the

college. Dr. Peter Shandy, who rather liked Christmases, was the sole decorating holdout in former years. Goaded, he hires a firm to "do" his house in a display that out bad-tastes all others with visual and aural aids. The visual are reindeer, Santas and garish lights, the aural, records which include "I Don't Care Who You Are, Fatty, Get Those Reindeer Off My Roof." From this, Shandy, a 56-year-old agrolologist, bachelor, and part developer of the Balaclava Buster, a prodigious rutabaga, flees on a tramp steamer. A shipwreck sends him back by Greyhound on the 26th to discover a corpse behind his sofa, and he becomes a detective. He also discovers the second corpse, and with visiting librarian Helen Marsh, Ph.D., fortyish and charming, beats the bushes to flush the whodunit birds. Each is a natural "counter," an asset in solving these crimes. Other teachers, President Thorkjeld Svenson and his wife, Sieglunde; Mr. Grimble, the head of security; Ben Cadwell, the comptroller; Heidi Hayhoe, a student, and other types add to action and smiles. The season is essential to opportunity. To capitalize on the scandal after the arrests, the president decrees that next year the Grand Illumination shall be better than ever, though Shandy may not choose his own decorations. Peter Shandy is hoist with his own petard, but the reader knows he will marry and rest merry with Helen. This is a welcome ho-ho-ho for a Merry Christmas.

Notes

1. In Notes, *The Adventure of the Speckled Band and other stories of Sherlock Holmes*, Intro. and Notes by William S. Baring-Gould, Signet ed., pp. 275-276.
2. *The Father Brown Omnibus* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc., 1951), pp. 67-87.
3. *Lord Peter*, comp. & intro. by James Sandoe. Equinox Books, 1972, pp. 347-57.
4. *The Grand Masters: Masterpieces of Mystery*. Selected by Ellery Queen. (Des Moines: Davis Publications, Inc., 1976), p. 203.
5. In *And Four To Go* (Bantam ed., 1974).
6. *An Autobiography* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1977), p. 126.
7. *The Adventure of the Christmas Pudding*, Pan Books ed., p. 49.
8. *The Calendar of Crime*, Signet ed., pp. 233-61.
9. Francis M. Nevins, Jr. (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1974), pp. 174-75.
10. (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1953).
11. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951).
12. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972).
13. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1958), pp. 191-92.
14. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963).
15. (New York: Walker & Company, 1977).
16. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951).
17. (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1976), p. 126.
18. (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1968).
19. (New York: Mason/Charter, 1976).
20. (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1978).

REX STOUT

Newsletter

By John McAleer

Rex Stout: An Annotated Bibliography edited by Guy M. Townsend, Judson C. Sapp, Arriean Schemer, and the present writer, will be published by Garland in late November. Its 260 pages give an up-to-the-minute account of every English edition of Rex Stout's works including his novels, short stories, poems, articles, reviews, prefaces, and edited volumes. Comparable coverage is given to Stout interviews, to critical pieces on the Wolfe saga, pastiches, and blurbs. The editors will be on hand for an autographing party at the Mysterious Bookshop in early December. Since that's when the Wolfe Pack will be holding its third annual Black Orchids Dinner at the Biltmore a swarm of Stout fans are expected to be on hand.

Guy M. Townsend has done the critical piece on Nero Wolfe appearing in John M. Reilly's massive *Twentieth Century Crime and Mystery Writers* (1600 pages), published by St. Martin's Press in June 1980.

"Monotony is often, like beauty, 'in the eye of the beholder!'"

—Rex Stout

Peter E. Blau recalls a TV broadcast on WNET-TV (New York) in early January 1963, called "Happy Birthday, Mr. Holmes," featuring a half-hour interview with Rex Stout and William S. Baring-Gould. Anyone have any information on this broadcast?

A reader reports that Rex Stout once described A. A. Milne's *The Red House Mystery* (1922) as "charming." Was this remark supplied as a blurb for a subsequent edition of the book? If you have the full statement can you send me a Xerox copy?

Have you seen "The Case of the Disposable



Rex Stout in his alcove at High Meadow, showing his delight at a friend's wit—1959.

Jalopy," a Nero Wolfe pastiche by Mack Reynolds published in *Analog Science Fiction/Science Fact*. I can give you the pages (105-39) but can't pinpoint the issue. Can you?

I visited for a bit with Ruth Stout on 12 June, her 97th birthday. Her wit persists and her voice still is firm and booming. She loved it when I told her I had told one of her fans that I had written Rex's authorized biography and the fan asked, "Was he a writer, too?" Life is winding down for this wonderful woman. The final twilight is descending. But Ruth is tough. Early in July the life signs sank low. A day later she again gathered strength and the crisis passed.

My inspection of the Wolfe corpus indicates that Bill Gore appears only in the following stories: *Fer-de-Lance*, *The League*

of Frightened Men, *The Silent Speaker*, *Before Midnight*, and "Christmas Party." Did I miss any?

There's a mention of Nero Wolfe in Michael M. Thomas' *Green Monday* (Simon & Schuster, 1980), and another in William X. Kienzle's *Death Wears a Red Hat* (Andrews & McMeel, 1980).

In Charles J. Woodbury's *Talks with Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: 1890), Woodbury says: "Novels generally 'made him yawn.' 'Why read novels? We meet stranger creatures than their heroes. What writer of stories would not be derided if he gave us creatures as impossible as Nero?'"

Incidentally I recently took possession, for a year, of the Sherlock Holmes Memorial Bowl, a sterling Revere bowl awarded by the New England chapter of the Baker Street Irregulars, when I delivered a paper which demonstrated to everyone's satisfaction that Emerson's protégé, Henry David Thoreau, was actually Sherlock Holmes. Now wait until you read my paper proving that Emerson himself actually was Wolfe's prototype.

On 7 October 1951, the *New York Times Book Review* published the following item, given here in its entirety:

"I spent the rest of that week collecting some very interesting data about the quality and tone of publishers' offices," reports Nero Wolfe [sic], the detective in Rex Stout's *Murder By the Book* (coming Oct. 12). "I learned that Simon & Schuster * * * had fallen hard for modern and didn't give a damn what it cost; that Harper & Brothers liked old desks and didn't care for astrays; that the Viking Press had a good eye for contours and comeliness when hiring female help; that the Macmillan Company had got

itself confused with a Pullman car; and so on. * * * The only concrete result was a dinner date with a young woman at Scribner's. * *

Flabbergasted? So were some *Times* readers. On 28 October the *Times* ate humble pie:

"Several readers have pointed out that the quotation from Rex Stout's *Murder By the Book*, printed two weeks ago, couldn't have been from the lips of Nero Wolfe, but was probably spoken by his sidekick, Archie Goodwin. Prof. Willard Hurst of the University of Wisconsin Law School, without having read the book, reasons thus: '(1) Nero Wolfe speaks in the style of Dr. Johnson; (2) he almost never leaves his office, and there is the strong implication in the quoted passage that the information has been had by a good deal of walking around; (3) he regards women from only two points of view—if stupid, uninteresting; if intelligent, dangerous—and hence is unlikely to file for record any comments on their looks; (4) he would never refer to a meal as 'a dinner date,' if only because he would regard the food as the central point of emphasis.' Professor Hurst, and other letter-writing sleuths, are right."

Yes, indeed, and we hope Nero Wolfe thought more kindly of lawyers after reading Professor Hurst's lucid assessment of the original excerpt.

Novelist Mike Avallone tells me that when he once made a crack about Rex's beard, Rex told him: "The only comment about my hair that I would object to is Delilah's with scissors."

In *The Time-Life Encyclopedia of Gardening*, writing on "Flowering House Plants," James Underwood Crockett, discussing orchids, observes: "Your orchid is now ready to take its place among your house plants; with a little more experience you will be ready to take your place beside author Rex Stout's famed—though fictional—expert amateur, mystery-story hero Nero Wolfe, in the company of distinguished orchid fanciers" (p. 61).

My thanks to Larry Brooks for bringing this passage to my attention.

On 25 September 1944, Rex Stout supplied a Foreword for Alexander Jania's *I Lied To Live: A Year as a German Family Slave* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1944). Here Rex reiterates his conviction that the German people shared fully in Hitler's guilt.

I'm frequently asked to list, in order of preference, my five favorite Nero Wolfe stories. I'd find it instructive to know, before I do that, what your favorites are. How about jotting them down, at least on a postcard, and mailing them to me? I'll report the results here in a future column.

On 11 December 1946, Rex Stout wrote the following comments on the flyleaf of Alan Green's copy of *The Silent Speaker*. Alan had engineered Rex's transfer to Viking and handled publicity for the book for Viking.

"This was a problem. If I had inscribed a copy to you before the publication date you would have thought it a bribe to go the limit on space; and I had to avoid even the appearance of evil. If I had sent you one a week or so after publication you (your mind being what it is) would have thought it a hint to step up the hoopla. So I delicately waited until the advertising appropriation was all gone, the crowd had moved on, and what you were worrying about was the spring list. You probably have forgotten that you had an affair with this book once, but the book hasn't, nor have I. The day I opened the *New York Times* and saw—but no, who playing footsie with his new love, wants a knee nudge from one of the old ones?"

"Rex"

In the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, 15 June 1980 (pp. 12-13, 25), Sue Kreitzman reports on the efforts of sausage maker Paul Masselli and friends to solve the mystery of Nero Wolfe's literary sausage, *saucisse minuit*. The session was a stormy one. "Poor Stout!" laments Ms. Kreitzman. "He had to write something about the blasted sausage; countless readers were waiting with bated breath to—at last—get a crack at the legendary morsel." The end result "would have made a dandy pâté," says Kreitzman, "but as a sausage, it was a complete dud." The day was saved, however, when the chef tackled Nero Wolfe's Ten Herb Sausage and it turned out to be scrumptious.

My thanks to Donald A. Webster for his thoughtful generosity in supplying me with a copy of this piece published under the fetching title of "Missing Link."

Writing in the *Saturday Review of Literature* on 22 May 1943 (p. 45), William Rose Benét commented:

"A new literary game has suggested itself to me. Reading Rex Stout's *Double for Death* the other day, I noticed that the murdered man, Ridley Thorpe's secretary, was named Vaughn Kester. I am writing this far removed from my own library, but wasn't it Vaughn Kester, of Indiana, who wrote *The Prodigal Judge*? His brother, Paul Kester, who died young, wrote of gypsies. At any rate, my game would be to locate as many as possible real names of authors in the cast of characters of other authors' books. Maybe Rex knew there had been a real Vaughn Kester, or maybe the name just stuck in his mind as an oddity. Surely some of my bright readers can remember others."

Rex told me he had never read *The Prodigal Judge* or anything else by Kester. It was possible, he owned, that he had run across Kester's name somewhere but he preferred to think his use of the name was merely a coincidence.

We now know that William Conrad, after his warm-up in the "Cannon" role, will do eight hour-long Nero Wolfe episodes for television. Stout's own plots will be used. If the series takes hold, more episodes will follow. Good luck, Bill, but please, when you demonstrate your prowess in the kitchen, don't assume your usual stance of outdoorsman rustling up some grub in a chuckwagon.

I still have copies on hand of *Rex Stout: The Life and Times of the Creator of Nero Wolfe* for which Little, Brown asks \$17.50. If you want an inscribed, postpaid copy you may have one for \$13.50 by writing to me directly—John McAleer, Mount Independence, 121 Follen Road, Lexington, Massachusetts 02173. And thank you for the letters that keep me well supplied with items for this newsletter.

Rex Stout commissioning John McAleer to write his biography—High Meadow, August 12, 1969. (Note the inevitable bandolier of cigars in Stout's breast pocket.)



JAMES SANDOE: A Retrospective

Tom and Enid Schantz

People were always surprised when they met Jim Sandoe. His imposing reputation—whether as a scholar, critic, teacher, director, or actor—always preceded him, and people expected the man himself to be as imposing. Instead they found a slight, determinedly casual figure, clad in blue jeans or cutoffs, his hair perhaps held back by a sweatband, his feet in moccasins or sneakers or no shoes at all. His neat mustache and glasses were the only aspects of him even remotely professorial. In all, he seemed a friendly, inquisitive, and highly intelligent elf, especially in his later years, when the five feet, eight inches of height he claimed had shrunk to what seemed much less, and his slender frame became frail to the point of wispieness.

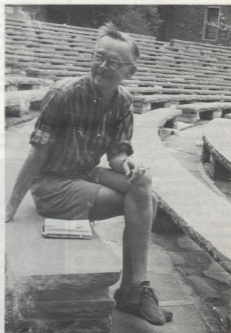
The frailty was caused by what he referred to as “years of accumulated booze” and severe emphysema aggravated by chain-smoking. But in his last two years he managed to kick both habits, and we all hoped that he would not only be with us for a long time to come but that he might at last write the long-postponed detective novel he had always dreamed of doing. In late April he called us to chat and order a few books, but after only a few moments of conversation the emphysema cough would not allow him to continue and he hung up, promising to call later.

We never heard from him again. On Tuesday, May 27, he collapsed from massive congestive heart failure accompanied by kidney failure and was rushed to the hospital in Lincoln, Nebraska, where he was then living. He regained consciousness briefly the following day, then drifted back into a coma and died on May 29. Mary Smith, who was with him during his last years, abided by Jim’s wishes that he be cremated and that there be no memorial service. His passing will instead be marked by a party this fall where his friends will gather, garbed as their favorite detectives. For despite his love of pomp and pageantry on the stage, Jim saw no need for them in life, and though he took shy pleasure in the recognition his many achievements earned him, he was one of the most honestly modest men we have ever met.

He was born in Alameda, California, in 1912. After earning his bachelor’s degree from Stanford

University in 1934 and completing a master’s in literature from Columbia University in 1935, Jim abandoned plans for his doctorate because of financial pressures—it was the height of the Depression—and joined the English department at the University of Colorado, where he spent his entire academic career. Some years later, when his employers rather stuffily insisted that he complete his doctorate, Jim rebelled, spent 1940 at the University of California library school in Berkeley, and returned to campus as order librarian. After many years with the university libraries, Jim was accepted back into the teaching faculty, sans doctorate, eventually to become a full professor. In 1975 poor health forced him to take an early and not entirely welcome retirement from the teaching he loved so well.

Jim was one of that large number of people who



began reading detective stories after a youthful encounter with Sherlock Holmes. He never stopped, and in 1940, partly because he found library school insufferably dull, began re-reading mysteries for various publications including the Chicago *Sun-Times*, the New York *Herald Tribune*, and the *Library Journal*. He was awarded two Edgars for his criticism, one in 1949 and one in 1956—a feat surpassed only by his friend and fellow reviewer Anthony Boucher, who won three.

Jim was one of the first academics to recognize the importance of detective fiction to a university's library holdings, and his preliminary checklist of cornerstone acquisitions in the field, "The Detective Story and Academe," was published in the April 1944 *Wilson Library Bulletin*. A revised version of this though-provoking list, which deserves to be better known, appeared in Howard Haycraft's *The Art of the Mystery Story* (1946) as "Reader's Guide to Crime." Also included in that anthology is Jim's lecture on the psychological thriller, "Dagger of the Mind," originally delivered at *Poetry Magazine's* 1946 Modern Art Series.

Jim also edited what Jacques Barzun and Wendell Hertig Taylor have called "a virtually perfect anthology," *Murder: Plain and Fanciful* (1948), which reflects his fondness for true as well as fictional crime, and in 1952 he compiled his celebrated checklist of private eye fiction, *The Hard-Boiled Dick*, most recently reprinted in a somewhat updated version together with a retrospective essay on the genre in John Ball's critical anthology *The Mystery Story* (1976). In 1955 he contributed an introduction to an omnibus of Josephine Tey's novels, *Three by Tey*, and in 1972 he compiled and wrote the introduction to *Lord Peter*, The complete collection of Dorothy L. Sayers' Peter Wimsey stories. He served on the University of California, San Diego Extension, Mystery Library editorial board for its duration in the 1970's.

Jim was married twice, first to Julia Caldwell in 1938, from whom he was divorced in 1965. They had four children, all grown now. In 1966 he married Mary Ann Brown, reference librarian at the University of Colorado—like himself a small, unpretentious person, fond of cats and books and walking. Early in their marriage they decided their car was a superfluity and donated it to a student volunteer group in need of one. After that they walked everywhere, knapsacks slung on their backs, a familiar sight on campus and the surrounding hill area. They separated amicably in 1974, and Jim tried, not altogether happily, to live alone at the University Club and cope with his increasing dependence on alcohol and various other health problems. The most frustrating of these was his failing vision, which threatened to keep him from his

beloved books, although he stubbornly kept at them with the aid of a magnifying glass until even that no longer brought the words into focus and he had to depend on friends to read to him.

Finally, a dear, widowed friend of his and Mary's from earlier days, Mary Daehler Smith, professor of Victorian literature at Wesleyan University in Lincoln, came to his aid, and he lived contentedly with her until his death. Jim had always been an intensely romantic man whose life was not complete without the close and loving companionship of a woman, and Mary Smith provided that as well as the sort of physical care he required at the time. Their relationship marked a turning point in this stage of Jim's life. At the urging of friends and an eye surgeon here, he returned to Boulder in 1977 for a cataract operation. The day after the operation we had a call from Mary Smith asking us to join them for lunch at their hotel. When we walked into the room, we found Jim happily propped up in bed and devouring a paperback mystery with the thin mesh bandages still in place. All around the room, on the bed, the bureau, and the nightstand, were books, lying open or with bookmarks in place, in wonderful testimony to the surgeon's skill.

Not long after that, Jim stopped drinking and smoking and though he spent some time in a wheelchair, his strength and health were steadily returning. He and Mary Smith shared many enthusiasms—in books, people, drama—and constantly delighted in each other's company. He was able to travel, to California and frequently to Boulder, and a trip to England was even in the offing. And then his time ran out.

His death brings back memories for us all: for us, of our first meeting with Jim when we arrived in Boulder in 1973. Despite the warm and friendly letters we had received from him in the past, we were mildly apprehensive about the occasion, fearing he might be—well, dignified, or stuffy, or perhaps even a Republican. The "Impeach Nixon" sign on the door of his house dispelled the worst of our fears, and the somewhat sleepy, barefooted figure who finally answered our ring banished the rest of them. The evening was a delight. We talked of books and politics and people and plays, first over Chinese food and then late into the night over coffee in Jim's kitchen, as a seemingly endless assortment of stray cats who had taken up residence there wandered about our feet and draped themselves over our shoulders and laps.

Jim played Gilbert and Sullivan for us, and we inspected his books, lovingly arranged in his cozy study, most of them reflecting his passion for Shakespeare and detective fiction, but with a shelf here and there reserved for other favorites: Langston Hughes, Charles Dickens, and Beatrix Potter, whose

works were being reassembled after a set loaned to a very young bed-ridden friend was somehow never returned. The bulk of Jim's detective fiction collection, acquired over the years of his reviewing (many volumes of which, of course, were warmly inscribed by their authors), had long since been sold to finance a son's graduate studies. Those books, along with his reviews, letters, and other papers, are at Brigham Young University, except for his correspondence with Raymond Chandler, which is at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Jim himself may have had preliminary misgivings about that initial meeting, for we were joined for dinner by his long-time friend and associate Ricky Weiser, who acted and directed with him at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. Ricky's own introduction to Jim many years previous was recalled recently as we shared memories prompted by his death. She was directing a play for a Boulder community theater group, and one of her many tasks was to arrange for someone to review the production, the local newspaper being decidedly deficient in its coverage of the arts. She knew of Jim by reputation only and gathered up her courage to telephone him. He agreed, on the proviso that he attend the dress rehearsal rather than opening night as he disliked crowds, but when curtain time arrived Ricky could see no one in the audience who could possibly be Jim. There were only the various friends and relatives of the cast, many still finding their way to the rickety folding chairs and being somewhat hampered in their progress by a small man with a broom who was at the last minute busily sweeping out the aisles.

"Where is Sandoe?" she fumed to the nervous cast backstage. "If he doesn't show up soon we'll just have to start without him."

"Start without him? But Jim's been here for ages!" exclaimed one of the cast. "Who do you think that is sweeping out the aisles?"

Most of the readers of this journal know of Jim primarily through his accomplishments in the field of detective fiction, but he was at least as well known for his contributions to the theater, particularly Shakespearean drama. He was long associated, both as an actor and as a director, with two of the country's most prestigious Shakespeare festivals, the Oregon Shakespearean Festival in Ashland and the Colorado Shakespeare Festival in Boulder. His career as a director spanned over forty years, from his debut in 1931 as a Stanford undergraduate directing for the Palo Alto Community Theatre, to his staging of *Pericles* in Boulder in 1973. In all he directed more than three-quarters of Shakespeare's plays should follow the earliest texts as closely as possible, and his productions were seldom cut; but they were so crisply paced and articulated that their the Ashland festival came to be known, and he was the first director of Boulder to stage Shakespeare

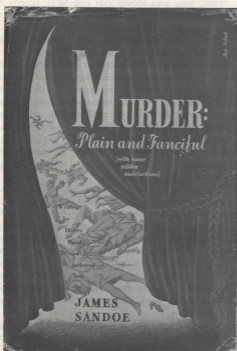
under the stars, a practice which later became the hallmark of the festival. Jim always felt that the plays should follow the earliest texts as closely as possible, and his productions were self-cut; but they were so crisply paced and articulated that their length went largely unnoticed. In a recent tribute to Jim for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, Ricky Weiser (to whom we are grateful for much of the information here) speaks of the thrilling "visual splendor of his work" and the intricate beauty of his blocking patterns.

Jim was first invited to Ashland in the summer of 1948 as an observer, with a teaching job thrown in to make it financially feasible. One evening he and Angus Bowne, the festival's founder, chanced upon a group of Boy Scouts who had climbed onto the stage, picked up the scripts scattered there by a departed cast, and very earnestly and very badly begun enacting a scene from *Othello*. So touched were the two men by this impromptu performance that Jim made his Ashland debut earlier than anyone had anticipated by directing the boys that same summer in a curtain-raiser consisting of the "Pyramus and Thisby" play-within-a-play from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

That was the first of many directing assignments at the Oregon festival, where Jim was to spend ten of the next twelve seasons, with a final bow in 1968. In his autobiography, *As I Remember, Adam*, Angus Bowne writes: "One of the signs of summer in Ashland during the fifties was Jim's slight, wiry figure striding vigorously down the streets of Ashland with his eyes glued to a paperback." (This was when Jim was reviewing six mysteries a week as well as carrying out his directing chores.) Later, Jim's summer activities shifted back to Boulder, where he had first directed *Romeo and Juliet* under the stars in 1944. In 1961 he began a series of directorial assignments with what had now become the Colorado Shakespeare Festival that would span the next thirteen summers.

Jim was as painstaking a director as he was a critic. In working with his actors, the teacher in him was uppermost: it was his habit to dismiss the cast immediately after rehearsal and then work late into the night typing up what Browner called "clearly articulated, stimulating and germane" notes on each performance, which he would then distribute the following day. This permitted him to spend far more time on the stage with his performers than most directors, and it made each production a learning experience for all involved.

Similarly, Jim's book reviews were pithy models of their kind. Most frequently quoted is his one-line dismissal—or should one say plot summary?—of the first Mickey Spillane novel: "Boom-lay, boom-lay, boom-lay-boom." He may have considered Mike Hammer the ultimate perversion of the private eye



novel, but on the whole his tastes were remarkably eclectic, ranging from cozy English classical to hard-boiled private eye to psychological thrillers, even those of the retreaded Had-I-But-Known variety. He was primarily known to many readers as a proponent of the hard-boiled detective novel, but in truth Dashiell Hammett was the only member of that school for whom his admiration never flagged. His first enthusiasm for Raymond Chandler faded over the years and he eventually came to view even Chandler's earliest books as being little more than pastiches of Hammett. His objections to what he considered the overuse of simile by another hard-boiled writer, Ross Macdonald, finally drove him to telephone the author and plead for a bit more restraint. But he read and enjoyed a far wider variety of detective fiction than most people now realize, and he was warmly appreciative of excellence in any mode, entertained by competence, and keenly critical of failure, no matter how exalted the source. Jim was able to use the English language himself with a precision that few of the writers he reviewed could match, and his judgments were informed by an understanding of the creative process that his years of directing had helped to shape.

Always a sociable person, Jim relished the opportunities his reviewing afforded him for meeting

writers and editors in the field—even if accepting his first Edgar did require, in his wife's opinion at least, that he buy the only suit and tie he was to own and wear it for the occasion. Anthony Boucher was a treasured friend, and Jim remembered him best pacing back and forth in his stocking feet, smoking a pipe and expounding on what it meant to be a liberal Catholic. He and Boucher once compared amused notes on their separate encounters with Craig Rice, who had a decided weakness for men (even going so far as to marry five of them) but who apparently drew the line at critics. Jim and Tony determined that they were the only two men they knew who had been alone with Craig without so much as a suggestive glance being directed their way; in fact, she had once deserted Jim in mid-sentence to go off with an editor who shall be nameless here. Jim also enjoyed telling how the author, who toward the end of her writing career did not always herself write the work that bore her name, once submitted a manuscript to Lee Wright, her editor at Simon & Schuster, and after a few weeks had elapsed fired off a telegram asking: "Have you read my book yet?" Lee Wright promptly wired back, "I have. Have you?"

Others whose friendship he valued included Lenore Glen Offord (who dedicated *Walking Shadow*, set at the Ashland festival, to Jim, Julia, and family) and Doris Ball, alias Josephine Bell, with whom he and his family often stayed during their trips to England. He and Raymond Chandler had a lengthy correspondence, only the blandest excerpts from which are included in *Raymond Chandler Speaking*. And of course fellow Coloradan Lillian de la Torre was always a dear friend with whom he shared many interests outside of detective fiction.

After the *Herald Tribune* folded and Jim gave up his reviewing, there was something of a hiatus in his reading and associations in the field, but increasingly he was drawn back into it and into corresponding with new authors whose work he admired. One of these was Joe Gores, who drew upon Jim's boyhood memories of the San Francisco Bay Area in researching *Hammett*. Another was Amanda Cross, whose Kate Fansler novels elicited warm praise from Jim and with whom he exchanged a number of courtly letters before she demurely revealed that she was none other than his old friend and correspondent Carolyn Heilbrun. He visited and was visited by John Creasey, taking a bemused delight in the sheer prodigality of his output and his determination to win a seat in Parliament representing a political party of his own madcap devising. He corresponded with Julian Symons, whose work he had always admired, and through his association with the UCSD Extension Mystery Library he was able to renew some old acquaintances and make new friends in the field, among them Christianna Brand, H.R.F. Keating, and John Ball. There were many others, of

course, and we hope that some of you, at least, will share your memories of Jim with readers of this journal.

Over the years Jim maintained a sporadic correspondence with Fred Dannay which reveals the mutual esteem in which the two men held each other. Jim often talked of his lifelong dream of someday writing mystery fiction, and Dannay urged him, when that someday finally came, to send any short stories he might write to *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. Jim agreed, but warned that they would be submitted under a pseudonym.

And so they were, when, in the last year of his life, Jim finally completed several stories and sent them to the magazine. He was far too considerate a person to impose on an old friendship or run the risk of embarrassing either Dannay or himself if the material was not publishable. It would be grand if we could report that they were enthusiastically accepted despite the pseudonym, but they weren't. And while Jim was undoubtedly disappointed, he was of course philosophical about seeing his maiden efforts politely rejected, and we hope that he meant to keep on trying.

Now, of course, he can't, and he died with that one dream unfulfilled. But he had already achieved much in his 68 years, had many memories to treasure and accomplishments to take pride in. And surely he left much for us all to remember him by.

Before he died, Jim Sandoe supplied TAD with notes on books in his collection. We share them with you in this and forthcoming issues, just as he wrote them.

Ross Macdonald. **The Underground Man**. New York: Bantam Books, 1972.

Macdonald is off-again on-again but the NYTimes is right in thinking this "His best book yet." California, Southern California in particular (and Santa Teresa: do we read Santa Barbara?) besieged by fire and, at the end, by flood.

Chance leads Archer into a case that occupies an exhausting week-end (including a trip to Sausalito) of unrelieved and gruelling action as, slowly for all of the speed, he unwinds a complex knot of relationship which go back through almost twenty years. It is skillfully managed first to last and the similes are much more often soundly arresting than fidgety. Archer himself remains a clear but very lightly drawn narrator-principal for all that he is an evocative reporter of scene and atmosphere.

Kin Platt. **The Princess Stakes Murder**. New York: Random House, 1973.

Platt, long a cartoonist (Mr and Mrs), latterly a writer of juveniles and a succession of tales about Max Roper of which this is the fourth.

The Princess stakes are run at Del Mar on Labor Day and won by an old pro named Willie Rich who misses an appointment with Max after the race and turns up drowned in his swimming pool next day. At about the same time young Pam Playton (whose father owns the winning horse) leaves for a hair appointment at a curious establishment called the Gilded Cuckoo. Roper, a steady, wry loser, persists, finding that much centers about the present Mrs. Clayton, formerly a movie star whose succession of husbands are, some of them, bound to be mixed up in whatever happened to Willie and Pam.

The tale is routine but always with amusement, with wise cracking that crackles well enough as incident follows incident. At about the midpoint it takes off into cloud cuckoo land and pelts incessantly with a cheerful disregard for plausibilities and so bland a dependence upon chance that the tongue nearly comes through the cheek. Caesar's judgment of Ahenobarbus might be reversed here: I do not like the matter but the manner. And it is doubly welcome after a try at Mark Sadler's wet cardboard chew, *Circle of Fear*.

Not, I fancy, worth keeping for a rereading although one would be willing to pick up another of the present quartet.

* * * * *

Dorothy Uhnak. **The Ledger. An Inner Sanctum Mystery**. New York: Pocket Books, 1972.

I'd much rather read Gloria Steinem's review of this than my sour notes since the love play-hate play between Reardon, supervising assistant D.A. and the nitwitted Christie Opara is Miss Uhnak's chief concern. The ledger is a very bright call girl whose boss is a top man in narcotics and manages to behave as childishly as everybody else through a thrash of personal confrontations and some plot activity. Christie, whose spine seems to suffer frequent trickles of sweat, behaves with an irresponsibility comparable to her boss's and if you had a knife sharp enough you could cut the collective self-righteousness if you wanted to.

This probably isn't as tiresome as I suggest but it wasted wads of a week for me.

* * * * *

Harry Kemelman. **Friday the Rabbi Slept Late**. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1964.

Praises of the series had been heard long before I read this first one and one sees why: the rabbi is outwardly unimpressive, deeply concerned with the past and its lessons (the Torah can be invoked to solve a problem about a car) and obviously knowl-

edgeable about the Jewish community in the sort of small suburb of Boston in which Kemelman lives.

It is told through the days that wonder about David's retention or dismissal as rabbi (stellar members of the Jewish community never having learned what a rabbi is) and the sad fact of a neighborhood girl's strangling.

Directly one is about to complain than Kemelman is writing a tract for understanding (no very invidious fact but an instruction one does not usually expect from the mystery) he does it well enough that absorption erases complaint. It is not "deep" but it is a salutary, salt wash done quietly, wryly and soundly.

Observations and reflections on the small Jewish community, its minute spiritual involvement and the keen interest of an Irish-Catholic police chief keep our concern well honed. We never know much about David from inside (save as he explains himself lucidly) and the narrative has clever skips for tension; one holdout might be complained about but not, when the answer comes, in terms of anything but niggling.

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Cyril Hare, pseud. **The Wind Blows Death.** Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1950.

Francis Pettigrew, that able barrister, married in middle age and one consequence is that he is Hon. Treasurer of the Markshire Orchestral Society which, as this tale opens, is planning the season's concerts under the hard presidential eye of Mrs. Basset.

What follows is elegant, humorous and handsomely wound with musical situations and clues. One major distraction does not, in fact, distract quite as it was intended to but without having a score of K.504 it is likely to work for all that.

The people are finely observed and one of the most telling episodes, early on, watched the estimable Pettigrew trying earnestly to shorten a session on circuit court to avoid the wrath of a very tetchy judge. The murderer's (murderers'—the question bothers one nicely) stratagem is excruciatingly cunning and acceptably unlikely.

A joy although I can't set it as high in esteem as Tom and Enid Schantz do. I'd reserve that place for *Tragedy at Law* (1942).

Little, Brown has, alas, allowed Pettigrew (p. 186) to say, "I'll nothing extenuate nor ought set down in malice which Hare would not." Nor Pettigrew.

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Dashiell Hammett. **The Dain Curse.** In *The Novels of Dashiell Hammett*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965. Pp. 143-292.

The Dain Curse (1929), Hammett's second published novel, is a case for the Continental Op, nameless, middle-aging, short and rather heavy for his height, dogged and with a humanity that here watches his cagey curing of Gabrielle (Dain) Leggett

from the dope habit. There are various allusions to and some bit parts played by other Ops and sundry mentions of the Old Man.

This one is memorable for at least twice appearing to come to an explained stop, whereupon it starts up like a frenzied hare and races off again. But it will be a wily reader indeed who shares the Op's assurance that he knows the answer which comes as startlingly as it usually does with Hammett. It is complex, rich in atmosphere (a San Francisco cult, the characters from a small coastal town, Quesada, south of San Francisco) and although a little of the talk early on sounds artificial, the Hammett ear is in sharp working order.

* * * * *

Raymond Chandler. **The Big Sleep** (1939).

I must have read *The Big Sleep* shortly after its first publication and I wish I knew (after a rereading in 1971) why I found it good but rather promising than fulfilling its promise. The rereading explains why it has so often been preferred as his best. It is under perfect control (including the similes which later become a sort of hiccup), most astutely plotted, sharply and variously peopled and steadily gripping. Marlowe is fully realized and his sardonic eye is alert. The human encounters crackle like current across a spark gap.

* * * * *

Julian Symons. **The Belting Inheritance.** London: Collins/Fontana Books, 1967.

This seems to me well and warmly written as remembered by young Christopher Barrington, the poor relation brought up from near adolescence under the stern imperial eye of his aunt, Lady W with her two remaining sons, sullen Steven and fey Miles in schoolboy attendance. The other sons were variously killed in the War (II)—or were they, since "David's" return has just shaken the household as the tale begins.

By the time he begins remembering these events, Christopher has read the *Works* of Max Beerbohm and by the time he solves the puzzle (for it is a tricky but traditional tale of detection) his knowledge of obscure Ibsen has been crucial although a quotation from Donne has been vital.

But essential though this special knowledge is to the puzzle the tale itself is a most successful evocation (as the maturer Christopher, remembering it, tells us at the outset) in a fetching-affecting way as he shares his awkward acquaintance with the characters, their milieu and the tangled history which centers about the inheritance.

I found myself rereading with absorption and, happily, with no remembrance of the shocks poised for us along with the interested literary allusions locked so neatly into an explanation.

AJH REVIEWS

Short notes on the current crop. . .

After a number of crime novels featuring Peter Blair, John (J. R. L.) Anderson introduced Chief Constable Piet Deventer of the North Wessex Constabulary in Marlborough in *A Sprig of Sea Lavender* (1979). Deventer returns now in *Festival* (St. Martin's, \$8.95). His wife Sally and he had longed for a child; finally, after five years of marriage, came Jo. Jo is nine months old when someone kidnaps her from her pram in the Deventer back yard. Sally is devastated, but Piet feels he must soldier bravely on. He diverts his worrying mind with concerns about a large rock festival in progress nearby on the Wiltshire downs, where shortly a body turns up—followed by a possible connection with the kidnapping. *Festival* is modestly interesting, even perhaps a bit audacious in plotting; but ultimately it's unconvincing and hopelessly wooden in attempts to convey strong emotion.

Thin of plot but varied and intriguing of cast is *Murder Murder Little Star* by Marian Babson (Walker, \$9.95). When housewifely Frances Armitage takes the position of chaperone to a child film star Twinkle, little did she know... Twinkle proves to be a poisonous little brat with razor tongue and an opportunely sick mother in tow. She quickly catalyzes all available hatreds among the film crew—producers, Frances Armitage takes the position of chaperone to child film star Twinkle, little did she know... Herkimer and aging actress Cecile Savoy are especially well drawn.

I make *The Blood on My Sleeve* (St. Martin's, \$7.95) the eighth crime novel by British clergyman Ivon Baker, and a plotting and storytelling treat it is. It features Baker's series character, Dr. David Meynell, archeologist connected with the Ministry of Defense and



Allen J. Hubin, Consulting Editor

Photo: Robert Small

accustomed to (if not relishing) dealing with treachery and intrigue. Meynell (and wife) is here in the U.S. on leave from his job when murder first strikes. Art treasures are involved; so too executives of the Fairfield Corporation. The trail leads to a 1947 murder in rural England, a fake Roman inscription, and two skeletons where there shouldn't be any in a grave that shouldn't be a grave. The killing continues, and it becomes clear that Meynell has become the prime target. David must know something dangerous to the killer, but what is it, and who has reactivated a 30-year-old appetite for blood?

The tenth of Michael Collins' novels about one-armed New York private eye Dan Fortune is *The Slasher* (Dodd Mead, \$7.95). Here Fortune works some turf—the L.A. area—with the highest density of private peepers—at least fictional ones—in the world. He's asked to California by an old flame, whose niece, a model, has apparently been the latest victim of the area's latest mass murderer. Fortune pokes around, discovering that the girl was

also a part-time hooker, that investigating her death can be dangerous to his health, that in some curious way a Santa Barbara import firm and its wealthy owners are involved. Has an opportunist imitated the slasher, and, if so, why? Satisfactory storytelling.

An impressively tense debut is *Rear-View Mirror* (Random House, \$8.95) by Caroline B. Cooney. The ingredients are well tested: a sudden mix of the homicidal and amoral with the innocent and defenseless. The former is Jerry Sam, escaped from prison and roaming rural North Carolina with a shotgun. The latter is Susan Seton, secretary to a dentist and out gathering flowers when she comes across Jerry Sam, who with his cousin is disposing of a pair of annoyances—two-year-old twins—in plastic bags in a convenient river. Susan rushes to rescue one of the babies and becomes hostage for a terrorized, death-filled tour of the countryside. I read this through in a non-stop hour-and-a-half.

Dorothy Salisbury Davis brings back her heroine from *A Death in the Life* (1976), Julie Hayes, in *Scarlet Night* (Scribner's, \$9.95), and a fresh and engaging encore it is. Julie, needing to fill a spot on her mantel and feeling sympathy for a struggling artist from Iowa, buys his painting "Scarlet Night." Unaccountably Rubin Rubinoff, well-known art dealer, seems desperately to want the work, but Julie gets it anyway. And—with some fear and trembling—she takes it for an opinion to Sweets Romano, gentleman mobster, pornographer and art collector. This leads Julie into a "counter-caper," as Sweets puts it, involving the smuggling of art treasures into the U.S. on order for collectors whose passion is only equalled by their money and lack of scruple. Sweets and Julie are to-

Dorothy Salisbury Davis

anmsjrry novel

gether on the side of the angels, though Sweets' repertoire of tactics is not limited to those of the winged creatures. Delightful!

I met Ivor Drummond once, and he bashfully and modestly described his mysteries as very good and the latest—*The Diamonds of Loreta* (St. Martin's, \$8.95)—as exceptional. I admit I had baited the fellow by confessing my unabashed fondness for his tales of Count Alexandro, Lady Jennifer and Coleridge Tucker III—but in fact *Loreta* is a good piece of work. Our trio of intrepid adventurers neatly thwarts a kidnapping plot. The mastermind, a jolly, pious German, determines that the three shall replace his lost revenue by doing a job for him. They will, in fact, steal the unstealable Czech treasure in the Loreta; they will do so, our villain reasons, if suitably persuaded. The persuasion chosen by our lovable kraut: capture one of the three (Colly, in this case) and return him to the others in small portions if his bidding is not done. This is a nice tense caper, set in a well-conveyed Prague; perhaps the ending is a little rushed and the gay abandon of early books regrettably little in evidence.

Christopher Fitzsimons' *Reflex Action* (Atheneum, \$10.95) is neatly and persuasively wrought. Ernest Fisher deserted the security force of his native socialist country and came to live in England. Here in due course he married (again), begat two daughters, and pursued a colorless existence as an insurance clerk. His desertion had not been without casualty: his master, Helle, suspected what was in the wind and scooped up his first wife in his net. Fisher swore to Helle's face to kill him, and now, ten years later, Helle has risen to his country's trade minister and prepares to visit England on an important mission. He's not forgotten Fisher and his threat, and dispatches agents to locate and kill him. What leverage can Helle's agents use to pin Fisher down—his family?—and can Fisher reactivate old skills and instincts to stay alive? And can he do so without coming to

the attention of Scotland Yard, who would surely believe him to be a deeply hidden and now activated mole?

Daggerman by Richard H. Francis (Pantheon, \$8.95) is a study of a homicidal psychopath, sent off the rails finally by the injustices of his personal life. When his world collapses, Turner leaves his (unfaithful) wife, acquires a new lodging, a new knife, and a new calling. The calling has to do with carving up women selected by some mad design. His victims are, coincidentally, linked, making him seem a threat to the local (north of England) crime czar. Daggerman drives frantic the locals and the police as he blithely adds to his score. I'm not greatly taken with this tale, which though interestingly cast has no likeable main character. Acceptable suspense.

Is Jonathan Gash just a personal enthusiasm of mine, or is he high unto the liveliest, freshest, most observant, most wryly witty new voice in crime fiction? I guess I'll have to start collecting reader/critic reactions. What sends me back on my soapbox is *The Grail Tree* (Harper & Row, \$10.95), the third of Gash's tales about Lovejoy (no first name). Lovejoy is the chronically broke, mystically gifted, and compulsively fornicating owner and sole asset of Lovejoy's Antiques, Ltd. And antiques, as practiced within sight of Lovejoy, are a deadly business. Here his gift for differentiating the genuine from the fraudulent lead him to the Rev. Henry Swan. The Reverend, who seems never to have pastored a parish and who lives unconventionally with wealthy Martha Cookson, has a little item—the Holy Grail—he'd like Lovejoy's views of. Now everyone knows the Grail only exists in fancy and Lovejoy is understandably upset when he discovers what a fool's errand he's on. But then Swan, a very pleasant sort to whom Lovejoy has taken a liking, becomes dead in uncommon fashion. The Grail matter thus acquires a different hue, but Lovejoy seems to be the only one who thinks Swan's death is

murder. Marvelous, rich storytelling.

I seem to rave once a year about Michael Gilbert and it's time for my 1980 eruption. The subject is *The Killing of Katie Steelstock* (Harper & Row, \$10.95), a long (293 pp.), complex and very gratifying tale of murder and police investigation. Katie grew up in the small town of West Hannington but made her name in London. Now a success in television, she divides her life between town and city. In the former, after a village dance, she meets her killer in the dark of midnight. Enter Supt. Charlie Knott of the Metropolitan Police, fresh from a successful case and lusting after the title of commander. Aided by a pair of local sergeants, Knott quickly unearths a likely suspect, who incriminates himself at every opportunity. Knott can already taste his promotion. But Sgt. McCourt has doubts—and then a second body turns up and the can of worms is open again. Don't miss this.

A small Montana town in the paralyzing grip of winter comes again to life (if you'll pardon the mixed images) in A. B. Guthrie Jr.'s third tale about Sheriff Chick Charleston and his young assistant Jason Beard, *No Second Wind* (Houghton Mifflin, \$9.95). The town and surrounding ranchers are jittery over an encampment of strip miners who are awaiting environmental agency approval to "devastate the land." Charleston is also concerned about a series of ritual cattle slaughterings—and then a killing takes place at a bar frequented by miners. These mysteries are enlivened by delightful character vignettes—like Doolittle, whom we meet as he's being tried for a most curious offense; Gunnar, a horse-sized dog with teeth like an alligator; a lad determined to prove his manhood by camping out in the wilds; and not least Jason, who here does a bit of painful learning.

John Hutton's *29 Herriott Street* (St. Martin's, \$10.95) is based on the noted Wallace murder case in England in the early '30s. Despite the author's statement to the con-

trary (probably drafted by his publisher's lawyer), the novel can be read as an explanation of that case, with an accusing finger pointed in a new direction. It makes an intriguing read, but suffers some in the telling from a rather stolid documentary style. A writer named Winnick decides to write the definitive account of the 1931 murder of Florence Rimmer. He discovers that Florence's sister, Beatrice, and her husband are still alive. The story consists of interviews, their reminiscences, and scenes from the '30s. Beatrice seems curiously to want to defend Wilfred Rimmer, executed for his wife's murder, while Winnick—not a very bright lad—wants mostly to clarify Wilfred's motive.

I don't know; maybe I should do a sabbatical from mysteries on Grace Livingston Hill. Or doesn't a ho hum reaction to the latest Michael Innes merit such a desperate remedy? The Innes is *Going It Alone* (Dodd Mead, \$7.95), which is sans Appleby and not very persuasive or interesting in plot or people, however occasionally it flashes with wit and erudition. Gilbert Averell, a minor scholar, lives in France to avoid British taxes. A look-alike French friend dares him to trade passports. He rashly does, and while thus fraudulently visiting his homeland gets involved in the rather silly and unclear difficulties of his nephew, which began with a letter bomb and now proceed to other uncharitable acts.

The Doomsday Deposit by Stanley Johnson (Dutton, \$9.95), an unconvincing and prosaic tale of adventure, is on the fringe of our genre. A U.S. spy satellite discovers an enormous deposit of plutonium in an inconvenient spot: just inside Russia on the Russia-China border. The Reds will certainly not share their riches with us if apprised of the situation; if only the find were on the Chinese side, for these are days of rapprochement between Washington and Peking... Solution: redraw the border to make the bit of territory Chinese. The means: a series of underground atomic explo-

sions to reroute the border river. All that the scheme will take is Chinese cooperation, U.S. high technology, a timely Iceland earthquake, and a jolly good bit of luck. All of which is not forthcoming.

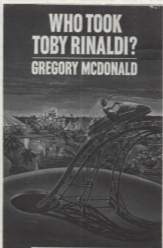
Despite the most unremitting carnage I've ever encountered in a mystery novel, despite a main "surprise" that's telegraphed almost from page one, despite some painful overstretching of my limits of credulity, a goodly element of the compelling somehow remains in *The Judas Gene* (Marek, \$11.95) by Albert and Jo-Ann Klainer. Could Nazi medical experiments in Dachau be killing Jews today, killing them via a slow virus, a susceptibility to which is transmitted genetically from generation to generation? And how does this relate to a seemingly endless sequence of violent deaths? New York's Lt. Peter Juno, horribly driven as grisly death claims those around him, teams with Israeli professionals to pick up the threads leading to an apparently impregnable Nazi monomaniac...

Female investigator Anna Peters agrees to help a friend in Florida in her fourth case, *The Shadow of the Palms* (Houghton Mifflin, \$8.95), by Janice Law. This is competently styled, but carries little in the way of surprise and too much that proves anticlimactic. Peters' friend Henry

Bramin is concerned about his nephew, whose lifestyle and possessions are not consistent with his income. Anna also takes the occasion to visit a former lover, whose reporting of antiquity thefts in Central America seems to have raised the ire of local mobsters. The two matters converge on the person of Vlad Sebastian, wealthy and reclusive realtor and art collector, and Anna comes quickly to wish she'd followed her instincts never to work for a friend.

After the Fletch/Flynn books, Gregory McDonald's latest, *Who Took Toby Rinaldi?* (Putnam, \$9.95), is not what one might expect—yet among the intriguingly diverse characterizations and the action are numerous deft comic touches, so we know where we are after all. Teddy Rinaldi, U.N. representative of a Middle East oil kingdom, is key to passage of a resolution designed to keep oil flowing and war away. Certain powers wish the resolution to fail and kidnap Ted's son Toby to ensure that. But the snatch goes strangely awry, leaving assorted villains milling about, Toby's mother frantically searching Northern California, and Toby in the hands of a ferocious killer who's lost touch with his boss. This all leads to a remarkable denouement at an amusement park (Fantazyland nee Disneyland), with our sympathies going off in unexpected directions. Quite an engaging and original piece of work this is...

The fifth of William Marshall's Yellowthread Street mysteries is *Skulduggery* (Holt Rinehart Winston, \$8.95). I was much taken by the first of these Hong Kong police capers, but this one occasionally lapses into silliness, though it does have a number of good comedic ideas and scenes. One of Insp. Harry Feiffer's men is dealing with an elevator mugger, who always attacks when the door opens at a floor at which the door can't open. This investigation has its ups and downs. Then a skeleton, ankles roped together, floats ashore on a raft carrying a dead fish, a pile of





sweet potatoes, a set of false teeth, and a section of blue drainpipe. Feiffer becomes convinced that the skeleton is that of an American murdered 30 years before. Then, when Harry has aroused the interests of the CIA, gotten a colleague in Macao in deep trouble, and raised his boss's blood pressure to the boiling point, the American turns up indisputably and very inconveniently alive...

Christina Merlin's *The Spy Concerto* (St. Martin's, \$9.95) is an espionage gothic, or romantic intrigue. Sara Hart visits Budapest to research a proposed TV show. She witnesses an apparent murder on the shores of the Danube, and flees in terror, clutching a piece of paper from the victim. The paper proves to be a concert program bearing a few handwritten notes; the artist in question is pianist Janos Rakovsky, who turns up on Sara's plane back to England—and as the lessee of her father's estate in Cornwall. Love and fear grow in the same soil, and so Sara is losing her heart while afraid that Janos will prove to have the unclean hands the intelligence boffos think he has. It naturally takes a perilous while to sort out the good guys from the bad. Pleasant reading of its innocent kind.

Merrily proceeding under the mis-

apprehension that *Take Me Out to the Ballgame* by Gary Morgenstein (St. Martin's, \$10.95) is a mystery, its publisher sent me a review copy. Although in the end violent death takes place, the book is really a baseball fantasy of a rather paranoid sort, of which my only lasting impression is that if one were to cut out with a razor all the four-letter words in the text, only confetti would be left.

Ordinarily I don't read reviews of books before I read the books themselves and write my own reviews—I prefer not to be influenced. Alas, I knew that the irascible New York Times Book Review raved over Shannon Ocorok's *Sports Freak* (St. Martin's, \$8.95), which created in me expectations the book failed to meet. I should have followed policy and kept my eyes out of the Times beforehand. Not that *Freak* is badly done; not at all. The writing in this first novel is quite good, the protagonist/sleuth/lady-in-peril, T. T. Baldwin, is engaging, and the plotting is imaginative if not convincing. The star quarterback of a new NFL franchise is murdered in view of all his fans. Baldwin, understudy press photographer, lucks into some beautiful shots. Plus the odd clue or two. The killer begins to knock off folks who pose a threat. Eventually he should get around to T. T. In the meantime, various people—newspapermen, franchise owner, team doctor, cheerleaders—are zestfully exposed to us in all their weaknesses.

Julian Rathbone's *The Euro-Killers* (Pantheon, \$8.95), which fires off rockets against environment-polluting industry and the corruptibility of governments, is set in a small mythical nation in the vicinity of Belgium. There in Brabt the multinational EUREAC is about to begin construction of a complex which will, ecology watchdogs believe, destroy precious coastal fens and sundry wildlife. Then the head of EUREAC, the complex's strongest supporter, disappears. Was he kidnapped to prevent the project? Or to gain release of imprisoned terrorists? And why, asks

police commissioner Argand, is he being given the case, which is outside his normal area of responsibility? Why is everyone—the chief of state, Argand's peers, EUREAC officials, the missing man's family, behaving so strangely? And what is an honest policeman—for Argand is that—to do? Impressive and penetrating storytelling...

Project Web by Barbara Rogers (Dodd Mead, \$8.95) is a blend of sf

The Woman Who Murdered Black Satin

The Bermondsey Horror
By Albert Borowitz

This is the first book-length study of an important early Victorian criminal case—the murder of Patrick O'Connor in Bermondsey (South London) by his mistress Maria Manning and her husband—that represents a remarkable chapter in the social history of England. The apprehension of the Mannings was a major early triumph of Scotland Yard; and the efficient detective work, featuring the use of the newly invented electric telegraph, as well as pursuits by sea and by rail, confirmed the early Victorian sense of security and the belief in progress based on science. At the same time, the case stirred controversy in a number of respects. The intensive coverage of the murder by a sensation-mongering press led to public outcries against the commercialization of crime; and the brutish behavior of the crowd at the Mannings' execution sharpened partisan feelings on the issue of capital punishment. Charles Dickens, who was to base his characterization of Mile. Hortense, the murderess in *Blink House*, on the personality of Mrs. Manning, was inspired to write his famous letters to *The Times* advocating an end to public hangings. *Illustrated.* \$17.50

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and intrigue, a preposterous and highly forgettable affair. It has something to do with communications from outer space (Alpha Centauri). Messages are coming in to Howard Shaw's observatory in Florida, but they've also been received by psychics in the U.S. and Russia. There seem to be weapons overtones, so the CIA and KGB are interested and maneuvering. There's more, but you don't want to hear it.

James Sherburne, author of four historical novels, offers a suave and properly mystifying period crime story in *Death's Pale Horse* (Houghton Mifflin, \$8.95). The time is the 1880s, the place is Saratoga, New York, and the ambience—Dick Francis, look to your laurels—is horseracing. Sportswriter Paddy Moretti, on the thin edge of disaster with his editor, comes to Saratoga badly needing a big story in addition to the one all writers will have—that of the track duel between Mogul and Tenstrike. Paddy noses around, and in due course manages (a) to fall in lust, (b) to discover three corpses, involuntarily deceased, (c) to get wind of a major turf fraud and a variant on the old Spanish prisoner swindle, and (d) to run for his life from villains and for his liberty from the police. Along the way we meet a most intriguing array of folk...

My first exposure to the work of practicing New York firefighter Dennis Smith is *Glitter and Ash* (Dutton, \$9.95), a tough, evocative, tense and penetrating view of the Big Apple. It's a Big Apple full of worms Smith gives us, a city of venal or incompetent leaders looking only for the political angle and willing to sacrifice an essential function—like the Fire Marshals—to further their own personal ends. Someone firebombs a discotheque on opening night. Result: 43 "roasts," among them many of the city's finest. Fire Marshal Terry Ahearn, in a contest with the police department's Arson and Explosion Squad, is assigned the case with his partner. Who is the killer, among the million needles in

New York's haystack; why did he kill; and will he strike again?

Jacoby's First Case (Atheneum, \$9.95) by J. C. S. Smith is the pseudonymous debut in our field of a "noted writer of nonfiction." It's a pleasant affair but not memorable in any way. Quentin Jacoby, retired New York transit cop, lives among the geriatric set in the Bronx and plays the horses for recreation. While at a local track one night he's propositioned by a girl who shortly turns up missing, then dead—one of a series of homicides. Retained at a hypothetical \$50 a day by a teenaged friend of the victim, Jacoby explores a messy matter that seems to involve an abortion mill, a brothel, the mob, and a fancy doctor who drugs the nags. Quentin's investigation is more staggering than cerebral, but eventually the answer—a killer—presents itself.

Scott C. S. Stone, an Edgar winner for his paperback original *The Dragon's Eye* (1969), does more than tolerably well with the very difficult challenge of parody in *Spies* (St. Martin's, \$9.95). It seems that a historic treasure with military overtones has disappeared in Thailand. The CIA, with a heavy caseload, has discovered a unit which has been overlooked, unused but faithfully paid, for 18 years. It sends these folks, first its chief (Henderson Farley, known as Fer-de-Lance), then the full unit (under cover as an incredibly inept rock musical group), to find the treasure. The Russians, informed through their pipeline, mount their own operation (Boris and Natalya, not to mention a troupe of acrobats). On the spot in Thailand, to their sorrow, are sodden newsman MacTavish, who knows the territory, and Stratton, grand master of TV reportage who never mixes with the common folk. Till now. Of common folk there are plenty on the Mekong... Hollywood, are you paying attention?

Michael Underwood's 31st mystery, *Victim of Circumstance* (St. Martin's, \$8.95), contains a couple

of neat surprises, one of which seems to come from far left field. It's an old story: man tires of wife, falls in love with younger woman, decides to kill wife. But then this old story gets stood on its ear. We are treated to an extended and well-developed trial scene, and then the final surprise. Sound work.

In Osmar White's *Silent Reach* (Scribner's, \$10.95), George Galbraith begins like a graft from James Bond. He's fired from British Intelligence and asked (told) to go to Australia to help wealthy entrepreneur Hamilton Wrightson solve a little business problem. So George, suspicions well aroused, goes innocently on his way. His first thought is to turn Wrightson down, for his problem—a raft of sabotages at various places on his outback empire—doesn't much attract him. However, an amateurish attack on his life changes his mind. He's plunged into a bloody bush country tangle that seems to involve either mineral deposits, aborigine uprisings, industrial sniping, international conspiracy, or all of the above. It also unexpectedly engages his heart, and Galbraith turns human right before our eyes. High tension, graphic portrayal of setting (I've still got dust in my teeth from a summer windstorm)—good work.

Two final notes, out of alphabetical order. Anyone interested in a new series of pulp reprints called *Attic Revivals* should write to 53 Gilmore Ave., Great Barrington, MA 01230. Bernard Drew is behind this labor of love, which counts "The Hawk" by Judson P. Philips (from 1934) as its first release. This 16-page pamphlet includes a useful essay on Philips' early career by Drew, and is available for (I think) \$2.50. And a reminder that *Baker Street Miscellanea*, that most polished of Sherlockian scion publications, continues to appear quarterly from The Sciologist Press, P.O. Box 2579, Chicago, Illinois 60690; \$5/year in the U.S. and \$7/year overseas.

—AJH



An Interview with ELIZABETH LININGTON

By Margaret J. King

Elizabeth Linington has lived since 1928 in California, where she began her writing career with radio and stage dramas. After a number of historical novels, including *The Proud Man* and *The Long Watch*, she turned to the mystery novel in 1960, winning two runner-up award awards for best mystery of the year from the Mystery Writers of America.

Under two pseudonyms and her own name, Linington has created four separate police procedural series, featuring singular detectives: as Dell Shannon—Lt. Luis Mendoza, dapper, mannered Mexican-American sleuth, who lends class, Hispanic pride, and sharp intelligence to the Los Angeles police department; as Leslie Egan—Detective Vic Varallo, Italian ethnic rose-fancier of the Glendale force; also as Lesley Egan—Jesse Falkenstein, a subtly Jewish lawyer-detective fond of quoting the *Talmud*; and as Elizabeth Linington—Sergeant Ivor Maddox, the dedicated Welsh bachelor of Hollywood's Wilcox Avenue station.

Linington's skill in "procedural naturalism" has been compared to other masters of the genre such as Ed McBain, John Creasey, and Dorothy Uhnak. She has been often cited as "Queen of the Procedurals," though she admits basing her knowledge of police routine and law not on direct experience but on the basic texts used by police departments themselves. Her plots are intricate complexes of three to four separate story-lines woven in a maze which duplicates realistically the patterns of a precinct station caseload. Beyond this documentary approach, however, in her view, the detective novel is politically and ethically important as "the morality play of the twentieth century."

A prolific writer, she produces three books a year for a total of about seventy titles at this writing (August 1979). Of her own craft, she says, "There is really only one way to learn how to write, and that is to write and write—and gradually evolve one's own style and habits of work."

Miss Linington recently moved 200 miles up the California coast from her long-time Glendale home to Arroyo Grande, where she lives with her Keeshond dog, two Siamese cats, and two sheep, Nicodemus and Marlene.

K = Margaret J. King, interviewer
L = Elizabeth Linington

K: Do you have an idea who your audience is? Is there an audience profile for your books? Are your readers any different from the usual mystery buff?

L: I think fans overlap a great deal. Most of the people who enjoy my stuff also read Kemelman, Doris Miles Disney, Ursula Curtiss, Helen McCloy—whenever she has a new one out—people like that. I'll tell you one thing: fans always say to me, "You know, I can always depend on your books, there isn't anything obscene in them, or anything pornographic."

K: As in the hard-boiled school.

L: Well, look. I don't think you have to go and call a spade a goddamn shovel, to be realistic. Sure, quite often the characters the police pick up are going to be coming out with a four-letter word; but what is the point of writing them in? You can always say, "He came out with some obscenities," or something like

that. And you would be surprised. This is in the mainstream of fans. The great majority of the people who read fiction don't like that kind of thing. The few people who do are reading, but not necessarily mysteries. They're going for the straight novels that go in for quote unquote "realism," and I don't think that realism means something pornographic. There are a lot of nice things that are real, too. Fortunately.

K: Well, I guess what I see is your being in the middle between the genteel detective tradition and the hard-boiled one. Because you do have a lot of regionalism, a lot of local color, and real interest in character development.

L: You see, most of the cases I use are real cases.

K: How do you go about getting these cases?

L: Well, I have a stack of back detective magazines. *Master Detective*, *True Detective*, and so forth. When I'm plotting out a case, I sit down and go through these things. You have to change them around a little bit, you know.

K: I've seen your credits at the beginning of a story for the plot.

L: Just one. I couldn't resist that one. A highway patrolman, back in Indiana, had happened to give a ticket to this man two or three times running, and the man resented it... so he thought of all the diabolical ways to get back at him. You know there are so many of these places where you can order things sent C.O.D. He started ordering. You wouldn't believe the outlandish things that arrived: a cigar-store Indian, initialled tennis balls, a poodle, a pony... all sorts of stuff. All piling up at the highway patrol station. And of course he kept saying, "I didn't order it!" Well, of course you can't send it back, you have to have the money for it. You can't imagine what a mess the poor man got into.

K: That was the Vic Varallo title, *Detective's Due*. . . Do you see reviews of your books?

L: For a long time I did subscribe to a literary clipping service, but I got fed up with them. My father was the one, really, who was so interested in collecting the reviews. And they got so they were sending me so many duplicates. They charge you \$45.00 for fifty clippings, or whatever, and about seven reviews, and the rest of the clippings were all copies. And I didn't see any reason to go on paying for it.

K: Just go to *Book Review Digest* and look them up yourself.

L: I suppose so. Well, the publisher sends them to me every once in a while, so that's about all I see anymore.

K: Well, what do you think of them, the ones that come in? How do you think the critics treat you?

L: Well, I'll tell you. They've surprised me very considerably lately. I had an extremely flattering review in the USC *Daily Bruin*. And I was so surprised, because generally speaking the college-aged people kind of look down on this sort of stuff. But it was a very nice review—a very long review, too. So I wrote and thanked her very much. And, generally, critics are pretty kind to me.

K: Anthony Boucher was one of the leading critics for the mystery/detective genre. What about his reviews?

L: Well, James Sandoe used to give me some wonderful reviews. I was very sorry when he retired. Then I guess Boucher took over for him. So I don't know who's doing that now.

K: I was just wondering about how you reacted to some of the things Boucher said. I think he liked Mendoza—he has his favorite. But he also criticized your use of Spanish.

L: Oh? I don't remember it.

K: Well, he said something about it. I never could understand exactly what he meant, and I wondered if you could explain it. He said, "It's rare to find an American author who can use a foreign language correctly in the dialogue," and he said, "Unfortunately, this is another case of that." Now my Spanish is mediocre, high school Spanish, and I'm not aware of any problem with yours. Are you?

L: Several people have complained about it. This is a fictional device that I've been forced to use. Now you take people who are bilingual, like Mendoza and his wife. Naturally they aren't going to make some remark in Spanish and immediately repeat it in English. But I have got to figure that after all the majority of my readers don't know Spanish. So nine times out of ten, when I have Mendoza say something, a Spanish phrase or something, I will repeat it in English. Which is completely unnatural, I realize that.

K: I don't know if he meant that, or that it was awkward, or ungrammatical—I don't know.

L: I've had a number of people remark on that, but they don't stop to think that after all the majority of readers have got to have it explained to them. So it is purely a literary device, yes.

K: People probably ask you about your four different bylines. How does that work, and why are there so many?

L: At the time we sold the first Mendoza, I was under contract to Doubleday, because they had just published *The Kingbreaker* in 1958. So they wanted a pseudonym. And we came up with Dell Shannon. And then I wrote *Case for Appeal*—that was with Harper—and they didn't want to confuse it with the

Shannon. So we had to have a new pseudonym for that.

K: So it was for contractual reasons, then?

L: I'll tell you something even stranger. The publisher in England is W. H. Allen. My agent there sold the first four Mendozas—without consulting the publisher here, without consulting my U.S. agent, without consulting me. They brought those out under my own name. Which confused everybody, because of course all the Mendozas here are under Dell Shannon. So then Victor Gollancz, who is now the British publisher that I deal with, couldn't publish those first four. It was very confusing, see. They're just beginning to re-issue them in England now. And I hope this is going to mean a little money. But anyway, then I started to write the Maddox series, and that is published under my own name here. When Gollancz picked it up, he figured it would be very confusing on account of these first four Mendozas... so in England the Maddox books are published as by Ann Blaisdell, which is the pseudonym I used for just one—*The Sentinel*. So it's really all very confusing, and it's the publishers' idea.

K: I suppose reviewers sometimes get your names confused.

L: Yeah, some of them don't understand quite that I am the same person, and then they find out about it.

K: The way I got to know your books was through writing an article on ethnic detectives, cross-cultural detectives, because these works have a lot to tell us about other cultures and minority cultures in America as well. I know about your Irish interest in the historical novels, and your own Irish background. But how did you pick up on the idea of Luis Mendoza? Did the Spanish theme come from living in this area [Southern California]?

L: Well, it didn't. I had this little idea for the plot of *Case Pending*, and introduced the detective on the scene—just in carrying out the plot. And he rose off the page and captured me alive, and I couldn't stop writing about him.

K: Do you happen to know why he happened to be Mexican-American?

L: I couldn't tell you—it just came. And then of course I had to do an awful lot of research on the LAPD [Los Angeles Police Department], when it looked as if I'd be writing police procedurals, and you know learning police techniques—and oh, ask me anything about the LAPD. I know all about the precinct stations and everything. And of course you had to keep up with the newest techniques they have. One good friend of mine is a policewoman on the force of Albany, Georgia. And quite occasionally she has handed me cases, too. Real cases that happened back there. She's a fingerprint technician.

K: How did you first get interested in police work? You didn't have to write your mysteries as police procedurals.

L: It just happened that way.

K: After all, that genre is quite a commitment, because your readers and critics are going to be judging you for accuracy. That's the odd thing about police detective novels. They're a branch of fiction, yet they are judged for their congruency to a set of facts and situations that are very much a part of the real world.

L: So you do have to be authentic, and it does mean a certain amount of research, and knowing how the police work, and everything like that. I just got tangled up in it, that's all. I've often wondered how and why. But there it is.

K: Have you gone through any sort of evolution or shift in police procedurals, do you think? Did you start doing things differently once you got involved in it?

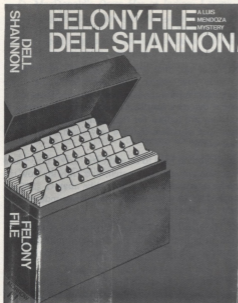
L: Well, yes. After the first four, I really decided I better do some research on this. And so I did. I found out all about the LAPD and how they operate and, you know, their salary schedules and police examinations... that's all very interesting to look at, the examinations for plain-clothes detective and sergeant, you know... the kinds of things they have to know... criminal slang, and that sort of thing. I've got notebooks filled with stuff. That's another thing you have to keep up with—criminal slang, which does change as time goes on.

K: Was the department cooperative, when you told them what you were doing, and talked to people on the force?

L: Matter of fact, of course, at that time, one of the public relations men for the LAPD was one of our Birch Society speakers. I would say of course that the Birch Society is very interesting from that aspect, because I think it represents the biggest cross-section of the American population. I mean, you name it, we've got it. We've got people of all religious backgrounds, all economic backgrounds, color backgrounds, you know—we're just Americans together. But I would say that if there is one profession heavily represented, I would say we've got more cops. I would.

K: How does this tie in? Were you in the Birch Society before you started writing the police procedurals? Is one the cause of the other?

L: No, for heaven's sake, no, nothing to do with that. But I say we do have quite a good number of police. Doctors—you name it. We have everything. But it's interesting, the cross-section of the members of the Society, because it really is a very wide cross-



section. Every possible job, every economic status, every color, every creed—all represented. And I think it has done a very remarkable thing. That struck all of us within the Society. There are no differences—you know, we don't all agree on every subject, but we agree enough on other subjects that we are all cooperating together. And there have never been, in the twenty years, any internecine quarrels, nothing like that. We all pull together. And I think it's a very remarkable organization from that standpoint.

K: You've written a book for the John Birch Society?

L: Yes, I did. It's way out of date now—it was written in 1955. But I think it helped to recruit a lot of members.

K: Do you know what the reaction of other mystery writers to your works has been?

L: Well, I couldn't say...

K: Are you in touch with them?

L: I'm not really in touch with any of them. I did belong to Mystery Writers of America for some years, but the Hollywood chapter down there are people who are mostly TV writers, script writers, people like that. We would have very little in common.

K: I guess most people think of the MWA membership as being largely novelists.

L: Oh, no. One other person who belongs to that chapter is Robert Bloch, who is a very, very nice, very dear man. He's the only science fiction writer I

can read, because he and I have the same sense of humor... and he, I think, would be publishing more books, except that he can make more money writing TV scripts. And I can see the point. The only other people that come to mind are the husband and wife team who wrote *That Darn Cat* [the Gordons]. They have written fifteen to nineteen books. They used occasionally to get down to the meetings. But you see, when they had a meeting once a month or so, they would have a speaker, and it was usually on some aspect of TV writing. Something like this that had no interest for me at all.

K: Very oriented to the local industry there.

L: A great number of the writers—you take Lockridge, people like that, are back in the East. Hillary Waugh. I don't know what Hillary is doing now; I don't think he's had a book out in some time now, but he is another very good writer. And he's turned out some very good police procedural stuff.

K: Some of your characters and stories seem to be naturals for a television series. Have you ever been approached by any of the studios with this idea?

L: Keep your fingers crossed on it. Of course my agent has a studio agent here. So far as I know, all these years he has done absolutely nothing for me.

K: Because it would be so interesting, with all the out-of-the-mainstream detectives who are showing up in so many series.

L: Well, an assistant director—a very nice fellow—came to see me last August. I guess he is interested in trying to do something with the Mendoza series. Any deal my agent makes, I want this director to be in on, because he would exercise some control to see that it was all done in good taste. But I don't give a damn what they do with it—I'm interested in the money. Because I know they'll make a hash of it; they always do.

K: I know that's true in many cases. The Kemelman series was pretty much destroyed on the screen. The original books are great, and of course what Kemelman is trying to do is much more than mystery. He's trying to talk about Judaism. But in the TV series, "Lanigan's Rabbi," you wouldn't know that. The rabbi is a swinger, very hip—and nothing like the scholar or mediator that David Small is in the novels.

L: They were some of my favorite books, too. He's a good writer. Another thing: they're an off-beat mystery, because Kemelman is bringing in other things—you know, the theology of Judaism, and everything like that. And I think that's one reason they're so interesting. He's made characters of these people, you know, and I always think it's such a shame when you see something like this done—a two-dimensional TV thing, and they haven't developed it

at all. But, like Kemelman did, you have to wash your hands of the whole thing. You've got no control. Now look, if they make a deal for me—if the studio agent and the director make a deal for the Mendoza series, I've got nothing to say. Nothing. Unless I want to go back and live there [Los Angeles, Hollywood] and be over at the studio every day, and have it written into the contract—no way. No way would I get mixed up with those riff-raff, no way. I know show business people too well.

K: There's a similarity in the way you deal with the social situation in the *Wine of Violence* and what Kemelman does in one of his books, in which the rabbi is teaching at a small college. You get the drug scene, the revolutionaries... but all that is lost on the television series. Plot and setting are completely altered.

L: That's typical of what they do. Look, it is a different medium, and it's perfectly true that you could not follow the book exactly, because a book is in a different medium from any visual art. But at the same time, they don't have to come along and switch the whole thing around, you know. And if they would make some effort to at least emulate the characters!

K: Who do you read?

L: I used to read Ed McBain. I haven't caught up with the last couple. Who else? You should keep up with the latest mysteries to see what other people are doing... Ursula Curtiss, these people whose names I can't think of—you know, people who are turning out a mystery a year or so.

K: There was quite a gap in the publication of your books a few years ago, wasn't there?

L: Well, I'll tell you what that was caused by. I wrote *Scenes of Crime* during February of 1975. Then I knew I was going to be coming up here, and I commissioned this house in June, and of course I was dying to sit down and decide on the carpet, the tile, think about furniture... I couldn't do it. I had to sit down instead and write the next Mendoza. So I did that, and then I moved up here that October. So I couldn't write a book that month. So the following January I wrote *Blind Search*. And along about that time, or maybe further along in the year, the editorship at Morrow changed. And I was thinking, what's happened to that Mendoza? And I woke up to the fact that they were in breach of contract. They had been holding onto these things; it says in each contract, "We agree to publish within twelve months," and here they had been hanging onto those books... Well, look, the book has got to earn back the advance before you get your royalty on it. Fine! I wrote that Mendoza in June. It never came out—that was *Streets of Death*—it came out almost

eighteen months later, in October. I never got a dime on that thing—except for the advance—for two years after it was written. So, my agent wrote them a letter and I wrote them a letter and they backed down and promised to be good little boys and girls, and to live up to contract, which they have been doing ever since. *Cold Trail* just came out—I wrote that last June and now it's out.

K: I thought it was a consistent part of their publishing program. I wouldn't even think of checking to see if they were actually turning them out after I wrote them!

L: You would think it would be. The book didn't get a fair chance to earn back the advance. And the checks from the publisher come only in May and November. Of course this is a terrible way to live, because you never know what's coming in or when. There is absolutely no way to budget at all. You never know what amount will come in. The only figures you know for sure are the advances. And otherwise, you never know. I could never, even if it weren't against my own inclinations, go into debt for anything, because I wouldn't know what was coming in. That statement might be a thousand dollars; it might be five thousand. I never know until it comes in.

K: How does the average Linington mystery sell? So many thousand per story?

L: Well, keep your fingers crossed. I hope we will again be getting into paperback. Because that of course is where the volume is. You see, the lithographic union has forced the retail price of hardcovers up so much that it equals itself out. See, your biggest sale is to libraries. O.K., very seldom do your allotments go up. Where maybe when my books were selling at \$2.95, \$3.95, libraries might buy three or four copies, each library. Now that it's \$6.95, \$7.95, they only buy two copies. So it evens itself out. But in paperbacks, that's where your sale is, because that's an impulse buy. Even though the price of paperbacks has gone up, you find them all sorts of places—drugstores, and things like this, other than bookstores. An awful lot of people, seeing them, will buy on impulse. So I hope we're going to be getting into paperback. We shall see. But it's a precarious way to make a living.

K: Can you give me any idea what your readership is, or the numbers of readers buying your books, outside of libraries?

L: I wouldn't say very many. Not very many at all. Not at these prices!

K: So it's mostly through library lendings that you're getting your readers. How many library copies to you sell?

L: That I couldn't tell you. They must get some kind of discount. Now the publisher sends me ten free

copies. And then I buy as many as I want at a 40% discount. It was \$24,000 last year. For all three volumes. The Morrow statement in May is usually about \$3,400. I get some from a British publisher. The whole thing usually comes to \$24,000 a year. But the Mystery Guild usually takes them—thank God. That, too, is where the volume is. They use the original plates, the ones Morrow and Doubleday use. That way they can produce a hardcover book and sell it for about \$1.98. And an awful lot more people are going to buy a book at \$1.98 than they will at \$6.95; that's where your volume is. And of course they have this enormous mailing list. And that is really where most of the books sell. So I just hope it keeps up. Because I am the world's louisiest typist—I can't think of anything else I could hire out to do except housework or something, if the bottom falls out.

K: Was your writing more or less your own idea?

L: Oh, I think, like most writers, I always wanted to write, and it's just one of those things. It's a very difficult field to break into, and of course you go on at it for years and years and years before you ever get anywhere. But I was very fortunate in getting hooked up with this top agent in New York. One of the editors at Simon and Schuster introduced him to me.

K: You went to Simon and Schuster first?

L: Oh, I had been sending in manuscripts for years. And I guess this editor admired my perseverance, and put me in touch with Bart [Barthold Fleis].

K: I don't think of publishers finding agents for writers.

L: Well, actually, publishers do read unsolicited manuscripts, but they don't get a very careful reading. Your best bet is always to have an agent.

K: You said you find typing difficult. Is this a problem in your work? Or do you find that you are revising while you type?

L: Nobody could ever read my handwriting. No way would I ever make two copies of a book. I write that one chapter at night. It gets copied out with a carbon in the morning, and that is it. When I'm finished with it, that's the final story. It costs much too much—it costs hundreds to get a manuscript typed. And for thirty days a year... I have a new manual machine, because I have an awfully hard touch on a typewriter—I only use one finger.

K: You don't touch-type at all?

L: Oh, no. By the time I got into the last year of Junior High where they teach you typing, I had already devised my own system and I was faster at it that way. I did learn touch typing, but I was faster at this way, with my own system. But nobody else can ever use my typewriter, because the action is so hard... nobody else has got the strength to press the keys.

So you can see what a struggle it is for me when I'm on a book, to copy it out... I've got this thing down to a system, see. Don't tell me—I know I'm lazy. When Bart suggested, wouldn't you like to write another historical?—oh, boy, going through all of that research would take me a lot longer than ten days. I've gotten so used to this ten-day routine per book—during that time, I'm incommunicado. After ten days I can get back in touch with my friends, we can start to make [letter] tapes again—I'm back in the world then. But I've got it down to a system. The publishers asked me to cut it down to ten chapters some time ago. I write the first five chapters, and then I read them over. And make myself little notes: don't forget to pick up this and don't forget to pick up that. And then I go ahead and write the next five chapters. And then, as I'm going through it, proofreading it, sometimes I will come across a place where, oh, for instance, I may have said that an autopsy report said that the time of death was between 10 and 1, and I want to change it to between 9 and 12. I'll do that in longhand, because they can read it just as well. I've long passed the stage of copying out a page when I want to change something. Let the editor do it!

K: I think that the plotting of these books is what amazes me most.

L: It's part of the great difficulty of doing these police procedurals. Take a Mendoza—the one I just finished. I had two, three, four main cases, and then all these little cases wandering in-between. You have to keep in such close touch with everything.

K: Now this is what I'd like to understand. Do you plot it all out in your mind, in advance?

L: No, no way. The first chapter writes itself. I know the cases I'm going to be bringing up first. And then every day, when I finish copying that chapter, I have to sit down and write myself little notes about what's coming in tonight's chapter, and sketch out the scene—you know, what's going to go in there, and probably over-writing it a little bit. Because you never know. Sometimes a scene you thought was going to take up half the page might not take quite that length. Or a scene that maybe you thought was going to take half a page will go to a full page. So you've got to have enough material there to fill up that whole chapter. It's 60 or so long-hand pages, and that works out to maybe 27-28 typewritten pages to each chapter.

K: And with all these subplots, too, you have even more to handle than the conventional writer.

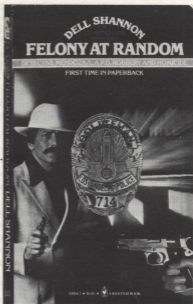
L: Especially in a Mendoza.

K: It amazes me how you pull all those plot lines along separate tracks within the same novel. I can't imagine what it's like sitting down and tracing out more than two plotlines.

L: They get a little bit tangled and difficult, I can assure you of that.

K: That's why I think you're right about what you said in your article on writing the police procedural in *The Writer* [March 1967]. About this form—the mystery-detective novel—being exciting and the most challenging type of writing. That's what I think—and just in terms of plot. They talk about this being formula. Well, it is formula, but that doesn't write it for you. The writer still has to craft it. And that's the marvelous thing, besides characterization and style, there is this challenge you have in the procedurals, of verisimilitude, of order, of logic. But just the plotting is enough of a job!

L: Well, it always reminds me of a story of a little girl who always said she wanted to be a writer, and after she'd been struggling with it one morning, her mother asked her how it was going, and she said, "Well, it was pretty easy to write it." It was just the "he says" and "she says" that she found difficult. And of course that is too true. Now to me, I write dialogue easier than I write anything else. A lot of people have trouble with dialogue. To me, it's the easiest thing to write. It's the hook-ups in between, getting from one scene to another, that is kind of awkward sometimes. But you know, people get hooked on this stuff not because they're interested in the plot. Or anything that's wandering through these stories. Because they're the same monotonous plots in any police department. You know, the unidentified bodies, the suicides, the impulsive homicides—this kind of thing. They're deadly dull. But they get interested in the men. Now, for instance, in the Mendozas. They get interested in the family—the men's wives and their children, things like that. Now as you know, the Mendozas are going to be moving to a new place—an estate. In *Streets of Death*, when Allison (Mendoza's wife) is expecting a new baby, she's decided the old house isn't big enough for them, and all through that book, she's hunting for a house. And of course she doesn't want a swimming pool, because none of them swim, and it's dangerous for the kids, and the poor real estate salesman was taking her all over—Bel Air, Flintridge, and all sorts of places, and she found fault with all of these houses. And finally he said, well, you're going to have to build to get what you want, and amongst the sites he was showing her, this big old winery up in the hills above Burbank. And when they get there, the old house is still there. It's a hundred-year-old house, a Spanish mansion, with the red tile roof. And she falls in love with it. And they're doing everything to that house; they're putting in all the modernizations, new roof, new tile floor; they're doing everything to it. And it's an immense old place—two stories, 4½ acres. They're putting a ten-thousand-dollar fence all around it. So through the last couple of books, we've



had all this. And of course she's still expecting the same baby. Well, in the one I just finished, she has the baby in the first chapter—it's another little girl—and so eventually they'll be moving into this big estate. Well, people get interested in this, you know. It goes from one book into another. And the children getting older... that's what people like to follow. It isn't the plots. But at the same time, you've got to work at the plots. You can't write the same things over and over.

K: I try to imagine what's going on in your mind when you go through the writing process.

L: Well, I'll tell you some of the things that go into a book. This may interest you. The Maddox series of course is based on the Hollywood Precinct. Well, I had just finished writing *Perchance of Death*, which came out last October, and I was reading the paper one day—I still get the *Santa Ana Register*—and the Glendale paper—and lo and behold the Hollywood precinct has just got a brand new station housed, around the corner from Wilcox Street. Well, I thought, I'm going to have to find out about this. Well, as it happens, my former neighbor—they lived next to us in Glendale—moved up here to Los Osos, a year or so before I did, and they still own rental property back there. So they still go back about once a month. So I said to Miriam, "The next time you're down that way, will you take a run past the new station-house and describe it to me?" All I wanted to know was, is it two-storey, is it one-storey; well, she's

a very conscientious person. She went into that place and she drew me a diagram and she told me what pictures are hanging on the walls, what color the tile is. . . so when I was writing the latest Maddox, which was in February, I had a very handy description of the place and I could write it in just as it is, without going back and looking at it myself. It was very handy. You do have to keep these things more or less the way they are. And if I hadn't had a description of that station-house, and just imagined one, sure as shooting somebody from the L.A. area would say, "Your description is all wrong."

K: Does anyone ever comment specifically on the verisimilitude of your writing?

L: Especially people who do know the area. Another thing: I have to get a county guide every year. To keep up with the new freeways, sections, and everything. They have put in a great big new shopping complex there in Glendale, and they're thinking of taking down the old Webb building. Grand Boulevard is all torn up—it's a mess. So I do have to keep up with these things, to keep everything more or less authentic. Because I do have some fans down there that would notice if I did anything wrong. I would not know that town now. It'll be three years in October since I moved up here [Arroyo Grande]. And the changes that have come to that town. . . the highrise buildings that have gone up. . . I really wouldn't know it. And they say they're taking down so much of the older residential streets and putting up condominiums. Really, no longer the nice little town that we knew. So I guess I got out just in time. I understand an awful lot of people have been moving into Glendale, because that has always been known as a low-crime-rate area, a conservative middle-class town—stable money there, not big money. But you wouldn't believe how those rents have been climbing. Just ridiculous. I got out just in time.

K: There's a question that's been in the back of my mind for some time. Has your attitude toward the police changed very much? After you began writing the police procedural, did you have any new ideas about the function of police in society?

L: No, I wouldn't say so. Of course one advantage I have is that I'm mainly writing about the LAPD, and that is a very top force. Their requirements have been so high; their standards have been so high. That was the first police force that undertook to police itself. And believe me, some of those men do resent Internal Affairs a little, because they can be pretty puritanical. I mean, if one of those unmarried officers goes out and stays at his girlfriend's apartment, after midnight, he's going to be hauled up on the carpet. All this kind of thing. But it has resulted in a force with very high standards. 40% of the force are college graduates, and this is very unusual for a police force. Of course, they pay a very good rate.

But their standards have been so high over the years that they get the highest type of men. Of the other forces down there, I wouldn't rate the Pasadena force that high. The Glendale force is pretty good. Again, their requirements aren't quite as high as LAPD. And it would be a different thing, of course, if you were writing for instance as Ed McBain is about the New York police, because that has always been known as rather a corrupt police force, though reformed from time to time. Their standards are not that high. Now, you take the force in Albany, Georgia. That's a very small Southern force, and they don't have the money to pay those men. But you would be surprised what a good little police force that is. . . . It wasn't until I got mixed up with this writing that I ever found out about police methods, this sort of thing; and it's been very interesting.

K: But it hasn't changed any of your basic attitudes about the police as guardians of justice? Considering the developments of the '60s?

L: No, I don't think so. I think basically it was being raised in a middle-class atmosphere with a basic respect for the police, respect for authority, and so on. My writing did, of course, introduce me to many of their problems. For one thing—especially in the metropolitan forces—they have a pretty high divorce rate, because so many times the wives can't take the pressure. The pressures are terrific.

K: How many titles have you actually published now?

L: Well, *Case Pending* [the first title] was 1960, and since then, for a while, they were bringing out two Mendozas a year. Where did I ever get all of that energy? I think that the one I just finished was the 67th book I've written. Maybe I'm off a little bit. Not all of them are out yet, of course.

K: What is your arrangement with the publishers now? The Dell Shannons are published by William Morrow. . . what about the other names?

L: We just switched from Harper to Doubleday. *Scenes of Crime* was the last Harper book. I was having some problems with an editor at Harper, so I asked my agent, is there any problem in switching over to another publisher? He said it's very simple; after all, your contract with Harper only gives them an option on the next book you write. And I said, look, I am fed up with this editor. . . . She is supposed to be one of the best editors in the business. And I guess that she knows what she's doing, except that the poor woman has absolutely no sense of humor at all. And you put everything that is supposed to be even faintly humorous into the book, and she just doesn't get it. She's a very obtuse woman. Anyway, the characters are my property. So he got me hooked up with Doubleday, which is a very nice outfit to deal with. You know, the author is

usually the last person they tell anything. I never know when the book is coming out, nothing about the jacket... Doubleday is very, very good about keeping you up to date. I've never had a publisher do that before.

K: I'm really astonished at the lack of control that authors have so often, over things like titles, for example.

L: I'll tell you another funny thing where they haven't got any control. In my innocence, I had assumed that if you sell the rights to a book to a foreign publisher, that they are bound to translate it absolutely. No way! The only other language I have stumbled around a bit in besides Spanish is German. And the first time we sold one of the Mendoza titles to a German publisher, I really had fun going through that thing. Because evidently it shocked those Germans terribly that here was a Sergeant going around calling a Lieutenant by his first name. This just isn't done over there. So all the way through those German books, all of the other men: "*Jawohl, Herr—*" And you can't imagine how funny it sounds, because here in an American precinct station of course they're all men working together. But of course those Germans are such sticklers for protocol. But these translators can leave things out, they can do any thing they want to. So I wish I knew French. I never could find my way around the French translations. They pay pretty well. Now the Germans of course have pin money coming in. I'll have a check for my agent: \$137.00 for German royalties. Well, it's a hundred and thirty-seven bucks I wouldn't have, you know. But it's the American and English sales that are the mainstay.

K: Do you have any sense of whether the English are bigger mystery readers than Americans now?

L: I think they might be. The mystery form is more or less the English tradition. So many of the classic writers have been English. Carr, Margery Allingham—but we're losing some of the best ones, my favorites. And of course D. E. Stevenson; not a mystery writer but with a number of great fans. And Nicholas Blake; I always enjoyed him so much, too. But when you think that so many of them began writing back in the '30s, and naturally, time going on, you know—they're getting up there in years. I had a letter from a woman the other day, a fan letter. And she said she's always intended to write to me, and her daughter had said to her the other day, "Well, if you're going to do it, you'd better do it." Because this same woman had intended to write fan letters to Charlotte Armstrong and Margery Allingham, and they're both dead! I said, "I hope you've saved me from an early demise by writing me." Because—you take Charlotte Armstrong. She was only sixty. And did you know, by the way, that her husband was murdered? They lived in a big old house way up at

the end of Grandview Avenue, in Glendale, too, I think it was very strange. He was living alone in that house, great big old place, six bedrooms on an acre—and what the taxes must have been in town I shudder to think—What happened was he had gone out to play golf, and the gardener had broken into the house to rob it. Didn't realize the master of the house had come home. And he ended up bashing him in the head and killing him.

K: Oh, so they knew who did it?

L: Oh, they picked him up, they got him. But I thought it was kind of strange, a very well-known mystery writer having her husband murdered.

K: And by the domestic help, too, which you must never do. Very unorthodox.

L: That's right, very funny how these things happen. Well, I've often thought I might end up that way, the stuff I've got piled up here preparing for the Crash. I've got guns in the house and at least my dog will let me know if anybody tries to break in... but even up here, the crime rate... they've had armed robberies and things around here, around Pismo Beach, where before they were unheard of. Places where you wouldn't expect real money. But mostly it's teenagers after a couple hundred dollars, the ones supporting a habit, or something like that. They're after a fast buck.



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A CATALOGUE OF CRIME

By Jacques Barzun and
Wendell Hertig Taylor



S 108 Allan, Stella
A Mortal Affair
Scrib 1979

An earlier tale by this author was characterized by one of us as "... a book essentially by, about, and for women." This does not apply to the present story, which has at least three well-turned male characters. There is, of course, a heroine: the wife of a sexually ambivalent gynecologist who gets a three-year prison term for performing an illegal abortion that ends fatally. The unfortunate wife, turning for moral and financial support to an old friend of her husband, finds herself falling for someone from whom she badly needs to be rescued. Despite the strong appearance of melodrama, a well-managed tale of human folly.

S 109 Bernard, Robert
Blood Brotherhood
Walker 1977

In an earlier entry (S 91), *Deadly Meeting* by Robert Bernard was favorably reviewed and readers were urged to look for *Death of an Old Goat*, which is not by Bernard but by our present author, his namesake except for a vowel. Bernard is the more prolific of the two and a very accomplished performer indeed. He is an academic, like his retired American colleague, but English by birth and now head of the English department at the University of Tromsø in northernmost Norway.

The tale under review shows his skill in plotting and characterization, together with the knack of adding new twists to the genre; for instance, a policeman in charge so driven by religious mania that he is certifiable, and a murder in a religious community at once devout and sinister, which makes the crime more believable than is usual in this setting.

The visitors, including two women priests, are a mixed lot very well done. Barring a spot or two that are a bit outré, the tale is a fine specimen of the author's output.

S 110 Clark, Philip
The Dark River
Wingate (London) 1950; orig. S & S 1949

A little-known performance worth looking out for. Janet Rossler, a business woman, returns to her Charleston, S.C. home a year after she had found her quarrelsome husband shot dead in his study. A faint memory of having seen what may have been a suicide note has lingered long after police and others have denied its existence. Finding herself still the target of suspicion, Janet turns to plausible and non-irritating amateur detection. She stages an unusual kind of showdown at the end, when the killer discloses himself unmistakably. One of the most readable tales to come our way.

S 111 Gill, B. M.
Death Drop
Scrib 1979

In this attractive little book we are told how twelve-year-old David Fleming pitched to his death down the open hatch of a freighter at an English maritime museum, he being part of a boarding-school visiting group. David is thought to have died accidentally, but he was a sleepwalker; and as it turns out, this peculiarity made him a threat to others—hence a fresh perspective on the death. The deceased boy's father is a strong, convincing character, and the other boys and the masters at the school are extremely well done. To compensate for the absence of any

very elaborate detective work, the author gives us a powerful ending.

NOTE: B. M. Gill is the pseudonym of a woman writer who is no relation of Bartholomew Gill.

S 112 Hansen, Joseph
The Man Everybody Was Afraid Of
Rhinehart 1978

In the author's fourth book featuring David Brandstetter, an insurance investigator who has to look into the killing of a small-city police chief, the guilt is promptly put upon a gay activist; but Brandstetter eventually clears up the crime and jealousy that led to the murder. In this book, Brandstetter's homosexuality is much more to the fore than it was in earlier tales by Hansen, but it is not done for propaganda. His low-keyed "affair" with Cecil, a young black TV employee, is touched upon with considerable art. As a detective, Brandstetter is middle-aged and not glamorous, but always worth watching.

S 113 Hartman, Mary S.
Victorian Murderesses
Schocken Books, N.Y. 1977

The author, a liberated person from Douglas College, Rutgers, has produced an ambitious study of six pairs of middle-class Victorian women who poisoned or otherwise disposed of their lovers or spouses (the exception, Constance Kent, was a fratricide). The arrangement of the cases is chronological but the handling is clumsy. Within each section Hartman skips back and forth in a way that makes it difficult to follow the murderous line, as it were, so that anyone wishing to know what really happened will do well to consult other sources. The author's interest is chiefly sociological, and she

manages a good summing-up in the last section, *The Lady Killers*. The cases:

- I. Marie LaFarge & Euphemia Lacoste
- II. Madeleine Smith & Angelina Lemoine
- III. Célestine Doudet & Constance Kent
- IV. Florence Bravo & Henriette Francky
- V. Gabrielle Féneyron & Adelaide Bartlett
- VI. Florence Maybrick & Claire Reynolds

S 114 Hickman, Hal
The Bachelor Party
Lipp 1977

No longer need we depend solely upon James McClure for crime fiction set in South Africa. Here the adventures of Harry Bauer, an American ex-FBI agent now resident in Cape Town, arise from his being framed for the killing (by automobile) of a young "coloured" girl, actually the "entertainer" of a bachelor party, rendering the seven male participants liable to prosecution under the Immorality Act—something not to be trifled with in South Africa. How Bauer gets out of jail and ultimately outruns his vicious pursuers is well told, and the trimmings, including a remarkable example of *ius primae noctis*, will satisfy the most blood-thirsty. Except for rather too much good luck on Bauer's part, a convincing and gripping narrative.

S 115 James, P. D.
Innocent Blood
Scrib 1980

Already famous and dubbed "the reincarnation of Agatha," P. D. James chose to write a novel in which crime might figure but would not be the mainspring of the action. The work is a great success—with the public and with the connoisseurs. What starts things moving in the tale is a young (adopted) woman's determination to find her real parents. This headstrong wish is gratified, creating social difficulties, deep changes in personal relations, the plotting of a murder, the experience of jail, and miscellaneous sexual activity. The diverse characters involved are admirably drawn and the author's fingerwork in tying and untying threads is as deft as her touches of sordid life and as nimble as her prose.

S 116 Stewart, R. F.
...And Always a Detective; Chapters on the History of Detective Fiction
David & Charles 1980

The title of this substantial study is taken from a ditty of 1864 which ends: Tame is Virtue's School / Paint, as more effective, / Villain, 'knaves, and fool / And always a detective. The date gives the author warrant for shuttling among the practitioners of the genre since Collins, whose two great "mysteries" lie four years on each side of 1864. Mr. Stewart's aim in mustering his examples from anywhere along this stretch is to take up and settle points of technique, appeal, and significance. He is less a historian than a discursive critic. He has read everything and he argues amiably with everybody, including ourselves,

...And Always a Detective

Chapters on the History
of Detective Fiction

R F STEWART



to whom he is particularly generous. His conversational style lends itself to darting among masterpieces, and he quotes Coleridge on Shakespeare as readily and aptly as Régis Messac on science in detection. The book will delight "those who know"—to use Dante's terse classification—and it may annoy others, who expect more consecutiveness, greater regard for social and cultural influences, and fewer personal remarks. A notable proof of the author's thoroughness and sincerity is the Appendix of corrections to be made in Glover and Greene's bibliography, *Victorian Detective Fiction*.

Japanese Mystery Fiction in English Translation

By John L. Apostolou

During the last six decades, Japan has produced a vast quantity of mystery and detective fiction. Thousands of mystery stories and novels have been consumed by the Japanese people, who are an enthusiastic audience for mysteries in print, in films and on television. Clearly Japan has joined America, England and France as a major producer of mystery fiction.

This development has received some attention in the United States, including an article printed in TAD in 1976.¹ Few Japanese mystery stories, however, have been translated into English.

Without delving into linguistics, it is obvious that Japanese and English are dissimilar languages. Given a text written in Japanese characters, not many individuals can do a literal translation into English, and fewer still are capable of a smooth, literary translation. This fact and the preference given to more serious literature by translators and publishers are probably major reasons why Japanese mystery fiction was ignored for so many years.

In the nineteen-forties, when Japan was our wartime enemy, virtually no Japanese writing of any kind was published in the United States. Only in the mid-fifties did translations begin to appear in significant numbers.

In 1956, the Charles E. Tuttle Company published a collection of short stories entitled *Japanese Tales of Mystery and Imagination*. This pioneering work contains nine stories written by Edogawa Rampo, "the father of the Japanese mystery," and translated by James B. Harris. Two of the stories, "The Human Chair" and "The Hell of Mirrors," later gained a degree of popularity as a result of appearances in American and British anthologies.

Edogawa Rampo is the pseudonym, derived from the Japanese pronunciation of the name Edgar Allan Poe, which was used by Taro Hirai.² Rampo's "Nisen Doka" (The Two-Sen Copper Coin), published in

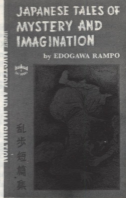
1923, is considered the first original Japanese mystery story. It is not available in English.

Following the publication of the Rampo collection, there was no rush to translate works by other Japanese mystery writers. Seicho Matsumoto, Japan's foremost living author of crime fiction, made his first appearance in English in 1962 when two of his stories, translated by John Bester, were printed in *Japan Quarterly*. In 1970, a detective novel by Matsumoto was published in English by Kodansha International. Entitled *Points and Lines*, the novel was translated by Makiko Yamamoto and Paul C. Blum. The title alludes to railroad timetables, the key ingredients in the solution of a case involving an apparent double suicide.

A major contribution to this field of interest occurred in 1978: Tuttle published *Ellery Queen's Japanese Golden Dozen*. The first anthology of Japanese mystery stories in the English language, the book was edited by Ellery Queen (Frederic Dannay), who also wrote the introduction. It consists of twelve stories by twelve living authors, one of whom is Matsumoto. The other eleven writers had never before been published in English. Two of them are women: Shizuko Natsuki and Masako Togawa. "The Vampire" by Togawa was selected by Edward D. Hoch, current editor of the *Best Detective Stories of the Year* series, for his 1978 Honor Roll.

Two Japanese mysteries have appeared in recent issues of *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. One by Matsumoto, his fourth story in English, was printed in 1979; the other by Natsuki, in 1980. The translators of these stories and of those in *Japanese Golden Dozen* are not identified.

The publication history of each of the translations mentioned above is detailed in the checklist of Japanese mystery fiction in English translation at the end of this article.³ The list, which is as complete as I could make it, should provide those unfamiliar with



Japanese mysteries with a useful guide, while offering those knowledgeable on the subject with a few items that they may have missed.

In compiling the checklist, consideration was given to stories by authors who are not known as mystery writers. Only those works which incorporate strong crime fiction elements were selected. The authors in this group are Kobo Abe, Naoya Shiga and Junichiro Tanizaki. Among Japan's leading creators of fiction, they occasionally worked in the mystery genre. It is interesting to note that listed stories by two of these men actually predate Rampo's "Nisen Doka." These stories are "The Razor" (1910), "Han's Crime" (1913), both by Shiga, and "The Thief" (1921) by Tanizaki.

The works of Ryunosuke Akutagawa,* one of the twentieth century's finest short story writers, presented a problem. Some of Akutagawa's stories are filled with murder and mystery, but it would be difficult to classify them as modern mystery fiction. These stories belong to the Japanese tradition of retelling or reworking ancient tales and legends, and I have decided that they fall outside the scope of this article.

The Inspector Saito stories by Seiko Legru, recently published in *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*, are not on the checklist for the simple reason that they are not translations. Seiko Legru is the pseudonym of a major author who writes in English.

Besides having the special quality that we Westerners describe as exotic or bizarre, the listed stories differ from American mysteries in other ways. For instance, characters in Japanese mysteries rarely use firearms since Japan has had gun control, in one form or another, for over three hundred years.¹ In both reality and fiction, most murders are committed by means such as knifing, striking with a blunt instrument, poisoning or strangulation.

With the prominence of ritual suicide or *seppuku* in Japanese history and literature, it is not surprising that many of the stories involve suicide. The plot sometimes hinges on whether a suicide took place or a murder was staged to look like a suicide. Oddly enough, suicide is not as common in Japan as one might expect. Recent figures indicate that the suicide rate in Japan, although higher than the rate in the United States, is lower than that in eight European countries.²

The importance of honor and the family in Japanese society is reflected in Japanese mysteries. Murder and other crimes are often committed by characters who are attempting to protect their reputations, to protect the reputations of close relatives or to prevent disgrace to their families.

The authors on the checklist use fairly conventional writing styles, with the exception of Kobo Abe. He is represented by a novel and a story, both of which are unusual in form and in content. Mystery fans with a

taste for the avant-garde should read Abe's novel *The Ruined Map*. While conducting an intensive search for a missing husband, the detective hero of this novel loses himself in a nightmare world of pornography and syndicate activities.

With the translations that have become available in the last few years, we can now appreciate the quality and diversity of Japanese mystery writing. However, the checklist, when compared to the great amount of mystery and detective fiction produced in Japan, is short indeed—29 stories and two novels by sixteen authors. Even Rampo and Matsumoto, highly prolific writers with world-wide reputations, are not adequately represented in English.

Assuming that the economic and cultural ties between Japan and the United States remain strong, a substantial number of Japanese works will be published in English every year. If the checklist is periodically updated, it will certainly grow. Perhaps at some future date, the list will be as long as a complete list of French mystery fiction in English translation would be today.

Notes

1. Katsuo Jinka, "Mystery Stories in Japan," TAD, 9, No. 2 (1976), 112-13. For more information on Japanese mystery writing see: James B. Harris, "Translator's Preface," *Japanese Tales of Mystery and Imagination* by Edogawa Rampo (Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1956), pp. vii-xix; Kawataro Nakajima, "Detective Fiction in Japan," *Japan Quarterly*, 9, No. 1 (1962), 50-56; and Ellery Queen, ed., "Introduction," *Ellery Queen's Japanese Golden Dozen* (Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1978), pp. 7-12.
2. Reversing the order used in Japan, Japanese names in this article are printed with the family name last. This practice, although widely accepted, is not standard with all English language publications. As a result, catalogues and bibliographies pertaining to Japanese literature will sometimes have authors incorrectly listed under their given names.
3. Considerable information for the checklist was found in International House of Japan Library, comp., *Modern Japanese Literature in Translation: A Bibliography* (Tokyo, New York and San Francisco: Kodansha International, 1979). I wish to thank Eleanor Sullivan of *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* and Susan Calderella of *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* for their assistance.
4. Translations of Akutagawa's works are widely available. Several of his stories, including "In a Grove," "Kesa and Morito" and "Rashomon," would be of interest to readers of mystery fiction.
5. Measures taken in seventeenth-century Japan toward the imposition of gun control are documented in Noel Perrin, *Giving Up the Gun* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1979).
6. United Nations, *Demographic Yearbook 1977* (New York: United Nations Publishing Service, 1978), pp. 426-41.

A Checklist of Japanese Mystery Fiction in English Translation

The following abbreviations are used on the list:

EQJGD Queen, Ellery, ed. *Ellery Queen's Japanese Golden Dozen*. Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1978.

- EQMM *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. New York: Davis Publications (formerly Mercury Publications), since 1941.
- JQ *Japan Quarterly*. Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun, since 1954.
- JTMI Rampo, Edogawa. *Japanese Tales of Mystery and Imagination*. Trans. James B. Harris. Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1956. Rpt. as Tuttle pb, 1956.
- Abe, Kobo** (b. 1924)
 "The Dream Soldier" Trans. Andrew Horvat
 JQ, 19, No. 1 (1972), 56-61
Four Stories. Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1973
The Ruined Map. Trans. E. Dale Saunders. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969; London: Jonathan Cape, 1972. Rpt. as Tuttle pb, 1970
- Ishizawa, Eitaro** (b. 1916)
 "Too Much About Too Many"
 EQJGD
- Matsumoto, Seicho** (b. 1909)
 "The Cooperative Defendant"
 EQJGD
 "Evidence" Trans. John Bester
 JQ, 9, No. 1 (1962), 74-85
 "Just Eighteen Months" Trans. Bester
 JQ, 9, No. 1 (1962), 57-73
Points and Lines. Trans. Makiko Yamamoto and Paul C. Blum. Tokyo and Palo Alto, Calif.: Kodansha International, 1970
 "The Woman Who Took the Local Paper"
 EQMM, June 1979, pp. 110-25
- Miyoshi, Tohru** (b. 1931)
 "A Letter From the Dead"
 EQJGD
- Morimura, Seichi** (b. 1933)
 "Devil of a Boy"
 EQJGD
- Natsuki, Shizuko** (b. 1938)
 "Cry From the Cliff"
 EQJGD
 "The Pawnshop Murder"
 EQMM, May 5, 1980, pp. 75-90
- Nishimura, Kyotaro** (b. 1930)
 "The Kindly Blackmailer"
 EQJGD
- Rampo, Edogawa** (1894-1965)
 "The Caterpillar" Trans. James B. Harris
 JTMI
 "The Cliff" Trans. Harris
 JTMI
 "The Hell of Mirrors" Trans. Harris
 JTMI
The Hell of Mirrors, and Other Classic Tales of Horror. Ed. Peter Haining. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1965. Rpt. as Everyman pb, 1976, under the title *Everyman's Book of Classic Horror Stories*
 "The Human Chair" Trans. Harris
 JTMI
Tales for a Rainy Night. Ed. David Alexander. A Mystery Writers of America Anthology. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961. Rpt. as Crest pb, 1962
- Beyond the Curtain of Dark*. Ed. Peter Haining. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972. Rpt. as Pinnacle pb, 1972
 "The Psychological Test" Trans. Harris
 JTMI
 "The Red Chamber" Trans. Harris
 JTMI
 "The Traveler With the Pasted Rag Picture" Trans. Harris
 JTMI
 "The Twins" Trans. Harris
 JTMI
 "The Two Crippled Men" Trans. Harris
 JTMI
- Sano, Yoh** (b. 1928)
 "No Proof"
 EQJGD
- Sasazawa, Saho** (b. 1930)
 "Invitation From the Sea"
 EQJGD
- Shiga, Naoya** (1883-1971)
 "Han's Crime" Trans. Eric S. Bell and Eiji Ukai
Japan Times, Aug. 28, 1927. Story appears under the title "The Murder"
Eminent Authors of Contemporary Japan. Vol. 2. Tokyo: Kaitakusha, 1931. Story appears under the title "A Murder Case"
 Also trans. Ivan Morris in:
 JQ, 2, No. 4 (1955), 460-69
Modern Japanese Literature. Ed. Donald Keene. New York: Grove, 1956. Rpt. as Tuttle pb, 1957, and as Evergreen pb, 1960
Modern Japanese Short Stories. Comp. JQ Editorial Board. Tokyo: Japan Publications, 1960
 Also trans. Ryozo Matsumoto in:
Japanese Literature, New and Old. Ed. Ryozo Matsumoto. Tokyo: Hokuseido, 1961
 "The Razor" Trans. Eric S. Bell and Eiji Ukai
Eminent Authors of Contemporary Japan. Vol. 1. Tokyo: Kaitakusha, 1930
 Also trans. Francis H. Mathy in:
Monumenta Nipponica, 13, No. 3-4 (1957), 165-76
 Also trans. Nobuyuki Honna in:
Kinjo Gakuin Daigaku Ronshu (Kinjo Gakuin University Bulletin), No. 36 (1968), 94-104
- Sohnno, Tadao** (b. 1917)
 "Facial Restoration"
 EQJGD
- Tanizaki, Junichiro** (1886-1965)
 "The Thief" Trans. Howard Hibbett
Seven Japanese Tales. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963; London: Secker and Warburg, 1964. Rpt. as Berkley pb, 1965, and as Tuttle pb, 1967
 EQMM, Oct. 1967, pp. 57-66
- Togawa, Masako** (b. 1933)
 "The Vampire"
 EQJGD
- Tsuchiya, Takao** (b. 1917)
 "Write In, Rub Out"
 EQJGD
- Tsutsui, Yasutaka** (b. 1934)
 "Perfectly Lovely Ladies"
 EQJGD

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SECONDARY SOURCES FOR 1979

By Walter Albert

Abbreviations

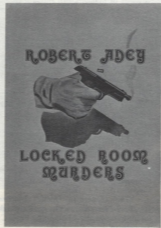
- AES *Abstracts of English Studies*
 AJH Allen J. Hubin
 EQMM *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*
 FIR *Films in Review*
 J COMM *Journal of Communication*
 JDM John D. MacDonald
 JDMB John D. MacDonald
 JLB Jon L. Breen
 JPC *Journal of Popular Culture*
 KQ *Kentucky Quarterly*
 NL *Les Nouvelles littéraires*
 NYRB *New York Review of Books*
 NYTRB *New York Times Book Review*
 PQ *Paperback Quarterly*
 PW *Publisher's Weekly*
 TAD *The Armchair Detective*
 TBG *The Buyer's Guide for Comic Fandom*
 TMF *The Mystery FANcier*
 TMN *The Mystery Nook*
 TPP *The Poisoned Pen*
 WCRB *West Coast Review of Books*
 WLB *Wilson Library Bulletin*

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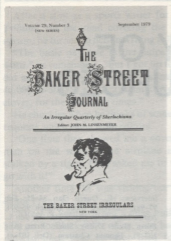
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- 1-4. Avon Classic Crime, Monarch (by Bill Pronzini), 1st edition pbs, Bonded and Chartered books, Columbia pbs.
- 1-5. Westlake's "Stark" novels, pseudonym authors, *Rex Stout's Mystery Quarterly* (with title index), Dell First Editions (the first series), gothic magazines, cover art. (Robert McGinnis)
- 1-6. Clayton Rawson, cover art, Dell First Editions (cont.), Richard S. Shaver.
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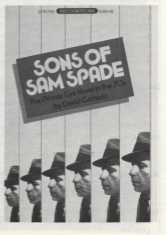
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KESHO NAIK, DACOIT

by Sir Edmund C. Cox

Edmund C. Cox wrote several short-story collections set in turn-of-the-century India. The first two, *John Carruthers, Indian Policeman* (1905) and *The Achievements of John Carruthers* (1911) are extremely scarce, but the rarest of his three volumes is *The Exploits of Kesho Naik, Dacoit* (1912), published by Constable in London.

Krishna, a police constable, appeared in the first book by Cox, was the dedicatee of the second, and narrates the adventures of the notorious thief and murderer in the third. Since the tales are told in the first person, the narration attempts to follow the language and patterns of a native Indian, an effect achieved with greater success during the past several years in H. R. F. Keating's tales of Inspector Ghote.

As the author wrote in the introduction to *Kesho Naik*, "I might say that I thought out these stories in Hindustani and Mahratti; and I have endeavoured to give them

an English rendering which is as nearly as possible identical with Krishna's mode of expressing himself."

Typical of so many tales of adventure and crime in this era (and, indeed, in other eras), there is no detection and scant sense of suspense. There is also precious little moral intelligence. The author, through the words of his narrator, does not entirely disapprove of the villain's actions, presumably because the fruits of his crimes are to be distributed to the poor. There is no examination of the mentality that will feel nothing at the killing of other people (not necessarily rich ones, either) in order to steal something to give to the poor. The brazen evil of the Robin Hood myth is at its worst here.

Why, then, publish the story? It's rare, and not good enough to warrant the republication of the book, so here is an opportunity to sample one of the dozen tales that comprise this journal of roguery.

—Otto Penzler

It is in this world a strange thing that if a man sets his hand to the doing of business, or for that matter it may be pleasure, in which hitherto he has had no part, that new thing may shortly become a habit. If anyone had said that to me, Krishna, the work of writing down these stories should at any time be a custom, he would have been thought to have seven tongues like the truthless ones who come from the Punjab. But the wonder is that such a thing has indeed occurred; and I, who only hoped to please the Sahibs in the taking of thieves and robbers, and so obtain promotion in the Police service, have been exalted to the position of a writer of histories. If what I have recorded, or may yet record, affords satisfaction, this must have been written in the book of my destiny. For it is sure that of himself this humble one has no skill in the guiding of a pen; and whatever favourable result there may be is due to good fortune. But Trench Sahib says that the writing is proper, and that on no account should I leave it until all that Kesho Naik has done has been printed, remembering this only, that every circumstance should be set down exactly as it happened, without any less or more. And in the end the Sahib who has the chap-khana in London is to publish the book, and send me more rupees than the Sirkar will grant me as pension. There is however the fear that a simple man may become proud; and this danger is to be avoided. The burden also is heavy; for the doings of Kesho are as the hairs of the head in number. Nevertheless the order must receive obedience.

This then is one of the acts of daring that Kesho did. It was known to him—and in truth such was his cleverness that what was not known to him who should say?—that on every fifteenth day much gold was carried in the train from the mines of Mysore to the harbour of Bombay, whence it was sent in the fire-boat to London. For many mines had been dug in the country of Mysore; and if some had been found unfruitful, yet from others were lakhs and crores of gold taken away. This gold was far under the earth, and it was mingled with quartz and gravel, and there was much labour in obtaining this prize. But the English Sahibs had brought engines and other wonderful machines such as we people had neither seen nor heard of before; and passages and roadways were made deep down and the workmen descended and ascended with great convenience. There were ropes and chains and pulleys and fire-wagons underground; and there was no darkness, for there were everywhere lamps that by the turning of a handle in one direction instantly filled the place with light as of the sun or the moon, and again by turning it in a contrary direction the light was gone. And the quartz and the gravel containing the gold were put into vast mills, and the wheels with the strength of a Rakshas crushed all that was placed before them, and then here was golden ore in beautiful yellow powder, and there was the rubbish from which it had been taken out. And then the powder was made into bars of metal, each weighing five pounds or two seers and a half. To us people it seemed that the gins and the peris must have made this device. Of a truth the Sahibs can do wonderful things, nor is the manner of them to be understood by us. And yet in other matters these same Sahibs are led away by idle talk, and what is well known to the children playing in the bazaar is beyond the ear of their understanding. For it seems to them that if a man speaks many words and asserts this and that about the ruling of the state he is somebody, whereas in truth he is not to be listened to, for the heart of the people is apart from such empty vapourings.

Now Kesho, as I have said, had knowledge of this gold, and how it was sent to Bombay, on what day, and by what train, and how it was packed, and how it was guarded, and whatever more particulars there were to be known. And this angered him that the treasure was sent away to London for the English Sahibs; and he said, "It is not meet that these robbers who have taken our country should also take the gold from the earth and remove it to their islands where all men have riches, while here the land is in poverty and people are crying. It is the time to make a plan that we may lay hold of this treasure and distribute it among the poor." In this way he was speaking to his companions, and his words pleased them; and they considered many ways by which they should possess themselves of the gold. And at last by the contrivance of one Jiwan who before he joined Kesho's band had been a servant on the railway, and for a number of offences had been dismissed and also sent to jail, the arrangements were at last completed. And this was the order of Kesho, that not a little of the gold in the train should be seized, but

nothing less than the whole of it. And he laughed and said, "This will be a good tamasha (amusement). What will Trench Sahib say?"

The line of railway over which travelled the train with the gold passed for some miles through dense forest, and the country was hilly. The train travelled fast down the hills but slowly up them. It is to be said that whereas on some lines the track is double and the trains may cross each other where they will, as bullock-carts on the highway, on this line there was a road for one train only, and there was crossing only at the stations. On some lines also the wagons are large and broad, but on this they were small and narrow, the space between the rails being less, and this was all favourable to Kesho. There were two stations about eight miles apart, named Hongal and Bilgi. The whole way from the one to the other was a steep incline, and the station of Bilgi was at the top. Both of these, Bilgi and Hongal, were but small stations. About halfway between the two there was a branch line of railway that diverged from the main line, and ran for the length, it may be, of one mile, into the jungle. The opening on to this line was as one goes down the incline from Bilgi; and on the branch the same incline continued for half a mile, and then to the end there was a rise. The branch line was only used during part of the year for the conveyance of timber that was cut in the forest; and at this season it was closed, and long grass and bushes, which spring up quickly in this district, were growing between the rails where the lesser line left the greater. This was all known to Kesho, who had also ascertained that the train bearing the treasure of gold was to reach Bilgi at two o'clock in the night. It was the dark half of the month; and from this too there was advantage to Kesho.

As I have written, the manner of packing the gold was also known to Kesho. And the gold was packed in this fashion. Each bar weighed five pounds. In this consignment there were sixty bars, and these were distributed among ten strong boxes of teak wood, six bars being contained in each box. For the computation of value it may be estimated that a pound's weight of gold is worth about fifty-six sovereigns of English gold coinage. Each bar therefore was equal to two hundred and eighty sovereigns of gold. Thus the whole number of sixty bars was equal to no less than sixteen thousand, eight hundred sovereigns. When it is considered that each sovereign is worth fifteen rupees, and that the full value of the sixty bars came to two lakhs and fifty-two thousand rupees, then it may be understood that Kesho Naik had no equal in audacity in any nation. So much for the value; but to this too must be given attention. The weight of each bar being five pounds the weight of four bars would be twenty pounds; and for convenience in walking in long distance a man might conveniently carry twenty pounds' weight, and no more, without attracting observation, although it were an easier burden to carry four bars weighing each five pounds, than one of twenty pounds. For the several bars could be distributed here and there according to each man's taste and pleasure. But even thus fifteen men were required. If Kesho were pleased to order it he might have had fifty men whom he could trust.

The first part of the device was this. If the driver of an engine on approaching a station sees that the lamp on the distant signal is of red colour he may not take his train into the station, for a red lamp signifies danger; but he is required to halt, and await the setting of a green lamp. Kesho and Jiwan stood not far from the signal post half an hour before the train should come, and the hamal, whose name was Tookeram, after receiving the order from the station-master went to the signal, climbed up the ladder, and fixed the green light. When he came down Kesho gave him a great blow on the head, and he fell on the ground senseless. That was the beginning of Kesho's tamasha. Whether Tookeram were dead or only stunned was not a matter which concerned Kesho at all; for to such an one the life or death of a man who came in his way was of no account. They placed the senseless Tookeram behind a wall, and then Jiwan climbed up and placed the red lamp in position, covering up the green lamp. Thus the train could not enter the station. Then Kesho and Jiwan, and three others who were with them, waited till the train should come. Before long they heard the whistle of the engine, and the rumbling and the roaring of the wagons, and they perceived the great lamps in front of the engine, and the lights in the carriages. And they were standing in the shelter of some bushes near where the end of the train would be when it should come to a standstill. The next thing

that happened was this. The driver seeing the red light slowed down his train, at the same time sounding the whistle in order to attract the attention of the station-master who should put up the green signal. And he was angered that he had to stop, for on account of the steep incline it would be difficult to start his train again. But the signal remained unchanged, and he was compelled to halt outside the station. Then he became filled with anger, and he sounded his whistle very loud again and again. All this time Kesho and his men were lying in wait, and they softly crept on to the line just behind the guard's van, which was the hindmost wagon on the train and contained the treasure. And three of the men went softly to the other side of the train, and two of these were standing on the footboard of the van. At length the guard, who was a Goanese named De Souza, looked out of his window to see what was the matter, and he saw the signal set against the train; and still the driver in his anger was making his whistle scream. Then what was to happen happened. De Souza opened the door of his van on the side which should be alongside the platform; and carrying his lantern he stepped down, intending to walk to the station to inquire into the cause of the delay. No sooner had he set foot on the ground than Kesho seized him by the throat with such an iron grip that he could utter no sound. At the very same moment Jiwan snatched the lantern from his hand, and standing in front of De Souza, who was now lying on the ground by the force of a blow from Kesho, waved his lantern in the manner of guards when they would signify that all is well. Thus no one could see what was being done behind Jiwan as he was swinging his lamp; and in truth all of the passengers who were not asleep were looking out in the direction of the engine. And Jiwan moved a little forward to the front of the guard's van; and the light of his lantern fell on the coupling that joined the van to the next carriage. Meanwhile the two men on the other side of the guard's van had stealthily opened the door on that side, and had entered the van. Their business it was to deal with the two constables who were in charge of the gold. One of these was asleep on the floor, and the other was looking out of the window towards the front of the train. To this one they both gave a heavy blow on the back of his head before he was aware of their presence, and he fell on the floor like a black-buck that is hit by a bullet. The constable who was sleeping received the same treatment. All this was done without a sound. The third man too was at the same time doing his work. With little difficulty he withdrew the bolt which secures the couplings; and the guard's van with two lakhs and a half in gold was separated from the train.

By this time something had occurred at the station. The station-master, who was a Brahmin, became irritated when he heard so much frantic whistling from the engine, and he began to call out for Tookeram. But none could find Tookeram anywhere. Then the station-master, unable any more to suffer this intolerable whistling, went out of his office, and he saw the train standing a long way off, and he looked at the distant signal and he saw that it was at danger, although he had given the order to Tookeram to place the green light. And being helpless, as no Tookeram was to be found, he himself walked to the signal post and climbed up, and set the green light. And he was venting curses on Tookeram. Then the driver gave two sharp whistles to show that he would start the train, and he looked back at the guard's van to see the lantern waved in token that all was well at that end. And Jiwan stood on the foot-board swinging the lantern. Then there was one short whistle, and the driver put on the steam, and began to start the train, upon which Jiwan stepped inside the van and closed his lantern. Kesho and the other three men were also in the van. With great difficulty and much furious puffing of steam the driver at last drew his train up at the platform. He did not suspect that the guard's van was not attached to the train, and he began to abuse the station-master, and each abused the other.

When they became tired of uttering abuses, the driver said to the station-master, "Get your business done with the guard, and let me get on." For at every station the guard goes to the office and there is much signing of papers. What all the signing is for, God knows. The station-master after a few more abuses went to his office expecting to find the guard there, but there was no guard, and he became the more angry that Tookeram and De Souza had played him such tricks. So he went off to where the guard's van should be, having a mind to abuse the guard, but there was no guard and no guard's van. Then he became annoyed, and he went to

the engine driver and gave more abuses, and asked where he had left the guard's van. And the driver swore that at the distant signal the guard had shown "all well" with his lantern. And there was much confusion in the minds of each, for they knew of the treasure; and the conclusion that they came to was that by some misfortune the van had become uncoupled, and had run back by its own impetus down the incline to Hongal. Then the station-master began to send many messages along the stretched wires; and the message that he sent to Hongal was this: "Three up arrived distant signal all well, after delay owing to mistake in signals drew up at station minus guard's van with golden treasure. There must have been fortuitous separation and spontaneous retrogression to Hongal. Please arrange. Engine follows." He then gave orders to the driver to uncouple his engine and work back slowly to Hongal to pick up De Souza and his van wherever he might light upon them.

Now it is my business to relate what was done by Kesho. As soon as the red signal was changed to green and the train started up the incline to the station, the guard's van, in which were himself and the four others and the treasure, was left standing, the brake being on. Then by Kesho's orders the brake was released, though not altogether lest the van should lose control, but its force was reduced; and the van began to proceed down the hill. And so for four miles, with what more or less there may have been, the van travelled at a gentle pace. So they came to where the branch line went off into the forest. One of the band was holding a small lamp at this spot to let them know where they were. And the bushes had been cut away, and the points were opened for the van to run on to the branch line. This then took place just as had been planned; and when the van had gone on to the branch line the points were replaced, and the bushes were stuck into the ground as though they were growing, so that no one should see any difference. And the van descended cautiously to the end of the incline, and when it came to where the line commenced to ascend, it came to a stop. Then Kesho having heard something commanded silence, for the number of men present was now fifteen. And while all were silent they heard the engine coming down the hill on the main line. And at the junction with the branch line it stopped, and some examination was made with a lantern, but nothing suspicious was observed, for the bushes were it seemed growing as usual, and the van could not have passed over such obstruction; so the engine proceeded towards Hongal.

"Arhe bapre!" said Kesho. "See the foolishness of these blind ones! This is a fortunate time; now is our opportunity. Let us make ready some shikar for Trench Sahib." Then as speedily as might be the men rushed into the van and hurled the ten boxes containing the treasure out on to the ground, and with axes and hammers they began to break them open.

It is to be remembered that all this was going on between two and three o'clock at night, in the depths of the forest. If any one could have been present he would have seen a strange sight, and he would have wondered what work of men or magic of devils was being accomplished. For this was an extraordinary thing that in this secluded spot in the jungle there should be the guard's van of a railway train, and yet no railway to be seen, for the track which was on the level of the ground was overgrown with grass and weeds so the rails might not be perceived without difficulty, nor were there poles or wires or fencing; and had anyone witnessed the scenes he might say, how has so great a wagon come into this wild place? Surely it must have been brought through the air. And Jivan was holding the guard's lantern to enable the work to be done; and there was smashing and crashing of boxes with the blows of the hammers and axes; and the sight of the men delivering vehement blows and tearing open the boxes was as though ghouls were engaged in some unholy operation. The forest animals too that were disturbed in their habitation by this wild irruption were joining in the mischief; and jackals were yelling and hyenas were shrieking in anger and fear because Kesho and his men had trespassed upon their limits. At length the business was brought to an end; and to each of the fifteen men were distributed six bars of the Mysore gold.

Now, when the engine had come near to Hongal and yet there was no sign of the missing van more amazement came to the driver and his fireman. The signal was set for entering the station as the message had come from Bilgi that the engine was to be expected, so the driver drew up at the platform and sounded the whistle furiously. Then came the station-master, who was angry

because he was disturbed from his sleep; and the driver too was desperately angry on account of all the misfortunes. And I have found too that at such an hour of the night even men with equable temperaments are apt to become hot.

"Arhe Baba," said the driver, "what have you done with my dam guard's van?"

It is to be noted that our people on the railways who mingle with European guards and drivers have followed the custom to call everything "dam."

"Kum-bukht, be-wakool! ill-fated foolish one," replied the station-master, "what should I know of your dam van? You will lose your dam engine next. This is all muskeri (play-acting). Is it not a time to sleep when the train is gone? But you come back here with a fool's word of a lost van. What female relations have there been of you and your father and grandfather, be-shuram, shameless one! Your service in the company will soon end."

"Chup-raho, you four-anna-bribe-eating befaida, worthless one! Stop this dam muskeri, and tell me where the van is. Where is De Souza? He should have met me here. The van cannot have run through your dam station since the road is level."

"This talk is foolishness," said the station-master. "God knows where your van and your whole dam train are. Go and search for them in my office if you like."

Then both gave many abuses for a long time. And in the end the driver was perforce made to believe that his guard's van had not come to Hongal, and he was in great fear, for he saw that this must be the work of evil spirits. So there was nothing left to him but to take "line-clear," and return to Bilgi. It would take many days if I were to write down all that was spoken at Bilgi, for all were filled with terrer and astonishment. The train could not leave the station without a guard's van because the brake was needed to control the speed on the incline to the next station. So messages were sent to many stations, and at last it was learned that a spare van lay in the siding at Lipani, thirty miles off; and the unhappy driver was compelled to take his engine there to fetch it. By the time that this was completed day had dawned; and then there was more ghur-bhur (confusion), and more terror and uncertainty, for the body of Tookeram was found lying where Kesho and Jiwan had placed it, and whether he were alive or dead could not with certainty be determined. But it was understood that there was some great devilry; and men began to speak of Kesho, for Kesho's name had become famous.

Now it must be written what was done by Kesho and his band. When the bars of gold had been distributed the fifteen men separated into three parties of five each, and they were to go by different ways and meet at the place where they were at that time concealing themselves. Kesho, it should be said, never kept the same hiding-place for a long time, but constantly selected new places, so that his whereabouts should not be known. For the carrying away of the gold the man adopted various devices. Some placed their bars in bundles of bedding such as many people take on their travels, and others stowed them in their clothing, a few who wore large puggris placing them therein. Five of the men were to walk to Hongal and there take tickets for the train. Five were to make their way many miles round by country tracks to another station. But Kesho said: "I will see what is doing at Bilgi," and he and Jiwan and three more walked through the jungle to that place. And Kesho laughed when he saw all the confusion that he had caused. The train was still standing there. Each of the five took tickets for different stations, nor did they speak to each other nor seem to know one another. Yet all as it were by chance sat in a carriage which happened to be empty. And Kesho asked the station-master how it was that there was a train so soon, as he had not expected one for some hours. So daring a man was Kesho! But the station-master gave him abuses and bade him move aside. In this manner the five passed away safely from Bilgi; and in the end all met in their hiding-place.

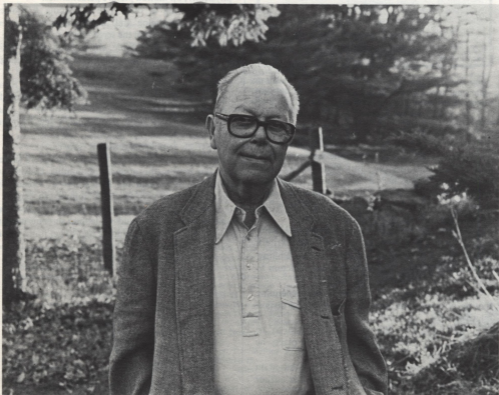
Later on came Trench Sahib with many Police; and walking down the line between Bilgi and Hongal they discovered what a trick had been played, for by daylight it was seen that the van had passed on to the branch line. And De Souza and the two constables who were to guard the treasure recovered after many days, but of Tookeram there was no recovery.

This then was one of the terrible deeds that was done by Kesho Naik. If it be said that it was his fate, who shall affirm the contrary? And this too is known, that much gold was given to the poor.

A Conversation with JUDSON PHILLIPS

By Bernard A. Drew

Judson P. Phillips writes his thrillers from a northwest Connecticut farmhouse. (Photo by Bernard Drew)





Mystery at a Country Inn

Philip Owen

Berkshire Traveller Press

STOCKBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Judson Philips has enjoyed a steady relationship with the same publisher, Dodd, Mead, for more than 40 years. Recently Berkshire Traveller Press enticed him to take a new name and pen *Mystery at a Country Inn*.

Mystery at a Country Inn turned up in the bookstores in the fall of 1979. The author's name, Philip Owen, is a new one. But from the first page on, the reader knows he is in the hands of a practiced writer. And little wonder. Philip Owen is a new pseudonym for Judson Philips, the mystery writer who already masquerades as Hugh Pentecost.

The suspense novel is published by Berkshire Traveler Press. "They asked me if I would write a mystery that takes place in a rural inn," says Philips. His regular publisher, Dodd, Mead, was reluctant to allow the use of Philips' regular bylines.

"So I became Philip Owen," he smiles, explaining that he borrowed the *nom de plume* from a distant relative.

Much of Philips' writing might be said to be borrowed. From the headlines. From the places he has visited. From the people he has met.

The setting for *Country Inn*, typically, is based on locales in northwest Connecticut, where the author makes his home.

"I did my research at the White Hart Inn (in Salisbury)," he confides. "I enjoyed a couple of expensive meals there and at the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge (Mass.)."

Only local readers can attest to how true his descriptions ring. The fact is, they often quiz him about who he was thinking of when he created such-and-such a character. His answers are always evasive.

Philips' Uncle George Crowder stories, which have appeared in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, are set in "Lakeview," Conn.

"In the Uncle George stories," he says, "I wanted a small town background and it was easy to take Lakeville. You wouldn't recognize it unless you lived around here. But it helps in writing to use real places."

This habit grew from his experience researching tales earlier in his career.

"I did a lot of special background stories for *American Magazine*," he says. "They would ask me for a story that took place at, say, a chemical plant. I would visit the place, then try to devise a plot that could only happen there. For a while, I had quite a reputation for doing this."

The author adds that he often bases his characters, physically, on motion picture personalities.

"My writing is often like describing a movie, including the dialog and all the little details you would see and hear on the screen."

Jud Philips is an affable, entertaining man to visit with. This profile is based on three different meetings with the prolific writer.

Living with his wife and assorted pets in a rural farmhouse, the 75-year-old writer is far from retired. Indeed, he feels hindered at being able to find markets for only three books and a few assorted short yarns a year.

He freely reminisces about his early career.

Born in Massachusetts, the son of an opera singer and an actress, he attended Columbia University. While there he sold his first story—a "dreadfully derivative" version of Sherlock Holmes—to *Argosy*.

In an introduction to a story in *EQMM* in 1947, he said that his father would not let him sing, his mother would not let him act, and he had to get it out of his system somehow. So he began writing at age 10 and never did anything else, career-wise.



SEPT 19
10

Exciting Mysteries
DETECTIVE

FICTION WEEKLY

FORMERLY FLYNN

**The Park Avenue
Hunt Club**

Stalks Dangerous Game in

**The
False-Face
Murders**

By

Judson P. Philips



**G-MEN Raid
"LOOT ISLAND"**
By **TOM ROAN**

Fred Markey & Whitman Clark

The Park Avenue Hunt Club was an early popular story series in *Detective Fiction Weekly*. One of the Club members was named John Jericho.

After a stint as a sports writer for the New York *Tribune*, on the road covering the Yankees for a season, he turned to fiction writing full time.

"The basic pay rate in the pulps was a penny a word," he remembers, "but I got up to 5 or 6 cents. I did an awful lot of work. My average output was 40,000 to 50,000 words a month. We were living in clover, for the economic times."

He chuckles when he thinks of some of the unusual requests which came from editors.

"One time they showed me a cover painting of a man on the wing of an airplane in flight, being stalked by a tiger. They asked me to write a story to go with it!"

Another time, he was visiting the offices of pulp editor Frank E. Blackwell.

"Street & Smith owned a huge building," he says. "To get to Blackwell's office, you had to go up the old-fashioned cage elevator then follow a course down corridors, past storage places stacked high with old Nick Carter dime novels and paperbacks by Bertha M. Clay, around corners and through rooms until you came to his cubbyhole office."

"One day I was there, talking over a plot, when the secretary popped in and said, 'Mr. Blackwell, you've

forgotten you had an appointment.'

"It was a memory expert, and he came to see Blackwell about starting a department on the subject in one of the magazines. He had us select a page in the Manhattan telephone directory. He read it, then handed it back and rattled off all the names and numbers he had seen. It was like a vaudeville act.

"Blackwell was interested, but said he didn't know how he could use it in a magazine. The man left, and we resumed our conversation. A while later, there was a timid knock at the door. It was the memory expert, and he said, 'You'll have to help me. I can't find my way out of the building.'"

Philips worked for more than ten years for the Munsey and, later, Street & Smith magazines. He penned the adventures of Ivy Trask (an early and not entirely successful female sleuth) and The Park Avenue Hunt Club (which ran for ten years) for *Detective Fiction Weekly* in the '30s.

"I did about 50 book-length serials for the pulps, one a month," he says. They were never re-issued in book form.

"We had some pride in that stuff in those days," he continues. "It was a recognized, legitimate form of entertainment. A lot of good people worked for the pulps—MacKinley Kantor, Erle Stanley Gardner, Edgar Burroughs. These were talented people."

When he finally made a transition to hardcover books, it was with a volume entitled *Red War*, co-authored with T.M. Johnson in 1936.

"Johnson was a war correspondent during World War I. He had a lot of material, but hadn't been able to put it together," Philips says. "I was asked to collaborate. That book predicted the outbreak of World War II, and a liaison between Hitler and Stalin. It did well enough that I was swamped with offers."

His blooming career took a twist when publisher Dodd, Mead was searching for a Red Badge Mystery winner in 1938. Unable to find a suitable novel, they offered the prize to Philips. If he would take a new name.

"The winner had to be an unpublished author," he says. "I had just finished a book without a running character, and they liked it.

"My middle name is Pentecost, and I had an uncle, Hugh Pentecost, who was a barrister in New York in the 1890s."

Thus was born a pseudonym, one which Philips has never been able to shed. To this day, it outsells his own name.

"That first Pentecost book, *Cancelled in Red*, has an interesting story behind it," Philips offers. "I was spending a couple of weeks on Long Island vacationing when I ran into a stamp broker. He knew everything about philately. I got him down on the floor and got all I could out of him, and later visited

Judson Philips' first venture as Hugh Pentecost was serialized in *Argosy*.



Cancelled in Red

By HUGH PENTECOST

Start now the exciting race of the danger and death that lurked around the most fabulous bits of colored paper in the world. The Dodd Mead 1938 Prize Mystery

FOR once Larry Stern and every other home stamp-collector have been trying to get something on the girls and finally, here comes the girl who has been waiting for him. She is the girl who has been waiting for him. She is the girl who has been waiting for him. She is the girl who has been waiting for him.

Her father's collection, she says, has been in the hands of the collector for years.

mentioned of by Adkins, bringing for him there he had said for Dr. Larry told me that Adkins has probably exchanged qualifications for the terms of "I want a collection and will do the collecting, at once, producing the results you desire."

Meanwhile, Larry's friend Sam Withler has gone to Adkins's office to tell him the results. He is sure that Adkins is the "Evil" who years before had stolen him of Larry's diamond ring and \$10,000. Sam Withler is sure that Adkins is the "Evil" who years before had stolen him of Larry's diamond ring and \$10,000.

Larry arrives in time to help Withler in his search for the girl who has been waiting for him. He is sure that Adkins is the "Evil" who years before had stolen him of Larry's diamond ring and \$10,000.

This story begins in Sam Withler's office.

A PETER STYLES MYSTERY... #1
Wings of Madness
by Judson Philips



Three of Philips/Pentecost's series characters, John Jericho, Peter Styles and Pierre Chambrun, have appeared in paperback reprints.

him at his office, and used stamp collecting as a basis for the novel.

"I still get letters asking about stamps! One philately magazine reviewed the book and said there were many thinly disguised versions of real people in it. But I didn't know any real collectors. I didn't know anything about stamps, only what I was told. And letters still come asking about three cent Jeffersons!"

On another occasion, the writer comments, "If I do the research, if I know what I'm writing about, people will recognize the effort. They'll feel closer to the work."

Philips worked for *American* and the other leading periodicals of the day, *Liberty*, *Colliers* and *The Saturday Evening Post*.

Following the advice of fellow mystery writer George Harmon Coxe, he took every opportunity to work in other media as well.

He adapted Father Brown mysteries for radio.

He co-authored John Barrymore's first Hollywood talkie, "General Crack," and did other feature films.

He scripted teleplays for "Suspense," "The Ray Milland Show" and other television programs in the early 1950s.

In one 39-week stretch, he wrote 18 shows for Goodson & Todman's "The Web," a half-hour program which depicted the plights of people trapped in perilous situations.

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"I was lucky enough to get clearance from the advertiser—Kent Cigarettes—which meant I was considered safe, the producer didn't have to have every one of my scripts approved. One time, however, I wrote a story that took place on a train. I had a man dying in a compartment somewhere. He was the villain. A conductor examining him said, 'I'd better go for a doctor.' And the lady detective, in the last line of the show, said, 'Let him die, it will save the state some money.'

"Well, the advertiser wanted to change that line, they thought it was too strong to have a woman say. Now just a short time before, a directive had come down from the Kent people saying that no villain could be seen smoking long cigarettes, which were their trademark.

"So when it came to the last reading of the script, I had a new line ready, which was, 'Don't bother, give the s.o.b. a short cigarette.'

"I did it in fun, of course. But the sponsor was so upset that they took away my clearance. Even though I had another line all ready."

All this activity in other fields barely slackened his book writing pace. His most recent, *The Homicidal Horse*, is his 78th. While two or three are published each year, he usually is working a dozen months ahead.

Philips also carried on a long relationship with the Sharon Playhouse near his home. He wrote several plays which still earn royalties in stock productions, he says.

He has had success with a number of running characters: Peter Styles and (as Pentecost) Pierre Chambrun, John Jericho and Julian Quist.

His series characters, while popular, are restricting, he finds. "My Pierre Chambrun character—a hotel manager in New York—is very limited, all the action takes place in one building. But it's the best selling thing I've got, so I have to keep finding new aspects of hotel life. Peter Styles is better, he's an investigative reporter, so he can travel around the country."

Any spare moments between books are filled with penning short stories for *EQMM*.

"The crime short story is just about limited to that publication now," he laments, "and it's too bad."

Philips learned his craft in the short story medium.

"I remember when the one-page short-short came into popularity," he says. "The editor of *Smart Set* offered to pay more than the usual word rate. And he told me that if I ever could get it down to where I could tell a story in three words—I'd really get a bonus."

A founder and the third president of the Mystery Writers of America, Philips received the group's Grand Master award in 1973.

His mysteries, while occasionally violent and sensational, are topical. They are of the old school in

that they offer solid plotting and avoid explicit sex.

"I have no objection to this," he says, "but Dodd, Mead and the Walter Black Book Club don't want it. Recently it was essential to one of my plots to have a man be gay, so that he couldn't be jealous of a man who goes after a girl. My publisher ok'd it, but told me that I would have to edit it out if I wanted to sell it to Walter Black . . ."

Philips doesn't read many other mystery writers. "I find myself being too imitative in my own writing," he says. But he has a great deal of respect for Dashiell Hammett and Ernest Hemingway—"They taught me to get rid of adverbs."

"There's a lot of fakery among writers," he says. "They like to make it seem romantic. It's no different than any other job. It may require more discipline than other professions, but it's still a job."

Philips occasionally ponders what his career might have been had he pursued other avenues.

"I could be driving two Rolls-Royces instead of two Chevettes," he smiles, "but I wanted to live my own way." He is referring to discouragement over all the fingers in the creative pie when he worked as a screenwriter in Hollywood.

In a recent column in the *Lakeville Journal*, Philips said, "If I'd had any sense I'd have been a song writer. People never forget the songs they have loved early on and forever."

He revealed that while a freshman at Columbia he wrote some sketches for The Variety Show, the college musical. Also involved in the program was Richard Rodgers.

"Dick read the sketches and took one of them. He asked me, very casually, if I'd ever thought of writing any song lyrics. I hadn't, but I said I would. I never did because I sold a detective story to a magazine for 50 bucks and I was gone forever. Who knows, I might have been a Hart or a Hammerstein and remembered forever with Dick Rodgers."

On the whole, though, Judson Philips is satisfied with the mystery writing life.



TAD at the MOVIES

By Thomas Godfrey

Intermission

The second toughest part of putting this column together is deciding which movies to include. The toughest is deciding which movies to leave out.

In the last issue, I included *Going In Style*, hardly a mystery-suspense film, but one I felt had elements of interest to the readers of these pages.

This issue finds me without a current movie to review. There have been several recent releases that came close to qualifying, but most like *The Island* were too marginal to rate even a bad review.

There are many interesting projects coming in the near future: *The Mirror Crack'd* (with Angela Lansbury as Miss Marple), *Dressed To Kill* (a Brian De Palma mystery-shocker), a Charlie Chan film with Peter Ustinov as the sage of Punchbowl Hill, the film version of Joe Gore's *Hammelt* from Francis Ford Coppola's studio, Walter Matthau in Brian Garfield's *Hopscootch* (already in the can), a film version of Margaret Truman's new book *Murder in the White House*, and several other goodies.

Unfortunately, this prospect of future feasts does not make the present famine any more tolerable.

If you find me overly critical of the current crop of mystery-suspense films, I cite the following in my defense. Last year the Edgar Awards committee nominated *Murder by Decree*, *Time After Time*, and *The Great Train Robbery* as its three finalists. In 1946, this same committee was faced with contenders like *The Big Sleep*, *The Blue Dahlia*, *The Spiral Staircase*, *The Dark Mirror*, *The Dark Corner*, *Lady in the Lake*, *Green For Danger*, *Somewhere in the Night*, *The Killers*, *The Stranger*. . . I think I've made my point.

My column was left out of the Winter issue by some ghoulies at the printer, so I've capsulized some of the films reviewed then. Also I am beginning a series of retrospective reviews of the classics and curios of the past. With the great number of films available on television, in revival houses, and through the growing video cassette market, these reviews may form a useful reference point for TAD movie buffs.

Gripes and gasps may be directed at me through:

411 N. Central Ave. #203
Glendale, CA 91203

★ 1/2 **Sunburn** (1979) Farrah Fawcett-Majors, Charles Grodin, Art Carney, D: Richard Sarafian. Somebody took an interesting book by Stanley Ellin and turned it into a witless collection of hack clichés. Art Carney is splendid, but the money boys threw him away, too. Farrah's fragile talents do not bear this degree of show-casing. Even Charles Grodin's professional skills cannot compensate. Another example of some foos and their money being parted in the Tinsel City.

★ ★ ★ **And Then There Was None** (1945) Walter Huston, Barry Fitzgerald, Judith Anderson, D: Rene Clair. Arguably the best film made from a Christie source. Dudley Nichols's script is intelligent and economical. Rene Clair's Gallic touch is sure. Many magic moments will linger in memory—Fitzgerald and Huston playing pool, Mischa Auer's dance of death, the rolling ball of yarn, C. Aubrey Smith's pathetic, senile general. Even if you know the story, this film bears watching.

★ ★ **The Man Who Cried Wolf** (1937) Lewis Stone, Marjorie Main, Tom Brown, D: Lewis Foster. Somebody came up with a good plot idea, but unfortunately it got the Olive Higgins Prouty treatment, so it looks very hard. Lewis Stone, best known as Judge Hardy and the co-star of many Garbo films, carries the lead quite well. The "Romantic Youngsters" that ruined many a good picture of the same period, do much the same here. Watch for Marjorie Main in a convincing performance as a society schemer, acres away from the cornfields of the Kettle farm.

★ ★ **Time After Time** (1979) Malcolm McDowell, Mary Steenburgen, David Warner, D: Nicholas Meyer. MacDowell is H. G. Wells. Warner is Jack the Ripper. Wells pursues J. R. to present-day San Francisco in his time machine. The plot has more holes than a cheese grater. Warner performs like he'd just had extensive root canal work that day, MacDowell gives us H. G. Wells as John Gielgud might have given us one of the Dukes of Hazzard. Steenburgen charms as a kookie bank teller. She lights the film with a special light, but unfortunately it only shows how badly Meyer the screenwriter has let Meyer the director down.

★ ★ **Bulldog Drummond Comes Back** (1937) John Howard, John Barrymore, J. Carrol Naish, D: Lewis King. This entry in the series

is a glorified treasure hunt with Drummond's fiancée as the prize. John Howard is too self-conscious in the title role. Errol Flynn might have given this nonsense the flair it needed. Barrymore steals every scene he is in, without resorting to the gross hamminess that marred his last pictures. The studio-bound set is atmospheric, but the writing is rather ordinary.

★ ★ 1/2 **Picnic at Hanging Rock** (1976) Rachel Roberts, D: Peter Weir. Pauline Kael coined the term "the coffee-table movie" referring to such works as *Barry Lyndon*, *Days of Heaven*, and *Elvira Madigan*. This Australian film by the director of the *Last Wave* may be the first coffee-table suspense film. The story of three schoolgirls and their teacher who disappeared during an outing in 1900, is artistically dazzling. But it's a feast for the eye, and a famine for the brain. Story is sacrificed to artistic effect at every turn. The Australian cast performs like they were part of a feminine deodorant commercial. (Except for Rachel Roberts, who is so good, that when she is on, the film seems to be about her.)

★ ★ ★ **Terror By Night** (1946) Basil Rathbone, Nigel Bruce, Alan Mowbray, D: Roy William Neill. A lot of criticism has been leveled at the Universal Sherlock Holmes series. But they revive better than many of the "A's" of the period. Frank Gruber, the pulp writer, contributed an original script for this one, yet another murder on the train plot. Holmes matches wits with ex-Moriarty crony Colonel Sebastian Moran as he attempts to recover the famous "Star of Rhodesia." Moran's unmasking is no surprise, despite the school of red herrings Gruber throws at us. Rathbone has been accused of over-acting in these later entries. If so, he looks like the Jascha Heifetz of the art.



TAD ON TV

By Richard Meyers



Rod Serling is not dead. He's alive and well and living in your television set. For those who didn't know and for those who had merely suspected, the tube is the only true Twilight Zone. It is also the Outer Limits which not only controls the horizontal and verticle but the reruns as well. Taken together, they have played a cosmic joke on TV crime lovers. The media machine has been kicked onto endless repeats thanks to a screen actors' strike.

This is all my way of saying that all of those who were looking forward to a preview of the new season will have to wait one more column. For while the pilots of *Hill Street Blues*, *Enos*, *Magnum PI*, and *Freebie and the Bean* are finished, the networks are holding them in lieu of renewed production. This makes it very difficult for quarterly reporters to glue their bloodshot eyes to the screening screen.

So until the new series are released from their bondage, I will turn my critical cornea to efforts that have already gone, as well as the awards yet to come. There's a limited series, a TV movie and the Emmys to consider.

Nobody's Perfect, the series, is proof positive that last season was just as eccentric as the present delayed one. Originally titled *Hart In San Francisco*, it too was delayed by ABC from its initial airing date of September 1979. Eight episodes were filmed before the network abruptly pulled it from their schedule. Its first problem was the title. ABC also had the Robert Wagner-Stephanie Powers mystery vehicle *Hart to Hart* set to premiere. Three Harts on one channel was one too many. So they took one off. No "official" reason for its delay leaked out, but the network did suggest the third Hart might resurface in the second season.

January came and went and still ABC left their Hart in San Francisco. No reordering of episodes was forthcoming, so the cast and crew were disbanded. The producers were left to watch their TV Guide for any word of their unshewn series. It was not until July that we could all judge the show's merits.

Nobody's Perfect was a title no one was really happy with. It really didn't say anything about the concept; an eccentric Scotland Yard inspector transferred to the S.F.P.D.—a sort of *McCloud/Clouseau*. Only Roger Hart wasn't a drawing, innocent Southerner or a bumbling, ignorant Frenchman. The Scotland Yard Inspector was merely clumsy. He might break windows with his brawley and spill his tea occasionally, but he was devastating in the field.

The first week he rescued a suicide and foiled a hijacker. In other episodes he protected a state's witness, rescued his kidnapped partner and broke a ring of robbers who preyed on tourists. In fact, all the episodes capitalized on Hart's incredible physical prowess. As shown, Hart could outrun and outfight anyone on TV short of Buck Rogers.

Ron Moody



Arne Sultan and Chris Hayward created the Edward Montague/Norman Barash produced series. Ron Moody, best known for his Oscar-nominated performance as Fagin in *Oliver*, played Hart with impeccable style born of years on the music hall stage and BBC television. Cassie Yates played Jennifer Dempsey, his partner, in a role originally set for a man. The attractive, capable Ms. Yates was last seen as an intrepid nun on the trail of a gem-encrusted crop on an episode of *Vegas*.

Sadly the producers, writers and directors didn't handle the rest of the show with the same quality Moody and Yates brought to their roles. The supporting players, most notably Michael Durrell as Lt. De Gennaro, suffered under the weight of mediocre dialogue and direction. The laugh track was unusually noticeable and strident. The only real mirth was generated by Moody's comedic abilities. The only other worthy aspect of the middling effort was the location filming which ranged from a plane taxiing along a California road to a bay wall beneath the Golden Gate to the usual screeching car chases along the hilly inclines.

Screeching cars were also in evidence during the TV Movie in question; as were hot air balloons, a truck full of cheese, exploding doors, transvestitism, and a veritable swimming pool full of red herrings. The title was *Murder Can Hurt You* and it was broadcast May 21st, the same week as the rebroadcasts of the Edgar-winning *Murder by Natural Causes* and the *Wild Wild West Revisited*.

Initially hopes ran high that the former title would be as enjoyable in its way as the latter two shows were in theirs, but viewing only brought boring disappointment. The high hopes came from a tried and true formula born of the recent success of Neil Simon's movie satires *Murder by Death* and *The Cheap Detective*. But while those films lampooned famous movie detectives, *Murder Can Hurt You* aped the TV detectives.

Gavin MacLeod played the bald Nojack. Burt Young played the rumpled Palumbo.



Ron Moody (center) stars in Roger Hart of Scotland Yard, a brilliant but klutzy detective on temporary duty with the San Francisco Police Department who is teamed with female death Jennifer Dempsey (played by Carol Yates). They both report to Lt. Vince De Gennaro (played by Michael Durrell) in the ABC Television Network's new half-hour comedy series, *Nobody's Perfect*.

Buck Owens played the cowboy MacSkye, Victor Buono played the crippled Ironbottom, Tony Danza played the tough Lambretta, Connie Stevens played the vivacious Sgt. Salty, while Jamie Farr played Studsky to John Byner's Hatch. Unfortunately they were all pretty bad. Only Young, MacLeod, Danza and Buono displayed any attempt to accurately caricature their characters and even those haphazard performances were undercut by the truly awful, arbitrary writing which showed absolutely no satiric accuracy.

As rich as those mystery heroes are, the lousy plot had the group chasing a mysterious man in white, played by Mitch Kveindel, who was killing them off one by one. That, in itself, was serviceable, but they compounded the film's crime by not only being satirically scattershot but climaxing with a denouement which had everyone unharmed and revealed the villain to be Mrs. Palumbo in drag. She was trying to kill them because she felt neglected. It may be a lousy reason for murder, but it is a truly American one.

For all of you who may not have seen the program and are screaming like dying bulls because I revealed the ending, take heart (or Hart as the case may be). The script was so ridiculous, unfunny and unfair, there's no real way to guess the solution. Viewers would be far better off to catch Benny Hill's *Murder on the Orient Express* satire where the phenomenal English comedian delightfully embodies Ironside, Cannon, Kojak, and McCloud, while his associate, Bob Todd, plays Barnaby Jones.

As bad as *Murder Can Hurt You* was, it still garnered an Emmy nomination. Naomi

Cavin and Mary Hadley were cited for "Outstanding Achievement in Hairstyling." That was about the show. Other detective series, however, were far more worthy and the nominations, announced the first week in August, mirrored that fact.

The *Rockford Files* led the way with six nominations, including "Outstanding Drama Series," "Outstanding Lead Actor—James Garner," "Outstanding Lead Actress—Lauren Bacall in the *Lions Tigers Monkeys and Dogs* episode and Mariette Hartley in *The Paradise Cove* episode," and "Outstanding Supporting Actor—Noah Beery and Stuart Margolin."

Next came *Barney Miller* with five nominations. Hal Linden, Max Gail and Steve Landesburg were nominated for acting honors. Bob Colclary was cited for writing the *Photographer* episode, and the series was pegged as one of the five "Outstanding Comedy Series." The only other cop series getting more than one nomination was *Quincy, M.E.*, which got the nod for Alric Edens, the cinematographer for the *Riot* episode, and Jack Klugman, the outspoken lead of the show.

Classic mystery lovers, take heart! *Tenspeed and Brown Shoe* did not go unnoticed. Stephen J. Cannell was nominated for his writing of the pilot episode. On a slightly lesser note, *Hart To*

Hart's Man with *Jade Eyes* episode got an art direction nomination, while Fred Karlin of *Paris* and John Cavacas of *Eisched* were named in the "Outstanding Music Composition" category.

On the mystery borderline, detection had something to do with Emmy-nominated episodes of *Lou Grant* and *The Muppet Show*. The former show had an episode called *Hollywood* where Lou Grant and the Trib staff solved a decades-old movieband murder. Both director Burt Brinckerhoff and guest star Nina Foch were named. Naturally, the Edgar-winning Muppet show co-starring Liza Minelli is a half-hour spoof of classic detective themes. Director Peter Harris and video tape editor John Hawkins received the Emmy honors.

In the true crime department, *Attica* got five nominations for sound editing, film editing, writing, directing, and supporting actor (Charles Durning). The *Guyana Tragedy: The Story of Jim Jones* got four nominations for directing, sound mixing, lead actor (Powers Boothe) and "Outstanding Drama Special."

Only time will tell if the new 1980-81 shows will reach this height and I will do my best to judge their chances next time out. Until then, see the movie, read the book and I'll take care of the tube.

Super-sleuthing isn't easy at best, and it's particularly tough when Ironbottom's wheelchair spins out in *Murder Can Hurt You!*, a super-spoof of television's greatest detectives with an all-star cast including (l to r) Victor Buono as Ironbottom, Gavid MacLeod as Nojack, Connie Stevens as Salty and Jamie Farr as Studsky.



Marmelahd or Marmelade

By E. F. Bleiler

Very often when I have read a Sherlock Holmes story, I have found myself wondering about a very important point. How is it pronounced? Is it Lestrahd? or Lestrade? or, since he is probably a Cockney, Lestrade? What did Holmes say when he spoke to him—apart from abusive comments? Or, what did Doyle say, if he ever mentioned the name?

Most of my friends prefer Lestrahd, when the question is raised, and the preponderance of TV, movie and radio pronunciation has been the same Lestrahd. I have a faint memory of having once heard Lestrade, but I would not bet my first editions on it. Not that this all means anything, for my guess is that the actors know no more about it than I do.

About a month ago, in the New York Public Library, I came upon a reference to one G. Lestrade, who was Professor of Anthropology at Capetown University. Along with some ethnographic monographs, he had the distinction of having translated *Julius Caesar* into Bantu.

This aroused my interest, and the thought occurred to me that I could write to Professor Lestrade, explaining the problem, and ask him how he and his family pronounced the name. This would have some validity, if a family consensus existed. I remembered reading in my college days of a similar project in English lit. Someone wanted to know how the poet Cowper pronounced his name. Did he coo or cow? The investigator, whose name I forgot thirty years ago, thereupon undertook a large survey of all persons by the name Cowper in the area where the poet had lived, and tracked down old documents for possible phonetic misspellings. He came up with Cooper. Not that this was anything new. Everyone had known it anyway, but now it was quantized, rigorized, and finalized.

But then everything was spoiled when I found out a little more about Professor Lestrade. First, he was

almost certainly dead, and his first name happened to be Gerard, with an accent on the "e." He was obviously of French extraction, and wouldn't carry much weight in London. Nor was there any help to be obtained from a Lestrade Leather Goods in the New York phone directory. Their phone was disconnected, and I was damned if I would go over to the building and interrogate the night watchman.

A check in the London phone book revealed no Lestrades, but a look in the Paris phone book revealed many. No Englishman by name Lestrade had ever done anything worthy of record—written a book, committed a major crime, or held public office. But there were several French Lestrades who made the records. By now the inference seemed clear: Lestrade is not properly an English name—if there is such a thing—but probably a French name that Doyle happened to like. And, secondly, the original question seems closed: it is Lestrahd.

But why Lestrade? Doyle usually took pains with the names he used. He rang them carefully for sound and personal associations. We all know how he toyed with approximations until he cleared Sherlock Holmes, and we know how he picked the name Watson. Challenger and Malone also fit. But Lestrade, to me at least, does not have this nice click, and in terms of sound does not fit the capable plodder without imagination. Could it have had a special meaning for Doyle?

The Lestrades of nineteenth-century France do make the records. The name itself seems to be of southern origin, perhaps ultimately from a place name. Lestrade, which simply means "the street," was usually associated with Roman roads.

First of the Lestrades was Louis Lestrade (1768?–1840), a native of Cevennes, who fled to Switzerland during the Terror and returned under the Empire. He held small public offices during the reigns of

Napoleon and Louis Philippe. Could Doyle have known of his existence?

A series of medical Lestrades follow in the first half of the nineteenth century. Andre Lestrade wrote a book in 1811 about convulsions, and in 1815 J. N. Lestrade wrote about female complaints. In 1837 B. Lestrade published on white tumors, while L. Lestrade seems to have written on environmental medicine—it is difficult to tell from only a title entry.

Did Doyle run into these names when he was reading medicine at Edinburgh? It is possible, although they all seem to be minor men, who are not otherwise recorded. But a footnote may keep a name alive far beyond its original value.

Or is it possible that Doyle ran into the name Lestrade through his French family connections? The larger Doyle family had connections in France, and during 1876 Doyle spent some time with his uncle Michael Conan, who lived in Paris. As a result of all

this, Doyle was always interested in French history.

About the time that Doyle began writing, the Lestrades again emerged into minor eminence in France. Gaetan Combes de Lestrade, a Gascon, in 1885 wrote a political work on the Russian empire, and Father Lavaud de Lestrade, preacher of St. Sulpice in Paris, was causing a stir with his anti-Darwinian lectures and publications. I gather that they were philosophical and scientific in bent.

Doyle's relatives are known to have been religious fanatics who despaired at his lost soul. Could they have said, "Listen to this man. He will show you where you have gone astray."

I don't know. I have no answers to any of these questions or possibilities. Probably no answers exist.

But I have at least convinced myself that it is Lestrade and not Lestraid, and I now have only one question of this sort left to worry me. Was she American pronunciation Irene? or British pronunciation Irenee?

Quirky Quatrains

By Jane Gottschalk

When dances are led by Ellery Queen,
Not all fox trot or Begin the Beguine.
They're slow to know and pick up the beat,
Like Sgt. Velie with two left feet.

For a lively neighborhood barbecue
Invite the invidious Fu Manchu.
Suspense in a party you've hosted:
Just what and/or who will be roasted.

Clients with a case on
Check with Perry Mason,
Cheered and chief'd by Della,
Forte—a capella.

Need a companion for a lion's den?
Demand the witty Gervase Fen.
He's safer there than behind a wheel,
Conducting a chase from woe to weal.

If sharp-edged Sam Spade
Had butler and maid,
He might never have heard
Of that fabulous bird.

A Chanogram of Charlie Chan
Can warm like woolly cardigan:
"Only a squirrel
Thinks a nut a pearl."

What ever happened to Nancy Drew?
Did she bid adieu to derring-do?
And change to jeans from lovely frock
To make the scene with a jogging jock?

A dubious knight is Simon Templar,
A hither and yon aloof exemplar.
Will his halo be a starching pin
When the saints come marching in?

One never knows what the flap'll be
With gentleman John Appleby.
But certain are allusions to lit,
Bizarre conditions, a chase, and wit.

If Cape Cod crooks need a kayo,
Alert the sleuth Asey Mayo.
Mayhap unpolished except in speed,
His brains his armor, his Porter his steed.

CHECKLIST

MYSTERY, DETECTIVE AND SUSPENSE FICTION PUBLISHED IN THE U.S. APRIL-JUNE 1980

Alexander, Patrick: **Show Me a Hero**. Viking, 9.95
Address, Lesley: **Caper**. Putnam, 10.95
Anthony, Evelyn: **The Janus Imperative**. Coward, 10.95
Ball, John: **Then Came Violence**. Doubleday, 8.95
Banks, Carolyn: **The Darkroom**. Viking, 10.95
Bickham, Jack M.: **The Regensburg Legacy**. Doubleday, 10.00
Byron, Christopher: **Foreign Matter**. Doubleday, 10.00
Cain, James M.: **Hard Cain**. Gregg, 13.95
Campbell, Jeffrey: **The Homing**. Putnam, 9.95
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Coburn, Andrew: **Off Duty**. Norton, 10.95
Cohler, David Keith: **Gamemaker**. Doubleday, 10.00
Collins, Michael: **The Slasher**. Dodd, 7.95
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Crispin, Edmund: **Swan Song**. Walker, 9.95
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Ferrars, E. X.: **Designs on Life**. Doubleday, 8.95
Fleetwood, Hugh: **The Redeemer**. Atheneum, 8.95
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Francis, Richard: **Daggerman**. Pantheon, 8.95
Fredman, Mike: **Kisses Leave No Fingerprints**. St. Martin's, 8.95
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By M. S. Cappadonna

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Dick Francis WHIP HAND

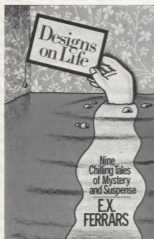


A Novel

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Paperbacks

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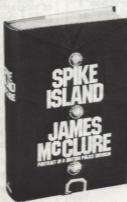


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 Chandler, Raymond: **Playback**. Ballantine, 2.25
 Chandler, Raymond: **The Simple Art of Murder**. Ballantine, 2.25
 Chandler, Raymond: **Trouble Is My Business**. Ballantine, 2.25
 Chesbro, George C.: **An Affair of Sorcerers**. Signet, 2.25

Christie, Agatha: **Poirot Loses a Client**. Dell, 1.95
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 Coburn, Andrew: **The Babysitter**. Pocket, 2.50
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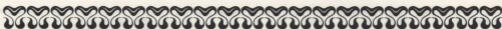
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An Interview with STUART KAMINSKY

by Robert J. Randisi

This interview was conducted in The Mysterious Bookshop, 129 West 56th Street, New York, in April 1980. Stuart Kaminsky had come to New York to attend the Mystery Writers of America's Annual Edgar Awards Dinner, and I had arranged with Stuart to meet at the bookstore. Once there, Otto Penzler was kind enough to let us use his private library for the interview, and also his tape machine which was of a superior quality to mine.

Thanks, Otto.

RJR: First of all, how did the idea of combining a Private Eye with famous movie stars of the 40's come about?

SK: It started in nineteen seventy-three. I had been working on an official biography of Charlton Heston, and for various reasons, it fell through. I started the novel sort of therapeutically, not thinking it was going to get any interest at all. I was writing it for myself, exclusively. I had written five novels before this, none of which were published, some of which had some interest, some of which hadn't, and I had always been interested in Private Eye fiction. I wrote my first story when I was fourteen years old and had it rejected by the neighborhood mimeograph machine. I plunged into it (the novel) essentially as a therapeutic thing. One thing that amazed me was how quickly it went. I hadn't done much research on the first one as I have on the others. Almost everything came out of my head. I had just finished reading *My Wicked, Wicked Ways*, the Errol Flynn, totally fantasized autobiography, and I really like Errol Flynn. If people go back and look at the book they'll see that there is a mention of Charlton Heston. That was also the only one I did without an outline. All the rest have been outlined.

RJR: Tell me something about your formal education.

SK: I've got a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism from the University of Illinois, a Master's in English Lit

from the University of Illinois, a Ph.D. in Speech from Northwestern University, where I teach.

RJR: And you write Private Eye fiction.

SK: And I write Private Eye fiction . . . and biographies.

RJR: Even now, with all your success, you don't write full time? You still teach?

SK: Yes, I teach full time . . . and I do my writing, too.

RJR: Do you write by a schedule?

SK: Yes. What I do is get a basic idea and let it work subconsciously for three, four, five months, while I'm doing other things. At the end of three or four months I'll start writing an outline. After I've done the outline, I'll then go back and do some research to give me a feeling for the period I'm going to cover. I usually select one or two periods, then I go to the library, spend a lot of time reading the *L.A. Times*. I do things like listening to old radio shows. I like it, I enjoy doing it, looking at old movies, a little reading of biographies, which I enjoy doing. After I do that, once I start the process of writing, I work very intensely. I can't put it away. Part of the reason is that the writing, for me, is so much like reading. I'm really interested in what's happening. I don't know what's going to happen. I know in general, I don't deviate from the totality of the outline, but in individual chapters I don't know what a character's going to say, I don't know how he's going to develop, and I really enjoy doing it, so usually I work very intensely, about 8 hours a day. I'll try and do a chapter a day, fifteen to twenty pages.

RJR: That's a pretty full day. How many hours a day do you teach?

SK: I teach full time.

RJR: Then you don't go home and write for eight hours?

SK: No, I don't go home and write. I go home and

pay attention to my family. I don't write until the kids are asleep. So when I'm writing, I don't sleep very much, and I work on weekends. Once I start, when the outline's done, normally it takes me about two and a half weeks, if I don't run into any problems. That differs dramatically from the biographies, which take me much longer, and I hate doing them. I like doing the research, but to actually sit down and write a mass of material—I think part of the reason I like doing the kind of novels I do is I don't have to deal with actual dates. There are a hundred and fifty people out there who are experts on the trivia of each individual.

RJR: Then, are the Toby Peters novels like a vacation from the bios? You do a bio, then sit down and do a Toby Peters?

SK: Yes, but my real goal is to stop doing the bios, and only do the Toby Peters.

RJR: Many people may not be aware that you are starting a new series. Could you explain a little about it?

SK: Sure, I'll tell you where it came out of, too. For years I wanted to do a heavy, serious, historical novel, a family novel, fictionally tracing my own family from Russia in the 1800's, the late 1800's. I did a lot of research and actually wrote about 150 pages on it. No publisher has been interested in it for various reasons, most of which I can agree with at this point. One of the things I thought of, after all the rejections, was that my interest in Russia might turn me in another direction and might actually be worked into a contemporary mystery novel. Part of the reason stemmed, too, from reading police procedural series I liked very much. I started thinking about what exotic scene I know a lot about, so I decided to do a police procedural set in Russia. The first one, which is finished, took me—the research took longer than on any Toby Peters—and the writing took me a bit longer, too, but I think if it continues as a series it will come a lot easier. Some of the people who have most influenced me in police procedurals have been Ed McBain, number one—in fact, my detective, who is a police inspector, reads the 87th Pct. Novels. He gets them through the black market, and hides them in his house. He's confused, though. He thinks they're about a real place and his goal in life is to visit Isola. I also like the William Marshall/Yellowthread Street mysteries, and the Chester Himes...

RJR: What about the Wahloo-Sjowall books?

SK: Yes, I like those too. They're a little different. I guess as a carryover from the Toby Peters novels, I like the idea of the bizarre and the potentially comic. I think the new novel is not comic in the way the Toby Peters are. I think it's more serio-comic, more bizarre and surreal.

RJR: Is there one main character?

SK: Three—actually, four. I've got the Inspector, who has idiosyncrasies. His hero is Alexeev (the Russian weight lifter). He has weights in his apartment. His goal in the novel is to compete in a weightlifting contest in one of the parks. He has all sorts of difficulties. His toilet doesn't work and he's determined he's going to beat the system, so he reads up on plumbing and decides he's going to learn everything, even the sewage system, and fix his own toilet. He has two assistants. One is a young police officer who's just been married, the other is a kind of dedicated communist. Very stoic. Above them is a woman prosecutor who sees herself as being very tough.

RJR: I understand that Charter is releasing it in September 1981. Why are you doing the book as a paperback original?

SK: It's not my choice, it's what my agent arranged. I'm very happy with it. I have no objection to doing it as a paperback original. It was not a matter of conscious choice and I'm not displeased with it.

RJR: Did you offer it to St. Martin's?

SK: Yes. In fact, the whole idea for doing it was that St. Martin's was interested in my developing another series, and I proposed this and another. Actually, this I actually did some work on. I proposed another which I did a little work on. I don't like giving away plots, but this one involved a sports reporter in a small Chicago suburb, a really disgruntled old sports reporter, who goes to a basketball game with a very young teenage photographer, which is what you get and they witness the murder of the center of the team, the equivalent to Artis Gilmore, and then the two of them have to go through the process of finding the murderer, and my idea for the murderer was the equivalent of the San Diego chicken. Actually, the whole idea of that was I love professional basketball and it would have been an excuse to get in the locker room, or maybe sit on the bench.

RJR: What is the title of the police procedural?

SK: The title, which we are going to change, is *Rostanyakov's Corpse*. It opens with his having several days to find the murderer of a dissident, who was about to go on trial and gets murdered. He gets hit in the chest with a sickle. I told you, it's bizarre. The second murder is committed with a hammer. That won't be the final title. We're working on a new one.

RJR: What do you read for pleasure, besides police procedurals?

SK: I read a lot, and I read very quickly. Last night I read two novels. I read Dick Francis' *Nerve* and John

D. MacDonald's *Dress Her in Indigo*. I think I've read all of the Travis McGees. I read the Robert Parker novels, I've read Jonathan Valin's *The Lime Pit*. I tend to go more strongly towards Private Eye novels than the classical things. I really like Jonathan Latimer, especially the thirties things. *Headed for a Hearse* I liked a lot.

RJR: Have you encountered any problems with using real people in your books?

SK: Not yet.

RJR: So far, everyone you've used is dead.

SK: Except a couple of times I've mentioned people who I know personally.

RJR: Do you check with an attorney, or anyone, as far as potential problems in using real people?

SK: No, I've left it up to St. Martin's. In fact, in every book I've gone through a series of warnings for them, "please check, please check." One thing that I think is important when I write these books, I think I'm much kinder to these people than they were to themselves. Everything that I have Errol Flynn doing, I'm certainly nicer to him than he was to himself, certainly nicer than his biography is. I have a nostalgic attitude towards them, my goal is not to tear them down, my goal is to engage in the fantasy of what they represent. Like Judy Garland. I'm much nicer to Judy Garland than she or anyone else ever was.

RJR: Could you offer us a few names of people you intend to use in the future?

SK: Sure, Gary Cooper, Ernest Hemingway. I want to do a circus one with Emmett Kelley.

RJR: How about the tough guy actors, like Cagney?

SK: Well, Bogart's been done. I had Bogart in my first one, *Bullet For a Star*. Andrew Bergman did *Hollywood and Levine* and there's *The Man with Bogart's Face* (Andrew Fenaday).

RJR: What about John Wayne?

SK: That's interesting. I was thinking of doing the next on John Wayne, and then I switched to Gary Cooper because I've done a book on Gary Cooper. It's kind of ironic, because in checking up, it's quite possible—I'm engaging in a little fantasy, now—that Marion Morrison (John Wayne) could have known Toby Peters. They're both from Glendale. Toby's father owned a grocery store, John Wayne's father worked in a drug store, so I thought they might be boyhood friends.

RJR: How old would John Wayne be?

SK: It's comparable (to Toby). He would have been a little younger than Wayne, but it's close.

RJR: Is Toby aging with every book?

SK: Yes, I'm writing them chronologically, but that may have to stop, depending on how many books I do. He may cease to age. I've also thought about what would happen when I reach the post-war period. I don't know at what age I'm going to stop him, if I do it at all. I haven't thought much about the circus one. The one thing I do know is that somebody is going to murder an elephant. I haven't thought about it much past that. It'll probably be electrocuted.

RJR: With several of the people I've interviewed in the past, we've gone into the Chandler-versus-Hammett question. Since you are interested—and involved—in the Private Eye genre, would you be willing?

SK: Sure, I'm willing to go into it. My vote is for Chandler, but that's personal. I wouldn't take it to the point where I'd say that Chandler was better than Hammett, Hammett is better than Chandler. I think different people like different things. I'm just more attracted to Chandler's attitude—in fact, I'm attracted to what I consider the softer attitude of Chandler.

RJR: How about Spillane? There has been some heated discussion on his merits—if any—as a writer. A lot of people seem to feel he is underrated.

SK: I think so, too. It's interesting. I think part of the stigma is stemming from his popularity in the early fifties. The middle-brow intellectuals, the pseudo-intellectual critics of the time sort of labelled him right at the beginning. Part of it based on the contents of his books, not on his ability to handle the language, and his enormous popularity, maybe because of the absence of a popular culture, led to a great literary reaction against him, which to this day hasn't been overcome. People won't reread the darn books, and when they do reread them they don't read them. They're still driven by this historical image of Spillane that they won't read him. I think it's one thing to say you don't like the way he writes, it's another thing to say that you disagree with what he's writing about, and I think people should differentiate between those two things. I mean, he's essentially a male, chauvenist pig, but so are a lot of them. A lot of people don't even remember when he wrote. He was writing when Chandler was still popular, when Ross Macdonald was just starting.

RJR: How do you feel about Ross Macdonald?

SK: I like him very much. I read all the novels. I think someone has a right to change, and the novels have moved increasingly towards more introspection, more plot, more overt psychology, but I realize that the novel is going to be like that, and I appreciate it. I would never presume to say, go back to what you were doing. If I didn't like the novel, I wouldn't read

it. My favorite Ross Macdonald novel is *The Ivory Grin*.

RJR: Let's get back to your books. Did you have any trouble selling the idea, initially, for the Toby Peters book(s)?

SK: No. My agent, I think, tried one or two other publishers before St. Martin's. It was sold fairly quickly.

RJR: Have there been any movie offers, any interest in Toby Peters for films?

SK: We're in the final stages of negotiation with 20th Century Fox for the option and the way it stands now, they'll probably have something like one year to make up their minds. And there's always the hopeful possibility of a TV series.

RJR: In the event that there was a TV series, would you be tempted to do some scripts?

SK: Sure, I'd love to, very much. Part of it would depend on whether they developed it as a half hour comedy, or an hour dramatic series. I won't have any choices. If they're one hour, dramatic shows, then I'm interested.

RJR: How upset would you be if somebody took it and made it into a half hour comedy series?

SK: That would depend on how much they paid me. By the time that happened I'd be up to the fifth, sixth or seventh novel, which is where I really live in my own fantasy. That wouldn't bother me too much. I think, rather than being upset at what they did, the author should be upset that they don't succeed enough so that he didn't make a lot of money.

RJR: Is the money more important to you than your art?

SK: I wrote the first one without the thought that anyone was going to buy it. I wrote it because I wanted to do it. I really didn't think that anyone would be interested. I did it for fun, I love doing it. After that's done, obviously, I want to make money, but I don't know if it simply comes down to a question of compromising. Sometime that may happen, but it hasn't happened to me, yet.

RJR: Then for the right amount of money you wouldn't mind seeing Toby Peters in a half hour comedy, doing pratfalls and taking pies in the face?

SK: No, I wouldn't mind, and the reason I wouldn't mind is, I don't come from a situation where I've had a lot of money. If I'm going to make a hundred and fifty, two-hundred thousand dollars a year from *that* Toby Peters, I'm not going to watch the series, but I'd be very happy to collect the checks. I would prefer that it not happen, but if it did, I could live with it. I'm not interested in telling these people what to do with my property. My vested interest in the property, as great as it is, is actually less than theirs. I'm not



risking anything, and they're risking enormous amounts, and if they're going to make a mistake, it's going to be their mistake, not my mistake. And if they make a good decision, it seems that I'll benefit from it... by good, I mean "popular."

RJR: I may be getting mixed up between you and (Andrew) Bergman, but somebody had Raymond Chandler in their book.

SK: I did, in *Murder on the Yellow Brick Road*. I had mixed feelings about that. Before I used Chandler, I had to make a decision. For me it was an interesting decision. My initial thought was of putting Philip Marlowe in the novel, but it broke with the idea of what I was doing. All of my references are not to that kind of confusion. I have nothing against that kind of confusion, but I decided that it would confuse me too much. My fantasy is very clear, my world is a fantasized world with real people in it. If I start having a fantasized world with other people's fantasies projected into it, I would get confused. In the new book I also suggest that Toby influenced William Faulkner to write *Knight's Gambit*, which obviously is ridiculous, and Toby goes through this blissfully unaware that he is affecting anybody.

RJR: If you stop aging Toby, can you see him getting into the fifties and sixties?

SK: I can see him getting into the early fifties, but I have trouble seeing him get into the sixties. There's a radical difference and we've already had an enormous nostalgia and response to the sixties, in film particularly.

RJR: Do you want to mention your latest Toby Peters novel?

SK: Sure, it stars Bela Lugosi and is called *Never Cross a Vampire*. It'll be out in the Fall (1980).

RJR: Okay. Thanks and lots of luck with the new venture.

SK: Thank you.

LETTERS

From Doug Greene:

First, a further note on John Dickson Carr's BBC radio work: Dana Batory, who is working on an annotated edition of Doyle's *The Lost World*, has discovered who wrote the script for the 1944 serial of that story—Peggy Wells, not JDC. Some additional information of a more positive nature has also come to light. On August 28, 1943, the BBC broadcast Carr's "The Dead Sleep Lightly," which differed from the *Suspense* version in that it was lengthened to include Dr. Fell. Carr did other unrecorded work for the BBC, including an adaptation of *The Mystery of the Yellow Room*, but since I have been unable to discover the broadcast date, that play is not included in the bibliography to my edition of *The Door to Doom and Other Detections*. Incidentally, I will gratefully receive any additions to the Carr bibliography in the hope that we can include more information in the British edition of *Doom*.

The Summer 1979 TAD was wonderfully enjoyable. Carolyn Hartman's cover of both halves of EQ is superb, and the articles are so uniformly high in quality that it is difficult to single any of them out. But certainly Ed Hoch's "A Mirror to Our Crimes" deserves special praise for illuminating the connection between fictional and nonfictional mayhem. I also enjoyed Mike Nevins on the Queen TV shows and Ron Goulart on Ellery as a comic-book hero. Both articles combine learning with enthusiasm. I'm sorry to say that I intensely disliked the "Classic Corner" story. Otto Penzler points out that the *Lingo Dan* "stories lack sufficient grace of style to make them popular discoveries." That seems to me an understatement. The example reprinted in TAD is both brutal and silly.

I'm glad that you included the late Adrian Goldstone's "Quacks in the Quorum" with my more positive evaluation of *Queen's Quorum*. It is encouraging to find diversity in interests, and many of Goldstone's points are interesting, especially about the inappropriateness of "H," "Q," and "R/S" as evaluations of the *Quorum* titles. No historian, however, would limit history to "war, revolution, conquest, movement of populations, and economic development or decline." Nor would many aficionados of the detective story believe, as does Goldstone, that the importance of a book can be deduced from the number of surviving copies. If that were the case, we should certainly judge Poe's *Tales* and Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* to be extremely insignificant. I'm grateful that Charles Shibuk (in a letter to TAD, Winter 1980) suggests another addition to my "Supplement" to the *Quorum*. Perhaps I should have included Hodgson's *Captain Gault*, but I've never been able to buy a copy or even to borrow one. Shibuk is a very good



critic, and on his say-so I'll continue to search for *Gault*. Shibuk's Retro Reviews are a high-point of each issue, and in fact his review of Olde's *Incredible Adventures of Rowland Hern* first introduced me to that book. I hope that other readers will suggest additions to my article.

Speaking of diversity (as I was a while back), the trip from Summer to Fall in TAD was marked by special issues from Queen to Spillane. Barson, Banks, and Collins all produced good articles, but it says something about Spillane that even his defenders admit the weaknesses of his plots and characterizations. As Banks shows, the critics have often based their judgment on too-hasty skimming of Spillane's work; yet, despite the fact that critics have miscounted the numbers of killings or beatings of women, I suspect that their negative conclusions are correct. Although Spillane's popularity may say much about his audience or even his times, that fact doesn't mean that he can write a detective story. Sex and (often implied) sadism, yes; detection, no. In the October 1969 *Mystery Reader's Newsletter*, Mike Nevins took Spillane as a writer apart in an article whose title tells it all: "Department of Unmitigated Mishmash." But the Spillane TAD does have much in it to praise, especially the delightful "Peter Cramer's Cigars" in the "Classic Corner."

Very briefly on the Winter 1980 TAD: The cover shows admirably how a talented artist can make an effective design using only black on a white stock. Of the articles in this issue, Scott's account of the Wimseys and Purcell's analysis of Amanda Cross stand out.

* * * * *

From Max Allen Collins:

I suppose I should respond to the condescending remarks made by Mike Avallone about my Spillane-on-film article...

Whether or not the Spillane movies were box office flops seems to me irrelevant (and inaccurate): the films did not do as well as expected, but well enough for their producer to do four of them before throwing in the

towel). And I could care less what critics of the day thought about them: it was my purpose to re-evaluate them, anyway.

Besides which, *Kiss Me Deadly* had its defenders even in 1955 (François Truffaut, among them) and has since come to be considered a major film of the '50s among many critics—see articles in *Film Comment*, *Take One*, etc., and books like the recent *Film Noir* (edited by Silver and Ward) and *Dreams and Dead Ends: The American Gangster/Crime Film* by Shadoian. Also, Carlos Clarens deals with the film intelligently in his recent *Crime Movies*. So my views on the merits of that film are not the first of their kind.

I don't know how to break this to Avallone, but I have seen all but one (*Riff Raff*) of the private eye movies he cites as examples of the "finest Eye films," and while a few of them are arguably excellent (*Murder My Sweet*, especially, dated and superficial though it now seems) none measure up to *Kiss Me Deadly*—or the only other two really excellent private eye movies I can think of, *Chinatown* and *The Maltese Falcon*.

The Big Sleep, for example, is an argument for the fallibility of Howard Hawks and Humphrey Bogart. Or perhaps I should say Leigh Brackett and William Faulkner (and Raymond Chandler, for that matter) because the film's hopelessly confused and confusing screenplay overshadows its many merits. *Marlowe* is an underrated film, in some ways the best Chandler adaptation of 'em all, though hurt by the '40s nature of the story not working in a late '60s California setting. One of the movies he mentions (*P.L.*) is flat out lousy; another (*Warning Shot*) is not a private eye movie.

And anyone who can seriously list the dreadful subjective camera nightmare *Lady in the Lake*—an embarrassment by any yardstick—as one of the "finest Eye films" ever made is somebody I can't take seriously at all.

Despite Avallone's half-hearted defense of *J. J. Jury*, the rest of his letter is a case in point where the jealousy of other mystery writers for Spillane is concerned. It's no wonder Spillane never joined MWA, when writers from an Avallone to a Chandler or Ellery Queen have publicly scorned him. Am I the only person who's noticed that the gallery of mystery writers gracing the covers of EQMM has not included the Mick?

Not long ago I suggested to a major mystery writer that Spillane should be honored by the MWA with a Grand Master Award. This suggestion was greeted with boos of laughter. When I asked this unnamed major mystery writer why he felt this way about Spillane, he said, "He poses with guns on his book covers." End of critical appraisal.

So I'm not surprised when another *Armchair* correspondent, Randy Cox, dismisses *l*, the *Jury* as "peculiar and hilarious... peculiar because the stereotypical Spillane seems to be missing from that book, hilarious... well, just take my word for it." That, unfortunately, is the level of criticism Spillane has usually been subjected to.

* * * * *

From Jane Gottschalk:

Congratulations for a fine issue. Vol. 13:1 finally arrived at a time when I have a bit of a breather. Although it is apparent from articles and letters that readers' tastes vary enormously, you usually include a good choice for everyone, a gourmet's delight. It is tempting to comment on many different features of your publication, but in this breather I'll restrict it to praise for the fine work of B. A. Pike for "Margery Allingham's Albert Campion" and of Charles La Borda for "Dicks on Stage." Both series are comprehensive, extremely readable, and tie together for reference what most readers only dabble in.

* * * * *

From John Dinan:

Let me be the first to ask that Leslie Charteris be granted the Grand Master in April of 1981 for his unique contribution to the field of mystery fiction. I don't believe there has been a year during the last fifty years when there was no Saint story published in one form or another. Surely this record is unmatched!

* * * * *

From Steve Stilwell:

My pleasure upon receiving the latest TAD, Volume 13, #1, was somewhat tempered by my feeling that it was a more slender issue than in the past. Doing some quick research, I found that Volume 11, #1 had 104 pages, Volume 12, #1 had 96 pages, and Volume 13, #1, only 80 pages. I hope that this is not an indication of worse times ahead and is but a temporary aberration. Surely people are not submitting less material.

Two things, within the issue itself, that I am moved to comment upon.

First, the article "A Song for the Unsung" by Joseph J. Coffey was a welcome treat. For quite some time it has been my considered opinion that the Gold Medal Originals have been unduly ignored. Mr. Coffey's article is an excellent beginning to what I hope will be more studies of unheralded, worthwhile authors in the paperback original field. Thanks.

My second point is somewhat more personal.

Ye olde editor continues to amaze (and occasionally befuddle) with his many ways to carp about, what he considers, gratuitous sex. A "regrettably advanced case of satyriasis" indeed. Clean, healthy urges, I call 'em. Someday I will do an annotated listing of your various phrases re: Gratuitous Sex. Until then, keep 'em coming!

* * * * *

From Hayford Peirce:

Having just received a number of delayed TAD's, I hope I'm not too late for a comment on the Mickey Spillane issue of the Fall of 1979.

Penzler, Barson, and Banks all point out at varying lengths that Spillane has been universally "ignored or maligned" by such critics as Malcolm Cowley, John Cawelti, George Grella, Christopher La Farge, and Kingsley Amis. True, true....

I would wager a pretty penny, however, that the combined readership of all these critics is not one-half that of the December 1966 issue of *Playboy*. A *Playboy* which contains, along with such features as "The Girls of Tahiti," an article by that noted critic Kingsley Amis, modestly entitled "My Favorite Sleuths," being "a highly personal dossier on fiction's most famous detectives."

The article is a lengthy, beautifully-written survey of fictional sleuths from Dupin through Fen, which should be read by everyone interested in the field. Much of it is devoted to "the three great successors of Sherlock Holmes," Father Brown, Nero Wolfe, and Doctor Fell, and to the other heroes of the classical detective story.

But before reaching the classics, Amis devotes himself at some length to the hard-boiled school, espousing a point of view tantamount to heresy to most readers of these pages.

Halfway between the policeman and the amateur comes the private investigator, of whom Dashiel Hammett's Sam Spade and Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe are typical, plus, in a rather different way, Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer. Theirs is a fantasy world all right, that of the toughie whose sacred objects are the gun, the boot, the bottle of rye and (less so in Chandler than in the others) the male organ.... The toughies have no decent cause. Self-interest is all.

This would probably matter less than it does if these writers wrote better. Spillane is the best of the three cited—an unpopulist view, which I would defend hotly. Legitimate shock and horror at the beastliness of Hammer's universe should not be allowed to weigh against the technical brilliance with which the whole thing is stage-managed. Few novelists on any level can



match Spillane's skill in getting his essential facts across palatably and without interrupting the action, in knowing what to leave out; and the impression received that the narrative is just tumbling out of Hammer's mouth at 200 words a minute is a tribute to real professional competence.

Can this be real? A critic finding something good to say about Mickey Spillane? And not in the recondite pages of *The University of Chicago Magazine*, readership seven graduate students and an associate-professor, but blatantly trumpeted forth on the glossy pages of *Playboy*, readership in the multi-millions. Can this be Kingsley Amis?

Indeed yes. A certain semblance of sanity is clung to at the last moment:

With all this granted, what makes the stories finally stultifying is Hammer's total facelessness, or mindlessness. He is a mere network of gristle connecting mouth, fist, trigger finger, and penis. A hero needs more substance than that.

Whew, saved by the bell. But I would suggest that if you capable a critic as Kingsley Amis can discern merit in some degree surpassing Hammett and Chandler, somewhere among the millions and millions of readers (and admirers?) of Mickey Spillane is a reputable critic who has been bold enough to come out four-square for *all* the virtues of this continuously assailed writer. Who could it be?

* * * * *

From Peter L. Stern:

You may be interested in a serious problem I had with another specialist dealer in mystery fiction. I ordered two books from the August list of Judy K. Reynolds/Mail Order Books of St. Louis, Missouri. The first book was Jacques Futrelle's *The Thinking Machine*, priced at \$150.00 and described as "near fine." The second book was Grant Allen's *An African Millionaire*, also priced at \$150.00, and described as "Near fine, spine lettering faded, but pictorial binding is quite bright." I received this package on August 20. In my opinion, and confirmed by a collector who was present while I opened the package, these books did not measure up to their descriptions. The Futrelle's back cover was discolored by a large brown stain, and there was considerable cloth wear. The Allen book was in even worse condition: both hinges were cracked, and an attempt had been made at one time to repair the front hinge, probably causing more harm than good. The spine and the top of the front cover were scuffed, and its general aspect gave merely a hint of its original brightness. In my own catalogue I would have described these as barely good and fair, respectively.

The stated terms of Judy Reynolds' catalogue are that returns are allowed within seven days if not "as described." Accordingly, the day after receiving the package, I called Ms. Reynolds, and spoke to a Mr. Miller, who became quite curt on hearing that I intended to return these two items. Mr. Miller was apparently further concerned that I had neglected to send the postage cost with my

order. With my return, I included a check for this postage.

Last week, I received Ms. Reynolds' reply in which she stated that the books were as described, and not subject to exchange or refund. Furthermore, she claimed that the hinges of *An African Millionaire* must have been damaged en route or by "some other means." Finally, she stated that she would return these two items to me when she received "appropriate postage."

Your readers should be assured that this situation is not at all business as usual in the book trade. In eight years I have never either refused a return from a customer, or been refused one by a dealer. Ms. Reynolds, who in my opinion has seriously misdescribed these books in the first place, has placed herself in the position of being the sole judge of the correctness of that original description. In essence then, she is selling books "as is," without informing the buyer. "Let the buyer beware" is *not* a credo of the book trade. The ability to return is the foundation on which confidence in the book trade rests. Your readers should know that they have a right to return a book to a dealer, and that this decision is up to the customer. Customers may not always be right, but they should always be treated as if they are.

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From R. L. Wenstrup:

Leafing through TAD Vol. 12 No. 4, I came upon Randy Cox's letter and reference to a writer with the intriguing name (a pseudonym?) of *Dornford Yates*. By circumstance, it is the second time in two nights I have run across this Englishman's name, never having heard of him before.

Interested in anything dealing with the subject of books, I was reading last night an article in the magazine *In Britain* on second-hand village bookshops. Seemed just what the doctor ordered. About half-way through the article, the author, Simon Hoggart, has this to say...

"About three years ago I conceived a guilty passion for the works of *Dornford Yates*, an English writer who wrote appallingly snobbish accounts of jolly high-jinks among the upper-classes. They were the opposite of great literature, but ideal for filling an idle day on holiday or in the sick bed."

The author goes on to say how cheap and easy he thought it would be for him to acquire copies of this once popular writer, but found, on the contrary, that in the shops he visited, his works were scarce and dear.

Recently the period between the wars, 1920-1945, has enjoyed a rebirth of interest. (Perhaps due in part to *Upstairs, Downstairs*.) Such recently neglected writers as Nancy Mitford, E. F. Benson, Angela Turckell, S. S.

Van Dine and now perhaps Dornford Yates are again gaining public favor.

It is a theory of mine, that generally speaking (with normal exceptions), the art world stopped *growing* after the "golden age" (1920-1950), viz.:

Architecture: Since the transition from Victorian to art nouveau to art deco—what?

Fine Arts: Since Picasso, Matisse—what?

Popular Music: Since Rock 'n' Roll—what?

Jazz: Since "Bop," Gillespie, Brubeck—what?

Classical Music: Since Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Gershwin—what?

Popular Arts: Has TV programming progressed beyond radio scripts such as "I Love a Mystery?"

Theatre: Is Doc Simon an improvement on Kaufman and Hart?

Movies: Can anything in the last 30 years compare with *City Lights* (1931), *Sons of the Desert* (1933), *Gone With the Wind* (1939), *Citizen Kane* (1941), *Devil in the Flesh* (1946)?

Technology has made great strides, but *has art progressed?* Perhaps it's just me singing "September Song" but truthfully does *anyone enjoy* today's classical music?

Back on course, perhaps the promised article by Randy Cox on Dornford Yates will shed some light both on this period and why development seemed to cease after it.

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BILL PRONZINI: A CHECKLIST

Francis Nevins, Jr., and Bill Pronzini

Introduction

He is the last pulpster. Those moldering old lurid-covered magazines like *Black Mask*, *Detective Fiction Weekly*, *Dime Detective*, which spawned Hammett and Chandler and dozens of other talents and revolutionized American crime fiction, are central to Bill Pronzini's life and work in far more ways than one. He has read and collected pulps avidly for years. Like the great pulpsters, he is tirelessly prolific behind the typewriter. Like countless pulp writers who later turned to book-length mystery fiction, he often bases his novels on his own previously published short stories, expanding, deleting or combining characters and plot elements as needed. Like the pulpsters of the thirties and forties, he has written in a variety of genres—mysteries, science fiction, westerns, spicy stories—by himself and with a variety of collaborators, under his own name, joint bylines, pseudonyms and house names. His most famous series character, the nameless San Francisco private eye who is referred to herein as N, is not only a pulp collector like his creator, but he often thinks of himself as a figment of a pulp writer's imagination, and occasionally solves a case (as in *The Snatch*) thanks to recalling some detail of a pulp story he has read.

Pronzini was born in Northern California in 1943, sold his first story at the age of 23 ("You Don't Know What It's Like," *Shell Scott Mystery Magazine*, 11/66), created the character of N in 1968 and became a full-time writer the following year. For the next few years he lived and wrote in Majorca and West Germany, then settled in San Francisco where he resides today. He has published 18 novels and around 200 short stories to date. The majority of his stories have no recurring characters but he has created three series figures. N, the pulp private eye who is alive and well in contemporary San Francisco, has appeared in six novels and 14 short stories, many of them recycled into the novels. Dan Connel (DC), adventurer and charter pilot, stars in two novels and three short stories, all of which are incorporated into the novels. International go-between Carmody (C) is the protagonist of a single novel and four short stories.

I(A). Novels Written or Co-Authored by Bill Pronzini

- The Stalker*. Random House, 1971.
N *The Snatch*. Random House, 1972.
Panic! Random House, 1972.
DC *The Jade Figurine*, as by Jack Foxx. Bobbs-Merrill, 1972.
N *The Vanished*. Random House, 1973.
N *Undercurrent*. Random House, 1973.
C *A Run in Diamonds*, as by Alex Saxon. Pocket Books, 1973.
Snowbound. Putnam, 1974.





- DC *Dead Run*, as by Jack Foxx. Bobbs-Merrill, 1975.
The Running of Beasts, by Bill Pronzini and Barry N. Malzberg. Putnam, 1976.
Freebooty, as by Jack Foxx. Bobbs-Merrill, 1976.
Games. Putnam, 1976.
 N *Blowback*. Random House, 1977.
Acts of Mercy, by Bill Pronzini and Barry N. Malzberg. Putnam, 1977.
 N *Twospot*, by Bill Pronzini and Collin Wilcox. Putnam, 1978.
Wildfire, as by Jack Foxx. Bobbs-Merrill, 1978.
Night Screams, by Bill Pronzini and Barry N. Malzberg. Playboy Press, 1979.
 N *Labyrinth*. St. Martin's Press, 1979.

**(B). Anthologies Edited or Co-Edited
 by Bill Pronzini**

- Tricks and Treats*, ed. Joe Gores and Bill Pronzini. Doubleday, 1976.
Midnight Specials: An Anthology for Train Buffs and Suspense Aficionados. Bobbs-Merrill, 1977.
Dark Sins, Dark Dreams: Crime in Science Fiction, ed. Barry N. Malzberg and Bill Pronzini. Doubleday, 1978.
Werewolf! A Chrestomathy of Lycanthropy. Arbor House, 1979.

The End of Summer: Science Fiction of the Fifties, ed. Barry N. Malzberg and Bill Pronzini. Ace pb, 1979.

Shared Tomorrows: Science Fiction in Collaboration, ed. Bill Pronzini and Barry N. Malzberg. St. Martin's Press, 1979.

**II. Short Fiction and Non-Fiction
 as by Bill Pronzini**

Adventure

C 12/70 *The \$50,000 Bosom*.

Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine

- 12/67 *Opportunity*.
 1/68 *The Running Man*. (*Murders I Fell in Love With*, ed. Alfred Hitchcock. Dell pb, 1969. *Alfred Hitchcock's Anthology*, Fall-Winter 1979.)
 2/68 *The Ethical Eye*.
 3/68 *A Quiet Night*.
 5/68 *Words Do Not a Book Make*.
 7/68 *You Can't Fight City Hall, Pete*.
 N 8/68 *Sometimes There Is Justice*. (*Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Stories To Be Read With the Lights On*, Random House, 1973, as "It's a Lousy World.")
 10/68 *A Lot on His Mind*. (*Crimes and Misfortunes*, ed. J. Francis McComas. Random House, 1970. *Getting Even: Gripping Stories of Revenge*, ed. Diana King. Bobbs-Merrill, 1978.)
 11/68 *Waiting, Waiting...*
 12/68 *Don't Spend It All in One Place*.
 N 5/69 *The Snatch*. (*Best Detective Stories of the Year*, ed. Allen J. Hubin. Dutton, 1970. *Crime Without Murder*, ed. Dorothy Salisbury Davis. Scribner, 1970.) (Later expanded into the novel *The Snatch*.)
 N 11/69 *A Cold Day in November*. (*Alfred Hitchcock's Anthology*, 1976. Hardcover edition entitled *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Tales To Keep You Spellbound*. Dial Press, 1976.) (Later expanded into part of the novel *Labyrinth*.)
 1/70 *Cain's Mark*. (*Best Detective Stories of the Year*, ed. Allen J. Hubin. Dutton, 1971. *A Treasury of Modern Mysteries*, ed. Marie A. Reno. Doubleday, 1973.)
 N 2/70 *Death of a Nobody*. (*Mirror, Mirror, Fatal Mirror*, ed. Hans Stefan Santesson. Doubleday, 1973.)
 N 5/70 *The Way the World Spins*. (Later ex-

- panded into part of the novel *Labyrinth*.)
- 8/70 A Dip in the Poole.
- DC 1/71 The Jade Figurine. (Later expanded into the novel *The Jade Figurine*, as by Jack Foxx.)
- 2/71 Perfect Timing.
- 4/71 Muggers' Moon.
- 7/71 The Imperfect Crime.
- 9/71 The Pattern. (*Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Stories To Be Read with the Door Locked*. Random House, 1975. *Cop Cade*, ed. John Ball. Doubleday, 1978.)
- 10/71 Skeletons Go Forth.
- C 11/71 The Desperate Ones.
- 12/71 The Killing.
- N 2/72 The Assignment. (Opening scene later expanded into the first chapter of the novel *Undercurrent*.)
- 7/72 The Amateur Touch.
- 9/72 All the Same.
- 12/72 I Don't Understand It. (*Alfred Hitchcock's Anthology*, Spring-Summer 1979. Hardcover edition entitled *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Tales To Scare You Stiff*. Dial Press, 1978.)
- C 1/73 The Web.
- 2/73 Sacrifice.
- 3/73 The Follower.
- N 7/73 The Scales of Justice. (Later expanded into part of the novel *Labyrinth*.)
- 3/74 The Riverboat Gold Robbery. (Later expanded into the novel *Freebooty*, as by Jack Foxx.)
- 4/74 Memento Mori.
- 6/74 Here Lies Another Blackmailer. . .
- 8/74 Unchained.
- 10/74 Up to Snuff.
- 4/75 For Love.
- C 5/75 Free-Lance Operation.
- N 7/75 Private Eye Blues. (*Best Detective Stories of the Year*, ed. Edward D. Hoch. Dutton, 1976.) (Opening scene later expanded into first chapter of the novel *Blowback*.)
- 4/76 Putting the Pieces Back. (*When Last Seen*, ed. Arthur Maling. Harper & Row, 1977.)
- 10/76 The Arrowmont Prison Riddle. (*Alfred Hitchcock's Anthology*, 1977. Hardcover edition entitled *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Tales To Take Your Breath Away*. Dial Press, 1977.)
- 3/77 Smuggler's Island. (*Best Detective Stories of the Year*, ed. Edward D. Hoch. Dutton, 1978.)
- N 5/79 Thin Air.

Amazing Science Fiction Stories

- 9/70 Dry Spell. (*100 Great Science Fiction Short-Short Stories*, ed. Isaac Asimov, Martin Greenberg & Joseph Olander. Doubleday, 1978.)

Argosy

- DC 12/70 Beautiful Smuggler. (Later expanded into part of the novel *Dead Run*, as by Jack Foxx.)
- N 9/72 Blowback. (Later expanded into the novel *Blowback*.)

The Armchair Detective (non-fiction)

- 4/72 The Mystery Career of Evan Hunter.
- 4/77 The Saga of the Phoenix That Probably Should Never Have Arisen.

Body Shop

- 12/67 The Swabbie and the Sexpot.

Charlie Chan Mystery Magazine

- 11/73 Buttermilk. (*Killers of the Mind*, ed. Lucy Freeman. Random House, 1974.)

Chic

- 12/77 Getting Much?

Cosmopolitan

- N 3/73 The Vanished. (Condensation of Pronzini's novel *The Vanished*.)

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine

- 12/73 Proof of Guilt. (*Ellery Queen's Murdercade*, ed. Ellery Queen. Random House, 1975. *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Stories That Go Bump in the Night*. Random House, 1977. *Masterpieces of Mystery, Vol. 17: The Seventies*, ed. Ellery Queen. Meredith, 1979.)
- 12/76 Sweet Fever. (*Best Detective Stories of the Year*, ed. Edward D. Hoch. Dutton, 1977. *Midnight Specials*, ed. Bill Pronzini. Bobbs-Merrill, 1977.)
- 10/77 Under the Skin. (*Ellery Queen's Scenes of the Crime*, ed. Ellery Queen. Dial Press, 1979.)
- 4/78 A Cold Foggy Day.
- 6/78 Strangers in the Fog. (*Best Detective Stories of the Year*, ed. Edward D. Hoch. Dutton, 1979.)
- 8/78 Bank Job.

- 12/78 Caught in the Act.
 N 2/79 The Private Eye Who Collected Pulp.
 9/79 Black Wind.
 N 11/79 A Nice Easy Job.
 12/79 A Craving for Originality.

Fantastic Science Fiction Stories

- 12/68 The Prophecy.
 4/69 How Now Purple Cow. (100 Great Science Fiction Short-Short Stories, ed. Isaac Asimov, Martin Greenberg & Joseph Olander. Doubleday, 1978.)

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction

- 9/69 The Screwiest Job in the World.
 6/71 The Man Who Collected "The Shadow". (Dark Sins, Dark Dreams: Crime in Science Fiction, ed. Barry N. Malzberg & Bill Pronzini. Doubleday, 1978. Mysterious Visions, ed. Charles Waugh, Martin Greenberg & Joseph Olander. St. Martin's Press, 1979.)
 9/73 I Wish I May, I Wish I Might. (100 Great Science Fiction Short-Short Stories, ed. Isaac Asimov, Martin Greenberg & Joseph Olander. Doubleday, 1978.)
 11/73 Thirst.
 11/78 Cat.

The Man from U.N.C.L.E. Magazine

- 5/67 A Man Named Vinelli.

Mike Shayne Mystery Magazine

- 5/67 Night Freight.
 9/67 The Long Knives Wait.
 4/68 Who's Afraid of Sherlock Holmes?
 5/68 The Bomb Expert.
 7/68 The Perfect Crime.
 9/68 The Accident.
 4/69 Retirement.
 DC 9/69 You Can Never Really Know. (Later expanded into part of the novel *Dead Run*, as by Jack Foxx.)
 10/69 The Almost Perfect Hiding Place.
 11/69 A Nice Place To Visit, But...
 N 1/70 The Crank.
 7/70 There's One Born Every Minute.
 3/71 Ice and Snow.
 9/71 I Know a Way.
 N 10/72 Majorcan Assignment.
 7/73 The Methodical Cop.
 6/74 It's Not a Coffin.
 4/75 The Storm Tunnel.
 2/76 If You Play with Fire...
 5/77 The Dark Side.
 9/78 The Same Old Grind. (Alfred Hitchcock

Presents: The Master's Choice.
 Random House, 1979.)

- 1/79 His Name Was Legion.

MWA Annual (non-fiction)

- 1974 View from the Paper Chase: Who's Winning the Soft-Cover Sweepstakes?
 1978 It All Started with Hammett.

Shell Scott Mystery Magazine

(Pronzini's first published story.)

Swank

- 4/72 "Our Times". (*The Future Now: Saving Tomorrow*, ed. Robert Hoskins. Fawcett Crest pb, 1977.)

The Writer (non-fiction)

- 5/71 The Uses and Abuses of Dialogue. (*The Writer's Handbook*, revised ed. The Writer, 1972.)
 2/76 The Elements of Suspense. (*Writing Suspense and Mystery Fiction*, ed. A. S. Burack. Revised ed. The Writer, 1977.)
 12/77 Writing the Mystery Short-Short.

Shell Scott Mystery Magazine

- 11/66 You Don't Know What It's Like.
 (Pronzini's first published story.)

Zane Grey Western Magazine

- 11/69 Sawtooth Justice.
 6/70 The Posse from Paytonville.
 10/70 Thunderstorm.
 1/71 Old Tom.
 8/71 Day of the Hanging.
 2/72 "I'll See to Your Horse". (*Dear Dead Days*, ed. Edward D. Hoch, Walker, 1972, as "Decision".)
 10/72 The Coward.
 4/73 The Gun Fanner.

Stories and Articles Not Published in Magazines

- 1974 It's So Wonderful Here. (*Science Fiction from Way Out*, ed. Roger Elwood. Whitman, 1974.)
 1975 Paxton's World. (*Future Corruption*, ed. Roger Elwood. Warner Paperback Library, 1975.)
 1976 The Hungarian Cinch. (*Arena: Sports SF*, ed. Edward L. Ferman & Barry N. Malzberg. Doubleday, 1976.)
 1976 On Agents. (Non-fiction.) (*Mystery*

- Writer's Handbook*, ed. Lawrence Treat. Revised ed. *Writer's Digest Books*, 1976.)
- 1978 *Deathlove*. (*Shadows*, ed. Charles L. Grant. Doubleday, 1978.)
- 1978 *The Sacramento*. (non-fiction.) (*Western Writers of America, Water Trails West*. Doubleday, 1978.)
- 1979 *Peekaboo*. (*Nightmares*, ed. Charles L. Grant. Playboy Press, 1979.)
- 1979 *Where Have All the Secretaries Gone?* (Non-fiction.) (*Murderess Ink*, ed. Dilys Winn. Workman, 1979.)

III. Short Fiction by Bill Pronzini writing as Russell Dancer

Chic

- 4/78 *The Fling*.

IV. Short Fiction by Bill Pronzini writing as Robert Hart Davis

The Man from U.N.C.L.E. Magazine

- 12/67 *The Pillars of Salt Affair*.

V. Short Fiction by Bill Pronzini writing as Jack Fox

Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine

- 6/69 *Method of Operation*.
12/69 *The Clincher*.
3/70 *The Right Move*.
10/70 *One of Those Days*.
5/71 *Roadblock*.
5/72 *Suicide Note*.

Charlie Chan Mystery Magazine

- 5/74 *Incident in Three Crossings*.

Mike Shayne's Mystery Magazine

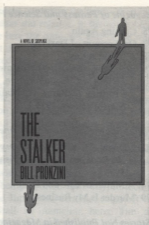
- 5/69 *Escape*.
9/69 *Little Old Ladies Can Be Dangerous*.
4/70 *You're Safe Here*.
4/72 *The Duel*.
4/76 *Your Choice*.

Zane Grey Western Magazine

- 12/71 *Taggart's Gold*.

VI. Short Fiction by Bill Pronzini and Michael Kurland

Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine



- 9/75 *Quicker Than the Eye*.
1/76 *Vanishing Act*.

Mike Shayne's Mystery Magazine

- 10/74 *Dog Story*.

VII. Short Fiction by Bill Pronzini and Barry N. Malzberg

Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine

- 12/76 *A Matter of Survival*.
4/77 *What Kind of Person Are You?*
5/77 *The Last Plagiarism*.
6/77 *Night Rider*.
4/78 *Birds of a Feather*.
10/78 *Cheeseburger*. (Written by Pronzini, Malzberg and John Lutz under the joint byline of John Barry Williams.)
2/79 *Final Exam*.

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine

- 6/76 *Problems Solved*. (*Ellery Queen's Anthology*, Fall-Winter 1979.)
4/79 *Rebound*.
7/79 *Million-to-One Shot*.

Fantastic Science Fiction Stories

- 10/78 *Another Burnt-Out Case*.

Galaxy Science Fiction

- 11/76 *Inaugural*. (*100 Great Science Fiction Short-Short Stories*, ed. Isaac Asimov, Martin Greenberg & Joseph Olander. Doubleday, 1978.)

Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine

- 11-12/78 *Out of Quarantine*.

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction

- 6/75 Coming Again.
11/77 On Account of Darkness.
10/78 A Clone at Last.
7/79 Prose Bill. (*Shared Tomorrows: Science Fiction in Collaboration*, ed. Bill Pronzini & Barry N. Malzberg. St. Martin's Press, 1979.)

Mike Shayne's Mystery Magazine

- 11/72 I Ought To Kill You. (*Every Crime in the Book*, ed. Robert L. Fish. Putnam, 1975.)
7/74 A Matter of Life and Death.
1/79 Murder Is My Business.

Stories Not Published in Magazines

- 1976 Multiples. (*Tricks and Treats*, ed. Joe Gores & Bill Pronzini. Doubleday, 1976.)
1979 Clocks. (*Shadows 2*, ed. Charles L. Grant. Doubleday, 1979.)
1979 Reading Day. (*Chrysalis 5*, ed. Roy Torgeson. Zebra Books, 1979.)

VIII. Short Fiction by Bill Pronzini and Jeffrey Wallmann

Adam Reader

- 6/69 The Night I Didn't Learn About Sex.

Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine

- 4/70 Fire Hazard. (As by William Jeffrey.)
6/70 Day of the Moon. (As by William Jeffrey.)
8/71 A Case for Quiet. (As by William Jeffrey.) (*Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Stories To Be Read with the Door Locked*. Random House, 1975.)
1/72 The Ten Million Dollar Hijack. (As by William Jeffrey.)
3/72 A Run of Bad Luck. (As by William Jeffrey.)
6/72 Shell Game. (As by William Jeffrey.) (*Best Detective Stories of the Year*, ed. Allen J. Hubin. Dutton, 1973.)
8/72 The Island. (As by William Jeffrey.)
9/73 A Slight Case of Suspicion. (As by William Jeffrey.)

Camerarts

- ? Scuba Shack-Up. (As by Rick Renault.)
(NOTE: The authors' files do not

indicate the issue of *Camerarts* in which this story, sold early in 1969, was published. Can anyone help?)

Charlie Chan Mystery Magazine

- 8/74 The Pawns of Death. (As by Robert Hart Davis.)

Coven 13 (Supernatural Tales)

- 3/70 I, Vampire.

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine

- 9/70 The Facsimile Shop. (As by William Jeffrey.)
5/74 The Half-Invisible Man. (*Cop Cade*, ed. John Ball. Doubleday, 1978.)
8/75 Once a Thief.

Mike Shayne's Mystery Magazine

- 7/70 Monday Is the Dullest Night of the Week. (As by William Jeffrey.)
8/70 Retribution. (As by William Jeffrey.)
10/70 Murder Is No Man's Friend. (As by William Jeffrey.)
4/72 Danger: Michael Shayne at Work. (As by Brett Halliday.)
3/73 I Want a Lawyer. (As by William Jeffrey.)
9/75 O'Flaherty's Wake. (As by William Jeffrey.)

Tonight Men's Magazine

- 11-12/68 Death on Four Wheels. (As by Rick Renault.)

Venture Science Fiction

- 5/70 The Evergreen Library. (*Wondermakers 2*, ed. Robert Hoskins. Fawcett Premier pb, 1974.)

Zane Grey Western Magazine

- 3/70 Danger Rides the Dollar Wagon. (As by Romer Zane Grey.)
5/70 Siege at Forlorn River. (As by Romer Zane Grey.)
7/70 The Marauders of Gallows Valley. (As by Romer Zane Grey.)
1/70 The Raid at Three Rapids. (As by Romer Zane Grey.)
8/71 Attack of the Bandido Horde. (As by Romer Zane Grey.)
6/72 Moment of Reckoning. (As by William Jeffrey.)
8/72 Apache Massacre at Puma Junction. (As by Romer Zane Grey.)

CURRENT REVIEWS

The Siege of Buckingham Palace by Walter Nelson. Little Brown, 1979.

As is obvious from the title, in this thriller the Queen of England is the victim of terrorism, held ransom for £5 million and the release of numerous political prisoners. After a slow start while Nelson establishes his characters, the plot erupts in a charged attack on the Palace. Terrorists Hisaichi Tanaka and Sean O'Hagan are the most intriguing of the criminals. O'Hagan's motivation as an IRA Provo is the clearest, while Tanaka's is both the murkiest and most frightening. Commander Lash of New Scotland Yard directs the low-key government response but has a few ingenious tricks of his own before the Queen's imprisonment is resolved. Not completely convincing, *Siege* is far above the commoner super-spy tales of many series characters.

—Fred Dueren

Fen Country, Twenty-six Stories by Edmund Crispin. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1979. 160 pp. £3.95.

In the realm of detective and mystery fiction, 1979 was an important year in that several outstanding short-story collections were published. Rawson's *The Great Merlini*, Rafferty's *Fatal Flourishes*, Rendell's *Means of Evil*, Garrett's *Murder and Magic*, Christie's *Miss Marple's Six Final Cases*, Schier's *The Anagram Detectives* and Perowne's *Raffles of the M.C.C.* all appeared in that most fruitful year. To that list we can add *Fen Country*, containing twenty-six previously uncollected short stories by the late Edmund Crispin. The book begins with an informative but much too short foreword by Philip Larkin, which suggests that Crispin would have revised the stories for publication. I am certain that Larkin is correct about some of the stories; "Gladstone's Candlestick," for example, would have benefited by more fleshing-out. Moreover, it is likely that Crispin would have omitted either "Death and Aunt Fanny" or "The Two Sisters" since both stories have the same gimmick. But such matters aside, *Fen Country* is an excellent collection which makes us regret that Crispin will write no more stories. There are many gems in the book. Even some of the short-stories, like the delightful "Merry-Go-Round," are filled with the wit and tight plotting of Crispin's novels. The relatively long "The Mischief Done" has interesting lore about diamonds, good detection, some suspense, and a nice twist at the end. I don't often like straight crime stories, but *Fen Country* includes two marvelous tales of murder which even I enjoyed. "The Pencil" is an ingenious "Biter Bit" story. The extraordinarily titled "We Know You're Busy Writing, But We Thought You Wouldn't Mind If We Just



"Dropped In For a Minute" describes the murder of two people who have broken no laws; yet Crispin manages to make the homicide not only justifiable but amusing.

Perhaps, however, the simple statement that twenty of the stories feature Gervase Fen or Inspector Humbleby explains better than any analysis why *Fen Country* is one of 1979's best books.

—Douglas G. Greene

Public Murders by Bill Granger. Jove, 1980. \$1.95.

A beautiful Swedish tourist is raped and murdered while sightseeing in Chicago. Then two more blonde women are murdered, and the police suspect the same killer is responsible.

Under political pressures to solve these cases quickly, the police initially find only meager clues pointing to an accountant, a skid-row wino, and a sadistic pedophile who operates a strip-joint. Upon further investigation, none of the three men seem guilty of these murders. Baffled, the police eventually set up a risky decoy operation to trap the killer whose demented hatred for women is fueled by pornographic films.

The expressed goal of Bill Granger, a Chicago reporter and author of *The November Man*, is to present in *Public Murders* Chicago as it really is and to have his characters follow actual police and court-room procedures. The resulting picture portrays the brass as willing to sacrifice an apparently innocent man to make themselves look good, the detectives as having difficulty communicating without resorting to obscenities and ethnic slurs, and the legal system as hampering justice.

This smoothly written police procedural is engrossing and culminates in an action-packed ending.

—Eve Simons

Who Done It? Alice Laurance and Isaac Asimov, Editors. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980. \$9.95.

This familiar title has literal significance for the 17 stories by authors such as John Ball, Dorothy Salisbury Davis, Edward D. Hoch, Patricia Moyes, John D. MacDonald, Robert Bloch, Ruth Rendell and Janwillem van de Wetering. As a follow-up to Queen's *Challenge to the Reader* of some years ago, the stories are printed with the authorship hidden in a code. Isaac Asimov's foreword says we are to deduce the author by his style. And to make it a bit more sportsmanlike (challenging), none of the authors has written of his series detective or of locales or situations for which he is noted. Style is to be the determining factor. Anyone who can correctly place them all should be the MWA historian. After reading a story and determining the author it is easy to say "Yes, that's her type" or "Sure, that's like other things he's written." Occasionally I was able to make a correct shrewd guess before decoding the name.

The quality of the stories is consistently excellent. These tales were written for this collection and are, therefore, fresh. Picking a few for special mention is difficult. But "A Dark Blue Perfume" remains in the memory. It concerns an old man who's come home to find the wife who left him 40 years before. "The Legend of Dirty Dick" is a humorous telling of a western warehouse with an unlikable customer. "Widow" is a tricky problem of a man who thinks his wife wants to kill him. Others also stand out—"The Lily Pond," "Connoisseur," and "Almost Perfect." They are almost all crime stories with little detection as such. But they represent the elite of current crime writers in stories that anyone would have been proud to have written.

—Fred Dueren

Tales of Japanese Justice by Isha Saikaku. Translated by Thomas M. Kondo and Alfred H. Marks. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1980. xix + 100 pp. \$6.50, paperback.

Oriental tales of crime and detection, stories that feature the exploits of district magistrates, have been popular in China and Japan for centuries. Long before C. Auguste Dupin and Sherlock Holmes, there were Magistrate Ti and Magistrate Pao.

Only a few of these early crime stories have been translated into English. Robert van Gulik did the pioneering work in this field. He produced translations of two Chinese classics: *Dee Goong An* (1949), an eighteenth-century detective novel, which was reprinted under the title *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee* (1976), and *Tang-yin-pi-shih: Parallel Cases From Under the Peartree*

(1956), a crime story collection from the thirteenth century.

In 1964, six Chinese detective stories were translated by Leon Comber and published as *The Strange Cases of Magistrate Pao*.

Now available in English is *Honcho Oin Hiji*, a Japanese collection of crime stories written by Ihara Saikaku in 1689. Although this book is usually referred to as *Records of Trials Held Beneath a Cherry Tree*, the translators, Messrs. Kondo and Marks, have chosen to give it the title *Tales of Japanese Justice*.

Ihara Saikaku, a major figure in Japanese literature, is best known for his racy, realistic novels depicting life in seventeenth-century Japan; however, he did some writing in the crime genre. His *Honcho Oin Hiji*, which was modelled after *Fang-yin-pi-shih*, contains forty-four very short stories, ranging in length from a half page to three pages. Some critics look upon the stories in this collection as prototypic Japanese detective stories.

Each story tells of a case tried before the Kyoto Shoshidai or district magistrate of Kyoto. The magistrate is not named, but simply called "His Lordship." Acting as detective, prosecuting attorney, judge and jury, he resolves every case with dispatch, intelligence and wit.

Although superstition plays a part in a few of the stories, the supernatural elements that we associate with Oriental tales are absent. The stories are realistic and believable, with some of them based on actual cases. The characters are mainly commoners: merchants, farmers, artisans and servants.

Less than a dozen cases involve murder or thievery. Most of the others are civil cases arising from disputes over such matters as inheritance rights and the location of property lines.

Since the emphasis is on the magistrate's wisdom rather than on his skill as a detective, mystery fans may find *Tales of Japanese Justice* somewhat disappointing. The book, however, is a welcome addition to the small body of Oriental mystery fiction available in English. It should appeal to readers who are interested in the law, Japan in the time of the shoguns, or the detective story before Poe.

—John L. Apostolou

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A Touch of Chill: Tales for Sleepless Nights by Joan Aiken. Delacorte. 183 pp. \$7.95.

The Rembrandt Panel by Oliver Banks. Little, Brown. 268 pp. \$11.95.

Some books are meant to be read in bed, if only by way of courting sleep. Not so Joan Aiken's new short story collection. Although it may sound as if it offers soothing relief for summer night insomnia, *A Touch of Chill: Tales for Sleepless Nights* is actually the kind of book that rouses readers from drowsiness and keeps sleep at arm's length.

With their delicate balance of humor and horror, Aiken's finely crafted fantasies cast a spell in which the helpless reader turns page after page in pursuit of the plot, eagerly beginning each new story as soon as he has finished the old. This is literary enchantment at its purest.

Better known for her young people's novels (*Black Hearts in Battersea*, *The Wolves of Willowby Chase*), Aiken is a short story writer of solid craft, airy grace, and malicious wit. A wizardress with words, the power of her tales is nothing less than magical, and she can only be compared with such masters of the macabre fairy tale as John Collier and Saki.

A Touch of Chill offers fifteen of Aiken's recent best, twelve of which make their debut on this side of the Atlantic, following English publication. American readers will probably enjoy them as much as the daughter of a Manchester book critic who worried her father by borrowing this unsettling book ("extremely alarming for the nervous adult," as her father warned her) and "swallowing it whole" with insatiable delight. The more Aiken you read, the more you want.

Children of all ages will be delighted with Aiken's young heroes. They talk to Druids ("Who Goes Down This Dark Road?"), suffer from irrational fears ("She Was Afraid of Upstairs"), get lost in time warps ("A Game of Black and White"), and are pursued by strange aliens ("A Long Way to Swim") and stranger humans ("Lodgers").

There are several adult fables as well, dealing with themes of alienation ("Listening") and family disintegration ("Power Cut"). On the less serious side, Aiken works a charmingly sinister variation on the old story of the shipwrecked typist ("Mousework"), undoubtedly the gem of the collection.

Another good candidate for the midnight reader's table is *The Rembrandt Panel*, a novel about a missing masterpiece, a slain art expert, and other outrages in the big leagues

of high-priced paintings. The situation here is not exactly new, but Oliver Banks, a fine writer, makes it all seem fresh and original.

Banks himself is an art consultant who has the uncommon gift of knowing exactly what he is writing about. The result is that his work is crisply realistic and roundly convincing. The exotic world of painters and dealers, critics and killers, comes off the page with an unmistakable ring of truth.

Banks works a fine feat by telling a believable love story about investigator Amos Hatcher and dealer Sheila Woods without losing pace or spoiling plot. Romance and suspense are seldom wed successfully in contemporary novels; *The Rembrandt Panel* proves a happy exception.

Though wholly different in style and tone, Aiken's anthology and Banks's mystery share the distinction of being models of spellbinding storytelling, sufficient to delight the demanding reader and instruct the aspiring writer. If you want to fall asleep quickly, keep these two closed and turn on the television. Otherwise, you haven't a chance.

—Howard Lachman

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Caged by Terry Bryczynski. Crown, 1980. \$9.95.

Caged is a switch from the sort of thriller in which humans are menaced by wild beasts. In *Caged*, the wild animals are the victims of a psychopath who hates zoos and wants to "liberate" the animals by killing them. It is set in San Francisco, the supposed capital city of lunacy.

The hero is a zoology professor, temporarily in charge of the zoo while his father, the director, recovers from a heart attack. This seems to me to be a rather unlikely situation in a municipal institution, but it does make a good story as the young professor hates zoos and is undergoing a generational conflict with his father. He is aided in his battles with the indifferent city government and the vicious psychopath by his uncle, a garrulous, retired hunter, and by a comely tour-guide and would-be actress who is passionately devoted to animals.

The graphic scenes of violence against animals will revolt most animal lovers. However, among the scenes of violence is an excellent portrait of a big city zoo and a very suspenseful story.

—M. S. Cappadonna

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RETRO REVIEWS

Bibliography of Dr. R. H. van Gulik (D. Litt.) by [Mrs. A. M. Evers]. Compiled for the benefit of the Boston University Libraries, Mugar Memorial Library, "Robert van Gulik

Collection," no date [ca. 1968].

I am on record in this journal as describing Robert van Gulik's T'ang dynasty detective, Judge Dee, as "a great creation." I was

tempted to add that any attempt to straighten out the publication details of the Judge Dee stories as certain to be a great disaster. One of van Gulik's early novels, for example, was

written in English, but held for six years before being published—not in English but in Japanese. It then appeared in van Gulik's native language, Dutch, before having its first English edition two years after van Gulik's second Judge Dee book appeared. Three of van Gulik's later Judge Dee novels were published first in Kuala Lumpur in English-language paperbacks, and one of his short stories was printed in Beirut in an edition of two hundred copies as a New Year's card to van Gulik's friends. To make matters more confusing, van Gulik included a Judge Dee chronology in his short-story collection, *Judge Dee at Work*, but the dates he provided for the books are first British publication rather than first publication in English. In light of these difficulties, it is not surprising that such sources as *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection* are utterly confused. To pick just one example, *The Chinese Maze Murders* was written in 1950, first published (in Japanese) the same year, translated into Chinese in 1953, into Dutch in 1956, into English in 1956, and published in Britain in 1962. But the *Encyclopedia* lists it as "1951," a date remarkable for having nothing at all to do with the book.

It is fortunate that I did not say in print that a van Gulik bibliography is impossible; such a work, in fact, was prepared about twelve years ago by Mrs. A. M. Evers to accompany the van Gulik papers preserved in the Mugar Memorial Library of Boston University. It is remarkable that this valuable pamphlet has remained so long unknown to scholars, collectors and dealers (with the exception of Enola Stewart of Gravesend Books, to whom I am indebted for leading me to this work). *Bibliography of Dr. R. H. van Gulik* begins with material on van Gulik's life and continues with descriptions of all his articles, scholarly books, poems, reviews, dictionaries, and novels—including *The Given Day*, a thriller published in English (in Kuala Lumpur) in 1964. Especially valuable to TADians, of course, is the listing of all editions of the Judge Dee books in all languages through 1967. This list contains many surprises, such as newspaper and magazine serializations and above all descriptions of unknown (to me, at least) Dee short stories which van Gulik wrote for what seems to have been a comic strip distributed in the Netherlands and Scandinavia. One of the stories became the basis of the full-length novel, *The Phantom of the Temple*, and four others were included in *Judge Dee at Work*. But seven stories remain uncollected and untranslated into English; they have wonderful titles: "The Twenty Gold Pieces," "The Dead Bride," "The Antique Dagger," "The Live Corpse," "The Villa's Secret," "The Stolen Necklace," and "The Riddle of the Ring." Is it too much to hope that some enterprising publisher will make these stories available in English?

This pamphlet also contains van Gulik's notes about the composition of the Judge Dee stories. From these, we learn about his experiences publishing books in Malaysia, his revisions of his early drafts of the novels (including shifting the identity of the

murderer), and his own evaluations of the books. Van Gulik believed, for example, *The Chinese Lake Murders* to be "a better book than the *Bell* and the *Maze Murders* [but] I think it is too complicated and far too long. I plan to rewrite this novel some day in a simplified form." *Nail* was written in Beirut during the 1958 civil war "and something of the terror of that time has crept into this novel." In short, *Bibliography of Dr. R. H. van Gulik* is an excellent reference work which deserves to be better known and widely used.

—Douglas G. Greene

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Kiss Me, Deadly by Mickey Spillane, Dutton, 1952; Barker, 1953.

Shibuk reviewing Spillane? Good grief! Somebody has to be kidding!!!!

Many years ago, I tried Spillane's *Day of the Guns* (1964), and thought it was awful.

A few years ago, at the suggestion of Otto Penzler, I tried two of the early Mike Hammer novels—I, *The Jury* (1947) and *My Gun Is Quick* (1950).

I must admit that I found much of interest in these works, but I couldn't understand the reasons for the fantastic popular adulation and widespread sales of the Hammer novels in the late '40s and '50s.

(Incidentally, with most of Spillane in current reprint editions, these phenomena continue unabated today.)

Curiously, I felt no compelling urge to continue reading Spillane.

However, the publication of the TAD-Spillane issue somehow inspired me to try another novel by this author. For reasons obscure to me, I chose *Kiss Me, Deadly*, perhaps because it is presumed to be the basis for the best Mike Hammer film, and I had never seen any of the series.

I must further admit that I was thunderstruck, and thought *Kiss Me, Deadly* a superb work.

It starts in fairly routine fashion when Hammer nearly runs over a beautiful hitchhiker (with many problems) while he's driving along a lonely road.

He gives her a lift, and suddenly a dark sedan crashes into his car. Violence ensues, Hammer is blackjacked, the girl is murdered, and the car is pushed over a cliff, but a dazed Hammer manages to bail out just in time.

The state police become interested in Hammer as a murder suspect, and the F.B.I. is much more interested in the dead girl because of her involvement in a narcotics case.

Hammer cooperates with the latter group, but is not too happy about the girl's murder, his own injuries, and the crude attempt to frame him. He naturally vows vengeance.

His quest for same engenders a riveting and extremely powerful narrative that races forward with the speed of a roller coaster on a downhill plunge.

How many of our current highly-praised mystery novelists who are considered to write in the hard-boiled tradition are conspicuous for their ability to write fast-moving stories? Not a very large percentage, I fear.

How many have the ability to tell a story with great power? Very few, I think.

Spillane has been writing novels for over three decades, and his work still elicits diametrically opposing views. Many readers seem to love him, but most critics hate him—and many of their reasons are not concerned with his literary merits (or lack thereof), but with what they perceive to be his anti-social viewpoint.

Be that as it may, I personally found *Kiss Me, Deadly* to be an impressive major work, and a true descendent of Carroll John Daly's masterpiece *The Snarl of the Beast*.

—Charles Shibuk

* * * * *

Whistle Up the Devil by Derek Smith. London: John Gifford, 1953. 222 pp.

In *Locked Room Murders*, Robert Adey describes this book as "very much the locked room fan's locked room novel" because of its "host of locked room lore." I would add that it is one of the most successful attempts to adopt not only John Dickson Carr's virtuosity with the impossible crime but also much of his sense of atmosphere, clueing, and even some of his attitudes.

Whistle Up the Devil begins when the amateur detective, a young romantic named Algy Lawrence (who has much in common with Tad Rampole and other protagonists of early Carr novels), receives a plea for help from Peter Querrin, whose brother, Roger, plans to brave a family curse. Traditionally, a secret is given to the eldest Querrin in "the room in the passage," but now, so the legend goes, the spirit of a malevolent ancestor lingers in the room and kills those who dare stay within it. Lawrence agrees to investigate, but he fails to prevent Roger's murder in what seems to be an entirely inaccessible room: Not only are all the doors and windows locked, but witnesses are watching all possible means of entrance, and the entire room is surrounded by wet, unmarked soil. It is soon discovered that there has been no hanky-panky with secret passages, or confusion about the time of death, or other well-tried tricks. Later in the novel, another murder occurs in a locked jail cell with Lawrence and a police detective guarding the only passage to the cell. To make the novel even more ingenious, several explanations are offered and rejected; one of them, coincidentally, is the gimmick which Carr used in his early Benclon story, "The Murder in Number Four." Solutions are proposed by an old reprobate named Uncle Russ, who (and this would have pleased Carr) is fond of the stories of Thomas W. Hanshew, the creator of Cleek the Man of the Forty Faces. Eventually, the book is brought to a satisfactory conclusion as the seeming impossibilities succumb to rational explanations.

Algy Lawrence may not be a memorable detective, but *Whistle Up the Devil* is an excellent book that has much to offer those who admire ingenuity in detective novels. It is unfortunate that Derek Smith has published no other novels.

—Douglas G. Greene

ANOTHER WATSON: CAPTAIN HASTINGS

By Earl F. Bargainnier

In Agatha Christie's *Death in the Clouds*, Mr. Clancy, a writer of detective fiction, remarks, "Interesting, by the way, how the technique of the idiot friend has hung on." In Christie's own work, the idiot friend "hangs on" in Captain Arthur Hastings, who has been called "the most admirably foolish of all Watsons," "easily the most blockheaded tribute ever paid to Dr. Watson," and "the most splendidly obtuse Watson in crime fiction."¹ Even his creator has bluntly described him as "the respectable, nice, but idiotic friend."² As foolish, blockheaded, obtuse, and idiotic as he may be, his fame is second only to Dr. Watson's in that long line of aides, sidekicks, and admiring friends of the great detectives. Surprisingly, considering his fame, of the thirty-three novels and fifty-four short stories employing the services of Hercule Poirot, Hastings appears in only eight of the novels and twenty-six of the short stories—less than a fourth of the former and approximately half of the latter.³ With the exception of *Curtain*, all are products of the 1920s and 1930s. An examination of the role of the Watson figure and its embodiment in Hastings illustrates both narrative technique in "Golden Age" detective fiction and Christie's own technique in employing a standard device of the genre.

The plot relationship of the detective and his Watson is that of knight and squire, with the squire being basically a comic figure because of his ignorance. The Watson's lack of intellect is compensated by his loyalty, for however stupid he may be, he is always the devoted—though occasionally exasperated—partisan of his detective colleague. In one sense, Watsons seem to be masochistic, for they are continually having their mental deficiencies thrown in their faces by the great detectives. In some cases, they defend themselves, but usually in a hang dog way, for even they have to admit their inadequacy in relation to their omniscient detectival friends. In fact, the juxtaposition and contrast of the baffled and the astute is the thematic basis of the Watson/detective pairing. The contrast between the two is emphasized

by differences in age, appearance, manner, nationality, social class, education, etc.

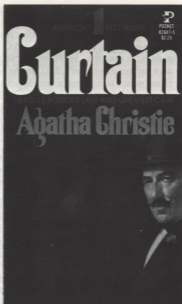
Another constant of the Watson is his moral goodness. (Christie's own Dr. Sheppard is the ultimate exception, and his breaking of the accepted rule created a furor.) Though he may be bumbling, he is on the side of justice and the innocent. Because he is anxious for right to triumph, he often attempts to solve the case himself. At times he goes off sleuthing on his own and is recklessly brave, with the result that he creates more problems for the detective by placing himself, the detective, or the innocent in peril—while providing the author with material for additional chapters. Though over and over again he is astonished at the detective's brilliant deductions, he still wishes to show what he can do: his only form of rebellion against his subordinate position. But his theories are always wrong, his interpretation of clues—if he finds any—inaccurate, and his inability to distinguish the guilty from the innocent obvious. His general gullibility leads him into perplexity and then into despair of a solution ever being discovered. All the while, the detective has been following the correct path; he solves the unsolvable and again astonishes his poor misguided and imperceptive friend.

In a very funny essay, Stephen Leacock calls the Watson figure "the Nut" and says that he personifies "the ideal reader, that is to say the stupidest—the reader who is most completely bamboozled with the mystery, and yet intensely interested."⁴ Similarly, H. Douglas Thomson states that Watson "represents what in their authors' minds will be the orthodox theories entertained by the unwitting reader."⁵ While these statements are true, they do not fully explain the Watson's function, which is double and paradoxical. He is, first, the reader's surrogate, allowing the reader to be in continuous and close contact with the detective's investigation (but without ever actually knowing his thoughts), and at the same time he is a character to whom the reader can feel superior. The reader does not identify with the Watson, but rather is amused by him. The reader can say to himself, "I

would never have thought that! How can he be so stupid?" This self-satisfaction of the reader is, in reality, a clever delusion arranged by the author; as Dorothy Sayers has written, the admiring satellite is "a device of the writer's for flattering [the reader] and putting him on good terms with himself."⁶ These "good terms" allow the reader to forget that he may be as baffled as the Watson. This double function—surrogate and comic scapegoat—is particularly in evidence when the Watson is the narrator of the case.

To quote Sayers again, "by describing the clues as presented to the dim eyes and bemused mind of the Watson, the author is enabled to preserve a spurious appearance of frankness, while keeping to himself the special knowledge on which the interpretation of those clues depends. This is a question of paramount importance, involving the whole artistic ethic of the detective story."⁷ Sayers rightly sees the advantage of the Watson as narrator in concealing whatever might lead the reader to a premature solution, i.e., before the detective. The Watson as narrator is a device for confusing and puzzling the reader, for only what he sees, hears, or thinks can be given. Since he often sees myopically, hears deafly, and thinks illogically, his version of what takes place lacks authority. However, the Watson presents the story honestly: "This type of narrator always has the excuse that, if he leads the reader astray, he is only doing so because he is describing events as he himself saw them."⁸ Though the story is almost always told in retrospect and the Watson-narrator knows the outcome, he is the faithful recorder of the events as *he experienced them*. If the discovery of the culprit is a complete surprise to him, he admits the fact. He is trustworthy in presenting the action insofar as he is aware of it; it is in his interpretation of that action that he fails. For this reason, the detective often has to recapitulate his thinking through of the case after the solution has been announced. Then the narrator (and the reader) realizes the weaknesses of his theories, his misinterpretation or ignoring of significant clues, his faulty character analyses, and his all-around lack of what Hercule Poirot calls "order and method."

Arthur Hastings fulfills the dual functions as narrator and does so in a totally honest manner. Even when he must consciously reveal himself as mentally lacking, he submits without too much flinching. He is also careful to explain or justify the presentation of any events outside his experience. In *Poirot Loses a Client*, he and Poirot enter the action with the fifth chapter, and he begins by saying, "The events which I just narrated were not, of course, known to me until a long time afterwards. But by questioning various members of the family in detail, I have, I think, set them down accurately enough" (30). Similarly, besides the twenty-seven chapters narrated from his participation in *The A. B. C. Murders*, there are eight chapters presented omnisciently; in a



"Foreword," he says of those eight, "If I have taken a certain poetic license in describing the thoughts and feelings of various persons, it is because I have set them down with a reasonable amount of accuracy. I may add that they have been 'vetted' by my friend Hercule Poirot himself." Hastings can only be described as scrupulous in presenting the stories and his part in them. Poirot does complain that Hastings is addicted to the capital "I": "On every page, many, many times was the word 'I.' What *he* thought—what *he* did" (*The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, 257). Perhaps; but Poirot's own vanity is certainly greater than Hastings'. Hastings is the comparatively humble chronicler of the exploits of the little mental giant, and his life, personality, and relationship with Poirot reveal him as the typical Golden Age Watson.

Much of Hastings' life is a mystery in itself. Perhaps his English reticence as to personal matters is the reason that there are so many gaps in what is known. He was born in the late 1880s, for he is thirty in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, which takes place during World War I. He attended Eton and worked at Lloyd's before the war; whether he attended college is unknown. As a result of service in the war, he is wounded and invalidated home, the situation at the beginning of *Styles*. Recuperating at the home of the Cavendish family, where a murder occurs, he meets again Poirot, whom, he says, he had "not seen for years" (15). When this case is solved, Hastings moves in with Poirot at 14 Farroway Street, London, and takes a position as "a sort of private secretary to an M.P." (*Murder on the Links*, 8). No mention is

made of his having any family, but in the second novel, he meets his future wife, Dulcie Duveen. She and her sister Bella are The Dulcibella Kids, a singing-dancing-acrobatic act. Dulcie, called Cinderella by Hastings, is described by Poirot as "la petite acrobate with her wrists of steel" (221). In the novel, she uses those wrists to prevent a murder. Though Hastings is immediately attracted to Dulcie, he fights the urge because of her social background: "Well—it sounds snobbish perhaps—but she's not a lady, not in any sense of the word. . . . I may be old-fashioned, but I certainly don't believe in marrying out of one's class. It never answers" (110). However, by the end of the novel, he has attacked Poirot to allow her escape, he has sworn to lie to save her (of course, she is innocent), and their marriage is imminent.

The remainder of Hastings' appearances are the results of visits to England, for he and Dulcie settle on a ranch in Argentina with Bella and her husband Jack Renauld. But here the mystery deepens. Hastings makes five such trips during Dulcie's lifetime, but she never accompanies him. In fact, there is little mention of her, and on one occasion Hastings even gives her name as Bella! (*Peril at End House*, 36) Poirot indicates that the success of the ranch is due to Mrs. Hastings, and surely he is right from the amount of time Hastings is away. Also, Hastings continues to be susceptible, though morally so, to young women, particularly those with auburn hair.

His first return coincides with the case of *The Big Four*, a year and a half after his marriage; he stays for nearly a year. At one point, he is tricked into believing that the villains have kidnapped Mrs. Hastings, but the foresight of Poirot has arranged for her safety. When he returns next for *Peril at End House*, he is forty years old. His third visit to Poirot is for *Lord Edgware Dies*; he now has a "tooth-brush" mustache which Poirot finds offensive. By the time of *The A. B. C. Murders*, he has received the Order of the British Empire, but for what is not revealed. His rather cavalier attitude toward his marriage is indicated by the following statement at the beginning of that novel: "It was in June of 1935 that I came home from my ranch in South America for a stay of about six months. . . . My wife remained to manage the ranch" (9). His next-to-last visit occurs in *Poirot Loses a Client*; at the end of which he appropriates Bob, the terrier presented to Poirot for solving the case.

There is little physical description of Hastings in the works, but at the beginning of their final adventure, Poirot says, "Yes, just the same—the straight back, the broad shoulders, the grey of the hair—*très distingué*. You know, my friend, you have worn well. *Les femmes*, they still take an interest in you? Yes?" (*Curtain*, 12) If they should take an interest, they are now free to make an attempt, for

during the year since his return to Argentina, Mrs. Hastings has died. Hastings' great grief over her death is stressed throughout *Curtain*, and so the marriage was apparently a happy one, in spite of his absences. Further evidence consists of their four children: two nameless sons, one in the Navy and the other managing the ranch, and two daughters: Grace, married and living in India, and Judith, who is involved in this case. Hastings says that Judith's "brains were the best of the family" (4), and she has completed a university education. Nevertheless, Judith Hastings is a very unpleasant young woman, and Hastings is "frankly, a little nervous of my daughter" (5), which translates as utter fear. Of course, he makes an ass of himself in trying to determine her romantic interests and suffers agony that she may be having an affair with a cad. By the end of the novel, however, they have settled their differences.

This brief sketch of what is known of Hastings' life indicates just how few biographical facts Christie gives. Where was he born? Who were his parents? What was his training for managing a ranch? Why the five long visits alone to England in approximately twenty years? Why so few details of his married life? And many other questions. As is so often the case with Christie, she deals only in essentials: what is not required for the presentation, investigation, and solution of the mystery is omitted. However, as indicated earlier, Hastings' innate reserve makes the omissions understandable. Since he does not approve of prying into the personal lives of others, he would not want others to pry into his, and he certainly would not volunteer such matters on his own.

Though the biographical facts are scarce, by the very nature of his being a narrator, his personality is fully exposed. A narrator determines the tone of a work, for that tone is the result of the narrator's personality. Hastings' personality includes a seriousness which verges on pomposity; a comic streak of vanity; a strong sense of propriety; a desire for action, usually without thought behind it; and, most important, a gullibility which is evident even to the other characters.

In *Curtain*, Hastings says, "My wife was a merry, laughing creature. She wouldn't take anything seriously—and tried to make me the same, without much success, I'm afraid" (177). She certainly did not succeed, for Hastings has no sense of humor whatsoever. Jokes pass over his head, and he generally distrusts those with humorous temperaments, for he does not understand their banter. Nor can he recognize irony. The following passage from *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* is just one illustration from many of this lack:

[Poirot]: "We must be so intelligent that he does not suspect us of being intelligent at all. . . . There, *mon ami*, you will be of great assistance to me."

I was pleased with the compliment. There had been times

when I hardly thought that Poirot appreciated me at my true worth.

"Yes," he continued, staring at me thoughtfully, "you will be invaluable." (93)

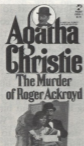
This sobersided aspect of Hastings naturally makes him seem foolish, which is Christie's intent, for a lack of a sense of humor makes one a pompous bore. One wonders what the "appreciative listener" of the following statement really thought of Hastings' humor: "An appreciative listener is always stimulating, and I described, in a humorous manner, certain incidents of my Convalescent Home, in a way which, I flatter myself, greatly amused my hostess" (*Styles*, 4). Christie is being playful with the stereotype of the serious-minded Englishman (certainly Hastings is angrily chauvinistic about all things English). At the same time, as a narrator Hastings can be trusted not to treat crime as frivolity, but as a serious threat to his society. Again, he is surrogate and comic scapegoat.

The serious-minded are often also vain, and Hastings is no exception—though he never reaches Poirot's level. He may say, "I was not, Heaven help me, a clever man. I blundered—made mistakes," or "I've always been a poor hand at descriptions" (*Curtain*, 53 and 27), but he relishes compliments to his powers. When he is described in "The Adventure of the Cheap Flat" as "a great unraveler of mysteries," his reaction is "I laughed embarrassed but not wholly displeased with the role thrust upon me" (32). Likewise, when he realizes that a French police sergeant ranks him equal in importance with Poirot, he feels "a thrill of satisfaction" (*Murder on the Links*, 73). And when, in *Styles*, a young woman compliments him, he immediately finds her charming and proposes marriage; she laughs in his face! On the other hand, he strongly resents slights as to his intelligence or his being ignored. He is irritated by the profile of himself prepared by the Big Four, which contains "some absurd references to my supposed impulsiveness," and when, in the same novel, Countess Vera Rossakoff calls him stupid, his thoughts indicate both his irritation and his blind vanity: "Doubtless this attitude of hers was assumed expressly to annoy me and to give me the idea that I

was unimportant" (120 and 148). In *Murder on the Links*, he becomes petulant at being ignored: "Nobody would answer my questions. Nobody had seemed to hear them. Angrily I flung myself into bed. . . ." (216). Obviously, Hastings has an image of himself, which however failing to correspond to that of the reader, provides him self-esteem and assurance. Finally, it must be mentioned that his vanity occasionally leads him to feel pity for poor, misguided Poirot, who is getting on in years and is really not as sharp as he once was—only later to have Poirot prove himself successful again.

A source of minor conflict between Hastings and Poirot is the former's excessive sense of what is and is not proper. In spite of his streak of vanity, Hastings has "a horror of doing anything conspicuous" (*Lord Edgware Dies*, 93). His English reserve and his Etonian training cause him to become upset at Poirot's willingness to read others' letters without permission and to eavesdrop. When Poirot delves in a drawer of ladies' underwear and then reads the love letters he finds there, Hastings remonstrates, "It isn't playing the game." He is not mollified by Poirot's rejoinder that "I am not playing a game, *mon ami*. . . I am hunting down a murderer" (*Peril at End House*, 103-4). As for eavesdropping, Hastings says, "At whatever school Poirot was educated, there were clearly no unwritten rules about eavesdropping. I was horrified but powerless" (*Poirot Loses a Client*, 107). The "unwritten rules" are, for Hastings, a code of conduct, which he finds difficult to break in even the most exigent circumstances. His attitude is another example of Christie's exaggeration of the stereotyped proper Englishman so that readers can laugh at his correct, but misapplied, values.

Poirot, the man of thought, is balanced by Hastings, the man of action—and one can add, action without thought. Whenever a case arises, Hastings wishes to be immediately up and about, and he is often frustrated by Poirot's seeming lack of energy in pursuing what is, to Hastings, a matter requiring rushing to the scene of the crime, finding clues, and whatever other activity will demonstrate that *something* is being done. The idea of analyzing by sheer logic what is already known does not appeal to him, for thinking simply confuses him. For Hastings, action replaces thought: the result is that his actions never succeed. The best example of Hastings in action on his own occurs in *Curtain* when he decides to commit murder himself. Assuming that his daughter has been seduced by a cad, he determines to take justice into his own hands. He is, of course, foiled by Poirot, who drugs his cup of hot chocolate. When he awakens the next morning, he is "bewildered, incredulous, disgusted, and finally immeasurably and overwhelmingly relieved" (141). But then he must listen to Poirot's telling him of the many fallacies in his murder plan. (In the same novel,





Hastings does, in a sense, kill by unintentionally causing a would-be murderer's method to result in her own death.) The only conclusion is that Hastings as a man of action is active, but ineptly so.

The last principal trait of his personality, and the most important, is his gullibility. Indeed, that gullibility is the basis for Hastings' role as confused surrogate and comic scapegoat. In a long lecture on Hastings as the normal, gullible man in *Lord Edgware Dies*, Poirot says, "In you, Hastings, I find the normal mind almost perfectly illustrated. . . . As in a mirror I see reflected in your mind exactly what the criminal wishes me to believe" (129), and in *Peril at End House* he goes even further: "You are that wholly admirable type of man, honest, credulous, honorable, who is invariably taken in by any scoundrel. You are the type of man who invests in doubtful oil fields, and non-existent gold mines" (35). Hastings angrily denies the accusation, but it is true. His acceptance of appearances without evaluation and his romantic imagination combine to make him the dupe of any clever deceiver. Allied with this gullible, romantic nature is his open countenance. In spite of his reserve, Hastings cannot conceal his emotions, especially when taken by surprise; he is utterly transparent. Because he cannot dissemble, Poirot often refuses to share information with him, knowing that Hastings will be bound to reveal it, unintentional though that revelation may be.

Another element of his personality resulting from his gullibility is his instant like or dislike of others on the basis of surface appearance as soon as he meets them. Christie is too clever to make him always wrong; that would be an obvious giveaway to the reader, but he is far more often wrong than right, though he flatters himself that his "first judgments are usually fairly shrewd" (*Styles*, 5). In "The Double Clue," on meeting a man who happens to be innocent of any crime, Hastings says, "I have seldom taken a greater dislike to anyone than I did to this particular young man with his white, effeminate face and

affected lisping speech" (144). Such a reaction may be tribute to Hastings' manliness, but not to his effectiveness in solving the robbery of the story. On another occasion, his reaction to meeting a man is "I felt a positive tingling in the end of my boot, so keen was I to kick him down the stairs" ("The Veiled Lady," 141). This man turns out to be acting the part of a blackmailer to aid the true criminal, who is to the unperceptive Hastings "our fair client." The point is that Hastings' quick character "analyses" are not based on anything except his personal feelings, which are an unsure guide at best. Christie uses his judgments of others to confuse the reader, who cannot know for certain whether they will turn out to be justified or not.

Related to his quick judgments of other men is his susceptibility to pretty, charming women, especially those with auburn hair. Hastings describes himself as "an admirer of beauty" (*Murder on the Links*, 20). However, he is "not a great admirer of the so-called New Woman" ("The Case of the Missing Will," 130), no matter how beautiful, nor does he have any "patience with the modern neurotic girl who dances from morning to night, smokes like a chimney, and uses language which would make a Billingsgate fishwoman blush" (*Murder on the Links*, 5). His preference is for someone like Valerie Saintclair in "The King of Clubs": "She seemed to exhale an atmosphere of romance" (153). Hastings is unconsciously a male chauvinist, for he believes women are to be beautiful, socially graceful, and attentive to and supportive of men, while men are to be their chivalrous protectors. His actual understanding of women is nil; as Poirot says, "You admire *les femmes*, Hastings; you prostrate yourself before all of them who are good-looking and have the good taste to smile upon you; but psychologically you know nothing whatever about them" ("The Cornish Mystery," 139). Hastings' attitudes toward women incorporate all of the aspects of his personality: seriousness, vanity, sense of propriety, thoughtless action, and gullibility.

Of necessity, a great deal has already been said of the relationship between Poirot and Hastings, for that relationship is the reason for Hastings' existence as a character. It is not always a completely happy relationship, for Hastings has to acknowledge his secondary position, a position recognized by other characters. Their comments are rarely flattering to him. Inspector Japp particularly enjoys flinging barbs at Hastings' thin skin. For example, when in "The Mystery of Hunter's Lodge," Poirot has *la grippe* and Hastings becomes his leg man, Japp comments, "Rather the case of the cart without the horse, your being here without him. . . ." (46). On another occasion, Japp says, "Where the master goes, there the dog follows," to which Hastings' reaction is that this remark is "in what I could not

think was the best of taste" (*Lord Edgware Dies*, 68). Nick Buckley makes a similar statement in *Peril at End House*, producing a frigid response from Hastings. It is understandable that others would have such views, for Poirot himself continually refers to Hastings as "my faithful dog"; during *The A. B. C. Murders*, he says, "You know, Hastings, in many ways I regard you as my mascot" (11). In the non-Hastings novel *Mrs. McGinty's Dead*, Poirot remembers him and says bluntly that he needed Hastings as a "stooge" to serve as an ego-booster for himself. In spite of Hastings' resentment of such putdowns, any time Poirot congratulates him, he quickly melts; at one point he says that he is "so flattered by the little man's approval that I could hardly continue" (*Murder on the Links*, 156-57).

At the same time, Hastings makes many statements indicating that he feels that he is the long suffering member of the pair. Poirot's vanity is one cause. Hastings says, "I am afraid that I have got into the habit of averting my attention whenever Poirot mentions his little grey cells. I have heard it all so often before" (*Lord Edgware Dies*, 16). But however much Hastings may try to appear superior to or amused by the eccentricities of his little friend, the fact is he does suffer from being so often wrong while Poirot is *always* right. The following exchange in "The Affair at the Victory Ball" is typical:

"Poirot," I cried, "one day I shall murder you! Your habit of finding everything perfectly simple is aggravating to the last degree!"

"But when I explain, *mon ami*, is it not always perfectly simple?"

"Yes; that is the annoying part of it! I feel then that I could have done it myself." (99)

Hastings, of course, cannot do it himself; nevertheless, at times Poirot seems to be unnecessarily severe with his befuddled companion, particularly in light of his own vanity. When he attacks Hastings for guessing rather than reasoning, Hastings' thoughts, at least partially correct, are "It was on the tip of my tongue to suggest that my real use to Poirot was to provide him with a companion to whom he could boast, but I controlled myself" (*Lord Edgware Dies*, 130). Perhaps Hastings' greatest complaint is Poirot's refusal to let him in on what is happening. (If Poirot did, the reader would also know.) In *The Big Four*, Poirot pretends to be dead, and there is even a funeral with Hastings as chief mourner. When the two are reunited, Hastings exclaims, "But you might have told me!" Poirot replies, "No, Hastings, I could not. Never, never, in a thousand years, could you have acted the part at the funeral. As it was, it was perfect" (154). No one likes to be fooled or be made to feel insignificant, and Hastings is no different. But Poirot resolutely refuses to confide really important matters to him. When Poirot does offer him clues,

Hastings cannot grasp their significance, but clues are as much as Poirot will give; not even pleading by Hastings will change his mind. In *Poirot Loses a Client*, Hastings humbly says, "You know, Poirot, I don't quite understand all this"; Poirot puts him down with "If you will pardon my saying so, Hastings, you do not understand at all!" (190) There is a passage of conversation in the same novel which illustrates both the exasperation of Hastings and the mockery – as well as the genuine affection – of Poirot:

[Hastings]: "I'm still a little fogged. Who exactly do we suspect?"

[Poirot]: "I really could not say who *you* suspect, Hastings! Everybody in turn, I should imagine!"

"Sometimes I think you *like* to get me into that state!"

"No, no, I would not amuse myself in such a way."

"I wouldn't put it past you." (206)

Hastings is not, however, always ineffectual. Poirot admits in *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* that Hastings has a knack "of stumbling over the truth unawares" (255). There are a remarkable number of such stumblings. In their very first case, Hastings' noticing of Poirot's hand trembling as he straightens ornaments on a mantel provides the vital link in the case for Poirot. When Hastings points out that there are varying nicknames for a single given name, Poirot receives a valuable clue, which a foreigner would not know, for solving *Peril at End House*. Hastings is the first person in *The A. B. C. Murders* to suggest that something is fishy about the arrival of the murderer's letters to Poirot; no one pays any attention then, but at the conclusion, Poirot publicly gives Hastings the proper credit. In *The Big Four*, Hastings risks (he thinks) his wife's life to save Poirot, and Poirot is deeply grateful: "in this last adventure of ours, the honours are all with you, and happy is the man who has such a friend as I have!" (118) Poirot also gives Hastings the credit for discovering the headquarters of the Big Four, and, most significantly, when it is necessary to enter that headquarters, he refuses to allow a substitute (as if there could be one) to go with Hastings. The relationship between the two men may have its tensions, but they are truly friends.

Curtain, the final pairing of Poirot and Hastings, illustrates their relationship superbly. Poirot refuses to tell Hastings the identity of the murderer because of his "speaking countenance," and he tricks Hastings into believing that Poirot is almost totally incapacitated, so that he can carry out his plan for removal of the murderer without Hastings' giving the show away. Since Poirot knows that he will have to die to complete his plan, he makes preparations for Hastings: "I am doing all the things that so often you have reproached me with not doing. I am playing fair with you. I am giving you a run for your money. I am playing the game. You have every chance to discover

the truth" (234). Poirot's playing fair includes leaving eight clues to explain what really happened; Hastings, of course, fails to unravel the mystery, and Poirot, knowing that will be the case, leaves a detailed explanation for him to receive four months after the final events. Even after death, Poirot has to explain to his faithful Watson, but it should also be said that death itself does not break their friendship. In an early short story, "The Adventure of 'The Western Star'," Hastings says, "In spite of his idiosyncrasies, I was deeply attached to my quaint little friend" (8). That feeling never changes, except to intensify, as is shown by Hastings' comment in the last novel summing up the relationship; there he says that Poirot is "the man whose influence over me was to shape and mould my life" (2).

Arthur Hastings is the literary son of Dr. John H. Watson, whoever his actual parents. As unchanging narrator and participant in thirty-four adventures of Hercule Poirot, he is characteristic as reader surrogate and comic scapegoat—some might say almost too much so—of the traditional Watson figure. In fact, next to Watson himself, Hastings probably did as much as any character to establish the stereotype of the great detective's incompetent aide. Christie apparently became tired of his inanities and dropped him from the Poirot stories in the late 1930s, just as she was later to tire of Poirot himself and write less and less of him. Nevertheless, when she decided to write Poirot's last case, she brought Hastings back and gave him a more than usually important role in it. It was appropriate for her to do so, for though Poirot acted without Hastings on many occasions, the tall "silly-ass" Englishman is inextricably associated with the egotistical little

Belgian. Holmes had his Watson; Poirot had his Hastings; readers had the fun!

Notes

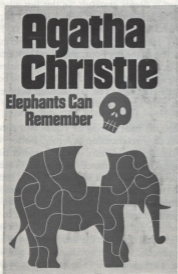
1. E. M. Wrong, "Crime and Detection," *The Art of the Mystery Story*, ed. Howard Haycraft (New York, 1975), p. 22; Martha Duffy, "The Sweet Sleuth Gone," *Time*, 15 September 1975, p. 88; Julian Symons, "Review of *Curtain*," *New York Times Book Review*, 12 October 1975, p. 3.
2. Quoted in Derrick Murdoch, *The Agatha Christie Mystery* (Toronto, 1976), p. 100.
3. The novels and short stories in which Hastings appears are here listed separately in chronological order, with the original date of book publication first and the edition used for this study following. Where applicable, alternate titles follow the entry. All quotations from these works will be cited in the text.

Novels

- 1920 *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*. New York: Bantam Books, 1961.
 1923 *Murder on the Links*. New York: Dell, 1964.
 1927 *The Big Four*. New York: Dell, 1968.
 1932 *Peril at End House*. New York: Pocket Books, 1959.
 1933 *Lord Edgware Dies*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1970 (*Thirteen at Dinner*).
 1935 *The A. B. C. Murders*. London: Fontana Books, 1962.
 1937 *Poirot Loses a Client*. New York: Avon, n.d. (*Dumb Witness*, *Mystery at Littlegreen House*, *Murder at Littlegreen House*).
 1975 *Curtain*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1975.

Short Stories

- 1924 *Poirot Investigates*. New York: Bantam Books, 1961.
 The Adventure of "The Western Star"
 The Tragedy at Marsdon Manor
 The Adventure of the Cheap Flat
 The Mystery of Hunter's Lodge
 A Million Dollar Bond Robbery
 The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb
 The Jewel Robbery at the Grand Metropolitan
 The Kidnapped Prime Minister
 The Disappearance of Mr. Davenheim
 The Adventure of the Italian Nobleman
 The Case of the Missing Will
 The Veiled Lady
 The Lost Mine
 The Chocolate Box
 1939 *The Regatta Mystery*. New York: Dell, 1964.
 Mystery of the Baghdad Chest
 1950 *The Mousetrap and Other Stories*. New York: Dell, 1969. (*Three Blind Mice and Other Stories*)
 The Adventure of Johnnie Waverly
 1951 *The Under Dog and Other Stories*. New York: Dell, 1969.
 The Plymouth Express
 The Affair at the Victory Ball
 The Market Basing Mystery
 The Lemesurier Inheritance
 The Cornish Mystery
 The King of Clubs
 The Submarine Plans
 The Adventure of the Clapham Cook
 1961 *Double Sin*. New York: Dell, 1964.
 Double Sin
 The Double Clue
 4. "Murder at \$2.50 a Crime," *The Art of the Mystery Story*, p. 330.
 5. *Masters of Mystery*, reprint (Norwood, Pa., 1976), p. 136.
 6. "Introduction," *The Omnibus of Crime* (New York, 1929), p. 13.
 7. *Ibid.*
 8. Sutherland Scott, *Blood in Their Ink* (London, 1953), p. 114.



PAPER CRIMES

By Fred Dueren



Verdict of 13. Julian Symons, Editor. Ballantine, 1978.

Stories written by members of the London Detection Club are practically guaranteed to be entertaining. The theme here is juries and each story offers a jury in one form or another. Usually the jury is correct, but one or two of the tales leave a question. . . . Most memorable are Peter Dickinson's story of a crew of interplanetary creatures; Patricia Highsmith's ironic (but flawed in conception) tale of a cat who found some severed fingers; H. R. F. Keating's "Gup" about life (and death) in colonial India; and Celia Fremlin's "The Postgraduate Thesis" concerning a student's fieldwork on ghosts in a country cottage. All the entries are first-rate—the volume is a must for any avid crime reader.

The Games of 80 by W. H. Mefford. Belmont Tower, 1980.

Fearing another terrorist attack at the Moscow Games, the Olympic Committee hires free-lance agent Ned Sand to uncover and stop any such attack before it occurs. Ned's first few weeks in Russia are calm as he connects with his counterpart, Col. Andrei Zarkov. Meanwhile, African leader Jume Bombasso's plan to unite Africa slowly unfolds. By the time Ned learns enough of the plot to take action, it is almost too late. The action then explodes in several directions, revealing layers of deceit and a few improbable resolutions. If Russia and the Games are only a minor part of it all, that's soon forgotten in the rush. Ned is engaging and his adventures are diverting. A little believability would make him a worthy protagonist for a series.

The Diehard by Jon A. Jackson. Berkley, 1977.

Attorney Arthur Clippert was successful enough to avoid indictment when an investigation uncovered a massive computer insurance fraud in the Fidelity Funding Corp. Then his wife was murdered in a bizarre burglary in their plush Detroit home. The investigating officer, Sgt. Mulheisen, provides competent detection. Intervening scenes cover the killer's attempts to escape, and the Mob agent's search for the \$20 million that everyone thinks Clippert has. The various elements merge in a taut climax that has its own ironic justice and is particularly satisfying.

Day of the Dingo by Nick Carter. Charter Books, 1980.

The latest of the Nick Carter adventures is rather bland. His task this time is to find out what the "Day of the Dingo" is and then prevent its occurring. It takes three-fourths of the book for him to hop all over the world, meeting a few beautiful women, and try to find out why agent Benny Chang was killed, leaving only a cryptic Dingo message. The women all act a bit suspiciously, Nick finds out what General Fung is planning. It's all harmless, but ho-hum.

The Blackstock Affair by Franklin Bandy. Charter Books, 1980.

Kevin MacInnes' second recorded case as an investigator specializing in psychological stress evaluators (super lie detectors) involves several nick-of-time escapes and a plot about sterilizing the world. Aiding MacInnes in his search for truth and justice is Amanda Button, private investigator, and Eveleen O'Connell, a super reporter hot for news or a man. Bandy's smooth style and loaded plot serves well enough, but all those escapes and near-misses stretch credibility and don't add much to the theme anyway. MacInnes needs to get back to detecting with his PSE instead of with his fists and friends.



Ghost Story by Peter Straub. Pocket Books, 1979.

Ghost Story was a mass release, splashed with admiring quotes about its chilly horrors. I usually read such glowing reviews with doubt. This time they were right. Straub has produced the best horror story since Stephen King's *Salem's Lot*. Ironically, the greatest similarity is in the power to evoke a whole town. We are as interested in the bit characters as the main protagonists. But don't underestimate the terror and overbearing menace that seeps through the entire book. Plot synopsis would be unfair. Suffice it to say it's about the Chowder Society—five old men who meet regularly to tell each other ghost stories. Eventually the ghosts they invoke become real, bringing out their past and possibly destroying an entire town.

Sabella by Tanith Lee. DAW Books, 1980.

I was drawn to *Sabella* (or *The Blood Stone*) by its subheading, "A Science Fiction Vampire Novel." I have a cold little place in my heart for any of those sharp-toothed night creatures with ruby specks sliding down their chins. Since Sabella lives on Novo Mars, an earth colony at some unspecified date in the future, it is not surprising that she's not the traditional bride of Dracula—she casts a shadow, sees herself in mirrors, her victims don't become vampires. But she is also interesting in that, for most of the book, she is a victim herself, forced to hide in a remote house, eventually pursued by the avenging brother of one of her victims. Most important, Sabella is sympathetic, tries not to kill her partners and wants only to live a quiet, sufficiently-fed life. Tanith Lee's style and

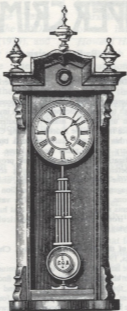
descriptions have a melodic freshness—a combination of artistic skill and attempts to describe vampires in an alien world, casting new impressions on familiar objects. But in being familiar, except for the resolution, there was little science fiction; it could easily have been adapted to a current tale in the desert southwest.

Blood Rites by Barry Nazarian. Signet, 1980.

David Redburn is a quiet, attractive teenager with an unstable background and a talent for seduction. But the culmination of the chase is always the same—the death of the girl, Michael Marsten, the teacher of one of David's victims, is asked to help the police when Allison Tully disappears; then he's discarded when her body is found and his help is no longer needed. But Michael has become too involved by then and continues to hunt the killer on his own. A fine psychological suspense tale, *Blood Rites* holds interest as it builds to an unusual ending. The idea of hunters becoming killers themselves is the ultimate puzzle of the novel. Its resolution here is both realistic and logical.

The Spear by James Herbert. Signet, 1978.

Harry Steadman, one-time agent for Israeli intelligence, is drawn back into the brutal game when his partner in a private detective business is tortured and killed. Several gory scenes and a smattering of sex later, Harry learns that his enemy, Gant, is involved in resurrecting the evil forces of Hitler's Third Reich. Gant's tools for eventual world domination are a holy spear, said to be the one stabbed in Christ's side, and the still-living spirit of Heinrich Himmler. Herbert's writing moves the story line along at a steady clip, and Steadman and his accomplices (and foes) more than hold interest. The occult



elements are not particularly scary or convincing, but serve to remove the book from the run of the mill spy-versus-evil, save-the-world escapade. Whether that's better or worse depends on your personal preference.

Sunset People by Herbert Kastle. Jove, 1980.

The seamier side of *Sunset Strip* is the focus of this big, fast novel. The crime elements are oddly shunted aside in Lt. Larry Admer's search for the killer of several Strip prostitutes. Diana Woodruff, sister of the first victim, works in a massage parlor and exerts a devastating effect on Admer. He seems more interested in bedding Diana than in finding the killer. The explicit sex scenes and tone of quality trash are more in the style of a straight novel than one in the crime genre. The characters are alive, though, and continuous action leads to the inevitable, predictable ending.

Diagnosis: Murder by James Kahn. Carlyle Books, 1980.

Dr. Jason Watson had reached a new low—a crumbling (non-existent) practice, his wife dead from his own incorrect diagnosis, and then he ODED on the morphine he was in the habit of taking. He was rescued by Ella Lean, an odd young woman who was coming to get the results of a chest X-ray. With his own life such a disaster and Ella then suspected in the murder of her lover's wife, Watson decided the best thing he could do was become a detective and save Ella's life as she had saved his. From that point on colorful, not to say bizarre, characters trample in and out of Watson's life. The plot takes more twists than a minstaur's maze, being both the weak and the intriguing parts of the mystery. Watson gets a few clues to put him on the track, but the solution is handed to him in the last pages.

THE PAPERBACK REVOLUTION

By Charles Shibuk



FRANKLIN BANDY

Kevin MacInnes, an expert psychological stress evaluator, and his new bodyguard, Amanda Button, are summoned by the mayor of Blackstock, Ohio to help solve a serious problem—the rapidly declining birth rate. *The Blackstock Affair* (Charter, 1980) suffers from slightly far-fetched motivation, loosely-constructed plotting, and a weak ending, but it's all very entertaining, studded with appealing characters, fast-moving, highly readable, and just plain likeable.

SIMON BRETT

Unsuccessful actor Charles Paris is approaching his 50th birthday in *An Amateur Corpse* (1978) (Berkley), and has not yet profited by his previous mistakes. His fondness for the bottle and the ladies are well-known by now, and, one must admit, his

pendant for discovering corpses—in this case an aspiring actress in a coal shed—bodes ill for success in his chosen profession.

CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE DETECTION CLUB

The first paperback appearance of *The Floating Admiral* (1932) (Charter) is a signal event. The talents of Christie, Sayers, Chesterton, Wade, Rhode, Knox, Crofts, Berkeley, and other prominent British mystery writers of the golden age have combined to produce a serial detective novel that is worthy of the literary and ratiocinative skills involved in this laudable and intriguing project.

LESLIE CHARTERIS

In his heyday, the Robin Hood of modern crime functioned best at less than novel

length, and his first three volumes of short stories set an extremely high standard for crook stories to follow. **The Saint to the Rescue** (1959) (Charter) is the tenth collection, and does not quite recapture past glories, but it will entertain, and is certainly worth your attention.

This column's favorite Charter's work is *Enter the Saint* (1930), but Charter Books has not served its readers well in choosing to reprint only two of its original three novelettes.

MICHAEL COLLINS

The Brass Rainbow (1969) (Playboy Press) starts with a small-time hustler's attempt to collect a \$25,000 gambling debt from a multi-millionaire. When the latter is found murdered, the former is the chief suspect. This novel is one of private eye Dan Fortune's best and most complex cases, and is very much in the Ross Macdonald tradition.

DICK FRANCIS

Each new Francis novel arouses raves from the critics, who have just about run out of superlatives. It would seem to me that the recently revived **Odds Against** (1965) (Pocket Books) is this author's absolute masterpiece — standing head and shoulders above his other work — and one of the very best mystery novels from the '60s.

The later **Slayride** (1973) is also available from the same publisher.

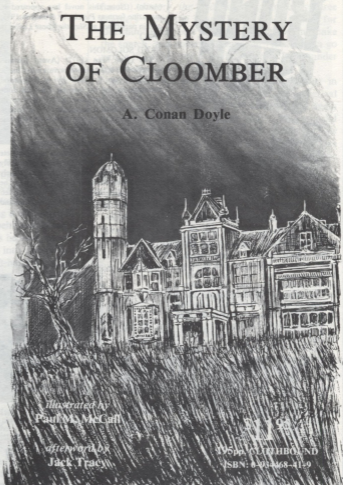
WILLIAM OSCAR JOHNSON

No U.S. President elected since 1840 in a year ending in zero has left office alive. **The Zero Factor** (Pocket Books, 1980) follows newly-elected Republican President Augustus Alvin York through the early '80s. So, too, does a highly-efficient professional assassin, who has been paid \$10,000,000 by a fanatical anti-Castro group and is determined to see history repeat itself.

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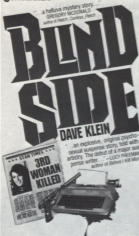
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DAVE KLEIN

Blind Side (Charter, 1980) is a many-stranded novel about a sportswriter covering a pro football team that includes a psychopathic killer. It's harshly realistic in content and language, and not recommended to anyone seeking a cosy read. Klein's debut is uneven and not completely successful, but its strength of characterization and occasional flashes of power give promise of better things to come.

PETER LOVESEY

A six-day walking race in Victorian England forms the background of **Wobble to Death** (1970) (Penguin). Detective-Sergeant Cribb's subsequent exploits (with the notable exception of *Waxwork*) have not quite equalled the merit of this excellent debut.

LEROY LAD PANEK

The work of golden age writers Bentley, Christie, Milne, Sayers, Berkeley-Iles, Aillingham, Carr, and Marsh is superbly illuminated in **Watteau's Shepherds: The Detective Novel in Britain 1914-1940** (Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1979). This volume is written with intelligence, fresh insight, wit, love of the form, and a refreshing lack of dreary pretentiousness. It's a must for anyone interested in the above authors in general, and the detective novel in general.

(Note: *Watteau's Shepherds*, which really deserves a longer and more thoughtful review, serves to establish Panek's credentials as a major critic.)

PATRICK QUENTIN

Theatrical producer Peter Duluth, a victim of alcoholism, has himself committed to a mental institution in order to effect a cure, but finds his personal problems (including romance) confounded by two murders in **Puzzle for Fools** (1936) (Avon). This oft-reprinted novel, marking Duluth's debut, is a major work, and represents its authors at the very top of their form.

On leave from the Navy once again,

Duluth finds himself and his wife reluctant guests at a luxury hotel near Lake Tahoe that is teeming with a group of aspiring divorcees and murder in **Puzzle for Wantons** (1945) (Avon). (Note: this novel has appeared in magazine form as *Puzzle for Frauds* in 1945, and in paperback as *Slay the Loose Ladies* in 1948.)

BRAD SOLOMON

The Gene Man (1977) (Avon) features unsuccessful actor turned private eye Charlie Quinlan, who is hired by a Hollywood executive to find his missing son. This long and striking debut novel is orthodox in its plot and character depiction, but is written with so much skill and assurance that one wishes it had achieved a successor.

STEVEN A. STILWELL (compiler)

The value and usefulness of my complete collection of TAD has been considerably enhanced by publication of the handsomely designed **The Armchair Detective Index** (The Armchair Detective, 1979) to the first ten volumes. The expenditure of much time and

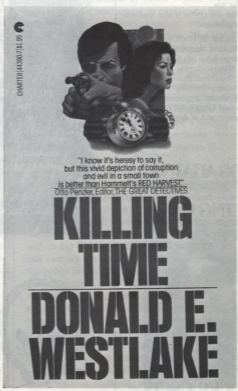
effort in the past has now been obviated by the existence of this invaluable reference tool.

JULIAN SYMONS

The narrative involving three deaths by arsenic contained in the critically well-received **The Blackheath Poisonings** (1978) (Penguin) has much to recommend it. The '90s period detail is drawn by a meticulous hand, and never obtrudes into plotting or characterization. Equally meritorious is Symons' sense of understated realism that recalls the vivid quality of the best accounts of true crime cases. (Note: I believe *The Blackheath Poisonings* does have its basis in fact.)

DONALD E. WESTLAKE

I may be one of the few human beings who are not amused by this author's recent comic work, but I am impressed by Westlake's very early novels that were murderously hard-boiled in the best early Hammett tradition. **Killing Time** (1961) (Charter) is from this period, and obviously shows the influence of *Red Harvest*. You should find this novel a more than worthy successor.



The Mystery of Robert Eustace

By Joe R. Christopher

At one time the identity of Robert Eustace was something of a mystery. He collaborated with L. T. Meade (Elizabeth Thomasina Meade Smith) on *A Master of Mysteries* (1898, about a psychic investigator named Bell), *The Brotherhood of the Seven Kings* (1899, the first series of stories about a female criminal), *The Gold Star Line* (1899), *The Sanctuary Club* (1900), *The Lost Square* (1902), *The Sorceress of the Strand* (1902 or 1903—authorities disagree), and three stories about Diana Marburge, "The Oracle of Maddox Street" (never collected, 1902); with Gertrude Warden on *The Stolen Pearl* (1903); with Edgar Jepson on "The Tea-Leaf" (1925), "Mr. Belton's Immunity" (1926), and "All Square" (1936); and with Dorothy L. Sayers on *The Documents in the Case* (1930). He wrote by himself *A Human Bacillus* (1907). The man behind the pseudonym was Dr. Eustace Robert Barton, born in 1868 and qualified for the medical profession in 1897 (he was not, however, an M.D.); he left England in 1903 for Portugal, returning to England by 1914; he seems to have served in World War I, as a doctor, and he died in England in 1943.

Most of the above information comes from a brilliant essay by Trevor H. Hall, "Dorothy L. Sayers and Robert Eustace" (in his *Dorothy L. Sayers: Nine Literary Studies*, 1980). He distinguishes this "Robert Eustace" from another pseudonymous "Robert Eustace" of the period who wrote one publicly-published book under the common name, *The Hidden Treasures of Egypt* (1925); the latter was one Eustace Fraser Rawlins, who died in 1932. But as valuable as this distinction is, Hall goes on to a conjecture which I doubt is well-founded. He is interested in why Sayers, having given "Robert Eustace" half of a dual by-line on *The Documents in the Case*, did not ever thank him for information about hemophilia which he furnished for her *Have His Carcase* (1932). He decides that she may have learned something disreputable about Barton between books. Hall's source of information for Barton supplying Sayers with information about hemophilia is James Brabazon, whose biography of Sayers—the fourth book-length biography of Sayers—is due out just about as I write this. But the two

letters which Brabazon supplies him are available in the United States, and they are described and summarized in E. R. Gregory's "Manuscripts in the Marion E. Wade Collection, Wheaton College (Wheaton, Illinois)" (in Margaret P. Hannay's collection, *As Her Whimsy Took Her*, 1979; see B.2 on 222). What Hall obviously does not know is that in the Wade Collection there is a series of nine letters from John Rhode (Cecil John Charles Street) also giving advice about hemophilia in six of them. Thus when Sayers thanks John Rhode in her prefatory note to *Have His Carcase*, she is probably thanking the man who gave her the most information. Among other comments, for example, he works out several possible family trees for Sayers' hemophilic. He also gives information about the Playfair Cipher which she uses. (For Gregory's description of these letters, see Gregory, B.16, in Hannay, pp. 225-226.)

I said above, rather generally, that Hall conjectures that Sayers learned something disreputable about Barton. Let me be more specific. Hall presents evidence that Barton was given a small annuity by his wealthy father, while his three siblings inherited substantial amounts; his father was probably also responsible for Barton's living in Portugal for several years (see Hall, pp. 100-1, for the first and the implied second). Hall makes a guess that Barton may have been a homosexual and, in the years before World War I, that was enough to cause the rejection. (It seems to me that it could have been a number of other things. What if the elder Barton—who was an M.D.—had discovered his son was performing abortions?) It is possible that there could have been something so scandalous it would have driven Sayers away. But I do not think homosexuality could have been it. In 1919 Sayers exchanged letters with Leonard Green, who was asking for a literary contribution on friendship (see my "Letters in the Humanities Research Center, the University of Texas at Austin", G.1, in Hannay, pp. 270-271). This was for his homosexual (but non-pornographic) *Quorum: A Magazine of Friendship*. As Ralph E. Hone says in *Dorothy L. Sayers: A Literary Biography* (1979), since Blackwell's had published two of Green's books during the years Sayers was publishing poetry with that firm, editing

volumes of *Oxford Poetry* for it, and otherwise working for Blackwell's, "she certainly knew about his attitudes" (p. 32, italics by Hone). What Hone does not mention is that Sayers published a poem—"Veronica"—in Green's magazine which could be taken as a sentimental, Lesbian verse; she also published one titled "Prayer to the Holy Ghost against Triviality" in the same issue, which does not fit the theme so well. I am not suggesting that Sayers was a Lesbian, by the way; I suspect she was simply amused to contribute to such a volume. But the point is that she was not likely to be upset that Barton was a homosexual, if he was.

As long as I am being somewhat digressive about Hall's theories, let me add a minor comment not about "Dorothy L. Sayers and Robert Eustace" but about the preceding essay which leads into the one I have been discussing. In *The Documents in the Case*¹ Hall praises the novel and answers an idiotic reading of it as applying to Sayers' own marriage which was advanced in Janet Hitchman's biography of Sayers, *Such a Strange Lady* (1975). He could have made a case in a different manner if he had realized that *The Documents in the Case* was based on a famous British murder, the Thompson-Bywater case of 1922. See Gregory, B.6 (Hannay, p. 223), for documentary evidence that Sayers used this case.

So far I have tried to deny two of Hall's conjectures: that Sayers deliberately cut Barton in not mentioning him in her note to *Have His Carcase* and that she would have been horribly upset over his (possible) homosexuality. I would not like to leave this material without a conjecture of my own: I hypothesize that Barton wrote part of *The Documents in the Case*. Certainly I do not have firm evidence for this, and Gregory's description of the manuscript (B.6, as cited above) does not mention two hands apparent in the writing. However, I wonder if Barton may not have written part of the first draft. (In fact, my guess would be that Barton had the first idea of handling the Thompson-Bywater case, but he could not manage it. However, I will argue for his writing part of the book, not for his starting it.) In the past, all that has been generally conceded "Robert Eustace" is that he supplied the information on muscarine—and his authorities got it wrong (see Hall, pp. 71-73).

I have three reasons for suggesting Barton's real collaboration. First, Hall quotes a semi-autobiographical passage from *A Human Bacillus* in which Dr. Pedro Silver points to a bookshelf and says that the main ideas and most of the writing in a number of the mysteries were his. The sensational titles listed by Silver—*The Fraternity of the Six Princes*, *The Mistress of Wonders*, *The Chapel Club*, and others—recall Barton's early collaborations with L. T. Meade (see Hall, pp. 95-96). Hall does not

think much of Barton/Silver's claim to have written parts of those early works, but a man who is capable of writing one novel on this own is capable of writing parts of others.

Second, Sayers was fond of collaborating in minor matters at least. For example, Helen Simpson, Muriel St. Clare Byrne, C. W. Scott-Giles, and Sayers all worked together on the privately printed *Papers Relating to the Family of Wimsey* (1936) and Sayers worked with Fr. Raymond Baynes and a Mr. Lambert on the "Pantheon Papers" which were printed in *Punch* in 1953 and 1954. (This is the first time the full authorship of the latter has been given; I will substantiate my statement in another paper elsewhere.) As is generally known, she collaborated with Muriel St. Clare Byrne on the play version of *Busman's Honeymoon* (1937). Therefore, might it not be possible she asked one of her acquaintances who had collaborated with other authors to do first drafts of some of the male-point-of-view sections of *The Documents in the Case*? Hall shows that Barton lived much of his life in boarding houses (see pp. 85,94); would he not also be useful in describing some details of the Harrison home in the novel, with its boarders?

Third, in the summer of 1980, I was reading some of the as-yet uncatalogued papers in the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin. What I was interested in were some of the papers which the library received from David Higham, Sayers' literary agent. One of the groups I looked through were the financial records from February 1953 through December 1955. In a 29 July 1954 statement in the Sayers file (as in other statements) I found that one third of the royalties of *The Documents in the Case* went to the estate of Dr. E. Barton.* Let me make an analogy. In a letter in Higham's 1958 file dealing with Sayers' estate, it is mentioned that M. St. Clare Byrne received one-third royalties of the play version of *Busman's Honeymoon*. Part of the manuscript of that play is in a second hand, not that of Sayers and presumably that of Byrne (see Gregory, B.4, in Hannay, pp. 222-223). Therefore, if Muriel St. Clare Byrne wrote part of that play and received a one-third share, may it not be likely that Barton also wrote parts of *The Documents in the Case*?

Whatever merits this suggestion of *The Documents in the Case* being a real collaboration, I hope my other points are well taken and that they add necessary qualifications to Hall's excellent study.

*I wish to thank the Research Committee of Tarleton State University which funded my two weeks in Austin, and the staff of the Humanities Research Center—particularly Ellen Dunlap, Ken Craven, and Carolyn Harris—for assistance in various ways (Craven, who was on the desk in the Reading Room while I was there, suffered the most).

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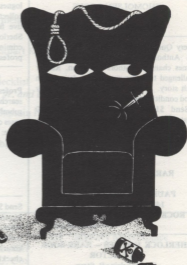
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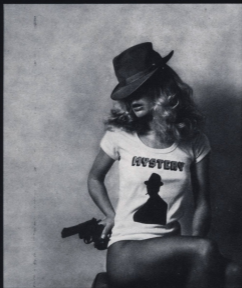
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