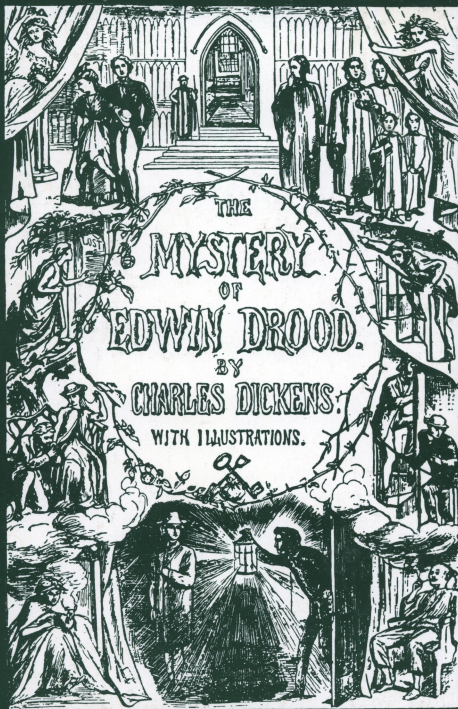
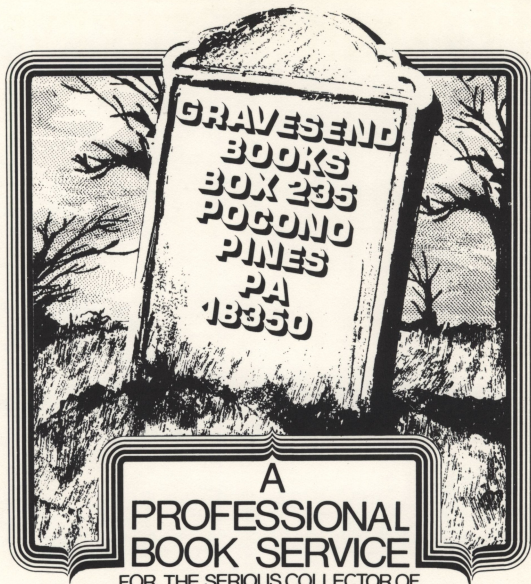


THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE



John Dickson Carr Solves the Mystery of Edwin Drood



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THE UNEASY CHAIR

Dear TADian:

T. M. McDade is a former FBI agent whose stories about his experiences have kept those of us who know him fascinated for hours on end. It seemed only fair, then, to start sharing them with as large and appreciative an audience as possible. So, beginning with this issue, Tom will be contributing a column on true crime, and we will be able to debate truth being stranger than fiction for some time to come.

Tom's column represents the third new regular feature (and he becomes the fourth new regular contributor) to appear in TAD since I took over the editorial duties about a year ago. Early responses to what we've been doing have been gratifyingly positive, and I expect that the next year will see more of the same, including a feature on the collecting of mystery fiction.

And speaking of collecting, this issue has a definite collectability in that it marks the first appearance in print of John Dickson Carr's solution to *The Mystery*

of *Edwin Drood*. Our special thanks to former MWA president Lillian de la Torre and to Mrs. Carr for allowing us to share this with you.

I was pleased to see that both reviews and letters are beginning to flow again and that contributions and submissions have not abated. Also pleasing is the fact that Laura MacPhail has joined us as Managing Editor. Not only does this mean that our promise of staying on schedule may become a reality, it also means that it will be possible to respond to letters with some regularity, something I haven't been able to do up until now. I hope it will also mean that I will never again have to say, "I'm sorry."

As I do now to Mr. Trevor Clark, who took the photographs of Peter Lovesey and Ruth Rendell which accompanied the interviews by Diana Cooper-Clark. Somewhere along the line the photo credits got lost. I'm sure Laura will see to it that such mistakes don't happen again. In the meantime, Mr. Clark has my apologies. And his well-deserved credit.

Also deserving credit for his review of three books by Norbert Davis in the "Retro Review" column of TAD 14:2 is Kim Grinder. He reviewed *The Mouse in the Mountain*, *Sally's in the Alley* and *Oh, Murderer Mine*.

I hope you've enjoyed reading TAD as much as I have putting it together. In my first Uneasy Chair, I commented on the necessity for growth, for broadening the base. I think we've done a lot in that direction, and know that we'll be able to do more... with your help. As long as you keep the feedback coming, we'll know which way to go. (In the next issue we're going to Tom Chastain, who has done a wonderful interview with Robert Parker.)

After my long-winded diatribe last time around, I now find myself tongue-tied, so I'm going to go play with my daughters and leave you to enjoy the rest of this issue.

Until next time, then,

Best mysterious wishes,

Michael Seidman

MICHAEL SEIDMAN



John Dickson Carr's Solution to *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*

By John Dickson Carr

When Charles Dickens died in 1870, he left unfinished a mystery novel that he was counting on to outclass Wilkie Collins's *THE MOONSTONE*. *THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD* has remained a mystery ever since. Books innumerable have tackled the problem, the two latest appearing within the last year.¹

Clearly the time has come to reveal yet another solution to the mystery of *Edwin Drood*, one proposed by a man especially fitted to understand the problem—the late John Dickson Carr.

I say "especially fitted," because *THE MOONSTONE* had the kind of construction that Carr excelled at: ever deeper levels of complication, and a stunning surprise at the end. If Dickens were to outclass *THE MOONSTONE* (which in my opinion he was incapable of doing, but let that pass), he had to be thinking like John Dickson Carr.

So when John one evening tossed off to me the remark, "By the way, I've solved *EDWIN DROOD*," I gave him no rest until he explained his theory.

He explained it briefly in a personal letter. Here is the letter:²

—LILLIAN DE LA TORRE

Of course I'll tell you my solution. No human being could resist such an appeal. I hope you don't find it disappointing, that's all.

In my view, *Drood's* fate *must* be murder. Anything else would be a faltering, a chase after a mechanical hare, a cream-puff feast for those who drink blood. And I agree with you that Dickens misled everybody in private conversation; of course he would. This was his bid to outshine Collins, and I submit he attacked it from the beginning like this:

THE MOONSTONE. Franklin Blake, the hero, has stolen the diamond but thinks he hasn't.

EDWIN DROOD. John Jasper, the villain, hasn't committed the murder but thinks he has.

Jasper, it is evident, *had* planned to kill Drood—strangling him with the scarf, and disposing of his body exactly as all the Cathedral indications so obviously show. But what happens on the day before Christmas? Jasper, clearly, has been taking opium—probably in the form of laudanum swallowed—since early afternoon. His eyes shine, and he is exalted. See his conversation with Crisparkle as they leave the Cathedral, after Jasper has sung so well.

"One would think, Jasper, that you had been trying a new medicine for that occasional indisposition of yours."

"No, really? That's well observed; for I have."

"Then stick to it, my good fellow; stick to it."

"I will."

In other words, Jasper is nerving himself to commit murder; he has been taking opium; he is taking too much; and he will be in danger of having a blackout.

Next, on the assumption that Dickens is playing fair exactly as Collins did, we must reconcile two puzzling factors in Jasper's behaviour. When Jasper is acting the hypocrite, as he always does *before* the disappearance of Drood, Dickens invariably lets the reader know this. It is pointed, re-pointed, heavily underlined. And yet, *after* the disappearance, this changes. Jasper is so nearly a maniac in his insistence on tracking down the murderer, and then on the guilt of Neville Landless, that for the first time his words have the ring of truth. That is the suggestion it carries, as palpable as a touch from the author's hand.

First, before giving supporting evidence, let us state a theory. At midnight Edwin Drood and Neville Landless leave Jasper to go down to the river and watch the storm. This is ideal for Jasper; he follows them. And then—just then—he has a blackout.

On coming to his senses, Jasper finds himself near the door of his own house. At his feet lies the body of Drood, skull cracked or crushed with a blow from some heavy weapon. The dazed Jasper, at that moment, can only imagine he has killed Drood



himself. He therefore, in frantic haste, disposes of the body just as he had originally intended, quicklime and all; afterwards, he throws watch and stickpin into the river to misdirect the police.

But all this while he is conscious of some hazy memory he can't place: a wild notion that he has seen something or someone slipping away from the body just as he woke up. Not until morning, when he rushes to Crisparkle's house and the Canon tells him of Neville's departure, does Jasper find that memory suddenly pinned in his brain. The figure slipping away from the scene of the crime—Neville Landless.

Is Neville, we ask ourselves, really the murderer after all?

Oh, no. That would be too easy. Besides, we have been allowed to follow Neville's thoughts; and this would rule him out.

Who did commit the murder, then?

I submit:

It was Helena Landless, dressed in a suit of her brother's clothes.

Now let's look back. Dickens has made much of the episode, in former years, when Helena dressed up in male clothes. (He was thinking of Constance Kent, of course; and note how his thoughts must have run.) When Dickens made his women dark-haired and of suppressed fierceness, you can look out for squalls. Remember, in *Bleak House*, that the tempestuous French maid proves to be the murderer of Tulkinghorn after Dickens has given us two innocent suspects—in itself a proof that *Edwin Drood* has no naïve solution.

What do we know of Helena? She is Neville's twin, and looks like him. She has a temper equal to, if not exceeding, his own; but she keeps it outwardly under control. We are never allowed to look into her thoughts. Neville is described as "slight" in build. She could easily be mistaken for Neville if she wore his clothes.

Now we recall, Watson, a very odd conversation between Helena and Neville on the afternoon of the day before Christmas. Neville tells her he is going on a walking-tour next morning. One of her questions is: "Do you send clothes on in advance of you?"

Tut, tut! We stumble over this; it jars; unless it is a clue, it is out of place. Helena next examines the walking-stick, noting how heavy it is and even asking the kind of wood.

In other words, she wants to know that a suit of his clothes will still be at Crisparkle's. She has determined to join him in his walking-tour, because she too is upset—after that interview with the Canon by the sea-side—and she still thinks *Drood* and *Rosa Bud* are to be married. But, if she mentions to Neville that she is going with him, he won't have it. She can get away with it only in male costume.

Can she get out of Miss Twinkleton's, that night, without being seen? Easily: the girls who might have seen her have all gone home. (A hit, Watson, a very palpable hit!) Can she get into Crisparkle's house unseen, cut her hair, don a suit of her brother's, and be ready? Easily: we know that the Canon and his mother both retire early; and nobody in country districts of England, even to this day, ever locks doors.

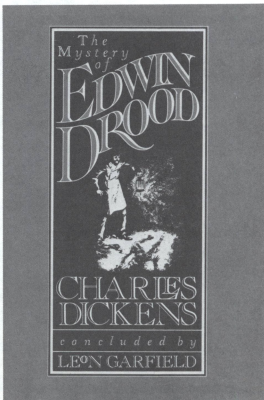
Thus we begin to perceive how it works out. At Crisparkle's, in the dark, she waits for Neville; she has procured a *heavy* walking-stick like her brother's. But Neville doesn't come back. By midnight—a very late hour in Cloisterham—there is still no return. And Helena goes towards Jasper's to find out what has happened.

Meantime, of course, Drood and Neville—who knows nothing of Helena's plan—have gone to see the river. Helena misses them; but she does come face to face with Drood outside the gate-house where Jasper lives. And Drood mistakes her for Neville.

Do you say that her voice would have betrayed her?

No. Not with such a wild, whooping, shouting wind as Dickens tells us has been going on all night.

Well, there is a quarrel. I know few young men in fiction so insufferable as Edwin Drood. Far from

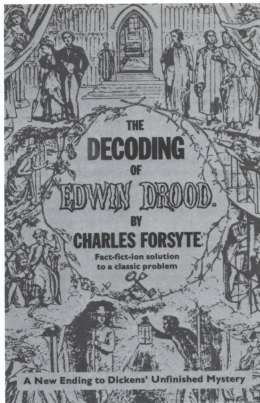


explaining the real situation between himself and Rosa, he would take pleasure in telling "Neville" just the opposite. Helena goes mad, just as Neville nearly did, and lashes with that heavy weapon.

When Jasper lurches up to the scene, Helena moves quickly away. But now we understand why, in the latter part of the book, Jasper is so frantically certain Neville is the murderer. Like Drood, he has been mistaken. But his suspicion comes too late. Before he clearly remembered what he saw, he has disposed of Drood's body and made himself an accessory.

Here, enfin, we have the crux of the book: the situation of the bitterest irony, and all through this story it is irony on which Dickens has concentrated. Jasper is compelled to shield Neville, whom he hates almost as much as he hates Drood, because Jasper himself is accessory after the fact.

That's the main outline of my solution. I can't go into detail, or this letter would stretch out unendurably. Yet I think, like a number of others, that Datchery is Bazzard. And I am sure Jasper is meant for a sticky end, even though he didn't actually kill Drood; whereas Helena—whose crime can be




construed as manslaughter—will never be handed over to the police. It would satisfy poetic justice, which is all Dickens cared about.

Notes

1. Charles Forsythe, *The Decoding of Edwin Drood*, Scribners, 1980; *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, concluded by Leon Garfield, Pantheon, 1981. See also Arthur J. Cox, "Dickens' Last Book: More Mysteries Than One," *The Armchair Detective*, Winter 1981, pp. 31-36.
2. My thanks are due to Mrs. Carr for permission to publish, and to Dr. Douglas G. Greene for his guidance. Dr. Greene informs me that Carr subsequently imparted his solution to John Keir Cross, who incorporated it in a television version of *Drood* which ran in eight episodes on ITV in England in 1960. But the Keir Cross scripts, though earnestly sought for, have proved elusive. Thanks to the encyclopedic memory of one who saw the show—Derek Smith, author of the locked-room novel *Whistle Up the Devil*—we are able to say that the solution in the series was the same as that in the earlier letter to me. Mrs. Carr confirms this, and adds: "I believe John published his version as an article for a magazine or journal somewhere." Perhaps this article will yet come to light! □



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Adolf Hitler and John Dickson Carr's Least-Known Locked Room

By Douglas G. Greene

It may not be a burning question, but have you ever wondered what thriller and detective-story writers of the 1930s would have considered a fitting end to Adolf Hitler? Agatha Christie would have had Hercule Poirot accuse the least-likely person (Eva Braun?) of his murder. Sapper's Bulldog Drummond would have preserved civilization and white-anglo-saxonism by pummeling Hitler to a pulp. Ellery Queen would have had EQ discover Hitler's headless corpse nailed to a cross, with all his clothes on backwards. And John Dickson Carr would have had Hitler's deserved demise occur in a locked room. As it happened, only Carr dispatched Hitler in a way suitable to detective fiction. To understand how this occurred, we must look at Carr's career as a writer of wartime scripts for the BBC.

During the early months of 1940, while Hitler was digesting his conquest of Poland and people talked about the "Phoney War," John Dickson Carr was

briefly in the United States. But after the fall of France, the Low Countries, Denmark and Norway, Carr decided to return to England. He arrived near the height of the Battle of Britain and offered his services as a scriptwriter to Val Gielgud, head of the BBC's Drama Department. Gielgud recorded in his diary (printed in *Years in a Mirror*, 1965): "Met John Dickson Carr for lunch at the Ivy. He has come back from the States—a gallant and quite uncalculated-for gesture on his part—to see the war through in a country he is fond of." Almost immediately on his arrival, Carr's house in Maida Vale was destroyed by Nazi bombs, and a few months later his remaining furniture, which had been shipped to his wife's family in Bristol, was destroyed by another German bomb. He wrote to his publisher, "I can imagine the triumphant German airman hurrying back to Goering and saying: 'Ich habe busted der resten den furniture von Carr!' and Goering swelling under his medals and saying, 'Gut! Sie wilst der iron cross gotten!'" (quoted in Howard Haycraft, *Murder for Pleasure*, 1941).

One of Carr's purposes in writing mystery and historical dramas for the BBC was to relieve the horrors of the war by presenting cozier and, with the solutions at the end of each play, more manageable horrors. Carr said about his *Appointment with Fear* series, "These plays are, frankly, forms of escapism. The present war is seldom or never mentioned; the action takes place against a peacetime security." In addition, he wrote many propaganda scripts to encourage the home front and, through overseas broadcasts, to increase underground resistance to the Nazis in occupied countries. Propaganda plays, if they are to be entertaining as well, are extremely difficult to write, and it must be admitted that some of Carr's early efforts are almost unreadable today. "Britain Shall Not Burn" (December 12, 1941) tells of the destruction of a mythical town which did not follow the government's advice to be prepared for air raids. "You're Not Behind the Plough" (February 15, 1942) was beamed at the United States to persuade GIs that the British army was not organized along class lines. "Black Market" (March 6, 1942) showed Britains the danger of buying chocolate from unauthorized sources. "Women on the Guns" (February 27, 1942) explains that women can act as spotters of enemy planes, but—thank heavens—do not actually fire the guns. This show, incidentally, led Carr to some difficulties with his BBC superiors. He had crawled from gunsight to gunsight faithfully copying the women's coded speech for dramatic effect. When, however, he used the code on the program, it turned out to be filled with obscenities which many of his listeners understood.

But John Dickson Carr was too imaginative a writer to be limited to the rigidities of straight

All quotations from John Dickson Carr's radio scripts are printed with the kind permission of Mrs. Clarice Dickson Carr.

propaganda. Especially in his scripts about the Underground, he emphasized the emotions of the anti-Nazi Resistance as well as the heartlessness of the occupiers. "Men of Sparta" (April 11, 1942) tells the story of two Greek freedom fighters and of their sister who gives up her life in order to help them escape. It is an exceedingly effective play with several unexpected plot twists. Completely different but just as fine a play is "Denmark Occupied" (March 16, 1942), in which Carr showed that even propaganda can be wildly funny. The play features Von Renke, the inflexible German Minister to Copenhagen, who is hornsogged by the Danish Minister of Justice and by Detective-Inspector Vinterburg. Vinterburg is described as "like Sherlock Holmes in England," but with his wheezing and his love of drink, he is clearly out of the same mold as Dr. Gideon Fell and Sir Henry Merrivale. Von Renke wishes to discover why the Danish Underground has been able to set fire to German plants without interference from the police. Why are there no arrests, Von Renke screams: "We Germans always believe in encouraging the police to make arrests, and long ago we started practicing on ourselves." As the German Minister gradually turns purple in rage, Vinterburg blandly explains, "The only conclusion I can come to — and I say this, mind, with all my experience to back me up — is that maybe the whole business is a series of accidents." "Accidents?" Von Renke shouts, and throws his papers about the room so that they resemble a snow storm. But Von Renke can do little because "we Germans are great psychologists. We never make a mistake in judging the temper of a people." He is certain that "in the Danish character there is none of that detestable, anti-social quality which the English call a sense of humor."

Carr's propaganda plays reached their finest development in *The Silent Battle*, a series of six plays about the Underground. The emphasis is less on preaching than on the emotions of those trying to free their countries. "They Saw Him Die" (February 16, 1944) is a chilling story about the murder of a Polish wedding party and the Underground's unexpected revenge: The Germans are tried in a "court," then freed to be ridiculed by their own High Command. "Secret Radio" (March 22, 1944) has Carr's specialty, a miracle problem: Why can't the radio of the Resistance be found even after several thorough searches by the Gestapo? The answer is that it is hidden in the false hunchback of a hurdy-gurdy man.

"Army of Shadows" (March 8, 1944), like "Denmark in Chains," is aimed at making the Nazis ridiculous rather than sinister. It concerns the successful efforts of patriotic Belgian journalists to produce an imitation of the collaborationist newspaper, *Le Soir*. Apparently the play was based

on actual exploits by the Belgian Underground, but the fake articles are Carr at his most outrageously funny. For example:

THE BERLIN CONFERENCE

Unconditional Surrender

(From our Special Correspondent in Berlin)

Fascist trains always arrive punctually, so that Monsieur Mussolini's train was ahead of its timetable when it shot into Anhalt station. The trumpet sounded. The Duce alighted.

"Duce!" cried the Fuhrer. "Fuhrer!" cried the Duce. And their voices were strangled with emotion. The band then struck up the Fuhrer's favorite piece, "Ich hatt' einen Kameraden"—"I had a Friend"—which drew tears from the guard of honor.

Acknowledging the "vivats" of the crowd ranked on the pavements, the great men entered the shelter of honor at the Wilhelmstrasse, where they were joined by the Tenno, the Japanese Ambassador.

"Take the trouble of sitting down," said the Fuhrer. "Unnecessary," screamed the Duce; "we're in agreement." "In agreement," said the Tenno. "In agreement! In agreement!" The Berlin Conference was ended.

Another article claimed that Leon Degrelle, the Belgian Fascist leader, had been arrested for murdering his wife's German lover. "To the assaults of Ottokar von Schweinhund, his wife opposed only flexible evasive action followed by a deplorably elastic defense."

Excerpts from the parody of *Le Soir* conclude with Carr's account of Hitler's fate:

THE MYSTERY OF THE BROWN ROOM

by G. Stapo

Hitler disappears out of his triple-plated strong-room, leaving behind only his boots and his mustache. The room is hermetically sealed; they have to use a Russian tank to break in. No Fuhrer! The police are completely baffled. All the best detectives are summoned, and the leading crime-writers, including Ponson du Terrail, Alexandre Dumas fils, Maurice Leblanc, Agatha Christie, and the great master of this type of fiction, Dr. Josef Goebels.

Sadly, *Le Soir* doesn't give the solution to Hitler's locked-room disappearance: "A copy of *Mein Kampf* will be given as good measure to anyone who finds the Chancellor alive. A reward of 1,000,000 marks, on the other hand, will be paid to anyone who finds him dead."

Was John Dickson Carr a prophet? It was more than a year later that the last was heard from Adolf Hitler. The next step for an intrepid researcher is to discover whether, when the Russians broke into Hitler's bunker, it was found to be hermetically sealed. □

Douglas G. Greene is the editor of *John Dickson Carr's THE DOOR TO DOOM AND OTHER DETECTIONS* (Harper, 1980; Hamilton, 1981).

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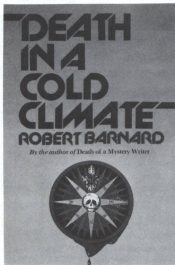
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AJH REVIEWS

Short notes on the current crop . . .

Death in a Cold Climate by Robert Barnard (Scribners, \$8.95) presents a fine portrait of a Norwegian city above the Arctic Circle—a setting with which at least we Minnesotans can identify—but is otherwise not noteworthy. The author, who teaches in that city of Tromsø, has served us much better in the past. Here an inquisitive dog discovers a human ear in the snow; excavation reveals the attendant corpse. Insp. Fagermo must determine why an English lad, apparently just passing through, should have needed killing in this variegated university town.



Position of Ultimate Trust (Dodd Mead, \$8.95) may be the pseudonymous William Beechcroft's first mystery, but it's his twelfth book. So the writing is assured, the plot intriguing and the tale a good if undemanding read. A conspiracy is afoot in the Everglades, and seven innocents happen to see the tip of it. So, for what they may be able to tell, they must die, and specialists are assigned to the task. Most of the



Allen J. Hubin, Consulting Editor.

Photo: Robert Smull

innocents die on schedule, but two do not, and the scheme—hatched and controlled by a couple of monomaniacs in Washington—starts to part at the seams.

Eric Clark's third well-crafted international suspense novel is *Send In the Lions* (Atheneum, \$10.95). Here terrorists—a breed well-presented in fiction these days—hijack a plane bearing sundry important persons plus an inadvertent nobody who happens to know America's most important espionage secret. Does he know what he knows? Will he try to trade it for his life? Perhaps the U.S. ought to send in its best agent to rescue him to death. . .

In recent years, the romantic suspense novel has all but disappeared into historical (regency) romances and horror and occult fiction, which I regard as outside our field even most broadly defined. So *Coast of Fear* by Caroline Crane (Dodd Mead, \$8.95) is a near anachronism with its gothic flavor of the heyday 1960s. Fanciers of the stuff will probably enjoy this tale of Jessica Hayden's vacation in France and innocent desire to express sympathy to the family of a friend killed by a mugger at their university in the U.S. Peculiar that this simple intent should be deadly dangerous. . .

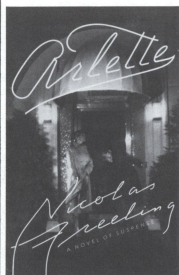
I've had the unusual experience recently of reading a mystery twice,

first in my usual way and then out loud (for broadcast by Minnesota State Services for the Blind). The book in question is Len Deighton's latest imaginative intrigue story, *XPD* (Knopf, \$12.95), and if nothing else the experience revealed that subtleties go overlooked in my normal reading. Perhaps we—I—should slow down and savor more. Here Deighton posits that, among

DEIGHTON XPD

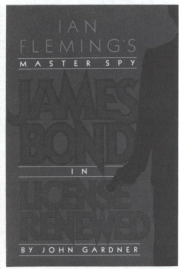


the Nazi documents stored at the Kaiseroda salt mine, are certain papers that prove Churchill tried to sell out to Hitler practically everything but his grandfather to avoid Britain's involvement in WWII. The documents—along with a goodly bit of gold—were liberated by entrepreneurial U.S. soldiers and now threaten to come into the public eye because of a film project in Hollywood. There are, of course, wheels within wheels, with everyone—intelligence agencies of three countries and German financial manipulators—having a turn at the crank, grinding small those Americans grown fat and wealthy on the bullion they hijacked. It all has an uncomfortable air of plausibility.



I think there's more feeling in Nicholas Freeling's tales about Arlette van der Valk (now Arlette Davidson) than those about Henri Castang; perhaps this should not surprise—maybe Freeling is doing penance for killing off the Inspector. The second Arlette novel is just that: *Arlette* (Pantheon, \$10.95). Several cases attract her attention, engage her heart, take her out of comfortable Strasbourg and into the pain of hurting people. Almost as good as *The Widow*, and that's good indeed.

Kingsley Amis (as Robert Markham) tried to assume Ian



Fleming's Bondian mantle after Fleming died. *Colonel Sun* was not especially successful, and we had nothing more of that. Now, inspired by the profit motive and apparently little else, John Gardner (with the blessing of the Fleming executors) revives (if that isn't too strong a word) Bond in *License Renewed* (Marek, \$9.95). But this is not the saga as I remember it; I recall flashes of humor, I recall Bond as insouciant and unabashedly larger than life. Here the cardboard is cut smaller and the whole affair is decidedly dull. There is, of course, a master villain: a Scottish millionaire physicist who decides to use terrorist tactics against nuclear power plants around the world to prove a point lodged in his fevered brain. There is also a winsome lass: beddable, to be sure, and with "impertinent breasts" (whatever they are). So Bond (or some imposter, perhaps) is lifted out of mothballs and given his 007 license back. Temporarily, I'm sure.

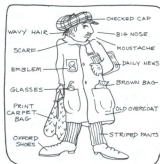
Death of a Shipowner by Thomas Henege (Dodd Mead, \$8.95) launches on the criminous seas an American who now lives in London and has for fourteen years been an international banker with an emphasis on financing ships. This background he uses well enough, but otherwise the novel is undistinguished. The setting is Oslo and the Far East. In Oslo, the head of a financially troubled shipping firm is shot dead. John Henriksen, its finance director, assumes the task of straightening the firm's financial keel, which involves a trip to China and Japan and the role of unwilling sleuth. The key to the puzzle seems to be the *Rose*, a minor vessel which tramped around the China seas losing money and apparently engaging in unseemly acts. Several deaths follow before Henriksen is able to sort out the sundry villains both at home and abroad.

Neither motive nor setting is startlingly new in Reginald Hill's *A Killing Kindness* (Pantheon, \$10.95), but this case for detectives Dalziel and Pascoe is nicely wrought.

October report on

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LITTLE, BROWN

Young women begin to die in Yorkshire, strangled and carefully laid out their bodies are. The citizenry nominates local gypsies for the high jump, and indeed there are some likely prospects among those encamped near a local flying club. But what's lacking is a reason: why kill these women, what links them?

I don't know how much truth lies in Christopher Hudson's portrait of Chile in *The Final Act* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, \$10.95), but it's a gripping one of mass murder and wholesale repression. James Dory, assistant to the U.S. Ambassador to Chile, should have known better than to inquire concerning the fate of those who disappeared into Santiago's prisons. . .

The Honfleur Decision (Walker, \$9.95) is the twenty-sixth of Alan Hunter's novels about Chief Superintendent George Gently, and the first in my reading to take him outside England. He's barely arrived in France on vacation when someone tries to kill him. Mistaken identity? Not likely, since the someone tries again. French police are first skeptical, then believing, then deferring to higher authority. At this point, the affair becomes a bit unpersuasive, but Gently is sketched throughout with uncommon feeling.

For reasons of its own, the CIA chooses not to pursue the terrorist killer of the fiancée of Charlie Heller, a CIA computer decoding expert. Heller, enraged and embittered, blackmails his organization into sending him to Czechoslovakia to destroy the terrorist. But just as Heller crosses the border, his masters find his blackmail leverage, and the order goes out: kill Heller. So Charlie finds himself in enemy territory pursued by bloodthirsty friends. This is in Robert Littell's *The Amateur* (Simon & Schuster, \$12.95), a fine espionage read.

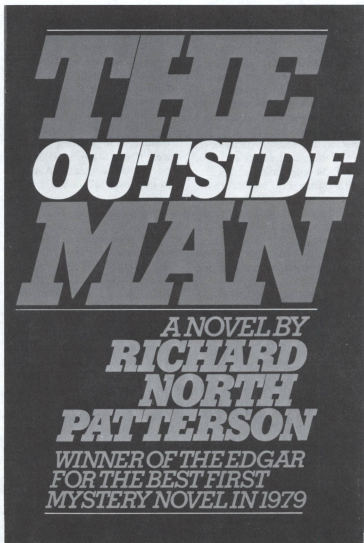
Arthur Maling's *From Thunder Bay* (Harper & Row, \$11.95) sticks in my memory more strongly than expected; perhaps that says something about the qualities of this tale of pursuit, of the compulsions of

ties between brothers. Paul Regensburg drifts into Canada and rather witlessly into smuggling. Police have the caper wired and Paul kills a Mountie in his flight. All Canada is on alert, while Paul's brother Jack—a very successful entertainer in the U.S.—tries to make contact, tries, once again, to shelter and protect Paul from himself, the police of two countries, his former colleagues, and pneumonia.

Some genial and deadly irony can be found in Patrick Mann's *Steal Big* (St. Martin's, \$9.95). Max Patrick quit the CIA to write

thrillers, and while in London stumbles upon an apparent plot to loot a bank deposit vault. Patrick means no harm—he only wants to be left in peace—but naturally neither his former intelligence brethren nor the several interested branches of the Mafia think Patrick has an innocent bone in his body.

The dustjacket says Laurie Mantell's *A Murder or Three* (Walker, \$9.95) is set in Australia, but all action takes place in the author's native New Zealand. Here, in the town of Lower Hutt, three young women are strangled with



panty hose. The citizenry is understandably nettled as this toll mounts. Sgt. Steven Arrow and Chief Inspector Peacock investigate. Acceptable.

Tense and compelling—I had to fight the urge to peek ahead near the ending—is Jack Olsen's *Missing Persons* (Atheneum, \$12.95). A woman walks into a city's Justice Building on a simple errand and vanishes. Her husband can't get the police very interested, so, desperate and existing on pills, he roams the building and an adjacent condemned structure. But others disappear too, and finally two cops—a woman rookie concerned about a missing child and a crusty veteran afraid he's lost his wife—begin to think something bizarre is going on. Especially when a most peculiar corpse turns up.

One of the most intense novels I've read of late is *The Outside Man* by Richard North Patterson (Little Brown, \$11.95). Lawyer Adam Shaw, a northerner, married into an Alabama law firm, where he never seems quite to fit. He discovers the body of Lydia Cantwell, wife of his best friend Henry Cantwell, who is promptly and primarily suspected of murder. Shaw determines to investigate, to clear Henry, against the express wishes of the head of his firm and to the endangering of his wife and himself. The more Adam probes, the more seamy his findings, the more compromised the relationships, the more costly to Shaw his every step. Read this one.

In the latest affair for Pierre Chambrun in New York's Hotel Beaumont, *Murder in Luxury* by Hugh Pentecost (Dodd Mead, \$8.95), a rich widow takes refuge in the hotel after a murdered body is found in her home. But she's barely installed when another corpse, also a stranger, turns up in her suite. This makes no sense at all; homicide's Lt. Keegan has one explanation, while Chambrun searches for the truth and the killing continues. The usual solid professional performance from Pentecost, though he

rather paints himself into a corner with only one real candidate for killer at the end.

Locked room murders—not one but two—are offered in Bill Pronzini's latest case for his nameless San Francisco private eye, *Hoodwink* (St. Martin's, \$10.95). It's a natural setting for the author and his character: a pulp convention, with manic fans and collectors and a bunch of aging writers who flourished in the pulps. Anonymous letters accuse an unspecified one of the writers of plagiarism, and the convention quickly demonstrates that those folks don't all love each other. Then comes the first corpse, and Nameless, present to look into the plagiarism matter and to feast on the atmosphere, has something solid to work on. The locked room puzzles didn't turn me on—nice try, but maybe the changes have all been rung—but otherwise the tale is a loving and enjoyable blend of old and new.

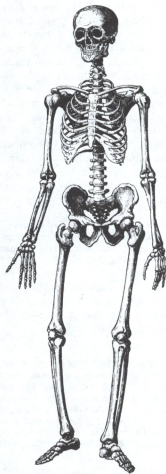
More bloody international shenanigans in Ian St. James's *The Balfour Conspiracy* (Atheneum, \$10.95). Terrorists steal a shipment of nuclear material; or at least they seem to. They also seem to be using each other toward unspecified objectives. Harry Brand, a newsman with the dubious honor of having known some of the principals, is vacuumed clean by interrogators, who are looking for the identity and motive of the schemer-in-charge. Smooth suspense with action stretching from Ireland to touchdown in Germany.

Gavin Scott's *A Flight of Lies* (St. Martin's, \$9.95) is a witty spy spoof in which Ronald Foster, a capitially unlikely hero, starts as innocent bystander in London and ends in a beautifully cinematic storming of a castle in the Appalachians. Always one or two bewildered steps behind is British Intelligence, wiping cream pie off its collective face...

Howard Shaw, a teacher at Harrow in England, has been turning out mysteries as Colin Howard for several years. The first to reach

these shores is *Killing No Murder* (Scribners, \$8.95), first published in 1972, which appears now under the author's real name. The setting is an English boarding school, graphically described by one who knows whereof he writes. The school is being destroyed by its new headmaster, whose ideas of discipline are liberal and ineffectual. He provides a handy corpse, and, upon arrival, Inspector Barnaby of the Yard finds no shortage of suspects among the staff. Pleasant; the killer is a tad too apparent.

—AJH



In Defense of Mr. Fortune

By William Antony S. Sarjeant

The major writers of the "Golden Age" of the detective story are, in general, still well known to modern readers and still to be readily found, in reprint and paperback, in any good bookstore. The one major writer whose works have virtually disappeared from view is Henry Christopher Bailey (1878-1961); only Lythway Reprints have, to my knowledge, recently reissued any of his works, and they are essentially a library supply firm whose products are rarely encountered in bookstores. In consequence, most modern readers are deprived of acquaintance with two of the major figures of the fiction of that era—the devious, hymn-humming lawyer Joshua Clunk, central character in twelve books and one of the most fascinating unlikeable characters in fiction, and Mr. Reginald Fortune, central figure of twenty-one novels and short story collections, the subject of this article.

Some critics of the genre actually applaud this neglect. Julian Symons, for example, in his history of detective fiction *Bloody Murder*, writes:

For those like me who find Fortune intolerably facetious and whimsical and the stories always affected, sometimes silly and at times obscure, this unanimity of disregard will seem perfectly justified. (1, p. 175)

Chris Steinbrunner and Otto Penzler, in their *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detective Fiction*, also make it clear that they neither like nor comprehend Mr. Fortune, for they note:

Some people find Reggie's speech mannerisms grating. A middle-aged, cherubic doctor uttering such phrases as "Oh, my aunt!" or "My dear chap! Oh, my dear chap!" can be almost as offensive as the man who points to the end-of-day crowds leaving their offices and says, "Look at 'em, all glad they're alive and lettin' live and goin' home to enjoy it. Same like me. The common people of whom I am chief." Reggie drives a Rolls-Royce. (2, p. 155)

In contrast, in his classic *Murder for Pleasure*, Howard Haycraft advances reasons for considering H. C. Bailey one of the "Big Five" writers of the Golden Age (p. 125). He notes similarities between

the Fortune stories and G. K. Chesterton's stories of Father Brown:

Both writers are highly mannered and often stretch characterization to the point of caricature. Both, moreover, have the quality of arousing strong partisanship - both pro and con - among their readers. But there are also important differences. A few, at least, of Chesterton's tales reach an "artistic" level to which Bailey does not pretend. By the reverse token, the Bailey *opera* are nearly always better detection *per se*. For all their stylistic mannerisms, they keep their feet solidly on the ground; in fact, it is difficult to find in modern detection puzzles more elaborately conceived or genuinely mystifying. (3, p. 126-27)

He further notes perceptively that:

Bailey has another great asset in his ability to portray certain types of character, particularly children and the pure of heart, with an appealingness and sympathy seldom met with in the form. While this is a little external to the merit of his tales as detection, it is a quality that cannot be ignored in analyzing his standing and popularity. (3, p. 127)

There are thus two sharply contrasted views of Bailey's writings, corresponding indeed perhaps to the two mainstreams in taste among readers of detective and mystery stories. For those like myself who find Symons a useful inverse guide for our reading, liking most writers whom he dislikes (Dorothy Sayers and Robert van Gulik, for example) and disliking almost all whom he praises, Symons's criticism of Bailey is almost tantamount to a recommendation. For us, praise from Haycraft is similarly enough to cause us to expect to discover new reading pleasures. Perhaps we are traditionalists, perhaps we are old-fashioned; we are those who still enjoy the country-home mysteries, who can still find excitement in the body in the library and the strange behavior of the butler, those who can still delightedly follow Sherlock Holmes's hansom cab through fog-shrouded London and await with bated breath the results of the latest forensic experiment carried out so meticulously by Mr. Polton and Dr. Thorndyke. We are not, after all, such a rare breed, as the large sales of Christie, Sayers, Allingham and Marsh so well prove. If you are one of this breed, then I urge you to search out

the works of H. C. Bailey. If, on the other hand, you are one of those who regards Symons's history as your bible and particularly revel in the bludgeonings, beddings and sordid realism (or is it just Unrealism of a harsher sort?) of the "Hard-boiled" *School* and its derivatives, then you may be quite sure H. C. Bailey and Mr. Fortune are not for you.

Yet, as we shall see, Reggie Fortune is by no means squeamish and can be particularly ruthless in seeing that justice is done.

HIS ORIGINS AND BACKGROUND

The fullest account of Mr. Fortune's life prefaces an anthology of stories of his cases (4); this is the principal source for the information in this section, all others being specified. In this, his chronicler notes that he was born "less than fifty years ago"; since this was published in 1942, the year of his birth might be presumed to have been between 1893 and, say, 1896. However, Mr. Fortune was a qualified surgeon in time to serve in the First World War, and had studied in Vienna before the international situation made such studies impossible. To qualify as a surgeon in Britain at that date would have required a minimum of seven years of study, more probably eight. Mr. Fortune could scarcely have entered University before the age of eighteen and could not have completed his studies before the age of twenty-five. Allowing for, say, a year of study in Vienna, this means he must have been born in 1887 or 1888.

His father was "a doctor of moderate means in good general practice in one of the wealthier suburbs of London" (4, p. 1); though Steinbrunner and Penzler (2, p. 155, in figure caption) call him "aristocratic", this was not the case either in birth or attainment. He was the doctor's only son but had several sisters, two of whom were younger than he (5, p. 51) and only two of whom married. Sister Pamela, "the livelier one" (6, p. 45) became Pamela Brandon, wife of the Bishop of Laxbury (4, p. 19); the other married "an ineffable civil servant" (7, p. 161), in fact an official of the Treasury who owns "a severe country cottage on the flat lands north of Oxford" (5, p. 216) and is so "conspicuously superior among the most superior persons" (4, p. 19) that one shares Reggie's wonder at his sister's devotion to him.

Young Reginald was educated at Charterhouse and at University College, Oxford:

Neither at school nor university had he any particular distinction but a general popularity. Schoolmasters and tutors pronounced him the most ordinary of amiable youths, though one or two remarked that he had an abnormal capacity for being interested in any subject, from pre-historic religion to the new physics. Men who were boys with him report that the only uncommon thing about him was his interest in everybody. (4, p. 1)

Although Mr. Fortune himself notes that he "Always found clever young people bafflin'. Myself when young did not eagerly frequent such" (8, p. 35), a friend he retains from this period being the Oxford Professor of Mediaeval Culture—known to Reggie simply as "Pobble," but whether indeed toless we never learn! (4, p. 41) Mr. Fortune retained, from this period, a knowledge of the ancient Greek alphabet and language (14).

From Oxford he progressed to a London teaching hospital where "he found, to his mild annoyance,



Mr. Fortune at work in his laboratory. (From a medallion depiction on the dustjacket of *Meet Mr. Fortune*, 1942)

that he was developing a certain specialized ability", first as a surgeon, under the influence of Sir Lawson Hunter, and later as a pathologist:

He became uncommonly sound in diagnosis and had the poise and the manual dexterity which make a surgeon. The love of investigation, the patience in scientific method, the flair which the pathologist requires were equally well developed in him. (4, p. 2)

At this time, it would have been usual for him to spend at least three years in the London hospital, to complete his basic training. To train as a surgeon would have then necessitated only one further year, after which he could have obtained a Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons; he need not have embarked upon the longer training necessary for a Fellowship. Allowing for three or four pre-clinical years at Oxford, Mr. Fortune must in total have spent a minimum of seven, more probably eight, years in completing his medical qualifications. It is normal nowadays for a surgeon in Britain to be addressed as "Mr." rather than as "Doctor"; at that time, the procedure was less consistent and his

subsequent preference for the former title may merely have been intended to stress that he was not in general medical practice.

Vienna was, at that time, perhaps the pre-eminent center in Europe for medical studies, especially in neurology and the neuro-sciences generally but also with a strong surgical tradition. It was natural enough that Mr. Fortune should be persuaded to go there to advance his medical studies but perhaps surprising that he should have acquired no respect for the work of one of the city's most eminent medical figures of that time, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939):

[He] sat down and lit a pipe and read the latest book on the psychology of Dr. Freud. He seldom travels without some tome of unconscious humor. (5, p. 104)

It was perhaps at this time that he became acquainted with the modern Greek language (9, p. 22).

Whether his Viennese studies were completed before, or were interrupted by, the First World War is not made clear, but certainly Mr. Fortune saw service in that bloody conflict, for he was a surgeon at a hospital at Etaples, France, in 1916 (11, p. 190). This experience seems to have both hardened him to the undertaking of tasks that distress even other physicians (e.g. 12, p. 77) and to have given him, by depriving him of them for a while, his strong love of the comforts of a civilized life.

Perhaps this was why, at the end of the war, he did not embark upon either of these medical specialisms but instead "went back to the suburb of his birth and took an assistant's share of his father's placid family practice" (4, p. 2). In later years, he was apt to lament having abandoned this quiet career: "Happy days. My true vocation" (5, p. 75).

What compelled him to specialize was two cases of crime that he encountered in the course of this suburban practice. His performance in these crimes brought him to the attention of the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, by whom he was thereafter principally employed. Nevertheless, he continued to undertake research in a number of different fields of medicine, including "the composition of a monograph on influenza in rabbits" (12, p. 28), "his classic monograph on the Siamese tumour" (12, p. 71), studies of warts in section (14, p. 77), experiments on whooping cough (11, p. 138) and the obtaining of "wholly negative results from new work on measles" which "only obliterated another man's theory" (5, pp. 140, 187).

HIS APPEARANCE AND MANNERISMS

In terms of his profession, Mr. Fortune is perhaps unfortunate in having retained too much of a youth-

ful appearance for, though he is both eminent and formidable, he looks neither:

He continues, in spite of years which must be called middle-age, to look about twenty-five, a rather plump twenty-five, but of a fresh and innocent face that might be younger. An irreverent damsel christened him "Cherub," and the name has stuck. His fair hair is ample and unfaded still. His blue eyes have still a simple candour, or a wistful childlike surprise at this wonderful world. His round cheeks keep a schoolboy complexion. (4, p. 2)

He is not a striking figure, either physically or in dress, but rather "sombrely neat from head to heel, slow of movement" and with "a round, pink, woeful face" like that of "a new boy going homesick to school" (5, p. 24). This is repeatedly a hindrance to him in his early dealings with people, and especially with officials, whom he meets; it is initially hard to believe in his abilities and attainments or, indeed, even to take him seriously.

The plumpness results, in part at least, from the fact that he is physically lazy. He intensely dislikes early rising:

Mrs. Fortune has been heard to say that Reggie never saw the sun rise. This is boasting though as near the truth as a wife need be. . . Birds on the wing, hillside dew-pearled, assuring him more than sufficiently morning's at seven, left him far from convinced God's in his heaven, all's right with the world. (5, p. 79)

In general, indeed, like his eminent American contemporary Nero Wolfe, he dislikes physical exertion, unnecessary walking in particular:

"It is only some two miles' walk."
"Walk?" Reggie's voice rose high.
"There is no road," Caplar told him with melancholy satisfaction.
"My only aunt!" Reggie moaned. (5, p. 28)

Certainly he differs from many doctors of today in their worship of exercise for its own sake;

. . . Bell proposed to take a stroll for the stretching of their legs. "My dear chap!" Reggie was shocked. "Oh, my dear chap! Have we risen from out the beast to fall into the beast again? No." Bell marched off, and Mr. Fortune entered the inn, sank into its easiest chair on the small of his back, took up the *Sunday News* and yawned over its lurid pages." (4, p. 412)

However, when there is urgent need for speedy rising and brisk physical activity, he is perfectly able to respond:

Few can dress as quickly as he, few, though neither his figure nor his habits are formed for swift movement, cover the ground faster on an urgent occasion. (4, p. 68)

Naturally enough in view of his essential physical

laziness, Mr. Fortune likes very much to travel by car, preferably his own car. Steinbrunner and Penzler, as quoted earlier, clearly regard his choice of a Rolls-Royce as indicative of undue opulence and ostentation. They misunderstand the situation in the twenties and thirties, for it was then practically *de rigueur* for any medical man, whether he be a specialist or in general practice, to own either a Rolls or a Daimler. (A Bentley was also acceptable, but considered rather flashy!) Since these were amongst the most dependable of cars, there was excellent reason for doctors to choose a vehicle that could be relied upon in the emergencies with which they were likely, at any hour, to be faced. In owning a Rolls-Royce, Mr. Fortune was thus merely conforming to the conventions of his day.

Moreover, Mr. Fortune's vehicle was not deliberately ostentatious: Nobody within the many miles... owned a car so large, so long of bonnet. [Yet] for its size the car made as little show as possible. (5, p. 24)

Its particular virtue was that, when he was being driven by his chauffeur, Sam, it allowed him to relax completely in its spacious comfort.

Well, you may ask, why a chauffeur? Could not Mr. Fortune have driven himself? Yes, of course he could—and did—but his driving was not such as to endear him to passengers:

He drove in ample swoops, dreamily; in what Mrs. Fortune calls with a shudder his lyric manner. (9, p. 202)

That was well enough when he was in no hurry; when he was, any passenger was justified in shutting his eyes and commending his soul to God:

Reggie took [the Chief Constable] back to Northam at a disintegrating speed and in the same style he went on with Platt. Uncertain about the knees, Platt arrived in his hall and sat down and gasped for whiskey and soda. (9, p. 210)

Mr. Justice Lord Platt appears nevertheless not to have protested; and protest, indeed would do little good, as a police inspector found:

"Has the village policeman a telephone?" asked Reggie, and the car shot at reckless speed down a lane it filled.

"Yes sir—good lord sir, be careful!"

"I always am," Reggie protested, and the car came out of the lane into the village like a skidding comet. (9, p. 10)

In consequence, it seems likely that Mrs. Fortune may have insisted on his employing a chauffeur, merely to try to ensure his continued survival! But Sam proved a useful assistant in many cases and in many ways, so Mr. Fortune would not regret her pressure.

My Fortune's speech is mannered and tends to be lazy, omitting all unnecessary words and sometimes

clipping necessary ones of terminal consonants, especially when he is talking with intimates or is exasperated, or both:

"I dislike you," said Mr. Fortune. "Some of the dirtiest linen I've seen." He gazed morosely at the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department.

"Quite," Lomas agreed. "Dirty Fellow. What about those stains?"

"Oh, my dear chap!" Mr. Fortune mourned. "Paint. All sorts of paint. Also food and drink and assorted filth. Why worry me? What did you expect? Human gore?" (12, p. 196)

This disjointed speech (never apparent, be it noted, when a serious message is to be conveyed and there is need for absolute unambiguity) and his watered down invocations and oaths ("Oh my aunt!" "My ghost!"), together with his tendency to address colleagues as "My dear chap," are considered improbable by such critics as Steinbrunner and Penzler and found intolerable by Symons. Yet they are exactly in period and were the affectations of men of exactly Mr. Fortune's class, men who reached adulthood before or during the First World War and were middle-aged in the late '30s and '40s. I can speak with confidence here, for in my youth in England I knew many such; my own doctor, for example, had

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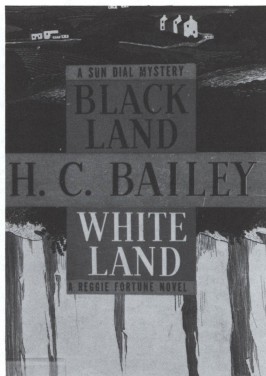
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some of these very affectations of speech. Men *did* talk that way; men who had fought and seen their colleagues killed in that bloodiest of conflicts nevertheless used this gentle speech, nevertheless shied away from oaths and curses and substituted such euphemisms as Fortune uses. They were nonetheless men of strength and of character, as he is. Bailey is not depicting for us an absurdity; he is instead portraying as it was a style of speech, and an attitude, that were perfectly real and even commonplace at the time of his writing, even if they have now faded from currency.

HIS WIFE, HOME AND HOBBIES

Mr. Fortune is extremely happily married and a great lover of home comforts. His wife Joan, with her “amber hair” (12, p. 9) and “amber eyes” (7, p. 103), is satisfyingly attractive.

She was dressed... in something filmy that revealed her adorably and shimmered apple-green and gold. (4, p. 315)

Their relationship is a relaxed and happy one; she chaffs and teases him on many occasions, bullies him at times and is well able to issue gentle reprimands:

... [S]lowly he rose and put his arms round her, and kissed the back of her neck.

She submitted; she disengaged herself and contemplated him severely. She crooned the nursery rhyme, “Was a lady loved a swine. ‘Honey,’ said she. ‘Hunk,’ said he.”

“Oh no. No, Joan,” he protested.

“Yes. She was being very nice to you and you were pig, merely pig.”

“My dear girl! Condemn’ me to awful things. Dance of all the county, and Argentine widow an’ all. And why? Because there was a nasty little crime a hundred years ago. I ask you! Just wantin’ to put me through my tricks. Make me show off to the Philistines.”

“Vanity!” She pulled his ears. “My good child! Too much ego. Far too much ego. The poor lady wasn’t thinking in the least of the wonderful Reginald’s wonderful powers. You sat there like a bored cat, so she tried to bring up something about the place that would amuse you.”

“You think so?” Reggie moaned. “I wonder. But, anyway, I hate being amused.”

“Nasty temper.”

“No, it isn’t. She’s like the Highland fellow with Dr. Johnson; when the doctor was feelin’ forlorn, made a lot of goats jump and said ‘See! Such pretty goats.’ Don’t want to see the goats dance, Joan.”

“You will dance yourself, my child,” said she.

He drew back. A piteous noise came from him. “Not me, Joan, No.”

“Yes. It is hard on the women.” She made an opprobrious gesture indicating the forward curve of his torso. “But I must think of your good, dear. Victims shall be found.”

And it was so. (12, pp. 54-55)

Indeed his wife’s love of social occasions is one of the crosses Mr. Fortune must bear:

Her desire to take him into social crowds is the only tragic element in their married life. (4, p. 316)

In one particular respect, however, she is the ideal wife for one engaged in forensic medicine, where so much confidentiality is necessary:

... [S]he is of all women within his experience the least curious. (4, p. 265)

This is fortunate since talking of cases at home, at least while they are in progress, is against Mr. Fortune’s principles (7, p. 95). Nevertheless, Joan Fortune inevitably comes to learn much about his doings, for her husband will talk of his cases afterwards. She is thus well aware of his great and particular abilities, so much so indeed as to be dismayed by them:

But she finds the case too tragic for talk and in his conduct of it the Reggie Fortune whom she must laugh at—or fear. (13, p. 69)

They have no children, which is a pity, for Mr. Fortune likes and understands children. He finds it easy to make them relax and talk to him; his comprehension of the paintings of small Tony Denland, and his use of them to forge an understanding, is a good example of this (7, pp. 49-50). Children are especially

important in his eyes and he is wholly merciless to those who mistreat them, physically or mentally (e.g., 7; 9).

The Fortunes lived originally in Kent, on the River Medway not far from the little towns of Wembury and Stanton (6, p. 79; 10, p. 7); close by, vengeful relatives of a man he had sent to the gallows came very close to murdering him by a trap laid in a furnished cottage (6). Not for that reason, but because of the growing urbanization of Kent due to the outward spread of London, the Fortunes later moved to the Cotswolds (11, p. 2). Their cottage had to be closed during the war when duty took them back to London, to render help to the injured in the bombing raids (8, p. 7).

Their garden is a delight to both of them and Mr. Fortune repines when his duties take him away from it at times he considers crucial:

He was going to miss the opening of his new iris and there was no joy in life. (6, p. 80)

He undertakes horticultural, as well as medical, researches:

Some of the long experiments in producing his ideal sweet pea flowered about him in colours of the freshness of his own innocent complexion. He sniffed delicately, he sniffed profoundly. The sweet pea of his dreams was to give him the rich waved grace of the moderns with the deep fragrance of the old. And his round face became wistful. (4, p. 315)

He is known, at his club and elsewhere, to be a great gardener and indeed is reluctantly drawn into one of his strangest cases by his suspicions of a man's claims to have a wonderful rock garden (9).

Mr. Fortune is a lover of cats; his black Persian, Darius, commands much attention (e.g., 4, p. 315). However, unlike many cat-lovers, he both likes and profoundly sympathises with dogs; his concern about an unhappy black spaniel indeed helps him toward the solution of one difficult case (5).

He reads widely and enjoys poetry; Swinburne, the Edward Fitzgerald translation of Omar Khayyam, Boswell, Robert Brooke and Rabelais are all quoted or recognized on different occasions. Once he is encountered while composing, in his bath, an ode to melancholy:

"Same like the late Keats'. But different. Main theme, the miserable folly of wantin' to do anything, with cursive embroidery on the horrid opportunities fellows give you." (13, p. 37)

However, he soon lapses instead into a "vulgar song" and, indeed, often cheerfully sings snatches of folk song and music-hall song.

An unexpected hobby is his marionette theatre; he makes the figures and modifies or writes plays for it:

Some days later he was engaged upon the production in his marionette theatre of the tragedy of *Don Juan*, lyrics by Lord Byron, prose and music by Mr. Fortune, when the telephone called him from a poignant passage on the rejection of his hero by hell. (13, p. 204)

Ultimately, one presumes, this particular epic was completed; but his "new and improved tragedy of Antony and Cleopatra" has, for good reason, never come to be performed (4, p. 9). He claims a "Simple mind. Can't stand cards" (8, p. 83).

Mr. Fortune is a pipe-smoker, like most contemporaries of his class (5, p. 45). However, he does not share one of the required virtues of the Englishmen of his period, in that he is essentially not "clubbable." He does not relish the cuisine that London clubs provide and is unwilling to subject visitors to it (12, p. 199). Though he is a member of several, he uses them only when pressure of business, or the social absences of his wife, mean that he must. He likes them to be quiet: "The defect of that club is men speak to each other" (9, p. 129) and he would doubtless have enjoyed the Diogenes Club, of which Mycroft Holmes was so prominent a member.

His dislike of the average club cuisine is little to be wondered at, for he is a great gourmet and connoisseur of wines, though "for port Mr. Fortune is incapable of affection" (13, p. 77). As such, he is equally likely to suffer and to encounter pleasant surprises when staying in the average English hotel:

Reggie found no comfort in the soup which was a decoction of milk and potato unconcealed by any other savour. He had consumed as much as he could some time before the maid returned with an uncorked, unlabelled bottle. Fear of the worst gripped him. But the fluid which came from the bottle was honest, a brown sherry of no distinction yet, in its plain wine-of-all-work way, companionable. It gave him strength to bear the next course, a dish of pallid mud surrounded by mashed potato. Dissection of the central mess showed small pieces of chicken mingled with much rice. Only the potato had a taste. He was tired of swallowing, he sat in dreary speculation as to how long he could live on starch when the second bottle arrived. This also lacked a cork but it bore a grimy label on which he incredulously made out the word; Montrose. He smelt, he sipped. No deception. Something less than great but a charming wine, gracious, elegant, subtle, its accomplished maturity had not lost the freshness of spring. Château Montrose, 1920, God bless it, who'd have thought it? The maid set before him prunes and junket. He did his painful duty and when the prunes had gone into him received a trefoil dish of cubes of cheese, butter and biscuits. Even in such an hour of need the cheese was too like dry soup, but he left nothing of the biscuits or the butter and then dreamed over the wine till the maid's impatient hovering drove him away. (5, pp. 43-44)

He is consequently grateful to be able to go back "to his own cook, the admirable, the unique Elise" (14, p. 77) who is, indeed, of such quality as might have instilled admiration even into the ample breast of

Nero Wolfe! Mr. Fortune's culinary inventions, in co-operation with such an artist, are inspired enough to profoundly impress a visiting French detective:

With a superior English smile, Lomas sat back and watched Reggie and Dubois consume that fantasia on pancakes, Crêpes Joan, which Reggie invented as an expression of the way of his wife with her husband . . .

Dubois wiped his flowing moustaches, "My homage," he said reverently. (13, p. 199)

Mr. Fortune is indeed almost an epicure, not at all a typically English characteristic, whereas the first of the two exclusions from the range of his pleasures cited below is one that would startle the Englishman of his day:

He lives at his ease. No human pleasure, from the higher poetry or the profounder speculations of science and philosophy to chocolate cream, is alien to him, except the sport which consists in killing creatures and the social ceremonies which draw crowds. (4, p. 2)

He is certainly at least an occasional follower of other sports, for we learn of his watching a rugby international match (6, p. 3) and proposing to go to a county cricket match, Sandshire vs. Sussex (6, p. 4)—though this intention was to be frustrated.

Whether his keeping of scrapbooks is a hobby or a facet of his work may be argued; perhaps the latter. Certainly their material is sensational enough:

In a scrapbook of Mr. Fortune's which is labelled "Critics: Vol. VII" there is a postcard. It comes between an analyst's report and a frantic letter in a woman's hand. The analyst records the amount of strychnine found in a brace of partridges sent to Mr. Fortune's house, October 11, 1931. Mr. Fortune's neat handwriting adds: "Varley certified insane 15.X.31. Not by me." The woman's letter is a summons to meet her at the Day of Judgement and answer for the blood of Clement Smith, whose child she has just borne. Mr. Fortune's annotation is "Fifth and only surviving wife of Clement." (12, p. 99)

HIS ASSOCIATES

It was the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department of Scotland Yard, the Hon. Sydney Lomas, who persuaded Mr. Fortune to forsake general practice for a career in forensic medicine. He wears an eyeglass (10, p. 213) and we are told that:

The rooms of the Hon. Sydney Lomas are hung with French prints of the eighteenth century. He goes with them well. (6, p. 52)

We also learn that angling is among his hobbies (5, p. 203). He is less of a gourmet than Mr. Fortune and, though prepared to enjoy restaurant meals with his friend, Lomas's taste in food is somewhat more austere. Certainly he would never say, as Mr. Fortune does: "I like sweets. Almost all sweets" (9,

p. 84). Their friendship is quite capable of acting on Lomas's behalf without troubling beforehand to Lomas's behalf without troubling beforehand to enquire whether he may (e.g. 13, p. 11) and has no hesitation either in castigating "the inefficiency of the British police and the peculiar futility of the Criminal Investigation Department" (4, p. 347) or in reproving Lomas himself:

"Good gad!" Lomas muttered and scowled at him, and went on, loud and furious: "What the devil do you think you're doing?"

"Tryin' to make you do your duty." Reggie also was vehement. . . . He gazed at Lomas with gloomy wonder. "My only aunt! Most pernicious creature in the world, official who won't officiate. You've left everything undone you could have." (4, p. 357)

Even when the exigencies of war place Lomas's department under considerable pressure, Mr. Fortune will not allow this as an excuse for inaction, as witness the following excerpt from a telephone conversation:

"I can't spare men for fishing enquiries at large. There's a war on."

"The perfect official. His defence in every muck he makes. With a war on he can't think. Men must fight and women must weep, and the more they curse him the sounder he'll sleep."

"Damme. . . ."

"As you say." Reggie rang off. . . (7, p. 78)

Repeatedly Lomas is made to uneasily recognize Mr. Fortune's special ability to detect a crime where none was obvious, to select a lead of the most improbable nature and follow it through to a conviction; yet, though relying upon these talents, Lomas can never quite accept them. In the case of "The Three Bears," indeed, Lomas disbelieves Fortune's conclusions to the end, and so does a jury who convict a man of murder he did not commit (12); but it matters little, for the accused had certainly done another murder. At times Lomas finds Mr. Fortune's ruthlessness awesome, for example when Fortune, after deliberately frightening to her death an evil woman, is contentedly predicting an inquest verdict of accidental death:

"Good gad!" Lomas exclaimed. "I like your conscience. You're trusted to bring out the truth!"

"Oh yes. Yes. So I do. The higher truth. Spiritual truth. Death was accidental. Accidental consequence of her own passions."

"Accidental!" Lomas flung back his chair. "What it all comes to is you arranged for the woman to die."

"Not me. No. I arranged to prevent a murder," said Reggie, and his blue eyes were calm and cold. (10, p. 237)

Nevertheless, Lomas is extremely distressed when Fortune is the victim of murderous attacks, as recurrently happens, and will go to considerable

lengths to protect or support him. After one such attempt has nearly succeeded, Fortune justly comments:

"If I'd been found dead in the road with a fractured skull and a bruise or two I should have gone to the grave as a traffic accident."

"Yes, very likely," Lomas grinned. "As you wouldn't have done the post-mortem yourself."

"Don't be facetious. It would have been most annoying. Think of me in heaven watchin' another doctor report it accidental death and you fellows hushin' up the case. My hat! I'd have come back to haunt you."

"You would, Reginald, I'm sure you would," Lomas chuckled. (9, p. 77)

Mr. Fortune's two principal Scotland Yard associates have a much greater faith in his views. Superintendent Bell may, like Lomas, be doubtful at times (e.g. 9, p. 46) but is prepared to seek Mr. Fortune out in cases of difficulty (12, p. 104). Even though his doing so may gain him a reproof, Bell is prepared to endure it:

"You know, Mr. Fortune, it is a clue; it sticks out, and we did ought to work on it."

"What?" Reggie opened wide, aggrieved eyes. "Are you tellin' me to do my duty? My dear Bell! Oh, my dear Bell!"

"Well, I beg your pardon, sir," said Bell uncomfortably. . . . As they drove away to Bournham, Bell made propitiatory conversation on the value of Mr. Fortune's work. Mr. Fortune remained aloof and morose.

"No. No more butter, thank," he said at last. "Get this clear, Bell. . . . You think of science as an automatic machine—put in a penny and it'll give you a box of matches. But that's not the way it works. Just as likely to push on to you something you never thought of. Your penny don't get you a box of matches, but a cold shower—or a white elephant."

"I'm having a cold shower from you, Mr. Fortune," said Bell reproachfully. (12, p. 104)

Sometimes though, Bell can be as appalled by Fortune's ruthlessness as is Lomas—for example, when he drives to suicide two men who have attempted, but not succeeded in carrying to conclusion, a particularly unpleasant crime:

"They'd tortured that boy and his mother. They planned to murder mother and son. They did their best to murder the boy's soul. And the law would only have given them a few years in prison. I want justice."

Bell looked at him with dread. "It's an awful responsibility to take."

"Yes. I take it," Reggie Fortune said. (6, pp. 76-77)

With Sergeant (later Inspector) Underwood, there is perhaps a greater mutuality of trust and respect. Underwood's looks proclaim "frank good humour" (8, p. 91) and he faces the world with "sagacious caution and openhearted homeliness" (7, p. 158). It is with Underwood that Mr. Fortune works in some of his most unusual, as well as in some of his most

unpleasant, cases. Underwood is persuaded to impersonate a butterfly collector in Dorsetshire (6, p. 173), to search for pigs among the Welsh hills (8) and, indeed, to perform many tasks that most policemen would find as unwelcome as improbable.

Among foreign police officers, we meet most often Dubois of the Paris Sûreté. Mr. Fortune and he are good friends and have much in common, in particular a relish for good food. They share many excellent meals together, both in England and in France (e.g. 9, 227-28, 231-32); and Dubois is impressed by Fortune's instant recognition of a Breton menu card, even though unwilling initially to admit its implications (12, p. 198). When, inevitably, Dubois is persuaded to accompany his friend to Brittany, it is the Frenchman who finds the landscape forbidding:

Beyond the next village, with its deep inlet of a harbour, the fields merged into moor again, and here and there rose giant stones, in line, in cricle, and solitary.

"Brr," Dubois rumbled. "Tombs or temples, what you please, it was a gaunt religion which put them up here on this windy end of the earth." (12, p. 223)

Dubois's appreciation of Fortune is deep: "An artist, my friend," he says to Lomas. "A great artist. He feels life. We think about it," and adds: "He is disconcerting, your Mr. Fortune. He makes one always doubt" (12, p. 204). At the macabre end of the Breton case, he says to Fortune: "Dear master. You have shown me the way. Well, I am content to serve. Does he serve badly, poor old Dubois?" and is assured: "Oh, no. No. Brilliant" (12, p. 238)—a compliment perhaps greater than he merits. Dubois's contribution is greater in a case which exhibits another enthusiasm shared with Mr. Fortune, a liking for paintings. Both men are connoisseurs to some degree and Dubois moves most in artistic circles, but it is again essentially Mr. Fortune's perspicience in noting discrepancies in style in an exhibition purportedly the work of a single artist which brings to an end a particular evil and saves a particular soul (9).

When Mr. Fortune is in Florence, he works with Arnolfo Briosco of that city's police service, magniloquent and vivid in all his doings and, when Fortune has effectively solved the case for him, playing "the conquering, beneficent hero" in explaining the case to those affected, while Fortune is merely passive:

Briosco sent bows in all directions. "I permit myself the honour—" he informed them, "if I have appeared stern to you, you will now perceive that it was necessary. You set before me a case of difficulties which you constructed yourselves. I am now happy to congratulate you that I have solved them all." (4, p. 284-85)

More congenial by far is Fortune's American associate

in wartime cases, Waldo Rosen. Unusually, we have a good description of his physical appearance:

He had broad shoulders and a thick body, but his dark face was lean with a long beak of nose and high cheek-bones. (8, p. 39)

Rosen's patriotic sensitivities add somewhat to Fortune's difficulties in a case where German agents are deliberately trying to exacerbate hostilities between U.S. and Canadian troops in Britain (7); nor does Rosen always find the British police easy to work with, asking of one of them:

"How do you breed fellows like that? By mules out of morons?"

"Oh no. No. By superior persons out of specialism. Don't you have officials in America? Well-meanin' man, Venn. As they go."

"Venn's all right, Rosen," said Underwood. "Safety first, but not dumb and no tricks." (7, p. 81).

Rosen, however, soon learns to respect Underwood and comes to have the highest regard for Fortune: "Sir, you have the fairest and most candid mind I ever met" (7, p. 27). Rosen's own toughness and willingness are, in their turn, of great service to Fortune himself.

Other legal officials encountered in the course of his work are of variable quality, ability and degree of humanity. Mr. Fortune has a refreshing lack of respect for authority, especially dogmatic authority:

On the afternoon of the next day he sat in the room of Ennis, the legal advisor of the Home Secretary, and Ennis was highly official with him. "You must allow me to say, Fortune, if I had seen any reason to require your opinion on the case I should have asked for it. I do not."

"No. Your error. Have you read the evidence?"

"Certainly I have. The judge's notes on the trial were of course submitted at once. I find the evidence conclusive. And I may tell you the judge has no doubt of the justice of the conviction."

"Yes. I know that. Poor old chap. He told her not to hope for mercy in this world."

"Are you suggesting Holt is cruel or unfair?"

"Oh no. Neither. Only conventional. Sufferin' from the usual judicial ignorance of things in general."

"There is no sounder judge on the bench," Ennis announced.

"I'm afraid not. No. Sad lack of general knowledge in the legal profession." (4, p. 415)

One of the most difficult combinations he encounters is in his investigation of a twelve-year-old murder in Durshire—a condescending and supercilious chief constable and an obliquely obstructive police superintendent:

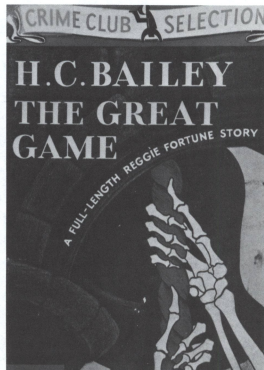
That he did not know how to deal with Superintendent Bubb he admits heartily, declaring that it was beyond human power, so safe has the world been made for officials. (13, p. 113)

Nevertheless, by the end of the case Superintendent Bubb has been outflanked and confounded—a fate familiar to many who try to avert Mr. Fortune of his purpose of ensuring that justice be done.

He has his own reading of justice, of course; and, whilst he can be merciless, he can also be understanding, even gentle. Following the suicide of a murderer, Fortune ensures that the murder does not become public and shows more effective sympathy than does the judge who was the murderer's friend (9, p. 221-23). On another occasion, Fortune conceals the full truth of a case until after legal proceedings are safely over, even then confiding it only to one friend (13). He is even willing to testify in court in a fashion that he knows will mislead the jury, in order to secure a conviction he believes to be deserved, not in relation to the case in hand but to a crime committed much earlier (12, p. 141-42).

In dealing with obtuse or obstructive medical associates, Mr. Fortune's procedure varies according to what he wants to achieve. Working with him can be trying:

Many young and some old men have found Reggie Fortune slow and ridiculously thorough at a post mortem and resented his method the more because he gave no explanations. Caplan found him dumb as the corpse and was very tired of him before he put it together again. (5, p. 26)



Dustjacket of *The Great Game* (1939)

Nevertheless, Caplan is made to recognize facts he had not perceived; and it is Caplan who, by Mr. Fortune's intent, gains unmerited credit for his care at the inquests that follow. The pompous Dr. Penberth, "an old young man, stiff with professional dignity," whose ineptitude has helped cause a woman to be condemned to death, is given brusque treatment that he well deserves and, unexpectedly, ends up ministering to Fortune himself (4, p. 430-42). Where an error is comprehensible, however, as when the doctor at Langdon hospital fails to perceive evidences of arsenical poisoning in what he considers an assault case (13, p. 15), Mr. Fortune is prepared to be much more understanding.

HIS ABILITIES

Mr. Fortune's medical training and capabilities have already been discussed; but these form only a part of his qualifications for his particular profession. He recognizes that it is a demanding profession and defines its requirements broadly:

All the sciences from astronomical physics to palaeobotany, he will maintain, are required in criminal investigation, and in addition every other department of human knowledge, millinery or mountaineering, from the garden of Eden to Russian films. The real specialist in criminology would be omniscient. The effective practitioner, he says modestly, is the ordinary man who knows enough of everything to know his way about in anything and can use his mind in a scientific way. (4, p. 4)

Though not indeed omniscient and perfectly willing to consult specialists when necessary, Mr. Fortune has an unusual breadth of knowledge which, to his associates, sometimes almost suggests omniscience. He is enough of a naturalist to perceive the relevance of interrupted slug trails (12) and of a dead male gypsy moth in a lane (10, p. 131-32); his knowledge of parchments is sufficient to enable him to identify a faked manuscript (4, p. 286); his knowledge of toxicology enough for him to perceive the properties of oleander flowers (10, p. 235); and his acute intelligence, allied with his familiarity with ancient Greek, enables him to properly interpret coded messages detailing the steps to a murder (6, p. 186 *et seq.*).

He has useful freedom from certain prejudices:

"Never found the female of the species more dreadful than the male, nor less." (7, p. 56)

Sometimes his views are unexpected: "Devotion—self-sacrifice—dangerous, delusive virtues" (13, p. 10), but he is able to justify them by instances from his cases. He has considerable persistence, so much so that he will never drop a case (7, p. 84) although one may have to be placed lengthily in abeyance if

evidence is not forthcoming. Some of the other qualities he claims are more arguable:

It is a cherished conviction of Mr. Fortune that his mind is always governed by caution. This is not admitted by the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department. (9, p. 191)

Nor is his own interpretation of his nature admitted by others:

"Reggie is apt to lament that he lacks confidence in himself. Many a case, he maintains, would have gone better if he had trusted his opinion and acted on it at once, indecision and hesitation are the weaknesses of a careful nature always intent of the saving of face and losing it thereby. His nature." (4, p. 40)

There is indeed sometimes a quality of serendipity or of intuition in his perceptions; and despite his protestations of caution, he is willing when necessary to harass Lomas and Bell into taking action on grounds so slender that one cannot blame them for their hesitation; an example is the case of the missing milliner (9). Much more often, however, it is his care that has enabled him to see evidence ignored by others, and to make reasoned deductions therefrom; the cases of the broken bicycle lamp (9) and of the angel's eye (12) are good examples, even though in the latter Mr. Fortune was unable to secure a conviction.

Essentially he has a clinical eye and uses it, not only to perceive symptoms in humans or evidences of disorder in their corpses, but also in the environment about him:

He is fond of preaching that the natural order of the world is arrayed for the overthrow of sinners and gives information of their knavish tricks by resentment, by symptoms of the abnormal, as the body announces disease. Those on the side of the angels, he assures you, if they will only observe the evidence provided for them and take the trouble to understand it, have always the means to victory. (10, p. 1)

HIS SENSE OF JUSTICE

Mr. Fortune says flatly, "I believe in justice," and, when his wife wishes to add "Add mercy," he says, "Not by itself, no. Bein' always merciful produces fools and devils" (11, p. 10-11). He is willing to indulge in theological arguments about the matter:

Dermor drew himself up, the authoritative ecclesiastic. "You speak with some confusion of thought, Mr. Fortune. It is in the order of things that out of evil good shall come, and by suffering and sacrifice alone right triumphs."

"Yes, I believe in the devil. He is with power. Which gives no reason to believe he's God. Contrariwise. Every reason to knock him out and stop the sufferin' and the sacrifice." (7, p. 151)

In short, Mr. Fortune's attitude is not in tune with the widespread modern view that crime is to be

condoned and criminals treated with the sympathy proper to those who are merely ill—an attitude that certainly seems to have achieved little in reducing the incidence of crime in our modern society. An extended quotation will make Mr. Fortune's attitude clear:

On the conviction of a criminal he has sometimes been heard to repeat the phrase of the old devine "There, but for the grace of God, go I." But this does not proceed from the comfortable philosophy that anybody may be a rascal if circumstances impel him that way. Mr. Fortune's theory is that the original impulse is a motive which many or most people feel. The distinction of a criminal is that he indulges it to extravagance. For that extravagance, when it wrongs others, Mr. Fortune finds no excuse in difficult or tempting circumstances. A cruel crime is to him the work of a pestilential creature, and he sees his duty in dealing with such cases as that of a doctor in treating illness. The cause must be discovered and extirpated. There is no more mercy for the cruel criminal than for the germs of disease. Both must be made innocuous. The measures taken against both must be such as to diminish the danger of further infection. That the criminal may be born to commit crime as a bacillus is born to cause suffering and death, Mr. Fortune agrees with his whole mind. For that mystery he has no explanation, but his philosophy is that the business of the human reason is to make the world safe from both. (4, p. 4)

Accordingly, and to the pleasure of the many who, like the late Edmund Crispin and myself, have found delight in following Mr. Fortune through his investigations, Mr. Fortune goes "on his hopeful and ruthless way believing heartily in God and the devil and the power of human mind to know which is which and give an effective hand to either" (4, p. 5). Moreover, we applaud his chronicler for telling us of so many of his attainments in such an entertaining fashion. □

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to Dr. Duncan Robertson (Faculty of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan) for his helpful comments on medical training and attitudes in the first two decades of this century.

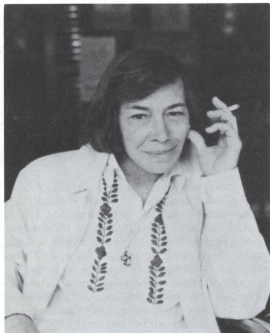
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Mr. Fortune relaxing in his laboratory; perhaps the best of the published portraits.
(From the dustjacket of *Case for Mr. Fortune*, 1932)



Patricia Highsmith — Interview

By Diana Cooper-Clark

I first met Patricia Highsmith in August 1980. At the time, she was living in Moncourt, France which is very near to Fontainebleau. She was a quiet and gracious woman, not enamoured with interviewers at that precise moment. She was born in Ft. Worth, Texas and has lived in many places—New York, Italy, France, England, Mexico. She now lives in Switzerland. She is the author of over twenty books, most notably *Strangers on a Train*, the Ripley series, *This Sweet Sickness*, *The Two Faces of January*, *Edith's Diary*. She is widely admired by both critics and her peers. James Sandoe wrote: "I think the world of Miss Highsmith because while she has me in her firm grasp, she is quite simply the world. Any questions?" No!

August 19, 1980, Moncourt, France

DCC: I recently read, and you can clarify or correct me, that you are not enamoured of the human race. Is that accurate?

PH: Not really. I often talk with a sociologist friend, and her opinion is that most people are quite ordinary, that universal education hasn't brought the happiness and beauty that people had hoped. I think human beings are very interesting, however. It is like talking about "a better life." Not everybody wants it, not everybody likes aesthetic things. Why should they? It is a matter of taste. It is one thing to make millions of people literate, to enact labor laws that provide leisure. The individual then decides how he spends that leisure time.

DCC: This particular reporter was from the *Observer*, and the slant of the article was that you were misanthropic.

PH: That isn't true. But like many writers, I like solitude. I have had two rather bad interviews with *Observer* people who shall be nameless. In fact, I don't even remember their names. I remember distinctly that I had a nice lunch, but it was a silly interview. Lots of my friends saw it and said it really wasn't like me. I didn't even keep it in my scrapbook.

DCC: You have said: "I like to entertain and to stimulate in an emotional way." Is emotion diametrically opposed to intellect, or are they part of the same thing for you?

PH: It could be part of the same thing, but I know that I write to tell an entertaining story, and that I am not trying to make a point. I am not trying to be an intellectual.

DCC: So you really have no particular philosophy of criminology or murder as some people do who write?

PH: No. I think unfortunately that most criminals, in fact, the vast majority of the people who are in jail, have not got a very high IQ. Therefore, they don't interest me very much.

DCC: So you don't agree with George Bernard Shaw's idea that the artist is very close to the criminal? Colin Wilson also picks that up.

PH: I can think of only one slight closeness, and that is that an imaginative writer is very free-wheeling; he has to forget about his own personal morals, especially if he is writing about criminals. He has to feel anything is possible. But I don't for this reason understand why an artist should have any criminal tendencies. The artist may simply have an ability to understand.

DCC: In *A Casebook of Murder*, Colin Wilson

wrote that he regarded murder as a response to certain problems of human freedom: not as a social problem, nor a psychological problem, nor even a moral problem, but as an existential problem. Is that what you meant before when you said that you really are writing to entertain, rather than for a didactic purpose?

PH: Yes, I still stand by what I said. I would much rather be an entertainer than a moralizer, but to call murder not a social problem I think is ridiculous; it certainly is a social problem. The word existentialist has become fuzzy. It's existentialist if you cut a finger with a kitchen knife—because it has happened. Existentialism is self-indulgent, and they try to gloss over this by calling it a philosophy.

DCC: In *Ritual in the Dark* and some of his earlier novels, Wilson is exploring the idea of the criminal, the murderer who is trying to move away from the boredom of life, searching for the meaning of life, going beyond the taboos of society. I think it is in this sense that he means freedom. He finally comes to the conclusion that murder really is a perversion of freedom, but he is still sympathetic to it as an attempt for freedom.

PH: Yes, Dostoyevski was toying with this idea too. It is extremely interesting if one writes a story about that, but I wouldn't want to imagine a world in which everybody tried this.

DCC: Would you associate Bruno in *Strangers on a Train* with some of these notions? He often speaks on this subject.

PH: Yes, but he is also a psychopath. He is really mentally sick, and either doesn't realize or doesn't care about the consequences of these ideas if he carries out all these projects; he is without a conscience and without any understanding of what he is talking about. He is simply not right in the head.

DCC: Often the criminal is the hero in your novels. Is this because, for a while at least, this particular person is not bound by society?

PH: Yes, in fact I once wrote in a book of mine about suspense writing, that a criminal, at least for a short period of time is free, free to do anything he wishes. Unfortunately it sounded as if I admired that, which I don't. If somebody kills somebody, they are breaking the law, or else they are in a fit of temper. While I can't recommend it, it is an awful truth to say that for a moment they are free, yes. And I wrote that in a moment of impatience, I remember distinctly. I get impatient with a certain hidebound morality. Some of the things one hears in church, and certain so-called laws that nobody practices. Nobody can practice them and it is even sick to try. I get impatient with that, and so I made a rather hasty

statement that at least for a short period of time the criminal is free.

DCC: And many people picked that up.

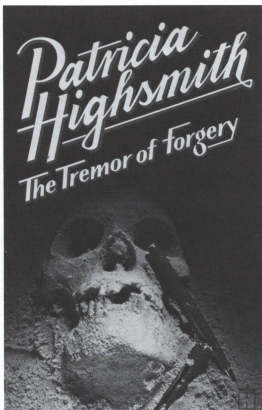
PH: Yes. Julian Symons has quoted it, and he said the equivalent of what I said, which was neither the law nor nature cares about real justice. I mean frequently in court the guilty person goes free, either through mistakes or a crooked court which is quite possible. In nature it is the survival of the fittest. You cannot call that justice, you just call it a scheme of nature, a jungle.

DCC: Many contemporary novels, those of Colin Wilson, James Dickey's *Deliverance*, Walker Percy's *Lancelot*, Saul Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, Graham Greene's *A Sort of Life*, to name a few, explore the idea that human beings murder and seek violence in a search for meaning, as a relief from ennui, as a challenge to society in order to find the potential in themselves. Although Bruno is a psychopath, these ideas are touched upon in *Strangers on a Train*. Is it ever justifiable to convert murder into a philosophical and aesthetic experience?

PH: I simply don't agree with it. Murder, to me, is a mysterious thing. I feel I do not understand it really. I try to imagine it, of course, but I think it is the worst crime. That is why I write so much about it; I am interested in guilt. I think there is nothing worse than murder, and that there is something mysterious about it, but that isn't to say that it is desirable for any reason. To me, in fact, it is the opposite of freedom, if one has any conscience at all.

DCC: I think that is important. Critics just don't pick up on that aversion to murder in your work. They seem to want to create categories of responses. Do they ever say anything that you consider accurate?

PH: In regard to murder I can't think of anything. Just now, I am going over the past two years of reviews. I have neglected them for two or three books, and I'm interested in the negative things. The new book out, *The Boy Who Followed Ripley*, is an interesting case. By the way, Ripley very much resembles Bruno psychologically because Ripley has done about eight murders by now, of which the first was the most important to him. I mean, he thinks back on the first murder and he feels shame. In the later murders he is killing people who—except for one honest man who is about to spill some beans, Murchison—are evil themselves. But he is also singularly lacking in normal conscience. So naturally the critics are going to pick up the similarity or they will make the remark about Ripley that he has no conscience. That is true. But, on the other hand, this is not true in a book like *The Blunderer*, in which the man gets to the brink of killing his wife, when she



takes the bus trip, and can't bring himself to do it, only to have the wife throw herself over the cliff. Mostly my heroes are rather like Walter in *The Blunderer*, I think, by which I mean that whether they kill somebody or whether they don't, murder is not a casual thing to them, it is of great importance, it is a very serious crime.

DCC: This is exactly what I find interesting, because it is so much at odds with what other people seem to glean from your books. I think that if someone read all of your work, he or she should see what you are saying. Perhaps part of the problem with reviewing is that many of the reviewers have not read a large quantity of your work. If you read only one of your books, I think it is easy to pick out certain striking features that are quite antithetical to what you are doing on the whole.

PH: Yes, I can hardly blame them now because I have about twenty books.

DCC: It is a large undertaking, but a fascinating one. I have read many of the reviews of your latest book, *The Boy Who Followed Ripley*, and they do seem to stress the negativity. To go back to what you were saying about guilt, you have previously said: "I suppose the reason I write about crime is simply that

it is very good for illustrating moral points of life. I am really interested in the behavior of people surrounding someone who has done something wrong, and also whether the person who has done it feels guilty about it, or just, 'so what.'" Very often the people in your novels around the killer think that he is mad or close to madness, and very often he is: David in *This Sweet Sickness*, Syd in *Suspension of Mercy* (in Britain, *The Story-Teller* in the United States), Robert in *The Cry of the Owl*, Vic in *Deep Water*. What interests you about this particular reaction?

PH: I suppose in the case of Vic it makes the story much more alive. One can identify with a so-called normal person who is looking at Vic and suspecting, because anybody can identify with a person who has a suspicion, you see, in fact more easily than they can identify with Vic. It is just like a "background" in writing, a necessary element or a very useful element.

DCC: Freud and Jung both felt that murder can exact its own punishment in that the murderer feels tremendous guilt and punishes himself. In *Strangers on a Train*, Guy says that "every man is his own law court and punishes himself enough." Guy certainly is tortured by guilt, but several of your characters do not feel guilt: Philip Carter in *The Glass Cell*, Victor Van Allen in *Deep Water*, Tom Ripley. Do you find the effect of non-guilt just as interesting as guilt in a murderer?

PH: Yes, I do.

DCC: Why?

PH: Ripley as I said before is a little bit sick in the head in this respect of having very little conscience. Vic is becoming deranged in the book, he is a bit schizophrenic at the end. I try to explore as much as I can the part of themselves that these murderers are keeping secret from the public and even their wives. I try to tell how they deal with what they have done.

DCC: And Philip?

PH: Philip was changed in prison when he saw the riot and his best friend Max was killed. He became hardened, you might say, and detests the man he kills at the end.

DCC: In what way does amorality interest you in a character like Tom Ripley?

PH: I suppose I find it an interesting contrast to stereotyped morality which is very frequently hypocritical and phony. I also think that to mock lip-service morality and to have a character amoral, such as Ripley, is entertaining. I think people are entertained by reading such stories. The murderers that one reads about in the newspaper half the time are mentally deficient in some way, or simply callous.

There are young boys, for instance, who pretend to be delivering, or who may help an old lady carrying her groceries home, and then hit her on the head when she invites them in for tea, and rob her. These are forever stupid people, but they exist. Many murderers are like that, and they don't interest me enough to write a book about them. Somebody like Ripley however, who is reasonably intelligent and still has this amoral quality, interests me. I couldn't make an interesting story out of some morons.

DCC: It seems to be a *sine qua non* of crime fiction that order is restored and good triumphs over evil, but sometimes your murderers do get away with murder; again, Philip Carter and Tom Ripley.

PH: This is the way life is, and I read somewhere years ago that only 11% of murders are solved. That is unfortunate, but lots of victims are not so important as the President of the United States. The police make a certain effort, and it may be a good effort, but frequently the case is dropped. And so I think, why shouldn't I write about a few characters who also go free?

DCC: You have often been accused of carrying your identification with your psychotic characters to the

point where you actually seem to be preferring their interesting evil to the mediocre virtue of their victims. Would you agree with that assessment?

PH: Yes. I think it is more interesting to talk about something off the beaten track than it is to talk about a so-called normal person. That's one answer to your question. Another might be, that in some of my books the victims are evil or boring individuals, so the murderer is more important than they. This is a writer's remark, not a legal judge's.

DCC: Is this why you might perhaps find amorality more interesting than immorality, because it is more unusual?

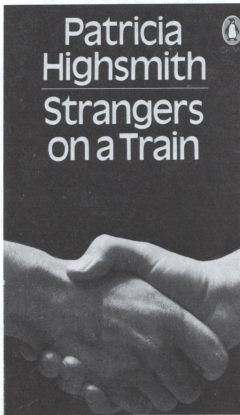
PH: Yes. I suppose it is such a subtle question because it is such a subtle difference. Amorality such as Ripley's is rarer than immorality. People in the Mafia, or pimps, people in any kind of wretched occupation, know that they and their work are strictly in the gutter, that their activities are disgusting, and they don't care as long as it puts a little money in their pockets. This is immoral, but the Ripley type is amoral.

DCC: In *The Tremor of Forgery*, the hero is both detective and suspect, accused and accuser. He is faced with the question of whether or not he must recognize the violence within himself. Conventional values and ethics seem lost in Tunisia and he is faced in his own life by the novel's statement: "Whether a person makes his own personality and standards from within himself, or whether he and the standards are the creations of the society around him." Which do you think come first?

PH: I am quite sure that the standards of morality come from the society around; a child within the jungle is not going to invent his own sense of right and wrong. In *Forgery*, he leaves America and comes to a place where murder is taken a little more lightly.

DCC: Your exploration of the criminal mind is ever-fascinating. There have been so many conflicting insights about the criminal mind: murderers are innately evil; Lombroso believed that criminality was a trait inherited from degenerate ancestors; sociologists maintain that criminals are victims of urbanization, family disintegration, poor schooling, unemployment, mental illness; and a recent study by Yachelson and Samenow stated that there is a criminal personality. Where do you believe the ability to murder comes from?

PH: I happen to believe more in heredity than I do in environment. There is certainly such a thing as a no-good family. Families always have a history, and I have heard of families where the grandfather was an old crook, never quite in jail. Within one household,



one can find sometimes an atmosphere of flaunting the law to a greater or lesser degree.

DCC: Do you believe in the "bad seed" theory?

PH: Yes, I think there is something in that; it doesn't mean the individual would always turn out badly, but as I said, I do believe in heredity more than environment. The phrase "poor schools" makes me laugh. I went to several. What counts is individual motivation. Ambition and drive count.

DCC: Do you think it is a mistake to try to reduce the original impulse to murder to one thing or another?

PH: An impulse to murder is surely based on anger. Premeditated murder is different. I think of the two young Australian girls. One was eleven and one was thirteen, and they murdered the mother of one of them on a garden path I believe, for no reason. They just got together and said, "Let's do it." That comes under mental derangement, and as I am not a psychologist, I can't make any intelligent statement about that, except that any court would probably say that the girl who was the leader of the two, was mentally deranged. Where does that get you? It's just a term. But there was something wrong with her brain, even though she was only about thirteen. There is something wrong with anybody who is so inhuman as to kill the mother of a friend.

DCC: In P. D. James's novel *Death of An Expert Witness*, the murderer states that a murderer sets himself aside from the whole of humanity forever. It's a kind of death. Do you believe that murder is a kind of death for the murderer?

PH: It certainly would be for me, but I don't know if many murderers take it that seriously. I had two dreams in my life in which I had committed a murder, and only in one could I identify a certain person whom I disliked years ago. But in each dream I was very disturbed by the fact that I was ostracized from society, or at least I felt that I was. In the dream, if I went to a store to buy a newspaper, I felt that people were looking at me and saying, "there goes a murderer." It was a truly dreadful feeling, but I think the world is also full of people walking around the streets in Chicago and Marseilles who have killed somebody and they sleep quite well.

DCC: In *Strangers on a Train*, Bruno tells Guy that "any person can murder." Do you think that is true?

PH: No, I don't. Maybe I thought it was when I wrote it, but at any rate it comes out of Bruno's mouth. I don't believe that at all. I don't believe that everybody can be coerced into murder. In war, yes, I guess it is different. But I don't think everyone can murder, not even for money. It is all relative, because

if you were to go to some primitive place, the Far East or Africa, and offered a fantastic sum to some humble person to kill somebody he doesn't know, then you or your paid agent could do it. You could find maybe the same thing in America if you looked hard, but I think I have to ask myself what kind of people am I talking about; the poor, the middle-class, or people like you and myself. I don't think you could be coerced, you couldn't be persuaded, I dare say you would not be able to kill somebody even for a considerable amount of money or whatever else.

DCC: What if we eliminate the question of punishment, jail, so that one would not weigh the consequences against the act? Many people think that it is the spectre of jail and punishment that prevents people from committing acts of violence.

PH: Again one has to ask what intellectual level of person is one talking about. Of course, the more primitive the person is, if you eliminate the punishment, then the more likely the person can kill somebody for money. But I mostly write about middle-class people, and they would have too much awareness of what they had done, just as I had in the dream. It is the awareness of it that is the torture rather than being put into jail. Koestler spent some time campaigning against hanging in England, and with success, because he proved that capital punishment is not a deterrent, but insignificant. Yet its advocates are again trying to call it a deterrent. It's revenge they want, and that's as barbaric as the Old Testament.

DCC: I agree. Graham Greene, in his introduction to *Eleven*, wrote that you create a claustrophobic world which we enter each time with a sense of personal danger. Do you see danger everywhere in life as in your writing?

PH: No. I am inclined to be naive in my personal dealings, and I am not inclined to lock the door and have padlocks everywhere. I don't know what Graham Greene means, but in my short story, "The Terrapin," about the little boy with the tortoise, the story is seen through his eyes. I don't know why it is so claustrophobic any more than any story, considering that a short story has to be intense, and is usually seen through the eyes of one person. You are within the little boy's atmosphere. I don't know why that is claustrophobic.

DCC: Just to continue with that, danger can also lurk under the rules and regulations of society. Vic, in *Deep Water*, feels that "people who do not behave in an orthodox manner are by definition frightening." This juxtaposition of the ordinary and the respectable with violence, creates a chilling atmosphere in your books because we are dealing with

people who are middle-class, who are respectable. Do you purposely create that kind of atmosphere because you know it is all the more frightening?

PH: No, it is because it is the atmosphere that I know, because it is my own class more-or-less, a very ordinary American. My family was neither rich nor poor, and I couldn't write about peasants. In New York once, when I was a teenager, I tried to write a short short about an Italian family because I went to school with many many Italians. I found I couldn't do it because I had never lived in their households with ten or eleven people sitting at the dining room table. I never finished the story. In other words, I have to write, any writer has to write, about the class of people that he knows. Therefore the contrast between class respectability and murderous thoughts is bound to turn up in most of my books.

DCC: You often return to the theme of a pathological conflict between two men, in *Strangers on a Train*, *Deep Water*, *The Blunderer*, *The Glass Cell*, *The Cry of the Owl* and others.

PH: The ideas come to me in that way. The idea for *Strangers on a Train* came as an idea for an exchange of murders. For the exchange, one needs two men, two people.

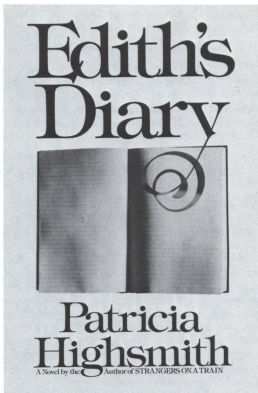
DCC: You don't really explore that conflict with women though.

PH: No, the only female protagonist I suppose in my novels is Edith in *Edith's Diary*. But I have a lot of short stories that have women protagonists.

DCC: Are you more interested in the conflict between men as opposed to conflict between women?

PH: No, perhaps I find men more violent by nature than women, or more able to use physical strength, but that is obvious. In the American schools, at least in my generation, around fourteen years of age, they separated the boys from the girls in the Junior High School. It wasn't to keep the birth rate down at all, it was because the boys were difficult to handle, they were disobedient and the teacher would have to slap them in the face in those days and pull their ears. It was much more fun when I was going to school with boys before the age of fourteen, because they have a sense of humor, much better than that of the girls, I must say, and it was amusing. And suddenly from fourteen to seventeen there was a bunch of girls before university learning things by rote. Pretty boring. Young women these days are less passive, thank goodness, but they've still a long way to go.

DCC: In a time when people are interested in the portrayal of women in literature, I found your book *Little Tales of Misogyny* really quite unique.



PH: That was like a book of jokes.

DCC: Yes, but I find that in a number of your novels the women seem despicable in trivial ways. They are often cheats, Melinda in *Deep Water*, Hazel in *The Glass Cell*, Alicia in *Suspension of Mercy*, Miriam in *Strangers on a Train*. And the women are totally unsympathetic in *Little Tales of Misogyny*.

PH: I must say that it certainly looks like that, but actually I have quite an esteem for women's strength. I think the women portrayed in my writing have rather bad characters, but I don't think that personally. I think that women can be quite strong. I can remember my grandmother who was the head of the household in a very pleasant way when I was a kid, and my own mother's character was stronger than my stepfather's. Unfortunately in *Strangers on a Train*, Miriam, the wife, happened to be a silly high school girl. The early marriage of Guy and Miriam was based, you might say, on falling in love around high school age. This was a mistake for Guy, and so the girl Miriam is the type who would flirt and make another stupid liaison of some kind. And then Melinda, who was Vic's wife, was always flirting and having two or three lovers. I simply needed that for the story because it gives Vic a motivation for murder. Unfortunately, the whole picture looks as if I suspect

that women have narrow characters, which is not really true. It is not my personal feeling at all.

DCC: Julian Symons has pointed out that you are drawn to the attraction exerted on the weak by the idea of violence, such as in *The Two Faces of January* and *Those Who Walk Away*.

PH: Well, I don't plan these things. When I start to write anything, I think of the story first. I think of the events. Is it interesting or is it amusing or is it unexpected or is it almost unbelievable? That comes first, rather than thinking one character is weak and one character is strong.

DCC: Critics often discuss your obsessions and fixations, and the one they usually mention is paranoia. Clearly from what you have said, you don't believe that you particularly have obsessions and fixations in your own life.

PH: Well, maybe there is a bit of paranoia in David in *This Sweet Sickness*, but I don't find it in *The Tremor of Forgery*. Vic, in *Deep Water*, is just the opposite of paranoid; he is quite sure of himself. He kills one man, then the second man, and he thinks he is completely in the clear. As for myself, I don't think I'm paranoid, but as I said before, rather trusting and optimistic about personal and business relationships.

DCC: Maurice Richardson has said that you write about men like a spider writing about flies, and another reviewer has maintained that reading one of your novels is like having tea with a dangerous witch. Both are compliments, I might add; they weren't meant to be negative. We talked before about reviewers. Do you read, now or in the beginning, material about yourself?

PH: Oh, Definitely! I read reviews as I was beginning to write. Now I finally read the critiques, sometimes after they've been lying around the house for months. It is the last thing I look at in the Sunday paper when I know I have a review out. I am not exactly eager to read my reviews, but I have always been interested in the negative comments.

DCC: Do you notice a change in the responses to your work, from your first novel, *Strangers on a Train*, to your latest, *The Boy Who Followed Ripley*? Do you see an evolution in the response? Is it the same, is it very different?

PH: No, I don't find it very different. I don't notice any change in them.

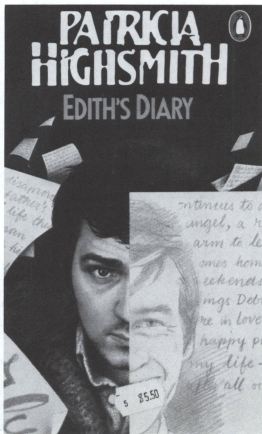
DCC: Do you feel that your literary reputation has suffered, as some people think, because crime is at the center of your books? Or do you really worry about your literary reputation?

PH: I don't care about it at all. The publishers always

want to categorize you, and they think it helps them to sell books. *Edith's Diary* was rejected by Knopf in New York and because the publishers can't categorize every book I write, this is why in New York I must have been with five publishers by now. I would rather stay with one, but they get so fixed on a certain category, that if I write something out of line, then it is a rejection and my agents have to take it to another publisher which up to now I have always been able to find. In England, Heinemann is less rigid. I won't say they will take anything, but my work has a fair amount of variation, if I consider *Edith's Diary*, *Little Tales of Misogyny* and the animal stories, but Heinemann is content to publish them all, mainly because they can sell them. So this business of categorizing bores me. I couldn't tailor my inspiration to that.

DCC: You mentioned *Edith's Diary*, which was a departure from the murder that is in most of your books. It was a wonderful novel. Are you interested in writing more novels in the future that don't deal with murder?

PH: Oh, yes, definitely. In fact, I might go to the



States to live for a few months in order to freshen my memory and my information, in which case I might write another American-set book with quite a different theme. I am interested in morale just now, not morals, but how one keeps up one's morale. It doesn't sound like a very exciting theme, and isn't until I attach it to a story.

DCC: I think it is crucial to anybody who is alive today.

PH: Sometimes one has the mental habit, well, really tricks, to continue to be cheerful and to continue to imagine that one's making progress when one really isn't. I speak not of myself but of many, many people.

DCC: Why have you never written a detective novel as such?

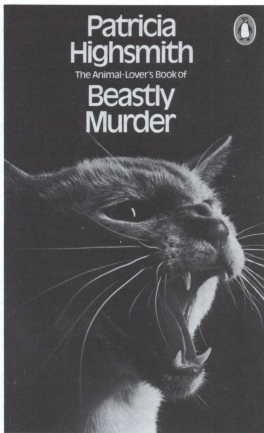
PH: I think it is a silly way of teasing people, "who-done-it." It doesn't interest me in the least and I don't know anything about the police procedure or the detective methods of working; that is an occupation in itself. It is like a puzzle, and puzzles do not interest me.

DCC: I am interested in the movies that were done from your novels. What did you think of them?

PH: The Hitchcock film, *Strangers on a Train*, is very dated now but I think it is a good film. *Purple Noon* is an entertaining film even though Ripley gets caught in the end. *The American Friend*, I thought, came off quite well. That's Wim Wenders doing *Ripley's Game* with Dennis Hopper. I saw that twice; I like to see any film that I'm interested in twice. *The American Friend* is a good film. I like it all except the ending. I thought they did the train scene very well.

DCC: I know that some writers, once they have sold the rights to their book, don't care what the film-makers do with the movie after that. Do you like to be involved?

PH: I do care. My agents want to put into the contract that I have the right to see the script, and if I don't like it, I can remove my name. I care quite a



lot because I like to have a reputation for not only writing amusing books, but books that are capable of becoming good films. Of course, that depends on the quality of the director and script writer.

DCC: Was it an augury that you have the same birthday as Edgar Allan Poe, January 19?

PH: I don't believe in astrology. It is also the birthday of Robert E. Lee, so I used to have a holiday down south in school. They recently stopped having holidays on his birthday though—too Confederate. (Laughs.) □



REX STOUT

Newsletter

By John McAleer

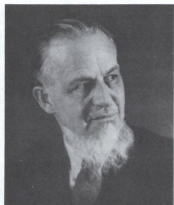
In the 13 June 1981 issue of *TV Guide*, Robert MacKenzie reported that "One reader, irked by a *Nero Wolfe* review, suggests I be 'whipped with a wet William Conrad.'" I don't want to bring down on myself the wrath of such readers, but over the past six months I must have been asked a thousand times to state my opinion of the show. Usually, I just grunted, coupling the grunt with a vague smile, and the inquirer, depending upon his own convictions, took that as either a hosanna or a sneer and went away satisfied. I even had a call from Ivan Goff, who produced the show. He told me that if it lasted into the fall he was going to give Archie a live-in girlfriend—the Honey West type, skilled in karate and probably fitted with suction pads so that she could climb tall buildings. I grunted then, too.

Well, now the show is gone, and Fred Silverman, who handed down the death sentence, is gone, and the brownstone probably has been bulldozed, so I guess it's safe to open up on the subject.

Since Orson Welles declined the part and no one could get him to reconsider his decision, I would like to have seen John Houseman step into the role. He's subtle enough to have carried it off, a man, like Sydney Greenstreet, of infinite nuances. Conrad alternated between being rancorous and sentimental. He seems limited to a single dimension, and that's not the Nero Wolfe that we know. By slumping in his chair, he managed to look fat enough when sitting down, but, standing, he merely looked roly-poly. You don't have to take my word for it. When he did a guest spot one night on Johnny Carson's show, he virtually admitted as much.

I met a lot of people who didn't like Lee Horsley as Archie. I don't agree with them. I heard the soundtracks of some of the shows after I'd seen the shows and thought he handled his lines like a true professional. The problem was, the lines he got seldom were up to Stout's standards. Don't forget, Archie is Rex's narrator. All the good lines are his. By

taking that role away from him on the TV series, Goff left him with only an occasional good line. He made the most of such lines, and he made the most of lesser lines, but that still wasn't enough to keep him from seeming, as one critic said, a male angel being dispatched out into the fray by an elephantine Charlie. Cast in that role, the warmth of his relationship with Wolfe had no opportunity to come through. Without Lily Rowan around, Archie was further diminished. With



no real life of his own, he seemed more and more Wolfe's errand boy. There are those who say a strong Archie was needed to carry the series. Horsley made the most of the material given him, and, for a long time to come, when I see him in other parts, I'll continue to think of him as Archie, but I just wish he had had enough clout to insist on playing the part as written. As for casting someone else in the part, I always thought Frank Converse could do it. Does anyone agree with me?

Concessions must be made to the dramatic needs of television. I don't agree with those who objected to Wolfe leaving the brownstone and having guests in his orchid rooms. Let's be fair. Goff's Wolfe really didn't gallivant. I think Goff showed good sense as

well in inflating the role of Theodore. After all, Archie did say that the sound of Wolfe and Theodore arguing sometimes carried to his ears. Robert Coote is a splendid actor. British or not, he was a good Theodore. At the risk of sounding heretical, I'll say further that Rex ought to have found more for Theodore to do than he ever did. I asked him once why Theodore never figured prominently in a story. His answer was that he had never worked up any interest in him.

Now Saul is another matter. Goff's Saul looked the part, but Goff never got enough use out of him. In some episodes, he actually was ineffectual, a near klutz. Saul is one of the jewels of the saga. He deserves to be acknowledged as such. Cramer, of course, was miscast. A fine actor portrayed him, but who could accept him as Rex's Cramer? Fritz presents the same problem. A bit faded and dusty to be a ladies' man. And we have Archie's word for it that Fritz had a dash of the lothario in his makeup.

As for the set—it was beautiful, and money was spent on it. But Rex said the brownstone was a double one and had a corner location. The terrestrial globe was too small. The waterfall painting should have been of the Reichenbach Falls which, Rex said, were the falls he had in mind. The lamp seen over Wolfe's left shoulder when he was sitting at his desk looked like the ruins of Corinth. Wolfe would have sneered at it. I know I did. That elevator was just right, however. If I had a huge big enough for it—and \$175,000—I'd buy it before J. R. Ewing did.

Pete Blau tells me that "The Volcano" by Paul Chapin (*The League of Frightened Men*) was reprinted in *Riverworld and Other Stories* by Philip José Farmer (New York: Berkley, November 1979), with a new, two-paragraph foreword by Farmer. And why not? Farmer wrote "The Volcano."

Robert Moses, who died at ninety-two in late July 1981, has been called "the greatest builder in American history," and as such his obituaries acclaimed him. I wonder how many of his admirers knew that Moses was one of Rex Stout's admirers. On 3 August 1970, Moses wrote Rex to express "many thanks for the happy hours you have given so many of us in which, beyond these raucous voices and short of the ultimate mystery, there is peace."

On 27 February 1973, Moses supplied me with some correspondence he had had with Rex six years earlier. On 7 July 1967, he had written Rex:

Where is Nero Wolfe? His fans and aficionados demand his return. Why not to his native haunts in Montenegro and to the freedom fighters of Durmitor and Komou?

Here is a suggested beginning of a Montenegro story. My knowledge of Montenegro is minuscule. All I can provide is an opening paragraph or two and then the master must step in with what my engineering and financial lads call the "specifics."

Here now, for the first time in print anywhere, is this unique Moses fragment, reproduced exactly as he wrote it:

The _____ of _____

"Archie," intoned Nero Wolfe, "I want you to meet an old landsman of mine, a boyhood chum, Mihaljo Vulpic." In came a homespun Balkan with half of Nero's girth.

We were sitting in a back room at Rodman's Cafe on Second Avenue—the Round Man and I—when this strange character ambled in. "A chum indeed," said Vulpic. "It's a long time since you saw the crags and crannies of Montenegro and the calm and raging seas beyond. Well I remember my own first view as a mere infant wrapped in rags, and clutching a lucky zloti or hustig in my clenched fist, I heard the shrieking seabirds and answered their cries for liberty in my own childish treble. I have been shouting liberty ever since, liberty always threatened but never overcome."

"Mihaljo," said Nero, dipping daintily into a marinated head cheese, "your credentials are unimpeachable. Say on. Give heed, Archie. I shall interrupt," said Nero, in his familiar facetious, didactic style. "An interpreter," he added, "in case you don't know, is one who translates a language which he doesn't understand into one which he can't speak."

To this manuscript, Moses appended the following lines: "Note to the Author—This launches the dark and bloody tale of Mt. Durmitor and Mt. Komou in Montenegro and of Nero Wolfe's astute and timely aid to a small band of intrepid mountaineers."

In 1935, a band of intrepid writers—Rupert Hughes, Samuel Hopkins Adams, Anthony Abbott, Rita Weiman, S. S. Van Dine, and



John Erskine—wrote *The President's Mystery Story*, a novel based on a plot propounded by the then President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Can we let it be said that their generation was braver than ours? Who among you is ready to follow in the footsteps of Moses? That Rex himself did not is not significant. He always followed his own leads.

* * * * *

As her tribute to Nero Wolfe, that enduring novelist, the late Faith Baldwin, once supplied me with these lines:

To Nero and his staff, hats off
If I wore one, I'd gladly doff
It in his presence. I despise
The condensations which arise
To pull the mystery novel down—
On such an attitude, I frown
And also envy those who till
My fav'r field, except the ill
Equipped who now by greed are led
To deal in Bourbon, Blondes to Bed—
Therefore of Nero Wolfe I sing
And of our Rex, unchallenged King—

* * * * *

A hot item on the current market is a batch of checks endorsed by Rex Stout between 1912 and 1917. They came to him in payment for short stories and novels which he published in *All-Story Magazine* in that interval. Ironically, people are now willing to pay more for the canceled checks than *All-Story* was willing to pay for the stories they were sent in payment for.

* * * * *

The original oil painting of Nero Wolfe which is reproduced on the back cover of the current Bantam edition of the saga has become the property of Peter Stern and hangs, monarch of all it surveys, on a wall above the walnut bookcases which hold Peter's Stout collection, a collection which, for perfection of condition and completeness, is beyond reproach.

* * * * *

Anthony Wynne's *Death of a Golfer* (1937) features a golf club which functions as an air gun. Evidently *Fer-de-Lance* (1934) inaugurated a vogue.

* * * * *

The Sunday, 5 April 1959, edition of a Connecticut newspaper, the *Fairfield County Fair*, has an article by Lucia Donnelly—"How-Dun-It?" Panel"—which discusses a panel which had recently held forth at the Westport Library. Members of the panel were Helen McCloy and her husband Brett Halliday, Lee Wright of Random House, and Rex Stout. Rex's friend, Edgar winner Alan Green, was moderator. Rex obviously was in top form. He told his audience: "If this germ of an idea excites you, sit down and write. If it doesn't excite you, it certainly won't excite anyone else." He also reiterated his aversion to calling mysteries "suspense novels." He contended that any story has suspense or it's no good and cited Homer's *Odyssey* as an outstanding example of a suspense story. When Sherlock Holmes became Rex's topic, his audience really perked up its ears: "Anyone who wrote stories today as poorly plotted would not be accepted. They're incredibly silly things." The article is accompanied by several photos, one of which shows Rex, on his feet, declaiming to his audience, and another showing Rex seated between the two lady panelists, his hand to his brow as though deep in thought, a pose he often struck when writing.

* * * * *

Toward the end of his life, novelist Paul W. Gallico, who served under Rex on the Writers War Board and often visited High Meadow, wrote to me with dismay:

"It is shocking indeed that nothing remains with me of this man but his visual aspect and his complete control over any meeting or group that he chaired. I can see Rex clearly but I cannot hear him. My memory ear has gone deaf. The only thing I can remember is that a daughter of theirs had been taking dancing lessons and gave us a demonstration. I made a few choreographic changes in her movements which, since I am not a choreographer, caused Rex to look at me with the utmost astonishment and I trust not suspicion."

* * * * *

Keep your letters coming to me at Mount Independence, 121 Follen Road, Lexington, Mass. 02173. In them this newsletter finds its genesis. □

Stockholm in June: Crime Writers 3rd International Congress

By Edward D. Hoch

The weather was cool and cloudy for much of the week, with light rain falling on two days, but spirits were bright at the Crime Writers 3rd International Congress, held at the Grand Hotel in Stockholm, Sweden, from June 15 to 19, 1981.

The two previous Congresses—in London, 1975, and New York, 1978—had attracted writers from most of the major countries, but neither approached the truly international scope of the Stockholm gathering. More than 250 delegates and spouses were in attendance, not only from the United States, England, Sweden and Japan, but also from such diverse lands as Denmark, Russia, Norway, West Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Australia, Italy, Holland, French West Indies, France, Egypt, India, Finland, Poland, Zimbabwe, Israel, Kenya and Ghana.

Registration began on Monday morning, June 15, followed by the Congress tradition of the Cluedo

tournament, won this time by the American writer and editor Michele Slung. Monday also saw a new Congress feature, an auction of nearly four hundred rare crime and mystery books, printed in several languages. Donald Rumbelow, author of a definitive book on Jack the Ripper, found a 1908 Danish book on the Ripper for his collection.

Following a noon lunch at Stockholm's new City Hall, the delegates returned to the Grand Hotel where they were entertained by the Stockholm Police Chorus and officially welcomed by Kjell Stensson, president of the Swedish Academy of Detection. The Congress's first panel, on Monday afternoon, concerned crime writing in different countries and cultures, and was chaired by Jan Broberg of Sweden. Eight nations were represented: the United States, England, Japan, Zimbabwe, Sweden, Poland, Russia and Norway.

Speaking for the United States, Otto Penzler



pointed out the many diverse cultures and regions that contribute to the American mystery, while Britain's Julian Symons stressed the need for good English translations of foreign language mysteries. He also mentioned the works of three British writers he admired—Eric Ambler's *Doctor Frigo*, Len Deighton's *SS-GB*, and the novels of Ruth Rendell. Japan's Shizuko Natsuki regretted the fact that so few Japanese mysteries have been translated and published abroad.

On the same panel, the Swedish representative pointed out the importance of essays and critical studies in his country, while the Norwegian delegate made the interesting claim that a Norwegian teacher and writer, Mauritz Hansen, published a detective short story in 1827—fourteen years before Poe! The Russian delegate, Julian Semjonov, explained that the intrigue and suspense novels of Graham Greene, with their wealth of atmosphere and character development, are far more popular in his country than the pure puzzles of Agatha Christie.

Tuesday morning's session featured a mock crime followed by a trial scene, with an alternate sight-seeing tour of Stockholm's Old Town district and the Royal Palace where the Crown Jewels were on display at the subterranean treasury. A noon visit to a former prison—where pin-ups still decorate the abandoned cells—was dampened somewhat by a light rain.

Afternoon sessions included a talk on book contracts in Sweden, where authors receive payment for public library borrowings of their books, and a Sherlock Holmes tribute, complete with violin playing. A late afternoon press party introduced the new James Bond automobile—a custom-outfitted Saab.

On Tuesday evening a score of the better-known writers were introduced to the Swedish public at an outdoor gathering arranged by Dagens Nyheter, Sweden's largest morning newspaper. Among those present were Ellery Queen, Julian Symons, Desmond Bagley, Dorothy Salisbury Davis, Tony Hillerman, Lawrence Treat, Richard Martin Stern, Christianna Brand, Ruth Rendell, Hillary Waugh, Shizuko Natsuki, Julian Semjonov, Jan Ekstrom and Edward D. Hoch. Following the outdoor session a late dinner was served at the newspaper's office.

Wednesday morning saw a visit to the Stockholm Police College, where the delegates viewed dog and horse training, pistol marksmanship, and a film about the school. The Police College, started ten years ago, generally has an enrollment of 700 to 1000 students, thirty percent of them women, for its 41-week course. Stockholm police, unarmed until recent years, carry a five-shot French 7.65 mm. automatic pistol.

While delegates were at the Police College, some spouses visited AB Gustavsbergs, Sweden's largest



A moment's rest for Dorothy Salisbury Davis, Christianna Brand and Chris Steinbrunner.



Popular Swedish crime writer Ulla Trenter (L.) and Margaret Yorke.



At Iwan Hedman's cocktail party: (l. to r.) Mary Higgins Clark, Hedman, Julian Symons, Colin Dexter, Inga Hedman, Hillary Waugh.



The Soviet Union's most successful mystery writer, Julian Semyonov.

porcelain factory. Afternoon sessions back at the Grand Hotel included lectures on art forgery and fingerprints, and a panel on why people enjoy reading about crime.

A two-part panel on Thursday morning considered the home market and the international market in making a crime novel into a best-seller. Gregory McDonald urged writers to extend themselves and break out of the formula, while London literary agent Gerald Pollinger and bookseller-publisher Otto Penzler discussed other aspects of best-sellerdom. Lawrence Treat, publisher Livia Gollancz and a Norwegian publisher took part in the international section of the panel, with Livia Gollancz discussing the high cost of translation into English—almost prohibitive unless an American publisher can be found to share the cost. She suggested foreign language authors should submit a plot synopsis and a sample chapter of their book in English.

On Thursday noon delegates lunched at Manilla, residence of the Bonnier publishing family, while others visited Drottningholm Palace. Later they went to the Swedish National Theatre for a discussion of stage and screen writing. Prize winners in a Swedish crime drama contest were announced, with first prize going to a play by Olov Svedlid. Awards were also given for the best Swedish television synopsis.

Friday morning's first panel was one of the week's liveliest. "Women and the Crime Story," chaired by Dorothy Salisbury Davis, featured a panel consisting of Ruth Rendell, Michelle Slung, Mary Higgins Clark, Christianna Brand, Celia Dale, Gerd Nyquist of Norway, and a lone male, Anthony Price. Ruth Rendell felt there is no basic difference between men and women writers, while Celia Dale disagreed, stressing the gentle fantasies of women writers as compared to men. Gerd Nyquist stated that male detectives were generally better because they could be more physical, which brought a sharp rebuttal from Michelle Slung who called the detective story one of the best equal opportunity employers. Anthony Price, creator of a female series detective, felt that women have been unsuccessful in creating good female sleuths.

The second Friday morning panel, on "Realism or Escapism in Crime Novels," featured K. Arne Blom, Hillary Waugh, Christianna Brand, Julian Symons, Peter Lovesey, Olov Svedlid and Tony Hillerman. Hillary Waugh stressed the real-life importance of police informants, rarely mentioned in fiction. Tony Hillerman discussed his realistic American Indian backgrounds. Others mentioned the growing trend toward more realistic language and sex in mysteries. Julian Symons noted the importance of a realistic background to even the most far-fetched of plots, but he said that violence is not the same thing as realism.

The final panel of the Congress, on the short story, brought gloomy comments from Symons, who pointed to Ellery Queen's *Mystery Magazine* as virtually the only remaining market. Foreign editors, H. R. F. Keating and Edward D. Hoch also participated in the discussion.

Closing event of the Congress was the Gala Dinner at the Grand Hotel on Friday evening, June 19. Several annual awards were presented by the Swedish Academy of Detection, and winner for the best translated novel published in Sweden last year was Ruth Rendell for *Make Death Love Me*. Three Grand Master Awards were presented, to Dorothy B. Hughes, Christianna Brand, and Hillary Waugh. And Frederic Dannay finally received the Grand Master Award presented to Ellery Queen by the Academy several years ago.

High point of the evening was the presentation of prizes in the short story contest, open to mystery writers around the world. Some 275 entries were received, from more than thirty countries. Winner of the first prize, a Saab automobile, was Frank Sisk for his story, "A Visit with Montezuma." Second prize went to Dwight Steward for "Genesis," and Tony Hillerman won third prize with "The Witch on Black Mesa." Among the fifteen runners-up were Stanley Cohen, Michael Gilbert, John Stevenson, Lawrence Treat, Jan Willem van de Watering, and Edward D. Hoch. All eighteen winning stories will be published in a British anthology by Collins Crime Club early next year, with American publication to follow.

Small groups of delegates were entertained during the week of the Congress by co-chairmen Jan Ekstrom and Olov Svedelid, by Iwan Hedman, editor of *Dast* magazine, and by Shizuko Natsuki, among others. The complete list of delegates, too lengthy to reproduce here, included Frank Bandy, Bruce Cassidy, De Forbes, Peter Godfrey, Marilyn Granbeck, Laurence Henderson, Clark Howard, Tabitha King, John McAleer, Patricia McGerr, Florence Mayberry, Hugh Parry, Douglas Rutherford, Aaron Marc Stein, Chris Steinbrunner, Edward

Wellen and Margaret Yorke, as well as those already mentioned.

Though the Congress officially ended on Friday evening, an outing by ship to Finland's Åland Islands was provided for the delegates on Saturday, Sweden's Midsummer holiday. During the return cruise the first meeting was held to make plans for the Crime Writers 4th International Congress, scheduled for 1984. The enthusiasm of those attending this Congress was clear, and the event has surely become, after three triennial meetings, the most important and distinguished gathering of mystery writers from around the globe. □

The International Crime Writers Short Story Contest Winners

<i>First Prize</i>	
Frank Sisk (USA)	for "A Visit with Montezuma"
<i>Second Prize</i>	
Dwight Steward (USA)	for "Genesis"
<i>Third Prize</i>	
Tony Hillerman (USA)	for "The Witch, Yazzie and the Nine of Clubs"
<i>Fourth to Eighteenth Prizes (no ranking)</i>	
Alida Baxter (UK)	for "The Unknown Pillow"
Stanley Cohen (USA)	for "The Battered Mailbox"
Arthur Douglas (D.A. Moreton) (UK)	for "The Case of the Baker Street Dozen"
Madelaine Duke (UK)	for "Little Knives"
Michael Gilbert (UK)	for "The Inside Pocket"
Richard Grindal (UK)	for "Murder a la Mode"
Edward D. Hoch (USA)	for "The Other Eye"
Grace Hogarth (UK)	for "Last Testament"
Francis King (UK)	for "The Silence is Rest"
Michael Z. Lewin (UK)	for "Wrong Number"
John Stevenson (USA)	for "The Price of Murder"
Lawrence Treat (USA)	for "All in Good Taste"
Jaroslav Veis (Czech.)	for "Some Shall be Pardoned and Some Punished"
Thomasina Weber (USA)	for "The Last Winter"
Jan Willem van de Watering (USA)	for "The Murders in the Alley of the Mad Nun"

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A CATALOGUE OF CRIME

S145 Duke, Madelaine
Death of a Dandie Dinmont
MJ 1978

From the variety of works that Miss Duke has produced, one can virtually see her at the typewriter turning out copy—on current themes, veterinary science, the loves of registered nurses, and (latterly) crime and detection in three specimens. She is facile, grammatical, consecutive, but thin. It is hard to say what her preferred substance is—household detail or good-natured gossip or the phases of moving from place to place—but triviality is foremost in all of her books. *Death of a Holy Murderer* (1975) is no more somber than *Death at the Wedding* (1976) is shocking.

In all three, her heroine narrator, Norah, is a young physician in general practice who (improbably) lives in sin with the amiable, housewifely Patrick and her own younger sister. The cohabiting pair do get married in this book and reconstitute their loves, several times, between bouts of wondering and inquiry by Norah into the odd behavior and alarming lies of an older woman doctor whom she likes. The threads of the cock-and-bull plot get tied together at the end, but the knot wouldn't stand any strain.

S146 Hensley, Joe L.
Deliver Us to Evil
CCD 1971
Outcasts
CCD 1981

One need not go back to Tarkington's *Gentleman from Indiana* to know the cultural debt the country owes to that rather neglected state. Dr. Kinsey's best-selling monographs and I.S.U.'s basketball teams have surely demonstrated the range of talent we may expect from the Hoosier State, even if Rex Stout left it at the age of two, "disgusted by local politics." At any rate, politics again and the charming small city of Madison (on the Ohio) have offered possibilities to Mr. Hensley for a series of detective stories, the first of which appeared ten years ago.

In that first book, the lawyer Dan Robak made his debut by digging up evidence in behalf of an innocent man seven days away from execution. Along the way, the author takes pot-shots at corruption in state and local government. The next year, despite a neat title, *Legislative Body* showed no great improvement in style or substance, though the author had caught the favorable attention of more than one critic.

For this year's effort, Don Robak has felt an urge to return to the town of his birth, which is presented as a sort of French Lick in miniature, though its luxury spa conceals vice and a problematical U.S. Senator is a resident. While defending a cousin who is

**By Jacques Barzun
and Wendell Hertig Taylor**

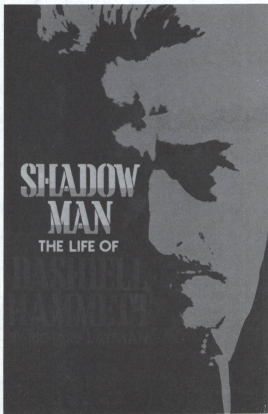
accused of having murdered "loose women," Robak joins his great-aunts, shown rocking gently on their Main Street porch but not so blameless as they seem. The few bits of tough-stuff are gratuitous and not well done. As for the rest of the series, one may note the pleasant *Rivertown Risk* (1977), the very poor *Killing in Gold* (1978) and the indifferent *Minor Murders* (1979), which is about juvenile crime. What next?

S147 Hoch, Edward D., ed.
All But Impossible! (The 1981 Annual
MWA Anthology)
Intro. by the Editor
Ticknor & Fields, 1981

What is all but impossible is the locked-room species of tale, and you can put whatever vocal inflection you like on *impossible*. Before making his selection, Mr. Hoch—himself a virtuoso performer on this tight rope—carried out an informal survey which

netted him opinions from seventeen judges as to the best examples in the literature. John Dickson Carr's *The Three Coffins* was on everybody's list, with 104 points to mark its ranking. The rest was a scattering of favors among thirteen other stories.

The Carr novel shows the good and bad sides of the pattern: ingenuity gives pleasure, but a sense of reality often erodes it bit by bit. The close adjustments of time, persons, and equipment often defy adult belief, and then where is the fun? If the perfect, plausible stunt rates a score of 10, a grade of 6 should be passing, and on that basis the tales in this new volume, by Isaac Asimov, Helen McCloy, James Yaffe, John F. Suter, and Edward Hoch himself, pass handsomely. The remaining fifteen are not without charm or merit. The problems may be original and solutions dramatic; but if, on looking back, the whole elicits even a slight groan, no amount of cleverness will help. And the game gets harder as time goes on, because the trick must always be new. What an amount of reading before the poor locked-room writer can set pen to paper! Much simpler to kill the



brute on an open beach—or in the lobby of a large hotel with four exits.

S148 Layman, Richard
Shadow Man: The Life of Dashiell Hammett
HB 1981

The biography has the merits of a good handbook. All the facts are there, flatfooted—about the boy, youth, and man, his education, early employment, marriage, work as a Pinkerton detective, writing, drinking, venereal infections, relations with publishers (almost as painful), drudgery in Hollywood, thirty years' fitful association with Lillian Hellmann, involvement with Communism, jail term of six months, drying up of talent, and final penury ending in seclusion and death. The plots of the novels and short stories are summarized, their reception noted, and a few critical remarks offered. In short, for anyone who wants to find out or verify a fact quickly and easily, this is the book.

But it cannot be said that it gives a portrait. One can piece together the separate features, but the expression is missing. Hammett's life is surely one of the saddest in the history of American literature, which has been a long tale of sad lives. We want hints of why he was so eager to fail and destroy himself, why true success and Miss Hellmann could not rescue him, why he despised his work. For good guesses at such enigmas, one will have to wait for another book.

S149 Penny, Rupert (pseud. of Ernest Basil Charles Thornett)
Policeman's Evidence
CCC 1938

With the disappearance from the scene of the expert practitioner John Dickson Carr, our genre lost its foremost exponent of the locked-room puzzle. Today, few would either want or be able to follow in his footsteps. The game was different forty years ago, when Rupert Penny included at least two "sealed room mysteries" in his list of eight detective tales. The editors of COC, then unaware of Mr. Penny's output, are now concerned to repair the omission. The book here reviewed shows its period all too clearly, that of the transition from the merely lurid or fortuitous to the saner procedurals of today. Thus Inspector Beale (who tells half of the story) is a competent and convincing officer, but the plot in which he is entangled is loaded with outdated trappings, such as "parchment," a missing ruby, and (worst of all) an elaborate deception requiring the carefully timed assistance of three people. Still, the varied incidents and good dialogue have kept the book readable, and even prompt a desire to find out what the other seven may hold.

S150 Sullivan, Robert
The Disappearance of Dr. Parkman
L.B. 1971

Real-life murder within the precincts of a famous university is understandably rare. Its

fictional portrayal has been largely unconvincing, and sometimes, when properly investigated, has been shown not to have been murder at all, only sabbatical leave. But the real thing happened at Harvard nearly a century and a half ago. Yale, Princeton, Columbia have absolutely nothing to offer. Good accounts of the murder of Dr. George Parkman by Professor John Webster may be read in several places (see ACOC 3064, 3077, 3191, and 3297), but they are now almost inaccessible.

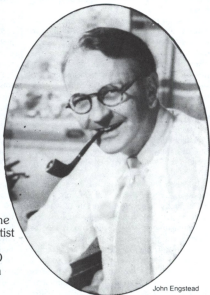
The event itself is anything but buried in oblivion, as the present book shows. Its author was appointed to Massachusetts's highest court in 1958. Turning to a case that almost everyone thought had been settled long since, Justice Sullivan found sufficient evidence to warrant a re-appraisal of Dr. Webster's performance. At the trial, Justice Lemuel Shaw undoubtedly said harsh things in his charge to the jury, things which were later toned down for publication. Webster's "confession" may have been falsified; the famous Parkman jaw was not necessarily a match to the badly damaged "mineral teeth" found in Webster's furnace. Good points are made about numerous people who said they had seen the victim after his departure from the Medical College, their testimony brushed aside by Shaw. The weakness of the defense put up by Webster's counsel seems unbelievable. If a verdict of "Not Proven" had been possible in 1850 Boston, it would best have met the case. □

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TAD at the MOVIES

By Thomas Godfrey

Storytelling is the oldest and most basic form of entertainment. Everything that we enjoy today has proceeded from it. Theatre, cinema, literature, television all tell a story. Even music in its most popular forms tells a story, be it "The Itsy, Bitsy Spider" or Bellini's *Norma*.

In our time, these sophisticated forms of entertainment have tried to get away from pure storytelling, often in an attempt to broaden the scope of the form. When it does, it invariably loses some of its audience.

The most critically acclaimed novelists of the past two decades have rarely appealed to the mass market, primarily because of this desire to experiment at the expense of story. Consequently, popular literature has fallen into the hands of Judith Krantz and Sidney Sheldon, while more technically adept craftsmen like Bartelme and Barth spin webs on the periphery.

The tradition of Charles Dickens has run out in our time. There are precious few writers like Eudora Welty at work, who have a story to tell and tell it with great professional skill.

This same phenomenon is apparent in filmmaking, although it is difficult to ascribe it to great attempts to expand the art of movie-making through experimental technique. As often as not, the failure of many contemporary movies seems one of incompetence at some fundamental level. The director-producer-scriptwriter-"auteur" allows special effects, poor scripting, irrelevant stabs at humor, or empty camera tricks to overwhelm his story. *Heaven's Gate* is the classic example of cinematic overload and story abortion. But this was also a problem in *Apocalypse Now*, *The Shining*, *Crusing* and *Dressed to Kill*.

Interestingly, while studios were pushing these big-budget white elephants off on the public, audiences were queuing up to see films such as *Airplane*, a modest effort of modest accomplishments that never strayed too far from its story in pursuit of a laugh.

It is no surprise, then, that the moviegoing public has taken to *Raiders of the Lost Ark* this summer like starving masses to a free lunch. *Ark* is admittedly 'B' entertainment, like the old poverty-row serials of the 1940s, but it is a story that catches you up, moves quickly and reasonably, and leaves you feeling satisfied at the end. The special effects are interesting. Its star Harrison Ford

performs well. But it is the story that really counts, and producer George Lucas has made another fortune by keeping this in mind.

Meanwhile, we have the latest Brian de Palma trash-slash classic to remind us that de Palma still has not mastered the art of cinematic storytelling. Many of the mistakes on display in *Dressed to Kill* are repeated here. He does, however, sustain longer stretches of plot better than he has in the past, so from that aspect there is improvement.

We open with yet another slashing murder, yet another shower scene, but this time De Palma pulls away to let us see that it is a joke, a scene from a movie within a movie. John Travolta, the soundman for a low-budget moviemaker, is having trouble getting the right scream. (This becomes a running gag that turns sour in the last moments.)

Later we see Travolta out on a bridge at night recording background noises when a car carrying a Presidential hopeful has a blow-out and goes over the bridge into the water. Travolta manages to save a call girl (Nancy Allen) from the car, but not the candidate. As he plays back the sound recording, and later coordinates it with the pictures of the accident, he finds the tire blow-out was really a gunshot. By then, the right-wing assassin is on to him.

De Palma "borrows" from everything from *Blow-Out*. There are echoes of Watergate, Chappaquiddick, *Psycho*, *Blow-Up*, *The Conversation*, *Vertigo*, and, of course, De Palma's previous work. As in Blake Edwards's *S.O.B.*, one searches for an original idea, or an original treatment of an idea, and comes up empty-handed.

Yet De Palma's story does hold its audience's attention for a while, because of its pacing and, more importantly, because of Travolta's superlative performance. I have not been greatly impressed with his work in the past, but I was bowled over by his acting here. Mature, sensitive, thoughtful, resourceful. Easily the best thing in the movie. He has made the transition from media phenomenon to professional actor, and I look forward to seeing him again.

Inevitably, I suppose, De Palma's newly-found self-discipline begins to crumble, and we have gratuitous murders in train station restrooms and head-scratching plot developments that call for massive suspension of disbelief. In short order, De Palma is back

doing the things he seems to like best at the expense of the story. Motivation is cut adrift, and the time warp must be seen to be believed. The killer is dragging poor Nancy Allen around for what must be three hours in a crowd while Travolta naps in the back of an ambulance. One day, everybody is out at night in summer wear. The next day, it is snowing.

Like *S.O.B.*, *Blow-Out* gets tarred with its own stick. It ends up reeking of the cheap, schlocky moviemaking it is trying to satirize.

If there is nothing as gross as *Dressed to Kill*'s orgiastic sado-masochistic finale, there is nothing much better here either. De Palma seems to be making the transition from promising talent, to arrested talent, to minor talent in short order.

And it seems unlikely that he will improve. He has cannibalized some of his own stuff for the second and third time now. Each new picture becomes a capsulized De Palma retrospective. And all to the acclaim of a few intelligent critics who might be exerting a force for improvement, but, instead, are guzzling this bilge with the same enthusiasm with which De Palma seems to bottle it.

Wolfen is a stylish murder mystery with some supernatural overtones. It begins with the grizzly dismemberment of several jet-setters one night in New York's Battery, and proceeds through some realistic scenes at the Medical Examiner's Office to some frightening moments in the South Bronx. Albert Finney leads the cast as a boozy, burnt-out cop trying to come up with a murderer, and he is excellent. No teethmarks on the scenery, yet all the important character points made handsomely. There is nothing about Detective Dewey Wilson to suggest Finney's charming Tom Jones or his flamboyant Hercule Poirot. Just another '10' on the acting Richter scale for amazing range and depth of performance.

Sadly, the picture lets him down. After setting up a genuinely chilling plotline, it goes all messagey and ends in a confused muddle of pseudo-morality. As in *Blow-Out*, there is a bloody murder thrown in near the end for cheap thrills at the expense of the story.

Both *Wolfen* and *Blow-Out* neglect their storytelling to their detriments, allowing themselves to get caught up in gimmicky camera work, gore, and momentary sensations. *Wolfen* also tries to tack a moral on its story but does it so ineptly that it manages to suggest things that should have the Anti-

American Indian Defamation League on the phone to its lawyer. Who needs this?

There is a message for moviemakers in *Wolfen* and *Blow-Out*. One that needs to be heard. Story, not the storyteller, must come first. Plotline, not diversions, brings it home.

Summer time is revival time. And this summer was no exception. There was some choice fare to be had. And some gristle and scraps, too.

★★★½ **All Through the Night** (1942) Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorre, Conrad Veidt (D: Vincent Sherman) This underrated surprise is usually forgotten when buffs rattle off the great Bogey films. It shouldn't be. It may be a step off the pace of *High Sierra*, *The Big Sleep*, and *Key Largo*, but it's still vintage stuff and mighty entertaining. Bogart plays "Gloves" Gallagher, a Broadway bon-vivant who gets mixed up in the murder of his mother's neighbor. Very soon, he is up to his shoulder holster in gangsters and "fifth col-loom-ists." Leonard Q. Ross (Leo Rosen) and Leonard Speigelglass contribute a Runyonesque script that mixes laughs and thrills effectively. Director Sherman keeps things moving at a machine-gun pace. Bogart's talents for urbane comedy are impressively displayed. And look at the supporting cast: Lorre, Veidt, Judith Anderson, Phil Silvers, William Demarest, Jane Darwell, Frank McHugh, Barton MacLane, and Jackie Gleason (his screen debut). Karen Vaarne holds up the distaff lead effectively enough that someone thought that another Scandinavian actress might do well opposite Bogart in a picture the following year—*Casablanca* with Ingrid Bergman.

★★ **You Can't Get Away with Murder** (1939) Humphrey Bogart, Billy Halop, Gale Page (D: Lewis Seiler) For every bit he made after he became a star, Bogart made two programmers like this for Warner Bros. and his apprenticeship days. Here he's a crumb leading poor Billy Halop into a life of crime. It seems amazing now that treacle like this was once considered morally uplifting and socially significant. Gale Page suffers through every scene, clutching a handkerchief as Halop's unfortunate sister. Henry Travers is "Pop," the old-timer with the bad heart, who tried to show Halop the error of his ways. Harold Huber and George E. Stone are similarly cast to type as two sleazy prison inmates. Bogart plays his one-dimensional role one-dimensionally. Halop was an interesting actor who occasionally rose above his material when cast as a serious urban youth struggling to break loose. He might have had a bigger career if offered the kinds of scripts that went to John Travolta forty years later. As it was, he was almost always abused by poor writing and clichéd situations.

★★★ **The Haunting of Julia** (1977) Mia Farrow, Keir Dullea, Tom Conti (D: Richard Loncraine) Another murder mystery with supernatural overtones, this classy British

suspenser had a delayed release in this country. That may be the real mystery, since this film looks a lot better than much of the fresh-out-of-the-developer crapper one've been seeing domestically since it was made.

Mia Farrow plays a woman recovering from a nervous breakdown after the death of her child. She takes a home away from her husband (Dullea) in Kensington Park. Soon after she moves in, she senses that a child is trying to communicate with her about a murder that took place over thirty years ago. Is it her daughter's ghost? A few murders later, the nature of the message and the identity of the child become evident. Farrow is good, probably better than her work in *Rosemary's Baby*. She's more mature, still vulnerable, but less childlike. The largely British cast matches her fine work frame for frame. But the film misses greatness, largely because the ending is emotionally unsatisfying. The script (from an early book by *Ghost Story* author Peter Straub) goes for message rather than story explication, which the film needs to hold its audience through to the end. Also there is a body in the basement that lies undiscovered too long. Yet this film has many haunting and stylish moments. And that will do quite nicely given the competition.

★★★ **A Shriek in the Night** (1934) Ginger Rogers, Lyle Talbot, Louise Beavers (D: Albert Ray) Thank Thunderbird Films of Los Angeles for preserving this early who-dunnit starring RKO's Vivacious Lady just prior to Astaire and stardom. Here she's mixed up in a rickety penthouse murder that smacks of S. S. Van Dine. The budget wouldn't have bought lunch in the MGM commissary in those days, but Monogram Studios put it all into its star, and she does not let them down. The plot, however, has its ups and downs, with a few too many old chestnuts like a comic maid and a bumbling policeman. It almost collapses when the villain is permitted some Tod Slaughter hamming at the end, but there are enough surprises to pull it through. The only thing to be said about Talbot, the male lead, is that he never gets in the way. (Actually, it was a reteaming. Rogers and Talbot had appeared two years earlier in *The Thirteenth Guest*.)

★★½ **The Hound of the Baskervilles** (1977) Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, Terry-Thomas (D: Paul Morrissey) Satirists Cook and Moore turned their attentions to Conan Doyle's story with disappointing results. Cook, dressed in a corset, hairnet and dressing gown, radiates boredom as Holmes. Moore, as if to compensate, mugs and overacts outrageously as Watson but is rarely funny. He also plays Holmes's mother, a phony clairvoyant who talks incessantly about her "Sherl." This gets a few smiles. His bit as a one-legged runner does not. Moore also gets screen credit for the score, and his collaboration on the script with Cook and director Morrissey, a protégé of Andy Warhol. Several fine actors surface from time to time in the mire: Terry-Thomas, who looks like he's babysitting the project, Joan Greenwood,

who does a takeoff on *The Exorcist*, and Hugh Griffith (in perhaps his last screen appearance) as an unstable hermit. Kenneth Williams, of the *Carry On...* series, comes off best as the fey Sir Henry Baskerville. The problem is that such of the material is tired and over-used and wasn't much to begin with. Too bad Cook, Moore & Co. didn't just drop the pretense of wit and intelligence and just wing it as *Carry On, Sherl*. With Denham Elliot, Spike Milligan, and Jessie Matthews(!)

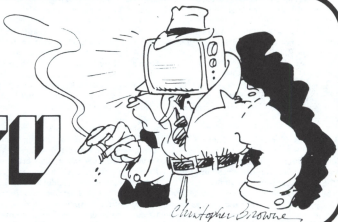
★★½ **The Speckled Band** (1930) Raymond Massey, Lyn Harding, Angela Baddeley (D: Jack Raymond) Sherlock Holmes's first sound incarnation and Massey's first film provides a curious version of one of Conan Doyle's most famous stories. Massey is properly thoughtful and engaging as Holmes, lacking only the final dash of ardor and romance. Athole Stewart's Watson is a dry-as-dust corner. Harding the villain seems to have been chosen on his ability to suggest Emil Jannings. The whole production has a heavy, Germanic quality that suggests the wrong side of the North Sea. Still, the script is faithful to the story, and the "band" is good for a few shudders. Watch for *Upstairs, Downstairs*'s Mrs. Bridges at the start of her career as the menaced heroine.

★★ **Sky Dragon** (1949) Roland Winters, Keye Luke, Milburn Stone (D: Lesley Selander) The last of the Chan series at Monogram. Filmed on a shoestring as the studio was closing down, and it looks it. Yet this is a degree better than most of the Winters films because the mystery itself is stronger. Winters never really seemed to get into the Chan characterization, yet he always seemed to be having a lot of fun trying. This time he and Luke are involved in a mid-air murder aboard an airliner. The film stays close to the story. (The studio couldn't afford to do much else.) With Tim Ryan (as Inspector Mike, a late and none too successful addition to the series) and Mantan Moreland (as chauffeur Birmingham Brown). In addition to Stone (Doc Adams of TV's *Gunslinger*), Elena Verdugo (Consuelo of TV's *Marcus Welby, M.D.*), Noel Neill (Lone Lane of TV's *Superman*), Lyle Talbot (Joe Randolph of TV's *Ozzie and Harriet*), and Iris Adrian as yet another floozy. (Listen, folks, television did not spring fully cast from the head of Athena. They had to come from somewhere.) □



TAD ON TV

By Richard Meyers



It's another first for "TAD on TV"! As you may remember, last issue I was fairly critical of some obvious quality shows, thereby planting the seeds of controversy, sewing the roots of reader feedback, and just generally getting my hands dirty. No such luck this time. Rather than cross my critical eye on the less than inspiring summer '81 fare, however, I have—at great personal and professional expense, mind you—arranged a preview of the fall's new shows by interviewing one of the prime movers and shakers of the media mystery scene.

As you may well know by now, the new season is rife with law and order. On ABC, James Garner and Stuart Margolin return in a reshoot of the whimsical western *Bret Maverick*. And that old westerner, James Arness of *Gunslinger*, will become a "rookie" policeman at the tender age of fifty-two—teamed with a much younger but much more experienced cop on the subtly named *James Arness Show* [recently retitled *McClaine's Law*—ed.]. Then there's dependable Robert Stack, still unable (and maybe unwilling) to shake his "Untouchable" persona as the head of *Strike Force*.

On NBC, more old friends are trying to return. First there's Rock Hudson as a private eye in a series with another subtle title, *The Rock Hudson Show* [since retitled *The Devlin Connection*—ed.]. Then there's ex-Eddie Capra Vincent Baggetta as just one member of a large police, legal, and medical team which handles crises in *The Chicago Story*.

But only on CBS is there a familiar, fondly-remembered actor doing double duty. That man is Kevin Dobson, who is best remembered as Crocker, the Lieutenant's right-hand man on *Kojak*. But come the fall and beyond, he may become better known as San Francisco investigator Jack Shannon in the James T. Aubrey/Universal TV production of *Shannon*. At the same time, he is also in the running to become the best and most popular portrayer of Mickey Spillane's legendary hardboiled dick, Mike Hammer.

As you also may already know, or as Thomas Godfrey will no doubt inform you in

his movie column, writer and director Larry Cohen (whose credits include *Columbo* plotting) instigated a new *I, the Jury* movie with the continental Armand Assante (*Prophecy*, *Little Darlings*, *Paradise Alley*) in the lead. But at the same time, Hammer Productions, Inc. and producers Biff Johnson, Jay Bernstein, Larry Thompson and Robert Hammer sold CBS on the idea of a Mike Hammer telefilm, utilizing an original screenplay by Calvin Clements, Jr., based on an original story by Alex Lucas, originally titled "Death By a Dainty Hand."

Obviously, a title like that doesn't quite match up with the ferocity of Spillane's original monikers like "The Twisted Thing" and "Survival Zero," so what viewers will be seeing is named *Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer*. And the man playing Hammer is none other than Kevin Dobson.

At first I was leery. All I remembered of the man was his well meaning, subservient, slightly frustrated Crocker manner. At first I figured that he must have been a compromise between the producers, who I figured wanted a tight-faced tough guy (like Jack Palance or William Smith), and the network, who probably wanted a bankable "pretty boy." Yeah, I figured that until I met the man.

Ray Healey, the CBS publicity person in charge of the project, arranged an interview for me with the double-barreled TV detective. So the first time I laid on eyes on Dobson in the flesh was in the lobby of the ritzy restaurant "21." I was impressed. Here was a man with some of the widest shoulders and the biggest hands I had ever seen. The preconceived image of the thin, curly-haired assistant to Kojak disappeared, to be replaced by the vision of a muscular, curly-haired boss-man who looked like he could get very dangerous.

Once my physical reservations were out of the way, we got down to brass tacks. Not surprisingly, we began at the beginning—namely, how was it that he came to become Mike Hammer?

"I was almost going to do another project," he began while surveying the restaurant's

pretentious menu, which included offerings such as "The '21' Burger" and (believe it or not) "Chipped Boeuf à la Creme." "Which was called 'The Other Victim' about the effect rape has on the husband," he continued. "But I had some reservations. I thought it should be done, it was a good time for it to be done, and it is being done, but it was very intense, very negative, and the guy just goes bonkers and does a foolish thing. Fortuitously, while my agent is in negotiation for the role on one line, he gets a call on the other line wanting me to do the Spillane thing. My agent says, 'Send the script over.' My agent gets it, reads it, and calls me at quarter after eight in the morning. He said, 'I just read a script called *Mickey Spillane's*...' I said, 'Mike Hammer?' 'I'll do it!' He said, 'You can't just do it. You've got to read it.' I said, 'You don't read that! You just do it!'"

Dobson hadn't even finished answering the question and he was already displaying Hammer-like attributes. Hammer isn't a thinker or reader. He's a doer. Dobson went on to describe Hammer in the glowing terms of "the ultimate detective" and that he could hardly believe it was actually he essaying the role. And while Hammer may not be a detective as much as the front line of the Green Bay Packers, his reputation is as solid in his way as Sherlock Holmes's is in his. In fact, Dobson only knew the character from reputation, not from reading.

"Well, I had heard about the author and his famous creation. And when Darren McGavin did the series about twenty years ago, that cemented the character for me. A balls-out guy, a real go-get-ther. So I saw an opportunity for me to be a good guy/bad guy... which I wanted and needed to do. There's a situation in the business where you get typed, and even though I had been in seven CBS movies in a little over two years, when it came to mystery many still saw me as Crocker. Which is O.K., but I didn't want it to keep me from getting other parts.

"So here I get the Hammer role and all of a sudden I've got five Spillane books shoved into my hands. And I said, if I read any of

these, I'm going to get stuck. I'm going to do what Spillane described rather than what I do. And I wanted me to be Mike Hammer, not the other way around. I've got to do what Kevin does, only with the Hammer handle."

Speaking from a devil's advocate point of view, not reading the books also allows Dobson to rationalize Hammer's small screen actions. While the Assante movie script is rife with violence, the TV screenplay is chock full of set-ups but has precious little in the way of pay-offs. While the theatrical film ends with a bang, the television effort ends with a seething whimper.

"I went about it this way," Dobson explains as Hammer. "If someone was going to hurt me, I was going to hurt him first. If someone was to try and take a shot at me, I'd blow his fucking head off and not care about the consequences."

Dobson made a believer out of me with his delivery, but still the script facilitated that attitude, since the TV Hammer rarely got caught in the crossfire. Rather, he'd always arrive to clean up the mob's mess after the worst was over.

"It's television," Dobson admitted finally. "Our Hammer doesn't blow people away, he manipulates people. He sets them up so that they bump each other off. I'm aware of the

book Hammer whose idea of pity is to shoot you in the head rather than the stomach, but you can't do it. I'm happy with what I did, because everybody's expecting Hammer to be a brute. What does that get you? We tried to make him a little more realistic, more human. The guy in the books is a fantasy, but I'm a real person. It's me up there on the screen, not someone's imagination."

But springing from Dobson's own fertile imagination was the concept and character of *Shannon*, the series which will go on at the same time the Mike Hammer telefilm will air. Here, he's an investigator who moves to the West Coast from New York with his ten-year-old son after the death of his wife. And, as in the case of "Death By a Dainty Hand," I had my initial reservations. I easily remembered mystery efforts such as *Big Shamus* and *Little Shamus* and the more recent TV movie *Rivkin: Bounty Hunter*, both of which had a child co-star—alternately helping and hampering the detective/father. Neither show worked—in the latter case, it was excruciatingly painful to watch because of all the hoary father-son clichés.

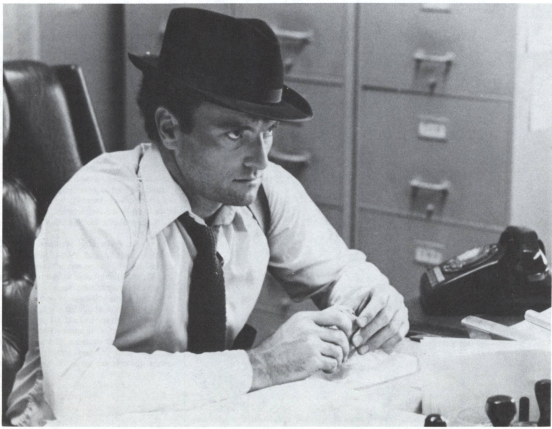
Dobson, on the other hand, has no worries. "We had arguments," he begins, then adds, "no... discussions about the relationship. There were lines in the original

script that had me saying to the kid, 'I promise to be there tomorrow' [which, by the way, is exactly the same device *Rivkin* abused], but I said, 'I'm not going to promise him anything. Either I'll be there or I won't. This whole matter involves honesty with my son.' I won... the discussion. I'm up front with my kid."

It was also Dobson's idea to have the boy's maternal grandparents living in San Fran. That way, *Shannon* is not only about a detective but the problems of youth and the elderly as well.

"*Shannon* is the culmination of all the movies that I've done," Dobson professes. "CBS wanted me to do a series, and Universal was just about to give up all their options which they had on me from *Kojak*. Then *Transplant* came out [with Dobson as an overworking exec], then *Orphan Train* [with Dobson as a cowboy], and when *Hardhat and Legs* appeared after that [with Dobson as a chauvinistic construction worker], well, well, well! Universal was suddenly all excited about me. The network and the studio got together with me and said, let's develop three one-hour pilots. Then we'll decide which we should do. But when Jim Aubrey said he wanted to do a series with me, I figured I had found the man. I went home and wrote about

Kevin Dobson as Mike Hammer



five pages about the series I wanted to do; stuff like 'Shannon went to UCLA...the University on the Corner of Lexington Avenue' and stuff like that. I talked it over with Aubrey, he talked it over with Universal, we got Jim McAdams to produce (he was on *Kojak* with me), McAdams brings in Al Rubin to write it, we waltz over to CBS and get a 'go.' I did *Shannon* and then just three days before I started *Mike Hammer* I got the word that CBS picked up *Shannon* as a series."

If both his series and the TV movie are successful, Dobson will be in the enviable and busy position of continuing as two detectives on the same channel at the same time. He's already ready to go the limit with Shannon while doing one or two *Hammers* a year. "I want to make the show a success," he professes. "I want to make it the best thing to hit the airwaves all year. I'm giving it 100%. The show...both shows deal with the anguish and frustration of a cop. You're going to like these guys."

Well, one thing's for certain. I like Kevin Dobson. I can see him as Shannon, I can see him as Mike Hammer, and I can only hope the rest of the creative team—director Daniel Haller on *Hammer* and producer David J. O'Connell on *Shannon*—live up to his talent and integrity. Keep your gaze on these pages for my critical appraisals of Dobson's projects. They'll appear with the rest of my new show reviews.

To finish off, I'd like to make a long delayed, public proclamation of respect, admiration, and regret to the late David Janssen. It was his initial series, *Richard Diamond*, that was the first thing I ever saw of evening television. I really couldn't appreciate him then, but as the years went on I came to diffidently accept him as a likeable TV star.

It was only with the recent rebroadcast of the Edgar-winning *City in Fear* TV movie, however, that I've come to realize how good he was and how much I'll miss him. It is only in retrospect that I can practically love him as *Harry O* and feel for him as he suffered through the abysmal *O'Hara, United States Treasury*. Here was a man who could be in full flight and weary at the same time. Here was a man you could feel for and like with his very first screen appearance. Here was a man who defined the dimensions of human integrity on the small screen. He was a realistic idealist in his roles. A man often beaten by life, but still a man who would doggedly refuse to give up. Not because he was a hero, but because he was a human being and wanted to live up to that responsibility.

I missed *City in Fear* the first time around because I do not casually give money or rating points to projects I feel glorify the sadistic killers of our world. And since the telefilm was about a "dream girl killer" and the newspaper which makes him a star, I passed it up originally. But after its award and Janssen's death, I trepidatiously turned on the repeat. I'm very glad I did. While I did not enjoy watching the slaughter of the various pretty victims during the show's two-and-a-half-hour length, I thought the points it raised about media responsibility and exploitation were extremely well done thanks to an exceptional script by Al Rubin (who, you'll remember, also did *Shannon's* pilot screenplay).

The cast, specially William Daniels, Robert Vaughn, and Allan Miller, was excellent. And Janssen was magnificent. I'm sorry the man died, but if he had to choose a fitting final performance, this was it. It was a wonderful acting job in an important effort. The more I think about his work, the more I'm amazed, impressed, and disappointed he will no longer grace my home screen.

David Janssen touched me, and I shall remember him. A more fitting epitaph I cannot think of for an actor. Godspeed to you, sir. □

Kevin Dobson and Cindy Pickett star in *Mickey Spillane's Margin for Murder*, a new made-for-television Mike Hammer movie.



The Radio Murder Hour

By Chris Steinbrunner



The most remembered mystery program on radio, the one with the most mileage in radio, is beyond question *The Shadow*. Spanning from 1930 until 1954, frightening and fascinating generations of listeners, the program which admonished that "the weed of crime bears bitter fruit" has become the prime example of what radio did when it reached into the far recesses of your mind to chill. Happily—unlike a good many other chiller programs from the Golden Age, such as *The Witch's Tale*—a fairly representative number of the *Shadow* shows are readily available today. The Murray Hill Radio Theater (One Park Avenue, NYC 10016), indeed, has just issued a seventeen-record set, *The Shadow Anthology*—in, no less, a numbered, limited, collectors' edition (only 5,000 were pressed)—that allows you to listen to more than fifty *Shadow* epics from 1938, close to when the show first crystallized into the familiar format, with Orson Welles as the *Shadow*, to 1949. Need I add: what a treat!

Interestingly, it was the radio program which gave birth to the famed pulp magazine. The *Shadow* was originally the host-narrator of Street & Smith's *Detective Story Hour*, a program so popular that Street & Smith decided to make it a magazine as well, hiring a magician-writer, Walter B. Gibson, to pen them. *Shadow* scholar Anthony Tollin reminds us that Gibson, using the pseudonym Maxwell Grant, wrote 283 of the pulp's 325 issues—at the rate of one every six days! Gibson, in "The Living *Shadow*" (the introductory *opus*) and after, was to give the *Shadow* substance and character, making him the being which on radio was simplified into Lamont Cranston—though in the pulps he was to have other identities as well.

By mid-1937, Orson Welles, another magician-writer, was the radio *Shadow*, a.k.a. Cranston, with Agnes Moorehead as his "constant friend and aide." The power to cloud men's minds was not in the original introduction—the announcer talking instead of "advance methods which will ultimately be available to all law enforcement agencies"—for both the invisibility device and Margo Lane were more to be found in the radio version than the pulp stories. But the thrills and high-pitch excitement of the pulp models were carried over into radio at full volume.

The very first show available in the Murray Hill set, "Death under the Chapel" of early 1938, has (in addition to a charming scene in

which Lamont reminisces to Margo over his college days) an element which recurs time and again in the shows: the grotesque villain. In this case, it is a college professor with legs so shriveled that he must have a deaf, blind servant carry him everywhere, but with a mind so twisted and brilliant he drives several of his students to suicide—with his philosophy that "the world is vile." A teacher of such force and strength—"I am now wiser than all mankind"—reminds one of the *Übermensch* philosophical ferment of the 1930s. Lamont was once this professor's pupil, and is told by him, discussing how he communicates with his sightless and deaf servant by tapping on a wall: "You would be amused, Cranston, you always liked oddities." But Lamont has a true measure of his old teacher—"His genius has turned his mind into dangerous channels."

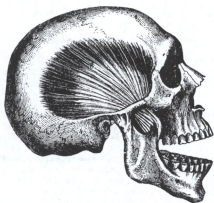
Indeed so. The villain plots to blow up University Chapel during graduation exercises, killing hundreds of people! The *Shadow* turns tables on the professor, though, in a rather clever fashion, not without some rather grotesque moments. *All* the shows had their grotesques! When "Singing Jim," a street-corner mendicant, is murdered by the mob, Margo wonders: "Nobody would be low enough to organize beggars" into a protection scam, but of course she's wrong. At the finish, hundreds of crippled and blind beggars converge on the gunmen who were trying to extort money from them, and the *Shadow* talks grimly of the blind woman, scale in one hand and sword in the other, to whom they will be delivered up: "Her name is Justice."

Happily, the shows all take a turn for the horrible, in the best tradition of the pulps.

When civic leaders are found dead in a wax museum, Margo says, not yet as wise about the black depths of men's hearts, "Surely political rivalry wouldn't be sufficient motive for these horrible crimes!" Wrong again. Her world is hardly a sheltered one, however, for she is constantly trapped and menaced by villains whom we recognize—by their shouts and rantings—as being certifiable maniacs. "Go on, scream," taunts the Black Abbot to her, having dragged her into his secret chapel. "Scream louder! No one shall hear you! No sound passes these walls!" He is about to kill her in front of a row of corpses: "Prepare yourself for the beauties of the death you shall receive." The *Shadow* cheerfully breaks his arm before the madman falls to his death.

And these are just the first few frightful years of *Shadow* shows. Lamont and Margo were to continue for more than two decades of healthy horror. We will return to their adventures, a veritable radio murder institution, in future columns. □





GARROTED!

By Frank Price

Love, Jealousy, Hate—Fear, Greed, Horror—It is from the more brightly-hued and darkest of elemental forces that the components of these colorful tales have been drawn.

Each follows a pattern lived out in real life by real people. Each, complete in itself, contains all the dramatic elements of wordier works. The recorders of these tales, however, through admirable restraint have let the tempo of the day dominate their productions.

A bit of cloisonne often is more intriguing than a mosaic of mammoth proportions. We trust a parallel-ing comparison will present itself as you read through the pages of this book.

This is the entire foreword to *Insurance Thrillers: Sinister Mysteries Centering About Insurance Frauds*, published by The Underwriter Printing and Publish-

ing Company, 1932, a collection of 53 stories by various writers published in *The Underwriter Weekly* during that year.

The author of this foreword must have been disappointed, as it is unlikely that many readers, then or now, would compare these melodramatic and suspenseless slivers of narrative to cloisonné, but they have some interest nonetheless. Mainly, they illustrate the naive world of a half-century ago, and the simple, straightforward crimes that seemed clever and innovative then. Those master criminals wouldn't have a chance these days!

Frank Price, the author of this story, also wrote *Mind Wreckers Ltd.*, a collection of stories featuring Barrow, ace insurance investigator—the same hero who resolves the mystery in “Garroted!”

OTTO PENZLER

"GARROTED, eh?"

Charlie Barrow, star investigator for the Citadel Life Insurance Company, grimaced as he waited further confirmation from Andrew Gresham, venerable chief of claims, to whose office he had been summoned.

The older man nodded.

"He didn't have a chance," he said quietly. "They must have been experts. Looks like one or more of the crew did it."

Barrow's response was characteristic.

"Perhaps. How much does it cost us?"

"He had two hundred thousand, double indemnity." Gresham was tense as the words came; then he exploded.

"But," he added, "it's not a fair shake, by God! Have all our inspectors gone sour? They should have learned of these enemies when his application came through. Four hundred thousand of our policyholders' money gone because somebody didn't have sense enough to get the low-down on this bird!"

For the thousandth time during his association with Gresham, Barrow wondered why the old man was built that way, and for the thousandth time he thought:

"You'd think it was his dough."

But his reply to Gresham's outburst was brief and to the point.

"We haven't paid anything yet," he reminded the chief, "and"—significantly—"we may not."

Gresham waved a hand.

"I like your optimism," he said, "and I hope you're right, but if ever I have handled a case that looked settled, done for and as plain to read as an open book, here it is."

Barrow glanced at the documents before him. The story was not an involved one.

J. Watson Grant, junior partner of Grant and Grant, importers, of New York, a reputable business house, of which his father was the senior member, had sailed from New York four days prior to this discussion on the steamship *American Legion*, his destination, Buenos Aires, where he had announced his intention to take up residence for an indefinite stay. Within twelve hours, a radio message had been received from the commander of the liner, that Grant had disappeared and his coat and vest, hat and shoes had been found by the rail of the promenade deck.

"He is unquestionably a suicide," the message affirmed. "No message of any kind was found in his stateroom, nor was there any outcry at the time of his disappearance."

In less than twelve hours of the time the radiogram was received, Grant's body had been recovered at North Long Branch, on the Jersey coast, where it had been washed up on the beach. The man had been strangled, a piece of heavy twine drawn tightly around his neck attesting to the gruesome method of his slayers.

The elder Grant himself had hastened to the Jersey coast resort the following morning and positively identified the body of his son, and even as Barrow and Gresham sat in the office of the chief of claims, the recovered body was being cremated at the direction of the victim's father.

The authorities had notified the commander of the *American Legion* of the garroting of his passenger and he, in turn, had instituted an investigation which led him to report almost immediately. His radiogram, a copy of which was in the hands of Gresham, read:

"Learn Grant had slight altercation with one of our stewards soon after departure. This man, José Gomez, will be held for your examination upon our return to New York."

Gresham was confident, as were the police authorities, that Gomez had invoked the apache method of vengeance and that upon his return justice would be satisfied. Barrow was skeptical.

"Who took off Grant's shoes and other clothing?" he asked of Gresham. "I hardly think a murderer would have done that when he could have heaved his man overboard just as well with them on."

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"What do you think, then?" the chief of claims demanded.

"If I have any right to think about it, now, at all," was the cautious reply, "it is my belief that Grant's death was outright suicide and that he himself knotted the cord around his neck. And when . . ."

"Bosh!" Gresham interrupted.

"And when," Barrow concluded urbane, "I have finished my investigation, I believe that is what I will have learned."

"Investigation?" Gresham seemed surprised. "The body has been identified, the death certificate issued, the body disposed of. What good will an investigation do now?"

"Frankly, I don't know that it will do any good, but I'd like to give it a wangle, anyway."

Late afternoon found Barrow in Freehold, N.J., in joint discussion with the sheriff and the coroner of Monmouth County, in which Grant's body was found. He had expected little help from them and was not disappointed when they appeared to be surprised at his presence.

"I don't see what can be done about it," the sheriff said. "The body was recovered and identified positively. Our coroner here issued the death certificate and as far as Monmouth County is concerned the case is officially closed. Of course, if the man was murdered on the ship, that's up to the Federal authorities, not us. What do you expect us to do?"

Barrow sighed.

"Nothing, gentlemen," he assured them. "I would, however, like to have a look at the property found in Grant's pockets after his death and, perhaps, at the cord that was used to strangle him."

The coroner spoke up.

"The property was returned to the young man's father. There was only a wallet and one handkerchief in a hip pocket and about seven dollars in loose bills in a side pocket. His father identified the wallet and handkerchief and they were returned to him with the money. I have, however, retained the cord."

Presently the cord was in Barrow's hands and he was examining it carefully.

"Just an ordinary piece of fishing line such as you'd find on almost any boat," the sheriff said. "I've seen stuff like it myself a thousand times."

Barrow assented, smiling.

"I think you're right, sheriff," he said, "but"—he added—"I wonder if I might have just a small piece of it, say about six or seven inches."

He noted their amused glances as he measured the piece of twine.

"I have to make my report look good, you know." He winked at them, and they thought they understood.

Thus it was that the Citadel's investigator left Freehold that night with a short piece of twine as his sole possible clue. It was significant, too, that he did not visit the scene of the recovery of the body, but returned to New York. He was playing for high stakes and that meant a thoroughness such as only a Barrow can devote in such an emergency. If the Citadel were to pay, he would see that the murderer paid, too.

From early morning until the late afternoon of the following day, Barrow tramped the streets of downtown New York and Brooklyn visiting ships' chandlers, and when he sought in each of them to buy cordage similar to that used in the strangling he was told that it was of a peculiar type and carried by few concerns.

"It is manufactured in Philadelphia," one of the last of the purveyors told him, "and I guess you'll have to get it down there. We have very little call for such line here."

This might have proved discouraging to others. To Barrow it was significant and promising and he was hopeful as he entrained for the Quaker City the following day. He inquired there for the firm to which he had been directed and presently was in conference with the manager.

"Certainly, we have it," he was told, "but there is little demand for it. As far as I know it is sold only in Philadelphia, New Orleans, Baltimore and San Francisco. You see, it is used exclusively for repairing damaged deep sea fishing nets which have been torn at the sides. The

average fishing concern prefers to substitute new nets, because the mending process is a slow and tedious one."

Barrow nodded his understanding.

"Perhaps," he suggested, "you have some customers to whom you ship such cordage as this. Have you?"

The information the manager relayed to Barrow after a consultation with one of his assistants was disconcerting. No such cordage had been shipped out in more than two years, save to the cities before mentioned and that in only small quantities.

"We have made a direct sale, however," he informed the investigator, "to two 'not so good' customers, for I find they have yet to pay their bill."

Instantly Barrow was on the alert, but he simulated a calm indifference.

"Do you mind telling me who they are?" he asked.

The manager demurred, but relented when Barrow assured him there would be no embarrassment for the manufacturers.

"They are Johan Kyrklenken and Olaf Swansen, of Sea Bright, New Jersey," he read the names from a ledger he had been examining. "They ordered fifty yards."

A hurried "thank you" and Barrow took his departure with a suddenness that caused the manager to turn to one of his co-workers and make a significant gesture, the same being a circular motion of one hand, the index finger of which pointed to his temple.

"Nerts," he commented with convincing finality.

But Barrow did not hear him. He was on important business now and Sea Bright was his next port of call. He reached the little seaside village in mid-afternoon and, upon inquiry for Kyrklenken and Swansen, was escorted to their fishing shack by a small boy. He found them half-drunk and friendly.

"Thought I'd like to get some fish," he began. "Got any?"

Swansen looked at him intently through bleary eyes.

"No-o sur-r," he assured the investigator. "We got no fish. We don' go fishin' anny moor."

"Oh!" Barrow replied, "I didn't know. Excuse me. Have you gone out of business?"

"We bane outta bizness," Kyrklenken spoke up. "We bane make plenty money, now we bane gonna spend it."

Barrow smiled.

"You're lucky," he assured them, and when they had nodded emphatically, he added quickly:

"Wouldn't care to sell out, would you?"

They looked at each other as though they were not certain they had comprehended. Then, almost in unison, they voiced their assent. There was a brief interval of dickering, with Barrow finally agreeing upon their price, but he demanded an inventory of their property first. This they readily agreed to give, and both seemed to have sobered up, temporarily at least.

There were the shack, a fishing boat and several nets as well as the contents of the place. These latter Barrow also insisted upon having shown to him, but he paid little attention to a bewildering array of hooks, poles, lines and other fishing tackle until Swansen produced a spool of cord similar to that which he had obtained from the coroner.

Barrow examined it.

"Why," he laughed shortly, "there's only about a hundred feet of the stuff there."

Kyrklenken resented this.

"Fifty yards," he corrected.

"Not a chance," said the Citadel man. "Measure it and see if I'm not right."

The belligerent fisherman opened a collapsible rule and carefully measured off the yardage of the spool of line. It measured exactly 141 feet, seven inches. The cord in the coroner's possession, Barrow recalled, had measured, before the piece had been taken off for him, exactly eight feet, five inches.

"Fair enough," said the investigator. "We've made a deal. I'll be right back with the binder and we'll close. All right?"

Both agreed that it was all right, and after Barrow left them they congratulated each other with a mutual lusty hand slap on the back. Even when Barrow returned a few minutes later they were jubilant, but this happy frame of mind did not last long.

"Why," the Citadel man asked when he entered the shack, "did you men kill Mr. Grant?"

They started for him simultaneously, but neither had moved three paces, when a command from a fourth voice just outside the doorway froze them in their tracks.

"Stand still!" it barked, "and put 'em up!"

Both reached for the ceiling, as two state troopers stepped into the room.

"Let's go to Freehold," Barrow suggested.

* * *

It was after midnight when Andrew Gresham was aroused from a fitful sleep and called to his telephone.

"It's Barrow," the voice on the other end of the wire announced.

"I know damned well it is," was the gruff rejoinder. "I don't know anybody else who'd have the nerve to awaken me at this unholy hour."

There was a chuckle over the line.

"Why, chief," the investigator whispered, "you'd get up at any hour to save the Citadel \$400,000, wouldn't you?"

Gresham was speechless for half a minute.

"Talk some more," he finally rasped. Barrow talked.

The fishermen had broken after hours of questioning and had made a clean breast of their part in Grant's disappearance. They had been out tending their lobster pots and were eleven miles off shore when they were hailed by a fast yacht, which both of them recognized as one of the rum fleet. A member of its crew had been badly beaten in a fight with another man and the skipper offered them one hundred dollars to get him ashore and to a hospital. This they agreed to do, and shortly after taking him aboard they heard faint cries for help. They had found Grant struggling in the water.

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When the skiff was still four miles off shore, Swansen had discovered that the injured sailor had died, and it was at this juncture that Grant had played his trump card. He told them of financial reverses he and his father had suffered and how they had conspired to defraud the Citadel by jumping overboard and making it appear that he had committed suicide at sea. He had intended swimming ashore and going into hiding.

"But this makes it easy," he had said. "Put my clothes on this fellow, my father will identify him as me and I can hide away until we get the money. We can even make it appear that I was murdered and thrown off the ship."

He had told them how to do this and they, upon his promise to pay them \$25,000 each, had followed his bidding. Thoroughly scared, they had omitted no details in their confession to Barrow.

Gresham asked only one question.

"How did Grant tip his father off?" he queried.

"Kyrklenken 'phoned him," Barrow replied. "I've got a record of the call."

A moment of silence, and Barrow resumed.

"We got Grant up in Atlantic Highlands in a hide-away," he said, "and the old man is in custody in New York. They both have confessed. We don't pay!"

"Good! But you've forgotten one thing we ought to do immediately," Gresham cautioned.



"What about José Gomez, the suspect?"

"That," Barrow replied grimly, "is the first thing I attended to."



Gresham was still wondering at this turn of events.

"How'd you do it, Charlie?" he asked.

"Well," Barrow replied, "you can rest easy. I just tied a little piece of string around my finger." □



Stanislaw Lem and John Dickson Carr: Critics of the Scientific World-View



By Edmund Miller

Stanislaw Lem's novels are often difficult to classify. They are something like detective stories, and though loosely called science fiction, they are often very lightly plotted for fantasy writing of any sort. *The Investigation* is particularly interesting in this regard because it does not even include a future setting or an alien reality. Yet for this very reason it allows us to see Lem's purposes more clearly than most of his other works do. In *The Investigation*, Lem looks at the world around us, applies modern science as we know it, and makes us see in one sudden, striking moment that we do not know what we are doing.

For a work with this limited though important objective, the book is a text remarkably dense with intellectualization. It is a very non-visual novel, especially for one on the subject of the articulation of corpses. Nothing much happens. Then the investigators go around investigating, and nothing much is detected, and nothing much is explained. But suddenly, when we have seen quite clearly how impossible the problem is, we are presented with a kind of solution. And we are not satisfied. The book illustrates the unhappy endings of our times. The investigators never seriously entertain a supernatural explanation for the series of body snatchings and articulations in a small section of southern England. But they talk more and more wildly about the possibility because it seems to be the only way of explaining all the facts. They disprove all the alternatives. The extent of the wildness is illustrated by this speculation of Lt. Gregory's:

Let's say, for example, that there are periodic interventions of factor X separated by long time intervals; that the last [occurrence] took place about two thousand years ago—not in England but in the Near East; that there was a series

of alleged resurrections then also—you know, Lazarus, and . . . the other one. . . . If we take this seriously even for a moment, the ground opens up beneath our feet, our whole civilization turns to jelly.

The hero of the book—or the victim—is the statistician Sciss. He represents the science of our modern world. And it is he who presents the philosophical problem to the detectives; if he had not shown that the bodies were disappearing in a systematic relation to temperature, distance from the site of first occurrence, amount of clothing on the corpse, and (finally) geographical incidence of cases of fatal cancer, the problem would not exist—there would merely be separate body snatchings, some of them perhaps inexplicable or complicated by difficult circumstances. But Sciss has seen the occurrences as related in a statistical scheme. It is the statistics which cause the problem.

And in the last few pages of the book, the unsatisfactory solution is necessarily a statistical solution. It turns out that the routes of refrigerated trucks out of Tunbridge Wells can also be plotted on the same graph with the corpse incidents. The explanation offered is that the winter fog has been driving one trucker mad for a few hours on his return run. In his moments of madness, their occurrence strictly predictable according to the laws of statistics, he has played games with himself and, though not consciously, with the police and stolen or articulated bodies from secluded mortuaries. Lt. Gregory, the detective assigned to the case, asks his chief inspector whether this is the way the incidents really happened. "An imitation of a miracle. . . .ha, ha. . . is all this true?" "No," Sheppard replied serenely, "but it might

be. Or, strictly speaking, it can become the truth.” Of course, this is the way we deal with the world. We believe in science, but we manipulate its findings for our own purposes. We lie with statistics.

This is the moral of the book, that even a phenomenon like the Resurrection can be explained away by the laws of science, but when the laws of science explain something away, we are not happy with the explanation. The investigators never seriously entertain the thesis that they may be living in the world of Lazarus, but the reader sees that a religion could be founded on their inability to solve a problem in statistics. The detective Gregory wishes to take the easy way out and see the statistics as a fabulous hoax. From the beginning he suspects Sciss, the only interested person with the relevant proficiency in statistics. Only, he reasons, a statistician could have conceived the idea of ordering the incidents according to a statistical table provided by the laws of nature. Of course, it is for reasons that can be charted as statistics that the schedule of Mailer Trucking is what it is. But this unhappy truth comes home to Gregory just after he has reluctantly abandoned his theory about Sciss. Sciss has turned out to be too human, too ordinary in his obsessions. Gregory has uncovered Sciss's secret life in bondage and discipline, and somehow a man with such



"You won't believe this - I can't find Sherlock Holmes anywhere."

pedestrian foibles is not likely to have attempted to violate the composure of Scotland Yard with statistical tables. But is a madman in a Mailer refrigerated truck a more satisfactory poser of a problem that has questioned the very foundations of Christian civilization? The book ends with a passage in which the chief inspector says to Gregory, "We have to set up clearly defined guidelines for the future. For the foreseeable future. I'll be waiting for you tomorrow morning at the Yard." But we cannot set up guidelines for the foreseeable future. The future cannot be seen. That is the point.

A very different critique of the scientific worldview is provided by John Dickson Carr. Carr's works, like Lem's, are sometimes difficult to classify. Carr is a mystery writer, but he is also a gothic and sometimes an historical novelist at the same time. If Lem asks us to be cautious about accepting the science of the present, Carr seems to ask us to throw over our science entirely and return to a less rational past. *The Burning Court* provides a fascinating illustration of the past recaptured and history rewritten. Of course, the seamless web of explanation with which Carr resolves the impossible problems he poses is spun in a world with fewer philosophical complications than the England of Lem's novel and with a perhaps more comforting familiarity.

But the Philadelphia Main Line of *The Burning Court* has an unreality of its own. It has nothing in common with the real but frivolous socialities of a Philip Barry play like *The Philadelphia Story* or the grim pathetics of Theodore Dreiser's novel *The Financier* or Christopher Morley's novel *Kitty Foyle*. What Carr does is to take two structures from the familiar literary past and remake them as a remarkable fabulation in combination. The ostensible pattern of the book is the detective story, but Carr also uses material from the occult tradition. Of course, this combination of materials is quite common in Carr and other detective writers. But ordinarily the occult is introduced only to be explained away at the end, the seeming miraculous turning out to be a misreading of the most ordinary things of our everyday life after all. This tradition is at least as old as Mrs. Radcliffe.

The detective-story structure of *The Burning Court* is conventional but carried off with Carr's usual excellence and spectacular effortlessness. There are two locked-room mysteries, one case involving the disappearance of a body from a sealed granite tomb and the other the administration of a cup of arsenic by a woman seen through a chink in a window as leaving the scene of the crime by walking through a wall. A nice tension builds in telling of the traditional detective part of the story as the focal character, Ted Stevens, helps his friend Mark Despard clear Despard's wife Lucy of suspicion of the murder only

to find that the evidence thus sifted tends to cast suspicion on his own wife Marie. Of course, other characters come under suspicion as well, at least in part because of the improbable nature of their evidence. "Why add a statement that we could prove was untrue, and therefore wouldn't believe?" You've answered your own question. Because you still do believe it, don't you, or you wouldn't be arguing with me?"

A psychologically interesting subplot develops alongside the intellectually interesting detective problem and becomes entangled in it. Marie D'Aubray Stevens has mounting self-doubts about her own supernatural place in the crime. She bears the name of two historical murderesses; she looks strikingly like at least one of these; the dress worn by the murderess at hand when seen administering her poisoned cup is a copy of one belonging to the other of the historical murderesses. Seemingly driven to distraction, Marie goes off precipitously to seek advice from a character we can only describe as the anti-detective.

This character, the novelist Gaudan Cross, returns to town with her and in the domineering yet engaging way of Carr's more famous detective Dr. Gideon Fell proceeds to explain away all the supernatural difficulties of walking through walls and spiring bodies out of sealed tombs, by the way managing to exculpate both of the wives. His explanation fastens the guilt chiefly on the nurse who had been attending the murder victim. Cross breaks her alibi, explains how an unsuspected but probable relocation of a mirror had misled the person peeking through the chink in the window into seeing a perfectly ordinary door in the middle of the blank wall it actually faces. He explains how the body was secreted in an urn rather than left in its proper coffin before the tomb was ever sealed up and then only taken away after the tomb has been reopened for a belated autopsy. He explains all this, then takes a drink to toast his success and immediately keels over from cyanide poisoning. Of course, his ingenious explanations are supported by no tangible evidence. However, the circumstances of his own poisoning before witnesses result in the conviction of the woman who comes to be called the Demon Nurse. She, however, maintains her innocence even after conviction.

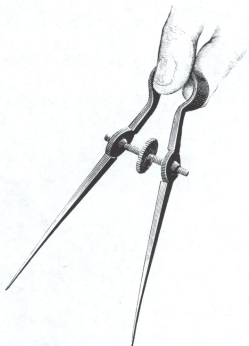
Then Carr does something that makes us rethink all of our relevant values—our taste in detective stories, our ideas about justice, our beliefs about the supernatural. In a brief epilogue we see that Marie D'Aubray Stevens is, indeed, a witch, the reincarnation of the two murderesses whose name she bears. Gaudan Cross has concocted an elaborate though plausible scenario to get her off the hook and has then poisoned himself as a way of substantiating his

accusations. There is also an implication that our Marie D'Aubray has probably substituted for the small dose of arsenic he would have survived the equally small dose of cyanide no one survives.

The beauty of this simply as the ending of a detective story is that it allows the murderer to get away. There is something very unsatisfactory about the ending of all the many detective stories in which the murderer, who has given us such a challenging puzzle to work out, has to be carted away screaming when he is found out. Some writers get around this difficulty by having the murderer commit suicide or die attempting to escape apprehension. But this is not nearly so satisfactory as clean success.

Apart, however, from its literary value, this ending has an important moral value. Even the most neat, even the most elaborate explanations are subject to revision in light of new evidence. No deciphering ever quite explains it all. So like Lem, though in a very different way, Carr cautions us against rationalism.

Lem and Carr are accomplished and entertaining fantasy writers. And each seems to find a critical focus for his fantasy in dissatisfaction with the neat rationalism of the scientific world-view. Lem bests the rationalists at their own game by showing the *reductio ad absurdum* nature of statistical problems. Carr shows us that a gothic solution to a problem may be more intellectually satisfying than a rational solution also available. □



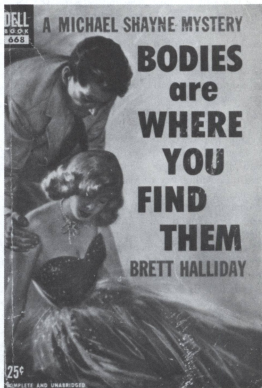
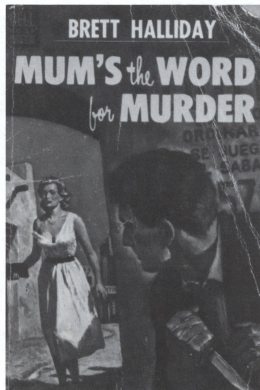
The Return of Michael Shayne

By Helen McCloy

Anatole Broyard, writing in his *New York Times* book column for December 18, 1980, says that "...many of us no longer identify very easily with characters; we would rather remain detached, at least for a while, and look on."

No doubt this is true of many *avant-garde* readers, but I think most straggling rear-guard writers will go on trying to give their readers a sense of identification with recognizable characters. Character-identification is older than writing itself, as old as the myths and epics chanted by pre-literate societies.

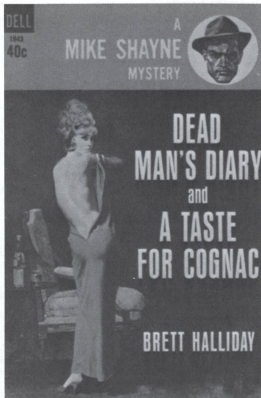
I am all for literary experiment, but does experiment serve art as well as it does science? Or does it



sometimes emphasize innovations in technic at the expense of other values that science does not know?

All this came to mind when I learned that the earliest of the fifty Michael Shayne mysteries written by Davis Dresser under his pen name Brett Halliday will be re-issued by the Harlequin Book Corporation this coming winter.

No story leans more heavily on character-identification than the classic detective story when dominated by a strong hero-detective like Michael Shayne. No books reach a wider public. These fifty Shayne books were best sellers in this country and abroad in translation from 1939 to 1964. There were



twenty Shayne movies, a radio show and a television show. Total American reprint sales topped fifty million copies, and in 1950 the American reprint publisher celebrated this by presenting Brett Halliday with a gold typewriter like that given to President Eisenhower.

Was this all the power of character-identification?

Possibly in the beginning, but everything that has life, physical or mental, must evolve. In Shayne's case, character-identification gradually turned into its opposite. Far from identifying himself with Shayne, the reader began to objectify Shayne as a real, live, flesh-and-blood man. Halliday was no longer seen as Shayne's creator, but as his historian.

This is not the first time such a thing has happened. Most people have heard of the bus-load of French schoolboys arriving in England for the first time who were asked what great, historical monument they would like to see first and answered in one voice: "Sherlock Holmes's rooms in Baker Street!"

Michael Shayne fans take somewhat the same view of him. To this day I meet some people who swear to me that they know Shayne is real because they have met him and talked to him themselves. Arguing with them is like arguing with a mirage. Apparently Anthony Boucher, witty *New York Times* critic, merely added to their confusion when he said: "Brett Halliday is what Michael Shayne would like to be."

But, of course, no faith is complete without a few skeptics. Shayne heretics wonder about the practical side of things. Why did Michael Shayne, who so loved his big fees as a private detective, hand over publication rights in all this material to Brett Halliday without asking for a cut of the profits? Or worrying about libel suits? And why can't they find any newspaper accounts of a private detective resembling Shayne in Miami at that time? Or any Florida court records of murder cases similar to those Shayne solves in the books?

True believers have answers to all such questions. They are quick to point out that Halliday himself during his lifetime published several apparently factual accounts of his first meetings with Shayne in interviews and jacket notes. Not only that, but in one of his books (*SHE WOKE TO DARKNESS*, 1954) Halliday introduces both himself and Shayne as characters taken from real life. Here the sense of reality is heightened by the presence of eighteen other characters also taken from real life, including Ellery Queen (Federic Dannay and Manfred Lee).

This would seem to settle the matter forever, and yet...

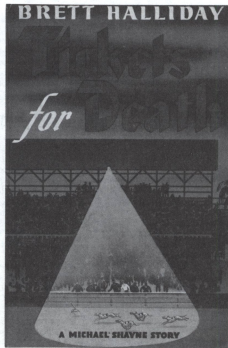
Halliday had a streak of schoolboy mischief in his nature which he never outgrew.

Isn't it possible that he just might have enjoyed writing about Shayne tongue-in-cheek?

Did he?

Frankly, I have never been quite sure.

I shall always wonder. □



BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SECONDARY SOURCES FOR 1980

By Walter S. Albert

Abbreviations

AJH	Allen J. Hubin
BMJ	<i>British Medical Journal</i>
CP?	<i>Collecting Paperbacks?</i>
DHD	David H. Doerrer
EQMM	<i>Elery Queen's Mystery Magazine</i>
FIR	<i>Films in Review</i>
JDM	John D. MacDonald
JDMB	<i>The John D. MacDonald Bibliophile</i>
JLB	Jon L. Breen
JM	Jim McCahery
JPC	<i>Journal of Popular Culture</i>
KLM	Kathi L. Maio
NL	<i>Les Nouvelles littéraires</i>
NYTAL	<i>New York Times Arts and Leisure</i>
NYTBR	<i>New York Times Book Review</i>
PQ	<i>Paperback Quarterly</i>
PW	<i>Publishers Weekly</i>
REB	Robert E. Briny
TAD	<i>The Armchair Detective</i>
TLS	<i>Times Literary Supplement</i>
TMF	<i>The Mystery FANcier</i>
TPP	<i>The Poisoned Pen</i>
WLB	<i>The Wilson Library Bulletin</i>

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Laborde, Charles. "Form and Formula in Detective Drama." Part VII *TAD* 13:1:69–75; Part VIII 13:2:151–57; Part IX (conclusion) 13:3:240–46.

Lamantia, Philip. "Radio Voices." In *Surrealism and Its Popular Accomplishes* (San Francisco: City Lights Bookshop), ed. by Franklin Rosemont, 25–31. Illus. Imaginary crimes of violence in *The Shadow*, *Mandrake* and others.

Larsen, Carl. "Old Time Radio Lives. Look for it in the *Morning Express!*" *TMF* 4:6:9–11. Flashgun Casey, Crime Photographer series.

—. "Old Time Radio Lives. 'Saints Preserve Us, Mr. Keen!'" *TMF* 4:5:18–20. Illus.

Lewin, David. "Graham Greene Conjures a Timely Spy Film." *NYTAL* 3 Feb. 80:1+.

Interview with Greene on subject of Otto Preminger's film version of *The Human Factor*.

Moddero, Craig. "Joseph Wambaugh Patrols Hollywood's Mean Streets." *Us* 13 May 80:74–75+.

"Personality Sketch" plus information on Wambaugh's producing films of *The Onion Field* and *The Black Marble* with his own money. (REB)

Roud, Richard, ed. *Cinema: A Critical Dictionary, The Major Film-Makers*. Vol. I: Aldrich to King. Vol. II: King to Zanussi. New York: The Viking Press. 1121 pp. Illus. Index. Arranged by director and by topic (i.e. "American Film Noir," etc.). Reviewed by James Leahy in *Sight & Sound* Autumn 80:269.

Silver, Alain and Elizabeth Ward, eds. *Film Noir. An Encyclopedic Reference to the American Style*. Woodstock, N.Y.: The Overlook Press, 1979. 393 pp. Illus. An alphabetized listing of films classified as film noir, with production credits and essays. Indices and Selected Bibliography. \$25.00. Reviews: *Choice* Sept. 80:102; Leslie Halliwell in *TLs* 8 Aug. 80:800; Tom Milne in *Sight & Sound* Winter 80/81:

68–70; Leo Braudy in *American Film* 5:9:53–55.

Wallace, Jack E. "Kojak, The Godfather and the City." *Clues* 1:1:25–31. "The myth of vigilante violence" in the 20th century. (JM)

Wells, Jeffrey. "Paul Schrader: *American Gigolo* and Other Matters." *FIR* May 80: 284–87. Interview.

Yronwode, Cat. "Will Eisner's *Spirit*." *Yesteryear* Feb. 80:8–9+.

III. Periodicals, Fan Organizations, Societies

Age of the Unicorn. Ceased publication in April 1980 with issue 8. Combined with the *Science Fiction Collector/Megavore*.

Les Amis du Crime. A French fanzine with each issue devoted to one writer. For information write to J. F. Naudon, 7, rue de l'Abbé Grégoire 92 130 Issy Les Moulaineux, France.

The Armchair Detective. Edited by Michael Seidman and published quarterly by The Mysterious Press. \$16.00 a year.

Baker Street Journal. Published quarterly at \$10.00 a year by Fordham University Press, University Box L, Bronx, New York 10458.

Baker Street Miscellanea. Sciolfist Press, Box 2579, Chicago, Ill. 60690. Quarterly. \$5.00 a year.

Cloak and Dagger. Ed./pub.: Jim Huang, 66 N. Virginia Ct., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07362. \$2.00/5 issues. Published irregularly. Last issue seen was 16 (30 Sept. 80). Notes on mystery films, books, and fandom.

Clues: A Journal of Detection. Ed. by Pat Browne. Published by Bowling Green University Popular Press. \$10.00 annually for 2 issues.

Collecting Paperbacks? Ed./pub.: Lance Casebeer, 934 SE 15th, Portland, Ore. 97214. Bimonthly. \$12.00/6 issues. Letters, notes, checklists of interest to collectors of pb editions. Much information in columns and letters, but mystery fiction material scattered. Articles/checklists indexed as appropriate.

Current Crime. Quarterly. P.O. Box 18, Bognor Regis, Sussex PO22 7AA, U.K. Reviews and notices of mystery fiction published in England.

DAPA-EM. The first detective amateur press association. Publishes a bi-monthly mailing consisting of 35 fanzines. No subscriptions available and mailings are sent only to contributors. For information, write: Art Scott, 10365 Wunderlich Dr., Cupertino, Calif. 95014.

DAST. Ed./pub.: Iwan Hedman. Flodins Vag 5, S-15200 Strangvas, Sweden. Detectives-Agents-Science Fiction-Thriller. Some material in English.

The Dime Novel Round-Up. 6 issues/\$5.00. Ed.: Edward T. Lebane, 87 School Street, Fall River, Mass. 02720.

Doc Savage Club Reader #7. Frank Lewandowski, 2438 S. Highland Ave., Berwyn, Ill. 60402. Not seen but described by Frank McSherry in a letter to *TAD* 13:3:238 as

being of interest to the pulp/detective reader.

Enigmatika. Published quarterly. For subscriptions, write: Jacques Baudou, 4 rue de l'Avenir, Les Mesnues, Rilly la Montagne 51 500 France. The major French journal devoted to secondary material on detective fiction. Articles, bibliographies, indices, reviews and notes de lecture which record material in American, English and French journals.

The GMS Informant. Ed./pub.: Don Miller, 12315 Judson Rd., Wheaton, Md. 20906. 6/\$4.00, 12/\$7.50. Several genres, including mystery, are reported on in this irregularly published listing of books and magazines and compilations of reviews from several sources, including the *New York Times*. I received issues 17 and 19 in 1980.

Graf, Joan Stephenson, "Mystery Societies." *Travel & Leisure* Nov. 80:39-40+. The Wolfe Pack, Holmes scribes, authors, Praed Street Irregulars, MWA, Dorothy Sayers Society and others.

Kimura, Jimo. "34th Annual Edgar Allan Poe Awards Dinner." TAD 13:3:205-7. Photos.

McAleer, John. "Rex Stout Newsletter." TAD 13:1:41-42; 13:2:108-9; 13:3:224-25 and 13:4:286-87.

JDM Bibliophile. Edited by Ed Hirschberg, Dept. of English, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida 33620. Published in January and June. \$3.00 annually. "A non-profit amateur journal devoted to the works and readers of JDM and related matters."

Megavore (Science-Fiction Collector) combined with *Age of the Unicorn*. Ed./pub.: J. Grant Thiessen, c/o Pandora's Books Ltd., Box 86, Neche, N.D. 58265. Published bi-monthly. \$10.00 annually. Advertiser with articles and checklists. Science fiction, pulps, adventure, mystery.

Mystery. Bi-monthly. \$10.00/6 issues. P.O. Box 26251, Los Angeles, Calif. 90026. Articles, interviews, reviews of books, TV, films, and some fiction.

The Mystery Fancier. Ed./pub.: Guy M. Townsend, 29 S. Church St., West Chester, Pa. 19380. \$12.00/6 issues. Essays, reviews and letters.

The Mystery Trader. Ed./pub.: Ethel Lindsay, 69 Barry Rd., Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7QQ Scotland. Issue 20 (Feb. 80) was the last of this fanzine.

Mystery Writers of America. For information about membership, write MWA, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10001. Publishes a monthly newsletter, *The Third Degree*.

Nieminski, John. "Pow-Wow on the Potomac. A report on Bouchercon XI." TMF 4:6:12-18. Also includes (pp. 19-30) a number of candid, largely irreverent photographs taken at the convention by JN. The running commentary is probably not going to be taken seriously by some people.

The Not So Private Eye. Ed./pub.: Andy Jaysnovich, 6 Dana Estates, Parlin, N.J. 08859. The P.I. in fiction, film and TV. Reviews and a list of "lost" B movies by

A.J. in no. 7; no. 8 indexed under IV, Avallone; Merz.

Paperback Quarterly. Ed./pub.: Charlotte Laughlin and Billy C. Lee, 1710 Vincent St., Brownwood, Texas 76801. Published quarterly. \$8.00 annually. Historical and bibliographical material on paperback publishers and publications.

The Poisoned Pen. Ed./pub.: Jeffrey Meyer-son, 50 First Place, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11231. Bi-monthly. \$10.00/6 issues. Articles, checklists, reviews and letters.

Polar. Published monthly at 37, rue Montholon, 75009 Paris. Reviews and media news with a dossier devoted to a writer including bibliography/filmography, fiction and—where possible—an interview. Issues indexed as received.

Slung, Michele. "Fan Fare." *American Book-seller* Dec. 80. Mystery fans and organizations.

The Thornyke File. John McAleer, ed. Twice yearly. \$5.00. Mt. Independence, 121 Follen Rd., Lexington, Mass. 02173. Journal devoted to writings of R. Austin Freeman.

Weintraub, Boris. "Dapa-EM—Elementary My Dear Grochowski." *Washington Star* 13 Oct. 80: Section C1+. A tongue-in-cheek report on personalities at Bouchercon XI.

The Weird Tales Collector #6. Ed./pub.: Robert Weinberg, 10606 S. Central Park, Chicago, Ill. 60655. \$2.00 an issue. Published irregularly. #12 (1980): Interviews with E. Hoffman Price and Mary Elizabeth Couselman and a *Strange Stories* issue and author index.

The Wolfe Pack. P.O. Box 822, Ansonia Station, New York, N.Y. 10023. The Nero Wolfe society. Publishes a review, *The Gazette*, of which no issues were seen in 1980.

Xenophile. Ed./pub.: Nils Hardin. Apparently ceased publication with issue 44. The two issues published in 1980 contained only books and magazines for sale.

IV. Authors

VAN ARSDALE, WIRT

Lauterbach, Ed. "The Adventure of the Purloined Red Herring." TTP 3:5:3-8. A study of references to Sherlock Holmes stories in van Arsdale's *The Professor Knits a Shroud* (Crime Club, 1951).

ASIMOV, ISAAC

Carter, Steven R. "The Science Fiction Mystery Novels of Asimov, Bester and Lem: Fusions and Foundations." *Cues* 1:1:109-15. The problems of fairness in sf crime and detective novels. (JM)

AVALLONE, MICHAEL

Barson, Michael S. "Interview with Michael Avallone." PQ 19:1:10-18. Photo and illustrations.

Cook, Michael. "Michael Avallone—Writer Extraordinaire." *Unicorn* 2:2:75-103. Illus. Newspaper reports, letters, tributes and a bibliography.

Johnson, Tom. "Fading Shadows. Avallone." *Megavore* 9:21:24. Illus. List of Avallone's

contributions to *Mike Shayne Mystery Magazine* and brief comments on his work.

Merz, Stephen. "Rapping with Mike. A Michael Avallone appreciation, interview and checklist." *The Not So Private Eye* 8:2-9.

BALL, JOHN

Bornstein, Karen. "John Ball Interview." *Mystery* 1:3:31-34. Photos.

BLOCK, LAWRENCE

Block, Lawrence. "Fiction." A monthly column in *Writer's Digest*. Not all of the material is directly related to the field, but, apart from its general interest to students of Block's work, the following columns should be noted: Feb. 80: discussion of collaborations, among them a Westlake/Block trio; June 80: characterization in Robert Parker's *Wilderness*; Aug. 80: *The Burglar Who Studied Spinoza* and *Ronald Rabbit Is a Dirty Old Man*.

BLOCH, ROBERT

[Snyder, Tom]. "Tomorrow's Mystery Show." PFUI 5 (March 80) 3-19. Transcription of NBC's *Tomorrow* show, hosted by Tom Snyder in January 1980 with guests Mickey Spillane, Robert Bloch, Donald Westlake and Dilys Winn.

BUCKLEY, WILLIAM F., JR.

Sullivan, Jack. "Behind the Best Sellers: William F. Buckley, Jr." NYTBR 30 March 80:32. Photo. Interview with the sometime writer of spy thrillers.

BURNETT, WILLIAM R.

Anon. W. R. Burnett Dossier. *Polar* 15 (Nov. 80). Illus. Interview, bibliography, filmography and a short story.

CARR, JOHN DICKSON

Busch, Lloyd. "A Checklist of the Paperback Editions of J. D. Carr." CP? 2:2:9, 18. Illus.

Green, Douglas G., ed. *The Door to Doom and Other Detectives* by John Dickson Carr. New York: Harper & Row. 352 pp. \$12.95. Introduction (9-26) and Bibliography (327-52) by editor Greene along with early fiction, radio plays and essays by Carr. Reviews: Steve Lewis in TMF 4:5:35-36; *Megavore* 11:47-48; Kingsley Amis in TLS 5 June 81:627.

CASPERY, VERA

Bakerman, Jane S. "Vera Casper's Fascinating Females: Laura, Evvie and Bedelia." *Cues* 1:1:46-52.

CHANDLER, RAYMOND

Bishop, Paul. "The Longest Goodbye or the Search for Chandler's Los Angeles." *Mystery* 1:2:33-36. Photos.

Milner, Jay G. "Morality and the Detective Hero: Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe." *Cues* 1:1:116-18.

Pavoni, Anna. "Marlowe, un narcisista che sfida la morte." *Il corriere medico* 30 Sept.-1 Oct. 80:17.

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AlexanderSSon, Jan and Iwan Hedman. "Leslie Charteris and the Saint. Five Decades of Partnership." TMF 4:4:2127. First published in DAST Dossier No. 2

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(See also I, Lyle and II C, Billington)

Bargainnier, Earl F. "Another Watson: Captain Hastings." TAD 13:4:354-60. The recurrent A. Christie character.

—. *The Gentle Art of Murder: The Detective Fiction of Agatha Christie*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press. 240 pp. \$16.95/\$8.95. Index. Study of the writer's techniques.

Barnard, Robert. "Agatha Christie." *London Magazine* Oct. 79:36-54. (DHD)

—. *A Talent to Deceive. An Appreciation of Agatha Christie*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. ix-x + 213 pp. With a bibliography and short story index compiled by Louise Barnard and an annotated list with brief comments on all the novels with "detective interest." Reviews: M. Lachman in TMF 4:6:31-32; *Choice* Sept. 80:86; Janet Morgan in TLS 27 Feb. 81:218; and JLB in WLB Oct. 80:130.

Birns, Margaret B. "Agatha Christie's Portrait of the Artist." *Clues* 1:2:31-34. Christie as seen through her novel *The Hollow*. (JM)

Cawelti, John G. "Artistic Failures and Successes: Christie and Sayers." In Winks, 188-99. Originally published in Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery and Romance* (University of Chicago Press, 1976), 111-16 +.

Fitzgibbon, Russell H. *The Agatha Christie Companion*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press. 200 pp. Bibliography and index of characters in her work.

Lane, Thomas D. "Dignity in the Detective Novel." *Clues* 1:1:118-22. The popularity of Christie and Sayers. (JM)

Peeters, Benoît. "Tombeau d'Agatha Christie." In his *La Bibliothèque de Villiers* (Laffont, 1980). Not seen.

Toye, Randall. *The Agatha Christie Who's Who*. New York: Holt, Rinehart. 264 pp. \$12.95. Illus. Characters in the work. Reviews: Howard Lachtman in TAD 14:1: 54; *Choice* 81:641-42.

Weinkauff, Mary S. "Miss Jane Marple and Aging in Literature." *Clues* 1:1:32-40.

CLARK, DOUGLAS

Anon. "Douglas Clark." BMJ 2 Aug. 80:378.

CLARK, MARY HIGGINS

Anon. Interview. Part II. EQMM 14 Jan. 80: 88-89.

Clark, M. H. "Suspense Writing." *Writer* Sept. 80:9-12. Writer on own work.

CLEMENS, SAMUEL L.

Saylor, Louise. "David (Pudd'head) Wilson: The Missing Figure in a Detective's Group." TAD 13:1:8-11. Illus.

COLLINS, WILKIE

Andrew, R. V. *Wilkie Collins: A Critical Survey of His Prose Fiction with a Bibliography*. New York: Garland, 1979. 1959 thesis. Series: The Fiction of Popular Culture (E. F. Bleiler, ed.).

Blair, David. "Wilkie Collins and the Crisis of Suspense." In Ian Gregor, ed., *Reading*

the Victorian Novel (Barnes & Noble), 32-50.

Miller, D. A. "From roman policier to roman-police: Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*." *Novel* 13:2 (Winter 1980) 153-70.

Nelson, Bill. "Evil as Illusion in the Detective Story." *Clues* 1:1:9-14. Thematic study with particular attention to *The Moonstone* and Greene's *Brighton Rock*. (JM)

CRISPIN, EDMUND

Sarjeant, William A. S. "Edmund Crispin: A Memorial and Appreciation." TPP 3:3: 3-10. With bibliographical notes.

DALY, CARROLL JOHN

Finch, G. A. "A Fatal Attraction." TAD 13:2:112-24. Illus. The Private Eye in popular fiction and Carroll John Daly's *Race Williams*.

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Bannon, Barbara A. "PW Interviews Dorothy Salisbury Davis." PW 13 June 80:6-7. Photo.

Lewis, Shelly. "Interview: Dorothy Salisbury Davis." *Mystery* 1:2:8-9 +. Photos.

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Bleiler, E. F. "The Dilemma of Datchery." TMF 4:4:7-15. An attempt to establish the identity of Dick Datchery in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

Fisher, B. F., IV. "Edwin's Mystery and Its History: or, Another Look at Datchery." TMF 4:5:6-8. Datchery may be Mr. Grewgious's clerk, Bazzard.

Fleissner, Robert F. "Drood the Obscure: The Evidence of the Names." TAD 13:1: 12-16. Illus.

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DICKINSON, PETER

Anon. "Peter Dickinson." BMJ 26 July 80: 293-94.

Bargainnier, Earl F. "The Playful Mysteries of Peter Dickinson." TAD 13:3:185-93. Illus.

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Lachman, Marvin. "Department of Unknown Mystery Writers." TPP 3:6:11-12. Bibliography and Bibliography.

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(See also I, De Waal)

Asimov, Isaac. "The Case of the Blundering Chemist." *Science Digest* Aug. 80:8-17. Illus. Conan Doyle's "science."

Lacassin, Francis. "Conan Doyle ou la musique du violon brisé." In his *P.C. I*, 195-222. Conan Doyle and communication with the dead.

Ferguson, Paul F. "Narrative Vision in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*." *Clues* 1:2: 24-30.

Roberts, Randy. "Oscar Wilde and Sherlock Holmes: A Literary Mystery." *Clues* 1:1: 41-45. Doyle's attitude toward Wilde and biographical elements in *The Sign of the Four*. (JM)

Seebok, Thomas A. and Joan Umiker-Seebok. "You Know My Method." A juxtaposition of Charles S. Peirce and

Sherlock Holmes. Bloomington, Ind.: Gaslight Publications. 84 pp. Reviewed by John Sturrock in TLS 31 Oct. 80:1226.

Shaw, John Bennett. "Did He or Didn't He?" An investigation into whether or not the Great Detective celebrated Christmas." *Adobe Christmas* (supplement to the *Santa Fe Reporter*) 4 Dec. 80:27-29. Illus. (REB)

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Tracy, Jack. *Conan Doyle and the Latter-Day Saints*. Bloomington, Ind.: Gaslight Publications, 1979. Revised and expanded. Described by JLB in WLB Oct. 80:131 as a study of "the Mormon background of *A Study in Scarlet*."

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DUMAS, ALEXANDRE

Lacassin, Francis. "L'Abbé Faria ou inventaire successoral pour une légende défunte." In his *P.C. I*, 65-97. Lacassin establishes the historical reality of the Abbé Faria who figures in *The Man in the Iron Mask* as a priest-detective and whom L. sees as an early archrival detective.

DUNCAN, ROBERT L./JAMES HALL ROBERTS
Winks, Robin. "The Sordid Truth: Four Cases." In Winks 209-28. Originally published as "Murder by Holocaust" in *New Republic* 22 July 78:31-33.

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Herr, Kay. "The Failure of Two Swiss Sleuths." TAD 13:2:163-65. Illus.

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JLB in WLB Dec. 80:295.

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Garfield, Brian. Reviews of genre fiction in NYTBR 10 Feb. 80:14 +.

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Adey, Bob. "Peter Godfrey—A Reprise." TTP 3:5:9-11. Three letters to Mr. Adey from writer Godfrey.

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Coffey, Joseph J. "A Song for the Unsung." TAD 13:1:67-68. Illus. Notes on G's Harry Hones series published by Gold Medal in the early '60s.

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GORKS, JOE

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Dunn, Bill. "Ron Goulart pen names and novels with a juggler's dexterity." *Us* 28 Oct. 80:50-51. Photo. Brief profile with some information on Goulart pen-names. (REB)

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Lyles, Bill. "C. W. Grafton." TTP 3:6:7-9. Informative letter from Grafton on his and other writers' mystery fiction.

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Raymond Chandler's Self-Parody

By Randall R. Mawer

Raymond Chandler was never entirely satisfied doing the kind of writing he did as well as anyone. Early on, this master of the hard-boiled detective yarn wrote to publisher Blanche Knopf, "I am constantly tempted to burlesque the whole thing."¹ And after he was firmly established, he confessed to Alfred Knopf, "I find myself kidding myself. I enjoy it and find it fun," wondering that his readers had not noted "the strong element of burlesque in my kind of writing."²

Frank MacShane, in his recent life of Chandler,³ notes traces of burlesque in much of his subject's work, but MacShane's examples are not, I believe, the sort of self-parody Chandler had in mind. The story "Pearls Are a Nuisance" is, as MacShane points out, "a parody from start to finish," but its target is not the hard-boiled manner of Hammett, Chandler, and other *Black Mask* writers but the polite stiffness of English and Anglophile who-done-its. Again, MacShane is certainly correct that Chandler sometimes thought "tedious" the grinding out of such "obligatory" stuff as "drinking bouts and physical violence," but what the biographer calls a "burlesque of the tough-guy scene" in "Bay City Blues" is not really parodic, except perhaps when a mean cop, having knocked down a hood and kicked him "in the face," delicately picks his next shot: "in the ankle."⁴

Surely this sort of broad japing could not have prompted Chandler's almost guilty confessions of self-parody.

As for the jest at the end of the classic first paragraph of the story "Red Wind," MacShane is again off the mark. The passage is worth still another reprinting:

There was a desert wind blowing that night. It was one of those hot dry Santa Anas that come down through the mountain passes and curl your hair and make your nerves jump and your skin itch. On nights like that every booze party ends in a fight. Meek little wives feel the edge of the carving knife and study their husbands' necks. Anything can happen. You can even get a full glass of beer at a cocktail lounge.⁵

According to MacShane, "In an opening like this, most readers will be carried away by Chandler's genuinely atmospheric sentences and will not notice the joke in the last one; but it is there for those who do." Knowing that "much of what he was writing was rubbish," MacShane reasons, Chandler occasionally gave himself (and his more discerning readers) such moments of comic relief. But he "had to be clever with his use of parody because he still wanted his stories to be accepted." Hence he "planted his jokes inconspicuously."

MacShane's analysis betrays what I take to be a basic misunderstanding of the importance of Chandler's fiction of humor in general and self-parody in particular. Any reader who responds to the "atmosphere" (the story, again, is "Red Wind"—is MacShane having *his* bit of fun?) will surely notice the deadpan anticlimax—which at any rate is hardly "inconspicuous" in position or emphasis: the next paragraph begins, "I was getting one [full glass of beer] in a flossy new place across the street from the apartment house where I lived," and the tale is off

More than anything else, Chandler took *language* seriously. Virtually everything he wrote, especially early in his career, attests to that fact—the deftly impressionistic descriptions, the truly heard dialogue, the glittering similes, the flatness of tone maintained so strenuously as to suggest much left unsaid. His overall style is necessarily exaggerated, mannered; knowing it to be so, Chandler sometimes pushed it across the bounds of verisimilitude, into a studied playfulness which becomes a part of the style it mocks. It is a dangerous trick, a magician's



and running. The crack is not a piece of humorous irrelevancy but a neat transition from exposition to plot. That precisely is the problem with MacShane's conception of Chandler's "parody." The biographer looks for "jokes" existing for their own sake, for comic pearls among the tough-guy "rubbish." Chandler, despite more than occasional attacks of self-doubt, took himself, his genre, and his readers more seriously than that. And his comedy, far from being at odds with his prevailing earnestness of purpose, points it up.

deliberate, if momentary, display of the machinery that creates his illusions, but it is integral to Chandler's larger thematic strategy.

Consider a paragraph from *The Big Sleep*, in which detective Philip Marlowe finds himself in a four-cornered brawl involving himself, a scared hoodlum, and two crazed women, one of whom has just bitten his hand.

The blonde spat at me and threw herself on my leg and tried to bite that. I cracked her on the head with the gun, not

very hard, and tried to stand up. She rolled down my legs and wrapped her arms around them. I fell back on the davenport. The blonde was strong with the madness of love or fear, or a mixture of both, or maybe she was just strong.⁴

Comedy and menace are nicely blended, each heightening the other. The second female, homicidal maniac Carmen Sternwood, is waving a loaded pistol, and just when the sober Marlowe tried to assert a little law and order ("Hey, wait a minute, Carmen, I yelled" [p. 80]), Agnes, "The blonde," who should be the one negligible factor in the equation, goes berserk. Marlowe holds hard to the illusion of mastery, carefully, chivalrously gauging his "not very hard" blow to the woman's head. Agnes is not deterred, but Marlowe keeps thinking—coolly, analytically, manfully—trying to *explain*, at least, a situation which he manifestly cannot control. The best elucidation he can manage, though ("The madness of love"), is a cliché so pathetically melodramatic that he must leap to an alternative ("or fear"), then to another ("or a mixture of both"). At last he simply surrenders: "maybe she was just strong"—stronger than he, just as, for one surrealistic moment, chaos is stronger than reason.

This passage is typical of Chandler's self-parody, for the butt of the joke is Marlowe, Chandler's alter ego, his very voice. The line about cocktail lounges, spoken by the detective for the writer, is witty enough, but there is no parody, which occurs rather when Chandler allows his narrator's wit, the clearest sign of control over people and circumstances, to break down. At such moments, we see just how much of the detective's apparent superiority of toughness, intelligence, and verbal facility is sheer manner, shadow without substance.

Often enough, the detective's very detecting gives Chandler occasion for fun. The private investigator's vaunted sensitivity to nuance, frequently contrasted to the more plodding methods of the police, is tested, for example, toward the end of *The Big Sleep*. Mrs. "Silver-Wig" Mars, whose knowing complicity in a series of crimes is the issue of the moment, responds to one of Marlowe's probingly cryptic remarks with "a racking laugh." Observes the interrogator, "I thought there was puzzlement in it, not exactly surprise, but as if a new idea had been added to something already known and it didn't fit." Having his hero right where he wants him, Chandler makes Marlowe conclude, "Then I thought that was too much to get out of a laugh" (p. 183). In *Farewell, My Lovely*, interviewing the drunken Jesse Florian, Marlowe tries another technique, stoical patience. "I sat down and rolled a cigarette around in my fingers and waited. She either knew something or she didn't. If she knew something, she either would tell me or she wouldn't. It was that simple"⁵—so simple, indeed

that the p.i.'s self-satisfied pontificating is ridiculous. Again in *Farewell, My Lovely*, Marlowe employs perhaps his favorite weapon, the wry crack, the last word that should establish his supremacy over his antagonist, in this instance mysterious redhead Anne Riordan, who has sought him out for ends unknown. An exchange began when the detective takes a drink without offering one to the woman simply breaks off when one of Marlowe's sallies proves so pointless that, far from impressing or even amusing his visitor, it only bewilders her. Marlowe acknowledges defeat with mock-Hemingway (and mock-Chandler) terseness. "She thought that over. It didn't mean anything to her. It didn't mean anything to me either when I thought it over. But the drink made me feel a lot better" (pp. 76-77).

The point of such passages is not only that Philip Marlowe is less than brilliant—he himself acknowledges as much repeatedly, as in a crucial moment in *The High Window*: "My face was stiff with thought, or with something that made my face stiff."⁶ More important is the fact that such confessions come hard to a tough guy, who must leak them through a "stiff" jaw and sternly impassive lips. The contrast between the manifest humanness of the detective—at least occasionally a bungler, a dullard, a speaker of commonplaces—and his portentously deadpan way of talking—Marlowe's style, finally *Chandler's* style—is a deeply comic one.

Chandler even infringes upon his very trademark, parodying the flashy similes so inimitable that MacShane calls them "Chandlerisms."⁷ (The over-dressed Moose Malloy [in *Farewell, My Lovely*] "looked about as inconspicuous as a tarantula on a slice of angel food" [p. 1]. The plot of a bad musical comedy has "all the originality and drive of a split fingernail" [*High Window*, p. 103], etc.) Startling in conception, elaborate in modulation (that careful "about" is the making of the tarantula simile), suggestive of qualities unnamed (the subject of the same figure is as deadly, as well as conspicuous, as a tarantula)—at their best, these figures verge on parody already. Hence Chandler's method, when he chooses to burlesque Marlowe's penchant for such hard-boiled poetry, is not to exaggerate but to give his narrator a running start toward a figurative vehicle, only to land him flat on his literal tenor. For example, a meticulous description of a man whose effeminacy is signaled by, among other things, a white flannel suit, a violet ascot, and a corn flower boutonniere, ends, "Apart from all this he had the general appearance of a lad who would wear a white flannel suit with a violet scarf around his neck and a cornflower in his lapel" (*Farewell, My Lovely*, p. 39). Similarly, having phoned the office of an aging coin dealer and told the man's secretary to put her boss on the line, Marlowe reports, with ponderous

redundancy, "There was a pause suitable to an elderly party in an inner office having his attention called to the fact that somebody on the telephone wanted to talk to him" (*High Window*, p. 29). Once more, in a scene in which Marlowe and a homicide lieutenant are trying to out-tough each other, the private eye observes, "His voice was acid-cold acid," and, after venturing a rejoinder, must admit, "My voice was just a voice" (*Farewell, My Lovely*, p. 184).

Context is everything. Without the "cold acid" metaphor, "just a voice" would not be a joke at all. Without the drumfire of good similes (I count at least 30 fully developed examples in the 249 pages of *Farewell, My Lovely*), we would not expect ever better ones; and without that expectation, Marlowe's misfires would not be funny. That is to say, Chandler's deliberate failures take their point from the context of success, reminding us how difficult it is to maintain high standards. As Marlowe puts it, about one of his ubiquitous affectations (his preoccupations, for example, with chess, with certain specific drinks, and especially with tobacco), "I...put a cigarette in my mouth and tried to jerk it up far enough to hit my nose with it. This is harder than it looks" (*Farewell, My Lovely*, p. 96).

The writer who late in his career kept lists of similes, checking them off as he used them,¹⁰ knows just how hard it is to continue passing those dozens of little tests the hard-boiled existentialist, be he mystery writer or private eye, makes up to judge his performance against. He knows how easily ritual—of act, word, or thought—becomes mere tic, losing its power to save. In *Farewell, My Lovely*, Chandler demonstrates as much in perhaps his longest and most sustained piece of self-parody. Marlowe has been sapped; he comes to only to make the shameful discovery that the man who hired him as bodyguard has been murdered; still groggy, he tries to figure out what has happened, and when, to prove "I could still use the head":

Time passes very slowly when you are actually doing something. I mean, you can go through a lot of movements in a very few minutes. Is that what I mean? What the hell do I care what I mean? Okey, better men than me have meant less. Okey, what I mean is, that would be 10.15, say. . . . Give me a minute to fall down and hit the ground with my face. . . . I got my chin scraped. It hurts. It feels scraped. That way I know it's scraped. No, I can't see it. I don't have to see it. It's my chin and I know whether it's scraped or not. Maybe you want to make something of it. Okey, shut up and let me think. What with? . . .¹¹

More than a convincing expression of a clouded brain at work, this passage is the purest burlesque of tough-guy prose. One is reminded of Faulkner's crack about Henry James: that he chewed more than he bit off. Impeded by the scantiest realities—the

time of night, the sensation of pain—Marlowe's style can run almost solely on its own power, picking and keeping up a fight, turning nonsensical epigrams, spitting out staccato declarations, remaining relentlessly colloquial ("better men than me"), making litany of the commonplace ("I mean," "scraped," "Okey").¹² So well designed and built, so thoroughly tested over the years, the style has become self-sustaining, like an expensive phonograph, slightly tilted, whose tone arm bumps repeatedly, maddeningly, against the edge of a record, producing most efficiently the most meaningless noise. "Shut up and let me think!" shouts the rational Marlowe, but his stylistic double will not be silenced, any more than the parodic demon who sometimes, Chandler said, took over his earnest prose: "I find myself kidding myself."

But unlike his groggy hero, Chandler was ultimately in control of his voice. No matter how long, high, or low his flights of self-parody, he knew what he was doing, and why. His claim that he was merely indulging himself—harmlessly, since his readers (Frank MacShane not yet among them) would not even see the humor—is unconvincing. Every self-hating hack writer must feel the desire, from time to time, to have a bit of "fun," to tell an inside joke. But Chandler's willingness to turn that joke on *himself* argues a motive more complex and (aesthetically if not ethically) more worthy.

Philip Durham is on the right track:

The fictional private eye...was only what his creator intended him to be—pure fantasy. As a symbol the detective hero was superb, but as a symbol he could never achieve reality. The result was that Chandler was actually writing romantic fiction, but by simulating reality through a hard-boiled attitude he could stay within an American literary tradition. The action and violence more or less covered up the fact that everything came out all right in the end.¹³

What Durham does not say is that violent action and a "hard-boiled" way of presenting it are themselves "romantic," none the less so in being characteristically "American." That is to say, plots are not more plausible for their violence, nor heroes more "real" for talking tough. Chandler knew as much, saw the futility of an unrelieved attempt to "simulate" (i.e. falsify) reality with mere "attitude" or style. But what if style intermittently called attention to itself, in an attempt not to "cover up" the fantastic but to acknowledge its presence? Surely Chandler's self-parody, ruthlessly exposing Marlowe's pretensions, is in aid of such an attempt.

Finally, Chandler's detective stories are "romantic" in more (and more significant) ways than their happy endings and the stock heroism of their protagonist. In calling Marlowe a "knight," Durham properly places these stories in a tradition antedating modern

realism: the medieval romance. Chandler's southern California is a world of chrome-striped roadsters and crooked cops and "flash" gambling dens. But on the level at which Chandler's imagination engages most fully with these recognizable "realities," it is also a world of quests and ordeals, of knights and fair maidens, of aging kings besieged by the forces of darkness, of magicians (various doctors and psychics), gentle giants (Moose Malloy), dragons (Mrs. Elizabeth Bright Murdock of *High Window*), witches (snake-like temptress Carmen Sternwood), and mysterious "helpers" (ex-cop Red Norgaard, he of the violet eyes, whose presence makes a remarkably effective little fairy tale of Marlowe's attempt, toward the end of *Farewell, My Lovely*, to board a well-guarded gambling ship).


That which is most realistic in Chandler's materials is well served by the flat objectivity of the prevailing style. Not so the wishful romanticism, which requires a more elaborate, fanciful manner, Chandler's equivalent of "once upon a time." Hence the extravagant similes, and descriptions which move quickly away from the literal into the impressionistic. Hence, especially, the humor, and most especially the self-parody, a stylistic reminder of the fact that a whimsical artist stands only a little behind the tough-guy narrator. For Chandler understood that in thus making Marlowe less heroic—if heroism is equated with mere toughness—he made his protagonist's exploits seem all the more chivalric.

"You're so marvellous. . . . So brave, so determined and you work for so little money. Everybody bats you over the head and chokes you and smacks your jaw and fills you with morphine, but you just keep right on hitting between tackle and end until they're all worn out. What makes you so wonderful?" (*Farewell, My Lovely*, p. 246)

Thus, in *Farewell, My Lovely*, does Anne Riordan sum up what Marlowe has accomplished. The detective's inability to live up to his own image—so manifest in Chandler's passages of self-parody—has prepared us to laugh at this eulogy, and as we laugh we may wink at the fact that Chandler, as well as Riordan, means every word. So too, if Marlowe may be allowed to return the maiden's compliment, is Chandler playing it straight when, earlier in the same novel, the detective accepts a drink from the woman's fingers: "I held them for a moment and then let them go slowly as you let go of a dream when you wake with the sun in your face and have been in an enchanted valley" (p. 158). This enchanted valley is far from the harshly sunlit world of Bay City, farther than sleep, precisely as far as chivalric romance is from hard-boiled realism. Raymond Chandler was determined to bridge that distance, and self-parody was one of his means. □

Notes

- 10 July 1939; quoted in Frank MacShane, *The Life of Raymond Chandler* (New York: Dutton, 1976), p. 93.
- 11 January 1946; quoted in *ibid.*
- Ibid.*; all quotations are from pp. 56-57.
- Killer in the Rain* (New York: Ballantine, 1972), p. 267.
- Trouble Is My Business* (New York: Ballantine, 1972), p. 187.
- The Big Sleep* (New York: Ballantine, 1971 [c. 1939]), p. 80.
- Farewell, My Lovely* (New York: Vintage, 1976 [c. 1940]), p. 23.
- The High Window* (New York: Ballantine, 1971 [c. 1942]), p. 26.
- MacShane, ed., *The Notebooks of Raymond Chandler and English Summer: A Gothic Romance* (New York: Ecco, 1976), p. 48.
- See MacShane, *Life of Raymond Chandler*, p. 153.
- Farewell, My Lovely*, p. 54. The final ellipsis is Chandler's.
- This last trick is glossed elsewhere in the same novel (p. 138), in an exchange between Marlowe and a dump cop he has nicknamed "Hemingway." "Who is this Hemingway person . . . ?" the lawman demands. Says Marlowe, "A guy that keeps saying the same thing over and over until you begin to believe it must be good." "That," the cop remarks, "must take a hell of a long time."
- Down These Mean Streets a Man Must Go: Raymond Chandler's Knight* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), pp. 96-97.

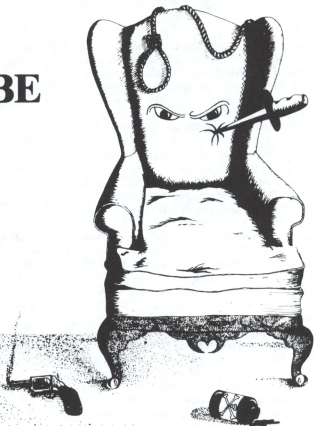


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CURRENT REVIEWS

Nolan #1: **Bait Money** by Max Collins. Pinnacle, 1973, 1981. \$1.95

Nolan #2: **Blood Money** by Max Collins. Pinnacle, 1973, 1981. \$1.95

These two books, the first and second in Max Collins's Nolan series, were first published in paperback in 1973 by Curtis Books, and that was when I first read them. There were three more due in the series when Curtis folded, and it took Max Collins some time to regain the rights to the series. Now Pinnacle will be bringing out those five books, plus a sixth one, between this year and next.

The first book, *Bait Money*, introduces Nolan, the best heist man in the business. He is recovering from a bullet wound, and, after sixteen years of pulling jobs, he is ready to retire. Nolan has not always been a heist man, though. Sixteen years ago, he was managing a night club for the Chicago mob. When he killed the brother of one of the top mob boys and took off with \$20,000 of "Charlie's" money, Charlie swore he'd get Nolan and put a contract out on him. Sixteen years later, one of Charlie's boys spotted Nolan and put a bullet in his side. Now Nolan feels it is time to meet with Charlie and settle things once and for all.

With the help of Werner, a friend who is still in the mob, Nolan sets up a meeting with Charlie and finds out what he has to do to square things. Charlie wants a hundred grand from Nolan, and he doesn't want Nolan using any of the money he's saved up over the past sixteen years. He wants Nolan to pay off with "new" money, obtained from a heist. Nolan agrees to one last job, in order to pay Charlie off.

There's a problem, however. The word is out that Charlie still wants Nolan, so none of the pros will work with him. Through another friend, Planner, Nolan meets Planner's nephew Jon and two friends of his, Gross and his sexy girlfriend Shelley. Working with the amateurs, Nolan pulls the job and has to overcome two double crosses before a final shootout with Charlie leaves Nolan once again badly wounded.

In *Blood Money*, Nolan has turned fifty and is running his own motel-night club. When he finds out from Jon that Planner has been killed and their money stolen from Planner's safe, Nolan sets out to find the killers, only to find that he must once again deal with Charlie, who is now working with his son. Charlie's in bad with the mob now, but he still hates Nolan and wants revenge. This time the meeting at the book's end is conclusive, and Nolan doesn't have to worry about Charlie any more. He realizes, however, that Charlie has still had the last laugh when he finds out what the old hood has done with his and Jon's money.

The third book in the series, *Fly Paper*, should be out about July, and I'm looking

forward to reading it, as I've been waiting patiently for a new Nolan since 1973.

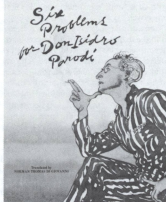
Following *Fly Paper* will be #4: *Hard Money*; #5: *Hard Cash*; and #6: *Scratch Fever*.

There have been some minor rewrites on *Bait Money* and *Blood Money*, but the books hold up very well. Collins is a fast-paced action writer who I think everyone knows by now is the successor to Chester Gould as writer of the Dick Tracy comic strip, where he has been doing a marvelous job. He has also had a series of paperbacks out about a hit man named Quarry, four books published by Berkley in 1976 and 1977 (*The Broker*, *The Broker's Wife*, *The Dealer* and *The Slasher*). In addition, he has a collection of *Mike Mist Minute Mysteries* coming up, a comic strip starring private eye Mike Mist, and has also launched a strip series in a new magazine called *Eclipse* about Ms. Trees, a lady P.I.

—Robert J. Randisi

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JORGE LUIS BORGES ADOLFO BLOY-CASARES



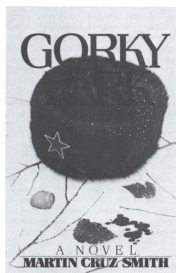
Reflex by Dick Francis. Putnam. 295 pp. \$11.95

Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi by Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy-Casares. Dutton. 160 pp. \$11.50

Gorky Park by Martin Cruz Smith. Random House. 365 pp. \$13.95

An English jockey, an Argentinian jailbird, and a Russian cop. What can they possibly have in common?

Not only are they detectives who appear in three of this season's most unusual mysteries,



but they are the kinds of detectives who are likely to be remembered even more for their personalities than for their profession.

First, the jockey, He's Philip Nore, aging steeplechaser, talented photographer, and amateur sleuth. Nore is the hero of *Reflex*, the nineteenth in a series of racing novels written by ex-jockey and turf columnist Dick Francis.

I mention the number nineteen deliberately. After that many turns around the race track which is always the central setting and symbol of a Francis novel, you would naturally assume that the saddle of the novelist is beginning to wear a bit thin.

False assumption. Like Agatha Christie, the prolific Francis is apparently capable of going on forever, inventing interesting new plots and characters and pleasing his transatlantic legion of fans. His most complex and ambitious novel, *Reflex* shows that Francis is not content to repeat himself or to stand still at the starting gate.

As always, Francis is an assured storyteller of gritty life and hard-riding action. The action at the track—which no one has ever conveyed better than this writer—once again reveals the close ties between English sporting and criminal life. Nore, a decent man and a dogged rider, is fed up with throwing races on orders of his trainer and owner. Can he buck the system and survive?

Like a steeplechaser hitting a hedge, Nore comes up hard against the unporting realities of his job. He is a man of honor in a corrupt game, and that ethical dilemma makes him a perfect choice to play detective. There is a missing half-sister to be found and a case of

photographic blackmail to be solved. Both problems give Francis the opportunity to develop Nore into a rewardingly complex hero. Here, too, is a credible female character in the person of a young book editor who lends Nore some much-needed moral and amorous support.

Reflex goes far beyond the average Francis novel (if there is such a thing) in the cleverness of its plotting and subtlety of characterization. Nore's inquiry into his abysmal childhood and his memory of a less than admirable parent remind me of the more sensational inquiry undertaken by Phillipa Pallfrey (heroine of the recent P. D. James novel *Innocent Blood*), while his use of scraps of film to solve a puzzling murder have an obvious link to the classic mystery movie *Blow-Up*.

Yet neither element seems borrowed. The book is pure Francis, from the dangerous spills of the track to the chills of our hero's peril off the track. Francis is one of the very few pros who has grown more sophisticated in his technique without losing any of his appeal as a storyteller. When he rides his storytelling horse with the whip of crackling dialogue and galloping pace, you realize that he hasn't forgotten how to run the kind of horse race that keeps his reader firmly mounted in the saddle and stirrups of suspense.

Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi is a horse of another color. Played for laughs more than thrills, chills, or insight into human nature, it is more "literary" and far more contrived than *Reflex*. In its own way, however, *Six Problems* offers beguiling entertainment. Its exotic lampoons will appeal most to readers who, like the authors, fully understand the conventions of detective fiction and are unable to resist teasing them.

Jorge Luis Borges, arguably the single greatest literary figure to emerge from South America in modern times, has had a lifelong love affair with the mystery story and has written such classics of the genre as *Death and the Compass* and *The Garden of the Forking Paths*.

Here, in collaboration with fellow Argentinian author and mystery lover Adolfo Bioy-Casares, Borges has a fine time satirizing the colorful characters who lent old Buenos Aires much of her storiedbook splendor. The jokes are also directed at the standard ingredients of the classical detective story—the "impossible" crime, the gallery of suspects, and the cryptic clues interpreted by an eccentric yet brilliantly reasoning mastermind.

Don Isidro Parodi (the last name should tell you what these parodic tales are all about) is a Buenos Aires barber who has heard too many sensitive secrets in his little shop to be allowed his liberty. He has been framed for a crime he did not commit and locked away in a cell for a long stretch. While there, he becomes a thinker of the first magnitude, an armchair (or rather, prison stool) reasoner who can crack any case brought to him, no matter how bizarre, complex, grandiose, or mysterious it may appear.

A steady procession of fantastic and flamboyant characters makes its way to Parodi's cell, tell him their incredible stories, and await his tersely worded, infallibly reasoned solutions. The cream of the jest lies in the treatment of Parodi's "clients," in crimes that sound as if they've been made up by a pair of tipsy screenwriters seeking revenge on realism, and in snappy solutions that puncture the highflying balloons of these theatrical mysteries with all the abrupt precision of a steel dart.

I find Don Isidro a very appealing character, even though the problem with some of the stories is that they read too much like jokes made between the collaborators. One can't take them seriously, even in fun. And certain allusions to local color and customs in the Buenos Aires of a half-century ago will mean very little to modern readers unacquainted with that great city.

Despite such drawbacks, the wit and gusto of the tales come across beautifully, thanks to a first-class translation by Norman di Giovanni. Once you familiarize yourself with their premises, the stories do exert a wacky charm. At best, as in "The Twelve Figures of the World" and "The Nights of Goliadkin," they are a delightful change of pace from conventional detective stories; at worst, they are gags that do not come off.

If you're weary of pipe-puffing, pistol-packing, or Freudian-angushed sleuths, do pay a visit to Don Isidro, the occupant of cell 273. He may be the best thing to come out of Argentina recently since *Evita*.

From English steepchasing and Argentinian skylarking, we now travel to Moscow's Gorky Park, the initial setting and the title of Martin Cruz Smith's justifiably popular best-selling novel.

When a trio of faceless corpses are discovered in the melting snows of a Moscow park, police inspector Arkady Renko sets to work to detect who the victims are and who the victimizers may be. It's hardly a routine case; more like a rollercoaster ride into the tunnel of national security and international intrigue.

What is truly fascinating here is not Smith's Byzantine plot (it's about fur-smuggling, icon-forging, and dissident activities), but the absolute reality of the illusion that we have entered into Soviet life. Scenes and characterizations leap off the page with the clarity and coherence of photographs.

The well-educated son of a Soviet general, Renko is too honorable to take his place in the Communist hierarchy, too nationalistic to join the dissidents. Police work intrigues him because it allows him to deal with the one commodity most Soviet citizens never see: the truth. Ultimately, however, Renko's love of truth jeopardizes the precarious balance he keeps on the tightrope between loyalty to the State and acts of conscience which become treason to the State.

Since the Gorky Park case falls in the well-defined classification ("foreign and domestic intriguers, smugglers, and malcontents") of crimes investigated by the KGB (secret police), it makes us suspicious that Renko is allowed, even encouraged, to remain on the

case. Suspicions mount when he is pledged cooperation by his KGB enemy, Major Pribluda. This is not the way the system works, but for whatever secret reason he is being used, Renko is a man of integrity and fidelity who is more than a match for his betrayers, a man whom we can trust in a society where no one can be trusted. Disheartened by official cover-ups and corruption, Renko is determined to get at the unofficial truth of the Gorky Park mutilations.

The first police procedural novel to be set in the Soviet Union, *Gorky Park* is spellbinding in its view of an obstructive bureaucracy and destructive KGB at war with a lone detective. Renko's competence poses the kind of internal threat to the Soviet justice system which makes him vulnerable. The question of his vulnerability assumes a major role in the reader's expectations, and this concern for Renko's safety gradually creates a close bond between reader and hero. But Smith also earns our admiration by allowing us the fun of trying to outguess the shrewd Renko. If the Russian sleuth never quite takes us into his confidence, we understand how a man in his position, with an unfaithful wife, a questionable mistress, and a double-crossing department, must play his cards close to the vest.

Smith's gift for character-drawing begins with Renko and branches out to a wonderful cast of supporting players who have plausibility, wit, and irony to recommend them. They include several unusual Americans (a profit-minded, pro-Soviet millionaire and a New York police officer with a war of his own to wage), a dissident actress with whom Renko becomes involved, and a dwarf anthropologist who specializes (fortunately for Renko) in the reconstruction of skulls.

If the book has a flaw, it's the downward spiral of events that occur once Renko is relocated in America. Something of the magic seems to be lost in the long leap from Gorky Park to Central Park. And in the inevitable shoot-out at the end between agents and cops of two nations, Smith opts for a Wild West climax, a blur of gunsmoke and identities.

These flaws undercut the credibility, but not the achievement, of a novel whose distinction is that it provides us with a new kind of detective from a most unexpected source. Renko's public investigation and private life illumine not only the heart and soul of the Russian nation but the sorrow and pity of our times. On any level—mystery, psychology, espionage, sociology—*Gorky Park* is a reading experience which ought not to be missed.

—Howard Lachtman

* * * * *

A Prayer for the Dying by Jack Higgins.

As I read this book, I couldn't help thinking of two novels written by Graham Greene in the 1930s, *A Gun for Sale* and *Brighton Rock*. For *A Prayer for the Dying* tells the story of a man apart, a man on the run, and

manipulated in a way that Graham Greene would have boggled at, and we are treated to two last-minute rescues of vulnerable females—Jenny and the blind Anna—from the sexual assault of the loathsome Billy. But judged entirely on its own terms, as a straightforward thriller, *A Prayer for the Dying* is an absorbing read.

—John Boyles

* * * * *

The Jericho Commandment by James Patterson. Ballantine, 1979.

Essentially an intrigue-adventure story, *The Jericho Commandment* postulates an extremist group apparently reviving the Nazis under the Fourth Reich. Their first act is an attack on the Strauss family, an influential Jewish clan. Matriarch Elena, survivor of Hitler's concentration camps, Nick, winner of an Academy Award for *The Fourth Commandment*, a documentary of the Holocaust, Beri, Nick's wife and co-producer, Heather, wife of David, Elena's grandson. All of them killed. Brutally, in public. Denounced for being anti-Jews. Only David survives to track down the mastermind behind the audacious plot. His path crosses that of Alix Rothschild, a movie actress rescued from Dachau. Eventually, they come to their own Armageddon at the Moscow Olympics. *The Jericho Commandment* is not a pleasant book. It shows the raw viciousness and brutality of ideals and extremes. Patterson's straight, reportorial style builds slowly through the book, culminating in a few final scenes that are riveting.

—Fred Dueren

* * * * *

Winking at the Brim by Gladys Mitchell. Dell "Scene of the Crime" Mystery, 1974. \$2.25

Dame Beatrice Bradley's granddaughter Sally gets involved in an expedition to hunt a "monster" in Loch na Tannasg. Indeed, over half the book is taken up with the comings and goings of Sally and the other odd characters making up the hunt. Of course, there is one member, Angela Barton, who is more concerned with watching her neighbors than in watching for the creature in the loch. And sure enough, eventually she is found dead and the police are willing to call it suicide. Only then do Dame Beatrice and her secretary Laura Gavin show up to set matters right. The detection consists mostly of Dame Beatrice asking a few questions and making a few phone calls off stage. Suddenly the murderer is pulled out of the pack and sent off to an unusual if deserving finish. Traditionalists and Anglophiles will gobble this up. Others will find this one of the few misses in the "Scene of the Crime" reprints.

—Fred Dueren

* * * * *

Sweet and Deadly by Charline Harris. Houghton Mifflin. \$8.95

When Catherine Linton's parents died in an auto accident, she stayed in Lowfield, took over their house, worked on the weekly paper, and rented out the small house that

had served as Dr. Linton's office. Six months later, Catherine discovers the body of Leona Gates, her father's nurse, beaten to death. Her life turns, briefly, into a nightmare of suspicion and doubt. The relaxed, set pattern of life in the quiet Southern town has been shattered beyond repair.

The crime brings Catherine out of her protective aloofness. For the first time she notices muscular Randall Gerrard, the owner of the *Lowfield Gazette*. She also realizes her tenant, Tom Mascalco, has an active life apart from his work as a reporter for the *Gazette*. But in developing these characters and portraying the closed Southern life Harris lets the mystery and suspense slip. A long center portion of the book revolves around Catherine's life without bringing out anything new about the murder. Finally, the climax pulls it back into focus, showing that a few clues have been sprinkled through the book. Although the motivation of the killer is not entirely convincing, it is surely one of the most unusual and distinctive motives for some time.

—Fred Dueren

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The Department of Dead Ends: Fourteen Detective Stories by Roy Vickers. Selected and introduced by E. F. Bleiler. Dover, 1978. \$3.00

This will be more of a bibliographic note than a review proper. I suppose most readers of this journal know that the original volume of *The Department of Dead Ends*, introduced by Ellery Queen (American Mercury paperback, 1947; Faber and Faber hardcover, 1949; Penguin paperback, 1955) was named to Queen's Quorum of basic detective and crime short-story collections (No. 104)—and therefore the series hardly needs additional praise in this note.

But I do have two comments to make. First, I wonder if any reviewer when this second volume appeared pointed out that one story—"Little Things Like That"—is not a Department of Dead Ends story? The case is solved by a local police superintendent. It is a curious slip for Bleiler to make, although the inverted form is like that used in the Department of Dead Ends stories.

Second, the book caused me to hunt up my copy of the earlier volume (I have the Penguin edition). I find that the two books have five stories in common: "The Rubber Trumpet," "The Man Who Murdered in Public," "The Yellow Jumper," "The Case of the Social Climber," and "The Henpecked Murderer" (oddly mistitled "The Henpecked Husband" on the Penguin contents page but not on the story). The earlier book has five non-duplicated stories, and Bleiler has eight others (not counting "Little Things Like That"). So with the two books, a reader can have eighteen of the thirty-seven Department of Dead Ends stories. (The total number of stories I take from Bleiler's introduction, subtracting one for his slip in this volume.) I wish some knowledgeable bibliographer would give us a list of all the stories with their first publications; even more, I wish for

another volume, holding the remaining nineteen stories.

—Joe R. Christopher

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Aristotle Detective by Margaret Doody. Penguin, 1981.

Margaret Doody's *Aristotle Detective* demonstrates once again that the conventions of the genre can provide a solid foundation for artifice that is both entertaining and enlightening. Doody sets the crime in the fourth century a.c. at a time when Aristotle was still teaching and Alexander was expanding his empire. The tale is narrated by Stephanos, a young man bound by familial duty to defend his exiled cousin Philomel against the accusation of murdering a wealthy and apparently virtuous aristocrat. Since Stephanos has no adult male kin except the absent Philomel, he turns to his former teacher Aristotle for counsel.

The plot is intricate without being arcane, and the delineation of the various major and minor characters is usually satisfactory. Professor Doody's portrayal of Aristotle is a lively and welcome characterization of a philosopher whose formidable reputation and style unfortunately has made him appear inaccessible to modern readers. Doody's Aristotle is precisely "the man of practical wisdom" celebrated in Aristotle's own *Nicomachean Ethics*. He is a classic detective in every sense: an outsider, an eccentric, a careful observer of all things natural and unnatural, a man with a keen interest in solving puzzles—and in seeking justice.

Aristotle Detective illuminates the darker side of the public and private spheres of the democracy that functioned for so long as both the philosophical foundation and the cultural ideal of western civilization. The pervasive aristocratic contempt for foreigners, laborers, and slaves is revealed. Attitudes toward women are, at best, condescending. (Doody's Aristotle is the exception in his regard for women. Doody is having fun here, however. Whereas Plato suggested that some women might have the same noble natures as some men, Aristotle, in contrast, argued that all women were inferior to men and thus made misogyny philosophically respectable.) The mystery skillfully incorporates Athenian judicial procedures and religious practices as well as the considerable duties and privileges of citizenship. Like the best teachers, Doody shows rather than tells. Most technical terms are presented in a context that makes them intelligible without recourse to a dictionary. This is an engaging book, and is sure to delight both the modern classicist and the classic mystery buff.

—Patrick K. Loose

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The Mystery of Edwin Drood by Charles Dickens. Concluded by Leon Garfield. Pantheon, 1981.

Garfield's conclusion of *Drood* must be disappointing to a crime fiction enthusiast because it immediately does away with all the mystery. I am neither a *Drood* specialist nor a

Dickens scholar. But a slight reading of the *Drood* criticism that has been in TAD shows that most of the mystery and interest is in Datchery and the ultimate fate of Neville Landless. Datchery is quickly dealt with. He is no more than an aging actor turned detective. Greigwius knew him as one of Buzzard's theatrical acquaintances and hired him to watch Jasper. It takes a bit longer, but Landless is also dispatched from the main plot.

Without introducing new characters, Garfield manages to shift the focus of attention away from Drood, Rosa, and Jasper to Datchery, Greigwius, Bazzard, and Princess Puffer, Jasper's opium supplier. And there, he fails at times to bring these people to life. We get an end to the story, seen through the eyes of the secondary characters. It is much like reading one of the many recent discoveries of old (new) Holmes/Watson adventures—the names are right and some of the actions, but it's all a bit off center. All of this is not to say the book is not good. The plot and action move well, probably clearer than in Dickens's chapters. Most of the major story elements are resolved. The themes and motivations are easily understood. It is a nice

genteel story of crime and its detection. But it is not Dickens.

—Fred Dueren

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What About Murder? A Guide to Books About Mystery and Detective Fiction by Jon L. Breen. Scarecrow Press, 1981. xviii + 157 pp. Index. \$10.00

The 23-page annotated bibliography "The Literature of the Subject" by Robert E. Briney (assisted by Francis M. Nevins), dealing with books and pamphlets about crime fiction and its creators, contained in *The Mystery Story* (1976) has been vastly expanded and brought up to date in *What About Murder?*

This volume is divided into sections on general histories of the genre, reference books, special subjects (such as mystery films, studies of spy stories and the pulps, etc.), collected essays and reviews, technical manuals telling how to write mystery fiction, coffee table books, and works on individual mystery writers.

The author, a professional librarian, is noted for his entertaining short stories—usually published in EQMM. He is also an

extremely knowledgeable historian of the mystery, and his reviews in EQMM and the *Wilson Library Bulletin* are among the best of their kind being written today.

Thus Jon L. Breen is eminently qualified to tackle the problems involved in compiling and writing *What About Murder?*

Each of the 239 entries is listed by author and title and contains city of publication, publisher, date, and number of pages. Illustrations, bibliographies, and indices are cited.

Each item contains an annotation which may range in length from a short paragraph to two pages—depending on its importance. Contents are succinctly and accurately described, and merits and deficiencies are honestly and intelligently evaluated in a no-nonsense fashion by someone who really knows the score.

Aside from the pleasure of dealing with a cultivated mind on a subject of much interest, this volume should be indispensable to anyone—reader, collector, and, especially, librarian—who wishes to build a basic reference library devoted to the subject of crime fiction.

—Charles Shibuk

RETRO REVIEWS

Octavius Roy Cohen. *Gray Dusk*. Dodd, 1920; Nash, 1920.

Gray Dusk appears to be Cohen's third mystery novel, and the first of a series of three which features private investigator David Carroll.

Carroll is fairly young, has been highly successful in his chosen profession, and is capably assisted by his friend Jim Sullivan.

Carroll's tranquility is abruptly shattered when an urgent telegram arrives from his best friend, Stanford Forrest, begging him to come to South Carolina immediately. Forrest's bride of three days has been murdered while on their honeymoon, and Forrest has been arrested for the crime.

Carroll, who had suggested the honeymoon spot, is seriously upset by the news, and asks Sullivan to accompany him and help him to maintain his objectivity as he pursues his investigation.

Preliminary evidence, mainly supplied by the intelligent and helpful Sheriff Potter, points overwhelmingly toward Forrest, but Carroll determines to continue his efforts because he just doesn't believe in Forrest's guilt—and the sheriff is inclined to agree with him.

Surprisingly, *Gray Dusk* suffers from a poor prose style that is not helped by a number of cumbersome circumlocutions. It is disconcerting when one considers the merit of subsequent work—especially Cohen's *Queen's Quorum* collection *Jim Hanvey, Detective*

(1923), which is very well written, and remains fresh today.

Characterizations are fairly one-dimensional, but several of the subsidiary townspeople involved in the narrative are limned with a certain degree of shrewdness by the author, who was born in South Carolina.

The chief merit of this novel, and the justification for its mention herein, is its detection, which is really first rate. Cohen's puzzle-making in *Gray Dusk* is masterly, his attempt to play fair with the reader is laudable, and his clue-planting is nothing short of audacious.

—Charles Shibuk

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The Catalyst Club by George Dyer. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936; Penguin Books, 1942.

If you have ever tried to work a crossword or jigsaw puzzle, sooner or later you have realized that you are stumped and in need of help. Before you know it, everyone in the house has gathered to contribute verbal erudition or a quick eye as you collectively struggle toward the puzzle's solution. For all past puzzle-solvers, and for those who would like to take a stab at puzzle-solving, let me introduce you to the Catalyst Club.

Founded in San Francisco in 1924, the original trio consisted of retired criminal lawyer Leonard Sloat, chemist Theodore Lempereur, and psychiatrist Dr. Alexander

MacCarden. They established the Catalyst Club as a forum for discussion of the inadequacies of police and court procedure in dealing with bootleggers and spreading crime, and to expand their individual theories of crime-solving.

Over the ensuing years, both the Club's number and reputation swelled with ichthyologist Cyriak Brill-Jones (the Club's Boswell), mechanical genius Newton Bulger, and reporter Persen Drake adding their unique talents to helping the Club anonymously solve crimes that had baffled the police. By 1935, though, their weekly meetings descended to verbal scrapping over the best way to solve crimes. The result was a contest: on their next case, each member would pursue his own investigation, sharing information but not deductions or conclusions.

Their opportunity came the night police found the mangled bodies of Brenda Chalis and her two terriers staining the lawn of her father's estate. San Francisco's finest treated it as accidental death; the dogs had attacked their mistress, she had bludgeoned them with the odd-looking hammer found near her body. But the members of the Catalyst Club weren't convinced and offered their services to the skeptical police.

Thus does Dyer spin the mystery, allowing the reader to follow each amateur detective's progress toward evidence to support his deductions.

And what progressions there are—dead-end leads, shaky alibis, and elusive weapons as each sleuth pursues his favorite suspect, turning up a bit more evidence here, another motive there. One by one, each member proudly presents his version, only to have his friends shred it in some of the book's most hilarious scenes.

Still, the solution eludes them. An ill Sloat, nominally head of the Club but unaware of the competition, finally summons two of the members to his house when he learns of the contest. Applying his skill at synthesis, Sloat snorts at Drake and Brill-Jones that, aside from the contest being a stupid idea, all of their theories are wrong. He points out that modern crime is too complicated and requires knowledge of too many areas to enable one person to match wits with a criminal. And that, he concludes, is the Club's strength—only by pooling their knowledge can they reach the correct solution.

Dyer must have had great fun writing this literate and witty book. To the customary trappings of Golden Age detective novels—maps, illustrations, and footnote references to actual crimes—he has added a delightful group of detectives who are no more shy about railing at the appalling state of society than professing their given areas of expertise. For the individual reader as versatile as the Club's collective membership, some of the clues may speed you to the solution sooner than they will those of us who must patiently follow the separate investigations. Either way, it's a great chase.

—Mary Lou M. Schultz

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**The James Sandoe
Retrospective Reviews**

Fischer, Bruno, 1908—

The Evil Days by Bruno Fischer. New York, Random House c1973. "First edition" 3 p.1., 3–210 1 p. About the author: p. 211.

Fischer's 25th (after a ten year distraction as editor of Collier books/Macmillan) is, for me, unreadable. It's a novel about an harassed suburban couple (he commutes daily to an editorial job in New York) after she finds a pouch of jewels—and obviously wants to hang onto them. Troubled, he appears to go along with the notion as various things beset them. Too many and too contrived and all with very little savour and a steady sense of labour in bed and out.

I gave up at something short of the mid-point and then flipped the rest to discover whodunit. It was rather cleverly planned, after all and I'd guess it could have been a better book if Mr. Fischer's style had matched his ideas.

It might very well sell to TV for a TV movie and that's probably where it belongs.

Symons, Julian

...The Plot Against Roger Ryder. New York etc. Harper & Row c1973. 4 p.1. 3–199 p.

Trim, unmistakable and prettily curious

Symons. This time about Ryder, an executive whose wife is deceiving him unsuccessfully (and with absolute indifference) not for the first time if *this* time with his best friend, if he has any.

One consequence is a vacation in Spain where most of the action occurs (although it begins and ends in London or more or less does. I'm a nervous traveler, comfortable in Britain but as nervous as some of the travelers when they get to Spain).

Count on Symons to play games, often boldly, always cleverly, usually tellingly because even the tired private eye on the first page of the tale clings in memory.

It's an astute first page and, after the last page, one could begin with the first and fix the admiration so keenly prepared.

Good Symons which is saying exceptional crime story.

Priestly, John Boynton

The Doomsday Men; an Adventure by J. B. Priestly. London etc. William Heinemann Ltd. 1938. 4 p.1., 312 p. Map of Mojave Desert (end papers)

This is a well wound thriller, written with great gusto gathering its cast at Beaulieu (tennis), London (a physicist) and Los Angeles and sends them out to the desert for the finale which (note the date) anticipates and barely fends off the atom bomb. The Doomsday men are three talented brothers (one of them a physicist) madly sure of the need for finishing mankind off.

The characters may be from stock but the actors play them with gusto and the effect is cheering. Early in the tale some of the slang is stiff.

Detective stories: p. 15. Priestly describes it as "one of those bright new tales in which the characters made funny remarks across each fresh mangled corpse" and I wonder whom he had in mind?

Allen, Grant, —1899

The Reluctant Hangman and other stories of crime; those being the two criminal tales from Ivan Greet's masterpiece etc., by Grant Allen. With the original illustrations from the *Strand* magazine by Alfred Pearce & Sidney Paget; edited by Tom & Edith Schantz. Boulder, Colorado, The Aspen Press, 1973. viii, 9–55 1 p. "Limited to 500 copies."

Contents. Editor's note (facsim. vi, of the opening of the ms. for the first story; a neat remembrance of the various Allen). *The Reluctant Hangman* (9–22) is about that stalwart provincial authority, Jerry Stokes, who visits a murder trial and finds himself disagreeing with the verdict and wondering about his respected profession. Allen is light and wry, evokes place and time agreeably and says more than any monthly magazine story says more, without once labouring it. 2. *The Great Ruby Robbery* (23–40) is charming beguement about an American lady heiress, candidly in love with a gent with a rocky financial reputation and a knighthood. Allen mocks lightly, using literary clichés and Accepted Notions and the consequence is a

pretty bauble, worth anybody's courting. Here, as elsewhere, the illustrations are delightful and apposite as reminders of place and time. 3. *"The Conscientious Burglar"* (41–55) does not rush and is the better for its slow approach to the temptation of an impoverished English painter in Germany who is tempted to steal a purse and then so ashamed that he... but it's Allen's story and he tells it very nimbly and always with a hint of mockery (this time of the high morality of the solemn young man) and narrative turns that keep one splendidly off balance.

A slim and pretty volume and a reminder that Allen was wry as well as adroit.

Robert Browning cited e.g. 35.

Carr, John Dickson

...The Hungry Goblin; a Victorian Detective Novel. New York etc. Harper & Row, publishers c1972.

5 p.1., 3–290 p. "First edition."

Bought this because Wilkie Collins (43, 113 and passim) is the detective, a pleasant appearer. But it is quintessentially Carr, all the tricks, and it is, alas, deeply tiresome.

The persisting trick, here as before, is to raise expectations that an answer will be forthcoming and then postpone it by some sudden, melodramatic intrusion. Here this particular trick is used incessantly.

The narrative is told by a young Englishman long in the States, a newspaperman returned to London in October 1869. The central problem, among several, is Nigel Seagrave's who, on a recent return from Africa, finds his wife, Muriel, curiously (especially in bedroom encounters) changed. She is deeply an aficionado of thrillers and their magnificent Hampstead house is called, symptomatically, Udolpho. There is much "atmosphere" and inexplicable apprehension always rewarded by one surprise or another, the whole seeming too calculated so that I grew impatient midway through, paged, read the conclusion and thought it neat, surprising and evidence of careful planning which by now is like watching an aging actor use tricks he's used for years "because they always get the audience."

The sense of Victorian London is pretty well evoked but the dialogue wavers between then and now (216: "Back to you" is radio lingo and the incoherence of Nige and Kit and Jim jars).

There is, inevitably, a sequence in the *Bazaar* (109, 124, 126f) which is Mme. Tussaud's and a lot of specific references to the Gothic novel and its successors including, of course, *The Moonstone*. The title appears to be rather colourful than meaningful. Carr has added "Notes for the Curious" (289–290) on sources and his use of them.

Sorry, the later Carr continues to bore me.





The Unique Mystery Magazine:



Hugo Gernsback's Scientific Detective Monthly

By Robert A. W. Lowndes

Part IV



As it turned out, that March 1930 cover for *Scientific Detective Monthly* signalled a change of policy. No more would we see the "popular mechanics" type of frontispiece, showing a large number of figures grouped around a suspect being examined by scientific-looking devices. The covers were simple and dramatic now, and the April issue presented a very striking one, which was not harmed by a red background.

The contents page explains it all, as usual:

The accessories to science are often weird and gruesome. On our cover for this month, Paul, the most popular scientific illustrator in the country, has depicted with faithful detail a protective suit, such as worn by workers in Radium, that fearsome and strange element. This suit is made of rubber and lead, to guard the wearer from the deadly rays emanating from radium and its salts. We dare not explain the picture more fully for fear of "giving away" the story; but you will find this incident in *Rays of Death*, an exciting two-part serial which starts in this issue.

Bizarre it is, showing the suited figure caught by a detective in the act of lifting a mattress. In its other hand, the figure is holding a glowing capsule. We see only the shadow of a man holding an automatic trained on the intruder, and, of course, we cannot be sure whether the protected one is about to put the capsule under the mattress or is removing it. But if someone in the story is suffering from some mysterious ailment, we have been given the clue as to what it is.

As it happened, I didn't get to purchase that issue at the time. The spirit was willing, but 25-cent pieces were insufficient, and the choice between *Air Wonder Stories* and *Scientific Detective Monthly* that month didn't make for any hesitation. I pored through the issue on the newsstand many times; it certainly looked more attractive than before, particularly considering that two science-fiction authors had new stories this time.

The editorial "Crime in Business" discusses the problem of petty thefts and systematic malfeasance

by employees in business and suggests means by which the exploits of lightfingered or larcenous employees—the latter in shipping departments, intercepting orders and filling them without turning the payments over to the employer—can be reduced or, in some instances eliminated. It's ironic that augmented technology, instead of reducing that type of crime, has on the contrary facilitated it. Hardly anyone—certainly not Hugo Gernsback—foresaw in the '30s that a company computer can be made to increase an employee's wealth at the expense of the proprietor. "Bugging" restrooms, etc., is among the measures recommended for preventing systematic thievery from getting too far.

"Craig Kennedy works on a mystery in which two recent discoveries are involved. One is the application of the physical principles of the gyroscope to bodies traveling through an unstable medium—water or air; and the other we will leave a secret for our readers to discover at the end of the story." So reads the scientific blurb for "The Terror in the Air," the Craig Kennedy adventure that opens our April issue; but since that story originally appeared in *Cosmopolitan* magazine between 1910 and 1911, and was reprinted in book form in *The Silver Bullet* in 1912, one must protest calling either of the "two discoveries" as "recent," when referred to in 1930. No matter, I suppose, but I'm glad I did not know of such dates in 1930 when I had supreme confidence in the reliability of statements in the Gernsback magazines.

The story opens with Kennedy musing that there's something queer about "these airplane accidents at Belmore Park." All of the accidents have involved planes equipped with Norton's new gyroscope machine.

Walter, the narrator, replies:

"... I can't say I know much about either the gyroscope or the airplane, but from what I hear the fellows at the office say it would seem to me that the gyroscope is a pretty good thing to keep out of an airplane, not to put on it."

"Why?" asked Kennedy blandly.

"Well, it seems to me, from what the experts say, that anything which tends to keep your machine in one position is just what you don't want in an airplane. What surprises them, they say, is that the thing seems to work so well up to a certain point—that the accidents don't happen sooner. Why, our man on the aviation field tells me that when that poor fellow Browne was killed he had all but succeeded in bringing his machine to a dead stop in the air. In other words, he would have won the Brooks Prize for perfect motionlessness in one place. And then Herrick, the day before, was going about 200 miles an hour when he collapsed. But tonight another expert says in the *Star*—here, I'll read it: 'The real cause was carbonic-acid-gas poisoning due to pressure on the mouth from driving fast through the air, and the consequent inability to expel the poisoned air which had been breathed. Air once breathed is practically carbonic-acid-gas. When one is passing rapidly through the air this carbonic-acid-gas is pushed back into the lungs, and only a little can get away because of the rush of air pressure into the mouth. So it is rebreathed, and the result is gradual carbonic-acid poisoning, which produces a kind of narcotic sleep.'"

"Then it won't be the gyroscope in that case?" said Kennedy with a rising inflection.

Kennedy then reveals that Norton has asked him to look into the matter, because if his invention is a failure, he's ruined. "All his money is in it, he is suing a man for infringing on his patent, and he is liable for damages to the heirs, according to his agreement with Browne and Herrick." Kennedy knows a lot about Norton and considers him sound enough to back. He adds, "... a flying machine capable of remaining stationary in the air means a revolution that will relegate all other machines to the scrapheap. From a military point of view it is the one thing necessary to make the airplane the superior in every respect to the dirigible."

It seems that a rival inventor, one Delanne, is trying to put Norton's patent application into a state of "interference," claiming that Norton's device isn't patentable or practical, whereas Norton is convinced that Delanne's competing invention isn't practicable and, if he made it so, it would infringe upon Norton. Norton must prove his own claims.

Kennedy examines the two wrecked planes and finds that, while there was no explosion, the wires in the dynamo were fused together and the insulation had been completely burned off. Also that the operator at the wireless telegraph station of the signal corps in front of the grandstand at the flying field complains of mysterious interference when one of Norton's planes go up. "It was worse than trying to work in a thunder-shower."

Kennedy sends a note to Norton to detach his gyroscope and dynamo when he sends his plane up, and see what happens. Shortly after, as the ship rises:

Suddenly Kennedy jerked my arm. "Walter, look over there across the road back of us—at the old weather-beaten barn.

I mean the one next to that yellow house. What do you see?"

"Nothing, except that on the peak of the roof there is a pole that looks like the short stub of a radio mast. I should say there was a boy connected with that barn, some radio amateur, no doubt."

"Maybe," said Kennedy. "But is that all you see? Look up in the little window of the gable, the one with the closed shutter."

I looked carefully. "It seems to me that I saw a gleam of something bright at the top of the shutter, Craig," I ventured. "A spark or a flash."

It becomes obvious at once to the present-day reader, but it may not have been to those who read the story at the time it was first published, or, for that matter, even in 1930. Inside the barn, they find an apparatus wherein, Kennedy explains, the culprit "has simply appropriated the invention of Mr. Nikola Tesla."

"Tesla's theory is that under certain conditions the atmosphere, which is normally a high insulator, assumes conducting properties and so becomes capable of conveying any amount of electrical energy. I myself have seen electrical oscillations such as these in this room of such intensity that while they could be circulated with impunity through one's arms and chest they would melt wires farther along in the circuit. Yet the person through whom such a current is passing feels no inconvenience. . . . In this form all the energy is all the dynamos of Niagara could pass through one's body and yet produce no injury. But, diabolically directed, this vast energy has been used by this man to melt the wires in the little dynamo that runs Norton's gyroscope. . . ."

The culprit is a man known as Lamar. Kennedy says to him:

"I suspected some radio-power trick when I found that the field radio telegraph failed to work every time Norton's plane was in the air. . . I just happened to catch sight of that peculiar radio mast of yours. A little flash of light first attracted my attention to it. I thought it was an electric spark, but you are too clever for that, Lamar. Still, you forgot a much simpler thing. It was the glint of the sun on the lens of your telescope as you were watching Norton that betrayed you."

In between, of course, we have a red herring. Did Lamar have any confederates at the field? But it transpires that he did not, after all.

"The Terror in the Air" can be considered as science fiction; it fits well into that vast collection of scientific speculations which looked plausible at the time, and which thoughtful readers expected to become fact in the reasonably near future, but somehow never made it. Or has an airplane which can hover in flight appeared when I was too busy to look? The heavier-than-air craft did supercede the lighter-than-air craft, as Jules Verne predicted in *Robur the Conqueror*, before the turn of the century, but the hovering ability didn't prove to be the crucial matter, after all.

He pressed one of the switches beneath his hands, and from the cabinet came a thin, almost inaudible whining. The three reporters and President Ellsworth were watching spellbound. A half-dozen feet before them the black disk of the paper-weight lay as dark as ever against the sunlight streaming in. But as Dr. Grantham slowly turned a small rheostat control they all uttered something like a sigh. The black disk against the sunlight was becoming translucent, transparent. It was disappearing!

Dr. Grantham's hand still moved on the rheostat handle and as the thin whine from the cabinet came louder they saw that the disk was but a mere ghost-like shape against the sunlight, and then that, too, had vanished. The paper-weight was invisible. They gazed silently, fascinated, and then as Grantham moved back the control in his hand the shadowy circle of the disk appeared again; it grew quickly more opaque, and as the switch clicked and the cabinet's whine ceased it rested there as black and opaque and visible as ever.

Dr. Grantham leaned and grasped it, handed it to the four. Wonderingly they passed it from hand to hand, seeing it the same as before, quite black and commonplace and visible. Carton, himself, oddly stirred by what he had seen, heard Burns' exclamation from beside him.

"Good Lord! What a story!"

"And you can do that to anything?" Carton demanded of the physicist.

So begins the meat of "The Invisible Master," by Edmond Hamilton. Hamilton was one of the few "name" fantasy and science fiction writers to appear in *Scientific Detective Monthly* who had not been Gernsback discoveries. He was very popular with readers of that magazine, as well as *Amazing Stories*, *Science Wonder Stories*, and *Air Wonder Stories*. Yet his name does not appear on the cover of the April SDM—nor does any other author's name, aside from the continuing mention of Arthur B. Reeve.

Dr. Grantham has invited three reporters, and Dr. Calvin Ellsworth, president of America University, to witness the demonstration presented above. He starts out with a brief lecture on bending light, noting that if light rays could be bent entirely around an object, it could not, of course, be seen. He has been searching for a force which could do just that, and says that he has finally found it.

"... It is an electromagnetic force which repels light-rays and by curving them around the zone of force can make all matter in that zone invisible. Understand, it does not blot out any light in any way, it simply makes the light-rays detour around an object and so makes the object invisible."

"So much for theory. I have here a small cabinet of black metal in which is an apparatus for projecting this force upward for a few inches. Any small object placed on top of the cabinet will become invisible when the force from within is put into operation. If the force were more powerful, and radiated outward in every direction instead of upward only, the cabinet itself and all around it would be made invisible."

Then follows the demonstration, which you have already read. Grantham tells the four witnesses that his assistant, Gray, and he himself are "now finishing

a cabinet-projector that will be of sufficient power to make invisible itself and all within a few feet around it. With it a man would be perfectly invisible." The man would have to have the cabinet and its compact batteries attached to him; then he could move at will invisibly. Apparently the apparatus is light and small enough to make that feasible. It can be strapped to one's back.

President Ellsworth immediately recognizes the danger in the situation and urges the greatest care; an invisible criminal would be a formidable menace to society, to put it mildly.

The next morning, Carton's editor sends him back to Grantham's. "Dr. Grantham's been attacked by someone there, and there's a rumor of an invisibility apparatus of his being stolen."

Carton finds police sergeant Wade there. Grantham's assistant, Gray, is missing, as is the cabinet referred to above. Grantham can only say that he saw no one, but was suddenly coughed; he cannot believe that Gray had anything to do with it. Then someone looks at a little table just inside the door. There's a letter on it that had not been there a moment or so ago. It's addressed to Dr. Grantham, and the writing looks like Gray's. The message is:

My Dear Dr. Grantham:

It has amused me very much to hear your conversation with these worthy officers, but I really must be going. (You really should offer chairs to your guests, whether visible or invisible.) I am obliged to you for developing the projector which now makes me invisible, but I warn you that any attempt on your part to regain it or to capture me will end disastrously for you. I am the Invisible Master and I begin now my reign of this city. My rule of it will become evident to all in it soon, for in it from now onward my will shall be supreme.

The Invisible Master

As one can expect, things begin to happen. First, a package of fifty one-thousand dollar bills vanishes in front of the eyes of a teller at Vance National Bank. (That is two days later, after the story of Grantham's invisibility apparatus and the note from the "Invisible Master" has been spread through all the papers.) The next day, three men who have met to dissolve a partnership are assaulted. They had brought a large amount of cash and negotiable securities to their office. In the morning mail was a letter signed by the Invisible Master, instructing them to put \$100,000 in cash and securities in a suitcase and appoint one of them to go out along Broadway carrying it at the exact hour of eleven.

According to the survivor, they had forgotten about the letter by the time the hour of eleven had come. His story was that the door had suddenly flown open, though when they looked up, no one was there. Three shots followed, the first two killing two of the partners, the third wounding the third. Then

he had heard cries from other parts of the building; the door had opened and shut again, but the Invisible Master had fled without stopping to grasp at the cash and securities.

In between those two cases, a pay-office had been robbed.

Now the Invisible Master writes to the Mayor and Officials of New York, demanding five million dollars, and instructing them on the details of its delivery. The alternative is a reign of terror which will make the three previous outrages look puny by comparison. Grantham and the police try to set a trap for the Invisible Master by setting wires in a large circle around the box containing the ransom money, that will result in a bell ringing if anyone enters the circle. The plan fails; one policeman is killed and Grantham wounded.

Since the author may have renewed the copyright on this story, and it is still good enough to reprint, I shall not risk spoiling it by telling much more. The secret of the Invisible Master lies in the nature of tourmaline crystals, and we have a perfectly sound story ending.

In "The Hammering Man," by Edwin Balmer and William B. MacHarg, Luther Trant solves the mystery through use of the sphygmograph. It's attached to the subject's arm and a pencil point traces a wavy line on a drum, which shows the normal record of the pulse. Trant says:

"Every thought you have, every feeling, every sensation—taste, touch, smell—changes the beating of your heart and shows upon this little record. I could show through that whether you had a secret you were trying to conceal, as readily as I will show the effect whisky has upon you, or as I can learn whether this man likes the smell of onion."

Needless to say, the demonstration faileth not, and heretofore concealed betrayal within a group of exiled revolutionaries (the Trant stories were collected into hardcover in 1910) is brought to light.

Walter Kateley was another of Hugo Gernsback's science-fiction authors, and first appeared in *Amazing Stories*, February 1928. His contribution to SDM, "A Denizen of the Underworld," deals with a somewhat different subject than the other stories we've seen so far. The blurb puts it succinctly.

One of the most baffling as well as irritating crimes to the average police official is the disappearance of merchandise or goods when there is no apparent reason how the goods vanish.

Sometimes valuables vanish right under the law's nose; yes, even while they are looking on.

And, when the merchandise in question is of semi-fluid consistency, the loss is even more irritating. . . .

The story is not, however, another "invisibility" tale, but has to do with the mysterious disappearance of

regular quantities of flax seed disappearing from a linseed-oil stamp-mill. It's as much a question of "How is it done?" as a question of who is doing it. Aside from the not-too-credible matter of the detective's finding in the bushes a map of the old sewer system, part of which happens to run under the mill, the tale gives an interesting picture of a little-known industry of the period. But there's nothing here which really merits inclusion in a magazine entitled *Scientific Detective*. The leading character does nothing that an ordinary undercover police detective might not have done as readily.

"Black Light" by Henry Leverage, on the other hand, could have gone in Gernsback's science-fiction magazines. In the blurb, the editor cites Henry Leverage as

one of the most famous scientific fiction writers of the decade. He is the author of "Whispering Wires," the famous book which was afterwards produced as a play and which enjoyed a long and successful run in New York before touring the country. In addition to his many popular novels, he has written more than two hundred short stories.

Soon after the success of his first book, he wrote "The White Cypher," "Where Dead Men Walk," "The Shepherd of the Sea," "The Ice Pilot," "The Phantom Alibi," "Purple Limited," producing a first-class novel nearly every year of his writing career. He is the inventor of various electrical devices for magnetic transmissions on automobiles, and an E.E. graduate of the University of Colorado (1916).

There's no indication whether "Black Light" is a reprint or a new story. No matter. It has to do with the Green Ray, or Glow, which is

the newest thing out in the field of electricity and research. It has been promised for some time. A British review foretold the discovery. It remained for Professor Pascal of Ossining to supply the missing link—a prism made of a rare crystal found only in Boulder, Colorado.

What all that adds up to is a sort of negative light. The brains of the little group who plan to make use of the discovery for their own enrichment says:

"... See the game? A Green Ray outfit set down by the door of a bank in the daytime. The switch is turned on. The place becomes greenish—a pit where striking a match is like putting it in ink. Nobody can see anybody. We put the cleaner on the vault and go out through the window."

The plan is for one of them to get into the good graces of Professor Pascal so that the Green Ray apparatus can be stolen. The one chosen to handle that end, however, falls in love with Pascal's niece and the schemes all come to nothing. Another instance of failure of imagination. We never find out whether the use of the apparatus to facilitate bank robbery would have worked out. If nobody can see anything, then the thieves are just as vulnerable as everyone else. After a bit of suspense, we do get more

intricate details and description of the apparatus, as well as a demonstration. But, of course, the precious prism is broken in the end, and that's all, folks. Long before then, the dialect used by the criminals has become tiresome to read.

"Scientific Actuality," this issue, deals with "Science, the Police and the Criminal," and gives a hint of things to come when it describes how some criminals use scientific methods to negate the scientific methods of the police—such as drowning out broadcasts to police radio cars by a stronger signal from a radio station run by criminals. Whether that included what we now know as scrambling radio signals, I couldn't say.

The scientific element in the new two-part serial, "Rays of Death" by Tom Curry, seems rather tame today, but it may not have seemed so then, when the general public had very little knowledge of radium. It was not a book-length story, but a novelet—what we could now call a "novella"—broken into two installments. In those days of the '30s, a "short story" might run to 10,000 or 12,000 words, while 20,000 to 40,000 was called a novelet, and up to 5,000 or 6,000 a short-short.²

The serial deals with a mysterious explosion at the Malloraium Company's plant and the disappearance of \$2,000,000 worth of radium—an ounce. At that time, it was selling at \$70,000 a gram. Mallory has a secret process of refining radium, and his past dealings with associates has been such as to arouse suspicion that the explosion was not accidental and that the radium has been stolen.

During the course of the investigation, Mallory develops some alarming symptoms, and a suspect is discovered either planting or removing a vial of radium from under his mattress—that, of course, is the cover scene. The first installment ends with the capture of the lead-protected intruder. Upon re-reading, it isn't at all a bad story, but could easily enough have appeared in one of the other detective magazines, as there isn't anything in the way of "super" or highly speculative science in it.

"The Readers' Verdict" is a disappointment this issue; not only is it very short, but the comment amounts to little more than "I liked this story," or "I didn't like that one," with little attempt to say why. One of the two readers who mentioned *The Bishop Murder Case*, however, said that he'd read it before and the other said he "liked" it. Comments on the scientific value of the fiction and of the magazine's mission had nothing to add to what we've quoted previously.

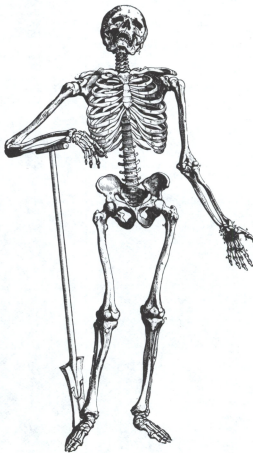
In the "Science Crime Notes," we read that two countries, Prussia and Mexico, are experimenting in more permissive treatment of prisoners who have served a good part of their sentences under good behavior. It's a means of gradually preparing them

for their return to free, civil life; they are put in more comfortable surroundings and are treated with a certain degree of trust. The item does not state how it's all working out, however. There's also a squib about "Fingerprinting Automobile Tires" for the purpose of identifying bandit cars by such means.

Books reviewed (only two this time), are *Lady Can Do* by Samuel Merwin, a whodunit, and *The Man with the Squeaky Voice* by R. A. J. Walling; of the latter, the reviewer notes, "This is essentially a book for detective story fans who like their mysteries to be baffling." □

Notes

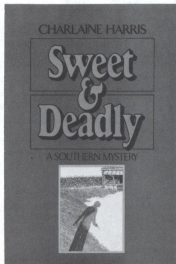
1. Hugo Gernsback admired Tesla greatly and often ran material about his work in such publications as *Science and Invention*, as well as speculating about possible extensions of Tesla's discoveries in various editorials, chiefly in his science-fiction publications.
2. I recall a time, while editorial director of the Columbia pulps, T. W. Ford—an oldtime big name in the pulps—telephoned to say that he was bringing in a short-short detective story with which he was especially pleased. To me, that meant 1,500 to 2,500 words. But what he delivered was a 4,500-word tale. It was good, but not my idea of a short-short.



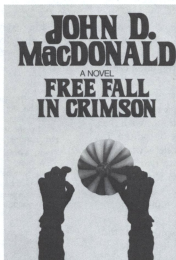
CHECKLIST

MYSTERY, DETECTIVE AND SUSPENSE FICTION PUBLISHED IN THE U.S. APRIL-JULY 1981

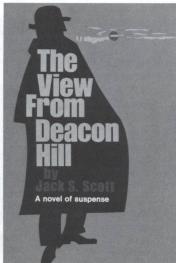
- Amis, Martin: **Other People**. Viking, 12.95
 Babson, Marian: **Dangerous to Know**. Walker, 9.95
 Barth, Richard: **A Ragged Plot**. Dial, 8.95
 Bell, Josephine: **A Question of Inheritance**. Walker, 9.95
 Brett, John: **Who'd Hire Brett?** St. Martin's, 9.95
 Burke, Alan Dennis: **Getting Away with Murder**. Atlantic, 12.95
 Chais, Pamela: **Final Cut**. Simon, 12.95
 Clark, Eric: **Send in the Lions**. Atheneum, 9.95
 Clarke, Anna: **Letter from the Dead**. Doubleday, 9.95
 Clive, John: **Barossa**. Delacorte, 10.95
 Cohan, Tony: **Canary**. Doubleday, 13.95
 Craig, Alisa: **The Grub-and-Stakers Move a Mountain**. Doubleday, 9.95
 Crane, Caroline: **Coast of Fear**. Dodd, 8.95
 Dewhurst, Eileen: **Drink This**. Doubleday, 9.95
 Eberhart, Mignon G.: **Family Affair**. Random, 9.95
 Ferrars, E. X.: **Experiment with Death**. Doubleday, 9.95
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 Freeling, Nicolas: **Arlette**. Pantheon, 10.95
 Gardner, John E.: **License Renewed**. Marek, 9.95
 Gash, Jonathan: **Spend Game**. Ticknor and Fields, 9.95
 Godey, John: **Nella**. Delacorte, 12.95
 Grayson, Richard: **The Death of Abbe Didier**. St. Martin's, 9.95



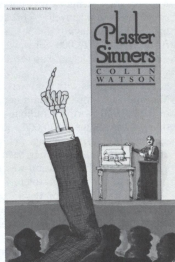
By M. S. Cappadonna



- Harris, Charlene: **Sweet and Deadly**. Houghton, 8.95
 Henege, Thomas: **Death of a Shipowner**. Dodd, 8.95
 Hyman, Vernon Tom: **Giant Killer**. Marek, 12.95
 Kienzle, William X.: **Mind Over Murder**. Andrews, 9.95
 King, Harold, and Lawrence Block: **Code of Arms**. Marek, 12.95
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- Littell, Robert: **The Amateur**. Simon, 12.95
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 McBain, Ed.: **Rumpelstiltskin**. Viking, 12.95
 MacDonald, John D.: **Free Fall in Crimson**. Harper, 9.95
 McGinley, Patrick: **Bogmail**. Ticknor and Fields, 9.95
 McLeave, Hugh: **Second Time Around**. Walker, 9.95
 Maling, Arthur: **From Thunder Bay**. Harper, 11.95
 Margolin, Phillip: **The Last Innocent Man**. Little, 11.95
 Miller, Geoffrey: **The Black Glove**. Viking, 12.95

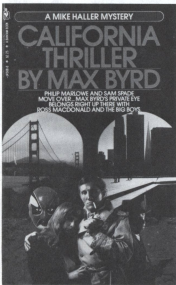


- Olsen, Jack: **Missing Persons**. Atheneum, 12.95
 Patterson, Richard North: **The Outside Man**. Little, 11.95
 Paul, Barbara: **Your Eyelids Are Growing Heavy**. Doubleday, 9.95
 Peters, Elizabeth: **The Curse of the Pharaohs**. Dodd, 9.95
 Peters, Ellis: **Monk's Hood**. Morrow, 9.95
 Peters, Ralph: **Bravo Romeo**. Marek, 11.95
 Petievich, Gerald: **Money Men and One-Shot Deal**. Harcourt, 12.95
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 Quinn, Monica: **Not a Blessed Thing!**. Vanguard, 9.95
 Rathbone, Julian: **Base Case**. Pantheon, 9.95
 Roos, Kelley: **Murder on Martha's Vineyard**. Walker, 9.95
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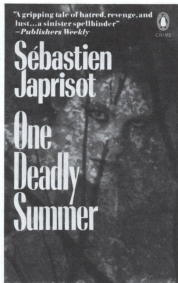
Scott, Jack S.: **The View from Deacon Hill.** Ticknor and Fields, 9.95
 Shannon, Dell: **Murder Most Strange.** Morrow, 10.95
 Shaw, Howard: **Killing No Murder.** Scribners, 8.95
 Simpson, Dorothy: **The Night She Died.** Scribners, 8.95
 Smith, Colin: **Cut-Out.** Viking, 10.95
 Smith, Martin Cruz: **Gorky Park.** Random, 13.95
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 Wager, Walter: **Blue Murder.** Arbor House, 11.95
 Wainwright, John: **Take Murder...** St. Martin's, 9.95
 Watson, Colin: **Plaster Sinners.** Doubleday, 9.95
 Wetering, Janwillem van de: **The Mind-Murderers.** Houghton, 9.95
 Worboys, Anne: **Run, Sara, Run.** Scribners, 10.95
 Wren, M. K.: **Seasons of Death.** Doubleday, 9.95
 Yörke, Margaret: **The Scent of Fear.** St. Martin's, 9.95

Paperbacks

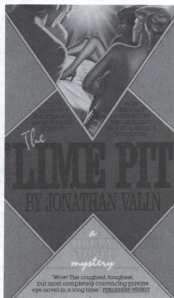
Buckley, William F.: **Saving the Queen.** Avon, 2.75
 Buckley, William F.: **Stained Glass.** Avon, 2.95
 Byrd, Max: **California Thriller.** Bantam, 2.25



Clark, Mary Higgins: **The Cradle Will Fall.** Dell, 3.50
 Gill, Bartholomew: **McGarr at the Dublin Horse Show.** Dell, 2.25
 Japrisot, Sebastian: **One Deadly Summer.** Penguin, 2.95
 Kallen, Lucille: **C. B. Greenfield: The Tanglewood Murder.** Ballantine, 2.25



Kallen, Lucille: **Introducing C. B. Greenfield.** Ballantine, 2.25
 Langton, Jane: **Dark Nantucket Moon.** Penguin, 2.95
 Lewin, Michael Z.: **Outside In.** Berkley, 2.25
 Lewin, Michael Z.: **The Silent Salesman.** Berkley, 2.25
 Mitchell, Gladys: **Winking at the Brim.** Dell, 2.25
 Parker, Robert B.: **Looking for Rachel Wallace.** Dell, 2.50
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 Thomas, Craig: **Snow Falcon.** Bantam, 2.95
 Truman, Margaret: **Murder in the White House.** Fawcett, 2.95
 Valin, Jonathan: **The Lime Pit.** Avon, 2.25



Van Lustbader, Eric: **Ninja.** Fawcett, 3.50
 Wheately, Dennis: **The Malinsky Massacre.** Rutledge, 17.95





THE WALLACE CASE

That a story is true is no proof of its worth. And sometimes a too strict adherence to the truth can blur the telling of a tale. Everyone has at one time been annoyed by some great bore interrupting a story-teller to correct some minor detail of no consequence. When entertainment is the objective to be attained, truth can often be restrictive and confining. But true crime books have their own fascination, for here the problem posed by the crime has been tested, not only by the professional police, but often by hindsight and the more perceptive thinking of the writer.

By the test of demand, books on real crimes have but a fraction of the audience which the best detective or suspense novel commands. It might be claimed from this that the disposition of most readers is to escape from reality into the fiction of the novel. Whatever the reason, true crime rates well below fiction both in numbers of books published and in the size of printings. Yet there are good, even great, books devoted to true cases in which the thoughtful reader can find all the imagination, good writing, and suspense of fiction. He will also discover that the real cases quickly reappear under the guise of fiction; a *roman à clef* is a fancy name for literary piracy from real life. A famous example is "The Murder of Marie Røget" by Edgar Allan Poe, who based his story on the case of Mary Rogers, whose body was found in the Hudson River and which Poe transposed to Paris. Literary researchers have already disclosed how Poe changed his original solution of the case as the investigation proceeded, and for years Poe was credited with a solution he never really made.

But here we are concerned, not with some real case transposed to fiction, but with the unadorned truth as best the writer sees it. The great cases of real life, even when believed "solved," have their own mysteries which are the indispensable ingredients of the masterpiece of crime. If Lizzie Borden did it, the unanswered question is how, not who.

I intend in this and later articles to give the

fiction aficionado a look at some of the great cases of real-life crime that he might compare with the fictional tales he reads. Usually played with a smaller cast, with less *outré* or bizarre elements, the problem posed is nonetheless one to tax human reasoning. As an initial example, I will use the Wallace case, that playground of the Detection Club of London and a delight to all true Connoisseurs. Murder in the DeQuinceyan sense.

William Herbert Wallace was a fifty-two-year-old insurance agent living in complete compatibility with his wife Julia at 29 Wolverton Street, Liverpool. On the evening of June 19, 1931, a telephone message was left for Wallace at a chess club where he was expected. A Mr. Quallrough asked that Wallace call at his house at 25 Menlove Gardens East on the following night at 7:30. The caller explained that it was in the nature of Wallace's business and that his daughter's twenty-first birthday was coming up. After he arrived at the club, Wallace was given the message, at which time he remarked that he knew no Quallrough and "Where," he asked, "was Menlove Gardens East?"

The following evening, Wallace left his home at 6:45 P.M., and thereafter his movements by tram and foot were traceable as he wandered through Menlove Gardens, North, South and West, searching in vain for a non-existent Menlove Gardens East. At 8:45 P.M., he was back at his own doorstep, having difficulty getting into the house and finally effecting an entrance in the presence of his neighbors, the Johnstons, by way of the back door. Entering the house, he discovered his wife dead in the living room, her head brutally smashed, blood and brains oozing on the rug. The weapon used by the assailant was never found. Except for the small sum of £4 which Wallace said was missing from a jar, there was no evidence of forced entry or theft, and the police directed their investigation into Wallace's movements. On February 2, the insurance agent was arrested and charged with the murder.

The trial which followed was most unusual in that there was no substantial disagreement between the prosecution and the defense in the facts as presented; it was chiefly in the conclusions drawn from that evidence that the sides parted ways. For example, the prosecution concluded that Wallace had used the telephone booth near his home while on his way to the chess club to make the call on the night preceding the murder. The defense on the other hand claimed that the murderer could have waited until Wallace left the house

Real Life Cases

CRIME HUNT

By T. M. McDade

by watching for him and had then called from the booth after he had gone. Likewise, Wallace's conduct in the search for the address given, his questions of the tram conductor, shop keepers, a policeman, and others was, to the prosecution, devised to make these people recall his presence there at that time. His lawyer on the other hand pictured him as merely a diligent insurance agent trying to find a prospective client.

Wallace went to trial in April, and, while there was a slight conflict in the evidence on the time of death, the Crown medical witness placing it possibly as early as 6:10 P.M., while a defense witness claimed to have seen the victim alive at 6:30 P.M., there was really no great conflict in the evidence. The charge of the presiding judge was eminently fair, and even the prosecution must have been surprised when the jury returned in an hour with a verdict of guilty, a verdict which at that time meant only one thing: a death sentence. An appeal was taken from the conviction, and then, wonder of wonders, the verdict was overturned, because, as the court said, the case "was not proved with that certainty which is necessary in order to justify a verdict of guilty." In the twenty-five years since the appeals court was founded, this was only the third time the appeal had been allowed in a death sentence.

This brief outline does not do justice to a case which leaves us with a great many unanswered questions. Independent of the judicial ruling in Wallace's favor, we can ask, if not beyond a reasonable doubt, was there even a preponderance of evidence against Wallace? First, not a shred of a motive was even suggested for Wallace to kill his wife. The couple lived together quite agreeably as far as anyone knew. The prosecution offered no motive; its investigation there had turned up a blank. There were no money problems, no girlfriends, no secret vices. Yet if it were Wallace, it was not a crime of sudden passion—an explosion of rage. The telephone call of the night before, if made by him, was to provide an excuse for his absence and allow time for another to commit the crime. The telephone call, like much of the evidence, pointed both ways. By a strange quirk, the telephone company was able to identify the origin of the call to the chess club as being made from the call box only four hundred yards from the Wallace home. The prosecutor could point out that the box was near and had, in fact, been previously used by Wallace. To the defense, it was just the place to be used by the unknown caller who had

watched Wallace leave home for the chess club and could safely call before he arrived.

The evidence also seems clear that it was not Wallace who made the call. The club captain who took the message testified that it was not a muffled or disguised voice, nor was it in any manner like Wallace's voice. Neither the telephone operator who handled the call, nor the waitress as the club who first received it, thought the voice was anything but the natural speaking voice of the caller.

Much was made at the trial of Wallace's imperturbable manner on discovering his wife's body and thereafter, but his conduct, though it might not accord with one's own idea of how a husband should react on discovering his wife brutally murdered, was not inconsistent with his behavior throughout his life—his remote, rather cold and distant manner, with which people marked him as an unemotional and undemonstrative man.

The attempts to "solve" the case have failed because none of the inquiries have answered the real question, "Why was Julia Wallace murdered?"

The fact is that we know very little about this lady; she is such a shadowy figure that we have not even the vaguest idea why someone might kill her. Wallace himself underwent considerable investigation, both by the police and by the press; we also have his own biography, written by him after his release for a public journal. But of Julia Wallace we know of a few skills and preoccupations, but of what she thought or felt, sought or feared, we are in the dark. She seems to have been better educated than her husband, she was modestly accomplished on the piano, and assisted in some church functions, but of her interior life we know little. And few of the acquaintances of the Wallaces saw the inside of their home.

In none of the books I have read on the case is there posed the query whether "Qualtrough" might have arranged his visit in the absence of Wallace with no thought in his mind of killing Julia Wallace. If he were an outsider, he came with no weapon and had no reason to expect that one would be in the sitting room, easy to hand if needed. For the police had concluded that the murder weapon was a small iron bar kept in the living room fireplace, which disappeared at the time of the crime. Did the result of his encounter with Mrs. Wallace drive him into such a frenzy as to grab the first article at hand? Still more, why carry it off when he departed? Its mere presence on his person could spell his own death warrant, while leaving it on the scene could not incriminate him.

The prosecutor's case against Wallace was skillfully made up of an accumulation of small pieces of evidence, some but the slightest shading of expression, a seemingly callous aside, a gratuitous remark, with the sum of all pointing to his guilt. On leaving the chess club with two members, Wallace again adverted to the telephone call. He remarked, "Qualtrough—it's a funny name. I have not heard it. Have you?" The next evening, as he boards a tram, he asks the conductor, "Does this car go to Menlove Gardens East?" And after riding a bit, he reminds the man, "You

won't forget, mister. I want Menlove Gardens East." Changing to another tram, he asks the conductor to be put off at Menlove Gardens East, and as he leaves the car the conductor points to Menlove Gardens West and says that Menlove Gardens East is probably in that direction. Wallace then remarks, "Thank you. I am a complete stranger here." And there were others. A clerk in a store tells Wallace there is no Menlove Gardens East, and Wallace says that he will try Menlove Gardens West. The tenant at Menlove Gardens West testified to Wallace's calling there and asking for a Mr. Qualtrough. And finally, a police constable is met who tells Wallace there is no Menlove Gardens East and suggests he try Menlove Avenue. To the officer, Wallace states, "I am an insurance agent looking for a Mr. Qualtrough, who rang up the club and left a message for me to see Mr. Qualtrough at 25 Menlove Gardens East." Then Wallace volunteers, "It is not eight o'clock yet," and pulls out his watch. The constable does likewise and confirmed the time as a quarter to eight.

No one remark is unusual in the circumstances; each of us can conceive himself saying the same things. But taken cumulatively, they sound like a man obsessed with impressing the details on his casual hearers.

Then there was the manner of Wallace's attempt to gain entry to his home on his return. The story is told by Wallace and observed in part by his neighbors, the Johnstons. "I returned home and went to the front door. I inserted my key to find I could not open it. I went round to the back yard door; it was closed but not bolted. I went up the back yard and tried the back (kitchen) door; but it would not open. I again went to the front door, but this time I found the door to be bolted. I hurried round the back and up the back yard and tried the back door, and this time found it would open." It must be noted that each of these trips from front to back and vice versa involved more than just going around the house. As it was one of a row of attached houses, to get from front to back it was necessary to go down the street past several houses to a narrow entryway which gave access to the rear of the houses and their back yards. When Wallace made his final return from the front to the back, he met his neighbors, the Johnstons, leaving their house, which adjoined Wallace's. Mrs. Johnston greeted him, "Good evening, Mr. Wallace." Wallace replied with a question, "Have you heard anything unusual tonight?" He then explained, "When I returned just now, I found the front door locked against me. I've been to the front door and the back." When Mr. Johnston asked if he had tried the back kitchen door, Wallace replied, "Yes, but I couldn't open it." As Wallace then walked to the back kitchen door to try it again, he said, "She won't be out. She has such a bad cold, as he twisted the doorknob, he seemed surprised as he said, "It opens now."

Is this the act of a guilty man dragging out his entry on the scene of a crime, reluctant to go in alone? If this were a pose that Wallace

was putting on, what in his past would suggest such convincing talent as an actor as to impress every witness who accepted each of his remarks as appropriate to the circumstances?

In these few words, I have but skimmed over the evidence and the problems of a case of which Edgar Lustgarten has written, "As a mental analysis, as a challenge to one's powers of deduction and analysis, the Wallace murder is in a class by itself." For the dedicated reader of detective fiction, I offer this puzzle as an introduction to a real-life crime. And for a starter I can suggest no better book than Jonathan Goodman's *The Killing of Julia Wallace*. Here will be found all the theories and hypotheses, the blind alleys, the off-stage remarks, and the fruits of many later inquiries, as well as the arguments pro and con put forward by all his predecessors in attempting to solve the Wallace riddle. When you have read the book, you will probably take one side or the other, for in this case there are few neutrals. As Goodman himself says, "You are *for* Wallace. Or *against* him. You are certain he was *innocent*. Or certain he was *guilty*." That is the choice.

Major Works on the Wallace Case

Books

- W. F. Wyndham-Brown, editor. *The Trial of William Herbert Wallace*. London, 1933.
John Rowland. *The Wallace Case*. London, 1949.
Veale, F. J. P. *The Wallace Case*. Privately printed, 1950.
Yesselt Bridges. *Two Studies in Crime*. London, 1959.
Jonathan Goodman. *The Killing of Julia Wallace*. London & New York, 1969.

Articles

- Six Trials* edited by Winifred Duke (chapter entitled "The Perfect Case" by Winifred Duke). London, 1934.
The Anatomy of Murder by Members of the Detection Club, edited by Helen Simpson (chapter entitled "The Murder of Julia Wallace" by Dorothy Sayers). London, 1936.
Murder By Persons Unknown by John Rowland (chapter entitled "The Death of Julia Wallace"). London, 1941.
Verdict in Dispute by Edgar Lustgarten (chapter entitled "William Herbert Wallace"). New York, 1950.
"Reconstructing the Crime." *The Times Literary Supplement*, May 8, 1959.

Novels based on the case

- The Jury Disagreed* by George Goodchield and Bechofer Roberts. London, 1934.
Skin for Skin by Winifred Duke. London, 1935.
The Telephone Call by John Rhode. London, 1948.



THE PAPERBACK REVOLUTION

ROBERT BARNARD

Marvin Lachman's famous article "Murder at the Opera" should have included **Death on the High C's** (1977) (Dell). This delightful British mystery novel limns the world of provincial opera with an eye that is as accurate as it is satiric, and while not Barnard's best novel, it is certainly his most entertaining effort.

E. C. BENTLEY

Trent Intervenes (1938) (Dover) contains a dozen short stories of salient merit and displays this author's ability to perform distinguished work in the short form. Several stories are anthology favorites, and this collection has also been included in *Queen's Quorum*.

ANTHONY BERKELEY

The hitherto blameless Lawrence Todhunter decides to commit a perfect murder against the most obnoxious person he can find when he discovers he has only six months to live. All goes well until an innocent person is accused of the crime, and Todhunter is obliged to turn detective in order to prevent a miscarriage of justice in the often reprinted **Trial and Error** (1937) (Dell). This is an absolute masterpiece, and the best novel to bear the "Berkeley" signature.

LEO BRUCE

Case with Ropes and Rings (1949) (Academy Chicago Ltd.) features the worthy Sergeant Beef and his chronicler, Lionel Townsend, in a case that starts with an apparent suicide in the gymnasium of an exclusive private school for boys. Beef's investigation seems too leisurely for the irascible Townsend who thinks he has solved this problem. In the meantime, the author provides us with wit and classic detection that is subtle and ingenious.

V. C. CLINTON-BADDELEY

Dr. R. V. Davie arrives at the sleepy English village of King's Lacey to attend the annual festival but is somewhat disconcerted to find himself embroiled in problems of industrial espionage and murder in **Only a Matter of Time** (1969) (Dell). Four (of five) novels by this foremost practitioner of golden age values have been published in America, and of that group *Only a Matter of Time* is the author's best and warmest work.

N. J. CRISP

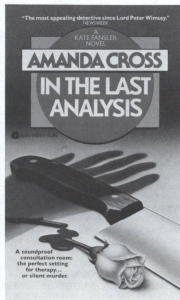
The Odd Job Man (1979) (Avon) is the portrait of a loser who is forced to take on extra-curricular, and usually illegal, "assignments" in order to supplement his very insufficient salary as an encyclopedia salesman. This is an intriguing and often suspenseful combination of the gangster novel and the spy story—with the accent on the latter.

By Charles Shibuk



EDMUND CRISPIN

Gervase Fen's fourth investigation, **Swan Song** (1947) (Avon) (Avon), was formerly published as *Dead and Dumb* and concerns the murder of an unlovable opera singer in a locked dressing room. *Swan Song* is noted for its



humor, but it must be counted as a distinctly minor Crispin work.

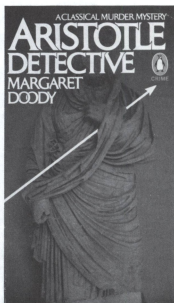
On the other hand, the sixteen short stories in **Beware of the Trains** (1953) (Penguin) are highly regarded by most critics. This is Crispin's first (and best) collection, and the emphasis here is on classic detection. *Beware of the Trains* is another *Queen's Quorum* selection, and it too displays its creator's expertise in the short form.

AMANDA CROSS

A coed's request for the name of a skilled psychiatrist leads to her own untimely murder, and Professor Kate Fansler (in her debut) is forced to abandon the confines of her academic life in order to solve this horrifying crime in **The Last Analysis** (1964) (Avon).

ELIZABETH DALY

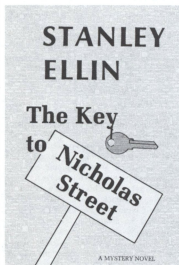
A widow being held incommunicado in a Hudson River mansion is threatened with commitment to a mental institution by her in-laws but manages to send an appeal for help in the form of a crossword puzzle to Henry Gamadge in **Death and Letters** (1950) (Dell). The work of Agatha Christie's favorite American mystery writer has been out of print for much too long, and one hopes that we shall soon see more.



MARGARET DOODY

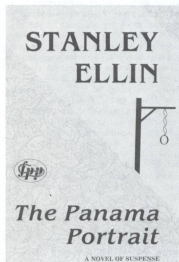
Aristotle Detective (1980) (Penguin) is set in 332 B.C. Athens, features the bow-and-arrow murder of an exemplary citizen, and is investigated by the young cousin of the

recently exiled chief suspect. This excellently written historical detective story starts slowly but accelerates in interest as it proceeds and winds up with a flourish, stage-managed by the famous Greek philosopher, in a dramatic courtroom revelation.



STANLEY ELLIN

Foul Play Press continues to reprint early novels by this notable author. One of the best is *The Key to Nicholas Street* (1952), which is about the murder of a beautiful commercial artist in a quiet neighborhood and is told from a variety of viewpoints. Authorities disagree as to whether or not the powerful *The Winter After This Summer* (1960) or *The Panama Portrait* (1962) are crime fiction. Be that as it may, both are now available.



STEPHEN GLAZIER

The Lost Provinces (Avon, 1981) is a long first novel, issued in trade paperback, that its

publisher labels as a novel of high adventure. It's an evocative portrait of France's pre-World War I artistic crises and tells a creditable tale of political intrigue that is set in motion with the unexplained death of a street acrobat. It's a very capably written, low-key work—sometimes subtle, sometimes confusing—that has its moments of physical action but lacks the sheer excitement that would justify its ambitious subtitle.

CYRIL HARE

Tenant for Death (1937) (Dover) marks this author's debut and introduces series character Inspector John Mallet, who is faced with a complex problem involving the murder of a financier whose body is found in a South Kensington flat. This is not a major Hare novel, but if you like British detective stories from the '30s you will find this work richly rewarding.

MATTHEW HEAD

Dr. Mary Finney, a medical missionary on a visit to Paris, stumbles onto the corpse of a night club owner and is obliged to help investigate this problem in *Murder at the Flea Club* (1955) (Perennial). This is a likeable and very readable novel, but it suffers from a lack of narrative drive and tension, and its ratiocinative qualities seem to have been overrated by several prominent critics. Another Dr. Finney investigation, *The Cabinda Affair* (1949), is available from the same publisher.



ELSPETH HUXLEY

The African Poison Murders (1937) was originally published in England as *Death of an Aryan*. Its author is not as well known as her cousins, Aldous and Julian, but Miss Huxley deserves greater recognition in her own field of mystery writing. Perhaps Perennial's publication of this novel, starring series character Superintendent Vachell, involving a Nazi Bund, and filled with romance, suspense, murder, detection, and good local color will help.

PETER LOVESEY

Invitation to a Dynamite Party (1974) (Penguin) was originally published here as *The Tick of Death* and is now reissued in conjunction with the *Mystery!* TV series. This quietly understated thriller deals with a group devoted to securing Ireland's independence from Victorian England, and its wit, character interplay, clever construction, and narrative momentum lead to a suspenseful and exciting climax in one of the better entries from the Sergeant Cribb series.

PATRICIA MOYES

Chief Superintendent Henry Tibbett is requested by his superior to attend the birthday party of elderly and eccentric Lady Balaclava, who fears her life may be in danger. Her subsequent death is immediately diagnosed as foul play via poison, but the post-mortem calls it death by natural causes in *Many Deadly Returns* (1970) (Dell). This admirable specimen of the classic form combines the mystery weekend party with the perfect crime, is also one of this author's best recent novels, and is a thorough delight.

THOMAS STERLING

The Evil of the Day (1955) (Perennial) is a vivid study of greed set in a decaying mansion in present-day Venice that has its genesis in Ben Jonson's famous play *Volpone*. This highly regarded work is a cross between the crime novel and the detective story and boasts superior characterization, plot, wit, and narrative excitement.

JONATHAN VALIN

The Lime Pit (1980) (Avon) is narrated by Cincinnati private eye Harry Stoner, who is hired by an elderly man to find the runaway teenage girl who had recently been living with him. This novel is neither original nor exhilarating, but it is powerful, and a very good example of the meritorious work currently being produced in the hard-boiled form.

HENRY KITCHELL WEBSTER

The mystery writer career of this important author from Illinois has been detailed by Wendell Harty Taylor in TAD 5:4. Webster's best known work *Who Is the Next?* (1931) (Perennial) concerns a substantial inheritance, several murders, amateur aviation, and a charming love story set in a small town near Chicago, and represents the paperback debut of an extremely talented and engaging writer.

ANNA MARY WELLS

A Talent for Murder (1942) involves a woman recently acquitted of murder who doubts her own innocence. *Murderer's Choice* (1943) concerns cousins who loathe each other, a will drawn by one in the other's favor, and the accusation of the latter for the former's murder. Perennial, whose reprinting efforts shame most of the other paperback publishers, presents these little-known, but worthy and civilized, detective novels. □

PAPER CRIMES

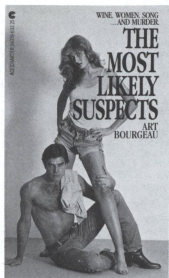
By William L. DeAndrea

Back around Edgar time, I was on a panel at B. Dalton's big bookstore here in New York. Someone in the audience asked a question about style, which gave me, for the first time, a chance to enunciate in public my philosophy (okay, call it a dogma, or even an obsession) about style in the mystery story.

It is this: Every sentence, every word in a mystery story should be aimed at one of the following ends. 1. To advance the plot. 2. To set a mood. 3. To develop a character. 4. To get a laugh.

But I forgot to mention something: Numbers 2, 3, and 4 are wasted if you don't take care of number 1.

I was reminded of all this when I read Art Bourgeau's *The Most Likely Suspects* (Charter, \$2.25). Rarely have I been so frustrated while I was sitting up. There is the stuff of a first rate mystery story here; there just isn't any mystery.



The Most Likely Suspects is the second of Bourgeau's books about Snake and F. T., ex-marines and good-old-boys who wander the South meeting women, drinking booze, and running into murders. This time, the boys visit F. T.'s college, a high-class institution for southern gentlemen. People start to get killed in satisfyingly bizarre ways — this is probably the first time, for example, an empty fly tank has ever been used as a murder weapon.

There is a lot of humor along the way (number 4). Bourgeau has the greatest collection of raunchy remarks and stories since Chaucer, none of the best of which can be

repeated here. Snake and F. T. have grown as characters since the first book (number 3); they've developed some endearing chinks in their macho. Other characters, particularly a crusty old professor, are well drawn. The college atmosphere is beautifully evoked (number 2), in all its simultaneous dignity and infantilism.

But there's *no plot*. There could have been, with a little work — there are ample opportunities to plant clues all through the story. But about twenty pages from the end, the killer is just *revealed*, and his motive is pulled out of a hat by a clue that the reader doesn't get to see.

If an author is going to *tell* who the killer is, he should do it up front, so we can read the book as a howcatchem instead of a whodunit. As I said, frustrating. Bourgeau is on the verge of doing something very rare in this business — creating a new kind of detective. Snake and F. T. and their picaresque adventures look like sustainable stuff, fresh and welcome. All the author has to do is get them in a *detective* story, or *any* kind of story (read "plot") for God's sake, and there'll be no stopping them.

I was eager to pick up *Fieldwork* by Maria Danielle (Avon, \$2.25) because of its nifty cover (Avon has a great art department — their covers have made me a few bucks, I'm sure) and because of its intriguing premise: An American woman, an anthropologist, becomes the lover of the president of a (slowly) emerging African nation. She's in bed with him the night he's overthrown by the army, but manages to escape to France with documents vital to the economic future of the country. Naturally, everybody wants them; the woman has to run for her life all over Paris, and she learns a lot in the process.

As I said, I was eager. Then I read the first chapter, and I knew there was a rocky road ahead. This passage, for instance:

"... She took off her blouse and bra, and slipped off her sandals. . . . She turned and walked to Moussa's desk in the corner of the large room. He was reading, so she leaned over the desk, slightly, until her breasts almost touched his face. He looked up, a bit annoyed. . . ."

"Laura was embarrassed. . . . She wanted to excite him, so that he would forget about work for awhile. But she didn't really know how to do it. If her seminudity and suggestive look could not excite him, she had too much dignity to try anything else."

It's always a sign of trouble when the critic begins to doubt he and the author are speaking the same language. I mean, I can't speak for any woman, and certainly not for Maria Danielle, but my dictionary indicates that

when a woman is trying to get the attention of a man who isn't interested, dignity departs some time *before* the waving-breasts-in-the-face stage.

Anyway, after about 150 pages of questionable diction, unnecessary and anti-erotic sex scenes, and the lack of a single character I'd be tempted to walk across the street to talk to, I gave up.

Harlequin's new Raven House line has issued paperback originals by a pair of old pros (each \$1.75) with mixed results.

Ron Goulart's *Ghosting* is a delight. The reader should be aware that the Schtick Detective (the person who must solve a crime in order to get on with his regular work, such work being instrumental to the plot) is one of my favorite types of mystery, but the reader should also be aware that *Ghosting* is a delight anyway.

The schtick in this case is cartooning, something Goulart knows something about as the creator (with artist Gil Kane) of the Star Hawks syndicated comic strip. A young artist, recently divorced, gets a chance to ghost the famous strip of a Harold Gray-type cartoonist — whom he never sees. Events lead us here to suspect the old man is dead. Is he? And if so, who killed him? And why? (Sounds sort of like a Gothic, doesn't it? Well, it sort of is, with a man as the innocent new comer, and the cartoonist's granddaughter as the dark, mysterious love interest.) Everything is fairly clued and plausible.

The best thing about the book is Goulart's style. In all his mystery and science-fiction work, he has a way of creating a world that is just about as obtuse and crazy as you are secretly afraid it is — i.e., just one tiny smidgeon more obtuse and crazy than it really is. It makes for good, but gentle, satire. This time the cartoon and comic book world gets the treatment. It's all a lot of fun.

Much less successful is Hilary Waugh's Raven House effort, *The Glenna Powers Case*. One thing this book does accomplish is to remove the last doubts that Harlequin would lift its squeaky-clean sweet romance guidelines for its mystery series. Every woman in the book, except Glenna Powers (who gets killed early) appears before narrator-hero Simon Kaye scantily clad or naked. And, as we see, private eyes are not made of wood. Twice.

The book is readable enough — I suspect Waugh's grocery lists are readable — but it is silly. The plot reads like a celebration of Raymond Chandler Week, featuring as it does a drug-taking nymphomaniac, a crippled millionaire, his nubile daughter, his even more nubile wife, assorted pushers and thugs, the saloon that harbors dark secrets on the upper floors, cops crooked and otherwise, and the private eye's boyhood friend who is



now a priest. It's not surprising that with all that going on, Waugh forgot to provide the killer with a credible motive.

The book is not as bad as I've probably made it sound. If it had another name on it, I might have recommended it as a harmless time-killer. But Hillary Waugh is the author of classics like *Last Seen Wearing* and *The Young Prey*. Compared to those, this one looks like he phoned it in.

I was talking about covers before. Some books, like *Fieldwork*, wind up with the covers being the best thing about them. Others, like *The Uninvited Guest* by Barbara Kennedy (Fawcett, \$2.50) aren't served as well.

The Uninvited Guest is packaged like a had-I-but-known romantic suspense job, complete with couple holding hands among orchids against a background of magenta. What it is is a cleanly written, nicely drawn little slice of rural Florida police procedural, combined with an amateur detective of whom I would like to see more.

The story opens at the beachfront party following the wedding of the granddaughter of the richest man in town. A boat floats up to shore with a dead body in it, ending the party.

The police, each of whom has some personal axe to grind, investigate, as does Penn Elliott, retired general, United States Air Force Intelligence, who was a guest at the wedding.

It is soon discovered that the body is that of an old boyfriend of the newlywed granddaughter, and things get complicated from there.

Barbara Kennedy's writing reminds me, in pacing and mood, of Dell Shannon, or Lillian

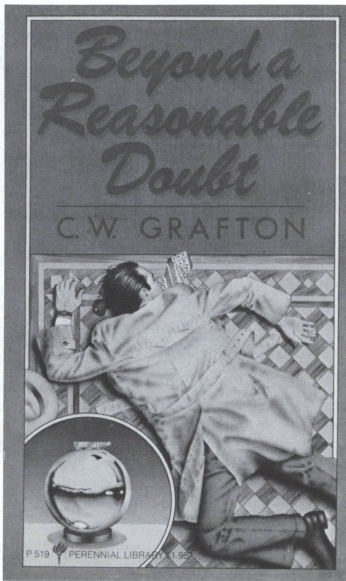
O'Donnell, only tougher. Unlike the other two, Ms. Kennedy is willing to use an unsympathetic character for point of view, and this puts a sharper edge on the book.

Nice work. Especially good is Elliott's romance with portrait painter Dru Alexander—it is adult, respectful, and (most important) germane to character and plot.

Finally, I want to call your attention to a book that's not a paperback original but a reprint in the Harper Perennial Library series. It's *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* by C. W. Grafton, and it's the best mystery I've read in about a year and a half. It's a first-person crime story, à la Francis Iles or Richard Hull, with a difference—the murder-

er is an unalloyed good guy. This is a terrific book, recommended without reservation.

I don't know anything about C. W. Grafton except he probably lived in Ohio or Kentucky, he probably was a lawyer, and that according to Hubin's bibliography he was the author of two other books, *The Rat Begun To Gnaw the Rope* and *The Rope Begun To Hang the Butcher*, both of which are excellent, each of which left me wanting more, or, failing that, left me wanting to know how somebody could write three books this good and then stop. I am willing to be educated by any of our footnote-slinging readers if they happen to know or can find out. □



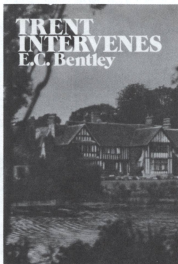
Minor Offenses

By H. Edward Hunsburger

"You have to make an effort, you have to play the hand out," a character philosophizes in the final paragraph of Lawrence Block's "Going Through the Motions" (*Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* 8/81). The line typifies the dark undercurrent that runs through this carefully-plotted kidnap tale. The story itself is deceptively simple. One old friend aiding another in the ransoming of his abducted daughter. What lifts it out of the ordinary is the way Block interweaves the *sense* of a man who's lost control, gone past the point of no return. This foreshadowing never overpowers the story or breaks in on the mounting tension that carries it to its conclusion. In short, this is Block in top form.

H. R. F. Keating, winner of this year's Golden Dagger award for his novel *The Murder of the Maharaja*, abandons India for England in "Mrs. Craggs and a Certain Lady's Town House" (*Mystery* 7/81). The title character is a keen-eyed London char with a knack for problem solving. We follow her through a single day of service at a garden party and a series of incidents involving such diverse elements as a corgi dog, a bearskin hat, flamingoes and Devil's Snitchbane. The story works, but not because of its plot. One complex problem, instead of the multiple

minor ones, would have better served to show off the talents of the admirable Mrs. Craggs. What does make the story well worth reading is the quality of Keating's writing. Along with



style and grace, it has that underrated attribute called *charm*, something that's practically a British monopoly these days.

Stunt man Tex Hill's "Just a Gag" (*Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* 7/81) is a first story and a good one. Hill draws heavily on his professional background to build a narrative around an aging western star, an arrogant young actor, and, of course, a stunt man. As with many first stories, the ending doesn't come as a total surprise. But Hill handles character, mood and dialogue with the ease of a natural. A very promising debut.

Two brief notes of interest to mystery short story fans. First, Dover Publications has reissued the 1938 collection *Trent Intervenes* by E. C. Bentley, with an even dozen classic tales of deduction from the Golden Age. And second, be on the lookout for *Black Cat*, a new mystery magazine being published in Canada. More on that in my next column.

Finally, I'd like to add that I'd hoped to cover a lot more ground in this third column. At least twice the number of stories, as well as more collections and anthologies. Unfortunately, conflicting book and magazine deadlines made this impossible. Now that *that* problem is solved, I'll try to bring you more extensive coverage in the issues to come. □



LETTERS

From Paul R. Moy:

It has just been discovered that three entries to Anthony Berkeley's works are incorrect [in the bibliography which appeared in TAD 14:3]. Please amend as follows:

"In the Aspidochelone" Part IV of "Behind the Screen" (BBC radio serial, broadcast 5 July 1930). Published in *The Listener*, 9 July 1930.

"Tracing Tracey" Part V of "The Scoop" (BBC radio serial, broadcast 14 February 1931). Published in *The Listener*, 18 February 1931.

"Bond Street or Broad Street?" Part IX of "The Scoop" (BBC radio serial, broadcast 14 March 1931). Published in *The Listener*, 18 March 1931.

* * * * *

From Doug Greene:

I am grateful to AJH for the kind review of my edition of John Dickson Carr's *The Door to Doom and Other Detections*. I fully agree that it would have been nice if we had included some of Carr's previously unpublished radio scripts. We had hoped to do so, but the scripts were not available when the book had to go to press. Now, however—with Mrs. Carr's kind permission—we have copied some 75 Carr scripts used on British radio. Of these, around 50 are mysteries, including three previously unknown adventures of Dr. Fell, quite a few impossible crimes, some early versions of plots that later appeared in Carr novels, and several serials. The best is an eight-parter called *Speak of the Devil* about the ghostly manifestations of a young woman hanged for murder ("On my last public appearance I was hanged by the neck until dead"). We now have almost all Carr's scripts for *Suspense* and *Appointment with Fear*, but we still lack his plays for the 1948 series *Cabin B-13*, which was quite different from his *Suspense* drama of the same name. I hope that we can someday make Carr's scripts available in book form.

I am gathering additions and corrections to the Carr bibliography printed in *Door to Doom*, and I shall be grateful to TADians for sending me any material (627 New Hampshire Avenue, Norfolk, VA 23508). When I have enough material, I'll mimeograph the results and send the list to anyone in exchange for an SASE. I'll send more details to a future letters column.

I am trying also to gather as much material on John Dickson Carr as possible. I'll be greatly in the debt of anyone who will send me reminiscences about Carr, or copies of letters from Carr that they may have received. Clarice Carr has given me permission to make copies of all material relating to her husband.

The Spring 1981 TAD was a very strong issue. Diana Cooper-Clark asked Ruth Rendell some fascinating questions, and Ms. Rendell gave eloquent answers, though I



would like to know more about such mundane things as how she constructs her stories. I've always found it odd what an author thinks of his/her own works. Rendell clearly likes her crime novels better than her Wexford series, but I disagree. Her crime novels seem to me standard stuff—of the "how I felt as I committed murder" style—but her Wexford stories are simply splendid. On the level of character, which is Rendell's strength, I find her Wexford stories more sympathetic, more gentle, and more rounded than her rather tortured crime novels. But whatever Rendell works we prefer, she is clearly a dominant force in the modern mystery story.

It was good also to see such fine treatments of Clayton Rawson and of Dorothy Sayers. James Kingman's article on Carr is quite interesting. He's right that often Carr over-used coincidence, but I doubt that he would have minded the criticism. When Anthony Boucher criticized one of his novels, he responded, "I'm unrepentant." Carr positively liked improbability, and most of the time he introduced it in such a way that the reader finds the coincidences acceptable. I had never noticed the error in *The Crooked Hinge*. I wonder whether it could have been avoided by having a taller villain, a taller hedge, and knees. In another of his highly praised works, *The Judas Window*, there are two utterly impossible parts to the solution. I disagree that "Carr got away with fooling us because . . . from past experience we know his explanations are ingenious and correct; therefore we don't bother to think them through any more." I think that Carr at his best was simply such a superb storyteller that he carried us along by the exuberance of his characters and his plots. We admire a magician's dexterity to the extent that we cease to ask whether it could have happened.

* * * * *

From Victor A. Berch:

This is my first letter to TAD, and I must say that I have relished every issue that I have read to date. Although I am not by definition a crime or detective aficionado, I do consider myself a literary detective and therefore am writing this letter.

Because Allen J. Hubin's *Bibliography of*

Crime Fiction, 1749-1975 is so closely associated with TAD, I am wondering if some small column or department might be generated to include additional information which falls within the framework of that bibliography. I feel certain that the readers of TAD would welcome such information on a quarterly basis rather than wait for a new, revised and updated edition.

Obviously, I do have some information to start the ball rolling; so, for openers, I would like to share the following list of pseudonyms with the readers of TAD:

Abbott, Sandra	pseud. of Robert Devaney
Alexander, Jan	" Victor Jerome Banis
Ames, Clyde	" William Knowles
Anders, E. J.	" E. J. Anders Lype
Bishop, Mary	" Beverly Mason
Cabot, Isabel	" Isabel Capreol
Cameron, Kate	" Linda DuBret
Cardiff, Sarah jt. pseud. of	Rebecca Kavaler
	Louise DeCormier
	Gloria Kirchheimer
Carol, Robin pseud. of	Camille Bourgeois
Cerra, Gerda Ann	" Dean Ray Kooztz
Clark, Al C.	" Donald Goines
Corner, Eric	" Jerrold Mundis
Creighton, JoAnne	" Joseph L. Chadwick
Dwyer, Deanne	" Dean Ray Kooztz
Grace, Alicia	" Irving A. Greenfield
Grey, Naidra	" Naidra Cockshut
Hale, Jennifer	" Frank K. Smith
Hawthorne, Violet	" Christofer Rainone
Hunvald, Henry	" Henry H. Gross
Kaye, H. R.	" Hugh Randolph Knox
Kent, Fortune	" John Toombs
Knye, Cassandra	" Thomas M. Disch
Marlow, Edwina	" Tom E. Huff
Milton, Joseph jt. pseud. of	Harold & Ann
	Callin
North, Anthony pseud. of	Dean Ray Kooztz
O'Brien, Lee	" Candice Ward
Paige, Leslie	" Norman Rubington
Radcliffe, Jocelyn	" Charles N. Beardsley
Reddoch, Jennifer	" George McNeill
Richard, Susan	" Julie M. Ellis
Ross, Regina	" May Mackintosh
Somers, Suzanne	" Norman Daniels
Stratton, Chris	" Richard Hubbard
Stuart, Elizabeth	" Elizabeth Stuart Pratt
Warren, Paulette	" Paul W. Fairman

One further note before signing off. To the title listed under the name of the author Daniel A. Lord should be added the following:

Red Arrows in the Night. Queen's Work, 1943.

* * * * *

From Melville Cox Hill:

Having contributed a short article and checklist on Arthur W. Upfield to *Paperback Quarterly*, which appeared in the Summer 1980 issue, Vol. 3, No. 2, I thought that I had

covered all bases and had done my homework well. Much to my dismay and chagrin, I found that I had committed the unpardonable sin and had omitted the one, the only, short story that he had ever written. He wrote it at the request of Ellery Queen for a short story contest back in 1946. It had been sent to him for consideration and had been accompanied by a letter dated January 7, 1948. I'm not going to copy the letter. I'll let you read it for yourself as it is contained in the comments that precede the story in the December 1979 issue of *Ellery Queen*, No. 433. Read it and be amazed, as I was.

I will say that this was truly a discovery—to uncover a letter and manuscript that had been written 31 years ago, had been received and filed for future consideration, and had remained hidden until discovered by Ellery Queen (Mr. Dannay) in 1979. What could he say, "Better late than never," so, to you completists, read and enjoy (I did) "Wisp of Wool and Disk of Silver."

While I'm at it, I might as well confess that I omitted another item. I never, beyond my wildest dreams, ever thought that Upfield had appeared in any magazine format. Yet, you guessed it. I was in a friend's bookstore in Lemon Grove, California one day, and he offered me a group of *Bestseller* mystery magazines, and as I glanced through them I was startled to see "Murder in Eden" by Arthur W. Upfield emblazoned across the cover of *Bestseller* for April 1961, Vol. 3, No. 2, whole No. 226. I couldn't believe it for a moment, but of course upon leafing through it I realized that this was truly a find. The story had originally appeared as "The Bushman Who Came Back" in 1957 and subsequently appeared as "Bony Buys a Woman" in an English Pan paperback edition.

How many more times is this going to happen? All I can say is that, "I keep trying." So without a doubt one or more of Upfield's stories will appear in some yet-undiscovered publication. I'm looking forward to receiving my copy of Fred Cook's upcoming book that will cover the mystery magazines (digests) published in the U.S. Possibly one or more new discoveries will occur. When we are finally able to scan all the contents pages of the scarce to rare mystery magazines of the past, we will finally know.

* * * * *

From Frank D. McSherry, Jr.:

All the articles in TAD 14:1 had a nice, quiet air of competence. First place goes to Raymond Obstfeld's "Opus in G Minor for Blunt Instrument," with some interesting insights, especially about how mass arrests for use of marijuana, like the Prohibition Era's similar arrests for use of alcohol, produces a growing lack of respect for the law. Second place goes to Lowndes's informative historical study of the now rare *Scientific Detective Monthly*. Perhaps we could see reproductions of some of the covers in following installments of this article. Third place is harder to pick; almost any of the remaining articles could easily qualify.

Hagemann's well-researched study of the career and personality of Whitfield's Filipino detective Jo Gar wins by a nose against strong competition from David Madden's study of Thomas Berger's avant-garde detective series; Nancy Blue Wynne's short but interesting review of the career of Miss Maud Sliver, a worthy companion to her book-length study of Agatha Christie; and Cox's comparison of Collins and Dickens.

Speaking of Raoul Whitfield, I can add a few more stories to Prof. Hagemann's list. As Nolan's letter points out, Whitfield did indeed write for pulp magazines other than *Black Mask*. In addition to those listed, there are two short stories about Army Air Force pilots in the Philippines, "Sky Jinx" and "Kiwi" in *Adventure* for 15 December 1927 and 1 June 1928 respectively; a story of some kind in *Complete Adventure Novelles* for August 1932; and several stories in *Everybody's* (apparently a sort of companion magazine for *Adventure*) during 1928: "South of Tia Juana" for January, described in an *Adventure* ad as "A breathless story of the air... Life on the Mexican border and the machinations of a crew of unprincipled men"; short stories in the February, May, and October issues and a novelette in the December issue. Nolan's point that Whitfield's role in the development of the air war has been overlooked or overshadowed by his detective stories, incidentally, is a good one.

Reader Hall asks for the sources of some of the stories filmed for TV's *Thriller*. One, "The Poisoner," is (I'm partly guessing, partly depending on memory here) from Oscar Wilde's "Pen, Pencil and Poison," a true-life account of Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, a Victorian poisoner who killed his pretty sister-in-law, stating as his motive, "It was a dreadful thing to do, but she had very thick ankles." Mr. Wainwright was a gentleman of truly artistic sensibilities.

Another, "The Twisted Image," sounds as if it's from Jerome and Harold Prince's Inspector Magruder story, "The Watchers and the Watched," in *EQMM* for August 1946 (though this is just a guess).

Two recently announced publications have been delayed for the same reason: legal battles between film and magazine interests over who owns what, causing a delay by the third party of book publishers. Exchequer Press has postponed the last novel in the "Man from U.N.C.L.E." series, David McDaniel's *The Final Affair*, for at least two years; and Mysterious Press has temporarily cancelled plans to publish all four of the novel-length clashes of the Shadow with his great antagonist, Shivan Khan, announced for publication in two volumes with two novels in each, front and back jackets to consist of the covers of the original magazine publications in full color, including the superb Graves Gladney portrait of the villain for "The Golden Master."

This issue's Classic Corner reprint, "Within Four Walls" from *Donovan of Whitehall*, incidentally, is the first time you've used a Vanisher story. Donovan vanishes in the *Classical Pattern*: a man who likes to walk, or

at least travel—in deed, travel is his profession as a King's Messenger—he vanishes from his sister's home at Wyvernho after an Interview and an Altered Vacation, oddly dressed for that time and place (workman's clothes at an upper-class residence), following a Theatrical Performance (as he misleads the other guests at dinner) and gets a letter from a friend to deliver (a Ticket To Nowhere). The only point lacking is that of the Vanisher being a teacher or student. Was Donovan described in the book as being a student or teacher at that time?

Another book, Patricia Moyes's new *Angel Death*, just out in the U.S., also features a Classical Vanisher. Retired school-teacher Miss Betsy Sprague disappears from the little island of St. Matthew's, in the British Seaward Islands, following an Interview with Janet Vanduren, the daughter of an old friend, shortly before Janet herself and her sailing ketch, the *Isabella*, vanish mysteriously at sea. There's an Altered Vacation, cut short when Janet's parents refuse to let Ms. Sprague stay with them for a week as previously planned; a Theatrical Performance (when she later sees a girl she believes is Janet, returned as mysteriously as she left but with her hair now dyed and using another name); and finally, just before she disappears with little money and after getting several postcards—her Ticket To Nowhere. Ms. Sprague, who likes to travel, is strikingly dressed when she vanishes, wearing dark, old-fashioned clothes and a long skirt among the scantily and colorfully dressed young people on holiday—"like a crow in a cage of canaries," one witness describes her. Nor is she the only Vanisher, as Chief Inspector Henry Tibbet and his wife Emmy interrupt their vacation to investigate the disappearance of both Ms. Sprague and a large number of people and ships in the Bermuda Triangle. Violence by both humanity and nature make a desperate situation for them both, and especially for Emmy, in a suspenseful tale.

TAD regular Alan J. Warren appears in *Mike Shayne Mystery Magazine* (July 1980) with a gripping story, "In the Cards"; this magazine is improving rapidly under a new and ingenious editor, Charles E. Fritch. Sometime mystery author and actor Raleigh Bond ("Tear a Passion To Tatters," *EQMM*, Dec. '62) appears as Capt. "Helpless" Hook in the film version of Joseph Wambaugh's *The Black Marble* and does a fine job.

Bond fans will enjoy three recent large-format, excellent paper collections of daily comic strip versions of the famous secret agent, *The Illustrated James Bond*, published by the James Bond Fan Club at \$6.95 and containing strip versions of three Bond novels, *Diamonds Are Forever*, *From Russia With Love*, and *Dr. No*; and his most impressive rival, *Modersty Blaise*, in two slick paper format collections at \$5.95 each, containing two complete stories in each one. MB #1 has "Top Traitor" and "The Vikings," #2 has "The Mind of Mrs. Drake" and "Uncle Happy." Available from Robert Weinberg, 15145 Oxford Drive, Oak Forest, Ill. 60452.

In my own article, "The Armchair

Criminal," I stated that stories about the criminal who kills by doing nothing are rare. Well—not all that rare; I'd overlooked one, which makes me a member of the Big Chief Red-in-the-Face Dept. There's one I overlooked, "Night Call," in *Mike Shayne* for May '75, a short-short about the husband whose faked suicide attempts are driving his wife to the verge of a nervous breakdown, and a neighbor who finds a way to deal with the problem—

What makes this oversight so embarrassing is that the story is by

Yours sincerely,

Frank D. McSherry, Jr.

* * * * *

From R. F. Fleisner:

If Arthur J. Cox is right (TAD 14:1), then it is a good thing that Dickens did not finish *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The only "dark" thing about Neville (p. 36) is the color of his skin and his natural sensitivity about racist slurs. For him to be Jasper's "sympathetic" accomplice would imply a bias on the part of the author, in effect substantiation for Edwin's own stated prejudice regarding the visitor from Ceylon. In dealing with Collins's influence on Dickens from another standpoint, I am on record for suggesting that the latter's theme was distinctly opposed to racism and that he obtained some of his stimulus from a mystery story by Collins.

Still, it is just possible that Cox is right, for Dickens had his human failings. We think of Fagin, who the novelist first described as a villainous Jew; he later deleted references to Semitism when taken to task, but at the same time insisted that he thought of "Jew" only as a reference to race, not to religion! That he showed some insensitivity toward racial matters may easily be inferred, and the same weakness could have crept into *Drood*. But let us probe this matter more closely. Dickens did, after all, say that he was going to have Drood strangled with Jasper's scarf. First, Cox makes an issue of mesmerism's involving the "Doctrine of Sympathy," thus claiming that the character most "sympathetic" to Jasper is Neville. Although it is a commonplace that a person cannot be hypnotized unless he is somehow willing to be, I am inclined to think that this principle can be overlaid with regard to animal magnetism. Or at least the exact nature of willingness should be carefully defined. Probably the most famous example of this force in modern times has been the so-called "magnetic" hold that Hitler had over the German people. Frankly, I find it outrageous to suggest that the Germans *en masse* were "sympathetic" with him; they followed him out of blindness, because of his immense power, and especially because, if they did not, they would be shot. Likewise, Christian Scientists are well known for their opposition to animal magnetism because of its power to subjugate the individual conscience and will. After all, inherent in the very term *magnetism* is the concept of the attraction of *opposite* poles. It is antithetical to homeopathy.

A few other points in Cox's article may be

cavilled with, for example his bland assertion, "Who would want to argue with Edmund Wilson?" I, for one, since one of my teachers at the Bread Loaf School of English was Donald Davidson, who called Wilson a "literateur." Also, in spite of the fascination of *Drood*, it hardly approaches *Crime and Punishment*. Nonetheless: a provocative article.

Having just purchased the Winter 1981 issue, I have found not only Cox's article but other contributions, especially "The Armchair Criminal," stimulating. (Have you seen mine on Moriarty, by the way, in the current *Baker Street Journal*?) I also appreciated reading the letter by Nigel Morland, which need not undercut Cox's article, of course. Incidentally, one of my very first articles dealt with *The Moonstone* in much the same way as the article of mine you published recently on *Drood*. Unpublished (but inaccessible), it was entitled "The Reader's Clues in *The Moonstone*," and it dealt with the import of the names in unraveling the mystery. I do have a paper available for publication still on *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, if you are interested; called "Hyde and Seek—Another Turn of the Screw," it is a short paper dealing with a Jungian approach to the novel and its religious implications. Among other matters, it points out that Jekyll's name has commonly been mispronounced.

* * * * *

From John L. Apostolou:

Some comments on the Fall 1980 issue of TAD...

The long interview with Elizabeth Linington is certainly worth reading; but I must point out an error that she makes, not only in the interview but also in her novels. Although she has obviously done research on the Los Angeles Police Department, Linington frequently refers to LAPD "precincts." There are no precincts in the LAPD. The department is organized into divisions—Hollywood Division, Wilshire Division, Rampart Division, etc.—and people in Los Angeles, especially police officers, do not call them precincts.

Douglas Greene's review of the *Bibliography of Dr. R. H. van Gulik* is most informative. To fans of van Gulik's Judge Dee books, let me recommend *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations*, an anthology edited by Y. W. Ma and Joseph S. M. Lau. A lengthy volume, it contains dozens of tales, eight of which are Chinese detective stories or, as they are called by the editors, *kung-an* stories. Two of them are quite humorous.

I enjoyed the Kesho Naik story in the "Classic Corner," and I have a suggestion for that department. One of my favorite authors from the turn of the century is Rodrigues Ottolengui, mystery writer and dentist. I know of only three Ottolengui stories that have been published in recent years. Two are in Hugh Greene's *The American Rivals of Sherlock Holmes*, and one is in Tony Goodstone's *The Pulpis*. May I suggest that a story

by Ottolengui, perhaps from his collection *Final Proof*, be reprinted in the "Classic Corner."

After the long wait for my copy of the Winter 1981 issue, which finally arrived on May 29, I am happy to see that TAD is alive and well—very well indeed. It's a marvelous issue. I like the new emphasis on illustrative material, although the space devoted to illustrations for "The Armchair Criminal" seems rather excessive.

I spotted a minor error on p. 25 in Robert Lowndes's article on Gernsbach's *Scientific Detective Monthly*. Lowndes confuses Maurice Level with Maurice Leblanc. Level was a French writer known for his *contes* or short-stories, some of which are criminous. Leblanc was, of course, the creator of Arsène Lupin.

Another story by Raoul Whitfield that was not published in *Black Mask* is "Murder Extra!" It appeared in the March 7, 1931 issue of *Argosy* and features newspaper reporter Bill Faber.



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