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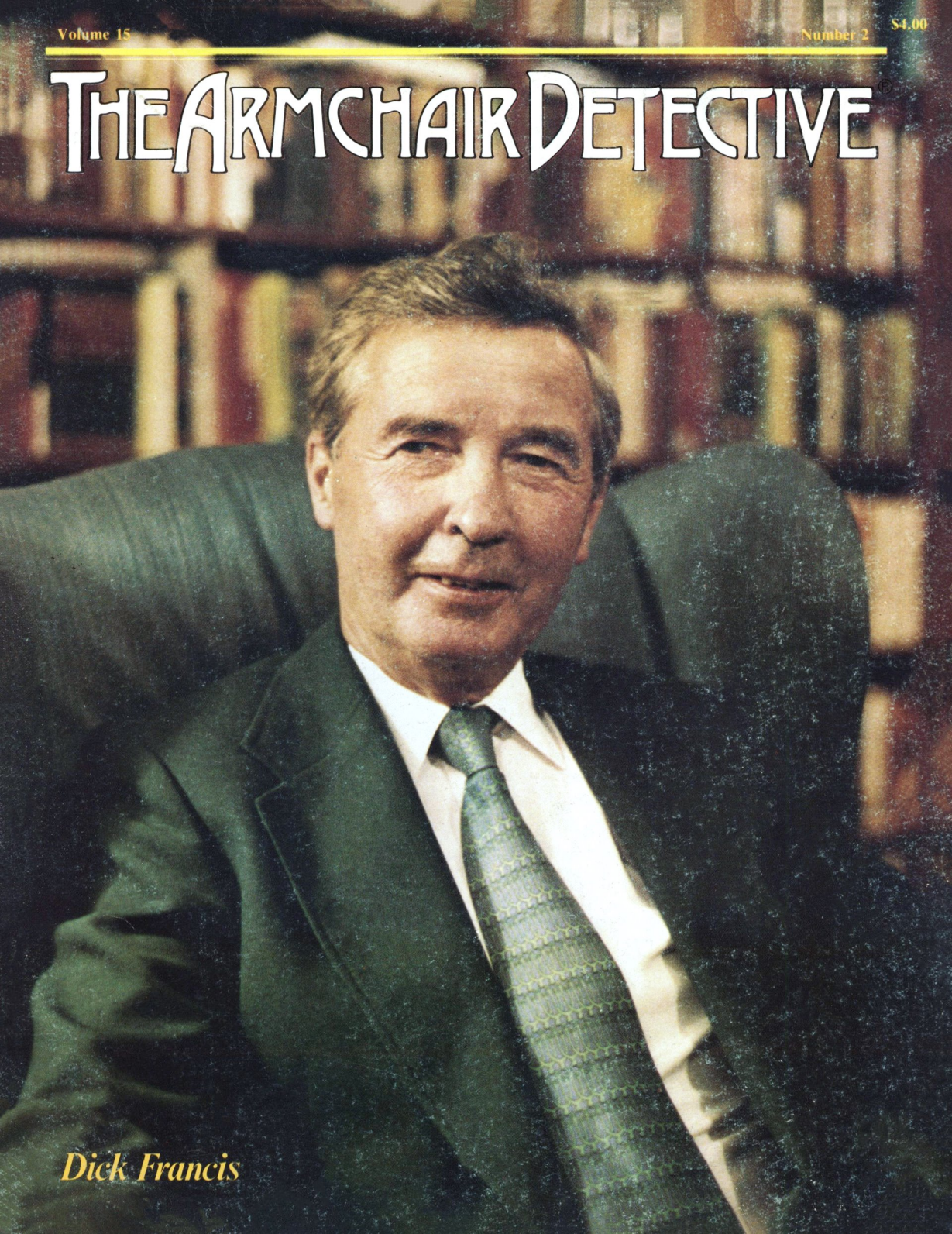

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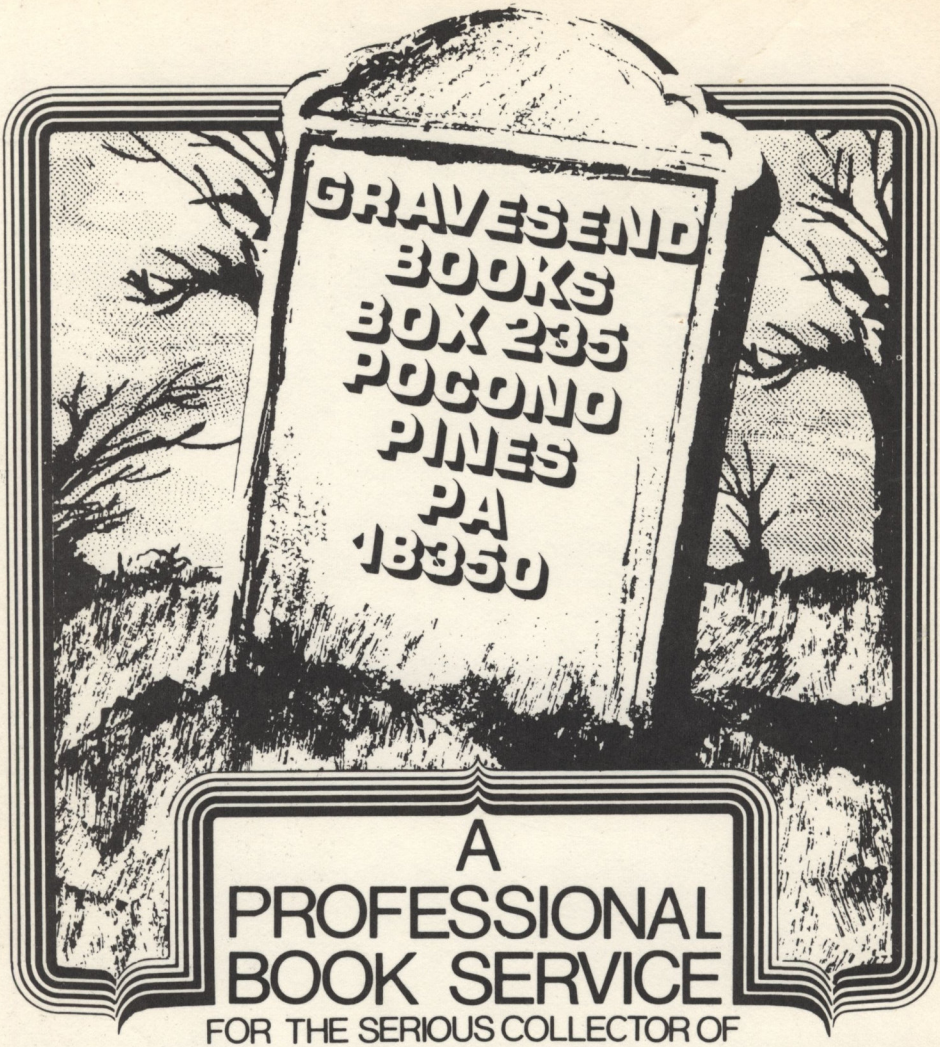

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THE UNEASY CHAIR

Dear TADian:

The bad news is that Edward Hunsburger's "Minor Offenses" column will not appear in this issue, due to circumstances beyond anyone's control. The good news is that, beginning with 15:3, the column will be taken over by Edward Hoch, a man whose knowledge of the short story is second to none. While we are sorry to lose Edward's contribution, we are pleased to welcome Edward aboard.

Another new feature is the Dorothy L. Sayers Newsletter. Given the great interest in her work, as well as in the writer herself, I think this latest addition to our pages is something which will be welcomed by all.

And now, as promised, a response to some of the questions raised in the Letters column of 15:1, as well as in the current issue...

No, Marvin, I was not seriously endorsing the idea of government subsidies for writers. The point of my statement was that if *we* do not take care of our own—and writers are *our* own—then no one will. As the sage said, "If I am not for myself, who will be?" (I know, I know, that may not be an exact quote.) This has nothing to do with my being a writer, or a friend of writers; it has to do with being a reader.

The question of writers writing books good enough for publishers to want to publish, which is raised in Marvin Lachman's letter as well as in the letters of James Devlin in the same issue and of Mel Ames in this issue, is one which could take an entire edition of TAD to discuss. Perhaps, if you don't think the question is too much a writer's issue for a fan magazine (another of Marv's complaints), I will confront it at some future time. Suffice it for now, however, to point out that, contrary to popular belief, publishers do do market research, and, even if they didn't, they'd have the returns at the end of a year to give them a solid indication of what will "go" in the market place. And I think that is all I should say on that point right now.

The last point in Marvin's letter, regarding TAD's readiness to welcome home those who are waiting for a sign that we want to return to the material that made it fun to read and write for, is particularly bothersome. It is bothersome because, at least during my time at the helm, I thought I had made it clear that that is exactly what we want. I do not think, on the other hand, that such openness precludes scholarship. Ideally, we will have a balance, and that balance will come from the readers. I can only pick and choose from among articles received... as you know, we are not in a position to "commission" writers. It is a long process, made longer by the lack of time everyone faces. But, Marvin, really, we're trying... even in the face of personal communications complaining about it.

Perhaps, like Topsy, TAD has grown to the point at which it is no longer a one-man editorial job. But while it is, and while I'm the person in the Uneasy Chair, I will do my best to respond to the needs of *all* of our readers. In Jim Devlin's letters he says that "TAD must encourage, and lead, mystery fandom." That is what we're trying to do, and we've been quite successful. If I have to say something in these pages which will stick in someone's craw and force him to write, so be it. The dialogue is important.

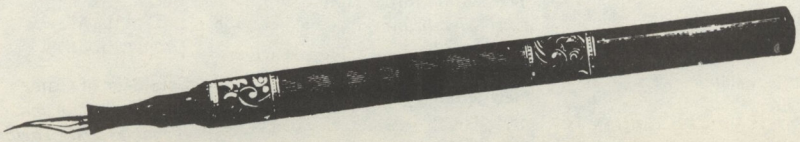
In response to K. M. Douglas, whose letter in this issue brings back some fond and frightening memories, I can only say that while attendees at some sf cons may be... bizarre (and by no means are they all), this does not deny the possibility of fan involvement in a public way—and that is what I'm trying to find.

I'm certain that all involved in the production of TAD will be pleased to know that I am not going on at great length this time. I'm sure that there will be enough to write about when the responses to the last Uneasy Chair start coming in. Keep those cards and letters coming; I may not respond as quickly as either you or I would like, but I will respond.

Best mysterious wishes,

Michael Seidman

MICHAEL SEIDMAN



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A Toast to the Secret Service:

In Tribute to Manning Coles and Tommy Hambledon

By William A. S. Sarjeant

Everyone who has become an addict of mystery and detective fiction must have had some specific "entry point"—a particular short story or book that gripped his interest, especially intrigued him, or presented him with a puzzle so fascinating that he was eager for more like it. For many, the process may admittedly have been gradual, a transition from comics to hack paperbacks and thence, maybe, to more competent writers, so that the point of transformation from reader to addict can no longer be remembered. Others perhaps started with a book by some classic thriller writer, persuaded to the reading by a friend or impelled to it by the direction of parent or teacher, to find they had inadvertently swallowed the lure and were happily hooked.

In my own case, I had sampled a few "Saint" stories and read a little of Sherlock Holmes with pleasure, but in general I had avoided the genre until my mid-teens, when my father persuaded me to try a library copy of Manning Coles's *A Brother for Hugh*. I did so reluctantly but soon found myself enjoying it so much that I went back to the library—one of the old Red Circle chain in Sheffield—for more. After that, my reading of thrillers and detective stories expanded to encompass many other authors. A love of the Manning Coles books persists, however; this article is an acknowledgement of the pleasure they have brought me.

THE WRITERS

Manning Coles was not, in fact, one author, but two—or maybe one should say three. The name is a neat federation of the surnames of the two principal authors.

Adelaide Frances Oke Manning was born in London in 1891 and taken shortly afterwards to live in Kent. She was educated at the High School for Girls, Tunbridge Wells. When the First World War came along, she worked patriotically in munitions factories and then as a clerk at the War Office; later she was involved in local government. Her hobbies were painting and embroidery, but she was also attracted to writing and in 1939 published a novel, *Half Valdez*. It was excellently reviewed but, financially, was not noticeably successful.

In 1929 the Mannings moved from Buckinghamshire to a house in East Meon, Hampshire, rented from a man named Coles. Their landlord's son, Cyril Coles, happened to live next door; and Mrs. Manning and he became friendly. From this friendship there developed a literary collaboration that was to last till her death and that produced thirty-one excellent books.

Cyril Henry Coles was eight years her junior, born in London in 1899; his father was David Coles, his mother Rose Elizabeth Gaite. The family soon settled in Hampshire, and Cyril was sent to be educated at Churchers College, Petersfield. When World War I broke out, however, he found it impossible to remain peacefully at his classes while others were fighting. After gaining reluctant parental consent, he left school early and became an apprentice engineer with a shipbuilding firm, John I. Thorneycroft of Southampton. This job proved little better than school; it left him still far from the fighting lines, still a spectator of, and not a participant in, the great, bloody combat. So in 1916, he contrived, though still under age, to enlist under an assumed name in the Hampshire Regiment.

Cyril Coles spent a year fighting on the front line in the Twenty-Ninth Division. During this time, the military authorities began to realize that this young man had two special abilities: a gift for languages and an uncanny knack for emerging unscathed from incursions into the German lines. Soon he found

himself attached to Intelligence, becoming indeed its youngest officer. He adventured perilously into Germany and lived undetected there, sending valuable information back to London, for the remainder of the war and for some time afterward. During this perilous sojourn, he acquired a sympathy for the German people, if not for their leaders. This sympathy is very evident in the books he was later to co-author; even in those written in the angry heat of the Second World War, many of the individual Germans are portrayed with a compassion and understanding highly unusual in the books of that tense time.

After the war came anticlimax. Major Coles was discharged in 1920 and for a while rejoined Thornycrofts, becoming manager of their millfitting department. The slump and his own boredom with his job, however, caused him soon to leave Southampton and begin an odyssey of restless wandering. During the next few years, he visited or lived in a variety of different countries, among them France, Belgium, Africa and India. He worked as a dishwasher in New York and as a ship's steward, but his longest stay was in Australia, where at different times he sweated as a railroad navvy, ran a garage and acquired his first writing experience as a columnist for a Melbourne newspaper. He returned to England in 1929 and was soon running a garage at East Meon. He married Dorothy Cordelia Smith in 1934; they were to have two sons, Peter and Michael. He also resumed work with British Intelligence, a connection not finally relinquished till 1958.

During conversations with his literary neighbor Mrs. Manning, Cyril Coles confessed that he had a book in mind that was begging to be written and suggested they might write it together. That book was *Drink to Yesterday* (1940); though referring back to a conflict by then long past, it sold well even in the dark days of another war and began a twenty-year collaboration.

Both authors were enthusiastic travelers, delighting in new experiences and unfamiliar surroundings. Mrs. Manning's travels were mainly in Europe; Cyril Coles had already roamed more widely and continued his wanderings. By 1942, he claimed that there were only three countries he had not visited—Japan, China and Mexico—and maybe he filled those gaps later! Their joint knowledge of War Office and Intelligence attitudes and procedures, their personal acquaintance with so many different countries, and Cyril Coles's hobbies of archaeology and model-making gave color and plausibility to their writings.

Of their thirty-one books, twenty-five were written under the "Manning Coles" pseudonym. All but two of these are thrillers featuring Tommy Hambledon. The exceptions are *This Fortress,* written in 1942 (a work I have never seen) and a children's mystery. The latter was their contribution to an imaginatively conceived series of junior novels, commissioned by the University of London Press from authors who normally wrote only adult fiction; the series proved all too short but included excellent junior thrillers by two other mystery writers, Freeman Wills Croft and Clifford Witting. The Manning Coles item, *The Emperor's Bracelet* (1947), is an excellent story involving the rediscovery of a lost Roman colony, still vigorously alive in West Africa. It is especially rich in original and memorable characters and is, in my view, one of the very best in the ample genre of "lost world" stories. It is hard to find nowadays and well deserves reprinting.

Five other books were written under the pseudonym "Francis Gaite," a federation of a masculinized version of Mrs. Manning's second christian name and Cyril Coles's mother's maiden name. These are humorous works which Anthony Boucher has described as being "as felicitously foolish as a collaboration of Wodehouse and Thorne Smith"; light, relaxing reading but outside the scope of this article. In addition, Coles contributed articles on engineering, travel and model making to various magazines.

Their work together ended with Mrs. Manning's death in 1959. Two books appearing the following year were final fruits of their collaboration: *Nothing to Declare* (1960), a collection of short stories that had appeared earlier in magazines, and *Crime in Concrete* (1960), surely at least begun jointly but probably finished by Coles alone.

In his two last books, *Search for a Sultan* (1961) and *The House of Pluck's Gutter* (1963), Cyril Coles had a new collaborator, Tom Hammerton; but both books nevertheless appeared under the Manning Coles byline. Cyril Coles died in 1965, two years after his last book was published.

THE FIRST COLLABORATION

The first of the Manning Coles stories, *Drink to Yesterday* (1940), opens with an inquest in a quiet English country town; but it is essentially a story of espionage in Germany. Its central character, Michael Kingston, is at school when the First World War begins but soon finds it impossible to concentrate on the trivia of lessons and sports when men are fighting and dying. He persuades his parents to let him leave school early and works for a while as a trainee engineer in a Southampton shipyard; but that too leaves him feeling unfulfilled, so he enlists in the infantry under the assumed name of "William Saunders." Because of his outstanding linguistic abilities, he is employed in the interrogation of German prisoners, to discover about troop movements and other matters of military importance; sometimes, indeed, he mixes with them in disguise:

. . . [I]t seemed to encourage them to talk if they saw an unhappy-looking German private shivering in the corner. (I, p. 43)

In due course, he is invited to visit the War Office and asked to carry this work further—to serve as a spy. He accepts without hesitation.

Kingston finds that his mentor and companion is to be one of his former public-school teachers, Tommy Hambledon. In the guise of a Dutch merchant, Hendrik Brandt, and his Boer nephew Dirk, Tommy and Michael travel to Cologne and there embark upon espionage and sabotage. Radio contact with London is maintained through another spy, Alfred Reck, who works as a schoolteacher in Mülheim, keeps silkworms and quietly operates a spark transmitter at need from the school tower. Kingston is instructed in his new role by Hambledon:

"You are the favourite nephew of a rich uncle, you have money to burn for the first time in your life, and it goes to your head. You are young, impulsive, and silly. You have attacks of paralytic shyness followed by shattering exhibitions of misdirected energy. You are fairly easily affected by drink at present—you can become hardened to it by degrees if convenient—it may take the form of beaming upon everyone, retiring to some quiet spot and going to sleep. That's always a good idea, for if people think you are wrapped in a drunken slumber, they won't worry about you. Let no man, especially no woman, think you have a single idea beyond having a good time. When in doubt, put on that boiled-codfish expression which seems to come so naturally to you, and in moments of embarrassment think of cold pickled pork."

"Why?"

"It takes the mind off," said the man of experience. (II, 73–74)

Soon Michael (or rather, Bill) is absorbed in this demanding, exciting new task:

A queer little thrill ran through Bill Saunders and his eyes brightened. This was life. Tommy Hambledon watched him ruefully.

"Yes, it's got you now, and it will never let you go. When once the job has taken hold you'll find that nothing else in life has any kick in it, and apart from the job you're dead. Neither the fields of home nor the arts of peace nor the love of women will suffice." (I, 71)

Despite this warning, Michael marries his first sweetheart during a return leave in England. After further adventures, Hambledon disappears while they are attempting a second return to England and is presumed, on good evidence, to have been drowned. Michael returns to Cologne, helped now by a lean and seemingly somnolent gentleman known in Berlin as Ludwig Wolff, in London as Charles Denton. Even after the war has ended, their job continues for a while. Michael befriends a German girl, Marie Bluehm, and they become lovers; but Marie is accidentally killed in a street fight. Eventually, Michael returns to England and his marriage, but without enthusiasm; Hambledon's words are proving all too well justified. The marriage soon disintegrates and Michael moves away to a solitary life of running a garage in a Hampshire village, only to be found and murdered by Marie's vengeful and uncomprehending brother Kaspar. It was with the inquest on Michael that the book began; the verdict was "Death by Misadventure"—true enough, in its way.

This, then, was the story Cyril Coles wanted to tell when he and Adelaide Manning first collaborated; and quite evidently, from what one knows of Coles's early life, it has a very substantial autobiographical component. One is left wondering how much else was also autobiographical. Did Coles undertake similar adventures in Germany? Did he too have a love affair with a German girl? The warp of fact and the weft of fiction cannot be disentangled.

TOMMY HAMBLEDON

In the first book Thomas Elphinstone Hambledon is an incidental character. In the second, he moves to the position at center stage which he is to occupy in most subsequent Manning Coles collaborations.

We know little of his early life, though we know he lived in a Hampshire village where his father was the clergyman. In one of the short stories, we briefly meet old Colonel Marsh-Gibbon of Weston Abbas, Dorset, whom Hambledon had known all his life, and hear a reminiscence:

"Heavens above," said Hambledon slowly, "I don't believe I've heard a nightingale for thirty years. Not since my father died and I went home to clear our stuff out of the vicarage to make room for the new vicar. That was in May, of course, and there were always nightingales in our spinny." (XXIV, 59)

Evidently, then, Hambledon's mother died earlier than his father; but most events must have occurred either before, or in the early years of, the First World War, since Hambledon had no parental home to return to when at last he returned from Germany. Nevertheless, he retains his love of the countryside in which he grew up:

It is true that the country in November is not everybody's choice, but he was very sick of streets slimy with damp fog, frowsty lodgings and evading the police. He bought an ash-plant and went into Hampshire, where he stayed at a country inn and ate home-cured bacon, walked on the Downs in dry cold weather and encouraged the wind from the sea to blow his cobwebs away. (X, 87)

Hambledon's earliest appearance is in the first book, where he is a language master of a refreshingly unusual sort at Michael Kingston's school, Chappell's School at Weatherley, Hampshire:

Tommy Hambledon took the Scripture lesson on one occasion. It was not really his job, because he taught modern languages, and his ideas of doing so were not stereotyped. He taught the boys how to talk effectively to taxi-drivers and how to ask for whatever they happened to want, and not to be obviously British but to adopt the manners, customs and modes of thought of whatever country they happened to be in. He always went abroad for his holidays, mostly to Germany, which was curious, for he was a parson's son with exiguous private means, his pay was small, and his tastes cheerful and expensive. Yet he could always go abroad in the holidays and one would really wonder where he got the money from unless one had the idea that perhaps he sometimes did something else besides teaching languages at Chappell's school. (I, 17–18)

So it seems that Hambledon's connections with Intelligence began before 1914, and one well understands the stress in the lesson he taught:

The portion assigned for the lesson was the eleventh chapter of the second book of Samuel. He skated awkwardly but firmly over the highly informal relations between David and the wife of Uriah the Hittite, but when he came to the fighting he was on familiar ground. (I, 18)

He reappears in the story when Michael is first recruited for espionage service:

...[I]t was Tommy Hambledon, very smart in the uniform of a major of horse artillery. "Congratulations, sir," said Bill, greeting him with delight. "I didn't know you'd got your majority."

"I haven't," said Hambledon frankly. "I just like the cut of these breeches." (I, 46)

Hambledon disappears from that book when a boat, in which he and Kingston are rowing out from Ostend to meet the motor-launch appointed to take them back to England, is run down by that launch; and Kingston and the reader presume he has been drowned. But not so.

The second book, *Pray Silence* (1940), is so much a continuation of the first that Anthony Boucher has called them "a single long and magnificent novel of intrigue, drama and humor." Nevertheless, it brings a shift from what one knows to be essentially Coles's reminiscences to what must surely be substantially fiction. Not entirely, maybe, for the dedication is "To A.M.Y. Remembering the Free City of Dantzig"; yet the autobiographical component must surely be small.

Though there is an effective little preamble, the story really begins with the finding of a man clad only in underwear, wounded in the head and unconscious, on the beach at Ostend. Though he recovers quickly enough in the German naval hospital from his wound, it leaves him with amnesia so serious that he cannot even recall his own name. As substitute, he is given the name "Klaus Lehmann" by the doctor who befriends him.

Uncertain of his roots but assuming himself to be German, Klaus wanders round the collapsing Reich and witnesses many of its dramas. Eventually, he is taken under the wing of an elderly German lady, Fräulein Ludmilla Rademeyer, who adopts him as a sort of substitute nephew. Together they weather out the terrible years of the collapse of the German mark. In this period of economic disaster, Lehmann, as did so many Germans, decides that Hitler and his associates are offering the only possible salvation and becomes an early member of the Nazi Party.

When the Nazis gain political control following the Reichstag fire, Lehmann is appointed Deputy Chief of the Berlin Police. The spectacle of that fire has at last brought back his long-dormant memories, however, and he now knows himself to be not a German but Tommy Hambledon of British Intelligence. While he also realizes he has helped to perpetrate a great evil in Germany, he knows he is in a position where he can do something to sabotage the Nazis' plans.

A chance meeting with Reck, newly emergent from a mental home to which he was taken by excessive drinking, provides Hambledon with the means of contacting the Foreign Office; the first scene of the book indeed shows him ingeniously using a radio script as a means of establishing that contact. He also learns of, and avenges, the murder of Kingston.

Reck, shocked by the realization that he had inadvertently betrayed Kingston to Kaspar Bluehm, forswears alcohol thenceforward, with great benefit to his health. Kingston's former colleague Charles Denton is sent back to Germany to aid an agent the Foreign Office have not yet identified, but does not succeed in making contact; instead, Hambledon, still anonymous, contrives Denton's rescue from the Purge of 1934 and send him off to Switzerland, in a mock elopement that turns into a runaway marriage.

More effective aid comes to Hambledon from his manservant, Fritz von Krug, who proves to be a member of an anti-Nazi action group; and they and Reck effect much harassment of the Germans for a while. Disillusioned with her native country, Fräulein Rademeyer escapes to Switzerland; and eventually Goebbels's dislike and suspicion of the Deputy Chief of Police reach such a level of danger that Hambledon and Reck must flee too. They turn a murder attempt into a means of escape. Another man's body is mistaken for Lehmann's and accorded a state funeral, with Hitler himself giving the oration. Meanwhile, Hambledon and Reck are on a British ship, bound for home and the comfortable prospect of sizeable arrears of salary!

As noted earlier, these two books were published in 1940; yet it is a striking feature of them, considering the political climate of that time, that events in Germany are depicted with understanding and without hysteria and that the ordinary Germans are shown as human beings, not as monsters or as subhumans, but as real people with whose plight one can sympathize. Hitler and his associates, however, are portrayed, here and in the later *Green Hazard* (1945), as they truly were, in all their moral repulsiveness. With the partial exception of Goering in the earlier pages of *A Toast to Tomorrow,* they neither merit nor receive comparably sympathetic treatment.

Thus Hambledon returns from the dead, to a very special renown in British Intelligence and a position of authority which he will always henceforward retain. Reck serves thereafter primarily as Hambledon's manservant and friend, largely offstage; Fräulein Rademeyer travels from Switzerland to join them in London, for we are told in a later book that:

> Hambledon shared a flat overlooking St. James Park with Reck, the wireless expert, and a stout elderly lady, Fräulein Ludmilla Rademeyer, who mothered them both and was beloved in return. (IV, 101)

We last encounter her when she is listening with them to a broadcast of one of Hitler's tirades against the unfortunate Czechs, prior to the German invasion of their unhappy country. Thereafter she disappears from the stories and must be presumed to have died, in honored age, in the country where she found refuge.

HAMBLEDON'S LATER ADVENTURES

In this section, I am attempting a brief survey of the twenty-five books that record Hambledon's third and subsequent adventures. Readers familiar with them should skip this section, if they wish to avoid boredom! – but for those unfortunate enough *not* to have read their Manning Coles, these succinct summaries may be helpful.

III *They Tell No Tales* shows us Hambledon and Reck settling into a cottage near Portsmouth and reaccustoming themselves, after so long a residence in Germany, to the very different atmosphere of England. Its central character, however, is James Bellair, a junior intelligence officer given the task of stopping the sabotage of ships sailing from the Portsmouth dockyards and none too pleased at having a superior of great but vague reputation taking over. Indeed, Hambledon here is so awesomely effective and authoritative that one sympathizes with poor Bellair. Yet it is the chance arrival on the scene of Franz von Krug, another fugitive from Hitler's Germany, that provides Hambledon and Bellair with the solution to the puzzle.

IV In the fourth book, *Without Lawful Authority,* Hambledon is largely offstage; its central figures are Jim Warnford, an army officer cashiered for allegedly selling plans of a new tank to the enemy, and a chance-met safecracker friend who aids him in efforts to find the true culprit. Though so much offstage, however, Hambledon is a very effective participant in the story and central in the humorously handled, yet essentially gruesome, culminating scene.

A new feature appears here, a new compass variation that would affect the course of most subsequent books in the saga. In the earlier books, there was much humor, but this was always subordinate and, in a sense, arose naturally in the course of the story. In the fourth book, however, an episode is inserted entirely for humorous effect – the unhappy odyssey of Warnford's manservant Ashling, in precipitous flight from the police and the German spies. Henceforward, such episodes, though usually better integrated into the story, occur with increasing frequency and become a welcome part of the texture of Manning Coles's books.

V Tommy Hambledon returns to center stage in *Green Hazard.* He is investigating the activities of an alleged chemist supposedly manufacturing explosives in Switzerland and comes near to being murdered when that gentleman, actually not a scientist but merely a confidence trickster, arranges a spectacular exit from the ring of people – Nazi and British agents and Swiss police – who are avidly watching him. Tommy, though considerably injured, narrowly survives the explosion, only to be mistaken for the alleged chemist and whisked back into Germany, the most dangerous place on earth for him.

Perilously, he survives and, securing the aid of a *bona fide* Dutch chemist, puts on a show of research that apparently produces a spectacular explosion with an apple-green flame. Aided delightedly by his assistant and most unwillingly by the confidence trickster, whom he is now blackmailing, Hambledon embarks upon renewed sabotage activities in Berlin. Goebbels, however, half remembering earlier unhappy confrontations, again becomes dangerously suspicious. The confidence trickster, who by now has gained some of our sympathy, dies, and Hambledon and the Dutchman make a neatly contrived strategic withdrawal to Sweden.

VI *The Fifth Man* represents another shift of pattern. Its central figure is Anthony Colemore, one of the most plausible and audacious heroes in fiction, by chance one of a group of British prisoners of war recruited by the Germans to undertake espionage in Britain. Colemore enthusiastically exploits the opportunity thus afforded to instead harass other German spies. Hambledon is again off center stage but acts as support for Colemore throughout and in the end intervenes in time to narrowly save him from death. The two principal German spies, the fat taxi-driver Newman and the bleak Symes; the chinless German prisoner of war van Rohde, whom Colemore befriends; and the over-talkative schoolteacher Harold Abbott are among the memorable minor characters in a lively and effective story. Indeed, this book and the next in many ways epitomize the best and most typical elements of the later Manning Coles stories. It is a pity that Colemore never again figures in the series; he is too good a character to lose.

VII The seventh book, *A Brother for Hugh,* represents a turning point in the series since, for the first time, espionage is not in any way an element of its plot. Its central figure is again not Hambledon but a much more improbable figure: a wealthy, retired leather manufacturer from Yeovil, Somerset called James Clarendon Hyde. He is not at all like Colemore, being quieter and having no comparable range of abilities and experience; yet he is very likeable, and one well understands the long frustrations that send him in belated quest of adventure. He finds it, by chance, through a man who is his near-double, Hugh Selkirk from Argentina. When Selkirk is murdered, Hyde assumes his identity and wreaks vengeance on the South American gang of crooks responsible for his friend's death.

Chief Inspector Bagshott, of Scotland Yard, and Tommy Hambledon hover in the background of this story, serving mainly to irritatedly receive the corpses, living or dead, of the gangsters as they are successively dealt with. Bagshott's principal ordeal is coping with the cheerful evasions of two model-makers who run a shop on the Clerkenwell Road, Forgan and Campbell, who are privy to Hyde's devices. Though not principal figures in this story, these two are destined to figure prominently in later adventures.

VIII In *The Emperor's Bracelet,* Chief Inspector Bagshott of Scotland Yard and Hambledon hover in the background, serving mainly to irritatedly receive the corpses of the gangsters as they are successively dealt with. Bagshott's principal ordeal is coping with the cheerful evasions of two model-makers who run a shop in the Clerkenwell Road, Forgan and Campbell, who are privy to Hyde's devices. Though not principal figures in this story, these two are destined to figure prominently in later adventures.

IX In the next book, *Let the Tiger Die,* Hambledon returns to center stage. He is involved in the murder of a German while holidaying in Stockholm; because given a package by the victim, he is pursued by the three Eastern European killers to Rotterdam and thence to France and Spain. He recruits the help of Hyde, Forgan and Campbell; and though Hyde exits from the scene (and the series) in Spain, driving proudly back to England in a newly acquired Bugatti, the model-makers are there to the end. They follow Hambledon to the Canary Islands and there extricate him from death at the hands of neo-Nazis.

X Hambledon goes to jail in the next book, *Among Those Absent;* but no, he has not committed a crime. He is instead investigating from the inside a series of jailbreaks which have caused great trouble for the British police. He and an amiable confidence trickster called Cobden substitute themselves for a convict whose escape had been arranged; they hazardously survive the anger of a vicious gang and are befriended by a goodhearted crook memorably named Salvation Savory. In the end, all is well: the gang is defeated, and justice turns a blind eye to Cobden, who departs quietly. Whether he turns honest or returns to crime, we are never to discover.

XI *Not Negotiable* harks back to a quite genuine wartime episode when the Nazis were counterfeiting banknotes with an eventual aim of upsetting the currencies of their enemies and for the immediate purpose of cheaply paying off their own agents. A Parisian criminal, Pierre Guyon, becomes unwillingly involved, first in aiding the Germans in their forcible acquisition of art treasures, and later in the postwar distribution of counterfeited notes. Since these are soon upsetting the precarious peacetime balance of currencies in Europe, Tommy Hambledon is set the task of exposing the criminals. He travels to Brussels and, during a series of perilous adventures, makes the acquaintance of a French detective, Antoine Letord of the Sûreté, who is making similar investigations. After Hambledon has been extricated from a sticky situation by a saucepan-wielding Belgian amazon called Brigette, he and Letord pursue the criminals into France. Guyon, whose cheek and

initiative make him initially a sympathetic character, murders in error the one person he trusted and, when the story reaches its climax back in Belgium, suffers an appropriate retribution. We leave Hambledon in flight from the amorous intentions of Brigette!

XII *Diamonds to Amsterdam* is the closest approach in the series to a classic murder story. A gentle, elderly recluse of a chemist, Henry Niven, seems to be successfully making diamonds. He is murdered and his laboratory notebooks are stolen. By degrees, Chief Inspector Bagshott, with the fitful and amused assistance of Tommy Hambledon, follows the trail of the criminals. The trail leads to the Netherlands and back again to the Home Countries before the murderers are eventually trapped. This book is made especially enjoyable by a host of well-drawn minor characters and some witty observations on the vicissitudes of English village life.

XIII *Dangerous by Nature* takes Hambledon farther from England than ever before, to the Central American republic of Esmeralda, where a corrupt government is unwittingly aiding in a Communist plot that threatens the United States with nuclear destruction. Aided by his Amerindian servant and with a U.S. agent forever hovering in the wings, Tommy triggers off a revolution and eliminates the enemy. He returns to Britain in the surprised awareness that he is now regarded as a Liberator and that the Esmeraldans are busy erecting his statue!

XIV The setting of *Now or Never* is more realistic, if more sombre; the city of Cologne, still in devastation after the war. It is an unsafe place indeed for foreigners, for it is the focus of a plot to restore Nazi rule which Hambledon must investigate and scotch. He is aided by an energetic German detective, Heinrich Spelmann, by Forgan and Campbell in the guise of two renegade Spaniards, by an English soldier seeking the girl he loves among the ruins, and, as always, by good fortune. The enemy who surfaces is formidable indeed, and the ending has an element of tragedy.

XV In *Night Train to Paris,* the central figures are twins, but very unlike in character; a respectable London dealer in spices and his scapegrace brother, expelled from Britain by his family and, after a spell in the Foreign Legion and in the French resistance movement, settled in Paris. When inadvertently involved in an international crime, the staid, respectable brother unprecedentedly seeks the aid of his twin, but dies instead. Three Eastern European killers give a satisfactorily sinister flavor to a story in which Hambledon and Bagshott play only minor roles, though Hambledon is crucial to the climax.

XVI At the beginning of *Alias Uncle Hugo,* Hambledon is trying to trace a lost boy-king, whose presence is urgently desired by his government-in-exile, though the dangerous streets of a former Eastern European kingdom now under Communist control. He finds he has arrived too late and must instead seek the boy in the U.S.S.R. itself, where he has been unwillingly sent to school. Hambledon ingeniously assumes yet another identity, as Hugo Britz, a German criminal on the run. After neatly engineering the escape of a high-echelon Russian official embarrassingly imprisoned in West Berlin, he travels to the Ukraine, finds the boy and, after more perilous adventures, escapes with him to Austria. Among several memorable figures in this book, two stand out: the degenerate ex-hero of Stalingrad who heads the local M.V.D. and the boy Kasper himself, struggling to maintain an unwelcome role and yet still given to pranks that add to the grey hairs of his poor "Uncle Hugo"!

XVII *A Knife for the Iuggler* begins with Hambledon's witnessing of a murder in Paris. Naturally enough, Letord is very much involved in its earlier stages but finds it hard to forgive Hambledon when he brings Forgan and Campbell to Paris. Letord's ire is understandable, for the model-makers inadvertently cause a riot! It is thus with relief that Letord sees events shift away from Paris, to Portugal and thence to the Canary Islands. Here Hambledon, under an alias of course, finds himself in the employ of a gentle German with a novel approach to dealing with Communists. Forgan and Campbell, in unexpected disguise, arrive too and in the end extricate themselves, Hambledon and the one Communist they wished to retrieve with minimal disturbance to what they clearly regard as a worthy establishment!

XVIII The German detective Heinrich Spelmann, now in a position of power in a recovering Germany, invites Tommy's involvement in his next adventure, *Not for Export.* The story moves from the Rhineland to divided Berlin, where Hambledon survives further dangerous adventures only through the aid of a street urchin called Frett. A gang of German crooks are progressively eliminated, and even if, at the end, Hambledon might feel he has risked his neck for very little, Spelmann at least is content that his problem has been solved!

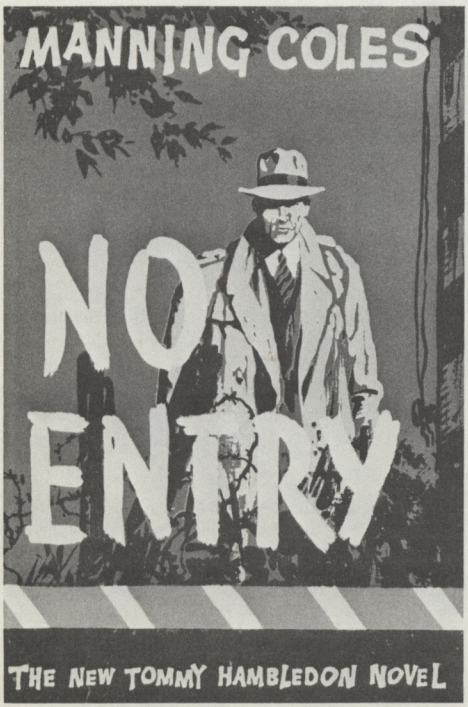
XIX *The Man in the Green Hat* begins in Italy as the Fascist regime is collapsing; it is essentially a story of what happened to Mussolini's lost loot. Hambledon is involved because a member of the Diplomatic Service has disappeared in the Lake Como region; and Forgan and Campbell are again brought into a lively story with many attractive characters and two believable villains.

XX Hambledon's involvement in the adventure that begins on the *Basle Express* is essentially inadvertent and results from the murder of his sleeping-car companion. The scene shifts to the Austrian Tyrol and finds Hambledon a new associate in a barrel-shaped member of the Austrian Special Police,

Lucius Lombard. After surviving embarrassing and exhausting adventures on the slopes of the Arn Spitze, Hambledon and Lombard ultimately account for a criminal gang with international ramifications.

XXI Forgan and Campbell occupy the center of the stage throughout much of *The Three Beans,* a story of murder and financial manipulation set in France. Hambledon enters the story late and Letord, shudderingly remembering his earlier encounter with the model-makers, remains as much offstage as he can! Forgan and Campbell divert the crooks' attention by posing as businessmen come to France to raise loans for the South American republic of Campos de Oro (Uruguay?); but it is Hambledon who finally deals with the gang leader, in a Paris rooftop scene that is perhaps less hair-raising for him than his prolonged exposure to the threat of matrimony!

XXII The ambassador whose murder initiates the next adventure, *Death of an Ambassador,* is from Esmeralda and is of as dubious antecedents as one might expect from Hambledon's earlier adventure in that country! A petty French criminal is unjustly accused of the crime but escapes; Hambledon follows him to France and, with the energetic support of Letord (no, Forgan and Campbell are not around this time!), the unexpected help of a dwarf and his own special survival powers, lives to see their adventure concluded in a fashion in which he plays little part.



XXIII *No Entry* is the last of the fully co-authored novels and one of the most memorable of all, with its picture of the uneasy life on the perilous frontier between East and West Germany. Hambledon is seeking the strayed son of a British diplomat. In the process, he admirably portrays an irascible and eccentric German to whom the Russians—to their deep regret, at the time as well as afterwards—consider themselves indebted. Despite a spirited chase episode in the culminating chapters and the rescue of the strayed student, the book ends with the same sense of unease with which it began—an excellent end to the long collaboration.

XXIV The short stories brought together in *Nothing to Declare* are all lightweight byproducts of the thirty-year collaboration. Hambledon appears in all of them and Bagshott in most. Adding flavor to several of the stories is a cheerful minor crook whom Hambledon befriends, Butler Harry (perhaps based on a real-life English crook called "College Harry"). These are enjoyable snacks to intersperse between the solider fare of the novels.

XXV After Adelaide Manning's death, three more books appeared under the "Manning Coles" byline. The first has so much the flavor of the earlier novels that I suspect much, if not all, of it had been written before her death—*Crime in Concrete.* It begins when another of Hambledon's criminal acquaintances, a cockney called George Tranter, narrowly survives a murderous attack and, for once, talks to the police. The pursuit takes Hambledon to France and a renewed collaboration with Letord which even survives the arrival on the scene of Forgan and Campbell! As the story develops, an association of current crimes with much darker earlier episodes in wartime France becomes apparent. The eventful denouement occurs among the French vineyards during the grape harvest.

XXVI The *Search for a Sultan* is to try to locate the possible heir to the throne of the oil-rich Middle Eastern sultanate of Qathusn, a search that again takes Hambledon, Forgan and Campbell to France and, this time, to Tunisia also, where, after various other adventures, an heir is indeed found. This book, written by Coles with a different co-author, is not of comparable quality with its predecessors. The humorous effects take too much command, and several loose ends are left unknotted at the end. Evidently Cyril Coles's ingenious imagination needed the restraint of his earlier collaborator and did not find similar qualities in her successor.

XXVII The same criticism can be properly applied to the last of the Manning Coles stories, *The House at Pluck's Gutter,* though this has many

excellent scenes and several well-drawn minor characters to redeem it. The story hinges on the continued existence into the modern day of a fading mediaeval Order, the Knights of the Reconciliation, whose retention of diplomatic privileges and a private fiefdom close to Rome has made them desirable subjects for an unpublicized Communist takeover. Hambledon, tough as ever in his old age, very narrowly escapes drowning in Belgium and, after traveling in a wheelchair to Rome, survives a terrifying adventure on a transmitter mast. Forgan, Campbell and a spirited English nurse called Prudence are in on this adventure. After the model-makers have arranged a beautiful stage-set extrication of Hambledon from his Roman perils, we see him for the last time as he finally extirpates the menace back in England, with Bagshott once more in support.

HAMBLEDON'S ASSOCIATES

A series of secondary characters reappear repeatedly in these stories and merit extended discussion, since they make an important contribution to the texture of the adventures.

The one we meet most frequently is William Bagshott, already Chief Inspector at Scotland Yard when we first encounter him, subsequently deservedly promoted to Superintendent and eventually Chief Superintendent. At his first appearance, in *Without Lawful Authority,* he is thus described:

> Bagshott was a tall man with thick black hair turning grey, a lean face and an amused expression which alternately terrified and infuriated evildoers. The more amused he looked, the less they liked it, and with reason. (IV, 126)

Like Hambledon, Bagshott is too wedded to his career ever to marry. Despite that amused expression, he has essentially a more serious and disciplined mind than his friend and tends to act as foil to Hambledon's quicker and more inventive wit. They share a delight in good food and prefer to meet in restaurants whenever they need to discuss problems present or hold inquests upon problems past. We meet Bagshott for the second time in *The Fifth Man;* and we witness him trying to harass, but instead being harassed by, the model-makers in *A Brother for Hugh.* Nevertheless, it is in this book that we see Bagshott at his most formidable, as he examines the Argentinian crook Gatello:

> Question after question; continued reversion to previous answers wherever discrepancies appeared; dogged persistence whenever Gatello refused to answer, the interrogation continued for hours without a break. The Argentinian stormed, cringed, turned sullen and even wept; he lied and swore and was stubbornly silent by turns, but the steady bombardment of questions went on. Walter Race—who was with him—who was in the flat at the time—why did Race come to the flat—who brought him there and how—Cesar Mariposa—Ramon Jacaro—but you said just now—which gun was that, the .45 or the .32—you say Race was shot with the .45, you stick to that?—how do you account for the fact that—
>
> At the end of three and a half hours, Gatello, too strong to faint, went into violent hysterics and was removed.
>
> "The doctor had better see him," said Bagshott. "I don't want him to crack up altogether, I haven't nearly finished with him yet."
>
> Hambledon, rather white round the nostrils, wiped his forehead. "That's the first time I've seen you really in action, Bagshott. Good lord, I hope you never get after me."
>
> "We got some nice damaging admissions, didn't we?" said the Chief-Inspector cheerfully. "Lunch time, thank goodness, and I feel I've earned it." (VII, 276–77)

Bagshott is the principal investigator in *Diamonds to Amsterdam;* he figures in all the short stories in *Nothing to Declare;* and, indeed, he appears in most of the later adventures, adding legitimacy to Hambledon's wide-ranging enterprises. Curiously enough, though, in view of Manning Coles's undoubted talent for character development in few words, Bagshott remains essentially a cardboard figure throughout, an epitome of the ideal, unreal Scotland Yard detective of fiction. Though we hear him laugh occasionally and several times see him become exasperated or angry, Bagshott never truly comes alive.

A much more vivid character is Antoine Letord of the Paris Sûreté. His very entry into the saga is memorable:

> Hambledon...turned to find himself looking down the barrel of an unpleasantly large revolver. The man who was holding it was the fat little man with the spiky moustache who had passed him under the railway bridge in the Rue de Brabant twenty minutes earlier. He sidled into the room, if such a rotund form could be said to sidle, and pushed the door shut behind him with his shoulder.
>
> "Your pardon, m'sieu," he said politely. "The hands up, if it will not inconvenience you." (XI, 30)

He has a liking for *vermouth cassis* (a drink composed of a dash of vermouth, an inch of black currant syrup and a lot of soda water) and always knows where the best restaurants are to be found in Paris, one of many things for which Hambledon has repeated cause to be grateful to him. He is quick on the boil:

> "I have no shadow of right even to attempt to influence the actions of m'sieu', but if you could suppress for a time your English mania for abstract justice it would be a help. What," said Letord passionately, "what, is the necessity to avenge that spiv Yanni so urgent as to hamper such men as we in our investigations? We begin to discern the dim outline of a path which may take us somewhere near where we wish to go, and behold, there is the corpse of Yanni. If m'sieu' desires his justice at all cost, let him say so and I, Antoine Letord, will go home to my mother at Voutenay in the Department of Yonne and bread, rabbits and pigeons.

Racing pigeons, for they do at least get somewhere if it is only—"

"Stop, stop," said Hambledon, "simmer down, come off the boil, extinguish yourself." (XI, 50)

He again threatens retirement to Voutenay in a later adventure, but this time with the object of breeding quite another creature:

"Goats?" said Tommy. "The last time I heard you say that, it was racing pigeons you were going to breed."

"I have changed my mind," said Letord with a smile. "Goats, at least, do not take wing and fail to return." (XVII, 40)

When Forgan and Campbell inadvertently start a riot in Paris, Letord's exasperation is justified indeed. As Letord watches the participants who have been arrested being unloaded from the police vans:

Hambledon wandered across towards Letord, meeting on the way an elderly police-sergeant of his acquaintance who glanced over his shoulder at Letord, pulled down the corners of his mouth in a grimace of comic dismay, and passed on without speaking. Letord, hearing steps hebing him, looked round to see Hambledon at his elbow.

"Er, good evening," said Tommy apologetically.

"You think it is a good evening," said Letord crisply. "You think this is a good evening's work, no doubt. Tell me, do you think also that the police of Paris do not already earn their few beggarly francs? Do we sit in our luxurious offices smoking and drinking and getting into the mischief Satan provides for idle hands? Tell me, and I will try to be grateful for what is doubtless the good intention. Look at them! Fifty-seven already and the good God only knows how many more to come. What do they represent, tell me that. You do not know, let me tell you. Every one of them represents an interview, a dossier, a search of records, a hundred-and-five entries in files, records and lists; booking in, booking out, searching, locking in cells, half-hourly supervision, preparation of police case, production in court, marshalling of witnesses, hearing of evidence most of it untrue, delivery of sentence, execution of sentence, dispatching to jails as though we had not enough rascals in our jails already—" (XVII, 59–60)

But, fortunately for Hambledon, Letord is distracted and soon forgives his friend, even if he is long in forgiving the model-makers. He is always peremptory with his staff:

He rang a bell on his desk and immediately a man came in.

"I am engaged," said Letord. "If anyone except Monsieur the President of France wants me, I am not to be disturbed. If Monsieur the President wants me, I have gone to Heaven and you do not know when my ghost is expected to return. That is all, go!"

The man vanished, and Hambledon laughed.

"I always admire the way you discipline your subordinates," he said. "If I were one of them I should not dare to sit down for fear there would not be time to get up."

"So they think," said Letord. "Now tell me about yourself, I suppose you have been in the usual series of troubles, eh? Out of the frying-pan into the fire? My friend, you are made of asbestos. When I sit quiet in the evening and the welcome picture of you rises upon the screen of my mind, I see you surrounded by corpses, always."

"Oh, please not," said Hambledon. "How very unpleasant."

"Not at all. Your sportsmen in England, when they have a shooting, the birds and beasts are all laid out in rows, are they not? Deer on the left, foxes in the middle, hares on the right and pheasants all along the front, and there, towering above all, the sportsman with his gun, for the photograph, no? Certainly. So it is when I think of you. Magnificent." (XXI, 72)

William Forgan and Archibald Henry Campbell first appear as incidental characters in *A Brother for Hugh* to serve as witnesses to Hyde's will—written, be it said, after Hyde is already supposedly dead! Hambledon and Bagshott are fascinated by the contents of the Clerkenwell Road shop where Forgan and Campbell work as model-makers and watch and clock repairers:

On the right [of the shop window] were waterline models of warships; one or two toy yachts, Bermuda rigged; and several power-driven models, from steam launches to the humble toc-toc. In the middle of the window was a tray full of spare parts for miniature locomotives and tiny ships' fitting. Above all these, high up to the windows, hung a large wooden model of a barque, fully rigged but without sails. It was such a model as one sees hanging as votive offerings in churches on the maritime coasts of Europe, beautifully built and with great wealth of detail. It was dusty and out of order; the broken mizzen topmast hung tangled in the rigging and the poop rails were missing on the port side, but it was still lovely. Tommy Hambledon flattened his nose against the window and said, "Look at that! Somebody's pride and joy, you know."

"I wish I were a small boy again," said Bagshott. "Look at that signal gantry. Oh, at the back there! There's an old brass model of a beam engine, I wonder if it works."

On the door was painted "William Forgan, Models, antique and modern. Repairs executed." Hambledon and Bagshott detached themselves regretfully from the window and went inside. (VII, 178–79)

Forgan is short and solid, with a sallow complexion, dark wiry hair with a thin patch on top to which his partner at times makes pointed allusions, and beady brown eyes. Campbell is taller and thinner, with the same sallow complexion but with red hair. Both have traveled in the tropics; and they worked on the Selkirk ranch in Argentina before their entry into the saga. They speak Spanish fluently (though initially with an Argentinian accent), French quite fluently, German well if unprepossessingly,

with a strong Spanish accent—a most peculiar noise. . . . For example, instead of saying "Danke schön," which means "Thanks very much" and rhymes with "banker burn," they said "Darnka schoona," and it sounded horrible, but was understood. Forgan and Campbell had, in fact, learned their German in the Argentine, and this horrid accent was natural to them. (XIV, 46)

Their interest in politics is slight and their under-

standing of it so minimal that when, on ill-advised request, they address a meeting of Parisian communists, they preach the Yugoslav brand of communism instead of the official Kremlin doctrine and provoke a riot! (XVII, 48–51)

Their versatility in impersonation becomes apparent in the later stories. They are English journalists of "the London *Record,* that great paper" and, later, Canary Islands fishmongers in *Let the Tiger Die;* insalubrious Spanish supporters of the neo-Nazis in *Now or Never;* discharged Portuguese ships' engineers in *A Knife for the Juggler;* a Spanish doctor (Forgan) and his mentally unbalanced orange-grower patient (Campbell) in *The Three Beans;* and they play many other, briefer roles—so well, indeed, that a French confidence trickster is quite certain they are members of his profession! (XIV, 26–27) Some of the episodes in which they are involved are richly humorous, as for example their use of phrasebook and records in *Let the Tiger Die* to convince a Spanish prison governor of their ignorance of his language, while covertly passing a message to Hambledon (IX, 182–89). Their model-making skills are intermittently in evidence; in *The House at Pluck's Gutter,* one of their models unexpectedly extricates them from danger; and the bugging device they have invented is of crucial importance in the *Search for a Sultan.* They are imaginative, tough and resilient; and, though he is occasionally embarrassed by their wilder activities, Hambledon knows he is fortunate to have recruited such assistants.

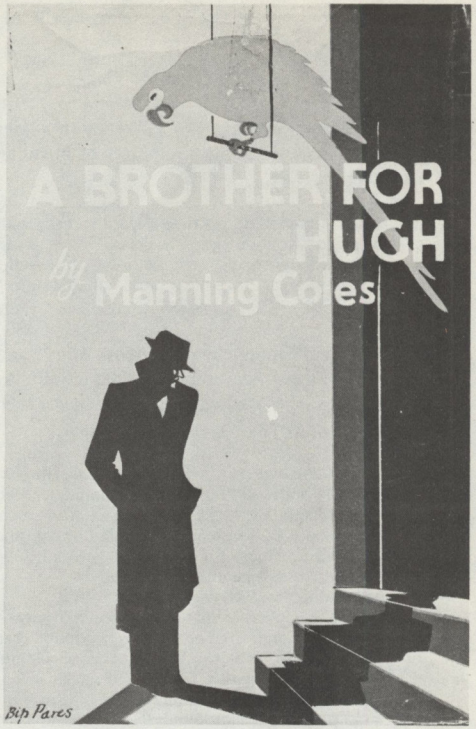
Hambledon's longest-serving colleague in Intelligence is Charles Denton, officially on leave from his army regiment since 1916 (IV, 187). He appears first, and characteristically, in the later chapters of *Drink to Yesterday:*

> The door opened and there entered a tall young man with an air of fatigue, a very smart uniform, wonderful boots, and a hat with a crown of the utmost floppiness such as was firmly discouraged in army orders. Nevertheless he wore it, even at the War Office, nor did anyone reproach him, for that was the sort of man he was. He greeted the man at the desk, sank into Bill's chair, and said: "Really, your passages get longer and harder every time I tail along them. If we win the war, will you have cork linoleum laid down?"
>
> "I doubt it," said the War Office man. (I, 149)

After his espionage work in Cologne, he remains in Intelligence and reappears in the second book, after a spell of service in the Balkans. He is still weary:

> "Glad to see you, Denton. Sorry to come away?"
>
> "Not at all," said the young man in a tired voice. "These people are too damned energetic by half, fight at the smallest excuse. The Younger Nations, what? Simply too nursery for words." (II, 81)

In the guise of a Swiss businessman, Denton is sent to Berlin to seek vainly for the anonymous British agent



we already know to be Hambledon. Instead, Hambledon finds and rescues him from considerable and unpleasant peril, arranging his sick colleague's escape back to Switzerland under the guise of an elopement. Denton's partner, Elizabeth, is the daughter of another British agent who calls himself Weber in Berlin but is actually a Scot named Keppel. During Denton's recuperation in a Basel hotel, a flirtatious Austrian baritone arouses his energetic ire and the elopement becomes reality. Charles and Liese marry in Paris and return to England. The marriage thus precipitately arranged is a success, for in later books we hear that Liese is in Bonn when Denton is wounded there (XIV, 125); we learn that they have a son, Adam Keppel Denton; and later Hambledon holidays with the Dentons on Lake Como in Italy (XXIV, 189).

Denton plays a prominent, if not very fruitful, role in *Without Lawful Authority,* having his car stolen and being shot. He also reappears intermittently in the later books. In *The Fifth Man,* he is involved in some very effective pocket picking and filling:

> "Aren't you the man who had his pocket picked at Waterloo Station one night not long ago?" said Colemore. "By a man named Eddie?"
>
> Denton nodded. "Edwin Cuttlefish, or some such name.

We shall not meet him again for some time, I think."

"Cuttlefish?"

"Czentchifitchkowski, or words to that effect. Probably assumed." (VI, 208)

Denton's last prolonged appearance is in *Let the Tiger Die,* to discuss with Hambledon a mysterious packet. He has still the same sempiternal weariness as when we first met him:

The packet contained two samples of a dirty grey substance, differing slightly in specific gravity and several other important respects, and several pages of remarkable cryptic notes.

"I saw them myself," said Denton in a tired voice. "To be accurate, I took a hasty glance and averted my eyes. They were then passed on to someone stronger. They are scientific notes of some kind, but to make them more exciting the symbols used are not the usual ones but an entirely fresh set which nobody has ever seen before. I even gather nobody particularly yearns to see 'em again. . . . The grey powder was like cigar ash only heavier. Our chemists have got to work on it, their first preliminary report came in this morning. Exhausting, very. I had one look at it and sent out for some beer. What passes for beer these days. It was no help at all." (IX, 77)

Alfred Reck is serving another British agent in Germany in the first book but loses his morale and almost his sanity during Germany's collapse. Hambledon finds him as a street derelict and, after various vicissitudes, restores Reck's self-confidence; he becomes Hambledon's servant and friend. In the third book, he is living with Hambledon in a cottage near Portsmouth and striving to control the domestic arrangements:

. . . Reck stirred, opened his eyes and immediately looked at the luminous dial of the clock. Barely seven, needn't get up yet for another twenty minutes, that awful woman never came before seven thirty. Not that she would be so bad, presumably, if only one could understand what she said, though even Reck's bachelor ideas of cleaning and sweeping were outraged by Mrs. Bigg's methods. Speed, and speed alone, was her virtue. "I'm paid till twelve, and at twelve I goes," she said, and rushed round the bungalow like a female tornado until noon, after which peace descended on the house of Hambledon. (III, 3)

We learn a little of Reck's background:

. . . [H]e was brought up in the flat Midlands, where a gentle rise of fifty feet is called a hill, where men make wonderful hedges for the pleasure of the Hunts, where the lift of the sky extends in an arc of a hundred and eighty degrees from horizon to horizon, and the great companies of cloud appear and gather, pass, and fade again into the illimitable distance, their green shadows sliding across the green fields. (III, 4)

Reck is persuaded in that book to help Hambledon in a burglary and is consulted as a radio expert in a later adventure (IV, 42). He is away from Hambledon's flat when it is triply invaded at the end of *A Brother for Hugh.* Thereafter, Reck is mentioned rarely, saying his last words in one of the short stories:

Tommy returned to his own rooms in the exasperated mood of one who has allowed himself to be persuaded into doing something thoroughly silly.

"I am a fool, Reck," he said.

"They say that wisdom comes with advancing years," said Reck.

"I said I was a fool," snapped Hambledon.

"That's what I meant," said Reck, and retired to the kitchen. Tommy looked after him with a pained expression. (XXIV, 80)

There are also a handful of characters who appear in two books. Most notable by far among these is German detective Heinrich Spelmann. He is

a small square man with a shock of white hair which blew about in the wind. He stood with his legs wide apart and a long, shabby waterproof flapping round them, looking keenly at every detail of the scene before him. (XIV, 14)

He appears first as a private investigator in Cologne and, though dismissed by the official police as "that comic private detective grandpa" (XIV, 150), is more than capable of looking after himself, indeed rescuing six plainclothes policemen from a dangerous predicament which he himself treats most calmly (XIV, 156–59). His ability gains him a senior appointment with the Security forces in Bonn; and later he is sufficiently high in the German police hierarchy to be able, in *Not for Export,* to officially request the British government for Hambledon's aid. After Spelmann's eventual triumph on that occasion, we encounter him no more.

HAMBLEDON HIMSELF

By the third book, as we have seen, Tommy Hambledon is a senior and potent figure in the British Foreign Office, sufficiently so to be treated with care and respect by his nominal superiors, who know well that they are much more readily replaceable than he.

Physically, he is tough, resilient and in excellent trim. When he runs for and leaps aboard a train at the beginning of *Diamonds to Amsterdam,* Bagshott notices he is not even slightly out of breath. If he were in his early twenties in 1914, he must have been well into his sixties by the end of his recorded career, yet he is able to chase over Austrian mountain slopes after the rotund Lombard with no more cost than breathlessness, and, though suffering from phlebitis following his near-drowning in *The House at Pluck's Gutter,* he nevertheless continues his pursuit of the criminals, even if initially in a wheelchair!

Though self-avowedly attracted to blondes (IX, 28), he is not a man for the women; in this he follows his own precepts, as expounded to Michael Kingston. He affords some attraction himself: certainly Brigette of Brussels sees enough in him to pursue him with

telephone calls (XI). The unfortunate Amalie Reilander also takes a quick liking to him and turns to him for protection when theatened by Goebbels (V); and Prudence Warner clearly regards him with a warmth greater than nurses usually feel for their patients (XXVII). His bachelorhood is never seriously threatened, however, and, when he feels the need to charm the widowed Belgian owner of a Paris café, he does so with extreme trepidation (XXI).

In an early book, Hambledon sleepily reflects: "I do take a lot of killing" (III, 3). This is true enough and not merely a tribute to his considerable physical powers; much more is it a reflection of his initiative, his ability to rapidly assume new roles and to use unexpected factors to his advantage. When pursued by the Stockholm police for a murder he has not committed, he uses a chance-found hotel porter's uniform not only for escape but also to bluff the criminals into flight (IX, 23–26); his swiftness of thought and action enable him to turn the tables on a driver with a gun on an Austrian mountainside, although unarmed and mother-naked (XV); and it is Hambledon, not the tough Logan, who saves the two of them when trapped on a Thames launch by two East European killers, even if it is Logan who doggedly drags one of the killers ashore to be hanged (XV).

His long experience of violence has given him a considerable phlegm that sometimes disconcerts his associates:

> "In the small hours of this morning," said Grogan, "there was a violent explosion in Macgregor's house which wrecked it very thoroughly, rendered the houses on either side so unsafe that they had to be vacated at once, and broke every window in the street."
>
> "Dear me," said Hambledon, sitting down on one of the hard chairs, "they did mean to make sure of him, didn't they?"
>
> The Detective Inspector, less accustomed to violent death than the British agent, looked really shocked, and said, "They got his widow, anyway."
>
> "The devil they did. That makes five."
>
> "Yes, five," said Grogan sourly, "and the police have as yet no evidence to show who did any of 'em. No trace of the yellow taxi, either."
>
> "Cheer up," said Hambledon encouragingly, "it's not so bad as it sounds. It's obvious that this is one and the same job, done by the same people, so it's only one murder really, isn't it?" (III, 43)

He is very much committed to his job but relaxes whenever there is opportunity and likes good food and cheerful company. We only once see him on holiday, in Stockholm at the beginning of *Let the Tiger Die:*

> He turned right and strolled along the waterfront, planning another lazy day. He would hire a motor launch and visit some more enchanted islands. He would sit on a bench, sunning himself in the Stadshustrad Gardens. He might even—so warm was his heart towards Stockholm—visit a museum, for Hambledon was not by nature a museum visitor. It would be as it were a graceful acknowledgement of favours received. After which he would go and have a drink somewhere—it was really very odd how the mere thought of a museum suggested a drink to follow—and have lunch at the Rosengrens Källare. (IX, 13–14)

He has a variety of friends, as indeed an intelligence officer must. Quite a few of them are criminals: Johannis the passport forger of Rotterdam, the safebreakers George Tranter and Butler Harry in England, Cobden the confidence trickster, the tramp Dinel and many more. He is freely critical of those colleagues he considers inept—Bellair in *They Tell No Tales* is given no sympathy when he blunders and gets shot in the arm—but fiercely loyal to those who have been loyal to him, seeking out the killer of Ginsberg in *Pray Silence,* even though it exposes him to great danger. He is a good and amusing talker and twice, at least, talks himself out of dangerous situations, persuading the dwarf fiddler Gogo to his aid in *Death of an Ambassador* and distracting the talkative, murderous Gaston in *Crime in Concrete* so effectively that it is Gaston, not Hambledon, who goes into the concrete barrel.

What makes him so likeable, though, is the recurrent humor in his talk. So much of this arises naturally from the story that it is not easy to quote briefly: an example is when Hambledon and Bagshott find, in *A Brother for Hugh,* that Hyde and his friend left the hotel by the back door as they entered at the front. Hambledon realizes he and Bagshott must have been seen and says:

> "To quote the poet, 'it wasn't the words that startled the birds, but the horrible double ongtong!' You and me, Bagshott." (VII, 232)

Of his reaction to Bagshott's statement, in *Diamonds to Amsterdam,* that the deceased chemist was indeed making diamonds:

> "Nonsense," said Hambledon briskly. "What, our old friend the alchemist? Nonsense."
>
> "It doesn't seem to be," said Bagshott, and hunted among his papers. "I've got some dope about it here if I can find it."
>
> "Don't bother, I know. All these stories are much the same. One dark cold wintry night there came a knock at the alchemist's door and when he opened it there, among the swirling snowflakes, was a middle-aged man of foreign but respectable appearance. The alchemist invited him in and in return for having been saved from death by exposure the stranger presented him with a mysterious yellow powder in a small piece of paper. Was it curry powder, sulphur, or a cure for fleas? No, it was a scraping from the Philosopher's Stone. The alchemist makes a note of the directions for use and sits up all night trying it out. By the morning, he has turned one ounce of pure silver into two ounces of pure gold. Singing like a kettle joy, he rushes up to the stranger's room to bless him in the name of humanity and get some

more flea-powder. But the room is empty, the bed has not been slept in, and the stranger is never seen again. All the stories are like that. That's alchemy, that was." (XII, 10–11)

Yes, Hambledon has given much delight to me and to many others. I hope he is now in contented retirement, still occasionally globetrotting no doubt, going to Paris for a meal and talk with Letord—or to Voutenay, if Letord has indeed gone off there to keep pigeons or goats; to the Rhineland to drink wine with Spelmann or to Austria for a good meal with Lombard, but always returning to his apartment near St. James's Park, with Reck to look after him. Maybe it's filling up with models, if he goes often to see Forgan and Campbell in their Clerkenwell Road shop; and maybe he still dines every so often with Bagshott, to pick up the news from Scotland Yard, or less publicly with shadier acquaintances like Butler Harry. After so many perils survived, Tommy Hambledon deserves peace and relaxation at last!

Notes

This article is based on an address presented to the Casebook of Saskatoon, Canada, on Thursday, December 14, 1978. Thanks are offered to my wife, Anne Margaret Sarjeant, for her help in library researching. In preparing the biographical notes on Adelaide Manning and Cyril Coles, the following sources were used:

a. *Contemporary Authors,* Vol. I. Permanent Series, pp. 134–35.

b. "Coles, Manning" (pp. 214–15) in Stanley J. Kunitz and Vineta Colby, eds., *Twentieth Century Authors,* First Supplement, New York, 1955.

c. "Cyril Coles": obituary notice in *Publishers Weekly,* Vol. 188, Nov. 8, 1965, pp. 38–39.

d. "Coles, Manning" (pp. 93–94) in Chris Steinbrunner and Otto Penzler, eds., *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection,* London, 1976.

e. Anonymous note from advertising leaflet, pasted into my copy of the Book League edition of *They Tell No Tales* (1941).

REFERENCES

The list that follows details the editions used in preparation of this article; it is to these that page references are given. English or (more usually) American titles, where different, are quoted afterwards in parentheses.

Works by Manning Coles:

I 1940 *Drink to Yesterday.* Toronto: Musson Book Co., ix + 251 p.

II 1940 *A Toast to Tomorrow.* Toronto: Musson Book Co., ix + 308 p. [English title: *Pray Silence*]

III 1941 *They Tell No Tales.* New York: Book League of America, ix + 296 p.

– 1942 *The Fortress.* New York: Doubleday. [Not seen.]

IV 1943 *Without Lawful Authority.* Toronto: Musson Book Co., iv + 279 p.

V 1945 *Green Hazard.* Toronto: Musson Book Co., x + 262 p.

VI 1946 *The Fifth Man.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 287 p.

VII 1947 *A Brother for Hugh.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 316 p. + 4 p. advts. [U.S. title: *With Intent to Deceive*]

VIII 1947 *The Emperor's Bracelet.* Illustrated by H. M. Brock. London: University of London Press, iv + 234 p., color frontis. + 3 color plates, 119 drawings. [U.S. title: *Great Caesar's Ghost*]

IX 1947 *Let the Tiger Die.* Garden City: Crime Club, 224 p.

X 1948 *Among Those Absent.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 283 p. + 3 p. advts.

XI 1949 *Not Negotiable.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 223 p.

XII 1949 *Diamonds for Amsterdam.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 252 p. + 4 p. advts.

XIII 1950 *Dangerous by Nature.* London: Hodder and Stoughton

XIV 1951 *Now or Never.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 224 p.

XV 1952 *Night Train to Paris.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 254 p.

XVI 1952 *Alias Uncle Hugo.* London: Thriller Book Club, 192 p.

XVII 1953 *A Knife for the Juggler.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 221 p. [Originally issued in the U.S. under this title but republished 1967 by Pyramid Books as *The Vengeance Man.*]

XVIII 1953 *Not for Export.* London: Hodder and Stoughton [U.S. title: *All That Glitters*]

XIX 1955 *The Man in the Green Hat.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 191 p.

XX 1956 *Basle Express.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 191 p. [U.S. title: *The Basle Express*]

XXI 1956 *The Three Beans.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 190 p. [U.S. title: *Birdwatchers' Quarry*]

XXII 1957 *Death of an Ambassador.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 223 p.

XXIII 1958 *No Entry.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 223 p.

XXIV 1960 *Nothing to Declare.* Garden City: for the Crime Club by Doubleday, 216 p.

XXV 1960 *Crime in Concrete.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 190 p. [U.S. title: *Concrete Crime*]

XXVI 1961 *Search for a Sultan.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 222 p.

XXVII 1963 *The House at Pluck's Gutter.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 192 p.

Items I, II and XVI were republished as a combined volume, *The Exploits of Tommy Hambledon,* Garden City: Doubleday, 1959, 480 p. Item XXII was also published in David Alexander's *Hugh-a-Bye Murder,* 1957; and Item XXVII in Mignon Eberhart's *The Cup, the Blade, or the Gun,* 1961.

Works by Francis Guite [in the U.S. by Manning Coles]:

1954 *Brief Candles.* London: Hodder and Stoughton. [Not seen.]

1956 *A Family Matter.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 191 p. [U.S. title: *Happy Returns*]

1957 *The Far Traveller.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 190 p.

1958 *Come and Go.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 192 p.

1959 *Duty Free.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 192 p. □

A SENSE OF HISTORY:

The Espionage Fiction of Anthony Price

By Jeanne F. Bedell

Anthony Price's first novel, *The Labyrinth Makers* (1971), winner of the Silver Dagger award from the British Crime Writers' Association, opens with the fusion of past and present that forms the technical and thematic basis of all his work:

> *Every August 14 for twenty-three years Mrs. Steerforth put the same In Memoriam notice in the* DAILY TELEGRAPH:
>
> *Steerforth, John Adair Steerforth. Flt. Lieut. D. F. C. R. A. F. V. R. Lost at sea, September, 1945. On this, his birthday, not forgotten— Mother.*[1]

The discovery of Steerforth's lost Dakota and Steerforth, "Icarus turned Yorick," coupled with Russian interest in the plane and its cargo, involves Ministry of Defence counter-intelligence expert David Audley in an assignment which his superior, Sir Frederick Clinton, describes as "an intellectual exercise in human archeology." Audley's digging is, however, literal as well as figurative: the boxes in Steerforth's plane contain only rubble, but Audley's investigations of buried human motives reveal the existence of genuine treasure, and, in a plot whose end returns exactly to its beginning, he excavates the "heap of golden trinkets" which Johnny Steerforth had smuggled out of Berlin in 1945 and rediscovers the lost Schliemann Collection, the gold of Homer's Troy.

Despite its echoes of Robert Louis Stevenson, Price's novel is not romantic, and the treasure sought by Audley's antagonist, KGB agent Nikolai Andrievitch Panin, is not Priam's gold, which he dismisses as "of no importance," but a set of documents crucial to a power struggle between the KGB and the Soviet army. The story possesses romantic elements in abundance. But Audley's ironic attitudes (he calls the Schliemann story "a good capitalist legend") and Price's continuous juxtaposition of legendary past with dangerous present prevent readers from indulging in nostalgia and gently remind them that treachery was not unknown in Troy.

The Labyrinth Makers is first-rate espionage fiction with a cleverly constructed plot, well-placed clues, and an action-filled dénouement. But Price's real interest is character development, and the thematic center of the novel is the personal growth of David Audley. Audley is a puzzle-solver whose first devotion is to the game he plays and the intellectual challenge it offers. He moves with ease through the labyrinth constructed by Panin, but he must simultaneously move in another and different direction and explore areas less accessible than RAF Newton Chester. He begins this journey before dawn on the day he first hears of Steerforth. Because of his early awakening,

> uncalled for and long forgotten end-of-term memories intruded. He remembered the boy in the next bed for the first time in twenty years. Which was interesting: it meant that the right key unlocked a whole set of memories, and then one could clarify the past, flexing the memory like muscles. (LM, p. 10)

Without significant bearing on the formal plot, this passage is nonetheless important: among the buried motives for which Audley must search are his own; and among the discoveries he makes is an understanding of the complexity of his own personality. The schoolboy memory is a precise foreshadowing of the nature of his assignment and the self-knowledge it brings.

Audley is an expert on the Middle East, who has antagonized his superiors; he is an analyst whose home is "the back room among the files and reports." Given a field assignment in which his expertise about Arab-Israeli affairs is virtually useless, he develops new talents and shows himself to be an excellent field agent; but in the process his natural arrogance is severely jolted, and at one point he feels he is "simply not up to job." Adjusting his ability for sifting facts from reports to extracting them from conversations requires that he learn new skills, and as he expands his capabilities, he recognizes the limitations of his previous approach. His love affair with Johnny Steerforth's daughter Faith breaks through the tight compartments into which he has structured his life, and he comes to realize that his "passion for facts had ended by inhibiting other varieties of passion." Without losing his intellectual acumen, Audley develops new sources of strength as his buried emotional life surfaces. The archeological motif is thus central to

both plot and character development and indicates Price's ability to combine divergent elements into a coherent structure.

Of the nine espionage novels which Anthony Price has written, all the best display the careful fusion of personal and historical past—time and memory—used in *The Labyrinth Makers*. Rigorous concentration of point of view in one central character is crucial to this technique, which enables Price to offer character analysis of greater depth than is usual in the genre. And since discovery and interpretation of information are human processes, Price, by filtering them through a specific personality, gives credibility to the convoluted plots of espionage and makes plot action develop naturally out of the attributes of individual characters. *The Alamut Ambush* (1972), for example, is a fairly conventional tale of international terrorism, but Price focuses the reader's interest on Squadron Leader Hugh Roskill and the combination of guilt and responsibility which motivates his investigations.

A continuing cast of characters to which additions are occasionally made also emphasizes individuality and personal development: Audley, Sir Frederick Clinton, his assistant, Brigadier Tom Stocker, Roskill, and Jack Butler, to whom three novels will subsequently be devoted, appear in *The Labyrinth Makers*; military historian Paul Mitchell is first met in *Other Paths to Glory* (1975) and Frances Fitzgibbon, whose investigations of Jack Butler's past provide the narrative focus for Price's latest novel, *Tomorrow's Ghost* (1979), is first seen in a minor role in *Our Man in Camelot* (1976). Through gradual revelation of his characters' backgrounds, Price simultaneously stimulates reader interest and re-emphasizes his thematic concern with the pervasive influence of time past. This is equally true of *The '44 Vintage* (1978), whose central character is nineteen years old, and *Tomorrow's Ghost*, which details the personal history of a man in his fifties. In fact, Price's two relative failures, *Our Man in Camelot* and *War Game* (1977), suffer because the historical background is only that and he has not managed to integrate either Arthurian legend or the English Civil War with the private lives of his protagonists.

Reappearing characters contribute a sense of continuity to Price's series of novels, but perhaps equally important in establishing a coherent and consistent socio-historical viewpoint is his debt to Rudyard Kipling, especially the Kipling of *Puck of Pook's Hill*, *Rewards and Fairies*, and *Barrack-Room Ballads*. The first two books can best be described as disguised history lessons for children (which does not mean that adults do not read and enjoy them). Each lesson focuses upon a single character and his involvement in an historical event and takes place within a frame story which involves the adventures of two children. Price uses this technique in modified form, but his real link to Kipling lies in a shared emphasis upon the fusion of past and present.

Two of the best stories in *Puck of Pook's Hill*, "On the Great Wall" and "The Winged Hats," are set on Hadrian's Wall and evoke with precision both the brooding landscape of the border and the day-to-day life of the legions. Fifteen hundred years later, Kipling notes, traces of the past are preserved in the contour of the land itself and impinge upon the present:

> And see you, after rain, the trace
> Of mound and ditch and wall?
> O that was a Legion's camping-place,
> When Caesar sailed from Gaul! [2]

Walking the Wall in *Colonel Butler's Wolf*, a novel whose very title echoes Kipling's descriptions of the region,[3] Jack Butler feels kinship with his dead colleagues and understands that:

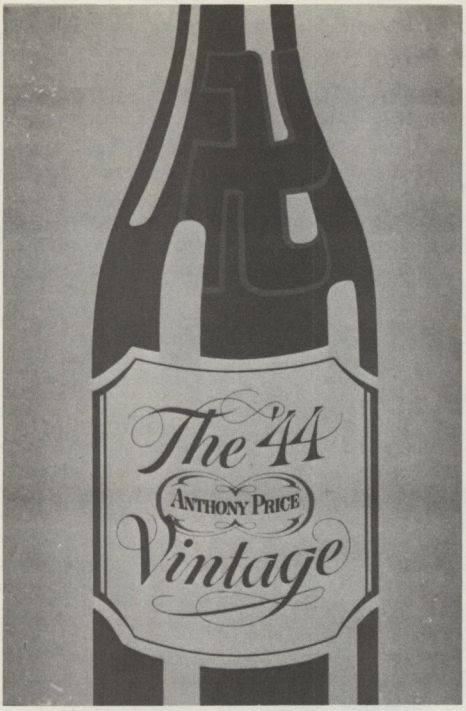
> It mattered not at all any longer that the famous line was often no more than a few courses high, or a mere jumble of stones buried in the turf... the true wall was made of men.

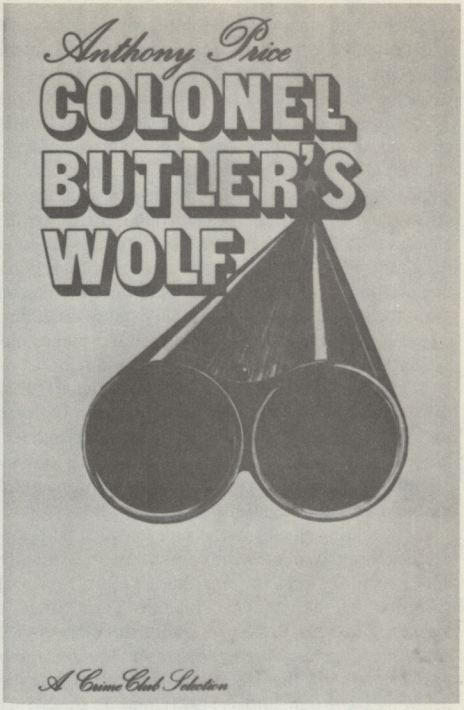
The novel deals in part with student activists and clearly reflects the world of the early '70s, but Butler believes that

> the world hadn't changed so much as people imagined. Life up here would have added up to the same endless quest for information which he knew so well, and peace would have depended on the ability of the Wall's intelligence officers to smell out trouble in advance.

The hypothetical questions he poses for the long dead legions, "What mischief were the troublemakers in the northern tribes hatching?... were the young warriors restive because of hunger or idleness?" are applicable to the present: "And that, exactly, was what he and Audley were engaged in now: there were troublemakers loose and the young men were restive" (CBW, p. 109). The heroine of *Colonel Butler's Wolf* is a young woman whose family has guarded the border for five hundred years; its main action takes place north of the Wall "in the ancient no-man's land of the Picts," and its climax is on the Wall itself.

David Audley, referring to Puck's "people of the hills," once describes himself as a "hill watcher" (LM, pp. 70–71), and the numerous allusions to fairies and trolls scattered through the novels recall Kipling, as does Price's imaginative use of landscape to infuse the present with a brooding sense of the past. The kinship is also, of course, political. Although not an imperialist, a position that would be not only untenable but ludicrous in the 1970s, he is a conservative who respects traditional values. He





shares Kipling's regard for the professional soldier, and the career of Jack Butler, for whom "it was enough, and always had been enough, and would always be enough to be on the Queen's Service," can almost be viewed as a lengthy extrapolation from "Tommy."

Referred to behind his back as the "thin red line," a soubriquet in which he takes pride, Jack Butler began his military career as an "other ranker." The son of a Lancashire printer who was a union organizer and a local leader of the 1926 General Strike, Butler cannot "imagine himself on the gentleman's side of the green baize door." Yet he both admires and respects "the privileged world which took its proved quality for granted" and knows that despite his working-class background he will defend that world when its "last barricade" goes up. Price's most sympathetic character, Butler embodies "pre-1914 virtues" and makes them relevant to the present. He knows his Kipling, and what he knows illustrates both his character and Price's approach to creating it: "Only *Kim* and *The Jungle Book*. . . and some of the poetry, like *If*. . . and the *Barrack-Room Ballads*."

Butler's affection for "the good old days he admired and regretted so deeply" and his background, "Sandhurst superimposed on Lancashire," are sketched in *Colonel Butler's Wolf*, but his character is first seriously developed in the retrospective portrait of *The '44 Vintage*. Set in Normandy in 1944, the only one of Price's novels whose action occurs in the past, *The '44 Vintage* begins with one of the most striking opening sentences in espionage fiction—"The toes on Corporal Butler's left foot were bright purple"—and in a narrative that is simultaneously suspenseful and contemplative shows how a nineteen-year-old boy's desire to be "a good soldier" and a hero enables him to become both.

Shamed by *impetigo contagiosa,* a disease he associates with "dirty boys from dirty families," the German-speaking corporal is detached from his battalion for special duties with Chandos Force,[4] where he meets French-speaking subaltern David Audley. Although he is too embarrassed to realize it at the time, Butler's preoccupation with his feet not only saves his life but introduces him to his future career as an intelligence agent. Unlike Audley, who seems destined to play the Great Game, Butler has wanted to be a soldier "ever since I saw our country regiment march through the city with fixed bayonets and drums beating"; and he thinks that "the only field for a soldier was the battlefield and the only part worth playing was the infantryman's" (V, p. 27). But he knows intuitively that Chandos Force is "more like

a bandit encampment than a unit of the British army," and he learns that identifiable enemies are less dangerous than renegades and traitors on his own side. His naïve dreams of glory in conventional battle give way to the exigencies of the present, and Butler demonstrates the adaptability that will shape his life. At Beaumont Hamel in 1916, Butler's father had pulled his commanding officer off the wire "under machine-gun fire in full view of the Germans"; at the Chateau de Pont-Civray in 1944, Corporal Butler kills his with a sten gun. His own code of honor remains intact, but his simplistic view of life has been permanently shattered. Years later, as an officer, Butler "would have a chap's boots off and examine his feet as soon as look at him" (TG, p. 174); he would win a Military Cross in Korea, fight terrorists in Cyprus, and ferret out KGB "sleepers" in England, and in each case he would rely on experience gained during his youth. *The '44 Vintage* is an adventure story, but, like *Kim*, it is an adventure story which shows an adolescent gaining mastery of himself and his profession.

It is a long way from Jubilee Street, Blackburn, to the Chateau d'Auray in Touraine, and Butler's arrival there is as dangerous as his journey. At the chateau, among friends of Audley, he meets his future wife, Madeleine Françoise de Latour Boucard. Readers of early novels in the series know that Butler is a misogynist who struggles against irrational hatred for women because of the "gross betrayal and infidelity of one" (CBW, p. 82). In *Tomorrow's Ghost*, his marriage and the mysterious disappearance of his wife nine years before are the subjects of intensive investigation. Because Butler is in line for promotion, Frances Fitzgibbon and Paul Mitchell are assigned to delve into his past, Paul to study his military career and Frances to inquire into charges that he murdered his wife. These two plot lines mesh neatly: Butler's relationship with General Sir Henry Chesney, his father's ex-commanding officer, provided the basis for his successful transition from other ranker to officer, as well as the financial independence that enabled him to marry the aristocratic Madeleine. Even reminiscences of the First World War and Armistice Day are important to the novel: both Madeleine's disappearance and the climax of *Tomorrow's Ghost* take place on 11 November, and suspicions of Butler are proven false by a Remembrance Day poppy in the hands of an 84-year-old veteran of the Somme battles.

The somewhat cynical Mitchell at first describes Butler as someone who "obeys orders and gets on with the dirty jobs that other lesser breeds and bloody desk-walls he wouldn't touch with a barge pole," and then adds, "Which is a noble thought, but may not be what the late 1970s require" (TG, p. 18). But he comes to feel that Butler's "pre-1914 virtues" are clearly "in the best interests of the country."

The exoneration of Butler and the affirmation of his values form the central theme of *Tomorrow's Ghost*. Unfortunately, the structure of the novel is bifurcated by an ill-developed and distracting emphasis upon the fated death of Frances Fitzgibbon, from whose viewpoint it is narrated. Early in the story, when Frances poses as a graduate student writing on "The Land of Faerie from Spenser to Tolkien," Price introduces another plot strand which seems extraneous to his thematic emphasis upon patriotism. Mitchell refers to her as "the Princess"; she herself relates a folk tale known as "The Summoning Story," whose sinister implications are used to foreshadow her death at Thornervaulx Abbey. Butler's exoneration is rooted in his personality, which is, in turn, the result of the past events revealed. But Frances does not even like fairy tales and thinks *The Lord of Rings* "an absolutely marvelous adventure story for romantically-inclined fourteen-year-olds" (TG, p. 21). Her death, like the world of fairies, seems imposed upon the basic structure of the novel and does not emerge naturally from its plot.

No such criticism, however, can be made of the Golden Dagger-winning *Other Paths to Glory*, a perfectly plotted novel. Using his extensive knowledge of World War I, Price constructs a story which has two mysteries, one contemporary, the other sixty years old, and provides a single solution for both. The novel opens in the War Documents Room of the British Commonwealth Institute of Military Studies, where rising historian Paul Mitchell is reading the letters of General Chesney. Depressed by the "weight of pain and death" in the yellow pages, Mitchell is interrupted by the arrival of Audley and Butler, who ask him to identify a piece torn from a German trench map. That night, on his way home, he is nearly killed; then he learns from Audley that his mentor, a leading expert on the Somme, has been murdered and all his papers destroyed. The next morning, dressed in the uniform of the Royal Tank Corps, Paul Mitchell, with his extraordinary, detailed, and accurate knowledge of the battles and battlefields of the Somme, is concealed behind the identity of Captain Lefevre. Audley needs a Somme expert to facilitate his cooperation with French intelligence, and Mitchell, bored by the ordinary routine of his life, is impressed by Audley's power and efficiency.

All the details in *Other Paths to Glory*, even Mitchell's boredom, are important, but obscure details about long-disbanded regiments and long-forgotten battles are crucial. Tracing the last contacts of the dead Professor Emerson, Mitchell realizes that one of them belonged to the Gamekeepers Rifles, the Poachers, and he begins to understand why Emerson had been excited:

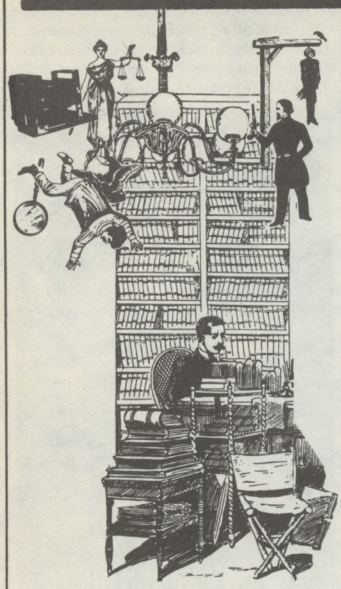
> "It's one of the great feats of arms of the whole battle: how the Poachers took Bully Wood and the Prussian Redoubt. And it's also one of the greatest mysteries." (OPG, p. 61)

But not until he arrives in France does a casual bit of information assume its proper significance: Bouillet Wood is now closed to the public and under heavy guard in preparation for a top-secret international conference; but because Harry Bellamy of the Poachers carried a Charles Lancaster shotgun into battle and because that gun has been recovered perfectly preserved, Mitchell knows how 'D' Company took the Prussian Redoubt. And he also understands the strange behavior of Audley's French colleague and the nature of the threat it poses to the conference. Mitchell's own battle, fought in the trenches and won with a stick grenade filched from the overcoat of a long-dead soldier who had carried it into battle in 1916, rounds out the perfect concurrence of situations. And Paul Mitchell, whom Butler calls "a born intelligence agent," discovers a taste for the "unconquered present."

Price's sound grasp of history and his ability to integrate his historical knowledge into tightly woven plots and to use it to build and analyze character set him apart from other writers of espionage fiction. Writing in the Kipling-Buchan tradition, he reveals a strong attachment to such traditional virtues as patriotism, duty, and honor. Although sensitive to the nuances of social change and able to write sympathetically of student unrest, feminism, and working-class ascendance, he obviously shares Jack Butler's affection and respect for pre-1914 England. This appreciation of tradition provides a continuous value structure for his novels and contributes to the coherent vision of the world which they present. "All I do," says David Audley, "is extrapolate on the past and the present" (OM, p. 79). The same could be said of Anthony Price.

Notes

1. A list of Price's novels with dates of publication follows; all were published for the Crime Club by Doubleday and Company, Garden City, N.Y. References will be found in the text according to the abbreviation indicated.
   The Labyrinth Makers (1971) LM
   The Alamut Ambush (1972) AA
   Colonel Butler's Wolf (1973) CBW
   October Men (1974) OM
   Other Paths to Glory (1975) OPG
   Our Man in Camelot (1976) OMC
   War Game (1977) WG
   The '44 Vintage (1978) V
   Tomorrow's Ghost (1979) TG
2. "Puck's Song," in *Puck of Pook's Hill, The Collected Works of Rudyard Kipling* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, and Company, 1941), 3.
3. See, for example, "On the Great Wall," *Collected Works*, XIII, 131.
4. Chandos Force was appropriately named after Sir John Chandos, a medieval soldier whose specialty was the quick raid into enemy territory. □



COLLECTING Mystery Fiction

By Otto Penzler

Planning and acquiring a collection of books relating to a single fictional character can be as challenging and exciting as assembling a collection devoted to a favorite author. In the world of mystery fiction, the most (by a wide margin) enthusiastically collected subject is Sherlock Holmes. In fact, that statement need not be qualified by limiting it to the mystery genre; in all of literature, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his creation reign supreme—they are collected more than Shakespeare, Dickens, Hemingway, or anyone else.

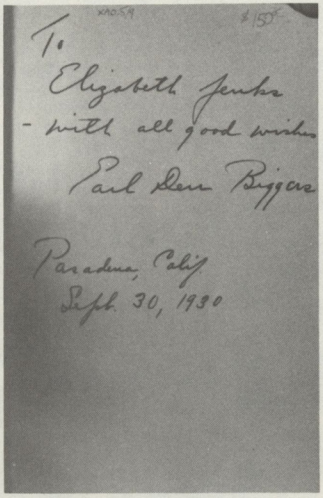
While many books have been written on the subject of Sherlock Holmes, including several bibliographies (two of which are massive tomes), no other characters in detective fiction have been so honored. No book-length discussions (and only a tiny handful of articles of *any* length) have been produced to serve as a guide to constructing a collection devoted to any other character.

At first glance, it does not seem a difficult task to put together a complete collection of Charlie Chan books. Earl Derr Biggers wrote only six novels about the popular Hawaiian sleuth (there have been no short stories), and none is extraordinarily rare in first edition. They are not all common, but, with a little patience and perseverance, they can be found in reasonable condition at a reasonable price.

One difficulty with a Charlie Chan collection, however—and it would be equally true for any other collection, whether of a single character, or author, or subject—is that it is virtually impossible to know precisely where to draw the line when deciding what to collect. If the book collection is to be centered exclusively on this character, a six-book shelf looks pretty sparse indeed.

The next logical step, then, after accumulating the six first editions, is to be certain that they are the best copies available and that they have dust jackets. Now it gets difficult. While the books are relatively plentiful, the dust jackets are quite scarce, and they are *very* scarce in fine, fresh condition. To have every Charlie Chan first edition in true collectors' condition is no small feat—even though there are only six.

Continuing to push the boundaries, the quest for the ultimate copies demands that they should each be inscribed by the author. Again, Earl Derr Biggers's signature is not excessively rare, but it is challenging enough to require several years to get all the books in the desired condition—with inscriptions.



It should come as no surprise that the book is enhanced if the inscription is to someone important—whether to the author (such as a parent, child, or spouse) or to the rest of the world (such as another significant author). What a thrill it would be to find a copy of, for example, the author's first book, *The House Without a Key,* with a presentation inscription to, say, S. S. Van Dine or Dashiell Hammett. Unlike most inscriptions, which are simply salutations and signatures, perhaps with a place and date, a presentation inscription lives up to its name and is clearly a copy of the book that has been *presented* to someone.) I once saw a copy of one of the Chan books inscribed and presented by Biggers to Chang Apana, the real-life Honolulu policeman on whom the fictional one was partially based. I passed it up because the book was not a first edition, merely a reprint, and I've regretted it from that day to this, with little doubt that it will cause a small pang of continued regret from time to time.

At any rate, once the six first editions in splendid copies are on the shelf, has the quest ended? Or, for that matter, should the quest be stalled indefinitely while those six perfect books remain just beyond the horizon? Either to supplement an impressive array or to maintain some activity while the big game hunt continues, it would be fun to add some of those lovely Grosset & Dunlap "Photoplay Editions" to the shelf. The texts are the same as in the first editions, to be sure, but these volumes have been enhanced by the addition of photographic plates, illustrating scenes from the motion pictures based on the books. The dust jackets, too, depict the actors (usually in a splendidly melodramatic pose) in the film, and are thus entirely different from the jackets on the first editions.

The immense success of the Charlie Chan books caused them to be reprinted with regularity and many of the later editions have entirely different dust jackets altogether, a number of which are even more colorful than those on the first editions. Finding these variants in beautiful condition can be difficult but rewarding. The next progression from this point is a consideration of the paperback editions, many of which have front cover illustrations by powerful and creative artists. Perhaps a worthy challenge, then, is to locate a copy of every printing of every edition, all in fine condition. This would, necessarily, include copies of all the issues of the *Saturday Evening Post* in which the novels originally were serialized.

But there is more—much more—to consider.

The popularity of the character, and the friendly regard in which he was held, made Chan a natural for children's books, with

several types being produced. Comic books, with their garish covers and fast-paced original adventures created for a younger readership, are an unusual (if peripheral) adjunct to a collection—with the advantage of requiring little room for a reasonable number of copies.

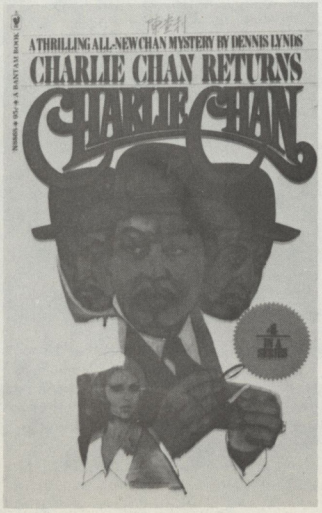
Related but separate collectors' items are Big Little Books and Better Little Books, published in the 1940s by Whitman in Racine, Wisconsin. Small, fat, hardbound volumes, they sometimes featured small drawings in the upper corners of the right-hand pages which could be flipped rapidly with the thumb to provide the illusion of figures moving a bit at a time, motion-picture-like. Primitive, but wondrous to a small child. This once-popular series included several Chan volumes based on the newspaper strip of the time.

What began as a collection of six volumes has now been expanded to six shelves, with the end not yet in sight.

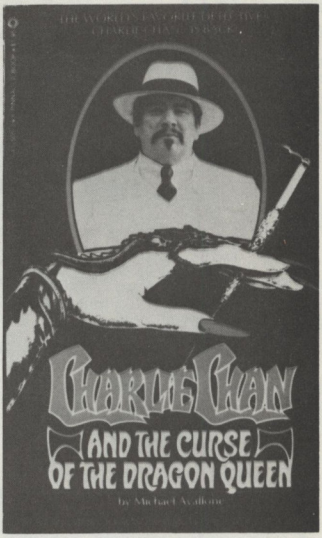
In November 1973, the first issue of *Charlie Chan Mystery Magazine* saw the light of dawn and, though it had a short and erratic life, it is no longer a simple matter to form a

complete run. Each issue of the elusive little periodical contained a new Chan novelette by Robert Hart Davis (which doubtless contributed to the speedy demise of the periodical).

Other apocryphal Chan stories have been written. One, by Dennis Lynds (the real name of the pseudonymous Michael Collins, the author of some first-rate hardboiled detective fiction), who hacked out *The Return of Charlie Chan,* is a paperback original published in New York by Bantam Books in 1974. Another is by Michael Avallone (the author of scores of novels, many of which have been published, mainly as paperback originals), who is responsible for *Charlie Chan and the Curse of the Dragon Queen,* the novelization of the comedic movie starring Peter Ustinov and Angie Dickinson in the title roles, published in New York by Pinnacle Books in February 1981.



Prior to that film parody, there had been more than fifty Charlie Chan motion pictures (a few of which were more humorous than intended—precisely the reverse of *Charlie Chan and the Dragon Queen*). It is possible to



amass a sizable collection of film-related material and memorabilia: stills (8″ × 10″ glossy photographs released by the studios), lobby cards (11″ × 14″ colored cards, issued in sets of eight scenes from the film, used for display in theater lobbies), and various sizes of movie posters. The press books produced for each film are also fascinating collectors' items. These slim promotional booklets are filled with illustrations, interviews with people involved in the film, and much other feature-story material unavailable elsewhere.

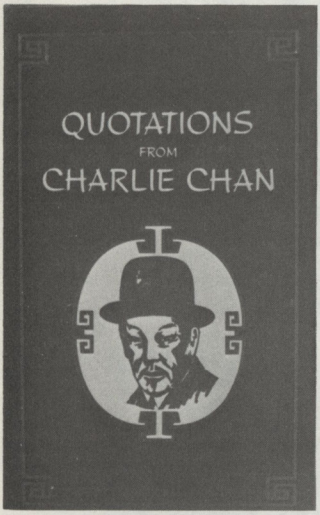
Chan had life in other electronic media than film. J. Carroll Naish (famous for his Italian accent in the old radio series *Life with Luigi*) played the Oriental detective in a British-made series, *The New Adventures of Charlie Chan,* that was syndicated in 1957; mercifully, it lasted only one year.

On radio, the sleuth enjoyed a longer, if only marginally more successful, life, beginning on the NBC Blue Network on December 2, 1932, in a Friday-night series starring Walter Connolly. The half-hour series went off the air on May 20, 1933, to be revived by the Mutual Network in October 1937 as a fifteen-minute serial that lasted only until April 1938. Ed Begley brought the character back to life on ABC with Leon Janney as his Number One Son on June 6, 1944. The following year, the half-hour series was cut to fifteen minutes, and it was dropped entirely two years later, only to be immediately picked up again by Mutual on August 11, 1947 as a half-hour program with Santos Ortega playing the title role until it went off the air permanently on June 21, 1948. Tapes and records of those radio dramas are

available today, and it is not impossible to turn up an occasional copy of a script for one of the radio shows, a TV program, or even one of the films.

Obviously, there are innumerable bits of ephemeron and effluvium which would correctly fit into a comprehensive Charlie Chan collection, but two should be mentioned especially as being of particular worth.

New York's Golden Press published *Quotations from Charlie Chan* in 1968. A compilation of the filmed *bon mots* ("Hasty conclusion easy to make—like hole in water") edited by Harvey Chertok and Martha Torge, this paperback original may still be uncovered in used bookshops but is quickly becoming more and more elusive.



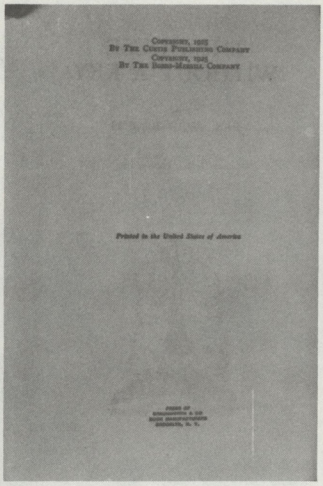
Among the scarcest and most desirable of Charlie Chan items is the fragile and colorful board game produced in the 1930s. Only one has surfaced in the past five or six years, but it must have been mass produced, and there can be no doubt that others lurk in the dark corners of nostalgia shops around the country.

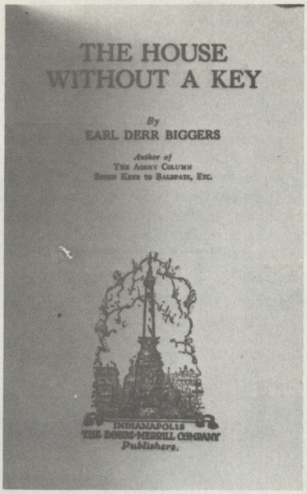
Following the definitions and dicta of the introduction to this series on "Collecting Detective Fiction," only the first editions of the Charlie Chan books will be described in detail below. The greatest amount of information may be had by examining the reproductions of the copyright pages included with this essay. Bobbs-Merrill, the publisher of all six Chan novels, had one of the least consistent policies for identifying its first editions, and it is simplicity itself to be misled. Any variation from the copyright pages depicted here indicates a later printing of the book.

The House Without a Key

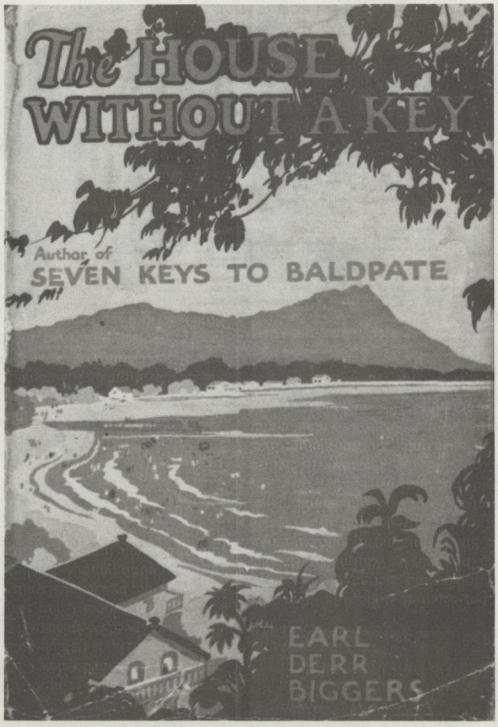
First edition: Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company (1925). Orange cloth, lettered in green on front cover and spine. Issued with a pictorial dust wrapper (see illustration).

Note: This title is in The Haycraft-Queen Definitive Library of Detective-Crime-Mystery Fiction: Two Centuries of Cornerstones, 1748–1948. It was serialized originally in the *Saturday Evening Post.*





Estimated retail value:	(without d/w)	(with d/w)
Good	$15	$ 75
Fine	25	200
Very fine	35	350

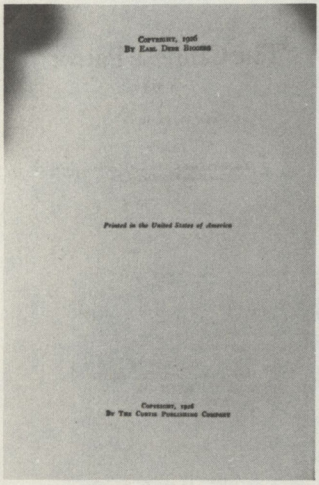


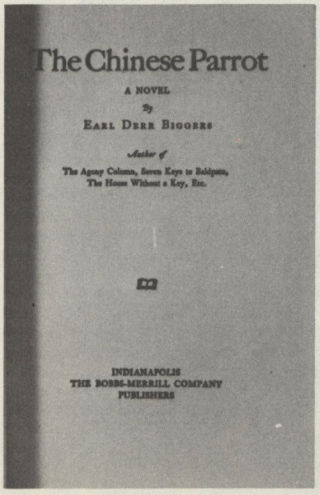
The Chinese Parrot

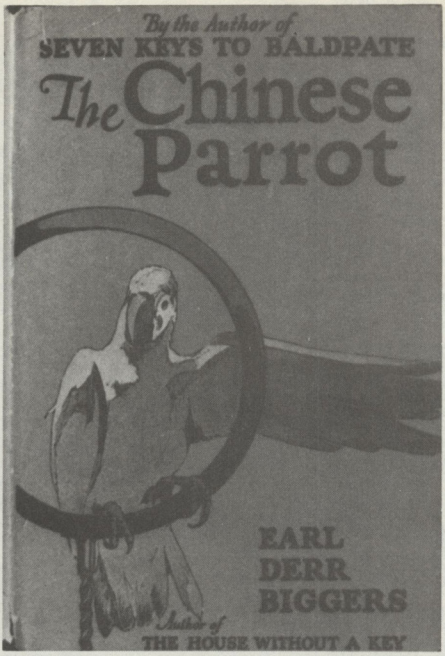
First edition: Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company (1926). Green cloth, lettered in orange on front cover and spine. Issued with a pictorial dust wrapper (see illustration).

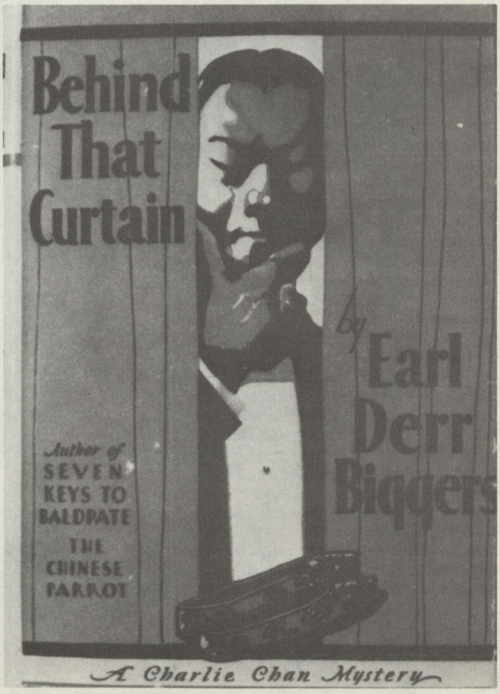
Note: The second Charlie Chan novel and the most elusive book to find in first edition and with a dust jacket. Two states of the binding, with no priority, have been reported. One is a green linen-textured cloth; the other is a darker, marble-green cloth. The latter *may* be a later state, as there appears to be more wear to the type in those copies.

Estimated retail value:	(without d/w)	(with d/w)
Good	$10	$ 40
Fine	15	150
Very fine	20	250







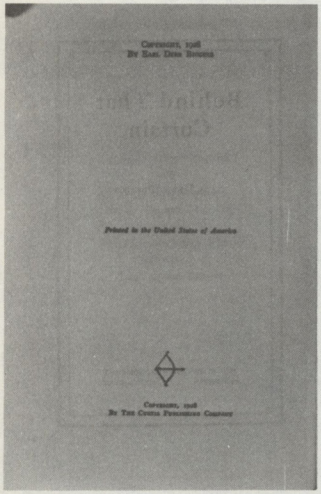


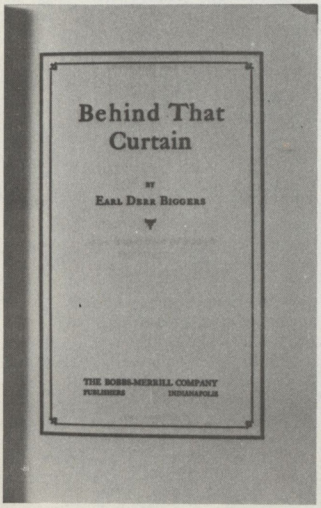
Behind That Curtain

First edition: Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company (1928). Yellow cloth, lettered in very dark brown on front cover and spine, which also has a small stylized pair of Oriental slippers as decoration. Issued with a pictorial dust wrapper (see illustration).

Note: The third Charlie Chan novel and the most difficult to find in clean, fresh state, owing to the light-colored cloth binding. The copyright page must have the publisher's symbol, a drawn box and arrow, else it is not a first edition.

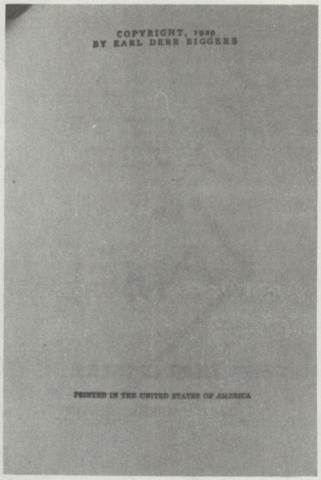
Estimated retail value:	(without d/w)	(with d/w)
Good	$ 7.50	$ 35
Fine	12.50	100
Very fine	15	150



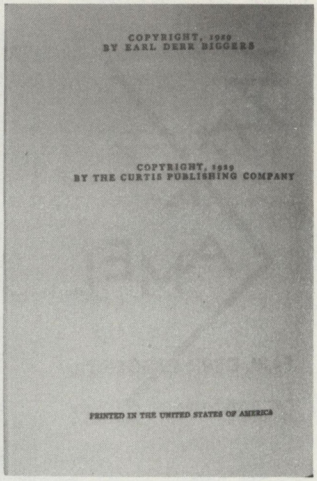


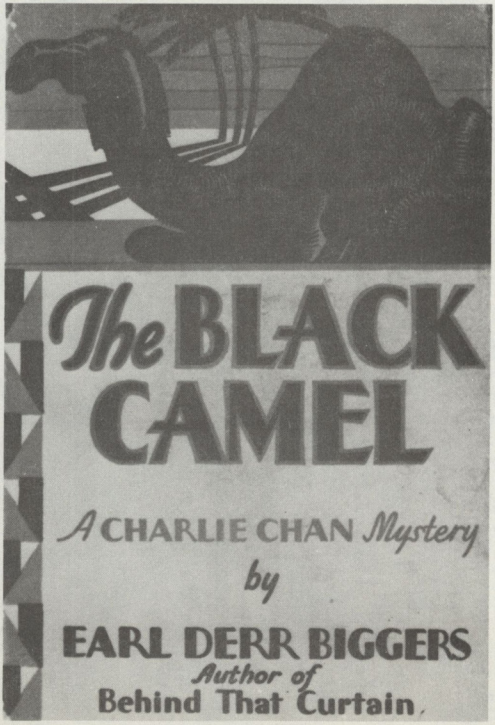
The Black Camel

First edition: Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company (1929). Grey cloth, lettered in orange on front cover and spine, which also has a small stylized camel as decoration. Issued with a pictorial dust wrapper (see illustration).



Note: The fourth Charlie Chan novel. There are two states of the copyright page (see illustrations). No priority has been established between the state with a copyright notice and the one without it. Logic suggests that the lack of the copyright notice was an oversight and that it was added to correct this



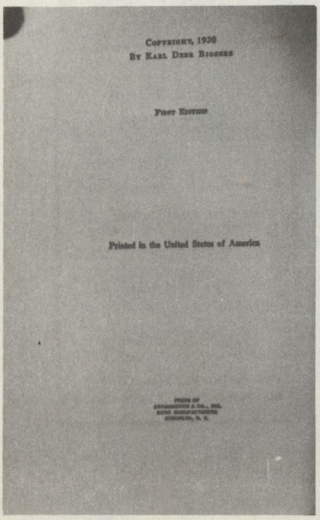


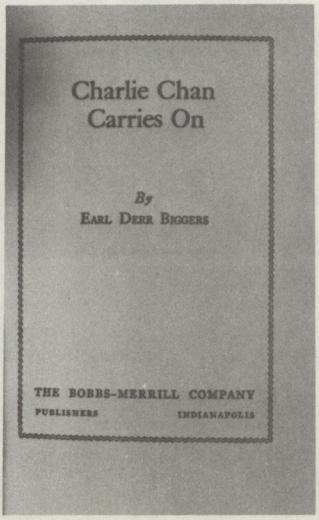
oversight, thereby making those copies the later state. This is, however, no more than supposition.

Estimated retail value:	(without d/w)	(with d/w)
Good	$ 7.50	$ 30
Fine	12.50	100
Very fine	15	150

Charlie Chan Carries On

First edition: Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company (1930). Orange-yellow cloth, lettered in dark blue on front cover and spine. Issued with a pictorial dust wrapper (see illustration).





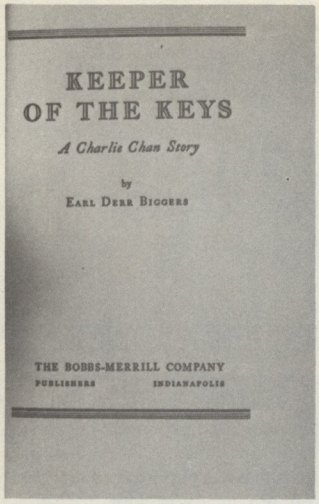
Note: The fifth Charlie Chan novel and the most common, copies in ordinary condition being plentiful. Even the dust jacket is not elusive, though it cannot easily be found in fine state. The words "FIRST EDITION" must appear on the copyright page.

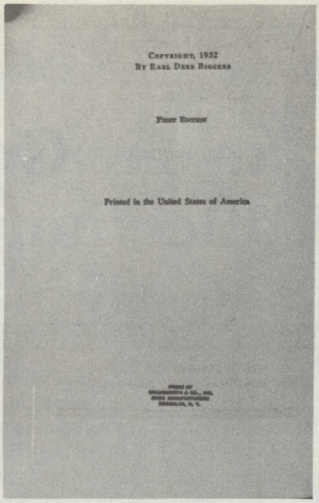
Estimated retail value:	(without d/w)	(with d/w)
Good	$ 5	$ 25
Fine	10	75
Very fine	12.50	100

Keeper of the Keys

First edition: Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company (1932). Black cloth, lettered in orange on front cover and spine, with small ornamental asterisks. Pictorial end papers. Issued with a printed and decorative dust wrapper (see illustration).

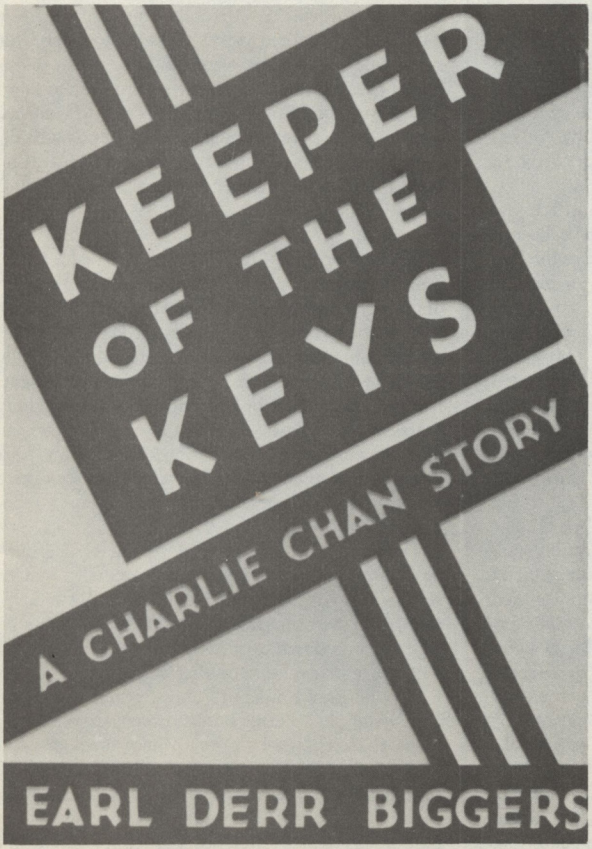
Note: The sixth and last Charlie Chan novel. Copies of this title are also plentiful, and the dust jacket is the most commonly found of any of the six Chan books. The words "FIRST EDITION" must appear on the copyright page.





Estimated retail value:	(without d/w)	(with d/w)
Good	$ 5	$ 25
Fine	10	75
Very fine	12.50	100

Too great a range of circumstances can enter into a bookseller's decisions on pricing his books, so the above estimates are entirely subjective and probably near the center of a fairly wide range. It could be conservative but still generally accurate to state that a signature or brief inscription would add $50 to $100 to any of the above estimates; genuine presentation inscriptions have no ceilings, depending upon such obvious factors as the length and importance of the inscriptions and associations. □



Mystery and Detective Fiction at Auction:

The Adrian H. Goldstone Collection

By James Pepper

On December 9, 1981, collectors, book dealers, and crime devotees gathered in San Francisco for the auctioning of the collection of mystery and detective books of the late Adrian H. Goldstone. At age 80, Goldstone died when he attempted to stop a car whose parking brake had broken. Unfortunately, the car had been parked on one of San Francisco's steep hills and quickly rolled over him. A collector of the mystery genre for over thirty years, Goldstone gathered more than 7,000 volumes in his lifetime, which the California Book Auction Galleries divided into 3,236 lots. Three days were required to complete the sale. Never before in the history of book collecting had a major auction been devoted solely to mystery and detective first editions.

For several years after Goldstone's death, the fate of his fabled collection was unknown. The books, sealed in boxes, lay in a Bekins warehouse in the Bay area. Speculation had been running high for months in advance of the sale as to what the collection contained. The auction house began issuing the extensive three-volume sale catalogue a few weeks before the sale. Potential bidders and interested parties eagerly wrote or called to obtain their copies. Many collectors were looking for the titles that eluded their collections, while book dealers planned what they would like to add to their stocks. Starting a week before the sale, future participants, catalogue in hand, were finally able to inspect the books. The collection was enormous. A detailed inspection took at least two days. People spent many hours filling their catalogues with notes as they carefully untied and retied bundle after bundle of books. A considerable number were soon found to be in not very good condition. Hidden among these, however, were some excellent copies of desirable volumes and some truly great rarities.

Everyone wondered what prices the best books would bring. They soon found out just how high some could reach. Many of the books that were in poor condition undoubtedly would have earned much higher sums if they had been in fine condition, for condition in book collecting is as important as it is in stamps and coins and many other collectibles. To collectors and dealers alike, that a book be a first edition is of primary importance. That it has its original dust jacket is almost as important. Fine first editions of certain desirable books with fine dust jackets can be worth ten, twenty or even thirty times more than identical copies of the same editions missing their original jackets. Throughout the Goldstone sale, top prices were paid for many of the books because their dust jackets were present and in collectors' condition. A number of first editions without dust jackets brought high prices as well, but these were books which were rare in any form. If a book is signed or inscribed by the author, its value is increased as well.

On the morning of the first day of the sale, bidders were gathered outside in the San Francisco fog as the doors of the auction hall were opened. Inside, the long auction room was virtually packed with books. All available shelves, as well as carts, tables and glass cases, were filled. As the auctioneer raised his gavel for the first lot, people from all over the United States and as far away as England were in their seats, waiting with great anticipation. By the time three days had elapsed, those present had seen much excitement and the setting of many world record prices.

The most expensive book in the sale turned out to be a little paperback which had originally cost one shilling. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), the first separate edition, earned top honors. This volume deserves such tribute for presenting us with the first adventure of Sherlock Holmes. Maurice F. Neville Rare Books of Santa Barbara, California and Peter L. Stern, book dealer from Sharon, Massachusetts, were bidding jointly throughout the sale. When the volume came up on the auction block, they actively bid on it. Acting for a client, John Howell Books of San Francisco quickly began bidding as well. After some exciting minutes of

spirited bidding, Howell edged out Neville and Stern, capturing the book with a final bid of $15,000. Neville and Stern, however, won their share of books by eventually being the sale's largest purchasers, buying over a full third of the items, which grossed some $200,000.

Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler turned out to be two of the stars at the auction. The revival of interest in the "hardboiled" school had brought these two authors to the very top in collector desirability. As interest has grown and the amount of fine Chandler and Hammett material available has become less common, their values have steadily risen. The prices realized for their books at the auction were startling to many. Neville and Stern set the world record price for a mystery novel written in this century by purchasing an advance copy in printed paper wrappers of Hammett's own favorite novel, *The Glass Key* (1931), for $4,000. The copy had once belonged to the famous mystery aficionado and writer, Vincent Starrett, and bore his signature on the flyleaf. Hammett's first book, *Red Harvest* (1929), brought $2,000 for a copy in dust jacket. A jacketed first of his Sam Spade novel *The Maltese Falcon* (1930) sold for $2,500. A personally inscribed copy of Raymond Chandler's 1945 paperback first edition, *Five Sinister Characters,* brought $3,750. *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940), a fine copy in jacket, sold for $1,600. Jacketed copies of Chandler's other Philip Marlowe novels brought good prices as well: *The Lady in the Lake* (1943), $950; *The Long Goodbye* (1953), $275; *Playback* (1958), $250.

Among living authors, Ross Macdonald (Kenneth Millar) is noted for his contributions to the development of the private detective in American fiction. His continually rising popularity among collectors has brought attention to the fact that many of the first editions of his books are really quite scarce. This growing awareness among collectors helped to bring fine prices for his work at the sale. A first edition of his first book, *The Dark Tunnel* (1944), *lacking* the dust jacket, fetched the substantial price of $400. *The Moving Target* (1949) in dust jacket, the first of his novels to feature Lew Archer, brought $225. Many of his other titles brought in excess of $100 each.

American mystery and detective fiction attracted considerable interest in general. Jack Boyle's *Boston Blackie* (1919) brought $600 for a copy in dust jacket. A personally signed and inscribed copy of W. R. Burnett's *The Asphalt Jungle* (1949) brought $250. Ellery Queen's first novel, *The Roman Hat Mystery* (1929), earned $300 for a jacketless copy. Damon Runyon's Broadway tale, *Guys and Dolls* (1931), was purchased at $800 for a copy in its colorful jacket. A jacketed copy of Mickey Spillane's first Mike Hammer novel, *I, the Jury,* earned $150.

A Sherlock Holmes pastiche, *The Unique Hamlet* (1920) by Vincent Starrett, was published in a tiny edition of 200 copies. It was estimated by the auction house to be worth $400. The final bidder had to pay $1,000 to snare this rarity. Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe showed his ever-present popularity with strong prices paid for his books. *Fer-de-Lance* (1934), Wolfe's first adventure, garnered $275 for a jacketless copy. *Double for Death* (1939) and *Over My Dead Body* (1940), both with their dust jackets, each brought $300. The strange and melancholy books of Cornell Woolrich were very sought after. A copy of his first book, *Cover Charge* (1926), lacking the dust jacket, but personally inscribed by Woolrich, sold for $1,900. His noted novels *The Bride Wore Black* (1940) and *Black Alibi* (1942) were purchased for $425 and $325 respectively.

Collectors interested in espionage found many titles to their liking. Graham Greene's first novel, *The Man Within* (1929), in jacket, turned out to be a $1,000 book. Eric Ambler's 1936 first book, *The Dark Frontier,* was knocked down for $550. Ambler's most famous work, *The Mask of Dimitrios* (1939), published in America as *A Coffin for Dimitrios,* is a legendary rarity. This is due to the fact that the Germans bombed the Hodder and Stoughton warehouse during the Blitz, destroying most of the first edition. The Goldstone copy in jacket sold for $475. The resurgence of interest in James Bond was made clear to Goldstone purchasers with the Ian Fleming lots bringing $1,300 for *Casino Royale* (1953), $650 for *Live and Let Die* (1954), and $450 for *Moonraker* (1955), all in dust jackets.

Agatha Christie and Dorothy L. Sayers were among the others most intensely sought after. Christie's first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920), brought a flurry of bidding. The Goldstone copy lacked the dust jacket. Even so, it cost the purchaser $1,300. The precedent-setting *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926) fetched $500 for another jacketless book. Sayers's *Five Red Herrings* (1931) and *Busman's Honeymoon* (1937), both in jackets, sold for $900 and $550.

R. Austin Freeman and his Dr. John Thorndyke were in the most-desired category. *The Adventures of Romney Pringle* (written in 1902 with John J. Pitcairn under the pseudonym Clifford Ashdown) sold for $1,200. *The Red Thumb Mark* (1907) brought $1,200 for a beautiful copy inscribed by Freeman to the noted English bookman and writer John Carter, who was one of the first to promote the collecting of mystery and detective fiction in the 1930s. A copy in jacket of *The Mystery of Angelina Frood* (1924), inscribed by Freeman to his niece, reached $700.

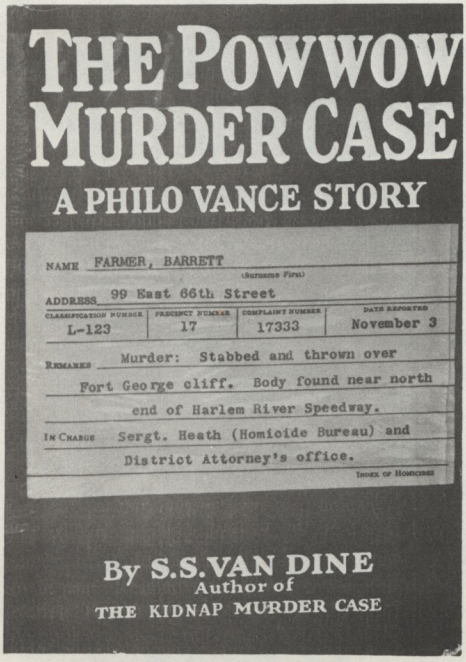
Another surprise to the auction house was the sale of *The Adventures of Archer Dawe, Sleuth-Hound* by J. S. Fletcher, published in 1902. The auctioneers estimated the book would bring $40 to $60. Ralph

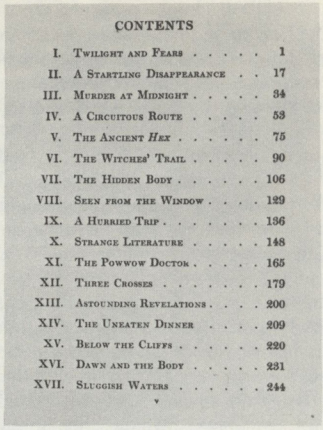
Sipper of Joseph the Provider Books in Santa Barbara recognized that its importance had been singled out by Ellery Queen in *Queen's Quorum* as a landmark in detective short-story collections. He also checked and found that it was lacking from almost every major collection of detective fiction. Sipper finally purchased the book for $400, having been prepared to pay up to $1,500. He sold it shortly after the auction to an inquiring collector for $1,750.

Other authors as well made surprisingly strong collector showings. John Dickson Carr, Erle Stanley Gardner, Jonathan Latimer, and Craig Rice were among this group. Not every book in the sale went for high figures, and the range of prices started from $5 for some books.

One of the most talked about incidents of the sale took place on the third day, when S. S. Van Dine's *The Pow Wow Murder Case* was auctioned. Astute readers of Philo Vance will quickly recognize that this is one of his adventures which has eluded their reading. This should be no surprise, though, because the book was never published. What Goldstone had was a dummy book made up by Van Dine's publisher for a book that he was writing but never completed. The dummy was hardbound, had a printed dust jacket, title page and a few pages of text, with the story ending abruptly in mid-sentence. Why Van Dine never finished the book is not known. The auction house estimated the dummy would bring $25 to $40. When the bidding opened at $130, the auctioneer turned to his associates in a startled manner. At this point, one bidder turned to another and was heard to say, "He ain't seen nothing yet." Bidding became furious and went on for a number of minutes. By the time it ended, Otto Penzler of The Mysterious Bookshop in New York had successfully bid $2,500 and the audience broke into applause.

The sale ended with a mix of disappointment and elation. A number of participants were surprised at some of the prices and were not prepared to go that high. Others were very pleased to obtain rarities or just to buy a few modest books to add to their shelves. The size of the Goldstone collection allowed there to be something for almost everyone. When the bidders stepped out of the auction hall, back into the foggy street after the final session, almost everyone carried away at least one small parcel containing his souvenir of this soon-to-be-famous sale. □

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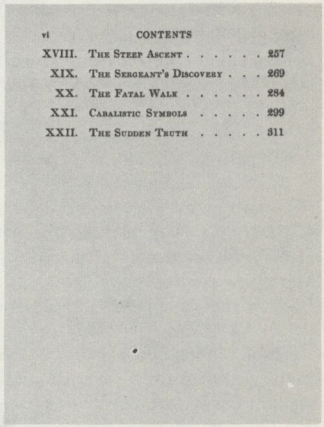

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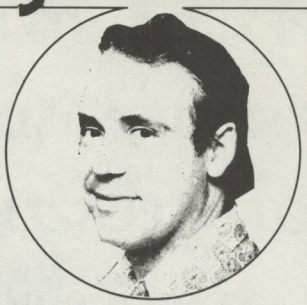


Allen J. Hubin, Consulting Editor

Photo: Robert Smull

Short notes...

I got only to page 93 of Evelyn Anthony's ***The Defector*** (Coward, $12.95), which probably proves I am an unsuitable judge of product designed for the women's market. A high-ranking Russian, full of secrets, defects to England, and Davina Graham is assigned to debrief him. Of course they fall in bed—there may be some affection involved, too, though it's hard to tell these itch-scratch days in fiction, and I didn't stick around to find out. I gather Ms. Graham survives, even if her virtue doesn't, for a sequel is in the works.

Pierre Audemars has been writing about M. Pinaud of the Sûreté since 1958, but ***And One for the Dead*** (Walker, $9.95) is the first I've tried. And, probably, the last. Not that this is so awful; it can be read. But France and French police work must be odd indeed if this is an accurate guide, and I haven't the energy to suspend enough disbelief. Pinaud is summoned by his superior, who has the misfortune to discover a murdered body in his bed. Pinaud, his car ailing, arrives late and his superior is already in jail. Various semi-comprehensible political machinations ensue, and eventually Pinaud stumbles across the killer.

George Bellairs wrote some fifty novels about Insp./Supt. Littlejohn and has recently been discovered by Walker, who now brings us ***Fear Round About*** ($9.95), a latter-day (1975) investigation. This is very ordinary stuff, with no characters of interest (Littlejohn himself has less substance than Perry Mason, if that can be imagined). An unpleasant old man dies in a decaying village of rural England, and the Supt., on the scene because he knew the man in earlier, equally unpleasant days, pokes about. The prose is flat, too.

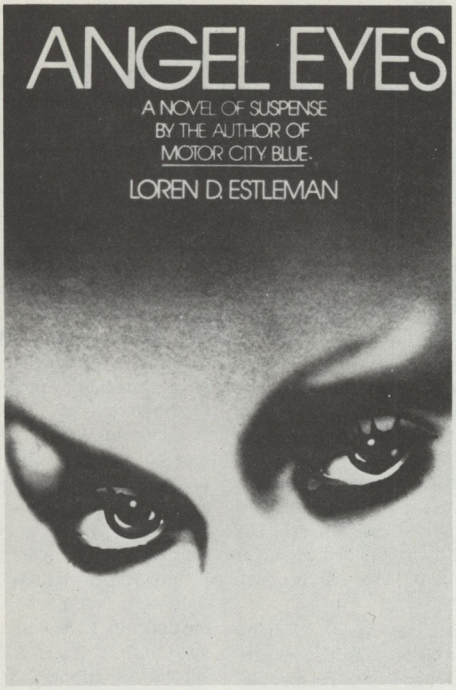
Final Cut by Pamela Chais (Simon & Schuster, $12.95) is a very effective Hollywood crime novel. Detective Bud Bacola was a child star, but the experience cost him his parents and left him mental scars covering things even he doesn't know. Finally, the murder for which he has unconsciously waited for years takes place: D. P. Koenig, the famous agent (and his one-time agent), dies of a knife in the chest. Bacola, whose masters are unaware of his personal stake, investigates with increasing fervor, increasing self-knowledge. Character depiction is incisive and knowing; suspense is high and narration is polished.

The second of Wessel Ebersohn's tales about police psychiatrist Yudel Gordon is ***Divide the Night*** (Pantheon, $10.95), which also provides a crushing portrayal of the means and people by which apartheid is maintained in South Africa. Johnny Weizman seems to have worked out a foolproof scheme to kill off blacks: he induces them to "break in" to his shop by leaving the door open at night and then takes "justified action" to defend his property. Gordon is assigned the case, but he's professionally helpless: the patient won't cooperate. Yudel figures the only way to prevent his killing again is to get him convicted for a previous death. Which puts him squarely between the authorities and fugitive blacks. Grim and memorable; little wonder that Ebersohn's books are banned in his country.

Clive Egleton (a.k.a. John Tarrant) offers us ***The Eisenhower Deception*** (Atheneum, $10.95), his ninth intrigue thriller under his own name. In 1956, Britain plans to invade Suez; President Eisenhower is determined they shall not. British Intelligence's solution: blackmail the President into staying out. The means: "evidence" that Ike had a WWII affair with his pretty female driver. Matters get bloody complicated, however: the Russians take an interest, the wrong people in the intelligence apparatus get wind of it, and the CIA buys in. The affair winds up in New York with Soviet agents as chief villains. Nicely readable of its "history as it might have been" type.

Charlie Rope is a New York City cop who has perhaps only one redeeming quality: he usually gets his man. In ***Charlie and the Ice Man*** (St. Martin's, $9.95) by John Eller, someone is dispatching Manhattan's finest hookers with an ice pick. This attack on a city resource cannot be tolerated, of course, and I suspect you will find the killer before Charlie does. A cocaine connection with all three victims gives him the key. Forgettable.

Loren D. Estleman's private eye Amos Walker reappears in ***Angel Eyes*** (Houghton Mifflin, $11.95), and this series seems to be growing on me. Estleman has the formula down pat, as Walker investigates a case involving a missing client and the occasionally law-abiding head of a muscular union. Events seem to center on the union's lawyer, whose numerous invisible means of support



didn't enable his attempt to fly his plane under water in Lake Superior to be at all successful a couple of years before. You may already be ahead of the story, but I reckon you'll enjoy it anyway.

B. M. Gill's *Death Drop* (1980) was a fine tale of murder in a British boys' school and richly deserved its Edgar nomination. Now comes ***Suspect*** (Scribners, $9.95), with its hospital-medical setting, which is very nearly as good. Hospital staff members are the targets of a ritual killer. Motive: unknown, but presumably psychopathic. Which means almost anyone could be the killer and any female the next victim. Gill deftly explores character, tormented character, feeling character, substantial character, and provides a satisfying dénouement.

The Ultimate Game by Ralph Glendinning (Wyndham, $13.95) offers, besides an impressive price-tag, what might be the ultimate psychopath: one victim per day for this chap in Fairport, Connecticut,

while having his off-hours jollies with his harem of insatiable playgirls. In calmer retrospect, any credibility in this tale and its sexual dimension disappears like a vapor, but in the midst of the action the implacable daily toll does raise the tension notably. And despite my suspicions about whodunit, the author managed to keep me just sufficiently uncertain. The local police, the state cops, the feds, all martial their forces and still the madman—even while telegraphing his moves—kills day after day after bloody day...

Solo Blues by Paula Gosling (Coward, $12.95) is one of the strongest, most intense tales I've read in months—the narration and the handling of the protagonist make me think of Dick Francis. Johnny Cosatelli is of two parts at least: concert pianist and jazz musician. Neither part pleases someone, because when his former girlfriend is murdered after a night in his bed, the police take a dim and suspicious view, and someone else attacks him where he lives—his music. Absolutely compelling stuff by this American-born winner of the 1978 John Creasey award who now lives and sets her story in England.

Charlaine Harris quite respectably debuts with ***Sweet and Deadly*** (Houghton Mifflin, $8.95), set in a well-limned small Southern city. Catherine Linton seems to attract death, violent death; most recently, that of the nurse who had been employed by her father—her violently dead doctor father. It develops that the nurse had gone into the blackmailing and aborting business with fatal consequences. But what does this have to do with Catherine, and why does the killing have to go on around her?

I ho-hummed my way through Hugh McLeave's ***Second Time Around*** (Walker, $9.95), which brings back Harley Street psychiatrist Stephen Armitage (from *No Face in the Mirror*). A useful idea is wasted here: the slippage in the brainwashing of an East German agent, established for many years as a successful British man of business. The agent's mind has been so laundered that slippage involves his amnesiac killing of prostitutes. Enter Armitage, more interested in psychiatric researches than preventing more killing. He's about as credible as Twiggy playing the Hunchback of Notre Dame.

Philis caper #11 by Ritchie Perry is ***Fool's Mate*** (Pantheon, $10.95), and acceptable fare of its wisecracking intrigue type it is also. Philis is commissioned by his Machiavellian master to smuggle a statuesque Ugandan (Amin's ex-mistress) from France into England. A pile of rubies is the prize everyone is after, and a variety of folks are disposed to foil Philis's assignment. The usual lot of dying and bedding takes place, and our hero will be back again.

Nigel Mars has everything going for him: the bluest of British artistocratic blood, handsome, personable, young. Well, not quite everything: his personal life is a shambles (he has a wife and a mistress, and a son by the latter), and he has compulsively gambled himself into vast indebtedness. Now with the last shreds of his honor at stake, he conspires in a money-raising kidnapping of his son with a visiting American professional lowlife. Result: a killing and Mars wanted for it. He flees to Europe, where he pursues his one hope: tracking down the lowlife and extracting a confession. I found little attractive in this coming-of-age of a spineless Englishman, nor in the morals espoused, but despite this, ***Hunted*** by Jeremy Scott (Wyndham, $13.95) kept my attention.

Dorothy Simpson's ***The Night She Died*** (Scribners, $9.95) is a pleasant British import, introducing Insp. Luke Thanet (though I wonder if he also appeared in the earlier *Harbingers of Fear,* not published in this country). The setting is the medium-sized city of Sturrenden, where a pretty young housewife has died in her home of a knife wound. She and her husband are newly arrived in the community, and the connections that might produce death are few indeed. Could she have got tangled in the threads of an unsolved twenty-year-old murder?

Theodore Wilden's ***Exchange of Clowns*** (Little Brown, $12.95) is post-Bond intrigue fiction, grim and unromantic and ultimately showing that all the spying and dying is meaningless, uncontrolled, unproductive. Therrick, a sort of espionage mercenary, is hired by the British to retrieve one of their agents abducted in West Berlin. Therrick tries to organize a trade, tries to break through all the hidden agendas, tries to find useful purpose. Not a pretty picture overall or of Germany in particular.

I'm neither female nor stage-smitten, which maybe accounts for the difficulty I had with the protagonist in ***Run, Sara, Run*** by Anne Worboys (Scribners, $10.95). Sara Tindall has been pursued by ill-fortune. Her parents were burned to death in their cottage, apparently murdered; case unsolved. She fell in love with Guy Fortune and planned to marry him. His death was clearly murder; Sara was suspected again, but case also unsolved. Now, having borne Guy's child, she is in love with Max Ritchie and about to debut in London; success is a breath away. But so is someone absorbed with hatred, willing to strike through Max, through the child to whom she is compulsively attached. Even given my difficulty swallowing Sara, this is a compelling read.

—AJH

PAPER CRIMES

By William L. DeAndrea

This column completes my first year writing "Paper Crimes" for TAD. I've enjoyed it, and I've learned a lot. For one thing, I've learned what a hard-to-please, narrow-minded S.O.B. I really am, but I can live with that if you can.

For another thing, I've read books I ordinarily would have skipped, and I've had to have reasons for my opinions, instead of just the opinions, and writing them down maketh them permanent, if not exact.

I have also learned what an incredible amount of dreck is published in paperback originals. What I review here is the best of what I read. There are a lot of good books (I hope) that I never catch up with, but many titles missing from these pages are bad and frequently atrocious.

I mean that literally, by the way—they are atrocities on the language of S. S. Van Dine, let alone the language of Shakespeare. For example, the first two sentences of a recent privately-published confection that shall go nameless for that very reason:

Against the restaurant's darkness, the candles' flames atop the icing of her birthday cake with 58 candles danced and reflected in her smiling brown eyes, flickered and sparkled against the gleaming wine stems holding the remains of a 1978 Mouton Cadet.

"Why, how did they know?" she delightfully wondered as she gasped in surprise and preparation for blowing out the candles and making her wish come true.

I grant you, this is an extreme example, but not too extreme. Writing like this abounds, but not in the books reviewed here. A book panned in this column will have gotten me teed off for other reasons (see examples below).

I'm still working out ways to deal with the lead time of this magazine. For example, if I want to plug a forthcoming book of mine, such as *Five O'Clock Lightning* (a novel of baseball, politics and murder), which is due out in June from St. Martin's Press, I have to mention it *now*, because this issue of TAD is scheduled for May.

Thank you for your indulgence.

Still, unavoidable delays in publication work against some books more than others. **The Twelve Crimes of Christmas** (Avon, $2.50), for one. This is an anthology edited by Carol-Lynn Rössel Waugh, Martin Harry Greenburgh, and Isaac Asimov. It starts out rather strangely, with a curmudgeonly introduction by the usually cheery Asimov, in which he discusses the pagan origins of the familiar Christmas customs and dismisses the Christmas Spirit as hypocritical because it doesn't last all year. The thrust of the whole thing seems to be, "This may be a Christmas anthology, but I'm still an atheist, and don't you forget it." Spoilsport he may be, but Asimov is, as always, readable and educational.

The stories themselves, though, are sheer fun. Comedy to horror, they're all good. The greats are represented here—Stout, Queen, Carr, Sayers, Ellin—but the find of the volume (for me, at least) was a story called "By the Chimney with Care" by Nick O'Donahue. It features a pair of engaging Midwest private eyes of whom I would like to see more.

Some trade paperbacks were released around Christmastime as well, all of them still timely and still fun.

M. Evans and Co. gave us a couple of quiz books at $4.95 each. **The True Crime Quiz Book** was put together by journalist and author Jay Robert Nash, the author of the exhaustive encyclopedia *Bloodletters and Bad Men*. **The Mystery Reader's Quiz Book** is credited to Aneta Corsaut, Muff Singer, and Robert Wagner. Now, there may be a million Robert Wagners in the world, but how many Aneta (with an "e") Corsauts can there be? This must be the same actress who was rescued from the Blob by Steve McQueen and who played Andy Griffith's girlfriend back in Mayberry. The cover says nothing about this—it may be the biggest mystery of all. Both books are entertaining, with questions ranging from laughable to impossible.

The pick of the bunch, though, is **TV Detectives** by Richard Meyers (A. S. Barnes, $14.95). Every once in a while, a book comes along that seems as if it were written solely because the author knew DeAndrea was out there waiting for it, and this is one of them. *TV Detectives* is everything a book like this should be. Meyers has a mountain of facts and photographs to show us—everything from *Martin Kane* to *Hill Street Blues*—but he never forgets to put it all in context. And all of it is presented in a style that lets the reader glide through it.

Honesty compels me to tell you that the book contains a few minor mistakes, like spelling Ross Macdonald's name with an upper-case D, but they shouldn't spoil anyone's enjoyment of this jaunt through the younger days of both the tube and of ourselves.

You may recall that last issue I came down pretty hard on the hardboiled private eye story as it is being written today. Well, I have some good news and some bad news.

First, the bad news. One ray of sunshine I managed to find last issue was *The Old Dick* by a promising newcomer named L. A. Morse. L. A. Morse has returned, with **The Big Enchilada** (Avon, $2.25).

The book is a big something, all right. We can start with "disappointment" and go on from there. All the while I was reading it, I kept thinking that the people who used to attack Mickey Spillane for sex and violence in his work should read this. Spillane is St. Paul the Apostle compared to this anti-human garbage. Garbage isn't even the right word, though—garbage, at least, is the remains of something that was once useful.

The entire book is gratuitous. The plot is the hoary old wheeze about the tough private eye being warned off a case he has no interest in in the first place, with the inevitable results. All the men in the book are perverted and corrupt. The women are meat. They exist to be had and killed, or had and abandoned, or just had. The violence is constant, and badly set up. Having used up guns, knives, and bludgeons, Sam Hunter (nominally a hero) winds up dispatching other of his foes with medieval maces and poisonous snakes. Castration is one of the milder amusements in this book.

By some alchemy not apparent to the reader, Hunter is irresistible to women—on page 10, on page 29, on page 52, and lots more times, but there is nothing resembling love in this book, nothing resembling honor, or hope, or human motivation, or originality of plot or character.

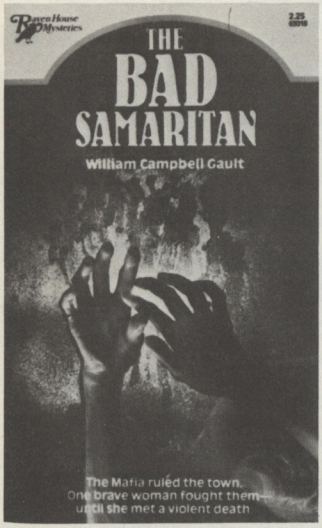
What there is, more's the pity, is some good, pure style. L. A. Morse can make sentences—that's the only thing he carried over from the first book. *The Big Enchilada* made me sad. Unless the man's mind is an actual sewer—which I doubt, on evidence of his first book—L. A. Morse is squandering a fine talent. When I closed this one, the line from the old movies sprang to mind: "If only he could have used his powers for *good*..."

Now the good news.

First of all, William Campbell Gault is back. The Edgar-winning veteran of the '40s and '50s returns after a long layoff with **The Bad Samaritan** (Harlequin Raven House, $1.75). It begins with the precedent-shattering event of a Southern California private eye coming into some money and getting married and going on from there (usually, they end that way). Brock Callahan is tough, pragmatic, compassionate, and smart. One might say the same for the author. It's nice to see an old pro at work.

Callahan's best friend in the ritzy community to which he retires is the town busybody/

Good Samaritan. When she's murdered, Callahan goes back to work. The plot is swift, compact, and more than competent. Read this one.



Another sign of life in the private eye genre is **Bragg's Hunch** by Jack Lynch (Fawcett, $2.25). Peter Bragg is a former reporter and a former bartender; he uses contacts from both to good effect in this book, the first of a planned series. Lynch borrows plot elements—the gangster getting the death threats from Macdonald's *Black Money*; the wide-open town in the hands of the enforcers from Hammett's *Red Harvest*—but Lynch does a nice updating here, and the effect *is* of borrowing, rather than of stealing. The first person narration is skillful, especially in the understated action sequences. If future books in the Bragg series hold up (I'm a little gun-shy after L. A. Morse), we have some good hardboiled reading to look forward to.

I've also finally caught up with Christian Garrison, whose Ace Chaney books for Avon constitute some of the best new mysteries being published in paperback originals. There are two of them so far, **Snake Doctor** ($1.95) and **Paragon Man** ($2.25). The front cover carries the blurb "DIXIE's #1 SLEUTH!" which led me to expect some Burt Reynolds super-cop macho adventure, but it's not like that at all. There's action, all right, and solid plotting, but Garrison shines at characterization. Chaney is a cop in the first book, an operative for a private detective agency in the second, but in both he is a hard-working guy trying to save a marriage that's constantly being jeopardized by his dedication, bordering on compulsion, to get to the bottom of things and make them right.

Garrison brings Chaney out subtly, illuminating a different part of the character with each encounter Ace makes. I especially like his dealings with his son and with his fellow detectives. Chaney is good company; Garrison is a good writer. Look these up.

Warren Murphy, of Destroyer fame and riches, has started a new series for Pocket Books, about a fellow called Digger. These books are easy to spot in the store—they look exactly like miniature detergent boxes, brightly colored red or blue with the word DIGGER splashed across in yellow.

Digger himself is a maverick insurance investigator who works out of Las Vegas, where he lives with a Japanese girl who is a part-time hooker. The first book in the series, **Smoked Out** ($2.25), takes him to Southern California to investigate the death of a woman active in local charities and leads to an ingenious, if improbable, solution.

None of this, though, conveys the true flavor of Murphy's writing. This book seems like Murphy's attempt to show us what it would be like if Henny Youngman wrote a mystery novel, a cascade of one- and two-liners from every character in the book, usually very good ones, too. Only Murphy could get away with stuff like this. Early in the book, Digger and his boss do a quick two pages of schtick on Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe's nose. Is this relevant? No. Is it fun? Lots. The whole book is good fun. Not good *clean* fun, mind you, but good fun all the same.

It's always nice to read a good first novel, especially one with something different about it. That's why I was happy to read **Murder** by Harold Adams (Charter, $2.50). It's the story of Carl Wilcox, town troublemaker in Depression-bound Corden, South Dakota. Carl is looking for work and trying to stay out of the county jail, when he gets caught up in a murder involving the town's leading family. Before long, he meets a couple of James M. Cain-ish steamy sirens and attempts on his own life begin to occur with distressing regularity. Wilcox follows up, and has trouble with bodies living and dead before Corden returns to its usual sleepy self.

The best thing about this book is its sense of place. I am now convinced that I know everything about jerkwater South Dakota towns during the Depression. Adams makes it all seem *right*—he could have made it all up, for all I know, but it seems as if he had a Fodor's for South Dakota at his elbow as he wrote.

The Eyes on Utopia Murders (Ace, $2.50) is the second of Barbara D'Amato's mysteries about Chicago physician Dr. Gerritt de Graaf, the first being last year's *The Hands of Healing Murders*. In this one, de Graaf travels to a retirement community in the sun belt that is breaking out in violence because the oldsters resent an infestation of dreaded *children*; soon after his arrival, a child is killed.

Aided by his grandmother (there's a new one) and the local cops, de Graaf digs his way to the bottom of the case.

I have to admit that *The Eyes on Utopia Murders* did not excite me, but that is strictly taste. This book is absolutely competent in every respect, and if a copy falls into your hands there is no reason you shouldn't read it.

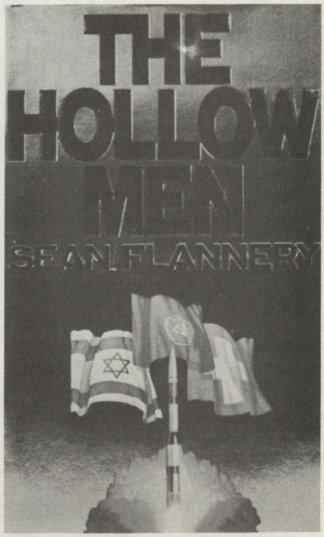
There's a reasonably new phenomenon in the mystery field, an outgrowth of the Romantic Suspense novel. It was pioneered by Mary Higgins Clark, and her books are still the most familiar examples.

I call it the Novel of Persecution. This kind of book invariably involves some innocent damsel who takes it on the chin for three hundred pages or so before things come out all right in the end.

If you like this sort of thing, **The Unforgiven** by Patricia J. MacDonald (Dell, $3.50) is a superior piece of work.

The heroine certainly suffers enough. By page 100, she has been sent to prison for a murder (of her lover) she didn't commit, tormented and attacked by fellow inmates, paroled after twelve years, made to look like a fool at her new job and in her new relationship, and accused of shoplifting. Then, in the remaining 251 pages, things start to go wrong for her.

But seriously, folks. There is an enormous danger, in this sort of book, to go over the line, to have the reader begin yelling, "Oh, just give up, for God's sake, you wretched woman!" Miss MacDonald never steps over that line. This is Romantic Suspense that really is suspenseful. A touch of comedy relief would have been welcome, but, even without it, *The Unforgiven* is an impressive debut.



On the espionage front, we have Sean Flannery's **The Hollow Men** (Charter, $3.25). Flannery is the foremost current practitioner of the spy story as rollercoaster ride, and I like his stuff. His books are always fast-moving, breathless, pulp-style thrillers in which logic takes a beating but excitement emerges unscathed.

Flannery also is the author of what is becoming the longest novel of intrigue since Dumas's *Vicomte de Bragelonne.* His books about now-retired CIA man Walter Mahoney, the Edgar-nominated *Kremlin Conspiracy, The Trinity Factor,* and now *The Hollow Men,* form one extended novel, with no end in sight. Anybody who doesn't hop on now is going to have a lot of catching up to do.

Finally, I am constrained to talk about the so-called "No-Frills" Mystery (Jove, $1.50). Not to mince words, the book is an abomination; the whole concept of this series (Western, Romance, etc.) is hateful. The non-book with a vengeance. No title. No picture on the cover. No author's name. Nothing, that is, to mark this as the work of a human being, of an individual.

This tome is no bargain—it's 58 pages long, so you get about one-third of a normal book for half the price. Inside, the style is decent, the plot ludicrous, and that's all I'm going to say about the story.

Because it's as a phenomenon that these things scare me. Yes, I know it's supposed to be a joke. It is not funny. One does not joke about rope in the house of a man who is about to be hanged.

This no-frills balony is the concept of a book packager, an outgrowth of the same philosophy that sees books as "product" and sells the writer's vision like socks.

Actually, we have been getting no-frills books for quite a while now, with these house-named homogenized series. Publishers love them. The writer is a hired hand; if he tries to actually say anything (and I'm so mad I'm splitting infinitives), why, just get rid of him and bring in the next one.

Writers are not interchangeable. People are not interchangeable. To a writer, his work should be more than filling white paper with speckles for a paycheck. To a reader, a book should be more than chewing gum for the eyes. And to a publisher, by God, putting out books should entail something more than buying wood pulp, processing it, and selling it at a profit.

Not that everything in the mystery field is Great Art, or even should be. But the *possibility* has to be there, the chance that we'll find something that engages our intellect, or fires our emotions, or lets us learn what it feels like to be a hero.

Those are the frills. That's what any writer worth a damn tries to give his readers. But you can't find them in "product," especially "product" that boasts of their absence. □

DICK FRANCIS: The Worth of Human Love

By Michael N. Stanton

With the American publication last year of *Reflex,* his nineteenth mystery novel, Dick Francis began to receive the kind of attention generally reserved for other, and inferior, breeds of writers: of diet books, for example. There he was taped on TV and featured in *Newsweek* and all the rest of it. There he is still (in mid-July 1981) with *Reflex* still on the *New York Times* bestseller list after fifteen weeks. Maybe his new publisher has launched a new kind of campaign for his books, or maybe there is a general awakening in the land at last. Whatever Mr. Francis thinks of all this, it at least provides an occasion for musing. After all, *Reflex,* although it is a fine mystery novel, is not an atypical Francis fiction: what, then, one may wonder, is appealing about a Dick Francis novel —what makes it work?

Once upon a time (some people say), there were on the one hand mystery stories: abstractly English in tone, intellectual in orientation, rural in setting; satisfying social comedies. On the other hand were thrillers: American, urban, physical; fables of violence. This distinction blurs when looked at closely, and nearly disappears when thought about. If it ever had any validity, it has little now as writers of excellent but diverse talent practice in the thriller-mystery-detective-suspense form. (Even simple labels are hard to come by.) One need only think of the compassionate toughness of Travis McGee in John D. MacDonald's novels, of Ross Macdonald's sad parables of lost childhood in the California smog and sunshine, or of the scientific sophistication and human inadequacy portrayed by P. D. James to realize how various and continually new the genre is. Dick Francis is among the best of these contemporary writers on crime and sensibility.

Since 1962, this English writer has produced nineteen novels, all notable for a lean, fast-paced style and for depicting a rather restricted area of human life. However they may be labeled—thriller, suspense—all these fictions concern violence, fear, greed, and virtue in the world of horse racing (steeplechasing, usually, not flat racing). Within the limited ground Francis has claimed for himself, he has found room for exquisite variations of setting, plot, and psychology.

Francis owns this ground by right. He has worked with horses since his boyhood, and after his World War II service became a professional jockey; in 1954 he became Champion Jockey of England. After he retired from racing in 1957, he wrote articles on the sport for the *Sunday Express* for many years and in 1962 published *Dead Cert,* the first of his novels.

Francis's limits can be more precisely stated. Besides concerning themselves with racing, usually British, his fictions are told in the first person by a rather young male protagonist—as young as 24 (Alan York in *Dead Cert,* 1962) or as old as Gene Hawkins at 38 (*Blood Sport,* 1967). All these men live, more or less, in the racing world. They are amateur or professional jockeys, former jockeys, trainers, owners, and so forth. Less centrally, they are racing columnists, or bloodstock agents, or painters of horses. Whether or not they get their livings by horses, all of them, with one exception, are familiar with that world. Only Matt Shore, of *Rat Race* (1971) is an innocent: he is a pilot whose firm flies trainers, jockeys, and other horse people to racecourses; and he is soon blooded.

The question of occupations is not simply a way for Francis to vary his central figures and central concerns; it itself matters. For example, Steven Scott, the protagonist of *High Stakes* (1975), owns horses but is by profession an inventor of clever mechanical toys, and his inventive cast of mind not only enables him to see through the elaborate dishonesty of the man who trains his horses but also suggests to him the complicated scheme by which he undoes the trainer. As a friend observes to Scott: "'Do you know what your plan reminds me of? . . . Your own . . . toys. There you are, turning the single handle, and all the little pieces will rotate on their spindles and go through their allotted acts.'" And so they do, but, as Scott himself notes, there is one "piece"—a sinister character who has been lurking at the edge of the action all along—for whom there is no slot. And that might make all the difference. At any rate, there

is nothing arbitrary about the line of work Francis has chosen for Steven Scott. Nor is it immaterial, considering what he must undergo, that Edward Lincoln of *Smokescreen* is a film actor, or that Matt Stone is an experienced pilot.

Such remarks sound unnecessarily cryptic, but in suspense fiction, detailed plot exposition is at best tactless. In general, though, the skeleton of a Francis novel is articulated like this: the protagonist suspects or discovers some anomalous or untoward or downright iniquitous goings-on in the racing world. His efforts to uncover the truth are blocked by unknown hostile forces. At the same time, he often finds help or support from unexpected sources, at least one of which is usually female. Their help and his own natural courage or stubbornness enable him to persist through escalating episodes of violence to bring to light the details and implications of whatever scheme is afoot. Often enough, the perpetrator of the scheme, the antagonist, is known early on, and the protagonist must set a trap to lure him out or to procure evidence against him. Or the scheme may be uncovered and the antagonist unmasked, but the protagonist still finds himself in mortal danger and must exert the utmost resources of body, mind, and spirit to extricate himself and those with him.

The endless fascination of Francis's novels lies in the particulars which he chooses to flesh these bones; the settings, the characters of protagonist and antagonist—the crucial role of their personal history and their psychological or physical peculiarities—the nature and timing of the aids and hindrances the protagonist encounters, the nature and complexity of the illegal scheme and of the trap set to discover it. Besides all this, the novels bring vividly to life and drama of the racing world—its colors, sights, people, and language—as well as giving us compelling and knowledgeable accounts of fictional races, lost or won, on real courses.

The forces trying to block the protagonist on his quest for truth or discovery typically do so by violence. Typically the violence is done to the protagonist by parties at first unknown, it occurs two or three times, and it is carefully scaled upward—Francis's calibrations of physical or mental damage are sensitive indeed.

Smokescreen, for example, opens with a scene of synthetic terror—a movie set upon which the actor Edward Lincoln is seen in a car in a blazing desert, his hands locked to the wheel, helpless. He struggles, he thirsts, he burns. Fortunately, someone is there to say "Cut!" Later, as a private person, Lincoln goes out from England to South Africa to see why a beloved friend's horses are running so poorly; his pretext is the South African première of one of his films. At a press conference, he is nearly electrocuted by a defective microphone; he had relinquished it only seconds before it became live. Later, he visits a gold mine where he is knocked unconscious and left in an area about to be blasted—a careful checker notes his absence and he is saved. Lincoln's unknown assailant is not at the end of his measures, however. The actor later accompanies friends to a game preserve. He is abducted from his lodge and wakes up to find himself in a car in a remote area under a blazing sun, his hands locked to the wheel, helpless. He struggles, he thirsts, he burns. No one is there to say, "Cut."

He endures three days and nights of agony but is finally rescued. In order to trap his antagonist, however, he must pretend to be still in his helpless position: "The hardest thing I ever did was to get back in that car." Indeed, given the vividness and detail with which Lincoln's ordeal is described, it must have been. The original filmed ordeal imitates a possible real ordeal, the real ordeal imitates the film, the staged ordeal imitates the real one and so on round and round.

Much of the violence in Francis's novels is more active and less fiendishly clever than this. It consists of beatings, clubbings, and knockings-about performed in a quite straightforward fashion. None of it is ever gratuitous, of course, although the protagonist who is damaged often thinks so. If often marks stages in the unraveling of whatever scheme is afoot, as we see on looking back. It also often serves to reveal to the protagonist the deadliness of what is going on and thereby achieves the reverse of its intent: instead of convincing him to lay off, it stiffens his resolve to get to the bottom of things. Given the nature of the hero, the violence is self-defeating.

The violence is never justified, but likewise it is never without sufficient motivation. Almost universally in Francis's world, the motive for ill-doing is greed. As has been suggested, the basic line of Francis's books is the uncovering of a wrongful scheme which is in place or is being put in place, and the identification of the agents and principals involved. Except in *Nerve, Enquiry,* and *Bonecrack,* the object of every scheme is to make money wrongly, and one could argue about *Enquiry.* The racing world is of course a world in which a great deal of money passes around, in sales, in stud fees, in owners' fees, in wagers. It is for that very reason a closely-regulated one—and one of Francis's shining qualities as a plotter of fiction is his ability to contrive for his nasty characters clever scams to circumvent the regulations.

The schemes are endless and scarily plausible. If a turf accountant could make sure that a given horse would not run in a race, would he not accept all the antepost wagers on it he could find? If an unscrupulous speculator could sabotage a racecourse until it became a liability *as a track,* could he not make a

fortune buying it at a depressed price and selling the land for building? Francis's novels are a cornucopia of morally maimed cleverness.

Since much of the rest of this essay will be spent on the protagonists of Francis's novels, it might be well to look for a moment at their antagonists. Their major motive is greed, to be sure, but it is almost never simple greed. The greedy man is by definition self-centered and anti-social, but in Francis he often engages in other activities inimical to human well-being. Greed is linked to sadism, for example, in *Odds Against,* to pure sociopathy in *For Kicks* and *Forfeit,* and to treason in *Flying Finish.*

Antagonists behave in harmful ways throughout Francis's fiction, but his protagonists make a distinction between obsessive or aberrant behavior and purposeful behavior. For instance, in *For Kicks,* two men are collaborating on a moneymaking scheme which involves extreme cruelty to racing animals. Daniel Roke records his belief that "whereas [X] may be mentally abnormal, [Y] seems to be simply wicked." After undergoing severe punishment from his antagonist, Rob Finn in *Nerve* meets the man on a public occasion; of course all blades are carefully sheathed: the man is a model of self-control: "If [he] had exploded into the rage he was feeling... I could perhaps have believed him more mad than wicked after all." Rob is thinking that because his enemy is wicked, yet sane, no revenge Rob could dream up would be too great.

Thus the struggle is not simply between legal and illegal; it is between right and wrong, or good and evil. A moral polarity exists in Francis's novels—a polarity which is not exactly simple but is usually very clear. For that reason, I have not been at much pains here to distinguish between a technical term such as "protagonist" and an attributive one such as "hero" or between "antagonist" and "villain." They tend to be the same thing.

Since the protagonist is the narrator, since we see everything through his eyes, he is clearly the most important character in any Francis novel. His character and personality, and what he does in the novel, are and should be the heart of the fiction. The psychology and individuality of each hero intensifies, interpenetrates, and goes beyond the plot to satisfy more complex questions than, how did it come out?

Francis's heroes are usually beset with marital or familial problems, or with personal handicaps, which color their outlooks and behaviors. For examples:

Rob Finn of *Nerve* is a non-musical member of a passionately musical family (the modern English equivalent of the Bachs, it seems), who is hopelessly in love with his first cousin, a woman with strict ideas about permissible degrees of consanguinity.

Sid Halley of *Odds Against* is an illegitimate child, orphaned in his teens, separated from his wife, with a left hand maimed in a racing accident; the injury causes him shame and humiliation.

Daniel Roke of *For Kicks* is unmarried at 27, the sole support of his three teenaged siblings. He rightly feels that his prosperous Australian stud farm is also his prison.

Henry Gray of *Flying Finish* is a closed-in young man who has never loved or been loved. He was the child of his parents' old age, and, to increase his difficulties, he is heir to his father's earldom. As a kind of strange compensation for his lack of human connection, he takes great joy in flying and is an accomplished amateur pilot.

Gene Hawkins of *Blood Sport* is chronically depressed. We know little of his parents except that his father was an alcoholic. He is in love with, and severed from, a woman whose husband refuses to divorce her.

Kelly Hughes of *Enquiry* is a widower at thirty, his wife dead in a car crash. He is also in large part estranged from his parents, having in their view been educated (at LSE) beyond his station (and then having wasted his education by becoming a jockey).

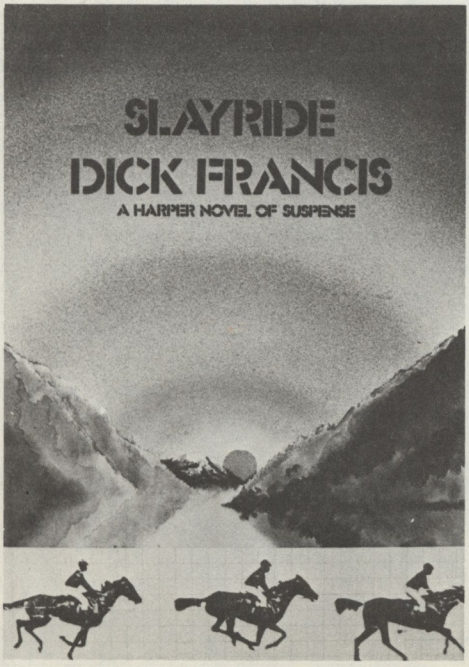
James Tyrone of *Forfeit* is seemingly happily married, except that his wife is 90% paralyzed with poliomyelitis and is dependent on a respirator and

constant care for her very life. Tyrone's rare excursions to find sexual relief fill him with guilt and shame.

In *Smokescreen,* Edward Lincoln is in fact happily married—his domestic life is presented as exceptionally tranquil for a film star (or a Francis hero). His five-year-old daughter, however, is retarded.

Jonah Dereham of *Knockdown* was orphaned in his teens and left penniless by spendthrift parents. His marriage has ended in divorce, and he is burdened with an alcoholic brother. Thanks to his former racing career, he also has an arm which slips painfully out of its shoulder socket at the least provocation.

Thus piled up, these woes may seem melodramatic and improbable. But in each novel, they fit; their reality is part of the protagonist's character and experience and helps determine the way he reacts to his situation. These matters are integral. For example, in *Odds Against,* Sid Halley's injury has ended his racing career, his success at which was his way of overcoming the unpromising background of bastardy and orphanhood from which he came. His career ended, he adopts an uncaring and flippant attitude, the while pathetically trying to hide his crippled hand. His father-in-law shrewdly traps him into investigating a potential racing crime, in the course of which he discovers that he really cares about British racing, that among his antagonists are sadists who, should he fall prey to them, would dearly love to smash his hand further and thus torment and shame him more, that a woman he meets in his investigation is worse maimed than himself (her face hideously scarred in an accident with fireworks), and that they can help each other.



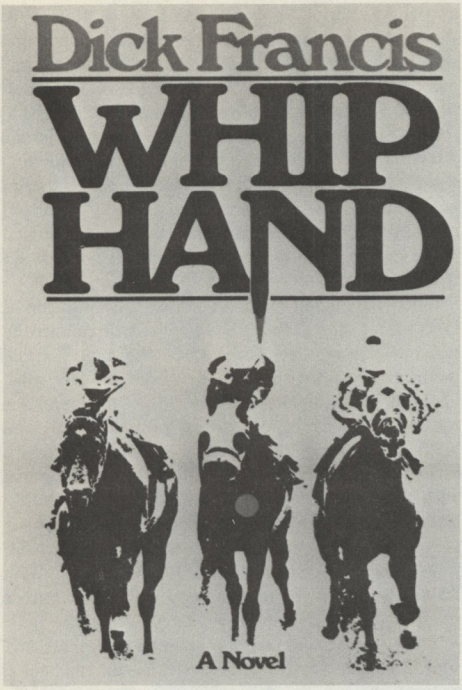
The plot is considerably more complex even than this, but so much ought to make it clear that Francis endows his characters with a richness of interest which goes beyond conventional requirements. Emotionally starved or physically damaged (or both) as his protagonists are, it is not too much to say that Francis's fiction is about learning to love. One function of the plot or action is to teach people (often but not always the hero) to be fully human. Exciting as the action is, its end is not itself—its end is to show characters how to open their closed hearts.

Closer examination of a couple of individual novels will show how Francis deploys these complexities of blood and spirit.

There are no typical Francis heroes, but Matt Shore, in *Rat Race,* shares features with several others. At 34, he is alone, having gone through a bitter divorce after twelve years of marriage. His parents are not part of his present life (we know only that his father was an impoverished schoolmaster). Atypically, Matt Shore is no horseman; he is rather a highly qualified pilot who has been driven down in the world. First, he resigned his post with BOAC in the vain hope of salvaging his marriage. In his next job, he was brought before the Board of Trade on charges of negligence, although the negligence was in his prevaricating co-pilot. (As Matt says, "'The captain is always responsible. Whoever does what.'") Next, in South America, he refused to fly a plane he felt unsafe; someone else flew it without incident and Shore was fired and unofficially labeled a coward. Bush-piloting in African wars and cropdusting followed, and now he is working for Derrydowns Sky Taxis, flying jockeys and trainers and such folk to racecourses all over England. Thanks to his former wife, he is mostly broke, and he lives in a dingy trailer near the Derrydowns airstrip.

He is, therefore, depressed: "I had been depressed for so long that it had become a permanent state of mind. . . . This was my sixth job since I'd gone to learn flying with stars in my eyes, my fourth since the stars had faded for good" (p. 13). "I wondered whether I'd ever get back to where I'd once been. Maybe if you'd hashed up your life so thoroughly as I had, there was never any going back" (p. 57).

Matt Shore's depression comes through to others as polite coolness, aloofness, and nonchalant competence. "Since [the smash-up of the marriage],"



he says, "I had tried more or less deliberately not to feel anything for anybody. Not to get involved. To be private, and apart, and cold. An ice pack after the tempest" (p. 18). On his first charter, he flies Colin Ross, the Champion Jockey of England, with others to Haydock and there meets Colin's sister Nancy. Sensing his reserve, she tries to persuade him that he will in fact get involved with the racing world in spite of himself:

> "It'll bust through that cool shell of yours and make you feel something for a change."
>
> I blinked. "Do you always talk that way to total strangers?" (p. 18)

Matt Shore does get involved with the racing world when someone blows up his plane, presumably in an attempt to kill Colin Ross, and when he begins to sense that a couple of the people he's been flying around are involved in a betting scam. Equally importantly, he begins to know the Rosses: Colin and Nancy, and Nancy's twin sister Midge, who ("the unbearable bit") is dying of leukemia. One stormy night, he stays in Cambridge with the Rosses rather than fly back to Derrydowns; they eat and talk. Says Matt, "I hadn't passed a more basically satisfying evening for many a long weary year" (p. 18), but still his feelings are wary.

A few weeks later, he stays in Cambridge again and swims and picnics with the Rosses; again: "Don't get involved, I thought. Not with anyone. Not yet" (p. 103). But it seems difficult. Matt has found people who are truly alive—not least because one of them will certainly die soon—who laugh, and feel. He finds himself caring: "They could heal me, the Ross family, I thought. . . . If it would take nothing away from them. If I could be sure" (pp. 108–9). Nerveless cool Matt Shore is attracted to Nancy, and his feelings scare him: "I was. . . a fool to get involved, a fool to grow fond of her. . . . If I was an iceberg. . . I'd better stay an iceberg. When ice melted it made a mess" (p. 130).

Nancy Ross is an amateur pilot, and it gives her great pleasure one day to fly her brother to Haydock and back to Cambridge while Matt flies another lot of passengers to the same racecourse. When they depart, Matt discovers that Nancy's radio has been sabotaged; her life and Colin's are in danger because deteriorating weather is making visual flying impossible. Matt chases after her, takes her below the cloud cover over the sea, and leads her back to Cambridge under a dangerously low ceiling.

Helping another plane in distress is part of the code of the air, but Matt could prudently have left it in other hands. Instead, flying (literally) in the face of the horrendous record his career makes on paper, he breaks air rules to fragments to save her ("I wondered if I would ever, ever learn to keep myself out of trouble" [p. 142]). In the ensuing publicity, all sorts of distorted stories about Matt's earlier career come out, and Nancy, bewildered and confused, flees to an old boyfriend. At this point, Matt realizes, in bitter and hurt emptiness, that indeed he does care:

> Never had listened to my own advice: don't get involved. Tried to get back to the arctic. . . but it was too late. Feeling had come back with a vengeance. . . . I hadn't known I loved her. . . didn't realize how far, how deep I had already gone. (p. 156)

All is made right in the end; Matt Shore and Nancy Ross will likely be together, but Matt has learned to love and to suffer once more.

The importance of his melted feelings informs more than the romantic thread of the story, however. He learns to care about people other than Nancy. He learns to respect Colin Ross as a firm friend. He learns to cherish the kindly and guileless Duke of Wessex, whose generosity has made him the intended victim of a racing insurance fraud of which the demolished and sabotaged planes are a by-product. Matt cherishes him enough in fact to risk his own life to save the duke's.

This highly compressed outline leaves out most of the color and excitement and intelligence of *Rat Race.* What it shows, though, is the essential ordeal the hero must undergo—that of returning to life. We sense that Matt Shore always has been a man of sensitivity and honor, and that those were the qualities that hurt him and drove him into his ice castle before. Love makes him vulnerable once more; vulnerable, he hurts and cares desperately. It is the storyteller's privilege finally to reward him.

Generally, then, in the very richest of Dick Francis's fictions, learning to live fully means learning to love. The pattern of movement from protective indifference, through increasing vulnerability (hence possible injury), to actual or potential happiness, describes a number of Francis's novels, among them *Odds Against, Flying Finish, Enquiry,* and *Blood Sport.* But the pattern is no formula—all of these novels are as excitingly different from each other as any of them is from *Rat Race.*

What is more, learning to love, to be human, can take still other forms. It takes a completely different form, for example, in *Bonecrack,* which is, among other things, a study of the relations between fathers and sons. Neil Griffon, a business consultant who has previously done handsomely in antiques, is temporarily managing his father's training stables while the elder Griffon recovers from a serious auto accident. Griffon's mother died when he was a boy, and his father is a cold, unloving man. Says Neil Griffon:

> He had not been a kind father. I had spent most of my childhood fearing him and most of my teens loathing him [but]...the severity with which he had used me had not, after all, been rejections and dislike, but lack of imagination and inability to love. . . . [H]e had lavishly handed out ...punishments of deprivations and solitude, without realizing that what would have been trifling to him was torment to me.

Now, at 34, Griffon can understand his father. After years of estrangement, they can deal with each other at least as acquaintances, if not as loving child and parent. "His manner to me," says Neil, "was still for the most part forbidding, critical, and punitive, but as I no longer depended solely upon him for approval . . . I found a perverse sort of pleasure in his company" (p. 38).

This early failure of love has brought Neil Griffon not bitterness but understanding and insight as well as independence of mind. His father, predictably, tries to run the stable from his hospital bed, but Neil Griffon does not find it difficult to practice some fairly comprehensive deception on him.

In the stable's tentative and tenuous situation, that deception is made necessary by the appearance of another father-and-son pair, Enso and Alessandro Rivera. Enso Rivera is an Italian living in Switzerland who has acquired a large fortune, mostly by criminal means. Besides being wealthy, Enso Rivera is powerful—and mad. His madness, his obsession, takes the form of a belief that he can get his son Alessandro anything the eighteen-year-old boy wants. The father is in fact sickeningly megalomaniacal, and when Alessandro casually mentions one day that he'd like to ride the favorite, Archangel, in the Derby, Enso immediately takes steps to gratify that wish.

Since Archangel is in his stable, Neil Griffon is involved at once. He is abducted and threatened by Rivera (which, one gathers, is the man's usual method of conducting business) and perforce must agree at least to take the boy on as an apprentice jockey. The boy is, of course, proud, wilful, and arrogant, but he is also capable, and, unlike his father, he is sane. When Griffon does not behave with proper servility toward Alessandro (for Griffon is not easily frightened), the boy's peremptoriness and arrogance turn to frustration. He tells Neil: "'[My father] will have to talk to you himself. You do not behave as he tells me you will. You confuse me'" (p. 57).

The comparison between the pairs of fathers and sons is instructive; the failure to love is moved back a generation. Neville Griffon's harshness toward his son resulted in Neil's first hating him; with maturity, the hatred was replaced by apathy. This change, of course, has taken place in the years before the novel opens. Throughout the novel, we see the change taking place in the relations of the elder and younger Rivera. The father is fiercely, madly, protective of his son (it's not merely that he will give Alessandro everything, but that *only* he may do so); the son has always accepted Enso's seeming omnipotence as a fact of nature. Thanks to Neil Griffon, the boy begins to realize he himself may do or be something without his father's procurement. When Alessandro realizes further that this is the last thing his father wishes for, and that the father will destroy whatever stands in the way of his being all-in-all to his son, Alessandro begins to hate his father.

Literally to save his own life (not to mention the millions of dollars' worth of horseflesh in his stable), Neil Griffon must drive that wedge of realization between the two Riveras. He consciously decides to show Alessandro that he is good enough to be a first-class rider on his own, that his own intelligence and skill can earn him what his father's murderousness and wealth cannot buy him. The boy is soon a good enough jockey to know that he *isn't* good enough to ride Archangel in the Derby. Toward the end, Neil observes, "To defeat the father, I had changed the

son. Changed him at first only as a solution to a problem, but later also because the emerging product was worth it" (p. 182).

Neil Griffon's cool rationality, his refusal to grovel, and Alessandro's emergence as an independently worthwhile human being, all combine to drive Enso Rivera into a state of blind, salivating rage. In Enso's mad eyes, the object is no longer to get his son a ride on Archangel but to get the boy back and to get Neil Griffon to obey. Alessandro becomes a pawn of the worst kind—a sentient one. He tells Griffon, "'You and my father, you tear me apart'" (p. 142).

Or to put the whole matter succinctly, what is at issue is not the Derby, or Alessandro's career as a jockey, but the boy's freedom. Freedom is the one thing his father won't give him, Neil tells him: "'Because he did not want you to have freedom, he gave you everything else. . . . As he sees it, I have actually been holding out to you the one thing he doesn't want you to have. The power to make a success of life on your own'" (p. 157).

Well, Alessandro gets his freedom. By the end of *Bonecrack,* both fathers are dead, Neville Griffon the victim of an embolism, Enso Rivera the victim of his own insane violence. "The world as [Alessandro] had known it had come to an end," says Neil Griffon (p. 182), and the boy must begin his world anew.

The initiation that Alessandro Rivera has undergone is a strange, inverted mirror of the one Neil Griffon underwent before. Griffon moved from the onus of his father's coldness and seeming rejection to independence and equilibrium. Rivera is moving from the suffocation of his father's protectiveness and wealth toward independence and balance. Both of them become, or will become, new free-standing human beings. Breaking out of the parental cocoon makes Alessandro free, but it also makes him responsible and vulnerable. For the first time in his life, he cares what someone thinks of him; he learns to respect Neil Griffon even as Griffon learns to care about him and his human potential.

In *Rat Race,* it was the protagonist-narrator who returned to life. Here the protagonist makes that happen to someone else; in a sense Alessandro is Neil Griffon's surrogate as well as his protégé. Griffon would not have been nearly as interested in young Rivera, and his relationship with his father, if his own relationship to his own father had not been so eccentric. He is continually comparing and contrasting the relationships, and Alessandro's breaking away from Enso is a re-enactment (inverted, as noted) of Neil's own achievement of freedom. *Bonecrack* is one of the more complex of Francis's novels because, while it has only one protagonist, it can be said to have two heroes.

Alessandro's awakening is very different from Matt Shore's, but the principle is the same. Both novels, as different as they are, involve a return to life, or, the same thing put otherwise, a rise in stature to the openness of full humanity.

Dick Francis's fiction has developed in many interesting ways since 1962. As good as *Dead Cert* was, later novels have been leaner and tauter. Geographically, their horizons have expanded to include much of the present and former British Commonwealth, as well as such exotic locales as Norway and the United States. Yet, like Jane Austen in a very different world, he has stayed well within his own limits. His latest book, *Reflex,* is in fact full of ingenious novelties: laden with information on photography, for example. Yet it is typical; all the best elements of a Francis novel are there, the crisp style, the inside view of the racing world, the violence, the brittle cleverness of evil, the unloved and unloving protagonist. Perhaps it is this particular combination of the joys of recognition with the joys of surprise that makes Dick Francis's novels especially satisfying. Perhaps, but the satisfaction really comes not through their adherence to a formula but through their adherence to a set of values: the price of learning to need, the value of being vulnerable, the inestimable worth of human love. □

CLASSIC CORNER
Rare Tales from the Archives

Mr. Sherlock Holmes in the Case of the Drugged Golfers

By Bertram Atkey

The Armchair Detective publishes a singularly sparse amount of material about Sherlock Holmes, considering that it is a periodical devoted to mystery fiction and that Holmes is the greatest creation in that exalted sphere.

This does not have to do with any disrespect or lack of affection for him, to be certain. It has mainly to do with the fact that the majority of the scholars and serious fans of Holmes and Watson write primarily for publication in those journals devoted *exclusively* to them, notably such worthy periodicals as the *Baker Street Journal* and *Baker Street Miscellanea.* And it would be foolhardy to attempt competition with a publication which specializes in one facet of the subject of mystery, while TAD attempts to maintain a broader view.

On the other hand, TAD will never ignore an opportunity to publish anything worthwhile that

relates to "the best and the wisest man whom I have ever known," and this edition of "Classic Corner" presents an early and extremely obscure adventure of the master.

Published in the November 1909 issue of *Fry's: The Outdoor Magazine,* edited by C. B. Fry (Vol. XII, No. 68, pp. 171–74), "Mr. Sherlock Holmes in the Case of the Drugged Golfers" was chapter six of *Great Men and Golf,* a series of humorous sketches by Bertram Atkey, the creator of that wonderful crook, Smiler Bunn. Atkey was the uncle of Philip Atkey, better known as Barry Perowne, the author of the splendid series of pastiches written about Raffles following E. W. Hornung's death in 1922.

Fry's was not a terribly successful magazine and did not flourish nor survive into present-day legend, as did the *Strand* and, to a lesser degree, *Cassell's, Pearson's,* the *Grand,* and other of the Victorian and Edwardian publications which enjoyed immense sales during the gaslight era.

Even Ronald B. De Waal's enormous *The World Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson,* with more than 6,000 entries, does not mention "Mr. Sherlock Holmes in the Case of the Drugged Golfers." As nearly as I can discover, this is the first appearance in the United States of this story, and its first reprinting anywhere.

—Otto Penzler

"Holmes," said I, as I was looking out of our window one morning, "here is a madman coming!"

My friend slipped the fully loaded hypodermic syringe—with which he was whiling away a pleasant half-hour after breakfast—into the pocket of his dressing-gown, and looked over my shoulder.

"Yes. Coming to consult me," he said, rubbing his hands. "Ha! there he is." Almost as he spoke the front door bell-wire was torn completely down and out through the door into the street.

The landlady ushered into the sitting-room a short, stout, red-faced, middle-aged man of hairless appearance with a military look.

Puffing and gesticulating, he sat down heavily in the arm-chair which Holmes indicated.

"Whisky, for Heaven's sake!" he gasped.

I poured out the stimulant for him, and turned to get the soda syphon. By the time I reached it our caller had emptied his glass, refilled it, emptied it again, and was refilling for the third time. He motioned the soda away impatiently, and drained the glass.

"Not another drop," he said, emphatically. "Is this Mr. Sherlock Holmes's place?"

Holmes opened his eyes suddenly. He had been lounging in his favourite chair with half-closed lids.

"Were you under the impression that it was 'The White Hart' or 'The Three Tuns'?" he said, suavely. "Let me offer you—er——" he pushed over the cachou box presented to him by a Russian Grand Duke.

Our caller smiled.

"No doubt you think I am mad!" he said.

"No—only thirsty," said Holmes, gently. "And now that you have slaked your thirst, let me have a clear account of who you are and what trouble has befallen you."

"My name," answered our visitor, "is Colonel Cleak. I am a member of Blameshot Golf Club, and I have been travelling half the night in order to lose no time in laying my case before you. Blameshot Golf Club is composed wholly of retired officers—we tolerate no d—n nonsense there, sir, from the pups of the younger school—and two days ago I put up for competition an Indian trophy of great value. It was a gem-studded drinking cup fashioned from a tiger's skull, and had long been the envy of every member of the club. It was, of course, an event of some moment in the annals of the club, and to celebrate it the committee engaged an Indian cook for the occasion, and arranged for a perfect dinner to be attended by all the members, at which I should formally offer the cup for competition. I attended that dinner—held last evening—Mr. Holmes, and I have no hesitation in saying that it was the finest dinner I recollect—and that from a man who has eaten with kings, damme! We have a cellar to be proud of, Mr. Holmes. Now, I remember distinctly taking the cup to the club-house—where

the event was celebrated—I carried it personally in a small brown bag, and during the meal the bag was under my chair. At the conclusion of the banquet I made a few well-chosen and appropriate remarks, and, producing the cup from the bag, placed it in the exact centre of the table upon a pedestal which had been put there for the purpose. Then followed a few speeches suitable to the occasion, and we adjourned to the billiard-room for some pool. *Since that moment not one of us has set eyes on the cup.* It has vanished completely. The servants are above suspicion, and I need scarcely say the members also. Indeed, there are only twenty members of the club. We are fairly well-to-do, and we like to play our own games in our own way—without the advice and sneers of strangers or of the younger generation. Practically all the Blameshot Golf Club is a purely private concern. And now, Mr. Holmes, we want you to find the cup. That is the problem you have to solve."

"I have!" said Holmes, languidly.

"You have! Have *what?*" cried the colonel.

"Solved it!" Holmes yawned. "I shall arrive at the club-house at four o'clock this afternoon, and I shall place the cup in your hands at six o'clock precisely." He rose. "It has been an interesting little problem, colonel, but elementary. And now I must leave you. I have an appointment at the docks in connection with the Case of the Man with Striped Hair, the story of which Watson here is anxious to finish in time to catch the American mail on Saturday. It would be wise for you to rest here for an hour or so—you won't find it dull, there is plenty of whisky left—and by twelve o'clock Watson and I will be back. We might all three travel to the scene of the robbery together. Good-morning. Come along, Watson, and bring your revol—your fountain pen, that is."

A few hours later found us on the scene of the robbery, where we were met by an inspector of the local police, who, beyond arresting the entire staff of the servants and telephoning to Scotland Yard to have the Indian cook arrested on his arrival at Waterloo, had taken no steps pending our arrival. There were a number of elderly gentlemen of a military type sitting on the verandah behind tumblers, discussing their handicaps.

Holmes asked to be shown the kitchen, and the inspector conducted us thither. Colonel Cleak had joined the group on the verandah. Lost in admiration and wonder the inspector and I squeezed ourselves up against the dresser watching the great detective at work. With a magnifying-glass in one hand, his pamphlet upon cigar ash in the other, and a tape measure between his teeth, he crawled about the kitchen, evidently hot upon the scent. Suddenly he turned to the inspector.

"I shall want to see the waiter or butler who served at table at the dinner last night," he said.

The inspector went to fetch the man.

"Will you ask Colonel Cleak to step this way, Watson, my dear fellow?" next asked Holmes.

I did so.

"Which of the members of the club has the most seasoned and strongest head for wine, colonel?" questioned Sherlock Holmes when the colonel arrived.

"I have, Mr. Holmes, undoubtedly," said the colonel, readily.

Holmes thanked him, and he withdrew, as the inspector returned with the waiter—a tired-looking man, with a very pale face and a curious look of regret in his eyes.

Holmes whispered something to the inspector, who left the kitchen. He then spoke in low tones with the man for a few moments, and went with him into a sort of scullery adjoining the kitchen.

Very shortly the inspector returned, accompanied by a horsey-looking individual in coachman's livery.

"How was your master when you drove him home last night, my man?" asked Holmes, holding a half-sovereign in his hand.

The man threw up his hands in a gesture of envy and despair.

"*Abso-lutely,* sir. Broke *all* records."

"All right, my man, that will do!"

The horsey-looking man grabbed the half-sovereign and vanished. Holmes pulled out his cocaine apparatus and took a stiff dose. Then, lighting his pipe and placing a paper of shag on the floor, he sat down beside it and stared vacantly at a toasting-fork that hung near the kitchen range. He was thinking—that flawless, pitilessly logical mind was dissecting, as with a pork-butcher's knife, weighing, as with a cheesemonger's scales, the case upon which we were working. It was almost possible to hear that great brain grinding as it worked, swiftly, surely, relentlessly, to the solution of the problem. An hour passed. Then, with an exclamation, Holmes leaped to his feet and darted into the scullery. We heard a rattle of plates and dishes, then a sound of running water. A minute later Holmes appeared before us. In his hand he held a whitish, jewelled object that blazed and sparkled in the sunlight which shone through the kitchen window. It was the Indian trophy!

"Call the colonel," said Holmes.

We did so, and as the old soldier appeared in the doorway the clock struck six.

"Permit me, colonel," said Sherlock, and handed over the cup.

"The case has been interesting, though elementary, Watson," said Holmes as we sat in the London train an hour later. "Very elementary. I saw at once, this morning, from the manner in which the colonel dealt with my whisky, that, to coin an expression, he was no cold-water sharp. I had found myself looking askance at the part played by the Indian cook and the servant or servants who waited upon our military golfers at the dinner. But, upon arriving here I eliminated the cook—at least, the inspector had arranged his elimination for me. He was to be arrested at Waterloo. I then examined the waiter, as you saw. He was complaining of a headache; he did not remember when it began, but was sure that he woke up with it this morning. He did not remember seeing the trophy on the table when he cleared away the remains of the banquet. He did not remember any speeches. He had a vague idea that he had found the billiard-room full of dead bodies an hour or so after the dinner, but was not sure. It might have been a dream, he thought. It all seemed to be a dream to him, he remarked, banquet and all. Towards the end of the meal he had noticed a kind of haze about the place. He did not remember anything more. Fancied he had been out of sorts. Had a dark blue taste in his mouth, as though he had been drugged. The crockery used at the dinner had not yet been washed.

"Suspecting at first the presence of some Indian drug, I went into the cellar and among other things counted the number of empty wine, liqueur, and spirit bottles that had been removed after use at the dinner. The number was incredible. I began to get a glimmering of the truth. I then examined Colonel Cleak as to his staying powers. He considered he could give a bottle of anything drinkable start to any member of the club and beat him to a standstill. Then I gathered from the colonel's coachman that his master was 'abso-lutely' on the night of the banquet. This being so, what must the others have been like? I began to see what the waiter's dim recollection of dead bodies meant. It was clear to me that none of the members either knew or cared what had happened to the trophy by the time they had finished their liqueurs and were ready for whiskies and sodas in the billiard-room. The empty bottles proved that.

"Then in the scullery I found three quart champagne bottles empty, and a half-empty bottle of cognac, and then I understood why the waiter thought he had been drugged. Now, how does an extremely 'drugged' waiter, when alone, remove the *débris* of a banquet, my Watson? He removes it by *armfuls*—glass, cutlery, decorations, dishes, flower-bowls, everything—by *armfuls*. (I have written a small monograph on the effects of drugs on waiters.) And that is what this waiter did. All the members were far too 'drugged' to care. I found the things piled in heaps on the scullery tables and floor. Among them was a round bowl liberally covered with a mixture of mayonnaise and about 50 horse-power tipsy cake. I marked this down, and at two minutes to six went into the scullery and washed it. It was the trophy, of course. The waiter had mistaken it for a flower-bowl. That is all!" and the great detective smiled, shrugged his shoulders, and dreamily proceeded to recharge his cocaine pump. □

REX STOUT Newsletter

Great Detectives: Seven Original Investigations (New York: Abrams, 1981), a handsome coffee-table book written by Julian Symons, contains a generously illustrated (ten Tom Adams drawings) "interview" with Archie Goodwin, "In Which Archie Goodwin Remembers" (pp. 43–60). According to this account, Wolfe has vanished into Yugoslavia and Archie doesn't know whether he is alive or dead. To the best of my knowledge, Wolfe is alive and well and living in his brownstone. Don't look for confirmation of this claim, however, in Ken Darby's *The Brownstone House of Nero Wolfe* (Little, Brown, 1982). But if you want to make a complete domiciliary tour of the brownstone, then Darby's book will suit you right down to Fritz's basement. Many readers will be glad to know, too, that Viking has released a revised edition of William S. Baring-Gould's *Nero Wolfe of West Thirty-Fifth Street*. I helped with the revision but suspect that many would like to have had a hand in that labor. Baring-Gould died while writing the book and would certainly have revised it strenuously had he lived to see it through the press back in 1969, when it first came out. Let's have your opinion on these three books as you encounter them.

* * * * *

David Anderson, a professor at Texas A&M, and my indispensible Archie while I was writing Rex's biography, now is under contract to Frederick Ungar to do a book-length bio-critique of Stout for Ungar's "Recognitions" series. David has published four brilliant articles on Stout, and we can expect this book to be in contention for an Edgar award. In the months ahead, David, whose schedule Texas A&M has lightened so that he can go ahead full steam, will be working with the Stout papers at Boston College, where they now repose.

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A gentleman from Virginia discloses that he is at work on a "new" Nero Wolfe novel. I wish him the same success Nicholas Meyer had with his Holmes pastiche *The Seven-Per-Cent Solution*—on the condition that Wolfe does not end up on Freud's couch.

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"There is a possible Nero in the gentlest human creature that walks."

—Thomas Bailey Aldrich

* * * * *

Those who read the Wilmington, Delaware *Morning News* (5 Jan. 1982) now know that Bill Smith of Warren Grove, N.J., an outstanding orchid grower, does a flourishing business as owner of "Rainforest Orchids, 'Where Nero Wolfe Shops'." My thanks to Kayleen Sybrant, of Wilmington, for this item.

* * * * *

Sol and Fred rate a mention in Bill DeAndrea's Edgar-winning *Killed in the Ratings*. I'm told, too, that Wolfe is mentioned in Donald Westlake's *Somebody Owes Me Money* (1969). Will a reader who has a copy pinpoint the passage for us?

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Let me thank Pete Blau for a copy of a recent column by the admirable Michele Slung, in the Washington *Post*, in which she reports on the annual Black Orchid Award Dinner of the Wolfe Pack, held 5 December 1981 at the New York Sheraton, with 120 Wolfe Packers in attendance. Jacques Barzun, keynoter at the dinner, properly skewered NBC's Nero Wolfe. As chairman of the Award committee, I presented the annual Nero to Carolyn Heilbrun, who, as Amanda Cross, got the 1981 Nero Award for *Death in a Tenured Position*. Professor Heilbrun (Columbia), in her acceptance speech, owned that those Archie touches in her books aren't there by pure chance. She's a Rex rooter.

Earlier that same day, I co-chaired, with marvelous Marvin Kaye (Marvin does all the work), the Third Annual Nero Wolfe

By John McAleer

Assembly. We had several splendid papers read—"From Zeck to Moriarty to Wild" (Marvin Kaye); "Wolfe on Foot" (Joyce Shiarella); "Plotting Elements of the Wolfe Stories" (Bill DeAndrea); "Satisfactory, or the Result of Yelling 'Nero Wolfe' in the London Underground" (Leonard Picker)—soon to appear in the Wolfe Pack's *Gazette*, of which Sue Dahlinger now is editor-in-chief. After a book auction break, I read excerpts from my forthcoming *Royal Decree: Conversations with Rex Stout*, which is based on my many tape-recorded conversations with Rex. Published by Pontes Press, it may be ordered from me, $6.25 postpaid.

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James Ussher, a seventeenth-century Anglo-Irish archbishop, said God created the world on 23 October 4004 B.C. So that's why Rex picked 23 October for Archie's birthday! A day of great beginnings.

* * * * *

In the days before it was open season on cats, Frances and Richard Lockridge took a holiday from mystery writing to produce a cat book—*Cats and People* (*c.*1950). In a current perusal, J. L. Weiner of Chicago spotted this passage: "Crows—although no less a gardener than Rex Stout defends them as potential pets and had one once which got drunk regularly on the terrace, sipping from highball glasses; finally, when too inebriate to stand easily, wrapping wings about a glass to steady it while he drank—crows seem to us altogether bad" (p. 101). It's nice to recover this fugitive bit of Stout crow lore. If you want more, see my biography of Rex, p. 228.

* * * * *

David Oyerly, Ann Arbor, Michigan, has zeroed in on that passage in Anthony Shaffer's *Sleuth* which irked many of us when we saw the movie. In Act II, Inspector Dopple says:

" 'You see, we real life detectives aren't as stupid as we are sometimes portrayed by writers like yourself. We may not have our pipes, or orchid houses . . . but we tend to be reasonably effective for all that.' "

* * * * *

A word to the sapient. Bantam's new reprints of *Gambit* and *And Be a Villain* already are out of print. In January 1982, *Some Buried Caesar,* one of several Wolfe titles which, in recent years, appeared as a Pyramid paperback, made its first appearance as a Bantam book. The current Bantam reprint series offers readers the first chance ever to own a uniform edition of all the Wolfe stories. To be sure you get one, pick the books up as they appear. Their value should quickly soar.

* * * * *

To Greg Goode, Rochester, N.Y., I owe thanks for this quotation from Howard Fast's *Samantha* (1967), which Fast published as by E. V. Cunningham—the first of his novels about Masao Masuto, crack Nisei detective in the Beverly Hills police department:

"Masuto took a liberty that his chief would certainly note and resent and called his wife on his car radiophone. The children were asleep, and she was reading a mystery novel by Rex Stout" (p. 137).

From that illustrious Neronian, Dr. Bruno Lumbroso, professor at Rome's Clinica Oculistica, I have received a five-page article, "Le Irresistibili Seduzioni di un Antipatico" (*Radiocorriere TV,* 20 December 1981) by Lina Agostini, which, if you haven't figured it out from the title, is all about NBC's Nero Wolfe. The article marked the debut of the series on Italian TV. Ten photos and a brief interview with Stout himself, credited to Giancranco Orsi, accompany it. The interview must date back to 1969, the era of the Italian Nero Wolfe TV series which exceeded the fourteen-episode American series by four episodes. Back then, Tina Buazzelli played Wolfe. His likeness appeared on the Nero Wolfe stamp issued in 1979 by the postage-stamp-sized republic of San Marino. He died in 1980, at 58. Despite Wolfe's Montenegrin origins, he stands in high favor with Italian mystery lovers.

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Gene, who assists Marvin Kaye's series detective, Hilary Quayle, could offer boon companionship to Archie Goodwin. So says Kayleen Sybrant. I agree. So does Marvin.

* * * * *

Robin W. Winks, Master of Berkeley College at Yale and a full professor of history there, greets 1982 with a new book, *Modus Operandi: An Excursion into Detective Fiction* (Godine), which pays several fine compliments to Rex Stout and the Wolfe corpus. Acknowledging the nuances of Rex's art, Winks says: "One can no more transfer Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe to the screen than one could give us the Winnie-the-Pooh and Piglet of our childhood." Professor Winks will be one of the judges choosing the 1982 Nero Award winner. The fine perceptions he brings to the study of detective fiction is a boon to the genre.

* * * * *

From Tom Muth, assistant director of the Topeka Public Library and curator of the Library's splendid Stout collection, comes news of a sprinkling of references to Rex Stout and the Wolfe corpus in Peter Straub's *Shadowland* (Berkeley, 1981): "During this time Tom read a paperback Rex Stout mystery" (p. 148).

Again: "The second Rex Stout book he had brought in his suitcase lay on the bedside table. . . . The light beside the book made that end of the room, the book and the bed and the lamp, as inviting as a cave. . . . Tom picked up the Rex Stout book and turned to the first page" (p. 180).

And: "The bed was turned down, the bedside lamp shone on the Rex Stout paperback. . . . He thought of . . . two girls from the neighboring school; maybe it was Archie Goodwin and his strings of women that brought them to mind" (p. 229).

Finally: "Tom . . . picked up his book. He willed himself into Nero Wolfe's round of the orchid room, the kitchen, and office . . ." (p. 273). Thanks to both Toms—Tom Muth and Straub's Tom. And thanks to Peter Straub. We look forward to his next novel.

* * * * *

North Dakota may have been buried under snow this winter, but the mail got out, and from Louis P. Becker of Bismarck I learned that being snowbound, with a good selection of books on hand, can pay dividends. Louis located Rex's ubiquitous jacket essay, "Reading and Writing Detective Stories," on two books by the Lockridges, *Murder, Murder, Murder* (1956) and *Show Red for Danger* (1960), both published by Lippincott. The earliest listing we have for this essay, in *Rex Stout: An Annotated Primary and Secondary Bibliography* (Garland, 1980), is Georges Simenon's *Inspector Maigret and the Killers* (Doubleday, 1954). Let us know if you know of an earlier one.

* * * * *

Rex Stout hated phonies as much as Holden Caulfield does. Once Rex found that one of his rhubarb plants had gone to flower. He cut the lovely bloom off and put it in a vase on a table in front of his bentwood rocker. Later that day, a lady called who purported to know a great deal about flowers. She was wild with envy when she beheld his unique "orchid." "Not quite unique," Rex told her, "but there's only one other plant like this one to be found in the whole range of the western hemisphere." She believed every word of it. It ruined her day.

* * * * *

Have you seen, in the latest issue of Guy Townsend's *Mystery FANcier,* Bob Napier's "Wolfe a Howler!" a stern assessment of NBC's failed Wolfe series? The best post mortem done to date. And to think, Orson Welles would have accepted the role of Wolfe if NBC had agreed to produce it, *Columbo* style, as two or three specials a year. Truly, in Whittier's memorable phrase, "a lost occasion." I'd still like to see John Houseman in the part. I once polled my friends to come up with the worst casting of Wolfe and Archie. The final selection—Oliver Hardy as Wolfe, Don Knotts as Archie. Runner-ups—Dom DeLuise and Arnold Stang.

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Membership in the newly-organized R. Austin Freeman Society, including membership card and two issues, annually, of *The Thorndyke File,* now may be had at $5.00 per annum, domestic, and $6.50, foreign, from your editor, John McAleer, Mount Independence, 121 Follen Road, Lexington, Mass. 02173. As always, the excellent information you send to keep this newsletter current is most welcome. □

Real Life Cases

CRIME HUNT

By T. M. McDade

In the Fall 1981 issue of TAD (14:4), there appeared the first of my series of articles on true crime. The case there reported was that of William Herbert Wallace, whose conviction of the murder of his wife in Liverpool in 1931 was reversed by the Court of Criminal Appeal. Like that of Lizzie Borden in this country, the Wallace case has been the prize puzzler to the fancier of real-life crimes. For the question which followed—in fact, even preceded—Wallace's release was: If he didn't do it, who did?

Among the many theories about the case, Jonathan Goodman, author of The Killing of Julia Wallace, *has now proposed a solution which commands attention. While this new suspect was alive, he could be referred to only by vague references. With his death in 1980, almost fifty years after the murder, the case against him could be made public. The following is Jonathan Goodman's proposed solution to the Wallace case.*

—T. M. McDade

THE KILLING OF JULIA WALLACE
A New Solution
by Jonathan Goodman

Wallace himself thought he knew the answer to the question: If he didn't do it, who did?

Two days after the murder, he made a statement at the request of Inspector Gold, naming the people "who would be admitted by my wife without hesitation if they called while I was out." Among the fifteen men referred to in the statement were James Caird, Joseph Crewe, Wallace's violin teacher, and his tailor.

Asked if he suspected any of the men, Wallace hesitated a moment, then proceeded to tell the inspector what he knew about one of them: *Richard Gordon Parry.*

Wallace described Parry as "a single man about 22 years of age [he was born in Liverpool on 12 January 1909], about 5 ft. 10, slimmish build, dark hair, rather foppish appearance, well dressed and wears spats, very plausible." For about two years, until the beginning of 1930, Parry had worked as an agent for the Prudential, under the supervision of Joseph Crewe. Wallace mentioned that, during this time, Parry had "once called at my house on business and left a letter for me which he wrote in my front room. I was not in at the time but my wife let him in."

When Wallace was ill, Parry did part of his collecting: "He called very frequently to see me about business, and he was well acquainted with our domestic arrangements. He had been in the parlour and kitchen frequently, and had been upstairs in the middle bedroom a number of times to see me while I was in bed. . . . Parry knew the arrangements of my business with regard to the system of paying in money collected to the head office, Dale Street. I have had the cash box from which the money was stolen for about 16 years. . . . Parry knew I kept the money in the box because while he worked for me I always put the money into it when he called to pay over to me his collection. He had seen me take it down and put it back to the top of the bookcase in the kitchen often."

Wallace knew that Parry was either careless with money or dishonest. And so did Joseph Crewe, who had discovered that he was collecting payments from certain clients and not including the cash in the returns. Crewe had spoken to Parry's parents, and they had paid the deficiency of about £30. When Parry was doing part of Wallace's collection in Clubmoor, Wallace had noticed mistakes in the accounts; he had pointed them out to Parry and been told that "it was an oversight." Later, noting further discrepancies, he had been forced to inform Crewe. Probably as a result of this, Parry had been given the choice of resigning or getting the sack; he had chosen the former.

"I have often seen him since he has been working for his new company [first, for a short time, the Standard Life Assurance Co., then the Gresham Life Assurance Society], and have spoken to him," Wallace stated. One of the last of these encounters took place shortly before the murder: a very brief encounter—"I said good evening and he returned my greeting."

It occurred at the City Café, on a Thursday evening when the chess club was occupying one part of the premises and an amateur dramatic society, of which Parry was a star member, was using another.

As well as visiting the City Café for meetings of the society, Parry frequently lunched there.

Wallace recalled that he had met Parry in Missouri Road, Clubmoor, round about Christmas time: "He had a car then which he was driving." Almost certainly, the reason Parry was in Missouri Road was that he was visiting his fiancée, Miss Lily Lloyd, who lived with her parents at No. 7.

Wallace made his statement to Gold on Thursday morning, January 22. Later that day, he was told that the police were satisfied that Parry had no connection with the murder, since he had a perfect alibi, supported by the testimony of a person who was in his company the whole of the Tuesday evening.

But, perfect alibi or no perfect alibi, Wallace was still not satisfied. During the next few months, he had plenty of time to think. And the more he thought about the motive for the murder, the identity of the murderer, the more suspicious he became of Parry.

After his release from prison, he learned a couple of additional facts concerning the man. First, that he was more than usually hard up at the time of the murder—heavily in debt and pleading with friends for financial aid; second, that he had a police record.

On 14 September 1931, Wallace wrote in his diary:

"Just as I was going to dinner, Parry stopped me, and said he wanted to talk to me for a few minutes. It was a desperately awkward position. Eventually I decided not to hear what he had to say. I told him I would talk to him some day and give him something to think about. He must realize that I suspect him of the terrible crime. I fear I let him see clearly what I thought, and it may unfortunately put him on his guard. I wonder if it is any good putting a private detective on to his track in the hope of something coming to light. I am more than half persuaded to try it."

But he never did. And, as far as is known, he never found out any more about Parry.

What else is known about him?

Quite a lot. For instance:

Parry was well connected in more than one respect. His uncle, George Parry, was the Liverpool City Librarian; following his death in 1933, laudatory letters and poems were published in the local press and a memorial service was held at the cathedral. Parry's father, William John, was a senior employee of the Liverpool Corporation; in 1948, after 43 years' service, he was appointed Assistant City Treasurer. At the time of the Wallace case, his secretary was Imelda Moore, the daughter of the head of the Liverpool CID.

Parry's criminal record was longer, and

more varied, than Wallace thought. Both before January 1931 and afterwards, he was charged with theft, causing malicious damage, embezzlement, and indecent assault. He seems to have had a charmed life, however: the only time that he was sent to prison was in September 1934, when he was in the army, stationed at Aldershot; he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labor for stealing a car (a year before, he had appeared in the same court on a similar charge, but the owner of the vehicle did not turn up, so no evidence was offered). On all the other occasions on which he was charged, he was either fined, bound over, or acquitted. In 1936—back in Liverpool and employed as the manager of a shop—he was charged with committing indecent assault on a girl whom he had met in a temperance bar at Prescot. At the police court, the prosecution case was that he had offered to drive the girl home but instead of doing so had driven her to Rainhill, on the outskirts of Liverpool, where, after threatening to murder her, he had committed the assault; one of the girl's earrings was found at the scene. Professor MacFall and Professor Dible again appeared on opposite sides, but this time with the roles reversed from those in the Wallace case: MacFall, for the defense, said that he had examined the girl but had found no sign that force or violence had been used; Dible, for the prosecution, said that his examination of the girl led him to believe that there had been interference and that he had found injuries and scars on Parry. (There is a series of small mysteries concerning the reporting—or rather, non-reporting—of this case. A diligent search has failed to find any mention of the outcome of the committal proceedings in any newspaper. It may be that the magistrate's decision came too late to be included in either of the Liverpool evening papers and that the case was considered too sordid to be reported by the staid morning paper, the *Daily Post*—but what can one make of the fact that, though the *Prescot & District Reporter* gave coverage to the early hearings, it did not report the outcome? Parry was definitely committed for trial at the Liverpool Summer Assizes—Professor Dible, who afterwards referred to Parry as "a sexual pervert," remembered appearing at St. George's Hall, though he could not recall the verdict—but there is no trace of a report of the trial; if one discounts the notion of a cover-up, a sort of "D notice" being put on the Liverpool press, then the only explanation seems to be that an account was squeezed out by full coverage of a locally sensational civil case at the Assizes involving the directors of the Aintree racecourse.)

Turning to Parry's alibi for the night of the killing of Julia Wallace, when he was interviewed by the police, he said that he had spent the material time in the company of his fiancée, Lily Lloyd; separately interviewed, she confirmed that this was so. The police accepted the slender story. The fact that they did not bother to test the strength of the alibi shows that they were not interested in finding other suspects. It is all very well for people with ombuds-mentalities to say that a person's past mistakes should not be held against him, but, when a man named as a possible suspect has a criminal record, any alibi he puts forward should not only be checked but double-checked—treble-checked, if necessary. Two years later, in the summer of 1933, Parry jilted Lily Lloyd, and the scorned young woman went to see Hector Munro, saying that she wished to make a statement to the effect that she was not with Parry at the time of the murder—indeed, could not possibly have been with him, since she was working as the pianist at the Cosy Cinema, Boaler Street, Clubmoor, until late in the evening. Parry had asked her to support his story, and she had done so, though she knew full well that the simplest of inquiries would reveal the lie. The solicitor's response may surprise readers outside the legal profession, and even some within it; he advised Miss Lloyd against making a statement and hustled her out of his office. Many years later, he gave two reasons for adopting this negative attitude: first—and most important, he said—Wallace had died a few months before, so he no longer had a client to instruct him; second, as the result of the publicity from the Wallace case, he was far too busy to take on unpaid work. As far as is known, Lily Lloyd did not go to another solicitor—but she has recently confirmed what she told Munro. A couple of years after the ending of her relationship with Parry, she probably felt glad that she had been jilted, for she met and soon afterwards married a wealthy businessman. The marriage lasted for forty years, until her husband's death in the mid-1970s. She is now, and has been for some time, a pillar of the establishment on the Isle of Man, one of the United Kingdom's offshore tax havens. It would not advance this account to give her married name and address, but the information is available to the Liverpool police if they are interested.

In 1966, after collecting a good deal of information about Parry, I was left with the task of finding out whether he was still alive; if he were, then the laws of libel would prevent me from naming him in the first edition of my book, and I would have to be extremely circumspect in giving any details about "Mr. X." I went to Somerset House to consult the death registers. Arriving there early in the morning, I assumed that I was the first customer. I ascended the steps to the circular gallery, on one side of which was a continuous working surface and on the other the shelves of registers. As I walked round the gallery to the place where the post-1939 section began, I noticed a register lying open on the working surface. Glancing at the page, I saw what at first seemed to be the record of my own death. A second, extremely hesitant, glance reassured me that the Jonathan Goodman referred to had died before I was born. Even so, having consulted the registers and found no reference to a Richard Gordon Parry, I took extra care in crossing the street and from then on made sure that the doors of my flat were locked at night.

Eventually, through Thomas Alker, the Liverpool Town Clerk, I learned that Parry's father was still alive and residing at the family home in Stoneycroft. I traveled to Liverpool the next day and rang the bell of 7 Woburn Hill. William Parry opened the door. Though it was a hot Sunday morning, he was wearing a black jacket and stiped trousers, with a ready-made bow tie circling a butterfly collar. Several cats sidled and mewed around his feet—which, incidentally, were shod in bedroom slippers topped by spats—and his whole clerical outfit was given a tweedy appearance by feline hairs. I had decided that there was no point in inventing an excuse for wanting to discover the whereabouts of his son, so I told him that I was writing a book about the Wallace case and that the name of Richard Gordon Parry had arisen during my research. After wondering why I was "raking up dead embers," he said that, yes, Gordon had known the Wallaces—but quickly added that

at the time of the murder "the boy" was in Breck Road, having the battery of his car changed; this, he said, was established by the police. Without hesitation, he told me Parry's address.

The next evening, back in London, I was accompanied by Richard Whittington-Egan (acting as both witness and bodyguard) to 39 Grove Hill Road, a small Victorian terrace house in an upper-working-class part of the suburb of Camberwell. The front door was open, and Parry was standing on the step, apparently simply enjoying the last of the sun. A van cruised in the road, the driver giving amplified exhortations to vote for a candidate in a local government election.

I introduced myself.

"Is it about the election you want to see me?" Parry asked blandly. As we learned later in the interview, he knew quite well who I was, since his father had been in contact with him, telling him of my call and warning him to expect me.

Here are extracts from the notes of the interview:

"Parry, who now works for 'the government' [I afterwards found out that he was a GPO telephone operator], is married to a plump woman who appears some years younger than himself, and has a daughter who is just about to go to university.

"We found him a plausible man who was not made in any way uncomfortable by our questioning. He has grey hair, smoothed sleekly back, and a military-style moustache. He is wiry and well-preserved. He is of reasonably powerful build, has noticeably large hands, and a fleshy handshake. His eyes are penetrating and alternately shifty and too-candid. He exudes a false, trowel-laid-on charm, which can easily beguile but which is as bogus as the bonhomie of a used-car salesman; this manner masks, in our opinion, considerable firmness. He is evasive, manipulative, sharp, and very clever. He is quite well-spoken, and throughout the interview kept a self-satisfied and often inappropriate smile on his face.

"Parry hinted that, if he chose, he could reveal much about Wallace, whom he described as a 'very strange man'; he implied that Wallace was sexually odd.

"He described Julia Wallace as a 'very sweet, charming woman.' He said that he used to sing as a young man, and would often go to tea at 29 Wolverton Street, where Julia would accompany his singing on the piano.

"He was quite ready to admit that, as a young man, he was what he called a 'tearaway.' But he made little of the criminal charges against him: just youthful high spirits, no real harm done. 'It was very awkward for me, having my little misdemeanours dragged up at the time of the case,' he remarked. The police, he said, were satisfied as to his innocence of the Wallace murder when he produced some people with whom he had spent the evening 'arranging a birthday celebration.' (This new professed alibi may be significant in view of the fact that R. M. Qualtrough spoke of being busy with his girl's twenty-first birthday party.) He did not remember being in Breck Road on the night of the murder (the new alibi mentioned by his father when J.G. spoke to him).

"He refused to talk about his part in the case—'Not if you were to offer me £2,000'—because, he said, he had promised his father that he would not speak about it. He added that, when his father died, he might be prepared to talk, subject to proper financial arrangements being made. He suggested that J.G. had acted less than honestly in his endeavours to trace him, and had upset his father and endangered his heart. But even this was done in an oblique sort of way by saying that 'someone' had called on his father and upset him.

"He claimed that the Wallace case broke up his engagement to Lily Lloyd. He refused to talk about Miss Lloyd, apart from saying that he was still in touch with her and that she is now living in Llandudno [the latter piece of information was afterwards discovered to be a lie].

"He said that Joseph Crewe, the Prudential superintendent—now conveniently dead—was utterly convinced of Wallace's guilt (this we know to be untrue). It was surprising to learn that he knew of the deaths of Crewe, Alan Close, and Wallace's nephew Edwin. (The latter's death in North Borneo was not at all widely reported, which suggests that Parry watches everything that appears in connection with the case.)"

A week or so after the interview, I telephoned Parry. He was viciously angry that I had called, and I was taken aback by the breadth of his vocabulary of foul language: many of the obscenities were new to me. The odd thing, though, was that I all the time had the feeling that he was feigning his outburst.

Parry retired from the GPO in 1969, and he and his wife (his second, I later learned) moved to a bungalow, "Ty'n-y-Fynnon," on Waterloo Hill in the village of Llangernyw, North Wales. He did part-time work as a switchboard operator in various local hospitals.

Over the next ten years—during which two editions of my book appeared, both using the "Mr. X" device—I occasionally checked up on whether Parry was still living at Llangernyw. I was helped by my friends Philip and Diane Chadwick, who, on one occasion, posing as house-hunters, were invited into the bungalow by Mrs. Parry when her husband was out; she told the Chadwicks that he was receiving treatment for a broken ankle, and, when Philip Chadwick asked if he were insured, she replied: "Oh, no, he doesn't believe in insurance."

There were no developments until Radio City, the Liverpool broadcasting station, decided to prepare a program on the case, lasting two and a half hours, for transmission on the fiftieth anniversary. I agreed to act as

consultant and to take part in both the dramatization (which was based on my book) and the discussion/phone-in parts of the program. I told the producer what I knew about Parry, and a representative was sent to Llangernyw. He learned that Parry had died from a heart attack on 14 April 1980, leaving a will of £18,000.

Knowing that Parry's wife had predeceased him (I am convinced that she knew nothing of his murky past), I had no qualms in agreeing to name him on the program and to sketch my reasons for believing that he killed Julia Wallace. This I did, and as a result a "middleman" telephoned Radio City, offering to put them in touch with a man called John ("Pucka") Parkes, who had further details about Parry. The middleman said that Parkes wanted payment for the information, and subsequent telephone conversations were chiefly taken up with bartering over the "right price." While this was going on, however, information came in from another source which led to the middleman's being bypassed. Parkes, who was in a Liverpool hospital, was interviewed, and he made a statement, the salient parts of which are as follows:

In January 1931, when he was 22, he was employed at night as a cleaner and general hand at Atkinson's Garage in Moscow Drive, a couple of blocks from Woburn Hill, where Parry lived with his parents. Parkes knew Parry well; he had been to school with him, and Parry was a frequent visitor to the garage, not only to have repairs done to his Swift car but also to use the "social center" in the flat upstairs, where customers were welcomed for a drink and a chat. Parry was not one of the most welcome customers: he was dilatory in paying his bills, and he had been caught going through a wardrobe where money was kept. Parkes had once told him off for using the telephone in the flat to make calls to complete strangers: "He could alter his voice like changing a shilling."

Late on the night of the murder—or it may have been in the early hours of the following day—Parry drove into the garage. Parkes, who was alone, noticed that he was agitated. Parry told him to wash the car, and, though the vehicle looked clean, Parkes went over it with a high-powered hose. When he had finished the bodywork, Parry—who stood over him all the time—told him to use the hose on the inside as well. Before doing so, Parkes noticed a bloodstained glove protruding from the glove compartment; he started to remove it, but Parry snatched it from him, saying: "If the police found that, it would hang me." Parry was muttering to himself, and at one point he said that he had hidden a bar down a drain in Priory Road (which runs beside Anfield Cemetery). The job completed, Parry gave Parkes five shillings and drove away.

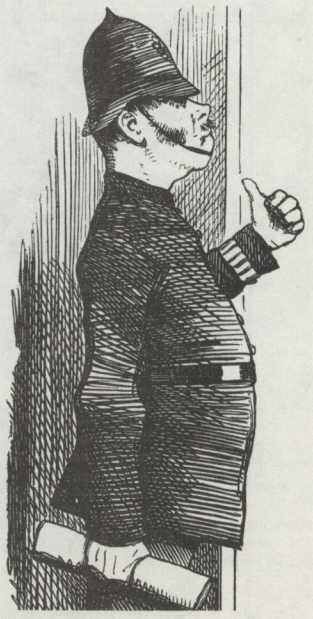
The next morning—by which time everyone was discussing the murder in Wolverton Street—Parkes told William Atkinson, the owner of the garage, about the incident; he was advised to say nothing more about it and was told to keep the five shillings. But when Wallace was convicted, Parkes again spoke to Atkinson, who telephoned the police. Superintendent Moore came to the garage, listened to Parkes's story, said simply, "I think you've made a mistake," and left.

Parkes had an explanation for why Parry was not covered with blood. He had spoken to a driver for Ellis's, a local grocery firm, who had informed him that, shortly before the murder, Parry had borrowed from him a pair of thigh boots, saying that he was going fishing. And a policeman friend had mentioned to Parkes that he had lent Parry an oilskin coat for a fishing expedition.

Radio City obtained some slender corroboration of the main part of Parkes's story from Mrs. Dolly Atkinson, the widow of one of William Atkinson's sons: she said that she recalled Parkes telling her and her husband about the car-washing episode the morning after it happened.

Even if one discounts Parkes's statement, one is left with a good many facts which, added together, form a sum greater than its parts—great enough, I submit, to support the assertion that Richard Gordon Parry was the killer of Julia Wallace. He may have had any, or all, of three motives for the crime—financial gain, revenge, and/or sex. He knew that Wallace was a member of the Central Chess Club, and, as a habitué of the City Café, could have looked at the notice board to see when Wallace was due to play a match. Being an actor, he would probably have had little difficulty in assuming the role of R. M. Qualtrough. He knew of Wallace's insurance business; he knew his way around the house; he knew where the cash was kept. Unknown to Wallace, he was friendly with Julia and often visited her when Wallace was at work; she would have had no hesitation in letting him in while Wallace was searching for Menlove Gardens East. Before the police called on him—fewer than 48 hours after the crime—he fabricated an alibi and persuaded his fiancée to break the law by supporting it. He had a diverse criminal record, some components of which suggest that he was the type of man who *could* have committed the murder. He may have believed that his connections with top people in Liverpool would help him to escape retribution—and perhaps they did.

Within the framework of the Wallace case are several separate tragedies. The killing of a seemingly innocent woman—that, of course, is one of them; another is the way in which Wallace was martyred, not only during the case but afterwards, until the day he died; there is the tragedy of prejudice sneering at justice, spitting in its blind face; and there is the tragedy of a mishandled investigation: tragic twice over, for by expending all their energies on building the case against Wallace, the investigators ignored or overlooked evidence that could have established the identity of the true culprit. □



THE PAPERBACK REVOLUTION

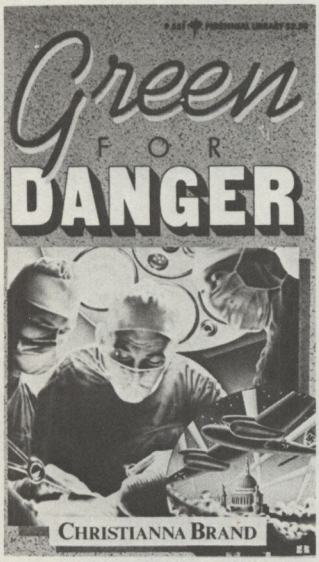
By Charles Shibuk

JAMES ANDERSON

The Affair of the Mutilated Mink Coat (Avon, 1981), the long-awaited sequel to *The Affair of the Blood-Stained Egg Cosy,* is a warm, charming, and skillful pastiche of the Golden Age detective story. It comes complete with crime map, weekend house party, baffling murder problem, reconstruction of the crime, and contains enough ratiocination to interest Messrs. Barzun and Taylor—as well as most readers of this journal.

CHRISTIANNA BRAND

Green for Danger (1944) (Perennial) is set in a beautifully-realized British hospital during the bleak days of World War II and is a memorable adventure in fair-play detection. This masterpiece proves its creator's deserved eminence in her field and will not disappoint any admirer of its classic film version.



VICTOR CANNING

The death of Richard Seyton's older brother means that he now owns the family estate and wants immediate possession, although it is currently leased to a charitable organization for twenty years. **The Satan Sampler** (1979) (Ace/Charter) contains very good writing, appealing characters, suspense, intrigue, and a coherent plot line but suffers from verbosity and an overly placid climax.

LESLIE CHARTERIS

The Saint in Miami (1940) (Ace/Charter) starts with a bang as an oil tanker explodes and a dead sailor's body is discovered soon afterward. The fantasy of the '30s Charteris stories has changed to a slightly more realistic milieu as the Saint challenges Nazi agents and seeks a hidden submarine. **The Saint in Europe** (1953) (Ace/Charter) is the fifth short story collection and presents the Robin Hood of modern crime in seven adventurous escapades set against various exotic backgrounds.

MICHAEL COLLINS

Eugene Marais, a pawnbroker of French extraction, is well-liked by his neighbors and customers in New York's Chelsea district until he is found one morning by private eye Dan Fortune—the victim of a blunt instrument. **Shadow of a Tiger** (1972) (Playboy) is an intricate and briskly-paced detective story that bears comparison with the best of this author's work.

EDMUND CRISPIN

The numerous and devoted fans of this famous author may rejoice in the paperback publication of **Fen Country** (1979) (Penguin). Most of the 26 short stories feature Professor Gervase Fen, and at least three have appeared in EQMM.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

Little did young Stamford (or the world) realize the importance of his casual introduction of Dr. Watson to Sherlock Holmes. The repercussions of this act continue unabated today. Witness this historic occasion and be edified and entertained by a bizarre tale involving two murders and a little-known religious group in the majestic **A Study in Scarlet** (1887) (Ace/Charter).

JAMES ELLROY

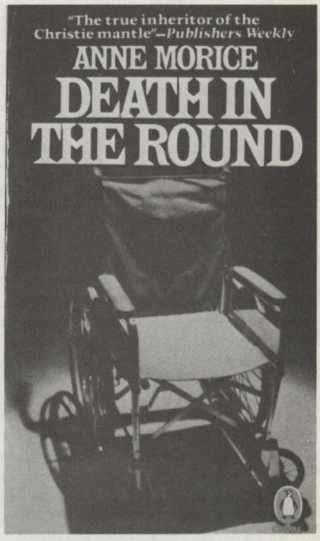
Brown's Requiem (Avon, 1981) is a long, complex, first-person private eye novel set mainly in Los Angeles. It's neither brilliantly original nor is it perfect, but it is a powerful work and marks an impressive debut for its author.

JONATHAN GASH

Lovejoy is one of England's most expert antique dealers and a likable rogue to boot. A client's request for **The Judas Pair** (1977) (Dell) of supposedly non-existent dueling pistols is a commission that will lead to deadly danger for Lovejoy, and much pleasure for the reader in this fresh and promising first novel.

NGAIO MARSH

Photo Finish (1980) (Jove) is set on a luxurious New Zealand island estate cut off from the mainland by a severe storm and concerns the efforts of Chief Superintendent Roderick Alleyn to solve the murder of a tempestuous diva whose premiere performance of a new opera before a specially invited house party proves to be her finale. This is a literate and civilized example of the classic detective story.



ANNE MORICE

Two deaths during a theatrical rehearsal in Dorset provide actress-detective Tessa Crichton with an extra assignment in **Death in the Round** (1980) (Penguin). This attractive detective novel is well clued, tersely narrated by its sleuth, and contains a stronger narrative drive than one would expect.

SHEILA RADLEY

Alison Quantrill, **The Chief Inspector's Daughter** (1980) (Dell), works for best-selling novelist Jasmine Woods until the day she finds her murdered employer's body in her cozy Suffolk cottage. Alison's father and the police investigate, but Alison, who may have important evidence, has disappeared. This is a very well-written and attractive example of the procedural novel but is not quite the equal of its predecessor, *Death in the Morning.*

JULIAN SYMONS

True crime cases have engendered countless fictional counterparts, as followers of Mary Groff's "All Too True" series have noted. The famous and unsolved Bartlett poisoning case of the 1870s has provided the inspiration for **Sweet Adelaide** (1980) (Penguin), and this particular blend of fact

and fiction turns out to be one of this author's best and most relentlessly readable crime novels.

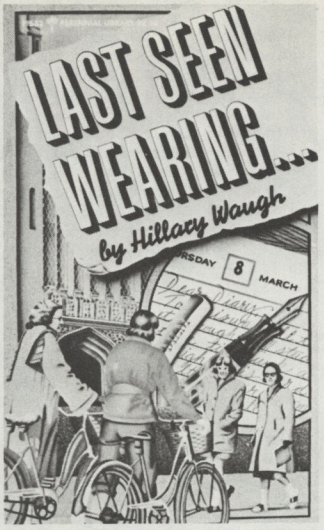
DOUGLAS TERMAN

Free Flight (1980) (Pocket Books) is set in a post-nuclear holocaust America and involves ex-Air Force officer Gregory Mallen and a black friend who must flee from Vermont to Northern Canada via sailplane in order to avoid capture and death. This is an exciting and compelling chase novel when its action takes place on land, but it becomes even more effective in the air.

HILLARY WAUGH

This author is the most distinguished American exponent of the realistic police procedural novel, and **Last Seen Wearing...** (1952) (Perennial), concerning the disappearance and murder investigation of a pretty co-ed from a small Massachusetts college, is his first major work. It is generally regarded as a masterpiece of the form.

The Missing Man (1964) (Perennial) stars Police Chief Fred Fellows and tells about his patient, painstaking, and detailed inquiry into the strangling of a very lovely, but unknown, young woman on a resort beach. The only real clue is that the victim was known to have an appointment with an equally anonymous man—who can't be located. □



RETRO REVIEWS

The Man Who Died Twice by Samuel A. Peeples. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976.

Why review a book published just six years ago as a retrospective work? Because this one is just too good to miss—and there has been no subsequent paperback edition.

The Man Who Died Twice is fresh, exciting, innovative, and beautifully plotted. As a period mystery, it rates along side Joe Gores's *Hammett*; Peeples's re-creation of 1922 Hollywood is as powerfully realized as Gores's 1928 San Francisco. The period flavor is richly detailed, a flawless rendering of the film industry's Silent Era, in all its gaudy glitter, flamboyance and larger-than-life melodrama.

The book is subtitled "A Novel About Hollywood's Most Baffling Murder"—and in his author's note Peeples tells us that he has based his narrative on "the famous unsolved shooting of [film director] William Desmond Taylor."

A veteran cop, Ernie Carter, is shot down on a Hollywood street in the mid-1970s and wakes up as Taylor in late January of 1922. The cop knows that his host was mysteriously shot to death on February 1, 1922 and realizes that since he is sharing Taylor's body he has just eight days to solve what is now his *own* impending murder! And there's a further problem: Taylor *hates* the idea of a 1970s cop taking over his body but is powerless to do anything about it. (Thorne Smith out of Raymond Chandler.) The barbed, tart inner dialogue between them—with Taylor "talking" to Carter in italics—is one of the novel's prime delights. They share everything together, including happy bedroom frolics with several sexually enthusiastic young ladies. (Peeples's deft handling of these sex scenes is both humorous and erotic.)

During the course of the engaging, fast-paced narrative, involving a wonderfully wild out-of-control trolley ride down a mountain, drug scandals, shootouts, and night attacks, we mingle intimately with several famous Hollywood personalities of the '20s, including egocentric Cecil B. De Mille, drug-plagued Mabel Normand, boozing John Barrymore, high-living William Randolph Hearst . . . each characterized with sharp insight. Peeples makes them totally real for us; his joy in the period is plainly evident, and his expertise (like that of his friend and fellow period buff Robert Bloch) stems from what the author terms "research that has been [my] personal hobby for more than twenty years." (Another of his passions is the Old West, and he has several Western novels to his credit.)

At the book's climax, Peeples provides us (and history) with his own wrap-up to the Taylor murder, calling his solution "entirely fictional, although it represents an actual possibility." *The Man Who Died Twice* is sheer delight, a seamless interplay of fact and fiction, a *tour de force* brought off with rare verve and style.

I rank it among the very best novels written about early-day Hollywood, regardless of genre.

Look it up; this one's worth the trouble.

—William F. Nolan

* * * * *

The Mystery Puzzle Book by Lassiter Wren and Randle McKay. New York: Thomas Crowell, 1933. London: Hurst and Blackett [1934].

Like those in the *Baffle Books,* prepared by the same authors, the problems of *The Mystery Puzzle Book* are varied, with solutions ranging from the obvious to ones possible only in fiction or in artificially constructed puzzles. Along with the usual codes to be broken and fingerprints/footprints/signatures to be identified, the authors have included such interesting pieces of history as the famous Dreyfus *bordereau* (accompanied by samples of the writing of Dreyfus and Major Esterhazy) and documents from the George Edalji case, one of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's real-life detective investigations.

It is surprising to find in such a logically-minded and clue-conscious book problems asking the reader to match people's biographies with their portraits ("A Problem in Physiognomy") or with samples of their writing ("The Handwriting Puzzle"). There is probably some curiosity value in seeing sketches (or even handwriting samples) of people such as Seddon and Eugene Aram; but it is hard not to be amused or scared by the

authors' sincere claims that one can see Ralph Waldo Emerson's character and intellect in his face and that Tennyson's signature is an index of his character and intelligence. The reader will enjoy himself most if he simply matches his ingenuity against the authors' and ignores their serious but unsubstantiated claims and the intriguing problem of why the English edition deletes one story found in the American version and includes three new ones, yet fails to revise the authors' note that the book consists of 28 puzzles.

—William Reynolds

* * * * *

The Castle Island Case by Van Wyck Mason, with candid camera clues by Henry Clay Gibson. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1937. London: Jarrolds, 1939. 185 pp.

The Castle Island Case is unexceptional in plot and puzzle. It has, however, some novelty value; for it contains more than seventy photographs, half a dozen of which present clues that by themselves or in conjunction with the text help to identify a double murderer.

Major Roger Allenby, investigator for the Inter-Ocean Life Assurance Company, travels to Bermuda to investigate the suicide of Judy Fortier. In the course of the novel, three more people die, Allenby himself barely dodges a bullet, and one of those presumed dead is found alive.

Mason deserves credit for cleverly dividing responsibility for the murders between two people, but his plotting breaks down; and he must extricate himself by having Allenby bluff one murderer into confessing. Infra-red photography also figures in the solution, but the passage of forty years has made the technical discussions heavy and unnecessary.

Though some poses are exaggerated and theatrical, the photography is excellent. Black and white pictures cannot capture Bermuda, but the reader can easily see the features about and from which deductions must be made. Anyone who has read more than a few Golden Age novels should have no trouble deciding whom Allenby will accuse, but there is some challenge in trying to spot the clues as soon as they appear in the text and/or the pictures.

—William Reynolds

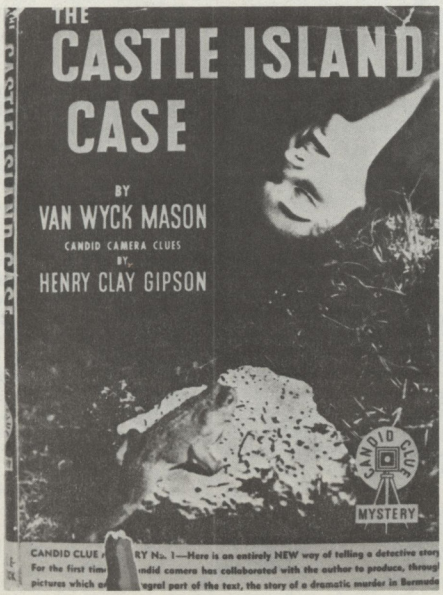
* * * * *

Harlequin Enterprises, Ltd. **Harlequin's 30th Anniversary 1949–1979.** Toronto, London, New York: Harlequin Books, 1979.

Although now the world's leading publisher of romance books, for its first ten years, Harlequin Books reprinted mysteries by more than twenty writers, including E. Phillips Oppenheim, Edgar Wallace, and Agatha Christie.

Harlequin's is a bibliographical gem; it is a comprehensive listing of Harlequin books from its founding in 1949 to the last book it published in December 1978. In addition, there are chapters on the history of the house, the origin of the Harlequin emblem, and a chapter in which several romance authors tell about themselves.

But the core of the book, and its greatest asset to readers of our genre, is its three different lists of 2,490 books. One list is by publisher number and year, one by author, and one by title. There are reproductions of several of the older book covers.



From 1949 until the mid-1960s, Harlequin printed several different sorts of books, including nonfiction. The following are typical examples of books which are neither romances nor mysteries: *Canadian Etiquette Dictionary* #550 (1960); *Football Today and Yesteryear* #694 (1962); *The Pocket Purity Cookbook* #51 (1950); *The Owl Hoot Trail* by Buck Billings #226 (1953); *Catalina* by W. Somerset Maugham #266 (1954).

For the first ten years, Harlequin published an average of fifty books a year, of which from three to twelve were mysteries. In the late 1950s, romance titles dominated the publishing. Today, Harlequin publishes more than 144 new romance titles yearly, but no mysteries *per se* (although they do feature an "Intrigue" Series).

As far as I could discern, the first mystery published was *The Dark Page* #9, by Samuel Michael Fuller, in 1949. It is a reprint of the 1944 Duell edition. Similarly, the last mystery published was Edgar Wallace's *The Man at the Carlton* #493 in 1959. It is a reprint of the London H & S edition. Unfortunately, *Harlequin's* does not describe the books by type or genre, nor does it give the original publication information.

Among the mystery writers represented by Harlequin are such well-known names as Agatha Christie (who here has four titles, with two reprints of *The Murder on the Links*), Victor Canning, James Hadley Chase (sixteen titles, including *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*), John Creasy, Sydney Horler, Dorothy B. Hughes, A. E. W. Mason (*At the Villa Rose*), E. Phillips Oppenheim (*The Great Impersonation*), and Edgar Wallace (seventeen titles, including *The Mind of Mr. J. G. Reeder*). There are also less well-known writers represented, including Robert Leslie Bellam, Ben Hecht, Frank Kane, and Richard Sale. There is also a science-fiction story by Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Lost World* #238, which Harlequin's president, W. L. Heisey, calls a mystery.

Harlequin's is important for two reasons. One is that there is at least one mystery writer who wrote *originals* for Harlequin, according to the ghostly author. Brian Moore, Canadian author of *The Revolution Script* (Holt, 1971; listed in Hubin), wrote two mysteries for Harlequin, *Wreath for a Redhead* #102 (1951) and *The Executioners* #117 (1951). There is a reproduction of the former on page 21 of *Harlequin's,* and it is obviously a mystery. What is interesting is that neither of these is listed in any of the standard bibliographies or reference works of the genre, although Kevin Hancer's *Paperback Price Guide* carries a partial listing of Harlequins which includes them.

The other reason that this book is important is that the Harlequin reprint editions of even the very well-known authors are not listed in Hagen, Hubin, or *Twentieth Century Crime and Mystery Writers,* although the authors' Pocket Books and Avon editions are listed. It seems that this little book, $1.25 in 1979, is a fertile field for bibliographical investigation.

—Greg Goode

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The World of WILLIAM ARD

By Frances M. Nevins, Jr.

I

William Thomas Ard was born in Brooklyn on July 8, 1922. He took ROTC courses while a student at Dartmouth and, after graduating in 1944, went into the Marines. An accident that severed some tendons in his right hand kept him out of combat, and he was discharged before the end of World War II. He returned to Brooklyn, moved in with his parents and worked briefly for a local detective agency. Then he got a copywriter's job with the Buchanan Advertising Agency, whose office was in Manhattan's Paramount Building. He fell in love with a young woman named Eileen Kovara, who worked at the agency, and married her in 1945. Ard's next job was as a publicity writer for the New York office of Warner Bros. Pictures. He was eventually promoted to head of his department but quit Warners around 1950 to become a freelance writer.

By that time, the Ards had two small children, a daughter and a son, so that economic necessity reinforced Ard's natural bent to write swiftly and much. For the rest of the decade, he produced an average of a book every four months, the vast majority in the private eye and hardboiled genres. The family lived first in Brooklyn, then in Scarsdale and New Rochelle, New York, before moving in 1953 to Clearwater, on the west coast of Florida, which served as the setting for many of his later works. After turning out thirty books, all of them typed with two fingers, Ard died of cancer on March 12, 1960, aged 37. In the years since his premature death, he has been almost completely forgotten, and the leading reference works on crime fiction mention him not even in passing.

And yet during the years he flourished, he was considered one of the top private eye writers in the business. Anthony Boucher, mystery critic of the *New York Times* throughout Ard's creative life, praised him over and over for his "deft blend of hardness with human warmth and quiet humor," for the way he kept his novels "gratifyingly distinct from each other, and each one better than the last," for producing "masterpiece[s] of compressed narration ...backed with action and vigor, written with style and individuality." Ard, Boucher wrote in 1955, "is just about unmatched for driving story-movement and acute economy."

In the early 1950s, when the dominant model for all hardboiled writers was Mickey Spillane, Ard and a few others (including Ross Macdonald, Thomas B. Dewey and William Campbell Gault) resisted the pressure to imitate the surefire blend of sadism-snigger-and-sleaze in Spillane's Mike Hammer novels. Instead, they carried on the tradition of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, in which the private eye stands for personal and political decency, in which legitimate violence abounds but sadism is eschewed, in which sex is not a savage perversion but a restoration of one's self and a friendly caring for another. The writer most influential for Ard, however, was neither Hammett nor Chandler but John O'Hara, whom he mentions several times in his novels and from whom he apparently derived his simple yet vivid style, his habit of flashing back to explore various characters' social

and economic origins, and his theme of dropping ethnicity (like stockbroker Louis Graziano/Gray in *.38,* gang boss Charlie Wilenski/Wilson in *Don't Come Crying to Me,* and vice cop Gordie Welliwicz/Wells in *Hell Is a City*) to achieve success. What makes Ard unique is that despite his recurring use of dark alleys, gangsters, crooked cops and pols and sinister roadhouses and all the other standard mean-streets story ingredients, his heart was elsewhere, in the world of movies and stage musicals and Broadway nightspots and music, the world of popular entertainment. He loved that way of life and all who lived it, and in novel after novel he bathed its every aspect in a soft, romantic glow. The same romanticism permeates Ard's series characters, particularly his private eye Timothy Dane, who is a shamus like no other in fiction: young, naïve, always tender with women, incompetent at machismo, incapable of extricating himself from tight spots singlehanded, resorting to violence rarely and never in a sadistic way. There is about Dane a sweetness, a delicate simplicity whose very incongruity in a fictional private eye somehow makes it work. In the '50s, before Ross Macdonald replaced Spillane as the dominant influence and a sense of decency in a sour world became part of the private eye's standard equipment, Ard's approach was startling and sorely needed as a corrective.

Not that he was a paragon of all the literary virtues. He wrote rapidly and didn't always revise as much as he should. Although his style is readable and efficient, his work lacks the hauntingly memorable, marvelously quotable lines that are common in Chandler and Macdonald. Despite his gifts of pace and economy and his unusual story premises, his plots have a tendency to fall apart, especially when he plays with the motifs of classical detective fiction. He seemed to have a mental block that made him forget the character names he used in one book and recycle them unwittingly a few books later;[1] sometimes he changed a person's name halfway through the same book. But even his worst efforts are infused with raw readability, and his best are among the finest hard-boiled novels of the '50s. This article will concentrate on Ard's strongest work, the ten hardcovers published under his own name and the six paperbacks under his byline that Ard actually wrote. Pseudonymous and ghosted novels get short shrift.

II

In Ard's first novel, *The Perfect Frame* (1951), Dane is distinguished from the standard Hammeresque Manhattan private eye of the '50s only marginally, although even here a few touches of Ard's naïve lyrical romanticism seep through the surface machismo. Narrated in first person *à la* Spillane, the book has Dane hired by a gorgeous blonde to visit a seedy Third Avenue bar, where he is quickly beaten to a pulp but recovers in jig time to mix into a rather neat marine-insurance swindle and a pair of murders. The usual tough-guy story elements pass in review on schedule, including feelthy pictures, a sinister night club owner and an assortment of sadistic hoods. But despite the obeisances to convention and an extremely awkward climax it's a readable exercise, drenched in the feel of early-'50s Manhattan.

Dane returned early the following year as narrator and protagonist of *The Diary* (1952), in which a corporate tycoon about to launch a political career hires the young shamus to recover the missing and potentially embarrassing secret journal of his tempestuous teenaged daughter. The trail leads Dane to a predictable mixture of sinister night clubs, sleazy Latino hoods, corrupt cops and pols, sex teasing and shootouts. What makes this novel a huge improvement on its predecessor is not the ingredients but Dane's romantic naïveté, his complete inability to get out of a single tight spot without help (usually a woman's), his hopeless ineptitude at Hammerismo. Ard's blending of familiar mean-streets material with

the elements of Hollywood sex comedy growing out of Dane's erotic mishaps with the women in the case makes this one of the more unusual private eye adventures of the '50s.

Apparently Ard at this point became unhappy with the limitations of first-person narration, for in the third Dane novel, unaccountably entitled *.38* (1952), and in all of Dane's later cases, he switched to third-person storytelling, kept his protagonist offstage for long stretches, devoted much time and skill to exploring the social and psychological roots of his characters, and displayed a wizardry at cinematic crosscutting between scenes. Even though *.38* takes place in Manhattan and a mob-run New Jersey vice town, the ambience is very close to that of a Western novel, and Dane's personality and actions are specifically likened to those of that hero of early-'50s TV, Hopalong Cassidy. The story begins with a math error by a missing girl's distraught father which catapults Dane into the middle of a war among mob factions, but considering the premise there is remarkably little bloodletting in the book, and many developments in the later chapters are indebted not to Chandler or Spillane or the screen exploits of Hoppy but to the coincidence-packed traditions of Hollywood sex comedy. Contrived in spots, marked as usual by Ard's youthful romanticism, this is still one of Dane's best adventures, described by Anthony Boucher as "a singularly realistic study of the mechanics and intrigues of gang rule" but rising far above sociological reportage to become a sort of *locus classicus* of Ard's distinctive traits.

Nothing in his first three Dane novels could be mistaken for the traditional detective story, but in his next case, *A Private Party* (1953), Ard works along whodunit lines, with disastrous results. Released from custody after two potential witnesses against him turn up conveniently dead, corrupt dockworkers' union boss Al Stanzyck is himself shot to death at a roadhouse during his getting-out celebration. A not too plausible life insurance angle brings Dane into the case at the behest of Stanzyck's equally corrupt colleagues, who insist Al was killed by some police-man-vigilante seeking justice outside the law. This theory becomes increasingly plausible to Dane as his own investigation is hampered by Detective Lieutenant Joe Bannerman and his squad. Our shamus follows a tortuous path, filled with innocent persons who were suspiciously prowling the scene just before the murder, awash with incredible behavior by both cops (a morally outraged plainclothesman sends hoodlums nonsensical threatening letters signed J. Lex) and crooks (the killer keeps the murder gun that can hang him and digs it out to use again when Dane baits him by publicly romancing his girlfriend). The solution is pure guesswork and comes about for no reason at all, but the telling is crisp and diverting, and Ard does quite well at characterizing a variety of hangers-on without function in the story.

When a private eye becomes involved with an ancient tyrant and his two sexpot daughters, one of whom has a missing husband, the informed reader knows he's in for another retread of Chandler's *The Big Sleep*. But in Dane's next case, *Don't Come Crying to Me* (1954), Ard plays some bizarre variations on those overworked themes: the unmarried daughter, the overt nympho, is about to give birth to an illegitimate child who is wanted very badly by its gangster grandpa and by three separate and distinct men claiming to be its father, and Dane is sucked into the Solomonic furor over rights to the baby. It's hard to believe that none of these streetwise characters ever thought of an abortion and even more incredible that so many gangsters could get so gooey over an infant. Add these problems to the chaotically constructed last chapters, splice in Dane's strange conviction that the baby is better off with its hoodlum grandfather than with any conceivable foster parents, and the result is a book whose flaws far outweigh the customary Ard virtues of pace, economy, and restraint with the sex and gore.

In *Mr. Trouble* (1954), Ard shifts the scene of Dane's adventures from Manhattan to the author's new home base on the west coast of Florida and returns—with mixed results—to multiple-viewpoint narration and comedy-of-errors plotting. While en route to the Sunshine State on commission from Fidelis Insurance to look into a suspicious stolen-jewelry claim, Dane is involved in a minor baggage accident at the airport that has twin consequences: two gamblers on the run from a gang boss mistake him for a hit man out to get them, and the real hit man, who happens to be on the same plane with Dane, mistakes the shamus for the gamblers' bodyguard. Despite a premise seemingly tailor-made for bloodletting, and two luscious woman who become involved in the plot, the action and sex teasing remain minimal throughout the book, and Dane's life is saved only through chance and a convenient police chief. One story element is simply beyond belief—after a murder attempt in a crowded hotel lounge, no one bothers to call the cops—but otherwise, this is a smooth if unchallenging novel, enriched by Ard's exploration of his characters' backgrounds and personalities and by his avoidance of Spillanean excess.

Dane's next case, *Hell Is a City* (1955), is by far the most powerful and exciting of Ard's private eye novels, pitting Dane against the forces of law and order in a nightmare New York where the mayor, the police commissioner and most of the officials are in a corrupt alliance with the mobs and determined to hang on to their power in the forthcoming mayoral election. When a young Latino shoots a Brooklyn

vice squad cop who was about to rape the boy's sister, the city bosses use their puppets in the news media to portray the case as the coldblooded murder of a heroic officer and put out word to shoot on sight whomever might contradict the party line. Brought into the picture by a crusading newspaper editor, Dane at once finds himself in the position of the classic protagonist of *roman noir:* knowing the truth, threatened by evildoers both with and without badges, hounded through city streets dark with something more than night. A gallery of sharply defined characterizations, breathless pace, an exceptionally strong premise and the evocation of Dane as a sleuth both more aggressive and brighter than before combine to turn this book into a masterpiece —until the climax, perhaps the first televised criminal trial in fiction, where all is set to rights in record time and impossibly ludicrous manner. With a sensible ending, what a movie Sam Fuller could have made out of this novel!

Until this point in the saga, Ard had told us a great deal about the backgrounds of one-shot characters but nothing at all about Dane himself—a deficiency he corrected in *Cry Scandal* (1956), which contains a vivid flashback to the detective's earlier years when he was in partnership with a man he knew to be corrupt but who had once saved Dane's life. When that ex-partner suddenly disappears, Dane is drawn into the affairs of a sleazy scandal magazine whose owners prey on Manhattan's theatrical and television celebrities. The adventure has much to recommend it, including a succinctly convincing portrait of Broadway and its people, the usual fine character sketches right down to the walk-on parts, and even a modicum of reasoning in the search for the perpetrators. Dane's performance is rather passive, and only the chance intervention of a friendly ex-con saves him from being drowned in a marble quarry at the climax. Ard never bothers to give us an adequate explanation of why the scandal sheet was started, and his editors left in a couple of linguistic howlers—"There were audible gasps when Mike Carhart's rippling muscles strode from the wings"—that are worthy of Michael Avallone. But in most respects, including the abundance of sex teasing, this is pure '50s nostalgia and good medium-grade Ard.

In Dane's ninth and last recorded adventure, *The Root of His Evil* (1957), our hero sinks to the hopelessly stereotypical level, absorbing three brutal beatings and a serious knife wound within 48 hours yet still capable of derring-do in the bedroom and Tarzanesque rope-swinging in the chase after a mad killer. A night club singer hires Timothy to deliver the $100,000 he owes in gambling debts to a vicious Miami hoodlum. But unknown to Dane, the money is intended to help finance a Latin American revolution, and the dictator in power is just as determined

to sabotage the payoff as is the hoodlum to punish Dane for sleeping with a stripper he considers his own property. It's a swift-paced book, full of interwoven diverse viewpoints, graced with the sexiest bedmate in the canon and climaxed by a grand race to save the lady from a Fate Worse Than Death. But otherwise, the only notable feature of Dane's last case is the ease with which Ard mixes up the first names of his Latino characters.

III

During his peak years, Ard wrote so prolifically that he needed four separate and distinct pseudonyms in addition to his own byline. Almost all of his work under other names, however, can be dismissed in a phrase, coined by Anthony Boucher, who said that one of them read "like William Ard in an off moment." He used the byline of Ben Kerr for six mean-streets thrillers without series characters, ground out two more as Thomas Wills and a singleton as Mike Moran. Eight of these nine, all but the first Kerr, were published as paperback originals.

As if all this activity were not enough, Ard also turned out a series of paperback Westerns for Gold Medal Books under the pseudonym of Jonas Ward. The protagonist is a gunfighter named Buchanan, after the advertising agency for which Ard worked in the '40s. The first of the series, *The Name's Buchanan* (1956), is essentially a westernized rewrite of *Hell Is a City,* with the hero once again trying to save the neck of a young Latino who is going to be legally murdered by corrupt officials for shooting the man who was raping his sister. Director Budd Boetticher adapted this novel into one of the last starring films of Randolph Scott, *Buchanan Rides Alone* (1958)—the only movie ever made from an Ard book.[2] Boetticher added an abundance of the quirky human touches that were typical of him and preserved the Ard structure at the same time. Since Ard's death, Gold Medal has hired other writers, including Brian Garfield, who wrote *Buchanan's Gun* (1968), to carry on the Jonas Ward byline as a house name.

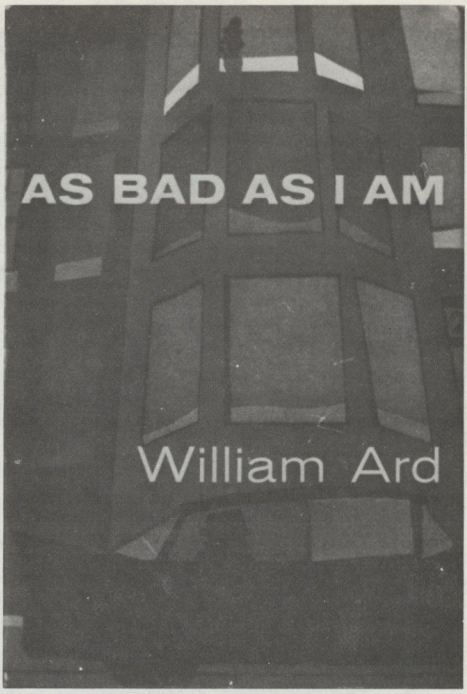
IV

Besides the nine Dane novels, Ard under his own name published four other books, three as paperback originals and one in hardcover, which can best be discussed as a group. The earliest of these, *A Girl for Danny* (1953), is only remotely a crime novel but demonstrates as well as his mysteries Ard's delicate blend of mean-streets atmosphere and gentle naïveté. The action takes place in an unusual and well-evoked setting, a 5000-passenger excursion boat cruising from Manhattan to Poughkeepsie and back on a sweltering July 4, 1952. Among the passengers are a prostitute, a dead john, a heroin-crazed thief, a rape-traumatized girl, a repulsive homosexual and a sadistic boat detective, each contributing to the education of virginal ship's cafeteria cashier Danny Shannon in this quickie *bildungsroman.* Although by today's standards the sex scenes are strangely tender and unobtrusive, they must have seemed quite steamy by the criteria of the early '50s. And the McCarthyite hysteria of that time adds special flavor to the telling moment when Danny, trying to keep the boat detective from beating up the homosexual, is therefore accused of being "queer" himself. Paced as rapidly and told as economically as any Timothy Dane adventure, this is quintessential Ard in mood, tone and themes.

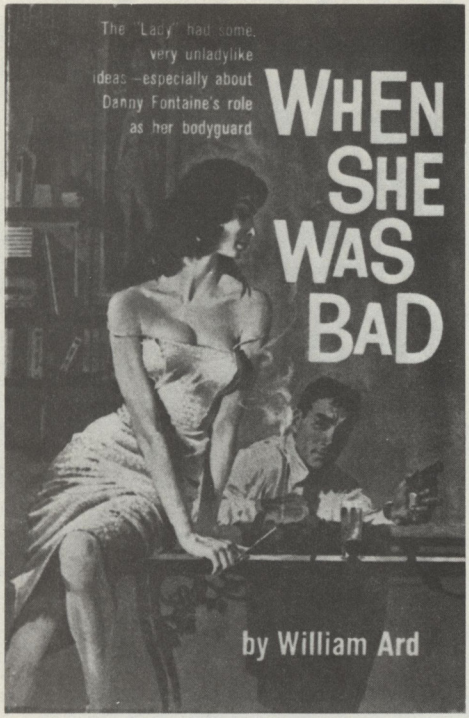
Which is more than can be said for Ard's second paper original under his own byline, *No Angels for Me* (1954). As in the Dane series, the client in this caper is irascible Joe Spencer of Fidelis Insurance,[3] but this time he takes his business to Manhattan's All-States Agency, whose chief operative Luke MacLane is one of those Mike Hammer clones to whom women bare their breasts five minutes or less after the first hello. When fellow sleuth George Epply is found shot to death in the New Jersey meadowlands,

MacLane inherits his colleague's current case, a diamond heist from a Jersey pier, and is soon eyebrows-deep in gunmen, sinister roadhouses, bosomy babes and the rest of the standard equipment of the '50s tough-guy story. Ard tries to freshen the mixture with a traditional whodunit element but handles it so ineptly that the exposure (mostly by guesswork) of the "surprise" killer simply adds one more coincidence to a plot already riddled with implausibilities and contradictions.

Five years later, and two years after abandoning Timothy Dane, Ard launched a new character and a new series which was abruptly terminated by the author's early death. The protagonist of these novels is Mike Fontaine—thirty years old, big and dark and handsome, half French, half Irish, and such a compulsive romantic than he must help any and every troubled woman who crosses his path. Although he aspires to Broadway stardom, and once appeared in the male chorus of *South Pacific,* his penchant for rescuing ladies has caused most of his adult life to be spent behind bars. At the start of Ard's final hardcover novel, *As Bad As I Am* (1959), Fontaine is released on parole after serving five years for a fistfight in which he killed a man who was beating a woman, but the implausible terms of that parole require him to avoid all social contact with women for the next eighteen months. Fontaine, however, is one of those sexually magnetic men at first sight of whom women tear off their clothes and offer themselves, and to make matters worse his parole officer is a sadistic creep who aches to catch the young man off base and send him back to the slammer. Fontaine returns to the family home on East 97th Street which his younger sister shares with her husband, plainclothes cop Harry Taggart, but finds that during his imprisonment the block has been absorbed into the slums of Spanish Harlem and that the upper floors of the house are being rented to Puerto Ricans. While hunting for an acting job, Fontaine happens to meet and instantly propels into an erotic tizzy the gorgeous redheaded TV starlet Gloria Allen. Then, about a hundred pages into the book, he discovers that his brother-in-law is on the take, collecting a commission on each patron of the Puerto Rican prostitutes to whom he has rented rooms in the 97th Street house. Taggart breaks in on Fontaine's enraged attempt to throw the whores out, tries to kill Fontaine on the spot but is himself shot to death in the struggle. The prostitutes flee, their current costumer flees, and, just as in Ard's *Hell Is a City,* the dead cop's equally corrupt superiors form a politically motivated conspiracy to whitewash the officer, brand the innocent young man who shot him as a mad-dog cop killer, and put out orders that he be shot on sight. This version lacks the power and night-



marish intensity of the 1955 Timothy Dane novel but is rather better constructed, with the burden of saving the young victim of municipal corruption placed on the shoulders of the starlet Gloria, a high-powered talent agent, a tax lawyer with romantic yearnings of his own, and a shrewd Broadway private eye named Barney Glines. (This is clearly not the Barney Glines who was protagonist of Ard's 1952 paperback original *You'll Get Yours,* published as by Thomas Wills, nor is he the Glines who used to be Timothy Dane's partner and who was killed in *Cry Scandal.* Ard seems to have been almost pathologically careless about recycling that name.) The climax takes place at a criminal trial turned media event just as in *Hell Is a City,* but this time—except for Ard's illusion that the Supreme Court is the highest court in New York State rather than, as in fact it is, the lowest—the judicial proceedings are considerably more believable. Anthony Boucher, who always had a kind word for Ard's lesser efforts, summed up this one best when, reviewing it in *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine,* he called it a "happy, exciting romance-melodrama of rogue cops, the theatre, and young love—Ard's longest and probably his most entertaining."



In his second and final adventure, which occurs three weeks later, Fontaine's first name has magically changed from Mike to Danny (whether because a real Michael Fontaine threatened to sue, or Ard simply forgot, or because the author changed too, history does not record), he has just married Gloria Allen and he's about to begin a new career as partner in Barney Glines's detective agency. This premise comes from *Cry Scandal,* at the end of which Timothy Dane offered a job in *his* agency to the likable ex-convict Johnny Packerd, who had saved Dane's life at the Tuckahoe quarry, although Packi was never mentioned in the single Dane case subsequently published. But the resurrection of this story thread in the paperback original *When She Was Bad* (1960) proves a disaster. A titled, recently widowed and astonishingly sexy young Englishwoman comes to Manhattan and hires the Glines agency to find her stepdaughter, who is threatening to sell some of the lady's passionate love letters to a London scandal sheet. Glines assigns the case to Danny, whose bride has just flown to Hollywood to appear in a Frank Sinatra–Dean Martin–Tony Curtis sex comedy. The real sex comedy, however, unfolds in Manhattan and Bermuda as the stepdaughter's trail brings the hapless Fontaine into the eager clutches of uncountable nubile lovelies, every one of them lusting for his manly body. Sex titillation consumes most of the pages of this adventure, and what crime plot there is turns out to be as skimpy and flimsy as the bikini panties discarded by every female in the cast at first sight of Fontaine. Ard's last novel published by a major house is so long, slow, clumsily paced, lackadaisically told and non-urgent that one could easily believe it was ghosted from an Ard outline or rough draft by someone infinitely less talented.

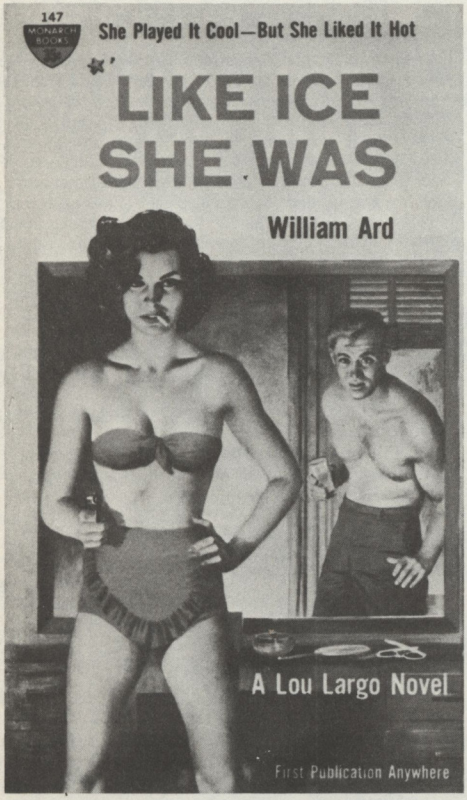
V

The last publisher to become involved with an Ard series was Monarch Books, a short-lived paperback house based in Connecticut and specializing in titillation. Between 1959 and 1962, Monarch issued seven sleazy-covered novels under the Ard byline, six of them about private eye Lou Largo. Despite the lurid jacket copy and artwork, the three genuine Ard books in the group bear all the hallmarks of the author's universe and are well worth discussion here.

Except for a Marine background paralleling his creator's, Ard's Lou Largo is simply Timothy Dane under an alias, a Manhattan private eye with a curiously gentle personal style, a Times Square office, a rented apartment in a converted brownstone, a host of acquaintances in the entertainment world and a penchant for cases that take him to the Florida west coast after one of whose towns he was named. The two authentic Largos are marked by motifs from Hollywood's screwball sex comedies, an interest in characters' social and psychological roots, insightful glances at underworld politics and the corrupt politics of the "respectable" world, cinematic cross-cutting between scenes, and an occasional incident or bit of dialogue that reminds us irresistibly of Ard's sideline as a writer of Westerns. Although not in the same league with the Timothy Dane series, they are unmistakably from the same pen.

In the first and better of the pair, *All I Can Get* (1959), Largo's client is Milt Weston, the crusading, incurably romantic New York newspaper editor who had been a major figure in *Hell Is a City,* and the detective's assignment is to check the background of a sex goddess whom Weston has just met and now wants as his eighth (or, depending on certain legal technicalities, his ninth) wife. As Largo contrives to meet, rapidly becomes enchanted by and starts bedding this lusty wench, we are treated to one-third of a book's worth of Hollywood sex comedy unadulterated by the slightest criminous interest. Then Weston takes his fiancée to Gulfside, Florida, where he instantly becomes embroiled in a newspaper

circulation war, the murder of a local sheriff, and rivalry between the Cuban gangsters and the Mafiosi across the Bay Bridge in the corrupt city of Tampa. Largo is hired to come down and take a hand, and the book's final hundred-odd pages turn into a fast-paced, action-crammed cornucopia of customary Ard motifs, graced with a neat detective subplot, spiced by the continuous sex-comedy scenes with which the ongoing crime story is ludicrously incompatible, climaxed by a shootout between an honest and a crooked deputy sheriff that seems to come straight out of a Jonas Ward Western. This may not be great literature, but it's a splendid piece of storytelling that still holds up well today.



In *Like Ice She Was* (1960), Largo is to some extent Hammerized, being portrayed as a compulsive gambler, a raging bull in brawls and bed, a macho immune to torture and bullets; but underneath these trappings he retains much of the gentleness of the Ard hero. Hired by a professional gambler to recover a million dollars in dirty Canadian money which he claims was stolen from him two years before by a Quebec prostitute and her pilot boyfriend, Largo follows the trail to Saratoga and an excess of sadistic encounters with various creeps who also want the money. The thin story line is held together by guesswork and wild coincidence, but the main emphasis is on Ard's unique brand of sex comedy, albeit with much more explicit bedplay than usual, stemming from the juxtaposition of Largo and the Quebec hooker and his own temporary assistant, a wealthy young criminology student beneath whose prim exterior lurks an erotic tigress desperate for release. An exciting race against time at the climax, plus some wonderful bit parts such as the Jewish beatnik cabdriver and the ex-Marine deputy sheriff with a sideline as applejack bootlegger, are enough to remind readers of this quick how good Ard at his best could be.

Ard's third and final Monarch paperback was not a Largo but a long, vividly written and minimally criminous novel that he hoped would be his breakthrough into the mainstream. *The Sins of Billy Serene* (1960) follows the transformation of Gino Serini, a young Brooklyn street tough who happens to have a magnificent voice, into a Sinatraesque superstar with the de-ethnicized titular name. Along the way, he encounters pals and punks galore, including a baseball-nut priest, a sadistic cop, orchestra musicians and press agents and filmmakers and, at every stop on his road to the top, legions of models and showgirls and starlets who yearn to share his bed. It is a rich book, full of Ard's soaring romanticism, his O'Hara-derived interest in characters' socio-economic roots, his love of movies and stage shows and night clubs and most of all his fascination with the making of music, with the art of the great songwriters such as Cole Porter and Jerome Kern and that of the singers and musicians who make the lyrics and melodies come alive. Despite the misleading title, Gino/Billy, like almost all Ard protagonists, is an overwhelmingly decent person, his worst sin having been a youthful stint as numbers runner for his Mafia cousin. He is loyal to his men friends, particularly the pianist Mike Dushane, who superintends his rise to fortune, and, once he learns in the bed of a kindly older woman that his partners are supposed to enjoy it too, he treats all his ladies, up to and including the octoroon actress passing for white whom he briefly and tragically marries, with exemplary care and gentleness. Ard must have dreamed about how *Billy Serene* might be made into a movie, maybe even a stage musical like the O'Hara-based *Pal Joey*. He died a month before the novel was published and never saw a copy. It was reviewed nowhere and vanished almost at once into the Bermuda Triangle of forgotten books.

After Ard's death, Monarch editor Charles Heckelmann made a deal with the Scott Meredith Literary Agency for ghost writers who would continue the Lou Largo series under the Ard byline, with the ghost taking three-quarters of the money and Ard's widow 25%—minus, of course, Meredith's commission. This arrangement quickly transformed Largo into a superstud caricature of no interest to us here. Of the four posthumous Largos, the final three were written by John Jakes, whose Kent Family Chronicles series netted him more fame and money than Ard saw in his lifetime.

VI

It was a sad and sudden end for a writer who in his brief prime contributed such a distinctive voice to the popular literature of the '50s. Since his death, William Ard has been all but forgotten, his books unreprinted, his career unmentioned even in the most comprehensive reference works on mystery fiction. His best books, and especially *As Bad As I Am,* richly deserve republication for the benefit of the generations who have never experienced his unique amalgam of mean streets and singular tenderness. It would be a sweet romantic touch he would have appreciated.

Notes

1. Thus Stix Larsen, a gangster killed in *.38* (1952), is revived in *The Root of His Evil* (1957) and again in *All I Can Get* (1959). Wes Shell, a Florida orchestra leader in *Mr. Trouble* (1954), becomes a Manhattan political columnist in *Hell Is a City* (1955). And the curious triple career of Barney Glines is considered in Part IV of this article.
2. Apparently the only television film based on Ard is "The Baby Sitter" (*Alfred Hitchcock Presents,* May 6, 1956), starring Thelma Ritter and adapted from Ard's short story of the same name.
3. The company's name of course is taken from *Semper Fidelis,* the motto of the Marine Corps in which Ard briefly served.

A WILLIAM ARD CHECKLIST

I. Hardcover Novels as William Ard

The Perfect Frame. Mill, 1951; Hammond, 1953. Popular Library pb #416, 1952. Timothy Dane.
The Diary. Rinehart, 1952; Hammond, 1954. Popular Library pb #477, 1953. Timothy Dane.
.38. Rinehart, 1952. British title: *This Is Murder,* Hammond, 1954. Also published as: *You Can't Stop Me,* Popular Library pb #526, 1953. Timothy Dane.
A Private Party. Rinehart, 1963. British title: *Rogue's Murder,* Hammond, 1955. Popular Library pb #569, 1954; #G328, 1959. Timothy Dane.
Don't Come Crying to Me. Rinehart, 1954. Popular Library pb #639, 1955. Timothy Dane.
Mr. Trouble. Rinehart, 1954. Popular Library pb #723, 1956. Timothy Dane.
Hell Is a City. Rinehart, 1955. Popular Library pb #756, 1956. Timothy Dane.
Cry Scandal. Rinehart, 1956; Digit pb, 1960. Popular Library pb #G236, 1958. Timothy Dane.
The Root of His Evil. Rinehart, 1957; Boardman, 1958. Also published as: *Deadly Beloved,* Dell pb #991, 1958. Timothy Dane.
As Bad As I Am. Rinehart, 1959; Boardman, 1960. Also published as: *Wanted: Danny Fontaine,* Dell pb #D364, 1960. Mike/Danny Fontaine.

II. Paperback Novels as William Ard

A Girl for Danny. Popular Library pb #502, 1953. Danny Shannon.
No Angels for Me. Popular Library pb #591, 1954. Luke MacLane.
When She Was Bad. Dell pb #B145, 1960. Mike/Danny Fontaine.
All I Can Get. Monarch pb #124, 1959. Lou Largo.
Like Ice She Was. Monarch pb #147, 1960. Lou Largo.
The Sins of Billy Serene. Monarch pb #152, 1960. Gino Serini/Billy Serene.
Babe in the Woods. Monarch pb #172, 1960. Lou Largo.
Make Mine Mavis. Monarch pb #215, 1960. Lou Largo.
And So to Bed. Monarch pb #231, 1961. Lou Largo.
Give Me This Woman. Monarch pb #269, 1962. Lou Largo.
NOTE: *Babe in the Woods* was ghosted by Lawrence Block. The final three entries were ghosted by John Jakes.

III. Novels as Ken Kerr

Shakedown. Henry Holt, 1952. Popular Library pb #467, 1952. Johnny Stevens.
Down I Go. Popular Library pb #653, 1955. Lou Bantle.
I Fear You Not. Popular Library pb #763, 1956; Digit pb, 1960. Paul Crystal.
Damned If He Does. Popular Library pb #785, 1956. Frank Driver.
Club 17. Popular Library pb #803, 1957. Mike Riordan.
The Blonde and Johnny Malloy. Popular Library pb #EB104, 1958. Johnny Malloy.

IV. Novels as Mike Moran

Double Cross. Popular Library pb #494, 1953. Doran.

V. Novels as Thomas Wills

You'll Get Yours. Lion pb #87, 1952; #LB129, 1956. Barney Glines.
Mine to Avenge. Gold Medal pb #490, 1955. Joe Derek.

VI. Novels as Jonas Ward

The Name's Buchanan. Gold Medal pb #604, 1956; Fawcett (London), 1958. Buchanan.
Buchanan Says No. Gold Medal pb #662, 1957; Fawcett (London), 1958.
One-Man Massacre. Gold Medal pb #742, 1958; Fawcett (London), 1959. Buchanan.
Buchanan Gets Mad. Gold Medal pb #803, 1958; Fawcett (London), 1960. Buchanan.
Buchanan's Revenge. Gold Medal pb #951, 1960; Muller (London), 1960. Buchanan.
Buchanan on the Prod. Gold Medal pb #1026, 1960; Muller (London), 1961. (Mostly by Ard but completed by science-fiction writer Robert Silverberg after Ard's death.)

The Radio Murder Hour

By Chris Steinbrunner

One of the few major mystery writers who mastered the art of writing for radio was John Dickson Carr (Ellery Queen was another). Carr was as facile in creating baffling drama for the ear as he was famed for ingenious novels—and one of his scripts, "Cabin B-13," became one of the legendary programs of radio's golden age.

"Cabin B-13" was one of the scripts which Carr had written for the program *Suspense* during its very first year on the air—a "class" thriller series meant by CBS to be absolutely top-of-the-line. Indeed, the show had made its debut with an adaptation of Carr's novel *The Burning Court*. Now Carr was writing original scripts for the program, having already honed his radio skills by writing mystery plays (such as an early version of "The Devil in the Summer House") and wartime propaganda material—with titles like "Britain Shall Not Burn"—for the BBC. But America's entry into the war brought U.S.-born Carr back from England to enlist, and, while awaiting military orders, he used his time to contribute quite a few original scripts for the new *Suspense* program. Among them was "Cabin B-13," first heard in March of 1943.

Like most of his radio work during the early '40s, Carr in this script bypassed themes of war by taking his listeners back to "happier, peacetime days"—back to the twilight of the '30s. The narrator (*Suspense's* ominous-sounding Man in Black) sketches in a few deft words the setting of the entire program, the 25,000-ton ocean liner *Maurevania:* "Smoke from her three funnels coils up lazily in mild October air..." Hurrying up the gangplank is new bride Anne Brewster and her husband Richard. We realize from the first that Anne is frail and nervous—she tells us she has just gotten over a bout of "brain fever"—and that the idea of a shipboard honeymoon leaves her feeling somewhat insecure. "I get fancies. Queer, sick fancies. All I can think of is the night, and the wind, and all the black water in the dark." She also reminds herself of the old Paris Exposition story, in which a girl visiting the city with her mother during the Exposition discovers that the old woman has disappeared from their hotel room, everyone claims the girl arrived alone, and even the hotel room has changed in appearance. (The story was a rather famous one of the day, for Alexander Woollcott had spun it on his radio essay show as a tale people insisted happened to someone they knew. The payoff was that the mother had died of bubonic plague and city officials wanted the death hushed up at all costs.) Anne does not want her new husband to leave her side, and with good reason, for he no sooner deposits her at their stateroom—cabin B-13—than he vanishes!

No one claims to have ever seen Anne's husband. Anne is told there is no cabin 13 on any deck. The second officer remembers Anne boarding the ship *alone.* The crew and officers all think the girl insane—with the exception of the ship's doctor, Paul Hardwick, who feels "there is not a psychopathic trait in her nature" and there must be truth in her story. (In the premiere dramatization, Dr. Hardwick is given a more European name and accent—and a line about leaving his homeland—to accommodate Dutch actor Philip Dorn, who had come to America in 1940 and generally played sincere refugees. Margo portrayed Anne.) A hysterical Anne feels that the whole ship is involved in a conspiracy to make her husband disappear, but that is not the case. Ultimately, the somewhat sinister ship's doctor unravels the mystery.

"Cabin B-13" was tremendously popular and was repeated several times on *Suspense* across the years, nearly rivaling "Sorry, Wrong Number" as an annual event. Ten years after the first broadcast, it was made into a motion picture by Twentieth Century-Fox called *Dangerous Crossing,* with Jeanne Crain as Anne and Michael Rennie as the saturnine doctor. That same year, the studio had released its epic melodrama *Titanic* and had quite a few huge shipboard sets still standing for handy use in the second film. Helped by a glossy look—Anne prowls deck after deck of the luxury liner seeking out her vanished husband—the film remains watchable, even though a half-hour radio script was stretched to nearly three times its length in screen time. Five years later, in 1958, "Cabin B-13" was dramatized on CBS's high-quality television mystery anthology series, the hour-long *Climax!* The show originated from Television City in Hollywood and was a far more lavish production than the generally cramped-looking medium had to offer during that period. Kim Hunter played the girl. (There was also an earlier version on the TV *Suspense* series.)

The legacy of "Cabin B-13" for radio enthusiasts goes beyond a mere movie or TV adaptation, however: it allowed John Dickson Carr to spin off his popular plot into a regular weekly radio series! In the summer of 1948, CBS replaced its long-running adventure anthology, *Escape.* (*"Tired of the everyday world? Ever dream of a life of high adventure?..." Escape* was very much a twin to its sister *Suspense,* and many scripts heard on one program were soon after reprised on the other.) Suddenly, *Escape* ended its run, and the following week a *series* called *Cabin B-13,* totally written by Carr (some of the scripts recycled from old *Suspense* shows of years before), began.

The setting of this show *was* the inside of cabin B-13...even though the stateroom was declared nonexistent in the original drama! It is the shipboard home of Dr. Hardwick, mysterious as ever but now named Dr. Fabian, and from which each week he spins another exotic tale of sinister happenings in strange ports of call. The rich and demonic voice of actor Arnold Moss, who played the doctor, ushered in such stories as "The Man Who Couldn't Be Photographed," "The Blindfolded Knife-Thrower," "The Street of the Seven Daggers," "The Dancer from Stamboul," "The Island of Coffins"...

John Dickson Carr was a master of radio mystery. A sampling of his ingenious scripts (and a good bibliography of his radio work) can be found in Douglas G. Green's excellent Carr collection *The Door to Doom.* Alas, however, the *Cabin B-13* series experiment was short-lived, lasting only until nearly the end of that year. Brief or not, though, the program ranks with *Suspense* and *Escape* as among the very best mystery shows on radio ...all the more astonishing because it is totally the work of one man. □

DOROTHY SAYERS Newsletter

The Dorothy L. Sayers Historical and Literary Society have graciously agreed to share their newsletter with us, and the column which follows is made up from selections from Bulletins #34 to #38.

The Society is located at Roslyn House, Witham, Essex, England CM8 2AQ. Membership fees are £3.00 in the U.K., $7.00 (U.S.) or $8.00 (Canada). We're certain the Society would like to hear from you.

DLS: The Life of a Courageous Woman by James Brabazon. Gollancz, 1981. £9.95 net or through the Society. Review by Dr. G. A. Lee:

This long-awaited work is the first authorized biography of DLS based on her private papers made available by her son, Mr. John Anthony Fleming, who contributes a preface. There is also a foreword by Mrs. P. D. James, whose address we enjoyed hearing at the 1979 Seminar of the Society.

James Brabazon has made excellent use of the papers and has largely refrained from going over old ground. For her childhood, he has relied upon the fragment *My Edwardian Childhood* and still more upon the unfinished autobiographical novel *Cat o'Mary* (c.1934). (Both are long overdue for publication, and one hopes this will soon be rectified.) He makes it clear that as a young woman DLS was not unattractive; her admiration for Dr. H. P. Allen was to some degree reciprocated, and in 1917 she received an unexpected proposal from the Vice Principal of St. Edmunds Hall, Oxford, which she declined. Her relationships with Eric Whelpton and John Cournos (both platonic despite much urging from the latter), and with the motor mechanic "Bill," Mr. Fleming's father, are greatly clarified. Mr. Brabazon has been permitted to quote from Dorothy's letters to Cournos, under seal at Harvard. Her cousin Ivy Shrimpton is shown as her close childhood friend and mentor, despite their difference in ages (*pace* Mr. Brabazon, it was not five years but eight as is shown by their birth certificates). The witch-like figure conjured up by Janet Hitchman has been exorcised. DLS's husband also is presented in a much better and more sympathetic light than in some earlier books. He did have a real job as a journalist on the *News of the World* up to 1928, when the aftereffects of the war dragged him down and he lost his job and took to the bottle. Dorothy looked after him with genuine love and fidelity, for which Mr. Brabazon gives her full credit. She was, it is now clear, devoted to her son and agonized by her inability to acknowledge him. Several letters to him are quoted, revealing tenderness and solicitude for his intellectual development.

James Brabazon says less about DLS's works than some earlier biographers. He regards the detective stories as probably her most lasting monument and perceives the weakness of her religion in that it is virtually all head and no heart (an admission made in her letter to John Wren-Lewis in 1954). Her friendship with Dr. Barbara Reynolds is given prominence in connection with her work on translating Dante; and it is revealed that she became Barbara's godmother at the latter's christening in 1957, four days before her death. It is also revealed that in 1943 she was offered a Lambeth Doctorship of Divinity by Archbishop Temple (an almost unprecedented honor for a woman) but declined it, perhaps for fear that the existence of her son might be discovered and bring discredit on the Church.

To sum up: Mr. Brabazon has produced far and away the best biography of DLS to date, though earlier ones are by no means in all respects superseded. All who read it will gain in a deeper understanding of a truly great-hearted woman, admirable in so many fields and unrivaled in the field of detective fiction.

Was Harriet a Murderess?

We owe it to member Melissa Dauerty for an ingenious example of the higher criticism that casts a new light on the depth of Harriet Vane's character. Why did she sign her note to Philip Boyes (*Strong Poison,* ch. I) with the letter "M"? It is a tenet of the higher criticism that the canon cannot be in error. Alfred Hitchcock would of course have understood at once what the foolish Philip did not: "M" unquestionably stands for Murder. Harriet was giving him, soft-hearted woman as she was, a last chance to mend his ways, to make him realize the danger which threatened him. Philip was capable of doing anything to give pain, and he had cockily offended both Harriet and Urquhart. Harriet, who knew an awful lot about poisons, had come up with the idea of gradually administering arsenic. How closely was she in collaboration with Urquhart? Perhaps she had had second thoughts, perhaps she no more than suspected what was happening, what indeed she wanted so much to happen. But it was enough to oppress her conscience so heavily with guilt that she could not bring herself to accept Lord Peter's proposal, any more than DLS could bring herself to accept that doctorate of divinity from Archbishop Temple. It was natural that she should not have come forward with her story at Urquhart's trial, any more than he came forward at hers. It would not have helped them. Under the rigorous law of the time, they would both have hanged. How fortunate for Lord Peter that Harriet's guilt was never laid bare, even to the reader! If his only true love affair had ended so tragically, he probably would have ended up an incurable manic-depressive.

DLS and Witham

There has been a variety of opinions on how big a part DLS played in the life of the town where she lived from 1928 until her death in 1957. Having bought a house in the middle of the town from the Gardners, a family very active in local affairs, perhaps more was expected of her than she could give in the time available from her intensive work. The following cutting from the *Essex Chronicle* of 16 August 1940, which we came across the other day, sheds some light:

"Well-known Novelist's Appeal. Miss Dorothy L. Sayers, the well-known novelist, attended the Whitehall Cinema last night and made an eloquent appeal for the support of the Witham Carnival Flag Day on Saturday in aid of the local Nursing Association and Hospitals. This flag day replaces the annual carnival. Miss Sayers (in private life the wife of Major Fleming of Witham) has lived in the town for several years but this was her first public appearance locally."

The Witham Carnival is again an annual event. White Hall, closed as a cinema in the '60s, is reopening as a fine public library this autumn and will house a "Dorothy L. Sayers Collection" presented by the Society.

The Nine Tailors Convention at Bluntisham

From the letters we have received (for which we thank the writers), this has been our most enjoyable as well as our most ambitious convention. The people of Bluntisham rose

magnificently to the occasion, and Christchurch and Upwell too made us most welcome. The weather was kind to us with one rainy night followed by two sunny days which showed the Fens at their best.

On Friday night, a goodly company of twenty came to Bluntisham House for an informal evening and a quiz set by Mrs. Eileen Bushell which was won by Mrs. Carol Freeman, with Professor Basney second and Miss Servatius third; the British were unplaced! We met again next morning in glorious sunshine to be shown the house and grounds by Prof. and Mrs. Derek Clare, meeting each other and local people. At noon, Derek Claire mounted the rostrum outside the front door and opened the proceedings. Then the Chairman thanked him for receiving and fixing the plaque and all those who had contributed to the Memorial Fund. Dr. Barbara Reynolds gave an amusing account of DLS as a friend and her associations with Bluntisham House, and unveiled the plaque, which read:

BLUNTISHAM HOUSE / THE CHILDHOOD HOME OF DOROTHY L. SAYERS 1893–1957 / WRITER AND SCHOLAR

The Bishop of Ely, the Rt. Rev. Peter Walker, dedicated it with a fitting prayer, Dr. Reynolds delivered a stirring panegyric, and we proceeded to a most satisfying luncheon in the rose garden at tables of four.

At 2:00 P.M., the seminar began in a crowded music room, with Philip Scowcroft giving an excellent commentary on *The Nine Tailors* as a novel and as a detective puzzle, followed by Lionel Basney, who dealt with the more philosophical angles. After tea, we had a lecture on change ringing from expert Brian Threlfall, illustrated by a model and hand bells rung by him and his talented family. At 6:30, we were welcomed at the church by the rector, Tony Williams, who told us its history and introduced to us Messrs. Thoday and Hinkins and sexton Johnson, who rang the carillon for us. An excellent supper was provided in the hall in the churchyard by Mrs. Morris and the Women's Institute, followed by an organ recital by John Morley and the play which surpassed all expectations. We hope to have it repeated in Witham at next year's convention.

The fact that the play was performed in church enhanced rather than hampered the action. DLS, magnificently robed, declaimed from the pulpit, using mostly her actual words taken from letters and articles. The chancel steps made a fine setting for *Gaudy Night* enacted expertly in twelve minutes, and the chancel a convincing advertising office and BBC studio, disrupted from time to time by a chorus of gossiping villagers or angry Methodists. Jesus Christ, walking hand in hand with Judas to the altar, was an affecting climax, and we felt that DLS herself had returned to Bluntisham. Photographs are available (see below).

On Sunday at 9:30 A.M. began a special service with DLS's favorite hymns, beautifully sung by the choir, with the Athanasian Creed and a splendid address by the Bishop. The church was packed. Outside was waiting the BBC television team which was to accompany us on our tour of the Fens, on which we were ably conducted by Mr. Dutton of the Anglian Water Board. We were welcomed at Christchurch by the rector, Herbert Mountfield, who showed us the grave of DLS's parents. Mr. Jackson gave us coffee at the Old Rectory, and Dr. Lee filled in the background.

As we arrived at Upwell, the bells were already pealing out their welcome, and the rector, R. C. Wallis, was waiting to show us the angel roof and the gallery. He had arranged for us to eat our packed lunches in the beautiful garden adjoining the churchyard by generous permission of the owner, Mr. St. John-Soty. The Five Bells had been warned.

Tower Captain Paul Meyer conducted a splendid demonstration peal and answered our numerous questions about the technique of ringing. We were dragged reluctantly from church, pub, and garden to embus at 2:15 for Denver Sluice, where Mr. Dutton explained the drainage system, and we enjoyed the refreshment we had brought with us. As the bus carried us back by way of Ely, we were soothed by further information on the history and ecology of the Fens.

Aftermath

The Rev. Tony Williams, to whom we are indebted for so much of the convention, kindly tells us that he would be pleased to conduct any members (in old clothes) up the tower to inspect the Bluntisham bells. Copies of the service sheet and of the play program are available from the archives at 10p each while stocks last. The seminar proceedings will be published in November, and copies may be ordered now. They will contain the two lectures, Dr. Reynolds's address and panegyric, and the Bishop's sermon. Our tour guide to the Fens has been rewritten with quotations from *The Nine Tailors* and may be obtained in our new edition of tour guides (price £1.00), which also includes a tour of Galloway with quotations from *The Five Red Herrings*.

Photographs of the players in action (b&w size 5″ × 7″) are available from B. J. Matthew, 38 Gilmerton Court, Cambridge CB2 2HQ at 50p each plus postage and packing (15p U.K., 50p surface overseas, £1.00 airmail). There are 26 excellent prints to choose from, so say which scenes or characters you are interested in.

Her Soul Goes Marching On!

DLS, who spoke strongly in support of the Conservative candidate for Parliament, Aubrey Moody, at a stormy meeting in Witham in 1950, might well be expected to have thrown her weight behind the campaign of Congressman Crane as Republican candidate for the U.S. Presidency in 1980... Anyway, it was worth a try!

Mr. Crane sent a letter to the *National Review,* which had just previously published her essay "The Lost Tools of Learning," addressed to Mrs. Dorothy L. Sayers, 150 E.

85th St., New York. Editor William F. Buckley wrote back as follows:

"Dear Congressman Crane, Miss Sayers, who is in heaven, unhappily cannot contribute in the coin of the realm to your campaign deficit, but promises to cooperate in other ways. Yours truly, WFB Exec."

DLS and HRH the Princess of Wales

Research carried out by Dr. Geoffrey Lee reveals DLS to be Diana Spencer's twelfth cousin five times removed through her mother's family, the Leighs of the Isle of Wight.

Jacobi de Ley was living at Landford, Wiltshire, around 1280–85 and married a lady called Petronilla. Their great-great grandson, Nicholas Ley of Flamston and More, died in 1460, leaving two sons, John, Member of Parliament for Wiltshire, and Henry, who died in 1490. John died prematurely in 1451, leaving a son, Sir John Leigh of Appuldurcombe Park, whose tomb may be seen in Godshill Priory and whose daughter Anne married Sir James Worsley, Captain of the Isle of Wight, youthful companion to Henry VIII, Master of the Robes and organizer of The Field of the Cloth of Gold. The Spencers are descended from Sir James Worsley through the Carteret family.

The descendents of Henry Ley continued modestly to reside in the Isle of Wight for nine generations. Frederick Leigh became a solicitor in Southampton, married in 1845 and had twelve children, among them being Helen Mary, born in 1856, DLS's mother. The arms of the Leigh family are: argent on a chief embattled sable three plates (which means, a silver background with a black band across the top whose edge is notched like a castle, and on the band three silver circles side by side).

Wilfred Scott-Giles says: "The original arms of Wimsey are said to be sable, three plates. Tradition asserts that the Baron Fulk de Wimsey (or Guimsey) encouraged King Richard I to persevere in the siege of Acre, quoting to him the patience of a cat at a mousehole; and that after the fall of the city the plates were changed to mice in recognition of the Baron's good advice. . . . The plates and the mice occur interchangeably on tombstones and elsewhere during the thirteenth century" (letter from DLS, quoted in *The Wimsey Family,* Gollancz 1977).

Further facts have been unearthed by Dr. Lee which can hardly be coincidental. Sir Richard Worsley Bt. (1751–1805), who was married to Seymour Dorothy Fleming of Middlesex, sued another gentleman in 1782 for "criminal conversation" (or, as we should now say, intercourse). He won his case but received only one shilling's damages, as he was held to have condoned his lady's conduct. In court, Dorothy was taxed with having slept with thirty-four other men. This she indignantly denied, admitting only to twenty-seven!

A sensational pamphlet was issued on the case in which Sir Richard was referred to as "Sir Finical Whimsey."

Dorothy L. Sayers by Dawson Gaillard. New York: Ungar. 136 pp. $10.95 cloth, $5.95 paperback.

A useful study of the mystery works of DLS and her development as a writer which will be of great interest to all who have read her novels. Dr. Gaillard divides them into four periods. In the '20s, under the influence of Poe and Conan Doyle, she was perfecting the mechanism. The turning point came in 1930 with *The Documents* and *Strong Poison,* when she developed a style which was able to carry a stronger injection of characterization after the manner of Collins, Bentley, and Chesterton. Having failed in her efforts to rid herself of Wimsey, she had no option but to re-create him as a flesh-and-blood character in readiness for the great novels of the '30s, in which the plots depended on aspects of contemporary life, drug trafficking, slick promotions, synthetic romance, and otherworldliness. *The Five Red Herrings* was a deliberate step backwards to the puzzle story. As she wrote to Victor Gollancz:

"I wanted to try my hand at just one of that kind . . . if people really want to play 'spot the murderer' I don't mind obliging them for once!"

The final group, *Gaudy Night* and *Busman's Honeymoon,* explored the higher themes of the intellect, integrity, and the development of the male/female relationship, whose complexities made for difficult handling. A good bibliography, notes, and an index are provided. There is a biography which deals in some detail with the Detection Club and the writing of the composite novels, and a useful commentary on the Monty Egg series of short stories. Would that Mr. Egg had been awarded a novel so that we could have studied in greater depth a character less romantic but possibly more lovable than Lord Peter Wimsey (modeled perhaps on the mysterious Bill?). Dr. Gaillard ends with a commentary on values and aesthetics drawn from DLS's other writings as well, particularly on the value of work; and she explores how they affected the mystery writings. This is an essential book for those proposing to work in this field.

The Higher Criticism Again

Our member Lisa Lawton thinks that the "M" with which Harriet signed the note to Philip Boyes in *Strong Poison* could not have stood for Murder because policemen as portrayed by DLS were not entirely thick-headed and must have considered and rejected the possibility. There was a more likely answer. Much of the book dwells on Harriet's burning fury that Philip considered their living together was not so much a defiance of convention as a period of probation for her as wife. When he proposed marriage, she felt that her ethical code had been spurned. If he now thought her suitable for the rank of wife, from what was she being "promoted"? Mistress, as she ironically took to signing herself.

Kathleen Slack, author of our new pamphlet *The Character of Lord Peter Wimsey,* sets the next puzzle:

Why did the Wimseys employ to repair the church roof at Denver a nervous little Battersea architect who hadn't even the sense to know that he had the right to be legally represented, and upon whom Lord Peter pours scorn at every opportunity? Good solutions will include references (not necessarily in *Whose Body*) that support the theory adopted.

James Agate Rebukes DLS (*Thursdays and Fridays,* Hutchinson)

We have Gilbert Sutcliffe to thank for this amusing extract from the reviews of this urbane and devastating critic concerning a performance of *The Devil To Pay* at His Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket in July 1939:

"Miss Dorothy Sayers' exploits in dramaturgy remind me of the Lady Jane's virtuosity on the violincello: those massive chords! that tremendous plucking! And the theme that our drama virtuoso now tackles is nothing less than the Faust legend which, let me say in a mouse's whisper, has always been to me one of the world's major bores."

He then quotes some of her verse and suggests that most of it is cribbed from Shakespeare; and continues:

"No, I'm afraid that I cannot pretend to approve or be impressed by a re-hashing at third-hand in second-rate poetry of what I have never regarded as a first-rate theme. . . . And now, readers of John o' London's Weekly, sit portentiously at your writing desks, draw forth sheets of stout crackling paper, and with ponderous stylographs indite letters to me saying that *The Devil To Pay* by Dorothy L. Sayers is a first-class masterpiece

composed by a dramatic poetess of maximum genius: that you attended the extremely well-acted performance (I thought myself it was all done rather middlingly) and that you were simultaneously struck to the soul by the play's message and rib-tickled by its humour. Write me that I am a bungler and an ass whose incompetence is matched only by his malevolence. The same post which bears this article to my editor carries also a letter to my stationer. I am ordering five thousand post-cards to be printed, each containing no more than the words 'YOU WIN'."

(The Lady Jane referred to is the anti-heroine of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience. The Devil To Pay* is by no means DLS's most effective play, and we would like to hear from anybody who has seen it. Nevertheless, it is evident that even the eminent had to move cautiously in criticizing DLS. We would like to see her reply!)

The Dramatic Poetess Relaxes (with acknowledgements to Miss N. McNaulty and Dr. Barbara Reynolds):

There was an old man, Aristophanes
Who said, "What an eyesore a coffin is!"
So he cut up his nieces
In very small pieces,
The size that the cat's meat so often is. (DLS)

Fire at Bluntisham House

"Rectory Blaze. The old rectory at Bluntisham, £100,000 home of jazz band leader Chris Barber, was badly damaged by fire. The fire started in a downstairs lounge early last Wednesday evening while Mr. Barber was away on tour. His wife and daughter fled the building, former home of writer Dorothy L. Sayers. Firemen were hampered by the design of the old building, according to Assistant Fire Officer Gerry Dacey, but fire was stopped from spreading upstairs. The cause is being investigated" (*Hunts County News,* 30 Dec. 1981).

The accompanying picture shows a pile of charred wreckage outside the window of the study where the fire took place, the first room on the right inside the front door. Professor and Mrs. Derek Clare had sold the house and been away only about a fortnight.

Our New Year Quiz, set by Philip Scowcroft. (Books allowed!) Try to be the first with a correct solution from U.K., Europe, or overseas.

(a) Which of Beethoven's works was scheduled for performance by the Wilvercombe Orchestra on the morning of Paul Alexis's murder?

(b) Name the coroners in *The Nine Tailors* and *Busman's Honeymoon.*

(c) Where was the Duke of Denver imprisoned awaiting trial?

(d) What were Lord Peter's scores in the Pyms v. Brotherhood's match?

(e) Name a Sayers novel *and* a short story introducing footballers.

(f) In which novel or novels does Charles Parker not appear?

(g) Who is common to *The Documents in the Case* and the Wimsey novels?

(h) What detail in Freke's *Who's Who* entry confirmed LPW's suspicion?

(i) Name three of LPW's recreations according to *Who's Who.*

(j) In which regiment did Robert Duckworthy serve?

(k) Name five *real* Oxford colleges visited by Harriet Vane.

(l) In which novels does the reporter Hector Puncheon appear?

(m) Who was the pilot that flew Lord Peter Wimsey across the Atlantic?

(n) Which Wimsey novel or novels describe(s) an official exhumation?

(o) Where were Mr. Murble's chambers?

(p) Which work of poetry helped LPW to the solution in *Strong Poison?*

(q) Give the titles of four of Harriet's novels.

(r) What was Padgett's job before he became a porter?

(s) Which of the Five Red Herrings lived in Gatehouse-of-Fleet?

(t) What was the name of the Dowager Duchess's cat?

(u) Which public schools were attended by (1) Ingleby (2) Strachan?

(v) Where did the Duchess wish Peter and Harriet's wedding to be?

(w) In what three *real* places were bodies found in Sayers's novels?

(x) Which famous British artist painted Lord Peter?

(y) What was Mary's pet name for Peter, and his for her?

(z) What subjects did (1) Miss Cattermole (2) Miss Layton and (3) Miss Haydock study?

In Memoriam

As every year, we put a notice in *The Times* of 17 December, the date of DLS's death in 1957, reading:

"Poco favilla gran fiamma seconda" (*Paradiso,* Canto I line 34), which she translated:

From one small spark springs up a mighty flare.

The Thipps Problem

Thanks and congratulations to the respondents to the problem set by Kathleen Slack, who included Dr. John Morris, Thelma Platt, Marian Gower, and Stephen Clarke. All contributed to the solution of why the Wimseys employed a nervous little Battersea architect.

Thipps is introduced (WB I) as "a nice little man," respectable but distracted and nervous, with a weak heart and a strong mother, both living a retired life. Yet he had been "putting off clients" and spoke sharply to the maid Gladys and even to the Inspector. "He roused me, regular roused me, my lord." He could not have been very retired either, because he was in Manchester the day that Sir Reuben Levy was murdered. He concealed a quality like that of his mother, "the perfect Napoleon," under the deferential manner which the owners of angel roofs in the '20s expected of those who dropped their H's. Lord Peter automatically took up the reciprocal manner of condescension. Thipps had the steel to rise in the world like Monty Egg, who could be deferential too when it suited him.

He specialized in "angel roofs and things" (WB IV); he was good at his art and perhaps out of touch with reality, a Walter Mitty character. It is not unknown for a specialist, when wrenched out of his accustomed role, to panic and give a false impression of stupidity. The perceptive duchess liked him: "I always thought him a nice little man."..."I'm beginning quite to admire him." The complaint against his views of vivisection was made by Mrs. Appledore and Sir Julian Freke, neither of whom were sympathetic characters. The Wimseys were satisfied with their choice of architect, but why did they employ him in the first place? We shall never know whether he was recommended by a friend or by the RIBA. He may have been the only angel roof specialist in the country. How many are there today? Church architecture is a limited, highly specialized field. Employing him to design a bathroom (BH Epi I) was a bit of typical Lord Peter nonsense; he just wanted an excuse to resurrect a genuine friendship. "He and I got really friendly thirteen years ago," says Lord Peter, who did not make friends lightly.

Yes, there were hidden depths to Alfred Thipps.

The next problem is set by Dr. John Morris: Why did Edward Thorpe not succeed to the title on the death of his elder brother? (TNT) Please quote chapters and not page numbers in your references. □

CHECKLIST

MYSTERY, DETECTIVE AND SUSPENSE FICTION PUBLISHED IN THE U.S. OCTOBER–DECEMBER 1981

Ashford, Jeffrey: **The Loss of the Cullion.** Walker, 9.95

Asimov, Isaac, ed.: **Miniature Mysteries.** Taplinger, 14.95

Barnett, James: **The Firing Squad.** Morrow, 10.95

Bellairs, George: **All Roads to Sospel.** Walker, 9.95

Brett, Simon: **Situation Tragedy.** Scribners, 9.95

Brierley, David: **Big Bear, Little Bear.** Scribners, 10.95

Byrant, Dorothy: **Killing Wonder.** Ata Books, 10.00; 6.00 paper

Campbell, R. Wright: **Malloy's Subway.** Atheneum, 12.95

Canning, Victor: **Memory Boy.** Morrow, 10.95

Caudwell, Sarah: **Thus Was Adonis Murdered.** Scribners, 10.95

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By M. S. Cappadonna

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Paperbacks

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Treat, Lawrence: **Crime and Puzzlement: 24 Solve-them-yourself Picture Mysteries.** David R. Godine, 4.95

The Twelve Crimes of Christmas. Avon, 2.50 □

THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

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Compiled by Steven A. Stilwell

(Volumes 1-10)

1967 - 1977

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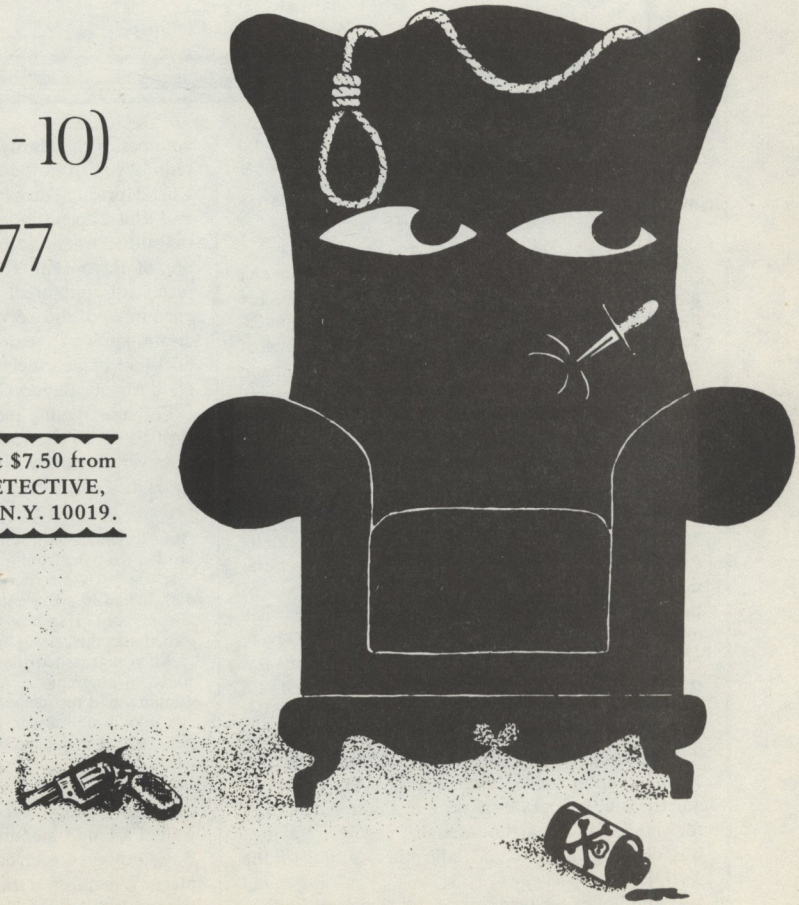


ME AND THE HARDY BOYS

By Louis Phillips

There, rocking gently in the waves, was a long, graceful craft, white with gilt trimmings, a motorboat... There was a flag at the bow and at stern: the fittings glistened; the seats were upholstered in leather, and across the bow was the name of the boat in raised letters: SLEUTH.

The *Sleuth* is a magic craft, for, if you haven't guessed by now, it belongs to the Hardy Boys, to Joe and Frank Hardy, teenaged detectives whose multi-volumed adventures spiced the lives of millions of readers. Created by Franklin W. Dixon, Joe and Frank Hardy, fifteen and sixteen years old respectively, (in later volumes Frank is eighteen and Joe seventeen, perhaps on the assumption that it was not a good idea to permit a sixteen-year-old to have his own hotrod) were, and still are I suppose, the sons of Fenton Hardy, the internationally famous detective, and of Laura Hardy, the not-so-internationally famous housewife. In spite of their father's reputation, the Hardy Boys are the two leading citizens of Bayport, a city of 50,000 inhabitants, a city that is a miracle of civic planning, for, in an age of severe population explosions, Bayport's population has remained unchanged for generations. It has been said that Bayport is located on Barmet Bay, three miles from the Atlantic Ocean, but do not bother to locate it on the map. It does not matter if Bayport is on any chart or upon any globe; as Emily Dickinson so quietly said, true places never are. Let it suffice that, for thousands upon thousands of readers, Bayport was once the literary and adventure capital of the world.

If you have ever read any of the seemingly endless volumes of the Hardy Boys, then there is no need to remind you of how Joe and Frank, with their chums Chet Morton, Tony Prite, Allen Hooper (or "Biff"), and Phil Cohen (notice how the author made certain that different ethnic groups were represented) roared out of Bayport in search of adventure. They were rarely disappointed, for Joe and Frank Hardy encountered and solved some of the most baffling crimes known to man—crimes that, more often than not, had baffled their illustrious father and the not-so-illustrious Bayport Police.

For most young men, mystery and death-defying thrills seem to be a long way off. For the Hardy Boys, however, intrigue was right around the corner. Sometimes they didn't even have to turn the corner:

"Frank, come here!" Joe Hardy called excitedly to his brother from the front porch of their home.

It was early afternoon of a hot August day, but tall, dark-haired Frank, eighteen years old, ran down the stairs at top speed. He knew from the tone of Joe's voice that something unusual was happening.

When he reached the porch, Frank stopped short and stared in amazement. An expressman, who stood there, grinning, had just delivered a burlap crate and a package. Joe, blond and a year younger than Frank, had already removed the burlap. In the crate was a fine, proud-looking hawk.

Not many people receive a hawk in the mail. I've waited a long time, and I never have. To the Hardy Boys, however, such occurrences were mere commonplace. When they didn't seek out mysteries, mysteries sought them.

Now blurbs on the back of the Hardy Boys books insist that Frank and Joe Hardy are to be admired because they are so much like the ordinary twelve-year-old reader. That must be the copywriter's mistake of the century. Actually, my friends and I read the Hardy Boys because, as the above passage suggests, they were not like ordinary twelve year olds at all. The Hardy Boys were what we all wanted to become. Joe and Frank Hardy were not only detectives of great ability, but, more importantly, they were high school students. High School is awesome territory to any sixth-grader. In addition, Joe and Frank had access to hotrods, motorcycles, and to their speedboat, *Sleuth*. I didn't even own a bicycle. And, as for the Hardy Boys being awarded a thousand dollars for solving a crime—well, a thousand dollars was beyond my ken entirely. The blurbs, therefore, were wrong. Children are always more interested in what they will become, not in what they are. By the time I reached Joe Hardy's age, Dixon's books had long been relegated to a closet shelf.

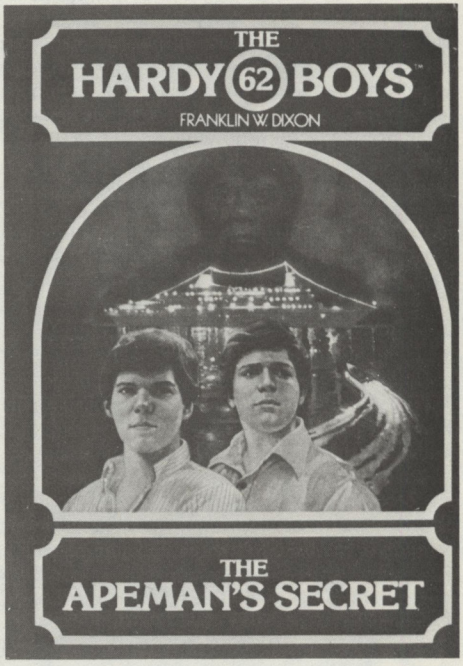
Whatever the reasons are for reading the Hardy Boys, however, the fact remains that it is virtually impossible to read only one book in the series. Like the potato chips in the famed Bert Lahr commercial, one volume whets the appetite; it does not satisfy it. Hints of other adventures, previous or forthcoming ones, are so skillfully planted in every volume that the ordinary reader is led from one book to another. Browsing through my tattered copy of *The Hardy Boys: Hunting for Hidden Gold*, for example, I come across an especially insiduous dialogue between Joe and Frank:

> "...[W]e haven't done too badly so far, anyway."
> "Yes, we had the fun of discovering the tower treasure."
> "And running down the counterfeiters."
> "Yes, and solving the mystery of the house on the cliff and finding out about Blacksnake Island."

If the reader hasn't already encountered the counterfeiters or the house on the cliff, then that poor boy or girl is compelled to purchase the necessary volumes. Since my friends and I were far from rich, we would buy different books in the series and lend them to each other. How sharper than a serpent's tooth it would have been to have had a non-lending friend.

Or, let us consider another side of the same coin. Suppose our hypothetical reader has previously encountered *The Tower Treasure* or *The House on the Cliff*. Imagine that reader's feelings of superiority over his non-reading friends. An immediate bond of intimacy is established between the reader and the Hardy Boys, between reader and writer. After all, literary allusions are a way of patting a reader on his back, a way of complimenting the reader for his magnificent accumulation of wisdom, his breadth of scholarship, his keen eye, and his discerning judgment. Once a young man has his first triumph over a literary allusion, there can be no turning back.

Nor was it only random conversations betwen Joe and Frank Hardy that influenced my friends to buy more books. The author himself, the phenomenal F. W. Dixon, often casually intruded to provide the faithful reader with encouragement and advice. Often at the conclusion of a typical adventure, a final paragraph would read:



The Hardy boys were not destined to solve a mystery every week, but it was not long before they were plunged into a maze of events which were fully exciting as those that followed their first visit to the house on the cliff. The story of their next adventures will be told in the next volume of this series, called "The Hardy Boys: The Secret of the Old Mill."

It has been rumored that the creator of the Hardy Boys was not one man, but many persons writing under one pseudonym. But, whoever he was or is, F. W. Dixon knew what he was doing every step of the way. He knew how to construct a book that can, if it must, stand by itself, but a book that also forms an indissoluble link in a chain. I easily swallowed the bait Dixon cast forth, and thus I soon became an

honorary citizen of Bayport, where I sided with Joe and Frank, not only against evil, but also against the most inept and caustic police department in the world.

If I had been slightly older and slightly wiser, I would have recognized that the Bayport Police were distant relatives of the Keystone Kops, police designed not to solve crimes but to show off blundering, mediocre bureaucracies. Ezra Colif, the chief of police, was "a fat pompous official who had never been blessed by a super-abundance of brains. His chief aide-de-camp was Oscar Smuff, a detective." As Chet Morton so characteristically remarked about Colig and Smuff, "If you put both their brains together you'd have enought for a half-wit." Colig was usually discovered reading comic books (a sure sign of mental degradation, since an underlying purpose of the Hardy Boys series was to wean a young man away from the land of Dell), and both Colig and Smuff were naturally hostile to the idea of being outwitted by a group of high school boys. Not even Con Riley, an ordinary cop pounding his beat and often falling victim to a Chet Morton prank, held much warmth for the Hardy Boys' shenanigans. Like Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer (although, of course, my friends and I could not have known it at the time), the Hardy Boys and the chums displayed a healthy disrespect for bureaucratic inefficiency. If there were a mystery to be solved, Frank and Joe went ahead and solved it, not always bothering to consult Bayport's comic-book police force. That well may be one of the reasons why Hardy Boys were not displayed on the shelves of our local library.

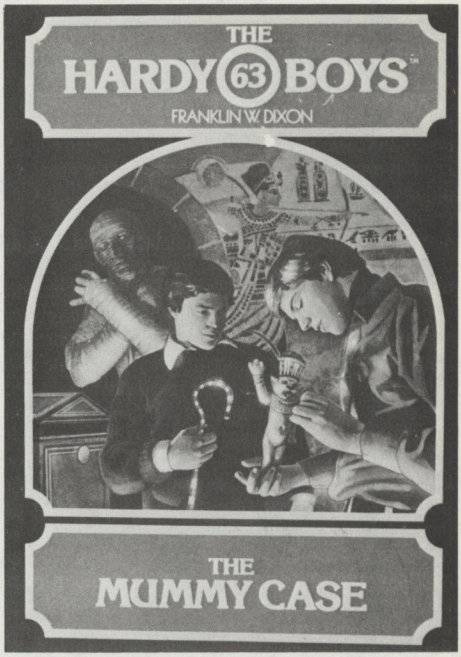
Of course, if Colig, Smuff, and Riley, that famed vaudeville team, are not shining pillars of intellect, at least they are a far cry from the dastardly villains who provided momentum for the mysteries. Even today, names such as Li Chang, Redhead Blount, John Jackley, Markel, and Weeping Sam do not inspire a multitude of trust. The physical appearances of such characters are no less ominous:

> In the reflected light the boys could see that the speaker was a lean, wolfish-looking man with small calculating eyes, a hatchetlike nose and a thin, cruel mouth.

A crook looked like a crook in those days, and not just like your local congressman. When Mrs. Hardy describes a rug-buyer as

> a queer little fellow, very short and dark. He was a foreigner, you could tell by his appearance. He didn't speak very good English. He was dark and swarthy, with little keen black eyes.

you know it means trouble. In the world of the Hardy Boys, the villain is most likely to be a foreigner. If he is not a foreigner, the villain has red hair. Or if he isn't a foreigner and doesn't have red hair, six times out of nine the villain's name will have a *K* in it. Ganny Snackley, for example. I can no longer remember the more sordid details surrounding Snackley's less-than-legal career, but the very sound of his name fills me with delight. F. W. Dixon was no slacker when it came to creating criminals with notorious names.



With all my emphasis upon criminals and inept police, a casual observer might receive the impression that the Hardy Boys have no normal home life. Such an impression, however, is far from accurate. The Hardy Boys attend high school, worry over exams, and, to the best of their abilities, attempt to remain out of earshot of Aunt Gertrude, "an elderly, crochety maiden lady of certain temper and uncertain years." Frank even has a girlfriend of sorts—not a real girlfriend, understand, but a let-me-walk-you-home-every-once-in-a-while girl named Callie Shaw. Always carrying cakes and jellies to sick widows, brown-haired and brown-eyed Callie is "Frank's favorite of all the girls in the city," and to this day Callie Shaw remains a paradigm of purity, chastity, and all-American girlhood.

Joe Hardy, like his brother, is not much interested in the gentler sex. The only girl to ever catch Joe's eye

is Iola Morton, Chet's sister, and no one in his right mind would dare label Joe's relationship a romance. The closest the poor girl gets to a compliment is the fact that she "had achieved the honor of being about the only girl Joe Hardy had ever conceded to be anything but an unmitigated nuisance." With opium dens and counterfeit coins lying about, no red-blooded American boy is to be distracted by mere women.

Tracking down counterfeiters may be exciting to high-school students, but mothers are not fond of having their sons risk their necks on foolish escapades. Laura Hardy, mother of two great detectives and wife of one, is certainly no exception. One detective in the family is more than enough, so Mrs. Hardy wants her sons to prepare for a career in medicine or for one son to become a doctor and the other to become a lawyer—worthy ambitions, but definitely not as exciting as following in the steps of their father.

In the Hardy household, Laura and Aunt Gertrude, Fenton's sister, sound the note of normalcy, but it is Fenton Hardy who provides a tone of romance. A busy man and a handsome one, Fenton moves across the adventures as an almost shadowy figure, an international figure who always has time for his sons. According to the redoubtable Dixon, Fenton "was not the type of father who maintains an air of aloofness from his family, the result being that he was on good terms with his boys as though he were an elder brother"—and who am I to argue the description with the books' own author?

The best trait of Fenton, however, is his uncanny ability to pop up in the most unexpected places at the most unexpected times. In *The Disappearing Floor*, for example, Joe, Frank, and Chet fall into a deserted cave. No one, seemingly, is around for miles, but who should appear to save the boys from tragedy? You guessed it.

> "Well upon my word! How in the world did you three find your way in here?"
>
> "Dad!" exclaimed Frank and Joe in one surprised breath, while Chet was beside himself with joy.
>
> "Golly, Mr. Hardy," he bubbled, "you found us just in time."

Just in time. True adventurers always get rescued just in time, or they would be wiped out a hundred times over. So Frank and Joe are often rescued by their father, *just in time*. In perilous and chaotic times, how reassuring it is to know that there are at least two boys in the world who are to be looked out for, whose father is only a stone's throw away.

Thus, between the influences of high school, Callie Shaw, Iola Morton, the crochety Aunt Gertrude who never complimented her nephews to their faces, Laura and Fenton Hardy, Joe and Frank were typical adolescents. Well, not quite typical. After all, how many families do you know that have secret identification marks, and how many high school boys get the opportunity to solve murders and robberies? Try as I would, pray as I might, I turned up no murders in my neighborhood. Joe and Frank had all the luck.

Looking back on my fifth- and sixth-grade reading material, I realize now that the Hardy Boys books are educational in more ways than one. I would rather a child read those books than the works most librarians and teachers would recommend. Nothing is more sad than a person who reads the classics too soon in life; nothing is more sad than a person who reads only what is "best," for classics are what one grows to and into, and the best paths to the classics are not reading lists, not short cuts, not paths clearly marked out, but paths that zig-zag in all directions at once. The Hardy Boys provided me with one such path.

Ah, but I am pontificating, and that will not do, will not do at all. Let me close with fond memories of Frank Hardy rushing to save his brother and another boy from drowning. As Frank rushes forward, F. W. Dixon's prose leaps with excitement:

> Could he reach the two in time? Would the current carry Joe and Lester close enough to the bank to enable him to rescue them? Would he be able to hold them until help arrived?

Anyone who doesn't know the answers to those questions has definitely wasted a misspent youth. □

LETTERS

From William F. Nolan:

Usually TAD's readers spend their praise on essays, articles, profiles, and interviews. And that's to be expected. But in your latest issue (14:4), the piece most deserving of praise is a checklist—the factually stunning "Bibliography of Secondary Sources for 1980" by Walter S. Albert. As a veteran indexer and checklister, I stand in awe of Mr. Albert's superbly organized, totally comprehensive job of in-depth scholarship. This is, for crime buffs, a detailed roadmap to all aspects of crime writing and writers—and I cannot praise Mr. Albert highly enough for his remarkable achievement. It surpasses all other annual listings by a wide margin.

Regarding the essay under my name in *Mike Shayne,* "Pulp Pioneer of the Private Eye," he notes it as "reference not verified." Let me clarify this by pointing out that it is a full-length examination of Carroll John Daly, expanded and updated from an earlier piece on Daly which I wrote for TAD. Since so little has been printed about Daly, I feel it's important to identify this as a Daly entry.

Some TAD readers have wondered what happened to my second book on Dashiell Hammett. I had a draft completed last year, but have been revising it extensively (under its new title, *Life at the Edge*). It will be completed in 1982, and I intend to tie it into the release of Francis Ford Coppola's *Hammett* film, which is now shooting once again in Hollywood, with a new screenplay by Ross Thomas. (He is the umpteenth writer to have worked on the project!)

My new Hammett book runs to about 90,000 words and deals with his entire life and career in much greater depth and detail than my Hammett *Casebook* back in 1969. That book was simply a "warm-up" for this current biography. I think there's room for several books on Dash Hammett. (More than 200 have been published on Ernest Hemingway—including one of mine—and they're still coming out!)

A final thought: in the last decade, scholarship in the genre of mystery/suspense had taken a mighty surge upward, and we are learning more and more about the history of our field and of those who write in it. TAD has contributed greatly to this upsurge, and each issue offers new delights. In printing the type of material supplied by Walter Albert, TAD does service to our genre in a very special way. Congratulations!

* * * * *

From K. M. Douglas:

In your open letter in TAD 14:3, you stated "what the mystery needs is a true fandom" to insure that contemporary mystery novels sell as well as science fiction. Assuming that sf conventions show the way to the creation of a "true fandom" still leaves the contemporary

mystery in trouble. As anyone who has ever stood in the entrance line with Gandalf, a Princess of Amber, and a Klingon on two can tell you, the fans who pack the "umpteen sf conventions each year" after buying Ace, DAW, and Del Rey books are less interested in discussing the fictional worlds of the future than in enjoying the chance to live out their own magical fantasies. And magic is the key word in sf fandom.

Much of what is now published as science fiction is really sword-and-sorcery fantasy despite the spaceships, rayguns, and technological marvels the landscape may contain. A few titles from the sf imprints you mention are indicative: *The Spell Sword, The Diadem from the Stars* (DAW); *Space Pirates, The Black Knights of the Iron Sphere* (Ace); *Exiles at the Well of Souls* (Del Rey SF). Magical or occult-like powers are displayed by at least one character, if not more, in these sorts of books; extraordinary powers that the reader longs to possess. And they can be, by wearing the proper costumes at a gathering where both costume and character can be acknowledged and admired.

Stop and consider the characters from mystery novels that generate a magical presence; that seem to possess powers beyond the ordinary. Sherlock Holmes, of course; Sam Spade, perhaps. How many deerstalker caps and trenchcoats have been purchased out of the secret desire to somehow acquire a little of their power? Now consider the presence of Lew Archer or Adam Dalgleish. There's nothing really to emulate. Perhaps that's part of the problem of contemporary mysteries. They're so intent upon delineating "real people in a real world," to use Chandler's phrase, that the real has become merely pedestrian, and the dark forces of disorder become mere violence. A copy of *True Detective* does the same thing.

* * * * *

From Marvin Kaye:

I was at The Mysterious Bookshop this morning, picking up a copy of my *Bullets for Macbeth* for my agent, who is getting one of those periodic nibbles from the media on the Hilary Quayle series that have, so far, been nothing to tell my relatives about. While browsing in the shop and marveling yet again at the superb stock you maintain there, I came upon the Spring 1981 issue of *The Armchair Detective* and was delighted and overwhelmed by the two excellent articles on Shakespearean mysteries and the cogent comments in each on *Bullets for Macbeth.* The fact that I only discovered the issue now attests to the fact that I was not in the real world during 1981 but was chained to my typewriter and deadlines and really going out of the house on extremely rare occasions. At any rate, my deepest apologies for not thanking TAD's staff for the fine words published on my personal favorite of my mysteries before this late date.

I would like to share some of the circumstances surrounding the creation of *Bullets for Macbeth,* in hopes they may be of interest on TAD's letters page as they pertain to the two excellent articles by Ms. Gottschalk and Ms. Bakerman.

The viability of the theory of the Third Murderer which was the *raison d'être* for this novel is proving to be quite hardy. As Ms. Gottschalk said, many Shakespearean scholars have supported the thesis, not the least of them Dr. O. B. Hardison, Jr., director of The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. Dr. Hardison has added *Bullets for Macbeth* to the Folger's archives...a fairly uncommon honor for a work of fiction.

Actually, it was my wife Saralee who first deduced the possible identity of the Third Murderer. She told it to me while I was a graduate student in theatre at Penn State and she was a junior. For the ensuing decade and more, I pursued studies in the problem, including research in Philadelphia, New York, at Princeton, and, of course, at the Folger. The more I examined the available sources and commentaries, the more convinced I became that this was the *only* possible theory that made any textual and theatrical sense. Every other suggestion advanced over the course of three and a half centuries struck me as profoundly fatuous. But it must be understood that the practice of studying Shakespeare's plays in relation to the physical playhouses in which they were first performed only began to gain academic currency in this country and abroad after World War II.

(Incidentally, the articles in TAD stated that the fictional production was modeled after Shakespeare's Globe theatre, and this is accurate to the extent that the text specifies it on p. 49 of the Dutton edition. On the same page, however, it is pointed out that *Macbeth* was probably first staged at the indoor Hampton Court...and it was actually this that the director-victim, Michael Godwin, was patterning his production upon. This is in keeping with the theatrically-oriented [as opposed to literary] scholarship stressed throughout the mystery—and this p. 49

passage is therefore a vital clue to academics reading the book.)

When the manuscript of B4M was turned it to Dutton, it included a sketch of the stage area of Felt Forum, along with an extensive bibliography, but the publisher saw fit not to include either. They also saw fit not to bother submitting the book to the MWA for possible consideration as an Edgar nominee. When I eventually found this out and took the editor to task on it, she claimed that a Shakespearean scholar who was a friend of hers stated that the theory developed in it was actually quite common, known to virtually every undergraduate.* My astonishment was boundless, inasmuch as I had not uncovered a single reference to the idea in a decade of study. Among those who read the book or discussed the theory with me were José Ferrer and Isaac Asimov, both of whom backed me up on the originality of the conception. Nevertheless, relations with Dutton deteriorated, and we finally severed connections. Thus, there has not been a new Hilary Quayle since 1978, a situation that will only change later this year, when Viking Press will take up the saga with the fifth HQ novel, *The Soap Opera Slaughters.*

I must commend both TAD authors for their thoroughness in covering their subject. Being, however, a peculiarly recondite old snob with a love for built-in private references, I may point out a few "dustings and shavings" that escaped their microscopic scrutiny of *Bullets:*

• The first five chapters are carefully patterned after the atmospheric effects of *Macbeth* with an insistence on night, winter, and dampness—qualities which H. P. Lovecraft frequently stressed in his terror tales because of their essential nature as human fears, but of which Shakespeare already was well aware in his writings. In several places, my text deliberately paraphrases in prose certain lines of *Macbeth* itself. (See, especially, p. 2 of the Dutton edition.)

• The structure of B4M is not an accidental analogue of Innes's *Hamlet Revenge* but a deliberate homage to that fine melodrama. I was so deeply indebted to J. I. M. Stewart that I enclosed a dual tribute to him on pp. 56–57 of B4M. These pages are the program copy for the production about to be given at Felt Forum. I had to make up a lot of names of actors, naturally. One of them is "Jim Stewart." The other is "Noel Gylby," an important character in *Hamlet Revenge,* as well as in the ensuing Appleby novel, *Lament for a Maker.*

I do not wish to commit any special pleading on behalf of B4M, but I want to point out one stylistic problem I had that Innes did not have to face—a consideration that mystery essayists very understandably do not seem to be aware of, since one must be an author to be affected by it.

I refer to the crippling brevity of the modern mystery novel. When one must force a complex problem into 60,000 words and no more than about 198 pages of hardback folio, it becomes virtually impossible to do so and spend much time on characterization, atmosphere, scene painting, any of the essential novel techniques that other fiction writers take for granted. Naturally, one attempts to resolve it "indifferently well," but, with half a dozen suspects, an ongoing detective-Watson relationship, plus the current plot to squeeze in, it is generally necessary to "tag" characters, compress probability, and truncate dialogue. The ratio shifts from book to book. The better at the craft one becomes, the closer to 50–50 (plot vs. characters) one gets. But the form is essentially intractable.

Innes, Sayers, and Carr, to mention a few earlier examples, had greater latitude in pagination. Nowadays, it would be impossible to write a category mystery the size of *Gaudy Night* for the simple reason that the extra folios would drive up the cover price and trim institutional sales drastically.

What options do series detective writers have? They may break into mainstream, a difficult task—compare the lengths of the early "Rabbi" books to Kemelman's later titles in that series, and notice how much better the mysteries are in the longer ones—or they may work within the system and battle the word count each time. Once in a great while, a prodigy such as Bill DeAndrea or Steve Knickmeyer or George Cronin does a pretty neat job of it, but most of the time it's a case of what to emphasize at what expense.

Give me another 15,000 words, and B4M will win me an honorary doctorate!

P.S.: It may be ungracious of me to nitpick, but if Ms. Bakerman is going to continue to write scholarly studies—which she certainly has the analytic ability to do—she should be more careful on the subject of pagination. Five passages to which she referred in her analysis of B4M were attributed to the wrong pages in the Dutton text. Specifically, when she cites pp. 20–23, it ought to have been pp. 18–20; 24 ought to be 22; 47 should be 46; 17 should be 15; and pp. 134–36 is actually the passage running through pp. 136–38.

* * * * *

From Stephen B. Ringwood:

While overseas in December of 1980, I purchased one of the best American crime novels I have ever read. I have an interest in identifying it now but have long since misplaced the book and forgotten the title. It occurs to me that your membership might well recognize something in the enclosed synopsis and be able to assist me. Thank you for your attention to this request. I would be pleased to hear from you at 6085 Skyline Boulevard, Oakland, CA 94611.

This crime novel was written by a woman (or couple?) in New York City.

The main plot revolves around four British and American World War II veterans who met in the service and then became relatively successful in business. They meet weekly for drinks and discussion in a game room of a lesser-known private club on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Realizing they miss the excitement and challenge of the war, they devise a "game" utilizing the game board of Parcheezi, their occasional club pastime, and their individual combat experiences. A grid with sections corresponding to the game is laid over a map of New York, and before a player can "take" another man on the board, he has to kill—and prove to the others he has killed—someone within the particular grid area and identifiable with the color he happens to be on at the time (e.g., to jump a player in the yellow, blue, red, or green sections might entail murdering an Oriental, a policeman or a "blue collar" worker, an Indian or a wino, or an Irishman in an Irish pub, respectively). The more famous or infamous the intended victim, the more difficult his murder is presumed to be, and the greater the accolades once the feat is accomplished. The murders are usually proven by presenting something from the victim's personal effects or clothing, such as a policeman's badge, although the later, more ingenious killings require more unusual verification, including the medallion from a burned-out yellow cab. The four men maintain an apartment for the storage of weapons and various disguises.

Authorities are dumbfounded; the murders produce no discernable pattern other than an increase in the crime rate itself. A famous criminologist is consulted, who meets frequently with the boroughs' Chiefs of Detectives; his daughter, an attractive Assistant State's Attorney, is intimate with one of them. The criminologist stumbles onto the connection with the game's colors well into the story, and the four men are eventually apprehended or killed.

* * * * *

From Joe Christopher:

A few quibbles about minor matters, if I may. I was impressed by Walter S. Albert's "Bibliography of Secondary Sources for 1980" in TAD 14:4, but he did miss *The Sayers Review* 4:1 (September 1980). It contained S. L. Clark, "*Gaudy Night's* Legacy: P. D. James' *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman,*" pp. 1–12; J. R. Christopher, "A Sayers Checklist" (of secondary materials), pp. 13–25; and Christe McMenomy, a book review of Alzina Stone Dale's *Maker and Craftsman,* pp. 26–27.

I was looking up something in Barzun and Taylor's *A Catalogue of Crime* the other day, and of course I went on to read other items in it. I don't remember reading the annotation on G. K. Chesterton's *Autobiography* before (Item 2921), but it is inaccurate. Has anyone pointed out that about the first half of the final chapter of that work deals with the Father Brown stories (Ch. 16, "The God with the Golden Key")? Barzun and Taylor say that "there are no references to the Father Brown stories or the lifelong concern with detective fiction." They seem to have given up reading too soon.

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*I.e., it would be embarrassing, therefore, to have submitted B4M as a *tour de force,* since it was "common knowledge."

Finally, a comment about *The Armchair Detective Index 1967-1977* compiled by Steven A. Stilwell. I checked my own name there (don't we all?) and found that two items have been omitted: "The Female Private Eye Ponders Where to Carry Her Gat," 9:2:101 (a piece of light verse) and "An Unsolved Mystery," 3:2:93 (a paragraph note). Neither is very important, of course, but I suspect that their omission means the compilation was done from the contents pages and that other minor items have been missed also. Perhaps Mr. Stilwell could run a re-check and, if there are other omitted items, do a listing on them...and perhaps include them in the next index in about six years?

* * * * *

From Larry Cattaneo:

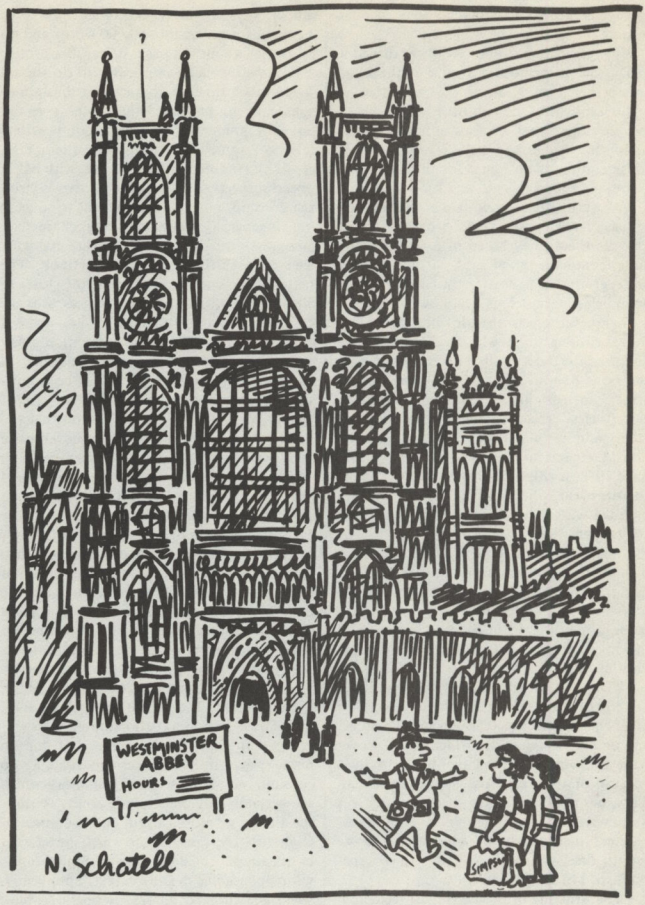
I don't have any bibliographical additions or new discoveries for checklists; I'm just writing as a fan. TAD has only gotten better. On its growth and the continued high standards, you, the staff, and Otto Penzler and The Mysterious Press are to be congratulated. TAD has finally found a home.

TAD 14:4 was a solid, entertaining, and informative effort. I especially liked Randall R. Mawer's piece on Chandler and Carr's solution to *Drood*. The departments have also grown nicely. The addition of "Crime Hunt" is a great idea. The influence of the "real world" on our genre is apparent—now TAD readers have the opportunity to learn more about these infamous "classics." I am also looking forward to the feature on collecting mystery fiction. There's no end of the service you could do TADians with that (I hope) regular column.

The only section I didn't like was the interview by Diana Cooper-Clark. Invariably, the best interviews are those that let the subject do the talking. An interviewer should ask pertinent questions (obviously) and guide the interview to prevent its wandering away on twenty different tangents, all the while remaining in the background; the subject holds center stage. But to ask questions that take up a quarter of a column of type and produce resposes such as "Well, yes" proves what? I'm not very interested in the interviewer; only in the thoughts, attitudes, and opinions of the person being interviewed. Ms. Cooper-Clark has a habit of getting in the way.

Finally, a plea. Could TAD please become more consistent in warning its readers when endings are going to be discussed?—if not in the body of an article, perhaps in the form of an Editor's Note (this would be even better). TAD doesn't always do this. Although I have not yet read Carr's *The Burning Court*, it appeared that its ending was given away in the Lem/Carr piece by Edmund Miller. Mr. Miller had to do this; the ending was central to the point of his article (the ending of Lem's *The Investigation* was also revealed). Some kind of warning would have been nice for those of us who haven't read a certain work yet. I hope this kind of notation becomes standard procedure in the future.

And as to the future: keep on growing!



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

You're right, Larry. We try to catch "give-aways," and this one slipped by me. My apologies to you and to anyone else who may have had his enjoyment of the books lessened by my error.

—Michael

* * * * *

From Gail Eyer:

I have just been reading Ralph E. Hone's biography of Dorothy L. Sayers (Kent State University Press, 1979), in which he states:

"From 25 June 1933 through 18 August 1935, Sayers wrote a weekly column of detective-story reviews for the *Sunday Times*. She reviewed over three hundred fifty books during that period, the authors of which sound like a Sherlockian hall of fame."

Wouldn't these reviews make delicious reading now! But how is one to obtain them? Could TAD find and reprint them in great chunks? (Your reviews are almost the best part of your magazine, I think.) Or might they make up a volume in themselves for someone like The Mysterious Press to bring out? I've never found anything Sayers wrote about detective/mystery fiction that wasn't worth reading.

[*We'll see what we can do.* —*Michael*]

Harking back to 1980 (TAD 13:2), why did you show a photograph of the John D. MacDonald paperback *A Flash of Green* (c. 1962)—the only "color-title" that's *not* a Travis McGee—in an article about the McGee series? Shame.

Also, it would be nice if you could be more assiduous in helping your readers with the

aggravating problems caused by pseudonyms and by alternate titles (what the catalogues call "old friends in disguise"). Recent omissions include not noting that Jane Langton's *Transcendental Murders* was also published as *Minuteman Murders* (I think I'm right here); and speaking of Phoebe Atwood Taylor's "Leonidas Witherall" series (*Cold Steel,* etc.) without saying that they were originally published under the pseudonym Alice Tilton; and reviewing some reprints without giving so much as a clue to the original years of publication.

Picky, yes—but you're Supposed To Know. That's why we read you—facts, facts, facts. The articles may be diverting—or not. Mystery fans, who are all collectors in one way or another, need facts.

I've enjoyed your magazine, but sadly I must agree with your scolding from Jiro Kimura (Letters, 14:3)—you ought not to be academic but "fun to read." As well as super-accurate.

* * * * *

From Paul R. Moy:

Amendments and additions to "A Bibliography of Anthony Berkeley Cox (Francis Iles)" (TAD 14:3) compiled by Paul R. Moy:

ANTHONY BERKELEY

Insert between *Panic Party* and "Who Killed Madam 'X'?":

"Mr. Simpson Goes to the Dogs," *Strand Magazine,* June 1934; U.S.—*Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine,* February 1946.

Delete "Outside the Law" and substitute:

"Outside the Law"—*see* Francis Iles.

Insert between "Holmes and the Dasher" and "Mr. Mimpson Goes to the Dogs" (see next amendment regarding the latter):

"Murder Reconsidered: The Verdict That May Have Been Wrong. The Case of Dr. Crippen," *Strand Magazine,* September 1944.

Delete: "Mr. Mimpson Goes to the Dogs."

FRANCIS ILES

Insert between *Before the Fact* and "Was Crippen a Murderer?":

"Outside the Law," *Strand Magazine,* July 1934; later included as by Anthony Berkeley in *Fifty Masterpieces of Mystery* (Odhams, 1937). U.S.—*Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine,* June 1949 (as by Iles).

Insert between "Was Crippen a Murderer?" and "The Rattenbury Case":

"Sense of Humour," *Strand Magazine,* October 1935.

Addition to "The Rattenbury Case":

"Vintage Crimes: IV Mrs. Rattenbury," *Strand Magazine,* May 1943.

Amendment to "Eastern Love Song":

"'Eastern Love-Song'" contained in *Press Gang! Crazy World Chronicle* edited by Leonard Russell (Hutchinson, 1937).

NOTES—ANTHONY BERKELEY Add the following:

Ambrose Chitterwick appeared in Berkeley's *The Piccadilly Murder, The Poisoned Chocolates Case,* and *Trial and Error.*

NOTES—FRANCIS ILES Add the following:

Actor Hywel Bennett, who played Dr. Bickleigh in the TV serial *Malice Aforethought,* signed 21 copies of the Gollancz Second reissue of 1978 (price increased to £4.95) during a summer fête in 1981: "Best Wishes Hywel Bennett (Dr. Bickleigh)."

These amendments arrived too late for inclusion in Paul Moy's article. —*Michael*

* * * * *

From Mel D. Ames:

I applaud the few final paragraphs of your editorial (TAD 14:3) in which you point to the absence of even a solitary American among five nominees for the coveted Edgar for best novel in 1980. That, if not a mystery, is surely a crime.

Well done, M.S. You end your comments with READ AN AMERICAN MYSTERY, then blithely proceed to commit the same crime in the very magazine to which your blurb is attached. The imbalance in TAD of space and type given over to British authors by way of book reviews, story reviews, interviews, reminiscences, and just everyday aggrandizement is something like eighty to twenty percent in their favor. Crime *does* pay, it seems, for some.

You (and MWA) are unfortunately not alone. Any issue of EQMM, selected at random, will contain a terrifying preponderance of limey lit. AHMM? Ditto, but to a lesser degree. MSMM? Not guilty. And there are, of course, others.

The sad truth is, these highly-touted imports are, in my opinion, not as good as the home-grown product. They are just *different.* I, for one, am fed up with thatched cottages, village greens, and privet hedges, not to mention bobbies, boots, bonnets, and brollys. I literally *loathe* country squires, vicars in rectories, and the bloody gentry spouting quaint English colloquialisms. And I swear I'll kill the next bumbling, tweed-jacketed, RAF-moustached, dog-and-cat-loving, tea-sipping, semi-retired CID agent I read about, especially if he's a jolly one. Americans (enigmatically) seem to find, as in cars and wine, a singular fascination for the foreign product.

And, please. Don't blame fandom. The public will digest the literary food we feed them, particularly when the fare is so richly seasoned by our "mysterious elite."

Burp!

* * * * *

From Mary Groff:

I would like to thank both Mike Nevins and Bob Randisi for their additions to "Eyes on the Screen" (TAD 13:3). *The Cases of Eddie Drake* was on the long-dead Dumont network and ran from March 6 to May 29, 1952, and *The Files of Jeffrey Jones* appeared in 1954; both starred Don Haggarty. *Bourbon Street Beat* was an ABC production from October 5, 1959 to September 26, 1960.

My reason for doing this article was purely an exercise in research and nothing else. I don't enjoy private eyes, nor do I watch television. I had better explain that I am working on a book of fiction based upon true crimes and mysteries and that this will have a film and theatre list attached. I felt that if I could produce an adequate article in a subject I know nothing about, which would be accepted by a critical magazine such as TAD, then the work I am planning should seem easier to handle. It is much easier to write about something that really interests you than to handle unfamiliar materials.

I apologize to Randisi for not including producers; I imagine that my source materials did not include these names.

I do have a few questions to ask of the readers. Does anyone know if Philip Cannon's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* opera was ever produced, and, if so, where and who were the leading singers? Has any novel been written based on the Rattenbury and Stoner case in England in 1935? Were any Jack the Ripper books or plays produced before Belloc Lowndes's *The Lodger* in 1913? If anyone has an answer, I would be grateful if he could send a card to me at 279 Topaz Way, San Francisco, CA 94131, which will be gratefully acknowledged. □

CURRENT REVIEWS

The Man with a Load of Mischief by Martha Grimes. Little, Brown, $12.95

Mystery readers will justifiably rave about this book. *The Man with a Load of Mischief* draws on traditional mystery novel conventions—primarily of the "civilized" British, rather than the hard, "mean streets," variety—and plays with, undercuts, and then delightfully affirms them. There is still an England, and there always will be an England (in fiction, at least) that fosters both the kind of writing Grimes does and the expectations readers bring to the genre, and the setting makes clear the writer's, as well as the reader's, assumptions as to what has been and what is likely to be:

"The English inn stands permanently planted at the confluence of the roads of history, memory, and romance. Who has not, in his imagination, leaned from its timbered galleries over the cobbled courtyard to watch the coaches pull in, the horses' breath fogging the air as they stamp on dark winter evenings? Who has not read of these long, squat buildings with mullioned windows; sunken, uneven floors; massive beams and walls hung round with copper; kitchens where joints once turned on spits, and hams hung from ceilings...cups of ale ...the bustling landlady...battalions of chambermaids...lavendered sheets...heavy oaken doors...."

In short, clichés run rampant, but with interest, for much of Grimes's book, in addition to being about the violent deaths of five individuals, is about how one's assumptions concerning words, just as concerning people, can play one false as well as true. It is, in the final analysis, a self-conscious mystery novel that rarely is trite, never is ponderous, and always is entertaining.

The "Inn Murders," as the British press takes to calling them, start out as picture-book perfect as the town of Long Piddleton itself, and end up as grisly and bullet-real as any described in this horror-filled genre. Two strangers to the placid village, which is peopled mainly by artists and writers who have moved there, are found dead: one with his head in a butt of ale at The Man with a Load of Mischief and the other standing in, as it were, for the mechanical figure of "Jack" at The Jack and Hammer. In rapid succession, two more deaths are discovered at the outlying inns of The Swan with Two Necks and The Cock and Bottle. Richard Jury, an assistant superintendent at New Scotland Yard, receives the assignment to investigate after the first two murders, cannot prevent the second two, unwittingly fails to intervene in the fifth (yes, fifth—an example of how Grimes astonishingly bows to and carries to extreme the multiple-murder convention), and escapes with his life in a confrontation with the murderer.

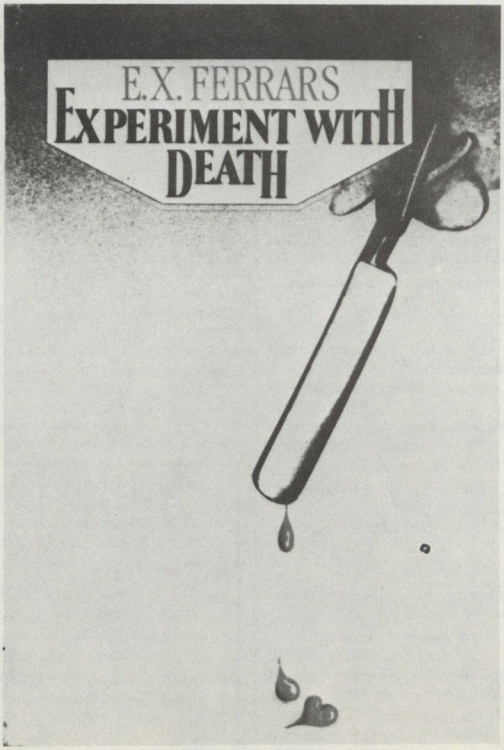
For the confirmed mystery reader, there are just enough and not too many red herrings, hints of romance past and present, motives, opportunities, and intertwining complexities. Nothing seems contrived, yet everything is, and the result is marvelous. Grimes succeeds at what every mystery-reader-with-frustrated-mystery-writer aspirations dreams of: she establishes an intellectual challenge, she evokes other writers in the tradition (her names are of the Michael Innes stamp, with eccentric village characters reminiscent of Ngaio Marsh and Agatha Christie, and multiple alibis like those Dorothy L. Sayers created), and she does so without sounding precious or unimaginative. Moreover, Grimes, an American, is a confirmed Anglophile who nevertheless uses her American perspective to an advantage, so that, through her eyes, the conventions, while imitated, are scrutinized afresh, and the past of the romantic English inn is juxtaposed to contemporary England, just as past detective novels are to this novel. Grimes's Jury is as much a son of P. D. James's Dalgliesh and E. C. Bentley's Trent as he is kin to Rex Stout's Wolfe and Lucille Kallen's Greenfield. He is not Wimsey, nor Appleby, nor Alleyn, nor, for that matter, Thatcher or Goodwin, but he is still all of them while at the same time being uniquely himself. *The Man with a Load of Mischief* is a splendid book, precisely because of the fine line Grimes walks between stereotype and individual, genre and parody, and expectation and actuality. It is a book admirably suited to capture the fancy of the initiate to mystery reading, as well as to charm the mystery addict.

—Susan L. Clark

* * * * *

Experiment with Death by E. X. Ferrars. Doubleday.

E. X. Ferrars's newest crime novel takes as



its sphere of investigation those obligations one human has to another and reflects them not only in the events surrounding the throat-slitting of Dr. Guy Lampard, Director of the King's Waltham Institute of Pomology, but also in the mesh of dependency and indebtedness that binds the novel's minor as well as major characters. Seen through the eyes of Dr. Emma Ritchie, a research fellow at the Institute and one of Guy's former doctoral students who has owed every position she has attained to him, the murder could have been committed by any number of the Institute's staff: her lover, Roger Challoner, the Deputy Director, who is admittedly jealous of Guy's influence on Emma; ambitious Bill Carver, who "had persuaded himself that when Clive Bushell retired he would step into his place"; Sam Partlett, another former student with a predilection to wife-beating and excessive drinking, whom Guy had hand picked to replace Bushell; Maureen Kirby, the Director's receptionist who "was so stupid that it was really refreshing to have her around"; and Ernest Nixey, whose wife has been supported for years by Guy in a private mental hospital. All owe something to Guy, whether it be a job or self-esteem, and all are rather like Emma, who finds it difficult to write because Guy is literally or figuratively looking over her shoulder. The man's presence is so large, so inspiring as well as intimidating, so good-natured as well as malicious, that a motive for murder is not lacking. Nor is the weapon, a dissecting razor of the type readily available at the Institute. Where Ferrars stumbles in this, the latest of her nearly forty novels, is in the matter of opportunity to commit the crime. There are doings with altered clocks, red (and red-haired) herrings, and false solutions galore, but the resolution hinges on an opportunity that the reader could hardly have anticipated. In this respect, *Experiments with Death* demonstrates Ferrars's consistent adeptness at developing a convincing complexity of motive but a certain clumsiness in arranging for opportunity.

—S. L. Clark

* * * * *

Early Autumn by Robert B. Parker. Delacorte, 1981. 212 pp. $10.95

I acknowledge Robert Parker as one of the finest writers in the private eye field today. I thought *The Godwulf Manuscript* was, to say the least, an auspicious debut for him, and that last year's *Looking for Rachel Wallace* was Parker's best since that first one. I look forward to Robert Parker's books, and it is probably for that reason that I was disappointed wjth *Early Autumn.* A decidedly non-hardboiled title, it virtually sets the tone of the book.

Spenser is hired to rescue a fifteen-year-old boy from his father and return him to his mother, who is Spenser's client. The parents are divorced, and Spenser soon discovers that the boy really means nothing to either parent, except as something else to fight over. This has affected the boy's attitude and his physical well-being. Spenser decides to "take" the boy himself and whip him into shape. He takes him to Maine, where he forces him to lift weights, box, and run, and where they begin to build a house together. The book is about Spenser's relationship with the boy, and everything else is incidental. It struck me that this didn't have to be another book in the Spenser series but should have been a separate novel altogether.

Let me state that my disappointment was not so much in the novel as a novel but as a Spenser novel. I might have liked it better as a one-shot book. I still look forward with great enthusiasm to the next Spenser but hope he will once again be a private eye, and not a social worker.

—Jim Fixx

* * * * *

Echoes of Zero by Ross H. Spencer. St. Martin's. 175 pp. $9.95

As described on the dust jacket of this book, Ross Spencer writes with a "highly entertaining and charmingly idiosyncratic flair." Whatever the man writes with, the merits of it continue to elude me, as they have in his Chance Purdue series.

I had high hopes for this book when I first opened and saw—gracious—quotation marks around the dialogue. But it is written in a style that is annoyingly close to that of his Purdue books. The plot is filled with twists and countertwists as ex-ballplayer Rip Denton attempts to prove that his mentor, Martin Bannister, was killed by his mistress, who was acquitted in a court of law.

Spencer has his following, and I'm sure that the fans of Chance Purdue will enjoy meeting Rip Denton. I am not saying that the author's writing has no merit. I am only saying that I have yet to see it.

—Jim Fixx

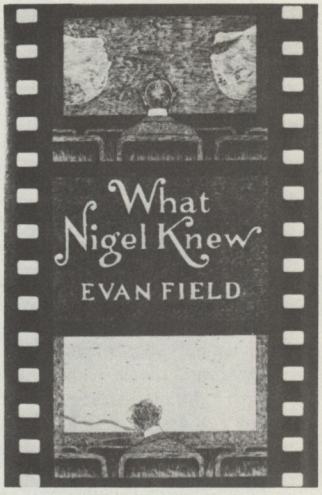
* * * * *

What Nigel Knew by Evan Field. Clarkson N. Potter, 1981. 224 pp. $9.95

Nigel Whitty, the title character of *What Nigel Knew,* was a film critic and gossip columnist known for his acerbic cruelty. He was ill disposed toward the entire film community; indeed, he "loved watching them squirm" and gave them plenty to squirm about in his columns. By creating such a character, the authors (Evan Field is a pseudonym for two writers) have taken a risk: one is tempted to judge the book by Whitty's standards. Happily, one can yield to temptation with an entirely clear conscience.

Whitty is murdered, not surprisingly, by someone he offended too deeply. Eleven people, all of whom work in the film industry, could have committed the crime. A police inspector observes that "these people were unbelievable, mired in dirt up to their necks," and he is right; they are unbelievable. Realistic characterization is sacrificed to satiric effect, and the reader is treated, consequently, to a parade of show business stereotypes. Each of the suspects lusts after the glamour or power that films are presumed to provide; each is revealed to be corrupted by this lust.

The shallow pursuits of glamour and power have been depicted often enough before, but the authors are guilty of a worse fault than triteness. They undermine their satiric point by attempting to entertain the reader with parties at Tavern on the Green or Studio 54 (attended by all the big stars, of course), with a shooting set at the Cloisters, with a gala at Radio City Music Hall. As the names drop faster than a ton of bricks, one wonders whether movie glamour is meant to be condemned or enjoyed.



If the ancillary characters are uninteresting, the principals are more so. Michael Connelly is a Detective Lieutenant assigned to investigate Whitty's death; Sara Nightingale is Whitty's employee. The two meet through Whitty's death and are immediately antagonistic. As the investigation forces them to spend time together, they warm gradually to each other and finally fall in love. The authors seem to have compiled a small encyclopedia of stock characters and situations.

Connelly proves (quite against the authors' intention) to be a woefully inept investigator. He is able to determine that each suspect has his own motive for killing Whitty but then, in effect, lets someone else solve the murder for him. Small wonder; no evidence other than motive is presented, and there is no reason why any one suspect should be more likely than any other to have committed the crime. The authors could easily have chosen their killer at random. Moreover, the solution to the crime contains a very obvious flaw which is briefly, and very unconvincingly, glossed over.

The satire is weak, the characters are unimaginatively rendered, and the mystery is disappointing. What Nigel knew, it turns out, is not worth knowing.

—David A. Christie

Japanese Mystery Fiction Revisited

By John L. Apostolou

Compiling the checklist that accompanies my article "Japanese Mystery Fiction in English Translation" was an attempt to produce a list that would remain definitive for some time, perhaps a few years. But I was soon to learn how tentative a checklist can be. Even before the article appeared in the Fall 1980 issue of *The Armchair Detective,* new translations of Japanese mystery fiction had been published; and recently, I have discovered some older translations that also belong on the list. All of these items, both new and old, are identified at the end of this article in the form of addenda to the original checklist.

The translations listed below were found in a variety of sources. From *Ukiyo,* an anthology of postwar Japanese fiction, came two crime stories, one each by mainstream authors Tatsuzo Ishikawa and Haruto Koh. *The Spiteful Planet,* a collection of thirty stories by science-fiction writer Shinichi Hoshi, yielded one mystery short-short. *The Shiga Hero,* a work of literary criticism by William F. Sibley, was found to contain ten short stories by Naoya Shiga, two of which are criminous. One of these, "The Razor," had been translated previously; the other, "The Kidnapping," is available in English for the first time. Unfortunately, "The Kidnapping" is of greater interest for its autobiographical content than for its effectiveness as a crime story.

Mystery fiction from Japan has continued to appear in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine.* The magazine published a story by Seicho Matsumoto in late 1980 and one by Shizuko Natsuki, sometimes called "the Agatha Christie of Japan," in 1981. Upon examination, the Matsumoto story proved to be a new translation of "Evidence," a title on the original checklist. Another Matsumoto story, his fifth in English, was printed in the October–December 1980 issue of *Japan Quarterly.*

My most important finds were two paperback novels by one of Japan's leading mystery writers, Akimitsu Takagi. Entitled *The Informer* and *Honeymoon to Nowhere,* these books were published in Australia in the early 1970s. *Honeymoon to Nowhere* was later reprinted in the United States under the title *No Patent on Murder.*[1] Both novels were translated by Sadako Mizuguchi and both feature series character State Prosecutor Saburo Kirishima. As Takagi unravels these complex murder cases, the reader is given a penetrating look into the ruthlessly competitive world of Japanese business.

Two recent books—*Bullet Train*[2] and *Tales of Japanese Justice*[3]—are not included in the addenda but are worthy of mention. *Bullet Train* is an exciting terrorist thriller that could easily be mistaken for a translated work. Written by a British author using the pseudonym Joseph Rance, it is actually a novelization of a popular Japanese motion picture.

Tales of Japanese Justice is a translation of a classic collection of court cases, written by Ihara Saikaku in 1689. An early forerunner of the Japanese mystery story, the book belongs in a special category, similar to Otto Penzler's list of "incunabular detective fiction,"[4] rather than on a list with works that are all products of the twentieth century.

Among the addenda are reprints and new translations of material on the original checklist as well as items that have never before been translated into English. Combining the two lists and eliminating all duplication, we arrive at the grand total of four novels and 35 short stories—less than the amount of fiction currently produced by Japanese mystery

writers in a single month. Although the number of translations is still quite limited, what is available should provide mystery fans with many hours of good reading. Sufficient material exists, I believe, to form the basis for preliminary critical work on the rarely explored subject of Japanese mystery fiction.

Notes

1. Reviewed by Fred Dueren in TAD 10:4 (1977), p. 340.
2. Joseph Rance and Arei Kato, *Bullet Train* (London: Souvenir Press, 1980; New York: Morrow, 1980; Dell pb, 1981).
3. Ihara Saikaku, *Tales of Japanese Justice,* trans. Thomas M. Kondo and Alfred H. Marks (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1980). Reviewed by John L. Apostolou in TAD 13:4 (1980), 351–52.
4. Otto Penzler, "Incunabular Detective Fiction," in *A Miscellany for Bibliophiles,* ed. H. George Fletcher (New York: Grastorf & Lang, 1979), pp. 240–41. Penzler's list of significant pre-Poe detective fiction does not include any works by Asian authors.

Addenda to: A Checklist of Japanese Mystery Fiction in English Translation

This list conforms to the format used on the original checklist in TAD 13:4 (1980), 311–12. Asterisks (*) indicate titles that are also on the original list. As before:

EQMM = *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*
JQ = *Japan Quarterly*

Abe, Kobo
*The Ruined Map**
Also reprinted as Perigee pb, 1980

Hoshi, Shinichi (b. 1926)
"The Mysterious Footprints" Trans. Bernard Susser and Tomoyoshi Genkawa
The Spiteful Planet and Other Stories. Tokyo: Japan Times, 1978

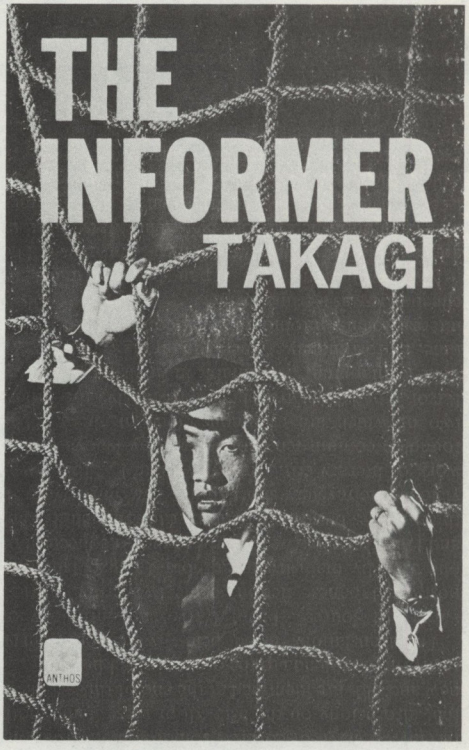
Ishikawa, Tatsuzo (b. 1905)
"The Affair of the Arabesque Inlay" Trans. Makoto Momoi and Jay Gluck
Ukiyo: Stories of "the Floating World" of Postwar Japan. Ed. Jay Gluck. New York: Vanguard Press, 1963; New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964

Koh, Haruto (b. 1906)
"Black Market Blues" Trans. Grace Suzuki and Jay Gluck
Ukiyo. Ed. Jay Gluck. Tokyo: Phoenix Books, 1954
Ukiyo: Stories of "the Floating World" of Postwar Japan. Ed. Jay Gluck. New York: Vanguard Press, 1963; New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964

Matsumoto, Seicho
"Evidence"*
Another trans. in: EQMM, Nov. 3, 1980, 84–95. Story appears under the title "The Secret Alibi"
"The Face" Trans. David W. Wright
JQ, 27, No. 4 (1980), 515–35
"The Woman Who Took the Local Paper"*
Ellery Queen's Crime Cruise Round the World. Ed. Ellery Queen. New York: The Dial Press, 1981

Natsuki, Shizuko
"The Sole of the Foot"
EQMM, Sept. 9, 1981, 85–103

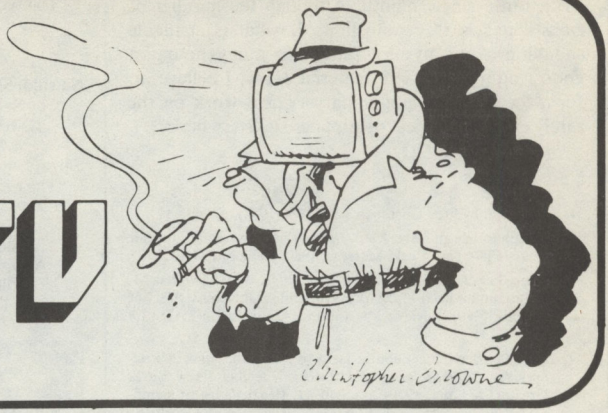
Shiga, Naoya
"The Kidnapping" Trans. William F. Sibley
The Shiga Hero by William F. Sibley. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979
"The Razor"*
Also trans. William F. Sibley in: *The Shiga Hero* by William F. Sibley. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979



Takagi, Akimitsu (b. 1920)
Honeymoon to Nowhere. Trans. Sadako Mizuguchi. The Gap, Queensland, Australia: Anthos, 1972. Reprinted as Playboy Press pb, 1977, under the title *No Patent on Murder*
The Informer. Trans. Sadako Mizuguchi. The Gap, Queensland, Australia: Anthos, 1971

Tanizaki, Junichiro
"The Thief"*
*Seven Japanese Tales**
Also reprinted as Perigee pb, 1981 □

TAD ON TV



By Richard Meyers

I'm pleased with myself and the networks. First, every single new detective effort the majors have foisted upon us in the new season has something to recommend it—be it a series or telefilm. Second, it's always fun to be right, and I find myself in that enviable position in terms of two out of three TV mystery movies shown in the last few months. Not only did I guess the correct murderer two out of three times, but the process of watching was unanimously enjoyable.

Working up from the lightest weight, there was *Fantasies,* an ABC mystery movie that was based on a gimmick of casting. Producer-writer David Levinson conceived a *Dallas*-like nighttime soap opera in which the actors were being killed off one by one. The gimmick was that these victims—and in one case, a prime suspect—were portrayed by real daytime drama actors.

Otherwise, the show had a real mystery which could be solved by the viewers, and, if I do say so myself, easily. Given that almost anyone can beat me at chess, Clue, Risk, Asteroids, Missile Command, and even Spoons, I'm a firm believer that if I can do it, anyone can. The only problem with *Fantasies* was that it was essentially a murder mystery with one clue and one hour of meandering dramatic padding.

It also points up the crying need for a certain conversational cliché to be completely eliminated from scripts. In this, as in many, many other detective/murder programs, someone says to someone else (in this case, detective Barry Newman to TV writer Suzanne Pleshette), "I know how you must feel. . ." to which the other replies, "No, you don't." I hereby suggest that all script writers using these two lines be fined half their payment. Or at least have a game show buzzer sound a warning whenever the offending, oft-repeated words are about to be uttered. I don't want to hear them again.

Just in case the program is rebroadcast and readers missed it the first time around, I'll refrain from revealing the killer, but suffice to say that you should listen to detective Errol Flint's (Barry Newman—the character's parents wanted him to be an actor) theory and follow through. From there on, it's child's play.

Its title aside, the CBS movie *Murder Is Easy* wasn't as easy to solve, since its major clue was psychological rather than practical. But again, I managed to guess the killer by utilizing the "least likely suspect" rule. That's the one which states, "Whoever is attacked but survives is the murderer." It also says that, "Whoever seems the most kind, most sweet, most helpful, and is the most ignored is the one who did it." What can I tell you, it's a long rule.

Murder Is Easy

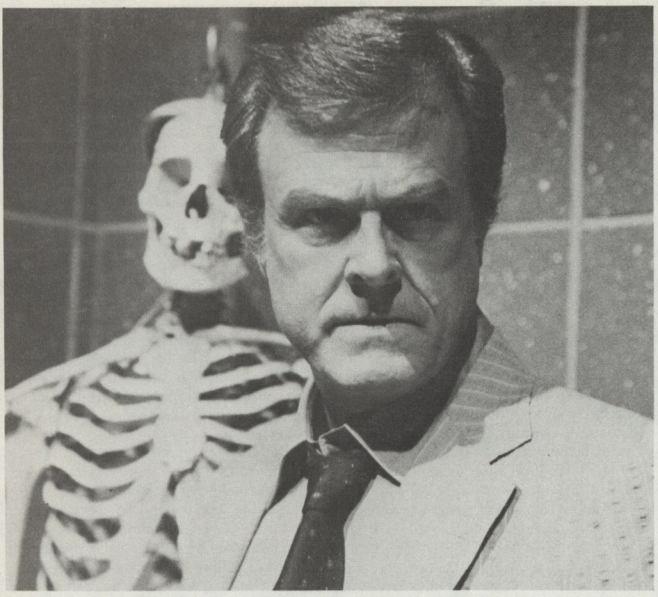
What else I can tell you is that the presentation was a nicely-mounted adaptation of an Agatha Christie story (unread by me) that labored under an uncomfortable Bill Bixby performance in the leading role and was bolstered by wonderful performances from Timothy West, Freddie Jones, and other English supporting players. Lesley-Anne Down suffered in a "prime suspect" part that had her making suspicious faces at the camera while forgetting all about several gruesome murders once Bixby had proposed marriage at the fade-out.

I can never get completely comfortable with entertaining diversions that make murder seem as easily forgettable as the name of a passing acquaintance. In these shows, the survivors just laugh the deaths off once the killer has been caught, rendering the murders meaningless. Unfortunately, murder has a resonance which stays with those touched by it.

Such a feeling was elicited by the third and best movie mystery of the bunch, *Killjoy.* Here writer Sam Rolfe threw enough curves into the proceedings, and it was directed and acted so well, that I ignored the obvious to tread down dark, winding passages to dead ends. Set in an atmospheric hospital, bar, and overdecorated manors, actors Stephen Macht, John Rubenstein, Nancy Marchand (of *Lou Grant*), Kim Basinger, and especially Robert Culp as the enigmatic detective, had a good old time trying to find out not only who killed Joy but where the body was.

Now, this was a fine mystery with a solid backbone. It wasn't trying to pretend that murder was a civilized sport that anyone could play. The same could be said of *Shannon,* one of the first casualties of the canceller's ax. This was Kevin Dobson's CBS series that lasted a total of two weeks before the powers that be decided it needed an overhaul. The episodes that made it to air were atmospheric and heartfelt. Shannon—a detective's name which has been used twice before on two 1950s series—was a New York cop who moved to San Francisco so his in-laws could take care of his recently motherless son.

The stories were presented in a way that could be called either grittily realistic or disjointed. Using lots of locations, hand-held cameras, and sharp editing, it gave the impression that I was actually watching scenes out of Shannon's life, not just a blandly packaged hour story. Whatever the case, the show came and went too quickly for me to make any kind of solid judgment. We'll just



Robert Culp as the eccentric, determined, thorough and clever detective on the TV mystery movie *Killjoy*.

have to wait for its return, heralded by network resurrection promises.

The CBS series that stayed on was *Simon & Simon*. Originally, I was going to beg off reviewing it, since the creator and producer, Philip DeGuere, was a friendly associate of mine. But then I received a letter from Bob Shayne inviting all MWA members to watch his 1/19/81 episode—"Ashes to Ashes and None Too Soon"—for Edgar consideration. I had gotten an invitation to watch television once before (and that was from DeGuere for his *Doctor Strange* telefilm), so I gladly took P.D. and B.S. up on the offer.

Simon & Simon

This viewing put *Simon & Simon* into focus for me. It's a nice show about two nice brothers who run a San Diego detective agency. They're not Sherlock Holmes and Watson, and they're not Rockford and Angel, but they're interesting and diverting. And, by gum, the stories involve actual mysteries which the viewers are probably solving at the same speed Rick (Gerald McRaney) and A.J. (Jameson Parker) Simon are. At least, it's my speed, but remember what I said about Risk and Clue and all.

Having skirted that issue, we change the channel back to ABC, where another pair of brothers are bashing the bad guys as best they can. But rather than being brothers by blood, these two series are joined by a production kinship. In other words, despite a difference in title and actors, *Strike Force* and *Today's FBI* could be the same show. Both have a team of detectives consisting of a bunch of guys and one girl, led by a crusty old TV detective veteran.

In the latter case, it's Mike "Mannix" Connors himself, battling baddies and governmental red tape alike to cleanse the "Most Wanted" list. And speaking of *Most Wanted,* forever Untouchable Robert Stack went from that abortive series to effectively lead the *Strike Force* by way of *Airplane* and *1941*.

Although both shows have had at least one episode each to commend them, both are glossed with a stirring, super-patriotic theme and opening reminiscent of the Saturday morning cartoon *Superfriends* (thank you, W.L.D.). *Strike Force* is the worst offender, literally having the four-person unit walking in a "V" formation down the hallway behind Stack at the end of the opening credits. I could only laugh, thinking about anybody else in the way getting bowled over as if they were in a *Little Rascals* short.

The flat, pastel presentation runs counter to the series's subject matter. The best *Strike Force* episode had black cop Strobber, played by Dorian Harewood, publicly refusing to quit the Force even though some bigoted psychos were threatening to kill Negro officers until he did. The best *FBI* show was an amazing exercise in sneaky relevance as a cult leader played by David Carradine threatened to kill government office workers unless the men responsible for killing his family were delivered to him for "justice."

I say amazing because not only does it come off that Carradine is victimized by the pushy, obnoxious FBI negotiator who constantly lies through her teeth, but the last thing he does to climax the show is deliver a two-minute speech about how the TV news trivialized and exploited his tragedy. Both these programs are worth a look simply to see whether some subtle writers are still throwing poison into the pudding.

Finally, we switch over to the much-beleaguered NBC. It seems that the overwhelming praise for *Hill Street Blues* pushed the series into the top twenty, but then they go and schedule *McClain's Law* opposite CBS's number one Nielsen-ranked *Dallas*. But make no mistake, folks, the series starring James Arness is about as similar to *Hill Street* as chocolates are to sandpaper. The action cop show should have been called *Dirty Old Harry* because it's nothing more (or less) than *Dirty Harry* with returning retiree McClain standing in for Eastwood's Callahan.

And that's fine by me. As Bill DeAndrea revealed in his "Paper Crimes" column elsewhere in these pages, I wrote some of the *Dirty Harry* novels, so I've got nothing against a big cop bending "the book" to get his murdering man. In fact, it's good to have an uncompromising hero on the airwaves. McClain has to be that way, considering what creator-writer-producer Eric Bercovici throws at him week after week. Psychotic killers of all shapes and sizes invade the mythical town of San Petro constantly. It seems to be a lodestone for the worst woes evil has to offer. But be they terrorists or paroled prison gangsters, McClain takes them on in kind with sawed-off pump shotguns and Uzi submachine guns.

McClain's Law is packaged complete with pulp-like purple prose, commonsense platitudes, and bullet-spewing action. It's a tight, exciting, disturbing, solid series with more violence per episode than all the previously mentioned series put together. So if that's your cup of tea, take a big gulp of McClain . . . and tell NBC to put it someplace where it'll have a chance of survival. □

TAD at the MOVIES

By Thomas Godfrey

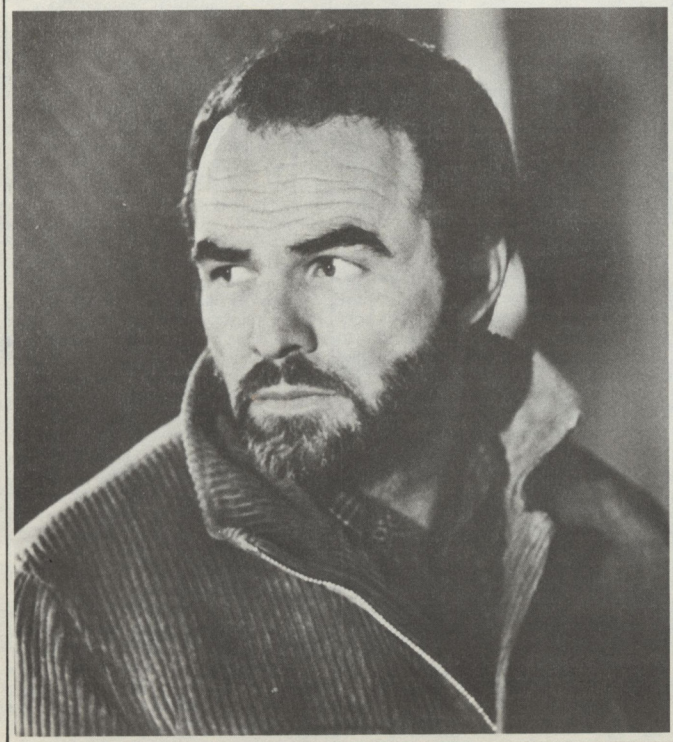
Closing out the books on the mystery-suspense films of 1981 —

Sharkey's Machine turned out to be a very watchable no-calorie Burt Reynolds offering. By design, I saw his 1974 policier *Hustle* just before I saw the new film. The comparison was instructive. The films have several similar features: in both he plays a loner cop battling corruption higher up, in both he romances a high-priced prostitute. But in this film, he seems to have learned a few lessons. Gone are the inept pretensions of Steve Shagan's horrible script for *Hustle*. Here we have just the facts, ma'am, and no heavy moralizing or bogus sensitivities. Robert Aldrich's in-and-out direction has been likewise scuttled. Reynolds is doing his own this time around.

But all is not perfection. The plot disintegrates into dissociated fragments of action, and some of the key characters are not well sustained by the writing or direction (Charles Durning's and Brian Keith's most especially). Just as the film starts to suggest a remake of *Laura,* it veers off into standard cops-and-robbers stuff and never looks back.

Reynolds has improved as an actor. He seems more willing to depart from his talk-show personality on the screen. Here he digs deeper into himself and broadens his range, even if it remains somewhat unclear what he finds in his digs.

Burt Reynolds



Rachel Ward is luscious as the Laura-like prostitute, and there are good moments from Vittorio Gassman, Bernie Casey, and others.

Not a great film, certainly, but enough to suggest that Reynolds's presence on the screen will be worth watching.

Cutter's Way made several top ten lists, but to these eyes it was just one muddled mess. I have no idea what the novel *Cutter and Bone* was about, but this movie adaptation seems to be about two very unsympathetic characters who may be pitted against one another. There is a third dull character thrown in, I guess for us to associate with. Jeff Bridges is the dull one, a college graduate layabout who makes a living posing aboard boats in the Santa Barbara marina. (That's what we're told.) His friend Alexander Cutter is a charmless, disfigured Vietnam War vet with a contempt for everyone. They decide that Stephen Elliott, the local bigwig and town moneybags, is the one who dumped the body of the violated cheerleader into a trash can during the annual Old Spanish Days festivities.

Since they can't touch him police-wise, they decide to blackmail him, with disastrous results.

John Heard is convincingly obnoxious as the obnoxious Cutter, and Stephen Elliott (perhaps *the* country club heavy of the past decade) is heavy and cardboardish as the heavy, cardboardish heavy. Lisa Eichhorn does not survive the thankless role as Cutter's abused wife, and Jeff Bridges keeps disappearing from the screen, even when he is supposed to be there.

I suppose *Cutter's Way* should be given some points for trying something a little different, but it loses them all for not seeing that it doesn't work.

Through the Retrospectoscope:

★★★ **One Body Too Many** (1944) Jack Haley, Jean Parker, Bela Lugosi (D: Frank McDonald)

There's a lot in this comedy-suspenser that's just plain silly. And some of the plot devices probably came over on the *Mayflower.* But this budget effort from Paramount is more entertaining than it has any right to be. These phantom-killer-in-the-spooky-house things somehow fascinate even as they appall.

Jack Haley is just fine as the bumbling insurance salesman who is hired to guard the millionaire's body from the greedy relatives. He kept me in mind of the Tin Woodsman all the time. I guess that's why he didn't have a bigger career. Still, it is not his fault, and he does have a deft way with a comic line.

Jean Parker is the un-greedy relative and, of course, the love interest. She was stubbornly pegged as a B actress during her career. Here she reminded me of Katharine Hepburn without the polish, although she projects a greater natural warmth than Hepburn did. She never dominates her scenes as the big names could, but she does give a very pleasing performance.

Lyle Talbot is on hand with yet another of his dependable B-movie characterizations. And there's a goldfish that has a terrifically funny swim-on part, but the surprise is Bela Lugosi, who shows a lethal flair for comedy as the butler with the ultimate solution for tiresome house guests. He gets a laugh every time he appears and is beautifully abetted by stage tragedienne Blanche Yurka as the equally misanthropic Matthews the maid.

Maybe it isn't really all that great, but I found it enormous fun to watch. Just don't expect miracles from the plot.

★★★½ **It's a Wonderful World** (1939) James Stewart, Claudette Colbert, Guy Kibbie (D: W. S. Van Dyke)

No, this is not the heartwarming fantasy you saw on the tube last Christmas (that was Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*). But this is a pretty wonderful film, just the same. Jimmy Stewart plays a private detective who's trying to unframe his client, millionaire playboy Ernest Truex (!) from a murder charge. Colbert's a flappy heiress whose car Stewart steals. She sets fire to the car, then won't leave him alone.

As you might be guessing, this was the successful mating of two cinema forms that were very popular at the time, the whodunit and the screwball comedy. Ben Hecht and Herman Mankiewicz, two old masters of this sort of thing, provide a high-voltage script. Director W. S. Van Dyke (*The Thin Man, San Francisco*) keeps the fur flying on camera. Stewart and Colbert are excellent farceurs (she won an Academy Award for a similar part in *It Happened One Night*). They are matched by a splendid cast of seasoned performers.

The mystery itself may not be much, but comedy and excitement there certainly are.

★★ **Bulldog Drummond Escapes** (1937) Ray Milland, Heather Angel, Reginald Denny (D: James Hogan)

One could easily get the impression that Bulldog Drummond was the James Bond of the Boer War. His exploits might once have seemed daring, but they are pretty tepid stuff today. This entry, adapted from H. C. McNeile's play *Bulldog Drummond Again*, retains too many stagebound, drawing-room effects for its own good.

Ray Milland, at the start of his international career, is properly dashing, if a bit too

William Powell

light for the part. The camera catches him forcing some of the material, and it becomes wearing after a time. He does show early mastery of a wry way with a line that would eventually give him star quality.

Heather Angel looks properly distressed as a damsel in distress, but it was a hopeless part, even then. The film drags inordinately before reaching its sixty-fifth and final moment. John Barrymore would give Colonel Nielson (Drummond's 'M') some of the snap and zing the part required in the later John Howard series. His predecessor Sir Guy Standing is no more than competent here, and that simply won't do against these odds. E. E. Clive steals all his scenes as Drummond's butler Tenny. Sad to say, it's only petty theft.

★★★★ **The Kennel Murder Case** (1933) William Powell, Mary Astor, Eugene Pallette (D: Michael Curtiz)

I'm not sure exactly how to describe that unique quality which William Powell brought to the screen. He was witty, charming, intelligent, assured, comfortably masculine—yet more than all this. It was a distinguished career—limited, perhaps. (Aren't they all?) Powell's intelligence, or luck, kept him out of oaters and costume pictures in which he would not shine.

Whatever word you give that quality, it is present in abundance in this much-praised entry in the Philo Vance series. Powell fills every frame with it, so that even the mystery tolerator should not mind that he is watching essentially a no-character puzzle piece.

But what a puzzle piece! Director Michael Curtiz (*Casablanca, Mildred Pierce*) keeps it moving like a gazelle. There's not an ounce of fat or bloat to be seen. Curtiz keeps the camera and the plot development in constant motion. The viewer cannot belch without fear of missing something vital.

Mary Astor lends some cool glamour to the picture as one of the suspects. Eugene Pallette (with that voice which sounds like a bullfrog with laryngitis) and Etienne Giradot add restrained comic relief as Sgt. Heath and police surgeon Dr. Doremus, respectively.

But the show itself belongs to Powell and Curtiz. And what a show it is! □

A CATALOGUE OF CRIME

By Jacques Barzun and Wendell Hertig Taylor

S159 Anderson, J. R. L.
Death in the City
Gollancz 1977

The author of the several lively tales about Colonel Blair died in London last August at the age of seventy. He was known for his work as an editor of the (Manchester) *Guardian* and for numerous books about sailors and explorers. He himself tested in a 44-foot cutter the possibility of the Viking voyages to North America. One more tale about the resourceful Blair is yet to be published. The title of the present one would suggest that the Colonel had become a landlubber and exchanged the mainsheet for the mainchance: not so. There is plenty of action in and on the water, in small boats, police launches, large ships, and naval vessels—Jane's directory in miniature. The intricate plot combines banking, smuggling, impersonation, and insurrection in skilful fashion, and stays within the plausible, thanks to the author's usual attention to detail and the sensible balance, in Blair and his helpers, between competence and fallibility. Virtually no women and no sex at all, normal, abnormal, or supernormal. This relief from *genitalia literaria* is, one fears, only temporary.

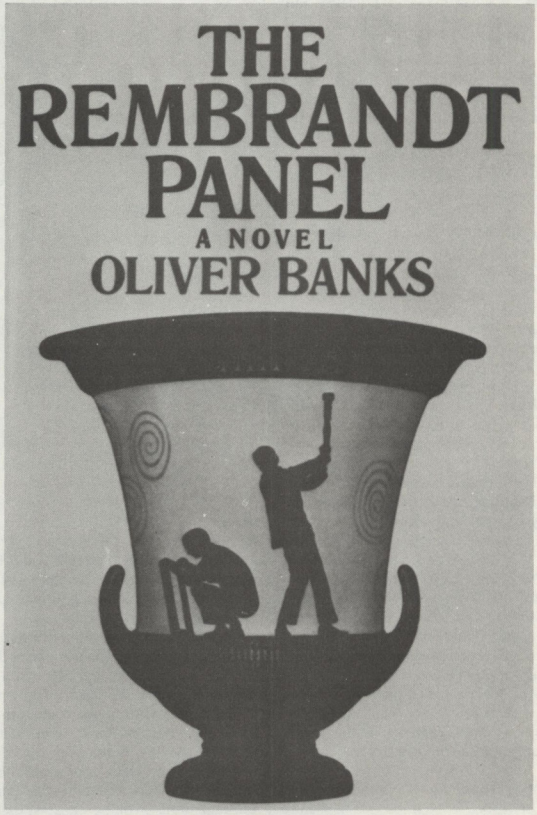
S160 Banks, Oliver
The Rembrandt Panel
L B 1980

The author is an art consultant and holds a Ph.D. in Art History. He subtitles his book "A Novel" (rather than a detective story) and has provided an engrossing narrative of art theft culminating in a double murder. Perhaps he may be forgiven for having exposed the criminal to full view within the first few chapters. To compensate for this breach of the rules, we have an intelligent investigation, carried out by a private detective named Amos Hatcher, who is assisted by the murdered art dealer's young secretary, Sheila Woods. The pair are as much concerned with the identity of the missing panel as with that of the criminal, and their search for data, extending to The Hague and finally to Cape Cod, provides the reader with an easily digested amount of artistic lore. The author's concern for professional detail has not kept him from providing us with an excellent smash ending. Off the beaten track but highly commendable.

S161 Caudwell, Sarah
Thus Was Adonis Murdered
Scrib 1981

A newcomer, English and apparently from the legal profession, for her debut has chosen the form invented (and so far monopolized) by Pat McGerr in *Pick Your Victim* (COC No. 1474). That form consists of putting a group of people to figuring out what a series of events at a distance and incompletely reported may mean. It is in effect the game of Twenty Questions, except that not all the answers are forthcoming or to the point.

Here, a young woman who is far from stupid but congenitally and erotically enterprising leaves her colleagues in a London law office to spent a short holiday in Venice. She is at once in trouble and sends back tantalizing messages as to her plight. When her new lover's body is found dead in her bed at the Italian hotel, a rescue mission is dispatched and the imbroglio works itself out, perhaps a little too scampily. But the tale as a whole is excellent. It is difficult to make a damn fool, male or female, at once attractive, believable, intelligent, and an object of uncondescending humor. Julia Larwood is all of these, and her creator (who writes like an angel) deserves a prize in the serious-hilarious department of crime fiction. We can't wait for No. 2.



S162 Clark, Douglas
The Longest Pleasure
Gollancz

The longest pleasure, Byron says in *Don Juan,* is hatred; and this is the theme of the latest tale by a far from negligible contributor to our earlier and quite different pleasure. When people at various points in England start dying of botulism, it is soon apparent that the cases are not accidental and disconnected. Somebody has got hold of the right "culture" to infect—whom? and how? A pretty problem, which the author has set within a tolerable plot and activated by a plausible motive. Unfortunately, in order to explain *all* the details about Clostridium

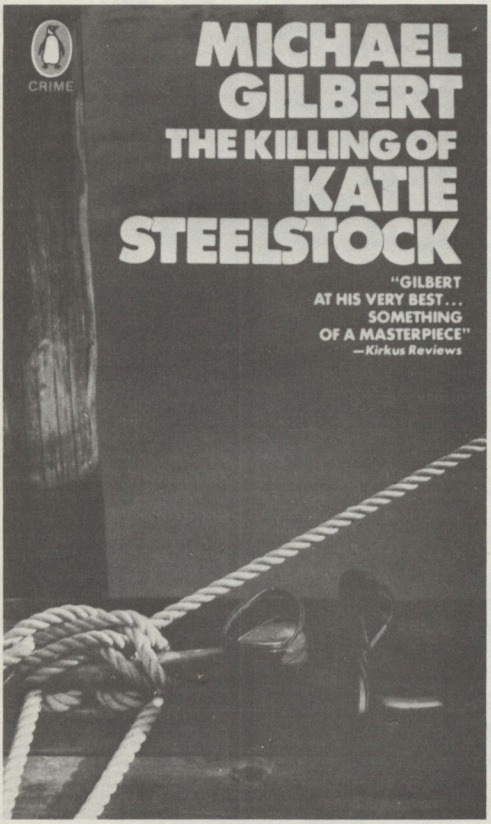
botulinum, Mr. Clark virtually abandons the fictional narrative tone and gives us long, unlikely dialogues which are really speeches by scientists cut up into lengths by "intelligent" questions from the police officers. And this mistake happens not once but at every stage of the investigation. The story is potentially so good that one feels like Beethoven after hearing Paer's opera: "I liked it and I think I'll set it to music."

S163 Fletcher, David (pseud.)
A Lovable Man
C, McC & G 1975

The 34-year-old author, said to be the husband of a well-known novelist and a "committed vegetarian," won a prize for this first novel, which has received much praise from good critics. It certainly reads well, and it contributes to the literature a killer who must rank high among bastards. Roger Kilby, except when the object of his attention is his wife, lets others do his killing. This strategem helps to make the case a nice example of "police baffled." Even so, the humane yet hard-headed Inspector Ruby has his suspicions. Mr. Fletcher writes with assured style and exhibits a comprehensive knowledge of various kinds of social decadence, though his portrayal of a homosexual man of letters seems rather strained. Whether or not the departure from the genre is welcome to the reader, the book remains an unusual document.

S164 Gilbert, Michael
The Killing of Katie Steelstock
Harper 1980

This twenty-first book by the distinguished lawyer is one of his best. Few writers of crime fiction have so well managed to match large output with high quality. Here we have an excellent tale, rich in varied substance and embodying unusual psychological tensions that are very much of our time. Everything we see and are told is wholly free from any taint of bookishness.



Katie Steelstock is a singer who has "made it" in television. When she returns to her small hometown to attend a dance, she is brutally murdered but not sexually attacked. Chief Superintendent Knott of the C.I.D. finds himself in the midst of a complex case, soon topped by a second murder. His gradual discovery of Katie's true character and shady relationships is presented with great clarity and unremitting suspense. The book, in fact, has virtually everything one could ask for: fine local color, good topography, a discreet yet pertinent sexual element, and a good trial. The author's presentation of the "true facts" of the case in the final three pages is masterly.

S165 Symons, Julian
The Great Detectives: Seven Original Investigations
Illustrated by Tom Adams
Van Nostrand (Toronto) 1981
Abrams (New York) 1981

The versatile Mr. Symons has had a splendid idea and has executed it splendidly. After stupendous research in the tales told of seven masters of detection—Holmes, Marple, Marlowe, Maigret, Wolfe, Poirot, and Queen—he has organized the facts into as many biographical essays, some of them artfully embedded in original adventures "in the manner of..." Accuracy is as conspicuous as variety in these treatments of figures we all thought we knew well. The doubtful (or impossible) facts are dealt with Napoleonically, and invention rules where permissible. All these merits make the work unique: indispensable for reference and admirable as fiction.

Still, it is the work of human hands, and some small specks may be discerned if one uses a pocket magnifier: Carry Nation's first name is misspelled, Athelney Jones's misprinted. One wonders about the cute girl here missing from the Queen household. And on the subject of sausages, it must be said sorrowfully, the author's views are subversive—of fact, morality, and the spirit of science.

The illustrations are imaginative and satisfying, all but that of Nero Wolfe's important front door, flanked by unlikely Doric columns. Let us pray for a second edition; for in it there might also be a shade of difference in the superb "Marlowe," owing to the new light cast upon him by the recent *Selected Letters of Raymond Chandler*.

S166 Various Hands
Crime Digest
Davis Publications, New York

The first issue of this new periodical is marked October–November 1981 and the second January–February 1982; it is to be published six times a year. The contents are abridgements, fifty to sixty pages long (*Readers Digest* size), of books by William Z. Kienzle, Frederick Forsyth, Marilyn Sharp, Joseph Wambaugh, Stuart Woods, and John Gardner. The last named is the official prolonger of James Bond's adventures. In addition, there is a short nonfiction article on the Jean Harris case and very brief reviews of books and films in the genre. The condensations seem skilfully done, but why done at all? One does not read crime fiction in order to be efficiently informed—"spared" 150 pages. Isn't a digest of the delights of detection like offering a gourmet meal in capsule form? □

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