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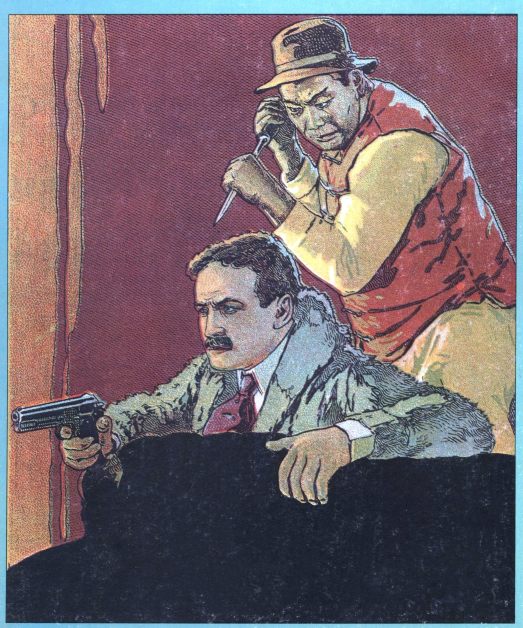

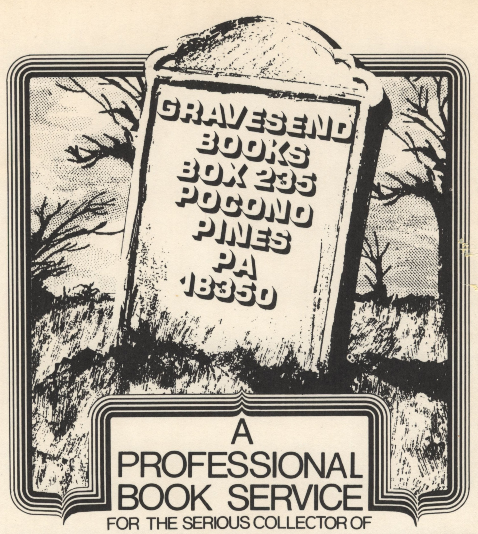

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196 The Oriental in Mystery Fiction: The Sinister Oriental Part I
Greg Goode

203 The Oriental in Crime Fiction and Film: A Bibliography of Secondary Sources
Greg Goode

219 The Demoniacal St. Amand and the Brave Baron von Kaz
Douglas G. Greene

238 The Future Is Upon Us: A Necrology for the Year 1981
George Wuyek

242 Classic Corner: Rare Tales from the Archives
Greaves' Disappearance by Julian Hawthorne

253 William R. Cox: An Interview and an Appreciation
Jim Traylor

Departments

194 The Uneasy Chair

212 Rex Stout Newsletter
John McAleer

214 AJH Reviews

234 Paper Crimes
William L. DeAndrea

236 The Paperback Revolution
Charles Shibuk

249 Collecting Mystery Fiction
Otto Penzler

267 TAD on TV
Richard Meyers

269 The Radio Murder Hour
Chris Steinbrunner

270 TAD at the Movies
Thomas Godfrey

273 The Dorothy L. Sayers Newsletter

274 Crime Hunt
T. M. McDade

276 Catalogue of Crime
Jacques Barzun and Wendell Hertig Taylor

278 Letters

282 Current Reviews

284 Retrospective Review

285 Minor Offenses
Edward D. Hoch

286 Checklist
M. S. Cappadonna

288 Mystery Marketplace

THE UNEASY CHAIR

Dear TADian:

It's that time on the cycle again, time for me to be outrageous, annoying, and otherwise a gadfly—an event which occurs, seemingly, every other issue. So...

On Sunday, May 9, 1982, the Sunday immediately following the Edgar Awards dinner, a group of writers and fans met at a small New York eatery called Bogie's. As the name indicates, the owners, Billy and Karen Palmer, have a certain affection for our genre. That affection, and commitment, has given rise to something I favor. It is a plan which would require your cooperation, and the cooperation of all mystery fans. It is a plan which would result in a new award.

What Billy and Karen would like to see is an annual award, made part of Bouchercon, presented by the fans to the writers, an award akin to the Hugo presented by SF fans at their Worldcon. Details—from the nominating and balloting procedures to categories to financial backing—are still to be worked out. In all likelihood, ballots will be placed either in the fanzines or as part of Bouchercon registration forms, and only those registered for the Con will be eligible to vote.

The important thing about the Bogie, as it is presently being called, is that it would in no way conflict with the Edgar. Rather, it is a separate award which not only allows the fans to vote for their favorites but which should serve as extra encouragement for the writers.

There'll be more about this as things develop; for now, though, we would all appreciate your reactions, ideas, and suggestions. Karen and Billy would like to see the first awards presented at Bouchercon in New York in 1983—so you have some idea of the timing involved.

On another matter. It seems that I owe many people apologies, and, while I am in the process of writing individually to them, I want to take this opportunity to say that I'm sorry correspondence has been so slow. Unfortunately, my available time, especially for these last five or six months, has been severely limited. I am also from the school of thought which dictates that a commitment made is one that must be kept, and, rather than trying to find a way out of certain situations, I've just been working away as best I can and not really staying aware of just how far behind I'm falling.

Events now indicate that I am going to have a lot more time, and I feel confident that I will be able to catch up by the middle of the summer. In the meantime, though, to all who have been awaiting responses and who have, rightly, been complaining about the lack of attention, my sincerest apologies.

An apology is also due Bob Randisi, who did not receive a credit for his photos accompanying the article on the Beer City Capers.

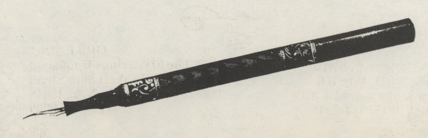
A more uplifting note. Ed Hoch has graciously agreed to take on the column for short story reviews started by Ed Hunsburger. His first foray appears in this issue, and I must admit to being pleased. Ed is one of the acknowledged masters of the field, and I know you will find his insights informative and entertaining.

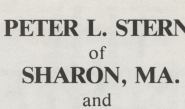
But enough. The issue awaits. Enjoy.

Best mysterious wishes,

Michael Seidman

MICHAEL SEIDMAN





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The Oriental in Crime Fiction:

THE SINISTER ORIENTAL

Part 1

By Greg Goode

Ever since the early 1300s, when *The Book of Marco Polo* was published, the West has been intrigued and mystified by the Orient. Orientalists and Sinologists have devotedly studied the Orient in all its aspects at least since Dr. Johnson's time. Today there are institutes of Sinology and departments of Asian Studies at many Western universities. Even American architecture has at times embraced Oriental style. Hollywood's most famous movie showcase, Grauman's Chinese Theater, was built in the early 1920s in an Americanized Oriental Gothic and looks almost the same today.

The Oriental, who has figured largely in Western popular fiction at least since the nineteenth century, appears more and more frequently today, and in almost every type and genre of popular literature.[1] Popular fads, such as the Bruce Lee-inspired martial arts craze, James Clavell's *Shogun* TV miniseries, and Eric Van Lustbader's *The Ninja* (Evans, 1980) resulted in every younger generations becoming interested in certain isolated aspects of Asian culture.

In crime fiction, from the boys' journals and dime novels to Fu Manchu and his imitators, the Oriental was synonymous with mystery, intrigue and horrendous evil.[2] The prevalence of such fiction was partly what caused Earl Derr Biggers's well known desire to create an amiable Chinese on the side of law and order. In 1931, he explained that "sinister and wicked Chinese were old stuff in mystery stories."[3] Charlie Chan appeared in 1925, and was popular, but had not gained enough popularity in four years and three, perhaps four, novels, to prevent Father Ronald A. Knox from devoting the fifth rule of his "Detective Decalogue" to the exclusion of "Chinamen" from detective stories.[4] Doubtless Knox was thinking of Sinister Orientals, for his reason for Rule V was that it was thought by most that "Chinamen" were overequipped with brains and underequipped with morals.[5] By this time, 1929, there were many friendly Orientals other than Charlie Chan in crime fiction,[6] but for every one of them there were scores of wicked ones.[7]

But just as world historical events such as the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 were partly responsible for the spate of early xenophobic crime fiction[8]—Fu Manchu appeared just twelve years later—other events became responsible for the character of later crime fiction in which Orientals appeared. World War II forced the West and the Orient to come closer than they had come before. The Indo-Chinese War, the establishment of the People's Republic of China, and the growing ethnic consciousness of the 1970s all affected the Oriental's appearance in crime fiction.

The Oriental is found most frequently in three subgenres of crime fiction: Yellow Peril and Sinister Oriental fiction, stories of international intrigue, and detective stories proper, where he usually appears as a professional policeman. Since the early 1940s, the proportion of friendly Orientals (whether as detectives, private eyes, or allies of Western agents in Asia) to Sinister Orientals has increased so much that today there are perhaps more of the former than the latter.

Perhaps a clarification is in order before I proceed. By "Oriental," I mean "Far Easterner." The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines the Far East as Tibet,

China, Korea, Taiwan, Mongolia, Japan, and all of Southeast Asia. I mean to exclude countries which are sometimes considered as part of the Orient, such as India and the Arab countries. Because of certain important characters such as Charlie Chan and Jo Gar, Hawaii and the Philippines should be included.

Part I

The Sinister Oriental: From Yellow Peril to Red Menace

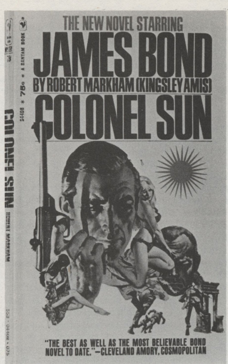
The classic Sinister Oriental, especially up to about 1940, combined the deadly aggression of Genghis Khan with the bizarre sophistication of the mad scientist. But the Sinister Oriental's organization of minions was larger than the great Khan's and extended much farther into the West. Fu Manchu's organization, the Si-Fan, was composed of several different sects of Asian murderers, such as dacoits, thugs, and phansigars, who tormented Nayland Smith and associates wherever they went. Donald A. Keyhoe's Fu Manchu imitation, Dr. Yen Sin, tried, in three pulp appearances in 1936, to conquer the world with his Invisible Empire, which was composed of deformed, ape-like, devilish-looking assistants. One of the most hideously ugly of the early Sinister Orientals, John Easton's Dogface,[9] had a smaller army (confined to Tibet) but intentions just as grandiose as those of Fu Manchu and Yen Sin. With his Blue Hat Sect, Dogface attempted to conquer Tibet in order to clear the way for China and Russia to invade India, then the rest of the world.

Like Dr. Frankenstein, the Sinister Oriental would use methods unknown to the rest of the scientific world to accomplish his goals. In addition to his degrees from three Western universities, Dr. Fu Manchu possessed knowledge of Asian flora and fauna sufficient to stump Western scientists. With his "Zayat Kiss" (the bite of a deadly poisonous Burmese centipede),[10] "Coughing Horror" (a trained Abyssinian baboon sacred to the Amharun tribe),[11] various poisons and gases, a quasi human-life creating process,[12] and other devices, Fu Manchu demonstrated his mastery over science. Dr. Yen Sin developed an extremely advanced laser-type emerald ray called the Dragon's Shadow, which could burn through wood, concrete, and, of course, people.[13]

The combination of Oriental despot and mad scientist was perhaps best characterized by The Shadow's *bête noir*, Shiwan Khan, the Golden Master.[14] Shiwan Khan was actually a descendant of Genghis Khan, and, from his military installation in the lost city of Xanadu, he would plot and plan to conquer the world. In one novel, he seeks an ancient Oriental relic, the silver coffin of Temujin, in order to become Kha Khan, Great Ruler of all the world.[15] With his mastery of the West's hard sciences and the East's more subtle mentalistic sciences, Shiwan Khan would use flickering lights to control his minions.

It was specifically the Oriental exoticism of such villians and their devices that provided both the dangerous threat to Western heroes and also the foreign mystique. Not only were the inventions dangerous but they were used by evil geniuses who were "inscrutable," "unfathomable," "cunning," and of course "wily." Such epithets abounded in Sinister Orientals stories.

"Yellow Peril" is sometimes used to represent stories in which the threat was anything Asian tainting the West, and in which there was no real dominant individual villain. Although the classic Sinister Oriental stories are also sometimes thought of as Yellow Peril fiction, there were plenty of stories in which the mere presence of hordes of Orientals (usually Chinese) in the West was enough to terrorize the heroes. Although M. P. Shiel's *The Yellow Danger* (1898) included a Chinese warlord, the principal threat was an Oriental invasion of Europe. Calvin Ball, in a 1925 short story, "Chinese Merchan-

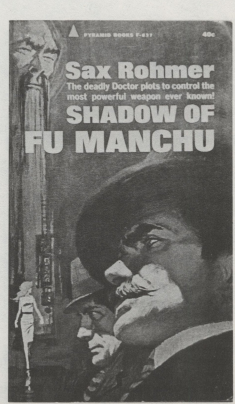


dise," told of hordes of Chinese being mailed to the U.S. in crates from Canada.[16] Curtis Steele's James Christopher, in *The Yellow Scourge*, battled thousands of Chinese who came to attack the U.S. and the Panama Canal.[17]

By the late 1930s, the large numbers of Chinese and their military threat had turned into the quieter threat of Western countries being infiltrated by Chinese illegal aliens. In *The Teeth of the Dragon* (1937), The Shadow quashed the "insidious" enterprise of "Chink running," which was controlled by the U.S.-based Jeho Fan tong.[18] One of the last of these Yellow Peril threats occurred peripherally in James Hadley Chase's *Twelve Chinks and a Woman* (1940),[19] again as a relatively quiet "Chink running" operation. It is significant that this book was revised and retitled twice. Ten years later it appeared, with fewer xenophobic epithets, as *Twelve Chinamen and a Woman* (1950), and in twenty more years as *The Doll's Bad News* (1970).

With World War II came the decline of the sinister Chinese and the rise of the sinister Japanese. Fu Manchu was inactive between 1941 and 1948,[20] when he returned to battle Chinese Communism. The several Wu Fangs had ceased operations,[21] as had Yen Sin. But in their place arose sinister Japanese warlords. In August 1944, almost exactly a year before Japan's unconditional surrender, Doc Savage fought a mysterious and sinister Japanese known as Jiu San.[22] Savage had been tapped by U.S. officials to sneak into Japan and assemble a group of Japanese who would rule Japan in a way amenable to the U.S. after the Allied victory. He found a sympathetic group, but somewhere in Yokohama was Jiu San, who sabotaged his efforts in order that he, Jiu San, might become Emperor. As Emperor, of course, he would try to conquer the world.

Whereas the sinister Chinese had used armies of men to aid him, the sinister Japanese relied on the stealth of a hand-picked few for his schemes. In the movie serial *Secret Agent X-9* (Universal, 1945), Japanese warlords ordered beautiful Nabura, head of the Black Dragon intelligence agency, to steal a secret formula for synthetic fuel from the U.S. In a very similar serial, *The Black Widow* (Republic, 1947), Hitomu, the evil Asian king, sent his beautiful daughter Sombra to the U.S. to steal an atomic rocket engine so that he could dominate the world.



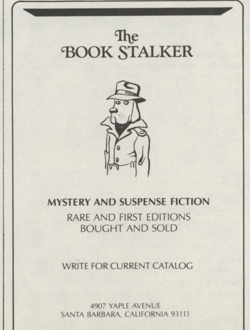
As the years progressed, the ambitions of the sinister Japanese became smaller and smaller, perhaps as an indirect result of Japan's declining threat to the rest of the world. After WW II, the sinister Japanese no longer sought to conquer the West. In *Kill Me in Tokyo* (1958),[23] private-eye-of-sorts Burns Bannion stumbled upon a U.S. currency smuggling operation confined only to Asia. In an echo of Chandler's "Find my Velma," Bannion was hired to "Find my Mitsuko." Mysterious Mitsuko turned out to be not just another girl, but a geisha and the ringleader of the entire smuggling plot. She was a very strange geisha, though, and perhaps the strangest sinister Japanese ever: "she" turned out to be a transvestite karate killer, a man in geisha's clothing. In *Assignment: Find Cherry* (1968), another private eye in Asia, Curt Stone, battled the religiously and culturally fanatic Japanese group called the Pure Nation Society and their incognito leader Mr. Aikawa.[24] Although Aikawa had been educated in the U.S. at M.I.T. and was a respectable businessman, he was also fanatically devoted to returning Japan to her ancient Spartan-like purity by severing her foreign relations, ousting Westerners, and overthrowing her present government.

By the '70s, the sinister Japanese was just a memory. In *The Bengali Inheritance* (1975),[25] Hiroshi Watanabe, former commander of the dreaded Japanese 82nd Bureau, Japan's WW II intelligence agency, was sinister, but by reputation only. His reputation was almost omnipresent in the novel: He had tortured and murdered POW's in Asian wars ever since the 1936 Chinese War. But the fact that he was presently involved in much milder activities, such as the gathering of the lost bodies of his fellows in the 82nd Bureau, seemed to indicate that the heyday of the sinister Japanese warlord had passed.

After WW II there was more turbulence in Asia, and, with it, different Sinister Orientals appeared in crime fiction. In the Indo-Chinese War (1946–54), the French were driven from the Indo-Chinese colonies they had established. In the turbulence in Malaya at about the same time, the British were having trouble maintaining their colonies. One of the results was that Communism spread throughout Southeast Asia. These events were reflected by the rise of the Sinister Oriental who was neither Chinese nor Japanese. And, just as the Southeast Asian countries were individually less influential than China or Japan, so were their Sinister Orientals. A villain as sadistic as any of John D. MacDonald's most vicious creations appeared in Mark Derby's *Malayan Rose* (1951).[26] Makota was a sinister Javanese who had worked as a translator and torturer for Japan during WW II. Now he worked for the terrorist Indonesian Army of Liberation, torturing, maiming, and murdering Western women whose husbands had colonial posts in Malaya. Makota's tortures were explained with a much closer focus than Dr. Fu Manchu's had been. Because of this, and the intense joy Makota derived from his activities, he seems more sinister than his contemporaries.

Anti-Western imperialism was almost always the motive of the sinister Southeast Asian. Sinister Malayan Mr. Kim, in Susan Yorke's *Agency House, Malaya* (1962),[27] plotted to blow up the entire city of Kuala Lumpur in order to crush the British colonial establishment and pave the way for Communism. Simon Harvester's *The Flying Horse* (1962) featured another Communist anti-Western imperialist villain. This time he was a Korean named Pak Un Tai. In William Stroup's only crime novel, *The Mark of Pak San Ri* (1965), there was another sinister Korean, Pak San Ri, who also just happened to be another currency-smuggling transvestite crime lord.[28]

More recently, the motivations of the small-scale Sinister Oriental have changed yet again. In a South African film, *To Kill and Kill Again* (1981), Korean Master Bong Soo Han set up a small religious cult empire and brainwashed his adepts into serving him



as slaves and donating their life savings to his causes. When the converts questioned his procedures, he would batter them with Tae Kwon Do and throw them to be trampled by a bull. A ridiculous figure, Master Bong resembled a hybrid Dr. No–James Jones–Bruce Lee. A sinister Vietnamese called only "Assassin" appeared in the film *Search and Destroy* (1981). Assassin came to the U.S. on a mission of deadly revenge against former members of a combat squad which had served in Vietnam. Murdering the vets one by one, Assassin sought no empire, but he did have the trappings of an exotic sinister villain—dressed in all black with the inevitable black glove covering the deformed hand.

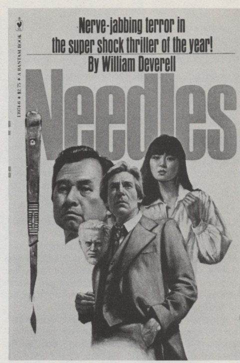
The Yellow Peril becomes the Red Menace toward the end of the 1950s, when the sinister Chinese is once again active, but now as a rampaging Communist. After the formation and worldwide recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1949–50, Sinister Orientals were again primarily Chinese, but with a difference. The new villains now subordinated their desires for personal conquest and domination to the larger goal of *Communist* domination of the world.

Oswald Wynd, who is perhpas the best chronicler of Asian intrigue, relates the real-life Chinese Communist threat to crime fiction in his comments about his Communist cautionary tale *Death the Red Flower* (1965):

> Throughout China today little tots in kindergarten are being taught a dance mime in which the final movement is the thrusting of a spear through the prostrate body of "imperialism," America, and after her Britain. . . . At the moment China is the enemy and not to see this . . . as a good many Britons and some Americans refuse to see it . . . is to invite disaster. What happens in *Death the Red Flower* could be horribly near tomorrow's headlines.[29]

Such was the thinking between the late 1950s and mid-1960s.

The transition from the old-style Sinister Oriental to the evil Chinese Communist villain is illustrated by several pivotal books published within ten years of one another. Although Fu Manchu appeared in *Emperor Fu Manchu* in 1959, the last well-known Sinister Oriental of the old style was Dr. No, who appeared in Ian Fleming's book of the same name in 1958. On Crab Key, his small island in the Caribbean, Dr. No wielded his advanced scientific equipment in order to interfere with the rocket systems of the world's superpowers. He was also independent, desiring personally to command the world, or at least sell his skills to the highest bidder. He also had the trappings of an exotic villain—no hair, no eyelashes, and no natural hands; his were mechanical. Fleming's description of Dr. No could have come right from the pulps:



> The bizarre, gliding figure looked like a giant venomous worm wrapped in grey tin-foil, and Bond would not have been surprised to see the rest of it trailing slimily along the carpet behind.[30]

But Dr. No's menace was definitely modern and impressively technological, not magical and story-book-like, as was Fu Manchu's. As Dr. No explained his threat, "This island, Mr. Bond, is about to be developed into the most valuable technical intelligence centre in the world."[31] He further explained how he had been jamming missile guidance systems and diverting the missiles with equipment of his own design. In *Dr. No*, the Sinister Oriental became somewhat modernized.

The next year saw both the final book-length tale of Fu Manchu (*Emperor Fu Manchu*), who had since 1948 been working *against* the Communists of his country, and also perhaps the first full-fledged sinister Communist Chinese, Dr. Yen Lo, in Richard Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate* (1959). Dr. Yen Lo had been employed by the Russians during the Korean War to hypnotize and brainwash U.S. soldiers with Communist values to perform Communist-inspired tasks. Gone was the old Sinister Oriental urge to dominate the world for oneself, but the mad scientist aspect remained. Dr. Lo possessed

state-of-the-art knowledge of Pavlovian classical conditioning and had found a hitherto undiscovered way to condition men's entire nervous systems. Dr. Lo also possessed two more degrees than Fu Manchu: D.M.S., D.Ph., D.Sc., B.S.P., and R.H.S. The theory and practice of his technique is spelled out in extensive medical and psychological detail, and the effect on the reader is realistic terror, not romantic wonder.

That the old-fashioned mold for the Asian villain was cracking is also illustrated by perhaps the first outright comical imitation of the Sinister Oriental, in *Matzoball* (Pocket Books Special, 1966) by Sol Weinstein. Dr. Nu (Dr. Watts Nu), like his inspiration, Dr. No., was half Chinese, but was 6′6″, ash blond, and spoke with a thick Chinese dialect, like one of Chester Bailey Fernald's characters. Dr. Nu had Communist paymasters but plotted to outwit them so that he personally could rule the world.

The next Sinister Oriental in the Bond saga was also a Communist, working for the People's Liberation Army of China, in *Colonel Sun* (1968) by Kingsley Amis. Colonel Sun Liang-tan, of that army's Special Activities Committee was employed to torture men, especially Bond. Although not as refined a technician as Dr. Yen Lo, Colonel Sun had his methods. He explained to Bond that he planned to break all the major bones in his body, inject the body with a convulsive drug, and make it one of his "vital instruments in an ingenious political scheme aimed, roughly, at inflicting serious damage on the prestige" of England.[32]

A good example of the Sinister Chicom in the realistic school of espionage fiction is Chiang Li-shih, in *The Smile on the Face of the Tiger* (1969) by Douglas Hurd and Andrew Osmond. Called "The Tiger of Perak," Chiang is a ruthless superagent working for Mao himself, blackmailing and extorting the British out of Hong Kong. Chiang is enough of a threat to the British that, even though he is not at the top of the Chinese governmental superstructure, his elimination "remains the principal objective of all security forces in the Sungei Siput area."[33] Chiang is sinister, but, like his fellow Communist villains, his designs are less ambitious than those of the pre-Communist Sinister Orientals: ultimately he is working for someone else and for a cause greater than himself.

Sometimes, instead of Chinese Communism, the Asian threat is heroin trafficking. Just as the threat occasionally was thousands of Chinese infiltrating to the West in the 1920s and '30s, the threat is now occasionally thousands of kilos of heroin infiltrating Western borders from Asia. And, instead of Tongs, battled generations ago by dime novel heroes such as Nick Carter and King Brady,[34] modern crime fiction makes triads responsible for the dope threat.

In William Deverell's *Needles* (1979) there is a Sinister Oriental who is also a heroin trafficker. Dr. Au P'ang Wei is a member of the Hong Kong-based Ch'ao-chou triad and is on the receiving end of drug shipments coming into Canada. As a Western-trained surgeon who also knows the pleasure and pain points in acupunture, Dr. Au is in a unique position to defend his Canadian drug network: he simply tortures those he suspects of having informed. He is extremely cruel, and his methods of torture almost strain the permissiveness of modern fiction for descriptions of sex and violence. The Chinese heroin threat is also seen in books such as Robert Daley's *Year of the Dragon* (1981) and in films such as *Enter the Dragon* (1973) and *An Eye for an Eye* (1981).

Since 1970, the Sinister Oriental has shown up more frequently than at any time since the 1930s. Almost every paperback action series, such as Nick Carter, The Executioner, The Destroyer, The Death Merchant, The Penetrator, The Butcher, the Hawk, or the recent American Avenger, has its share of Asian villains, most of them Communist or terrorist, many of them Japanese or Korean. The Sinister Oriental appears in affectionate parody of Fu Manchu in Michael Avallone's *Death in Yellow*, in nostalgic pulp-pastiche in Richard Jaccoma's

"Yellow Peril", in a carbon copy of Dr. No in the film *Enter the Dragon*—even Doctor Who battles a Sinister Orientals in *Doctor Who and the Talons of Weng-Chiang*—and on and on.[35] Perhaps this resurgence is in some way due to the wide discovery and strengthening of some of the conventions of crime fiction in the past decade. Perhaps it is partly due to the ever-growing popularity of nostalgia. In any case, it appears that the Sinister Oriental, whether bearing Yellow Peril or Red Menace, is here to stay.

Notes

1. For example, in nonfiction there is Maxine Hong Kingston's bio-history *China Men* (Knopf, 1980); less "popular" and more "serious" than popular fiction is Yukio Mishima's oft reprinted *Sea of Fertility* tetralogy (1975). Orientals appear in science fiction in Jessica Amanda Salmonson's *Tomoe Gozen* (Ace, 1981); in Somtow Sucharitkul's *Starship & Haiku* (Pocket, 1981); and in *Dai San* (Doubleday, 1978) by Eric Van Lustbader, who was instrumental in starting the "Ninja" craze. The blockbuster romance has Oriental interest and characters in Michael William Scott's *China Bride* (Warner, 1981), and the epic adventure presents such titles as Van Lustbader's *The Ninja* (Evans, 1980), Robert Shea's "Shike" series (Jove, 1981), and Robert S. Elegants's picaresque tales *Dynasty* (McGraw-Hill, 1977) and *Manchu* (McGraw-Hill, 1980). The gangster novel is done an Oriental turn in *Chinese Godfather* (Fawcett, 1980) by Paul Gillette. Last but not least, there are James Clavell's mainstream novels of the Orient, particularly of Hong Kong, *King Rat* (Dell, 1962, but reprinted several times), *Tai Pan* (Atheneum, 1966), the enormously popular *Shogun* (Atheneum, 1975), and most recently *Noble House* (Delacorte, 1981).
2. Robin Winks covers some of the Asian "horrors" in the boys' journals of the 1870s, in "The Sinister Oriental: Everybody's Favorite Villain," *Murder Ink* (Dilys Wynn, ed.; Workman, 1977), pp. 491–93.
3. To an anonymous interviewer in the *New York Times*, March 22, VIII, p. 7.
4. First published in Knox's introduction to *The Best Detective Stories of 1928* (New York: Liveright; London: Faber, 1929). Reprinted in Howard Haycraft's *The Art of the Mystery Story* (Simon & Schuster, 1946), pp. 194–96. Knox's anthology was published the same year as Charlie Chan's fourth book appearance, *The Black Camel*, and I do not know whether Knox knew about it or read it.
5. Knox, in Haycraft, p. 195.
6. Some of the friendly Orientals before 1929 include some of Hugh Wiley's characters, such as Cheng Huan in "The Chink and the Child," in his *Limehouse Nights* (London: McBride, 1917), E. Harcourt Burrage's Ching Ching in *Ching Ching on the Trail* (Lucas, 1892), Howard Pease's Wu Sing, in *Shanghai Passage* (Doubleday, 1929), and Dashiell Hammett's Lillian Shan in "Dead Yellow Women" (*Black Mask*, Nov. 1925). Some Orientals were both friendly and sinister, such as Chester Bailey Fernald's Chan Tow in "Chan Tow, Highrob" (*Century* 49 (NS 27) 797–800, March 1895), and Oppenheim's sinister Japanese gentleman, Prince Maiyo, in *The Illustrious Prince* (Hodder, 1910).
7. For an excellent, concise history of early Oriental villains, especially of Fu Manchu's imitators, see Robert E. Briney, "Sinister Orientals," *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection*. Chris Steinbrunner and Otto Penzler, eds.; McGraw-Hill, 1976), pp. 302–4.
8. Briney. For the variety of xenophobic fiction published up until the late 1930s, there are two excellent pieces. Sue Fawn Chung traces the image of the Chinese-American as it went from bad to better in "From Fu Manchu, Evil Genius, to James Lee Wong, Popular Hero: A Study of the Chinese-American in Popular Periodical Fiction from 1920 to 1940," *Journal of Popular Culture* X:3:534–47. William F. Wu, in his recent *The Yellow Peril: Chinese Americans in American Fiction 1850–1940* (Archon Books, 1982), traces and analyzes the image of the Oriental in fact and in fiction (much of it genre—in the pulps, periodicals, Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan).
9. In *Dogface* (London: Allan, 1927).
10. *The Mystery of Dr. Fu-Manchu* (Methuen, 1913); U.S.: *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu* (McBride, Nast, 1913).
11. *The Devil Doctor* (Methuen, 1916); U.S.: *The Return of Dr. Fu-Manchu* (McBride, Nast, 1916).
12. *The Bride of Fu Manchu* (Cassell, 1933); U.S.: *Fu Manchu's Bride* (The Crime Club, 1933). Fu Manchu's life-creating process yielded the "Hairless Man."
13. Keyhoe, *The Mystery of the Dragon's Shadow* (Dr. Yen Sin *Magazine*, May 1936).
14. The Shadow's battle with Shiwan Khan was fought in four issues of *The Shadow Magazine: The Golden Master.* Sept. 15, 1939; *Shiwan Khan Returns*, Dec. 1, 1939; *The Invinsible Shiwan Khan*, March 1, 1940; and *Masters of Death*, May 15, 1940. Frank D. McSherry, Jr. gives a splendid summary of the four-novel mini-saga in "The Shadow of Ying Ko," *The Rohmer Reivew* 16 (July 1977), entire issue.
15. *Masters of Death.*
16. *Saturday Evening Post* 198:25, Dec. 19, 1925.
17. *Operator 5* magazine, 1934. Reprinted by Freeway Press, 1974.
18. *The Shadow Magazine*, Nov. 15, 1937. Reprinted by Dover, 1975.
19. Jarrolds, 1940. Revised as *Twelve Chinamen and a Woman* (Novel Library, 1950); again as *The Doll's Bad News* (Panther, 1970).
20. From *The Island of Fu Manchu* (New York: The Crime Club, 1941; London: Cassell, 1941) to *Shadow of Fu Manchu* (New York: The Crime Club; London: Cassell, 1948).
21. One Wu Fang each by the following authors: William Roland Daniel, in a series of novels from 1928 to 1937; Robert J. Hogan, in *The Mysterious Wu Fang* magazine; Norman Marsh in a 1938 Whitman Big Little Book; also, in addition to a comic strip, there may have been still other Wu Fangs.
22. *Doc Savage Magazine*, Aug. 1944; reprinted in *Doc Savage: Jiu San* (#107)/*The Black, Black Witch* (#108) by Bantam, 1981. Although Jiu San is thought by almost everyone to be Japanese, he turns out to be Dutch. This fact, however, does not diminish the force of the sinister Japanese as a threat: if he were known from the beginning to be Dutch, the threat would have been minimal.
23. By Earl Norman (Berkley, 1958).
24. In Jack Seward's *Assignment: Find Cherry* (Belmont Tower, 1973), copyright 1968.
25. By Owen Sela (Random House).
26. Published by Collins; U.S.: *Afraid in the Dark* (Viking, 1952).
27. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy; reprinted as *The Girl in the Cheongsam* (Macfadden Books, 1963).
28. *The Mark of Pak San Ri* (Book Company of America, 1965).
29. Jacket blurb on *Death the Red Flower* (Harcourt, Brace, 1965). First ellipsis mine; others are the editors'.
30. Ian Fleming, *Dr. No* (Macmillan, 1958); reprinted by Signet, 1964, p. 130.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
32. Robert Markham (pseud. of Kingsley Amis) (Harper & Row, 1968); reprinted by Bantam, 1969, p. 159.
33. Reprinted by Ballantine, 1971, p. 18.
34. For example, *Nick Carter in San Francisco; or, Unearthing Crime in Chinatown,* Nick Carter Detective Library #26, 1892; *The Bradys and the Hip Sing Ling; or After the Chinese Free Masons.* Secret Service Library: Old and Young King Brady, Detectives, May 30, 1919.
35. Lo Te Tsang, in Michael Avallone's *Death in Yellow*, The Butcher #31, as by Stuart Jason (Pinnacle, 1981); Dr. Chou en Shu, in Richard Jaccoma's *"Yellow Peril": The Adventures of Sir John Weymouth-Smythe* (Richard Marek, 1978; reprinted by Berkley, 1980); like the cinematic Dr. No, the villain Mr. Han in *Enter the Dragon* (1973) stroked a white cat and had a mechanical hand; Mr. Weng-Chiang, the crafty magician-ventriloquist in Terrence Dicks's *Doctor Who and the Talons of Weng-Chiang* (#7) (Pinnacle, 1979). □

The Oriental in Crime Fiction and Film: A Bibliography of Secondary Sources

By Greg Goode

The Oriental is enjoying a resurgence in crime fiction and film. Since 1970, he has appeared as a Sinister Oriental in many numbers of many of the paperback action series, such as Nick Carter, The Penetrator, The Death Merchant, The Destroyer, and others. The Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan novels have been reprinted in paperback several times, and each character has appeared in a recent film, *The Fiendish Plot of Dr. Fu Manchu* (1980) and *Charlie Chan and the Curse of the Dragon Queen* (1981). Judge Dee has also been reprinted often in the last ten years.

Perhaps as a result of a rekindled pride and interest in ethnic identity, there have appeared several new Oriental detectives. E. V. Cunningham's Sgt. Masao Masuto has appeared in five novels since 1967 (four of them since 1977), James Melville's Superintendent Tetsuo Otani in three since 1979. The mystery magazines have introduced several more Oriental detectives, such as Nan Hamilton's Sam (Isamu) Ohara (not "O'hara") in EQMM and AHMM, Seiko Legru's Inspector Saito in AHMM, Ron Butler's Police Inspector Toshihiko Ueki in AHMM, Ta Huang Chi's private eye David Feng in EQMM, and others.

The last ten years have produced more expositional, critical, and bibliographical material on this small area than it seems had ever existed before, perhaps as a response to a new, serious interest in popular fiction and film (aided in no small way by TAD itself). The year 1972 saw the publication of book-length biographies of two of the most important authors of Asian characters, John P. Marquand by Stephen Birmingham and Sax Rohmer by Cay Van Ash and Elizabeth Sax Rohmer (see sections IV, II). The Oriental detective in film has recently been examined by William K. Everson, Michael Pitts, and others (section I). *The Rohmer Review* has flourished all through the 1970s. The year 1971 even saw a doctoral dissertation on the plays of Judge Pao.

This bibliography includes books and monographs which feature interesting or substantial commentary on the Oriental in crime fiction or film, articles, essay length reviews, interviews, appendices to books where appropriate, bibliographies, and even one letter to an editor. I have excluded material not in English, reviews of shorter than essay length, textbook material, and some (but not all) material easily available in the basic reference books on the genre. The interested reader who has not already done so should see the excellent entries for Charlie Chan, Mr. Moto, Fu Manchu, Mr. Wong, and Judge Dee in Chris Steinbrunner and Otto Penzler's *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection* (McGraw-Hill, 1976). Both this work and John M. Reilly's *Twentieth Century Crime and Mystery Writers* (St. Martin's, 1980), have entries for many of these characters' authors.

A word about the terms "Yellow Peril" and "Sinister Oriental." I have distinguished them in my annotations as follows: By "Yellow Peril," I mean stories such as Curtis Steele's *The Yellow Scourge* (*Operator 5* magazine, 1934; reprinted by Freeway Press, 1074), in which there is a threat of Asian takeover of the West but no real dominant villain. By "Sinister Oriental," I mean stories in the Fu Manchu vein primarily, with a dominant villain.

The bibliography is divided into five sections. Section I includes works which treat generally the subject of the Oriental in crime fiction, and works which discuss more than one major character not included in the other sections. Section II includes material on Fu Manchu and Sax Rohmer; section III on Charlie Chan and Earl Derr Biggers; section IV on Mr. Moto and John P. Marquand where relevant; section V on Judge Dee and Magistrate Pao. Of course, I do not claim comprehensiveness, though I trust there are few serious errors of omission.

Abbreviations used:

AHMM = *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*
EMD = *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection*
TAD = *The Armchair Detective*

Section I: General

Anon. "Chinese Apathy Towards Crime Detection." *The Literary Digest*, Sept. 23, 1933, p. 14. Chatty article explaining that the Chinese lack detective fiction because the Chinese mind is not suited for deductive reasoning. Typical xenophobic article for the period. But for the true picture of Chinese detection, in fact as well as in fiction, see section V.

Apostolou, John L. "Japanese Mystery Fiction in English Translation." TAD 13:4:310–11. Includes a capsule history of Japanese mystery fiction, cultural aspects of Japanese mysteries, and a checklist of works by sixteen authors whose work has been translated into English. In "Notes" section, gives bibliographic information on other similar articles, including Jinka and Queen.

Ball, John. "The Ethnic Detective." In Ball, ed., *The Mystery Story* (San Diego: University of California Press, 1976), pp. 143–60. Introduction to the ethnic detective. Covers black, Jewish, Indian, Arab, Apache, gypsy, and Oriental detectives. Perhaps the only article which mentions Komako Koa, the Hawaiian plantation cop who appears in three novels by Max Freedom Long. Definitely a starting point in the study of Oriental detectives. See also King, section I.

Barshay, Robert. "Ethnic Stereotypes in *Flash Gordon*." *Journal of Popular Film* III:1:15–30, Winter 1974. Analysis of ethnic images in the extremely popular serial *Flash Gordon* (1936). Stating that the evil Oriental is the richest and oldest ethnic stereotype in films, Barshay compares the villain Ming in the serial (played by Charles Middleton) to Fu Manchu (played by Boris Karloff) in the film *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932) and cites many other Yellow Peril movies of the 1930s.

Briney, Robert E. "Sinister Orientals." In EMD, pp. 302–4. This is the standard introduction to the subject of the Sinister Oriental and the Yellow Peril. Gives historical background to the reasons for the existence of this subgenre. Especially good information on Fu Manchu's imitators. See also Winks, section I.

Butler, William Vivian. *The Durable Desperadoes*. London: Macmillan, 1973, pp. 46–50. Discusses Fu Manchu in connection with another early Oriental villain, Sexton Blake's Prince Wu Ling, Chief of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Beetle.

Carr, Nick. "The Pulp Villains." *Xenophile* 42 (1979) 126, 19. Includes information on pulp villain Dr. Fuji. (Walter Albert)

____. "Introducing the Yellow Peril." *Megavore* 12, Dec. 1980, pp. 39–46. Not a survey of the Yellow Peril subgenre, but rather a fannish profile of Donald E. Keyhoe's Dr. Yen Sin and his short three-issue pulp career. Argues that Yen Sin is just as diabolical as Fu Manchu, and describes Yen Sin's murder methods. Included are profiles of hero Michael Traile and others. Many illustrations, including reproductions of pulp covers and interior art.

Choy, Christine. "Images of Asian-Americans in Films and Television." In Randall M. Milles, ed., *Ethnic Images in American Film and Television* (Philadelphia: The Balch Institute, 1978), pp. 145–55. General history of the Asian image in media and of discrimination against Chinese-Americans, and some genre material. Includes an account of the large-screen images of Charlie Chan and Fu Manchu and is very critical of them. There are some factual errors about Chan on screen and Fu Manchu in print. This academic article is very critical of Hollywood's treatment of the Asian. See also Oehling, section I, and Chin, section III.

Chung, Sue Fawn. "From Fu Manchu, Evil Genius, to James Lee Wong, Popular Hero: A Study of the Chinese-American in Popular Periodical Fiction from 1920 to 1940." *Journal of Popular Culture* X:3:534–47, Winter 1976. Scholarly, interesting, well-researched history of the change in the popular image of Chinese-Americans through this twenty-year period. Most of the periodical fiction mentioned is genre material: Hugh Wiley's, Earl Derr Biggers's, and Sax Rohmer's works, for example. Argues that perhaps the periodical appearances of Charlie Chan and James Lee Wong contributed to counteract the anti-Chinese feelings which were part cause, part consequence of Yellow Peril fiction.

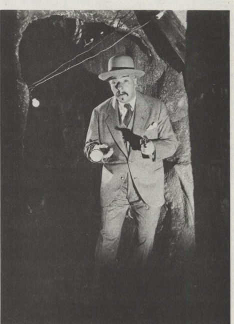
Everson, William K. "The Oriental Detective." Chapter 7 in Everson's *The Detective in Film* (Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel, 1972), pp. 72–85. Historical and critical survey of films featuring Oriental detectives. Besides examining the Chan, Moto, and Mr. Wong series, Everson mentions lesser-known films such as the 1915 silent *The Mission of Mr. Foo,* the 1939 Moto satire *Porky's Movie Mystery,* and one he calls a classic film as well as a classic detective film, *High and Low* (1963). Includes many stills, and a poster reproduction. See also Richie and Tuska, section I.

Hagemann, E. R. "Ramon Decolta, a.k.a. Raoul Whitfield, and His Diminutive Brown Man: Jo Gar, The Island Detective." TAD 14:1:3–8, Winter 1981. Survey and evaluation of the Gar stories, and perhaps the only one in English. States that Jo Gar, as an Oriental detective, was an innovation and an addition to the small number of Oriental detectives operating in Whitfields time. In fact, when Jo Gar first appeared in *Black Mask* in 1930, Charlie Chan was the only well-known Oriental detective.

Hagen, Ordean A. "Scene of the Crime." Appendix in Hagen's *Who Done It?: A Guide to Detective Mystery and Suspense Fiction* (New York: Bowker, 1969), pp. 473–96. Essentially a location index for mysteries set in foreign countries. There are entries for many Far Eastern countries, including China, Japan, Korea, Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam, etc. Errs in stating that in such exotic locations the murder victim "is still invariably an Anglo-Saxon" (p. 474). *The Kahuna Killer* is one obvious exception. There are some errors in the settings also, notably in the Chan and Moto series. For example, under the heading for Japan, Hagen lists *Mr. Moto's Three Aces* (p. 488). Not only is this not a novel (it is an omnibus) but one of the novels in it, *Thank You, Mr. Moto,* was set in Peking; another, *Think Fast, Mr. Moto,* was set in Honolulu. But despite these and other similar errors, this location index is still very valuable, for it is most likely the most extensive one in print and a good research tool for searching for Oriental detectives.

Jinka, Katsuo. "Mystery Stories in Japan." TAD 9:2:112–13, Spring 1976. Succinct capsule history and description of the Japanese mystery in Japan. Mentions the work of several authors, such as Edogawa Rampo (pseudonym of Taro Hirai) and Seicho Matsumoto, as well as giving some indication of the critical and professional acitivity in the genre. See also Apostolou and Queen, section I.

King, Margaret J. "Binocular Eyes: Cross Cultural Detectives." TAD 13:3:253–60, Summer 1980. Interesting



academic-style article on the particular problems which confront the detective when detecting in a culture foreign to his own. The Oriental detective King chooses is Charlie Chan, and the analysis of the problems of detection is socio-cultural. There are other Oriental detectives who might better have illustrated King's point that both the detective and the reader learn about the foreign culture in the process of the detection; detectives such as Harry Stephen Keeler's Yung Cheung, Max Long's Komako Koa, or E. V. Cunningham's Masao Masuto.

Knox, Ronald A. "A Detective Story Decalogue." Originally in Knox's introduction to *The Best Detective Stories of 1928* (New York: Liveright, 1929; London: Faber, 1929); reprinted in Howard Haycraft's *The Art of the Mystery Story* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1946). This is the original statement of the oft-quoted dictum that Chinese should not appear significantly in detective stories. Knox's Rule V states the following: "No Chinaman must figure

in the story." The reasons he gives are that it is (*was*, in 1928) thought that the Chinese is overequipped with brains and underequipped with morals. Knox gives a single possible exception, *The Four Tragedies of Memworth* by Lord Ernest Hamilton. Knox's rule seems to be an official voicing of the reaction to the Sinister Oriental fiction of the 1920s.

Lachman, Marvin. "The American Regional Mystery: Hawaii and Northern California." TAD 9:4:260–66, Fall 1976. An installment of Lachman's column on the mystery in different parts of America. Besides surveying novels with Hawaiian settings and characters by writers such as Jack London, Juanita Sheridan, Leslie Ford, and Thomas B. Dewey, Lachman gives some account of Charlie Chan's Hawaiian and Northern California cases. Coins the term "Hawaiian Gothics" for HIBK novels set in Hawaii. Illustrated.

Lewandowski, Joseph. "An Index to *Dr. Yen Fu*, A Popular Publication." *Unicorn* 1:5:32–33. Illustrated.

McSherry, Frank D., Jr. "The Shadow of Ying Ko." *The Rohmer Review* 16, July 1977, entire issue. Argues that the four-novel battle between The Shadow (a.k.a. Ying Ko) and his adversary Shiwan Khan, the Golden Master, is paralleled in the Holmes/Moriarty, Wolfe/Zeck and Doc Savage/John Sunlight battles. Intelligent, insightful psychological and literary analysis. Splendidly illustrated by Frank Hamilton.

Moreland, Nigel. "Incident in Shanghai." In Donald K. Adams, ed., *The Mystery & Detection Annual, 1972* (Beverly Hills, Calif., 1972), pp. 98–101. Not a commentary on the Oriental in mystery fiction, but rather a picaresque but supposedly true story of Moreland's encounter with an extraordinary Chinese during his short stay in Shanghai. To reveal the identity of the Chinese would ruin the startling surprise. Perhaps this incident and Moreland's stay in Shanghai influenced his *Sing a Song of Cyanide* (Cassell, 1953), which was set there.

Nakajima, Kawataro. "Detective Fiction in Japan." *Japan Quarterly* IX:1:50–56, Jan.–March 1962. Historical account of the Japanese mystery, from Edogawa Rampo's *Two-sen Piece* (1923) to the contemporary "social school" novels of Tsutomu Minakami and Seicho Matsumoto. Relates that in Japan up until the 1950s there was an unquenchable thirst for the Japanese "orthodox" detective stories, which correspond to the Golden Age classical detective stories of England and America. The "unorthodox" stories included elements of horror, adventure, fantasy, exploration and abnormal psychology. From the early 1950s on, as Nakajima laments, the social school stories, i.e., stories which substitute psychological complexities for logical plot twists, have almost overshadowed the more classic form. (Suggested by John Apostolou)

Oehling, Richard A. "The Yellow Menace: Asian Images in American Film." In Randall M. Miller, ed., *The Kaleidoscope Lens: How Hollywood Views Ethnic Groups* Jerome S. Ozer, Publisher, 1980), pp. 182–206. Gives a history of U.S. attitudes toward Asians in the U.S. and argues that movies are cause and consequence of these attitudes. States that Charlie Chan is a positive image. Also mentions films in which the Oriental was treated stereotypically, such as *The Yellow Menace* (1916), *Broken Blossoms* (1919, an adaptation of the Thomas Burke short story "The Chink and the Child" (1917), and *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (1933). See also Choy, section I, and Chin, section III.

Pitts, Michael R. *Famous Movie Detectives*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1979. There is a chapter each on Charlie Chan (pp. 39–84), Mr. Moto (pp. 195–205), and Mr. Wong (pp. 206–13). Pitts gives a capsule history of each character's literary and film career, and includes some data on the actors who played the characters. Includes filmographies with screen and technical credits, along with an appendix featuring bibliographies of the novels (so that Mr. Wong is not included). Illustrated with relatively uncommon stills from each series. This is probably the best single source for factual data on the films themselves. See also Pitts, sections III and IV, and the entries for Chan and Moto in EMD.

Queen, Ellery. "Introduction." *Ellery Queen's Japanese Golden Dozen*. Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1978. Ellery Queen was commissioned by the Suedit Corporation of Japan to select twelve Japanese short stories to include in an anthology. The introduction gives information on the history of Japanese mystery writing and writers, the Mystery Writers of Japan, and Japanese mystery magazines. There are also profiles of the writers before each story in the volume. Queen relates in the inimitable Queen manner how he search for information on Japanese mystery fiction and sifted through 2,500 stories; the resultant introduction is itself almost as suspenseful as a mystery story. See also Apostolou and Jinka, section I.

Richie, Donald. *The Films of Akira Kurosawa*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2nd ed., 1970. Written by a scholar of Japanese cinema, this book gives authoritative analyses of the style, content, and production of Kurosawa's films. Crime films include *Stray Dog* (1949), pp. 58–64, which is Kurosawa's tribute to Simenon; *The Bad Sleep Well* (1960), pp. 140–46; *High and Low* (1963), pp. 163–70, based on *King's Ransom* by Ed McBain. Illustrated with stills. The chapter on *High and Low* is reprinted in Francis M. Nevins, Jr., *The Mystery Writer's Art* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green Popular Press, 1970). See also Everson, section I.

Sampson, Robert. "The Chang Monster." *The Science Fiction Collector* 14:41–46, 1981. Perhaps the only examination of A. E. Apple's Mr. Chang pulp stories. Covers the period 1919–36 and gives a description of Mr. Chang and his murder methods. Sampson argues that Chang is as spectacular a fiend as Fu Manchu and explains that Chang is a "monster" because he is a criminal egoist whose first murder was committed at age nine. Suggests that the Chang stories might be a parody of Sinister Oriental fiction. Includes a partian checklist of 27 of Mr. Chang's pulp appearances between 1919 and 1936.

Starrett, Vincent. "Some Chinese Detective Stories." In Starrett's *Bookman's Holiday* (New York: Random House, 1942), pp. 3–26. This might be the first English language examination of the classical Chinese detective stories of Judge Dee, Magistrate Pao, and others, and is certainly one of the best. Gives a succinct and almost compulsively readable introduction to Chinese detective stories and how they differ from Western ones. Includes data on the history of the Pao legend, plot summaries for several of the Pao stories, and information about a volume on Empress Wu. There are quite a few classical Chinese detectives besides the well-known ones. Starrett mentions stories about the following: Shih Kung (a.k.a. Shih the Incomplete; "Kung" means judge or magistrate), P'an Kung, Lu-chow Kung, and Liao T'sai. See also section V.

Tuska, Jon. "Chinatown, My Chinatown." In Tuska's *The Detective in Hollywood* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), pp. 104–57. Informal but in-depth survey of the series featuring Charlie Chan, Mr. Moto, and Mr. Wong.

Tuska interviewed many people, including Keye Luke, in researching this chapter, and much of the information is about the production of the films. Includes information on the lives of Biggers, Marquand, Warner Oland, Sidney Toler, Keye Luke, etc. For example, Tuska reveals that Oland was so involved with the character of Chan that he would inscribe books and sign Christmas cards with Chan's signature. Tuska gives short descriptions of almost all of the movies in all three series and includes information on two unauthorized, Chinese-made Chan films. This is more personal and less critical than the Everson chapter (section I), and there is more behind-the-scenes information. Illustrated with stills and photos of the making of the films. See also Pitts, section I.

Watson, Colin. "The Orientation of Villainy." In Watson's *Snobbery with Violence: Crime stories and Their Audience* (New York: St. Martin's, 1971), pp. 109–21. Informal socio-historical analysis of the popularity of Yellow Peril fiction in general and of Fu Manchu stories in particular. Watson attributes such popularity in Britain to Britain's relative inexperience with Orientals between the wars and to the xenophobia which helped make Rohmer's Fu Manchu stories bestsellers. See also Briney and Winks, section I.

Weinberg, Robert. "Introduction." In *The Case of the Six Coffins* (Robert Weinberg, publisher; reprint of *The Mysterious Wu Fang* magazine, Sept. 1935; Weinberg Pulp Classic #8, 1975), pp. 3–4. States that Fu Manchu was the inspiration for this, Robert J. Hogan's, Wu Fang (there were at least three other Wu Fangs!) and relates that Wu Fang had seven issues. Weinberg explains that this short career was due to the relative unpopularity of the villain pulps compared to the adventure, hero, and mystery pulps. For more on Wu Fang, see Briney, section I.

Weiss, Ken, and Ed Goodgold. *To Be Continued---* New York: Crown Publishers, 1972. x + 341 pp. Supposedly a complete list of (American) movie serials, with description and uncritical examination of each one. Includes several Yellow Peril and Sinister Oriental serials, such as *Shadows of Chinatown* (1936), *Drums of Fu Manchu* (1940), *Secret Agent X-9* (1945), and *The Black Widow* (1947). Illustrated with stills.

Winks, Robin W. "Sinister Orientals: Everybody's Favorite Villains." In Dilys Winn, ed., *Murder Ink: The Mystery Reader's Companion* (New York: Workman, 1977), pp. 491–93. Vivaciously written survey of the early career of the Sinister Oriental, from the horrors of the boys' journals of the 1870s to *The Manchurian Candidate* in 1959. But as the article also includes several benevolent Orientals, such as E. Harcourt Burrage's Ching Ching and Biggers's Charlie Chan, it might be better seen as a short history of the Oriental in crime fiction. There is an inset paragraph on "Oriental good guys," such as James Lee Wong, Mr. Moto, and Judge Dee. Illustrated. Covers some of the material covered in Briney's article (section I), but Briney gives more details on Sinister Orientals in the Fu Manchu vein.

____. "The Sinister Oriental: Thriller Fiction and the Asian Scene." In Robin Winks and C. S. Cray, eds., *Asia in Western-Language Fiction* (forthcoming, 1982). 21 pp. In part this essay analyzes the image of the Oriental and its impact on readers, comparing that image as given in mainstream fiction and in thriller fiction. Winks argues that, although the image in thriller fiction might not be as worthy of study, it very well may be more influential because more people read thrillers than books such as E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India.* Perhaps this essay should have been titled "The Sinister *Orient*" because it deals primarily with thrillers set in the Orient (esp. Malaysia). Argues that, in thrillers, the South Asian landscape is a foil to the West, and that it is almost always described as hostile to the Westerner.

Wu, William F. *The Yellow Peril: Chinese Americans in American Fiction. 1850–1940.* Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1979. 477 pp. See Wu, next entry.

____. *The Yellow Peril: Chinese Americans in American Fiction 1850–1940.* Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books (an imprint of The Shoe String Press), 1982. ix + 241 pp. An outgrowth of Wu's doctoral dissertation, this book attempts to survey and analyze the depiction of Chinese and Chinese-Americans in American fiction from the first immigrants up until the outbreak of WW II. Most of the fiction is genre material. Chapters on frontier stories, "Chinese invasion" stories, and Chinatown stories, a chapter on Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan (ch. VI), and one on the pulps (ch. VII). Wu asserts the usual claim that Fu Manchu was the image evoked by future Chinese villains for years to come. Also states that Charlie Chan reflects the Yellow Peril image by being an overcompensatingly *good* guy. In the chapter on the pulps, Wu covers villains such as Hammett's Chang Li Ching, Stockbridge's Ssu Hsi Tze, Hogan's Wu Fang, Keyhoe's Yen Sin, and Chang of *Secret Agent X* fame. Wu's coverage of stories in the "slicks" and pulps is perfectly adequate, but one wishes that he had treated the dime novel villains and tongs, of which there were many. Bibliography of primary and secondary sources, index. (Suggested by John L. Breen)

Section II: Fu Manchu

Anon. (Checklist of Sax Rohmer's Books). *Book Collecting & Library Monthly* 14:39–41, June 1969.

____. "Drums of Fu Manchu." *The World of Yesterday* 33: 29–48, Aug. 1981. According to an editorial blurb, this is a reproduction of the *Drums of Fu Manchu* "chapter-play" pressbook from the 1940 serial. Extremely detailed, it gives an introduction to Fu Manchu, a full summary of every chapter with reproductions of scores of frames from the film, complete list of screen credits (even to all of the dacoits), shooting dates, and footage and copyright information. The frame blowups concentrate on the cliffhanger endings of each chapter and the escape in the next.

Avallone, Michael, and Frank Hamilton. "Fu Manchu Revisited." *Mike Shayne Mystery Magazine*, December 1981, pp. 108–10. Gives the briefest of arguments that Fu Manchu always was and continues to be the blueprint for every Oriental mastermind-villain to come after him. Examples given are Fleming's Dr. No and one of Avallone's own creations, Le Te Tsang (*Death in Yellow* [1981], written under pseudonym of Stuart Jason), among others. Illustrated by Frank Hamilton. Also features a reproduction of an ad for the film *Daughter of the Dragon* (1931).

Baring-Gould, William S. "I Shall Live When You Are Smoke." TAD 1:1:2–3, Oct. 1967. First article in the first issue of TAD. Gives a brief account of Rohmer's encounter in Limehouse with the mysterious figure who was the inspiration for his Fu Manchu stories. Identifies the first Fu Manchu book, *The Mystery of Fu-Manchu*, as ten interconnected short stories and briefly mentions other Rohmerian characters:

Briney, Robert E. "Sax Rohmer: An Informal Survey." In Francis M. Nevins, Jr., *The Mystery Writer's Art*

(Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1970), pp. 42–78. Canvasses and evaluates Rohmer's books, including the non-Fu Manchu works, and gives a sketch of Rohmer's life. A great benefit to the article is the chronological checklist of Rohmer's stories and novels, which gives U.S. and British publication information, contents of short-story collections, and data on anonymous and pseudonymous books. See also Van Ash, section II.

____. "Death Rays, Demons, and Worms Unknown to Science." In John Ball, ed., *The Mystery Story* San Diego: University of California Press, 1976; reprinted by Penguin Books, 1978), pp. 235–89. Subtitled "The Fantastic Element in Mystery Fiction," this essay contains a section on Rohmer and Fu Manchu and concentrates on the latter's bizarre murder methods.

Frayling, Christopher. "Criminal Tendencies: Sax Rohmer and the Devil Doctor." *London Magazine* 13:65–80, June/July 1973. An introduction to the world of Fu Manchu for the under-thirty generation, as Frayling says. He adds that the Fu Manchu books have been enormously popular because of their melodrama and sinister villainy even though they were not well received by literary critics. Interesting illustrations include plates of early Fu Manchu dust jackets.

Hoffman, Eric. "Drums of Fu Manchu." *Serial World* 3:28: 6–9+; continued in 3:29. Detailed summary of the 1940 serial, chapter by chapter. 3:28 covers chs. 1–8, 3:29 covers 9–15. Gives screen and technical credits, a list of all chapter titles, and many illustrations of stills and lobby cards, many in color. Back cover of 3:28 illustrated with color reproduction of a German poster for chapter 2: *Das Geheimnis des goldenen Drachens*.

Madden, Cecil. "Meet Dr. Fu Manchu." In Madden's *Meet the Detective* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1935), pp. 36–41. Transcription of a BBC radio talk in which it is revealed, perhaps for the first time, that Rohmer's inspiration for Fu Manchu came from his explorations in London's Limehouse district.

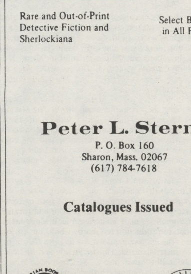
Panek, Le Roy. *Watteau's Shepherds: The Detective Novel in Britain, 1914–1940.* Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1979, pp. 8–9. Places Rohmer with Wallace and Oppenheim as an adventure-thriller writer. Places Fu Manchu in the villainous tradition of Buchan's Zulu villain Umkulunkulu (*Prester John* [1910]) and Wallace's Albanian brigand Remington (*The Clue of the Twisted Candle* [1916]). It is worthwhile to note, however, that Fu Manchu antedates Remington by four years.

Pate, Janet. "Fu Manchu." In Pate's *The Black Book of Villains* (London: David and Charles, 1975), pp. 52–55. Very short introduction to Fu Manchu and Rohmer and a mention of Rohmer's famed Limehouse escapade. Includes a filmography, which starts with the 1923 serial *The Mystery of Dr. Fu Manchu* and ends with *Kiss and Kill* (U.S.: *The Blood of Fu Manchu*) (1969). Filmography includes TV appearances and one Spanish film, *El Otro Fu manchu* (*The Other Fu Manchu*) (1948). There is a bibliography, which includes U.S. and British publication information. Illustrated with stills from several Fu Manchu films.

Perelman, S. J. "Cloudland Revisited: Why Doctor, What Big Green Eyes You Have!" In Perelman's *The Ill-Tempered Clavichord* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), pp. 37–48. One of Perelman's humorous literary studies in his "Cloudland Revisited" series published in the *New Yorker*. This installment relates Perelman's first adulthood encounter with *The Mystery of Fu-Manchu*. Perelman had read it in his childhood but re-read it because he noticed his daughter reading it. The second reading left Perelman disappointed. He disliked Rohmer's supposed avoidance of dénouement and use of *deus ex machina* plot devices. He did not find the Devil Doctor menacing. After coming to these conclusions, Perelman confiscated the book from his daughter, and, in a stroke of poetic justice, cast it to the flames of his fireplace! This is the classic Fu Manchu spoof.

Prager, Arthus. "The Mask of Kali." In Prager's *Rascals at Large, or, the Clue in the Old Nostalgia* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971), pp. 47–69. A personal, nostalgic account of Prager's childhood reading favorites, including the Fu Manchu books. Gives a great deal of information about them; includes an overview of the Devil Doctor's saga, a biographical sketch of him, and descriptions of many of his tortures and murder methods. Includes very good profiles of the saga's other characters, such as Smith, Petrie, Kâramanèh, Fah Lo Suee, and even the dacoits. Since this is such a fondly written account, it is informative to read in conjunction with Briney's factual, neutral accounts and Perelman's negative account (section II).

Rohmer Review. Ed/pub 1968–72: Douglass Rossman. 1972–present: Robert E. Briney, 4 Forest Avenue, Salem, Mass. 01970. Irregular. Single copies: $1.50. Professional-looking journal dedicated to Rohmeriana. Includes news of Rohmer book reprints and foreign translations, some news about Orientalia, articles, and letters. Articles by writers such as John Ball, Frank McSherry, Jr., Cay Van Ash (see section II), John Nieminski, W. O. G. Lofts, and Briney himself. Extremely well illustrated, with photos, reproductions of Rohmer books



and magazine illustrations, and original art by Frank Hamilton and others.

Thompson, H. Douglas. *Masters of Mystery.* London: W. Collins Sons, 1931, pp. 218–20. Reprinted by Dover, 1978. Argues that Chinese make good villains because of their exoticism and Oriental mysticism. On the other hand, Thomson explains, Hindus are not such good villains, because they are more popular and more familiar to Westerners. States that Fu Manchu is at his best when he is inventing new murder methods. This is representative of the openfaced xenophobia of the 1920s and early '30s, but also seems to reflect the trends of crime fiction of the times.

Van Ash, Cay, and Elizabeth Sax Rohmer; Robert E. Briney, ed. *Master of Villainy.* Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1972. ix + 312 pp. This biography was not only authorized by Rohmer but partly written by him as well. Lovingly rewritten by Cay Van Ash, this is the only book-length biography of Rohmer and concentrates on him as Orientalist and creator of Fu Manchu. Van Ash names Rohmer as her mentor and is unfailing in her praise of his skills as an author. The chapters proceed in anecdotal form and at times are as exciting as one of Rohmer's own books, although occasionally one wishes for a more sober examination of Rohmer and his work. Includes many photos of Rohmer, wife Elizabeth, and their various residences. Editor Briney provides a foreword, notes on bibliographical details, and a Rohmer checklist which is slightly altered from the one which appeared in "Sax Rohmer: An Informal Survey" (see Briney, section II).

Zinman, David. "Fu Manchu." In Zinman's *Saturday Afternoon at the Bijou* (New York: Castle, 1973), pp. 288–300. Essay on the films of Fu Manchu with filmography. Introduction to Fu Manchu and Rohmer, with the standard anecdote about Rohmer's Limehouse trip. The essay is very uneven. After calling *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932) the best of the films, Zinman speaks only of it. Zinman is perhaps the only writer to speak of Rohmer's characters Sir Denis Nayland Smith and Dr. Petrie as "fascinating" (p. 290)! Illustrated with stills.

Section III: Charlie Chan

Armato, Douglas M. "Charlie Chan in Books and in Motion Pictures." TAD 7:2:97–99, Feb. 1974. Survey of the six novels; includes a chronological checklist and plot summaries. Provides neutral commentary, outlining both strengths and weaknesses in the novels. Gives some gently chiding criticism of the intricacy and formulaic nature of the film plots.

Benvenuti, Stefano, and Gianni Rizzoni. "Most Exotic: Charlie Chan." In Benvenuti and Rizzoni, *The Whodunit: An Informal History of Detective Fiction* (New York: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 77–79. Reprint and translation of *Il Romano Giallo*, Milano: Amaldo Mondadori, 1979. Popular introduction to Charlie Chan. For such a short piece, this contains quite a bit of information on Biggers, Warner Oland, and Chan. Much like the Chan entry in EMD. Illustrated.

Biggers, Earl Derr. "Creating Charlie Chan." *New York Times*, March 22, 1931, VIII, p. 7. Newspaper interview with Biggers, on the occasion of the film version of *Charlie Chan Carries On*, the first widely popular Chan film. Just as Rohmer is the subject of an oft-repeated anecdote (see Madden, section II), so is Biggers. Here is where Biggers tells how "sinister and wicked Chinese were old stuff in mystery stories" and adds that he wanted to create an amiable Chinese. The interview includes a bit of information on Biggers's discovery of Chang Apana, who is reputed (primarily by others) to be the model for Chan.

Breen, Jon L. "Charlie Chan in Qui Nhon." TAD 2:2:114, 1969. Short note written during Breen's Vietnam military tour, this is an appreciation of four of the Chan films, *Charlie Chan in London* (1934), *Charlie Chan at the Circus* (1936), *Charlie Chan at the Opera* (1936), and *Charlie Chan at the Race Track* (1936), as well as a word of appreciation of the fact that Breen got to view the films in Vietnam in the first place.

____. "Who Killed Charlie Chan?" TAD 7:2:100, 127, Feb. 1974. Disappointed appraisal of two Chan stories in the first two issues of the short-lived *Charlie Chan's Mystery Magazine*. According to Breen, the stories make Chan into a combination of Mike Shayne and Bruce Lee. The stories Breen covers are "Walk Softly, Strangler" (CCMM Nov. 1973) and "The Silent Corpse" (CCMM Feb. 1974), both under the byline of Robert Hart Davis.

____. "Charlie Chan: The Man Behind the Curtain." Part I. *Views & Reviews*, Fall 1974, pp. 29–36. A chronological survey of the novels. According to a communication from Mr. Breen, Part II was never published, the periodical having ceased publication. See Breen's "Murder Number One," section III.

____. "Murder Number One." *New Republic* 177, July 30, 1977, pp. 38–39. A sympathetic look at the character of Charlie Chan, his multicultural personality, and identity problems. Gives some biographical data on Biggers. Breen went to the *Saturday Evening Post*, in which the novels were first published in serial form, and describes the magazine illustrations as their style changed and Chan became more important from story to story.

Chertok, Harvey, and Martha Torge. *Quotations from Charlie Chan.* New York: Golden Press, 1968. 51 pp. Compilation of quotations (called "Chanograms" in the 1930s; see Service, section III) from the 21 Chan films shown at New York City's Museum of Modern Art in a 1968 film festival called "Charlie Chan at the Museum of Modern Art." The quotations are categorized under headings such as "Of Truth," "Of Riches," "Of Beauty," etc. and vary greatly in quality. Illustrated with gravure style still reproductions, many of which are scarce.

Chin, Frank. "Charlie Chan in America." *Ramparts.* March 1973, pp. 41–48. Angry, resentful, but humorous article directed against Hollywood's treatment of Orientals. Chin compares their treatment to that of the blacks. Chin's primary target, though, is Chan, who is called by Chin "a decrepit, hunched over, mealy mouthed, sycophantic, clumsy, more-than-slightly effeminate, limp wristed bucktoothed detective" (p. 44). Chin, who was himself an actor in films such as *China* (1943), feels passionately that the demise of Charlie Chan and similar Oriental characters would be of service to Chinese. Illustrated with stills and color reproductions of Chan movie posters. See also Choy and Oehling, section I. (Suggested by R. E. Briney)

____. "Interview: Roland Winters." *Amerasia Journal* 2: 1–19, Fall 1973.

Christian, Peter. "Crime on Screen." AHMM, June 24, 1981, pp. 121–24. A review of the latest Chan film *Charlie Chan and the Curse of the Dragon Queen* (1981), this might also be the best short survey of the Chan films. After a bit of data on Biggers's life and a summary of the Chan film saga, Christian reserves comments on *Dragon Queen* for the last two paragraphs. To anyone having seen this film, the reason for such short treatment is

obvious—the film is silly, and the review reflects Christian's disappointment.

Connor, Edward. "The 6 Charlie Chans." *Films in Review* VI:I:23–27, Jan. 1955. Best short history of the production of the Chan films. Includes several items of Chan trivia, such as names of Chan's different sons from film to film, but also reveals that the first two films with Roland Winters, *The Chinese Ring* (1947) and *Docks of New Orleans* (1948), were remakes of Mr. Wong films with Boris Karloff. Perhaps this is not the first instance of part of a series being remade from other films that the series inspired in the first place! See also Tuska, section I.

Dueren, Fred. "Charlie Chan: A Biography." TAD 7:4:263, Aug. 1974. Short compilation of biographical facts about Chan, such as his birthplace (China), his house on Punchbowl Hill, his family, descriptions of him, etc.

Ellman, Neil. "Charlie Chan: The Making of an Immortal." *The Indiana University Bookman* 8, March 1967.

____. "Charlie Chan Carries On." TAD 10:2:183–84, April 1977. About the tenacity of Chan's popularity. Includes some little-known quotes from letters Biggers wrote to his publlsher at the Bobbs-Merrill Company. Illustrated with a dust jacket reproduction.

Godfrey, Thomas. "Mystery Moviegoer." *Mystery* 3:1:44–47, July 1981. Review of *Charlie Chan and the Curse of the Dragon Queen* (1981) and an analysis of why it falls short of the previous Chan films. Includes information on the history of Chan filmdom. Illustrated with a publicity still from *Dragon Queen*, a movie poster reproduction, and several other stills. See also Christian, section III.

Meyers, Richard. *TV Detectives*. San Diego, Calif.: A. S. Barnes, 1981, pp. 38–41. Short history of Chan's appearances on the small screen, from *New Adventures of Charlie Chan* to *Happiness is a Warm Clue*. Some information on Chan on radio and on the series films' appearances on TV. Meyers mentions Warner Oland's career as Chan and implies that he was the first to play Chan. He also states erroneously that, to this date, no Oriental has ever played Chan (p. 38). The number one and two screen Chans, however, George Kuwa and Kamiyama Sojin were both Japanese. Kuwa starred (at least, appeared) in *The House Without a Key* (1926), and Sojin appeared in *The Chinese Parrot* (1927).

Pate, Janet. "Charlie Chan." In Pate's *The Book of Sleuths* (Chicago: Contemporary, 1977; London: New English Library, 1977), pp. 55–57. Includes a character sketch of Chan and information about his life, family, and methods of detection. Some information on Biggers. Argues briefly that Biggers protested for the dignity of the Chinese in America through his books. Includes a filmography but does not attempt to list all the films (see Pitts, section III, and the Chan entry in EMD). Bibliography includes several omnibus publications but does not include Dennis Lynds's *Charlie Chan Returns* (1974). Illustrated with film stills.

Pitts, Michael R. "Charlie Chan." In Pitts' *Famous Movie Detectives* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1979), pp. 39–84. Perhaps the best compendium of factual information on the films and on the post-1949 activity of Chan. Includes a filmography with screen and technical credits, a historical essay on the films which summarizes the plots of most

of them, and an evaluation of the trends in the filmic Chan saga. There is some information on Roland Winters's advertisements for Chan and the restaurant, House of Chan, as well as the made-for-TV movie *Happiness is a Warm Clue* and the Lynds novelization, *Charlie Chan Returns*. Illustrated with stills.

Service, Faith. "Charlie Chan at the Interviewer's." *Modern Screen*, July 1937, pp. 42–43+. A fannish, loving, fun look at Warner Oland and his involvement with the Charlie Chan character. Service interviewed Oland at the Fox studio commissary, and the resulting article reveals that Oland took the part of Chan very seriously. He assumed the character even off-screen, speaking in pseudo-Confucian aphorisms (at the time called "Chan-o-grams"), and speaking about himself in third person, through Chan. Quotes some of Oland's aphorisms, such as, "Think things out. Hasty conclusions, like leg of mule, kick backward" (p. 84). Illustrated with stills.

Stumpf, Charles K. "Was Charlie Chan Chinese????" *The World of Yesterday* 31:4–16, April 1981. Survey of the Chan films. Includes tidbits of biographical information on Biggers, Oland, Keye Luke, Roland Winters, Victor Sen Yung, etc. Some information on *Charlie Chan and the Curse of the Dragon Queen* (1981), which had not yet been finished, and on the Asian-American protests in San Francisco. Desultory essay intending to show that Chan was played by a Chinese only once, by the voice of Keye Luke for the 1972 CBS cartoon show *The Amazing Chan and the Chan Clan*. Liberally illustrated will stills, ad reproductions, clippings, etc.

Zinman, David. "Charlie Chan." In Zinman's *Saturday Afternoon at the Bijou* (N.Y.: Castle, 1973), pp. 257–72. Brief, unsystematic survey of Chan's film career. This might be the worst piece on the Chan films: it is uneven, poorly written, and generously laced with errors. Although the filmography does list all 47 of the films through 1949 and there are interesting bits of information in the essay, there are also howlers, such as Zinman's claim that Chan is the detective with the largest number of films (p. 259). To Chan's 47 at the time of publication, Sherlock Holmes had more than 100. A caption lists Winters as the third and last Chan (p. 261), when he was the sixth and last Chan. Zinman also states that Chan's method of detection was to gather his suspects and re-enact the crimes (p. 260). This is a bit misleading. He *would* gather the suspects, but, more often than not, would use the gathering to explain the crimes or intimidate the criminal into revealing himself. Illustrated with stills. See also, and perhaps instead, Tuska, section I, and Pitts, section III.

Section IV: Mr. Moto

Bell, Millicent. *Marquand: An American Life*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1979. xv+537 pp. Largest, most recent biography of Marquand: contains a considerable amount of material on the Mr. Moto stories. Bell quotes Marquand saying that the *Saturday Evening Post* wanted him to replace Biggers as their supplier of stories with Oriental backgrounds, and they wanted Chinese interest. Marquand was sent by SEP to the Orient to gather information for the stories and was impressed by tales of Chinese bandits that he heard in China. Thus came the inspiration for his first Oriental suspense story, *Ming Yellow* (1934). But Bell is reticent about the inspiration for the character of Moto himself. Relates that Marquand denied the title "literature" to the Moto novels. Illustrated with photos of Marquand.

Birmingham, Stephen. *The Late John Marquand: A Biography*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972. xiii+322 pp. Birmingham had the same publisher as did Marquand, and knew him well. Perhaps the latter is why Birmingham's book is gossip-ish and filled with the people and personal events of Marquand's life instead of the literary events. There is not much material on the Moto stories, but Birmingham does reveal that Marquand liked to plot them as a form of mental exercise. Birmingham thinks *Last Laugh, Mr. Moto* the best of Marquand's thrillers, but overall it seems that neither he nor Marquand's wife Adelaide thought very much of them. Perhaps the geratest benefit of this book is the chronological checklist of Marquand's works, giving periodical and book publication information on the Moto stories. Illustrated with photos.

Holman, C. Hugh. *John P. Marquand*. University of Minnesota Press, Pamphlets on American Writers #46, 1965. 48pp. Short biography, with a proportionately small amount of material on the Moto stories. Holman calls them spy thrillers which lack the "tight construction of the detective story" (p. 19).

Pitts, Michael R. "Mr. Moto." In Pitts' *Famous Movie Detectives* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1979), pp. 195–205. Includes an essay-length survey of the Moto films, and a filmography. Similar in format to the Chan and Wong sections of Pitts' book (section III, I), and, like these sections, a good source of factual information on the films, including technical and screen credits. But there is also Pitts's puzzling attribution of the inspiration of the film *The Mysterious Mr. Moto* (1938) to a Marquand novel called *Mr. Moto's Last Warning*. But as far as I can ascertain, there was never any such novel, even as a reprint. Pitts certainly does not list it in his bibliography in the appendix. But overall, the essay is one of the best on the Moto film corpus. See also Tuska, section I.

Rausch, George J. "John P. Marquand and Espionage Fiction." TAD 5:4:194–98, July 1972. Probably the best critical essay on the Moto saga. Includes an introduction about Marquand and his mainstream literary works, such as *The Late George Apley* (1938). The critical analysis points out that the protagonist of the Moto books is not Moto himself but rather a young American in each case who undergoes character development as a result of the intrigue and other people he confronts. Although Rausch provides biographical information on Moto, he observes that such information is hard to come by in the books.

White, William. "Mr. Marquand's Mr. Moto." *American Speech* XXIII, April 1948, pp. 157–58. Interesting letter to the editor stating that the term "Mr. Moto" came to be used as a generic term to refer to Japanese by U.S. servicemen early in WW II, even though the term was not to be found in standard linguistic reference works. White includes an excerpt of a letter from Marquand which says that, although the term had even been used in institutional advertising, it had dropped from usage since the war.

Zinman, David. "Mr. Moto." In Zinman's *Saturday Afternoon at the Bijou* (N.Y.: Castle, 1973), pp. 274–86. Somewhat better than his chapter on Chan (section III). Gives data on Marquand's life, and relates (without documentation) that, when Marquand went to China in 1934 to do research for his suspense stories, a Japanese detective followed him from place to place; that detective was the inspiration for Mr. Moto. But the essay as a whole is uneven. Zinman gives the entire plot for the film *The Mysterious Mr. Moto* but says almost nothing about the other films. Unfortunately, there are several errors in the essay and filmography, such as the statement that

there were five novels (p. 278; *No Hero* [1935] was missed) and the mis-dating of *Last Laugh, Mr. Moto* (1942) by three years (p. 278). Illustrated with stills.

Section V: Judge Dee and Magistrate Pao

Atchity, Kenneth John. "Robert Van Gulik." In Donald Adams, ed., *Mystery and Detection Annual 1972* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Donald Adams), pp. 237–45. A survey and review of nine Judge Dee stories and an exposition of Van Gulik's technique and style. Some biographical information on Van Gulik. Atchity explains why the stories would not attract all readers, and thinks *The Haunted Monastery* (1963), *Necklace and Calabash* (1967), and *Poets and Murder* (1968) are the best books. Van Gulik's strengths, says Atchity, lie in literary technique rather than in plotting.

Bleiler, Everett F. "Chinese Detectives in Poland." TAD 11: 4:343–45. Gives some information on Magistrate Pao, and a translation from Polish of the preface by a Polish editor (Tadeusz Zbikowski) to *The Righteous Judgments of Magistrate Pao (Sprawied-liwe wyroki sedziego Pao-Kunga)* (Warsaw, 1960), which features the largest assortment (twenty) of Pao's cases available in a Western language. The translated introduction itself gives a concise history of Chinese detective stories and distinguishes them from Western ones. Bleiler includes notes and a bibliography.

____. "A Chinese Detective in San Francisco." *The Mystery FANcier* 5:3:2–4, May/June 1981. Summary of a dialect piece, a short story loosely based on Judge Dee stories, called "Chan Tow the Highrob" by Chester Bailey Fernald. Bleiler compares "Chan Tow" to his classical predecessor in Judge Dee, and gives some information on San Francisco's Chinatown in the nineteenth-century.

Comber, Leon. "An Introduction to the World of Magistrate Pao." Introduction to Comber's edition and translation of *The Strange Cases of Magistrate Pao: Chinese Tales of Crime and Detection* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1964; Tokyo; 1964, pp. 9–31). Probably the first English translation of Pao stories, this edition contains a fascinating encounter with Magistrate Pao. Comber tells about his trip to China and his first Magistrate Pao movie, *The Case of the Bloody Hand*. Gives some information on different Chinese editions of the Pao stories, and explains and describes methods of ancient Chinese torture, some of which is used in the stories. Beautifully illustrated with woodcuts and a reproduction of the poster of the Pao movie.

Evers, Mrs. A. M. *Bibliography of Dr. R. H. van Gulik (D. Litt.)*. Compiled for the benefit of the Boston University Libraries, Mugar Memorial Library, "Robert van Gulik Collection," no date, *c.* 1968. Includes biographical material, listings of Van Gulik's articles, books, poems, reviews, novels, and all of the Judge Dee books in all languages through 1967. Reviewed by Douglas G. Greene in TAD 13:4:352–53.

Hayden, George A. *The Judge Pao Plays of the Yuan Dynasty*. Doctoral Dissertation, Stanford University, 1971; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1977. 453 pp. Part of the growing body of scholarly sinological studies of the classical Chinese detectives. Includes a biography of the historical Pao Cheng (A.D. 999–1062), a history of the Pao legend, and a history of the Kung-an or "crimecase" plays. The body of the work consists of the translations of seven "hitherto untranslated" courtroom plays. See also Comber, section V, and Starrett, section I.

____. *Crime and Punishment in Medieval Chinese Drama: Three Judge Pao Plays*. Cambridge: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University Press, 1978. 238 pp. (Series 82 in Harvard East Asian Monographs) A shorter and more polished version of Hayden's dissertation (section V). Gives the history of the Pao legend, information about the courtroom plays of the Yuan and Ming periods, and three checklists of works in which courtroom plays are to be found (in Chinese). The three Pao plays featured here are also to be found in Hayden's dissertation, translated into English in both places.

Idema, W. L. "The Mystery of the Halved Judge Dee Novel: the anonymous *We Tse-T'ien Ssu-Ta Chi'i-an* and its partial translation by R. H. Van Gulik." *Tamkang Review* 8, I (1977) 155–69. Reprinted from a 1974 Dutch journal article. Interesting scholarly piece of literary detective work. Sketches the differences between Chinese and Anglo-American detective stories. Compares Judge Dee to James Bond, as both have values of mixed class within their respective societies. The body of the article investigates the reasons that Van Gulik could have had for declining to translate the latter half of *Four Important and Curious Cases from the Time of Empress Wu* (*Wu Tse-T'ien*, etc.). After much technical Sinological linguistic analysis, Idema concludes that Van Gulik's reason for not finishing the translation was that he probably thought that the latter half of the Chinese manuscript was an inferior continuation by a later hand.

Lach, Donald F. "Introduction." In Lach, ed., *The Chinese Bell Murders* by Robert Van Gulik (University of Chicago Press, 1977). May be found also in the University of Chicago editions of *Chinese Lake Murders, Chinese Maze Murders*, *Chinese Nail Murders* and *Chinese Gold Murders*. Succinct portrait of Judge Dee and of Van Gulik. Capsule history of Chinese popular literature and crime stories. Relates how Van Gulik changed some of the Chinese elements in the stories. Van Gulik's Dee is not strictly historically accurate, and some of his plots come from Chinese incidents that occurred 400 to 700 years after the legendary Dee. Lach adds that Van Gulik took plot ideas from a wide range of Chinese literature. Includes a selected bibliography of secondary sources on the Chinese popular novel.

Van Gulik, Robert. "Translator's Preface." In Van Gulik's *Dee Goong An: An Ancient Chinese Detective Story* (Tokyo: Toppan Printing Co., 1949). Reprinted in *Celebrated Cases of Judge Dee* (Dover, 1976), pp. i–xxiii. Perhaps the best and most extensive introduction to Judge Dee, in the first English translation of Chinese detective stories. Argues that the Chinese had a form of detective fiction one thousand years before the West. Lists five characteristics whereby Chinese stories differ from English stories, including the point that the Chinese stories insist that the punishment of the criminal be described. See also Starrett, section I.

____. "Parallel Cases from Under the Pear Tree." *Institutum Sinologicum Lugduno Batavum* X. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1956. 198 pp. Translation of *T'ang-Yin-Pi-Shih* by Kuei Wan-jung, a thirteenth-century manual of Chinese jurisprudence and detection, with preface, notes, and introduction to ancient Chinese crime detection.

____. "Postscript." In Van Gulik's *The Chinese Maze Murders* (The Hague: N. V. Vitgeverig W. van Hoeve, 1957; Dover, 1977), pp. 322–28. Explains the social and physical contexts of the classical Chinese detective stories, such as that the magistrate/detective being responsible for an area with a radius of about fifty miles, and that the novels usually dealt with three or more cases at a time, the detective working like a circuit judge. Includes Chinese sources for *The Chinese Maze Murders*. □

REX STOUT Newsletter

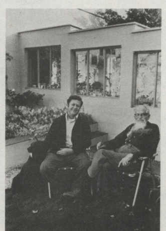
Recently I was presented with the need—but, alas, not with the ability—to tri-locate. As a newly-elected director of the Mystery Writers of America, I wanted to be in New York City the night of 7 May for the annual Edgar Awards Dinner. But currently I am president of the Thoreau Society of America and had a longtime commitment to be in Concord, Mass. that same night for a plenary session of the directors of the Society and the trustees of the Thoreau Lyceum Foundation, to work out the final stages of an impending merger. Also that same night, the Speckled Band, the New England chapter of the Baker Street Irregulars, was having its annual beefsteak-kidney pie dinner at Boston's ancient Tavern Club, an event I'd scale the grand terraced walls of the Matterhorn not to miss. But the Thoreau Society had first call on my services, so I had to send my regrets to the MWA and the BSI. Then, at the last possible moment, our space in Concord was pre-empted by a meeting of the Emerson Centenary Committee, and the Thoreau event was shifted to another night. I put on my track shoes and sprinted for the Tavern Club, working up, en route, a nice appetite for that pie. Fortunately, since half the members loath it, there are always second helpings.

Of course, the high point of the evening at a Speckled Band dinner, for me, is the chance it offers me to meet a lot of closet Neronians. This year was typical. One member asked me if Mycroft Holmes was Rex's model for Nero Wolfe. Another asked me if there is any truth to the rumor that Nero Wolfe was the love child of Holmes and Lizzie Borden, conceived by Lizzie during her visit to London the year prior to the hatchet (*not* ax) murder of her parents in Fall River, Mass. in 1892. Two brought with them copies of my biography of Rex Stout so that I might inscribe them. And a new member asked me if I could be persuaded to start a "Rex Stout Newsletter." This last guy left early so he could get a subscription check in the mail to TAD "before midnight."

Next year, I shall miss that beefsteak-kidney pie dinner. The Speckled Band dinner and the Edgar Awards Dinner always happen on the same night. I've just been appointed to the committee that will decide who gets the 1982 Edgars for the best novel and best first novel. That means I must be in New York when the awards are handed out. Hmn, I wonder if I could persuade the MWA to change the menu. They must be sick of chicken Kiev by now. How about a nice beefsteak-kidney pie?

* * * * *

Gerald Kersh (1911–1968), an Englishman who migrated to the U.S. after WW II, created a character, Karmesin, a rogue, who has been described by Ellery Queen as "either the greatest criminal or the greatest liar of all time." When Karmesin wants to show contempt, he says "Pfui." Any fellow who says that can't be all bad.



John McAleer and Rex Stout

By John McAleer

The splendid Peter Blau, Washington, D.C., has sent me Svend Petersen's "Trans-O-Gram" from the 19 March 1982 issue of the *National Review*. One of the items to be defined in this puzzle is "A description of Nero Wolfe."

* * * * *

Jan Broberg's *Mordisk Familjebok* (1972) has a chapter, "Still Going Strong," on Rex Stout (pp. 39–45). I wish I could read Swedish. It's a handsome book.

* * * * *

A. L. Lazarus, Professor Emeritus, Purdue University, tells me that I'm "cited and quoted" (is that anything like being "drawn and quartered"?) in his new book *Beyond Graustark* (Kennikat Press, Inc., 1981). He didn't say for what reason. Must be something to do with Wolfe and Archie, I suppose.

* * * * *

The Science Fiction Encyclopedia, edited by Peter Nichols (Doubleday/Dolphin, 1979), contains this entry on Rex Stout:

"STOUT, REX (TODHUNTER) [1886–1975] American writer, best known for his detective novels featuring Nero Wolfe, beginning with *Fer-de-Lance* (1934) and continuing into the 1970's. His borderline science fiction novel, originally published anonymously, is *The President Vanishes* (1934), in which the disappearance of the American president causes a near-fatal crisis."

Rex did, in fact, write an authentic science-fiction novel—*Under the Andes* (1913)—never published in book form. Some publisher is missing a great bet, especially since Stout's heirs have authorized me to edit it for some responsible house.

* * * * *

David Oyerly tells me that his paperback edition of Anthony Shaffer's *Sleuth* has, on

the back cover, a quotation from *Cue* mentioning Nero Wolfe, Inspector Appleby, Miss Marple, and Sherlock Holmes. In that order, David? Or is our partiality showing?

* * * * *

Shirley Beaird and Nancy Wynne, who run the "Murder By the Book" bookstore, 1224B West Littleton Blvd., Littleton, Colorado 80120, held their first annual Nero Wolfe dinner on 16 March 1982. The chef (owner of the private dining club at which the dinner was held) is a Wolfe fan "and he planned and prepared all the dishes with loving care." This dinner will now be an annual event, and I hope to announce the date of the next one in this newsletter early enough so that those who want to go can let Shirley and Nancy know. Incidentally, they still have a few copies of the souvenir menu—limited edition of one hundred, each copy numbered—left, and you may order one, $2.00, postpaid, at the address given above. I have one. It's not only beautiful, it's delicious!

* * * * *

Paulette Greene, whose rare book business is in Rockville Centre, N.Y. (140 Princeton Road 11570), has for sale an inscribed copy of the photo of Rex Stout which appeared with this column in TAD 15:1. It's dated 1-17-41. I was never sure of the exact date of that photo, since Rex's own copy was undated. But I think that date fits. The photo probably was taken the previous May or June, when Rex's irises were in full bloom. At least that's when those he gave me are at their peak. But then, Lexington is farther north than Danbury.

* * * * *

Back in the summer of 1963, William F. Deeck, College Park, Maryland, wrote to Rex Stout to point out that, in several novels, Archie Goodwin—"he of the great memory—had said that Inspector Cramer never lit his cigar." As an example, he referred Rex to p. 107, Book Club edition of *If Death Ever Slept*. Yet, in *The Rubber Band*, Chapter IX (you look up the page; we can't do everything for you), the following passage appears: "Cramer sat down and got out a cigar and bit off the end, and held a match to it. . . . Cramer got smoke in his windpipe and coughed it out. . . . Cramer took a puff and knocked off ashes." In response to this letter, Rex replied, with more humility than he ordinarily cared to show: "I'm glad Archie Goodwin writes the stories and I am merely the literary agent; explanations of discrepancies are up to him. I suppose he would plead that since the only time he saw Cramer light a cigar was back in 1936 it isn't stretching it much to say that he never lights one, but I call that a rather lame excuse. Never means never."

A dozen years before Deeck confronted Rex with this discrepancy, however, Archie had already taken steps to remedy it. In *Plot It Yourself*, in 1951 (Chapter X), Archie says, "Cramer stuck the cigar between his lips and clamped his teeth on it. I had seen him light one only once, years ago." I guess that goes a long way to rehabilitating Archie's memory.

Lest you suppose Archie sneaked that passage into a reprint of *Plot It Yourself*, it is in the first edition. I checked.

* * * * *

Jim Leachman has sent me a Xeroxed copy of a lengthy article—"Wolfe's Creator Claimed Stout Hoosier Connections"—from the Sunday edition, 7 March 1982, of the Indianapolis *Star*. The author was Rex Redifer. I wonder if his given name predisposed him to the subject? At times, the article seems a line-by-line gloss of my biography of Rex, especially since a sizable percentage of his information could have come from no other source. I don't mind not receiving a plug, but I do wish he hadn't fallen back on older sources for his statistics. He says more than forty-five million copies of Rex's novels have been sold, and that they have been translated into twenty-two languages. Rex's sales have long since passed the one hundred million mark. The stories have been translated into twenty-six languages. Nonetheless, we thank Rex Redifer for reminding his fellow Hoosiers that Noblesville, Indiana, as the birthplace of Rex Stout, has a legitimate claim to fame.

* * * * *

Rebecca Ann Brothers, Carbondale, Colorado, poses this query: "Have you ever heard of a novel called *Autumn Angels?* Pyramid published it, in July 1975, as part of their Harlan Ellison Discovery series. It's a science fiction fantasy . . . absurdity . . . by Arthur Byron Cover, with a spoof of Wolfe and Archie—appearing on pp. 111-36—as 'the other fat man' and his 'witty legman.' It's. . . all right; not as bad as it could have been." Rebecca has also done a Wolfe pastiche but refuses to discuss it! I'm glad she had the decency to be embarrassed. To poke fun at Wolfe! Indeed!

* * * * *

I've just turned out a ream of copy for Mike Cook's new book on detective fiction magazines. I did the pieces on *The Nero Wolfe Mystery Magazine: The Rex Stout Mystery Magazine*; *The Lone Wolfe*; *The Gazette: The Journal of the Wolfe Pack*; and *The Thorndyke File*. The book should hit the stores next fall. Mike fills a real need with this book. He is indefatigable. We are all in his debt.

The March 1982 mailing of the mystery fan amateur press association, DAPA-EM, contains a splendid, generously illustrated spoof of Rex Stout's early pulp fiction career (1912-17). Since it's based on an intimate knowledge of my coverage of the same material in *Rex Stout: A Biography* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977—$17.50) and *Justice Ends at Home*, the volume of early Stout fiction which I edited for Viking (1977), I can bring better than average judgment to bear on its merits. It's close on to perfect. Thanks to Professor Bob Briney (Salem State College, Mass.) for sending a copy, and to the author, who embraces anonymity but also sent me a copy.

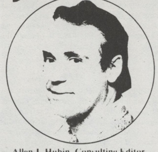
* * * * *

When I was working on Rex's biography, two members of my original Wolfe Pack, Cheryl Althoff and Rose Vogel, ran down for me many references in the Wolfe corpus to actual people, living or dead. Some of the results may interest you. Shakespeare was top winner, with fourteen mentions of either his plays or himself. Napoleon and Sir Laurence Olivier each got five mentions. Four mentions each went to Caesar, Brillat-Savarin, Casanova, and Lizzie Borden. Cleopatra, Joe Louis, and Willie Mays each have three mentions, and Joan of Arc turns up twice. Other mentioned at least once, and perhaps more than once, include: Washington, Lincoln, John McGraw, Lynn Fontanne, Churchill, Rocky Graziano, Mussolini, Edwin Booth, Fanny Brice, Dillinger, Haile Selassie, Einstein, Babe Ruth, Dutch Schultz, Charles Laughton, Casey Stengel, Sherlock Holmes, Roy Campanella, Nelson Rockefeller, Emily Post, Dana Andrews, Beethoven, Eisenhower, F.D.R., Elsa Maxwell, Greta Garbo, Jack Dempsey, Moss Hart, Mickey Mantle, Tito, Franco, Hitler, Senator Joseph McCarthy, Chaucer, Wagner, Jane Austen, Renoir, Victor Hugo, Cezanne, Keats, L.B.J., Goldwater, Alfred Lunt, Plato, Ben Franklin, Sugar Ray Robinson, Aristotle, Protagoras, Archimedes, Clark Gable, Gary Cooper, Castro, Congreve, Charlie Chaplin, Herblock, Boris Karloff, Mickey Mouse, and, of course, J. Edgar Hoover. Maybe we should have a party for the survivors, most of whom are athletes. I guess it pays to keep fit.

* * * * *

Pontes Press has published my *Royal Decree*, culled from my miles of taped conversations with Rex Stout. TAD readers may order it from me for $6.50, postpaid. Subscription fee for *The Thorndyke File* and membership in the R. Austin Freeman Society still is $5.00 domestic, $6.50 other. Keep writing to John McAleer, Mount Independence, 121 Follen Road, Lexington, Massachusetts 02173. And thanks for the strong support. □

AJH REVIEWS



Allen J. Hubin, Consulting Editor

Photo: Robert Smull

Short Notes...

Robert Barnard's pen is active these months: I've two of his books before me, ***Death of a Perfect Mother*** (Scribners, $9.95) and ***Death by Sheer Torture*** (Scribners, $10.95). Their moods are quite different. In *Mother,* we have the titular female, poisonously perfect, eminently murderable, quite dead. A pompous policeman probes but not well. Characters are nicely done, as they are in *Torture,* but here the mood is comic. The bizarre Trethowans are visited by death: Leo, of that family, is found dead in the midst of his sado-masochistic machinery. His son Perry, who bolted the family asylum some years before, has the good fortune to be a sane and successful policeman, the bad fortune to be sent into the madhouse to help the resident investigator find a killer. There are, of course, other dangers associated with such an assignment—contamination, even reacceptance into the bosom of the family. This will take careful management by Perry indeed... Barnard is a most refreshing recent contributor to our field, notable both for the excellence and the diversity of his works.

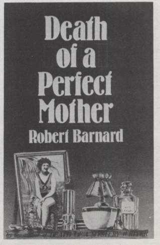
Situation Tragedy (Scribners, $9.95) represents Simon Brett and Charles Paris at the very top of their form. Paris, perenially under-employed, has landed a small part in a TV situation comedy series. But the show is cursed with accidents—fatal ones—and Paris must a-sleuthing go. The cast abounds in characters—you should pardon the expression—and motives, so Paris naturally pounds energetically down sundry false trails before stumbling across the right one. Richness of description and scene here, as well as a nicely contrived plot.

The plot of ***Big Bear, Little Bear*** by David Brierley (Scribners, $11.95) blazes no new trails, but the author mixes the tested spy story ingredients well to tell a polished tale. George Orris, British agent in Prague, sees his network collapse in bloody ruin about him and flees to London. There he immediately becomes a target, suggesting there's a traitor in the bosom of mother England. So George stakes himself out as bait in Berlin to see who sticks his head in the trap. The backdrop of this divided city in 1948 is well used, and the ending is very nicely managed.

In ***Malloy's Subway*** by R. Wright Campbell (Atheneum, $12.95) lives a psychopath who gets his jollies by sticking his sharp knife into people selected at random on the cars that wend beneath New York's streets. He seems to be a member of the subculture that exists in that dank world. That's Martin Malloy's beat. Retired from the NYPD by four bullets in his gut and terrors in his mind, Malloy tracks the psychopath, looking for a thread, a trail, a pattern, a trace of evidence. Campbell handles his scene and its unusual people well.

Thus Was Adonis Murdered by British lawyer Sarah Caudwell (Scribners, $11.95) is an agreeably amusing first novel, set largely in Venice, poking gentle fun at its characters, and told mostly by means of letters—a narrative plot which in this case succeeds. Julia Larwood leaves her lawyerish colleagues for a gambol in Italy, where her objective is principally sex. Murder intrudes in embarrassing fashion, leaving her at the mercy of justifiably suspicious policemen. Hilary Tamar, operating from London at the end of telephone and holograph epistle, must bail her out and determine whodunit and why.

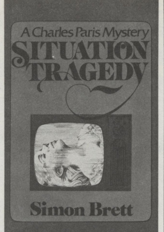
Douglas Clark's latest about Supt. Masters and Insp. Green is ***Roast Eggs*** (Dodd Mead, $8.95). This is something of an inverted tale. A business executive is on trial for burning down his house with his wealthy wife inside. He seems about to beat the rap. A weekend's breathing space is used to ask Masters's help. He assumes guilt, postulates the killer's fire-setting mechanism and overall strategy, tracks down some evidence, and concocts a confrontation scenario for Monday's session before the bench. Pleasant enough but entirely forgettable.



What would happen if a young woman from Oakland, "under the influence of an overdose of Agatha Christie," were to write a mystery? It might turn out like ***Murder After Tea-Time*** by Leela Cutter (St. Martin's, $9.95). It might be set in England. It might feature an aging and successful mystery writer who, with her eligible niece, gets involved in a real-life murder. It might take place in a small community, seething with passion and suspects. It might be lightly readable.

I don't know when I've enjoyed a book as much as ***By Frequent Anguish*** (Walker, $9.95), a first mystery novel by S. F. X. Dean, the pseudonym of a "former Naval intelligence officer, actor and politician" who is now a college professor in New England and whose novel under his own name some years ago was nominated for a National Book Award. Two aspects of this tale are striking: the freshness of language, and the intensity and expression of emotion that engages the characters. Neil Kelly, a middle-aged widower, teaches English literature at a college in Massachusetts. His heart died with Georgia, beloved wife who succumbed to cancer. He's faculty advisor to Pril Lacey, she of the lightning mind, lithe 20-year-old body, she who is daughter of Kelly's best friends. Pril, who declares her love for Neil, repeatedly and in ways which break down the walls of reserve and reservation and decades of age difference. Whereupon she is murdered in the college library. In blind agony, Neil searches for a killer, poking about in the messy bowels of academia. An exceptional and very persuasive debut in our field.

I've missed several of Colin Dexter's novels about Insp. Morse and, based on memories some years old, was not prepared for the richness of characterization in ***The Dead of Jericho*** (St. Martin's, $9.95). Morse has become a much more interesting, more human person than I remember him. Here he feels



a strong attraction for a woman of Jericho, an area of Oxford, but he doesn't follow up on the small invitation he senses. The next time he encounters her, she is a corpse, an apparent suicide in her home. It's not really his case; he stumbles across it by accident and, driven by a sense of loss, investigates behind the scene. Eventually, the inquiry is assigned to him formally, and with Sgt. Lewis he explores what becomes a two-corpse matter. He has a prime suspect, but that suspect has an impeccable alibi: he was under Morse's eye during the entire time of the second death. Very nicely done.

William Diehl's second novel (after *Sharky's Machine*) is ***Chameleon*** (Random, $14.50), a long and violent intrigue caper that moves well through its multiple layers of deception. Frank O'Hara, an investigative reporter who dropped out (because he was put on the CIA hit list) into immersion in Eastern (Japanese) mysticism, is lured back by the owner of a Boston TV station to investigate a hot tip. He is put on the trail of Chameleon, killer and saboteur, a trail that leads across the bloody globe and back to Japan, a trail with apparent links to an oil conglomerate whose executives have been accident prone, a trail littered with intriguing characters.

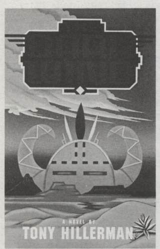
I think Dick Francis's latest, ***Twice Shy*** (Putnam, $13.95), is less intense, less compelling than his best work, but it's a very smooth and enjoyable read nonetheless, with expert blending of computer technology and horseracing. A computer program which calculates the winners of races with enough reliability to let its owner live very nicely indeed is the object of attention here. Jonathan Derry, a teacher, is given it by a friend who has become the object of violent attentions by a businessman and his psychopathic son. The friend dies, and the psychopath transfers his attentions. The narrative spans more than ten years and offers the usual resourceful Francis hero (two of them, actually) and the usual highly satisfying ending.

Checkpoint Charlie by Brian Garfield (Mysterious Press, $10; limited edition, $30) provides twelve tales about Charlie Dark. Old, fat, unkempt, the best the CIA has at his sort of thing—that's Charlie. He appeared in *Hopscotch* (1975) and then in these stories, originally (except for the last one) published in EQMM and AHMM. Charlie is hated by his master as much as Charlie hates him. Charlie never carries a gun. Charlie outthinks his enemies. Unlikely set of facts? I imagine so, but you'll find most agreeable these spy-puzzle stories, set in suitable spots around the globe.

Ben Healey's ***Midnight Ferry to Venice*** (Walker, $10.95) is the first of the continuing saga of painter Paul Hedley I've read. It's a minor British import, readable if never getting below the surface of anything. Hedley is in Venice to paint a grand dame's portrait. He gets caught in a wash of intrigue having to do, it appears, with rediscovered da Vinci drawings. An attractive and formidable American Ph.D. provides the romantic interest and dutifully gets into sundry perils,

from which—at the last moment—Hedley dutifully rescues her.

Somewhere I saw a criticism of Tony Hillerman's ***The Dark Wind*** (Harper & Row, $12.50) to the effect that the author had lost control of his plot. I disagree: the plot hangs together quite satisfactorily. And as with earlier novels, ***Wind*** also provides a compelling sense of place (Arizona) and culture and religion (Navajo and Hopi). Jim Chee of the Navajo Tribal Police is investigating two crimes, repeated attacks on a windmill in disputed Navajo–Hopi territory and the ritual slaying of an unidentified man. However, the murders of a pilot and another man, apparently related to a huge drug-running enterprise, keep intruding. The Feds, behaving strangely, warn him off in no uncertain terms: his career, maybe his life, seems to be at stake. But Chee, gone underground, keeps probing, finding pieces, connections...

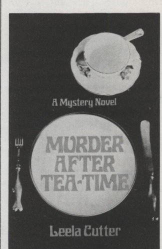


Montague Jon, the pseudonym of a London barrister, offers an ambiguous barrister-hero in ***The Wallington Case*** (St. Martin's, $10.95). Stephen Kale accepts the defense of Lady Ann Wallington in the matter of her husband's murder. But he's hardly in a position to do his impartial best—he's smitten. The evidence is circumstantial but strong; Lady Ann claims an alibi but refuses to name the person she was with at the crucial time. Jon maintains uncertainty and tension fairly well, but the ending does not have the shock the author hoped, and his string-pulling is a bit too evident in the plot.

Fear Itself (Putnam, $12.95) by Stefan Kanfer, a senior editor at *Time* magazine, is set in 1943–45 with a focus on—as the title suggests—President Roosevelt. Niccolo Levi, an actor, an Italian Jew, is caught up with his wife and child in the bestial Nazi machine. They are experimented upon and die hideously, but he survives, stretched emotionally beyond all bounds, and with a fixation: to kill Roosevelt for his failure to send American bombers to the concentration camp he was in. Another Jew, in New York and working with the OSS, becomes Levi's hunter. A nice narrative juxtaposition, and the story does end with telling impact, though for me the tale failed fully to convince.

Annabel Laine, "the pseudonym of a best-selling non-fiction writer," takes us to Regency London in ***The Melancholy Virgin*** (St. Martin's, $9.95). Here an attractive young "kept" lady has been battered to death, and the Earl of Moriston's valued personal secretary is Bow Street's prime suspect. The Earl, wealthy and handsome and unattached, disbelieves Francis Mervyn could have done the deed, and must needs turn detective to prove an alternative. Enlisting his brother and sister, as well as the beautiful actress for whom he has incurably fallen, he tracks a killer who is not at all loath to strike again... Pleasant and evocative period piece.

Robert Ludlum's latest, ***The Parsifal Mosaic*** (Random, $15.95) is, as usual, long (630 pp.) and will, also as usual, sell a bunch. But—and I write as an unrepentent fancier of Ludlum's work—this one has less of the narrative drive and intensity of his best novels. Perhaps he has here been "contaminated" by novelistic intentions—the desire to explore



character and male-female love relationships—to which he is not normally so subject. Nonetheless, *Mosaic* will keep your attention, provided you can suspend the requisite disbelief. Havelock, a U.S. agent, engineered the death in Spain of the woman he loved when she was proved a traitor, and then, crushed, retired from spying. Now he spots her in Rome, miraculously alive, gives chase, but loses her. If she's alive—and, from her reactions, hating and fearing him—who died on the Costa Brava and why? Havelock's pursuit of truth puts him on his former master's kill list and on the trail of a mole deep within the U.S. government as well as someone even more deeply hidden who has the means to destroy the U.S. forever.

The Man with No Face by Scottish journalist/novelist Peter May (St. Martin's, $10.95) has distinctly more depth of feeling and more incisive probing of character than the typical tale of a professional assassin. Someone hires the killing

of a respected British journalist in Brussels. There is also a second victim, whose autistic daughter sees the murderer. Neil Bannerman, reporter sent from Scotland to get him out of his editor's hair, is accidentally on the scene and is drawn in by his journalist's nose for unsavory news behind the news—and by unfamiliar tender feelings. And the killer, told to carry on and destroy the child as well, finds his dispassion crumbling. Well done.

I very much liked the first two Dan Mallett novels by Frank Parrish, whose real identity I hope soon to be given leave to reveal. The third, ***Snare in the Dark*** (Dodd Mead, $8.95), is quite pleasant but not, I think, up to the high standard of the first two. Parrish takes care with these books (he told me they are much harder to write than his other crime fiction), and they have a nice sense of the country and nature. Mallett, you'll recall, turned his back on a banking career to follow the calling of his father—poaching. Here he seizes a golden opportunity to snare a mess of pheasants out from under the nose of his least favorite gamekeeper. But this humble endeavor lands him in the soup with a corpse, so on the run he must go. He follows a lead to a nursing home, identifies a likely suspect as well as a fetching black lass with whom temporarily to cohabit, sets his own snare...ah, but things are not what they seem.

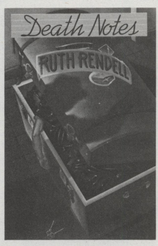
Is it my imagination or has the Spenser series by Robert B. Parker gone badly downhill? ***Ceremony*** (Delacorte, $12.95), the latest, seems a pale shadow of earlier brilliance, a sort of sad tramp through Boston, smashing heads, practicing macho while belittling same, looking for a girl who prefers prostitution to parents. The wit and insight that characterized this series initially seem largely to have been exhausted. Spenser reluctantly takes the case, more for the sake of the girl than her objectionable father, and tackles the pimp and mob establishment in Boston's Combat Zone. Just in case there are more heads to smash than Spenser has fists for, he brings along his buddy Hawk, who gets his jollies in similar ways. A large-scale head-smashing serves as the finale.

I rarely review paperbacks here, but a blurb on Don Pendleton's 41st Executioner book, ***The Violent Streets*** (Gold Eagle, $1.95), caught my attention. "A maniacal rapist is terrorizing Minneapolis until Bolan tears the city apart!" Well, now, that's pretty close to home. But both Pendleton and the blurb-writer start on the wrong foot: the action is enitrely in St. Paul (even closer to home), and the author wrongly thinks that the city's Holman Field serves commercial airlines. Reading through this wooden-prose affair left me without a clue as to why 25,000,000 copies of these things have been bought. Bolan comes to town in answer to a cry for help from a friend, shoots to death twelve bad guys (the thirteenth corpse is produced by someone else) in less than 24 hours, and leaves the city on his white horse.

Death Notes by Ruth Rendell (Pantheon, $9.95) is pleasant, nicely puzzling stuff featuring Inspector Wexford, but it seems to me a bit more superficial than Rendell's best. A revered and aged musician, on the brink of marriage with a woman much younger, dies before he can change his will. Inheriting his substantial estate is his daughter, long estranged to California but recently returned to the scene. Or is she an imposter extremely well equipped for her role? The evidence is curiously conflicting...

Jonathan Ross's ninth novel about Supt. George Rogers is ***Dark Blue & Dangerous*** (Scribners, $9.95). Here a policeman is found dead beneath the ice on a frozen river. The dead man proves to have been a wide-ranging womanizer, and Rogers has the distasteful task of probing these relationships for a motive and a killer. Exposing a less than model officer, seeing something of himself in the process—not so enjoyable for Rogers. But a bit more so for the reader, although Ross cannot be accused of fair-play plotting.

The academic pot, cloistered and inbred and seething with repressed passions, boils over in Howard Shaw's ***Death of a Don*** (Scribners, $10.95), which brings back Insp. Barnaby from the earlier *Killing No Murder*. Here the setting is the decaying Beaufort College of Oxford, where murder most inconveniently intrudes upon a fund-raising drive which is under the command of Brigadier Sparshott-Hayhoe. Once again, academia and its curious inhabitants are viewed



with a loving and satirical eye; once again, the modern and the traditional worlds spark and crackle as they collide. A solid, fair-play detective story, this.

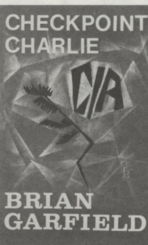
I can hardly believe that ***People Versus Kirk*** (St. Martin's, $12.95) is by the same Robert Traver who wrote *Anatomy of a Murder*, but it is he, now aged 79. Alas, *People* is built on a single idea too thin to sustain it (I shall not reveal it here for fear of eliminating the only interest the book may offer) and is filled with embarrassingly sopho-

moric dialogue. It has to do with Frederic Ludlow, Michigan attorney, and his defense of Randall Kirk against the charge of having murdered his mistress. Kirk seems to have left convincing evidence of his guilt at the scene, but now claims to have no memory whatsoever of the fatal evening. What possible defense can be offered?

Pauline Glen Winslow, British born but now resident in the U.S., brings her Inspector Merle Capricorn to our shores in ***The Rockefeller Gift*** (St. Martin's, $12.95). Capricorn, you'll remember, is part of family of magicians, and has a trio of mad aunts that are a continuous trial to him. Here their antics are in New York, and Capricorn is begged to help when one of the trio falls for a Swedish diplomat and threatens to leave their magic act. So the Inspector, officially on leave, unofficially takes the opportunity also to look into the deaths of a pair of countrymen who were part of Britain's U.N. delegation. They seem to have sniffed out a nasty scheme and were killed for their pains. So, with almost nothing to go on, his aunts flailing about, and his bachelor heart distracted, Capricorn pokes about... Amusing, well written, though perhaps some of the successes of the ungodly strain credibility.

Walter Winward's ***The Midas Touch*** (Simon & Schuster, $15.50) has—besides an impressive price tag—a base in fact like many of its WWII-history-as-it-might-have-been brethren. Winward fastens on Britain's shortage of bearings for its war machinery (fact) and Sweden's supplying of high-quality bearings to both sides (also fact). Germany has a major materiel manufacturing capability in Schweinfurt, which becomes a prime target for Allied bombing. The Nazi plot to prevent this: kidnap a key Swedish industrialist, detain him in Schweinfurt, and notify the Allies. Who makes a predictable response, and send in a rescue team. But, equally predictably, not everything is as it seems. Polished writing, some good action sequences, but ultimately forgettable.

I should not end this column without calling attention to several nonfiction items. First is Michael L. Cook's accomplishment of a task that long has badly wanted doing. This is the vast and very impressive ***Monthly Murders*** (Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, Conn. 06881, $49.95), "A Checklist and Chronological Listing of Fiction in the Digest-Size Mystery Magazines in the United States and England." Cook covers 110 magazines, giving

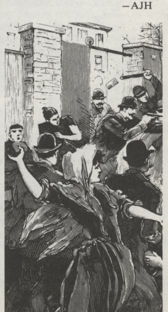


the contents of each issue (where available; copies of some issues of the more obscure publications could not be traced). A 380-page author index enables one to identify a given author's works and track them to their sources. *Monthly Murders* is a contribution of great importance to our field (I object only to a certain eccentricity in the "alphabetization" of the principal magazine listing). And although little is overlooked here, it's a work which—with the help of users in the time ahead—will become truly exhaustive in future editions.

Fanciers of Fredric Brown will want to have ***A Key to Fredric Brown's Wonderland*** by Newton Baird (Talisman Literary Research, Box 455, Georgetown, Calif. 95634; 63 pp.; $15 in cloth, $8.95 in paper). This "Study and Annotated Bibliographical Checklist" summarizes and updates Baird's longer work in TAD 9:4–11:1 and adds reminiscences by Elizabeth Brown and Harry Altshuler, as well as a short essay (on religion) by Brown himself.

And finally, my periodic reminder that no Sherlockian worth his deerstalker can be without that superb quarterly, ***Baker Street Miscellanea*** (Sciolist Press, P.O. Box 2579, Chicago, Ill. 60690; $6/year U.S., $8 overseas). Issue #28, completing seven years of publication, lies before me, with articles on Holmes's birthday, a visit of three Scandinavian Sherlockians to Manhattan, Pondicherry Lodge, a meeting at Chisham (reprinted from 1948 with an introduction by Vincent Starrett), Sherlockian Collectibles, plus the completion of Jon Lellenberg's two-parter on Sherlockian pastiches and parodies, and reviews and editorial matter of considerable interest.

—AJH



The Demoniacal St. Amand and The Brave Baron von Kaz

By Douglas G. Greene

On a plane flying over the English Channel, a man enters the lavatory and utterly disappears.

In Germany during the Nazi takeover, a young American is approached by an elderly man who mutters, "A bird down there spoke to me. It was a little brown bird. It looked up at me and said very distinctly, 'Help! I am caught!' It said that twice and now it's flown away."

The Baron Franz Maximilian Karagoz und von Kaz investigates the impossible murder of a Hollywood actress killed inside a magician's cabinet.

On his wedding night, the Baron is confronted by a man wearing false whiskers who prattles incoherently about danger from the "broken face." When the Baron leaves the room briefly, the man is murdered.

This summary of a few early scenes in the detective novels by Darwin and Hildegarde Teilhet indicates why to many readers the 1930s remain the Golden Age of the formal detective story. It was an age in which imagination in fiction was more important than mere probability; when eccentric detectives solved bizarre crimes; when the detective story was, in John Dickson Carr's phrase, "the grandest game in the world" with the author challenging the reader to foresee a new and ingenious solution. The decade was so dominated by the prolific masters of the genre – Carr, Christie, Queen, Stout, and others – that the excellent works by less prolific authors such as the Teilhets have fallen into undeserved obscurity. Howard Haycraft mentions the Teilhets in passing, and Julian Symons praises one of their books as being of "considerable distinction," but on the whole historians of the genre have ignored them. This article is an attempt to correct that omission.

It is too easy to assert that all mystery writers whose work first appeared between the world wars were dyed-in-the-wool reactionaries. Darwin Teilhet, however, was throughout his life a political liberal, sympathizing with labor unions and with opponents of Naziism and Fascism. Although his novels were always meant primarily as entertainments, they reflect his left-wing viewpoint. On the other hand, Teilhet did not believe that in order to write one must first suffer. At the height of his career, when his work was being serialized in *The Saturday Evening Post*, Teilhet gave some advice to aspiring authors of mystery/adventure stories: "To write an adventure story it is vitally necessary for the writer to take care of his creature comforts. No writer is going to write an absorbing adventure story if he is helling around in mud and snow and having adventures himself." Like many detectives of fiction, he appreciated the finer things of life. He enjoyed fine wines, assembled a large library, carried a swordstick cane, and smoked a pipe; he even invented something called the TIRP – "Teilhet Inverted Ribbed Pipe."

Darwin LeOra Teilhet (pronounced "Tee-let") was born on May 20, 1904, in Wyanette, Illinois, of French Catholic stock. His father, a well-to-do land agent, insisted that Darwin learn French. When Darwin was a teenager, he visited the Corrèze area of France and spent some time working as a juggler in a French traveling circus. He also worked for a while on the Paris edition of the New York *Herald Tribune*. When he was in high school, he learned to fly small planes (and retained his pilot's license until 1960, four years before his death). He attended one year at Drake University in Iowa about 1923, and the next year he went to study at the Sorbonne. He continued to visit the Corrèze region, and in 1924, at St. Chamant, he built a huge glider, to the amazement of the populace and the appreciation of the mayor, who declared a legal holiday on the day it was airborne. Darwin later wrote about this episode for a travel magazine and incorporated it into his 1935 novel *Bright Destination*; and in 1948 he wrote a mystery for boys, *The Avion My Uncle Flew*, about the construction of the glider.

On his return to the United States, Darwin entered Stanford University to major in foreign languages. At a party, he met Hildegarde Tolman, daughter of Professor Cyrus Fisher Tolman of the Geology Department, and he proposed to her that same evening. They were married on October 28, 1927; he was 23 and she almost 21. The Tolmans were traditionally Republican and associated with the party's leaders, including Herbert Hoover. Darwin was a Democrat, but he agreed not to vote when Hoover ran for President. (Hildegarde became a Democrat after World War II.) After a short honeymoon, the

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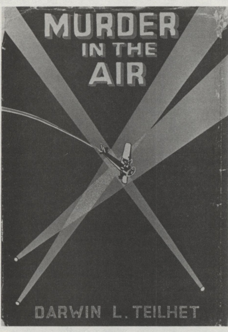
I am grateful to Hildegarde Teilhet for biographical information in this article. If in spite of her generous assistance errors crept in, I am solely responsible.

Teilhets went to Heidelberg, Germany, for postgraduate work; there they sensed the growing anti-semitism associated with the rise of the Nazis.

Darwin had always wanted to write, and, as the Teilhets prepared to return to the United States in 1929, he began to consider what kind of book he should produce. A friend told him that detective novels had the best chance to be accepted for publication. That thought pleased both Darwin and Hildegarde; they were voracious readers of mystery stories. At Stanford, they had read such authors as R. Austin Freeman, H. C. Bailey, and G. K. Chesterton, whose impossible crimes affected their view of what a detective novel *should* be. (At the same time, at Haverford College, Chesterton's works were strongly influencing the young John Dickson Carr.) As Darwin searched for ideas, he recalled that he had been flying over the English Channel on July 4, 1928, the same day that the Belgian financier, Alfred Lowenstein, had disappeared from a small plane. Lowenstein, who, according to the *New York Times*, was known as "the mystery man of Europe," had stepped into the plane's lavatory and simply disappeared. Experts told the newspapers that it was impossible for him accidentally to have fallen from the plane by opening the wrong door, and for the next two weeks the popular press speculated about conspiracy or murder. Eventually, Lowenstein's body was found in the Channel, and the authorities decided that, despite the experts, the death was somehow accidental—though detective novelists, of course, could find more elaborate explanations. And that's what Darwin Teilhet did, writing the first draft of *Murder in the Air* in five days aboard ship to the United States.



Darwin Teilhet's first book, 1931, featuring St. Amand

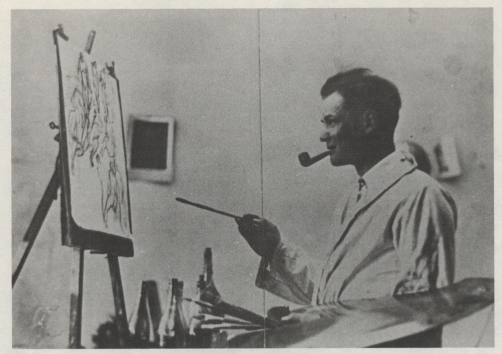
Murder in the Air was published in 1931 by the William Morrow company, who blazoned to the world that it solved the Lowenstein mystery: "Do you recall the disappearance of the famous Belgian financier Lowenstein? Here is a story that parallels that famous case and follows all the facts in a dramatic conclusion." Whether or not the book actually follows all the facts, it certainly provides an ingenious explanation of the seemingly impossible disappearance. The book opens as the hero, Peter Blue, receives a final chance to obtain a good story for his English-language Paris paper. Henri Augenet, who is "in an official capacity at le Bourget," has told Blue's editor that a plane carrying the financier, Heinrich von Dolbenstein, across the Channel will soon land. The pilot has, however, reported that von Dolbenstein disappeared after going into the lavatory. It is soon proved that the only exits from the lavatory to the cabin were under constant observation. Teilhet carefully scatters suspicion for the disappearance among several suspects: Geraldine Howard, von Dolbenstein's social secretary (with whom Blue quickly falls in love); Carson, his business secretary; and the pilot and navigator of the plane.

Meanwhile, the police enter, headed by George Talmont Maria St. Amand, recently appointed head of the Sûreté's detective department. St. Amand is a memorable character:

> It is impossible to forget his face. . . yellow and wrinkled it was, like an antique leather mask. The long, drooping eyelids gave it a peculiar Tartar cast of countenance which is sometimes seen in individuals from the provinces of Limoges or Corrège. The projecting cliff of a nose was bold and imperturbable. . . set off by a mustache which was thick and curved at the extremities like exaggerated cat's whiskers, incredibly fierce and stiff. It left me with an unholy desire to laugh. But when the drooping eyelids flickered open, and I saw his eyes, the desire to laugh died quickly.

St. Amand, like many other detectives of the era, is a collection of idiosyncracies; for example, he wrinkles his nose and shakes his head "like a wise old crane who has just seized upon a fish too large to swallow comfortably." St. Amand hates Blue's attempts to solve the case himself: "If the good God would grant me only one request, I would ask him to rid me of all amateur detectives."

Eventually, Augenet is murdered but leaves a



Darwin L. Teilhet, Paris, 1920s

dying message which is beautiful in its simplicity. As the plot develops, various characters act suspiciously; Blue hares off to England and Belgium searching for clues; he falls out of a low-flying plane but survives; he is attacked in the hospital; von Dolbenstein's pilot is killed. In the midst of all this, Blue discovers how von Dolbenstein disappeared, and the book ends in a well-handled action scene as Blue fights for his life with the criminal.

This brief résumé indicates how the strengths of Teilhet's early books also produced a major weakness. He wanted to avoid the actionless detective novel in which the sleuth spends too much time interviewing the suspects, but, in trying to include high-speed action, he did not always make the events relevant to the unfolding of the plot. *Murder in the Air* easily keeps the reader on the edge of his chair, but on reflection it is clear that much of the action is filler. This is related to the fact that, like most detective novels of the period, *Murder in the Air* introduces what should be the climax, the commission of the crime, at the opening of the story. Thus the remainder of the book is often a letdown, unless it is filled with further mysteries or rapidfire action—but Teilhet did not yet have the experience to make the action a coherent part of the plot. In addition, in order to produce tension, he occasionally lapsed into purple prose: "To have a man vanish from an airplane five thousand feet high in the air, when he could not even open the door to get out! Fantastic! Incredible! No wonder they stared at one another." Finally, the solution, though fairly clued, is rather clumsy. To make the impossible situation work, five people had to have knowledge of the scheme. On the whole, however, the positive aspects of the book outweigh the negative. The lore on flying at the end of the 1920s is interesting, as is the material on newspaper life of the period, which is based on Teilhet's experiences with the Paris *Herald Tribune*. The characters have no progressive revelation, or development, of personality, but they are distinctly delineated.

Darwin Teilhet began his second novel, *Death Flies High*, during July 1930; Morrow accepted it eleven months later, and the book was published on December 17, 1931. As with *Murder in the Air*, it benefits from Darwin's knowledge of airplanes, in this case the *Dorbach*, a "flying boat" crossing the Atlantic in two days. The book begins with a chart of the plane, indicating the sleeping cabin of each passenger; and the claustrophobic atmosphere of the

flying boat is successfully captured. The narrator, Jerome Bale, joins the *Dorbach* to see Helene d'Argence, who is a lovely and completely amoral adventuress. In trying to locate his own quarters, Bale stumbles into the cabin of Patricia Lane and sees a necklace being carefully pulled toward an air-vent on a nylon string. Bale grabs the necklace, but that mysterious event is followed by the discovery of a wounded stowaway, who almost immediately disappears. Some of this seems to be cleared up when another passenger, St. Amand, announces that a famous jewel thief, the Sleeper, has booked passage. The Sleeper is not a Raffles or Arsène Lupin character —he is a cold-blooded murderer. Eventually, there are four murders and three other attacks which might well have resulted in death.

St. Amand's only clue to the Sleeper's identity is that he has a small scar on his little finger. Unfortunately, in one of those coincidences which abound in detective novels (but which Teilhet *almost* makes believable in *Death Flies High*), most of the characters have such scars: Bale, the charming ne'er-do-well Percival Entrecot, and even St. Amand himself. An English chemist, George Leatherby, has acid-stained fingers which might hide the tell-tale scar. Teilhet carefully distributes suspicion among all the passengers. The suggestion is made that the Sleeper is a woman. Even St. Amand is under suspicion, and late in the novel the detective seems to accept a *Roger Ackroyd* case against the narrator. Finally, with a double plot twist, the Sleeper is revealed. The plot is complex and depends on too many criminals being involved, but it plays fair with the reader.

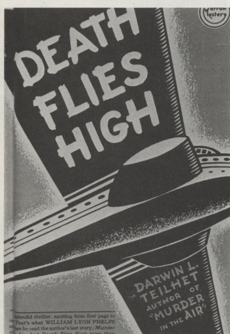
Hildegarde Tolman Teilhet

Death Flies High is a notable improvement over Teilhet's first book. Not only is the mystery well handled, but the material on early transatlantic air travel is fascinating. The unmotivated action of *Murder in the Air* is not entirely absent, but it is less obvious, primarily because Teilhet carefully relates the events to air travel. For example, when Bale is attacked by the Sleeper (narrators and detectives are often attacked in the Teilhets' books), he is actually inside the wing of the *Dorbach*. Later the flying boat goes through a storm and makes an emergency landing on its pontoons in the middle of the Atlantic. In a stunning concluding scene, the Sleeper is chased along the *outside* fuselage of the plane—which was possible since the *Dorbach* averaged only 106 miles per hour. Above all, *Death Flies High* conveys the feeling of air travel when it was elegant and passengers were not shoehorned into tiny seats.

The book also has much of interest in the development of Teilhet's writing. The characters are much better handled than in *Murder in the Air*, as their personalities are revealed gradually. The purple prose of the former book is also absent, and St. Amand is a much more convincing character. He remains a collection of eccentricities—he has a love of the dramatic; he is rude; and (on a lower level) he likes coffee with toast in it. Though he cares nothing for clothing, he is scrupulous about cleanliness. On the whole, however, I do not find St. Amand entirely satisfactory as a fictional detective. Clearly Teilhet disliked sleuths who are never wrong, and thus St. Amand several times misreads the evidence and (like the narrator) is knocked unconscious. On the other hand, we learn that he has a "demoniacal intelligence," and he is described as "like a well-oiled piece of machinery." The balance between fallibility in his detecting and infallibility in his attitude is not convincing. Teilhet, however, would soon do better in creating human detectives.

One oddity should be pointed out here. In *Murder in the Air*, St. Amand's given names are George Talmont Maria; in *Death Flies High*, his names are Jean Henri. Mrs. Teilhet believes that Morrow made the change in the proofs, but the reason is unclear. She suggests that perhaps the original name was too close to that of a living Frenchman. Teilhet was already known for basing his books on contemporary events ("for fans who like their news stories done into fiction," wrote one reviewer), and perhaps Marrow was unwilling to chance a legal action.

Reviewers generally praised both St. Amand books. The *New York Times* said that *Death Flies High* "is packed with thrills from the first page to the last and deserves to be classed as one of the season's best mystery tales." Morrow asked Teilhet for more volumes in the series, but he was then uncertain of his path as a writer. He had taken a job with the N. W. Ayers company as a copywriter, and he believed that what time was left over from work might be more profitably invested in magazine articles. Between 1931 and 1934, he was a regular contributor to *Outlook*, *Travel*, *Forum*, and other magazines on topics



The second St. Amand mystery, 1931

ranging from current issues ("Curse of White Collar Babies") to travel ("Pilgrims to China's Sacred Island") to one of his lifelong interests, the circus ("Traveling with a German Circus"). He also wrote one of the earliest columns of radio reviews, for *The Forum*, under the penname "Cyrus Fisher." Meanwhile, he had been mulling over the plot of a new detective novel, one which would introduce an extraordinary, impossible situation and which would also express some of his feelings about what was happening in the early 1930s. Later, in explaining why he introduced controversial themes into popular literature, Teilhet said that a writer must "have something deep in one's self and . . . the need to express it. They say that applies to the important novels, to the big serious efforts, and it may be true, too; I wouldn't know. Perhaps it can apply to anything a man feels he has to write." Certainly, Darwin Teilhet felt that he had to write about the rape of the Germany he loved, and he managed to do it in a formal detective story, *The Talking Sparrow Murders*, published by Morrow in 1934.

Teilhet worked longer on *Talking Sparrow* than on his first two books, and perhaps as a result the narration is far tighter. The setting in mellow Heidelberg, where the Nazis are unleashing unlimited terror, is perfectly integrated with an extraordinarily complicated plot. That Teilhet was able to combine the rationality of a formal detective novel with the background of a world-gone-mad is evidence of (as Julian Symons put it) the "considerable distinction" of *The Talking Sparrow Murders*.

The book is narrated by William Tatson, an American engineer temporarily in Germany. As he crosses the *Plockenstrasse* in Heidelberg, an elderly man named Kitmel Kohlmann staggers toward him and announces that a sparrow has asked for help. Kohlmann then collapses with a bullet hole in his stomach. As the police surround Tatson, he tries to explain about the talking sparrow. Although there is no evidence that Tatson has any other knowledge of the crime, his story is so odd that the police order him to remain in Heidelberg. Here begins one of the motifs of the story, that Germany was slowly going insane. The police, primarily non-Nazis, "acted as if they expected to be shot any moment, and had been expecting it for so long they no longer cared, and nothing minded very much to them but to get their work done. . . . I think Germany had been on the verge of exploding for so long that they all were not quite normal." *Herr Polizeidirector* Kresch sympathizes with Tatson, but he suspects that the American is concealing information, especially when it turns out that Kohlmann had been negotiating to purchase Tatson's company, the United Porcelain Tank Manufacturing Company. Kresch's association with Tatson is further complicated by the language barrier. American words, the policeman says, are "very difficult for me to understand. I only studied the English language in my school."

Kresch is Teilhet's most believable detective. He admits that he is imperfect, and on several occasions he misinterprets the evidence. But he is not described in the outlandish way of a St. Amand. He is simply an ordinary person trying to be rational and humane in a country that is experiencing irrational violence, from both the left and the right: "The Nazis had been in power long enough for the workers to lose faith in the Great Heroes." The unemployed clash with Nazi demonstrators, and rightwing papers blame the Communists for Kohlmann's death. To make matters

more difficult for the police, Taubek, the Mannheim Nazi leader, also has an interest in the porcelain factory, and he has a strong motive for Kohlmann's death; yet, because of the political situation, Kresch cannot act directly against Taubek. Another suspect is Otto Geigen, who wants to purchase the factory and who already owns a brewery: "He wished to extend his interests in what could be a profitable industry...if German export beer could ever be sold in any quantity in the States." Other suspects also emerge: Geigen's ward and mistress, Elaine Edrich; Carlson, the manager of Tatson's plant; Mischa Dryshezoff, a half-Jewish *chanseuse*; and the mysterious la Roc. Typically with Teilhet's books, the hero is attracted to both the women characters, but he eventually falls in love with Mischa and even spends a night with her which is delicately described in the 1930s manner.

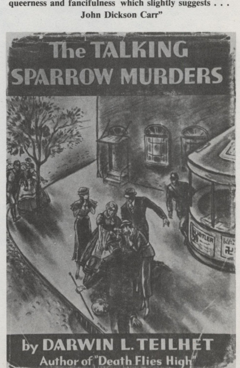
There is plenty of running around in the middle of the story, but little of it seems unnecessary. Teilhet may have realized that his first two novels were damaged by having the climax too early, and though *The Talking Sparrow Murders* does begin with the major mystification, Teilhet introduces new mysteries which will contribute to the ultimate solution. For example, there is the Baron von Lindbrulle, who every day has his chauffeur drive him to a little hill. He bows with impeccable manners at a pine tree, smiles happily, and then leaves. Even after a completely rational explanation is given of the loquacious sparrow, we do not discover who killed Kohlmann; rather, we learn of yet another murder—this one being particularly horrifying. (Rather than give away the entire plot, I will say only that rats are directly involved.)

Above all, the body of the novel develops Teilhet's views about what has happened to Germany. Many detective novelists looked upon fictional murder as merely providing an intellectual puzzle. Teilhet did not. Witness the opening to the chapter entitled "The Live Cat and the Dead Jew," which must be quoted at length to understand the depth of Teilhet's rage:

> It was a dead Jew, all right. The cat was humped like a curved sewer brush over the shoulder where the sleeve and coat had been torn away. The cat hissed at us. Its eyes were green and hungry under the flickering street lamp and Mischa sagged against me and whispered, "Kick it! Kick it away!"
>
> The cat was skin and bones. It stopped spitting after the second kick. Most of the man's body was a pulp of cloth and blood with a great gaping place where the cat had been at him after the Nazis finished. . . . They had thoughtfully burned the swastika sign on the Jew's forehead before finishing with him and tossing him out in the Friedrichsallee as one of their amusing little signs of the cultural revival of Germany.
>
> Except for the mark on the forehead and a bruise below the right eye, the Jew's face had not been touched; it was strong and intelligent, with a sensitive nose and a firm mouth flicked up at the corner by a final frozen grimace of agony or, perhaps, the last physical indication of a refusal to be either humiliated or frightened by torture. The clear eyes were open. They seemed to hold no rancor.
>
> Despite our haste I stooped down and closed the Jew's eyes—it was the least and the only thing we could do for him. . . . From somewhere in the distance a clock struck out mellowly and with a curious haunting sadness, as if it were a relic of a long forgotten past, two hours in the morning.

Such passages were strong stuff in a detective novel of the 1930s, but they were peculiarly important (and courageous) at a time when too many Americans still believed that the Nazis were merely German patriots. Not all authors of popular fiction practiced, in Colin Watson's phrase, "snobbery with violence," and *The Talking Sparrow Murders*, though filled with murders, expresses the ultimate senselessness of violence. The incident of the dead Jew also contributes to the detective elements of the story in two ways. First, it helps the reader to understand Kresch's difficulties in dealing with Nazi suspects, and, second, it directly foreshadows a later episode. A newspaper article reports three other murders the same day as

Teilhet's 1934 book, which Dorothy Sayers said "has a queerness and fancifulness which slightly suggests . . . John Dickson Carr"



the death of Kohlmann. Two of the victims are named Rozenkrantz and Jacobson. Mischa explains, "You can tell from their names what happened to them." Tatson spells it out: "Jews attacked by the righteous Nazis." But the third victim is a newsvender named Schmidt, and since he was killed across the street from the talking sparrow, we suspect that his death is associated with the mystery.

In another scene, Teilhet talks openly about the homosexuality of some of the Nazi Brownshirts. In an excellent description of the unreal gaiety of a night club (something that recent readers will associate with *Cabaret*), Teilhet introduces Willi, a young Nazi who has been sent to capture Tatson. Tatson plays on Willi's homosexuality by luring him to a closet where he knocks him unconscious.

Teilhet does not let the mystery become submerged in his comments about time and place. Some two-thirds of the way through the book, Mischa and Tatson list all the facts of the case, and Tatson comments that, had they interpreted those facts correctly, they should have been able to identify the murderer. Kresch eventually solves the case with clues that have been fairly given to the reader and helps Tatson and Mischa to escape from Germany.

The timeliness of *The Talking Sparrow Murders* made it a great popular success in 1934. Several hardback printings appeared, and serial rights were sold to the New York *Herald Tribune* and the Washington *Post*. The *Herald Tribune* brought Darwin and Hildegarde Teilhet from California to New York to help launch the serial, and they were greeted with huge placards in the subway reading "WHO KILLED HERR KOHLMANN?" The very immediacy of the book, however, meant that its vogue would not last. As the Nazis consolidated their hold on Germany, a book set at the time of their takeover seemed dated. But almost fifty years have now passed, and it is time that a modern publisher recognizes *The Talking Sparrow Murders* as one of the best productions of the Golden Age of detective fiction. Until the book is reissued, it is worth any number of trips to used-book stores to track down a copy.

After the success of *Talking Sparrow*, James Poling of the Crime Club began negotiating to bring Teilhet into Doubleday, Doran's stable of authors. He asked Teilhet to agree to write two detective novels a year and to develop a series detective who had an identifiable personality; Kresch was perhaps not distinctive enough, and with the rise of the Nazis it would clearly be difficult to have a Heidelberg *Polizeidirector* appear in more novels. Teilhet accepted those stipulations but insisted that Doubleday, Doran also agree to publish some of his non-detective novels. The result was that Teilhet's next book was *Bright Destination* (1935) (British title: *Bells on His Toes*). Though the book has all sorts of criminal activities, including murder (and thus could easily have been in the Hubin bibliography), Teilhet was right in calling it a "picaresque comedy." It is a tribute to his maturing abilities as a writer that he was able to combine violence, pathos, and comedy into a successful novel. Unlike his detective stories, the emphasis is not on plot but rather on character and the contrast between the modern moneyed world and the curiously more real lives of a French traveling circus.

The story is fairly simple. Mark Doughty, a young American radio writer, has come to France to locate his superficial and selfish wife Rosalie, who has left him to become a movie actress and to take up with a nobleman. The book opens with Doughty innocently becoming involved in a police riot against Communists in Cherbourg. The police believe that he has killed one of them, so he hides out with a *cirque*. Eventually, he discovers that he loves Lucia, one of the circus performers, but it is too late, and he returns to the United States. Like *Talking Sparrow*, the book emphasizes opposition to anti-semitism, but its main interest is the careful evocation of the French countryside and Teilhet's many amused and affectionate comments. Some are worth quoting, not only because they reveal how far Teilhet had come since the purple prose of his first book, but also because they indicate a theme which will reappear in the Teilhets' detective and suspense novels:

> "Have you no pride?" "Yes; I have pride. However I know how to control it." . . . Except for a sketchy brush-like mustache, Carlos' plumpish features were distinguished only by the conformity so often found in the faces of businessmen and intelligent croupiers . . . As he touched his cap he became that amalgam of impassivity and remotely vegetable characteristics which impregnates the true chauffeur . . . A robin's egg blue Rolls town car was lolling with massive contentment under one of the stone sheds . . . The crowd saw this tremendous affair of wings, wood and legs blasting on them from above; a visitation from a strange world—from Germany for example . . . The twelve dignataries arose from their seats on the wooden stand with the spontaneous uniformity of ballet dancers hearing the first bleating notes of the "L'Apres-Midi d'un Faun." The same twelve dignataries, proving once and for all that they were duplicates of the same bud, entertained the identical idea at the identical moment. They rushed for the short flight of stairs.

As these quotations indicate, one of the Teilhets' themes was the sameness of people who have not broken from their assigned lot. This motif re-emerges in several of their later stories, especially *The Assassins* (1946) and *The Rim of Terror* (1950).

Published later in 1935 was *The Ticking Terror Murders*. Poling had asked Teilhet to invent a series detective who was easily identifiable, and the result was the Baron Franz Maximilian Karagoz und von Kaz, one of the few successful humorous detectives

in fiction. Creating a comic sleuth is not easy, for what is funny to one person may not be funny to another, and standards of humor vary from age to age. Agatha Christie with Hercule Poirot and John Dickson Carr with Sir Henry Merrivale found the right balance between the comic eccentricities of their detectives and the fundamental seriousness of the detection. On the other hand, when an author tries too hard to make the sleuths funny by overemphasizing their weaknesses, as with Robert Barr's Eugene Valmont, David Frome's Mr. Pinkerton, and Joyce Porter's Dover, it becomes difficult to believe that they can solve crimes. When the detective is too much of a buffoon, the reader cannot suspend disbelief.

The Baron von Kaz is different from most comic detectives because we understand why he acts as he does (as we never do with Poirot or Merrivale). By the final book in the von Kaz series, the Teilhets have developed the Baron's personality so that his foibles are amusing because, though exaggerated, they are human. The Baron is imperfect; he is sometimes laughable; but he has our sympathy and even our respect.

The Baron is tall and slender, dark complexioned, with a scar on his cheek, and close-cropped hair in the Germanic fashion—sometimes described as black, sometimes as russet brown. He has a long lower lip and a prognathus jaw—"Hapsburgian heritage from a distinguished if prolific grandfather." He constantly brags about his Austrian von Kaz heritage, with its bravery and intelligence, while denying the Gypsy imagination contributed by his Karagoz ancestors. In part, it is his fear of the Karagoz strain that leads to his self-protecting pride. He served in the First World War and received decorations from the Emperor Franz Josef, but he was captured by the English and held for two years. He gained what he fondly believes is a perfect knowledge of the English language and a deep-rooted belief that the English have created an empire by their habit of taking cold showers every morning. Though he hates such rigors, he insists on taking cold showers himself. At the end of the war, he entered the Vienna police department, and quickly headed it. He retains the old-world Germanic courtesy of bringing his heels together and making a stiff bow, but he never lowers his head because once in Vienna as he bowed to a criminal he was knocked unconscious. The only weapon he carries is a innocuous-looking green umbrella, which has a sword concealed in its handle, and its base is weighted so that the Baron can "stun a man at a twenty-foot distance, throwing it end over end like a club."

After failing in an attempt to lead a revolution to restore the Austrian monarchy, the Baron has entered the United States illegally, and, as *The Ticking Terror Murders* opens, he is trying to live by his wits as a detective. Being in what he calls the "raw states of America" (where orange juice rather than champagne accompanies breakfast) increases the Baron's pride in himself and his ancestry, for in truth he has little left but his pride. He describes himself as "great and brave," as "the greatest detective in all America." He requires praise, write Teilhet, "as a tree does water," and "when flattered he would stretch and arch his back and cock his head and go through all the tricks that he had." He constantly offends Americans by quoting Latin sayings (which he has memorized for the occasion) and explaining blandly, "That is Latin, my dear sir; it translates..."

In the first scene of *The Ticking Terror Murders*, a Hollywood actress named Lucille Tarn hired the Baron to discover the source of a mysterious ticking noise which is terrifying her lover, the writer Henry Kerby. She fears that her husband Charles plans to murder Kerby. The Baron desperately needs the $5,000 fee for the case: because the pawn shops are closed, he has not been able even to buy a breakfast. Each time Lucille's attention is diverted, he snatches part of her meal. When the Baron arrives at Kerby's home in Carmel, Kerby announces that he doesn't want a foreign detective hanging around. It must be admitted that the Baron is partly responsible for this distrust. He has memorized the names of Kerby's books in order to impress him; unfortunately, he confuses the titles and ends up praising other authors. Even when the danger to his life seems obvious, Kerby wants to hire an American detective rather than this strutting popinjay of an Austrian.

The Baron's investigation does not begin promisingly, especially since he has to avoid suspecting Kerby of any wrongdoing; otherwise he might not collect his fee. In addition, he has persuaded himself that Charles Tarn is innocent, and, even though he realizes that his conclusion was hasty, his pride does not allow him to change his mind. The situation becomes much more serious when the Kerby household attends a magician's performance and Lucille is coaxed into a cabinet from which she is supposed to disappear. But instead of vanishing, she is discovered murdered with a hatpin through her breast. Thus Teilhet included for the fourth time a miracle problem in his books,* and, though this one is a bit more predictable to locked-room enthusiasts than is the problem of the talking sparrow, Teilhet's solution is original and convincing.

Unfortunately, the remainder of the book is not so convincing. Teilhet was clearly most concerned with making the Baron vivid as a comic detective, but in

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*The miracle problems in *Murder in the Air* and *The Talking Sparrow Murders* have already been discussed. *Death Flies High* has a minor impossibility which is quickly solved.

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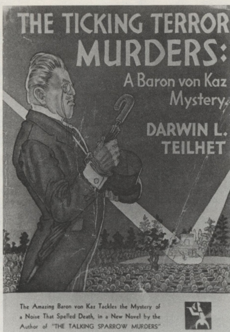


The jacket of the first Baron von Kaz book, 1935, makes the Baron look a bit like P. G. Woodhouse's exquisite idiots.

doing so he neglected to flesh out the other characters, and at times he made the Baron too much of a bumbler to have once headed an Austrian police force. For example, at the moment that he unravels the truth about the magician's cabinet, the local police discover him and he falls through the floor. He is later arrested because "these goddamned foreigners have to be taught that they can't flout American institutions." Sometimes the Baron's activities approach broad farce. When he eavesdrops by hiding in a closet, his dressing gown gets caught in the door and the suspects watch the cloth "jerking agonizedly." He is chased up a tree by a cow; he opens a door with burglars' tools, only to discover that the door was already unlocked; he is kidnapped, knocked unconscious, and wakes to find himself in bed with an unknown woman who claims that he has just married her (the Baron takes care of that problem by demanding his conjugal rights). In short, as in *Murder in the Air*, much of the center of the book has nothing to do with the solution, but the pace and tension of the events mask the pointlessness of the dashing about.

But although the comedy contributes little to the plot, it does help to make the Baron human. His pride leads him to make foolish mistakes, but it also gives him bravery and at times makes him almost heroic:

> The Baron was a brave man. Yet his imagination even surpassed his bravery . . . Sometimes when his bravery was overwhelmed by the specters brought forth by that imagination, then he had nothing to rely upon except pride. And when pride alone carries you forward into a dark attic, it has all it can do when oppressed by an unhaltered imagination stimulated by a soft, deadly tick-tick-tick which seems ever to gain in volume.

The Crime Club misleadingly described *The Ticking Terror Murders* as having a "compact and plausible plot." But as loose and implausible as the plot is, the solution is quite good, and I think that Teilhet accomplished what he set out to do—to make the Baron a vivid detective. Certainly the reviewers liked him. The *New York Times* called him "one of the most amusing detectives we have encountered in a long, long time"; and the New York *Post* said that he was "one of the most enjoyable sleuths in mystery fiction."

The first two chapters of the Baron's second adventure, *The Feather Cloak Murders*, were printed at the end of *Ticking Terror* as a promotional gimmick. The authorship was announced as "Darwin and Hildegarde Teilhet" because Mrs. Teilhet had contributed more and more to each succeeding Teilhet book. By the time of the writing of *Feather Cloak*, the Teilhets had developed a general pattern of collaboration. Darwin was most interested in character, and he would spend months inventing the biographies of the major actors in the novels, their families, appearances, tastes, and so on. He also devised the plots, and then husband and wife would vigorously debate the fine points of the novel. Darwin was less interested in plot details and development, and Hildegarde usually suggested such points during these discussions. He would then normally compose the first draft of the novel in about three weeks. She then rewrote and edited the manuscript. Although their later books received various attributions, almost all Teilhet titles were collaborative efforts. Once, when James Poling of the Crime Club told them that he could distinguish between their writing styles, they submitted a typescript to him in which they wrote alternate chapters. He couldn't tell which chapters were written by Darwin and which by Hildegarde—a fact which may not be surprising since Hildegarde (who had never wanted to be an author before her marriage) learned how to write from typing and revising Darwin's work.

Consequently, it is foolhardy of me to suggest that Hildegarde's involvement in the von Kaz stories

changed them in any way, but it does seem to me that the female characters become stronger and that domestic matters—especially marriage—replace some of Darwin's emphasis on rapid-fire action. Certainly, *The Feather Cloak Murders*, published in 1936, is a more unified book than anything Darwin had done earlier, with the exception of *Talking Sparrow*.

At the end of *Ticking Terror*, the Baron (after collecting his fee) fled from the immigration authorities. He ended up in Mexico, where he stayed with a compatriot. His old friends in Austria obtained a passport for him, and, as they prepared a monarchist coup, the Baron waited for the telegram that would call him back to Vienna. The Baron's ability was still respected at home, despite the fact that the Austrian nobility "still recalled the scandal resulting when his grandfather fell in love with a gypsy dancer." Meanwhile, the Baron agreed to be bodyguard to a Mr. Hiroshita until called back to Austria.

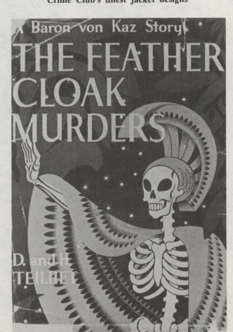
When *The Feather Cloak Murders* begins, the Baron and Hiroshita are on shipboard heading toward Hawaii. Also on board are a number of people connected with the McKay family, which owns a large ranch on one of the islands. As far as the Baron is concerned, the most important McKay is Caryl Miquet (her branch of the family likes French spellings rather than Scottish), who was one of the suspects in *Ticking Terror* and with whom the Baron has fallen in love. In the opening scene, a sleazy crook named Kohler is killed by a feathered dart fired from an airgun. The Baron stumbles upon the body and soon realizes that one of the McKays must have committed the crime. The Baron does not report the murder immediately; when a steward tells him that the Captain is in the stern, the Baron resolutely marches forward, explaining, "I understand both the American and English languages perfectly, my dear man." By the time that the Captain is informed of the crime, the body has disappeared.

After the Baron arrives in Honolulu and is nearly run down by a car, Hiroshita tells him a cock-and-bull story. He has discovered, he explains, a map to a lost Aztec city of gold. The Baron does not believe that story, but Hiroshita goes on to claim that the map is hidden in an artifact which he has shipped from Mexico to Caryl Miquet. The Baron now realizes that Caryl's receipt of the artifact will put her in danger—especially after Hiroshita is killed by another feathered shaft. The problem is that Caryl doesn't want anything to do with the Baron. Even when he helps young Billy McKay build a sandcastle, she ignores him.

The significance of Hiroshita's map is not particularly surprising to anyone who has paid attention to the title of the book, or to the dust jacket illustration; and the solution is less satisfying than in Teilhet's earlier novels. It depends upon a suspect's acting in a completely unconvincing way and upon some tiny points of evidence that even the attentive reader will miss. The book nevertheless has much that is rewarding, especially the careful description of Hawaii in the 1930s (Darwin had made several trips to Hawaii to gain the Dole account for the Ayers agency). And the Baron himself is described in greater depth than before. His foibles are still amusing, but, in one of the Teilhets' most moving descriptions, he shows extraordinary tenderness to Billy McKay when the boy is badly injured by the murderer:

> There was enough moonlight in the sky to see the boy. . . . His feet were trailing behind him, limp, like those of a puppy who has been run over. . . . The blood streamed into those great eyes, blinding him; the blood covered the smudge of freckles, and the boy was choking, crying in a faint, high-pitched, terrified voice, digging into the dirt with his hands, attempting to pull himself forward, and each time the hands moved so futilely they moved more slowly. Now the Baron had behind him years of experience . . . . He saw the boy. And he should have promptly called for help and remained there, touching nothing, bending closer to that small writhing object, ordering the boy to use

The Teilhets' 1936 von Kaz mystery has one of the Crime Club's finest jacket designs



what breath he had to talk. By doing this the Baron would have most efficiently preserved any possible clues.

Instead, the Baron tenderly carries Billy to the house while soothing him with an old German prayer taught him by his nurse.

And, paradoxically, the more we learn about the Baron's pride, the more we respect him. He succeeds as a detective because of the imagination inherited from the Gypsy Karagozes—a fact which he hates; and thus he exaggerates his other abilitities:

The Baron could take what few facts he had and construct a superstructure of theory and hypothesis. . . . And because the Baron's one real ability did lie in what amounted to a minor genius in theorizing, an unpredictable quantity at best, he was not infallible as those worthy gentlemen who advance only when they are given established facts. He failed often enough for him to distrust this queer talent of his, and for him to try to hide it and claim additional talents in order to make up for what he believed was a weakness.

We end the book not being surprised that Caryl has decided to marry the Baron. But, because of his involvement with the McKays, he has not been able to reply to any of the telegrams from the Austrian conspirators begging him to return, and the coup fails. Nonetheless, the Baron does return to Austria a few months later to retrieve the Karagoz fortune which will allow him, he is certain, to marry Caryl.

The third von Kaz book, *The Crimson Hair Murders* (1936), is one of the Teilhets' finest works. The Baron's bravery and imagination, his pride and ability, are in perfect balance. The relationship of setting to plot is well handled, with carefully developed descriptions of Mexico and San Francisco. The Teilhets, moreover, had gained enough confidence in their storytelling to play with the reader. Poling of the Crime Club is introduced as a character, but only long enough for the Baron to call him a "dolt." The Teilhets even include their own books in "four shelves tightly jammed with detective stories" owned by a suspect. The list indicates their wide reading and perhaps some influences on their work: "Mason, the Coles, Stout, Wallace, Abbot, Hart, Strahan, Mavity, Eberhart, Carr, Queen, Leroux, Patrick, Rinehart, Biggers, the Teilhets, Christie, Hammett, Rohmer...authors [the Baron] had never heard of, much less read, and wouldn't have liked if he had." In addition, the plot itself is playful. The Teilhets lay traps for experienced readers of detective fiction and carefully lead them to identify, wrongly, a least likely person as the culprit.

At the beginning of *Crimson Hair*, the Baron is returning by ship from Austria, where he obtained the Karagoz fortune, left to him after

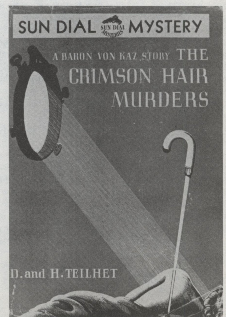
the sad demise of his uncle, a gentleman who had walked out of a third-story french window under the delusion that he was entering another room. Inasmuch as the uncle was over sixty, and was leaving by invitation of the husband the boudoir of a lady at least under thirty-five, the death was not only a heroic but a magnificent ending for a Karagoz.

Sadly, after debts were paid, all that was left of the fortune was a gold coin cunningly constructed so that the benign countenance of the Emperor Franz Josef showed on both sides. The Baron is able to flip the coin for innumerable bottles of champagne during the course of the book, but obviously the Karagoz fortune will not support a marriage with Caryl Miquet, who has just inherited the ranch in Hawaii. Though Caryl wants to marry the Baron in spite of his poverty, he cannot accept such an arrangement, and throughout much of the book he drafts but never completes letters beginning "My dear and cherished Caryl" asking to be released from his promise.

At a Mexican port, the Baron leaves the ship and goes to a bar to ponder his situation. There he is joined by a man with crimson hair and the face "of a Botticelli Angel." Belying his appearance, the man attemptes to poison the Baron's drink. The Baron switches glasses, and, as he walks back to the ship, he sees the man collapse,

one hand going to his throat, with the sun slanting through the green leaves and putting a halo upon his curls...and he began to laugh at the jest, all the greater because it was

The 1937 Baron von Kaz story



played on himself. . . . He laughed more loudly than before, and as he went to the ground he was laughing until the dust filled his mouth and ended the deep joyous sounds. . . . But the laughter was still spread over the head of a lost angel. . . and a hot Mexican wind blew the dust of Mexico through the matted curls.

By the time of *Crimson Hair*, the Teilhets knew how to construct a detective novel. After this unintentional suicide gains the readers' interest, the plot and the characters are gradually introduced. Dorothy Malby is traveling to San Francisco with a companion, Marjorie Holt, to meet her relative Cyrus Fields and to share in the Fields' shipping fortune. Also on the ship are an ex-football star named George Danton and his cousin Ben Gillhaft, both of whom (through a family connection worthy of Mary Roberts Rinehart) also have interests in the Fields' fortune. And there are indications that Cyrus Fields himself is on the ship.

On his return from the bar, the Baron discovers in his own stateroom Marjorie's body, stabbed with the sword from his umbrella. The Baron wishes only to rid himself of this annoyance and to discover some way to write to Caryl, but, after the Baron and George Danton hide the body, it disappears; and the Baron is drawn into investigating the crime. . . especially after he inadvertently allows Ben Gillhaft to call the flip of the "Karagos fortune." As a result, the Baron is engaged as a detective without pay.

The Baron remains the Baron throughout the book, limited by his pride and Gypsy temper, trying always to impress the barbaric Americans with his aristocratic heritage and his command of Latin. But no one is impressed. When he translates from Latin to a young lady, she responds simply, "So what?" He also makes the mistake of spouting Latin to Ben Gillhaft, who was a classics major in college. Ben not only responds with another Latin tag which the Baron can't translate but also catches the Baron: "The Baron crossed his left leg over his right; the blue eyes, very guileless and innocent . . . 'Hic nigrae sucus lollignis, haec est mere.' He smiled. 'That, my dear sir, is Latin—'" Ben answers, "No doubt, but just exactly what has the discharge of black cuttlefish to do with my question?" The Baron is reduced to puffing "very hard on his cigarette."

After landing at San Francisco, the Baron is torn between continuing to work for Ben and hoping that Cyrus Fields will give him enough money to solve the case so that he can marry Caryl. There are of course more murders—the Teilhets never believed in having only one murder where several would do. Halfway through the book, the Baron outlines suspects and possible motives, and a bit later he lists ten questions which, when answered, will solve the case. Meanwhile, he continues to consume champagne and, despite taking cold showers, imagines Caryl in bed with him. In a creepy scene, the Baron breaks into Fields's darkened mansion and discovers two more murders, with a cat licking the blood of one of the victims. (Considering this scene and the one in *Talking Sparrow* of "The Live Cat and the Dead Jew," it is clear that the Teilhets were not fond of felines.)

The book ends with two twists, a wonderful chase across the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Baron fingering the murderer from his hospital bed. Again the Teilhets have been completely fair to the reader, and in *Crimson Hair* they constructed one of their best detective novels. Although it is not so ingenious or so evocative in setting as *Talking Sparrow*, it is certainly a high point of the Golden Age of detection.

I suspect that, if the Teilhets had continued with two von Kaz novels of the *Crimson Hair* quality every year, they would have quickly joined the elite of detective-story writers. But, though the first chapter of *The Broken Face Murders* was printed at the end of *Crimson Hair* and announced for Autumn 1937 publication, the book was not published until 1940. The Teilhets also had ready the typescripts of two other von Kaz mysteries. The editor of *The Saturday Evening Post* had asked them to submit a von Kaz serial. They produced two novels about the Baron, one with an American circus background, the other based on Hungarian refugees. But the *Post* wanted strict limitations on the length of whichever story it published, and the Teilhets were unwilling to cut. At the same time, Darwin was fearing that he was becoming typecast in having to produce two detective novels a year. Erle Stanley Gardner had called on them (for information on the Far East, which Darwin had visited), and the Teilhets were impressed with him as a writing dynamo but fearful of getting into a situation in which, like Gardner, they would have to write with three secretaries and a van outfitted as an office. They had two daughters whom they wished to educate well, and that meant having as wide a market as possible for their books. This fact was connected with Darwin's desire to become a freelance writer. To live by their writing alone, Mrs. Teilhet recalls, "it was either juggling several writing balls or to become a Erle Stanley Gardner, and that Darwin could never be."

James Poling did agree to publish Darwin's mainlain novel *Journey to the West* (British title: *Tough Guy, Smart Guy*) in 1938. This book was based on Darwin's experiences as an advertising agent. The hero, Rufus Cobb, has picaresque journeys on the West Coast, changing from being a Communist while out of work to becoming a Republican when he finds a well-paying job. Although I find the book less successful than the earlier (and less topical) picaresque novel *Bright Destination*, it was a great popular success; it was serialized in various

newspapers, and it was Teilhet's first book to make the best-seller list. By this time he had resigned from Ayers to move to Hawaii as executive assistant to the president of Dole Pineapple. Life in Hawaii, Mrs. Teilhet remembers, was idyllic, but working at Dole left little time for writing. Darwin was torn between his knowledge from *Journey to the West* that he should not limit himself to one sort of literature, and his commitment to Poling (who was a personal friend) to compelte the von Kaz novel promised at the end of *Crimson Hair*. He finally decided to produce one more detective story and then go entirely freelance.

The Broken Face Murders was written mainly during 1938, after Teilhet quit Ayer and before he moved to Hawaii. The Teilhets had vacationed in England before going to Italy, where Darwin holed up and finished *Broken Face*. By this time, their books were being translated into several languages, and, with the royalties from their Italian publisher, they bought a Fiat. They drove to Scandanavia and Eastern Europe, but, after being caught in Czechoslovakia's first air raid, they returned to America and sent the typescript of *Broken Face* to the Crime Club.

The final von Kaz novel begins with an explanation of the delay from the promised time of publication. In 1938, the Baron was called back to Austria to try to prevent the Nazi takeover of his country. On his last day in Vienna, the Baron heard that his friend Solomon Grauenstein had been killed "for no other reasons than that his nose was hooked and he worshipped as his ancestors in the Jewish faith." But the Baron did manage to rescue a Jewish violinist from a concentration camp as Vienna was being decorated with Swastikas. The Baron escaped to Prague, but he left after the Munich agreement and finally returned to America.

The marriage between the Baron Franz Maximilian Karagoz und von Kaz and Caryl Miquet takes place at a hotel, and, as they go to the Baron's Daimler to drive to their rented home in Los Corrales, California, the hotel manager intercepts them:

> The manager pulled a long envelope from his vest pocket. "Before you go—hum. I had no opportunity—the bill. Your suite of rooms for three weeks. Bar bill. The—"
>
> "Of course," said the Baron smoothly. He took the bill, stuck it in his pocket. "There. It is done. Finished. A thousand thanks, my dear sir."
>
> "But the payment—"
>
> "No more apologies. I have a memory of steel. It is already attended to—"

As the manager stands petrified, the Daimler shoots forward amidst a shower of rice.

At Los Corrales, the Baron prepares for the wedding night he has been anticipating for several years and three books. But after the Baron announces at 8:22 P.M. that he is sleepy and ready to retire, his landlord, Mr. Gulthwort, arrives. The man is clearly terrified. With his mouth wobbling up and down in an obviously false beard, he babbles about a society called the Atlanticians whose anti-semitism is ruining Los Corrales. Gulthwort is planning to skip town, but meanwhile he's hidden evidence that will hang the society's leaders: "*The broken face!* . . . It'll finish all four of them." The Baron, however, has promised Caryl that he will no longer be a detective, and, with his bride in the next room, he has more pressing concerns. But Gulthwort says that he has told his enemies that the Baron knows where the Broken Face is hidden. While the Baron briefly leaves the room to talk with Caryl, Gulthwort is murdered and the Baron is forced to find the Broken Face, especially when it turns out that Caryl is the chief suspect. She is arrested for a brief time, later kidnapped, and Sheriff Heraclitus Carreras threatens:

> "You didn't know there's an organization in town of real Americans? They don't have much hankering for foreigners. Mostly they're against Jews and Communists but you can't never tell. It'd break my heart, Baron, if some of those fellers got the idea you were a subversive influence or had a lot of Jewish blood in you. You were over there fighting for the Jews, I hear . . . They got excited about a feller a couple of weeks ago and if they didn't go and take his daughter, fine handsome girl too, into one of the artichoke fields. Hate to have anything like that happen to your wife."

(Putting such words into the mouth of a man named Carreras adds considerable irony to the beliefs of the "real Americans.")

In short, Los Corrales is the corrupt town that in more recent years has become stock-in-trade for some mystery writers. Its leading citizen McBorrow and its mayor Foxx control the Altanticians, an esoteric organization based (as its founders admit) on the Rosicrucians. It has some 38,000 members, mock Egyptian temples just outside town, a large mail-order business in occult literature, and an entire mythology supposedly traced back to Pharaoh Rameses I. One of the subplots is the Atlanticians' clever use of insurance policies. The "Fellows of the Guild of Brotherhood and Benevolent Divinity" are encouraged to take out large policies in favor of the organization and then, as part of the ritual, to fast constantly and die of starvation. "In an effort to protect itself from an abnormal loss in the past year or so the Midwest National had raised rates for citizens in Los Corrales, but had found that such action had not deterred an increase of deaths among its policyholders."

The Baron discovers that the Atlanticians' money is being used by Foxx to become an American Führer. Foxx has realized (like some current religious leaders) that "it is very much the same process, gaining ad-

herents to a religious cause or to a political faith of action." Thus Los Corrales is the center of the National American Party of Social Action, or NAPSA. Like the Nazis, NAPSA has support from businessmen because it aims at busting unions, and has "hypnotized them into believing [Foxx is] going to save California from Communism."

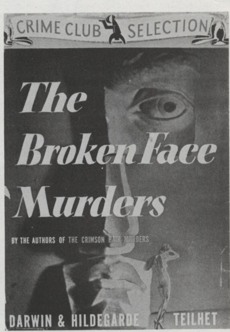
Although the Teilhets use *Broken Face* to make political and social statements, they do not minimize the detective interests. Red herrings and clues are all expertly developed; at one point the Baron discovers twenty-one physical clues. In sections reminiscent of Ellery Queen's discover of many types of backwardness in *The Chinese Orange Mystery*, the Baron locates several broken faces. In each case, the Teilhets use the episode to reveal the personalities of the suspects. The Baron goes to a party at which he learns a great deal about Mayor Foxx and discovers a broken face in a Dali painting. The Baron, whose respect for the law is never overwhelming, steals the painting by rolling it up and hiding it in his pants-leg. For the remainder of the chapter, he limps around feigning gout. Back at home, he uses a knife to search for a sheet of paper or a microscopic message hidden in the paint or the canvas:

> In an hour and ten minutes he had before him a slightly disheveled painting, with bare flecks on worms, face, trees, liquid watch, in the form of squares, and while an art critic might have been puzzled to decide if this were some more brilliant creation of the Dali genius or a canvas that had fallen under a lawn mower, the Baron was no further advanced in his researches.

Knowing that this was to be the final book about the Baron, the Teilhets carefully described his character, expanding on their sympathetic descriptions of his strengths and weaknesses. His pride is still evident, but he begins to recognize his limitations. He admits to Caryl that his boasts are not always true. He even becomes "distrustful of himself, and this was a new and disquieting emotion for him." To his utter mortification, a female suspect calls him "Baron von Kazzy-Wazzy." Perhaps we should leave this most sympathetic of humorous detectives with the Teilhets' summary of him:

> So it was then, as he grimaced and winked with great good humor over his cleverness in that obscure light, his pants flapping, his length of body so sinewy and quick with action, that Bunny had the impression of seeing not at all a man of the twentieth century but a Harlequin of jests and moods and mercurial changes, all in black and white motley, stepped out from the past. That impression passed as quickly as it came, but in that short space it seemed to Bunny that somehow he had gained a better comprehension of this man; and the comprehension was touched more with sympathy and affection than amusement, because he sensed that this Baron, this man of steel and sawdust, generous yet cruel, with some wisdom, and overmuch fanfarades, was born out of his time.

In a decade, the Teilhets had produced seven detective novels ranging from the competent to the superb, but they never wrote another detective story. Readers were left to mourn that there woud be no more of what Anthony Boucher later called the "wholly delightful series of picaresque adventures concerning the Baron Franz Maximilian Karagoz [und] von Kaz." Mrs. Teilhet recalls that neither she nor Darwin decided that the vogue of the classical detective novel had passed; rather, having left the Crime Club, they felt that it would be unfair to Poling to



The final recorded adventure of the Baron von Kaz, 1940

write more about the Baron. After Darwin resigned from Dole and at last became a freelance writer, both the Teilhets aimed their books for the next twenty years at various markets, and they wrote historical novels, "charivaris," children's books, and a series of mystery and suspense thrillers. □

Douglas G. Greene, who teaches history at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, has had four previous articles published in THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE. *He is the editor of John Dickson Carr's* THE DOOR TO DOOM AND OTHER DETECTIONS, *and he is now working on an article on the later works of Darwin and Hildegarde Teilhet.*

PAPER CRIMES

By William L. DeAndrea

The Edgar Award for best paperback original holds a special place in my heart, all the more so since I've been doing this column. It was very interesting to see the results of the latest balloting.

All in all, the results deserve approval. The committee gave the ugly-but-welcome little fellow to *The Old Dick* by L. A. Morse (Avon), not a bad choice at all. Runners-up were *Deadline* by John Dunning (Fawcett, for more about which see below); *Dead Bolt* by Raymond Obstfeld (Charter, also see below); *The Unforgiven* by Patricia J. MacDonald (Dell); and something from Pocket Books called *Pin,* which is a supernatural and should not have been nominated. In times of stress, members of MWA should whip out their membership cards to remind themselves that the "M" stands for "Mystery," then behave accordingly.

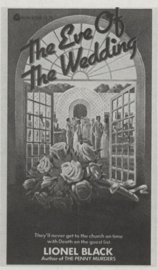
Anyway, except for *Pin,* all the nominees were reviewed favorably in this space, which says something complimentary about me or the committee.

Aha, you're saying. He never reviewed *Dead Bolt* in this column! Correct. It came out too late to make the last issue. It is hereby reviewed. **Dead Bolt** (Charter, $2.95) is a comedy-suspense romp that reminds me of the work of Donald E. Westlake, and higher praise than this cannot be given. The romper in this case is Harry Gould, ex-con, who, in the true Westlake tradition, gets involved in kidnapping and assorted other crimes of violence. He wouldn't mind that so much, but everything that happens adds to his Master Charge bill. Gould's first-person narration is crisp and funny, and the events of the book are suitably outrageous. It's very hard for a humorous work of any kind to win an award. (True, Westlake did win with *God Save the Mark* in 1967, but that's one of the few exceptions.) Judges tend to look for "significance," which is Obstfeld's tough luck, because there's none of that here, just fun. Even the cover is fun. There's something wrong with it. The book concerns Master Charge, but the cover shows a Visa card. Shame on the editor (whoever he is) for allowing that to happen.

Handicapping next year's Edgar race, the early favorite in the paperback original race would be **Bennett's World** by Elliott Lewis (Pinnacle, $2.95). This is a fine, fine book, and Bennett is a complex, believable, admirable character. He's a cop, but he functions in the same atmosphere as all the Gloomy Southern California Private Eyes I'm always complaining about. He has a lot of the same problems, too (Teetering Marriage, Trouble With Those In Power, etc.), *but he fights back!* It's a revelation. Instead of kvetching about Life, Bennett actually tries to make it better. God bless him.

Bennett's World also shows a neat bit of authorial sleight-of-hand about a third of the way through the book when Lewis changes the function of the plot from urban police procedural to private-eye-in-the-suburbs without a seam showing. No mean feat.

This is Lewis's fifth book in this series, but it's packaged better than the others. It looks like a novel instead of a pulp. I passed up the first four because among my many prejudices is a resentment of books with numbers on the cover (#1 in the Greatest Series Since the Gospels!!"—that sort of thing). In this case, it was my loss. I'm going back and filling in now. Elliott Lewis is a writer worth catching up with.



There have been new installments in a couple of other series as well. Englishman Lionel Black offers **The Eve of the Wedding** (Avon, $2.25), another adventure for journalist Kate Theobald and her barrister husband Henry, who also appeared in *Death By Hoax, The Penny Murders,* and *A Healthy Way To Die.* Black's work is in the classic English tradition, and this one is an agreeable bit of foolishness featuring Murder in the Wedding Party (gasp!) and a family of eccentrics in the Ngaio Marsh tradition. The writing is quietly stylish, but the detection is practically nil, the solution being pulled out of a dresser drawer about three pages from the end. Still, it's a relaxing way to spend a couple of hours.

Jack Lynch has a new book about Peter Bragg, who first appeared in the promising *Bragg's Hunch.* The new one is called **The Missing and the Dead** (Fawcett, $2.50) and shows signs of the promise being kept.

In this one, Bragg becomes involved with a retired hit man, and this leads to love and violence (what else?) for the reporter turned private eye. The only bothersome thing was the prologue, a third-person internal monologue from the point of view of the hit man. Where did it come from? How does it fit in with the documentary-style, first-person narration that follows? Still, this is a quibble. It's a good book.

If it gets the chance to be, that is. CBS, Fawcett's parent company, has sold the imprint to another publisher who "wanted to acquire the Fawcett backlist." They didn't say anything about the frontlist, including any Bragg novels that may have been in the pipeline. Let's hope the new publisher follows through, or that Jack Lynch finds a home somewhere else.

Long Island's *Newsday* used to run a comic strip called "Larry Gore's Thing." The "Thing" occasionally ran a feature called "The Fellas—World's Slowest Moving Action Strip." I was reminded of this while reading **Nevsky's Return** by Dmitri Gat (Avon, $2.50). This is part of the Russian invasion that is currently occurring in the mystery field. This one takes place in the U.S., but it *feels* more Russian than any of the other ones. The hero-narrator is Yuri Nevsky, a Pittsburgh private eye. He broods a lot. About Russia. About Pittsburgh. About The Past. He has a partner, Charity Day, and together they look into the murder of a youth in Pittsburgh's Russian Hill section, a kid some claim was a saint and not the hoodlum the manner of his death would lead one to believe.

This is not a *bad* book—Gat writes well, in a heavy-handed sort of way. It's just that any excitement it might have held has been suffocated under a load of ten-syllable names and philosophizing about The Meaning of It All ("I imagined the wind blew straight from where I might have belonged had the paths of reality split a different way—the land where my people had flourished for more than 500 years... Russia. Yes, Russia. Russia. Mother Russia!").

What it boils down to is this: I like color in

a mystery as much as anybody; I just don't like having to wade through the paint. If you are a more patient soul, you may like this book much better than I did.

Another book that suffers because of style is **Agent Out of Place** by Irving A. Greenfield (Charter, $3.25). The book is a Middle East spy yarn, but its real charm is Mr. Greenfield's creative use of the sentence fragment. Two examples from the first page: "Jack Groggins was a broad man of average height, about five ten. Muscular, with a strong jaw and sensual lips." And, "Groggins fought down the desire to pull the paper from the typewriter. Crumple it and throw it on the floor."

Now, a sentence fragment is something else I like as much as anybody. Moves the story along. But for crying out loud, they have to make *some* sense. Mr. Greenfield, it seems, doesn't. Care if his do or not.

Stand back, everybody, offensive sexist generalization coming up. Here it is: Male detectives created by female writers frequently tend to be much more idealized than those created by male writers. Lord Peter Wimsey is the classic example, but Dell Shannon's Luis Mendoza also springs to mind, and there are others. This is not a value judgment, mind you. I like Mendoza, hate Wimsey. I'm just saying these guys are more nearly perfect, in the author's view, than anyone you are likely to meet in the course of your entire life.

A new addition to that list is Michael Spraggue, in **Blood Will Have Blood** by Linda J. Barnes (Avon, $2.25). Spraggue (it's pronounced Sprayg, though my eyes insisted on reading it Spra-*goo*) is an actor turned private eye turned actor. Plus he's handsome. Plus he's rich. Plus he's got connections. I like him, and the book, in spite of all this. Like Shannon's Mendoza, he manages to be nearly perfect without becoming obnoxious. Spraggue investigates threats and disgusting pranks (someone sends him a beheaded bat) at the request of a producer staging a production of *Dracula* in a Boston theatre. Spraggue gets a part in the production and goes to work, competently and efficiently, and uncovers an old secret and the murderer.

Linda J. Barnes writes stylishly and deserves some extra points for conceiving the idea of a production of *Dracula* that actually has something to do with the book on which it is allegedly based. May it come to pass. And may we see more of the nearly-perfect Mr. Spraggue.

A woman writer who doesn't idealize *anything* is newcomer Teri White, author of **Triangle** (Charter, $3.25). This is a tough, tight novel of pursuit; two killers, one cop. There are echoes of *Of Mice and Men* in the relationship between Mac and Johnny, the killers; and there are echoes of the great old Gold Medal books in the prose and pace. It's supposed to be a compliment to say a woman writer writes like a man, but I never knew why. It's irrelevant, anyway. Teri White writes like a *writer*. This kind of book is not usually my cup of blood, if you will, but I raced through *Triangle* all the same. Have a look at it.

Dave Klein wrote a tough, tight novel about football a few years ago called *Blind Side*. It was very good. Now Klein (a sportswriter for a Newark, N.J. paper) tries it again with baseball in **Hit and Run** (Charter, $3.25). Butch Lewis, the sportswriter hero/victim of *Blind Side*, gets involved with the star centerfielder for the Yankees, who is in turn involved (against his will) with drug smuggling and an evil South American dictatorship.

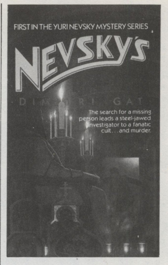
As they say in Baseball, the kid didn't just have it this time out. In *Blind Side*, Klein was able to dance up to the very edge of Grand Guignol without ever crossing the thin line that separates melodrama from farce. In this book, he tromps all over it. Horrible events in the first book elicited a mental, Oh, my *God!* This time, it's more likely to be, Oh, come *on!* Things don't ring true; there are sports-story clichés, and the Mexicans, they sound like B-movie Mexicans, *señor*.

It just didn't come together. Chalk it up to the sophomore jinx, and let's hope he does better next time out. Klein's proven he's got it in him.

The nice thing about fame is that with it you get juice. Clout. (Sentence fragment—see what I mean?) The nice thing about clout is that, in the right hands, it can get things done that wouldn't happen otherwise. Isaac Asimov is so famous, publishers will print and sell anything he feels like putting his name on. Over the last couple of years, in addition to everything else he does, he's teamed up with various people to turn out mystery anthologies.

Currently, he's teamed up with Carol-Lynn Rössel-Waugh and Martin Harry Greenberg to produce **The Big Apple Mysteries** (Avon, $2.75), stories set in New York City, as if you couldn't guess. Asimov starts things off with a sprightly introduction, then on to crime in the streets. The list is impressive: Queen, Stout, the Lockridges, Q. Patrick, Stuart Palmer, Pentecost, Hoch (and alter ego R. L. Stevens), Avram Davidson, James Yaffe, Woolrich, and Asimov himself. The stories are all good, as you might expect from a lineup like that.

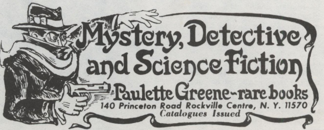
The lineup, conversely, leads to one criticism. It would have been nice to find a gem from someone unexpected, someone, perhaps, I'd never heard of. There were a couple like that in *The Twelve Crimes of Christmas*, this team's previous anthology for Avon.



Still, it's nice to see the mystery short story between any kind of covers. A handful of publishers have been keeping it alive, led, of course, by Fred Dannay and the gang at EQMM, and our Esteemed Publisher with his Mysterious Press collections. Now, Asimov, with his juice, is already having an effect. It's nice to have him aboard.

The answer to last issue's puzzle: Yes, by God, it *was* that Aneta Corsault, the one who was in *The Blob*, the one who played Andy Griffith's girl Helen, who co-wrote *The Mystery Readers' Quiz Book*. I found out at the Edgar Awards, which Ms. Corsault attended. A very nice lady, and a devoted fan.

You can have this issue's answer right now, because I already know. Yes, it is *that* Barry Sadler, the one who wrote and sang "Ballad of the Green Berets," who co-wrote (with somebody named Billy Arr) **Nashville With a Bullet** (Charter, $2.95). The book is a competent tale of corruption and other evil in the world of country music. There are some infelicities of style, but what the hell, it's not smart to get too insulting about a man who probably knows fifty-one methods of silent mayhem. It's an okay book.



You may have noticed (I just did) that more books from Charter and Avon are reviewed here than from anywhere else. The reason is simple—they are doing more original mysteries, and, on the whole, doing them better than anyone else. In addition, the editor of Charter Books is the editor of this magazine, and he makes sure I get copies of what's out. I hasten to add that he does not ask me to review any particular book or restrict or censor my opinions in any way. I wouldn't do the column if he did. When the other publishers bring original mysteries out in the quantity Avon and Charter do, that will be reflected here.

Boy, can I get *pretentious,* sometimes. [*Ed. note: Most of the time.*]

Let us now praise obscure men. A few issues ago, there were some glowing words about C. W. Grafton who wrote three excellent mysteries during the '40s and '50s, then stopped. Soon after that column appeared, C. W. Grafton died. DeAndrea delivers *la baccia di morte.*

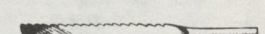
Despite that, I'm going to risk telling you about another of my favorite little-known authors. This one has written four books. He's an Englishman named Laurence Payne. He was an actor before he turned to mysteries (you can see him in the horror turkey *The Crawling Eye*), and he writes sprawling, silly plots that give his characters rooms to be human and funny. The first three of his books feature family man Inspector Sam Birkett and plodding, placid Sergeant Saunders. They are *The Nose on My Face* (Macmillan, 1961—it was faithfully filmed as *The Model Murder Case,* featuring absolutely nobody you ever heard of), *Too Small For His Shoes* (Macmillan, 1962), and *Deep and Crisp and Even* (unknown; I'll buy a copy from you if you've got one). His fourth (and last, so far) book is *Spy for Sale* (Doubleday Crime Club, 1970), a human and funny spy spoof about a small-time burglar who gets dragooned into big-time espionage.

You have probably deduced by now that Payne is very good in the human and funny department. He is also the master of the kind of set piece some call the Frustration Catalogue. This is the scene in which the detective lists all the things he is up against. Here's an example from *Too Small For His Shoes:*

"'All day long we've been on this bloody case, and what have we got to show for it? Sweet Fanny Adams! A lot of loose ends that go precisely nowhere. . . . And stop looking like a misunderstood basset-hound! We've got a body in the wrong place, we've got a bald-headed butler with a pathological wife; a maniac with a long nose and a cloth cap who says he's someone he isn't and then promptly disappears; a blond-headed pouffe in an S.S. uniform; a film director with the head of a biblical prophet, plus, if it's not too much for the imagination, Adolf Hitler to boot! To say nothing of a perfectly innocent man prostrate in the hospital with a smashed-up shoulder, the result of an accident that never should have happened. How's that for a day's work?'

"'Not bad,' said Saunders encouragingly, 'not at all bad.'"

Laurence Payne's novels are not great books, but they are wonderful books. Full of fun and enthusiasm and good writing. I wish they were in print—and that more writers would try that prescription a time or two. We might all enjoy the side effects. □



THE PAPERBACK REVOLUTION

By Charles Shibuk

MARIAN BABSON

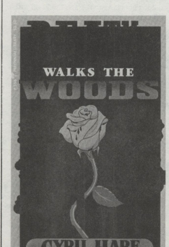
Perhaps this author is the victim of over-praise in TCC and MW, but **Murder, Murder, Little Star** (1977) (Dell) is certainly a competent, witty, and agreeable work. It's about a more than usually obnoxious child movie star, whom someone with good taste is apparently trying to forcibly remove from this planet, but whose miscalculation results in the wrong victim's death.

NICHOLAS BLAKE

There's Trouble Brewing (1937) (Perennial) when the corpse of a workman is found in a vat of boiling beer, and the unlovable factory owner disappears soon afterwards. This novel is Nigel Strangeway's third recorded investigation, and it's not a major work, but it has, to the best of my knowledge, been unreprinted in paper covers for over thirty years.

LESLIE CHARTERIS

The Saint and Mr. Teal (1933) (Ace Charter) is a vintage but not outstanding collection that presents the Robin Hood of Modern Crime in three novelettes that represent the Saint's own particular brand of fun and games from the early '30s.



G. K. CHESTERTON

Penguin Books has reprinted the complete 51-story saga of the greatest of clergyman-detectives. **The Innocence of Father Brown** (1911), **The Wisdom of Father Brown** (1914), **The Incredulity of Father Brown** (1926), **The Secret of Father Brown** (1927), and **The Scandal of Father Brown** (1935) contain more than their share of classic examples of the storyteller's art. (Note: the earliest collection is a *Queen's Quorum* selection and holds a high position of honor among short-story volumes.)

AGATHA CHRISTIE

The recent film version of **Evil Under the Sun** has prompted Pocket Books to reissue this 1941 Poirot novel for the 29th time. Watch out for this author's even more devious than usual sleight-of-hand. The recent TV version of **Easy to Kill** (1939) brings forth the 31st edition of this novel from the same publisher. Barzun and Taylor consider it to be one of its creator's unquestioned triumphs.

The Labors of Hercules (1947) (Dell) contains a dozen short stories that juxtapose M. Poirot's detection with classic mythology in startlingly imaginative fashion in this very rewarding collection.

BARBARA D'AMATO

The promise displayed in *The Hands of Healing Murder* is still evident in the clumsily titled **The Eyes on Utopia Murders** (Ace, 1981). The numerous characters and the setting of a retirement community in Young Lake, Arizona are vividly described, as is Dr. Gerritt DeGraff's painstaking investigation of three murders. Unfortunately, this classic detective novel's solution is not quite up to the level of that which has preceded it.

SEAN FLANNERY

Wallace Mahoney, retired CIA analyst, is summoned to Israel in order to discover the identity of a traitor within the higher echelons of the secret service who is selling his country's vital secrets to an unknown enemy in **The Hollow Man** (Ace Charter, 1982). The author's view of humanity seems bleak as double-dealing and triple-crosses abound, but his writing and plotting remain coherent until the bitter end.

JONATHAN GASH

Gold by Gemini (1978) (Dell) finds antique dealer (and rogue) Lovejoy in an embarrassing financial position, but hints of a hidden treasure in Roman coins on the Isle of Man are encouraging, while the violent actions of a rival are not. Although attractive and entertaining, this novel is extremely uneven in its first third but manages to straighten itself out enough to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

CYRIL HARE

This author's second and next-to-last novels, **Death Is No Sportsman** (1938) (Perennial) and **Death Walks the Woods** (1954) (Perennial), are solid, workmanlike detective stories, but they should not be construed as having the force or value of the four masterpieces which they bracket. (Note: the former title is making its first American appearance; the latter was published in England as *That Yew Tree's Shade*.)

Hare's third novel, **Suicide Excepted** (1939) (Dover), is an improvement over his first two works and an interesting harbinger of the major novels to follow. It concerns the efforts of three enthusiastic amateur detectives to change a suicide verdict to murder, and features a completely unexpected climax.

NGAIO MARSH and DR. H. JELLETT

The operation seemed successful, but the patient died in **The Nursing Home Murder** (1935) (Jove). England's Home Secretary Sir Derek O'Callaghan had been disliked by many people, and now Chief Detective-Inspector Roderick Alleyn has started to ask questions in one of his better early investigations.

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

Previous (and unsuccessful) attempts to read this distinguished author's crime fiction did not prepare me for the merits of good characterization, steady and straightforward narration, and the ingenious murder plot to be found in **The Red Redmaynes** (1922) (Dover). This classic British detective novel is highly accomplished for its period, and its selection for current revival is an excellent as it is unexpected.

WILLO DAVIS ROBERTS

Russell William Jory is an obviously psychopathic killer and rapist who has served seven years of a life sentence and is now out on parole. Far from being rehabilitated, Jory is now determined to kill several witnesses, the jury, and the judge who sentenced him. **A Long Time to Hate** (Avon, 1982) is a well-constructed and effective suspense novel that should keep the reader turning those pages—rapidly.

CHARLES MERRILL SMITH

With the exception of Father Brown and Anthony Boucher's Sister Ursula, this column has a profound disinterest in clergymen-detectives. The many appealing qualities of **Reverend Randollph and the Wages of Sin** (1974) (Avon), however, which concerns the murder of a chorus member in an empty choir practice room, are enough to disarm my prejudices—even though there are slight insufficiencies in plotting and detection.

LESLIE THOMAS

Dangerous Davies: The Last Detective (1976) (Dell) is somewhat less than an efficient detective constable. Given the assignment to locate a wanted criminal, he goes off on a tangent by trying to solve the 25-year-old disappearance of a pretty teenager. This is a long, interesting, well-written, and funny police procedural making its long-delayed American debut.

ROSS THOMAS

McCorkle's wife is kidnapped in order to persuade his partner Michael Padillo to assassinate the dying Prime Minister of an African nation who is about to visit Washington, as part of an elaborate plot to maintain white supremacy. This basic situation in **Cast a Yellow Shadow** (1967) (Avon) does not immediately engender suspense, but the novel does manage to engage and maintain reader interest until its effective climax.

JONATHAN VALIN

Cincinnati private eye Harry Stoner is hired to look into a case of vandalism in the public library. It seems that someone is mutilating pictures of women in various art books. There's also a sex murder in a local park, and it's Stoner's job to discover if these cases are related and to capture the perpetrator in the excellent **Final Notice** (1980) (Avon). □

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The Future Is Upon Us: A Necrology for the Year 1981

By George Wuyek

Less than a decade ago, this writer assisted Allen J. Hubin, *The Armchair Detective's* consulting editor, in the preparation of necrologies for his *Best Detective Stories Yearbook* and followed with later lists for TAD. At that time, the lists included detective-mystery writers mostly from the "Golden Age." Recently, I compiled a list for 1981 and found, somewhat surprisingly, very few pre-war authors. A majority make up what Ellery Queen once called "The Futurists," with the more active making their genre debuts in the 1940s, '50s, '60s, and even as late as 1971. As the appended necrology attests, the Future is indeed here.

Robert L. Fish made his debut as late as 1960 with his "Schlock Homes" short stories. In 1962, his first book was published, *The Fugitive,* the Edgar Award winner that introduced Capt. Jose da Silva. Later, he created Kek Huuygens, the smuggler, and the Carruthers, Simpson and Briggs team, and, under the pseudonym Robert L. Pike, Police Lt. Clancy and Lt. Jim Reardon.

Hildegarde Dolson had a long career as an advertising copywriter and magazine contributor, but, after her marriage to veteran mystery writer Richard Lockridge in 1965, she turned to mystery fiction. Beginning in 1971, she wrote several sophisticated, charming detective novels.

Lawrence Lariar, a veteran cartoonist and cartoon editor for magazines, made his genre debut in 1943, but he made a big splash in the wake of Mickey Spillane with his sex-and-fury private eye novels under the pseudonym Adam Knight beginning in 1951.

John Franklin Bardin had a long background in magazine work as writer and editor when he produced three unusual and original mystery novels, *The Deadly Percheron* (1946), *The Last of Philip Banter* (1947), and *Devil Take the Blue-Tailed Fly* (1948; U.S. 1967). They were largely neglected, however, and Bardin tried a new tack with three books under the pseudonym Gregory Tree and another as by Douglas Ashe. Unsuccessful, Bardin returned to magazines until, almost a decade later, British critic Julian Symons discovered and praised his early novels, leading to a recent Penguin omnibus reprint and a new novel.

By coincidence, death came to the distaff side of pseudonymous husband-and-wife teams in England and in America. Pamela Hansford Johnson, a noted author of straight fiction in more recent years, had collaborated with her first husband, Neil Stewart, under the pseudonym Nap Lombard, to publish two mysteries, *Tidy Death* (1943; unpublished in America) and *Murder's a Swine* (1943; U.S. *The Grinning Pig*). American critics of the latter book called it "bright," "exciting," and "amusing"; it featured a wise-cracking, hard-drinking couple along the lines of Hammett's Nick and Nora Charles. She later divorced and married C. P. Snow, the late author.

Eleanor Perry was the wife of Leo G. Bayer when, under the joint pseudonym Oliver Weld Bayer, they published four wartime thrillers beginning with *Paper Chase* (1943). She later divorced and continued in the theatre, meeting and marrying a young director, Frank Perry. Mrs. Perry wrote the screenplays for her husband's films *David and Lisa* (1962), *The Swimmer* (1967; also a novel), and *Diary of a Mad Housewife* (1970), among others. After their divorce in 1971, Mrs. Perry continued writing for films in addition to her stage plays, teleplays, and novels.

On the necrology is the first substantiated genre centenarian, Prof. Harrison R. Steeves, who died at the age of 100 years and almost four months. Professor Steeves, of Columbia University, had a long interest in detective fiction but wrote only one mystery, *Good Night, Sheriff* (1941), a fine effort. (Incidentally, Hubin's *Bibliography* lists several authors born before 1881, but current information on them is not available.)

Another noteworthy senior citizen was E. Walbridge McCully, who died at the end of 1980 at the age of 94, although an early biographical sketch would have placed her age at 84. She made a fine debut with *Death Rides Tandem* (1942) but followed with only two more. In 1962, she made newspaper headlines as the grandmother who was fighting confiscation of her Virgin Islands home for a government park; she later won lifetime postponement.

Nellise Child, a Chicago playwright and novelist, wrote two detective novels dating from the "Golden Age." Victoria E. Lincoln's only mystery novel was written in 1930, but her more noteworthy work was her later study of the Lizzie Borden case, published in 1967.

The academician and humanities scholar, Hugh Holman, wrote five Sheriff Macready novels while a young instructor at the University of North Carolina.

He also used the pseudonym Clarence Hunt for one mystery novel.

Beginning in 1971, Edwin Corley wrote crime and big-caper novels under his own name and the pseudonyms David Harper and William Judson and coauthored the Ben Shock and Charity Tucker mysteries under the joint pseudonym Patrick Buchanan.

Nathaniel Benchley, son of Robert Benchley the humorist and father of Peter Benchley the novelist (*Jaws*), wrote a variety of books in his own right, including several humorous spy and adventure novels.

Claud Cockburn, the Irish radical writer, wrote two well-reviewed novels of intrigue under the pseudonym James Helvick.

The Bloomsbury writer David Garnett wrote a crime novel, *Dope—Darling,* under the pseudonym Leda Burke, published in 1919!

Donald Barr Chidsey, a prolific biographer and writer on historical subjects, wrote one mystery published as a thin 10¢ paperback: *Nobody Heard the Shot* (1941).

Meyer Levin, the noted writer, novelist, and playwright, used the old Leopold-Loeb murder case for his bestselling novel *Compulsion* (1956).

Don Ford, a veteran reporter and feature writer, wrote *The FBI Story* (1956) and *Journey into Crime* (1960), very successful works of nonfiction.

James D. Horan, historian and novelist of the Old West, wrote a history of the Pinkerton Agency, the pioneering American private detective agency now over 130 years old. He wrote one crime novel, *The New Vigilantes* (1975).

Robin Maugham, nephew of W. Somerset Maugham, wrote several psychological crime novels in the '60s and '70s. Elements of crime appeared in a 1953 novel by A. J. Cronin and in *The Chalk Garden,* the successful play by Enid Bagnold. William Saroyan adapted *Settled Out of Court* by Henry Cecil for the stage. But these mainstream writers only briefly touched the crime fiction genre. But Robert A. Simon, a newspaperman, librettist, and music critic for the first 23 years of the *New Yorker,* did write a mystery novel that was praised by contemporary critics as "original and delightful" and "superior" when it appeared in 1926, but unfortunately he did not continue in the field.

Martha Albrand, the German-born newspaperwoman who wrote novels as Katrin Holland in the 1930s, settled in America in 1937 and became naturalized in 1947. Her novels of intrigue and world adventure under the Albrand byline began in 1942; most appeared first as serials in women's magazines. A less successful romance author was Jeanne Judson, who also used the pseudonym Frances Dean Hancock.

To the list of book publishers who often featured a line of mystery-crime fiction—Albert Boni, Quentin Bossi, Frederick Rinehart, Jeffrey Steinberg, and Jane West—special mention should be made of Robert F. de Graff. In June 1939, with Wallis "Pete" Howe as sales manager and backed by Richard Simon, Max Schuster, and Leon Shimkin of Simon & Schuster, de Graff successfully launched the first successful American paperback firm, Pocket Books, Inc. Pocket Book No. 5 was *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* by Agatha Christie, and it so successfully tested the mass market outlets that, by 1941, the firm was averaging one mystery out of every four paperbacks it published. Robert de Graff was president (1939–50) and chairman (1950–53), then retired at the age of 57.

Raymond T. Bond, associated with Dodd, Mead & Co. for over forty years until his retirement as president (1957–64), had edited *Famous Stories of Code and Cipher* (1947) and the especially noteworthy *Handbook for Poisoners* (1951).

All made their contribution to the genre—both large and small—and all have passed on. . . .

A Necrology for 1981

McCully, Ethel Walbridge. Died December 21, 1980, St. John, Virgin Islands; age 84. Reported in the *New York Times,* January 4, 1981, which gave her age as 94. Born May 13, 1896, New York City. Author of three mystery books published 1942–45.

Cronin, Archibald Joseph. Died January 6, 1981, Glion, Montreaux, Switzerland; age 84. Born July 19, 1896, Cardoss, Dumbarton, Scotland. Physician turned bestselling novelist. Hubin's *Bibliography* lists *Beyond This Place* (1953).

Judson, Jeanne. Died January 9, 1981, New York City; age 92. Born 1890. Mrs. Judson was a Grand Rapids (Michigan), Chicago, and St. Louis reporter and New York editor. Author of many romance novels and of three mysteries published under her own name (1958–68) and one under the pseudonym Francis Dean Hancock (1969).

Whitehead, Donald Ford. Died January 12, 1981, Knoxville, Tenn.; age 72. Born April 8, 1908, Inman, Virginia. Journalist. Author of *The FBI Story* (1956), *Journey into Crime* (1960), and other nonfiction as Don Whitehead.

Dolson, Hildegarde. Died January 15, 1981, Columbus, N.C.; age 72. Born August 31, 1908, Franklin, Pa. Wife of Richard Lockridge, mystery writer. Author of several of her own, beginning with *To Spite Her Face* (1971).

Garnett, David. Died February 17, 1981, Le Verger de Charry, Montcuq, France; age 88. Born March 9, 1882, Brighton, England. Bloomsbury writer. Author of *Dope—Darling* (1919) under the pseudonym Leda Burke.

Robert L. Fish

FISH, ROBERT LLOYD. Died February 24, 1981, Trumbull, Conn.; age 68. Born August 21, 1912, Cleveland, Ohio. Author of over forty mystery novels since 1963 under his own name and the pseudonym Robert L. Pike. Also completed *The Assassination Bureau, Ltd.* (1963), left unfinished by Jack London.

MAUGHAM, ROBERT CECIL ROMER. Died March 13, 1981, Brighton, England; age 64. Born May 17, 1916, London. As Robin Maugham, wrote seven crime novels among his many books, including *The Link: A Victorian Mystery* (1969).

PERRY, ELEANOR ROSENFIELD BAYER. Died March 14, 1981, New York City; age 66. Born in Cleveland, Ohio. For the last twenty years, Mrs. Perry was primarily a screenwriter. Co-author of four mystery novels with her first husband, Leo G. Bayer, under the joint pseudonym Oliver Weld Bayer, published 1943–47.

CHIDSEY, DONALD BARR. Died March 17, 1981, New London, Conn.; age 78. Born May 14, 1902, Elizabeth, N.J. Biographer and historian who wrote one paperback mystery, *Nobody Heard the Shot* (Los Angeles: Bantam Books No. A-25, 1941).

BAGNOLD, ENID. Died March 31, 1981, St. John's Wood, London; age 91. Born Oct. 27, 1889, Rochester, England. Widow of Sir Roderick Jones, Reuters chairman. Playwright; her play *The Chalk Garden* (Broadway premiere, 1955; film, 1964; published, 1956) is listed in Hubin's *Bibliography*.

SIMON, ROBERT ALFRED. Died April 27, 1981, New York City; age 84. Born February 18, 1897, New York City. Music critic for the *New Yorker* 1925–48; librettist. Author of one well-reviewed story, *The Weekend Mystery* (1926).

SAROYAN, WILLIAM. Died May 18, 1981, Fresno, Calif.; age 72. Born Aug. 31, 1908, Fresno, Calif. The noted writer dramatized *Settled Out of Court* by Henry Cecil, published by Samuel French, Ltd., 1962.

STEINBERG, JEFFREY. Died June 2, 1981, Hempstead, N.Y.; age 34; from auto accident injuries. Founder of Straight Arrow Books, publisher of two of Roger L. Simon's Moses Wine mysteries (1973–75).

CHILD, NELLISE. Died June 11, 1981, Chicago; age 79. Born 1901. Mrs. Abner G. Rosenfeld. Playwright and novelist. Author of two Jeremiah Irish detective books, *Murder Comes Home* (1933) and *The Diamond Ransom Murders* (1934).

LINCOLN, VICTORIA ENDICOTT. Died June 13, 1981, Baltimore; age 76. Born Oct. 23, 1904, Fall River, Mass. Mrs. Victor A. Lowe. Author of *A Private Disgrace: Lizzie Borden by Daylight* (1967)—

whom she met as a little girl—and one mystery, *The Swan Island Murders* (1930)

RINEHART, FREDERICK ROBERTS. Died June 15, 1981; age 78. Born 1902, son of Mary Roberts Rinehart. Publisher of Farrar & Rinehart's Murray Hill Mysteries.

JOHNSON, PAMELA HANSFORD. Died June 18, 1981, London; age 69. Born May 29, 1912, Clapham Common, London. Widow of Sir Charles Percy Snow. Co-authored with first husband, Gordon Neil Stewart, of two mystery novels under the joint pseudonym Nap Lombard: *Tidy Death* (1940) and *Murder's a Swine* (1943; U.S. *The Grinning Pig*).

ALBRAND, MARTHA. Died June 24, 1981, New York City; age 66. Born Heidi Huberta Freybe, Sept. 8, 1914, Rostock, Germany. Twice widowed. European journalist and, as Katrin Holland, novelist 1930–40. Left Nazi Germany for Britain, then America (1937). Author of intrigue-romances as Martha Albrand, published since 1942.

LEVIN, MEYER. Died July 9, 1981, Jerusalem, Israel; age 75. Born Oct. 8, 1905, Chicago. Novelist and playwright. Author of *Compulsion* (1956), a novel based on the Bobby Franks murder.

BARDIN, JOHN FRANKLIN. Died July 9, 1981, New York City; age 64. Born Nov. 30, 1916, Cincinnati, Ohio. Magazine writer and editor. Author of three unusual mysteries (1946–48) highly acclaimed by Julian Symons. Also write three as Gregory Tree (1950–53) and another as by Douglas Ashe (1951).

BOND, RAYMOND TOSTEVIN. Died July 16, 1981, Jamaica, N.Y.; age 88. Born 1893. Editor and later president (1957–64), Dodd, Mead & Co. Editor, *Famous Stories of Code and Cipher* (1947) and *Handbook for Poisoners* (1951).

BONI, ALBERT. Died July 31, 1981, Ormond Beach, Fla.; age 88. Born Oct. 21, 1892, New York City. Publisher, A. and C. Boni, Boni & Liveright, etc.

STEEVES, HARRISON ROSS. Died Aug. 1, 1981, Kingston, R.I.; age 100. Born April 8, 1881, New York City. With the English department of Columbia University, 1905–49. Author of one mystery, *Good Night, Sheriff* (1941).

POPOV, DUSKO. Died Aug. 21, 1981, Opio, France; age 69. Yugoslavian who became a Nazi spy and British counterspy during World War II. Some of his escapades were reportedly used by Ian Fleming in his James Bond novels. Popov's memoirs were published in America as *Spy, Counter Spy* (1974).

WEST, MARY JANE GLAESER. Died Sept. 9, 1981, New York City; age 42. Born Evanston, Ill. Mrs. Jane West joined Clarkson N. Potter in 1967 and became executive editor (1974), vice-president (1976), and publisher (1978). The firm issued special books on the genre.

BOSSI, QUENTIN A. Died Sept. 25, 1981, Dennis, Mass.; age 74. Born in North Adams, Mass. Co-owner of David A. McKay Co. (1950–72), publisher of Armchair Mysteries.

LARIAR, LAWRENCE. Died Oct. 12, 1981, Waterbury, Conn.; age 72. Born Lawrence Rosenblum, Dec. 25, 1908, Brooklyn, N.Y. Cartoonist and cartoon editor. Author of a dozen mystery books since 1943 as Lawrence Lariar and under the pseudonyms Adam Knight, Michael Lawrence, and Michael Stark.

HOLMAN, CLARENCE HUGH. Died Oct. 13, 1981, Chapel Hill, N.C.; age 67. Born February 24, 1914, Cross Anchor, S.C. While an English instructor at the University of North Carolina, he wrote five Sheriff Macready detective novels, published as by Hugh Holman (1942–47). Another under the pseudonym Clarence Hunt (1951) was his last mystery.

HORAN, JAMES DAVID. Died Oct. 13, 1981, New York City; age 67. Born July 27, 1914, New York City. Old West historian and novelist. Co-author of a history of the Pinkerton Agency and author of one crime novel, *The New Vigilantes* (1975).

DE GRAFF, ROBERT FAIR. Died Nov. 1, 1981, Mill Neck, N.Y.; age 86. Born June 9, 1895, Plainfield, N.J. Reprint publisher. Founder and first president, Pocket Books, Inc., 1939–50. Successfully allowed a format of two mystery reprints each month after mass acceptance of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, first issued June 19, 1939.

CORLEY, EDWIN RAY. Died Nov. 7, 1981, Pass Christian, Minn.; age 50. Born Oct. 22, 1931, Bayonne, N.J. Novelist and screenwriter. Author of a crime novel under his own name and three others under the pseudonyms David Harper and William Judson from 1971 to 1975, although his best-reviewed were the four Ben Shock–Charity Tucker books co-authored with Jack Murphy under the joint pseudonym Patrick Buchanan.

BENCHLEY, NATHANIEL GODDARD. Died Dec. 14, 1981, Boston; age 66. Born Nov. 13, 1915, Newton, Mass. Humorist, children's author, and novelist. Author of several humorous spy novels since 1960.

COCKBURN, FRANCIS CLAUD. Died Dec. 15, 1981, Cork, Ireland; age 77. Born April 12, 1904, Peking, China, where his father served with the British Legation. Correspondent turned leftist writer. Author of two novels of intrigue under the pseudonym James Helvick. □

GREAVES' DISAPPEARANCE

By Julian Hawthorne

Julian Hawthorne, the son of Nathaniel Hawthorne, was a far more prolific author than his more famous father, averaging three or four books a year for more than twenty years, not to mention countless stories, articles and poems during an even greater length of time. Much of his work was in the crime and mystery genre, the most successful of which was a series of novels based on the real-life adventures of a famous New York City policeman, Inspector Byrnes.

Of his three short-story collections in the genre, the best and rarest is *Six Cent Sam's,* published in 1893 by The Price-McGill Company of St. Paul, Minnesota. The book's title takes its name from the unusual establishment (a restaurant at the front, a pawn shop at the rear) in which various unusual characters meet to exchange stories, generally of a criminous nature. While the tone of most of the stories was planned to be humorous, the jokes and other attempts at comedy have not stood the tests of time very well, as a rereading of Julian Hawthorne's contemporary, Mark Twain, will all too quickly attest.

—Otto Penzler

WE were four in the club smoking room that October afternoon. The weather was gusty and inclement, and we were out of sorts. Perhaps our having been up till two or three o'clock the night before may have had something to do with our gloomy sensations. Twelve hours had elapsed since we had left the card table, and permitted yawning Thomas to go to bed. We had dispersed to our various abiding places, slept till noon, and drifted back to the club and breakfast. Hardly anyone besides ourselves was in the house. It was intolerably dull. What is one to do in town at three o'clock of a rainy October afternoon, after being up all night?

Allardice, the man-about-town *par excellence,* lay languid and relaxed in his easy-chair, his legs outstretched, his chin on his breast, and a black Mexican cigar between his teeth. His prominent gray eyes were half closed, some cigar ashes lay unheeded on his vest, and the light from the window was reflected dimly on the bald summit of his cranium. Tinling, the poet and dramatic critic, reclined on the divan, his gray, abundant hair contrasting oddly with his smooth pink-and-white face; the hand with the big seal ring on it lay romantically and conspicuously on his heart. Gawtrey sat with his elbows on his knees, and his face between his hands, the small eyes in his big fat countenance blinking stupidly at the fire. He and Tinling had been wrangling about the merits or demerits of the new Persian dancer who had been attracting the town for some days past, and who was being advertised, free and otherwise, to a degree unexampled. Tinling had declared that she was "the peer—I do not say of Ellsler or Taglioni, but of Salome, the daughter of Herodias." Gawtrey had replied that he had never seen the Herodias girl, or the other two, either; but that he could find women in any ordinary music hall, here or in London, who could knock the stuffing out of Mlle. Saki. Thereupon fell a silence, finally broken by Allardice.

"If no one else will, I suppose I must," said he, leaning forward and touching the electric bell in the panel. "Think of what it's to be, gentlemen."

We sighed and changed the position of our legs.

"There should be a by-law specifying the correct drink for each hour of the day," said someone. "Up to eleven P.M., at any rate, it's too fatiguing to choose for one's self."

"You might always order the same drink, you know, like Greaves," suggested Gawtrey. "Grand Vin See is his tipple, and he never touches any other."

"Gawtrey has no discrimination," murmured Tinling. "Greaves has a hundred thousand a year, youth, health and happiness."

"No rose without the thorn," said Allardice. "He's going to get married."

"That's a pretty cheap article of cynicism, even before dinner," rejoined Tinning. "In the first place, the girl comes of one of our best families. Baddely was a name famous in the old country centuries ago, and always respected. Secondly, Miss Baddely is a mighty fine girl, both in looks and otherwise; and fifthy and sixthly, and to conclude, Greaves is dead in love with her."

"The Baddely, is it?" grunted Gawtrey. "Why, they don't amount to a row of pins! Met the old boy downtown. Ain't worth a hundred thousand."

"The greater her good sense, to look with favor on Greaves' suit," was contributed by Allardice.

Tinling closed his eyes. "You weary me," he said. "She's the most independent girl I know. If anything could make her jilt Greaves, it would be precisely his income. If Greaves were poor, she'd support him. She thinks women ought to support themselves, anyway."

"What can she do for a living?" someone inquired.

"What couldn't she? Anything—from keeping a dancing school to running an American railroad system. She's got genius."

"That's the reason Greaves didn't join us last night," remarked Gawtrey. "When a fellow gets gone on a girl, he may as well resign from his clubs. But I wish he'd given me my revenge first. Never saw anything like the hands that fellow held last time. Two flushes and a four-ace were some of 'em."

"What is yours, sir?" inquired the pale but ever respectful Thomas, appearing at this juncture. Whereupon we all wearily began to try to think of something.

In the midst of our deliberations, in came Fred Guise, looking quite pale and haggard. He nodded to us without speaking, and dropped into a chair.

"Just in time," said Allardice, "and you look as if you needed it. Ask Mr. Guise what he'll have, Thomas."

"Absinthe cocktail," said Guise, without faltering. "I'm knocked out. Haven't seen the color of a bed since night before last. None of you chaps have heard anything new about him, of course?"

"Guess not. About whom?"

"Greaves, of course. Did you think I meant the Shah of Persia?" inquired Guise, with a fine irony.

"All we know about Greaves here is, that he promised to be here last night and didn't materialize," said Gawtrey, with a yawn. "He owes me my revenge —— "

"Do you mean to say you chaps haven't heard?" interrupted Guise, sitting up and speaking slowly, as if astonishment weighted his utterance. "Why, it's nearly a day old!"

"Is its father known?" asked Allardice, languidly.

"What's the matter, Fred?" demanded Tinling, struck by something peculiar in Guise's manner. "We've only just got up, you know, and you're the first man that's come in since —— "

"Why, good God, the man's disappeared," exclaimed Guise, always in his characteristic low but distinct voice. "He vanished like the blowing out of a candle! He was with me one moment, and the next, he was — well, he was gone!"

"I say," grunted Gawtrey, "draw it mild. What are you giving us?"

"What are the circumstances? How disappeared? When? Where?" put in Tinling, erecting himself, and shaking back his long gray hair.

"Why, I supposed the report would have got here the first thing. It's the most inexplicable thing I ever came across. Let me see — to begin at the beginning, I'd breakfasted with him in the forenoon yesterday at his rooms. He was quite jolly — rather more so than usual, I thought. I took it for natural high spirits — going to be married soon, and all that sort of thing, you know. But I've thought since it may have been excitement from some other cause, you know. He talked a bit about his private affairs — we're pretty intimate, you know — but nothing was said in particular that I remember. We talked of the Ingledew's ball, and that escapade of Mrs. Revell's, you know, and that Mlle. Saki, the Persian dancer — whom he didn't seem to think much of, by the by — and of the gold-find in Alaska; he said he thought that looked promising, and that he might like to take some stock in that; and then —— "

"For pity's sake, do tell us the story first, and we can join you in your comments afterward," someone exclaimed. "Get to the point, can't you?"

"I was only trying to recall anything that might possibly throw some light on the thing, you know," rejoined Fred, unhurriedly. "I can't make out any motive for it myself. Everything was all right with him — property, health, love affair — well, everything. And it's inconceivable to me that he could have planned anything beforehand — to make away with himself, or anything of that sort; but then it's even more inconceivable he should have vanished involuntarily, don't you know. I can't make it out," and here Fred accepted the absinthe cocktail that Thomas silently extended to him, and emptied it with deliberate circumspection.

Allardice elevated one eyebrow, and hunted in his pocket for a cigar. "Take your time, my dear boy," said he. "We've got the afternoon before us, and we're none of us curious. Won't you take another absinthe before you continue?"

Guise leaned back in his chair, seemed to consult his memory, and finally went on:

"Well, after breakfast, you know, we lay about for a while, looking over his books and pictures, and talking philosophy and art. Toward three or four o'clock — just about this time, you know — we agreed to go out for a little stroll. It looked as if it might rain, and Greaves put on a light gray Mackintosh overcoat, that he'd just had over from London — rather a peculiar looking thing it was, by the by — and a soft felt hat, and out we went. We turned into Broadway, and walked on the west side up past the hotels toward Thirty-Fourth Street. There were comparatively few people out. I remember we passed a long file of those sandwich men, you know, with Persian turbans on, and boards with Saki's portrait on them. She's at the Fifth Avenue, you know. Just as we reached the corner of Twenty-Eighth Street, we came across a bit of an excitement. There was a man running down the middle of the street, with his hat in his hand, and making good time; and about a dozen yards behind him were a couple of bobbies. Greaves and I stopped on the corner, to see what would happen. Greaves said he was a fool to run in that direction, because he could never get across Broadway. The bobbies

thought so, too, I fancy, and it threw them off their guard. Almost at the entrance of the street the chap turned like a flash, and dashed straight at them. Before they knew where they were he had tripped them both and sent them sprawling, and was flying up the street. Half way along the block there's an empty house, going to be torn down. The basement door was open and he went through it, and that was the last ever seen of him, I fancy. I turned round to Greaves, who had spoken to me, you know, just the instant before,and saw him across the other side of Broadway, walking on toward Thirtieth. There he was, you know, in his gray Mackintosh and soft felt hat. I hurried to catch up with him, and took his arm. I said, 'He was no fool, after all, that chap. I fancy he must have played on a football team.'

"That's what I said, and then Greaves pulled away his arm and turned round on me, and you may imagine I was surprised when I found it wasn't Greaves at all, nor anyone a bit like him. It was a fellow of fifty, with a stubble of gray beard a week old, a red potato nose, and one eye gone. 'I beg your pardon, young fellow,' he said to me, 'I guess you've made a mistake.'

"Well, you know, at first I didn't think so much of it; I'd been misled by the similarity of dress, that was all. Greaves must be somewhere, of course, and close at hand, too; it was hardly thirty seconds since he'd spoken to me, and there were only three directions in which he could have gone—up Broadway, or down or up the side street toward Fifth Avenue. If he had gone down the street toward Sixth Avenue I should have seen him, for that was the direction I'd been looking. But the Broadway sidewalks in both directions were nearly empty, the crowd having run down Twenty-Eighth after the fellow and the bobbies. There was nobody going toward Fifth Avenue either, and he couldn't have got away more than a dozen rods, anyhow. I should have recognized him at any distance in that gray Mackintosh. It was true, he might have gone into some shop, so I looked into all of them up and down the blocks, but it was no use. Unless he'd dropped through a manhole in the pavement, there was nowhere he could have gone; but he was gone just the same. There never was a disappearance on the stage managed quicker or neater, or half so inexplicable. I began to feel mighty queer about it—something as if I'd seen a ghost. Here was an effect without a cause. I assure you it was as unpleasant a shock as ever I had in my life."

We all stared at one another. At last Gawtrey said:

"See here, Fred, make a clean breast of it; how many bottles of the Grand Vin See did you polish off at the breakfast?"

"I'm entirely serious, gentlemen," returned Fred, gravely; "and recollect, even if Greaves could have eluded me in any ordinary way, he would still have been heard from somewhere by this time. But he's given no sign. Whether he went voluntarily or not, he's vanished, and I'm afraid when news does come it will not be the sort of news we shall like to hear."

Gawtrey now poured his pony of brandy into a tumbler, added a dash of water, swallowed the mixture, looked in the bottom of the glass for inspiration, and said, "I don't believe, for my part, that Greaves has been kidnapped in broad daylight in the center of New York; and on the other hand, I don't believe in miracles—this year, anyway. What he did, depend upon it, was just to step quietly out of sight somewhere, when you weren't looking. Probably he saw Miss Baddely on a horse car, and boarded it to join her."

"There's something in that idea," said Allardice.

Guise shook his head. "There wasn't, as it happens, a single car passing, for there was a block across both tracks at Twenty-Fifth Street. And as for Miss Baddely, I afterward ascertained that she was at home at the time. No, gentlemen; ordinary explanations won't work. Last evening, I went down and had a talk with Inspector Byrnes, and he has put two of his best men on the case. But they had found out nothing when I looked in at Headquarters just now."

"You called on Miss Baddely, did you? How does she take it?" inquired Tinling.

"I saw her father; she was not to be seen. Of course they are all upset. I told him all I've told you. He said one thing—the old man did—that struck me as a bit odd; he said that both his daughter and Greaves were persons of arbitrary will and extraordinary whims. They were capable of almost anything. If one of them did a crazy thing, the other would be apt to do something to cap it. He said he had no control over either of 'em, and never had had. But he

said this last business did surprise him. I thought that was queer language to use on such an occasion. It might mean that he suspected something."

"A quarrel, for instance, and desperation on Greaves' part."

"A wager of some kind, maybe."

"I never did think much of that fellow Baddely. He's a poor sort of an old dude. Where does he get his pocket money from? He never made a cent in his life. Shouldn't wonder if his daughter supported him somehow. Takes in sewing on the quiet, or paints fans, or gives music lessons. Rum things go on in some of these old families." It was Gawtrey who made these observations.

"Upon the whole," said another of the party, "it looks to me as if Greaves' kidnapper must have been Greaves himself. But how he arranged it—the circumstances being what they were—I can't figure out. My impression is, Guise should have followed up that fellow in the gray Mackintosh."

"I agree with the last honorable member," said Tinling. "Such a coincidence as that similarity of costume is too remarkable not to be suspicious. Looks like a plot of some sort. But there's nothing to throw any light on his motive."

"Let's have another drink," said Gawtrey. "What are we going to do this evening?"

"I am going to the Fifth Avenue to see Saki," said Allardice. "Your talk about her has aroused my curiosity. I saw some oriental dancers at the Paris Exhibition a while ago, and I'd like to see how she compares with them."

The evening papers had just been brought in, and I had picked up one of them. A paragraph headed "Illness of the Persian Dancer" caught my eye.

"She won't appear this evening," said I. "It says: 'Mlle. Saki was so unfortunate as to sprain her ankle yesterday while alighting from her carriage. While the injury is not regarded as serious, it will prevent her from dancing this evening. Tickets purchased in advance will be accepted for later dates.' "

"Nothing in the paper about Greaves?" said Tinling.

"Seems not."

Soon after we broke up, and drifted away in various directions, somewhat preoccupied with speculations about Greaves.

The next morning, however, the papers were full of the story, and though no light was thrown upon the manner of Greaves' disappearance, certain facts of interest were mentioned. On the very day before his disappearance, it appears, he had executed a deed conveying the bulk of his large property to Sophie Baddely. This deed was not a will, but a deed of gift simply. Its provisions went into effect immediately, and, in view of what had occurred, one could not help suspecting that Greaves had prepared it as part of a predetermined scheme of action, whether of suicide or something else. And here there was a coincidence that drew my attention. The "indisposition" of Mlle. Saki corresponded very nearly with the disappearance of Greaves. She had not returned to the theater since the evening of that occurrence, and it was now stated that her absence might be prolonged for a week. I knew from Guise, the most intimate friend that Greaves had, that the latter had been several times to see Saki dance, and that he had betrayed rather marked interest in her performance. Mr. Baddely had said that his intending son-in-law was capable of strange escapades; was it possible, then, that he and the too-fascinating Persian had eloped together—he having first salved his conscience by bestowing his wealth upon the woman he was abandoning? Moreover, Tinling having made inquiries at the theater, brought news that there was now no prospect of Saki's returning at all; on the contrary, her agent had paid a heavy forfeit, and she had departed none knew whither. The sprained ankle was obviously a fiction. Of course, the manner in which Greaves had effected his exit was no less than ever a mystery. A conceivable motive had been suggested, that was all.

* * *

The establishment known as Six Cent Sam's extends clear through the narrow block in which it stands, and has an entrance in the street on the other side, a fact not generally known.

For the rear face of the eating house is a pawnshop, kept, as the sign board indicates, by one Samuel Jonathan, who is, in fact, no other than Six Cent Sam himself; and to the initiated there is a passageway leading out of the pawnshop into the eating house. I am of the initiated; and as I was passing down this passage on the day after the scene at the club, I met Sam—or Mr. Jonathan—and he said:

"Turn back, sir; I've something to say to you."

I followed him into the office of the pawnshop, where we sat down.

"One way or another," began Sam, "I hear a good deal of what's going on. Pawnshops and eating houses bring news. Now, there's young Greaves, for instance."

I became interested at once. Sam is always interesting.

"When last seen," continued the latter, "had on gray Mackintosh and soft hat. Could you identify them? Look at these," and from a shelf he drew out just such an English-made garment as Guise had described to us, with the hat to match.

"He's been here, then?" I asked.

Sam shook his head, and went on in his terse, deep-toned way. "A fellow came here yesterday with a carbuncle on his nose, and a game eye. Had these duds under his arm; wanted to sell 'em. How did he come by 'em? Gent had given 'em to him. How and why? Oh, quite a yarn. Gent met him on street during sandwich act for Fifth Avenue Theatre. Pursuant to bargain then and there made, and instructions given, met him again next day, same place. Another gent along. Disturbance on street; other man's attention distracted; garments exchanged inside ten seconds. Gent, in sandwiches, marches down street after other sandwiches; no one ever thinks of looking at face of sandwich, only the announcement on board. Thus gent became invisible, and has so remained."

So this was the simple but ingenious solution of the puzzle.

"And where is Greaves now, and what did he do it for?" I asked.

Sam looked me straight in the face with his powerful eyes.

"Where's Saki?" he replied.

"So they're together after all?" said I, rather vain of my insight.

"Guess not; but they ought to be."

That was a queer thing to say, and I stared at Sam without answering.

"Newspapers say he gave a pot of money to Miss Baddely," resumed the latter. "Proud, independent girl, father poor. She will be beholden to nobody, not even Greaves. Wanted to support herself. Greaves objects; quarrel. Now, if Greaves were to make away with himself, after deeding property to her, she would naturally give up her scheme of earning her own living. Do you see how the cat is going to jump?"

"You think Greaves has committed suicide?"

Sam gave me a reproachful glance. "Wasn't I asking to bring him and Saki together? Do you know either of the ladies?"

"Either of them?"

"Well, do you know Saki?" said Sam, a trifle impatiently.

"No, I don't."

"Nor Miss Baddely?"

"I haven't that pleasure."

"I'll introduce you to both of them. We'll go now. Great friends; always together."

"Who? Miss Baddely and Saki?"

"The same."

"What are we to do there?"

"I want 'em to settle which of 'em's to marry Greaves."

"Is Greaves in love with both of them?"

"That's his fix, precisely."

"And they with him?"

"That's what I'm figuring on."

"And you expect them to agree which of them ——"

"We have to hurry," remarked Sam, rising. "Let me get into a clean shirt, and we're off." He stepped into a side room as he spoke, and shut the door.

I did not know what to make of it, but I knew enough of Sam to know that he, who knew everything and everybody, from a pawnshop *habitué* to a wealthy club man, was not acting in the dark. In a few minutes he reappeared, in the garb of a well-to-do man-about-town. Silk hat, Prince Albert coat, striped trousers, white scarf, yellow gloves, and silver-headed umbrella. Not a finer gentleman in the city.

"We'll look up Mlle. Saki first," he said, as we sallied forth together. "Do you speak Persian fluently? Never mind, she speaks as good English as you or I do, and is a very intelligent woman."

To us, awaiting her in a tasteful but simple sitting room up-town, entered the famous Persian dancer. She was a handsome brunette, with superb black eyes and hair. Her figure and bearing were all grace and elegance. She was plainly dressed, and looked, as Sam had said, very intelligent.

"Now, Mademoiselle," said Sam, after the greetings were over, "I have called as your manager, to learn what you want to do. You may speak freely before this gentleman."

"Tell me first what has become of him?" she replied, in a slightly tremulous voice. "I can never forgive myself. Is he —— ?"

"He is a pig-headed donkey, if you must have my opinion," returned Sam. "And he's as well as such a monster deserves to be. Now, shall we temporize with him, or shall we keep on our course and let him go to —— " Sam's finger at this juncture was pointing downward.

"Temporize with him? I'll go down on my knees to him if he will but give me the chance. He was right from the beginning, and I was wrong. I saw that almost from the first—long before this terrible thing happened. But for my miserable obstinacy, I'd have given it up then. I had no conception what the life was till I had tried it. It was an awful lesson. I shall never forget it. I feel as if I had actually done all the bad things every one seemed to suspect me of. And yet, when I was looking forward to it, it all appeared good and right. I thought I would elevate and ennoble my art. But the world is hard."

"Well, it is unless we take it the right way," said Sam. "The best way to find out is to make experiments. I helped you to do that, and you're the better for it, because you now know what you would never have believed if it had been told you. Some girls go through life believing all they are told, good or bad, but you're not that sort. You can do other things just as clever as dancing, and not so open to remarks. For one thing, you can make a man happy, and bring up his children."

Mlle. Saki blushed, and tears stood in her eyes.

"It's too late to think of that now," she said. "He must despise me and hate me; he couldn't help it."

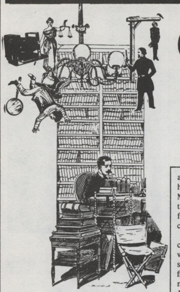
"Pooh! besides, there are other men in the world as good as he, and a great deal better."

"You know that is not so," exclaimed Mlle. Saki, with a naïve indignation that was enchanting. "I should like to see him again, though, just once," she added, "to tell him how sorry and ashamed I am, and to ask his forgiveness."

"I guess it would be more politic for you to forgive him," said Sam, with a smile. "However, we'll see what can be done," and thereupon we took our leave.

* * *

It was a mysterious affair altogether, and has never been cleared up to this day. As everybody knows, Greaves is married, but he married Miss Sophie Baddely. Mlle. Saki was never again heard of. It is the impression among the general public that she returned to Paris. Be that as it may, I saw Mrs. Greaves driving out in the park the other day with her husband, and remarked that the lady bore a striking resemblance to the Persian dancer. Guise and Tinling, however, have never spoken of any likeness. No doubt, she must have looked very different in her Persian costume from what she did in the plain American dress that she wore when I saw her.



COLLECTING Mystery Fiction

By Otto Penzler

The problems and challenges of assembling a comprehensive author collection are not appreciably different from those encountered in acquiring a serious collection devoted to a single detective character. The basic philosophies are identical; only the specifics vary.

Clayton Rawson is an excellent choice for someone attempting a complete author collection in the mystery genre. He was not a prolific writer, so the difficulties of tracking down fifty or a hundred volumes (as the collector of Rex Stout or Agatha Christie needs to do) are not relevant. He is not so exalted a literary figure as to cross over into the world of collectors of general fiction, say, or modern literature (as such authors as Wilkie Collins, Graham Greene, Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, for example, do).

At the same time, Rawson's work is sufficiently interesting and important that it (and he) are not likely to be lost in the mists of time. He wrote about magic and magicians better than any other mystery writer, due in large part to his first-hand experiences as a magician and author of several magic books. A leading practitioner of the locked-room puzzle, he is one of the few to be mentioned in the same breath with John Dickson Carr.

Carr and Rawson were, in fact, friends who respected each other's abilities as constructors of impossible crimes and their solutions. For some time, they engaged in a friendly rivalry, publicly challenging each other (in the pages of *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*) to create a logical set of circumstances and rational explanations for their apparently insoluble puzzles. Rawson wrote his most famous short story about The Great Merlini, "From Another World," in response to Carr's challenge: Make a man disappear from an ordinary telephone booth which is closely watched at all times.

So, in Clayton Rawson, the prospective collector has a good writer who can be read with pleasure, is not overly prolific, and is of sufficient significance in the history of mystery fiction to be worthy of preservation. Since none of the books is particularly old (the first, *Death from a Top Hat,* was published in 1938), the task seems simple and straightforward enough: compile a complete first edition collection of Clayton Rawson.

Born in Elyria, Ohio, in 1906, Rawson graduated from Ohio State University in 1929 and married Catherine Stone the same year; they had four children. A famous illusionist and member of the Society of American Magicians, he was an artist specializing in magazine illustrations before turning to writing and editing. He was the editor of *True Detective Magazine,* Ziff-Davis Publications, Unicorn Books, Simon and Schuster's Inner Sanctum Mysteries, and *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* (1963–71). Until his death in 1971, he was a member of the Mystery Writers of America and the British Crime Writers' Association.

Rawson wrote four detective novels about The Great Merlini, a professional magician and amateur detective. Born in a Barnum and Bailey circus car around the turn of the century, Merlini worked as a carnival and circus magician for four years, then formed his own show and toured the world for several years before opening his Times Square magic shop in 1939.

In addition to appearing in four book-length adventures, Merlini appeared in a number of short stories, all but one of which originally saw publication in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*; they were collected in book form in 1979.

Rawson also wrote four novelettes about another magician detective, Don Diavolo. Published under the pen name Stuart Towne, the novelettes were collected in two volumes.

A total of seven books does not appear to be an overwhelming challenge, but some important decisions remain to be made. Since Rawson also wrote books about magic, are they to be considered appropriate for the colllection? It seems fair to eliminate them, since the discussion is restricted to mystery fiction.

But what about magazines? The Don Diavolo stories, for example, originally appeared in *Red Star Mystery* magazine and the Great Merlini short stories mainly in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine,* and *The Headless Lady* was serialized in Detective Fiction *Weekly* before its book publication.

Whether to collect the magazine appearances of Rawson's magical mysteries can be intelligently decided only by each collector. Some will decide against them, declaring that it is books, and books *only,* that are being collected. A valid decision.

But certainly no less reasonable is deciding that the earliest publications of the stories, even if they are not in book form, are significant and worth preserving. And what handsome collector's items are those colorful old pulp magazines with their garish covers and melodramatic interior illustrations. They are nearly irresistible, once seen in fine condition.

To go a step further (and here, it must be conceded, lies a clear path to fanaticism), it is possible to recall that Rawson edited several magazines, illustrated numerous periodicals, and was an editor for more than one book publisher. A logical, if extreme, decision might be to collect all the publications in which he had a hand.

It is safe to suggest that this degree of completism goes beyond the aims of every but the most obsessed collector. It requires genuine dedication to a single author, as it would be nearly impossible to attempt it for more than one writer. Furthermore, if the truth be told, it is unlikely that the collection would be terribly interesting or enlightening if it were successfully assembled. On the other hand, if it provides pleasure for the collector, it serves its purpose adequately and should neither be dismissed nor vilified.

For the average collector (does such a person exist?) of mystery fiction first editions, it is reasonable to speculate that a complete Clayton Rawson collection may be comprehensive yet be confined to a shelf of extremely modest dimensions.

But what a challenge! Eight books (seven, actually, plus a slim pamphlet), only one of which is truly easy. *The Great Merlini,* the

1979 short-story collection published by Gregg Press, is still in print in a first edition.

The four Merlini novels, published between 1938 and 1942, did not enjoy huge success and had relatively small print runs. When the books do turn up, they are seldom in fine collector's condition and hardly ever have fine, fresh dust wrappers.

Even more uncommon is *Death Out of Thin Air* by Stuart Towne, published by Coward-McCann in 1941. It, too, must have had a small print run since it is an uncommon title in any copy but very scarce in anything approaching desirable condition. The dust jacket, when it is present at all, simply cannot be found in fine, crisp shape. There is a commonly held theory that it was issued with tears and creases!

The genuine rarity, almost making *Death Out of Thin Air* seem to be an ordinary book by contrast, is *Death from Nowhere,* a slim, cheaply-produced paperback published by a tiny New York-based firm, Wiegers Publishing Company, under the imprint "Yogi Mysteries." No copy has ever been reported in pristine condition.

While *Death from Nowhere* is a notorious rarity for which serious collectors had been searching fruitlessly for years until a couple of copies surfaced during the past five years, a more extreme situation existed with *Pictures Don't Lie,* a pamphlet so rare that its very existence remained unreported, unrecorded, and, evidently, unsuspected, for many years.

Pearl Publishing, a small company in Brooklyn, N.Y., issued a series of four jigsaw puzzles in the late 1940s or, possibly, early 1950s (they are undated and without reference in all the usual sources—or any of the many unusual sources consulted, for that matter). It is possible that more than four such jigsaw puzzles were issued, but numbers one to four are the only ones seen.

Each of the colorful jigsaw puzzles was packaged in a box with an inexpensively-produced pamphlet which contained an original mystery short story by a popular writer of the time (the other three being Brett Halliday with a Mike Shayne story, Helen McCloy and Kelly Roos). After reading the mystery set forth in the pamphlet, the would-be solver needed to assemble the jigsaw puzzle for the final clue.

Pictures Don't Lie vanished until *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* published it in 1969—calling it an original story—with a new title: "Merlini and the Photographic Clues." It seems odd that the story would have been described as original when it had been published about twenty years earlier, especially since the editor of *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* at that time was Rawson himself!

Whether a collection specializes in locked-room murders, important authors of American detective fiction, books set in New York, mystery fiction written between the world wars, mysteries involving magic and magicians—or any other well-focused specialty within the genre—Clayton Rawson and his relatively modest opera is a cornerstone entity within the wider boundaries of that overall collection.

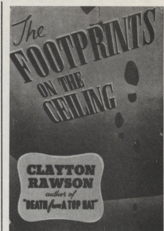
Descriptions of the first editions of the eight Clayton Rawson volumes of mystery fiction follow:

Death from a Top Hat

First edition: New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1938. Blue cloth, lettered in black on front cover and spine, with a vignette, also in black, on front cover. Two plates are tipped in: a frontispiece captioned "Dr. Cesare Sabbat's apartment as the police found it" and, between pages 122 and 123, "Duvallo's apartment as it appeared just after Grimm and Jones broke in." Top edges of pages stained red. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper.

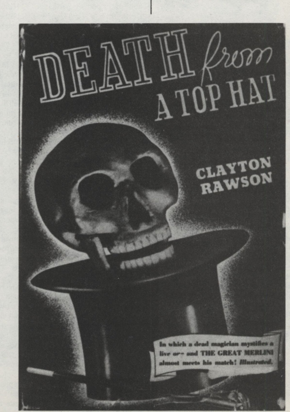
Estimated retail value:	*without d/w*	*with d/w*
Good	$10	$ 40
Fine	15	125
Very fine	20	200

Note: This title is in The Haycraft-Queen Definitive Library of Detective-Crime-Mystery Fiction: Two Centuries of Cornerstones, 1748-1948.



The Footprints on the Ceiling

First edition: New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939. Green cloth, lettered in black on



front cover and spine, with a vignette, also in black, on front cover. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper.

Estimated retail value:	*without d/w*	*with d/w*
Good	$10	$ 35
Fine	15	100
Very fine	20	150

The Headless Lady

First edition: New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, (1940). Rose or blue cloth, lettered in black on front cover and spine, with a vignette, also in black, on front cover. Top edges of pages stained blue in copies bound in rose cloth, unstained in copies bound in blue cloth. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper.

Note: The Headless Lady was originally published serially in *Detective Fiction Weekly* under the title *The Case of the Deadly Clown.* There is no established priority between copies bound in blue cloth and those in rose cloth. Apart from the cloth used to bind the books, and the stained page tops in rose cloth copies, all copies appear to be identical and there is no value distinction between them, although copies in rose cloth are decidedly more common.

Estimated retail value:	*without d/w*	*with d/w*
Good .	$10	$ 35
Fine	15	100
Very fine	20	150

Death Out of Thin Air by Stuart Towne

First edition: New York, Coward-McCann, (1941). Black cloth, lettered in red on spine, with a vignette, also in red, on front cover. Top edges of pages stained red. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper.

Note: Two novelettes. The first, "Death from the Past," was previously published as

"Ghost of the Undead" in *Red Star Mystery* magazine in the June 1940 issue (Vol. 1, No. 1). The second, "Death from the Unseen," was previously published as "Death Out of Thin Air" in *Red Star Mystery* magazine in the August 1940 issue (Vol. 1, No. 2). Both novelettes were rewritten for their publication in book form. One example of a variant binding has been seen, in the noted collection of Norman S. Nolan. It is a light brick-colored cloth, printed in black (both the lettering and the vignette are identical to the state described above). The top edges of the pages in that copy are unstained. It is not known whether this variant is a trial binding, a remainder binding, or simply a variant state. In any event, it is rare.

Estimated retail value:	*without d/w*	*with d/w*
Good	$25	$ 75
Fine	50	150
Very fine	75	250

No Coffin for the Corpse

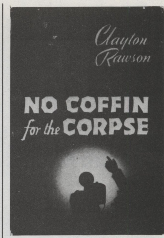
First edition: Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1942. Black cloth, lettered in orange on front cover and spine, with a vignette, also in orange, on front cover. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper.

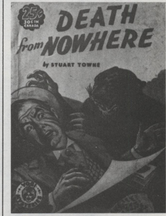
Note: The words "First Edition" appear on the copyright page. The last Great Merlini novel.

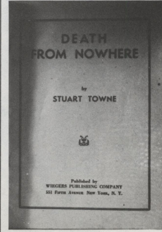
Estimated retail value:	*without d/w*	*with d/w*
Good	$10	$ 35
Fine	15	100
Very fine	20	150

Death from Nowhere by Stuart Towne

First edition: New York, Wiegers Publishing Company, N.D., *ca.* 1943). Full color pictorial wrappers; digest size.



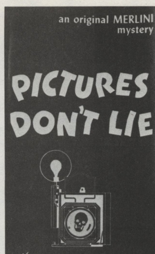




Note: Two novelettes. The first, titled simply "Act I," was previously published as "The Claws of Satan" in *Red Star Mystery* magazine in the October 1940 issue (Vol. 1, No. 3). The second, titled "Act II," was previously published in *Red Star Mystery* magazine as "The Enchanted Dagger" in the January 1941 issue (Vol. 1, No. 4). *Red Star Mystery* magazine announced a fifth Don Diavolo story, "Murder from the Grave," for the issue of March 1941 (Vol. 1, No. 5), but it was never published. *Death from Nowhere* is undated except for a copyright notice on the copyright page, dated 1940, in the name of The Frank A. Munsey Company. Since it reprints the third and fourth Don Diavolo novelettes, it is almost certain that it was published subsequent to *Death Out of Thin Air.* Although clearly intended as the first in a series by Wiegers (it is identified on both the front and rear covers as being in the "Yogi Mysteries" line), *Death from Nowhere* was the only book published under this imprint.

Estimated retail value:

Good	$100
Fine	200
Very fine	300



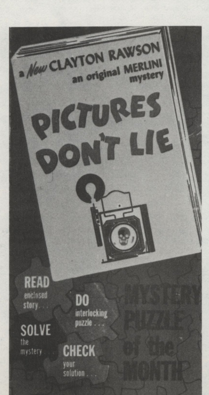
Pictures Don't Lie

First edition: (Brooklyn, N.Y., Pearl Publishing Company, N.D., *ca.* 1950). Mystery Puzzle of the Month No. 3. A 16-page pamphlet, printed throughout in black and white, stapled.

Note: Contained in a box with a colored pictorial cover. A full-color jigsaw puzzle of approximately 150 pieces is also contained in the box.

Estimated retail value (must be complete with box and jigsaw puzzle with all pieces):

Good	$ 50
Fine	125
Very fine	200

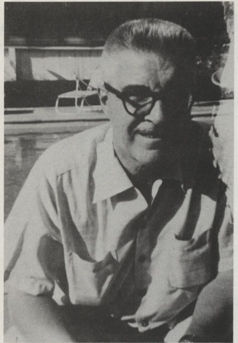


The Great Merlini

First edition: Boston, Gregg Press, 1979. White cloth, lettered in red on spine, with red and black ornamentation (depicting each of the four card suits) on front cover. Issued in a red and black pictorial dust wrapper.

Estimated retail value (mint in d/w, available from the publisher): $9.95

A great range of circumstances and factors influence a bookseller's decisions on pricing 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 inscripts have no ceilings, depending upon such obvious factors as the length and importance of the inscriptions and associations. □



Bill Cox in the 1950s

William R. Cox: An Interview and an Appreciation

By Jim Traylor

I first became acquainted with Bill Cox through the kindness of Phoebe Ballard, wife of the late Todhunter Ballard (known more readily to the detective reader as W. T. Ballard, creator of the Hollywood troubleshooter Bill Lennox). I was researching the early hardboiled writers, trying to establish a link between their style and the slam-bang style of the numerous tough guys now appearing in paperback originals (the Executioner, the Destroyer, the Revenger, and others), who were in turn heavily influenced by the work of Mickey Spillane.

Bill was kind enough to answer my inquiries for information and memories which would help a newcomer to the world of hardboiled pulp fiction. I had never read anything by him until I received a long, chatty and informative letter. That very day, I searched the local used bookstores for some of his crime stories. I was lucky. I actually found some. I read them. They're the type of mystery story which purists call the crime story, although adhering too strictly to that definition sometimes leads to strangely inaccurate classifications of otherwise classy books. Thriller, adventure, action/adventure—whatever the books are called—Cox knows his audience well and is in the purest sense an entertainer. And considering that his writing career has spanned six decades, he most certainly has an interesting story to tell.

William R. Cox was born April 14, 1901, in Peapack, New Jersey, but grew up in Newark. There he boxed, played football, and made deliveries for his father's ice and coal business. He played professional football with the Newark Pros, once even competing against Jim Thrope's team, the Canton Bulldogs. He began his writing career as a sports reporter in 1920. His first stories were about tough guys and sports figures; and he is still active in the western and crime markets.

Currently, he has three manuscripts awaiting publication and is completing a fourth. He is not and never was primarily a mystery/crime writer. He has published over one thousand short stories, many in the action/adventure field, in such pulp magazines as *Dime Detective*, *Dime Mystery*, *Detective Tales*, *Mike Shayne's Mystery Magazine*, and *Black Mask*; and in such slick magazines as *Collier's*, *American*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Liberty*, and *Cosmopolitan*.

Cox's first appearance in the pulps was in *Dime Sports* in 1934; his last, *Mike Shayne's Mystery Magazine* in 1972. His last slick magazine appearance was the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1956.

He moved to the West Coast in 1948 and by 1950 was working for the new medium of television, ultimately writing over one hundred TV shows. He was on salary at Universal-International 1951–53. He also began writing books in 1954 and has since written 75. A large number of these were westerns written under his own name and under the penname Jonas Ward (the Buchanan series for Fawcett, beginning in 1970). He was twice president of WWA (Western Writers of America), 1965–66 and 1971–72.

Cox knew many of the legends of the pulp era—Erle Stanley Gardner, Carroll John Daly, Raymond Chandler, W. T. Ballard, Frank Gruber, Cleve F. Adams; and later on the new generation led by John D. MacDonald, Steve Fisher, Brian Garfield, Wilbur Peacock and William Campbell Gault. Cox possesses

a style which is more representative of character study than it is of pure plot development. He created numerous representative pulp characters, ones that evoke images and memories long forgotten from reading the stories but well remembered from the many familiar plots and characters which daily show up on TV. Certainly TV killed the pulp market and even the slick writers, but it did create a new market for the better pulp writers.

Among his best crime story characters are Malachi Manatee (from *Dime Detective* in the mid-1940s), whose "gig was breaking up political villains"; John Wade (from *Detective Tales*), who "was against crooked millionaires and politicians"; Murphy the Neighborhood Cop, which ran for eight years in *Blue Book* under the penname Joel Reeve; "Dumb Dan" Trout, a not-quite-hardboiled private investigator (from *Detective Tales*) who resembles Richard Diamond; and my personal favorite, Tom Kincaid, a professional gambler and trouble-shooter who first appeared in *Dime Mystery* in the 1940s and later became the lead character in three novels of the late '50s/60's which appeared as Signet paperback originals.

I would like to express my appreciation to Phoebe Ballard for providing information, encouragement, and the picture of Bill Cox and her husband Tod; Michael L. Cook for valuable bibliographic references, all taken from his new book *Monthly Murders* (an index to stories published in digest-sized magazines); Hilary Cummings, Manuscripts Curator, Special Collections at the Library, University of Oregon, for providing most of the biographic material as well as photocopies of many Cox short stories. Most of all I would like to express my thanks to Bill Cox for his delightful conversations and his open, friendly manner.

I = Interviewer C = Cox

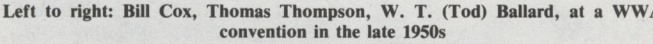
I. How did you begin your writing career?

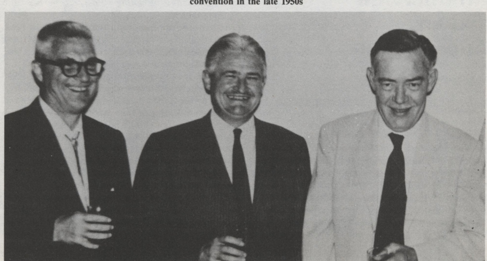
C: I started as a sports reporter in 1920. Because my father was in the ice, coal, and wood business I was a small muscle who played all the sports, including the stupidity of boxing. I was basically a sportswriter. I started in the newspaper business as a reporter for the Newark *Sunday Call*. It was really the Sunday edition of the Newark *News*, the famous paper that covered New Jersey like a tent. A big, big metropolitan newspaper. But my first job in high school was as a copy boy for the Newark *Morning Ledger*. I went to South Side High School, which is all black now and called Malcolm X High.

I: You spent almost forty years writing for the pulps and the slicks. That's pretty impressive. How did all that begin?

C: I began writing crime in magazines in 1934–35 in *Captain Satan* at the behest of William Fay and William Holder of Popular Publications. I had five sports stories in their *Sports Novels* one issue and needed to extend my field. I crassly imitated Hammett for starters.

But my first pulp was in 1934, called "Legs," a track yarn for Al Norton in *Dime Sports*. My last


Left to right: Bill Cox, Thomas Thompson, W. T. (Tod) Ballard, at a WWA convention in the late 1950s



Old friends sharing a laugh at Cox's eightieth birthday celebration; left to right: Brian Garfield, Hank Allen, Bill Cox, Thomas Thompson

published short story in a magazine was in *Mike Shayne* in 1972, "The Phone Call." I did a few for various WWA anthologies for free since then. There were somewhat over a thousand in between, but they were hard to keep up with. I'd send in a story under one title; they'd publish it under another. I quit the slick magazines in 1956 with a story in the *Post*, "Playoff Game."

I: What about the detective pulps? What was your specialty there?

C: Ninety percent of my pulp work was for Popular Publications. My pulp career in crime began in *Captain Satan*, a brief-lived book by Popular, and ran through *Ace*, *Detective Fiction Weekly* (Street and Smith) and *Blue Book* under the "Joel Reeve" byline. The John Wade stories were for Popular Publications, also the Tom Kincaids. I got into *Blue Book* under Donald Kennicott with sports and did the Willy Boulder series and several others before doing Officer Murphy, last of the walking beat cops.

One of my best, "Blood and Moonlight," was in *Manhunt*, a story laid in Savannah, which was sadly decadent in one social layer in 1938 when I dwelt in the De Soto Hotel for six months. *Manhunt* was a good magazine. You could writer character for it, as you could for the old *Black Mask*.

Most of my work was in *Dime Mystery*, *Dime Detective*, *Ace G-Men*, *Detective Stories*, *PIC*, *Argosy*, and others. William Fay and William Holder, both deceased, were my first editors, both fine but lazy Irish writers. Fay, a poet in his heart, was very big in the *Post* in the '40s and '50s. We were once known as "the three bad Bills" in our roistering days around New York. Fay was a Golden Glover, and Holder was a barroom battler *par excellence*. Holder wrote one book; booze got him.

I: Tell me about *Black Mast*. You published some stories in it, right?

C: Only two. Only after Fanny Ellsworth took it over. I was never in that early gang. You see, I didn't start full-time writing until 1935, about the time Popular Publications bought *Black Mask*. They bought it and *Argosy* and a lot of others. They became the big thing. They put Street and Smith out of the pulp business. . . by paying us more money.

God, the other magazines were mad, too. I remember a guy named Oliver, a sports editor. He bawled me out one time. He said, "I bought you when you started and now you sell me an occasional reject." I said, "I'm never rejected on sports stories. When you want sports stories, ask me for one. I'll give you one." He said, "I'm not asking anybody." I said, "All right"—and never sold him another story. I didn't have to because Popular would buy anything I wrote.

I: I'm curious about how you created your characters. I believe you said Tod Ballard's private eye Bill Lennox was based on an actual person.

C: Bill Lennox *was* based on a character out here in L.A., a troubleshooter for MGM. As for my own characters, I invented them. If you needed a character for a series, you just invented a colorful one. Take the John Wade stories. They were very murderous and violent things, very two-dimensional. The pulps

wouldn't allow you to do anything else. That's what you had to do. You were bound into that genre. You had to do it.

I: You mean each series character was more or less based on a theme?

C: Each had a specific area of concern. Malachi Manatee's gig was breaking up political villains. I only did about half a dozen of those. John Wade was against crooked millionaires and politicians. Dumb Dan Trout ran for years in *Detective Tales*. Tom Kincaid was an honest gambler who went on into books, as you know: *Hell to Pay*, *Murder in Vegas*, and *Death on Location*. That series was cancelled when Marc Jaffe left NAL for Dell. Then I did *Death Comes Early* for him at Dell—hero John Ware, a Toots Shor character, and another book about the only five-foot-tall Texas billionaire which was never published because Marc then left Dell and Mrs. Meyer hated everything he'd bought.

I: Tom Kincaid is my favorite of your crime characters. How did he come about?

C: Tom Kincaid came out of a series in *Dime Mystery* which evolved from the hardboiled school. Thereby hangs a tale: Mayor LaGuardia, that watcher of morals, once surveyed the kiosks displaying pulps and was shocked to his Italian soul at some of the covers—bosoms and thighs and gore. He began a campaign, and at that time *Mystery* was guilty, real guilty. Wyatt Blassingame and I had contributed a few, anything to make a buck in Depression days, but were not really regulars. The late, great Rogers Terrill, executive editor at Popular, assigned us to "clean up" *Mystery*. So we did, each writing slowly down from sex-horror into Kincaid and his ilk. They were really still pretty bad, but the characterizations stood up, as ours generally did. When I went into books, I sold the Kincaids to Marc Jaffe at NAL. Now they seem rather tame!

I: That brings up another interesting aspect of the pulps. Several of them were called spicy this or that, *Spicy Detective*, *Spicy Mystery*, *Spicy Western*, and so on. Were these books really all that racy?

C: *Dime Mystery* was sold on the newstands until LaGuardia complained. Then they cooled the covers and we did the rest. No spicy pulp was ever spicy enough to be sold under the counter. They were ridiculously mild in those days.

I: Malachi Manatee seems an odd character to become a series hero. How did this happen?

C: Malachi is a weird one, one of a kind because we had to write of oddballs. The competition was keener in crime than in westerns, and I have never been a John Dickson Carr and had to depend upon characterization. Kenneth White, a tough editor for *Dime Detective*, the top book at Popular—*Black Mask* went down after Cap Shaw departed—liked Malachi and bought a string of them. Malachi was primarily against crime in government. Odd that we should have themes in those days, but we did. Aren't we all against crime in government, including the police department?

I: Some of the pulps, such as *Black Mask*, had writers associated with them who are now legendary—Hammett, Chandler, Daly, many others. What are your memories of these men?

C: Carroll John Daly is generally conceded to have been the first of the really tough private-man writers. His Race Williams liked to see the brain matter run in the gutter. Daly was a meek little man in spats and a derby when I met him away back then.

Old copies of *Black Mask* are rare indeed. I have only a couple of tearsheets containing my own appearances in it, which was after Fanny Ellsworth became the editor. Those were the great days of the pulps, which prospered hugely in Depression time and during the war. They were cheap and they provided escape, you see. *Liberty*, the *Post*, and *Collier's* were a nickel; the mags from Popular were *Dime*-this or that. Later *Dime Western* and *Dime Detective* sold for a quarter.

Black Mask, of course, launched the truly great

ones, Hammett and Chandler. Cap Shaw first published Perry Mason and Gruber's The Encyclopedia Man series, a very good one. Tod Ballard and Frank Gruber were about the only *Black Mask* writers I knew personally. I lived in Florida for ten years and didn't get to New York often enough to meet the others.

I: What about the giants, Hammett and Chandler? You said at the first of your career you crassly imitated Hammett. Is Hammett that much better than the others?

C: Phil Durham, a professor at UCLA, was a friend. He wrote about Hammett at length and the whole crowd in an essay called "The Black Mask School." But he was a little didactic and professorial in his viewpoint and very wrong about Hammett. He's a much better writer than Durham allows. Durham said Hammett was limited in this direction or that direction. I don't think Hammett was too damn limited. Chandler was more poetic, but Hammett was a better writer. Hammett is a part of literature.

I: Did you know others?

C: Sure. McKinlay Kantor, Talbot Munday, Ernest Haycox, a whole fine string of them came out of pulp. If you can find copies of the old *Adventure* along with *Black Mask* you will enjoy some first-rate stories.

Paul Cain I dimly remember. James M. Cain was of course a master. Raoul Whitfield was a regular in old *Black Mask* and a good one, but the book of his that I read was not so good. Cleve Adams and Tod Ballard were fine storytellers, bright guys, both of them wonderful people. Tod did the Bill Lennox series in *Black Mask*. He was one of the early writers. How well he knew Dashiell Hammett, I don't know. But he was a sweetheart of a guy.

Cleve Adams had a great influence on the genre and came to Hollywood and did well until his early demise. They had the group The Fictioneers, who were all pulpeteers and often broke during the Depression. At each meeting—always at someone's domicile—they would discreetly leave a hat on a table for contributions, not to embarrass he who had not. Then they would wait for Cleve. The refreshments depended upon how much he dropped into the chapeau. I did not join them until I came to L.A. in 1948. I was the final secretary. They drifted, died, lost interest. Ray Bradbury was the best-known member, but Richard Matheson the best fantasy writer. Gault is still selling crime novels.

I've got a couple of tearsheets with me from *Detective Tales* and some of the other pulps. From *Detective*, I see John Hawkins, Day Keene (most pro-

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lific), Wilbur Peacock, Don James, Donald G. Cormack, Edward S. Williams, Frederick Davis (another big producer), and C. William Harrison. From *Private Detective*, May 1946, we get Roger Torrey, Henry Norton, and Ray Cummings. All these guys, most of them gone, were regulars in the pulps. You know the problem, pulp paper deteriorates. They were selling oldies out here in L.A. a few years ago in cellophane wrappers for two and three

bucks per copy. At the University of Oregon, where my work is stashed, they have all the slicks and are avid for the pulps. I gave them a couple hundred but kept tearsheets of those I might steal a plot from now and again. My own stories—I have a thing against stealing from others.

And there were many others. You know, poor Bob Bellem had to be the worst writer who ever sold as much as he did. He had a turn of wit, though it was awfully corny. But Bob was a sweet guy, adorable.

Do you know why I'm not in Frank Gruber's books about the pulp era? Because I wasn't part of his group. He wrote for another organization, Street and Smith. He went into novels when they were only paying $300 for a manuscript. I could get $300 for a novelette.

I: We've all heard stories about dictatorial editors during the pulp era. Did you have any problems? Since you published over a thousand stories, I assume if you did, you worked out the differences pretty quickly.

C: Editors were so great to me. And they were also good to those who would go along and do what you were supposed to do, which was tell the story. I learned to tell the story. Once you did, you could make a damn good living.

I: Some copies of the old pulps are now extremely valuable. Did you save any of them?

C: Of the short stories, all I have is my tearsheets—my stories ripped out of the original pulp, complete with cover and table of contents page.

I: Some of the pulp writers seemed to produce massive amounts of words, mostly because the mags paid by the word. How did you fare under this system?

C: I was just looking at the number of words I wrote. I kept pretty careful records. My God, it's unbelievable. I don't know how the hell I did it; I really don't. I had one year—1937, when I was getting a divorce—I only wrote 250,000 words, and that was very pitiful. Prior to that year, it was 500,000 and 510,000. From 1938, when I began to keep careful records, 589,000 is the least I wrote in a year, and 720,000 was the tops. And it was all over 600,000, right up till 1950.

Professionals of my time were paid from ½¢ to 5¢ a word and sold about everything we wrote. The *Post* paid $400 for my first in 1941 and $1500 for my last in 1956. At the peak of my pulp career, I was getting 2½–3¢ per word, which was good money. Rog Terrill, that great executive editor and later my agent, looked after those he called "his boys," that is, those he could depend on for stories. At one time, he had forty magazines he had to fill.

I averaged 50,000 words per month for fourteen years before taking off for Hollywood when the mags went down, and did maybe a hundred stories from L.A. while working at TV and movies.

Popular Publications was my home. *Dime Mystery*, *Dime Detective*, and *Detective Tales* were my markets, plus the sports and westerns which filled out the scheme of things. I averaged 50,000 words per month, played tennis every day, took trips, enjoyed life, drove a Lincoln Zephyr, owned a fine house in Florida. It was easy. I always claimed to be not the best writer but the fastest. Stories were everywhere: in the daily papers, the magazines reputed to be nonfiction, the tales of cops, crooks, baseball players, bartenders. Believe me, many a fiction came from bottles. Wyatt Blassingame, a fine writer, and Talbot Munday and I sat up with Meyers Rum many a night on Anna Maria Key and talked up the Florida sun telling it to each other.

I: What's the difference between writing in the '30s and '40s as opposed to what you're writing now?

C: A vast difference. In the '30s and '40s, we were writing formula. Also in my first TV shows, as in 1950. But we were in the pulps, and there was a big myth about the pulps. But you had to write formula for them as well as for the slicks.

My last story, the 1956 *Post* story, will illustrate the myth about the pulps being the only ones to have a formula. I wrote it for *Colliers*, and *Collier's* folded that week. That was one of the terrible things that happened in the '50s. *American* and *Collier's* were in the black, but Crowell and company needed a write-off or something. They killed the magazine. Overnight. I was in and sold two stories, and I got the call from Rog Terrill that they closed them up. And I said, forget it, and he said, no, we'll sell it to the *Post*. "Aw," I told him, "I can't sell that story to the *Post*." "Yes, you can, oh, yes, you can. I'll tell you what you do. Take some of the action off the field and put it in the stands where the pregnant wife is watching the rookie husband play halfback for the football team. Just change it a little bit." I said, "Oh, come on, Roger." And he said, "Just do it, willya?" So I did, and the *Post* bought it. There's the formula, you see.

I: They wanted more human interest?

C: They wanted a little more human interest. *Collier's* went for more action. It was all formula writing. That's the big difference for me between then and now. I don't have to write that way now, but on the other hand, yes, indeed, the Buchanans are formula, absolute formula.

Buchanan's a nice, big, peaceful guy. All he wants to do is fish and hunt and see his little adopted child and namesake, and so on. And on about page six, he'd better be in a lot of trouble. And he gets out his guns, and he doesn't want to use them. And he straps them on and says, here we go again. And that's the formula. However, I try to add character development and historical background to the Buchanans.

I: What about TV?

C: TV is strictly formula writing today. In the novels and the crime things, I don't stick to formula. I don't have to anymore.

I: Has the market for crime changed that much?

C: Oh, yes. There are no magazines.

I: Would you say it's true that people who would have written for magazines and pulps in the '40s and '50s are now in TV?

C: Right. Or selling shoes. A lot of those guys couldn't get arrested today.

TV is not an art form. It's an advertising form. And if you get a good rating, that does it. Everybody jumps on that same idea. The best scripts are

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being done for *Barney Miller*, *Taxi*, and *Hill Street Blues*. They're well written. *Barney Miller* manages to get three or four stories going at once, some of them very serious, and still get laughs. Damn good writers.

I: You said you saw the pulps going downhill after you moved to the West Coast in 1948. How did that change your writing career? Didn't you start to do Westerns about this time?

C: No. I began writing westerns in 1940. I came here in 1948 and was into television in 1950 with *Fireside Theater*, the first filmed show, thence to Universal-International for movies, back to TV, and into books in 1954.

I got into Westerns in 1940, when the desk drawers of my editors became overloaded with sports and crime. Bea Jones, then with Syd Sanders, bullied me into that, a great favor. I never had a rejection of a Western, although I'd never been west of Philadelphia when I began writing them.

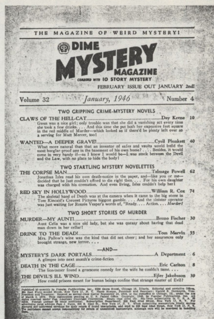
The big change came because so many of the magazines went out of business in the '50s. That's when Willy Holder and several others went into the booze, and a couple of them killed themselves, and some became shoe clerks or factory employees. Writing formula wasn't enough. You also had to have talent and imagination and the will to survive.

I: You seem to have been able to move rather quickly from the short-story field to movies and TV. You said you wrote so many stories for the pulps that you used the penname Joel Reeve for the slicks. Did that help or hinder you when you moved to Hollywood?

C: It didn't help any. Some of the stories, including the last one in the *Post*, were under William R. Cox. A good many of the others (in the slicks) were under Joel Reeve. I got so tangled up out here over that. People would say, Joel Reeve? It was a mixup. I never should have used that name. Had I known I was coming out here, I certainly wouldn't. It was a case of identification. The *Post* was a very powerful thing to get you a job out here. They were very funny about that. Nunnally Johnson had written for the *Post*. Some of the great screenwriters out here in the '30s and '40s came from the *Post*. That was the big fiction magazine. You can't imagine how powerful it was. Hard to remember how powerful that magazine was.

I: What about your books? I know you've written quite a few, some crime stories but mostly other fields, correct?

C: There have been 75 books; Westerns, crime, novels, whatnot. Not bad for an eighty-year-old geezer. *The Lusty Men* was the first book I ever sold after a lifetime in pulps and TV and movies. *Make My Coffin Strong* (a weird Fawcett title) was the second and won the monthly prize they gave for "first crime story, best of month."



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TWO GRIPPING CRIME-MYSTERY NOVELS

CLAWS OF THE HELL-CAT .... Day Keene 10
Gwen was a nice girl; only trouble was that she did a vanishing act every time she took a few drinks. . . . And this time she put both her expensive feet square in the red middle of Murder—which looked as if there'd be plenty left over as a serving for Matt Mercer, too!

WANTED—A DEEPER GRAVE! .... Cyril Plunkett 40
What more natural than that an inventor of safes and vaults would build the most burglar-proof one in the basement of his own home? . . . Besides, it would come in very handy if—as I knew I would be—I was stuck between the Devil and the Law, with no place to hide the body!

TWO STARTLING MYSTERY NOVELETTES

THE CORPSE MAN .... Talmage Powell 62
Jonathan Isles read his own death-notice in the paper, and—like you or me—decided that he just couldn't afford to die right then. . . . For his own daughter was charged with his cremation. And even living, Isles couldn't help her!

RED SKY IN HOLLYWOOD .... William R. Cox 74
The skeletal hand of Death was at the camera when it came to the big scene in Tom Kincaid's Coronet Pictures biggest gamble. . . . And the sinister operator was just waiting for Ronnie Vesper's words of, "Ready. . . . Action. . . . *Murder!*

TWO SHORT STORIES OF MURDER

MURDER—MY AUNT! .... Bruno Fischer 30
Aunt Celia was a nice old lady, but she was queasy about having that dead man down in her cellar!

DRINK TO THE DEAD! .... Tom Marvin 55
Mrs. Pallow's wine was the kind that did not cheer; and her assurances only brought strange, new terror. . . .

—AND—

MYSTERY'S DARK PORTALS .... A Department 6
A glimpse into next month's crime-fiction

DEATH IN THE CAGE .... Eric Carlton 8
The lion-tamer found a gruesome remedy for the wife he couldn't tame. . . .

THE DEVIL'S ILL WIND .... Ejler Jakobsson 39
How could prisons meant for human beings confine that strange master of Evil?

I've written twenty-five or thirty sports juveniles for Dodd, Mead, and a few for the Bantam Pathfinders series. I'm on the fifteenth of the Buchanan series now. Six were done by others before me. I hear they've sold over eight million copies of that series. I even wrote a nonfiction book called *The Mets Will Win the Pennant* in 1964. A bit before the time . . . And a biography called *Luke Short and His Era*.

I: I'm interested—as I'm sure others are—in your days of working with some of the legendary TV series, such as *Wagon Train*, *Bonanza*, *Tales of Wells Fargo*. That really took the place of short stories, didn't it?

C: Sure. I did over a hundred TV shows, mostly Westerns, starting with *Fireside Theater* in 1950. I did almost all of the early half-hour shows. I did several *Bonanzas* for Thomas Thompson, the old pulp writer. Gruber had *Wells Fargo*. I worked for him. I did two or three of them. I did the first *Wagon Train*, the one with Ernie Brognine. He was easy to write for because I knew him from the time my wife worked as the script supervisor on *Marty*.

I: What about others? Didn't you write a special TV show for Buster Keaton?

C: Yes. "Journey to Nivevah" for *Route 66*. Bus was my dear friend the last fifteen years of his life. Some others I did were "Lincoln's Doctor's Dog" with Robert Ryan; "The Titanic Incident"; and one with Fred MacMurray for *Screen Director's Playhouse*. And a boxing story taken from one of my short stories in *Collier's* for *Philco Theater*.

I: Did you ever writer for *Perry Mason?* The TV series?

C: No, I never wrote for them. I always wanted to. I couldn't get a job on that series. I don't know what was going on there. I guess I got typed with westerns for a while.

One TV show I worked on that I really loved was *The Grey Ghost*. I did half a dozen shows. They didn't like it in L.A. Boston and the South loved it. It just missed by a hair being renewed. The ratings got it, even then. And I even did a *Dragnet* in 1955.

I: How long did it take to write a thirty-minute script?

C: I could do about two a week. They'd be thirty-five or forty short pages, including camera cuts.

I. You did a number of TV shows, yet you got out and went back to writing novels, mostly Westerns. Any particular reason for this?

C: I got very tired of TV. It became very difficult to work in that medium. They brought in a lot of young punks, and when the saw my grey hair they knew they were in trouble. After that, I only did them as special favors for friends; I did an *Adam-12* for a friend. I've been out of that for fourteen or fifteen years. I'll do them if they ask, but I don't seek 'em out.

I: Most of your work for about the last fifteen years has been in Westerns. In fact, you've been president of WWA on two separate occasions. Was the market just better for Westerns?

C: Yeah, I never had a Western rejected. It was the strangest thing in the world, the first one for pulp. I just took a crime story and changed it into a Western. A guy owned the newspaper, he became the big rancher. His weak brother became the foreman, and so on. The private eye became the marshal. And I sold the same story I'd sold before. Funny thing, I sold it the Street and Smith, instead of Popular. About 12,000 words at 1½¢ a word.

I: Let's talk some more about your crime stories. How do you distinguish crime from mystery?

C: I was not a *Black Mask* author. In fact, I am not a "mystery writer." The hundreds of pulps and books I wrote were what Rogers Terrill called "crime-adventure." Neither Hammett nor Chandler were great plot men, you know. They dealt with characters, people.

I begin with the laundry, the people—and a theme. Joseph Hergesheimer said, "I invent characters. If they do not work for me, I slay them." I believe all writers are necessarily readers. Catholic readers who will tackle anything from the comics to Shakespeare. I believe we develop our style by devouring those who write according to our taste. Raymond Chandler once wrote that fine professional William Campbell Gault, saying that he was flattered that Gault *derived* from him. He added that he detested those who copied him. There were many.

Someone said Hammett took crime from the drawing room and put it into the gutter where it belonged, but wrote it well. Daly never did write well. Spillane never wrote well. They had influence but thought only in terms of violence and more violence. So did we all, there for a while, but many of us learned our lesson as we went along.

Someone also said the only crime worth writing about is murder. Even a good caper needs the threat if not the deed. In the pulps, believe me, it *had* to be a killing. Two things we knew in the pulp days. If you had a good short story, add some characters and incidents and make it a novelette. Produce more words for which you would be paid; second, get as many series going as possible—they gestated. I once had more than a dozen running at the same time.

I: We haven't talked much about the hard-boiled detective. Such a character type seems very close to the protagonists of your crime stories.

C: The late Tod Ballard's Bill Lennox character was a forerunner of the private eye genre, and a fine one, too. Tod was a fine man, a dear friend and a helluva writer until his death in December of 1980. He was a pro, covering all fields, as most of us must to survive.

"Mystery" stories haven't changed much since Poe, have they? Crime-adventure, the detective as a bum "going down those mean streets" came before the war and continues, lo, until today. I see no great changes excepting as to sex and in the better ones to psychological implications, with exceptions to better writing. Not better than Hammett or Chandler and others you well know, but generally speaking.

I: Who influenced your writing? Do you have any idols?

C: I am a professional and proud of it. I was one since I first started on the magazine page of the Newark *Sunday Call*, under the watchful eye of my mentor, Edward Sothern Hipp, later one of the four top theatrical critics in New York. I make no claim to

auctorial talent or great wisdom. My job is to entertain as in the days of the minstrels. James Branch Cabell, Ernest Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, John O'Hara, and Stephen Crane are my idols . . . and some William Faulkner.

I: Do you have a theory of writing? Are you a teacher or an entertainer?

C: I do not believe in "writing courses." I believe a writer is born with imagination and curiosity and the egotistical ambition to be read. Not *heard*. I have no message; I just tell the story. Remember what Dr. Samuel Johnson said: Anybody who doesn't write for money is a fool. I never pretended to be an author. I'm a writer; I just tell a story.

I: Tim Farr and John Wade in *Way To Go, Doll Baby!* seem to be burdened by a sense of guilt. Is that more typical of mysteries from 1960 on? Such as the ones by Ross Macdonald?

C: Not Ross so much as John D. Ross wrote the same story over and over. The guilt came from a personal tragedy. I never was a fan of his, even in the pulps. Although he is a good writer. His stories always have a feeling of terrible guilt. Downbeat. John D. is the master.

I: You say you write to entertain people. When I read something, if I get depressed I'm not too interested in finishing it.

C: Well, take *The Elephant Man*. I looked at that and about half way through I said, why am I watching this? It's making me very unhappy. Between things like that and rape stories, honest to God, everything you turn on the TV now is a rape story. It's a new fad.

I always try to please the people. You can find stories anywhere. I don't understand writer's block. But I've slowed down now. I used to just dash it off.

I: Which contemporary mystery writer do you most admire?

C: John D. MacDonald is, of course, the greatest pro of modern days, a far better writer than most of them. And probably the most popular. Brian Garfield, who has won three Edgars, admits to being influenced by me and by the others. He also produced and wrote *Hopscotch*, a continuous chuckle.

I: Of the books you have written, which is your favorite?

C: The one they called *Hot Times* and I called "Saturday." *Comanche Moon* made a big splash with the movie sale and all, but I don't think as much of it as *Moon of Cobre*, which got runnerup for Western Novel of the Year.

I: What's in the future for Bill Cox?

C: I have just finished two crime novels. One deals with a Southern city and a family torn asunder and a lady unbalanced by unrequited love. The other, in collaboration with V. C. Russell, deals with the kid-porno racket in the San Fernando Valley. There is very little violence in either. It is merely a question of maturing. I would classify *The Tycoon and the Tigress* and *Way to Go, Doll Baby!* in the same category. *Hot Times*, a straight novel of the 1930s, also had in it touches of the crime genre. Crime is always with us.

I have in the works, now, with the Matson Agency in New York, a projected novel about the century as I've seen it. Have three hundred pages and am only up to 1920! If it sells, it will go on forever—and we ain't gonna be here forever. . . .

William R. Cox: An Appreciation

One of the problems of writing an appreciation of the murder mystery is overcoming the apathy of the non-fan for the genre. Even the acknowledged masters of the form—Hammett and Chandler, and, more recently, Ross Macdonald and John D. MacDonald—faced the problem of the identification of the detective novel as something inherently lower class. Of course, this supposition is not true, but communicating it to a reader prejudiced against the genre is quite difficult.

Part of the difficulty lies in the definition of murder mystery. For me, an enjoyable suspense novel falls into the murder mystery classification. By this, I simply mean that there is a story and a murder is committed and for a time there is a mystery to be solved. This definition covers a broad range of reader interest. Most modern novels contain violence to some degree, and a large number also contain a murder or a mysterious death. There is always an air of mystery surrounding a death under suspicious circumstances.

It may be tantamount to heresy, but mystery novels should do relatively few things. They should do them well, however. An effective mystery should have most of the following characteristics:

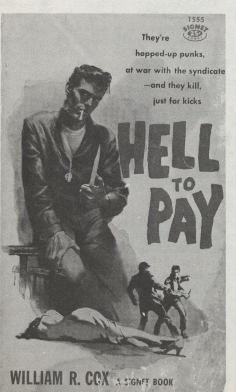
1. It should be fun to read; that is, exciting because of the action, relaxing because that action is *not* happening to the reader.
2. There should be a mystery, or puzzle, or quandry of some sort, that the reader can try to solve or just enjoy the resolution achieved by the protagonist. Not all mystery readers try to figure out whodunit or why. There is pleasure in being misdirected by the author.

3. The story should have a connection with the real world, however tangential. For this reason, the drawing room mystery of a John Dickson Carr or an Ellery Queen can fit into the same genre as well as the violent stories of a Mickey Spillane or Jim Thompson —and all variations in between.

4. A mystery may certainly have a theme; it may present a message to the reader either obliquely or directly. But it doesn't have to. Probably the most effective messages are not recognizable as didactic.

5. And finally, the hardest of all: the fictive world must be realistically presented. The stories must be well written in the sense that the reader cares what happens to the characters, whether they be scum-of-the-earth hoods or the most affected dandies of British drawing room mysteries. It is in this context that the mystery story can best be compared to a straight novel but often is not. Many times, the fictive world of the "ambitious" novel is self-conscious to the point of aridity. Such a fact is the reason many so-called classics cannot not find an audience.

A case in point are the underworld stories of Graham Greene, such as *Brighton Rock* and *The Ministry of Fear*. Greene wrote what he called two different levels of novels: the serious ones and those he designated as "entertainments." But this was merely shrewd packaging. The themes and concerns of his entertainments were exactly the same as those of the novels. The entertainments just had more action—both sensational and otherwise. It is probably no accident that the name of the movie in William R. Cox's last Tom Kincaid novel, *Death on Location*, is "Gun for Sale," the British title of the Greene novel published in America and later filmed as *This Gun for Hire*.

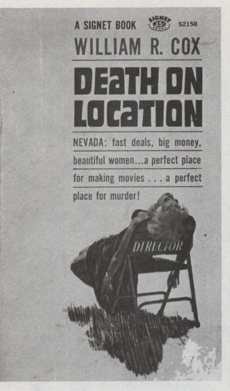


There is much that can be praised in the work of William R. Cox, but for me all the best elements for the devotee of the murder mystery can best be seen in Cox's Tom Kincaid stories. Kincaid, described as the "ex-gambler-king" in *Dime Mystery*, becomes the protagnoist of Cox's most successful series of crime novels. It is interesting to compare the pulp Kincaid of the 1940s to the more sophisticated and human character who appeared in the Signet paperback novels (1958–62).

"Red Sky in Hollywood..." is a typical Kincaid pulp exploit. In this story from *Dime Mystery*, January 1946, Kincaid has more or less abandoned the gambling world to become a Hollywood producer. He has closed his nationwide string of "square gambling houses" because of pressure from George Grey, an ex-banker and master crook. (In the pulps there were never any *minor* crooks.) Tom has vanquished Grey and now is the head of Coronet Pictures, an independent production company which he acknowledges is no threat to MGM.

There are several continuing characters in the series—the two most notable being Roxanne Queen and Matt Durkin. Roxanne (or Rox) is a thirty-year-old, blonde actress who is quite beautiful and looks about 22. Matt Durkin is Kincaid's companion of twenty years. Neither of these characters survives to the novels. Roxanne emerges in the novels as a similarly beautiful 25-year-old model-actress named Jean Harper. Roxanne is a stick character in the pulp stories and shows no movement at all; Jean is vulnerable and human. Tom loves them both; they are basically the same woman presented under different names. Matt Durkin is the sidekick comic-relief character common to pulp stories whose presence is not needed in the novels.

"Red Sky in Hollywood" is strictly a formula story, as described by Cox in the interview. Within it, however, one can see the kernel for character development. The plot is pure pulp fantasy. Maxie Keystone, the mobster financier behind Vesper Film, Inc. has the hots for Roxanne Queen. (The kernel of this infatuation survives in the Mosski–Jean Harper relationship in the novels.) He wants to ruin Kin-



caid's Coronet Pictures and force Roxanne to work for Ronald Vesper. Keystone decides his only recourse is murder.

Of course, in the pulps it *had* to be murder. In this story, almost immediately there's a gunfight resulting in the death of one of Keystone's hoods, One-Eye Morgan. He's killed even before he is introduced as a character—an obvious formula device. By the end of the story, four men are killed in two separate bomb blasts; one man is shot, stumbles, and is killed by falling on his own knife; a girl is both stabbed in the chest and has her throat slit, left sitting upright in a chair, and then her dead body is *shot* during a climactic shootout between Kincaid and Keystone. The reader knew and expected this action; Tom Kincaid promised it: "Guns would flash and Hollywood streets would run with blood before this was over."

The Kincaid novels are good, solid examples of the crime/adventure subgenre of the murder mystery. Of the three Kincaid novels, *Hell to Pay* (1958) most resembles a pulp story. It is a violent story of warring rival mobsters, the fixed-fight racket, and personal vengeance.

Cox retells the Kincaid saga in these novels and updates the character for a new generation of readers. By 1946, in the pulps, Kincaid was already an ex-gambler-producer. In *Hell to Pay*, he is still a freelance gambler caught in a gang war between the Mosski syndicate and unknown adversaries who hire a crazy named Tony Wysocki to kill Mosski. Kincaid has the misfortune to be involved in a game in which Wysocki has used crooked dice. Since Kincaid is an independent (non-mob), Mosski's men think he is in with those trying to depose Mosski.

The action in *Hell to Pay* is just as rapid as in the pulp stories. It's a transition novel, moving from the pulp style to the more sophisticated style of the crime novel. The Tom Kincaid in the novels is quite similar to the one who appears in the pulp stories. Jean Harper, his girlfriend, is a humanized version of Roxanne Queen. As opposed to the stories which stressed action, the emphasis in the novels is on character. The plot of the novel is much more involved than that of the Kincaid short stories. Normally, the plot complications are introduced by the addition of more characters.

Cox's crime stories have fast movement and human interest. A Kincaid short story can be read for the excitement of the chase and the expected quota or murder and mayhem. The novels expose the characters. Tom Kincaid is not just the ex-gambler-king who makes no errors. He becomes quite fallible and human. He loves Jean Harper but is divorced from a lush named Molly Sully—an evocative name for a sullied character—and is afraid to marry Jean. For her part, Jean similarly fears marriage. She was the victim of a mob rape at the age of eighteen, married and widowed from the mobster who raped her at nineteen, and spent some years as a hooker before living with Kincaid for the previous four years. Quite evidently, Kincaid lives on the edge of society.

Still, Kincaid is a thinker. He reasons things out. He—as many of us do—knows the correct thing to do; just as often as not he doesn't do it. Kincaid is both an active man and a thinker. In the course of the novel, he kills three hoods (all anonymous, in neo-pulp style) and has numerous physical encounters with others.

But it is not only Kincaid who lives on the edge of the abyss. His friends are threatened; the girlfriend of one of his close cohorts is raped and murdered. It is this outrage which pushes Kincaid into the role of active avenger. The novel concludes in a confrontation between the two warring factions of the mob. Kincaid and his friends are caught in the crossfire; they are even betrayed by a crooked cop. Kincaid survives, but his relationship with Jean is left open-ended. This inconclusive relationship has to continue, for it is a truism that nothing ever killed an

action series character faster than his getting married.

Kincaid returns in two additional crime novels. By the time the reader next encounters him, he is in Hollywood, bored with Jean Harper's attempt at stardom. *Murder in Vegas* (1960) is not quite as bloody as *Hell to Pay*. There are no violent gang wars in the Hollywood–Vegas scene, but there are conflicts among the gamblers and the movie set. In this story, Cox completes Kincaid's return to the role of independent movie producer which he had attained in the pulps.

At first, Kincaid and Jean are New York expatriates seeking a change from the deadly environment of gang wars and betrayal. There is only one problem. Kincaid is bored. He decides to move on to Vegas when one of the producers of Jean's movie is killed mysteriously. Jean and Tom have had another lover's spat, causing him to go off to stay at the White Elephant, a small casino owned by one of the group, Sam Andrews. He is accompanied by a randy, long-legged actress named Candy Cain who takes his mind off Jean by sleeping with him. Soon Kincaid gets the gambling bug and buys an interest in the casino. Shortly thereafer, Sam is murdered and Kincaid is left sole owner of a heavily mortgaged casino. In a tribute to Hammett, Kincaid thinks, "A man can't afford to have his partner killed and not do anything about it." But the solution to the murder must wait until the film crew comes to Vegas to finish the picture.

Quickly, Kincaid becomes involved in another two-way squeeze. Sam owed the mob money as part of the mortgage of the casino. He had also made large personal loans to some members of the movie crew, loans which he needed to call in to pay the mortgage. Kincaid is not sure that Sam's murder was really ordered by the mob, however. He suspects one of the movie crew and spends his time trying to prove this theory. Eventually he does and also decides to buy into the movie. Thus, by the end of the novel, he's a casino owner and a movie producer, more or less the same role he had in the pulps. He and Jean still are not together, but he is happier with their relationship.

The final Tom Kincaid adventure is *Death on Location* (1962). It is interesting not only for its story but also for Cox's blending of elements from the gamut of his pulp writing career into this one story. It begins with a baseball game between the employees of the White Elephant and those of the Desert Inn. Cox, of course, wrote hundreds of sports short stories for such pulps as *Sports Novels*. The final confrontation between the murderers and Kincaid takes place on a ranch sixty miles from Elko, Nevada, with Kincaid being rescued by four horsemen riding up to confront the murderers who have trapped Kincaid. Thus, in this novel, Cox has placed elements of the sports, the Western, and the detective story.

The novel is pure adventure from the opening gambit, a poorly executed casino heist performed by a bunch of heroin addicts wielding machine guns. Kincaid and a couple of his co-workers put an end to this threat with a pulp-style shootout in the parking lot. From this beginning, the action shifts to the location of Jean Harper's new film, "Gun for Sale." There someone is killing off members of the crew who know anything about the Las Vegas drug trade. In this story, Kincaid has a new plaything to occupy him while Jean is busy acting. She's Miriam Carewe—Jean's double on the set—and she becomes the unfortunate victim of a fatal stab wound in which the knife was actually propelled by a crossbow.

But as with all the Kincaid stories and novels, it is not the murders or the detection of the killer which makes for their enjoyment. Ultimately, most crime stories involve a murder. It is also true that some author's crime characters are boring. The Cox novels are realistic in such a way as to invite reader participation in the action. Cox allows the reader to know just enough of the motivation of the characters to ensure that they will be compelling to read about.

Kincaid is a successful gambler—proficient and lucky—and he has a habit of being involved in situations which are intriguing. That he is appealing to attractive women is another strong point in keeping the story moving. Kincaid thinks of himself as an ordinary guy, but naturally enough, he's not. He's an operator who gets by on stark realism; the reading audience identifies with him just enough to want to be the successful gambler and the coveted lover but who holds the line with not wanting to be the target of murder.

The appeal of the Kincaid series is that of the successful B movie. Kincaid is a character much like that of Jonathan Hart of *Hart to Hart, Richard Diamond, Private Detective*, or *Mr. Lucky*. His story would make a gutty TV series. As Cox points out in the interview, stories are everywhere, particularly stories concerning a casino owner in Las Vegas. Poor packaging probably accounts for the books not being more successful; from the covers of the novels, it is extremely difficult to tell anything about the appeal of Tom Kincaid as a character.

Cox's dictum for writing is to be entertaining, to tell the story. For readers and critics alike, if there is no story, there is no meaning. With this in mind, Cox's success as a storyteller and novelist can easily be acknowledged. Admittedly, tastes change from generation to generation—from sports to adventure to Westerns to mysteries and others. The fact that Cox wrote these types of stories successfully makes him worthy of note and, as an individual, a pleasure to read and know.

A The Tom Kincaid Novels

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B. Crime Novels

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The Tycoon and the Tigress. Gold Medal, 1958.
Death Comes Early. Dell First Edition, 1961.
Way To Go, Doll Baby! Banner, 1967.
Hot Times. Fawcett-Gold Medal, 1973.

C. Short Stories (A Selected List)

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"Murder Is My Business." *Star Detective,* February 1938.
"Mr. Murder Man." *Detective Short Stories,* February 1938.
"Mr. Detective Is Annoyed." *Captain Satan,* March 1938.
"Half a Crook." *Black Mask,* May 1938.
"Mr. Detective Goes to Jail." *Captain Satan,* July 1938.
"Crime Crest." *10 Detective Aces,* November 1938.
"Mr. Sleuth, B.A." *Secret Agent X Detective Mystery,* December 1938.
"Monopoly on Murder." *10 Story Detective,* January 1939.
"For the Love of Money." *Detective Fiction Weekly,* February 11, 1939.
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"Return Engagement with Death." *Ace G-Man Stories,* November-December 1939.
"Accounting in Blood." *Black Mask,* December 1939.
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"John Wade and the Harrgin Corpses." *Detective Tales,* September 1941.
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"The Finger of Death." *Detective Book Magazine,* Spring 1942.
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"Shame on Malachi!" *Dime Detective,* July 1945.
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"Rope Enough for Two." *Detective Tales,* August 1947.
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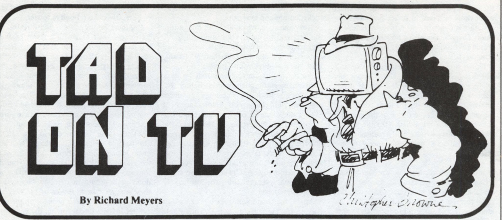


TAD ON TV

By Richard Meyers

Some reviews are hard. Like the ones I did for *Hill Street Blues.* Although the show was highly touted and reviewed, I had some reservations about it. The only problem was that, once my valid opinions were printed, somewhere between four to six months after they were written, the show had grown, changed, and mutated—as had my estimation of it.

For several issues now, I've played catch-up with the series, talking about things that happened a half-year ago. On the heel of my initial doubts came eight Emmys, quickly followed by an Edgar Award, making my preliminary opinion seem naked at best and ludicrous at worst.

Well, no more. I like the program now, but my initial reservations stand. Several of the characters are annoying (and, with thirteen leads, viewers can take their own pick), others are derivative, some plotting is heavy-handed, and some comedy is strident.

But once and for all, it proves that detective shows don't have to be ruled by the car chase and fist fight mentality of many execs who don't strive for quality because "it is impossible to work into a weekly hour format." *Hill Street Blues* shows plainly that heartfelt attempts at drama can be attempted on a series and that many times it can work beautifully.

So as Sgt. Esterhaus is apt to say—in the show's attempt to add to the ranks of such immortal lines as "Just the facts, ma'am" and "Who loves ya, baby?"—"Be careful out there." Case closed.

Some reviews are easy. Like this one for *T. J. Hooker.* It seems that producers Aaron Spelling and Douglas Cramer and creator Rick Husky ignored the lesson *Hill Street* taught to mount this pedestrian, cliché-ridden effort. "Pedestrian" is the operative word here, since the Hooker of the title is indeed a streetwalker. Only in this case, William Shatner trades in his starship captain's uniform for a policeman's outfit.

Now, Shatner is not a bad actor . . . he is an embarrassing one. No one in reality is like him as he creates an unconvincing combination of stance, gesture, delivery, and pauses. As commander of the *Enterprise* for *Star Trek,* I could forgive him. Given that the series was science fiction, it was quite possible that a futuristic captain would be as bombastic and posturing as he was. But on the earth-bound *Hooker,* his thespian talents are painfully exposed.

After one of the worst performances ever in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture,* he goes from bad to mediocre as the toughest, roughest patrolman ever to bash the California beat. As obvious as Shatner's performance is, he is aided and abetted in the package by the lowest-common-viewer attitude of the creators. Spelling, especially, is known for his by-the-numbers approach (*The Rookies, The Mod Squad, Vega$*), and his mark is evident in the simple plots through which Hooker can run, leap, slug, strut, and pontificate.

Most reviews rest somewhere between hard and easy, as most shows rest somewhere between *Hill Street Blues* and *T. J. Hooker.* Many such shows have appeared (and disappeared) on CBS in the twilight zone between the "second season" of January and the fall season start in September. But if there's one thing *Cagney and Lacey* proved, it's "You've come a long way, baby."

It used to be that female detectives were nothing more, and often less, than *Mannix* with breasts attached. Such greats as *Charlie's Angels, Get Christie Love,* and *Police Woman* came and went with hardly a believable character in the bunch. Incredibly, it seems as if TV's greatest contribution to the ranks of female heroism was Emma Peel of *The Avengers.*

Then along came the telefilm starring Loretta Swit as Chris Cagney, a single, ambitious policewoman, and Tyne Daly as wife, mother, cop (not necessarily in that order) Mary Beth Lacey. Together, they fought evil on the streets, racism at the precinct house, and discrimination on the promotion board. The movie made for television was extremely successful with both feminist writers and viewers of all denominations—inspiring CBS to give Filmways Productions the go-ahead on a series.

Add to "You've come a long way, baby" the platitude "There's many a slip 'tween cup and lip." Somewhere between the one-shot and the series, *Cagney and Lacey* lost most of the feminine talent that made the flick a hit. Daly is still there, but *M*A*S*H* had first dibs on Swit. Taking over the part was Meg Foster, a good actress with a pair of striking blue eyes that make her look vaguely alien.

Meg Foster (right) as Cagney and Tyne Daly as Lacey co-star in the television series *Cagney & Lacey*.

More importantly, the major talent behind the camera is almost exclusively male, changing the on-screen point of view. So instead of two Mannixes with bigger chests, we've got two Kojaks with hair and nice figures. Daly, especially, has that Telly Savalas approach, complete with flippant remarks and a deep, almost unbelievable New York accent.

Although the technical talent does a nice job making Los Angeles's back lots look like

the Big Apple, there's no excuse for the kinds of obvious mistakes in police procedure the program is guilty of—be it male or female at fault. There is usually one howler a show that would have a veteran mystery reader or writer cringing.

Notice how I manage to skirt the women's liberation aspect of the show which the telefilm trumpeted? In fact, I almost do as good a job as the series does. In the final analysis, it isn't the women leads, their male puppet masters, or the theme of the program that puts it low on my list. It's the glaring dichotomy between the gritty realism of the presentation and the facile fantasy of the scripts.

John Hawkesworth can now probably echo a *Cagney and Lacey* platitude, since a man of his talent probably wasn't completely responsible for the failure of *Q.E.D.* to find an audience. Hawkesworth produced and wrote *Upstairs, Downstairs* and *The Duchess of Duke Street* before creating and executive producing this: described by CBS as "a multi-faceted adventure series about an American science professor who goes to England in 1912 to pursue his scientific experiments."

Get the picture? It was sort of *Ellery Queen the Saint Meets the Wild Wild West*. That is, Quentin E. Deverill, his initials making up one meaning of the *Q.E.D.* title (another being the initials of the Latin *quod erat demonstrandum*, which press releases translate as "which is to be demonstrated"), fights evil more familiar to modern heroes—such as rocket bombs and nerve gas.

Story and style, which are both fine, aside, this series also shares a kinship with *T. J. Hooker* in that I'm convinced its basic failure rests with the stars. Actor Sam Waterson, who stars as Professor Deverill, does not strike me as, or convince me that he is, a brilliant, eccentric scientist/crimefighter. He just doesn't have the inner fire or outer ness that might sharpen his performance.

He's not alone in being unengaging. The supporting players seem picked from the American pool of "lovable sidekick" types. George Innes plays Phipps, a Cockney cab driver Deverill takes on as manservant. Bunter he's not, unfortunately. In fact, he's hardly memorable. A. C. Weary, a sad simile of a name, plays Charlie the "golly-gee" American reporter.

Again, the creators mistake innocence and naïveté for stupidity as Q.E.D.'s assistants bumble their way through, and from time to time even the Professor himself couldn't tell a clue if it hit him with a red herring. All in all, it doesn't have the charm to pull me to the set.

And speaking of charm, the three-hour CBS telefilm *A Question of Honor* had nary a whit of it. What it did have was audacious subject matter, some terrific production, a great cast, and a strong lead performance. The subject was police corruption—almost a mirror image to the Edgar-nominated *Prince of the City*. Instead of being about a cop who talked, it was about the pressure exerted on a vice detective who refused to squeal.

Producer Sonny Grosso and director Jud Taylor did their best with a script by Budd Shulberg. Actors Paul Sorvino, Danny Aiello, Tony Roberts, Anthony Zerbe, Robert Vaughn, and especially star Ben Gazzara took advantage of it, but it wasn't enough. Although it raised the same questions *Prince of the City* did, it answered none. Instead, it spent two hours and forty-five minutes painting Gazzara into a corner and five minutes blowing his brains out.

At the same time, *A Question of Honor* also painted a bleak picture that offered little or no hope for improvement no matter what the viewer did. I don't know about you, but these no-win exercises in audience frustration don't make it, no matter how "important" they are. As I said, *Prince of the City* and even *Absense of Malice* brought up the same subject better without forcing the pessimistic issue.

I still don't know about you, but I'm also getting mighty tired of "realism." Ever since *Hill Street* hit, the networks seem intent on trying to recreate its success by recreating its style. *Cagney and Lacey* is like that, but so is *Baker's Dozen*, ostensibly a comedy, and *Chicago Story*, the *Supertrain* of crime shows.

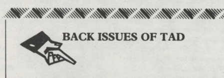
Baker's Dozen is another Sonny Grosso creation which tells of a love story between two cops on a New York City vice squad in well produced half-hour episodes. But while the production values are good, the stories are left over from *Barney Miller* by way of *I Love Lucy*. How does this grab you? Cindy Weintraub, playing Terry Munson, has to go out on decoy duty as a prostitute on the night Ron Silver as Mike Locasale plans to introduce her to his parents.

Hilarious, right? Wrong. Annoying, right? Right. One sentence could have corrected the situation, but *Baker's Dozen* milked it for ten minutes of "riotous" mistaken-identity humor. The great talents behind the camera have to realize that, without original thought behind the typewriter, style is good for nothing.

Chicago Story, on the other hand, is certainly audacious. It is as if NBC is trying to make up for *The Gangster Chronicles* with a saga series that talks from the other side of the law. Here, TV creationists descend on the Windy Second City to dole out ninety-minute episodes with a farflung cast that rivals *Hill Street Blues* in number. Their problem, however, is that rather than concentrate on one "franchise"—such as cops—they've got cops, lawyers, doctors, and many others. It's like *The Bold Ones* all jammed into the same episode.

And again, the stories are predictable exercizes in personal conflict. Will the beautiful woman doctor quit when faced with discrimination? Will the handsome public defender quit when the sleaze he got off kills a man? Will the audience quit after one or two viewings?

I'm sorry. My sarcasm muse attacked. □



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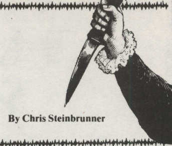
The Radio Murder Hour



By Chris Steinbrunner

"Blackstone, the Magic Detective!" the announcer thunders ominously, and the organ swells up in *Shadow* fashion—not surprisingly, as both The Shadow and Blackstone shared on radio not only the same organist but the same creator: Walter B. Gibson. For more than eighty shows in the mid-'40s, Blackstone—who was a real-life entertainer named Harry Blackstone, a well-known stage magician given to grand illusions and friend to Houdini—"starred" (or, more accurately, lent his name, since he was impersonated by radio actor Ed Jerome) in a three-times-a-week, fifteen-minute mystery program which not only dramatized a crime and its solution but carefully went through the paces of a magic trick, step by step, for listeners at home. More, Blackstone exposed the guilty party in each mystery by some legerdemain of his own. All in all, each show was a busy quarter-hour!

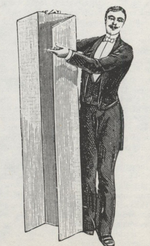
And the shows did not stint on the mystery element. In one program, the child ruler of millions of Hindus is threatened with death by a revived Kali cult, and his friend Blackstone—just happening to be visiting India—prevents an assassination. The incidents in this brief script are staggering in volume! "India is a queer place," Blackstone philosophizes to his companion/assistant Rhoda, and we spend a quick minute establishing mood—learning, too, that the young ruler's guru has gone "into a trance and been buried alive by his followers." Obviously, the fellow can't have any part in the murder plot. . . . Night falls, strange lute music is heard, deadly snakes are let loose, and we hear Rhoda scream: "It's a Thug! He's strangling the little Rajah!" Blackstone to the rescue. Then a complicated, satisfying solution, folding in such facts as why snake charmers don't work in the dark ("It's their motion, not their music, that charms snakes"). Afterwards, there is even time for the usual magic trick segment!

Another program had Blackstone visiting a circus and solving the murder of a high-diver. (Under the big tent, he ponders how many magicians have had circus origins.) In all of his cases, he uses his own trickery to goad the miscreant into confession. When, for instance, at a society wedding the guilty party has concealed a stolen gem in a hollow billiard ball in his pocket, Blackstone causes the ball to grow hot—so hot that the thief must throw it away from him to the floor. Sound a trifle contrived? Actually, the skilled magician pulls it off rather well, making the scene believable to the listener.

Actually, of course, the skills belonged to the writer, Nancy Webb, who also wrote the Chick Carter series, the latter in collaboration with her husband, mystery novelist Jean Francis Webb. Her facility with dialogue was superb: especially in the program epilogue, when Blackstone demonstrated a trick to his friends Rhoda and Allan, the ease with which the sleight-of-hand was verbalized for a radio audience was beautifully natural and effortless. All of the parlor magic used commonplace props, of course, such as a glass of water or (quite often) a dollar bill, and sometimes such archaeological artifacts of that day as a tiny red wartime ration token ("For this trick we need something smaller than a dime or a penny . . ."), but the amiable conversation made the step-by-step demonstration a clear picture for the listener at home.

Blackstone approached his on-air puzzles with much less up his sleeve than did his radio brothers Chandu and Mandrake. *They* either used occult wisdom learned in Tibetan monasteries or simply mind-fogging hypnosis (coupled with Mandrake's gesturing command, "Invovo legem magicarum!"). Blackstone could only resort to his stage-trick dexterity in besting criminals. In this he was much closer to Thurston, another real-life magician who had his own mystery radio show a decade earlier—but who was far more circumspect in revealing how his magic was actually performed. The Blackstone program made it a point of the introduction that it would "reveal the guarded secrets of the world's greatest magician"—as one might expect from the show's creator, Walter Gibson, who, as Maxwell Grant, churned out two Shadow novels a month and whose passion was magic and magicians. It was he who did the wild plotting for the shows, which Nancy Webb then translated into usable scripts. It was hard to pin Walter down, Nancy recalls; very often she would track him to magicians' gatherings—soon enough they began accepting her as a fellow enthusiast—where he would scribble show ideas for her on the backs of envelopes. Despite the restrictions of the program—one had to tell the story in fifteen minutes, and to use as few voices as possible, while demonstrating hand magic to a "blind" audience—Nancy Webb's vivid scripts were top-notch.

One could sense Blackstone's commanding presence, and muse over the exact nature of his relationship with assistant Rhoda. The *real* Blackstone had no input into the scripts whatsoever—beyond sharing Thanksgiving dinner with the Webbs one year. Nancy speculates that Gibson got him to lend his name to the series for the publicity value alone. Unlike other similar vehicles, *The Magic Detective* strove for grown-ups as well as young audiences—in the Midwest it was sponsored by a beer, and elsewhere the Blackstone Stove Company, certainly adult commodities. In one program, a gangster sneers at Blackstone's legerdemain as kid stuff, but Blackstone thunders quickly: "This is no kid magic!" Indeed so. In the few programs which still survive for the enthusiast and archivist (alas, mostly in private tape collections, though they occasionally surface in mail-order and swap arrangements), Blackstone still performs his wonders faster than the eye can follow—and indeed, this being radio, the eye could not follow at all. But this was magic and mystery for everyone. □



TAD at the MOVIES

By Thomas Godfrey

Vice Squad is a cinematic dinosaur, one of those low-budget, seamy programmers like *Tight Spot* (1955) and *New York Confidential* (1955) which studios used to grind out with great regularity in the days before television got into the movie business. The stories were gritty and gamy, the direction serviceable and succinct, and if the performances were anything special, it was because the company managed to snag a big-name actor on the way up or down.

A lot of good movies were made on low budgets: *Twelve Angry Men* (because Henry Fonda believed in it and put his money where his mouth was) and *Marty*. So were a lot of cult pictures: *Detour, Touch of Evil,* and the Universal Sherlock Holmes series. So were a lot of bad pictures. The budget didn't matter so long as the end result was entertaining.

Television swallowed up low-budget production. And when made-for-TV films came along in the late 1960s, quality B's became as scarce as milkboxes. Only sex-ploitation, kung-fu, and carve-'em-up quickies survived as pale reminders of a once-honorable cinematic form.

So, as *Vice Squad* appeared, it was written off in many quarters as just another sex-and-violence shocker. It is not. True, it does show a fascination with prostitution and urban low life, but it also tells its story from a moral point of view that brings it more properly into the time-honored tradition of the B programmer.

Naturally, the sleaze has gotten sleazier, the violence more violent, and the kinks more kinky, but basically this is the same sort of film that used to pack them into a drive-in at the bottom of a double bill in the decade following the war.

Season Hubley plays Princess, an experienced Hollywood hooker who comes to the aid of LAPD officer Tom Walsh (Gary Swanson) when he tries to trap a vicious, sadistic pimp named Ramrod (played with chilling conviction by an actor named Wings Hauser).

The police get their man, after he has killed one of his girls, only to have him break free from the arresting officers and go out after the unsuspecting Princess who set him up.

The quest for stalker and victim climaxes in a gut-wrenching conclusion that nonetheless stays within the bounds of story and setting. No chic straight-razors or shiny stilettos, just ordinary old guns and fists.

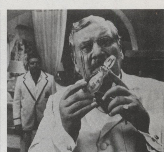
The milieu of Hollywood Boulevard and the surrounding urban sewage is accurately caught. It will be strong swill to those stomachs accustomed to tea in quiet English settings, or even the Diet Pepsi of TV's sanitized detectives, but so would a solo stroll down one of Hollywood's side streets after dark.

I don't really think producer Sandy Howard and director Gary Sherman have overplayed their material. The sex shops, the wierdos, and the frightened down-and-outers are as familiar a part of the contemporary Hollywood scene as the Chinese Theatre. But there are some touches that do not work. Princess's daughter seems an obvious device to grab sympathy for the character right away. The rookie cop reciting the underworld dictionary makes clumsy education for the masses. The ancient Chinese gentleman who lays out two LAPD officers with his geriatric martial arts expertise seems to have wandered in from another picture. And that jokey sequence involving a wierdo with a wedding fetish disrupts the final momentum of the picture. Yet they seem to be honest mistakes by filmmakers still getting familiar with their craft.

For all its shock potential, *Vice Squad* actually minimizes some of its material. I suspect the filmmakers were keeping an eye on that R rating throughout. In sum, not a great picture but certainly commendable of its type. The story of the shady lady helping the lawman down to his last witness is certainly nothing new. Edward G. Robinson and Ginger Rogers gave it to us in *Hot Spot*. That was the basic idea in *Marked Lady* (1937) with Bette Davis and Humphrey Bogart. It still makes a good little story, updated for the strong of nerve and digestive system. And that is just what you get here.

By contrast (and what a contrast), we have **Evil Under the Sun**, the latest Hercule Poirot pastry to reach the screen. Nothing indecent here, just Peter Ustinov back as the famous Belgian sleuth and happily more "on" and expansively "in character" than he was in *Death on the Nile*. Only the scrawny moustaches now lack the requisite grandeur of *le vrai Hercule*.

This time, Poirot is vacationing on a Mediterranean resort island when a nasty



Peter Ustinov as Poirot and Denis Quilley as Kenneth Marshall in *Evil Under the Sun*

Broadway star is found murdered in a secluded cove. Expectedly, everyone there has a solid alibi, as well as a good reason for wanting the viperish woman dead. In true Christie-ian style, Poirot penetrates the bogus alibi and unmasks the villainy to a roomful of apprehensive suspects.

The true devotee of Mrs. Christie's plotting will have it all figured out before long, yet this should not detract from the enjoyment of Anthony Shafer's screenplay, which is a model of adaptation. Not that Shafer isn't above one or two little "Improvements" of his own. Certainly, "cherchez la fruit" is not a line I recall from the Christie canon, but somehow these aberrations do not jar in this smoothly delivered Inter-War context.

Contributing much to the success of this film is a superb cast: Diana Rigg as the bitchy, insensitive victim; Maggie Smith as the overly-helpful hoteliere and former thesbic rival; James Mason as a thwarted New York stage producer; Sylvia Miles as his gauche, raucous wife (her costumes have a life all their own); Jane Birkin as a mousy, cast-aside wife; Nicholas Clay as her foolish, indiscreet husband; Roddy McDowall as a flamboyant writer and the aforementioned fruit; Dennis Quilley as Rigg's cuckolded husband; and Emily Hone as her much-abused stepdaughter. There. Have I forgotten anybody? Oh, yes—Colin Blakely as a Colonel Blimpish shipping magnate

William Powell in *The Thin Man Goes Home*

whose pinched bauble gets Poirot into the case in the first place. All in all, a shameless display of great acting talent, well accompanied by John Lanchbery's arrangements of Cole Porter tunes and Anthony Powell's eye-catching period costumes.

All of which add up to superior summer entertainment for the mystery movie-goer. Even the faithful Christie reader with little enthusiasm for the cinema will find this one well worth a visit to the local theatre.

In hindsight:

★★★ **The Thin Man Goes Home** (1944) William Powell, Myrna Loy, Gloria DeHaven (D: Richard Thorpe)

Of all the mystery-suspense series Hollywood produced, the Thin Man series from MGM maintained the highest standards throughout. Although Irene Dunne was announced for the Nora Charles role as of this entry, Loy was persuaded to re-sign and finish out the series with Powell one picture later in 1947 (she had reportedly been unhappy that her part was becoming secondary to Powell's).

With the death of director W. S. Van Dyke and the departure of writers Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, the series came gradually to reflect the changes in comedy style that were taking place throughout the industry during the war. The brittle, highly-charged wit had softened, and, in its place, broader, more right-minded humor was taking its place. That the style of the series maintained its consistency owes much to the playing of its two leading actors.

This is not to say the script by Robert Riskin and Dwight Taylor is necessarily inferior. The mystery story itself is good and the dialogue solid if without the high-voltage, knock-about repartee that characterized the first two films.

In this one, Nick and Nora go back to Ohio to visit Mom and Dad Charles, played faultlessly by Lucille Watson and Harry Davenport. While back in the bucolic Midwest, the Charleses predictably encounter murder among the dear-hearts-and-gentle-people set, to wit, a murder on Dr. Charles's front step. The investigation soon centers on a painting by a local artist that Nora has unwittingly bought Nick as a gift.

Though Loy's part may well have been built up, the film still belongs to Powell, who delivers in style. Aiding and abetting the foolishness are Ed Brophy as a Runyonesque friend of Nick's who just happens to be passing through town, Donald McBride (he of the slow burn) as yet another dumb flatfoot, and Anne Revere as the town looney who holds the key to the mystery.

Thorpe's direction is slower and more methodical than his predecessor's, which suits the rural setting of the story.

My favorite scene: Loy trailing Brophy into the men's room of the local pool hall.

★★½ **Impact** (1949) Brian Donlevy, Ella Raines, Charles Coburn (D: Arthur Lubin)

A maddening movie. For every line that rings clear, there is one that rings not at all. Example: Detective Charles Coburn asks Philip Ahn, "Do you speakee English?" To which Ahn replies without trace of an accent, "Yes, also French, Italian, Spanish, and Hebrew." But in the next scene, Ahn turns around and carries on a conversation with Anna May Wong in the most ludicrous No-Tickee-No-Shirtee tradition. It's as if the scenes were written by two different writers working independently of one another.

This original story of a hard-driving executive who inadvertantly escapes his scheming wife's attempts to do him in has its fascinations. Particularly, as he falls into an idyllic existence as a mechanic in small-town Idaho, the story has a charm which easily transcends its time. Donlevy, often cast as a supporting heavy, gives a perfect performance as the middle-aged over-achiever discovering life all over again. When he dominates the screen, the film is four-star material. Likewise, Helen Walker is also good as his two-timing wife, the typical *film noir* femme fatale.

In spite of a good Irish brogue, Charles Coburn is Charles Coburn as Quincy, the cop who smells the rat but can't prove it. But Ella Raines, as the small-town girl who renews Donlevy's interest in life, is perfectly awful—embarrassingly wooden and amateurish. She

Mickey Spillane as Mike Hammer in *The Girl Hunters*

sabotages almost every scene in which she appears.

Yet the essence of a good mystery-suspense story does survive her non-performance (and some horrible howlers from the screenwriters) to make it worth a look.

Why doesn't somebody remake a film like this, rather than messing around with *The Big Sleep* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice,* which were done well enough the first time?

★½ **The Girl Hunters** (1963) Mickey Spillane, Shirley Eaton, Lloyd Nolan (D: Roy Rowland)

Anybody who has ever come under the spell of Mickey Spillane will be curious to see how the author interprets his creation Mike Hammer on the screen. Well, he's not bad—actually riveting at a few moments, with that tired-Harold Russell voice and his big lummox frame encased in a crumpled trenchcoat. He's often more restrained than I might have expected, and certainly fearless, never flinching at any of the more ludicrous lines in the script, of which there are quite a few.

Spillane also collaborated on the screenplay, which involves a dying hood, a missing secretary, a murdered senator, and some "Commie" thugs. That the story of these people was almost impossible to follow was not helped by the print I saw, which reduced everything said in a low voice to an inaudible rumble. Consequently, every plot development came as a surprise. Since I was not sure where the story had been, I could not really guess where it was going.

The signs all said New York, but the locales all suggested the London of a lot of B's of this period. And where, in fact, this film was shot.

Aside from Spillane warming up for those Lite Beer commercials, we get Shirley Eaton, who spends much of her screen time lounging around in a collection of bikinis. No wonder she ended up in *Goldfinger* the next year. And there is a New York *Herald-Tribune* columnist Hy Gardner playing himself and taking the dramatic challenge a good deal more seriously than I suspect anyone wanted him to. Also an odd assortment of forgotten character actors offering performances that range from mediocre to awful.

It is left to Lloyd Nolan, as an FBI man in a pair of glasses that look as if they should have a hearing aid attached to them, to register the one voice of sanity to be heard in this film. Trouble is, he keeps looking like an owl at a convention of starlings.

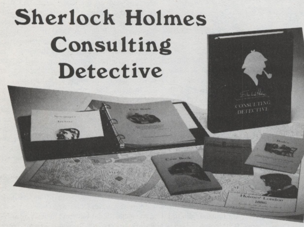
Honestly, I have nothing against Mickey Spillane, but this film can only be recommended to die-hard fans and post-graduate researchers at the Beer Drinkers' Hall of Fame.

★★ **Phobia** (1980) Paul Michael Glaser, John Collicos, Susan Hogan (D: John Huston)

In this seldom-seen Canadian production, famed Hollywood director Huston ventured into Hitchcock territory with disappointing results. The story, about a dynamic young psychiatric researcher whose patients begin turning up dead, is too pat and predictable for contemporary audiences. The twists are awkward and creaky; the identity of the murderer becomes evident much too soon.

In his early days, ex-screenwriter Huston insisted on collaborating with all his writers, even those of the caliber of W. R. Burnett and Ray Bradbury. Here he takes no screen credit when a greater interest in the writing would undoubtedly have paid off. Huston had been seriously ill about the time this picture was made, and perhaps it is for this reason that he too often seems to be going through the motions. The audacity and nerve that characterized such earlier successes as *The Treasure of the Sierre Madre, The African Queen, Freud, The Maltese Falcon,* and *The Asphalt Jungle* are sadly missing here.

Paul Michael Glaser, late of TV's *Starsky and Hutch,* gives him a first-class performance as the motivated young doctor, but Huston is unable to coax the kind of performances from his supporting cast that might have camouflaged the weak script. By all accounts, he worked just such a miracle on weak source material in *Key Largo* (1947). Sadly, nothing like that happens here. *Phobia* comes across as a feeble echo of ideas better served in *Spellbound, Psycho,* and *Cobweb.* In short, a great director having an off day. ☐



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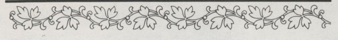

DOROTHY SAYERS Newsletter

The New Year Quiz

John Morris was first in with his solution, received 5 February, and he tied for the highest score (23) with Marian Gower (UK) and Helen Ketcham (USA). All three failed with the first question, and we award the accolade to Helen Ketcham because at least she noted that the Eroica was *not* scheduled, although she chose the Moonlight instead of the Pastoral. Other troublesome questions generally were:

(f) It was fatal to mention *Documents,* which is not a Wimsey novel.

(w) Kensington and Battersea are both *in* London.

The runner-up was Geoffrey Lee with 21 points, closely followed by Thelma Platt and Susan Diamond (20), Margaret Naismith (NZ) and Lorraine Summers (19), Deidre Kieckhefer (18), and Mary-Frances Stanley (17). Many thanks to the other competitors too who tackled this difficult quiz. Philip Scowcroft has promised to torment us again next year.

The complete sets of answers are as follows:

(a) The Pastoral (b) Compline; Perkins (c) Northallerton, then York (d) 14 not out; 83 not out (e) *Have His Carcase; A Shot at Goal* (f) *Gaudy Night* (g) Sir James Lubbock (h) Member of the Alpine Club (i) Bibliography, cricket, music, criminology (j) The Buffs (E Kent R) (k) Queens, Christ Church, New, Magdalen, Somerville, Balliol (l) *Murder Must Advertise, Busman's Honeymoon* (m) Grant (n) *Whose Body* and *The Unpleasantness* (o) Staple Inn (p) *Shropshire Lad* (A. E. Housman) (q) *Death in the Pot, Murder by Degrees, The Fountain Pen Mystery, The Sands of Crime, Death Twixt Wind and Water* (r) Assistant camel hand at the London Zoo (s) Graham and Strachan (Ferguson was not a Red Herring) (t) Ahasuerus (u) Rugby, Harrow (v) St. George's, Hanover Square (w) Epping Forest, Manaton, and The Minnoch (x) Sargent (y) *Elephant's Child* and *Polly* (z) History, English with language special, history.

Why did Edward Thorpe (The Nine Tailors) *not succeed to the title on the death of his elder brother?* (Set by Dr. John Morris)

The British have an advantage in a problem of this nature, and Marian Gower has provided the best answer, which we summarize below:

The Thorpes were baronets, not knights, so the title descended from father to eldest son or to the heir of the senior direct line. It could not descend, like a few Scottish baronetcies, by the female line. It could not, like a peerage, be disclaimed. Sir Charles Thorpe (died 1914, aged over 70) was the son of an unnamed baronet who lost, perhaps by gambling, a lot of money in London. His sons were Sir Henry (1884–1930) and Edward (born 1886). For Edward *not* to succeed to the title, there must have been another brother born a little after Henry, perhaps a twin, who is never mentioned. He may have been abroad, but that would not have been sufficient to make Hilary state conclusively, "Uncle Edward will have to look after me now." He might have been a black sheep, as there was a profligate streak in the family, and Mrs. Wilbraham left her estate to Sir Henry because "He is the only honest man I know." But if so, his name would surely have been considered in connection with the missing emeralds, an inside job. Insanity can arise in remote communities from in-breeding, and the featuring of Potty Peake hints at this solution. Sir Henry's heir and twin brother was a family secret like the monster of Glamis, never referred to but tenderly cared for. He would not be publicly certified and placed in an asylum in any such way as might bar his succession to the title. For the sake of the family, he would live in a private nursing home, but everybody knew that he could take no part as executor, trustee, or guardian for Hilary. Mrs. Venables knew: "Such a lot of trouble as the Thorpes have had too, one way and another..." Here was yet another drain on the family resources. Perhaps Edward did not have to wait too long for his title.

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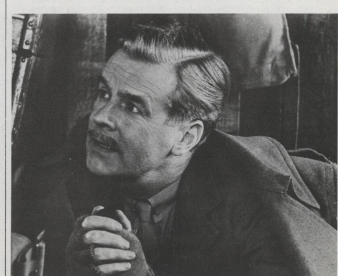


Ian Carmichael starred as Lord Peter Wimsey in the *Masterpiece Theatre* presentation of "The Nine Tailors"

CRIME HUNT

By T. M. McDade

THE HISS CASE

On August 3, 1948, at a public House Un-American Activities Committee meeting—an event followed by the press with suspicion and doubt—a *Time* magazine editor named Whittaker Chambers testified that Alger Hiss was an undercover Soviet agent. Though that name was but one of a dozen persons so identified, it was the first public accusation of Hiss, who had held several prestigious posts in the Federal government, including being a member of the United States delegation at the Yalta Conference and presiding at the organizational meeting of the United Nations in San Francisco, and who was now president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. When Hiss denied even knowing who Chambers was, the stage was set for a conflict which, through the press and the law courts, left the American public divided on the question of Hiss's guilt or innocence.

As Francis Russell wrote in his exposition of the Sacco–Vanzetti case in his book *Tragedy at Dedham:* "Opinions on the case are apt to divide along political or civil libertarian lines rather than on the evidence. Query: are not most of our opinions and judgments made intuitively or emotionally rather than intellectually? For myself I am apt to give more credence to a judgment held after changing one's mind than before."

In no case that I can recall has the resolution of the question at issue rested so completely on the two antagonists themselves—and two such different personalities. Chambers had been a restless, talented youth, a promising writer, but intense, unstable, and self-destructive. His writings caused his early departure from Columbia University, and he drifted into Socialism and Communism. He had both male and female sexual partners, and his lifestyle was casual and uncertain. His writings for Communist papers attracted attention, and eventually he was drafted into the red underground, spending six years as an important link with the Soviet apparatus.

Hiss, on the other hand, had a sheltered and happy childhood in Baltimore. He was a great success at Johns Hopkins, and his career flourished at Harvard Law School under his mentor Felix Frankfurter, serving on the law review, and on graduating he became the law clerk to Oliver Wendell Holmes. With Frankfurter's endorsement, it was only a matter of time before he was involved in the struggles of the New Deal administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Initially, it seemed incredible that Chambers's charges could be true. The consensus heavily favored Hiss. Turncoat Communists and informers were suspect, the credibility of the H.U.A.C. was very low, and the image of Hiss as the all-American boy ill-fitted the role of subversive or spy. In the early days of the inquiry, it seemed more likely that Chambers would be the one to be indicted than Hiss. Then, almost imperceptibly, the tide turned as the inquirers dug into the allegations of each man.

When Hiss claimed that his accuser Chambers was completely unknown to him, the committee suspected Chambers of lying. But, when the latter was challenged, he gave detail after detail about Hiss, his habits, his family, and his home, and, as these all proved to be correct, the committee looked at Hiss with a new eye. Finally, in a face-to-face confrontation (surely one of the most dramatic incidents in a great case) between the antagonists in a New York City hotel room, Hiss's behavior in his reluctant admission to knowing his accuser as a George Crossley convinced the committee that it was Chambers who was telling the truth and Hiss who was lying.

Still, the case might have died aborning if Hiss, stung by Chambers's accusations, had not challenged him to make them in a public forum where Chambers would not enjoy the immunity of the Congressional hearing. Accepting the challenge, Chambers repeated on radio his charge that Hiss had been a Communist, whereupon Hiss brought suit for defamation of character. Some years after the case, speaking with Thomas J. Murphy, the Assistant District Attorney who had tried it, I asked if he had any special view or thought about it. To my surprise, he likened it to the case of Oscar Wilde, and, when I asked in what way, he said: "In each case a man brought suit for libel and, failing to sustain it, was himself convicted."

It was Hiss's suit which made Chambers produce the documents without which no conviction of Hiss could have been obtained—the famous pumpkin papers, so-called because Chambers had briefly concealed them in a pumpkin on his farm in Maryland. As these documents are fundamental to the case against Hiss, a close look at them is desirable. Most of the documents were typed copies of cables to the Secretary of State from American embassies and legations around the world. Some sixty-five in number, they were typed copies of originals processed through the office of the Assistant Secretary of State, Francis B. Sayre, who was Hiss's boss. According to Chambers, Hiss had given him all of these copies in the early part of 1938. The cables reported troop movements, aircraft purchases, naval construction, economic information, and the like. Aside from the obvious conclusion that these were to be used to convey the information in them, their very existence exposed the security of the American codes in which the originals were transmitted.

In addition to the typed material, there were four brief notes in Hiss's handwriting relating to documents which had not been copied by typing. That the writing was his was never seriously contested by Hiss, and his explanation that these papers were intended for Sayre, his boss, was contested by Sayre's secretary. One of the four notes written by Hiss consisted of a copy of a cable sent to the State Department by Loy Henderson, the American chargé d'affaires in Moscow, quoting a telegram he had received from a Mary Martin:

"Tel from Mary Martin, widow of Hugh Martin formerly employed for special work at Legation Riga. Remember well Rubens while working for Hugh, be strict if needed. Write Lib. Cong. Law Div."

The incident referred to involved a man whom Chambers knew as "Ewald," a Soviet agent in the United States married to an American woman, Ruth Boergers. Using the name Adolph A. Rubens, he had returned to Russia, where he was arrested and charged with spying for the Nazis. His wife sought out American reporters in Moscow and was herself arrested, whereupon Henderson made efforts to see her to determine if she were an American citizen. The incident had been reported in American newspapers in December 1937 and January 1938. Martin had been an American agent in Latvia, and his widow was now advising the Moscow embassy that Rubens was a Soviet agent who had worked for her husband. Henderson had later reported that his interview with Mrs. Rubens in a Moscow jail had been passed back to the Soviet authorities and that the source of their information had been Washington. A year later, in Adolf Berle's notes of his interview with Chambers, there appeared this statement: "When Loy Henderson interviewed

Mrs. Rubens his report immediately got back to Moscow. Who sent it? Such came from Washington." The inference of the government in its case against Hiss was that he was the source of the information.

No report of the case would be complete without mention of the role of the Woodstock typewriter on which the documents produced by Chambers were typed. That this was the Hiss machine was early established by the FBI, which had located letters written by the Hisses and which demonstrated that the machine produced both sets of writings. Despite a broad search, the FBI could not turn up the machine, but at the trial it was produced in court by the defense. Hiss had claimed to have disposed of the machine either to a second-hand dealer or the Salvation Army. While telling this to the government, he was also telling his attorney that he thought he knew who had the typewriter. It was finally traced through the hands of the Catletts, who had worked for the Hisses, to Ira Lockey, a moving man. Both of the experts hired by the defense concluded that the papers produced by Chambers had been typed on that Woodstock. Thus there was only left to the defense an effort to try to show access to the machine by Chambers at some time after it had passed from Hiss's hands. Failing this, they directed their efforts to trying to prove that other people had access to the original State Department documents.

Though the attorneys for the defense never challenged the validity of the identification of the documents with the machine, when Alger Hiss was convicted at his second trial, in the few remarks he made to the court when he was sentenced, he said that he was confident that in the future the full facts of how Whittaker Chambers was able to carry out forgery by typewriter would be disclosed. It was a remark which surprised his counsel, and one to which they never gave support.

That Chambers was a successful Soviet spy was amply demonstrated by the evidence. The mass of documents which he processed alone testified to the worth of his efforts. Those presented at the trial were, according to Chambers, all obtained from Hiss. Chambers also claimed that Julian Wadleigh, Harold Ware, and Harry Dexter White were three other suppliers of information which, on being copied, were passed on to Colonel Bykov, a major Soviet agent in America.

In 1945, Igor Gouzenko, a code clerk in the Soviet Embassy in Canada, defected, taking with him thousands of documents. In interviews with Canadian and FBI agents, Gouzenko said he had been told by a Soviet military attaché that an assistant to the Secretary of State, E. R. Stettinius, was a Soviet agent. Checking this with an earlier statement made by Chambers to Adolf Berle, the FBI concluded that this could only refer to Hiss. As a result, the Attorney General approved a close surveillance of Hiss, including wiretaps and actual tailing of Hiss which continued through the last year of his service in the State Department. Thus, three years before Chambers made his charges before the H.U.A.C., Hiss was under investigation while he remained in government service.

When Chambers made his revelations and supplied the evidence to support his charges against Hiss, the Statute of Limitations had already barred any criminal action against Hiss for any crimes he might have committed with Chambers. In the ensuing investigations, however, he waived his right to remain silent and testified before the Grand Jury in New York, denying all of Chambers's allegations. He therefore exposed himself to the charge that he had perjured himself when he denied under oath that he had received the documents from Chambers. After Hiss had been convicted on this charge, some of his supporters had tried to mitigate his offense by stating that he had not been convicted of spying but only of perjury. While technically this was true, the conviction established his receipt of the documents, which, but for the lapse of time, would have been espionage.

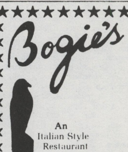
That Hiss the all-American boy could be a Communist spy seemed inconceivable in 1948. Today, with the revelations of the activities of the British old-boy network of Donald Maclean, Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, and Anthony Blunt fresh in our minds, we are more inclined to accept that some of our native sons could be coaxed away from our national allegiance to serve foreign masters.

Time has a way with great cases, which over the years lose much of the fire of the controversy which first lit them. While the partisan loyalties fade, the very conditions from which the case was made no longer attract men's loyalties. And by merely surviving, a party acquires a new status which casts his role in a new light. Today, Hiss nearly eighty, still battles for vindication—for reversing the judgment which condemned him thirty years ago. His task is incredibly difficult, for how do you prove something was not so? Lawyers know that proving a negative is almost impossible without the recanting of the original witnesses. With Chambers in his grave, that is no longer possible.

* * * * *

Writings about the case:

Though outdated by more recent research, Alistair Cooke's *A Generation on Trial* gives the flavor of the period and a sense of the immediacy of the trial. Allan Weinstein's *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case* benefits from the passage of time, in which more evidence has come to light, chief among that being the vast amount of data culled from the files of the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act. Weinstein's book is a staggering assemblage and integration of hundreds of bits and pieces into a mosaic which depicts the roles of dozens of actors. These two volumes are the best of a now substantial literature on the case. In his own book, *In the Court of Public Opinion,* Hiss reiterates the arguments of the court briefs on appeal. Chambers's book *Witness* is more revealing of the man and his trials in life. □



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A CATALOGUE OF CRIME

By Jacques Barzun
and Wendell Hertig Taylor

S167 Burke, J. F.
Location Shots
Harp 1974

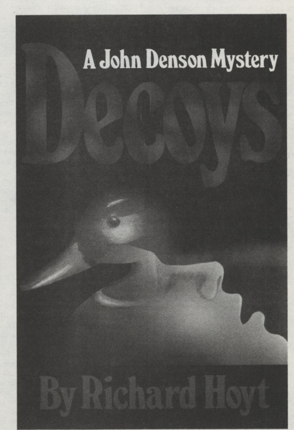
This fairly low-key venture is about a house detective, one Sam Kelly, who is attached to a seedy old hotel on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, as well as to an attractive "madam" who lives across Broadway from the hotel and with whom he shacks up. When one of the girls formerly of his mistress's stable is found dead in Sam's hotel, he does a fair job of finding the killer, assisted by the fact that the locale is being covered by a team taking TV shots. The writing is straightforward and loses nothing in effectiveness by not being peppered with the customary obscenities.

S168 Carkeet, David
Double Negative
Dial 1980; Penguin 1982

The scene of this prize-winning work is a research center in Indiana, where linguists study the ways babies develop speech. It is a baby's private word-coinage that clinches the identity of the person who has killed a colleague and a reporter who might know too much. The work of detection is divided between Lieutenant Leaf, a fat local of standard specifications, and the best-looking of linguists, improbably diffident and inept, as well as an unlikely suspect. One question left unanswered is why the book won a prize. The narrative swings from rather slovenly prose to pretentious twaddle; the characterization apes modernity by mechanically mixing incompatible traits; and most of the events are as implausible as the principal names: Arthur Stiph (the corpse), Adam Aaskhugh, Emory Milke, Ed Woeps, Bud Bumbman, and Paula Nouvelles (the newly-hired assistant who has good looks). Such onomastics make one wonder whether the author's name is not also a home-made product. We should add that the binding of these new Penguin paperbacks is splendid.

S169 Hoyt, Richard
Decoys
M. Evans & Co. (N.Y.) 1980

Mr. Hoyt is a teacher in Portland, Oregon, who has worked as a newspaper reporter and intelligence agent. Feeling, as he says, "part of a tradition of romantic, free-lance wise guys," he now contributes to it. But his hero John Denson is atypical. He is inherently "soft-boiled" and doesn't carry a gun. His weakness for screw-top wine is balanced by a passion for art, exemplified by his possession of a genuine Thomas Eakins. Confronted in his San Francisco office by the equally atypical female detective, Pamela Yew, one of whose clients is "Coyote," a prostitutes' union, Denson finds himself hired to help Pamela track down a pimp suspected of killing one of her clients. It would be difficult if not impossible to summarize what emerges as the author's too-complex plot unwinds, but he must be given his due for staying on the near side of credibility. The writing is clean-cut, and the ending affords some exciting action aboard a ferry boat, coupled with a legitimate surprise.



In a second tale, *30 for a Harry* (Evans, 1981), the author uses his newspaper experience to produce a well-knit tale of publishing in Seattle, much freer of excrescences than his first.

S170 Ross, Jonathan
A Rattling of Old Bones
Scribner, 1982 (orig. 1979)

The retired English policeman who also writes under the name of John Rossiter and has by now a fairly large body of excellent procedurals deserves a greater reputation than his professional readers have granted him: he is in that respect a counterpart to our own Hillary Waugh—both in the front rank as inventors and craftsmen and both undervalued, probably because they do not season their works with fashionable pseudo-intellectual talk—always so plausible when the dramtis personae are most small-town, middle-class folk.

In this latest "Ross" story, our familiar

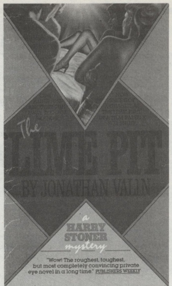
friend Supt. George Rogers faces, in a closet, the shriveled corpse of a woman who disappeared five years earlier. The technical difficulties are obvious, though the local pathologist Dr. Bridget Hunter, who is the Inspector's unofficial lover, does her best as usual and adds the fact that the woman was three months pregnant. The rest is "historical" research into the lives of those who consorted with the woman, including her husband, still alive and no easy character. It is in detail and discovery that the author's imagination comes in brilliantly, and it leads to a powerful and legitimate surprise ending. The spare writing is a pleasure after the recent return of our genre to the overwritten and the garrulous.

S171 Marshall Jevons (pseud.)
Murder at the Margin
Thomas Horton and Daughters
(Sun Lakes, Ariz.) 1980

This modest work has an attractive setting: St. John, in the Virgin Islands. There, an American bigwig meets his quietus, and it is with the aid of a recently landed vacationer, Henry Spearman (accompanied by his wife), that the crime is solved. The distinctive feature of the tale is that the hero, a middle-aged professor of economics at Harvard, uses economic theory to reach is intermediate and final conclusions. The title of the book and the author's adopted name tell us as much: Marshall and Jevons were the English economists who respectively paved the way for, and established, the marginal theory, which says that the price of any commodity is set by the amount someone is willing to pay for the last wanted portion of the goods desired. In the story, the application of this principle is more verbal than functional, since detection from its beginnings has been an exercise in guessing what people would do under necessity. But the author carries off his innovation regardless. What is missing, alas—submarginal—is characterization. Nobody has a spark of life, which is a pity. Let us hope for a second try with the benefits of practice; the demand is there: supply it!

S172 Shaw, Howard
Killing No Murder
Scrib 1981 (orig. R. Hale 1972)

The author teaches at Harrow, and it is not surprising that he should give us this good English preparatory school tale. Characterization is more than satisfactory, and the detection by Chief Inspector D. I. Barnaby and Sgt. Graham is competent. A disliked headmaster has been stabbed and then pushed into a swimming pool. Before Barnaby is able to put together the facts relevant to the case, of an interrupted BBC broadcast of Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2 (caused by the fainting of the young lady soloist at the end of the third movement), there is another murder. A second master, more musical than Barnaby, has caught on to an essential part of the murderer's plan and is shot. So Barnaby slogs along, eventually doing a fruitful reconstruction during a Wagnerian thunderstorm. The reader may well tumble to the solution before the detective, but the whole thing is most enjoyable.



S173 Valin, Jonathan
The Lime Pit
DM 1980

The author has produced a bit of variety in the currently overworked hardboiled private-eye scene by avoiding New York and "L.A." and setting his story in and around Cincinnati. Besides, his hero-detective Harry Stoner is less trigger-happy than most, and the obligatory sex stuff has been rendered "innovative" by a well-turned example of child prostitution. The two wretches, Laurie and Lance, who have the frail Cindy Ann in their power, are not overdone, and Stoner's willingness to help the elderly protector from whom Cindy Ann has been snatched is made credible. Stoner emerges as a believable human being, and his track is well done too.

S174 Wilcox, Colin
Stalking Horse
RH 1982

More than a decade ago, Mr. Wilcox gave us, in *Dead Aim* (1971), what must stand as the best performance of Lt. Frank Hastings of the San Francisco Police Department. Six or seven books later, all competent rather than memorable "procedurals," Hastings is found teamed with the F.B.I. in a big case. His job is to see that nothing prevents the influential but ailing Senator Ryan from attending the dedication of a federal office complex named in his honor. A series of anonymous threatening letters and the Senator's knowledge of certain facts combine with his ill health to make him an easy prey. Hastings works with the excellently characterized bodyguard and a very confidential secretary to avert disaster until near the end. It is good to be able to report that Hastings's own private difficulties, formerly rather annoying, have now been laid to rest. □

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LETTERS

From David Beams:

Some corrections and additions on A. W. Stewart (J. J. Connington) were too late for the draft of my article printed in TAD 15:1. Of special interest, Professor Barzun has recently said the Connington's *The Sweepstake Murders* probably merits "51st place" among the "Fifty Classics of Crime Fiction, 1900–1950," which he edited with Taylor, despite Connington's "deliberate, laboratory manner of exposition" which today's reader must find "excessively tame." It is also Barzun and Taylor who point out the probable influence of Connington's *Tragedy at Ravensthorpe* (1927) on the other Stewart celebrated in detective fiction, Michael Innes, when he wrote *Hamlet, Revenge!* (1937) (J. I. M. Stewart was published by Gollancz some years after A. W. Stewart, and he also taught at Queen's University, Belfast, from 1946 to 1948). And when they write of Connington as third in the line traced out by Freeman and Crofts, we may add, as they do, the spirit of Dr. Priestley.

In *Twentieth Century Crime and Mystery Writers* (1980), Melvyn Barnes closes his sketch of Connington with a curious emphasis: that, though it is otherwise "unaccountable" that Connington hasn't achieved the place in the genre's history accorded Crofts, he "just did have the benefit of Crofts' Inspector French." But it is Sir Clinton Driffield who seems the more emphatic personality, and (as quoted in the article) Arnold Bennett found the Chief Constable a character who "lives." Can this ever be said of Inspector French?

Concerning *Murder Will Speak,* I meant to cite it as an example of Connington's felicitous titles (*The Ha-Ha Case,* 1934; *Truth Comes Limping,* 1938), and, where the psychology of the poison pen is concerned, to note that Connington is sound enough along the conventional lines of, e.g., Patricia Wentworth's *Poison in the Pen* (1955) but less provocative than Carter Dickson in *Night at the Mocking Widow* (1950).

Of Stewart's textbooks, *Recent Advances in Organic Chemistry* went through seven editions to 1948. Stewart was never "Dean of Faculties" at Queen's University. Phillpotts would be another mystery writer excelling in "atmosphere of place." In the conclusion of the article, I meant to revert to the ballistics in *The Castleford Conundrum* where the murderer knows, from a book on forensic medicine, that a wound is in some circumstances smaller than the bullet which causes it, but only if the bullet strikes where there is some "give" in the skin tissues. That rules out the *head,* so the murderer has the much more difficult task of shooting Mrs. Castleford through the heart, necessitating the pinhole in the medical mannikin and close quarters in

the deed, which in turn necessitates the use of paper fireproofed with alum to shield the victim's skin from powder blackening it the shot is to simulate one fired by the rook-rifle from a distance.

The serious student of Connington should see the essays he published in *Alias J. J. Connington* (London, 1947), but it is a hard book to find.

* * * * *

From Douglas G. Greene:

Thanks for the excellent Summer 1981 TAD. It goes far to disprove Jiro Kimura's strictures in the letters column. Ever since TAD went to typesetting, various subscribers have complained about its lack of what Mr. Kimura calls "fraternal feeling," but that's more because type is less chummy in appearance than the old mimeograph. The articles remain as enthusiastic and informative as ever. A case in point is William A. S. Sarjeant's splendid survey of Edmund Crispin's Gervase Fen novels. I too mourn that Edmund Crispin will write no more. Closest to Crispin was a series of novels during the 1960s by Simon Nash, whose detective don, Adam Ludlow, is very much like Fen. William Reynolds's article does an excellent job rescuing an unjustly criticized author, Ronald Knox, though I wish that Reynolds had not revealed so many solutions to Knox's detective novels. My only objection to Knox is that he breaks up the pace of his stories by irrelevancies. His characterizations are far above the average for the 1920s and '30s, and his urbane writing style is always a pleasure. We owe much to Diana Cooper-Clark for her interviews, though I was amused that she wants to make Peter Lovesey and others say more than they wish. Ms. Cooper-Clark wants detective novels to be "meaningful"; Lovesey wants to tell a good story. Hence the questions are often longer than the answers.

More briefly on other articles in the Summer TAD: Paul Moy and Sylvia Patterson are very informative on Berkeley and Christie, and Bill DeAndrea is a lively and fresh voice. But I wouldn't find it "hard to criticize Pendleton"!

From Bob Randisi:

I see by the calendar on the wall that it is time for my annual letter to TAD. I had *better* write at least one a year, since I'm the one who has been yelling about the lack of them. (Actually, I haven't done too badly. I had a letter in each issue of 14:2 and 14:3.) Anyhow, now I'm back with another fairly long letter full of complaints, huzzahs, inanities, and all-around space fillers.

The letters page in 14:3 was a disgrace! Now for the good news. The letters page in 14:4 was a lot better, closer to the mark.

Comments on Bouchercon: It was terrific! I had a ball getting drunk, shooting off my mouth about this and that, making new friends—somebody write and tell me if I made any new enemies—and I met "The Mick"—which is a title I usually reserve for my boyhood idol, Mickey Mantle. This time, however, it refers to Mickey SPILLANE, who turned out to be a helluva guy. (Small anecdote: Coming down for breakfast the day after Mick's arrival, I found him in the coffee shop with Max Allan Collins and a couple of other people. I proceeded to join them for a cup of coffee, and when they got up and left, I moved to another table—joining Chris Steinbrunner—to finish my coffee. Upon completion of said cup of java, I asked the middle-aged waitress how much I owed her, to which she replied, "That's okay, you were with Mickey." At least I got a free cup of coffee out of it.)

Anybody whom I insulted while drunk, I apologize. Anybody I didn't insult...I'll get to you in San Francisco, next time!

Loved your letter, Jiro. Write more!

Comments on 14:2, 3 and 4: Thanks to Charles Shibuk for the review of my book in the 14:2 "Paperback Revolution." It's getting to the point where I just read the letters page, the reviews, and the regular columns, and skim the articles. That doesn't mean that the articles have been bad; it just means that they have not piqued my interest. In spite of the way it might sound, this is not a criticism, merely a statement of fact.

The Bob Fish memoriam was touching and probably could have run much longer. Had I been asked, I would have said, "Bob Fish was a nice man." (For anyone who missed it, almost the same day I heard of Fish's death, I bought Ross Spencer's *The Radish River Caper.* The dedication in this book reads: "This book is dedicated to Robert L. Fish. If I could write like Robert L. Fish I wouldn't be writing like Ross. H. Spencer.")

Read some good books recently, and among the best were *30 for a Harry* by Richard Hoyt, *Dead Letter* by Jonathan Valin, *Rubout at the Onyx* by H. Paul Jeffries and *Man of Glass* by Donald Zochert. Needless to say, they were all P.I. books.

From Arthur Cox:

I thank you for Volume 14, Number 4 of *The Armchair Detective,* with its very familiar and yet striking and dignified cover. As always, the issue is chockful of things of interest, foremost of which, this time, is John Dickson Carr's letter on *The Mystery of Edwin Drood.* I have been hearing of his mysteriously elusive solution to the mystery for quite a few years now—I believe it was more than twenty years ago that Anthony Boucher told me that it was "brilliant," but without supplying my eager and then-youthful curiosity with any details—and I was naturally interested in reading, at long last, what Carr had to say. Well... forgive me, but I laughed—and winced—when I realized what his essential idea was: that Helena Landless had disguised herself as her brother Neville and had murdered Edwin Drood! It is simply not an idea to be taken seriously, even though it comes from a respected writer of mysteries. After all, we know what Dickens thought of the notion of women disguising themselves as men—even he had his standards of plausibility. As some evidence of this: In June of 1867, he looked over *The Moonstone,* which was then in the early stages of its compositon, with an eye to its serialization in his journal *All the Year Round,* and he afterward wrote a letter about it to his subeditor, W. H. Wills. The tone of this letter has been ludicrously misread as one of lavish praise, although, actually, its tone is that of a man who has had some cause for scepticism but is generously determined to make the best of what he finds. And among the things he does find to praise in *The Moonstone* is that it has in it "nothing belonging to disguised women or the like." Other evidence could be cited, but this letter alone should be decisive in this matter, if there is no compelling evidence to the contrary... and Carr supplies nothing approaching that description.

What has put the idea of Helena disguising herself as a man into all our heads—what was *meant* to put the idea into all our heads—is the passage in chapter 7 in which Neville Landless tells Crisparkle that when he and his sister ran away as children from a brutal guardian, as they did several times, "she dressed as a boy, and showed the daring of a man." This whole paragraph reads very casually and some of the information in it seems merely thrown away—such as the information as to the ages of the young runaways. In fact, this is not only thrown away, it is thrown away in parts; but anyone piecing it together will note that the twins stopped running away when they reached the age of thirteen—the age at which puberty conventionally begins and a girl "becomes a woman." At that point, Helena's successfully passing herself off as a male would have been "out of nature," as Dickens would have said (and, as it happens, as he did say when Mrs. Gaskell had a boy successfully masquerading as a woman in *Cranford*). It is true that Mr. Crisparkle, the author's moral spokesman in the novel, praises the beautiful and sympathetic Helena—whom Carr would have us think a murderess!—for her courage, but it is for her *womanly* courage ("her womanly sense, feeling and courage," ch. 17). She has, he says, a pride that is "not haughty or aggressive," and he urges the stricken and persecuted Neville to imitate his sister "and be a truly brave man, as she is a truly brave woman." Notice: *"not haughty or aggressive."* These are not words that could be used to describe the vaunted courage of Wilkie Collins's heroines, Magdalen Vanstone in *No Name* and Miss Gwilt in *Armadale.* I argued not long ago in these pages that the *cliché* that Dickens, in writing *Edwin Drood,* "was trying to out-do Collins at his own game" is even truer than it itself knows or ever meant to be: that he was specifically countering Collins's practice and philosophy point by point... and I would add now that the womanly courage of Helena Landless (of which I suppose he was to have given us some striking or moving example in the last half of the novel) was one of those points.

Robert F. Fleissner's letter in the same issue, commenting, mostly adversely, on my essay mentioned above, fills me with despair. Most of what he says is irrelevant to the present discussion—so much so that the long paragaph in which he sets forth his objections and demurrers seems to me to only doubtfully involve anything recognizable as reasoning—rather, it looks very much as if he were simply free-associating around a set of terms. What the Christian Scientists believe about animal magnetism cannot concern us here. Adolf Hitler's "magnetism" ("the most famous example of this force in modern times") seems a grotesque interpolation. And, although "the attraction of *opposite* poles" may be one of the properties of actual magnets, it has nothing to do with animal magnetism as it was understood by Dickens. And all that matters here is what *he* believed about animal magnetism and what use, if any, he meant to put those beliefs in writing *The Mystery of Edwin Drood.* Of course, I could do no more than lightly touch upon those beliefs in my brief essay in TAD; but I did discuss them somewhat more fully in the March 1967 *Dickens Studies*... and I promise that in my forthcoming (about the turn of the century) book I shall go into this subject in absolutely merciless detail.

A confession: When I read Fleissner's statement, "I am on record"—as if he were not making a literary judgment but committing himself on a political or moral position—"for suggesting that Dickens... obtained some of his stimulus from a mystery story by Collins," a fantastic thought flitted across my mind: that he was referring to some remarks he had made in the March 1967 *Dickens Studies Newsletter,* in which he seemed (for his wording was ambiguous) to be suggesting that a character in Collins's "Mr. Policeman and the Cook" (originally, "Who Killed Zeebedee?" in the 26 January 1881 issue of *The Seaside Library*) might have contributed to Dickens's conception of Neville Landless. But that cannot be: for in a letter I wrote him in July of 1978, I pointed out, in passing and as tactfully as I could, that this story had been first published in 1881... and of course no Dickensian scholar ever forgets, even for an instant, that Dickens died in 1870. No, no: it isn't possible that he is still clinging to a notion against which an unmistakably fatal objection has been lodged. He must be referring to some other piece that has escaped my notice... and so the jury will please disregard these last remarks.

He characterizes my sentence, "Who would want to argue with Edmund Wilson?" as a "bland assertion"; but, actually, it is neither an assertion nor bland. It is a question, and it is rhetorical. After all, what am I doing in the passage from which it is quoted—what am I doing in the essay as a whole?—except arguing with Edmund Wilson? But arguing with him is not the same as lacking all respect for him or any share of that grateful affection that most of us, despite any disagreements, feel for him. Yes, it's true: Edmund Wilson was a *litterateur,* as Fleissner's teacher, Donald Davidson, would have it. But so is Robert Fleissner. And so is (or was?) Donald Davidson. We all have heard this word used so often as a sneer that we have forgotten its meaning, or have never troubled to look it up. It seems a pity that any member of the teaching profession (even if he should also be a member of the Modern Language Association, so memorably attacked by Wilson) should resort to this essentially honorable, if somewhat outmoded, word as an abusive epithet.

But, enough. I would like to take the sour taste of contentiousness out of my mouth by mentioning something with a more agreeable flavor. The next book to be published on *Drood* (or the next, as far as I know) will be by Katharine M. Longley. Miss Longley, who is associated with the Borthwick Institute for Historical Research in Yorkshire, has done a good deal of work on Dickens's relations with Ellen Ternan during the last years of his life and in the process, it seems, has uncovered some previously unknown facts about the background and sources of *Edwin Drood.* If this is so—and I have faith that it is—it should be welcome news to everyone interested in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* or in Dickens generally.

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From R. L. Wenstrup:

Readers of that eccentric but engaging little journal, *The Booklover's Answer,* back in the early '60s, will recall with pleasure the name of Tom Dunn. Tom was a frequent and constructive contributor (similar to Frank D. McSherry, Jr. in TAD).

Among Tom's enthusiasms is pipe smoking, resulting in his publishing *The Pipe Smoker's Ephemeris* the past fifteen years (recently collected and bound, with index, $40.00; 541 pp.; limited edition of 300). The current 48-page issue (Summer 1981/Spring 1982) features "Sherlockiana." Tom doesn't charge for these individual issues, but a small contribution would be in order (and well worth it). *The Pipe Smoker's Ephemeris,* 20-37 120th Street, College Point, N.Y. 11356.

From John L. Apostolou:

I had hoped to get this letter to you sooner, but perhaps you can still use it.

Although I feel William DeAndrea's praise for the work of C. W. Grafton (TAD 14:4) is somewhat excessive, I have uncovered some facts on the life of Grafton that may be of interest to TAD readers.

Cornelius Warren Grafton was born in Hsuchoufu, Kiangsu Province, China in 1909. His parents were Christian missionaries. In 1926, Grafton came to the United States to pursue his education. He attended Presbyterian College, South Carolina, and earned a B.Litt. in journalism from Columbia University in 1931. For two years, he taught at Presbyterian College while doing graduate work at Northwestern University in the summers.

In 1932, Grafton married a young woman whom he had met in Shanghai. The couple had planned to return to China, but Grafton's brother persuaded him to come to Louisville, Kentucky to study law. He was admitted to the bar in 1935 and practiced law with his brother during the years before and after World War II. As an Army officer, he returned to China in 1943. Serving in the China-Burma-India theater, he rose to the rank of Major and was an aide to Lt. Gen. Wedemeyer.

Along with all these activities, Grafton somehow managed to write four books: the three mysteries mentioned by DeAndrea and a mainstream novel entitled *My Name Is Christopher Nagel* (Rinehart, 1947). All four books were published between 1943 and 1950. By the way, the film *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* (RKO, 1956) is not based on Grafton's novel of the same name.

Grafton is, I believe, still practicing law in Louisville. I don't know why he stopped writing mysteries. He may have found the law a more rewarding profession, not only financially but also from the standpoint of personal satisfaction. Although difficult for a mystery fan to accept, this is a distinct possibility.

That's all I have on C. W. Grafton. Perhaps another "footnote slinger" will pick up the trail from here.

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From R. F. Fleissner:

The issue with "John Dickson Carr's Solution to *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*" (TAD 14:4) is a valuable collector's item, one appropriately enough brought to light by a connoisseur of the higher echelons of literature, Lillian de la Torre (author of *The Detections of Dr. Sam: Johnson*). I feel honored that you included my letter and the criticial review of Leon Garfield's completion of *Drood* in the same issue. It was also of archival interest to learn of Carr's prediction of the circumstances surrounding the death of the Nazi dictator.

It was indeed a novel twist for Carr to find Helena the culprit rather than disguised as Datchery, and the presumed correlation with the murderess Hortense in *Bleak House* is worth pondering. In any case, a side remark of his stands out like a buoy in a rock-strewn Droodian sea: "I know few young men in fiction so insufferable as Edwin Drood." Such an admission surely detracts considerably from a Survivalist claim that Drood represents a bona fide Christ figure. Again, Carr stresses Dickens's sense of irony, which, I submit, pertains also to Edwin's symbolic meaning, as I have shown. (See my study "Dickens' *Little Testament:* Spiritual Quest or Humanistic Document?" in the March 1981 issue of *Research Studies* [Washington State University].)

The contributions of Bengis, Cox, and Carr—not to mention the intriguingly written Sherlockian solution reprinted in *Sherlock Holmes in America* (1981)—all indicate that Dickens somehow changed his mind (or would have), notably in the matter of what I should call Exhibit A: the scarf meant for Jasper to strangle Drood. Yet in spite of Dickens's having also been an amateur magician, I still wonder whether the literary historian has the privilege of relegating the novelist's statements concerning intent to misdirection—even if Carr had a point in suggesting that Jasper threw "watch and stickpin into the river to misdirect the police."

The debate on *Drood* continues in the pages of the Dickens Society newsletter (December 1981). Mr. Edgar Rosenberg of my *alma mater* Cornell has raised a quibble concerning the title of my recent piece in TAD, "*Drood* the Obscure," which has given him (alas) trouble sleeping. Much as I deplore being the cause of insomnia rather than Falstaffian wit in others, it helps to recall, when confronted by the charge that punning is the lowest form of humor, that it is thereby the foundation of all wit! Actually, Mr. Rosenberg is a very reputable scholar, has an engaging style, and I hesitated to respond, even when invited by the editor to do so. Since, however, he is much too complimentary to me regarding my published New York University dissertation on Dickens, I decided to submit a brief reply, which appears in the 1982 issue as "A Drood Re-Awakening."

By the way, it happened that Shakespeare became famous partly, as is well recognized, due to his own penchant for punning. This matter bears on another item in a recent issue of TAD where, among various Shakespearean accommodations presented, is a duplication of the well-known dedication of his *Sonnets* referring to a mysterious "Mr. W. H." It might be of interest that I have now offered new evidence identifying this dedicatee of Thorpe's as the up-and-coming printer William Hall, who, incidentally, could have been related to the poet's son-in-law Dr. John Hall. Admittedly, this identification is, in itself, scarcely a novel one, though it has been given short shirft in recent years. See my essay "The Case of the Embarrassing Lacuna: a Textual Solution to the W. H. Mystery" in *Res Publica Litterarum,* Vol. III (1980), a journal specializing in the Renaissance and printed in Italy but still published and edited, I believe, at the University of Kansas. A key clue that I propose is the extra-large space between "W. H." and "ALL." Its oversized effect calls attention to itself (not merely suggesting a misprint, as has been surmised). The printer Thorpe was punning on the name. A recognized eccentric, he loved to play with words and names, it turns out. Compare his similar dedication to Blount, whom he designates as a man with whom he will be "blunt."

Even a greater mystery, then, is whether the reference to "W. Hall" inscribed in the familiar Aldine copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* one which some scholars think also contains Shakespeare's genuine signature, is to "Mr. W. H." again. I deal with this problem in my article, too, trying to discount the argument that a clever forger was responsible. Certainly the volume came to light before Sir Sidney Lee originally proposed that Mr. W. H. was W. Hall! In all honesty, however, I have to confess that I encountered a setback of sorts when I finally went to Oxford and looked at the book itself in the Bodleian Library. Most, though not quite all, paleographers there find the inscriptions of a later "vintage."

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From Donald Rumbelow:

Reginald Temple and Kennaway James were the pseudonyms of a friend of mine named C. W. Shepherd. He died several years ago; he was then in his eighties. If you turn to William Le Queux's autobiography, you will find him referred to as the editor of the Northern Newspaper Syndicate. Shep was about 89 years old when he died but continued writing up to the end. He was a Fleet Street man through and through, with anecdotes of Arnold Bennet, G. K. Chesterton (I enclose a splendid photograph of him in pantomine dress), and Edgar Wallace. Shep is also credited with publishing the first crossword puzzle in the U.K. The story is in his autobiography, *Let's Walk Down Fleet Street* (London: Gerald G. Swan, 1947).

This is a rather laborious way of getting to the main point, which is that he ghosted at least three books for Le Queux; he could only remember two of the titles: *Blackmail* and *The Enchanted Peril.* Apparently he and Le Queux met when Shep was editor of the Northern Newspaper Syndicate and Le Queux sold him some stories. Eventually, Le Queux's troubles with the Inland Revenue forced him to live abroad, and he told Shep that if he wanted any more stories from him then he would have to write them himself. Some sort of agreement was made between them. Shep, at this distance in time, couldn't remember the details. On his infrequent visits to England, Le Queux and Shep would meet to discuss the outlines that the former brought with him. Shep would then write the book from the skeleton outline and check back to Le Queux on the accuracy of the Continental customs, society details, etc., which Le Queux would like to pop into his books. Shep would then forward the book to Le Queux's publishers without Le Queux ever having seen it.

The two of them were highly amused when

the publisher wrote to Le Queux on receipt of one of these stories: "I see the old hand has lost none of its cunning."

As you'll have gathered, Shep was a professional through and through. He seems to have turned his hand to everything—poetry, short stories, novels, history books, and textbooks. He was short story editor of the *Evening Standard*.

I know I have gone on rather at length, but these sorts of details tend to get lost and do have some bibliographic significance.

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From Roger Martin:

I have created a French fanzine about American mystery writers, titled *Hard-Boiled Dicks*. There will be four issues a year, and each issue is devoted to a single writer. Number One is devoted to Marvin H. Albert (alias Nick Quarry, Anthony Rome, Al[bert] Comoy...) and Number Two to Michael Collins (alias Mark Sadler, John Crowe, William Arden...). Future issues will deal with William Campbell Gault and Brett Halliday/Helen McCloy. For further information, your readers may write to me at: 1, Route d'Halanzy, Piedmont 54350, Mont-Saint-Martine, France.

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From Judson C. Sapp:

This is just a brief note to commend you for inclusion of Otto's new department "Collecting Mystery Fiction." May it prosper and expand.

You and he might be interested to see the latest issue of *American Book Collector* for John Ballinger's article "Bibliomysteries."

As always, my unending thanks for McAleer's "Rex Stout Newsletter."

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From Paulette Greene:

Re: TAD 15:1 — "Collecting Mystery Fiction" by Otto Penzler.

At long last!

No careless shot in the dark, this well-aimed and long overdue account. Otto Penzler had advanced the cause started by John Carter, who advocated collecting mystery fiction in the 1930s. The case of collecting mystery and detective first editions shall not be closed. The dossier is still open to more issues, points, elusive dust jackets, and other bibliographic mysteries. And Otto Penzler (Rare Book Sleuthhound) is the best literary detective for the task.

However, the public should be warned. This collecting game is a disease...highly contagious...aided but not cured by adding some long sought first edition to a collection.

This article and the others that *must* follow can only lead to a greater understanding into the *not* mysterious world of fine book collecting under the master tutelage of Otto Penzler.

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From Stuart Kaminsky:

I sat down prepared to write a long letter to the editor concerning the recent TAD, but I've decided against it and opt for only a few comments.

First, I like the issue very much, even beyond the two very favorable reviews of my work. TAD is the only periodical I get which I read from cover to cover including the ads.

Second, I was particularly pleased to see the article on Chester Himes, whom I rank in my short list of all-time favorite writers. I make no distinction between mystery writers and other writers. So, while I enjoyed Berry's admiration of Himes and his research, I was bothered by his basic premise, which, I think, causes confusion about the author and leads us the wrong way. Berry's basic premise is that Himes comes from the hardboiled tradition of Chandler, Hammett, Macdonald. He then builds quite a case for that relationship stemming from the belief that they and Himes are writing in the same genre. I think, on that point, Berry is simply in error. Of course, Himes and the private-eye writers share a style and attitude and even a view of the world, but they are quite different genres. This becomes evident when Berry writes of Himes's "unusual" choice of the third person. In fact, it was not an unusual decision at all but very much in keeping with the tradition of the police novel. It is *private eye* tales which frequently use the first person. While Berry's comparison of Himes with, say, Chandler is not apples and oranges, neither is it two oranges. I think part of the reason private eye tales are frequently first person is that they are, indeed, about an individual whose moral perspective is important and who is engaged in a private task. Police tales, like those of Himes, are about public detectives, often more than one. Berry's arguments about why Himes uses third person are not unreasonable, but they apply to everyone who uses the third person and have nothing at all to do with the genre.

I think a more fruitful examination of Himes would involve a comparison of his work with that of others who have written police (or police procedural) tales. He is not the kin of Hammett but of McBain, Sanders, Uhnak, Marshall. Coffin Ed and Gravedigger Jones are in the world of Martin Beck, not Philip Marlowe. Himes's ancestral home is more *Crime and Punishment* than *the Long Goodbye*.

The problem with putting too many kinds of tales into one basket and calling them a genre is that your observations have to remain so general that they don't tell us much. So, if someone says there is a hard-boiled school or tough-guy school of writing, I want him to tell me what that school is, what he is talking about, what holds it together. *Film noir* presents the same kind of problem. Too many writers have used the term to take in whatever they wish, without stopping to see the films and do the difficult job of actually figuring out what the genre is and is not.

I should suggest a variety of ways of examining Himes that would result in fruitful comparisons. For example, a comparison of Himes with Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright seems reasonable. All three are black writers of great skill who dealt with the idea of the American ghetto as a violent and surreal place. Or one could explore Himes as a surreal writer, one who brought the style of Surrealism to the form of the crime tale. Quineu, Robbe-Grillet, Genet seem reasonable for comparison.

This has grown longer than I intended and is probably harsher than I feel on the subject. I know as a writer it bothers me when I read a review of one of my books which is clearly and sometimes self-consciously in one genre or tradition and the reviewer starts telling me that I am clearly and intentionally somewhere else. My impulse is to give the reviewer a very long reading list in the field.

So, finally, I apologize to Berry for my zeal and thank him for his respect for Himes, which I both applaud and share.

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From Lillian de la Torre:

I'm thrilled with the handsome setting you gave to my cherished Carr letter. It was a great idea to reproduce the original *Drood* title page. It's the key, I'm sure, to the mystery, if you could only read it aright.

I'd love to do a piece for TAD some time. I'll see if I get inspired. Maybe Tom McDade's excellent summary of the Tichbourne case in the new TAD will inspire me. I have a theory about Tichbourne (see my story "The Lost Heir" in EQMM, Dec. 1974, for a hint) and the nine-volumes-tall folio of the Kenealy *Trial* on my shelf—yet to be tackled, a daunting prospect! Maybe next year?

While I have typewriter in hand, let's cheer for John McAleer. It's nothing short of genius how he keeps his Stout column so lively and readable. Granted, he has a lively subject, but he does it full justice. More power to him!

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From George H. Madison:

I was happy to receive and devour TAD 15:1. What happened to the promised Tom Chastain interview of Robert Parker? By the way, Patrice Loose incorrectly refers to Spenser's lover as Susan Silberman in her review of Parker's *Savage Place*. The name is Silverman, if you please.

Am I alone in feeling that two of my favorite authors, Robert Parker and Gregory McDonald, are going a bit stale? Their books seem to be preachy and lacking their initial storytelling crispness and character-development skills.

Parker's case is especially tragic. His recurring themes of women's liberation, childhood rejection, and youth's alienation from society as seen by our seer, the protagonist on a white horse, Spenser, has really detracted from the quality of the series. It seems that only those who fail by society's standards are deemed to be worthy of respect, tolerance, and oh-so-much understanding. All the traditional "white hats" and society's standard-bearers are ridiculed for lacking perfection. His attacks have become light on humor and heavy on pretension.

Vincent McConnor's third Inspector

Damiot entry, *The Paris Puzzle* (1982), is a wonderful read. Who is Mr. McConnor? He published *The French Doll* in the mid-1960s and was a contributor to EQMM but had no other titles to his credit until *The Provence Puzzle* (1978). The book jackets are absolutely mysterious in their biographies. I can only surmise that McConnor is a middle-aged francophile with a recent charge of creative energy. His books are charming, with a genuine sensitivity to their French locale.

The book industry seems to be more confusing with each passing day. Titles are published and reviewed daily, yet the task of actually locating and buying a book involves the prospective buyer in an odyssey of adventure and danger. Why?

The address for the *Mystery* magazine ad is incorrect. Please continue the excellence of TAD.

Unfortunately, the Chastain piece had to be postponed. We hope to have it soon.

As to the state of publishing, I could easily write an essay, but it wouldn't be appropriate to these pages. Suffice to say that the more "businessmen" become involved, using Harvard Business School techniques of determining profit margins, the worse the situation will become...especially in the area of general fiction.

—Michael

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From Greg Goode:

The letters column in TAD 15:1 was very, very interesting. My opinion about "whither fandom" is that fans can do much more to influence fandom itself than they can to influence the price, style, quality, and distribution of new mysteries.

With all due respect to Teri White, whose candid letter I really enjoyed, I must disagree with her about the relative segmentation of mystery *vs.* science-fiction readers. Although there are those in our genre who faithfully adhere to either the cozy, the hardboiled, or perhaps the intriguing, it seems that most readers (at least the vocal ones) read all around the genre. But in the overall science-fictional field, there is a wide schism between the readers of *fantasy* and those of hard science fiction, that is, the "sword and sorcery" fans and the "nuts and bolts" fans. There is a greater proportion of science-fiction readers partial to one or another of those sub-genres than there is in our genre partial to one of the sub-genres. Friends of mine who are science-fiction fans say that "fandom is a way of life" and that it often has very little to do with actually *reading* science fiction.

As for why readers of our genre are less enthusiastic than those of other genres (even romance lovers have their "Romance Lovers" organization), I hope many people will write in and express their thoughts. I do know that our whole approach is more academic than those of other fictional genres, and I'm pretty sure the answer lies there somewhere. As for organizing—if James P. Devlin *starts* a fan organization, I will *join* it, and even recruit, if possible.

Enjoyed the Lauren Bosworth Paine interview. There is a personal-name byline whose output far exceeds Paine's, but the name is almost certainly a house name, and the books have absolutely nothing to do with crime fiction. If anyone wants to be literally astounded at prolificity, just look in *Books in Print* under Rudman, Jack. There were more than 3,100 entries in 1981.

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From Raymond O'Leary:

In TAD 15:1, a slighting reference was made about St. Thomas More in Jacques Barzun and Wendell Hertig Taylor's "Catalogue of Crime" Supplement 158.

Thomas More is not a saint for the life he led but for the way he died.

To die for the Catholic religion makes one a saint whether you are canonized or not, no matter how many sins one may have committed. When Thomas More chose to sacrifice his life rather than renounce his faith, he became a saint and all his previous sins, whether intentional or unintentional, were forgiven under what is known as a Baptism of Blood.

As for being a man for all seasons, any man who dies for his beliefs, when he could live by saying in public what he may not believe in private, I believe is worthy of that description. ☐

CURRENT REVIEWS

What Nigel Knew by Evan Field. Potter, 1981. 272 pp. $10.95

Nigel Whitty was an exceedingly nasty gossip columnist, who knew the worst about everyone who was anyone. What Nigel didn't know was that he was destined to become the year's most deserving murder victim, strangled by his own typewriter ribbon during a screening of *Le Dernier Souffle (The Last Gasp)* at the New York Film Festival. The crime is investigated by a movie-hating Irish cop and Whitty's gorgeous and bright assistant, who become, in the language of the gossip trade, an item.

The suspects include caricatures of practically every show-business type from the has-been Italian director to the pill-popping starlet. There are also a few characters bizarre enough to go beyond the stereotypes, including a six-foot feminist vegetarian poet who lectures on fruit imagery in films and the world's greatest Polish ballet dancer who moonlights as a racecar driver under the name Rhett Butler. Each of the suspects has something to hide, providing a motive for murdering Nigel, but the clue to the mystery lies in Nigel's own shady past.

This is a diverting satire of the high life, reminiscent of the mysteries of Edgar Box.

—Mary S. Cappadonna

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Death in the Round by Anne Morice. Penguin, 1981.

A twelve-year-old friend of mine lives by an inflexible rule: never read any science fiction that's written in the first person. I'm keeping Anne Morice's *Death in the Round* away from him for fear that he will universalize his rule across the genres. The inescapable "I" of Tessa Cricheton, Morice's actress-sleuth, is literally and allegorically just that. She is a grown-up Nancy Drew with a Fortnum and Mason palate. In charity, it may be her profession that causes her to be relentlessly chatty and clever. The footlights seem to follow her footsteps.

In this case, her success depends upon being able to out-perform the other actors in the off-stage drama. (Plato and Rousseau apparently were right: you can't really trust theatre folk—their livelihood depends on pretending.) The purportedly accidental death of a virago impressario and the unmistakable murder of an aspiring but not inspiring actress set the stage for all the classic dinner-theatre scenes: a luncheon comedy of bad manners, a fashionable cocktail party, verbal sparring between and about the sexes, numerous soliloquies, and the inevitable denouement in which Tessa upstages all the supporting cast. Unfortunately, it is a pretty pedestrian performance.

And this is the tragic flaw: Tessa is all performance. She is no more than her role. Her emotional repertoire soars from pique to pique. When her calculated aside precipitates a flood of tears from a supercilious director, Tessa declares, "I had never felt more miserable or ashamed in my life." This is a curious remark from someone whose professional training and marital connections should have exposed her to the literature and the reality of profound human suffering. Obviously for our

heroine, the play's the thing. Tessa is no Antigone, but she takes curtain calls with great aplomb.

—Patrice K. Loose

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Modus Operandi by Robin Winks. Godine. 131 pp. $12.50

How does one become a mystery critic? As one of the most knowledgeable and readable mystery critics in America, Robin Winks reveals that he has had an ideal preparation for the job.

Susceptible to the spell of the detective story at a tender age, Winks read *The Hound of the Baskervilles* while hiding under a dining room table, alone in a large house on a dark and stormy night.

Sensitive to miscarriages of justice, Winks vomited in the balcony aisle of a movie palace when several innocent Hollywood cowboys were lynched (without benefit of a last-minute reprieve from John Wayne and the trumpeting Seventh Cavalry) in *The Ox-Bow Incident*.

A mystery critic should also be prepared to cheerfully accept martyrdom for his faith. Winks had his luridly-illustrated copy of *I Wake Up Screaming* torn in half by an indignant high school teacher who proceeded to tell the entire study hall that Winks had the deplorably bad taste to prefer thrillers and shockers to something as palpably edifying as *Silas Marner* or *Julius Caesar*.

You couldn't ask for a better-orchestrated background than that to inspire a fledgling mystery critic. Nor can you ask for a more beguiling blend of autobiography, literary inquiry, and free-wheeling commentary than you will find in the pages of Robin Winks's new book, *Modus Operandi: An Excursion into Detective Fiction*. As a combination travel agent and tour guide, Winks takes us from mystery to illumination on this one-man survey of detective literature.

Yale historian, mystery critic for *The New Republic*, and editor (*Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays*), Winks argues that the detective story is taken much too solemnly by its new scholarly champions and not seriously enough by critics who refuse to regard such lowly "entertainments" as literature or popular myth. For his part, Winks eschews the piety of the first and the snobbery of the second. In defense of detective fiction, and sensible criticism, he contends that the genre is well worth our time and attention. It is a craft, a philosophy, a mirror-image of society, and a reflection of the culture whose rules and assumptions shape both plot and the detective hero. There is much to be learned, it seems, from mysteries!

In just over one hundred pages of this intensely personal essay, Winks manages to put the whole art of detection—and the partial autobiography of Robin Winks—in clear perspective. By doing so, he restores to his readers the lost art of the essay, the excursive and experimental attempt to come to terms with a chosen mystery of experience. His arguments are not always infallible, but his timing is impeccable now that the mystery story is riding a wave of popularity unknown since the Depression Era.

In hard times, people turn to gold and detective stories. The metal encourages belief that something of stable value will survive the fluctuations of the marketplace. The fiction permits faith in the continuity of higher human values such as truth, reason, justice, and the efficiency of the criminal justice system. The contemporary revival of the classical mystery story, which began in the 1970s with a surge of publishing and theatrical interest in such storybook sleuths as Hercule Poirot, Sherlock Holmes, and Lord Peter Wimsey, has gone beyond a seasonal fad or short-term trend, and it is time for a critic of Winks's acumen, fluency, and taste to restate the rules and values of "the great game." Few can do it better or with more surprising flair for unexpected truth:

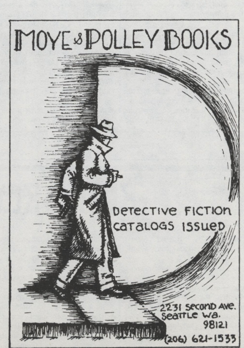
"Detective fiction creates for us an anonymity; within it, we may constitute the last law on earth, at the freezing point, making decisions (to be 'proved' right or wrong) as we go, responsible for them, tricked, disappointed, triumphant, joyful, honest as to our mistakes, setting the record straight. As we make leaps of faith between evidence and decision in our daily lives—to board this bus, to choose that doctor, to add these pounds—so we make leaps of faith between evidence and conclusion, through the public historiography and the private autobiography that are the literature we read. . . .

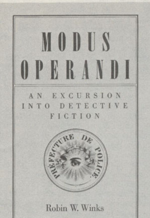
"We learn how to define evidence, to use up our intellectual shoe leather in pursuit of an operable truth, to take joy from the receding horizon and pleasure in the discovery that the answer has not yet been found, that there is more work to be done. . . . We learn that what people believe to be true is as important as the objective truth defined by the researcher/detective. . . ."

Ultimately, Winks avers, one reads detective fiction less to while away time or induce slumber than to make sense of one's life and confirm that reason is left to combat the error and terror of our world.

"Detective fiction involves judgments—judgments made, passed upon, tested. In raising questions about purpose, it raises questions about cause and effect. In the end, like history, such fiction appears to, and occasionally does, decode the environment; appears to and occasionally does tell one what to *do*; appears to and occasionally does set the record straight. Setting the record straight ought to matter. Detective fiction, in its high seriousness, is a bit like religion, in pursuit of truths best left examined at a distance."

And beyond the "seriousness" of the story is the fun, the pleasure of attempting to do as





the detective does, evaluating evidence, reasoning and judging causes and effects, always with some final knowledge in mind. It can lead us "to laughter in our frustration, to joy in our experience, and to tolerance for our complexities."

We pass through *Modus Operandi,* to borrow Winks's own words on the delights of reading detective fiction, "as on a train, travelers, fascinated, pleased, excited, more exalted by the journey than by the destination."

It is the journey here—the play of ideas, the questioning of assumptions, and the passage of a mind in search of mysteries—that matters enough to make *Modus Operandi* a pleasure for travelers who seek the delights of detection.

When and if Winks elects to abandon his fascination with mysterious footprints, suspicious suspects, and Florentine daggers concealed in Ming vases, I hope he will write about the comedies of the literary life, a hint of which is contained in his book's sly acknowledgement to his mystery-weary family circle: "My daughter, Honor, helped type the manuscipt and complained of its prose, with good reason, and my wife, Avril, undertook to renew her pledge never to read a word I write about detective fiction. My son, Eliot, says he will read the book one day, though he is rather busy just now, and my father will accept a free copy."

Well, let those ingrates carp and cavil and tease. *Modus Operandi* is the perfect book for those who have never before thought about thinking about detective fiction. In an age of big literary blockbusters and media-hyped superbooks, it is refreshing to come across a little book of this kind that not only refuses to insult the intelligence of the reader but treats him as if he were a friend of the author, sipping sherry with him by the fire, talking easily about reading preferences and prejudices, tasting the delights of old books and new ideas.

—Howard Lachtman

* * * * *

TV Detectives by Richard Meyers. A. S. Barnes & Co., 1981. 276 pp. $14.95

If you grew up with TV, and with TV detectives, as I did, you will love this book. This is a comprehensive study, year by year, season by season, of all the TV detectives, i.e., cops, private eyes, lawyers, reporters, etc., who have appeared on TV since 1947. The author, who has a TV column in *The Armchair Detective,* has a genuine love for his subject, and it shows. He examines each series and its stars and reveals some behind-the-scenes information that you otherwise might not be aware of, such as the real reasons successful shows such as *The Wild Wild West* and *Harry O* were cancelled while still riding high in the ratings, why Fish left *Barney Miller,* while also theorizing on such subjects as why Burt Reynolds never made it on the small screen. The author makes no bones about what shows he thinks were the best, and what shows were his favorites. (He agrees with me that *Harry O* and *The Rockford Files* are the best private-eye shows TV has ever offered.) He also makes no bones about the fact that *The Untouchables* remains the best gangbusters series ever.

At the price, *TV Detectives,* a trade paperback, is worth it to anyone who remembers the incestuous relationships among the Warner Bros. stable of private eye shows from 1958 into the early '60s, anyone who can recite the evolutionary steps of *Danger Man/Secret Agent/Prisoner* John Drake or the names of all John Steed's lady partners. It's a nostalgic, informative trip back through time, and I thoroughly enjoyed the ride.

—Robert Randisi

* * * * *

30 for a Harry by Richard Hoyt. Evans, 1981.

John Denson returns in another well-written, well crafted P.I. tale from the talented typewriter of Richard Hoyt. As impressive a debut as was 1980's *Decoys, 30 for a Harry* is even better. The title is very odd, but germaine to the story. It has to do with Harry Karafin, a true-life character. Karafin was a reporter—a much respected reporter—for the Philadelphia *Inquirer* for three decades, and was exposed as having used his position for the purposes of blackmail.

Harold Balkan, owner and publisher of the Seattle *Star,* hires Denson to find the "Harry" on his paper and write "30" to him. "30" in newspaperese means "the end," and Denson's assignment is to find this "Harry" and end his little game before he does damage to the *Star.* Denson goes back to his old profession as a newspaper reporter and plunges into the unseen side of the newspaper world in his quest for the real "Harry."

Excellent pace, interesting characters and plot twists make this a contender for the best private eye yarn of the year. Hoyt's subsequent books are to be looked forward to with relish.

—Robert Randisi

RETRO REVIEWS

Murder Unlimited by M(ary) V(iolet) Heberden. New York: Doubleday Crime Club, 1953.

While it is generally true that female authors do not handle hardboiled fiction very well (one notable exception: Leigh Brackett), *Murder Unlimited,* the only Heberden I've read to date, pleased me enough for me to want more. Set in New York in the early '50s, private eye Desmond Shannon encounters enough bombs and bullets to satisfy almost anyone except Mickey Spillane.

This book has a complex plot, a large and varied group of characters, frequent changes of scenery, and plenty of action. In one scene, which takes place on a ledge outside a penthouse, the rescue of a would-be suicide is handled as excitingly and as well as any similar situation I've read about elsewhere.

Except perhaps for Shannon, the characterizations are done well, especially considering the size of the cast. The flaws include a naïveté about New York gangsters as well as Beacon Hill (Boston) financiers in the general construction business. Again, practically no reader should be surprised with Ms. Heberden's choice of villain.

Overlooked in Steinbrunner and Penzler's *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection,* the author came to my conscious attention by persistent culling of Barzun and Taylor's *Catalogue of Crime.* Since the latter critics seem to dismiss the Shannon series in favor of Heberden's other tales, these others must be great stuff indeed.

—T. John Shamon

Minor Offenses

By Edward D. Hoch

When I agreed to take over this column from the capable hands of Ed Hunsburger, my first thought was that I would change the name. As a short story writer myself, I didn't particularly like the connotation of the word "minor" in connection with mysteries of less than novel length. They certainly weren't minor to Poe or Doyle or Chesterton, and they've never been minor to me. But the more I thought about it, the more I toyed with even less acceptable titles such as "Petty Larcenies," the more I came to agree that "Minor Offenses" isn't such a bad title after all.

So here it is, and here I am. As Ed had been doing before me, I intend to report every three months on the state of the mystery-crime-detective short story, covering not only new stories in the mystery magazines but also single-author collections and anthologies of short stories which are appearing with increasing frequency in paperback and hardcover. I'll also be looking at those rare mysteries which appear in mainstream publications, and I want to start my first column with a look at one of the best recent examples.

James McClure's "To the Letter, Harry" (*Playboy*, June 1982) is a fine mystery about three San Diego patrolmen and their hunt for a series killer who has murdered two young women after writing them letters to gain admittance to their apartments. The patrolmen's conversation and the glimpse of their off-duty lives recalls Joseph Wambaugh at his best, and my only mild complaint is that a fairly complex solution is explained a bit too quickly at the end. Still, there's a great deal in this story—enough for some novels—and it should enhance the author's reputation. McClure, a native of South Africa who now resides in Oxford, England, has gained fame over the past decade with a fine series of South African police procedurals beginning with *The Steam Pig* (1971), winner of the CWA Gold Dagger Award. To my knowledge, his only previous short stories appeared in *Winter's Crimes 7* and *Winter's Crimes 9*.

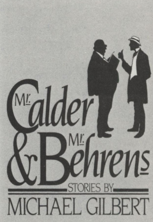
It's been an unusually bright period for mystery collections. The final days of 1981 saw publication of Joe L. Hensley's *Final Doors* (Doubleday, $10.95), containing seventeen mystery-suspense-fantasy stories and a brief essay on how the author's fiction differs from the cases he sees as a circuit court judge in Indiana. Many of the stories are reprinted from magazines, six are new, two were written in collaboration with Harlan Ellison, and one in collaboration with Gene DeWeese. All are worth reading.

Recent Edgar-winner Jon L. Breen's *Hair of the Sleuthhound* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, $12.50) collects 22 of the author's skillful parody-pastiches of famous fictional sleuths, including two not previously published. Breen's versions of Christie, Carr, Queen, Hammett, McBain, and Asimov are all here, often in plots so clever they could easily have been published as "straight" mysteries. Most are reprinted from *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine,* where Breen's regular review column is always a treat to read.

Michael Gilbert's 1967 volume *Games Without Rules* has been called the second best collection of short spy stories ever written, topped only by Somerset Maugham's *Ashendon.* The adventures of Gilbert's mild but ruthless professionals are continued in *Mr. Calder and Mr. Behrens* (Harper & Row, $12.95), again reprinted from EQMM. It's well up to the high standards of the first collection and belongs on every mystery reader's shelf.

But perhaps the outstanding collection of crime-suspense shorts this spring has been Frederick Forsyth's *No Comebacks* (Viking Press, $13.95). Three of the ten stories previously appeared in *Playboy,* and the title story was reprinted in *Best Detective Stories of the Year—1974.* (Another story, "Used in Evidence," was withheld by the author from *Best—1980* so it could have its first book publication in this volume.) Of the remaining seven stories, a couple are outside the mystery field. But one, "There Are No Snakes in Ireland," is as good as anything in the book and appears here for the first time in America. A tension-filled tale of a young Indian laborer seeking revenge on a bigoted Irish foreman, it has a nice sting in its ending. The book is a worthy successor to Forsyth's four memorable novels.

Turning to the mystery magazines, I want to especially mention the June 1982 issue of EQMM, which opens with three of the year's better stories. Anyone who thinks the mystery short story has fallen on hard times should read Ruth Rendell's "The Fever Tree," William Brittain's "Mr. Strang and the Lost Ship," and Joyce Harrington's "Address Unknown." They're as fine and diverse a trio as one could hope for and represent all three authors at close to their peak. Come to think of it, the rest of the issue is pretty good too, with P. G. Wodehouse, James Holding, Peter Godfrey, David Morrell, George Baxt, H. R. F. Keating, and recent Edgar-winner Jack Ritchie, among others.



At this writing, I haven't yet seen the expanded and redesigned *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine,* but I'll have a report on it next time. □

CHECKLIST

By M. S. Cappadonna

MYSTERY, DETECTIVE AND SUSPENSE FICTION PUBLISHED IN THE U.S. JANUARY-MARCH 1982

Alding, Peter: **Betrayed by Death.** Walker, 10.95

Allen, Steve: **The Talk Show Murders.** Delacorte, 11.95

Asimov, Isaac, ed.: **Tantalizing Locked Room Mysteries.** Walker, 12.95

Atkins, Meg Elizabeth: **Palimpset.** St. Martin's, 11.95

Barnard, Robert: **Death by Sheer Torture.** Scribners, 10.95

Brashler, William: **Chosen Prey.** Harper, 12.95

Buckley, William F.: **Marco Polo, If You Can.** Doubleday, 13.95

Burley, W. J.: **The House of Care.** Walker, 10.95

Clark, Douglas: **Roast Eggs.** Dodd, 8.95

Clarke, T. E. B.: **Murder at Buckingham Palace.** St. Martin's, 9.95

Crispin, Edmund: **Frequent Hearses.** Walker, 9.95

Dean, S. F. X.: **By Frequent Anguish.** Walker, 9.95

Dexter, Colin: **The Dead of Jericho.** St. Martin's, 9.95

Fraser, Antonia: **A Splash of Red.** Norton, 12.95

Frimmer, Steven: **Dead Matter.** Holt, 12.95

Gash, Jonathan: **The Vatican Rip.** Ticknor, 10.95

Guild, Nicholas: **The President's Man.** St. Martin's, 13.95

Hall, Adam: **The Peking Target.** Playboy, 13.95

Harcourt, Palma: **A Turn of Traitors.** Scribners, 10.95

Hardinge, G., ed.: **Winter's Crimes 13.** St. Martin's, 10.95

Harrington, Joyce: **Family Reunion.** St. Martin's, 12.95

Harris, Herbert, ed.: **John Creasey's Crime Collection, 1981.** St. Martin's, 12.95

Hebden, Mark: **Pel Is Puzzled.** Hamilton, 14.95

Hilton, John Buxton: **The Green Frontier.** St. Martin's, 9.95

Hutton, Malcolm: **Address Unknown.** St. Martin's, 9.95

Inchbald, Peter: **Tondo for Short.** Doubleday, 10.95

Kallen, Lucille: **C. B. Greenfield: No Lady in the House.** Wyndham, 13.50

Kaminsky, Stuart: **Catch a Falling Clown.** St. Martin's, 9.95

Kilgore, Kathryn: **Something for Nothing.** Seaview, 13.50

Kyle, Duncan: **Stalking Point.** St. Martin's, 10.95

Laine, Annabel: **The Melancholy Virgin.** St. Martin's, 9.95

Langton, Jane: **Natural Enemy.** Ticknor, 11.95

Lathen, Emma: **Green Grow the Dollars.** Simon, 14.50

Leonard, Elmore: **Split Images.** Arbor, 12.50

Lewis, Roy Harley: **A Crackling of Spines.** St. Martin's, 10.95

Lovell, Mark: **The Spy with His Head in the Clouds.** Doubleday, 10.95

Lowden, Desmond: **Sunspot.** Holt, 11.95

McConnor, Vincene: **The Paris Puzzle.** Macmillan, 12.95

Mackay, Amanda: **Death on the Eno.** Little, 12.95

MacLeod, Charlotte: **Wrack and Rune.** Doubleday, 10.95

Masur, Harold Q.: **The Broker.** St. Martin's, 13.95

McMullen, Mary: **Better Off Dead.** Doubleday, 10.95

Melville, James: **A Sort of Samurai.** St. Martin's, 9.95

Millar, Margaret: **Mermaid.** Morrow, 10.95

Paretsky, Sara: **Indemnity Only.** Dial, 12.95

Parker, Robert B.: **Ceremony.** Delacorte, 12.95

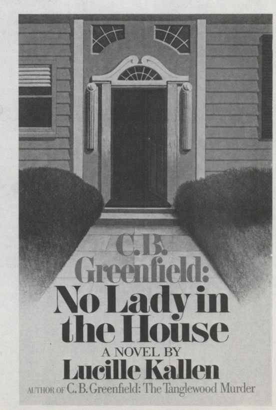
Ross, Jonathan: **A Rattling of Old Bones.** Scribners, 10.95

Paul, Raymond: **The Thomas Street Horror; an Historical Novel of Murder.** Viking, 13.95

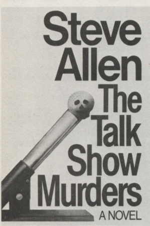
Pronzini, Bill, ed.: **The Arbor House Treasury of Mystery and Suspense.** Arbor House, 20.95; paper 9.95

Quill, Monica: **Let Us Prey.** Vanguard, 9.95

Scott, Justin: **Normandie Triangle.** Arbor, 13.95



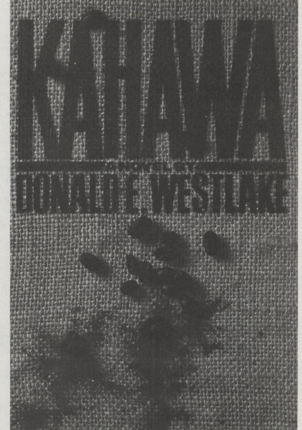
Seaman, Donald: **Chase Royal.** St. Martin's, 14.95
Serafin, David: **Saturday of Glory.** St. Martin's, 9.95
Smith, Kay Nolte: **Catching Fire.** Coward, 13.95
Somerville-Large, Peter: **A Living Dog.** Doubleday, 10.95



Sullivan, Eleanor, ed.: **Alfred Hitchcock's Tales to Make You Weak in the Knees.** Dial, 10.95
Tine, Robert: **Uneasy Lies the Head.** Viking, 12.95
Turnbull, Peter: **Deep and Crisp and Even.** St. Martin's, 10.95
Underwood, Michael: **The Hand of Fate.** St. Martin's, 9.95
Wainwright, John: **All on a Summer's Day.** St. Martin's, 10.95
Webster, Noah: **A Problem in Prague.** Doubleday, 10.95
Westlake, Donald E.: **Kahawa.** Viking, 14.95
Wilcox, Colin: **Stalking Horse.** Random, 10.50
Wilsse, David: **The Wedding Guest.** Delacorte, 11.95
Winch, Arden: **Blood Royal.** Viking, 14.95
Woods, Sara: **Enter a Gentlewoman.** St. Martin's, 9.95
Zochert, Donald: **The Man of Glass.** Holt, 12.95

Paperbacks

Aird, Catherine: **A Slight Mourning.** Bantam, 2.25
Babson, Marion: **Murder, Murder, Little Star.** Dell, 2.25
Brand, Christianna: **Green for Danger.** Harper/Perennial, 2.50
Chesterton, G. K.: **The Scandal of Father Brown.** Penguin, 2.95
Clark, Mary Higgins: **A Stranger Is Watching.** Dell, 3.50
Christie, Agatha: **Evil Under the Sun.** Pocket, 2.95
Coppel, Alfred: **The Hastings Conspiracy.** Pocket, 2.95
Cunningham, E. V.: **The Case of the Russian Diplomat.** Holt, 3.50
Dickinson, Peter: **The Poison Oracle.** Pantheon, 2.95
Ferrars, E. X.: **Alive and Dead.** Bantam, 1.95
Leonard, Elmore: **City Primeval.** Avon, 2.50
Littell, Robert: **The Amateur.** Dell, 3.25
McClure, James: **The Blood of an Englishman.** Pantheon, 2.95
McClure, James: **The Steam Pig.** Pantheon, 2.95
McIlvanney, William: **Laidlaw.** Pantheon, 2.95
MacKenzie, Donald: **Raven and the Paperhangers.** Berkley, 2.25
Moyes, Patricia: **Angel Death.** Holt, 3.50



Gault, William Campbell: **The Bad Samaritan.** Raven House, 2.25
Gill, Bartholomew: **McGarr and the Politician's Wife.** Penguin, 2.95
Hare, Cyril: **Suicide Excepted.** Dover, 3.75
Hillerman, Tony: **People of Darkness.** Avon, 2.25
Hjortsberg, William: **Falling Angel.** Fawcett, 3.25
Hunter, Alan: **Landed Gently.** Dell, 2.25
James, P. D.: **Crime Times Three.** Scribners, 1.95
Perry, Ritchie: **One Good Death Deserves Another.** Ballantine, 2.25
Rosten, Leo: **King Silky!** Bantam, 2.25
Simenon, Georges: **Maigret's Christmas.** Harcourt, 4.95
Smith, Charles Merrill: **Reverend Randollph and the Wages of Sin.** Avon, 2.50
Smith, Martin Cruz: **Gorky Park.** Ballantine, 3.95
Trevor, Elleston: **The Damocles Sword.** Playboy, 3.50
Valin, Jonathan: **Final Notice.** Avon, 2.25 □

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