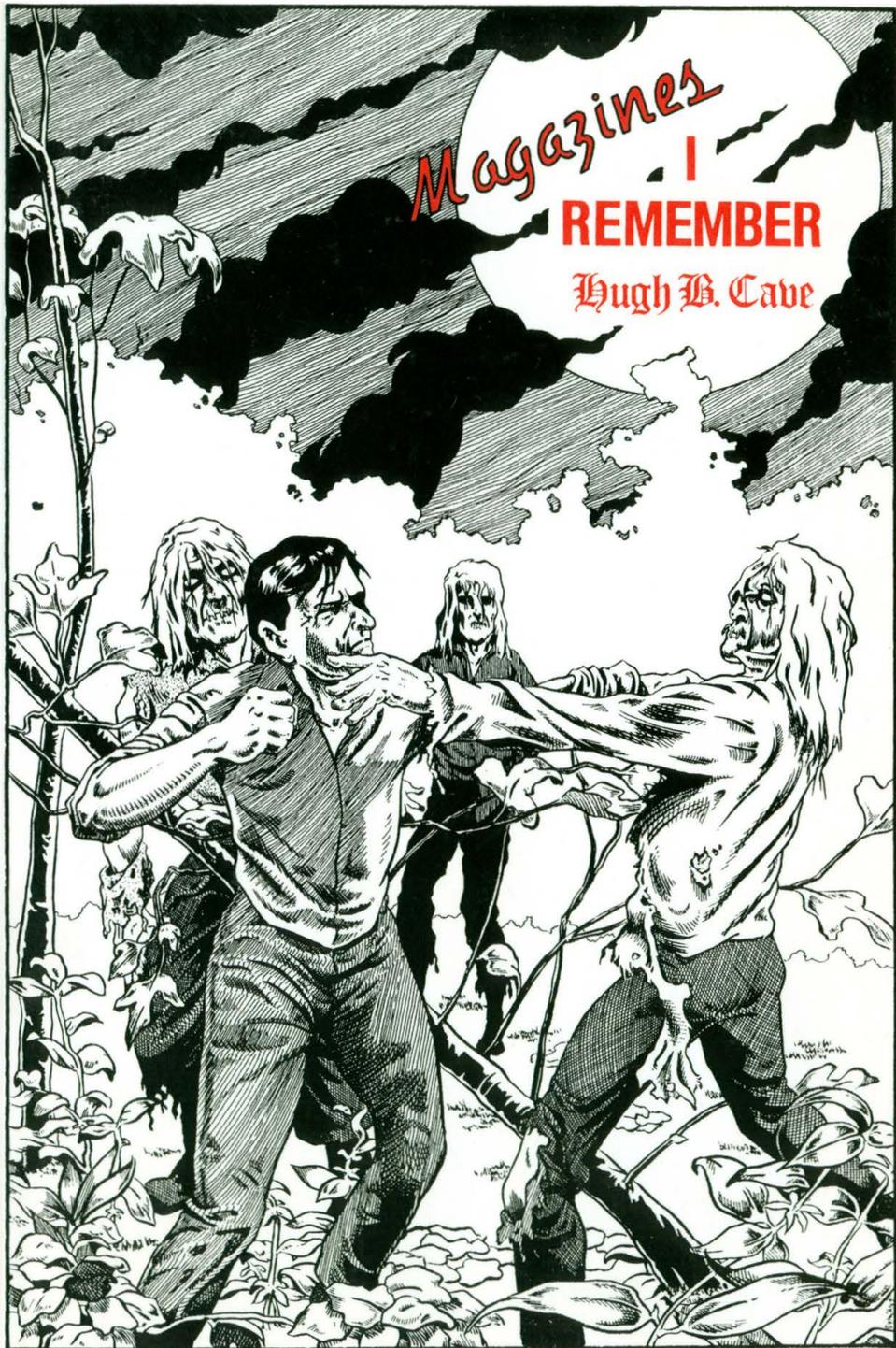


*Magazines* I

**REMEMBER**

*Hugh B. Cave*





# MAGAZINES I REMEMBER

*Some Pulp, Their Editors, And  
What It Was Like To Write For Them*

*by*

**Hugh B. Cave**

PULP VAULT PULP STUDY NO. 2

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Hugh Cave, circa 1935

## CHAPTER ONE

The other day, while looking for something in a dead-letter file, I came across some letters written by a certain young pulp writer named Hugh B. Cave to another young pulp writer, Carl Jacobi. Carl and I began a correspondence in 1930 when he liked a story of mine in Short Stories and dropped me a line, in care of the magazine, to say so. Since then we have exchanged many, many letters, yet still have never met face to face!

I don't have Carl's early letters to me, worse luck. They were all lost in a fire, along with copies of some 800 pulp stories of mine and all the records pertaining thereto: the dates on which they were completed, who bought them for what magazine, how much I was paid for them, and when they were published.

But I do have my letters to Carl because he saved them, bless him, and his friend R. Dixon Smith, who has been looking after his affairs for the past few years, kindly sent me copies of them.

Here, then, are some bits and pieces from those letters that may offer background information on certain pulps I was writing for at the time. Remember, please, these words were written when their author was a feisty young squirt in his very early twenties earning about \$5,000 a year--big money in those days!--as a hard-working, full-time pulp fictioneer.

\* \* \* \* \*

April, 1931: More power to you with Ghost Stories. You'll draw some very decent criticisms and comments from Wheeler; he is a really sympathetic editor. Incidentally, I have a story coming in the next Ghost called "The Affair of the Clutching Death." I like to write horror, and another of my stories, "Creatures of the Blood", is even now at Wheeler's office. This last is a creepy vampire thriller--too horrible, I think, to get by.\*

\*(Retitled "The Brotherhood of Blood", this was my first sale to Weird Tales. Editor D.E. Wheeler of Ghost Stories must have turned it down.)

August 1, 1931: There are rumors that Far East is taking over Star Magazine. Anyway, Star is through with the current issue. Man Stories is quitting, I believe, but will resume later at a dime a copy. Short Stories, with Maule bossing the works, is poison to all regular writers. Bedford-Jones writes to me and says he hasn't sold them a

thing since Maule took over the reins.

So you detected a new style in my Argosy yarn, "Steal a Dog's Bone." Argosy has a style of its own and one must comply with it. Their short story market is not worth much--one and a half cents a word.

August 18, 1931: Bad news for both you and me. Our old friend Ghost Stories, after being turned over to Hersey, is now finished. I don't know how that will hit you, but I had just landed a contract\* with Stuart Palmer to do a yarn an issue at good rates.

\*(Palmer had succeeded Wheeler, and this couldn't have been a contract. It must have been some sort of invitation to submit a story a month.)



# TEXAS BRED

By

HUGH B. CAVE

As for the rest of the dope: Man Stories will appear no more under that title. In the late fall it will reappear however, twice a month, at a dime a copy. And I'm optimistic enough to believe that Sam Bierman will make it pay. Man Stories has used some mighty fine stories lately. When it reappears,\* I'll have the complete novel in issue number one--a Borneo yarn called "The Flaming Skull." The second issue will have a novelette of mine with the not-so-good title of "Tex Takes a Hand." Both of these are bought and paid for.

\*(Man Stories reappeared as Popular Fiction in November 1931, and my story in issue number two was renamed "Texas Bred" by editor Bierman. That same second issue, by the way, contained a plagiarized story of mine, "Young Courage," by someone who called himself Rupert Knowles.)

You want a title for your Baluchistan yarn? How does "The Balu Break" appeal to you? Titles...are important. I had a story about a year ago which was, as my stories go, about middling good. I called it "Way of the Jungle" and tried Adventure. It didn't go. I sent it to Top Notch with a change of title, calling it "Jungle Judgment" simply because Top Notch in those days favored the justice theme. But that magazine was overloaded, and I tried the thing on Short Stories. If there's one thing Horn (editor Roy deS. Horn) hates, it is a trite title. So "Way of the Jungle" and "Jungle Judgment" were definitely out. I let the yarn hang fire around here for a week until I devised a trick name for it. Then I sent it--"Six-Leg Nerves"--to Horn, and he bought it.

November 13, 1931: Bates (Harry Bates, editor of Strange Tales) is a good fellow, but takes his job seriously and...balks at little things all the time. Get in thick with him and you'll have a great market--always a stiff one, but always eager to read and criticize. And here's something important: Bates thinks he is the last word on facts. Any kind of facts. He really is a mighty well educated man and knows any number of things. But if he tells you something in a story is wrong--CHECK UP ON IT. If you find you're right, send him a polite letter with proof. Some time ago he told me there was no such thing as a seasnake. I sent him newspaper clippings.\*

\*(The story referred to here was "Stragella," and the idea for it, including the snakes, was suggested to me by Clayton's own Dr. Douglas Dold, who was an authority on snakes!)

I think the finest yarn Bamber (editor Wallace Bamber of Far East Adventure Stories) has used to date is "Cadets of Gascoyne" by Marmur (Jacland Marmur, who wrote many stories for Adventure and Short Stories). That was as smooth and sweet as cider.

And I wonder if you've ever read any of J.D. Newsom's yarns featuring those two Foreign Legion hellions, Withers and Curialo. If not, by all means do. They're the neatest, funniest things in print

today. Adventure features them constantly; Short Stories occasionally.

If you can do Westerns, Triple-X is a wide open market for short lengths. If you know the war and army, Battle Stories needs material badly. Bierman (Popular Fiction) is keeping an eagle eye out for shorts that are "different".

Undated letter, apparently late 1931: I'm glad you've got started with Bierman. I wrote to him, of course, and told him about you.



TERROR TALES, July 1935

He replied by return mail that he would give your stuff a personal reading and hoped it would be suitable. You have a good chance of crashing him if you will study his book rather carefully. His most important requisite right now is careful writing--good writing--and he will accept the old plots if they are presented in an interesting, outstanding manner.



"Farber!" I cried. "Farber! If you harm that girl—"

*A gripping tale of occult evil and a marvelous musical invention—by the author of "Revelations in Black"*

By the way, I've sold two of Bates' rejections to Weird Tales, myself, and also a complete novel to Oriental Tales. Lord knows when the checks will come through. I'm rather worried. The funds

have been heavily drained during the past summer months of depression, and it is getting harder and harder to collect any money on acceptance. I haven't sold Short Stories a thing since Maule returned to the editorial staff. Neither has Bedford-Jones or Wetjen. Jungle Stories, by the way, has been discontinued. Unless Short Stories shows some signs of interest very soon, either Popular Fiction or Far East will take over my Tsiang House yarns. F.E., of course, is still playing "take-a-chance-with-me" but Popular Fiction, thanks to the success of the first issue, is promising better rates in the very near future.

Here's luck to you on the crimson piano yarn. Incidentally, I think the word piano ruins that title. Why not something like "The Crimson Keys" or "Keys of Death" (not so good) or "The Sinister Symphony" or "The Crimson Symphony"--but you can dope out something better than that yourself, and Bates will change it anyhow.\* Recently I spent half a day working up the title "The Creeping Holocaust" and he promptly changed it to "The Door of Doom." The next yarn I send him will be aptly titled "Little Rosie's Red Underthings"--or--"Asleep in the Senate."

\* (Carl's piano story finally appeared--in Weird Tales, I believe--as "The Satanic Piano" and eventually wound up on TV in "Tales of the Darkside.")

Christmas morning, 1931: I saw your "The Haunted Ring" in Ghost Stories and intend to read it as soon as I get over the ill effects of Christmas buying and spending. I'm as broke as you are! Incidentally, I think your own title was a dozen times better than Palmer's. "The Coach on the Ring" is intriguing, but "The Haunted Ring" seems to me to be just the old tripe. Incidentally again, the cover of the magazine has been used before, when MacFadden had the book a couple of years ago.

"Up-River from Sandakan"\* is the yarn which was advertised a long time ago as "Come Ya Back Ya British Soldier."

\* (This appeared in Far East Adventure Stories, December 1931 under my Geoffrey Vace pseudonym).

I believe ghost stories are more realistic and horrible where they concern everyday occurrences. Thus, in my next horror yarn (which I'm working on now) I'm using a common ordinary night club, on a country road, for the setting. It's the most horrible yarn I ever thought up. The same one I mentioned to you before. Name: "Murgunstrumm." I'm taking a long chance and making it a novelette, 25,000 words, which may kill it for Bates. If so, I'll perhaps sell it to Wright. Wright has accepted three weird yarns from me--"The Brotherhood of Blood", "The Ghoull Gallery", and "The Cult of the White Ape" which I originally dubbed "The Cult of the Moon Fiends." He's also accepted a 23,000 word novel "The Desert Host" for

Oriental. The first of my weird yarns will see print in the May issue, so he says. So far (knock wood, mister) he hasn't turned down anything I've sent him, and I've been feeding him nothing but yarns which Harry B. has rejected.\*

\* (Harry Bates's Strange Tales paid much better rates than Weird Tales but went broke after seven issues.)

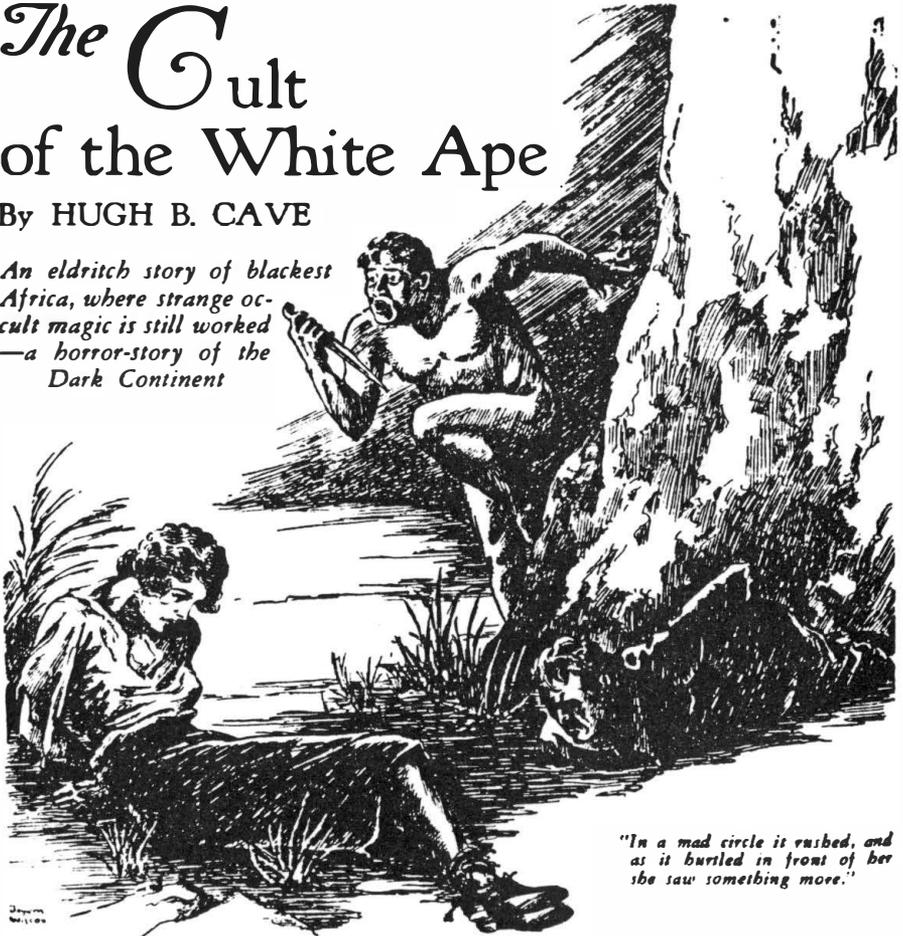
"Young Courage" (Popular Fiction, December 1931) was not submitted to Sam Bierman by me. It was copied from a last year's Short Stories, in which it appeared under the title "Borneo Brag." Rupert Knowles stole it and sold it to Bierman. Both Bierman and Roy Horn are now hot on the trail of the Knowles fellow, who, it seems, has also sold plagiarized stories to Far East and other magazines.

Ghost Stories, according to a letter I had from Stuart Palmer

# The Cult of the White Ape

By HUGH B. CAVE

*An eldritch story of blackest Africa, where strange occult magic is still worked — a horror-story of the Dark Continent*



*"In a mad circle it rushed, and as it hurried in front of her she saw something more."*

recently, is definitely through, but ran these last two issues in order to use up material...on hand. You're right--there isn't room for three such magazines. And personally I was disappointed in the last issue of Strange Tales. Seems to me that book has a long way to go before it catches up with the quality of the stuff in Weird Tales. Maybe I'm wrong...but in the new O. Henry Memorial volume, ever so many yarns from Weird Tales are given honorable mention. The book is better represented than Short or Adventure. And, as a whole, not so many yarns were listed, either. Last year three of mine got mentioned --"Captain Murder" (Short Stories), "The Pool of Death" (Brief Stories) and "A White Man Dies" (Short Stories). This year only two--"The Thirty Swords" and "Bring Me His Blood" (both from Short Stories). Of course they don't consider novelettes, and a lot of my recent stuff has been out of the short story class.

January 1932: The year 1931, in spite of its depression groans, netted me 2,000 dollars more than its predecessor. In spite of "overstocked markets" etc., I managed to sell better than 300,000 words.

February 15, 1932: Saw your "Moss Island" yarn on the stands, and liked the style of it. That was a neat illustration, hey? You're getting up in the world, Mr. Jacobi. In fact, you're already way up. This man Cave has never in his life received a full page illustration for a story!

I agree with you that Wright's book is improving. You'll notice that the cover of the current issue was painted by J. Allen St. John, who made quite a name for himself with jackets for the Tarzan books. In fact, I can remember poring over his ape-man pictures when I was just barely old enough to read Tarzan. And speaking of St. John, he has done a double spread black and white for my first yarn in Weird Tales--May issue which I am now trying to get for my wall. The original, I mean. Wright informs me that the sketch is one of the best he has ever had.\* The story, incidentally, will also get the cover illustration. "The Brotherhood of Blood" is its name. I also have...the cover of the next issue of Strange Tales.\*\*

\*(I never got it.)

\*\* (For "Stragella", the story with the sea-snakes.)

Harry Bates tells me that the readers picked "The Door of Doom" as the most popular yarn in the last issue of Strange. I suspect that's why he is giving me the cover of the new issue, on the strength of a mere short story. And he has okayed that "Murgunstrumm" yarn I told you about, although the thing must still win Clayton's approval and Clayton is three-quarters of the problem. One can never tell.\*

\*(As noted earlier, Strange Tales went broke after seven issues,

still owing me for my long novelette "Murgunstrumm" which was the cover story of the final issue. However, Karl Edward Wagner's Carcosa reprinted that tale 44 years later, in 1977, as the lead story in a handsome collection of my pulp shudder stories called Murgunstrumm and Others, wonderfully illustrated by Lee Brown Coye, and the volume won a World Fantasy Award for Best Collection. And "Murgy" is still reprinted every now and then in anthologies.)

Don't take too much stock in what you hear about Bierman and his high rates. He is horribly slow in giving decisions, and I have it



*My unsuspecting guide was still ahead of me.*

## The Door of Doom

By Hugh B. Cave

on pretty good authority that the top price he has ever paid is 2 cents--to H. Bedford-Jones for that "Ocean Bastille" yarn. The consensus of opinion in New York is that the cover of the current issue will just about kill that sheet. It is too highbrow; and Bierman, so they say, has made a big mistake in cutting out his silver covers, just at the time the silver was beginning to be his recognized trademark.

Personally the best Bierman ever paid me was a slim cent-and-a-half. And I find it particularly hard to sell him anything right now, mainly because he himself doesn't know whether or not the book is going to continue. He kept two yarns of mine more than two months and then returned them, and of course that doesn't encourage one to send him new stuff.\*

\*(Upon reflection, those pulp editors weren't so bad. Some of today's magazine editors are keeping stories a whole lot longer!)

So far as I know nothing was done about that plagiarized yarn of mine...though Bierman did say that he intended to write to all the editors in the game and put Rupert Knowles on the "blacklist". This Knowles chap copied my yarn word for word, beginning to end, with one or two sentences of his own thrown in.

Take my advice, mister, and lay off the westerns. There is absolutely no market for the commonplace slap-bang usual Western story at present. And the penny western markets are overstocked. Triple-X has discontinued, and Ace-High is chronically overstocked. Yarns for the Fiction House western sheets have to be a special type and have no other market if they fail to click.

As for getting into Short Stories, you have a better chance than ever right now. Something has happened down at Garden City. Maule seems to have stepped into the background once more. I sold 'em a short and a long novelette last month--the first sales (to them) in a long time. But beginners are getting only a penny down there right now, and the top price is two cents, I'm sure. My rates have been cut.

Far East, in case you don't already know it, has discontinued. Bamber held on bravely as long as he could, but the depression finally got him.\*

\*(When Far East folded--with the February 1932 issue --it was serializing a booklength Tsiang House novel of mine called "The Midnight Horde." The novel never finished running in Far East, but The Star Weekly of Toronto ran it as their complete novel on July 2, 1938. Said The Star Weekly in introducing it, "Frankly, this is melodrama--stark, full of terror, packed with suspense...but however sophisticated you may be, you'll enjoy to the full this tense drama of nine-lived secret service men, of a girl who knew how to keep a secret, and of brutal gun runners in the land where the world fights for oil!")

## CHAPTER TWO

Undated letter, apparently early 1932: The Weirditis bug is queer, just as you suggest. I didn't get it myself until after selling Wright some stuff. Then I began to glance at W.T. on the newsstands and finally bought a copy for the purpose of careful study. I had bought the book before, to read your yarn, but had read only a couple of other yarns in that issue. After studying the sheet, I got the bug mildly. Then The Eyrie got me, and that settled it. In my doubtful opinion I think The Eyrie is the thing that magnetizes us. No other magazine makes such a point of discussing past stories and letting the authors know how their stuff is received.

Get away from the idea that I'm a fast production man, or that anyone else is. Bedford-Jones confesses that he does only 500,000 words a year, or about 40,000 a month. Right now I'm down to 40,000 a month and sometimes less. Moreover, I'm at present revising a lot of stuff which was written before I really started selling.

Had a bit of luck this month and crashed slick paper--the Illustrated Love Mag (Tower Magazines)--for three and a half cents per. Also sold one to Short Stories, and placed British Rights at a penny a word on a couple of old ones. Right now I'm trying to convince the editor of a Boston newspaper that he ought to buy the newspaper rights of my adventure yarns.\*

\*(I succeeded. The Boston Globe Sunday Magazine became a regular reprint market for my pulp stories.)

2 June 1932: News from Clayton says pay on publication definitely from now on, but no decrease in rates--and that's something. And a letter from Bates announces that I'll have a short story, 8,000 words, in the coming issue of Strange Tales, out the 15th of next month. And the issue after that, dated January, 1933 and on the stands in October of this year, will feature "Murgunstrumm." That's a break for me. I'll be rich next October at that rate. "Murgunstrumm" runs 35,000 words. And Wright will owe me for "The Desert Host" (in Magic Carpet) which is 23,000, and also for a story in W.T. running 12,000. Besides which I have an order for another batch of newspaper rights which ought to bring in about \$150. The problem now is to stay alive until October.

And say, if I were you I'd join the American Fiction Guild. They've been feeling their way along up to date without doing much, but at the present writing they are embarking on the most unusual and stupendous scheme ever yet attempted. They are trying, with the

# The Price of Vengeance



By HUGH B. CAVE

*Back to back on the ragged edge of life, two white men listened to the sob of jungle doom drums. Each swore that even death itself would not cheat him of his vengeance.*

cooperation of publishers and distributors and authors, to PUBLICIZE this fiction racket and make people conscious that GOOD fiction is published regularly in the pulps. This they intend to do by various methods, principally through individual publicity for the authors. It will probably fall short of the mark--but still it's a big thing. I'm all for them. In fact, I joined a couple of months ago and have been named ex-officio member of the Board of Governors. Also president of this district. But the market tips they send are worth the 10 bucks yearly alone.

Here's the latest market dope: Fiction House rumored to be

## Ghosts of the Past

Hugh B. Cave, the author of *The Price of Vengeance* in this issue of *Action Stories*, doesn't take much credit for writing the sort of bang-up adventure yarns he does. He says it's in the blood—not imagination at all. He mentions a certain "ghost from out the past" that we wish we could have met. We'll bet he was an all-round fine fellow.

This adventure lore runs in the blood, inherited. It doesn't come from a front-row seat to Lon Chaney's *West of Zanzibar*, or from constant application of imagination. It's

there in the background.

There's a tiger skin and a pair of dried, wide-open jaws staring up at me now from the floor of my den, while I scribble adventure with the stub of a pencil.

Some one not so far back in the family dragged it through the jungle trails north of Capetown—some one who made a habit of the job. I can remember him—bearded, built with the rugged solidity of a tramp steamer captain—yet for all that, a man who entertained the royalty of England, and told them stories over the rim of his pipe.

It doesn't come from the keys of a typewriter, this mad clatter after the secrets of jungle trails; it comes from men like that—ghosts of the past.

HUGH B. CAVE.

From "Man Talk" in *Action Stories*, August 1929

closing down entirely. Dell is giving up all but three pulps, and will bring out new titles in the fall--maybe. Western Rangers, done. Far West Romances (S and S) done. Short Stories, overstocked. Adventure open only to shorts. Bierman's two new books abandoned before birth, and Popular Fiction having a hard time. That seems to be about all, but it's enough.

# American Fiction Guild

## BULLETIN

250 Riverside Drive, New York City

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Volume 4

March 15th, 1935

Number 3

Undated letter, probably June, 1932: As for the May issue of Weird Tales, I quote a few lines that friend Wright sent me. "'The Brotherhood of Blood' is in fourth place in popularity so far in our May Weird Tales. The current installment of Seabury Quinn's serial and Smith's story 'The Vault of Yoh Vombis' lead the voting, with 'The Last Magician' in third place. Some of the letters praising your story are exceedingly enthusiastic."

It would thus seem that my first yarn (in Weird Tales), while not being among the first three, was good enough to beat out Hamilton's long story, Eadie's mummy yarn, Derleth's short one, and Robert E. Howard's story. I don't think this is so bad, do you?

I like your title "The Sons of the Wind." Before you send it to Oriental, why not try it on Roy Horn (editor of Short Stories)? Or better still, address the MS to Dorothy McIlwraith--she's the associate--and include a short note saying that you have sold Ghost Stories, W.T., Oriental, and several other magazines. That ought to draw a letter--and letters from Short Stories quickly lead to checks.

I finally got my check for the "Brotherhood of Blood" in Weird. And, strangely enough, the rubber-stamp inscription on the reverse of it was a notice to the effect that they were buying First American

Serial Rts. only. What do you make of that?\*

\*(Many magazines were buying all rights at that time.)

9 July 1932: I'm now sojourning in Boston for the summer. New address for July and August, 118 Riverway, Boston, Mass.\*

\*(A furnished apartment I rented, to get away from Pawtucket, R.I., for a while.)

The new issue of Strange Tales will have a short story of mine in it called "The Infernal Shadow." The following issue, dated January 1933 and out in October (same time as "The Desert Host" in Oriental) will contain "Murgunstrumm." And I'm being gypped out of both covers. "Murgunstrumm" says Bates, is too horrible for a cover illustration; and the cover of the October Oriental will feature H. Bedford-Jones' yarn, "Master of Dragons," so Wright says.\*

\*("Murgy" did get the cover, a good one by H. W. Wesso, though certainly not one of that artist's best. And Farnsworth Wright finally used "The Desert Host" in the April '33 issue of The Magic Carpet. I believe that story had the cover also.)

Had four yarns in the July issue of 20-Story Magazine (England) recently, under four different names! "Island Ordeal" by Maxwell Smith--the first yarn I ever sold to any pulp magazine; it appeared in 1929 in Brief Stories. "That Monkey of Simms" by Hugh B. Cave, from Far East where it was used under the name of Jack D'Arcy! "Watch Your Slip," by Jack D'Arcy, and "Too Much Imagination" by Geoffrey Vace. Funny thing, that. I sent a bunch of published yarns over there and some of them had pseudonyms of course. But I crossed out all the pen-names and wrote my own name on all the stories. However, the editor evidently guessed that all those other names were American pen-names of mine, so she used them.

Another funny thing. Remember that yarn "Too Much Imagination" in the Author & Journalist? It hung around for two years in my files, turned down 22 times. Finally the A&J bought it and paid me six dollars for it. England's 20-Story paid ten dollars more. And two weeks later a British agent asked if he could sell the Danish rights to the damned thing--for which I got ten dollars more!

Right now I'm in somewhat of a mess. Only been here a week and I'm determined to plug the slicks tooth and nail during July and August. The summer is a dead time in the pulps anyway. I've been working like merry hell--doing a story every two days--three yarns in six days so far.

Now I've got to get to work.

4 August 1932: Congratulations on your sale to Bates! He let me understand, about a month ago, that only very exceptional stories would stand a chance.

As to payment, you will be paid on publication, of course, like

the rest of us. Unless there is a decided upheaval in the Clayton policy, the rate will be 2 cents. Other than that I can't tell you a thing. I know that payment is damned slow. I haven't seen a check yet for "The Infernal Shadow."

By the way, as president of the R.I. chapter of the AFG I had to write to Lovecraft, who lives in Providence. He came back with two very decent letters. Tells me that Wright has turned down all his recent offerings, and Bates the same. Lovecraft may be an artist, but he certainly is no business man. He actually tells Bates what Farnsworth Wright said about a story in rejecting it!

No, I don't use Lavell as a British agent. At present, Curtis Brown Ltd. is handling my British and foreign stuff. Wright doesn't buy the British rights to my W.T. and O.S. (Oriental Stories) stuff. First N.A. Serial only. As for 20-Story Mag over there, I generally send 'em a batch and let them pick out the two or three suitable ones. And they pay low rates. After the exchange deductions, a check for four stories last month amounted to about 60 dollars. All this stuff has been published before, you understand. It wouldn't pay to send manuscripts over.

When I saw Bates, he discussed Strange Tales very reticently and spent most of his time pumping me about conditions elsewhere. And mister, I dinna agree with ye about the cover of the new Strange Tales. That "horrific" creature of the fifth dimension looks too much like the Michelin tire man!

20 August 1932: No proof that All Fiction is to be revived. Only Carson Mowre's say-so. I imagine he has a flock of stuff on deck. Four of mine--or is it five?--so probably many others. That means he won't be buying until the first couple of issues are out anyhow. Dell has closed War Aces and is putting out a new nameless detective mag using the action-detective, non-deductive slant. Rates one cent on acc.

If you send "The Haunted Ring" over the water, just rip out the pages of the magazine. Suggest you send more than one yarn, though. My last batch to my English agent contained thirty-one. And rates are not so tough always. I got 12 pounds for the English reprint of "Improper Lady" from Canadian--more than Canadian paid me for the original.

My using Curtis Brown (as English agent) was mere chance. They saw a yarn of mine in 20-Story and asked if they might sell foreign rights...then they enquired if I used a regular agent for by British rights. Now they have nearly all of my published stuff except a few yarns that I can't get copies of.

8 September 1932: Strange thing about this matter of our ages. And incidentally, you and William Wallace Cook are the only men in

the business who know my real age, so for God's sake don't let it out! If we are to believe the astrologers etc., people born under the same sign of the Zodiac are temperamentally suited to each other. Well then, Mr. Jacobi, your birthday is July 10 and mine is July 11.

I imagine it was necessary that put me a notch above you in fiction production. You see, I've been on my own hook since I left high school, and had to combine college--nights--with newspaper work in order to keep alive.\*

\*(It wasn't newspaper work, except that I sold crossword puzzles and poetry to various newspapers. I worked days for a small Boston vanity publisher who also turned out some trade journals. Along with



Carl Jacobi, circa 1932

emptying wastebaskets and preparing manuscripts for publication, I designed book jackets and wrote jacket blurbs. I was even given the job once--at age nineteen!--of rewriting a vanity author's book to make it more "publishable.")

Wright sends word that Oriental is changing policy and name and will now be 15 cents. My yarn, being long, will be held over until the issue after next. The new policy will demand glamorous, exotic, mysterious tales embodying the full feel of the East, and trite plots will be definitely tabu.\*

\*(As noted earlier, the name was changed to The Magic Carpet.)

The new Weird Tales is kind of sexy, ain't he? Sexy or not, Brundage is a big improvement over Senf. But I still think St. John is the best, and I'd like to see more of those Hugh Rankin charcoals inside. Friend of mine says that Seabury Quinn's "The Corpse Master" was in the movies. Good. Maybe that will pave the way for more W.T. movie rights. These macabre pictures have great chances for masterful photography. "Dracula" was good, and "Frankenstein." "Murders in the Rue Morgue" should have been labelled Mack Sennett Comedy.

My number of duds (in the weird fiction field) isn't too heavy, considering that Bates has bought--let's see--five yarns including a long novelette, and Wright has even bought seven. Twelve sales out of 16 attempts isn't half bad, considering that the weird tale field is practically new to me and I had to get the slant of what both editors wanted.\*

\*(Those other stories eventually sold, too. Two of them, published in Black Book Detective, were reprinted by Karl Edward Wagner in Carcosa's award-winning collection of my pulp horror stories.)

Be sure to enclose return postage with anything you send to Collier's these days, or you'll get the damned thing back express collect! I know, I got one this morning!

And keep your eye on Clayton. Something's in the air down there. When it comes, it will be a shock to a lot of old-timers. Maybe a change of rates. Clayton is way behind with payments, and the list of overdue checks must be mounting to startling proportions by this time. Bates tells me they are holding their business meetings in Chinese to keep the editors from knowing what's going to happen. So don't spend any of your Clayton money until you get it. And don't be surprised, either, if you get your next check on acceptance--or don't get it at all.

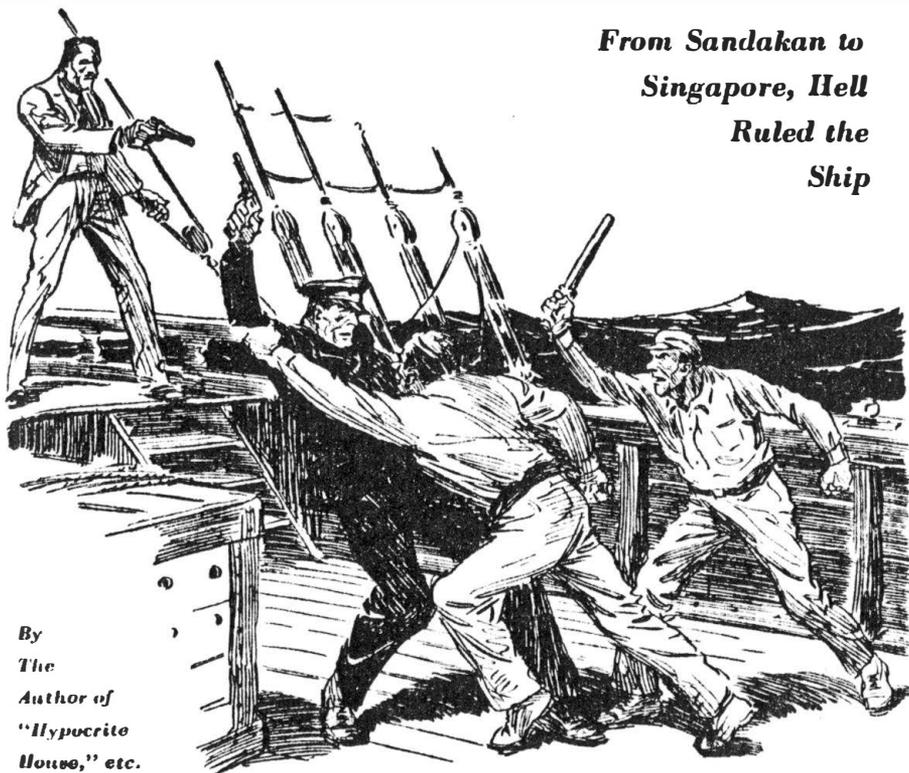
26 September 1932: You speak of Wright's disfiguration of your mss. Watch out, too, for those infernal red dots which he makes on the right hand margin of every page. Don't ever send a yarn to Harry Bates with those red dots on it, or you'll get it back. He

doesn't like to take W.T. rejects, and he knows damned well what those r.d.s are. He told me so.

Speaking of films, I once saw a German movie called "The Cabinet of Dr. Cagliostro"--I think that was the name--which had all our recent horror pictures beat a mile. Man I shuddered at my own shadow for months afterward!

25 October 1932: First off--about "Murgunstrumm." Yep, ever since that yarn was finished in mss form, I've been feeling that it ought to make a good movie. With changes, of course. The story is now in Roy Horn's hands for RKO, and in Irving Deakin's hands for Warner Bros., and in Viola Cooper's hands for consideration by smaller outfits. Viola declares it to be excellent movie material but fears that the madhouse scene will cause no end of trouble. Anyway,

*From Sandakan to  
Singapore, Hell  
Ruled the  
Ship*



By  
The  
Author of  
"Hypocrite  
House," etc.

# HELL HOLE HATE

By HUGH B. CAVE

I've done all I can do about getting it read. But thanks for passing on Derleth's and Smith's comments. It was encouraging.

I do like the plot for your new Western. There is one bad place in it, though. No Western Story hero can shoot down his own brother, no matter how rotten the brother is. True, this fellow isn't his brother when it comes to a show-down, but the hero THINKS he is at the time of the shooting. You'll have to let the hero learn, before the shooting, that the villain is not his brother.

I'll admit that these things sound petty and childish, but if you're going to write for markets like Western Story and Top Notch, in which the stuff is aimed at young readers, you simply have to watch out for your hero's morals. Incidentally, Western Story has a yarn of mine at present, called "Lonesome Rides Alone," which I hope will be the first of a series centering around a young chap named Lonesome Jim Gale. I worked like hell on it and am waiting rather anxiously for the result. If it goes over, that will be four sales without a reject or even a request for revision.

College Humor, Cosmopolitan, and Good Housekeeping are all keeping stories of mine "for final consideration." Pray, brother, pray.

17 November 1932: This is one of those days that knock a writer's ambitions to hell. Warner Bros., the first of the movie outfits to report on "Murgunstrumm," returned it because of the madhouse angle. Then Western Story returned my last attempt after holding it long enough to make me think it was a sure sale--so sure that I had just finished writing a sequel to it. Then I got one back from Chatelaine which had already been accepted. The Editor was strong for it, but the Editorial Director said no at the last minute. Cosmo returned the one they were holding with this comment: "This is a fine story, very humorous and well worthy of publication. The trouble is, we positively cannot consider anything until the first of the year." And Good Housekeeping returned theirs with the following: "We are genuinely sorry to return this. It is excellently done, and has a very nice appeal. The writing is vivid. It's by far the best you've sent us, we think. However, we can be very choosy these days."

Damn the depression. You plug along day after day, making yourself so damned irritable you can't even get along with the girl friend, and still the disappointments pour in relentlessly. If some kind editor would tell me straight out, "Cave, as a writer you're a damned good peanut vendor," I'd go out maybe and buy a peanut wagon. But these blasted "almosts" keep coming from the best mags in the country.\*\*

\*(It was only a matter of time. Cosmopolitan eventually bought several stories from me, and Good Housekeeping eventually published 36, including a number of long novelettes. All told, I have sold more than 300 pieces of fiction to the slicks.)

## CHAPTER THREE

10 December, 1932: This fiction factory is in the doldrums and, between you and me and the storm clouds, is getting desperate. A checkup on the year's work reveals 54 stories written so far, including a dozen long novelettes and a dozen slick-paper attempts. The slick stories were a downright gamble, so I can't legitimately call those stories a part of the routine year's work. That leaves just about 40 yarns written this year which should have sold-- allowing, of course, for a few duds which creep into the best of families. Well, so what?

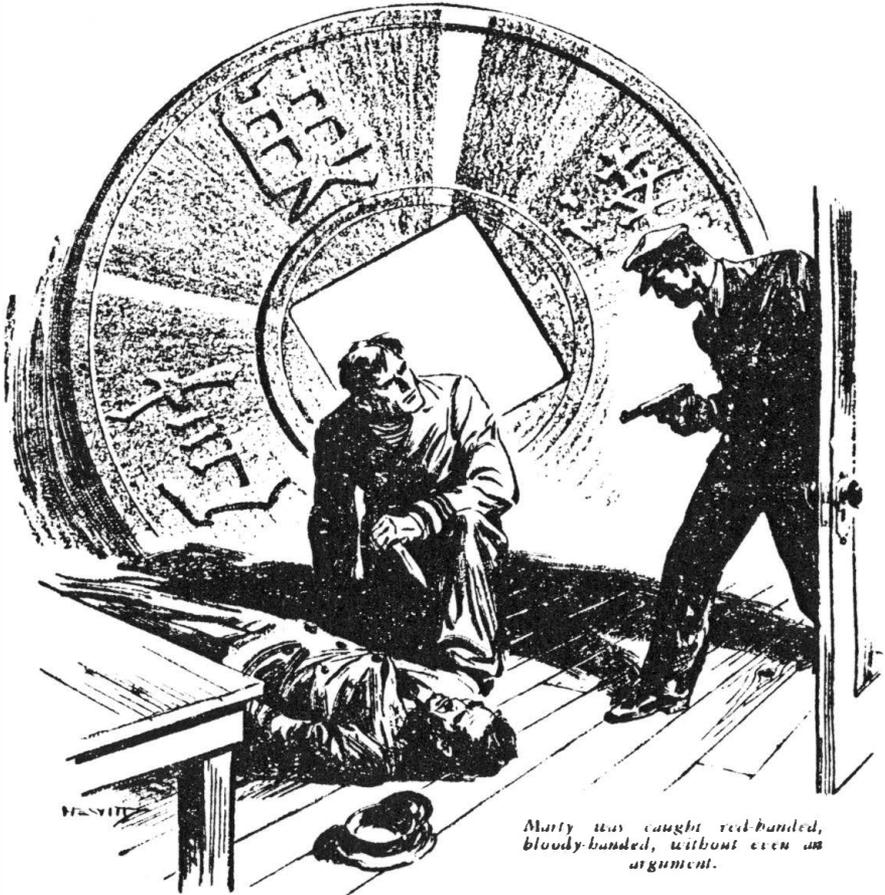
The files show a record of 32 stories sold. Of those, I've been paid for 19. Only in a few cases have I received more than a cent a word, and in two instances I received less than that. I'm getting low in reserve funds and yet have more than \$1,500 owing to me. Did you ever see such conditions before in the fiction business?

Ordinarily, this year would have been pretty nearly even with last, which in spite of the depression was my best year since starting in 1929. You know I began writing full-time in May, 1929 (when I was 2 months short of being 19 years old! HBC), after selling half a dozen stories during the previous six months, and sold about 15 yarns before the year ended. 1930 was a good year; I was beginning to feel the way along and get better results. Short Stories was buying a lot from me. 1931 was better, despite the depression. 1932, unless I can collect some of what's owing to me, will be a slump--and it hurts like hell to slump when you are plugging with all your heart to reach better things.

Trouble is, the depression didn't really sock the fiction industry until this year; then nearly all the mags started paying on publication. Rather, they began paying when they felt like it--and most of 'em don't feel like it, evidently. Then a flock of mags discontinued, sending me back accepted stories. So, from the looks of things, I'll be sending out a flock of telegrams around the end of this month in an attempt to bolster up the bank roll. And I hate to do it, because it puts you in a tough spot with the editors. In this racket, the editors simply can't realize the position of the free-lance writer who hasn't a regular weekly check coming in.

The other day I had a letter from Kenneth White of Dime Detective returning a weird novelette which was originally written for Strange Tales. He evidently liked the yarn, for he informed me that D.D. would be going twice a month beginning with the February issue, and how would I like to make the book a possible regular market?

Well, it was worth a stab and I needed the money, so I turned out a 14,000 worder in two days, finished it Sunday night, and then went down to Tony's at 2 a.m. for a couple of beers. Parked the car in front of Tony's, and when I came out there was a 5-month-old German Police pup curled up under the blanket on the ledge behind the seat. Poor thing was starved and frozen, couldn't walk, couldn't see. Knowing a little something about dogs, I brought it home (to my bachelor apartment) and did what I could to make it comfortable,



*Marty was caught red-handed, bloody-handed, without even an argument.*

**A Chinese Coin Told Marty To  
Dare The Terrors of Sandakan**

# HEADS UP IN HELL

By HUGH B. CAVE

thinking to call up the Animal Rescue League in the morning.

When I got a look at the pup in daylight, however, I changed my mind. What a beauty! Cross between a Dob Pinscher and a German Shepherd, just big enough to be all legs. Suffering from worms, starvation, exposure. Well, as I said, that was Sunday night--Monday morning, rather. Right now the damn little thing is running relays up and down the hall, skating on the polished floor. Give me two weeks and I'll have the pup in first class A-one condition: and already the little one is so grateful that I can't even get up from the typewriter and walk into the next room without being followed every step of the route! So if you should see me out in Minnie (Minneapolis, where Carl lived) by any chance this summer, the chances are you'll also see the new acquisition--as yet unnamed. Any ideas for a name for a lady pup 5 months old who, when full grown, will be damn near as big as a Great Dane?

Dorothy McIlwraith--now the managing editor of Short Stories, with Maule once again lurking in the background unseen--returned an 11,000 worder about a week ago, asking me to submit it again in two months. A good story, she said, but they were not buying ahead and were overstocked on novelettes.

Bierman's two nickel books are out, as you probably know, and I presume he is using that jinx western novel of mine in some future issue of Nickel Western. At least, I haven't had it back yet. There's no market, unless maybe for the detective mag. The western is using up a lot of stuff previously bought for Two Gun and a good bit of the stuff in the detective sheet is from the files of Popular Fiction. Dell's All-Western, with Carson Mowre the editor, is buying, too, but is slow in reporting. Western Story is going to cut out the serials and pattern itself after such mags as Complete Detective Stories and Wild West Stories and Complete Novel. That is, they will use one long novel each issue and fill the book with a few shorts for fillers. Perhaps that's why my last yarn was returned and the report is so slow on the one Miss Hubbard now has. It may mean the end of the market, just when things were beginning to look rosy. Don't let that scare you off the range, though, because you can bet your boots that the book will be going back to the old routine before long. Two or three of the Street & Smith sheets have tried experiments lately, but they are all back where they started from.

Well, sir, that seems to be all the dope. As I said before I feel like chucking the whole business and taking a couple of weeks' rest. Art for Pete's sake may be all right, but I've got a pup to feed now, as well as myself, and it's no fun writing for nothing. Still, I know damned well--and so do you--that the only way to sell 'em is to keep on writing 'em, pounding the mill day in and day out without a let-down. So as soon as I've signed my John Henry to this, and thanked you once again for the swell introduction to Pinky's

Potpourri\*, I'm going to work on a new yarn which has to do with finding a starving pup on the seat of a car on a cold wintry night.

\*(Pinkusson's Potpourri, a pipe tobacco.)

Postscript. Yours arrived just as I was about to mail this masterpiece.

Glad you listened in on the Brown-Colgate scrap. Now y'know how I felt. Providence, you know, is only 3 miles from Pawtucket--Podunk to youse guys. Me, I reside in Podunk's only modern apartment house. Brown's campus? Well, yes and no. We refer to Brown as "The Hill" because the college buildings, all ivy-covered and pleasantly aged, occupy Providence's central mountain--and if you don't think it's a mountain, try to drive a Ford up it--or down it when there's snow on the ground!

Last time I did that stunt I had an Essex. Started at the top in low gear, hit some lovely smooth ice about half way down, and landed at the bottom, sideways, still in first, going approximately 30 miles per. A big Cadillac, Cadillac rather, shot towards me and I would have swiped him to a fictioneer except for the car tracks. As it was, the Essex slapped the car tracks sideways, shot along in them for about 50 feet, neck and neck with the Caddy, and then bumped out of the tracks onto the sidewalk. And was my face red by that time? H'm. I haven't been down College Hill in winter since!

But as for Brown--well, the buildings are on the hill and the main campus while not particularly huge, is rather beautiful. Child's restaurant, downtown, has a hard and fast rule that sugar bowls cost 12 bucks if broken--because the Brown boys have a fancy habit of throwing them at each other whenever there's a big time on.\*

\*(The above hasn't much to do with pulp fiction but is included because College Hill was also the residence of H.P. Lovecraft. The odd thing is that though Lovecraft and I lived within a few miles of each other for years, and exchanged a few letters, we never met or even talked to each other on the telephone.)

Mister, I told you Wright wasn't buying! He wouldn't buy "The Fall of the House of Usher" if it were submitted right now. But I'm glad as hell to know you'll be in the April issue. You'll get paid, believe it or not--unless things improve--May first. Formerly you'd have been paid the fifteenth of the month the issue appeared--that is, March 15th. But not these days. I haven't yet been paid for "Step Softly, Sahib!" (in Wright's Magic Carpet). And I have a 93 dollar yarn appearing in the next W.T., as you may have noticed in this month's announcements.

That trip west this summer depends entirely on the bankroll. Right now it's sick as hell, and I'm honestly worried. It would be the height of irony for a feller to be broke and unable to pay the rent when he has more than two thousand owing to him! Honest to God, that's what I have, counting stuff in Magic Carpet, Strange, Weird,

NEXT MONTH

# Dead Man's Belt

By HUGH B. CAVE

**A**N EXCEPTIONALLY powerful story is this grim tale of a cold-blooded murder and the terrible retribution that stalked relentlessly in its wake. It is a narrative of the cruel and sordid existence of the dwellers on a city dump, their loves and their lusts, their superstitions and their games, and the stark tragedy of their lives.

**I**N THIS weird story, one of the most unusual ever printed, Mr. Cave has dipped his pen in the life-blood of his characters and depicted them so vividly that they seem to step out of the printed page and grip your sympathies. This absorbing, fascinating and dramatic weird narrative will be published complete in the

*May issue of*

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Canadian, Boston Globe, England's Modern Weekly, Toronto Star, etc. etc. And not forgetting Two Gun.\*

\*(Two thousand dollars was a lot of money back in 1932, remember. The rent on my apartment at that time was forty dollars a month, if I remember right.)

Your idea of the adventure series looks good to me. But, mister, take the advice of one who ought to know, and lay off adventure for at least a few months. Blue Book and Adventure are not buying, Short Stories is buying only big names, Top Notch and Complete are overstocked for months to come, and Thrilling Adventure isn't worth playing with. Detective fiction is the best bet in the pulps right now; Western stuff is good but the big western writers have the market pretty well padlocked. The Weird Tales market is shot to hell.

Nickel Western and Nickel Detective are Bierman's sheets, but not put out by his old company. Same address, though. Tell you more when I hear from Sam (Bierman).

4 January 1933: Well, the Christmas season is over at last, and I feel somewhat inclined to breathe a whispered "Thank God." It's a

season of unrest in which I seldom get anything done. But now we're back to the grind, albeit somewhat wiser after giving the entire situation a thorough study and mapping out a plan of action for 1933.

My first and only New Year's resolution has to do with slick paper stories. It is this: to study the various slick markets with fanatic zeal and slant my attempts precisely as one would slant a pulp yarn.

The year 1932 ended not too badly. On December 31 I had just one dollar and twenty cents more in the bank than on the same date of 1931. That's not an indication that I made as much in '32 as in '31, for I've cut down on expenses painfully. But at least I'm not any deeper in the hole, after the worst year in history.

The pup died. For three days it continued to improve, and really showed signs of enjoying life. On the third night it woke me up; I ran into the den and found the lamp tipped over, the table upended, books all over the floor, and the poor pup lunging headlong from wall to wall, stark mad. I did all I could think of and called the dog doctor. Says he: "Well, yes, you had the right idea. The little devil had worms and distemper, and could have been cured. But she also has congested lungs, so--" And he opened a bottle of something, administered the dose, gathered up my li'l pup, and said in parting: "Better luck next time."

Answering your other questions--Mister, I'd go to Singapore, Sandakan etc., tomorrow if I had sufficient money. As a matter of fact, I came very close to taking a long trip two years ago. Had it all mapped out--Boston by freighter to Algiers, inland through Morocco for three weeks, Mediterranean to the Suez, etc. Bedford-Jones gave me some pointers; so did Roy Horn. Douglas Dold squashed the idea by telling me I'd be the damndest damned fool if I left the U.S. at that particular period of my development. Said I'd lose contact completely and would have to start all over again on my return. Also said that a chap with as little money as I had should certainly have a knowledge of navigation, because there was no telling when he'd lose his money and have to work his way home. Also informed me that I'd have a hell of a time in some ports because I'd be shipping on an American freighter and was an Englishman. Told me that under no circumstances should I barge off without at least a thousand dollars in the pants pockets, and not to depend on the folks at home because the mail service would ruin me. So after due consideration I reneged, though I had already decided on the day of sailing, the ship, and all the rest of it.\*

\*(Born in England, I was brought to the U.S. by my parents when five years old. At the time mentioned above I had not yet become an American citizen.)

Well, I'll sign off. Here's a happy New Year to you. I'll drink to ya with hopes for a smashing '33, and the liquor is Seagram's best rye, right up off the bottom of the ocean where rumrunners heaved it overboard--off Cape Cod--the day before Christmas. Good stuff, and good wishes go with it. Maybe we'll be shaking hands before

long. Who knows?

16 January 1933: Yours was a welcome missive and mighty interesting, too. What we should do is buy ourselves a sea-going yacht and head for Goona-Goona, or wherever we can find an island which is not inhabited by a motion picture company. There, for the rest of our days, we can write Great American short stories, play chess, make love to auburn-skinned beauties, play my banjo, smoke Pinkusson's Potpourri, swim, get drunk on fermented coconut milk, fish for sharks, and write nasty letters to editors. Hey hey! Happy Noo Year!

You asked about Western Story. A check came for "Branded" about the seventh of this month. At present Miss Hubbard has a short called "Readin' Writin' and Rough Stuff," and there are two other yarns, in very rough draft, now on my desk waiting to be dispatched to 79 Seventh Avenue. I've had only one reject so far since I started. Friend Dorothy never writes letters. All I ever get from her is a Street & Smith envelope containing a check. But she did take time out, the other day, to caution me against using "yuh" in my stories--a point I had already taken note of because she changed all the "yuh's" to "you's" when she printed "The Arizona Kid." Western Story doesn't like too much slang. Prefers you to use correct spelling and also likes you to retain the "g" on words ending in "ing"--except in a few cases. I hadn't noticed this little point or points until I read over the printed version of my "Arizona Kid" but it's a point to be kept in mind.\*

\*(But Dorothy Hubbard published "Readin', Writin' and Rough Stuff" in Western Story of June 10, 1933 without changing the title!)

As for your sending me another Western yarn, go to it. I've been expecting one ever since you wrote the first one. Now that I've sold 'em quite a few--five sales in three months isn't half bad, is it?--I think a letter from this here dugout will insure you a sympathetic reading, just as much so as if we used a double by-line. So send me a story and I'll get it right out to her. A cent and a half a word on acceptance is better than a cent a word on publication.

Undated letter, probably January 1933: Well, Clayton has finally paid up, but in a most peculiar way. The other day I received a promissory note for 350 dollars (for "Murgunstrumm") payable in six months, at 5 percent interest. Also a letter from Mr. Clayton himself, saying that the outfit had adopted this policy of paying back debts in order to clear themselves, so that they might begin paying on acceptance again for new material. Clayton suggests that the receivers of the notes may discount them for cash at the local bank ("Our Bradstreet rating should make that easy") or may keep the notes until maturity. Whether or not the local banks will discount

*Up Through the Deep Borneo  
Jungle the Black River  
Was Bearing Opium  
and Treachery to  
Tsiang House*



## A WHITE MAN DIES

*A "Tsiang House" Story*

By HUGH B. CAVE

*Author of "Cry Wolf," "The Sins of the Fool," etc.*

'em is another question! Not being in any immediate need of cash, I haven't taken the note down to my local financier, but I'm curious to know what his reaction will be when I do.\*

\*(As I remember it, the Clayton magazines filed for bankruptcy and the note mentioned was either worthless or paid very little.)

Funny, but I sent a yarn to Nickel Western myself. Wonder which if either he will accept--your's or mine? Maybe both, huh?

Here's luck.

## CHAPTER FOUR

February 3, 1933. Only yesterday to myself I said: "Now I wonder what's the matter with that Jacobi guy. Maybe he has fallen into the grip of the flu ogre who is doing such a thriving business these days." Now this morning comes a letter from you, clearing up the mystery. And a mighty welcome letter too.

Muchly am I glad that you liked "The Desert Host" and also am I grateful to you for sending Wright a recitation of your likes. Without a doubt that story is a most important one to me, since Wright himself believes it to be a corker. If "The Desert Host" takes second place in its issue--and it won't do any better, with Seabury Quinn appearing alongside!--I'll be satisfied. For some reason or other Mr. Farnsworth has big ideas concerning the Cave name. You'll notice, for instance, that he inserted an advance ad for my "Dead Man's Belt" story into the current issue of Weird Tales although the yarn itself won't appear for 2 months.

Congratulations, sir, on selling another one to Farnsworth. Fifty bucks is fifty bucks; but more significant than the money involved is the fact that you're clicking the man regularly. He has more of yours on hand right now than he has of mine.

I'm still hanging onto "The Black Gargoyle"--the yarn which Bates returned to me after accepting it. Here's how I figure. If I sold it to Wright, it wouldn't see print for about 5 months, and my check wouldn't arrive for another 2 months after that. Seven months in all. And I'm willing to gamble that Astounding and Strange (Tales) will be alive again by that time. So I get 2 cents for the yarn instead of 1 cent, and don't have to wait any longer for the money than if I sold the story to Weird Tales.

RKO had "Murgunstrumm" under serious consideration for Karloff, but returned it finally with the comment that for the time being they were discontinuing their plan of seeking material in the pulps.\*

\*(RKO had sent me a telegram asking whether the motion-picture rights to "Murgy" were available, and I had all but spent the money when they decided not to go through with the deal. It was one of the saddest days of my young life!)

Finally, mister, this business of fictioneering seems to be definitely on the upswing. Editors are beginning to need material. Mowre of All Detective and All Western sent out an emergency call for stories not so long ago.

Canadian Magazine bought another of my slicks last week--a

4000 worder entitled "Road Map." The Home Magazine (Tower group) accepted a 3500 worder called "Behind the Mask" and offered 75 bucks for it. The Household Magazine (see the O.Henry collections for the past 3 years--and O'Brien, too) bought one called "Scarecrow in Scarlet" and paid me 3 cents per, promptly on acceptance. Aside from those three slick paper sales, I also sold a short to Western Story, an old dud to Abbott's Monthly, and had a tentative letter of acceptance from Dorothy McIlwraith (of Short Stories) on a 12,000-word novelette. All in January (1933)!\*

\*Like many another pulp fiction writer, I took time out to try a slick-paper story every now and then, in hope of breaking into higher-paying markets. A 5,000-word story for the pulps, even at 2 cents a word, brought in only \$100. My first sale to The Saturday Evening Post, in 1948, brought in \$1000 for a story of the same length--and I ended up getting \$3,000 a story after selling The Post 43 of them.)

You can't tell me that I've just suddenly learned how to write. These stories aren't any better than the stuff I've been turning out right along. Yet all of a sudden they begin to sell, pulp and slick both. And while you may be sure I'm damned tickled, I'm also mighty tickled to think that the market is finally starting to buy again.

21 February 1933. Pounding out a letter to you may serve to snap me out of the doldrums which I've been in since the first of the week. Damn this writing business anyway. You plan a schedule for yourself and then you hit a period of days when you can't sit on Fanny long enough to hit a key. Right now, to make things worse, I've got a right eye that runs like a river. Damn the grippe! I suppose that's what it is, huh?

Yes, I heard from Wright. He wrote me just about what he wrote you, except, of course, that he made no mention of your "Revelations in Black." Instead he included the following comment: "The second story in the broadcast will be your "The Ghoul Gallery" from W.T. of last June. I am not yet informed of the cast, but I know that Evelyn Brent plays a part."

That's good dope, broadcasting W.T. There are plenty people who like horror stuff and will listen in. Lots of 'em don't know that such a mag as W.T. exists. Anyway, a couple of the Street and Smith mags have boosted their circulation by using the radio. Why not Wright? Here's hoping he gives us both a break on the publicity.

Incidentally, Wright postscripted in his letter that a Hollywood movie company is considering making a series of 2-reel shorts using stories from W.T. The stories haven't been selected yet, I take it, but if the thing goes through, any money involved will go to the authors, with Wright in the role of agent. Fair enough. Here's hoping.

"The Ghoul Gallery," as I remember it, contains a plenitude of

sound effects--weird wailings, etc. Ought to be plenty dramatic on the radio. As for your "Revelations in Black," I ain't read it, of course, but if it isn't better than "The Ghoul Gallery" I'll sure as hell bowl you out.\*

\*(I don't think the W.T. radio broadcasts ever came off. Or the movie deal either.)

I sent Wright that "Black Gargoyle" story I'd been saving. This looks like a complete backdown on former statements I made in so loud a voice, but really it isn't. Clayton, for one thing, is paying only 1 cent these days, and some of his sheets (the Rapid Fire group) are paying only half a cent. For another thing, "The Black Gargoyle" had some radio and movie possibilities, worth taking a chance on. So Wright has the story, and wouldn't the laugh be on me if he returned it as being n.g.??\*

\*(He didn't. He gave it the cover of the March '34 issue, an issue that also contained stories by Edmond Hamilton, Clark Ashton Smith, David H. Keller, Paul Ernst, and Hazel Heald. I have that cover on my workroom wall as I write this--reproduced on a plaque given to me in 1983 by Rusty Hevelin and the gang at Pulpcon, for being co-guest of honor with Bob Bloch.)

Western Story has sort of petered out as a market, I'm sorry to report. The threatened change of contents took place last month, and the sheet is now using only three shorts each issue. Nearly half the book is taken up by a book-length novel. A little short of mine, "Notched Guns," appeared last issue. Did you see it? Anyway, Hubbard has had my last submission six weeks, and no report yet, so draw your own conclusions. Don't, however, let that discourage you from pounding out your "Deputies at Lost Brand." Even if Western Story says no, there are plenty other western markets buying material. All Western, for instance, needs stuff badly.

If you write one for Munsey's Railroad Stories, as you suggest, and it misses the mark, you have Adventure, Blue Book, Short, and possibly one or two other pulps to fall back on. Railroad Stories is a hard magazine to break into. Don't forget that a R.R. plot which seems new and original to you may seem hoary to a man who has been writing railroad plots for ten years or so and has exhausted all the obvious ones.

Dime Detective? As you know, I wrote a novelette for them. Got it back with the comment "too much woman." Mowre, of All Detective, refused it because it was too long. Dorothy Hubbard of Detective Story said too much sex. Right now it's at Rapid Fire Detective. You're right in thinking that Dime Detective uses weird plots. They like the weird element, but--so they say--the story must have a logical conclusion. Still, I've seen some of J. Paul Suter's stories in the book which were mighty close to being ghostish. Their best writer is Fred Nebel, who has also written for the S.E. Post.



*"Back!" Paul cried. "Back!"*

# Murgunstrumm

*A Complete Novelette*

**By Hugh B. Cave**

I can't make out whether you're doing a wise thing or a foolish one in trying your hand at so many different kinds of stories. Douglas Dold told me once that the man who learns to write all types of fiction is much better off in the long run than the "specialist," though it unquestionably takes him longer to "get there." I'm inclined to believe he's right.

But it takes longer to get there if you don't concentrate on one line of work. Look at me, for instance. If I'd stayed with adventure stories I'd perhaps be working regularly now for Short, Adventure, Blue Book, and Argosy. But I couldn't see getting into a rut. Result,

I haven't any absolutely infallible markets, but if any one of them should fold tomorrow it wouldn't put me in a bottomless pit. If Western Story died, I'd still have a dozen other mags. If Short Stories died, what of it? But if Short Stories had died when I was specializing on that magazine, I'd have been forced to look for a job.

So I guess you're wise--but I wish to God you'd take time out, every now and then, to turn out a slick paper story, mister. You speak of doing a railroad yarn, for instance. Well, suh, you'd have a whole lot better chance of selling a slick story than you'll have selling a R.R. yarn. So why not tackle a slick story and send it the rounds? All of which sounds like a sermon, but it's sincere. We'll now sing a hymn.

This damned eye of mine is driving me crazy. I'll rush the rest



of this letter and do my best to make up for it by writing a good one next time, at which point I should either have a better eye or none at all. Right now it feels as if it wanted to do a Clark Ashton Smith on me and go travelling along the floor looking for a place to hide.

You asked about the AFG (American Fiction Guild). Burks (Arthur J. Burks) is now president. Their weekly tip cards are worth the 10 bucks easily, and I owe at least four sales to them. Right now the Guild has access to some 1500 newspapers throughout the country--through a publicity company--and is ballyhooing better pulp fiction. Tell you more about it later. I'm still high muckymuck in this neck of the woods. Anytime you have a loose ten bucks, don't hesitate to join.

Wright returned my story for Magic Carpet...said it was too long and he had sufficient long stuff on hand, and he wanted shorts because the book has been reduced to 128 pages since the price reduction. Far as I know, he still wants glamorous adventure yarns with woman interest and unusual plot, and a lot of colorful names of people and places.

I'm going to quit and grab me a couple of ice cubes and see if I can't freeze this eye into submission. No kidding, it hurts like hell. So I'll be seeing you, and thanks again for your two interesting letters. Best wishes for "Revelations in Black" on the radio, and may you get lots of checks all of a sudden.

P.S. Bierman evidently isn't at all superstitious. I see that he has announced that Western novel of mine, "One On You, Zeus!" for the next issue of Nickel Western. Twice before, when he ballyhooed that story, his magazine folded before the yarn could see print! He's had the story so long now that I can't even remember when I sold it to him. Maybe I'll be getting a check for the damned thing, after all!

7 March 1933: I can see out of both eyes now, thank God, but I have a thumb as big as an elephant's foot, as a result of letting the car door slam shut on it last Friday night. Result, I've had to learn to type all over again, and while I'm rapidly becoming proficient at it, it still takes double the time of the old reliable touch system.

Now let's get down to business about your "Revelations in Black." (Author's note: here follow some short paragraphs of criticism of Carl's story. He and I critiqued each other's work often, and I know that in my case, at least, I benefitted greatly from his suggestions. Then I continued:) Don't...accept my opinions as law. Remember, the story was purchased and presented to the public by a magazine that is notoriously hard to crash. Those facts should speak for themselves, without any added comments from a mistake-making dodo like me. I enjoyed the yarn, and I know ninety-nine and

44/100ths percent of the readers did, too.\*

\*(Carl Jacobi's "Revelations in Black" ended up as the title story in a highly regarded collection of his weird tales published by Arkham House in 1947. Two other such collections by Arkham House followed.)

But to stay with W.T. for a moment, how did you like the cover of the current issue? I thought it was the best in a long time. If, as you say, my "Dead Man's Belt" is due for next month's cover illustration, I only hope St. John is given the assignment. But that yarn will NOT be popular, though. It is heavily written, is sordid and unpleasant to extremes, and contains nothing weird, in the sense that Weird Tales accepts that word, until the final half-thousand words. Douglas Dold (of Clayton Magazines) said the story was the most powerful and compelling yarn he had read ever, as both a writer and an editor. Collier's called it strikingly vivid but vicious. It contains some of the best writing I've ever been able to do.

So you met Doug Lurton! He and I have done considerable corresponding, and have sent yarns back and forth quite a bit--my yarns, I mean!--but we've never done much business. When Triple-X was an adventure-western sheet I sold him two long novelettes, one of which was worth 350 dollars. But I never could do his westerns. He seems to be a nice guy, judging from his letters. I'm mighty grateful for your putting in a good word for me. Whether you know it or not I did a similar stunt for you with Harry Bates when I had the good fortune to talk to him in New York one morning. It's a proved fact that writers can make more for themselves by sticking together and helping each other along than by cutting each other's throats.

27 March 1933: Seabury Quinn's "Vagabond-at-Arms" takes first place in the current issue of Magic Carpet. My "Desert Host" is a close second. Half a loaf is better'n none, eh?"

The coming issue of that same magazine will contain a half-page ad for a yarn of mine, "The Crawling Curse," which will appear in the June issue of W.T. "The Crawling Curse," according to the announcement, is "a shuddery tale of an East Indian murder, and the ghastly fate that pursued the murderer, like an inexorable Nemesis, to his doom. In this powerful story you have Mr. Cave at his superb best. It is a story of stark terror, of a criminal hounded to his death by forces he does not understand; the story of a dead man's hand that crawled, and crawled, like an evil spider...This gripping tale is printed complete in the current issue of Weird Tales."

Mr. Cave, you see, is now writing "superb" stories. Got a size 10 hat around the house somewhere?

## CHAPTER FIVE

3 June 1933: Yours should have been answered long ago, but I took a trip up to northern Maine, fishing, and left the typewriter at home. And now that I'm back, I've got so much mail to clean up that I just haven't time to breathe. Read your yarn "The Last Drive" in Weird Tales--and how did you like the cover? Neat little yarn. Hope you get some more of those swell readers-letters for it. The issue was just about all Jacobi--at least the Eyrie was. More power to you!

17 June 1933: By now you've probably given me up for dead, hey? Don't know as I blame you. Truth of the matter is, I had so much work to do when I got back from that fishing trip that I haven't yet got organized properly. Furthermore, I was doing lousy work before I left, and not much of it; so, when I got back and found the old fingers ready to tear off 60,000 words a month again, I just let 'em loose and made hay while the sun was glowing. And believe me, mister, the sun is glowing here in New England right now. It's been above 90 for the past three days, and 90 here in the coastal region is equal to a thousand-and-ninety out where you grace the scenery.

However, I have some letters of yours to answer. Forgive me if I seem to answer them in columnist style. Here goes.

If you haven't been paid yet for RIB ("Revelations in Black" in Weird Tales) don't worry about it. Wright's bank has been under the 5% withdrawal limit since the month he should have paid me for "Cult of the White Ape." I haven't had a cent from him in a dog's age. Don't know when the condition will improve.

Better not try to sell "The Curse Pistol" in England until it's been published in Clayton's magazine first. Think I told you the whys and wherefores in a recent note of mine. Fact is, editors may only buy--may buy only, if you like your grammar correct--First American Serial Rights in a yarn, but usually insist on first publication. You can sell "Dogs of the Wind" in England, of course, since it's never been placed in America--but you might have trouble disposing of Yankee rights afterward.

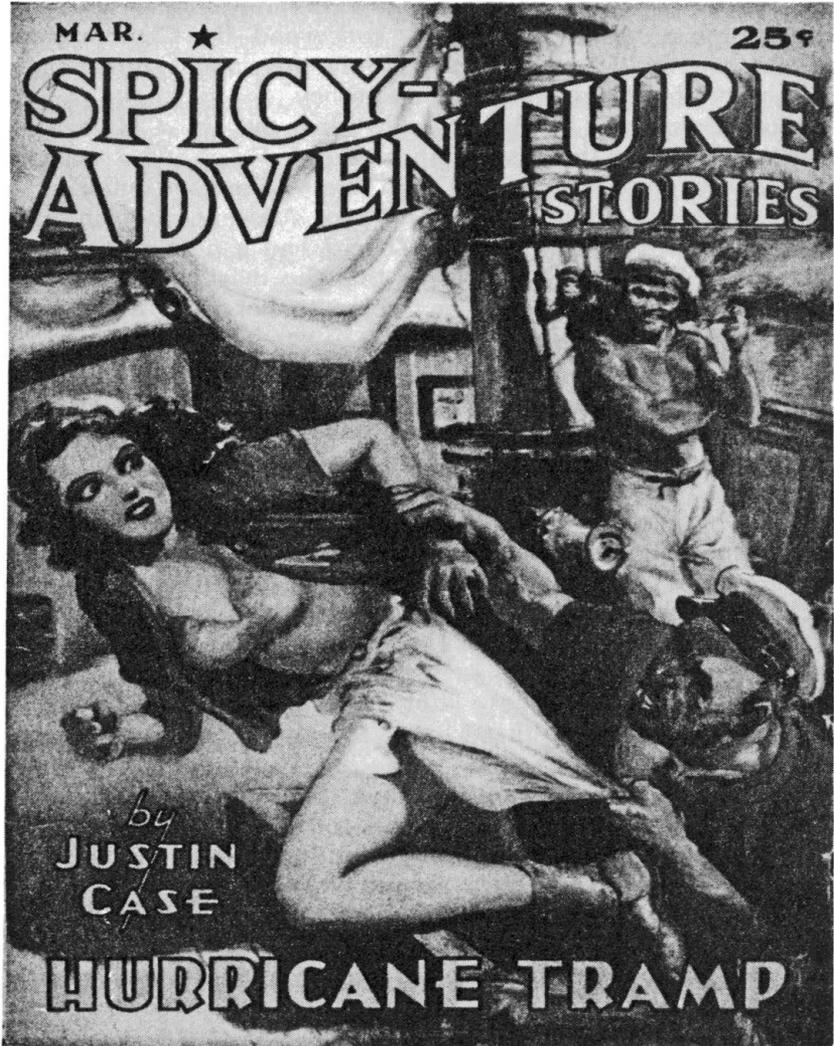
Next time you think there are moods in writing and sit there gazing out of the window, just turn around to the typewriter and start writing something. Bit of description, bit of action, characterization, anything. First thing you know, you'll have half a story finished.

I think that answers all the questions in your recent letters. As for the letters themselves, they were mighty good ones, full of human

interest and all that goes to make a letter readable. I enjoyed 'em a lot. And I should apologize for not writing sooner myself.\*

\*(As explained earlier, Carl Jacobi's letters to me were lost in the fire that destroyed all my pulp magazines and files. Oh, Lord, how I wish I had them now, to use in these reminiscences!)

You see, a long and lanky brother of mine (my older brother, Tom) paid me a visit and listened to some of my talk about the Maine woods. He got rather enthused, and since he had a ten-day vacation coming he wanted to up there fishing. Well, we went, and



SPICY ADVENTURE STORIES, March 1941

had a perfectly glorious time eating, fishing, sleeping. We stayed up there rather longer than I expected, but I realized how great was the need of a change. Honest, old man, I was absolutely stale. No matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't seem to make the old words flow fluently, and every damned one of my stories snagged at the end because of stagnation of ideas. I just had to get away for a while.

When I got back, I found plenty mail waiting and no less than three definite leads which had to be followed up immediately or result in a loss of cold cash--which has to be considered gravely these days. Truth is, mister, good times are on the way back with a rush, as far as the publishing business is concerned--the Clayton crash to the contrary--and I have awful visions of being caught short on stories at the very time when stories mean money.

For instance: Nickel Publications out in Chi has been reorganized under the leadership of Ralph Daigh, who used to be with Fawcett and Dell. Well, Daigh wrote to me for material and I hadn't a damned thing to send him. Not a decent story on tap. So I had to sit down and do one. Then I had a note from Dorothy Hubbard of Western Story, saying that the market would be open again for shorts and would I get some to her right away. And I didn't have a single Western yarn fit to send her. So I had to sit down and write one. Then I had a note from Cosmo, telling me one of my gypsy stories was better than most of Bercovici's gypsy tales, and if I could do a couple more and make them a bit more powerful in theme, the chances were almighty good of my clicking. So I had to sit down and write one.

Then--but you get the idea. Markets are opening up. New sheets are being planned for fall publication and old ones are boosting their present low prices and increasing their size. All of which means work and more work, unless this particular guy wants to take a back seat at the very time when three years of plugging ought to entitle him to a seat ringside. So if I seem to have neglected the correspondence lately, please forgive it, old man. And don't think for a minute that I haven't missed those newsy letters of yours.

I don't know what to tell you about the market--that is, what to say definitely--because nothing seems to be absolutely definite yet. If you feel like tackling an action-adventure yarn, try Daigh with it, at Bierman's old headquarters. If you're Westernly inclined, have a shot at Western Story. Incidentally, I just had a voluntary raise in pay from that outfit. Short Stories is buying shorts at better rates, and a few detective novelettes. Detective stuff is the rage at the moment, but the market is pretty tight unless you can squeeze in with some shorts.

George Bruce is putting out two new air books, Contact and Squadron, in an attempt to revive air fiction. Clayton will be adding

new titles in the fall, if the receivers give him a chance. Some of those old Fiction House titles will be revived, too. Dell won't be far behind with new titles. And that's about all for now, but don't be a bit surprised to see new names, new editors, new everything cropping up any day, even before fall.

I don't know what to make of Weird Tales. The magazine is a good one to play with when checks are coming in promptly, but this business of waiting months and months for money isn't conducive to good work. Furthermore, Wright's standard rate of a penny a word is going to be low pay by the time another six months have rolled around. Western Story paid me 2 cents for my last yarn. Most of the magazines are paying better than one cent now, or are contemplating doing so. Short Stories is paying 2 cents again for shorts; Daigh promised 1 cent promptly on acceptance after a brief period of organization; and so on all down the line. I like Wright and like to work with him, but when times improve as they are now doing, his rates won't be at all enticing, and his method of payment won't be any inducement. On the other hand, he may boost the ante if the radio series gets across successfully. It's a hard outfit to dope out.

WT has improved in appearance, though. I liked the last cover a lot, despite the nude woman. Brundage's nude women don't appeal to me. And I'm damned if I can dope out the necessity for bare skin on a weird cover.

Wonder if "Dead Man's Belt" rated a first place (in The Eyrie). You have me licked on that first place business, mister. You did with your first story what I've been trying unsuccessfully to do since last May! More power to you!

Incidentally, there was another reason for my not writing to you. When I got back from Maine, the Ford was just about all in. Those roads up there, this time of year, aren't good medicine for a broken-down Model A. And a five hundred mile grind, both ways non-stop, is a pretty tough dose for a chariot that has already been trundled some 50,000 miles. Mind you, I'm not calling down the Ford. Not me! The little crate took me to Canada twice, New York half a dozen times, and Carolina once. Never let me down. But it needed a rest, and so I had to go get me a new car. That took a bit of time--all my spare time, in fact. I finally acquired a secondhand Chrysler sport coupe, good for 85 miles an hour on a straightaway. Hey hey. Business is improving!\*

\*(Remember, dear readers--a brand new car in those days could be had for less than a thousand dollars!)

It looks very much as if I'm going to be more or less a bachelor this summer. My girl friend is going out to Wisconsin, and I suppose I'll be taking advantage of the fact and using the extra time to get some good work done. Last year she was away for a month and I

turned out 9 slick paper stories in the month. Sold 5 of them, and the others are not yet filed away as hopeless. It's a long while since I've been able to do 9 yarns in a single month, but I'll do my best to duplicate the record this July--and August too.

However, this epistle is running into wordage, old man. I ought to be getting to bed. Just had a visit from an old buddy who couldn't understand why I'm on the wagon. He would if he were in the fiction business at this particular time. I'm telling you, any work you do these days will pay dividends, so don't sit on your fanny.

3 July 1933: You and me both. If Wright's bank doesn't open soon, I'll be banging my head on the rocks. I've been spending right and left somehow--trip to Maine, new car, odds and ends, new radio-phono combination--and a glance at the old check book this morning shocked me into realizing that the cash is painfully low. Oh well, it's been lower.

Yes, I honestly think business is picking up, though the summer season seems to have landed on us and brought its customary sluggishness in the way of checks, reports, etc. I have a yarn in the current Chatelaine and another in the current Canadian, with nice layouts in both, but haven't yet been paid for that story in the June Canadian which I mailed you recently. As for Wright, he owes me some 600 dollars for published stuff. And Clayton has definitely gone bust, taking 350 dollars of mine into the ashcan with him. Hell of a life, ain't it? Hard as hell, too, to sit down and write stories when the thermometer reads 94.

Well, that sale to Wonder Stories was at least a sale for you. My own responses have been so slow of late that I'm not sure what is sold and what isn't. Canadian accepted the Canadian rights to a story I sold to Household recently--"Scarecrow in Scarlet"--and asked me for some more light love stories. Also informed me that I should feel singularly honored because I'm the only regular writer for that magazine who is a "foreigner."

If you value that yarn which Wonder Stories bought, I'd advise keeping after them for a price quotation. Otherwise you're apt to see it in print and get a measly fifteen bucks or so after publication. Long after. If the yarn is a dud, however, you won't lose anything.

As for the new weird magazine reported by Derleth, you know as much about it as I do. Haven't heard any rumors to that effect. Hope he's right, though, because I have a few Wright rejects hanging around that I'd willingly take half a cent for, but I'll be damned if I'll do any new stuff for that price. In fact, I hesitate to do any weird stuff at all right now, what with Wright's bank being closed and the cash being so scarce. And whatever did happen to that radio business?

Your "Bantam Ben Hur" will probably come back from Nickel

Publications for the simple reason that that western sheet is no longer alive. I must have given you the wrong impression. Thought I told you--at least, I meant to tell you--that the outfit would be bringing forth two new magazines in the fall and is now buying material for both. One's to be a detective sheet and the other, tentatively, a love book.

Speaking of nice letters in *The Eyrie*, I was more than satisfied with the comments re "Dead Man's Belt" even though Williamson's novel took first place. Thanks for passing on Howard's comments on "DMB." Agree with you that Howard is a good writer. Why doesn't he do something for some of the better pulps? Rather, for the pulps that pay for what they use? I looked in vain for the promised announcement concerning the radio broadcasts.

I've already sent you some Canadians. As for marking the stories that run true to type, the best thing I can do is to repeat what Rutledge (the editor) told me in his last letter. "We can get any number of good sober stories from Canadian authors; but there is a positive dearth here of light, fast, brittle stories of the type that you have been sending us."

My yarn in the July issue, called "Road Map," is nothing more than the recorded dialogue between a young married couple while they are touring at night along country roads. They scrap all the way but do it in such a way that the reader knows them to be devoted to each other. There is a smash-up in a cemetery and the young wife gets her husband to a country doctor's house. Then, while he and she are sitting in the front room, they overhear the doctor and his wife fighting in the kitchen, and they realize how utterly idiotic they have been. The final scene has hubby driving wife back to the cemetery late at night and making ardent love to her beside a tombstone.

A check-up of the finances for the year 1933--the first six months just ended--reveals the fact that I've made more, in actual cash received, during the first half of '33 than during the same length of time in '32. Not much more, but a little. If Wright hadn't closed up shop in March, the figures would be really encouraging. Moreover, nearly half of my sales for '33 have been to slick paper--and at least 60 percent of the stories sold in '33 have not yet been paid for.\*

\*(The slickpaper magazines referred to here were not major ones, however. I didn't hit such slicks as The Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, Cosmopolitan, Liberty, Country Gentleman, Good Housekeeping, Ladies Home Journal, etc. until later.)

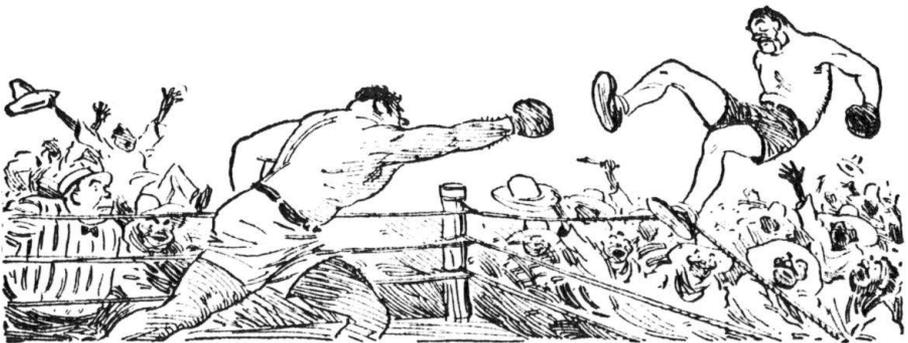
So I wasn't kidding you when I said business was on the up-and-up. It is. So--good luck to you, Mister Jacobi. Plenty checks, plenty work, and plenty publicity. And be sure to let me know if you hear anything more about the new weird magazine.

18 July 1933. Two things of importance. First: the new weird

magazine is a reality. Send your stuff to Rogers Terrill, American Magazines, Inc.--my error--American Fiction Magazines, Inc., 205 East 42nd. St., New York City. That's Steeger's outfit, Popular Publications. As yet the magazine has no name, but the first issue is on the way through and should be out soon; then you'll get a line on it. But if I were you I'd send your best available yarn to Terrill at once, with a good sales letter. Make it a horror story. He wants menace above all else.\*

\*(This marked the entry of Popular Publications into the shudder-story field, with Dime Mystery Magazine, Terror Tales, and Horror Stories. Carl and I wrote many stories for those magazines over the next few years, and had many a cover. We also wrote for Popular's many competitors. But my chief pulp markets from the mid-thirties on were the detective story magazines. Detective Fiction Weekly alone published 63 stories of mine, including many novelettes. At that time, also, I acquired an agent--Lurton "Count" Blassingame--who became a close friend and fishing companion. We continued to be close friends even after our business association ended, which it did when Count discouraged my efforts to hit the big slicks, saying I should be content to be a "name" in the pulps. When I finally quit the pulps and devoted all my writing time to the slicks and books, I was again marketing all my own work. Soon after that, the pulps disappeared from the scene.)

***You Remember Hoily? He Used to Fight under the Name  
of Horsehead Huff; and This Shows He Still Didn't  
Know Where He Got ●ff At***



# ACCORDING TO HOILY

By HUGH B. CAVE

*Author of "Suicide Trail," "Pawn of Circumstances," etc.*

## CHAPTER SIX

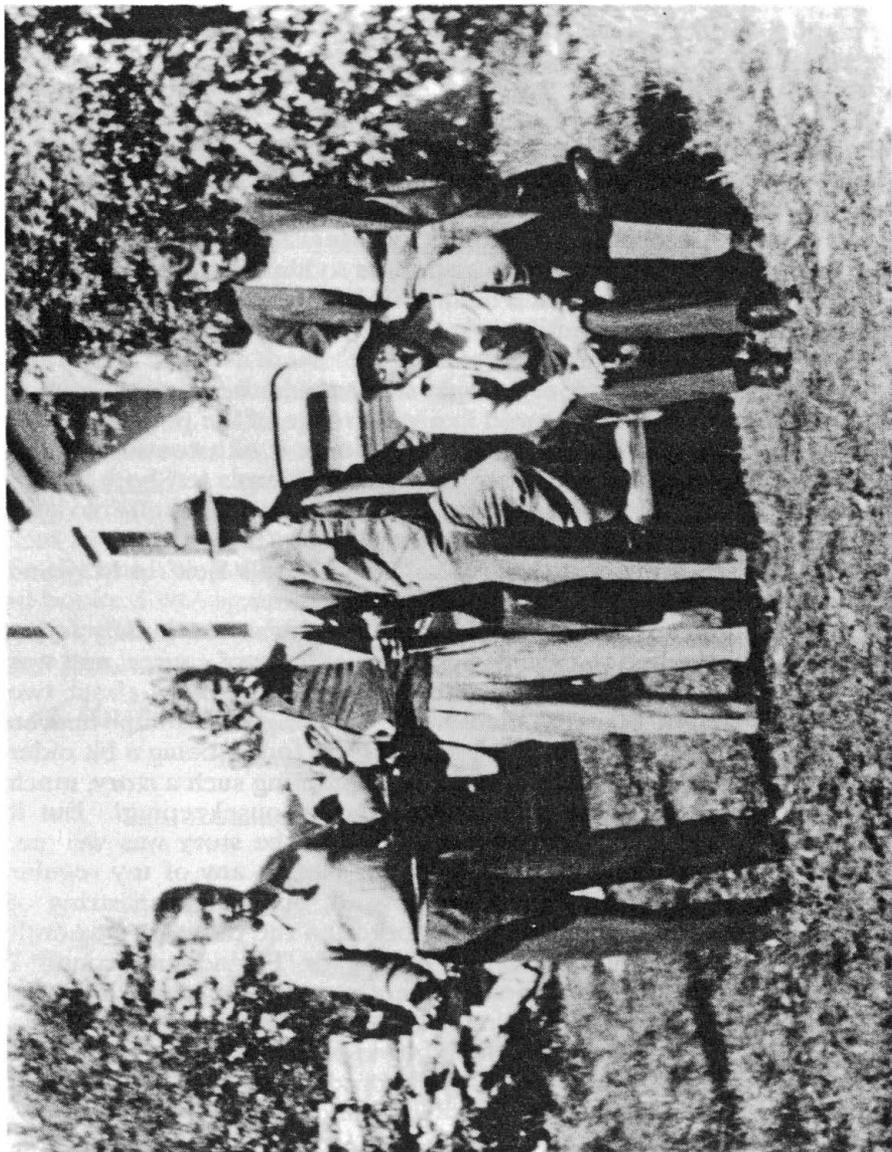
We come now, sadly, to a gap in the fence of time. The gap exists not because Carl Jacobi and I stopped corresponding--we were writing for many of the same magazines and actually had even more to say to each other!--but because his letters to me were destroyed in the fire I wrote about earlier, and mine to him were somehow lost. Apparently they were discarded or misplaced when Carl finally moved from his old family home in Minneapolis to a series of apartments in that same city.

During this period my short stories and novelettes, not to mention a few serials, appeared in a wide range of the pulps. In 1933 I must have continued to be in love with Borneo, with continued sales of Tsiang House tales and other Borneo adventures to Short Stories and something called "The Curse of The Grinning Skulls" to Ace High Magazine. Weird Tales continued using Cave stories--in fact, published two of my best that year: "Dead Man's Belt" in May and "The Watcher in the Green Room" in September.

"Dead Man's Belt" was a curious story. I was continually trying to break into the better-paying slicks at this time, of course, and was experimenting wildly. Along came this idea for a story about two black men and a black woman living in a big-city dump--heaven knows where it came from, but it came. Now today, being a bit older than twenty-three, I wouldn't dream of attempting such a story, much less sending it off to magazines like Good Housekeeping! But it seemed a promising notion at the time, and the story was written, rewritten at least once, and mailed out. Not to any of my regular pulp markets, of which I then had several, but to a long string of slicks and "literary" magazines. I've forgotten the title that was on it then--it was something like "Dark Ground" or "Forbidden Ground" I think. Certainly the word "belt" was not a part of it, because at that point in its history the tale didn't include a belt!

Well, anyway, the darned thing began to win me letters from big name editors who until then had honored me only with rejection slips. And they all said much the same thing: "We like this story; it's gripping, well written, and a totally fresh idea. But because of its subject matter, never in a million years could we use it. Please send us your next."

I sent the story to Douglas Dold of the Clayton Magazines, with whom I was corresponding regularly at the time. He wrote back that it was the most powerful story he had ever read as either an editor or a reader. So I kept sending it out. And it kept opening doors for



Fishing trip to Canada, circa 1934. From left to right, Larry Dunn (fishing friend of Cave's), Ken White, Lurton "Count" Blassingame, Hugh Cave and Sam Engdahl (another fishing friend of Cave's)

me. But no one would print it.

So, in the end, I rewrote the story to give it a touch of the supernatural, and sent it off to Farnsworth Wright of Weird Tales. And he bought it with enthusiasm. Later, Karl Edward Wagner selected it for inclusion in Carcosa's huge collection of my shudder tales Murgunstrumm and Others, but when the French edition of that volume came out, the translator included the following comment in his long introduction:

I acknowledge, moreover, that it is with a heavy heart that I have left out of this collection a story rated among the best of Cave (for me the best). "Dead Man's Belt" is unfortunately written in a savory dialect of Blacks that I find impossible to reproduce in French. One might as well try to translate the stories of Uncle Remus.

Was it a popular story with the readers of Weird Tales, as reported in The Eyrie? I have to confess I don't know. Robert Weinberg gives it special mention in his book, The Weird Tales Story, with the remark that "astonishingly it has never been reprinted since its original appearance"--the Carcosa collection hadn't been published when he wrote that--but he doesn't say what the readers thought of it. My hunch is that W.T. readers at that time were mostly writing in about Carl Jacobi's great tale, "Revelations in Black," which had appeared the previous month.

Anyway, as noted above, "Dead Man's Belt" opened many doors for me and certainly helped me "graduate" to the slicks. And my other 1933 contribution to Farnsworth Wright's great magazine, "The Watcher in the Green Room," has been reprinted a number of times. In fact, it is scheduled for yet another appearance in an anthology to be called Nightmare which should be in the bookstores by the time this sees print.

But I was also doing Westerns in 1933, with seven tales in Street & Smith's Western Story Magazine and one in Cowboy Stories. Mind you, I had never been any farther west than Niagara Falls--to which I hitchhiked from Brookline, Massachusetts, the summer before my junior year at Brookline High School. (A kid could safely do such things back then!) But I had read Zane Grey and Owen Wister and Max Brand and a whole slew of other Western writers.

And then came Harry Steeger's Dime Mystery Magazine!

According to Leonard A. Robbins's great Pulp Magazine Index, the first issue of Dime Mystery Magazine was dated October, 1933, and my story in it was one called "The Graveless Dead." In the next issue I had the lead novel, "The Corpse Maker," and a novelette called "The House of Evil" by Geoffrey Vace, and both names made the cover. So, then, a word about Geoffrey Vace.

In the beginning he was my brother Geoffrey, four years older than I. He began writing before I did--for his high-school paper in Boston, Mass. In fact, it was his being a writer--hey, a writer!--that probably turned me in that direction. If brother Geoff could do it, by golly, why couldn't I?

Then a few years later, when brother Geoff saw me making more money as a writer than he was making as an accountant, he decided to be a writer again.

Our English mother, Edith Mary Cave, had been born in India when that country was controlled by the English. Her father, an engineer, was out there building the Great Indian Peninsula Railway (and later being Lord Mayor of Bombay.) So as kids we had heard a lot about India, and had read just about all of Rudyard Kipling and Talbot Mundy. Which explains why Geoff began his pulp career by writing tales with an Indian background. But, feeling that one Caveman in the pulps was enough, he by-lined his stories Geoffrey Vace.

He sold some stories, too. Farnsworth Wright used him in Oriental Stories and The Magic Carpet Magazine, and Wally Bamber used at least one story of his in Amazing Detective Stories, under the name Maxwell Smith. (That Maxwell Smith name puzzles me. According to the Robbins Pulp Magazine Index, it appeared in a number of magazines including Thrilling Detective, All Detective, All Star Detective Stories, and Black Book Detective Magazine. Was it a house name or was there really a Maxwell Smith out there somewhere pounding a typewriter? I have no idea. But my letters to Carl Jacobi mention at least two stories of mine as having been published under that name, and I've a strong hunch there were others.)

But to get back to brother Geoff, he married and started a family, after which spare time in which to write stories became more and more elusive. Sadly, he decided to quit.

I kept hoping he would start up again, first because we were good friends--always had been--and second because I liked his stories. So, to keep the name Geoffrey Vace alive for him, I used it myself whenever I knew there would be more than one story of mine in an issue of a magazine--which, as a matter of fact, was rather often. Hence the two names, Hugh B. Cave and Geoffrey Vace, on the cover of that November 1933 Dime Mystery. But both stories came out of my Underwood. And in the December issue I had yet another story, "They Feed at Midnight."

According to the Pulp Magazine Index, Henry (Harry) Steeger himself edited Dime Mystery Magazine at that time. I don't know. It seems to me that the editor I corresponded with was Rogers Terrill. Anyway, either at that time or soon afterward, Rogers wrote me an interesting letter. I had been marketing my own stories up to

# The Death-Heads' March

By GEOFFREY VACE

*A thrill-tale of the Khyber Pass and Juggut Hai, the bandit who lay in wait for the life of Chowkander King*



*"The Fanatics" The words were Juggut Hai's."*

that time. He suggested I ought to have an agent, and the one he recommended was Lurton Blassingame, known to all in the trade as "Count."

"I note you always submit your work in a blue folder," wrote Rogers (I'm quoting him from memory; I don't have the actual letter), "And that's a good thing. It makes it easy for us to spot a story of yours when it comes in. Interestingly enough, Count uses an easy-to-spot colored folder also. I think you two would be good for each other."

Indeed we were. And we became good friends as well. But I'll get to that later, in its proper place.

1934 was a good year. I had eight more stories in the twelve issues of Harry Steeger's Dime Mystery, most of them novelettes with such words as DARK, DEVIL or DEVILS, UNHOLY, DEATH,

NIGHT, LOST, PAIN, TERROR, or SHADOW in their titles. Those Dime Mystery titles--and later, the ones used in the same publisher's Terror Tales and Horror Stories--were really out of this world! As I remember it, Harry Steeger or his editors made most of mine up, or at least added to my originals to heighten their allure. Later, in the '80s, Robert M. Price had fun with the same kind of titles in some of his Cryptic Publications; and so did I, when working with him for a spell.

Adventure stories took a back seat for me in that onward-upward year of 1934. I sold only one story to my old, good market, Short Stories, although I continued selling to that magazine until '49 and they reprinted several early tales of mine in later years. Ace High Magazine used a Borneo Johal story, "Sons of Shadow." Standard Magazines' Thrilling Adventures, one of Carl Jacobi's big markets, used a couple of mine. Western Story bought two. So did Weird Tales, publishing "The Black Gargoyle" in March with a Brundage cover, and "The Isle of Dark Magic" in August. Karl Wagner reprinted the latter in Carcosa's Murgunstrumm and Others. Called "La Femme de Marbre," it also became the lead story in the French edition of that volume.

1934 also saw the debut of Popular's Terror Tales, a companion magazine to Dime Mystery which first turned up on those lovely drugstore newsstands all across the country in September. In that initial issue of Terror Tales were stories by Arthur Leo Zagat, G.T. Fleming-Roberts, Wyatt Blassingame (a brother of my agent), John Flanders, Henry Treat Sperry, and something called "Terror Island" by me. In the second (October) issue Carl Jacobi made his first of many appearances with "Satan's Roadhouse," and I appeared again with "Death's Loving Arms."

But 1934 found me moving into the detective pulps, with my first of ten sales to Black Mask, a story in Black Book Detective that Karl Wagner later used in Murgy, three tales in something called Super Detective, one in Dell's All Detective (Carson Mowre was the editor there), one in Standard's Thrilling Detective, and my first two stories in Harry Steeger's Dime Detective.

More importantly--I actually got to know the editor of Dime Detective, Mr. Kenneth White.

It happened this way. One day I told my agent, Count Blassingame, that I was going "down Maine" for a week or so with a Rhode Island pal, Larry Dunn, to do some trout fishing in Sourdnahunk Lake, and suggested he come along to get away from the New York grind. To my surprise, Count not only accepted the invitation but asked if he could bring a friend.

That friend turned out to be my Dime Detective editor, Ken White.

Ken was one of the nicest fellows I've ever known, and the four

of us, with another Rhode Island buddy of mine, Sam Engdahl, became great friends in the years that followed. We shared a cabin at Sourdnhunk Lake several years in a row, on one occasion taking along Whit Burnett, who at the time was editor of a highly regarded literary magazine called Story and later put together the best-selling anthology, "This Is My Best." Whit, as I remember it, brought a typewriter along and spent more time working on a piece for his magazine than he did fishing, but he was a big, bearded, boomy fellow and we all enjoyed his company. Then our little gang of fishermen abandoned Maine and for another few years went to Doaktown, New Brunswick every spring to fish for Atlantic salmon in the Miramichi.

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**Lurton Blessingame.** Born Arkansas, started traveling before six months' old, into Indian Territory, then down into Alabama. Howard College, Alabama, with honors, earning spending money writing themes for other students. Columbia Scholarship, securing M.S. in Journalism there. Wrote publicity for various banking houses and manufacturing concerns. Ghosted two books scores of articles, then free lanced, selling air, detective, western, confession, adventure, romance...also literary and smooth paper. Both parents were college professors, so started teaching

writing, which led to literary agency. Extremely successful in coaching writers, helping to sell to all types of magazines, *Story*, *Atlantic*, *Pictorial*, *Redbook*, *Collier's*, *Country Gentleman*. Works fourteen hours daily for other writers, occasionally turns out one of own. Has written six, sold six, this year, one appearing in current *National Home Monthly*, Canada's largest. His friends call him "Count" Hobbies: Burgundy, hunting, dry-fly fishing—at which he is lousy—, bridge, reading, talking about writing.

Autobiographical sketch from  
American Fiction Guild Bulletin, January 2, 1936

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Now, I had been fly-fishing for trout for years, and even tied my own flies, but have to admit that no one in our group, including me, did much to deplete those famous Miramichi waters of salmon. The five of us were lucky to go home after a week of hard angling with even one fish apiece on dry ice in the car. And on one of our homeward journeys Ken White suddenly broke into a tuneful lament about that. The song was an old folk melody, I seem to remember, although I can't recall the name of it. And the words Ken put to it were these:

Oh, there ain't no fish in the Miramichi,  
No, there ain't no fish in the Miramichi.  
You can fish all day; you can take a pee,  
But there ain't no fish in the Miramichi!

This, mind you, from a man who was one of the shrewdest editors in the business--a man who persuaded some of the best pulp writers in the detective field to contribute to his Dime Detective. As I write these words in April, 1992, I have before me a Gramercy Books hard-cover anthology called Hard-Boiled Detectives edited by Stefan Dziemianowicz, Bob Weinberg, and Marty Greenberg, and that handsome volume is subtitled "23 Great Stories from Dime Detective Magazine." In it--to mention only a few--are tales by Frederick Nebel, Carroll John Daly, Erle Stanley Gardner, Max Brand, Raymond Chandler, Frederick C. Davis, Murray Leinster, and John D. MacDonald! And, I'm proud to say, a story by one H.B. Cave.

Ken White never let friendship get in the way of his being an editor, however. According to my records, between 1934 and 1943 he published twenty stories of mine in Dime Detective--many of them about a favorite character of mine, a drunken private investigator named Peter Kane who was forever at war with a cop named Moroni --but I recall some rejects along the way, at a time when I wasn't getting too many rejects from other pulp magazines and was selling to some of the slicks. (In 1934 I appeared 5 times in Canadian Magazine, once in Chatelaine, and twice in The National Home Monthly. Canada seemed to like me, but U.S. slickpaper editors were still just writing such things as "almost but not quite" and "do try again.")

My final appearance in Dime Detective was a novelette in the June, 1943 issue. Ken had come up with a great cover painting. I forget who the artist was and don't have the magazine to tell me--but here was this villain in front of a blazing oven, holding a baker's peel on which lay a victim. I'm not sure whether the victim was dead or alive, but in any case, Joe Villain was about to shovel him into the fiery furnace.

The trouble was, Ken had the cover but no story to go with it. So after a phone call to be sure I was alive and willing, he mailed me a blueprint of this fabulous cover--copying machines were not common at that time, if indeed they even existed--with the understanding that I would write a novelette in which this scene would be included. "And," he said, "try to think of a fitting title, will you, Trailblazer? Because I don't have one in mind."

Trailblazer. Count Blassingame was responsible for my being called that by the guys in our fishing group. I'd gotten the gang lost one time when we were trying to hike from one lake to another in the wilds of Maine. I never lived it down. When my son Ken was born in 1939 (named after Ken White, by the way) Count even sent a gift to my Rhode Island home addressed to "Trailblazer Cave Junior."

Anyway, as I remember it I went without much sleep for a night

or two to meet Ken White's deadline, but did get the story to him on time and he even liked the name I gave it. I called it "This Is the Way We Bake Our Dead."

Along with our fishing trips to Maine and New Brunswick, Ken White, Count Blassingame, Larry Dunn and I got together for one really big adventure. Big for us, at any rate. The four of us motored to a little Canadian town called Iron Bridge, on the north shore of Lake Huron, where we had arranged with an outfitter to provide us with two guides and two canoes for a journey into the Canadian wilderness to the north. For three weeks or so we canoed through a string of wild lakes--portaging between them, of course--without seeing another living soul. And talk about fish! Those lakes teemed with them, and we lived on trout and other fish the whole time, plus a few supplies we backpacked in with us and a little bannock the guides whipped up now and then. Then we returned by way of the Mississagi River to our starting point, where the four of us spent a hilarious night in the so-called bridal suite of a little hotel in Iron Bridge whose proprietor was also the town barber--a service we all badly needed after not having shaved for more than a month. His card, if I remember right, bore the words "The Iron Bridge Hotel, where Art LaTart will meet you more than half way."

A few years later I wrote a book based on that trip, although I changed the locale to Wisconsin because Dodd Mead's editor advised against the use of a Canadian background for American readers. It was my first novel--today it would be called a "young adult" work--and was about four young fellows on just such a fishing expedition. Fishermen Four did very well and got some nice reviews.

And just the other day I finished a second novel with that same background--this one an "end of the world" tale, called The Dawning, about a group of desperate survivors who journey into the Canadian wilderness in an attempt to escape a dying world and find a new life.

But about Ken White...though not a big man physically, he was a talented editor and a great friend. He wore a beard, and we fondly called him "Dr. Livingstone" after the famous explorer. At Popular Publications he also edited Adventure for a time, then in turn he became fiction editor of Esquire and editor for a Boston book publisher. Sadly, he was a heavy smoker of cigarettes and died--of cancer, I believe--much too soon.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

Your name was always a big one for me--always one of the best--and I always got a big kick out of receiving any envelopes that bore your name because I knew I would be in for a pleasant reading session. I had, of course, a number of favorites and it made my job so pleasant being able to read their works. I can remember thinking to myself often: "Why do they pay me for this. I am having such a good time I really ought to be paying them!"

I can remember how lucky we were to ever get going. At the beginning I had a partner, Harold Goldsmith, and each of us put \$10,000 into starting the company and immediately talked ourselves into \$125,000 worth of credit. Fortunately it worked although the distributor, Eastern Distributing Company, failed during our first year and stuck us for three consecutive issues. It was a wonder we ever survived. However, we had a great lawyer, Ed Harragan, who as the name connotes was an Irish fighter, and he kept the printer away from our door long enough for us to come out with Dime Detective which saved our collective necks. From that point on it was just a matter of growth and, like you, we had a principle of working hard at what we did. I remember at times sending back covers to the artists five or six times or more for repairs to finally get the finished product as perfect as possible. It really paid off and we had as many as 45 active magazines a month, each of them producing a substantial profit. In those early days we were kids, just like you, in our 20s and we had ourselves a real great time.

And, of course, the great attraction that made it all possible was our wonderful collection of authors. You and the rest of the great names! It's really something to be held in awe when one looks at our list of authors and the list of those authors whose first stories we bought is in itself a fantastic record. I am sure you know them quite well: Ian Fleming, Isaac Asimov, Erle Stanley Gardner, John McDonald, Louis L'Amour and on and on. The list is quite extensive. When I tell people about it these days they are amazed at the stature of these early authors of ours, but it was simple, as you and I agreed. There was no place else for them to go. They learned their trade through our

publications.

It's been, as I say, a great treat for me to be able to talk with you back and forth through the mail. I am planning to go to the Pulpcon sessions this summer--I believe they're at Dayton, Ohio--and if you go there in July we can have a wonderful opportunity to chat.

Sincerely,  
signed: Harry

The above letter to me is dated June 6, 1988, and the Harry who signed it was the founder and president of that great pulp empire, Popular Publications. I wonder how many times I have written "205 East 42nd Street, New York" on letters or manuscript envelopes! (Yes, I know--in the beginning the company was called American Fiction Magazines, Inc. and its address was given as Chicago, but even then the editorial and executive offices were at the New York address. Some of you pulp historians will have to explain that. To me it's just another Dime Mystery.)

And Dime Mystery was one of the magazines Harry Steeger was talking about when he dictated the above letter to me. The others were Terror Tales, Horror Stories, and Dime Detective.

In this series of reminiscences that I've been putting together (with a great glow of pleasure, believe me!) we have now reached the year 1935. In that year alone, Popular Publications printed twenty-one stories of mine, and most of them were novelettes. Dime Mystery used five, Terror Tales six, Horror Stories five, and Dime Detective five.

(Karl Edward Wagner, by the way, planned to use a number of my Popular shudder tales in a sequel to Carcosa's award-winning Murgunstrumm and Others, but at this writing that volume appears to be on hold. And Sheldon Jaffery did use four Cave stories from Popular's magazines in a collection of my tales called The Corpse Maker that was published by Starmont House in 1988.)

Sadly, though--because agent Lurton Blassingame was handling all my pulp sales at this time, I never once set foot in Popular's offices. And the only two of Harry Steeger's editors with whom I ever came face to face were Ken White, who as already reported became a close friend and fishing companion, and Rogers Terrill, with whom I once had lunch in New York after he had left Popular. And even more sadly I have to report that I never actually met Harry Steeger himself, despite the letter quoted from above. I was unable to attend the Pulpcon at which he was such a popular and admired Guest of Honor, and now he is gone.

But 1935 was a very good year. In addition to all those stories in the Steeger magazines, Count Blassingame sold tales of mine to a number of other good publications. In January, for instance, Dell's

# The Beast of Little Black

*It was a horrible thing I had discovered; but not as horrible as what happened that night when the forces of Nature went berserk, and a huge, shapeless thing that Nature had never intended to be, roamed through the house seeking human food for its eternal hunger!*

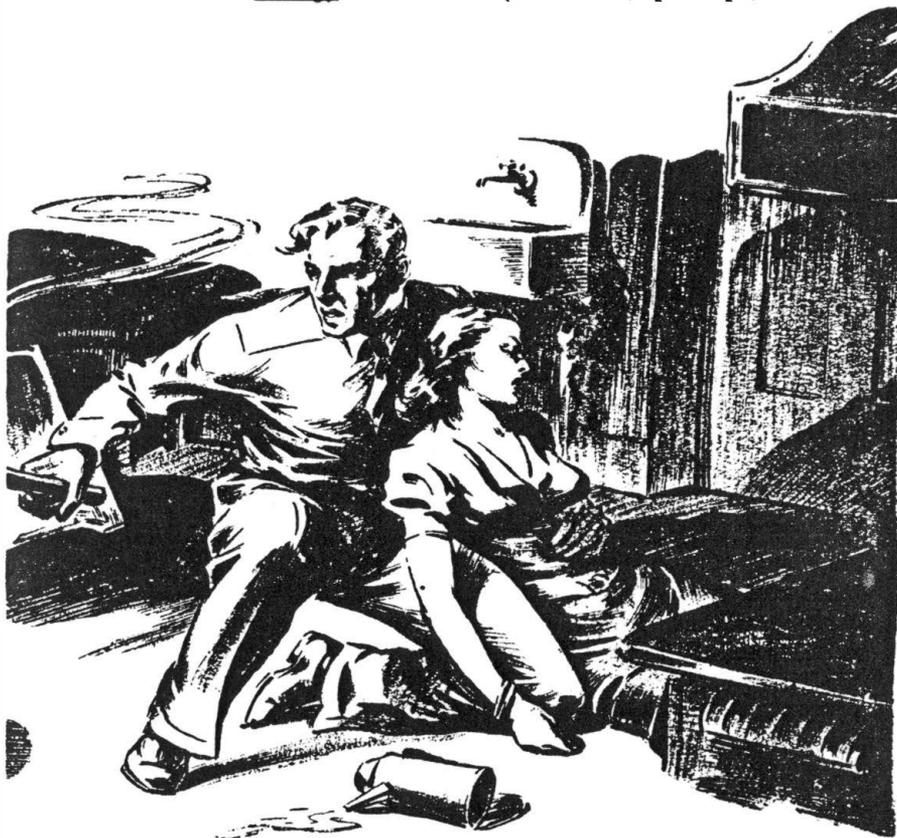
by HUGH B. CAVE



*In a frightful frenzy, the amoeba flung itself at the offending torch.*

All Detective, edited by Carson Mowre, gave a novelette of mine, "Sign of the Serpent," one of the best covers I've ever had. A color-copy of it, sent to me by a fan, hangs framed on my workroom wall as I write this. Rusty Hevelin and the Pulpcon folks used it, also, as the cover of their program in 1983 when Robert Bloch and I were guests, though for some mystifying reason they elected to block out the name of the magazine, the name of the story, and the name of the guy who wrote the story!

In February of 1935, Black Book Detective used another Cave story, "Maxson's Mistress"--one that Karl Wagner thought enough of to include in his Murphy collection. (And here, perhaps, I should



point out that Karl, not I, selected the stories for that omnibus. I had no copies of my pulp stories at that time.) And the month of April produced yet another of the stories Karl used: "Horror in Wax" in Popular's Thrilling Mysteries.

When the Carcosa volume came out and I sent a copy of it to my longtime correspondent Carl Jacobi, Carl wrote me a long letter about the many stories in it and then filed the following protest:

Now for the typo error I spoke of earlier. It was on the "acknowledgement" page, where a story from THRILLING MYSTERIES was given copyright credit by POPULAR PUBLICATIONS. Leo Margulies would be mad at you, were he alive; it should be STANDARD MAGAZINES, INC.

Carl wasn't the only one to call that "error" to my attention. But, in fact, it was not an error. The Leo Margulies magazine referred to by Carl was actually Thrilling Mystery. As the situation has been explained to me, Popular brought out Thrilling Mysteries as competition but was persuaded to kill it after the one issue in which my story appeared. Someone, I'm told, threatened legal action because of the similarity of the titles.

Another interesting magazine that seems to have appeared in 1935 was New Mystery Adventures put out by Pierre Publications and edited by A. R. Roberts. Count Blassingame sold them a novelette of mine, "The Flame Fiend," that according to the Robbins Pulp Magazine Index appeared in Volume 1, Number 2, in April. Probably it was a Harry Steeger reject; I don't know. It must have been a pretty fair story, though, because it was another of those that Karl Wagner planned to use in his second Cave collection. But New Mystery Adventures appears to have been a rather strange magazine. Contributors included Mary Roberts Rinehart and Octavus Roy Cohen!

Other magazines that used Cave stories in 1935 were Popular Detective, Street & Smith's Pete Rice Western Adventures, Short Stories, Star Detective, and Top Notch. Popular Detective was a Ned Pines publication, and the issue I was in contained five (count 'em, five!) "complete novels." All five, with the names of their creators, were prominently displayed on the cover! Star Detective was a magazine I sold to only once, but that lone appearance was a story called "Death Stalks the Night" that had the cover of the August 1935 issue. (I know it had the cover because Robert Kenneth Jones reproduced that cover in his book, The Shudder Pulps.) And that tale, billed as a complete novel, was to be the lead story in Karl Wagner's second Cave omnibus. In fact, the collection itself was to be called "Death Stalks the Night." (And award-winning artist Lee Brown Coye, who illustrated the Murgy collection, had completed the art work for it and was working on the dust jacket when he died.)

What else in '35? Ah, yes. That was the year of my "big blunder"--the year Street & Smith's Top Notch Magazine published a Cave tale that had already appeared elsewhere. At least, I think it happened in '35, and since I know it actually did happen, even if my memory is a bit hazy on the date, let me describe the event here as best I can, and get it over with.

First, I'm hazy about Top Notch Magazine itself. John Locke lists it in his "Pulp Magazine Quick Reference Guide" but if I'm reading him correctly he has the first issue appearing in March, 1910, and hasn't yet unearthed the date of its demise or the number of issues that were printed. Leonard Robbins hasn't reached it yet in his unfinished Pulp Magazine Index. But someone, sometime, must have told me I had a story called "The Green Gorgon" in the October 1935 issue and another called "Seven Steps to Doom" in the October 1936 issue, because those titles are included in my unfinished bibliography and I'm sure I didn't just pull them out of thin air.

Okay, then. Top Notch published "The Green Gorgon" in October, 1935, and the title leads me to think it was one of my Borneo stories. And Doubleday's Short Stories was fond of my Borneo stories, so "The Green Gorgon" must be the one that got me into trouble.

Here's how it happened. (Except that I don't understand how it could have happened after I acquired an agent. Every detail of the incident points to the fact that I must have been handling my own sales at the time. Maybe I hadn't yet signed on with Lurton Blassingame when this took place. But it did take place. Believe me. I spent a lot of time wishing it hadn't!)

Whatever. I was turning out stories at top speed in those days and when there seemed to be no likely market for a tale that was rejected, I simply put it aside. One day, in need of an idea for a "Tsiang House" story for Short Stories, and not being able to pull one out of the air, I looked through some rejects, found one that seemed a possibility if rewritten as a "Tsiang House" tale, rewrote it, and mailed it off.

Short Stories' editor, Roy de S. Horn, liked the story and accepted it. To this day I can't remember the name of it. But if any of you reading this happen to have a file of Short Stories and Top Notch magazines, you can probably figure it out.

Because, after rewriting this story as a "Tsiang House" story, I did something really dumb. I put the original manuscript back with my rejects. And when, as was my habit, I took up those rejects a little while later and mailed them out in hope that one or two might pick up a check, the editor of Top Notch bought the story I had revised for Roy Horn.

As noted above, I think that story must have been the one published in Top Notch as "The Green Gorgon" in October, 1935. It just sounds more like a Borneo story than "Seven Steps to Doom" does, and so far as I know, those are the only two stories Top Notch ever used of mine.

Anyhow, when the two stories appeared on the newsstands--evidently at or near the same time--readers of both magazines wrote angry letters to the editors saying they'd been cheated. Which, of

course, they had been.

I didn't know about it--was probably too busy struggling to stay afloat and make a living--until both editors telephoned me and suggested that I appear in New York in a great big hurry, with an explanation if I had one. Oh Lord, I thought, this is the end of Hugh Cave as a writer. I'm finished forever.

I took the train from Rhode Island to New York, shaking in my shoes the whole way, and dragged my frightened feet to Street & Smith's offices first. To this day I can't recall the name of the editor of Top Notch Magazine, but I have a feeling he was a good deal older than I--a sort of father figure--and that when I blurted out my story of what had happened, he believed me. Which, I suppose, was not altogether surprising. No young writer in possession of his senses would knowingly have sold the same story to two publishers, thereby bringing his career to a screeching halt. And this Top Notch gentleman, whose name will surface when Len Robbins lists that particular Street & Smith publication in his Pulp Magazine Index, informed me that he and I were to meet Roy de S. Horn, editor of Short Stories, for lunch.

The lunch took place at the Army & Navy Club. Am I getting that right? It was, at any rate, a club for military people, and Roy Horn, I believe, had been a naval officer. As I remember him he was tall, good looking, but initially less compassionate than my Top Notch editor--a bit less inclined to accept my faltering explanation of what had happened. But as the lunch went on, he mellowed.

In the end, the two editors agreed that if their young Rhode Island writer would promise to reply to all the letters of complaint the two magazines had received, I could be forgiven. But I was not to concoct a form letter. I was to read carefully each letter of complaint, do my best to figure out what sort of reader had written it, and respond in such a way as to inspire that reader to keep buying Short Stories and Top Notch.

Well, there were ever so many letters. I don't recall how many, but many. When I got back to Rhode Island, I spent days writing replies to them. And I was honest; I told the truth about what had happened, just as I've told it here.

And you know something? Almost everyone I wrote to responded with understanding and became a fan of mine! It's the truth! Many of them afterward wrote fan-letters to editors whenever they came across my stories. Some of them even followed me into the slicks!

But for a while there, let me tell you, I was one very scared young writer. Indeed I was.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

1936 was a year in which I seem to have been obsessed with death, dying, and graveyards. Witness the following titles:

"Seven to be Slain" and "The Dead Speak Softly" in the October and November issues of Clues Detective Stories.

"The Lady Who Left Her Coffin" in the June Dime Detective.

"Disturb Not the Dead" in the October Horror Stories.

"Death Stalks the Campus" in the April Mystery Novels Magazine.

"The Silent Men" in the March Popular Detective. (I don't have the magazine, but I'll bet they were either dead men to start with or died before the tale ended!)

"Dig the Grave Deeper" in the February Public Enemy--one of two Cave stories to appear in that magazine in this year of the Grim Reaper.

"The Sandakan Stiff" in the April Thrilling Adventures.

Thrilling Mystery came close to joining the club with a pair of stories called "The Twisted Men" and "Blood in the House." And Dime Mystery was definitely in it with "Death Holds for Ransom" in the February issue. Dime Mystery also used a novelette called "Modern Nero" which Karl Wagner plans to use in his companion volume to the Murgy omnibus, if that second Carcosa Cave collection ever goes to the printer. And Popular's Terror Tales came close with stories called "Daughter of the Plague" and "The House in Hell's Forest."

"Daughter of the Plague," a novelette from the January issue, was reprinted by Bob Weinberg in his Weird Menace Classics #6, in 1980. Bob had earlier reprinted my "Devils in the Dark" from the February '34 Dime Mystery in his Weird Menace Classics #4, giving it a solo cover, and "Satan's Mistress" from the June '35 Dime Mystery in WMC #2.

Which brings us to two major peaks in this uneven landscape of pulp-paper reminiscences.

First, Detective Fiction Weekly, a Frank Munsey magazine published under their Red Star Magazines imprint. Detective Fiction Weekly was important to me because that magazine used five stories of mine in 1936, starting with something called "The Infernal Web" in its issue of March 21, and before it folded, or before I quit writing

for it--whichever came first--it had used a total of 63 Cave stories that I know about, including many "novelets" (that's how DFW listed them) and two book-length serials.

I also sold to a number of other publications sometimes advertised in D.F.W. as "Other RED STAR Magazines," including Red Star Adventures, Argosy, Red Star Detective, and Double Detective. Yet I never once walked through the doorway at 280 Broadway and, so far as I know, never met any of the editors of the Red Star/Munsey magazines. I just wrote the stories, mailed them to my agent, Lurton Blassingame, and happily took the checks to the bank. In fact, to this day I don't even remember who edited those magazines. I do know that Howard J. Lewis edited Argosy after

Steve Bannon heaved himself at the door and the door crashed open



*They waited two weeks for the kid to open up and talk—but he turned the tables on them and pumped them dry instead*

By  
Hugh B.  
Cave

## Copper's Exit

Harry Steeger's Popular Publications took it over. And I do remember the names of many of the slick-paper editors with whom I later corresponded, because I handled those slick sales myself, as will be explained later in these ramblings. But none of those Red Star/Munsey editors ever telephoned me or wrote to me. Which must mean, perhaps, that I didn't have to do much revising.

The second of the two major 1936 events mentioned earlier was my first sale to a group of magazines published by an outfit that deserves to be remembered for its name alone, if for nothing else. Culture Publications, Incorporated, put out a string of pulps known by all fans today as the Spicies.

Culture, if I have my figures straight, began its steamy (for those days) career with a magazine called Spicy Detective Stories, the first issue of which appeared in April, 1934. (I'm relying on John Locke's "Pulp Magazine Quick Reference Guide" here because, as noted long ago, my own records went up in smoke years ago.) Then in July of that year the company brought out Spicy Mystery Stories and Spicy Adventure Stories. Later, in 1943, the three magazines changed the word "Spicy" in their titles to "Speed."

My first story for the Culture people was one called "Dark Night of Doom," which appeared under a pen-name in the January, 1936, issue of Spicy Mystery Stories. Here, as I remember it, is how that happened:

Count Blassingame, my agent, wrote or telephoned me one day to ask if I had read any of these Spicy magazines. They would like to see some stories of mine, he said, and would pay me better than the going rate--which for me at that time was around a cent or a cent-and-a-half a word in most other magazines. Why didn't I try a couple for Culture and see what happened?

I went out and bought some Spicies at the nearest drugstore. (Although it has been reported that the Spicy pulps were sold "under the counter" in New York and certain other cities, they were right out in the open whenever I went looking for them in Rhode Island, where I lived at the time.) Hell, I thought, this is just the usual pulp fare with a bit of added sex. (That's all those stories were, too. Far more salacious material is openly presented today on TV.)

"Okay," I said to Count. "But can I use a pen-name?" This because on my own, not through him, I was still trying to hit the big slick-paper magazines--Count thought I should be content to be a "big name" in the pulps--and I had a deep-gut feeling that the people reading my stories at, say, The Saturday Evening Post would not be impressed by the appearance of the Cave name on those Spicy covers!

"A pen-name?" replied Count. "Why not, if you want to. Think one up, put it on a couple of stories, and send them to me. I'll take it from there."

# The Eel Slips THROUGH

*The Eel is at all times a gentleman; but the Ibans have been reared to the fine art of head-hunting in the darkest depths of Borneo, and The Eel is liable to be a little rough even with an Iban maiden!*



I began a story aimed at Spicy Mystery. All the time I was writing it, I played around with potential pen-names. Cave could safely become Case, I decided, but what about a first name? Peter Case? John Case? Justin Case! So, with the appearance of that first story, "Dark Night of Doom," in the January '36 Spicy Mystery, Justin Case began his long and lively career.

(Culture Publications had fun with names, too. In later issues they reprinted quite a few stories under various *nom-de-plumes* of their own choosing. Several of mine were run through the mill a

**By JUSTIN CASE**



He was yelling for the girls to fight, too! One of them started toward us.

second time, and one of my first Justin Case stories, called "The Cult of the Corpse," was later reprinted as "Voodoo Madness" by--are you ready for this?--John Wayne!

Well. In that first year of my Justin Case existence, I had seven stories in Spicy Mystery, four in Spicy Adventure, and two in Spicy Detective. And if titles mean anything (remember, I don't have copies of these magazines to refer to--only story names and publication dates) I introduced two series characters who became rather well known to Spicy readers as time went on.

One of these was The Eel. He was a slippery sort of bloke--hence the name--who eventually appeared in all three Spicy magazines: Mystery, Detective, and Adventure. (There was a Spicy Western Stories, too, but I never wrote for it.) At times The Eel was a gentleman crook, at times a private eye, at other times an adventurer. But he was always cunning and clever, and always told his own stories in the first person, present tense. He got a lot of covers.

I have some of those stories before me as I write this--not the originals, but some that were reprinted in 1987 by Winds of the World Press in a neat little minibook called Spicy Detective Encores No. 2--Three "Eel" Stories by Justin Case. One thing seems to be pretty clear. When I invented The Eel and began writing about him in that fashion, I must have greatly admired the style of certain short stories by Damon Runyon. If Mr. Runyon ever read my Eel tales, I hope he forgave me.

The other series character I used frequently in the Spicies was a newsman named Peeper Poole. His real name was P. Percy Poole, he worked for a paper called The Recorder, and his adventures were told by his cameraman, Benny Beeman. Actually, Peeper Poole first appeared in the Spicy line's Private Detective Stories in September, 1937, in a tale called "Sleep Baby Sleep." Pulp historian Will Murray wrote about him--and about The Eel, as well--in a most interesting article entitled "The Spicy Sleuths" that appeared in Robert M. Price's Risqué Stories No. 4, in October, 1986.

How good were the stories in the Spicy Magazines? About as good as stories in most other pulp magazines, in my not altogether unbiased opinion--which is another way of saying that some were very good, others just hack work. Culture Publications paid well enough to attract some well-known writers, and most such writers did better-than-average work. Today, of course, the outdated attempt to make those stories seem sexy detracts from whatever qualities they may have. To turn them into good, solid pulp yarns, one would have to delete all the awkward references to alabaster bosoms and quivering breasts, not to mention lines like "she passionately pressed her ravishing, half-naked form against me."

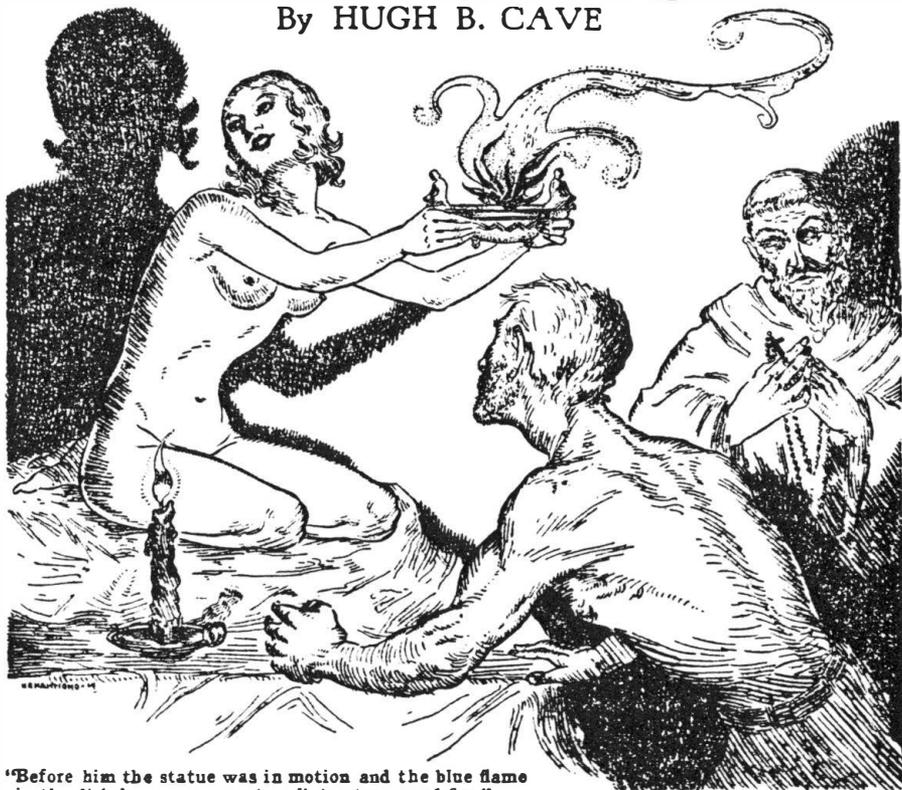
But with hundreds of my pulp tales to choose from when

selecting those to reprint in Carcosa's Murgunstrumm and Others, Karl Wagner—who presently edits an annual anthology of the year's best horror, remember—actually chose five of my Justin Case efforts from Spicy Mystery Stories. And one of those, "Purr of a Cat," even became the title story of the German edition of that volume—probably the first time a Spicy title ever became the title of a book! And Don Hutchison used a Justin Case tale in his 1991 Starmont House anthology of Fu Manchu clones, It's Raining Corpses in Chinatown.

My records are incomplete, but so far as I know I sold 19 stories to Spicy Adventure Stories, 3 of which were reprinted later in the same magazine. And 16 to Spicy Detective, with one reprinted in

## The Isle of Dark Magic

By HUGH B. CAVE



"Before him the statue was in motion and the blue flame in the dish became a weaving, living tongue of fire."

*An utterly different story is this—about a corpse-woman, and a man who hid himself away from the world*

Private Detective. And 26 to Spicy Mystery, with one reprinted in the same magazine and one reprinted in Speed Mystery. And 6 in Speed Adventure (3 by Justin Case, 3 by Hugh B. Cave). And 7 in Private Detective (5 Justin Case, 2 Cave). And one in Speed Mystery. Which adds up to 75 stories and 6 reprints between 1936 and 1944 and a lot of checks in the mail. Some of those checks, if I remember right, were for as much as a nickel a word, and so far as I can recall, not a single story was ever rejected. But I never once met or heard from a Spicy editor or even knew their names. (Or should that be "his" name"? For all I know, there may have been but one editor on Culture's payroll.)

It's probably safe to assume that some readers of the Spicies wondered whether Justin Case was a pseudonym, but for years I did nothing to enlighten them. As noted before, I was either trying to hit the slicks or, later on, was actually selling to the slicks, and felt that I ought to keep Justin's identity a secret. No one, I believe, except my agent and those at Culture Publications, knew who the guy really was. The whole charade was great fun.

Then sometime in the seventies, when Karl Wagner was selecting the stories for Carcosa's big Cave collection, I thought he might like some of those in the Spicies and confessed to him that Justin Case and Hugh Cave were one and the same fellow. And as mentioned before, he used five such tales. And when plugging certain stories on the dust jacket flap, he included the following words:

"Collected here for the first time in book form--most of them reprinted for the first time ever--are twenty-six of Cave's best horror tales...(including) 'The Whisperers' (and) 'The Strange Death of Ivan Gromleigh' and three more rare horror tales from Spicy Mystery Stories--written under Cave's pseudonym, Justin Case, an enigmatic *nom de plume* whose identity Cave has kept secret until now."

So it was finally out.

But was it? Not really. At least, not all the way out.

The Murgy collection appeared in 1977. In 1983 I was invited to be one of two guests-of-honor at Pulpcon 12 in Dayton, Ohio, and the Pulpcon folks had announced a competition. Prizes were to be given for the most complete bibliographies of the works of the two guests.

Well. Let me look at a little pocket notebook I carried on that occasion. It reminds me that when my wife and I arrived in Dayton by air from Florida on a Thursday morning, we were met at the airport by Pulpcon's Mark Tatman and the con's other guest, Robert Bloch. Bob had arrived from Los Angeles only a few minutes before!

But Peg and I had a problem, or at least I did. At Columbus, where we had changed planes, a hurried airline clerk had mistakenly torn out the return trip part of my ticket. So while Peg, who was once Public Relations Officer for the Queen Elizabeth and is very

good at that sort of thing, spent the next thirty minutes or more at the airline counter getting the snafu straightened out, Bob and I, who had never before come face to face, sat on a bench and got acquainted. (What has this to do with Justin Case? Nothing, really, but bear with me, please. We'll get back to Justin in a moment.)

For half an hour or more, then, Bob and I reminisced on that bench at the airport. We talked about our respective beginnings in the pulps, what those pulp beginnings had led to, etc. etc. And by the time Peg was through straightening out the ticket snafu, I felt as though I had known Bob Bloch all my life. And wished I had. Then Mark Tatman drove the three of us--Bob, Peg, and me--to the University of Dayton, where the con was being held.

Peg and I were assigned an apartment that had two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a sort of combined kitchen-sitting room. At first we didn't know with whom we were sharing it, and might have thought we had the place to ourselves except that occasionally we heard footsteps or doors closing or the toilet being flushed. When we finally did come face to face with our apartment mate, he introduced himself as Don Hutchison and thus began a second treasured friendship. But again I'm digressing--an old pulp fictioneering habit, no doubt. After all, the pulp magazines paid by the word!

Let me look at the aforementioned pocket notebook again. Here's an excerpt from it: "Fri. Up at 6. Bkfst at cafeteria then to 2nd floor where dealer's room was just open. Overwhelmed by displays of W.T., Spicy Mystery, etc. Told Richard Clear that Justin Case was not a house name and he at once excitedly told others." With that to jog my memory, here's what happened:

There was this competition, as I've remarked before. And when Peg and I walked into the dealer's room that morning, pulp fan and collector Jack Deveny came up to me and remarked that with the help of Len Robbins he had put together what he hoped would be the prize-winning biblio of my work. "But I haven't included any of your Justin Case stories in the Spicies," he said, "because Justin Case was of course a house name and no one seems to know which of those stories you actually wrote."

As I remember the occasion, Jack spoke these words with his wife Helen standing on one side of him and Pulpcon's Richard Clear on the other.

"No problem," I told him. "I wrote all the Justin Case stories. I invented the name. It belonged to me and no one else ever used it."

That was when Richard Clear let out his yell, something like "Hey, fellas, listen to this!" And I spent the next half hour or so, I remember, signing copies of the Spicies that had Justin Case stories in them. Pulp magazines become more valuable, it seems, when stories in them are signed by their authors. Cover stories, especially.

(At that convention I saw a copy of Terror Tales featuring Carl Jacobi's "Satan's Roadhouse" that was priced at \$90. Another issue of Terror Tales, featuring a story of mine, was \$85. Both magazines originally sold for fifteen cents!)

May I be forgiven one more little journey down memory lane in connection with that 1983 Pulpcon? Back to the notebook, then, for another quote.

"After supper, the panel discussion in the college theater. It turns out to be a 2-man panel, Bob and I seated on stage with Rusty [Rusty Hevelin, the convention chairman] between us as moderator. He asks us questions and we answer. Peg tells me I did okay. Bob made it easy for me with his friendly way of working. Then questions from the audience.

"The big surprise came at the end, when a huge birthday cake with 'Happy Birthday, Hugh, from Pulpcon 12' on it was wheeled down the aisle on a cart to a place in front of the stage. I said aloud, 'Oh my God!' and drew a laugh. Peg was called on to cut it. She had been sitting in the 3rd or 4th row with Mike (Stackpole) and Mark (Tatman), quietly nodding to me every time I looked at her, to tell me I was doing well. Lots of pix taken of the cake. Then Bob Weinberg gave a long, interesting slide show based on covers from Weird Tales and other magazines, and we went back to the apt for a long gab session with Mike, Mark, Bob, Don Hutchison. Peggie excused herself about 12:30 and retired. I sat up with Don awhile talking voodoo etc.--he had made a film in Africa."

To write these words about Pulpcon 12 I have been looking through my files. In doing so, I came across a carbon of a letter written after the con to Rusty Hevelin, Richard Clear, and Mark Tatman. I can't think of any better way to end this chapter than to reprint it.

Dear Rusty, Richard, and Mark,

From start to finish it was a totally wonderful experience that Peggie and I will never forget.

Never having made a speech before, I was understandably nervous--but not when the moment arrived, for by that time I had become aware of such a warmth and friendship emanating from you guys and your convention goes that apprehension was out of the question.

As for Bob Bloch--before I had known him for an hour, I felt I had known him all my life. Peggie says the same. When I called him a "warm and wonderful gentleman" from the platform, I had to restrain myself from singing it.

What more can Peggie and I say than a deeply sincere thank you. For everything. And especially for your being the kind of people you are.

## CHAPTER NINE

From the very beginning of our friendly relationship, agent Lurton Blassingame and I had differed on one important matter. He felt, I believe, that the pulp-paper magazines would forever be a part of the American literary scene, and that I should be content to write for them, perhaps doing some books on the side. I, as mentioned before, had my sights set on the higher-paying, more prestigious slicks.

So sometime between 1935, when I became a married man, and 1940, when I moved into a new home on the shore of Gorton Pond in Warwick, Rhode Island, Count and I reached a kind of compromise. He would peddle my pulps. I would continue to go for the slicks on my own. Actually, I hadn't had much luck with the slicks at this point, except for a number of sales to Canadian magazines. But the letters I was receiving from big-name slick-paper editors led me to think I was close to a break-through.

Meanwhile, in the pulps, by 1937 I seem to have more or less abandoned the adventure-story field except for five Justin Case sales to Spicy Adventure, one to Thrilling Adventures, and the first of four sales to Adventure. The latter was a story called "Derelict," co-written with Jonathan Eldridge, a friend who had worked on ships as a radio operator; and the story contained authentic shipboard radio lore that apparently appealed to Adventure's editor. Most of my output that year went to detective story publications, perhaps because of my success with Detective Fiction Weekly. Three more Cave tales appeared in D.F.W. Others were published in Black Mask, Clues, Detective Short Stories, Detective Tales, Dime Detective, Federal Agent, The Feds, Pocket Book Detective, and, under the name Justin Case, in Private Detective and Spicy Detective.

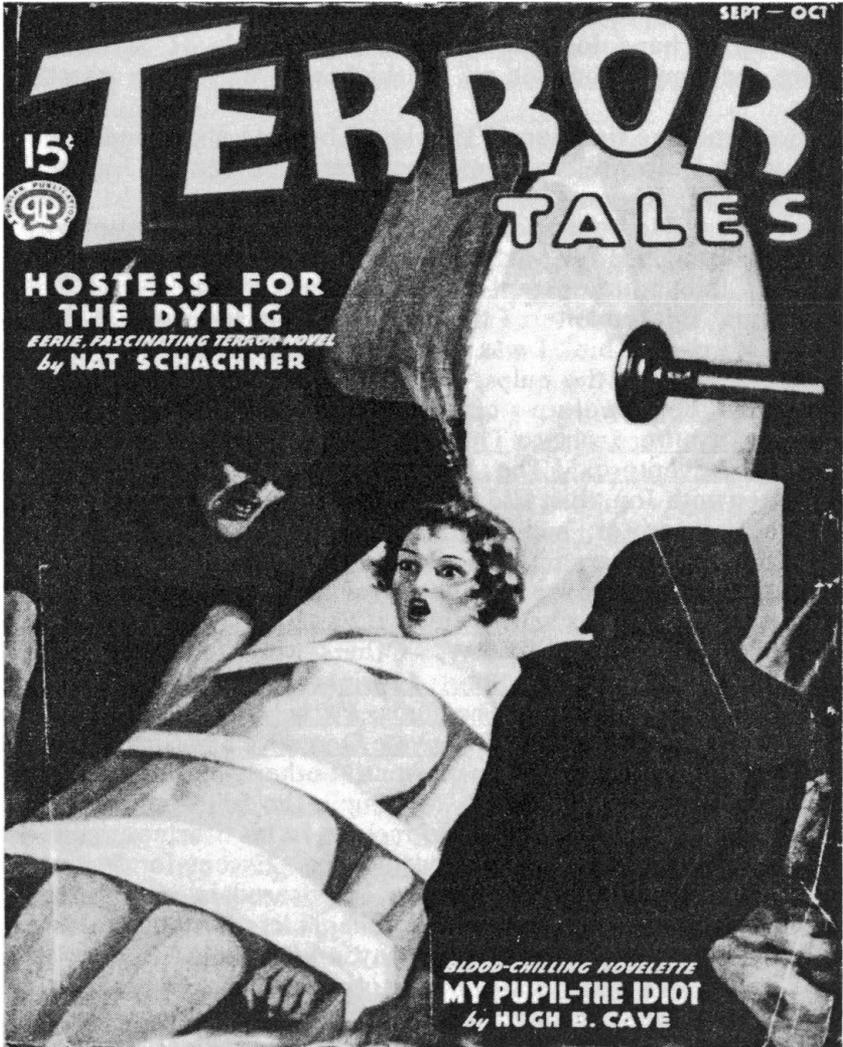
The year was more or less uneventful otherwise, although Terror Tales published a story called "My Pupil, the Idiot" which Sheldon Jaffery later thought enough of to include in his Starmont collection of Cave shudder tales, The Corpse Maker. Except for Justin Case and Spicy Adventure, the magazine I appeared in most often was Thrilling Mystery. Editor Leo Margulies, bless him, used stories of mine in January, February, April, May, and June.

The following year, 1938, was another detective story year, with work of mine appearing in many of the same magazines.

Detective Fiction Weekly ran ten tales, including a four-part serial called "Death Writes a Policy." Black Mask used three, two of them appearing together in the December issue in which my "Long

"Live the Dead" was run under the pen-name Allen Beck. Where that name came from, I don't remember, and it puzzles me a little. I don't believe I ever used it again myself, and it doesn't seem to have been a Black Mask house name. Perhaps it was just a name the editor dreamed up in a hurry when he decided to use two Cave stories in the same issue.

In addition to the serial in D.F.W., I had another very long story that year in Double Detective. This--and I have to wonder today how



TERROR TALES, September 1937

I ever had the nerve to attempt it!--was a 60-page "complete novel" laid in Russia, of all places, and called "Rifles at Dawn." I happen to have a copy of that story. "On a tiny strip of film," says the editor's come-on, "hangs the specter of a world war. A dramatic novel of an American Secret Agent who must pit his wits against the master minds of political greed." The ending isn't too bad either.

Glessner's eyes bulged. He thrust out a trembling hand, took a faltering backward step that brought him against the bed. "No, no!" he gasped. "I do not deserve--"

Yato shot him twice through the heart.

Nothing sissy about that, huh?

Meanwhile, Justin Case continued his rollicking career with a total of 16 stories in Private Detective, Romantic Detective, Spicy Adventure, Spicy Detective, and Spicy Mystery. Not a bad year for old Justin.

In 1939 my favorite title (not the story itself--I don't have a copy of it) has to be "The Mystery of the Maudlin Mermaid." It was one of 27 Cave stories to appear that year in the 52 issues of Detective Fiction Weekly. With "The Death Watch" in October I made my last appearance in Weird Tales. Justin Case must have gone on vacation, for nothing of his appeared. And my bibliography, put together bit by bit from various sources since the fire that wiped out most of my records, shows a story in Triple-X Magazine called "The Terrible Three of B'Ruga" that has me baffled. A note beside my entry reads, "Tsiang House with a different name," meaning, perhaps, that the story was a rewritten Short Stories reject. John Locke lists Triple-X as having been published by Fawcett, but the Len Robbins Index hasn't covered it yet and I can't find the story itself listed anywhere. Yet I remember it. Though there are many, many others I've forgotten, for some strange reason I do distinctly remember this one.

The June Argosy of that year contained a story of mine that Karl Wagner selected for inclusion in Murgunstrumm and Others. It was called "Boomerang."

The following year, 1940, seems to have been another detective story year, with Detective Fiction Weekly using 11 stories, Dime Detective and Double Detective 3 each, and single stories scattered elsewhere through the field. Justin Case got back to work with four tales in the Spicies. Nothing much else happened. Thirty years old by then, with a strong feeling that the pulps were on their last legs, I spent most of my working hours on slick-paper stories.

1941 was pretty much the same. Detective Fiction Weekly did another 7 stories including a second four-part serial, "Shadow Man." Street & Smith's Detective Story, in which I had appeared several times before, ran something that whets my curiosity because of its

title, "The Albino Butterbugs." (What in the pulp world or any other is an albino butterbug?) Ken White at Dime Detective used a couple more Peter Kane yarns. Justin Case continued to turn out stories and bring in some needed income. I turned my hand to Westerns again and sold six to Street & Smith's Wild West Weekly. Exciting Detective used a Cave story, as did Green Ghost Detective. Black Mask printed a couple more. And I sold my first two of 22 stories to This Week Magazine, a nation-wide Sunday newspaper supplement with editorial offices in New York. Hardly the "big slicks," it nevertheless used many slick-paper writers and was a step in that direction, paying about thirty cents a word instead of the pulps' one or two!

## WOLF BREED



By HUGH B. CAVE

*Author of "Jungle Loot," "The Price of Vengeance," etc.*

*For twenty years Wolf LaVerne fought jungle dry rot. But on a night of red madness he ran amuck—for the breed of the wolf showed yellow.*

Then, at last, came the breakthrough.

Out in the South Pacific our Marines had recaptured from the Japanese an island called Guadalcanal. The Japanese navy had done its damndest to drive them out and been held off by a squadron of our PT boats until our big-ship navy, shattered at Pearl Harbor, was able to regroup and get there to take charge. Some of those PT men had returned to the States. Life Magazine had done a cover story on them.

Lurton Blassingame asked me if I would be interested in writing a book about them. Would I ever!

So with a contract from Dodd Mead in hand, I took the train to Florida (gas was rationed), spent many days getting the story from

three of the squadron's officers who were training other PT crews in Biscayne Bay, then returned to Rhode Island and began work on the first of five war books, Long Were the Nights.

1942 was a good year for Justin Case, too. Spicy Mystery Stories published six tales of his, including three--"Purr of a Cat," "The Whisperers," and "The Caverns of Time"--that Karl Wagner used in the Murgy omnibus. (I keep mentioning that Carcosa volume because it keeps turning up. In June, 1991, the Horror Writers of America held its annual meeting in Redondo Beach, California. A whole crowd of us got invited to a signing at Dangerous Visions Bookstore in nearby Sherman Oaks. I had 27 books in print by then, including a new one that had appeared only three months before. Yet I signed more copies of Murgunstrumm and Others, published fourteen years earlier, than of any other.)

In 1942 I was still writing for a few pulp magazines also. Dime Detective used another three stories. Flynn's Detective Fiction and something called True Gangster Stories used one apiece. Short Stories, in printing "Free Frenchman," used the first of several slick-paper rejects that were to appear in that magazine. I know they were rejects because I still have notebooks in which I kept a record of slick-paper submissions, and those notes indicate that through the forties and into the fifties, Short Stories, Adventure, and other pulps provided a market for stories that didn't quite make it in the markets they were meant for. Take, for instance, a novelette called "The Surangani Affair," which appeared in Short Stories in '48.

"There are some interesting things in this, but to be perfectly frank with you, we think it comes too close to being a pulp story for us to use it," said my Post editor.

"We felt there was not the originality of plot that we like in this one," said my editor at Country Gentleman.

"We very nearly bought it, but it did not have quite the punch and originality of plot complication necessary to make our fiction list," said W.O. Mitchell of Maclean's.

And so it went.

But a great new market for me opened up in that good year of 1942. Early in the year I made my first sale to editor Gwen Cowley of The Toronto Star Weekly, who eventually bought sixty-five of them and even published as a complete novel the Borneo Tsiang House serial, "The Midnight Horde," that had died unfinished when Wally Bamber's Far East Adventure Stories folded back in 1932.

(I met Gwen Cowley twice--once in Toronto when my wife and I were vacationing in Canada, and later, in 1970 or thereabouts, when she spent a day at my coffee plantation in the Blue Mountains of Jamaica. She was a little woman, bright, warm and lively, and we talked for hours about writing and editing. She knew very well that most of the stories I sent her in manuscript form (she also bought

reprint rights) were slickpaper rejects. It didn't bother her. "I buy what I like," she said, "and don't care in the least what other editors have said about a story.")

A typical page from my slick-paper marketing notebooks (only the pulp books were lost in the fire) is this one for a Toronto Star Weekly story called "The Flame in the Jungle":

1. Saturday Evening Post. "Somehow we feel it is unconvincing in that the hero could have cleared things up with a bit of explanation; and the girl's brother is awfully hard to believe."--Stuart Rose.

2. Cosmopolitan. "Just didn't feel that this ever got deep enough as far as the characters and their relations were concerned. I know you will sell the story but hope you will consider us for your next one even though we have passed this one up. If you are in town, I hope you will come in and see me."-- Harriet Le Barre.

3. Country Gentleman. "I'm awfully sorry but we felt it was rather similar to others we have used, and, quite frankly, it failed to capture our interest as well as some of your earlier ones. Please excuse me if I sound hyper-critical. This story, as well as any you let us see, is far superior to most of the stories we have an opportunity to read."--Margaret Schnug.

4. American Magazine. "I tried it on the boss but he wouldn't go for it. Frankly, I didn't expect him to, in spite of the fact I think you did a good job with the story. The locale is just too remote for us. So, with regrets, we have decided to let it get by us. Do let me hear from you soon. Even when I don't buy them, I enjoy reading them."--Bob Meskill.

5. Collier's. "We read it with interest but regretfully decided that the combination of personal conflicts and taut situation did not allow the story room in which to build to a satisfying denouement. Thanks though, and we're sorry."--Warren Brown.

6. Today's Woman. "A fascinating story, but we think that to understand it one needs to know something of the motives and behavior of the jungle natives and the different attitudes whites have toward them. In final analysis it seems somewhat too specialized."--Eleanor Stierhem.

7. Toronto Star.

SOLD: Toronto Star Weekly.

First and Second North American Serial Rights. \$375.00

But in 1942 I also sold what has come to be the most reprinted story ever to have the Cave name on it. American Magazine bought for \$200, on its first trip out, a little tale about an Eskimo boy and his dog who were marooned on an iceberg. The magazine, published by the same company that put out Collier's Weekly and The Woman's

Home Companion, printed "Two Were Left" in June of that year as what they called a "storiette." To date, it has been reprinted more than a hundred times in assorted schoolbooks and anthologies, and requests to use it still come in at the rate of two or three a year. American also used a full-length short story of mine that year. My pulp-paper days were about finished.

But not quite. In 1943 Dime Detective published the story I've mentioned before, "This Is the Way We Bake Our Dead." Short Stories ran a couple more slick-paper rejects. Street & Smith's Detective Story used at least two stories, one of which, "As Does a Spider," was reprinted in their Detective Story Annual in '46. And Adventure printed another of the stories that Karl Wagner selected for the Murgy collection.

This was a slick-paper reject called "Tomorrow Is Forever," about a German soldier, killed in combat, who finds himself wandering dead in the streets of the Czech town of Lidice, the population of which was ruthlessly wiped out, you may recall, when one of its citizens dared to shoot an officer of the German occupation force. The town is full of the ghosts of its dead inhabitants, all happily living normal lives. But they cannot see or hear him. He is condemned to spend the rest of eternity alone, thinking of what he and his comrades did to these people.

I tried the story on Collier's first. "I think you have done a beautiful job here," the editor wrote back, "so you can imagine how badly I feel to have to return it to you. The trouble is we steer clear of the supernatural because we have found that Collier's audience does not respond warmly to such fiction. I do think you ought to try it at the Atlantic Monthly."

Atlantic Monthly turned it down with: "This is a moving little story, even though it is not quite our meat. As far as possible we try to make our fiction a relief from the necessary war material that occupies so much of our non-fiction space. We shall be glad to hear from you again."

American Magazine's editor wrote, "This is beautifully written, but it just does not fit into our present scheme. It is a little too out of this world, literally and figuratively, for us."

So in May, 1943, I sent the story to Adventure, and Ken White bought it for forty dollars. And, as mentioned above, Karl Wagner used it in Murgy. How narrow, at times, was the gap between pulp and slick!

Pulp editors sometimes turned up in the slicks, too. In 1954 I sold a story called "Danger by Night" to the Fawcett company's Today's Woman. (Later it was reprinted as "The Prowler" in a Doubleday collection of my slickpaper stories called The Witching Lands, and was done on TV with David Niven playing the lead)

# TOMORROW IS FOREVER



BY HUGH B. CAVE

When Today's Woman bought it, I received not only the usual letter of acceptance from the magazine's editor--in this case Eleanor Stierhem--but one from Fawcett executive Ralph Daigh as well, saying how much he liked the story and mentioning my stories in the pulps. Back in 1933, the same Ralph Daigh had accepted a story of mine called "Half Way to Hell" for Strange Detective Stories, and for all I know may have bought others.

The PT Boat book, Long Were the Nights, was published in 1943 by Dodd Mead, got some great reviews, and hit the best-seller lists. Adventure used a 7,000-word excerpt from it in November, 1943, under the title "A Few Tons of Plywood." Yachting also ran an excerpt, and True did a condensed version. Another excerpt landed in Gilbert Cant's This Is the Navy, published by Penguin. Meanwhile, I was already at work on a second war book for the same publisher--this one the story of the cruiser Helena, written in collaboration with the ship's radio officer, Lt. C.G. Morris. The Fightin'est Ship was published in 1944, and both books, along with a third war book called I Took the Sky Road, were reprinted by Zenger Publishing Company in the '80s. Liberty did Sky Road, which was the "as told to" story of famed navy pilot Commander Norman Mickey Miller, as a complete non-fiction offering in 1945.

The Fightin'est Ship was responsible for my first appearance in The Saturday Evening Post, which magazine ultimately published 43 stories of mine. In their issue of January 22, 1944, The Post used an excerpt from that book, calling it "I Saw the Helena Go Down." Later that year they used another Cave piece, "Angry Little Sister," adding an extra \$200 to the check for radio rights.

In 1944 Speed Adventure printed five stories of mine, three of them by "Justin Case," that were almost certainly slick-paper rejects. Street & Smith's Detective Story ran a slick reject called "Steve Takes a Hand" that was reprinted later that year in A. L. Furman's hardcover anthology, The Second Mystery Companion. I wrote a book about the Navy's Seabees, We Build, We Fight, that was published the same year by Harper. And Boys' Life accepted the first two of twenty-one stories, many of which were also reprinted in hardcover. "Worth Fighting For," a PT Boat tale, reappeared in The Boy Scouts Year Book: Stories Boys Like Best, and in The Boys' Life Book of World War II Stories. And three of the stories in The Boys' Life Book of Mystery Stories had the Cave name on them.

Toronto Star took six more stories that year, This Week two. Except for the sale of slick-paper rejects and a series of novelettes written for Argosy in what I have come to call my "John Russell" period, my pulp-paper days were about over. But those "John Russell" tales deserve comment if only because I personally think they are among the best things I've ever done.

We'll get to them in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER TEN

Writers are sometimes asked by interviewers to name the works of other writers that have most influenced them. I have no difficulty with that question. First on my list, without question, is The River of Darkness by William Murray Graydon. In it, some boys escape from warring natives by fleeing into a unexplored African cave and riding a homemade raft down an underground river, never knowing where the mysterious stream will carry them or if they will ever get out of there. This adventure story grabbed me early on, when I was only a kid in grammar school, and has never let go.

(At Pulpcon in 1983 I happened to mention the effect this book had had on me, and expressed regret at having lost it. Next thing I knew, a copy of it arrived in the mail from Winston Dawson, bless him, and I avidly read it again and found it to be--well, not quite as spellbinding as when I was a kid, but still a darned good adventure yarn.)

Next on my list are the short stories of Rudyard Kipling, which I read initially--again as a kid--because my English mother had known Mr. Kipling in India. (But she named me after Hugh Walpole, thank heaven; Rudyard Cave would have sounded like some tourist attraction in Virginia or New Mexico--probably with a real underground river!)

From Kipling I went on to Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad--the latter's "Heart of Darkness" is another river story I never tire of reading. And then, sometime in the mid-forties, I discovered two books of short stories by one John Russell. These, called Where the Pavement Ends and Far Wandering Men, I found in a store that sold used books. My copy of Pavement was done by Grossett & Dunlap, N.Y., and bears the notation, "COPYRIGHT, 1919 BY JOHN RUSSELL." Far Wandering Men is marked "FIRST EDITION" and the stories in it seem to have appeared originally in a magazine or magazines, for this volume bears the notation, "COPYRIGHT 1923, 1925, 1927, AND 1929 BY JOHN RUSSELL." The magazines are not named, however. In those days publishers were less careful about such important details than they are today.

Could these stories--all of them adventure tales and most of them laid in the South Seas--have appeared originally in the pulps? The author may have appeared once in the pulps, at least. Len Robbins, in his Pulp Magazine Index, lists a John Russell story called "Three Things" that appeared in a 1938 issue of Munsey's All-American Fiction. But perhaps that was a reprint, or a different John Russell.

I have a hunch that the stories of my John Russell may have first seen the light of day in Cosmopolitan, which in those days was a far different magazine from the Cosmo of today and, in fact, used a couple of South Seas adventure stories of mine, the last as late as 1961.

Anyway, the stories in those two John Russell collections gripped me the same way River of Darkness and the Kipling, Conrad, and Stevenson works had done years earlier. And I suddenly found myself writing some stories in the Russell style.

What style is that? Well, I can't use anything by Russell here without going through a drawn-out process of obtaining permission, so let me just use the opening paragraph of one of my own tales of that period. "Payoff at Palembang," published in Argosy, begins like this:

Now that all the facts are in at last, it would seem that the two of them--the man and the ship--must have staged their grand departures at about the same time. Henry Arthur Gaylord stepped out of Darwin into oblivion. The *Saka Maru* steamed out from Fanatu to a rendezvous with destruction.

The first such story I attempted was "The Secret of Trinity's Island," which I sent off to Argosy in April of 1947. Harry Steeger's Popular Publications was the publisher of Argosy at that time, and its editor was Rogers Terrill, my old shudder pulps man. Rogers bought the story, paid me \$400 for 8000 words, and wrote in his letter of acceptance, "A swell story. I want to congratulate you on your swell background color and the nice repression with which you handled a plot which might easily have become too melodramatic."

Argosy ran the story in November, 1947, and England's Argosy Magazine reprinted it. A Dutch magazine, Spaarnestad, also used it. (By that time I was sending all my stories to the John Farquharson Agency in England and Innes Rose of that agency was placing them all over the world, some to as many as a dozen foreign magazines in as many different languages.)

The next story of my "Russell period" was "The Man Who Couldn't Die." Argosy had first look at this one too, and because it was a bit longer, paid \$500 for it. Australia's Sydney Herald reprinted it--a compliment, I felt, because again it was a South Seas story and only one with a believable background would have convinced an editor Down Under. (But by this time, as a World War II correspondent, I had actually spent time in Borneo, New Guinea, Guadalcanal, the Marshalls, the Marianas, Iwo Jima and the Philippines, so I was writing about the South Seas with at least a small amount of first-hand knowledge.)

Under the heading "Next Month," the January 1948 Argosy contained the following announcement by, I presume, Rogers Terrill:

The other day, in the little office where we hide ourselves from telephones and visiting firemen, we were knee-deep in manuscripts that might better have been sent to the Ladies Home Journal or Mademoiselle. We were beginning to get that funny, sinking feeling that perhaps this wasn't our day to find even one really good yarn. Then our secretary (smiling wickedly because she likes to make us work), barged right in with a new story by Hugh B. Cave--and ten minutes later we'd forgotten all our worries.

Do you have a favorite tale of South Sea adventure that you reread occasionally for new and pleasurable thrills? If so, we warn you it is about to be replaced by "The Man Who Couldn't Die."

Cave's hero is a beachcomber, a tropical tramp, a man who has fallen as low as it's possible to go and still live in a section of the world where even the best is sometimes no more than a poor imitation of the real thing. His heroine is a freak product of the teeming slums of a famous oriental city. She is lovely, half-starved--and wholly savage. Together these two, in a setting that rivals the imagination of a Robert Louis Stevenson, face the mystery, the impersonal brutality, the terror and, finally, the stalking horror of Fortune Island.

Sound good? It is. And it's a long novelette--the sort of story you'll want to talk over with your best friend and to reread next month and again ten years from now.

Next came "Payoff at Palembang," a 9000-worder the opening lines of which I quoted above. This one, too, went straight to Argosy and the introductory blurb went as follows:

"Foolishly, relentlessly, Gaylord followed the dimming trail throughout the islands, seeking the lovely girl who had been stolen from him."

Two other stories from my John Russell period appeared in Argosy: "Vengeance Island" in August,'53 and "Island Feud" in December of that year. Still others were published in Country Gentleman, The Saturday Evening Post, Esquire, Cosmopolitan, and The Elks Magazine. Two from The Saturday Evening Post, "The Silent Horror" and "The Woman Who Wouldn't Run," were done on radio, the former on C.B.S.'s "Escape", the latter on CBS's "Romance." And my records show that magazines in Denmark, Italy, Holland, Sweden, Australia and England reprinted many of them.

One that appeared only in England's Argosy Magazine sometime in the fifties, a story called "Tempest in Paradise," I would dearly love to get my hands on, for I have no copy of it and have a hunch that someone, sometime, may want to gather these tales together in a book. It's a book I would be proud of.

And so, with Argosy's publication of some of these adventure tales of my "John Russell period," we come to the end of my contributions to the pulps. Even Argosy was not actually a pulp at that time, at least not in appearance. An 8 1/2" by 11 1/4" slick-looking publication subtitled "The Complete Man's Magazine," it used at least as much non-fiction as fiction.

Stories of mine did appear later in such hard-to-classify publications as Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine and Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine. And some of my older pulp tales turned up again in small publications devoted to reprinting such work. But I had become a steady contributor to the slicks even before the pulps vanished from the scene, and when many of the slicks also faded from the fiction market in the late '60s and early '70s, I returned to book-writing. Not with war books, travel books and mainstream novels as before, but with dark-fantasy novels somewhat reminiscent of the stories I had written earlier for Weird Tales, Strange Tales, and the shudder pulps.

Which brings us, full circle, back to my old pen-friend and fellow pulp writer, Carl Jacobi.

As mentioned before, in 1967 or thereabouts I lost Carl's letters to me in a fire, and later he lost many of mine to him. But to this day we still correspond, and I do have many letters written by him from 1972 on, and carbon copies of mine to him during that period. In these we reminisced at times about our pulp-era activities. So if you are still with me, let's have a look at some.

Jacobi to Cave, undated, probably 1972: Well, two of the giants of the science-fiction-fantasy world have passed on--John Campbell, editor of Analog and August Derleth, head of Arkham House. Derleth died of heart trouble and complications rather suddenly. His passing left much in doubt as to the future of Arkham House. However I learned today that my collection, Disclosures In Scarlet, will appear this fall. In many respects Derleth was a peculiarity. He probably was not the writer he thought himself to be, but he was an astute business man and oddly enough his juvenile novels--to which he attached little importance--are in my opinion little masterpieces.

Could you write and tell me the fiction you have had published since (last) September? I think I can get back-copies and I'd like to keep up with your work. You know, Hugh, I'll bet there's no one

outside of your immediate family who has been such an ardent follower of your writings. Why, I can name off-hand most of your stories since you first appeared in Brief Stories, through your development with the Tsiang House stories, your first slicks in The Canadian, your graduation to The Saturday Evening Post.



## The Murder Machine

By Hugh B. Cave

I often wonder what became of some of those writers who were popular a few years ago. There was Paul Ernst who I believe is still writing for Good Housekeeping. (He was, and so was I; in addition to short stories for that magazine, Paul and I both wrote some of the mystery novelettes that G.H. featured in those days. We both lived in Florida, too, but oddly enough never met.--Cave.)

And Wyatt Blassingame, who somebody told me was now writing juveniles. There was Tom Thursday, a name I remember simply because of its oddity. There were old popular pulp writers like Thompson Burtis, W.C. Tuttle, Walt Coburn, Captain Dingle, Gordon White and Ared White who wrote stories of the first World War. There was Murray Leinster who wrote some first rate stories

for Cosmo under his real name of Will F. Jenkins and who incidentally wrote the first science fiction story I ever read, "The Runaway Skyscraper," which ran in the old Amazing Stories way back in the twenties. There was George Allan England, now deceased, and Georges Surdez who besides his Foreign Legion stories for Adventure wrote some very fine books. There was Bob DuSoe, whom you once expressed a liking for (and with whom I corresponded--Cave). There was H.P. Lovecraft, now a legend in his own time, yet who never wrote for any other magazine than Weird Tales (not quite true--Cave). H. Bedford-Jones who could write a first rate adventure story yet who appeared only once, in collaboration, in The Saturday Evening Post. And of course the fantasy writers like Kirk Mashburn, Paul S. Powers, an English professor who wrote one story for Weird Tales, "Monster of the Pit," that made a great impression on me. And Frances Flagg, Arlton Eadie who was an English writer, Greye La Spina who died recently in her 80s, David Keller, E. Hoffmann Price who is still alive and writing constantly. I suppose most of the writers who were in their prime when you and I started have long since passed on.

Jacobi to Cave, undated, probably later in 1972: The University of Minnesota (Carl's alma mater) has contacted me several times in the last year to request that my manuscripts, page proofs of books, story outlines and synopses and all my correspondence with editors be given to the university library, to be preserved in an air-conditioned room where they will be kept on file for research papers. Of course a lot of university libraries are doing this these days. Nevertheless it helped my ego a little.

Yes, I'm in an apartment now. But during my long absence from my house (Carl was in a hospital after an accident--Cave) the place was broken into and many of my most treasured possessions taken. The funny thing is that they took things some of which had no monetary value and would be wanted only by myself...for purely sentimental reasons.

It saddens me a little not to see your name more often in current magazines. Of course, I realize that one story in Good Housekeeping is equivalent to many others at lower rates, but the time was when the name of Hugh B. Cave was on the covers of just about every publication on the stands. You were very prolific. And then the era of The Saturday Evening Post. You were in every other issue, it seems. Of course I know that the day of magazine fiction has virtually disappeared. But I'm accustomed to seeing your name more often. Aren't you writing as much these days? (There were hardly any magazines left to write for, and I was then doing dark fantasy novels.--Cave.)

Did you ever think of gathering some of your better New Guinea



I can see, of course, that running a coffee plantation takes a lot of time. I envy you your colorful life in Jamaica and Haiti.

Did you know that there is quite a growing cult of Lovecraft fans? Even here locally there is quite a number of them, and when they learned that I wrote the type of story he wrote and more important that I had actually corresponded with him, this group went out of their way to help me. They got together in three or four cars and moved my books and magazines and phonograph records to my apartment here. It's very odd to me why Lovecraft commands the attention he does. Of course there is no doubt but that his slow and powerful development of the macabre story was masterfully done, and I still remember the great impression his "The Rats in the Walls" and "The Lurking Fear" made upon me. But I think that much of his writing could have been improved with a blue pencil.

Yet today, almost 35 years after his death, his popularity continues to grow. There are fan magazines devoted entirely to his writings alone, and his books bring fabulous prices. I have in my possession a copy of his The Outsider and Other Stories. It is a first edition and in perfect condition and its value in the collector's market is \$175. Groups gather all across the country and do little more than discuss his stories.

There have been literally thousands of essays and critiques written about him. All of his correspondence--he wrote thousands of letters during his lifetime; he would have been far more prolific if he had spent less time writing letters--have been gathered together and published in three massive volumes, with a fourth on the way. The most insignificant letter has not escaped his public.

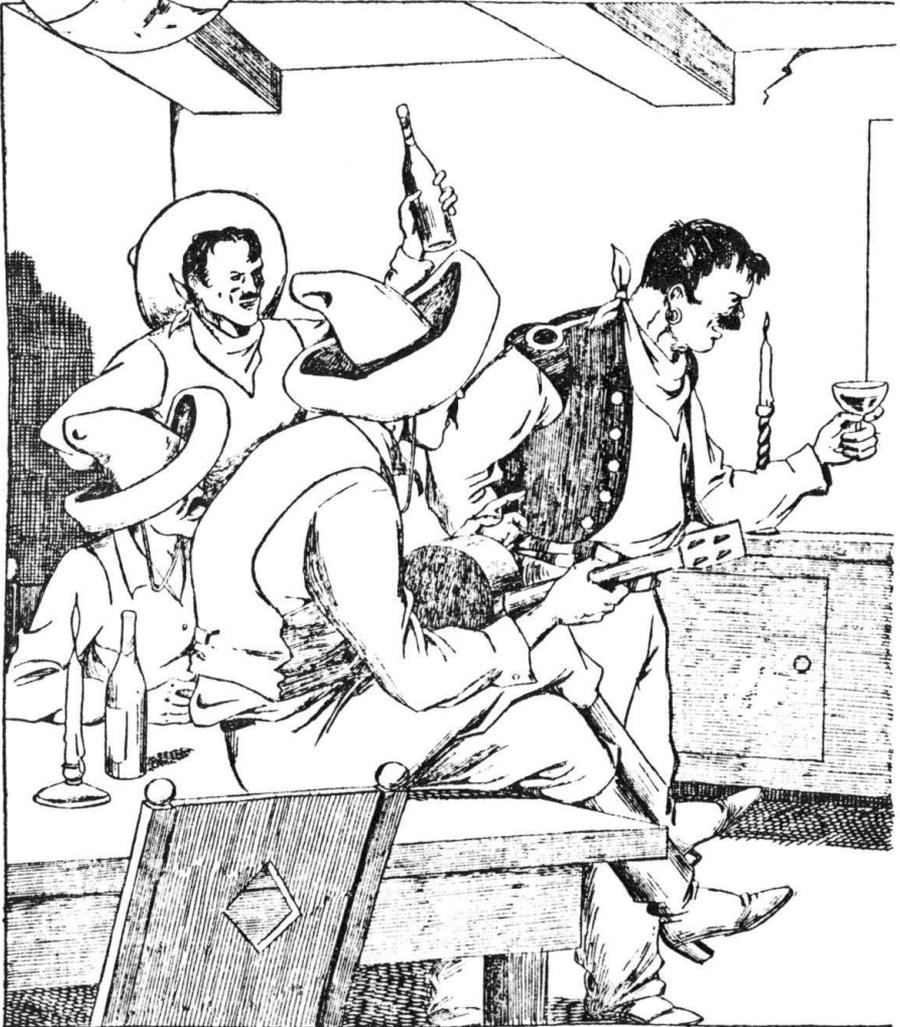
Yet he wrote for only a few pulp magazines--Weird Tales, of course, which during its golden age published many outstanding stories--and one or two lesser known publications. Two of his stories have appeared in the movies and many have appeared on television.

Yes, it's a mystery to me. And in a way, though I suppose I should be the last person to say it, it's a mystery to me the strange grip the fantasy story has on some people. As you know, I wrote during my life quite a few stories in many different fields. Several historical romances laid in the seventeenth century Caribbean, detective stories--featuring the "island detective" Joe Domingo--mystery stories (differing from true fantasy in that the supernatural element always had a "logical explanation") and a large number of so-called adventure stories. Some of these I worked very hard on to paint the background, and many of these I personally consider to be my better things. Yet they have come, gone, and are forgotten. Reprints among them have been very rare.

My fantasy stories, however, have been dredged out of obscure magazines, reprinted again and again in hard-cover and paperback anthologies, and in very handsome hard-cover books in France--one



# Tomorrow



*Jose Gazales was a mighty bandit, with a weakness for beautiful señoritas and plunder. At the rancho of Juan Potospo he seemed to have both, but for once in his life he tried to be too clever*

By JUSTIN CASE

# YOU DIE!



French book used no less than four of my stories in one edition and another used three--and in paperbacks in Britain, Denmark, Holland, Finland and many other countries. They have been gathered together in three books, Revelations in Black, Portraits in Moonlight, and the

forthcoming Disclosures in Scarlet. Of course R.I.B. was in a limited edition, but it sold out and today many copies are being sold at 10, 12 or 15 dollars a copy. Some of these fantasy stories of mine have been anthologized so many times, editors writing me for more of them to reprint have requested that I send them material which has not been published more than three or four times--at least within a certain period of time.

What's the answer? I don't know. Why the fantasy story--that is, the weird tale of the supernatural, together with the "hard core" science fiction story--should linger, stay on, and receive attention where better-written material in other fields is long forgotten is certainly strange.

Incidentally your "The Watcher in the Green Room" is often referred to by these dyed-in-the-wool enthusiasts.

Jacobi to Cave, undated, probably 1973: In the material I'm turning over to the university here are a number of magazines. Lathrop--that's the curator's name--wants all of my pulp magazines as an example of Americana of the period. A large number of these have stories by you in them. Although he is a comparatively young man, he is acquainted with the works of many writers of our time, especially those who did some work in the fantasy field. He knows of Robert Bloch, Robert E. Howard for example, and many others--Clark Ashton Smith, C.L. Moore, E. Hoffmann Price, Ray Bradbury, Clifford Simak, Mary Elizabeth Counselman, Henry Kuttner, etc. etc. And he knew of your work in this field.

Jacobi to Cave, undated, probably 1973, in which Carl wrote at length about being robbed a second time--this time of many valued items from his Minneapolis apartment: And (they took) all those stories I intended to send to you, "Kuching Cunning" in Far East, "The Brotherhood of Blood," "The Ghoul Gallery," "The City of Crawling Death," "The Cult of the White Ape," "The Door of Doom," and the many yarns in Dime Mystery all were taken, along with some early Black Masks that contained the first appearance of Dashiell Hammett's "The Maltese Falcon" (Remember the movie with Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorre, Sidney Greenstreet & Mary Astor?) also early pre-Perry Mason stories by Erle Stanley Gardner, and the once famous "Cameo Kirby" stories. They also took about ten copies of the very first science fiction magazine ever published in the United States, Hugo Gernsback's 1925 or 1926 Amazing Stories. These were large size with beautiful covers by Paul and contained early stories by H.G. Wells and Murray Leinster.

Incidentally, a chap came up to my apartment the other day and planked down \$125 cash for my copy of The Outsider by H.P. Lovecraft, for which I had paid \$5.00.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

Jacobi to Cave, undated, probably May 1974, in which Carl wrote at length about pulp writers who seemed to have been forgotten: Arthur O. Friel, on the other hand, seems to have survived a little. You may recall his name from the pages of Adventure. He was an acquaintance of mine. In 1923 he went up the Orinoco River in Venezuela, searching for a tribe of "white Indians." Sounds silly today, doesn't it, with modern air travel leaving no place unexplored. Anyway, I did see that a couple of his novels, Tiger River and The Pathless Trail, have been published in paperback.

Many of my books and most of my magazines, of course, were stolen when my house--and later my apartment--was rifled. As I said before, I can adjust to the theft of most of that material, except those magazines which had my stories in them. That's a loss I can't really evaluate, for they contained all I have to show for years of creative work.

Don Wandrei wanted me to ask you if there are definite plans as yet for your fantasy story collection by Carcosa. He said that the first book published by this company, Manly Wade Wellman's stories, was a big handsome volume. I hope it goes, if only to keep in print "Murgunstrumm," "Stragella," and "The Watcher in the Green Room."

Cave to Jacobi, May 23, 1974: I could add to your list of once-well-known writers who are now forgotten. When I was a kid I devoured the works of a fellow named Altsheler, for instance--he wrote marvelous frontier and Indian stories for young readers. Today you can't find anything of his in the library. Nobody writing today is going to be remembered alongside the famous writers of the past. There are just too many doing it today. Yet I'm sure we have people today who are as good as Stevenson, Conrad, Poe, etc. Although Conrad is awesomely good! I've just been re-reading "The Heart of Darkness," and that has got to be one of the great stories of all time.

Anyway, Carl, I don't expect to be remembered for ten minutes after I'm gone--for anything I've written, that is--but at the same time I don't regret the course my life has taken. Being a writer has kept me from slaving away in an office all my life. I've been able to go where I wished and do what I wanted, within the limits of a reasonably good income, and as I look back on it all, I feel I've had a lot of fun. Just the other day I had a letter from a publisher in Japan who'd been reading a lot of my stuff in Good Housekeeping and wanted to know whether he could put together a book of my

Good Housekeeping short stories for use in Japanese college English classes. (He did, in a volume called A Summer Romance and Other Stories that is now in its eleventh printing.--Cave.) There have been some keen disappointments, of course--I guess we've all had our share of those--but some wonderfully happy surprises as well.

Like you, I've given away most of the hundreds of books that I've collected over the years. I've kept a few old favorites, but there isn't space in a small apartment for all the others, and they have had to go. (At this time I was dividing my time between a Florida condo and a coffee plantation in Jamaica.--Cave.) I have your three books and enjoy going back to certain stories in them. I'm flattered that you have kept my Jamaica book. As for writing, I still get a kick out of turning out what I think is a good piece of work, and, of course, am delighted when some editor agrees with me. But I no longer send stories around to a whole lot of editors in hope of a "salvage" sale. There aren't the magazines to send a story to, in any case.

You asked about the collection of my stories by Carcosa. Far as I know, it is a definite thing. I haven't yet signed a contract but have okayed the project, and Lee Brown Coye has already done many of the illustrations.

As for your doing a booklength, Carl, why not? I mean, what have you got to lose? You like to write, and I'm sure you would keep on writing for your own satisfaction even if there were no magazines left to publish what you turned out.

You asked if I would like to have one or two more pulps you have on hand with stories of mine in them. You mentioned Short Stories. I guess I'll have to say "yes," old boy. You've already honed my appetite with the stories you have sent me, and I'm now just downright curious to see what kind of stuff I was writing in those days.

Jacobi to Cave, undated, probably 1974: Yes, Etchings and Odysseys is published here locally, or in Duluth, to be exact. It's a fan magazine, of course, but it's one of the best I've seen. I don't know where the fellows who put it out get their energy or drive. At best, all these fan magazines can hope to do is break even or enjoy a very small amount of profit. So mostly they're a labor of love.

They manage to get some material from professional writers--usually interviews or letters or reminiscences or an old story they can reprint--and the rest, of course, is done by non-professionals. But I agree with you that the short stories being written today for many of them are bad. And no, you're wrong in assuming that they are done by youngsters. One such writer I know is in his fifties, one in his late thirties, and the rest are in their thirties. Certainly not kids.

The fact is, they simply don't want to follow any discipline of writing. They may know techniques or point of view, or they may

not, but they seem to think they can write as they please, and to hell with any suggestion of conformity.

I'll never forget, in a letter you wrote me many years ago, you said: "Writing is more the work of omission, rather than commission." I've brought that to mind many times. I've labored hard to achieve simplicity and at the same time clarity. Somerset Maugham is my idol as far as those two things are concerned. I cut and rewrite. And it burns me up when some science fiction writer, doing what is now called the "New Wave of SF Writing" comes up with an opening paragraph or page which I simply can't understand or which I have to read two or three times to understand. These are studies in obscurity. Yet the tendency in a lot of fiction these days is away from clarity. It has become stylish to be ambiguous.

**Carl Jacobi.** University of Minn., where was ed of Minn. Quaterly and Minn. Ski-U-Mah. Newspaper reporter, rewrite man, *Minn. Star*. Fired. Night Hotel clerk. Fired. Sold first to *Weird Tales*. Since appeared in most adventure books, weird and pseudo-scientific mags, western and detective. Prefers to write of Far East, which knows. In halcyon days roamed thru off-trail ports with shirt-tail relation,

who footed the bills. Favorite hobby: working out catchy pseudonyms which never uses. Unmarried. Owns 23 pipes. Smokes one. Building cabin on lake for summer workshop. Wrote one radio series, "Danger Trails with Joe Carter". Electrically transcribed but never sponsored. No novels yet, but probably one before 1936 ends. If pocketbook permits, expects to trekk to Honduras for no particular reason.

Autobiographical sketch from  
American Fiction Guild Bulletin, January 2, 1936

Of course, many of these young writers simply don't recognize obscurity. They don't know any better. Those fellows I can excuse. But those writers who deliberately select such a style--they are the ones who get me down.

As for the Winston cigarette ad, with its "like a cigarette should," which you mentioned--that has been a sore spot in my hearing ever since they started using it. One thing you've got to say for the English, they may have a variety of accents, Cockney, etc., but they don't maltreat the language as we here in America do.

E. Hoffmann Price was here in Minneapolis and a group of us got together and talked over old times. He's sold about 500 yarns from the pulps to the slicks and has a raft of books to his credit. At 73 he's still alert as a pup and going strong. It pleased him when I brought out a lot of Short Stories, Argosys, Adventures, Weird Tales, the various Munsey books, Thrillings, Populars, and many others and

asked him to autograph them. You must recognize his name for he is more or less a contemporary of ours and was prolific as hell.

And some months ago a writer whose name you may not recognize, Mary Elizabeth Counselman, phoned me from her Minneapolis hotel room and I dropped down to see her. She's an old fantasy writer from way back, and her most popular short story, "Three Marked Pennies," has even been translated into Swahili.

Jacobi to Cave, undated, probably 1974: As you know, many of my magazines were stolen, either from my old house or from my former apartment on the north side of Minneapolis. Besides that I gave a "trunk full" to the University of Minnesota library's collection. Figuring at the going rate for pulp magazines in good condition, I must have given away almost \$900 worth of Weird Tales alone. And that doesn't count the Adventure, Short Stories, Western Stories, Magic Carpet, Action Stories and other pulps which would bring lesser money but still a substantial price. Those magazines which I have left are piled in boxes in a closet under a million 78 phonograph records.

What I'm getting at is that I may have more magazines with your stories in 'em. I remember several Short Stories yarns that I have of yours somewhere, including "The Reformation of Private Blake," "The Green Eyes of Confucius," "Suicide Trail," and "Fever Laugh." But these magazines are not in first class condition. The covers are missing, and in some cases they're yellowed from exposure to the sun. Many many others I had with your tales in 'em alas were stolen.

At 9:30 last Wednesday morning there was a soft knock on my apartment door. Foolishly I unlocked it without first asking who it was. Two black men and two white girls forced their way in and one of them immediately began beating the hell out of me. Blows to the eye and across the mouth and a cruel paralyzing slam to the rib cage. They forced me into the bedroom, threw me across the bed, and put a switchblade knife squarely against my throat. "Tell us where your money is," one said, "or we'll kill you." I told them all the money I had was the five dollars in my wallet, that I hadn't been to the bank yet. Meanwhile I could hear the others tearing open cabinets, drawers and bookcases and dumping their contents on the floor. They were in my apartment approximately twenty minutes during which time the switchblade knife never left my throat. But they found no money. There was \$120 hidden and I suppose I was playing with fate not to have told them where it was. But money comes hard these days and I wasn't about to turn it over to these thugs. Then they tied my hands with my robe tie cord and tied my feet to the bed with my belt. Then three of them left. One remained behind to cut the telephone wire. As he did, he whispered in my ear, "The Lord will forgive me but I've a good notion to kill you anyway." About that

time I got scared.

Well, I managed to untie myself and stumble across the corridor to the apartment manager's apartment and asked him to call the police. In ten minutes my apartment looked like a movie set with policemen with walkie talkies, detectives, fingerprint men, photographers, and ambulance doctors. My face by this time was a bloody mess and they insisted I go to the hospital. But I wouldn't go. Instead I got a friend to drive me to my family doctor where they took X-rays and said no ribs were broken, but I had several bruises and would be sore for a few days. Sore? They weren't kidding. I was so lame that a deep breath was agony for a week.

Anyway, I'm keeping my door locked from now on.

I enclose the magazines I spoke of earlier in this letter. Sorry for their poor condition. It was a letter written to you re "The Green Eyes of Confucius" that first started the correspondence between us. Do you remember that?

Cave to Jacobi, from Jamaica. March 19, 1974: I've just received your letter of Feb. 23, forwarded from Florida. Damn this Jamaican mail service. I wrote to you weeks ago, a long letter thanking you for Disclosures in Scarlet and commenting on many of the stories in that fine book. Damn me for not making a carbon copy of the letter, so I could just enclose it with this one. After all my sad experiences with Jamaican mail, I ought to know better by now.

Anyway, I think this is your best book. That's saying plenty, because the previous two were mighty fine. And I'll write in detail about it in my next.

I have to thank you most warmly for the latest batch of old magazines you sent. I haven't seen them, of course, but my wife wrote me about them and I'm tickled to death to know they'll be waiting for me when I return to Florida in 3 or 4 weeks. I'm especially grateful to you for the issue of Strange Tales containing "Stragella," which seems to be one of my best-known pulp stories, but which I don't remember much about.

You mentioned Carcosa. Yes, I guess they're going to bring out a collection of my old horror tales and fantasies. Karl Wagner has been collecting my stories and has found some that I had completely forgotten. I have a copy of their first book, Worse Things Waiting by Manly Wade Wellman, and want to tell you it is just about the handsomest thing of its kind I have ever seen. It is beautifully edited, printed, illustrated, bound--an outstanding job in every way. Lee Brown Coye did the illustrations, about 30 of them, many full page, and he is also doing the drawings for mine. I've seen photographs of many, and they're really scary.

Murgunstrumm and Others will probably be the book's title if it

becomes a reality. I don't know what stories Karl plans to include but believe he wants to use about 20 or so, and I am leaving the choice up to him and his associates. So far he has mentioned, in addition to "Murgunstrumm," such tales as "Stragella," "The Door of Doom," "The Watcher in the Green Room," and something called "The Grisly Death" from Black Book, which I don't recall at all. Mind you, the writing in these stories is not going to compare at all with your writing in Disclosures in Scarlet. Almost all the stories to be included were written before I was 25 years old. The gusto may please the readers, but the craftsmanship is going to make me wince, I'm sure. But what the hell--the whole idea is fun, and I'm getting a great kick out of delving into my half-lost past. If the book ever comes out, you'll be the first to get a copy.

I understand there's a book coming out soon, by Bob Jones, called The Shudder Pulps. The publisher is Bob Weinberg, and he is taking orders for publication this spring. I'll be sending him an

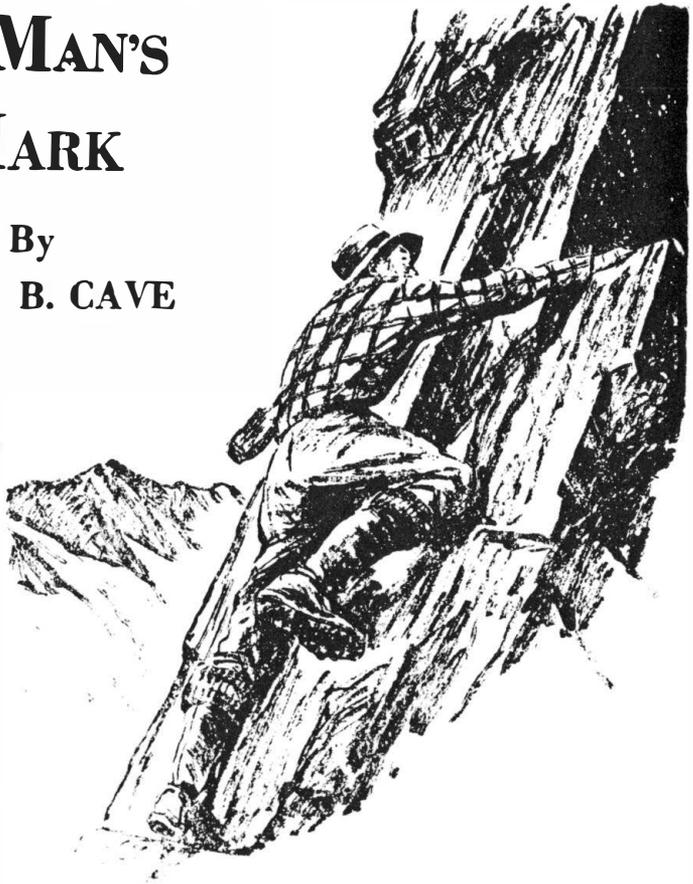
# A MAN'S MARK

By  
HUGH B. CAVE

---

*"A Blunderer  
Is Never a  
Hero . . . You  
Should Know  
That . . ."*

---



order when I return to Florida. I don't write, or rather mail, any letters from here that I don't have to. When writing to my wife I number my letters, and she numbers hers to me. About a third of them never turn up.

Finally, let me say I'm glad you postponed or canceled your projected visit to Jamaica. There is a ghastly wave of cold-blooded gun killings going on here at present, and the government just today passed a set of really tough laws in an effort to improve the situation. Three prominent citizens have been murdered on the street by gun-slinging hoodlums in the past three days. Many others not so well known have been gunned down in recent weeks. I'm strongly tempted to sell my place here and get out, but at the moment nobody is buying anything. The tourist hotels, incidentally, are nowhere near as full as you would expect them to be at this time of year, and people--even Jamaicans--are leaving the island in droves. It's really too bad.

That's about it for now, Carl. If you'll put off answering this for a month or so and then mail your reply to Florida, I'll be more likely to get it than if you write to me here.

All best and thanks again for those magazines. You're a kind and generous friend.

Cave to Jacobi, April 13, 1976: Many thanks for sending me Midnight Sun containing your new story, "Test Case." Very good story, sir, and I enjoyed reading it. I don't think it's your very best, but it has all the old craftsmanship. There's a story in that same issue by a young fellow I think is probably the most promising writer in the fantasy field. I refer to Dave Drake. His stuff packs a powerful wallop and gets better all the time as he learns what we all had to learn--to cut and trim so as not to bury all the good effects under a lot of verbiage.

I should have written you before, sir, but only returned from Jamaica two weeks ago and have had such a lot to do since. As you know, I sold the coffee plantation a year ago. The buyer has paid promptly as his installments came due--in Jamaican money, that is; he's a Jamaican--but the government is very, very reluctant to let anyone have any U.S. dollars, and so my struggle goes on. In fact, I am so sure it will continue that I've rented a little place in Christiana, up in the central mountains, so as to have a bed to sleep in and a kitchen to cook in on my anticipated frequent visits for the next year or so. That way I can hold onto my car there, and won't have to pay hotel bills and car rental when I go over.

I wrote a new novel when I was over there this time. Was there better than 3 months. It started out to be a Weird Tales type of thing, written purely for my own pleasure, but drifted off into a bit of science fiction at the end, so I may end up with a big fat nothing.

(This novel, rewritten, actually ended up twelve years later as Disciples of Dread, published in hardcover and paperback by Tor Books in 1988.--Cave.) Meanwhile, Karl Wagner says he is about to send me a contract for Murgunstrumm and Others, so apparently that project is now a sure thing. Should be quite a book.

By the way, I've had some correspondence with a fellow in Seattle who signs himself William Pugmire and puts out a fan magazine called Midnight Fantasies. He is doing a tribute to you, and asked if I would contribute to it, which of course I was happy indeed to do. You probably know about it.

What's new in the Jacobi typewriter? I trust you are still turning out stories, though like me you probably don't feel any great pressure nowadays and do them for pleasure. I did a new short story for Whispers just before going to Jamaica, but have been busy on the novel since then--in fact, I had such a great time doing the novel that I finished it in rough draft in just two months. Stuart Schiff liked the short story, but I don't know when it will be used. Whispers is a fine magazine, by the way. I'm sure you've seen it, since you keep up on these things--have done so for years, I believe--and I'm only just beginning to find out what is going on in the present day fantasy field. (I had been writing for the slicks--at that time mostly for Good Housekeeping, which by then had published 37 stories of mine.--Cave.)

Cave to Jacobi, June 4, 1976: Just read over my last letter to you (carbon copy) and realized it contained quite a boo-boo. I said I couldn't send you a copy of my last Whispers story because I didn't have an extra one. But of course you had a story in the same issue--Jacobi & Cave on the same contents page again, by golly, after all these years!--and so you don't need any copy from me.

The other day I picked up the paperback anthology Night Chills edited by your agent, Kirby McCauley. Good stuff, and I was happy indeed to see your old "Revelations in Black" story in it--I mean a story from your book of that name, of course, not the title story itself. You do get around, sir.

If you haven't read all the stories in Night Chills, please read Karl Wagner's "Sticks." For my money, that is one of the best fantasies to come along in years.

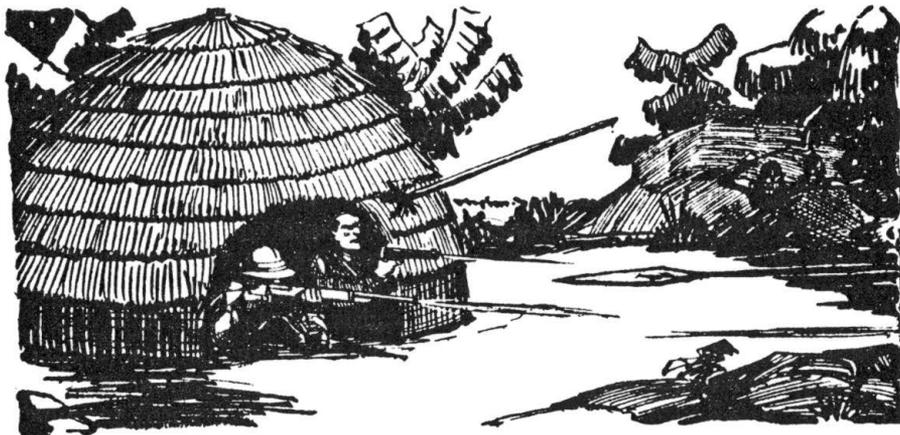
Hope all's well with you, and the Jacobi typewriter is merrily clicking away on new stories. I'll be returning to Jamaica on the thirteenth of this month and believe I'll stay there awhile, to get away from the oppressive upcoming summer heat here in Florida.

Jacobi to Cave, December 20, 1976: I've had quite a number of things reprinted lately. The short story, "Revelations in Black," appeared for the umpteenth time in a paperback anthology, Feast of

Blood or some such gosh-awful title. The book collection, Revelations in Black, came out in a British edition published in London. Then Starwind, a high calibre magazine published by the University of North Carolina, reprinted my "Canal." Also Fantasy and Terror, another subscription magazine, printed again my "The Aquarium," this time with the Cthulhu Mythos passages intact which no doubt pleased the Lovecraft fans.

Bill Pugmire farmed out his "Tribute to Carl Jacobi" to another chap to publish, and I guess it has been delayed, whether permanently or not I don't know. Thank you sincerely for contributing to it. ("Carl Jacobi: An Appreciation" appeared soon afterward, with glowing tributes by a dozen or more writers including, from Carl's pulp-paper days, Mary Elizabeth Counselman, Clifford D. Simak, E. Hoffmann Price, Fritz Leiber, and Robert Bloch. My own tribute ends with the following words: "Thanks for all the good stories, Carl. And for your many letters over the years. I have warmly appreciated your criticisms and encouragements. I have admired your stories and hope there may be many more. We need such writing today, when so much of what gets into print is done without caring."--Cave.)

## JUNGLE LOOT



By HUGH B. CAVE

*Strong men go mad on that one-way trail that leads to jungle ivory. Buck Deragon called it the Road to Hell—till the flame of an unholy torture turned a yellow streak to crimson.*

Complete Action-Adventure Novelet

## CHAPTER TWELVE

Cave to Jacobi, January 15, 1977: Must get a new ribbon for this machine. But if I put off writing you until I do, that will be just another delay. Forgive me for taking all this time as it is. I went out to California to spend Christmas with my two sons there, and got talked into staying much longer than I had expected.

I see by your letter of December 20 that you still have a slight dread of undertaking a novel. Honest, it's easy. The darned things just about write themselves after you get going on them. And I'm sure you could sell a fantasy novel, with your background in the field.

Of course, I'm not exactly one to pose as an expert. When I got the notion of doing some dark-fantasy novels, I did one and then realized I didn't know a thing about the market for such work. (I had been marketing my own work, both books and magazine stories, since the publication of Haiti: Highroad to Adventure in 1952.--Cave.) Wrote a second novel while thinking about it-- actually while Stuart Schiff and Dave Drake were reading the first one as a favor to me. Then when I decided I'd better have an agent again, since I was a total greenhorn in this market, they both recommended Kirby McCauley and I wrote to him. When I returned from California, there was a letter from him awaiting me in which he said that while he liked the novels, he was up to his neck in work and so had passed them on to an agent friend of his, Eleanor Wood, who he was sure would be good for me, etc.

Well, sir, there was also a letter from Wood in the pile, very businesslike, very professional. She liked the part-fantasy novel and wanted to try it right away "as is." She thought the other one--which actually was a first draft--needed some work and ought to be longer anyway. I was much impressed with her letter and decided to try working with her.

You asked how a man who got such high rates in the big slicks could sit down and write stories for Whispers. Well, sir, most of those slicks aren't there any more and I like to write. And I like to see my stuff published. That's the simple answer. At my age the money is less important. I like the stuff, of course, but can get along on less. And I sure as hell don't want to turn to shuffleboard for entertainment! Right now I'm content to get some good creepy novels written.

Jamaica continues to be a problem. The country is flat broke, and though I'm supposed to get a sizeable chunk of money in U.S. dollars every year for the next ten years--enough to live on, and then

some--I'm not getting it. So I'll be going down there from time to time, as before, to continue my efforts. I feel that if I stop keeping the pressure on--which is obviously what they'd like me to do--I can write the whole thing off as a dead loss. (I had owned my Arntully Highlands coffee plantation there for 15 years, restoring it from a "ruinate" plantation to one of the best producers of world-famous Blue Mountain Coffee in the island. Had also built a house there. It was a grand adventure, but when I finally got my money from the sale of it, the Jamaican dollar had dwindled in value to almost nothing and I ended up a loser.--Cave.)

Jacobi to Cave, June 8, 1977: First of all, I want to thank you for the many nice things you said about me in Bill Pugmire's "tribute" booklet. I appreciated it as I did all the accolades by all the writers who contributed to it. I thought it damned nice of Pugmire to go to the trouble and expense of printing and mailing it, and I was all but overwhelmed by those friends who took the time and effort to say what they did.

And I see you and I are together again--twice, as a matter of fact--in the magazine world. By now you've probably received your copies of Robert Weinberg's Weird Menace #2 which contains my novelette, "Satan's Roadhouse" and your complete novel, "Satan's Mistress." Both dating back to 1934. Seems like yesterday when I wrote that story! Also, you've probably received your copy of Weinberg's handsome hardcover book, The Weird Tales Story, with a first rate jacket and a most interesting history of the magazine. Our pictures are side by side, although I did little to hold up my part of that combination. My pic was only two years old, snapped at Don Wandrei's house, but I look like a tired old man while that handsome Cave guy looks like a movie star just about to open a check envelope from Good Housekeeping or the SatEvePost.

I was pleased to have "Satan's Roadhouse" in print again, although I'm not too proud of the diction in that story. To me it seemed over-written. I like to think my writing has improved since '34, toned down and not as garish. Whether it has or not, of course I don't really know. Can anyone really be a judge of his own writing?

Jacobi to Cave, February 24, 1977: The author of a recent best-selling novel (Carl names the man, but I prefer not to repeat it here.--Cave) was on a television talk show the other night and among the questions asked him was "How much copy can you turn out in an average day?" He thought a moment and replied, "Thirty pages." "Is that finished or marketable copy?" he was asked. To which he answered, "Yes."

Well, the average page runs about 300 words, so 30 pages would be 9000 words. There are seven days in a week, so that would give us



TERROR TALES, October 1934

about 63,000 words in a week which is pretty close to what used to be considered the length of a novel. Fifty two weeks in a year. Does he mean us to believe he can turn out 52 novels in a year? Or even assuming he worked only six days a week and took Sunday off, he would be averaging more than 45 novels in a year's time!

Perhaps I go into all this because of my own slowness. Now I suppose that when my wrist isn't acting up I could type quite a few pages of copy--not thirty, of course, but quite a few pages. But it wouldn't be marketable copy. My first draft is filled with clumsy

sentence structures, over-writing, clumsy transitions and just plain poor workmanship.

H. Bedford-Jones wrote in his book The Graduate Fictioneer that he set the margins on his typewriter at an inch and a quarter, began a story, and when he had written it, put the copy in an envelope and mailed it in. In other words, his first draft was his final draft. I don't believe him. There simply has to be some corrections, some deletions, some errors. The human intellect isn't, I maintain, that perfect.

(Even in my most prolific pulp days, I always did at least two drafts of a story. I might write the complete story in rough draft without looking back at what I had written, but then I would go over that rough draft line by line with a critical pencil and type out a clean, edited copy for mailing. I had something of a reputation in those days--at least, Ken White of Popular Publications told me I did, and Wally Bamber of Far East also once mentioned it--of being a writer who could be depended upon to turn in printer-ready copy. Not that I wasn't sometimes asked to revise a story, of course. That's not the same thing.--Cave.)

When E. Hoffmann Price was in Minneapolis last fall--he's been here several times--he dropped over to my apartment and gave me a copy of his book, Far Lands Other Days. If your Carcosa collection is as good as his, it'll be a handsome volume. I haven't seen the first Carcosa, the Manly Wade Wellman, but I understand the publisher did a fine job on that too. I liked the illustrations in Ed Price's book, too. They aren't arty or anything like that. I used to like Virgil Finlay's drawings and Hugh Rankin's greased pencil work in the very early Weird Tales of the 1920s. Remember Brundage's nude WT covers? They were considered quite shocking at the time. Today they'd be tame indeed. But I confess I don't like those illustrations where there is a very fine line between the horrible and the disgusting.

Speaking of agents, many of them, as you are perhaps aware, will no longer handle short stories. There simply are too few markets to make the marketing of them worthwhile.

(I had not used an agent for short work since my pulp days when Lurton Blassingame was both a close friend and my agent. I sold to the big slicks on my own, and in fact, sold all but the first seven of my books that way. It was not until the slicks became too few in number to be a reliable market that I returned to writing books and had to look for an agent again.-- Cave.)

You write that since Good Housekeeping has changed editors you no longer sell to that magazine. But how about the other slicks? I know you've written for Cosmopolitan and Redbook, and I know that you sold a lot of stuff to the Ladies' Home Journal. (Not a lot of stuff, but that magazine did use some shorts of mine and did run

a condensed version of my biggest-selling novel, The Cross on the Drum.--Cave.) I can appreciate your writing fantasy for the pleasure it gives you. But it seems a shame that with your experience in the quality publications you should drop all that and turn to a field where the recompense is only a tenth as much.

Jacobi to Cave, February 25, 1977: Although I have been writing science fiction and fantasy for about thirty years, I confess a good many of the new books baffle me. I picked up a sf novel recently which according to the jacket was "a major breakthrough in the technique of sf narration." I couldn't understand it. Not only was it obscure but I simply couldn't follow it from one paragraph to another. There wasn't the slightest attempt at a story line. Now I submit that if I, with more than thirty years reading and writing in the genre, can't understand it there must be a helluva lot of new readers to whom it would be an utter blank. Yet I must be wrong, for some publisher thought highly enough of it to put it in print in what is a highly competitive field.

I've been getting together stories for a fourth collection, but I'm a little short in fantasy and science fiction yarns. I've no rejects I can polish up for I've sold every blessed thing I've written in these two fields. That's not a bad record, is it? I'm also having trouble selecting a title. At first I wanted a name that would go along with my three other collections, Revelations in Black, Portraits in Moonlight, and Disclosures in Scarlet. Right now I have two in mind: "Wayfarers in Darkness" and "Passengers to Perdition." What do you think?

(At the bottom of this letter from Carl I had scribbled the title "Dwellers in Darkness," but whether I ever passed that suggestion along to Carl I don't know. In any case, his next book was not in the fantasy/sf field, but was a collection of adventure stories called East of Samarinda, edited by Carl and his friend R. Dixon Smith and published in 1989 by Bowling Green State University Popular Press. This one includes stories from such pulp magazines as Complete Stories, Top Notch, The Skipper, Short Stories, Thrilling Mystery, Dime Adventure Magazine, Thrilling Adventures, 10 Story Mystery Magazine, and Doc Savage. And to make the book even better, they are reproduced as originally printed, with their original illustrations. R. Dixon Smith also wrote a fine biography of Carl, called Lost in the Rentharpian Hills: Spanning the Decades with Carl Jacobi. This, with forewords by Robert Bloch and Joseph Payne Brennan, was done in 1985 by the same publisher.--Cave.)

Cave to Jacobi, June 17, 1977: No need to thank me for my small contribution to Pugmire's booklet. Twas done with sincerity and pleasure. I thought the booklet was quite a remarkable thing, by

the way--something you can be proud of. I know you have often said that you have little to show for your life's work, but I wonder how many heads of corporations have anything like your booklet.

Sorry about that too-handsome photo in Bob Weinberg's The Weird Tales Story, old man. It happened this way: I was in Jamaica when Bob's publisher recommended he use some photos of the Weird Tales authors, and when he wrote me for one I just didn't have any on hand. Worse, my wife wasn't at home here in Florida, so I couldn't have her send him one. (While I had a camera and my own darkroom on the plantation, and might have persuaded someone to take some snaps of me, I was out of developer at the time. So I still would have had to go to Kingston, a seven-hour round trip over bad mountain roads--and Bob wanted a photo in a hurry.--Cave.) The only solution that occurred to me was to send Bob a book jacket and let him copy from that. Hence my picture was taken at least ten years earlier than yours. (It was from the jacket of The Mission, actually published seventeen years before The Weird Tales Story appeared!--Cave.) The one on Murgunstrumm will look my present age. That one was taken by my Jamaican housekeeper--as a lark--only last year. Of course, I always was a handsome guy, though. Didn't you know?

I too thought The Weird Tales Story was very well done, though I frankly don't remember the magazine all that well. I don't think I ever read it after I stopped writing for it. Was too busy reading the slicks and trying to sell to those. Thus I didn't know W.T. at all during the period, say, when Lee Brown Coye was drawing for it. But I certainly enjoyed reading Weinberg's book.

I also enjoyed re-reading those stories in his Weird Menace #2. You say your story struck you as being overwritten. That's how mine struck me. We just weren't doing our best writing in those two stories, pal, and I wonder why Bob selected them. The best story in the book is the Fred Davis novelette. Never mind, though. It was fun to be in the same magazine with you again, just as it was fun to see our photos side by side in the bigger book.

Yesterday I talked with Eleanor Wood on the phone and got the impression that though she liked my novels very much--two of the three, at least--she feels the market for fantasy novels is limited. While she didn't actually urge me to shift to science fiction, she pointedly asked if I had ever written in that field and suggested that my latest novel, only just finished, could easily be done over as a sci-fi thing.

I just don't know what to think, and am not prepared to make any radical changes just yet, but am passing these thoughts on to you for what they may be worth. It is entirely possible that I'm not writing as well as I used to when I turned out The Cross on the Drum, Black Sun, and other successful mainstream novels, or that

I've been away from fantasy so long--even from reading it-- that I am turning out stuff that is stale to more savvy readers. Will just have to wait and see, I guess.

I haven't written any fantasy shorts except the three I did for Stuart Schiff's Whispers, so can't comment on your problems with yours. Schiff has printed only one of the three--"Ladies in Waiting"--which will be included in the forthcoming Doubleday hardcover he is also editing. If Whispers should fold before the other two are published, I wouldn't have any idea where to send them and would probably just file them away in hope that someone, sometime, would ask if I had any new stories that could be used in some anthology.

Murgy, by the way, has had an excellent advance sale, according to Karl Wagner, but has run into the usual delays and probably won't be out until August.

Keep well and keep writing.

Jacobi to Cave, September 28, 1977: I've been gathering together more stories for that other collection I mentioned. The working title I've got now is Wayfarers in Darkness which is all right, I suppose, except that that word "Darkness" has been pretty much overused. One of the short stories to be included is entitled "The Elcar Special" and I thought of calling the book "The Elcar Special and Other Stories," but of course no publisher would accept that since it tells nothing of the contents. Incidentally, the story is about antique cars. Do you remember the Elcar? It came out about the time of the Hupmobile, Marmon, Jordan, Durant, Rickenbacker, Locomobile, Stutz Bearcat, Chalmers and others. Remember? Anyway, any suggestions you've got for a title in the same vein as my previous three would be appreciated. Serious titles, I mean. Nothing facetious, like Cliff Simak's tongue-in-cheek suggestion, "Yclept in Yellow" or Don Wandrei's "Poltergeists in Purple."

Cave to Jacobi, October 24, 1977: Many thanks for your recent letter. I would have replied sooner but have been trying to do the final typing of a new novel and get it off to my agent. Finished the typing job yesterday, so now I can relax for a while. Not for too long, though. I find that if I don't have a writing job on the fire, I tend to get restless. Especially now that I've sold the coffee farm and don't have that to keep me amused.

You say you have no chance of selling a novel "if this guy Cave with his record of selling to the quality magazines and some five or six books to his credit has trouble in marketing a fantasy novel." That should be 16 books, old boy, by the way. I don't think that argument is valid. Maybe I have written and sold more mainstream stuff than you, but we are talking about fantasy here, not mainstream writing, and in the fantasy field you are much better known than I.

My hunch is that a new novel by Carl Jacobi would pretty much get by on its author's reputation. The fantasy editors at the various book publishers almost certainly know about you. They don't know me.

Anyway, Carl, since I quit writing for the slicks I have done four fantasy novels. The first one is a dead duck. Two weeks after I finished it, that TV series called "The Man from Atlantis" appeared on the scene. My book was almost a twin to it. The next two, Nebulon's Children and Legion of the Dead, my agent says will surely find publishers. I'm mailing her the fourth one today. My point is, I have found these books fun to write. After all the years I turned out slickpaper fiction for a living, it is like being released from a straightjacket to be doing these fantasies. I'll soon be busy on number five. And if they don't sell, I guess I'll still keep writing them in hope of coming up with one that will.

A title for your new book? I don't see a thing wrong with your Wayfarers in Darkness. If you're looking for more alliteration than Wayfarers provides, how about "Dreamers in Darkness"? I'm calling my new one The Saxham Seizure, but have a hunch someone will say it sounds like a treatise on epilepsy!

By the way, Murgunstrumm and Others is out. At least, I have received from Karl Wagner one copy, sent by priority mail, so I assume he is now mailing out the rest. He had advance orders for about a third of the first edition--the only edition, I'm sure--which I suppose is pretty good for a \$15 book. Your copy ought to be along any day now. It's being sent to you straight from the publisher. As for the book itself, I'm well pleased. It's just about the handsomest book ever to have my name on it-- certainly the biggest--and is beautifully printed and bound. I happen to think Lee Brown Coye is tops as a weird-story artist, so of course I'm delighted that he did the illustrations. He suffered a stroke while working on the art for my second Carcosa book, I guess you know. Has been in the hospital for a long time, partially paralyzed, but at last report is slowly getting stronger.

You seem to be selling reprints right and left. Congrats. Do you make these sales or does Kirby make them for you? The reason I ask: I get requests in the mail for reprints of various slickpaper stories at the rate of about four a year, and each one involves quite a bit of correspondence. They want to know if they can reprint a certain story, and if so, what is my fee, etc. etc. The most popular of my stories, insofar as reprints go, is a short short that originally appeared in American Magazine, about an Eskimo boy and his dog adrift on an ice floe. It has been reprinted many, many times in school reading books. I now ask and get \$200 for a reprint of it in hard cover and \$150 in paperback. (American paid \$200 for the original back in 1942.--Cave.)

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Jacobi to Cave, November, 1977: Well, I have my copy of Murgunstrumm, for which many thanks. It's truly a handsome volume, one that you can be proud of not only for the stories included but for the binding, printing, and the Lee Brown Coye decorations, some of which that artist outdid himself on.

The title story read as well and carried as much impact for me as it did when I first read it forty-five years ago. Good Lord, is it that long a time? We're getting old, sir, and no one realizes it more than I. It's a powerful story. And I well remember many of the other tales: "The Ghoul Gallery," which I recall my father liked, and all those from Weird Tales, the best of which in my opinion was "The Watcher in the Green Room," rivalled only by "Dead Man's Belt" in those taken from that magazine. And I remember that "The Brotherhood of Blood" was featured in its issue with a two-page-wide illustration.

And I remember, of course, "Stragella," which like "Murgunstrumm" copped the cover illustration of Strange Tales, and "The Door of Doom," the atmosphere of which impressed me then and now. And the two taken from Ghost Stories. I was only lucky enough to sell one to that magazine, namely "The Coach on the Ring."

All good stories, sir, that will stand up over and above much of the macabre fiction being done today.

But some of the other stories--those under the pseudonym of Justin Case and those from Black Book Detective--were entirely new to me, as were the one from Argosy and the one from Adventure. Regarding the Adventure tale, which you said you thought was one of the best, I must confess ignorance. I don't know or remember Lidice. But I assume it was a town of mass genocide by the Germans.

One background question. I don't want you to think I'm a smart alec, and I am honestly asking for information. In the Argosy story, "Boomerang," your setting is British North Borneo. Are there any Kayan tribes in BNB? I know there are Murut Dyaks, but I have a letter from the commanding officer of the outpost of Long Nawang which was a garrison of forty men and one medical doctor located in the onderafdeeling--district--of Apo Kayan in the Kayan River country of Dutch East Borneo--which was marked "unexplored territory" when I received the letter back in 1936. In that letter the officer said the natives there were all Kayan Dyaks. But Dutch East

# DYAK TORTURE



*The lithe body lunged forward*

*The Last Remaining White Man in Oma-Laong Falls  
Into Savage Hands in this Gripping Story  
of Hideous Native Rites*

By HUGH B. CAVE

*Author of "The Watcher in the Green Room," etc.*

is a long way from British North. But if you say there are Kayans in British North, I'll take your word for it. I honestly don't know. And you may say it's being "picky" anyway for there isn't one person in a hundred thousand--certainly not among the readers of Argosy--who would know or give a damn anyway. It's just that background has been more or less of a fetish with me. Incidentally, that letter, which went upriver in a soldered tin container to protect it from the humidity, upriver by military transport and then overland by native runner, I turned over to the University of Minnesota library along with other correspondence. You may possibly remember a story of mine called "Sumpitan" which ran in Top Notch in the same issue in which your "The Green Gorgon" appeared. (October, 1935.--Cave.)

I used that outpost of Long Nawang as a setting.

But back to Murgunstrumm. I swear you must be three or four different persons. The photo on the back of the jacket looks nothing like the picture in Weinberg's The Weird Tales Story or another pic I saw of you somewhere, or of a drawing of you in the issue of Far East that headlined your "Kuching Cunning."

Some of the Coye drawings I liked better than others. He's particularly good, I think, in his depiction of old haunted houses. And incidentally I see a more experienced and polished writer in your Whispers story, "Ladies in Waiting." All in all, as I said before, it's a volume you can be proud of.

You ask if Kirby makes my reprint sales, and the answer is some of them. Some come through Arkham House which incidentally takes 50% of all royalties and payments of anything which appeared in my three collections under their imprint. And some come from anthologies or magazines contacting me first. Did I tell you that Revelations in Black appeared in a British hardcover and may come out in a U.S. paperback this winter? Also I sold a "collection" of reprints in France, and heaven only knows what the French title will be, for it is an amalgamation of stories taken from my three Arkham House books as well as several from Derleth anthologies. The French are rather generous in their payments. Not like Brazil--I think it was Brazil--which pirated a yarn of mine without a penny of recompense.

(I have been told that some of my war books were pirated by a publisher in Spain, although I've never seen the Spanish imprints. An Italian magazine once reprinted some of my short stories without permission but came through with a check when my English agent discovered the theft and demanded payment.--Cave.)

Cave to Jacobi, November 27, 1977: I'm glad you liked Murgunstrumm. In the same mail I had a nice letter from Stuart Schiff of Whispers who writes: "There is no doubt both my Doubleday anthology and Murgy will be nominations in next year's World Fantasy Award short story collection category, and I can't see the judges passing over the triad of quality fiction, art, and bargain price on Murgy. An advance congratulation on that award!" Hope he's a good prophet. He used my story "Ladies in Waiting" in his Doubleday book, by the way. And he says the volume has now sold to Harcourt Brace for paperback reprint early in 1979.

About those Kayans in the Borneo story in Murgy--I used to own Roth's The Natives of Sarawak & British North Borneo, published in England about 1900 if I remember right, and I probably consulted it when writing any Borneo story. I was also corresponding regularly at that time with Dr. Douglas Dold, who had actually explored much of Borneo and would have given me hell, I'm sure, for any major

boo-boo. But God knows you could be right. I know I did a Haitian story, or a story about Haitians, before I ever went there. Dime Mystery printed it. In it I used some of what I honestly thought, after careful research, was Haitian Creole speech. Then I learned to speak Creole and realized the "expert" I had consulted didn't know what he was talking about.

Lidice was a town in Czechoslovakia. On June 10, 1942, the Germans executed every male inhabitant and 56 women. The remaining women were dragged off to concentration camps, the children to "correction schools," and the town was completely leveled so that its name would "never be remembered." All this in retaliation for the killing of a German officer. Of course, the atrocity resulted not in Lidice's "never being remembered" but in just the opposite. Remember it now? But I'm sure most of today's readers will miss the point of that story. Unless, of course, they get curious and go look it up. The word "Lidice" with its significance is in both my big dictionaries, by the way, so it isn't hard to look up.

By the way, did I ever tell you that I have seen Borneo at first hand? I went in with the Australians when they took Balikpapan from the Japanese. Didn't stay long--only a few days--and didn't get more than a few miles from the coast, but at least I got there. An interesting thing happened as the fleet--U.S. Navy in support of Aussie landing force--was passing through Makassar Strait. One of the escorting PT boats came boiling up to the LCI on which I was traveling as a correspondent. The skipper yelled through a megaphone, asking if Hugh Cave was on board--they had heard that he was. The skipper was one of the boat captains I had written about in Long Were the Nights, and he threw me a copy of that book that he had been saving for me. He and other LWTN fellows had written such things in it as "Thanks for a damned fine story, Hugh" and "Thanks for telling this the way it really was." (Long Were the Nights, mentioned before in this account, was a book about the exploits of our PT boats at Guadalcanal.--Cave.)

Back to Murgy: The picture on the jacket was taken in Jamaica just last year, so you can believe it. I think I've already told you how Bob Weinberg came to use the one he did in The Weird Tales Story. As for the sketch in Far East Adventure Stories, I remember it, but, Lordy, I was only about 25 then and sure don't look like that now!

Why can't you--or I, for that matter?--sell more stories at present? I'm sure it is simply because the markets are not there. So far as I can see, the only respectable magazine now using fantasy--and by respectable I mean one that is put together with care and pride--is Schiff's. And how much copy can he use, with practically every writer of fantasy giving him first look at everything? I did two more stories for him just after he bought "Ladies in Waiting." Neither has yet been used. No, old boy, don't blame your writing for

the fact that your stories may not be selling so easily today. It's the market. And not just for fantasy, either. I would hate to be trying to make a living from the slicks today, with fiction. I couldn't survive, I'm sure. The markets simply are not there; yet the population of this country has almost doubled since our pulp days, with many more people writing or trying to write--certainly many more getting formal training in writing at schools of journalism, etc. More people writing, fewer markets for what they write...it's an almost impossible situation. Which explains why all but a handful of writers today are only part-timers, depending on other vocations for their livelihood.

Jacobi to Cave, January 29, 1978: I don't remember if I owe you a letter or if you owe me one. No matter; this will have to be short anyway; I have an infected finger that sends a stab up to the knuckle every time it comes into contact with a key.

I'm having the manuscript of my new collection typed. I finally decided on the title Wayfarers in Darkness, although it doesn't exactly bowl me over. I thought of "Wayfarers in the Mist " but Kirby said it sounded like a Gothic, and I think he's right. At 40 cents a page I figure the typing job will cost me about a hundred bucks.

Many of the stories included are from magazines, ranging in dates from 1936 to 1975. One was a collaboration job with Cliff Simak, written some time before he became the big name he is in the science fiction field today. Two were sold to magazines that folded before they could be used. And two stories, one of which I think is the best I've ever been able to do, as yet are unsold and unpublished.

I am still receiving many new fantasy and science fiction paperbacks from several publishers. Judging from these books, the formula for writing a successful novel is this: Be as obscure as possible. Don't write anything that can be easily understood. Never explain your background or setting. Name your characters something that can't be remembered or pronounced. My closet is overflowing with the things, and so far I've come upon only one that interested me enough to continue reading to the end.

I hope you didn't think I was trying to be a smart Alec when I brought up that question of Kayans in British North Borneo. I know that both you and I used the excellent travel narratives of the Danish explorer, Karl Lumholtz, among other books, for background. It was from Lumholtz that I got the name of that outpost, Long Nawang, and its approximate location. He said in one brief sentence that he had met a young Dutch subaltern who was returning to the garrison of Long Nawang in Apo Kayan after a brief sabbatical at home in Holland. This was in the 1930s, of course, when air mail was practically non-existent and large tracts of Borneo were marked unexplored. So I routed my letter via Singapore, Bandjermasin and

up the Mahakam into Apo Kayan which was a blank on all maps. But the Mahakam was no longer navigable in those days so my letter went around the East coast to a place sometimes called Bulungan and sometimes called Tandjong Selor. Then it went upriver via the Kayan River. Anyway it started a correspondence with a Captain Roodenburg who was commanding officer there; and it was very similar in reality to your fictional Tsiang House in British North.

I did a lot of corresponding to out of the way places to add to the backgrounds which I was unable to see at first hand. One of these was a place called Ambunti, 230 miles up the Sepik River in New Guinea. Two lonely white men were stationed there, a District Officer and his assistant. And believe it or not, their prime reason for being there at all was to collect taxes from the natives.

I wrote to Conservators of Forests, port authorities, and American vice consuls in places like British Honduras, Trinidad, etc. And I sent for government reports and copies of local newspapers. After all, I see no difference in obtaining background for a present day story in this way than in obtaining the setting for a historical novel. (Carl is referring to his pulp adventure stories here. In those days, remember, there were no National Geographic specials or other such exotic travel programs on TV. As Bob Bloch reminded us in his speech at the 1983 Pulpcon, readers all over America who hadn't a prayer of ever being able to travel learned about far-away places through stories in the many pulp-paper adventure magazines. And some of us writing for those magazines tried very hard to make sure that what they learned was accurate.--Cave.)

Jacobi to Cave, March 31, 1978: I'm going to be one of the judges for the international Fantasy Award. Stephen King is also to be one of the four or five. As you may know, he authored Carrie and Salem's Lot. I suppose it will take quite a bit of my time reading all the nominations, and why they selected me I don't really know.

If you want to read a truly excellent fantasy short story, pick up a copy of "The Man from Glasgow." It's the only fantasy story, so far as I know, that Somerset Maugham ever wrote. I consider Maugham superior to Joseph Conrad, though I know few will agree with me on that. But his diction is clear, concise, succinct, and his character portrayal knows no equal. Every line he writes is clear as crystal in meaning. There's no obscurity for obscurity's sake as in the modern New Wave science fiction. Read his "The Book Bag" and see what I mean.

His short story, "Miss Sadie Thompson," which a man by the name of Kelley dramatized into the stage play and movie, "Rain," must have earned him a bundle. Did you ever see "Rain" on the stage? The scene for all three acts is, as you probably know, a trading post in Pago Pago replete with wicker chairs, a punkah, etc.

Left, one part of the stage opens onto what is a veranda and you can see the painted scenery of jungle and ferns in the background. Every little while thunder rolls in the distance--the sound-effects man rolls a long piece of tin for this. And the stage directions call for water pipes above and beyond the veranda. Then it starts to rain and you can see the water coming down in sheets on the ferns and the jungle beyond. And of course throughout the entire play Sadie Thompson's phonograph plays "Those Wabash Blues."

Did I ever tell you that many of my stories were written from titles? I didn't think there was anything unusual in that until I happened to mention it to a friend, and he said, "You're kidding!" But I wrote "The Gentleman Is an Epwa" from the title alone. Same with "The Digging at Pistol Key," "The Elcar Special," "The Cane," "The Royal Opera House," "The Unpleasantness at Carver House," and many others. Right now I'm struggling to make a story out of the title, "The Masque in the Maze."

I really can't understand your turning to fantasy after so many successful years in the slicks. If I know anything about rates, a short story sold to Good Housekeeping or Redbook or Cosmopolitan must have brought you as much or nearly as much as the advance on a paperback science fiction or fantasy novel. Furthermore, the competition in the fantasy field is enormous. Every writer with a bug in his cranium is trying to get into this field, and of those who do get into it about 50% do so on the basis of a new idea or a clever plot rather than on the basis of good writing. There are few writers who compare with you in excellence. I mean this sincerely. As for being able in the fantasy field to write what one pleases and not be bound by formula--which you once wrote me was your principal reason for moving into this field--sorry, but I don't believe this is true. There are just as many taboos and restrictions in fantasy, although I grant you they may be a little more subtle. It's just too damned bad that The Saturday Evening Post went out of business. It took an active market away from you and many hours of pleasure from me. I liked the Post's fiction, and incidentally I liked the Post's occasional pieces of fantasy by Gerald Kersh and others.

Well, enough of that. But I will say one thing for fantasy. Many more fantasies than other kinds of stories have been kept alive by reprints and anthologies. This is truly a mystery to me. I've read some mighty fine pulp adventure tales, and when I read them over again thirty or forty years later they seemed as good as ever; yet they are forgotten, lost in yellowing pulp pages. Can you explain that?

Well, once again best wishes and so long until...as Lowell Thomas used to say on his news broadcasts.

Cave to Jacobi, April 13, 1978: As I half expected, there was a letter from you in the pile of mail awaiting me when I returned from

Jamaica on the 11th. In fact, there were two. The neighbor who looks after my mail when I am in Jamaica turned out to be almost criminally careless this time. I pay him, mind you. I also leave stamped envelopes with him. All he has to do with letters that look personal or important--in other words, not junk mail--is slip them into one of my ready-prepared envelopes and drop them into the outgoing mail slot in the lobby of the condo here. But I found half a dozen important personal letters here, some, like yours, dating back for many weeks. Also a lapsed car insurance, a lapsed health insurance, and a tax-exemption card which, because it was not returned to the county tax collector by March first, is going to cost me an additional \$200 in taxes. I could have killed the guy.

I understand from Karl Wagner that Murgunstrumm and Others is likely to be nominated for best collection at the upcoming World Fantasy Convention. The fan mail on it has been excellent so far, he says. Incidentally, my luck has changed and my novel Legion of the

# Revelations in Black

By CARL JACGBI

*An utterly strange story of three mad  
volumes and a weird woman who sat  
by a fountain in the house of the  
twenty-six bluejays*



*"Oh, the foulness of it! She had been feasting on my blood!"*

Dead has sold to Avon. The advance and terms were quite good, so I guess they really liked it. It's a fantasy novel about a Caribbean dictator who uses a zombie army in an attempt to perpetuate himself in power.

I've been asked to attend the World Fantasy Convention in Fort Worth and will certainly go if I can make it. Of course, October is a long way off yet, and my life lately has been ruled by unexpected happenings. But I certainly would like to be there, if only to meet some of the other writers who will be. Do you expect to go?

You're right about the high price of typing. From what I hear, it's really rough these days. But clean-typing a whole book is a heck of a job. I had to do it with my last one this last time in Jamaica--no professional typists in the country districts there--and, what's more, I had to do it on a small Olivetti portable. Damned thing kept sliding all over the desk. By the time I reached page 300, my back was just about broken.

I got a big kick out of your "confession" that you often plotted stories around titles that popped into mind. I used to do the same thing. In fact, for those elusive story ideas I used to do all kinds of crazy things in my prolific--of necessity--pulp days. I even used to take a list of horses running in a race at, say, Narragansett Park in R.I. where I then lived, and work out a story line around their names. But there's nothing at all wrong with doing a story around a title, is there? If you've got a good title and can write at all, your story is half sold already.

Incidentally, I think it's great that Revelations in Black has at last been picked up by an American paperback outfit. It should have happened long ago. It should sell well, and I hope it makes you some money. Too bad that half of the proceeds will go to Arkham.

You say--again, I think--that you can't understand my turning to fantasy after so many successful years with the slicks. Well, sir, the answer is easy. I'm 67 years old, and those "successful years" with the slicks meant writing to editorial formula much of the time. Even the mystery novelettes I did for Good Housekeeping--for very fancy money, as you guessed--had to be tailor-made to formula and usually revised at least once to fit the editor's idea of that formula. I just figured that with the few years of writing I had left I would do a few things to please myself. And what has always pleased me most is fantasy. Not sci-fi but real fantasy. I knew the field was both weak and overcrowded, and the competition would be even greater than I faced in the slicks, but at least I would enjoy writing the stuff. Of course, even fantasy has to follow a certain formula. I know that. But at least it's a different drum to march to. And, as you pointed out in your letter, fantasy is enduring whereas most of the other stuff is not. No one ever seems to put together a Murgunstrumm of adventure tales or detective stories or Westerns from the pulps.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Cave to Jacobi, July 5, 1978: This is a double-purpose letter. I really have no news, and you owe me one anyway.

First, Avon Books has asked me for a "very select" list of persons who might be willing to read Legion of the Dead in galley form and comment on it. What they want, of course, are some comments they can use. So I took the liberty, and hope you don't mind, of giving them your name along with those of Karl Wagner and Stuart Schiff.

Second, the heat here is getting me down as it almost always does at this time of year. I'm tired of working in my shorts with a beach towel draped over my typewriter chair so I won't stick to it. So on July 12 I'll be going over to Jamaica where the mountain air is a bit more conducive to writing and other things. Kindly make a note of my change of address, will you?

How are you coming along with your Fantasycon judging? I was for years one of the judges in the Scholastic Magazine High School Short Story Awards--had to judge the final 20 stories and list them in the order of preference--and I have to admit that while I enjoyed the prestige, if any, I hated the job itself.

(This would seem to be a good place for an observation about the stories being written every year for that contest. Toward the end of my tenure as a judge, I noticed a definite trend toward obscurity in the stories I had to read; and remember, I had to read only the 20 finalists selected from the many thousands submitted. The stories became more and more difficult to understand. There is no doubt in my mind that high school English teachers were actually teaching their students that obscurity was a virtue, that to be considered "artistic" a story had to be some sort of contest between writer and reader. Language, in short, was no longer being taught as a tool of communication. Fiction should follow in the footsteps of modern art, allowing for whatever interpretation the reader chose to apply to it. In the end I lost interest in trying to figure out what these students were saying--or, rather, what they were not saying--and asked to be excused.

But it occurs to me now, on re-reading Carl Jacobi's letters and realizing that he, too, was aware of this trend and troubled by it, that many of those high-school students may now be writing the books and magazine stories we both find so difficult to read. And others, perhaps, are now the editors who are buying such work.--Cave.)

Cave to Jacobi, July 14, 1978: Your Fourth-of-July letter arrived

in Pompano Beach the afternoon of July 11th, and I left for Jamaica at 7 A.M. the following day, so this is the first chance I have had to answer it. And I do want to answer it promptly because I sense you are discouraged over the rejection of your latest collection.

You shouldn't be, old boy. Stop to think for a minute. You have several collections of darned good stories out and were bound to run into some difficulties with another one. We wrote so fast in our pulp days that the quality just had to be uneven. In Murgy, for instance, Karl Wagner used a Black Book novelette of mine that wasn't really a fantasy at all; it was a shudder-pulp yarn that rightfully should have been used in his forthcoming collection of my stories from Dime Mystery, Terror Tales, etc. So please, old friend, don't let the rejection get you down. In any case it doesn't reflect on your ability to write now.

Whispers magazine ought to be a good potential market for you at present, by the way. Stuart Schiff writes me that he will soon be devoting much more time to the magazine and his Whispers Press--which has just published a very handsome book by Fritz Leiber. Matter of fact, shouldn't you ask Stuart if he is interested in the collection just rejected by Arkham House?

Incidentally, I won't be here in Jamaica long this time. It's not a happy country any more, and I don't have a chance of persuading them to keep their financial commitment to me, I now realize. Guess my long Jamaican adventure is slowly fading to a finish, and not a happy one. But the climate after Florida's summer heat and humidity is worth the trip and I needed restoring.

Best of luck, Carl. Keep writing and to hell with Arkham House. You're one of the best and will be as long as you can use a typewriter.

P.S. I know you've already appeared in Whispers, but thought you might have got out of touch.

Jacobi to Cave, October 10, 1978: Thanks for your letter in which you tried to bolster me up after the rejection of my collection by Arkham House. It still is a disappointment, of course, for my other three books have been profitable to Arkham, both in sales and reprint rights, of which they take 50%. Revelations in Black and Portraits in Moonlight both sold out their editions and are now out of print. Revelations sold to England's Neville Spearman for a hardcover reprint and also to a British paperback outfit. And this fall, as I believe I've told you, it sold to a U.S. paperback company. Here again Arkham House got nice returns for reprints rights. They have also realized returns on reprint sales of individual stories from all three collections. That's what makes their rejection of the new collection so hard to take.

As one of the judges for the World Fantasy Awards I have been

deluged with hard-cover books, paperbacks, magazines and fan publications. It has meant a lot of careful reading and I've tried to handle my job of voting objectively. For example, I gave first place in one of the categories to a writer's work although I personally regard the writer himself as an unmitigated egotist. I was glad to see Murgunstrumm was nominated. Will not know of its final place, of course, until the votes are counted the last of this month, just before the convention in Fort Worth.

You speak of Stuart Schiff's magazine, Whispers. Yes, I was in one issue of that magazine with my story "Hamadryad." And the other day Schiff took my story "The Elcar Special" for his Doubleday Whispers Anthology Number 2. Did you ever see the semi-pro magazine, Midnight Sun? I have a yarn in that to appear shortly, called "Forsaken Voyage." I got six cents a word for that, which is pretty good for a magazine that has no newsstand sale. And Neal Blakie, who lives in Florida somewhere and was co-publisher of that Pugmire tribute booklet about me, also took a short story and an article for a magazine he publishes.

I like your title Legion of the Dead and congratulate you on the sale of this novel to Ace. Ace is one of the top paperback publishers in the fantasy field.

Occasionally I am asked by some aspiring writer who has yet to be published to read over and perhaps edit some of his copy. I've always been glad to do this, but no more. These chaps regard their first draft as straight out of creative genius. In other words, they refuse to polish. They're appalled when I tell them I have sometimes rewritten a paragraph as many as five or six times. They insist any such reworking would take away all spontaneity and utterly spoil what they have created. Well, I dunno. Maybe they're right. But I know Poe agreed with me, and Thomas Hardy also, correcting their work many times before being satisfied with it.

Again, thanks for your letter to rid me of my disappointment. It was appreciated.

Cave to Jacobi, October 29, 1978: Many thanks for your letter, which was waiting for me here when I got back from Fort Worth. I guess you know that Murgunstrumm won the award for best collection. To say that I was surprised would be the year's biggest understatement. Considering the quality of the competition, I didn't think Murgy stood a chance. Anyway, I now have a Howard on my desk and am damned proud of it.

The convention itself was a very pleasant surprise to me. I found my Murgy editor, Karl Wagner, a truly delightful guy and spent most of my spare time with him and Manly Wade Wellman, another fine fellow, and their wives. But I also met many writers whom I had previously known only by reputation. Was on panels with some of

them--scared half to death the first time but more at ease later.

Met Stuart Schiff of Whispers--still another very nice, warm guy--and he told me some of his future publishing plans for both the magazine and books. I gather you've been in touch with him about your recent Arkham House rejection and that he has some ideas about it. He did a nice job on Fritz Leiber's latest book, Rime Isle, so I hope something comes of yours. Incidentally, I met and very much liked Kirby McCauley, who I believe is your agent. He and my agent, Eleanor Wood, are partners, and the third member of their group is my old pulp-paper agent, Lurton Blassingame. Small world! Everyone at the con seemed to like Kirby, by the way, and he seems to represent most of the SF and Fantasy writers who are producing today.

Dr. Schiff showed me the contents list for his Doubleday Whispers 2 hardcover, and your story is one of those listed. One of mine may make it too--a short called "The Lower Deep." Be nice if we appear in such a book together.

And, yes, I have seen Midnight Sun. I believe either you or Karl Wagner sent me a copy and it's in my bookcase--right now in a box, because I'm moving. It's a nice magazine. Wagner's "Undertow," one of the best long stories he has ever written, originally appeared in it, if I'm not mistaken. Glad to hear you got such a handsome rate for your story there, which means they have sense enough to appreciate good writing when they see it.

Now let me correct you on a couple of things. My Legion of the Dead is coming from Avon, not Ace. And I've since sold a novel called Nebulon's Children to Dell, though they seem pretty slow in getting the contract to me. (Dell changed the title to The Nebulon Horror--Cave.)

And I must tell you that I am moving. The humidity and heat and worsening tourist traffic of Florida's Gold Coast finally got me down and I put this condo up for sale. Sold it in four days, which just goes to show that some people like all that tourist stuff. Anyhow, I have found an apartment in a small condo on a three-mile-long lake in central Florida and will be moving there November 8, unless someone throws a monkey wrench into my finely tuned schedule. Here's the new address.

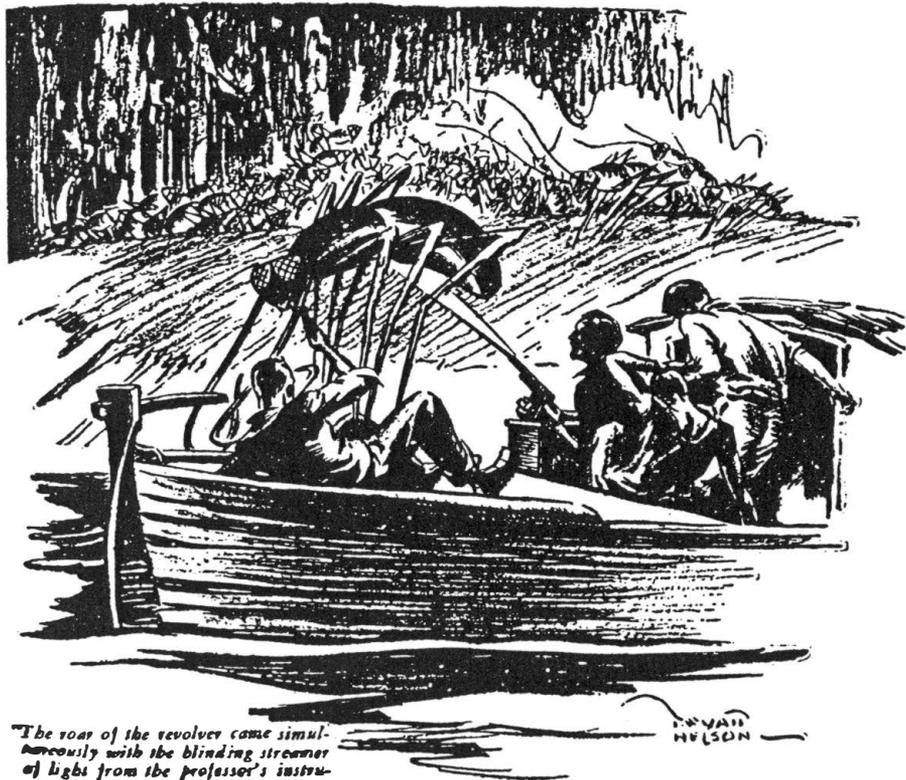
Thanks for voting for Murgy--that is, if you did. And the best of luck with Schiff and Midnight Sun and whatever else you're into. I'm happy as hell to hear that you are hard at work again. I'm convinced that at our age we just have to keep writing or we'll get too old too soon.

Jacobi to Cave, February 12, 1979: Yes, I voted for Murgunstrumm as the best collection. Only one other book came close to it in quality with the exception perhaps of Robert Bloch's

# The City of Crawling Death

By HUGH B. CAVE

*Ants—drones of them—as big as panthers—ants that made slaves  
of men and threatened civilization with destruction*



*"The roar of the revolver came simultaneously with the blinding streamer of light from the professor's instrument."*

Cold Chills. I received about a ton of paperback and hardcover aspirants for the Fantasy Awards, and today I sold most of them to a book dealer. I simply didn't have room for them. As it is I have a large closet full of books, including some of my college books and my boyhood volumes: a complete set of cloth-bound Frank

Merriwells, Tom Swift, Outdoor Boys, Submarine Boys, Battleship Boys, Uncle Sam's Boys, Boy Scouts, Rover Boys, etc. My folks were great in giving me reading material for Christmas, my birthday, etc., and I still remember making out lists for them. My linen closet is also packed with pulp magazines, some containing stories of mine, some I was simply interested in and bought. Nor does this include several large boxes of pulps that were stolen when thieves broke into my apartment locker, or the many pulps I gave to the University of Minnesota.

You may have noticed I didn't send you a Christmas card this year. I was hospitalized a short time before the holidays and didn't feel up to doing any shopping when I was released. I tripped and fell on some icy steps and injured my leg. Now when I go out I walk as if I'm walking on eggs. The sidewalks from my place to the corner are unshoveled during the entire winter, and to make it even more hazardous the street-plows throw the snow from the street onto the walks, so there are a couple of layers of ice under a layer of snow. Everyone complains about it but nobody does anything. I slipped and fell again today but luckily didn't injure myself. The first time, I went to the hospital in a paramedic ambulance. I saw a sixteen year old take a header on this strip of walk yesterday. You should have heard his profanity. Words I didn't even know!

Which brings me to your place in Jamaica. Have you definitely severed all ties with the island? I know you sold your plantation there, but wasn't there some trouble about getting the money out of the country?

As for me, I've been going through a period of writer's block that is the writer's block of all time. Every line I've written during the last month or so seems stilted. Every plot I've developed seems unconvincing--to use one of Farnsworth Wright's favorite comments in rejecting a manuscript. Even my old trick of jotting down a title first has failed to bring forth story material. I don't know whether I've lost my touch or not, but something is radically wrong. And the worst is that I have lost my "flow of narrative." By that I mean when you're writing and your thoughts are far ahead of you and it is actually difficult to slow down; when words of your secondary vocabulary--that is, words you don't usually use--come into existence effortlessly. Without that flow one can never be a writer. I think you know what I'm driving at, although I haven't expressed myself clearly.

Meanwhile a few more yarns I have written in the past continue to filter into anthologies or other reprint media. The latest is my "The Royal Opera House" which went into a Rod Serling Twilight Zone paperback; also "The Unpleasantness at Carver House" which brought a few dollars when the Derleth anthology Edge of Night went into a second edition. And maybe you've seen the paperback of my Revelations in Black by Jove, with a complimentary blurb on

the cover by Stephen King. Distribution must be spotty, although Kirby tells me 50,000 copies were run off. Here in Minneapolis I've seen it in only one book shop and that was a store that sells fantasy and science fiction exclusively.

I'll take my hat off to you. Anyone who can plot and write a novel in a couple of months--as I believe you said you did--has my honest envy. Hell, it would take me almost that long to type the thing.

Before I close, I want to ask you about the Canadian market, which I know you wrote for. Are the Toronto Star, Maclean's and Chatelaine still buying fiction? Both the Star and Maclean's paid me very good rates, and the Star arranged for reprints in Montreal's La Patrie and magazines in England and New Zealand. I remember one Canadian story of yours that I liked--"The Red Road Up." How's that for a memory? I believe it was a Borneo story and ran in The Canadian.

Cave to Jacobi, March 29, 1979: Please forgive my tardiness in answering your letter of mid- February. I was trying to rewrite a novel that I did about a year ago, and before finishing it I was inclined to kick myself for having begun the job. Writing a brand new book would have been easier.

Eleanor Wood liked my last novel, though. Said it was the best thing of mine she had read, and she stayed up most of the night reading it right through, non-stop. Again I seem to do better with my West Indian backgrounds than with other settings. This one was laid in Haiti.

Carl, you may have a temporary writing block but I'm sure it's no more than that. You say "Every line I've written during the last month or so seems stilted...and the worst is that I have lost my 'flow of narrative' (without which) one can never be a writer." And in an earlier letter you wrote: "After I've done a page or two it seems to read so badly that I go back and revise...and by the time I've got a page or two half way presentable I've lost all interest and spontaneity in the story." Well, sir, you wrote those lines without going back and revising them, and they're top quality, so it goes without saying that you can do the same with a story.

My suggestion--I seem to be full of suggestions today, sir, and I apologize--is that you deny yourself the luxury of revising as you go along. Just keep on writing until you reach those lovely words, THE END. Then go back over it. Treat the whole thing as an exercise in discipline. This may not get you over a writing block, if indeed you have one, but it will help you to overcome that urge to keep reading and rewriting what you have already written.

Did I say I plotted and wrote a novel in a couple of months? If I really did say such a thing, I must have been thinking of something

else, as Victor Borge would say. I think I did a novel in rough draft in that length of time once, in Jamaica, but it's been taking me about six months to do most of them, from the first idea to the finished manuscript. Typing a clean copy of the last book took me about three weeks, though I probably could have cut that to two had there been any pressure on me. One thing I don't and won't do--and which many fantasy writers are doing--is sign a contract and take an advance for a job not already done. It would scare the hell out of me to know that I had to think up and write a new novel in, say, six months. I'll bet I'd have a writer's block that would put your present one to shame!

To answer your question about Jamaica: No, I haven't exactly severed all ties with the island, but I have given up all hope of getting any more of my money out of there in the foreseeable future. My only connection there now is my old housekeeper and her junior-high-school-age daughter. She was very faithful to me over the years, so I now provide her with a rented cottage and money to live on, and I underwrite the youngster's school expenses, etc., so that she can be sure of getting an education. Jamaica is now in such a deplorable state that many people in their modest circumstances are starving, and many kids of the daughter's age have been forced to give up school. So then, I simply use some of my "locked-up" money to help them out, in return for what the lady did for me when I had my coffee plantation. As a matter of fact, she was not only my housekeeper; for the final three years or so she was my headman, doing a man's job and doing it well.

I must admit I don't know much about the Canadian magazine market now. Sadly, the Toronto Star--that is, The Star Weekly--is no longer being published; I do know that. Chatelaine, I believe, still uses fiction--the sort of thing they always used, of the Ladies' Home Journal, Good Housekeeping type. I don't know about Maclean's. How in the world you ever remembered that "Red Road Up" story of mine in The Canadian is beyond me. You have a fantastic memory for both stories and titles.

Now may I ask you a question? Stuart Schiff wrote me the other day and asked if I could recall any stories of mine that might have been about "mad scientists" in any way. He seems to want to use one in a new anthology he is putting together. Do you recall any? And do you recall any that you wrote? If so, it might profit you to send him something.

In any case, old boy, don't stop writing. When I see what many men of our age are doing to keep their juices flowing-- playing golf every day, or shuffleboard, or bridge, or just drinking themselves into a coma--I am everlastingly grateful that authors don't have to retire but can always sit at a typewriter and create something. You never know when that something may be darned good!

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Jacobi to Cave, undated, probably August, 1979: After reading your Legion of the Dead I have only admiration for your craftsmanship. What impressed me most about this fantasy novel is what I would call for want of a better term--pacing. The slow build-up of suspense, the introductions of the characters so smoothly and effortlessly, and the painting of the tropic background all combine to make it a first rate book. Now that may sound like a stock complimentary remark, but it isn't. So many novels I've read recently--some science fiction and some fantasy--read as if the characters are puppets, about whom one couldn't care less. Worse, the writing is obscure, often intentionally so.

Conversely I was fascinated by Legion of the Dead. I found your style crystal clear and the gradual development of the plot spellbinding.

Your publisher also sent me a copy of this book--at your request, said the publicity department--so I am returning one to you. I am also sending you a copy of Midnight Sun which in addition to a story of mine, "Forsaken Voyage," also includes a very complimentary article about me by Robert Bloch. Please tell me if "Forsaken Voyage" holds your interest. Despite the fact that it's a semi-pro magazine, the story brought six cents a word, which isn't too bad.

Cave to Jacobi, August 31, 1979: Your letter came just as I was about to write you.

First, let me say that I deeply appreciate your words in praise of my Legion of the Dead. Coming from you and in such detail, they have a very special value. I'm happy indeed that you like the book, for it is the first fantasy novel I have ever attempted.

Incidentally, in returning one of the two copies you had, you sent back the one I had signed. A mistake, I hope! I'll be sending it back to you, and please don't bother sending me the other one--just give it to someone who might like to read it.

You say your paperback of Revelations had a 50,000 printing but isn't on sale in most Minneapolis bookshops. Well, sir, I know next to nothing about paperback distribution--or any other kind, for that matter. Eleanor Wood mentioned 50,000 as a likely printing for my Legion just yesterday, when telling me on the phone that she thought she had sold another novel of mine to Tower Books. My book, however, turned up in a whole chain of drugstores in this area and in the one small bookshop nearby. But when it sold out here in Lake

# HOUSE IN HELL'S FOREST

By Hugh B. Cave

(Author of "Daughter of the Plague," etc.)

*A Weird, Thrilling Novelette of  
Nightmare Menace*



*Jack Maynard shuddered away from the knowledge that he had killed a man! And then, when his victim's rotting corpse came to him through the night—he had a greater fear that the man's body would never die!*



Placid the first week, it did not reappear, and the distributor told me he just couldn't get any more. It's frustrating, isn't it? The Tampa Tribune, circulation 600,000, ran a feature story on me and my winning the Lovecraft Award for Murgy and about the new book, giving it a great plug--and I told Avon the story was coming--but many of the stores were sold out even before the article appeared, so readers who went looking for Legion couldn't find it and by now must have lost interest.

Carl, I read not only your story in Midnight Sun, but all the others too, and yours is far and away the most professional in the book. Also, for my money, it is the best. It's taut, convincing, and contains no unneeded words. It's a real Carl Jacobi story. I liked everything about it.

Of the others, the Harlan Ellison was the best, I think, though grim and unappealing. For a grim story that is appealing, read "At the Bottom of the Garden" by David Campton in the forthcoming Doubleday anthology, Whispers II--in which, by the way, we both have stories, as of course you know. I'm sure you have already read that story and probably admire it as much as I do.

Jacobi to Cave, April, 1980: Many thanks for sending me The Nebulon Horror. Before I make any comments on it, let me tell you about my reading fare for the last two years. Ever since I was one of the judges for the World Fantasy Awards I apparently have been on the mailing lists for all the publishers of science fiction and fantasy, and I have received literally hundreds of paperbacks, some of them written by well-known writers in the genres and some by people I never heard of.

With few exceptions I couldn't read any of them. Some were sorcery tales wherein brute heroes roamed through a mythical antediluvian countryside filled with wizards, monsters and fabulous creatures. Now I've always told myself that to be successful a fantasy story must either have a fantastic backdrop or fantastic characters--BUT NOT BOTH. If both the backdrop and the characters belong to a never-never land, the reader has nothing he can relate to. And so it was with these sword and sorcery paperbacks. There was nothing I could relate to. So my attention wandered and I found them impossible to read.

Another classification was what is generally called hard science. These I couldn't read either. They dealt with astronomical postulations, celestial navigation, advanced scientific data and mathematical quotations, much of which I suspected was gobble-de-gook. My attention wandered with these, too.

A third classification dealt with the supernatural, and you would assume that with these I would be in my element. But with the exception of Robert Bloch and Stephen King they were inept, lacked suspense, and for the most part were poorly written.

Why is it that when I pick up a book by Hugh B. Cave my interest is immediately caught; I lose myself in the story completely, and I can't lay it down until I have finished it? It isn't because I know you--or at least know you through correspondence. No, it isn't that at all. It's because the writing is crystal clear and the diction pleasing both to the eye and the ear.

So I found The Nebulon Horror a first-rate fantasy story, and in

some respects liked it better than Legion of the Dead.

Well thanks again. I'm not going to pass along any more compliments because if I do you'll think I'm spreading a lot of blarney written in the name of friendship. All my comments are objective and sincere.

By the way, I've sold Italian rights to "The Digging at Pistol Key" and "Carnaby's Fish." And although Arkham House took 50% of what they paid, what I got was considerably more than I was paid when they originally appeared in the pulps.

Cave to Jacobi, May 1, 1980: Many thanks for your kind comments on The Nebulon Horror. They came at a good time, for I had just finished reading a review of Nebulon by one of those writers you refer to in your letter as turning out books you find hard to read. So what does he say about Nebulon? Just what you would expect. It is "merely an outline" and he would have doubled the wordage.

I'll bet he would have, too. Like you, I find most of the science fiction and fantasy novels being published today are without interest. I'm sure these writers never rewrite anything. They just toss the stuff off and let it fall where it will like a cannon-shot of mud. Good Lord, man, even in the worst of the pulp days, when you and I were appearing all over the place, we never wrote as carelessly as that! And, frankly, I think its bad for the whole writing business. for this kind of loose, undisciplined, sloppy prose is being accepted by readers--and editors--as good stuff.

As I told you in a recent letter, I could see this coming. As a judge in the Scholastic High School writing awards, year after year I could see this slackness, this lack of discipline, this disdain of craftsmanship creeping into the entries. It was being taught, dammit, by the teachers of these kids--taught as good writing by teachers who themselves had no idea how to write. Now it has crept insidiously into the whole picture. But what can we do about it?

Fact is, as I write this I don't think there is much any of us can do about any phase of writing at this time. Did you see the gloomy article on paperback publishing in last week's N.Y. Times Book Review? Profits are way down and publishers are cutting back right and left on future plans. I know it has hurt me. I didn't have any trouble selling Legion or Nebulon. But my next book, "Mission to Margal" (later published as The Evil--Cave) which Eleanor Wood says is the best thing I've done since returning to the fantasy field, has three times been accepted and then sent back by publishers who, after accepting it, decided to reduce their lists. Now I'm not even sure it will ever be printed. And another novel of mine met a similar fate with still another publisher.

I don't believe, of course, that you, Carl Jacobi, can't write a

novel if you want to. You just prefer to write shorts. Well, I like to do shorts too, but there is such a limited market in the fantasy field. Since I quit the slicks I've done five short stories. I sent all of them to Stuart Schiff at Whispers and he bought them all. Three are yet to be published. I used to get \$3000 for a Good Housekeeping short. Same from The Saturday Evening Post. It's a little different at five cents a word.

There is a new Weird Tales magazine in the works, by the way. Have you heard? Its editor is Lin Carter, who writes fantasy himself. He wrote to Kirby McCauley asking whether any of the old Weird Tales writers were still working. Seems he bought a story from Frank Long and was promised one by Manly Wellman. Me, I sort of feel obligated to send any new short stuff to Stuart Schiff for first look.

P.S. You made a mistake in the zipcode on your letter to me and it went to Atlanta Georgia, Sarasota Florida, and Arcadia Florida before coming here. Took 26 days! I guess those zips are important now.

Cave to Jacobi, May 10, 1980 (from Jamaica, in response to a long letter in which Carl outlined a story line for a novel he proposed to write, and asked advice on it): I've read your outline three times. Each time it sounded better. I also feel sure that by the time you get around to explaining all the weird happenings, you will have dreamed up some plot twists for a really unusual and surprising ending. If you've never tried a novel, you won't know what I mean when I say that some of it will just about write itself. I know you always carefully plot your short stories. Don't try that with a book-length or you'll leave all your good writing in the outline. Also, you may put yourself in a straitjacket and lose most of your enthusiasm.

So, then, I think you have a good idea here. Whether it's "old hat" or not I just don't know. Most of today's fantasy novels appear to be made up of unreal people behaving in unreal ways against totally unreal backgrounds. They leave me cold unless written as well as some of Karl Wagner's Kane stories, which have such color and vigor that I enjoy them. On the other hand, Stephen King can lay a novel in a familiar New England setting and he sells far better than anyone on the fantasy shelves in the bookstores. I myself would never attempt a Tolkien kind of background. I have to use backgrounds I'm familiar with, just as you usually do.

One danger I do foresee, however, lies in your remark that you can make some parts of the story credible through a scholarly exposition on the belief in the griffin. Yes, you can--but if you do this too soon, your mystery goes out the window, old boy. In this connection I would suggest that you plant at least one false herring, and perhaps several. You're going to have a number of victims found

with claw marks on them. The moment you mention griffins and inform the reader they have claws, you've telegraphed the solution. So why not introduce something else in that house--a pet animal, say, or a character who trained animals in a circus, or someone who has a collection of photographs of such animals, or a crazy dame who keeps a bunch of pet cats around--anything you like, to throw the reader off the scent. And in describing griffins, just quietly neglect to tell the reader that they have claws until you absolutely have to.

But these are all things that will occur to you, too, as you get into the yarn. The hardest thing for you, as I see it, will be writing the first couple of chapters.

In this respect, may I make a suggestion? You're a craftsman. That is, you write with a stiletto rather than an axe. Because of this, you tend to be overly self-critical at all stages of writing a story and will back up, rewrite, copy over, do almost anything to make sure that what you have written is done well before going on.

Well sir, in a novel you can become sort of frozen by such a technique. I have had to learn to sit down at the typewriter and just keep going for a few pages without reading over what I've written. It's surprising how little you will change when you do read it over, because after years of self-discipline you'll be turning out pretty clean copy at the first try. Anyway, give this a try, Carl, and before you know it you'll be through the first couple of chapters and well on your way. Once your own interest in the story is caught up, you'll be pulled along by the tale itself, wanting to get all your new thoughts down on paper before you forget them.

So, sir, good luck. I hope that by the time you've finished it, the market will be strong again.

Jacobi to Cave, May 12, 1981: Have you seen the new paperbacks, Weird Tales Number 1 and Weird Tales Number 2, edited by Lin Carter? I have a story in Number 1, "The Pit" and another, also a new story, "The Black Garden," scheduled for Weird Tales Number 3, out in June or July.

One of the stories reprinted is August Derleth's "Bat's Belfry," and in the introductory paragraph Lin Carter mentions that the story had never been anthologized before. But the story rang a bell in my memory and I was certain I had seen it somewhere else but Weird Tales. I checked through my closet here and found a book called Creeps by Night edited by Asbury and published by Vanguard Press. Sure enough, "Bat's Belfry" was in it, also a memorable story by Paul S. Powers. I remember the latter because it had the cover of the issue of Weird Tales in which it appeared and that was just about my first copy of the magazine. No, not the first. My earliest copies were one that featured an Arthur J. Burks story and another that reprinted H. G. Wells' "The Stolen Body" and another that gave the cover

illustration to H. Warner Munn's "Werewolf of Ponkert." Munn passed away just a few months ago. As did H. Vernon Shea.

Stuart Schiff wrote me recently, saying he had been gathering material for a death-theme anthology. I think the time is up on that, but whether it is or not, I haven't any stories that fit that description. Frankly, I'm not sure what a death-theme story is.

I believe I told you that Kirby sold radio rights of "Carnaby's Fish" to Television Italiana, an Italian broadcasting company. And today I got a letter from a publishing company in Brussels, Belgium, asking for my picture to accompany a story of mine. The only trouble is I have no record of selling a story in Belgium, and neither has Kirby!

Cave to Jacobi, May 20, 1981: I've moved again. Was tired of living in a condo where everyone minded everyone else's business all the time. Looked around and discovered this lovely little village of Sebastian--a fishing village on the east coast of Florida between Vero Beach and Melbourne. Have bought a small but pretty two-bed, two-bath in the pine woods about three miles from the beach, with room in the back yard for a garden, and we--Peggie and I--have been working our butts off ever since, having the garage made over into a study, screening in the back porch, getting a garden house erected, etc. It's like being born again to move into a real home, with privacy, and a yard to tinker around in. And the climate here is better than Lake Placid. Not to mention having the Atlantic near by for swimming, clamming, crabbing, oystering, the whole seafaring bit.

Glad to hear of your Italian TV sale and the mysterious sale in Brussels. Things are rather quiet with me just now. Stuart Schiff bought a short story, "Always Together," for the "Death" anthology you mentioned, a Playboy Press project. I'm making some changes for Ace in a sequel to "Mission to Margal"--now being called The Evil--and finding editor Michael Seidman a real nice fellow to work with. The Evil is due out in November with a printing of 240,000 copies--lovely, no?--so there's no hurry on the sequel. And I have still another Margal story planned and partly written, so can afford to prolong my "vacation" a bit longer.

No, I haven't seen the new paperbacks, Weird Tales 1 and 2, edited by Lin Carter. I haven't done any reading since I left Lake Placid, but will try to get onto those two books if only to read your stories. Just yesterday, by the way, I received the German paperback of Murgunstrumm and Others. It isn't the whole Murgy, which will require two more paperbacks if they pick up their option. The title of this one is Das Schnurren der Katze from "Purr of a Cat." It's a handsome little book.

Thanks for your two letters and do keep 'em coming. And all the best with the book you are working on.

Jacobi to Cave, September 1981: I know what you meant when you said in your last letter that after all the years in condos it was "like being born again to move into a real home." I lived in a house with a yard all my life until 1971 when a spell of illness hospitalized me for the better part of a year. Not only did I come close to cashing in my chips that year, but when I returned to everyday life I found that my old homestead had so deteriorated that disposing of it was not only advisable; it was absolutely necessary. Five times my place was broken into. They even backed a truck up to the back door and stole the piano, believe it or not. And because I was in the hospital at the time, the house was ruled "vacant" and I couldn't collect a cent of insurance. So I sold it--for a song--and moved into an apartment on the north side of Minneapolis. Here thieves broke into my basement locker and stole many of my magazines and books, including a lot of Weird Tales. Now this may seem a minor item, but on a television program I saw recently they showed on the screen a copy of the June, 1933, issue of Weird Tales with a cover by Margaret Brundage. The television MC said, "There are only eight copies of this issue known to be in existence. It is valued at ten thousand dollars." I'm not inclined to believe this but many of the books and magazines they stole had a combined value of at least five hundred dollars, I'm sure.

Anyway, I didn't like apartment living. I was used to a back yard where I could go and dig a hole if I wanted to. And I didn't like Minneapolis' north side. So after a year I moved again to south Minneapolis. Here I found apartment life just as confining, but at least, I said to myself, I still have my Red Cedar Point Lake cabin. I can go out there--it's only 25 miles from the city, and it's isolated and virginal.

Was I ever wrong! A land development boom had hit that part of Carver County. Streets were paved, sewers put in, electric lines strung, and my taxes went up. Where before there were pleasant country roads with a good fishing lake, there were now Sunday drivers and traffic. So I was virtually forced to sell, and as before with my homestead, I took a great loss.

Now I'm confined to an apartment which, though within walking distance of three of the city's lakes and in a fairly desirable neighborhood, is still an apartment.

Do you know the Weird Tales writer, Mary Elizabeth Counselman? She lives in Gadsden, Alabama, and has urged me to pull up stakes here and move down south. There is really nothing holding me here. My last near kin, a cousin, passed away a year ago. But roots are here and it's difficult to move without knowing what the future holds.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Cave to Jacobi, October 4, 1981: It must have been about two weeks ago that I received the copy of the August Derleth Society Newsletter you so kindly sent me. And, of course, after reading all the nice things you said about me in your article, I should have written to you right away to thank you. I'm truly sorry.

Fact is, I was right in the climax of my rewrite of the sequel to The Evil and didn't want to stop even to pay the light bill, etc. You know how it is. You lie awake nights thinking what you can do to such and such a scene to make it better; you get up at 3 A.M. to type notes on what you've hit on; and you just don't want to be interrupted until the job is finished.

So I finished it yesterday and mailed it off to Eleanor Wood, and now I'm free again. I take these revisions very seriously. Always have. The good old Saturday Evening Post, through editor Ben Hibbs, once told me I was so reliable on revisions that they could send me a check before suggesting the changes. As a matter of fact, I like to revise a story. To me it's a chance to improve something.

Speaking of The Evil, Eleanor relayed the information from Michael Seidman of Ace Books that Walden Books' initial order for it was a whopping 15,000 copies. Isn't that a hell of a convoluted sentence, now? Anyway, I'm beginning to get excited. On the strength of that order and what it implies, Ace withdrew their initial "sell sheet"--the thing salesmen go around to the bookstores with--because they expected to up their original print order for the book. I've been told that the original print order was 240,000 copies. What it is now I'm still trying to find out, but presumably it will be bigger. This book, The Evil--originally "Mission to Margal"--may really make it for me.

So, as I say, I've just sent in the revision of the sequel to The Evil, and am now breathing again. I have a contract on the sequel, by the way. They had already accepted it. They just wanted me to make some changes, and I agreed completely with their suggestions.

Now to your letter, m'friend. I knew about your experiences with thieves; you had written me before about them. I didn't know about the tragic loss of your beloved place on the lake, which you wrote me about many times--the place, I mean, not the loss of it--in years gone by. Well, sir, the whole damned world is changing, it seems. I have had it with big cities and want no more of them. Here we live, Peg and I, in a sort of southern "piney woods"--shades of Manly Wade Wellman!--section of a small country coastal fishing village, and we



SPICY ADVENTURE STORIES, June 1936

really love it. I don't think it would suit you after your spending a lifetime in the northern cold. It gets bloody hot here for a good half of the year, and if you're not Floridian or used to the tropics it could lay you low. But I'm still wondering why, at your age, you continue to put up with six months of bitter cold weather in Minnesota when, with no family ties to hold you there, you could so easily pack up and get out. Why don't you consider the suggestion made by Mary Elizabeth Counselman and head down around North Carolina way? You'd still have the change of seasons there that you are used to, but

it wouldn't be as cold as Minn or as hot as Fla. North Carolina is a part of the country we ourselves have considered moving to. Chapel Hill, for instance, is full of writers of fantasy, as perhaps you know. Karl Wagner, Manly Wade Wellman, David Drake--a whole crowd of them live there. And they love it. Peg and I have been invited up there to visit them and are planning to do so one of these days.

I don't believe any copy of Weird Tales, or any other magazine in existence, is worth or sells for ten thousand dollars. I do believe, though, that the mags stolen from you must have been worth many hundreds of dollars. Don't ever forget--bless you--that you sent me the Strange Tales in which "Murgunstrumm" first appeared. I treasure it.

Cave to Jacobi, July 19, 1982: I'm worried about you, old boy. It's ages since I had a letter from you, and I'm sure it is your turn to write, not mine. I hope all is well, and that you've just been too busy to drop a line in your usual way.

Not much has happened here since my last letter. I'm still awaiting the first royalty statement on The Evil, to find out how it went. As you know, it takes nearly a year for these first statements to come through. Seems like forever.

Meanwhile, I have a sort of sequel to The Evil due out next month from the same publisher, to be called Shades of Evil, and it was supposed to be given the same big printing, etc. But Ace has just been bought up by Putnam-Berkley, so I've got my fingers crossed. Anything can happen to the best-laid plans when ownership changes.

And I have just finished a sequel to that book--one called tentatively Forever Evil--and mailed it off to my agent. I think, myself, it's a good one but am anxiously awaiting her reaction to it.

Stuart Schiff has a paperback anthology coming from Playboy Press next month, called Death, in which he's including what I think is one of the best little short things I've ever done--a little 3000-worder called "Always Together." If you should latch onto a copy, please tell me what you think.

And for that matter, I'm wondering whether you ever read The Evil--and what you thought of that. I know I didn't send you a copy. The reason: Ace never sent me any, despite a contract that called for 20 freebies. I phoned them, wrote them, did everything I could to correct the oversight, and all I got was promises. It's the first time anything like this has ever happened to me. On the upcoming Shades of Evil they haven't even sent me a sample cover. I know what it looks like because it has been described to me over the phone by the editor, and because I've seen it reproduced in this month's Fantasy Newsletter, but that's all. I'm not renewing my subscription to F.N., by the way. Since that group at Florida Atlantic University took it

over from Paul Allen, they have turned it into a travesty of what Allen built it up to. They've even been editing the work of contributors such as Karl Wagner, claiming they had to do so to make it clear what the contributors were trying to say!

Anyway, sir, you owe me a letter. Do write and ease my mind, hey?

Jacobi to Cave, August 20, 1982: Sure I read The Evil. And sure I liked it, even better than Legion of the Dead, to which it was somewhat similar in the beginning. What impressed me in The Evil was its slow build-up, its gathering suspense. Character-wise I would say the two books are on a par, though the lead in The Evil, Sam Norman--and lead characters I've found are the most difficult to handle--was, shall I say, more believable? You've come a long way since the days of "Kuching Cunning" and "The Green Eyes of Confucius."

Forgive me for not writing sooner. My health is so-so--all I can expect of 74 years, I suppose. And I'm desperately afraid I've lost my former facility with words. Perhaps it's only my imagination, but I've made no less than four different starts on a new short story. Incidentally, the story centers around the lives of various professional magicians or illusionists of the past-- Robert Houdin, Herman the Great, Keller, Thurston, Dunninger, Blackstone, Houdini--who took that name from Houdin--and many many others. I've put a bit of research into it.

A chap here by the name of Dixon Smith is doing a book on my life and my writings. I don't know where the hell he expects to find any interested readers, but he's been over here looking through a lot of photographs of my mother and father, friends, and myself in early years. He has dug up pulps that I don't even remember writing for-- a novelet "The Twenty-one Crescents," for one. And he bought two copies of Weird Tales that contained my two stories, "A Pair of Swords" and "The Face in the Wind." Know what he had to pay for those two copies of WT? One hundred bucks!

By the way, E. Hoffmann Price, who is about ten years our senior, just sent me a copy of his latest fantasy novel, The Devil Wives of Li Fong. I didn't exactly like the way he inscribed it, though, "To Carl Jacobi, author of many fine exotic stories and one of the last survivors of the old days!"

Cave to Jacobi, December 9, 1982: Glad you liked The Evil. I am at present waiting with crossed fingers to find out whether it sold at all well or not. The first royalty statement is due any day, and with no one at Ace bothering to tell me anything--and, in fact, the company having been taken over by Putnam--I don't have anything much to go on. I know what the printing was, but publishers these

days are complaining about abnormally high returns.

A book on your life and writings by Dixon Smith sounds like something I want very much for my library shelves, even though I don't know Smith. Be sure to let me know when and where it will be available, won't you? As for his digging up old pulps you don't even remember writing for, the same is happening to me. I'm to be a co-Guest-of-Honor at next year's Pulpcon in Dayton, in July, and the folks running the show have been sending me some old magazines containing stories--even cover stories--that I don't remember. It's fun.

Peg joins me in wishing you all the very best at Christmas and some good new writing in the coming year.

Jacobi to Cave, May 2, 1983: This letter is about why I didn't answer yours of December 9th and why I didn't acknowledge reception of your Shades of Evil--more important, why I haven't read it as yet. Blame it on my moving. I must have had about five hundred paperbacks, an equal number of hardcover books and an infinite quantity of pulp magazines, to say nothing of slickpaper magazines like the SatEvePost, Cosmo, Good Housekeeping, etc., many of which I saved simply because they had stories by you in them. In my former apartment there was a basement locker where I stored a lot of these, and I simply added to them without any thought of selection. But my new place, which incidentally is only three blocks down the avenue, has no locker facilities, and I was faced with the problem of space. Some of this material I sold or gave away, and some of it almost broke my heart to do so, and I'd probably be making decisions yet of what to keep if it hadn't been for Dixon Smith. He has proved a friend indeed. He called me on the phone one night cold turkey after he had read "Revelations in Black," which he said entranced him, and our friendship has gone on from there.

Of course, I kept all of your hardcover books. And I have your recent horror paperbacks.

I had wall pictures that had to be hung, and a lot of illustrations including illos from Complete Stories, Short Stories, and, from the fantasy pulps, by Virgil Finlay, Paul, Lee Brown Coye, etc. And I had to weed out the reading material I could keep and that which I couldn't. Obviously I wanted to keep my first editions of Frank Baum's Oz and another children's volume, The Pearl and the Pumpkin, both illustrated by W. W. Denslow. And I wanted to keep intact my collection of Maurice Le Blanc, many of which featured his character Arsene Lupin. The Lupin books were almost an obsession with me in my youth. Today, of course, I can see their flaws and almost plagiaristic use of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes as a rival for his protagonist Lupin. I remember reading in Doyle's

autobiography how he had gone to his London club for a game of billiards, and as he chalked his cue, the chalk broke apart revealing a tiny message written on tissue paper. The message? "Arsene Lupin extends his compliments to Mr. Sherlock Holmes." Doyle was quite amused. And I kept a lot of others for purely sentimental reasons, including a set of Dumas, not only the D'Artagnan books but the more interesting Marie Antoinette series. I suppose you know that Dumas employed a number of hacks to aid him in his prolific creations.

So there you have a partial reason for my long silence.

Yes, what Dixon told you is right. I am working on a fantasy short, but so far don't think too highly of it. Meanwhile, reprints bring checks in from time to time. One anthology, Spaced Out, ran "Smoke of the Snake," a 6000-worder originally published in Top Notch. And Bill Pronzini's Voodoo anthology reprinted "The Digging at Pistol Key," from Weird Tales. And a French anthology ran my "Tepondicon" from Planet Stories--which was also in my second Arkham collection, Portraits in Moonlight.

What I'd like to do is put together a collection of my more recent fantasy and supernatural stories combined with adventure tales set in Borneo, New Guinea, the Sulu and Java seas, and the Malay States. Most of the latter are bizarre in locale only, of course, and whether a book editor would consider them along with yarns from Terror Tales, Thrilling Mystery, Weird Tales, Galaxy, and Amazing Stories, I don't know. The only reason I hesitate is the typing cost. My own typing is no longer accurate enough for perfect copy.

Dixon Smith has worked his head off on his book about me. He is very painstaking, even making transatlantic phone calls to get the name of a French collection of my stories and the various stories included in that book. Luckily, after the exchange of "*bon jours*" he was able to get someone who spoke English. He has gathered pictures of my father and mother, of my house, of my lake cabin, and snaps of me as a high-school graduate, college underclassman and newspaper reporter. And he has written a bibliography in which he has run down every story I remember writing and quite a few of which I have no recollection at all. I just hope he can find some people interested enough to buy the tome. Personally I can't see why there should be, but I guess there's no fathoming the makeup of your average fantasy fan.

Cave to Jacobi, June 30. 1983: I'm still waiting to hear from Eleanor Wood on what's going to happen to that "Evil" series novel I had just completed--without a contract, foolish me--when Putnam gobbled up my publisher. I had a marvelously warm letter from my former Ace editor, Michael Seidman, but he is presently running The Mysterious Press in N.Y. and they do only special editions in the

*Witchcraft in the Labor Market!*

## NUMBER ONE MAGIC

By HUGH B. CAVE

mystery-detective line. So no chance of his picking it up, even though he had okayed it before leaving Ace.

Anyway, you asked me to report on sales of short stories, so here goes. I have a story in the latest Stuart Schiff Whispers anthology--the Doubleday hardcover Whispers IV--which I think is pretty fair. And will have a new short story in the next Whispers magazine. And have sold a story to the World Fantasy Convention people for inclusion in their program for the upcoming convention in Chicago in October. And the phone rang the other day and it was Cathleen Jordan of Alfred Hitchcock, saying she wanted to buy a story I had

sent her. Not much, and nothing to get rich on, God knows, but it's better than shuffleboard. Oh, for the good old pulps!

And, yes, I prefer to market my own short stuff. First, I don't think any agent wants to handle shorts at the rates we are likely to be paid for fantasies. Second, don't forget that after I moved from the pulps into the slicks and books, I sold all my own stuff without an agent, and half the fun of that is the personal contact with editors. At least, it was. My trouble--and yours, I suspect, since we're practically the same age--is that many of today's young editors probably look upon me as an ancient relic. And when they get a story from me, I suppose they wonder whether I'm not just pulling some old, unsold stuff out of the closet and hoping to get an easy buck for it. As a matter of fact, in all the years I've been writing I have accumulated only about fifteen unsold short stories. So I have to write new stuff!

We'll be off to Dayton to the Pulpcon next Thursday--a week from today--and are looking forward to it. There will be a panel on which I'm expected to take part with Bob Bloch, and a slide show by Bob Weinberg about the old fantasy/horror mags and their contributors. Then the banquet with several awards, and Bob and I have to make speeches as guests of honor. It should be fun, although getting to Dayton from here is like getting to the North Pole by dogsled. We're flying a route that calls for puddle-jumping on four short flights!

R. Dixon Smith to Cave, August 15, 1983:

Dear Mr. Cave,

Just a note to let you know that I've had the good fortune of having my biography of Carl Jacobi, Lost in the Rentharpian Hills, accepted--first trip out--by Bowling Green University Press, Bowling Green, Ohio. They plan to publish it next spring or early summer.

Wanted to let you know, and wanted to thank you again for allowing me to quote from the tribute piece you contributed to Pugmire's 1977 chapbook on Carl. Incidentally, the letter I selected for inclusion in the "Letters to Carl Jacobi" appendix is your very first to Carl, written in August, 1930. I think you'll enjoy reading it again.

I'll make certain you get a copy of the book as soon as it is published. Thanks again, and I'm looking forward to your next Carcosa whenever Wagner gets it out.

P.S. E. Hoffmann Price stayed here at my home for three days in June. We visited with Carl and with Don Wandrei. Ed is a remarkable man. He has twice the energy at 85 that I possess at 39!

Cave to R. Dixon Smith, August 23, 1983: Many thanks for your letter. I'm as happy as you must be to know that your biog of Carl

has been accepted by a good university press. Carl must be delighted, too.

I wish you could persuade Carl to turn up in Chicago in October for the World Fantasy Convention. I hadn't intended to go, but Peggie and I had such a marvelous time at Pulpcon 12 in Dayton in July, where I was co-Guest of Honor with Robert Bloch, that we let ourselves be talked into making it. This will be a celebration of the 60th anniversary of Weird Tales. From that magazine there will be Manly Wade Wellman, his wife Frances Garfield, Jack Williamson, Frank Belknap Long, myself, and perhaps Mary Elizabeth Counselman. It would be great if Carl could join us. I don't suppose we'll be called upon to do anything more than take part in a panel or two--nothing like the Bloch-Cave panel and speeches I was called on for in Dayton--so it should all be very relaxing.

Tell Carl, if you will, that in Dayton I saw a copy of Terror Tales of which he had the featured cover story priced at--hold your breath--\$85. I had no idea those old pulps were selling for so much money. Tell him, too, that both Bob and I were presented with handsome walnut plaques bearing reproductions in full color of four of our best cover stories, with appropriate engravings to the effect that we were Guests of Honor at Pulpcon 12, etc. etc. It was quite an ego trip for me, especially when Bob Bloch called me, in his speech, "a living legend in both the pulps and the slicks." Down with the flu just now, I don't feel so living, but I certainly appreciated it at the time.

But this is your day, with your acceptance from Bowling Green. Congratulations! I'm looking forward to the book with intense eagerness, and hope you sell many copies. All the libraries should buy it, and that's what hardcover publishing is all about these days, isn't it?

Cave to Jacobi, Christmas Day, 1983: Ordinarily I wouldn't be pounding a typewriter on Christmas Day, but I've caught me a case of the flu and am housebound. So what better to do than write to old friend Carl Jacobi?

Wish I could remember which story of yours I saw at the Pulpcon in Dayton that was priced at \$85. Did you write one for Terror Tales called "Satan's Roadhouse"? If so, that could be it. I don't think I was on the same cover, however, as you seem to recall. (As mentioned earlier, the Terror Tales referred to here was the October 1934 issue and Carl's story was "Satan's Roadhouse." And, yes, I did have a tale in the same issue: a novelette called "Death's Loving Arms" that turned up 32 years later, in 1966, in a paperback book called Death's Loving Arms & Other Terror Tales published by Corinth Publications, Inc. The book contained, along with my tale, an introduction by Jon Hanlon and stories by Frederick C. Painton, G.T. Fleming-Roberts, Frances Bragg Middleton, and Wyatt

Blassingame. It's a good-looking paperback with a wonderfully sexy cover illustration for "Death's Loving Arms"--a fan sent me a copy--and since the publisher used my story without getting in touch with me first, I'm sure he won't object to my quoting from an intriguing ad for upcoming "Corinth Classics." "You will also enjoy," he predicts, "THE HOUSE OF LIVING DEAD & OTHER TERROR TALES plus the campy flights of DUSTY AYRES AND HIS BATTLE BIRDS, the perilous intrigues of SECRET AGENT X, and the opportune ploys of OPERATOR NO. 5. Look for them at your local newsstand, demand only CORINTH NOSTALGIA BOOKS." And on another page appears the following come-on: "Next: SATAN'S ROADHOUSE & OTHER TERROR TALES." So not only did Carl Jacobi and I appear in that same second issue of the original Harry Steeger Terror Tales; we reappeared with the same two stories in the Corinth reprints!--Cave.)

At Pulpcon there were on display complete runs of Terror Tales, Horror Stories, Dime Mystery, Weird Tales, and many other magazines of that type. And the dealers had many of those mags for sale, too, along with just about every other pulp that was ever published. The prices shocked me, ranging from a low of about \$10 for very common ones to a high of around \$150 for some of the rarer issues. I was told that the one issue (there were actually three issues --Cave) ever published of Zeppelin Stories is now worth \$1500. Golly!

I was called on to make a speech at the banquet and got away with it okay--in fact, received a whole bunch of compliments, although I hadn't ever made a speech of that kind before.

Peg and I had planned to attend the World Fantasy Con in Chicago, but at the last minute we had to cancel out. My brother was dying, and Peg's daughter was facing surgery; we just didn't think we ought to be so far away from home at such a time. When Bob Bloch got back to L.A., the first thing he did was sit down--with a mountain of mail in front of him, he said--to write us a letter telling us how much we were missed.

You asked if that October cover story in Alfred Hitchcock was my first appearance in that magazine. Not quite. I sold 'em a story many years ago when I was appearing in their companion magazine, Ellery Queen. There'll be another of mine in Hitchcock in March, featuring our two Siamese cats in the solution of a murder mystery. (This story, "The Lady Wore Black," was reprinted in a Signet paperback anthology, Mystery Cats, in December, 1991.--Cave.) As for the rest of my short-stuff output, I have a tale in the new Whispers magazine just out, also one in the latest hardcover Whispers IV anthology--and will have another in Whispers V, keeping my record intact of having appeared in all of that series. About the end of this month I'll have a tale in Fantasy Book, and sometime next

year one in England's Fantasy Tales.

Congratulations on your two recent short-story sales. I'll look for them on the newsstands, though in this small fishing village there aren't many newsstands available. Anyway, those two sales must have helped convince you that you're still an old pro, capable of turning out good stories--a thing I've insisted on all along, if you remember.

Jacobi to Cave, March, 1984: A story of mine, "The Riburi Hat," is now on the newsstands in the January issue of Mike Shayne. I do hope this magazine is on sale there in Florida, as I would like your honest opinion of it. Presumably "The Lavalier" will appear in a late winter issue. This is a new "Joe Domingo" story, my detective character who has appeared in The Saint and numerous other sleuth books.

Yes, I had a story in Terror Tales named "Satan's Roadhouse." I may be wrong about your being on the cover, but I am sure you had a story in the same issue. As for the pulp you mentioned selling for \$1500, I've never heard of Zeppelin Stories. One story of mine which Dixon tried his damndest to run down was a thing called "Drowned Destiny," and it was published in a magazine named 12-Story Adventure. There seems to be no record of it anywhere and my own copy was either lost or stolen. (Carl is probably referring here to a pulp called 12 Adventure Stories which, according to John Locke's "The Pulp Magazine Quick Reference Guide," first appeared in October, 1938.--Cave.)

Congratulations on your treatment at the Pulpcon in Dayton. It doesn't surprise me, though. I know of no one who was more versatile or prolific during that period of time. Oh, there was H. Bedford-Jones and Frederick Faust who wrote so many westerns under the by-line of Max Brand while living not in the western United States but, curiously enough, on the French Riviera. And Arthur J. Burks, also very prolific. And a few others. But none of them turned out more quality material than you.

By the way, E. Hoffmann Price too has been after me to do a novel, but thinks I probably would be more at home with an adventure novel than with fantasy.

And lastly, Clifford D. Simak, with whom I collaborated several times and who has been very successful with his science fiction, didn't send me a card this Christmas for the first time in about thirty years. We used to see each other often, but have more or less drifted apart since he moved out to Minnetonka. Anyway, I called him the other night and the news wasn't good. He has leukemia.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Cave to Jacobi, April 6, 1984: I had a letter a while ago from Bob Price, asking if I would consider doing a story for his upcoming Shudder Stories, in which he already planned to use a story by Carl Jacobi and an unpublished yarn by Robert E. Howard. He sent me copies of some of his publications, and I admired them for being especially neat and tidy, with some good stuff in them. So it looks as



*He went under with a screech that cut the swamp's silence like a saw biting through hard pine.*

# SWAMP TRAP

By HUGH B. CAVE

though you and I will again be appearing together in a magazine. The last time that happened was, if I remember right, in Whispers II, and that was quite a while ago.

I'm still awaiting decisions on the third "Evil" novel and a new one I sent to Eleanor Wood around Christmas time. It seems to be the lot of writers to wait, wait, wait, doesn't it? Meanwhile I've been selling a few shorts, and now will be doing one for Price. Also, if he does a second Risqué Stories, I've promised him a Justin Case tale. That should be a lot of fun, resurrecting old Justin!

You mentioned that Dixon Smith tried to run down a story of yours in something called 12 Story Adventure, without any luck. I don't believe I've ever heard of that magazine, though I'm sure it existed. A fellow out West who is trying to do a biblio of my stuff keeps coming up with pulps I don't remember, even though they have used stories of mine. There was a 15 Story Detective that he says I appeared in. (As mentioned before, Carl was probably referring to a magazine called 12 Adventure Stories.--Cave.)

I'm sorry to hear that Clifford Simak has leukemia. I knew that you and he kept up a correspondence over the years. Please give him my best wishes when you write to him. I used to enjoy his stories.

To end on a happier note, soon after your letter arrived I received a long overdue royalty statement from Putnam-Ace, covering the six months that ended the end of August. During that time The Evil and Shades of Evil together sold nearly 50,000 copies. I have no idea what caused this sudden spurt in sales. I'm sure Putnam didn't push the two books, because they had already decided not to continue the series. It must be I have picked up some sort of cult following for those Margal tales. Hope so. I'm also hoping that such good sales will persuade some other publisher to pick up the series. In addition to Book Three, which Ace was ready to send to the printer when Putnam took over--I have a fourth Margal book outlined and ready to go.

Have you heard from Karl Wagner yet? I have never found him to be a letter writer, perhaps because he has such a lot of reading to do in editing his Year's Best Horror Stories. Don't be disappointed if he turns down your proposed collection. As you know, he is committed to a second collection of my stories and that is almost a must because Lee Brown Coye has done the illustrations for it. Coye's work could of course be preserved in print without publication of the book, but it would be more at home in company with the stories he was illustrating.

Jacobi to Cave, April 6, 1984 (same day): Last time I wrote I mentioned a couple of detective shorts that were about to appear in Mike Shayne. Did you manage to pick them up? Would like to know what an old sleuth writer thinks of them. For me it's a

comparatively new field, though I did have some stories in The Saint magazine, notably "The Legation Cigar" and "The Keys of Kai."

I received a very nice and cordial letter from Karl Edward Wagner. He said he would be interested in seeing my omnibus collection, Smoke of the Snake, if I could send him the manuscript. I did that. I think there were 29 stories including material from Terror Tales, Short Stories, Complete Stories, Top Notch, Thrilling Mystery, Thrilling Adventures, Comet, Weird Tales, the new paperback Weird Tales, Whispers, The Saint, a Whispers anthology, and a number of other anthologies edited by Derleth, Terry Carr, and several others. You know me well enough to know I seldom blow my own horn, but I believe this collection includes some of the best stuff I've ever managed to turn out. I hope Wagner likes it

Meanwhile some chap in New Jersey--Robert Price, who edits a magazine called Shudder Stories--has asked to see any terror tales I might have. He calls them weird menace yarns. I sent him a couple which he promptly took, and I have six or eight others which he asked to see but which need to be retyped since I want to edit them. Also, a local man here is holding a collection of my fantasy stories for possible publication.

Jacobi to Cave, October, 1984: Well, I see we're together again in another of Bob Price's magazines, this time in Crypt of Cthulhu. My story, "Josephine Gage," was a Weird Tales acceptance but was displaced by another story which I submitted at the same time, "The La Prelo Paper." However, before sending it to Price I rewrote the entire story and gave it a new ending. Then a funny thing happened. Dixon Smith, to whom I gave both versions to xerox, sent Price the unrevised copy as well as the new one. And Price printed the old version! I think he used that one so that he could truthfully blurb it as a W.T.-accepted yarn as yet unprinted. It doesn't make any difference, of course, except for the time and effort I spent revising the story and the fact that I would rather have seen a more polished piece of work.

Did I tell you I received a couple of interesting fan letters from Japan and France? The young man in Japan said he liked my stories--he didn't say who had translated them or where--and wanted permission to use "The Corbi Door" in an anthology. The Paris letter mentioned a collection of my stories published in France in 1980. This is not a reprint of one of my Arkham House collections but a different book entirely, and so far I've been unable to get a copy.

Do you ever read over some of your old pulp adventure stories--"Rigler's Third Round," "Kuching Cunning," "Fever Laugh," "The Green Eyes of Confucius" etc.? There's a question that has puzzled me for years: Why are fantasy stories reprinted and anthologized over and over while adventure tales or slick-paper love

or domestic stories are never heard of again? And what the devil became of all the western story readers who couldn't wait for each new issue of Western Story, Wild West Weekly, Cowboy Stories, etc.? Are they all reading Louis L'Amour paperback western novels, and reprints of Max Brand, Luke Short and Zane Grey?

I still think that what killed off most of the pulps was their attempt to convert to digest size in the hope of getting better newsstand display. By doing so I believe they slit their own throats, for the reader thought he was getting a better bargain in paperbacks. Well, no use bemoaning the past, I suppose. Those days are gone forever. But I still remember when our downtown newsstand attendant would call out, "Argosy out today! Get your latest Blue Book and Adventure." And customers would line up to buy them.

I can understand why you switched to writing fantasy novels, but I can't quite see why you bother with fantasy shorts. With a record like yours, even the rates paid by Hitchcock's must seem small potatoes to you. Have you ever sold to Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine, by the way?

Do you know E. Hoffmann Price? You'd never take him for the octogenarian he is. Oh, his hair has turned silver and he uses a magnifying glass for reading, but the man has more drive, more enthusiasm for his craft, than any of the young writers who talk so glibly of a "new wave" in fiction. I remember well one of his first stories in Weird Tales, "A Stranger from Kurdistan." And of course he did a whole flock of adventure stories for Adventure, Short Stories, Argosy, etc., in the thirties and forties. A lot of them were good, too. He also collaborated with (name unreadable) and Otis Adelbert Kline. Kline, as you may remember, was also a fairly successful agent. He sold quite a few things for me.

Sorry this damned typewriter works the way it does. I wrote to a friend the other day and he wrote back, "For Gawd's sake get your machine fixed. I couldn't make heads or tails of your last letter." (Parts of this letter, too, were difficult to decipher!--Cave.)

Cave to Jacobi, November 2, 1984: Thanks for your long letter. That fellow in Japan, Masaka Abe, wrote to me, too, about using a story in his Weird Tales anthology. He wanted some stuff about me as a writer as well, so I sent him a copy of the speech I made at the Pulpcon in Dayton.

No, I don't correspond regularly with Karl Wagner, but we do swap letters occasionally. He recently wrote to tell me he'd had an order for 100 copies of Murgunstrumm and Others from one of the big fantasy dealers. Incidentally, I'll be seeing Karl soon. Peg and I are driving up to Chapel Hill Thanksgiving week and will see him and the Manly Wellmans and the Dave Drakes at that time. I'll talk to him about the biography of you that is due out from Bowling

Green Press.

I have a few stories coming out but no book in the works at the moment. Hitchcock bought a long novelette a few weeks ago, and Mike Shayne bought a long short story. Price has a Justin Case yarn coming up in the second issue of his Risqué Stories and a story lined up for the next issue of Shudder Stories. That last should cause quite a stir. He himself supplied the title for it--"Brides of the Blood Fiends from Hell" no less!--and asked if I could or would do a real old-fashioned campy Dime Mystery sort of yarn around that title. I said I would if I could. Then I played around with it and just couldn't get it off the ground until suddenly one day I came up with the idea of using Justin Case as the hero! It wrote itself then, and he loved it.

Yes, I've sold Ellery Queen, but not recently. I had several tales in that magazine when I was writing for the slicks. One is reprinted in Murgunstrumm.

You say you can't understand why I bother with fantasy short stories when the market is so limited and the payment so small. Well, old boy, the slick-paper market just isn't there any more. I suppose I could have continued aiming stories at Good Housekeeping after that magazine changed editors, but it would have meant submitting maybe four or five stories to sell them one, and what would I have done with the rejections? In the old days you could try, say, a Post reject on Country Gent, American, Collier's, Liberty, and on down the line to, say, Toronto Star, where you would still get around \$400 for it. But all those markets are gone now. I'll admit it's frustrating to write for peanuts, but a writer has to write, so I sell stories where I can. Incidentally, as I think I told you before, I don't use an agent for my short things.

Jacobi to Cave, March 24, 1985: Well, this is a new typewriter--an Underwood Olivetti Electric. Trouble is, it's still new to me and I'll probably make as many mistakes as I did with my old one.

I do have one piece of good news. That is the sale of "The Satanic Piano" to television. It will appear on a program called TALES FROM THE DARK SIDE. This is my first experience with American TV. I remember about fifteen or twenty years ago a story of yours was dramatized for TV. The actor who took the leading role passed away several years ago but I can't recall his name now.

Price has several stories of mine awaiting publication, among them "The Hand of Every" which takes place on what was formerly called the island of Madagascar. Every, of course, was a buccaneer who operated in both the Caribbean and Indian Oceans. Years ago H. Bedford-Jones wrote a peach of a yarn about this pirate, "The Bloody Decks of Every," which ran in Adventure. Adventure in those

*The*  
**BLOODY DECKS** *of* **EVERY**

*A swashbuckling yarn of the  
plunderers of the Spanish Main  
and a pirate who would be king*

By H. **B**EDFORD-JONES



days brought to light some grand stories: Foreign Legion tales by Georges Surdez, a couple of unforgettable yarns of Devil's Island by Allan Vaughn Elston, the Venezuela tales of Arthur O. Friel, the westerns of Walt Coburn and Luke Short, to say nothing of Max Brand, also the Malaysian tales of R.V. Gery and the sea stories of Richard Howells Watkins. Names buried in the past. There probably isn't one person in a thousand—even you—who remembers

them.

Do you by any chance remember the railroad stories of T.T. Flynn or the Jimmy Dale stories of Frank Packard?

I received a nice letter from Bob Bloch today. He is perhaps the only writer I know of who is a silent cinema buff. When I brought up a serial called "The Leather Pushers" he said he had seen two episodes made in 1922-23. And when I brought up the name of Harrison Ford--not the present actor--he came back with the information that Ford had died forgotten at the age of 70 after making more than 40 films, many with his co-star Marian Davies.

In other letters we have discussed Milton Sills' "The Sea Hawk," J. Warren Kerrigan, the original "Captain Blood," and that classic film, "Scaramouche" which starred Lewis Stone, Alice Terry, and Ramon Navarro. When this picture was remade some time in the '70s starring Stewart Granger, the producers managed the incredible feat of leaving out the whole damned French Revolution. Bloch was also acquainted with the original biggie, "Ben Hur," and the original silent "Beau Geste" which starred Ronald Colman, Ralph Forbes, Neal Hamilton, William Powell, and Noah Beery Senior--a far better picture than its talkie remake.

Cave to Jacobi, June 11, 1985: Congratulations on your acquisition of a new word-machine. But hey, I'm surprised you opted for elite type. I switched over to pica years ago when one of my slickpaper editors complained that the smaller type was too hard to read.

That's great news about your sale of "The Satanic Piano" to TV. I read the story on receiving your letter, and it's a good one, though I'm damned if I can figure out how they will do it on television. However, they can do almost anything these days, and I'm sure your piano will be a hit.

You say you remember a story of mine that was done on TV. I had several, actually--on Alcoa Theater, General Electric Theater, and one or two other programs. One of them had David Niven in the lead role. How I wish we'd had video cassette recorders in them there days! It would be a joy to watch Niven do it again.

Don't kid yourself that I can "always pull a plot out of the air with the greatest of ease." I've just finished an 8,000 worder that took me nearly two weeks, and I'm sure it's a stinker. The longer we're in this crazy business, the more self-critical we become.

I got a kick out of your page of reminiscences about the old pulps and the writers therein. You say "there probably isn't one person in a thousand who remembers them" but, lad, you're dead wrong. At the Dayton Pulpcon everybody present remembered old writers and old stories in the pulps. And not only remembered them, but had them in their collections! And yes, of course I remember

Frank L. Packard and the other old-timers you mentioned. I read them when I was just a kid, along with Burroughs and Altsheler and Wm. Murray Graydon.

So you hear from Bob Bloch. Great. We shared digs in the same college dorm at Pulpcon--that is, he lived just across the hall from Peg and me, but he was alone, so spent some of his spare time in our place (which we shared with Don Hutchison--Cave). We loved the guy. Not only is he brilliant and witty, but he's totally without pretense and very warm. You feel you can say anything at all to him. We exchange letters now and then, but not on any regular basis.

I knew you had a fantastic memory for old writers, but didn't know you were also a mine of information on old movies. In that department you leave me behind, but Peggie could keep up with you. She comes from theatrical people and seems to know hundreds of old films and who played in them. The two of you should get together. I'll just sit in a corner and listen.

Jacobi to Cave, October, 1985: Just a note to ask how you



# RED RIVER ROUND-UP

By HUGH B. CAVE

Author of "Plumb Scared," etc.

weathered the storm that apparently raised hell with most of Florida. A good friend of mine lives in Key Largo and I'm somewhat concerned, as I haven't heard from her since before the big blow. Were you flooded out? Any wind damage?

I note you've been appearing regularly in Bob Price's books. He has several more stories of mine, one with a title that made a hit with him, "Rails of the Yellow Skull." You probably have heard that Weird Tales has been revived.

I enclose a clipping about the return of western stories to popularity. I often wondered what became of the readers of western magazines. I know you did a number of shorts for such magazines--the "Dishpan Range" stories in Western Story and a few in Cowboy, both of which were published by Street & Smith. As I recall, I sold only one--"The Bantam Ben Hur"--but before he graduated to science fiction my friend Clifford Simak did a lot of them for .44 Western, Six Gun Western, Popular, and other pulps. Incidentally, Simak is a few years older than we are--he's in his 80s--and is not well. Still, in July he wrote me that he had just sold a new novel.

Things are about the same at this end. I'm working on a new Joe Domingo story. Also on "The Fencing Master," based on information I picked up when I wrote "Black Lace" and "The Commission of Captain Lace"--buccaneer tales of the Spanish Main that appeared in Short Stories.

Cave to Jacobi, October 28, 1985: Forgive me for not answering your last letter before now. I've just returned from nine days in the hospital where the medics removed a tumor from my gut. Same problem the President had, and, as in his case, they say they got it all out because I caught it in time. The first thing I read on arriving home was Dixon's book about you, and I enjoyed every word of it. It was like reliving a part of my life over again. Excuse this typing. I'm still weak from the surgery. This is the first letter I've tried to write.

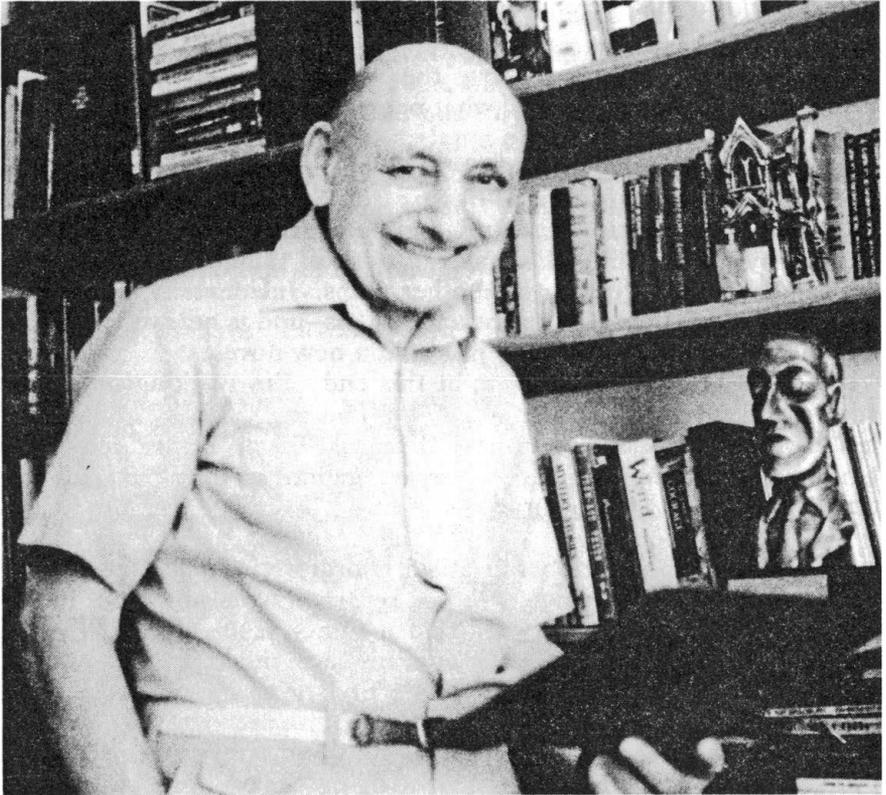
Yes, it was like going back in time--all those mentions of the old pulp magazines, their editors, their rates of payment, the rejections and acceptances, etc. And even that reproduction of my first letter to you. I wish I still had your first one to me, but, as you know, I lost all that stuff in a fire many years ago.

I get a great kick out of appearing with you again in Bob Price's little magazines. Your stories still hold up, old boy. I hope mine do, too.

You asked if Florida was hit hard by that last hurricane. No. It skipped all but the northern east coast, and even there did only a little beach erosion damage.

You mentioned being paid by Mike Shayne--through Kirby, of course. They haven't ever paid me for a story they ran in October,

1984, probably because I don't have an agent who might refuse to show them other writers' work. They have ignored five requests for payment. Won't even answer my letters. It isn't a big sum--only eighty-some dollars--but I can't remember getting this kind of treatment from even the worst of the pulps, can you?



Hugh Cave, 1993

Back to your book: It's really great, and when I'm a bit stronger I'll write Dixon and tell him so. He really caught the spirit and feel of the old pulp days--which, come to think of it, were great days, old boy. The photos and illos were a huge help, too. I'm sure you'll be hearing from a whole slew of your old friends as soon as they get their hands on it. And I want to thank you most warmly, by the way, for my copy. Peggie will be eagerly reading it as soon as she gets a few minutes to herself. Right now she's busy looking after me.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Cave to Jacobi, December 9, 1985: This is going to be about those old letters of mine that you have on file, but I'd better lead into it gradually or you won't know what I'm talking about.

A while ago I joined the Small Press Writers & Artists Organization, SPWAO. This may sound weird coming from a guy whose books have been published by Doubleday, Holt, Harper, Dodd Mead etc., but I sincerely believe we've got to have more small presses in this country or the handful of huge conglomerates will kill off all but big-name writers.

Anyhow, I got into a correspondence with the secretary of SPWAO, Audrey Parente, who is a member of your Derleth group and knows both you and Dixon Smith. And she has been talking to Dixon about doing something about me along the lines of his book about you. I've told them both that I don't think anyone will be interested in publishing such a book, but apparently they disagree with me.

Well, it seems Audrey is collecting copies of my old pulp tales where she can, and Dixon feels she ought to have copies also of my letters to you, for their pulp-paper shop talk, etc. Dixon says you are willing to let him copy them for Audrey provided I give my permission.

Carl, the truth is that I'd like to reread those letters myself. It would bring back a part of my life that is becoming more and more important to me. So, yes, I'll be glad to grant permission provided Dixon sends the letters--copies of them, that is--to me. And I reserve the right to withhold any that I don't want used. There probably won't be any such, and what will happen is that I will read them, make copies for myself, and send the whole lot on to Audrey. Still, I'd like to retain some control in case the odd indiscretion should turn up.

Okay, old boy? I'll send a copy of this to Dixon so we'll all know what we're doing. Meanwhile, to you, my very best. We're watching for your "Satanic Piano" on TV.

Jacobi to Cave, March, 1986: I hope this finds you completely recovered from your recent surgery. I know how concerned you were as a person who has enjoyed perfect health through the years. But now you can get back to the business of writing.

I am sending you some twenty or twenty-five letters that you wrote to me during the thirties. As you will see, they are in the

original envelopes, and I haven't read them since. Dixon may have seen these letters, for the file was part of the material I turned over to him when he started his biography of me. I believe I have some other letters that are in my large cabinet. If there are any from the 1930s to the 1950s, I'll send them along too. Am I right in assuming you want no correspondence from a later date?

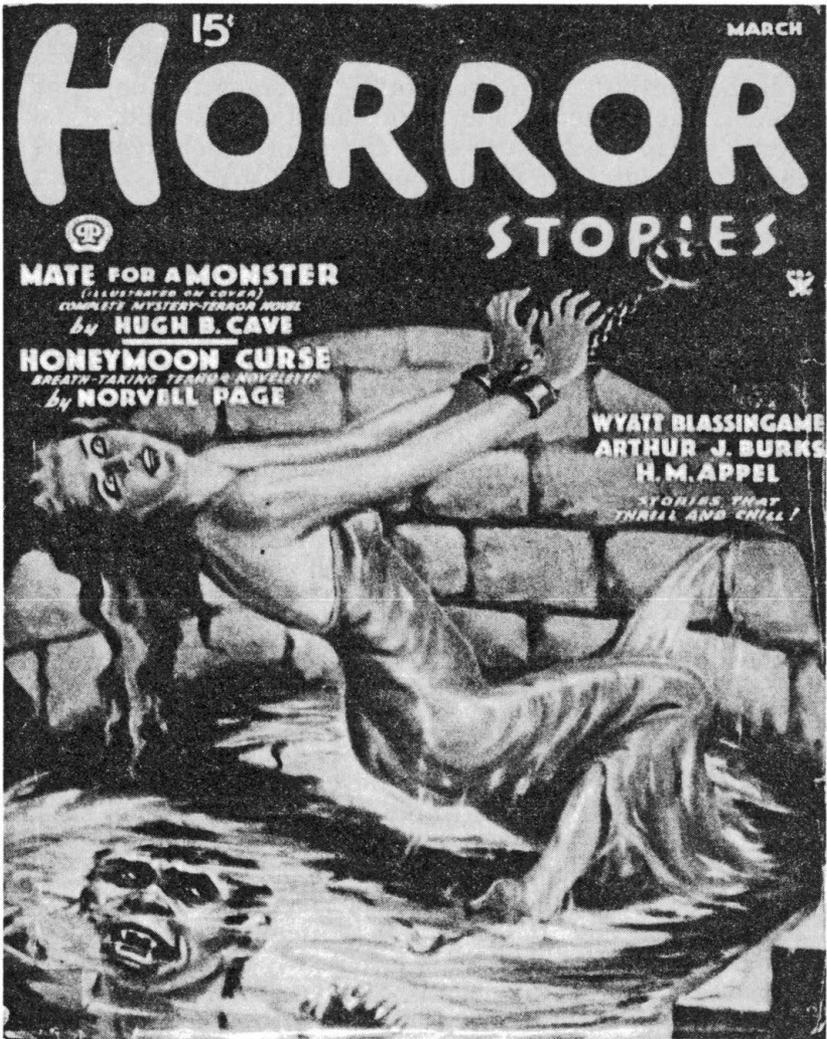
I note we share the cover of the next Shudder Stories, me with my "Rails of the Yellow Peril." (And me with a non-fiction piece called "On Voodoo" that has since been reprinted several times. But the amusing cover art was for Carl's story.--Cave.)

Meanwhile, I'm puzzled by a reprint of my "The Unpleasantness at Carver House." I was paid for its appearance in an anthology called 50 American Horrors published by the Outlet Book Company, but I was not paid for its inclusion in A Treasury of American Horrors published by the Bonanza Publishing Company. Is it possible these are one and the same book? What makes me suspicious is that A Treasury was published in 1985, is a large book, and yet sold for the incredibly cheap price of \$7.95. I wrote to April Derleth Jacobs--to use her married name--but so far have received no explanation.

Cave to Jacobi, March 17, 1986: I had a checkup a couple of weeks ago and came through it with flying colors, I'm happy to say. The doctor doesn't want to see me for another four months, so I guess everything is okay.

I'll be delighted to get those letters you are mailing me. I believe I've already told you that reading the first lot was like moving back in time to a forgotten era, and now that I've had a taste of it, I want more! Incidentally, Don Hutchison and his wife Jean were here for a few days last week and Don read them. He's associated with Borderland Magazine in Canada, is a cinematographer, has read Dixon Smith's biography of you, is a great pulp fan, and writes a lot about the pulps and pulp writers. He thinks that if we could put together enough of those letters I wrote to you back in our pulp days, they would be, to use his word, "spellbinding." I only wish to God I hadn't lost all your early letters. I have all the more recent ones, and also carbons of my recent ones to you.

Just received the new Shudder Stories with the two of us on the cover. That certainly brings back old times, when we shared covers on such magazines as Terror Tales, Dime Mystery, Horror Stories, etc. I haven't read your tale as yet--as I said above, Don has been here--but I'll be doing so with great interest tomorrow. Perhaps I should read it before mailing this letter, but I want to get the letter off to you. Hope you thought well of my piece on voodoo. I wasn't exactly anxious to do such a piece, but Bob Price seemed to think I should. I thought your "The Hand of Every," by the way, was a



HORROR STORIES, March 1935

corker, but I'm sure I must have said so in an earlier letter. That's a catchy title, too. Remember how you and I always used to talk about titles, and went out of our way to get hold of good ones?

Glad to hear you're at work on a new Joe Domingo tale. He was one of your best characters, and I know you always enjoyed using him in some new adventure.

Remember my asking you about Mike Shayne and whether or not you ever got paid for your stories in that rag? Well, Mike has gone bankrupt or something now, and never did pay me for that story

of mine in their October 1984 issue. Do you know, that's the first time I've had that happen since the Clayton Magazines folded way back in the thirties. All I ever got for "Murgunstrumm," you may remember, was about \$40 after their affairs were settled.

Sorry I can't help you with any information regarding the appearance of your "The Unpleasantness at Carver House" in those two books you mentioned. I don't know either of those publishing companies. Stories of mine have mysteriously appeared from time to time, too, but in magazines, not books. I never could understand it. The publishers couldn't have thought I was dead; I was appearing in print regularly. Yet without a word to me one of them (who shall remain nameless here--Cave) ran several stories, including some well-known ones, and I wouldn't even have known about it had not other writers told me.

Do please send along those old letters of mine. Audrey Parente will be most eager to see them along with the first lot. I'm expecting her next weekend. She'll be driving down from Ormond Beach, where she lives--about a three-hour drive from here. We'll be talking about you, I have no doubt, so if you feel your ears burning, you'll know why.

Cave to Jacobi, January 22, 1987: I don't know who owes who a letter, but who cares? It's been a long time since I wrote to you or heard from you.

"Who owes whom?" Maybe that's bad grammar today. If you've noticed, the word "whom" seems to have been replaced everywhere by "who"--just as "as" in formations such as "as I said" has been replaced by "like." Wonder what the schools of journalism are teaching. (Someone appears to be teaching, too, that the word "lay" covers all bases in the "lie, lay, lain, laid" family.-- Cave.)

Anyway, old boy, this is being written to you on an Atari computer or word processor, and I love it. My son Ken gave it to me for Christmas. It beats the hell out of a typewriter. With no fear of having to erase or "X" out mistakes, I find my fingers at last keeping up with my thoughts, and I can write ever so much faster. Because the fear of correcting is removed, I also write better. That is, I no longer think a sentence through before starting it, as one tends to do at a typewriter, but just let 'er rip and make whatever changes are necessary afterward before passing the script along to the printer.

As Dixon has probably told you, Peggie and I attended the World Fantasy Con in Providence, where we met lots of old friends and made some new ones. I met, for the first time, Bob Price and the two fellows--Marc Cerasini and Charles Hoffman--who collaborated with me on that crazy story in his Risqué Stories. (The story referred to here was "Sixgun Hellcats from Black River." Billed by Bob Price as "a hitherto-untold tale of those wild and woolly days of the pulps

and the exotic adventurers who wrote them," it had Justin Case and Robert E. Howard's alter ego, Sam Walser, searching in Mexico for Hugh B. Cave and Robert E. Howard, who had vanished while trying to solve the mystery of the disappearance of Ambrose Bierce! Actually, Karl Edward Wagner was responsible for the story's being written--at least for the name of it. On reading a tale of mine in which I had used Justin Case as the hero, he wrote to Bob Price saying he wouldn't be surprised to see next a tale called "Sixgun Hellcats from Black River" with Justin Case and Sam Walser as co-heroes. So Marc and Charles and I got together and wrote him one!--Cave.)

Also for the first time I met Dixon, Jack Koblas, Eric Carson, and other friends or acquaintances of yours. The weekend was pretty hectic but full of fun and excitement.

We were taken to dinner, along with Frances Wellman and a friend of hers, by Kay McCauley. For me that was a highlight of the weekend because--and you may also have heard about this from Dixon--Kirby is now representing me. He hasn't sold anything of mine yet--maybe it's too soon--but he has a new suspense novel and a collection of fantasy cat stories to work on. He, too, was at the convention, but had to return to New York early.

I was on a panel with Fritz Leiber, Les Daniels, and John Coyne. Steve King was also supposed to be on it but at the last minute had to send word he couldn't make the convention. We "done well," I think. At least, Fantasy Review in running a photo of the panel captioned it "Dream Panel"--though that may have been done tongue-in-cheek because Fritz plunged into the subject of dreams and held the floor a bit long. The panel's theme was supposed to be "Where do you get those crazy ideas?"

Audrey Parente flew up to Providence with us. Oddly enough, when we changed planes in Pittsburg we joined up with Karl Wagner and Frances Wellman, who were flying up from North Carolina. (Manly Wade Wellman had passed away on April 5, 1986.--Cave.) Audrey is well into her biography of me now, and Peg and I are both very pleased with what we've seen of it so far. She writes with lots of vim, vigor, and color. As you know, she is using some quotes from some of my letters to you. She was here last weekend, by the way, to look over my huge collection of photos in search of some for her book. I have hundreds of 8 x 10 glossies, developed and printed by me, of my adventures in Haiti and Jamaica, as well as many old pix of my pulp-paper days.

Ted Dikty's Starmont House will publish the book. Ted is also bringing out a collection of my old dark menace tales put together by Sheldon Jaffery. The Jaffery book will include "The Corpse Maker," about which Mike Ashley said rather a lot in his Who's Who in Fantasy and Horror Fiction. I'm kind of looking forward to reading

that one again, because it has been talked about almost as much as "Murgunstrumm."

What else? Oh yes--I've got another small iron in the fire: a book called The Voyage aimed at young people. After keeping it seven months, Macmillan's senior editor asked if I'd make some changes because it wasn't quite right for today's young readers. I did, and then she said I'd made it too long. Now I have to cut it! Cross your fingers.

On the personal side, Peg and I are both enjoying life to the hilt. Since my "Presidential" surgery, I have a checkup every six months; all's okay so far. I walk a mile or two every morning, and put in lots of hours a day at the type--oops, I mean the word-processor!

I forgot to mention that there'll be a Hugh Cave issue of Etchings & Odysseys in the near future. And a series of articles about me by Audrey in Bob Price's magazines. And some thing about me in other magazines by Don Hutchison. It's astonishing--and delightful--how the literary world has suddenly become fond of us old pulpsters. I get a real kick out of it.

Now it's your turn, hey? I don't need to tell you how much we hope you are in good health and good spirits.

Cave to Jacobi, July 5, 1987: What can I say? I have just read the Afterword you wrote for Audrey Parente's book about me. After reading it, I read it aloud to Peggie. Both of us ended up with tears in our eyes.

It was totally unexpected. When I phoned Audrey to tell her how great it was, she said something like, "Oh my gosh, you weren't supposed to see it till the book came out! I meant to remove it from the proofs when I sent them to you!"

Thank you, old boy. I only wish Dixon had asked me to do something like it for your book. Your's is a beautiful piece of writing, too--just the way you write your stories. Peg's daughter read it this morning and was full of admiration. "What a writer," she said. "There aren't many like him around, believe me."

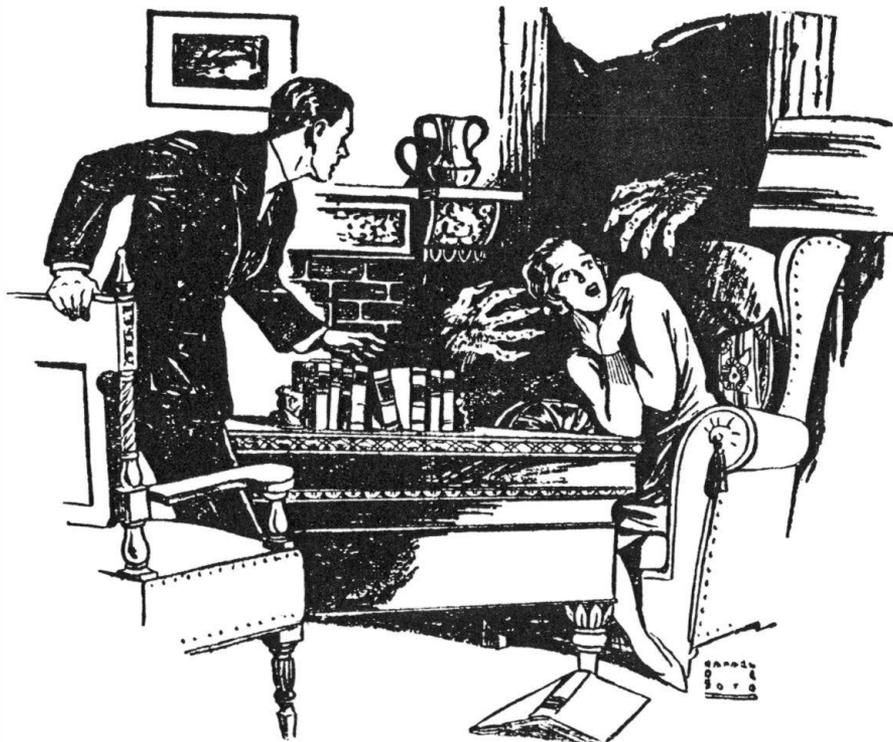
So now the book has an introduction by Bob Bloch, a foreword by me, and an afterward by you...and Audrey, in between, has done a really good job, we think. She's an exciting writer who is definitely going places. She also happens to be a lovely, warm person. Peg and I are very fond of her.

How are things going with you, Carl? Well, I hope. For me they are looking up after a couple of very slow years which began with the Putnam gobble-up of Ace. At the Deep South Convention in Huntsville, Alabama, a couple of weeks ago, a Tor editor seemed to be interested in a novel of mine that Kirby had sent her. I was given the Phoenix award at that convention, by the way. If you've never heard of that, it's for "outstanding achievement by a Southern

professional." Bob Bloch was Guest of Honor, I was a "special guest," and Ramsey Campbell was toastmaster. We enjoyed the weekend very much. Kirby was there, and several old friends.

Jacobi to Cave, late 1987: A thousand pardons for not answering your last letter sooner. There are several reasons for the delay, but the principal one has been typewriter trouble. (Here follow several paragraphs of remarks on which typewriters Carl liked and which ones he didn't, ending with the remark that he had had his old Olivetti portable repaired and "it is this that I am typing on now. I never was an accurate typist, but at least I can now write something that is legible."--Cave.)

So having bored you with my typewriter troubles, let me turn to other news, such as it is. Stuart Schiff recently took "A Quire of Foolscap" for Whispers, but he didn't know whether it would appear



*Huge, bluish hands encircled her throat.*

## The Infernal Shadow

By Hugh B. Cave

in the magazine or a Doubleday Whispers anthology. And "The Satanic Piano," which sold to television, will appear in print in a Berkley paperback. Incidentally, the television version of that story was lousy. The only thing I recognized in it was the name of the character, Wilson Farber. All else, the London setting, the plot, even the piano itself, was missing. I wonder why they bothered to buy the story since they used none of it.

Robert Price has a number of oldies of mine still awaiting publication in his various magazines, Shudder Stories, Risqué Stories, Astro Adventures, Lurid Confessions, Crypt of Cthulhu, etc. At this writing I have just received the latest Shudder Stories with my "Coffin Crag." Also in the same mail a copy of the latest Whispers with my "A Quire of Foolscap" and a note from Stuart Schiff saying he would like my comments on the issue. I see there's a story in it by you too, which I haven't read as yet. Is this a new piece or something Schiff has had for some time?

Now a bit of news. Dixon Smith and Madeleine have moved permanently to Ames, Iowa, which means the loss of another friend. And Don Wandrei, a lifelong friend and a classmate of mine at the University of Minnesota, passed away at the age of 79. And Clifford Simak, one of the best science fiction writers of all time--we collaborated on "The Street That Wasn't There"--is very ill.

Do you receive many fan letters? Brian Lumley, the British writer, wrote me one recently--that is, if you can call a letter from another writer a fan letter. He commented on my writing, said he admired it, and wrote a thoroughly nice letter. Then last week I received a fan letter from a fifty-year old man in Canada who said he had read all my fantasy and science fiction stories, and I had provided him with hours of pleasure, etc.

Of course, down through the years I have received many fan letters, a number of them from readers who wanted to know where they could obtain books I had mentioned in my stories. The Gypsy Zenicar prompted an inquiry from a Romany leader in Florida who said that neither he nor his gypsy friends had ever heard of such a book, and would I please advise him where a copy was available. Several have asked about Restitution of Decayed Intelligence, which I claim to be the first in fantasy fiction to be referred to as a banned book. It was a real book and I saw a copy years later; but the only writer who ever mentioned it was Manly Wade Wellman, several years after I had referred to it. Dwellers in the Depths and Untersee Kultur, both fictitious, of course, drew an inquiry from an oceanographer in San Diego, and I'm a Werewolf actually brought a letter from a man seeking the whereabouts of his brother, who had vanished from sight after walking away from an institution a year before!

Cave to Jacobi, January 26, 1988: Many thanks for the good letter written on your rebuilt Olivetti. I used Olivettis for quite a while; in fact, still have one of their portables on hand in case the power goes off, which it does quite often here. This Atari word processor and everything else I have are electric.

We missed seeing "The Satanic Piano" on TV, I'm sorry to say. Kept watching for it, but somehow it got by us.

You asked if I receive many fan letters. Well, yes, but mostly they are fans who want things signed after they buy them at conventions and such. I have people mailing me copies of Murgunstrumm and Others, which as you know is one hell of a heavy book, and they enclose return postage and wrapping material and all the rest of it. I get the impression, too, that most of them really want the signed copies for themselves, not to sell. And, like you, I warmly appreciate such happenings, just as I enjoy signing things at conventions. Any writer who says he hates to sign things for fans has got to be lying.

I haven't seen the story--in Bob Price's Pulse-Pounding Adventure Stories--that you said you'd like me to read and comment on. Bob, of course, sends me only those magazines in which I have stories, and he hasn't anything of mine on hand. I've more or less quit doing short stories now that my books are selling again. Just before I hooked up with Kirby McCauley, I sold a young-adult novel to Macmillan for hardcover publication. Then Kirby placed two horror novels with Tor Books. The Macmillan book will be out in April, the first of the Tor jobs in October, in hardcover. And I've just signed a contract for a second Macmillan book. That leaves little time for short stories, although I do enjoy writing them and have thoroughly enjoyed working with Bob Price. Since you have things coming up in Shudder Stories, I'll subscribe to it.

I'll end this letter by telling you that we are on the move. These Florida summers have been getting longer and hotter, and so we have taken my son, Ken, up on an offer he made to build us a house on Whidbey Island, in Puget Sound, about a two-hour drive north of Seattle. Ken has been building houses there for the past three or four years.

For Peg this will be like "going home." She lived in Seattle at one time. Whidbey doesn't have Seattle's rainfall though, and those majestic mountains and the waters of the Sound keep the summers cool. It's a big move for us, but we are looking upon it as another grand adventure--and, for me, another island! Wish us luck. I've been reading some of your stories to Peggie before we go to sleep at night--an old habit we got into some years ago. She wants you to know she enjoys them tremendously.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

Cave to Jacobi, April 14, 1988: Well, old boy, Peg and I are getting settled in our new home, and are glad we made the move. She grew up in the Northwest here, so feels she has "come home." As for me, I'm glad to get away from Florida's ever-hotter summers, and this little island town of Oak Harbor is just my cup of tea.

Audrey's biography of me should be out soon, its publisher, Ted Dikty, told me on the phone a week ago. You'll be getting a copy as soon as it appears, of course. The same publisher's collection of my old shudder stories, The Corpse Maker, put together by friend Sheldon Jaffery, is due out at the same time. Also this month, Macmillan is scheduled to bring out the first of my young-adult novels, The Voyage, which, by the way, will be done in England by Collins.

Other news that may interest you, since we've been friends for so long: the French publisher NÉO is bringing out a collection of stories from the Carcosa Murgunstrumm, and a new horror novel is due from Tor Books. I'm in the process of lengthening a second Tor novel--they bought two--for publication next year.

If you feel up to dropping us a few lines, Carl, Peg and I would love to hear from you. We hear about you quite often, of course, from Dixon and others. On the wall of my new workroom I have quite a gallery of framed photos of writers I've met--Bob Bloch, Karl Wagner, David Drake, Andre Norton, Sheldon Jaffery, Charlie Grant, Audrey Parente, Jack Williamson, Lloyd Eshbach and others. Would dearly love to put one of you up there, sir, whether from the old days or the present.

The move from Sebastian to Oak Harbor wasn't made without its touch of pain, I might add. We lost one of our two much-loved cats, a blue-point Siamese named Tai-Tai, whom we had had for seven years. She had a bad heart, and the trauma of the trip was too much for her.

Peg sends her love along with mine, and both of us hope all is well with you, good friend.

Jacobi to Cave, June 6, 1988: In addition to being a music teacher and a concert pianist, my aunt was a cosmopolite. She studied in Paris, Berlin and London.

Yet she often said that in her opinion the best place to live was the Seattle area of the United States. Myself, I've never been there, but of course that means nothing, for I've never been out of

Minnesota except for short trips into Canada. But when you move, you really move! From the farthest point in the southeast to the farthest in the northwest! I'm glad you like your new home and I hope it will be everything you want it to be.

I haven't much news. Price has published several things of mine since I last wrote you. I thought Steve Fabian did a good cover for my "Rails of the Yellow Skull" in Shudder Stories.

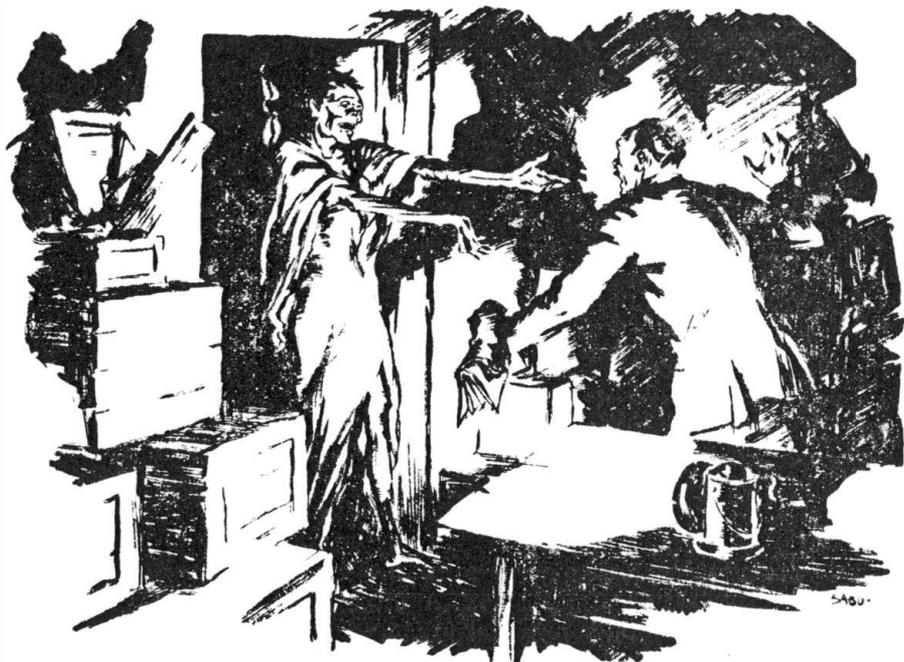
I can sympathize with you on the loss of one of your cats. About ten years ago I had a tomcat, Higgins, who was both a friend and an unusual animal. He was one of the few cats who knew his name. Any cat will come to you if you call "Kitty, Kitty." I got him when he was only a kitten. Some boys beat him up, and I was told by the vet that I could either have one of his legs amputated or have him put to death. "But can a cat function on three legs?" I asked him. "Some can, most of them can't," the vet said. Well, it didn't cramp Higgins' style. He would go out when the snow was drifted three feet high and it was 40 below zero, and he would be gone for a week or more while I worried and cruised down neighboring alleys expecting to find his frozen body beside each garbage can. When he came back he was warm and well fed and lord knows where he had been. He was a smart cat. He had a trick of wedging his paw between the storm door and the frame, pulling the door out and letting it slam shut. The resultant bang could be heard through the entire house and he knew I would come downstairs and let him in!

I just had a phone call from Jack Koblas who informed me that Cliff Simak had passed away. He was 83 and a very close friend. It's depressing when one thinks how the ranks of our contemporaries have been decimated in the last one or two years. And how soon they are forgotten.

Weird Tales took a new story from me several weeks ago, and I had to sign a contract before getting my check. I've never done this before with a short story, except in the case of selling television or radio rights. Is this a new policy among magazines? In the old pulp days your signature on the back of a check was sufficient. Also, Weird Tales sent me a single-spaced copy of my manuscript, asking me to proofread it. Why would they go to the trouble of making a new copy? Even in the days of the old linotype machines, which were still in use when I was a reporter on a Minneapolis paper, such a practice was unnecessary. I don't get it.

Translation rights for a Japanese edition of my book, Revelations in Black, brought in a rather nice check; and a small check arrived for use of the short story of that name in a Doubleday anthology. Have you seen an anthology on the stands lately with that story in it?

By the way, which fantasy story holds the record for the largest number of reprints? Is it Robert Bloch's "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper?"



*It was a corpse, standing before me like some propped-up thing  
from the grave.*

## The Corpse on the Grating

*By Hugh B. Cave*

Cave to Jacobi, June 18, 1988: I agree with you that the Japanese pay pretty well for reprint rights. I keep getting nice little royalty checks for the Japanese collection of my Good Housekeeping stories. It has gone through seven printings.

You asked which fantasy tale holds the record for the largest number of reprints, and you suggested it might be Bob Bloch's "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper." I think you're probably right, but I've never seen any figures.

The Doubleday anthology you mentioned isn't out yet, so far as I know. Someone mentioned it on a panel at the last World Fantasy Con in Nashville, and pointed out that it would contain my first Weird Tales story, "The Brotherhood of Blood." (Carl's "Revelations in Black" did not appear in the Doubleday anthology. That book, called Weird Tales, was edited by Marvin Kaye. The story he had in mind may have been "Carnaby's Fish," which was used in a Bonanza hardcover called Weird Tales: 32 Unearthed Terrors, edited by Dziemianowicz, Weinberg and Greenberg. Both volumes appeared in 1988 and both reprinted some great stories from that highly

respected pulp.--Cave.)

So you sold a new yarn to the new Weird Tales. Good! Afraid I can't answer your question about why they sent you a single-spaced copy of the manuscript for you to proofread. Maybe it's computer printed and this is the equivalent of sending you page proofs? As for asking you to sign a contract before sending you a check, this isn't too uncommon. The Davis Publications, Ellery Queen and Alfred Hitchcock, etc., always do that.

I was pleased to find, when we arrived here in little Oak Harbor, that the library had some of my books. Incidentally, we moved out here for an assortment of reasons, not just to escape Florida's heat. To mention just one--I'm nuts about islands, and the prospect of living on another one was enticing.

Hang in there, old boy.

Cave to Jacobi, July 13, 1988: Here is a copy of Pulp Man's Odyssey: The Hugh B. Cave Story, for which you wrote the afterword. I hope you'll like it. Heaven knows, there is so much about you in it that it could easily have been subtitled, "The Carl Jacobi Story"!

Dixon phoned last night to tell us you were in the hospital. We both wish we were near enough to be of some help, old boy, but you know you have our prayers. Get well soon.

Write when you can. Meanwhile, just concentrate on getting back on your feet.

And by the way, Happy Birthday. I guess you know that our birthdays are only a day or so apart.

(Carl at this time--though we didn't know it--was suffering from Parkinson's Disease. Ironically, it was Parkinson's that caused the death of our old Weird Tales editor, Farnsworth Wright.--Cave.)

Cave to Jacobi, March 8, 1989: Dixon wrote me about your being in the hospital again. He sent me the front copy for your upcoming new book, East of Samarinda. Your introduction is just great, and his foreword is full of delightful teases and come-ons.

Audrey Parente's biography of me is in its second or third printing now (small ones--Cave) and has had some nice reviews. Even folks like Bob Weinberg wrote to say it told them things about the old pulp days that they hadn't known.

And when I look back on those old pulp days and realize how long our friendship has endured, old boy, I get a pretty big lump in my throat. Do you realize we began writing to each other way back in 1930? There is no doubt about it, each of us has influenced the other's career along the way, by reading and commenting on almost everything the other wrote. I know that I have valued your criticisms for years, often paying more attention to them than to those of

editors I was working with. It's been like having an alter ego on hand to keep saying, "Hey, old buddy, you can do better than this, you know, so how about trying just a little harder."

Yes, we've talked in long letters about our own work, and each other's work, and even about the work of other writers. We've both admired the work of the same "other writers"--such as Somerset Maugham. And anyone with half an eye can see a similarity in your work and mine--a refusal to go whizzing off along every faddish sidetrack that has come along over the years, a determination to use the language for communication and not as a weapon with which to challenge the reader to a contest.

Right now, for instance, there are two distinct trends that I see in motion. One: a novel that isn't really a novel at all but is just a string of quickie motion-picture scenes, all action and whiz-bang dialogue with no characterization, only names. And two: novels, even short stories, so deliberately obscure that they become a contest between writer and reader, with, of course, the writer always winning and the reader ending up asking himself, "What the hell was that all about, and why did I bother finishing it?" He bothered finishing it in the hope that it would finally make some sense to him, but of course the winner was the author who had no intention of letting him understand anything. But the author himself is the ultimate loser, because no reader in his right mind would ever bother to read anything else of his.

What I'm really trying to say, of course, is how much I've appreciated having you for a friend all these many years, and how much I have valued your input. And, most of all, how very much I hope you'll soon be out of the hospital.

Don't bother to answer this letter. I just want you to know that I--we, I should say, because Peggie feels she knows you almost as well as I do--are in your cheering section. You have our prayers for a swift recovery. Get well, good friend.

Cave to Jacobi, May 29, 1989: Dixon sent me a copy of your new book and also gave me your new address. (The address was that of a nursing home.--Cave.) Peg and I both hope you are on the mend. It's good to know you are getting the care you need.

Someone told me--I forget who--that you have a story in the latest Weird Tales. I must get hold of a copy to read what you've written. Sounds like old times, hey?--one of us buying a magazine to read something the other has in it. Anyway, congratulations. I understand the new Weird Tales is a tough nut to crack, with practically every writer in the field trying to get into it. I do, of course, see everything of yours that's published in Bob Price's little magazines, and have enjoyed your recent stories there.

Carl, your East of Samarinda is just great. What a handsome job

Bowling Green has done with those old pulp yarns of yours! I haven't re-read any of the stories yet, but know I'm going to remember most of them and enjoy them.

Nothing much new at this end. I have two more books coming from Tor, but the market for horror novels appears to be shrinking. In my opinion, too much gore has been published and many readers have been turned off. With Kirby's approval I'm embarking on a blockbuster mainstream novel covering 40 to 50 years of Jamaica and Haiti, and three or four generations of characters. At the rate I'm writing now, it should take me a year or so.

So then, good friend, take care of yourself. Don't worry about answering this; we know it's difficult for you right now. Dixon and Mady keep us posted on your progress, anyway.

Cave to Jacobi, October 2, 1989: Audrey Parente phoned last night to tell us you were back in the hospital.

Just want you to know that Peg and I are in your corner, old friend. I would have phoned you but I know you don't like very much to talk on the phone, especially when you're not feeling up to par.

Just the other day, Carl, while trying to straighten out my books, I marveled at how many volumes I have with your stories in them. All those Bob Price magazines. The Whispers magazines. Bill Pronzini's The Arbor House Necropolis and the many other anthologies your work has appeared in. Not to mention, of course, your Arkham House books and Dixon's biography of you and your latest collection, East of Samarinda. In that last book, I remembered 67the stories almost as soon as I began reading them. You've been a consistently fine writer all your life, and will be remembered long after some of today's names are forgotten.

Things go well here. I try to do a few pages of the new novel each day.

Get well soon, old friend.

Cave to Jacobi, June 1, 1990: I have just received from Bob Weinberg a copy of the new Rivals of Weird Tales: 32 Great Fantasy & Horror Stories from the Weird Fiction Pulps, and see that once again you and I have appeared together in a fine collection of old pulp tales.

Your story is "Spawn of Blackness" from a 1939 Strange Stories. Mine is "Imp of Satan" from a 1935 Horror Stories. And hey, this is a good collection throughout, containing some really good stories that have not been reprinted in book form before.

I keep wondering how you are. Used to be kept informed by Dixon, but he hasn't written lately. Peg and I both hope you are doing well at St. Louis Park Plaza, and would love to have a brief

# The Preying Hands



## *A Weird Tale of Murder, Mystery and Fanaticism in Borneo*

By HUGH B. CAVE

*Author of "The Midnight Horde," etc.*

word from you if you can manage it.

I'll have a new Tor novel, The Lower Deep, out in September, and another, Lucifer's Eye, next year. Meanwhile I recently finished the long mainstream novel I told you about. Kirby McCauley likes it, and while awaiting some indication of what will happen to it I've been doing some new short things for various anthologies.

Carl, it was great seeing your story in Rivals and we have enjoyed rereading all those in your East of Samarinda. Know that we think of you often.

Jacobi to Cave, August 3, 1990:

Dear Hugh,

I read with delight your letter, but am wondering what you mean by the new Rivals of Weird Tales. I haven't received a copy of this book.

I haven't done any writing for a year, but I have a head full of ideas.

I'll make this short because I'm dictating. Congratulations on your recent sales.

Cave to Jacobi, August 15, 1990: It was great to hear from you. Took me back to those good old days when we exchanged letters every week or so.

Carl, the anthology I mentioned, Rivals of Weird Tales, is a handsome, hardcover book published by Bonanza. Bob Weinberg, Stefan Dziemianowicz and Marty Greenberg put it together. I am sending a copy of your letter on to Bob Weinberg, and I'm sure he will see that a copy of the book goes out to you at once. Since he lives in Oak Forest, Illinois, the book should reach you quickly. You will find a number of familiar names in it, believe me--Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith, Jack Williamson, Manly Wade Wellman, Seabury Quinn, Frank Belknap Long--the list goes on and on.

I talked to Kirby McCauley on the phone yesterday and told him I had heard from you. He said something like, "Please tell Carl that I will do my very best to call on him the next time I am in his vicinity." We talked about you for a good half hour, and I could tell that Kirby is very fond of you. He said that you and he were very close friends when he lived in Minnesota.

Kirby represents a number of horror writers, and the market for horror is really tight right now. I include myself among those writers, because even though what I'm doing is definitely not horror, that's how it is being marketed. Karl Wagner wrote recently in a letter to me, "There has been a tremendous glut of really bad novels, apparently all written by the same 16-year-old during summer vacation after he'd watched a dozen splatter films." As a consequence, readers of horror books have turned to other types, and good writers are suffering because of all the dreck that is being published.

Me, I'm happy that my most recent novel, the blockbuster I mentioned before, is a mainstream book. In truth, I'm a little sorry that when the slicks died as my major market I turned to writing what I did instead of doing mainstream books again. I did well in that field before, you may recall, with such novels as The Cross on the Drum and Black Sun.

Anyway, you'll be getting a copy of Rivals from Bob Weinberg, I'm sure, and I know you'll enjoy being in the company of so many old friends again. Peggie joins me in wishing you the very best. We know it is hard for you to write, but if you could manage to dictate a line or two every now and then just to let us know you are OK, it would be warmly appreciated. Postcards will do.

Let me know if you are reading any books these days. If you are, I'll send a copy of my latest, The Lower Deep, when I get some from Tor Books. It isn't due out for a couple of weeks yet and has sold out before publication, but because of the dreary sales in the horror field, the printing was disappointingly small. I think you might enjoy it, though.

P.S. You say you haven't done any writing for a year but have a head full of ideas. Have you considered trying to dictate some stories into a tape recorder and having someone type them for you? It might be hard at first--I know how you like to rewrite as you go along--but with a little practice it could work. And there are magazines out there that would be happy to see some stories with your name on them. Think about it, hey? Those ideas you mention should not be wasted.

Cave to Jacobi, April 3, 1992: This won't be a long letter. Mostly I just want to know how you are, and whether you are able to read letters or have someone there at the nursing home who can read them to you. Once I'm assured of that, I intend to resume our long, good correspondence by writing to you more often. Do you realize, Carl, that 62 years have passed since you first wrote to me to say how much you liked my Tsiang House tale, "The Green Eyes of Confucius," in Short Stories? Dixon Smith reprinted my reply to that letter in his biography of you. And we have written hundreds of letters to each other since that far-off day, some full of good news, some full of moanings and groanings, but all full of warm friendship.

I am still writing, but the book market is in a deep depression--as everything else seems to be these days--and the best I've been able to do recently is a sale of Polish rights to six of my last seven paperbacks. Dot Lumley made the sale for me--she is the Dorian Literary Agency in England, as you probably know. Peg and I spent a good deal of time with her and Brian at the Horror Writers of America's annual meeting last June in Redondo Beach, California, where I was given the HWA's Lifetime Achievement Award. With horror a nasty word right now, the award probably doesn't mean what it might have, but Bob Bloch won it the year before and Ray Bradbury the year before that, so I felt highly honored.

I talked to Dixon last night on the phone--called him to make sure I still had your correct address. He said he had not seen or heard from you in quite a while, and was worried. Well, old friend of 62 years, this bloke is worried about you too, so here's what I'm going to do. I will tuck a self-addressed postcard in with this letter and ask you either to write something on it or to have someone else write something on it and mail it back to me. Then when I get it, I'll know you received this letter, and I'll write again very soon. Okay?

Cave to Jacobi, November 25, 1992: Many thanks for the card you recently sent me, in response to my last letter.

Not much has happened here since then. I have left Kirby and am now represented worldwide by Dot Lumley, who has done well for me in foreign sales. As I told you before, she has sold six of my published books in Europe, for instance. And I've had stories, new or reprints, in a number of anthologies, with many more coming up, but that's about all.

Except, that is, for one bit of good news I share with you, old friend. Dixon Smith wrote me a while ago that Fedogan & Bremer would be publishing a collection of your stories, to be called Smoke of the Snake. Wonderful! And now I can tell you--because I heard from them yesterday--that F&B will also be publishing a collection of my stories. In my case, it is the companion book to Murgunstrumm and Others that Karl Wagner's Carcosa imprint had planned to publish. Carcosa, as you probably know, is no longer in business, so Fedogan & Bremer have taken my book over. Karl is writing an introduction, I'm happy to say. (At last report, this book will be out sometime in 1994 and, I believe, will bear the same title Carcosa planned to use on it: Death Stalks the Night.--Cave)

With his letter to me, Philip Rahman of F&B sent a copy of their latest book, the Robert Price-edited Tales of the Lovecraft Myths, which contains your story, "The Aquarium." Congratulations! It's a handsome book, one you must be proud to be in.

We both send our love, and hope you are well enough to drop us a line again. It was so good to hear from you. Again I enclose a self-addressed postcard to make it a bit easier for you. Take care, old friend.

Final note from Cave: The postcard in the above letter, like the one before it, was returned with only a brief message handwritten by someone other than Carl. This one contained the following:

"Somewhere I have lost the ability to type by touch. I have any number of plots in my head, some in detail, but am unable to put them down on paper. I can type a little by the old hunt and peck system, but it's slow going."

So--sadly--these reminiscences must here come to an end.

\* \* \* \* \*

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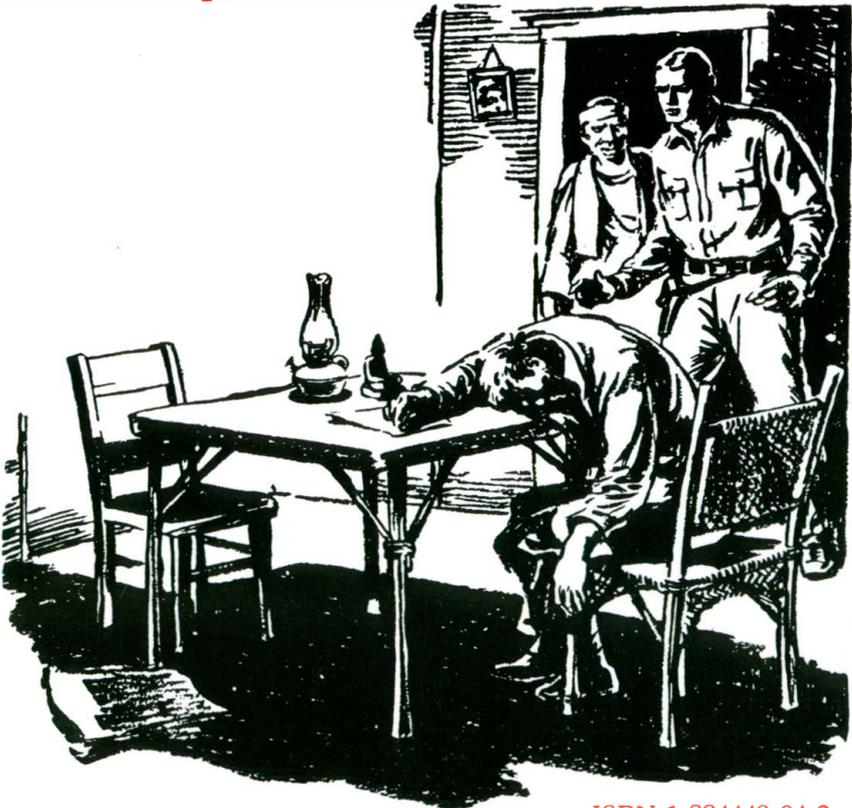


Magazines I Remember, subtitled "Some Pulp, Their Editors and What It Was Like to Write For Them," is a fascinating look at the pulps by World Fantasy Award winning author Hugh B. Cave. Cave, who is still active in the horror and fantasy fields, began his career in the pulps in the late 1920's. During the next 20 years, Cave was one of the top pulp writers, writing for every major pulp, such as Weird Tales, Adventure, Terror Tales, Argosy, Strange Tales, Dime Mystery, Spicy Adventures, Horror Stories, Black Mask, Spicy Mystery and dozens of others. In 1977, Cave's award-winning collection of his pulp tales, Murgenstrumm and Others, was published. Magazines I Remember is based on Cave's prolific correspondence, beginning in 1931, with fellow pulp author Carl Jacobi, a fellow Weird Tales alumnus. Through Cave's correspondence and his modern commentary on it, the pulp world of the 1930's comes alive. Profusely illustrated with many pulp cover and pulp interior illustrations for Cave's work.

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