THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

$6.00 Volume 18 Number 4 Fall 1985

INTERVIEW WITH JEREMY BRETT

Star of MYSTERY's "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes"

Gladys Mitchell: "Golden Age" Writer

The Politics of Detective Fiction in China

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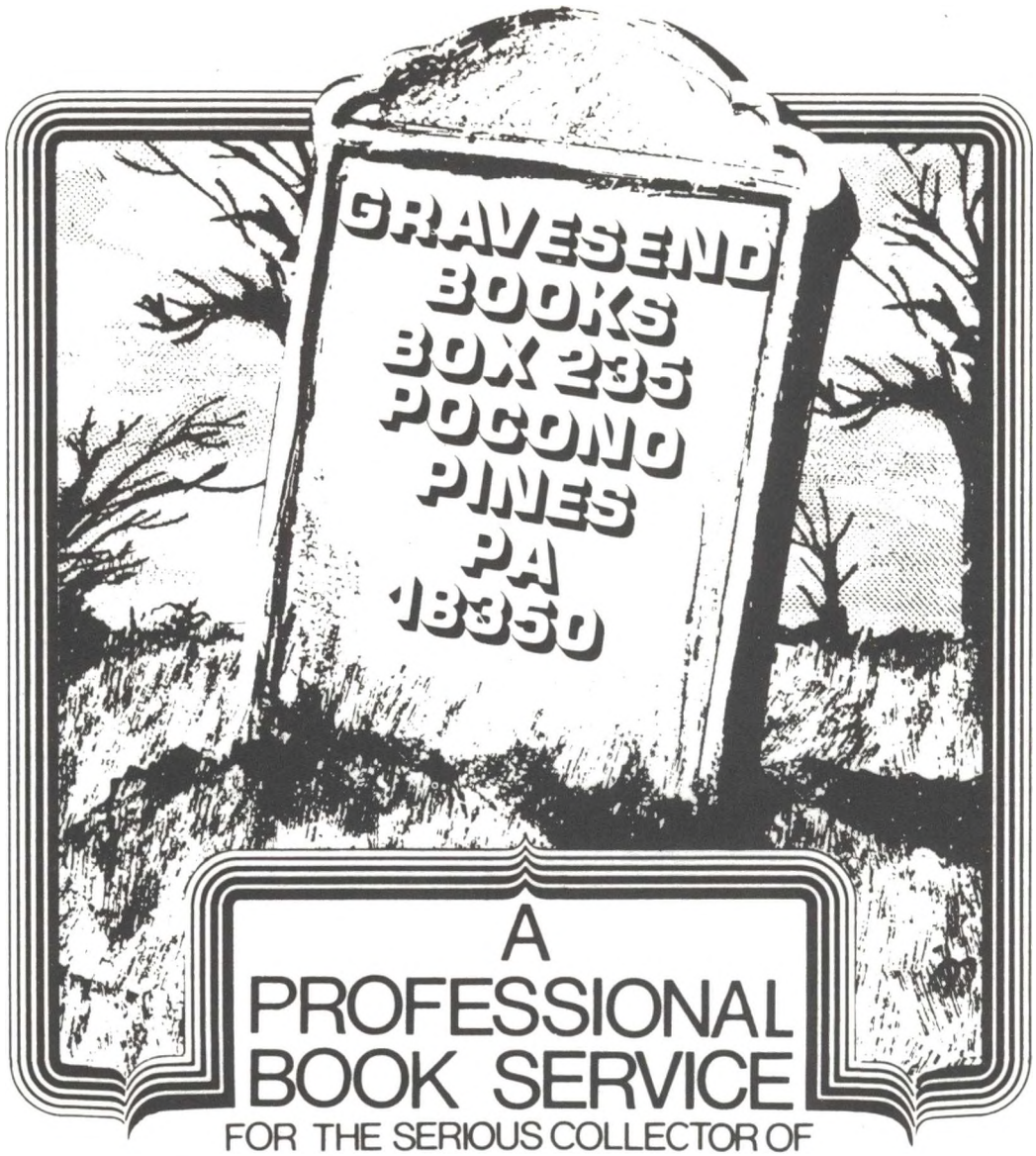

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Volume 18 **Number 4** **Fall 1985**

Feature Articles

The cover photograph of Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes is from the Mobil-funded *Mystery!* series "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes."

THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

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THE UNEASY CHAIR

Dear TADian:

Undoubtedly, the request we receive most often is for more reviews. Current reviews, retro reviews, paperback reviews—it doesn't seem to matter, as long as we have more of them.

Until now, the reviews have been completely unsolicited. We do not ask people to review any given title (as the major newspapers and magazines do) but receive them from our readers when they feel moved to write them. As I am certain is apparent, a large number of these notices comes from a small group of regular contributors. Of course, that helps you: you begin to learn a reviewer's tastes and know how to read his comments. On the other hand, it does tend to keep the columns short; a person can, after all, only read so much.

Fortunately, some of the publishers have begun to take our requests for review copies seriously. We do not get as many as we'd like, but we are receiving more than we did in the past. Therefore, we are pleased to make the following offer. Let us know what kind of books you like, what you want to read (and read about). We will, as review copies are received, forward them to you. (Obviously, there will be no charge to you.) In return, we ask that you take the time to read the books and write about them for TAD.

If you have been a reader for any length of time, you know that our format is simple. Anyone can—and should—write reviews for TAD. It is, in the final analysis, *your* opinion of the books that counts—to the authors, to the publishers, and to other readers of *The Armchair Detective. You* are the fans, you are the book buyers the publishers want to reach. And you are TAD. By participating in this program, you are ensuring that the magazine reflects your interests. You are ensuring that you have a voice, a voice which will be heard. And you are helping to fulfill your own desires and hopes for the magazine.

I realize that there are many readers who are, simply, afraid to write. It is a real fear. You have nothing to fear from us, however. All we ask is that you let us know what you think of the books you read, something you do regularly with your friends anyway. A slight plot synopsis (but don't give any solutions away!), discussion of characters, and, most importantly, what *you* thought of the book.

How will the system work? you ask. This way: If you are going to take an active role in TAD by participating in the process, please send a note to Kathy Daniel, Managing Editor, *The Armchair Detective,* 129 West 56th Street, New York, New York 10019, and let us know that you want to review books in *one* of the following categories: Private Eye/Police Procedural, Cozy, Espionage, Thriller, or General. The categories are broad. For our purposes, Amanda Cross might be considered "cozy" while Gregory Mcdonald might be "general." The hope is that we will not send a bloody and/or hard-boiled novel to someone who will be offended by the style, language, or theme. Unfortunately, we cannot break the list down further; it would be impossible to pull British academic mysteries or a private eye set in the Plains States with any regularity. If the wrong book gets to you, just return it (or give it to a friend to review). Our ability to fill your request depends on the number and type of books provided by publishers. If considerable time passes before you receive your book, it is because we simply ran out of your kind of novel. We will, I think, be able to iron out any wrinkles in the system quickly.

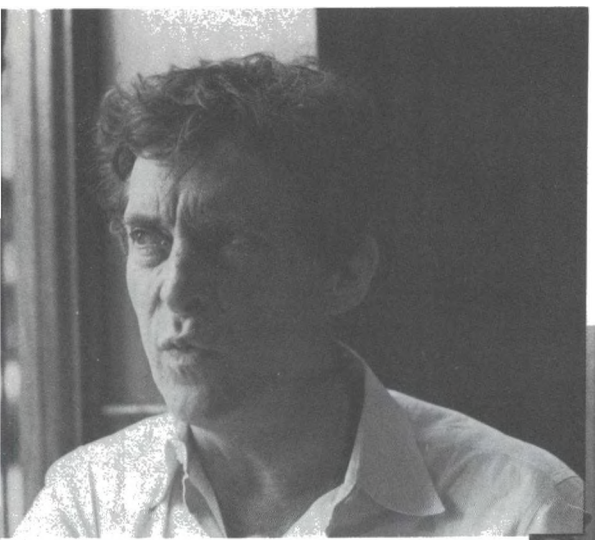
We look forward to hearing from you, and to having your reviews to share with all of our readers. Until then, however, I have a book to read.

Best mysterious wishes,

Michael Seidman

MICHAEL SEIDMAN

Interview with



By Rosemary Herbert

It was a windy April morning when revolving doors spun me into the lobby of a large hotel in New York's theatre district, there to meet Jeremy Brett, A.K.A. Sherlock Holmes, for breakfast. Having seen him in the Holmes role in the highly acclaimed *Mystery!* series on public television, it was difficult to imagine the actor in everyday attire. I wondered if I would recognize him.

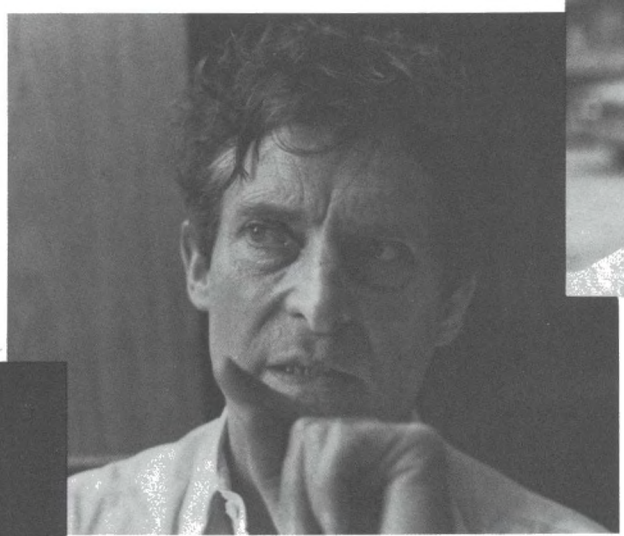
I was already seated at my table when Jeremy made his appearance, full of energy, brimming with ideas and anecdotes, and looking for matches with which to start up his "breathing apparatus," the cigarette. In appearance, he proved far less austere than his Holmes portrayal; the same eyes that seem full of intelligence and scrutiny on the screen are darting, dancing, luminous green. I suddenly believe that this is the same actor who portrayed the enigmatic Max de Winter in "Rebecca" (also on *Mystery!*) and the transparent Freddie Einsford-Hill, who wore his heart on his sleeve for Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*.

In person, Jeremy Brett is warm and animated, casually dressed, even a bit tousled. His voice and accent are as impressive in small talk as they are in rehearsed scenes, and his skill as an actor is shown when in a moment he turns his face, without make-up, into that of Holmes, to illustrate a point. The posture and the piercing eyes say it all; suddenly the conversationalist across the table *is* Sherlock Holmes. Then, just as quickly, his face breaks into a winning, whimsical smile all his own.

Herbert: **To begin with, would you tell us about your idea of Sherlock Holmes's character and in what ways you are or are not like him in personality? Was the Holmes role a natural one for you?**

Jeremy Brett

PHOTO CREDIT: ROSEMARY HERBERT



Brett: It's *not* natural. Funnily enough, I think I'm more like Holmes now that I've played him for the last two and one-half years than I was [when I began]. I have to watch it. *(He smiles.)* I *was* very gregarious, and I still am at the drop of a hat. I'm *not* a recluse [by nature], but I've *become* a little bit of one. *(He says this as though it is a discovery which has taken him by surprise.)* I'm inclined in a lot of ways [to see Holmes's behavior and natural reticence] as an alternative behavior for me.

My success at the part, I find, is really and truthfully a miracle to me because the part was never one that appealed to me. Watson is much more my kind of person.

Herbert: **You haven't got Watson's build! Although I know you've played him.**

Brett: Yes, I've played Watson. *(Brett played Watson to Charlton Heston's Holmes in a Los Angeles stage production of* THE CRUCIFER OF BLOOD.) And I had a taller Holmes.

Watson is a warm, loving, sunny person who's very enthusiastic—and hurt and slightly upset when his friend is rude to people or to him. This is much more like me. The actual part of Holmes didn't appeal, simply because he's a cold fish, rude. I wouldn't cross the road to meet Holmes. I think I'd be slightly frightened of him.

I think Holmes is somewhat deformed, because if you eradicate everything but the brain you become what is known as a machine. [Although Holmes doesn't always succeed at it], he removes all emotion, as much as he possibly can, and becomes a machine of detection. I was terrified because I thought, "Well, I can't do *that!*"

Rosemary Herbert is distinguished by having successfully disguised herself as a man in order to attend a full meeting of a Baker Street Irregulars banquet. When the group—to remain unidentified—toasted "the woman," she rose and said, "Here, here!"—while the company looked on, unaware of the cuckoo in the nest.

And when you're going to portray a man with the best brain in the entire world, what in the hell do you do when you know that in your own head all you've got is cotton wool? I thought, "How am I going to do this? How *am* I going to do this?" I tried to run from it for a while because I love a good, happy, full life.

I was first asked to do it in February of 1982, and then Ian Richardson started a play tour in *The Sign of Four* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles.* Our whole line was cancelled because it was thought Richardson would go straight for the Canon. But he did only the two. And then it came back to me. By that time, I had had time to absorb Doyle's works—although I'd done them at college, I'd never actually done a study of Holmes as a part to play. [In this interim period], I read everything, but not in that sort of rushed way you do when you know you're preparing to play a part. I was *imbibing* it.

Herbert: **How did this reading affect your ability to play the part?**

Brett: I don't know about that, but I know that playing the part has affected my life! It's shortened my life, or maybe lengthened it. I don't know what it's done! I'm a different person on this end than I was.

Herbert: **What is the most striking way in which you've changed?**

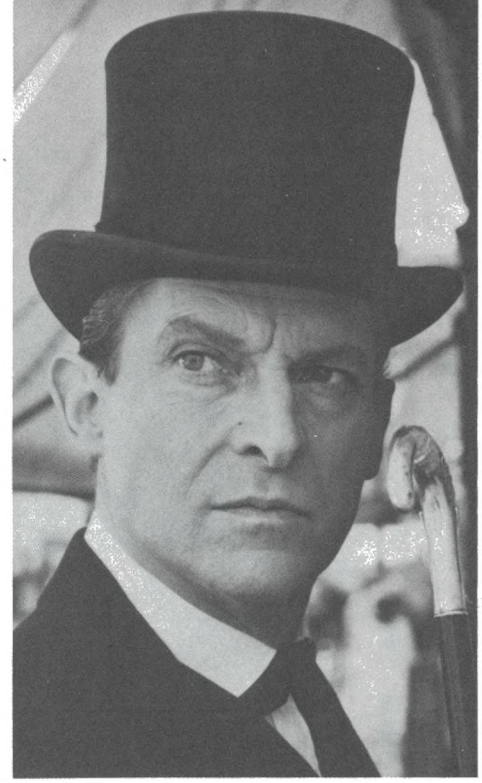
Brett: I'm more analytical, which I don't like. *(He smiles.)*

Herbert: **What did you enjoy most about the part?**

Brett: Well, we're all very well-mannered people, aren't we? And what I enjoyed the most? It's *heaven* to be rude. I loved that. I *loved* that! I loved being able to say, "Thank you!" *(He says this dismissively, turning his head away. Suddenly, Holmes is there in Jeremy Brett's voice and figure in a New York City coffee shop.)* That was *great* fun! *(He says it casually, laughing.)* All that cutting of all the rhubarb! I enjoyed all of those times when [Holmes] walks away without even saying goodbye. He just hasn't got the time to go through all that polite behavior. That I enjoyed, quite a lot.

I wouldn't cross the road to meet Holmes. I think I'd be slightly frightened of him.

Rosalie Williams as Mrs. Hudson



Jeremy Brett and David Burke

Herbert: **Did you find that your powers of observation improved?**

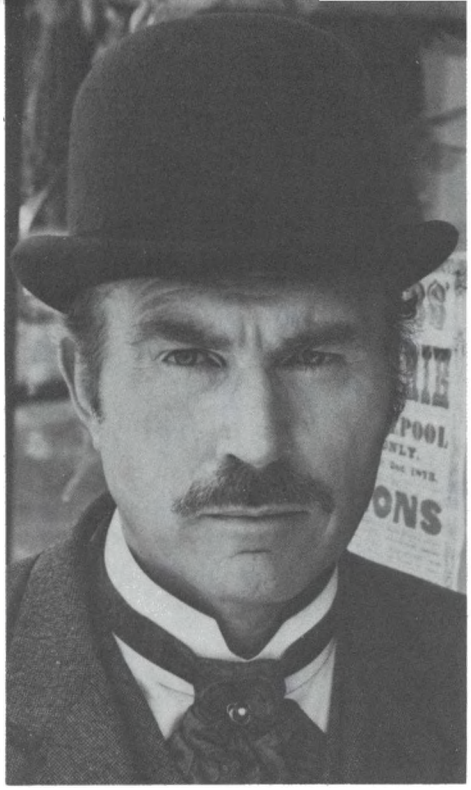
Brett: Yes. [Playing the part of Holmes] makes you observe. A wonderful thing.

Herbert: **There must be an extra difficulty in playing a part that is dear to the hearts of so many people, a part for which people already have a definite picture in their minds.**

Brett: Yes, that's the most frightening part. [The reaction of] my eldest brother is a great example of this. He's a great pipe smoker and a great Holmes buff. And he told me quite frankly that I couldn't play the part because I didn't smoke a pipe!

He also said, and quite rightly, "I can't think why you've been cast because you aren't *anything* like Holmes." And I said, "Yes, you're right." And he said, "But now listen, if you're going to do 'The Copper Beeches,' you will remember..." and he proceeded to give me detailed advice. And so then I had some element to please nearer to me; I had my brother. I had then the fascination of getting it as near to the book as possible.

Herbert: **The series has been praised for its loyalty to the Canon, in terms of character, setting, dialogue,**



as Holmes and Watson

Gayle Hunnicutt
as *the* woman

and more. Let's talk about the character of Holmes first, and the decisions you made as an actor in playing him.

Brett: Well, my first shot [in making screen tests] was a disaster. First of all, the make-up. I painted my face absolutely white, and then I put a sort of dark gentian violet in there *(pointing to facial bones),* and then I shaded right down the side of my nose. I put a kind of cross of white right down my nose and across my brow and put my hair back straight. *(He drags his hair back and smiles.)* And the white make-up makes your teeth look a little yellow. It makes your eyes look a little red. And then of course remember your ears have to go a little white, as well as your hands. And I said, "Would you like my forehead white so it looks as though there's something in it?"

I did this test and it was a riot. It was terrible because I looked like a gargoyle. [Producer] Michael Cox said to me, "Is there going to be *anything* of Jeremy Brett at all in this interpretation of Sherlock Holmes?" I said, "Why?" And he said, "Well, what's that funny walk you're doing?" I said, "I think he walks rather quickly." *(He snaps his fingers.)* "Yeah," [the director] said. "And you never smile." I asked, "Well, *does* Holmes ever smile? I know he laughs, but how does he smile?"

Well, I saw the tape and it was *unbelievably* awful. *(He smiles and speaks slowly, thoughtfully.)* It looked rather like a corpse, a rather sort of speeded-up film of a corpse. *(Seriously.)* I was *way* off.

Herbert: **Well, how did you work your way into bringing the part alive?**

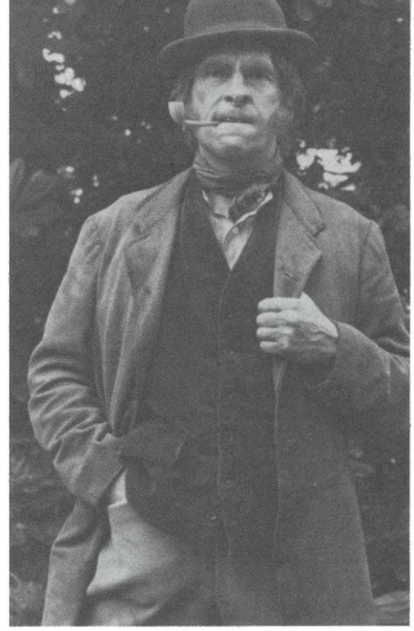
Brett: Well, we got into rehearsal, and of course you know what I'm like. I chip at it. We didn't [immediately] get it right; we got nearer to it.

I had a marvelous start because I had a good Watson [played by David Burke]. I had a person who is warm...and we got on very well. Also my producer, Michael Cox, was determined to put literature straight and get Watson's character re-established if possible.

As we began to get into it, we realized that, first of all, a lot of writing had to be done for Watson. Because the book is in the first person, dialogue [often] has to be manufactured for him. In "The Speckled Band," I think he has only thirty-four lines all told.

Herbert: **I loved the interaction of Holmes and Watson in the series. Can you tell us how you worked on this with David Burke?**

Brett: We talked and munched it through. The very nature of David and the very nature of me means in any case I'm going to be leaning a little bit on somebody. A part like that can be very frightening because you're so alone. I think this is the great danger. I'm not sure that it's true, but I think that many actors who have played this part have become megalomaniacs to a degree. They try to do it alone. By the very nature of my not being a loner, I find that very difficult; that's why I find the part so difficult.



Paget's conception of Holmes's disguise in "A Scandal in Bohemia" is faithfully reproduced by Brett.

Herbert: **Did you and David discuss your parts on the set or elsewhere?**

Brett: Well, Manchester [where the studio is located] is one hundred and fifty miles from London, so we had about a two-and-one-half-hour train journey—and God knows how often we made that!

Herbert: **So you could lean across Sidney Paget style and confer in the train.**

Brett: Yes. Oh, endlessly.

Herbert: **What sort of decisions did you make about the Watson character together?**

Brett: We asked ourselves, "*Who'd stay* with Holmes? Well, Watson *does*. But therefore *why* does he stay?" All right, he's fascinated with deduction - he still has never recovered [from his surprise at] Holmes's knowing he had just come back from Afghanistan—but there's more than that. [Holmes is] an impossible person to share rooms with! I think that what I found in what I call the under-bedding of the part is that somehow Watson sees this man's *need*. First of all, Holmes falls apart when he's not working. Well, that's easy to play because actors do that—we all fall apart, really, when we're suddenly made redundant. But what does Holmes do? He actually shoots up, straight to the vein, the seven-percent solution. He smokes too much. He scrapes on his violin, not very well. He does chemistry—nearly blows people to

A publicity shot for the *Mystery!* series was derived from Paget's illustration for "The Red-Headed League."

pieces if he's not very careful or, as happens in "The Solitary Cyclist," nearly sets fire to [221B] Baker Street. So he's obviously a problem child as well as a brilliant friend. Watson sees that. Watson sees that Holmes can't say "Thank you"; he can't say "Good night," can't say "Help." But what Holmes does occasionally is rather sweet little things like in "A Scandal in Bohemia" he tells Watson, "You see, I did remember you were coming; here are your cigars." And it's the little things that mean a lot. I tried to show how much Holmes does actually need Watson without actually saying it.

I think that Holmes would be dead—*(with a twinkle in his eye)* I mean, just pretending that they were real people—if Watson weren't there. If Watson suddenly decided to go and live, let's say, in Madagascar, Holmes would be dead inside of six weeks. And that's what we chose to play.

Herbert: **Does Sherlock Holmes experience fear? And if so, does Watson know it?**

Brett: Yes. I put that in, in "The Adventure of the Speckled Band." Holmes is quaking, but he's got his back to Watson. An actor's got a choice in dramatizing something. Watson doesn't see it.

Herbert: **Can you tell me what you get out of Holmes in disguise?**

Brett: [Holmes finds] escape. Escape from himself.

Herbert: **And when he has his closest brush with a woman in the affair of Irene Adler in "A Scandal in Bohemia," it is significant that he's in disguise.**

Brett: Yes. This is the lovemaking of a shy man. [He would like to remove Irene, too,] from his life because he can't waste his precious energies on emotion. But Irene sings divinely, and that means a very great deal to him because he loves music.

The interesting thing about this is, why the two disguises? Don't forget, these [stories] were written pre-Freud. You mustn't over-analyze because that can cripple. But this is my estimation. He uses a groom—a rough animal which he's not—for the approach. He then [disguises himself as] a priest. I think the priest is a spiritual element used as Holmes chooses to get near to her.

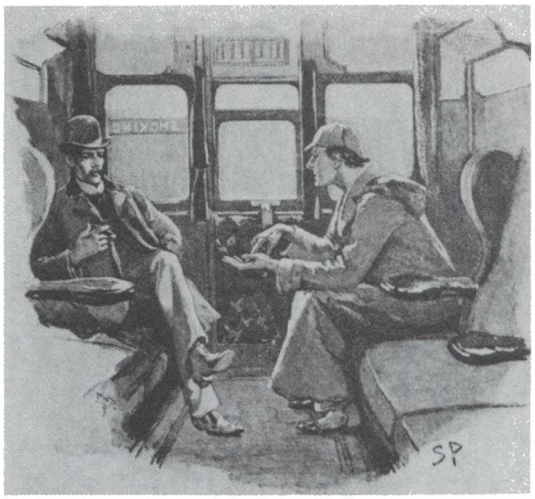
I'd love to go back and do that film again because there are so many things in it. When he pretends to be hurt, Irene comes very close. The actress, Gayle Hunnicutt, wears a scent called "Bluebell" by Penhaligon. Holmes is affected by this—his senses are acute—and he becomes disoriented and fails to get [the compromising picture of Irene Adler and the Grand Duke]. Holmes covers his error. He says he'll go back. But she has cheated him and gone away. She's a very remarkable woman. Holmes changed his whole code of ethics about women after meeting her, but he does this *at a cost.* The question is, is it worth the cost?

John Mortimer, who wrote *Rumpole of the Bailey,* said if you move in the circle of crime you learn the ways of the criminal mind and you are touched by

this, you are tarnished by it. Holmes has to deal with people in distress, therefore he's colored by that, too. And as the stories move along, you get Moriarty [who represents] the final element of evil. Holmes is to be erased. In comes the biggie, Moriarty. And in "The Final Problem," you see Holmes facing death.

Herbert: **And what do you feel is his attitude toward death?**

Brett: Well, I play him—well, that's giving it away. Holmes knows that Moriarty's network will get him. So very sweetly he says, "Listen, Watson, I'm going to leave the country because I don't want to endanger you." But then he turns around and says, "Do you want to come with me?" So the answer is, yes, he's scared. And then he uses the Reichenbach Falls as one of the greatest coups of all times. But that's another story.



The train ride in *Mystery!*'s "The Case of the Speckled Band" draws its inspiration from Sidney Paget's illustration for "Silver Blaze."

Herbert: **How many episodes are you filming?**

Brett: It will be seen for three seasons. There are seven episodes now [Spring 1985], six next year, and seven more the following year [scheduling to be confirmed]. We film the final set starting September [1985].

Herbert: **So you will be living with Holmes again?**

Brett: This time I trust it will be easier.

Herbert: **Because you're more familiar with the Holmes character?**

Brett: Yes. And because other issues are already worked out. [There were times when] the studio was thinking they'd got the most impossible actor *ever* playing this part. [At one point] I had to tell my producer, "I can't manage on one week's rehearsal because of the monumental number of words." You can't just *learn* them—you've got to *bounce* on them. You've got to be able to say them *without thinking. (Brett won two weeks' rehearsal time.)*

Herbert: **You had only two weeks' rehearsal for each episode?**

Brett: Yes. And during this time, I also had to work with the adapters, who all wanted to change the stories. In one story, they had a strange sequence where I was to play in the woods with a gray squirrel.

DODD MEAD STRIKES AGAIN!

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DODD MEAD

Well, gray squirrels actually weren't in England at that time. And it wasn't in the book in any case.

Herbert: **Did you play the scene?**

Brett: No. It's out. I kept bringing out the book. They said I couldn't lift literature and make it into a visual art. But in "The Dancing Men," in that first speech, I did *exactly* the book. I said, "Give me a chance." And, the last day of shooting, they did. I spent the entire lunch break walking up and down, practicing. They turned the camera on close-up, and I went at it in one take. I was shaking. Watson was absolutely pouring with sweat for me because it was me *versus* the studio at that time. [Soon afterward] the studio atmosphere changed. The enthusiasm began to grow.

Herbert: **I was delighted to notice that there are a number of moments when classic illustrations from the Doyle Canon are brought to life.**

Brett: Yes, that came about slowly. I said to Esther Dean, our brilliant designer, "Can we start doing the Paget drawings [in terms of costuming]?" She couldn't see why not. The drawings are very detailed, but, because I'm very big *(he points to the breadth of his shoulders)* and I'm not really the right skeleton for the drawings, I had to have clothing designed especially. Take that very thin dustcoat. I'm afraid it's like that for the one very good reason that it was the hottest summer in 1983 that England has probably ever had. And I die of the heat in any case. So I took

I think that Holmes would be dead—I mean, just pretending that they were real people—if Watson weren't there.

my waistcoat off and had my shirt cut into a little dickie shape and wore that long, thin dustcoat. I was cooler, and this gave me the long, thin line.

Herbert: **So the illustrations were used both for clothing design and as models for poses you might take?**

Brett: Yes. First of all, Mike Grimes, our brilliant set designer, gave us this incredible Baker Street set. He had strange, pixie-like, wild ideas. The picture over the fireplace in the digs is in actual fact the Reichenbach Falls.

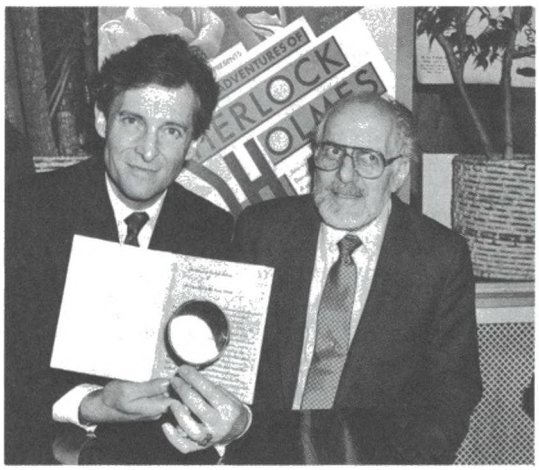
But as to the Paget drawings. First of all, no one wanted to make [the films] with those poses at all. But I kept going back to Doyle, and Paget had done the drawings for Doyle. Well, the treasure hunt started. I went deeper and deeper into the text, paying attention to all aspects of it, including the illustrations.

Herbert: **What else did you discover about Holmes from the text?**

Brett: Well, sometimes it was quite funny in actual fact. In "The Speckled Band," for instance, there's a moment when I'm looking for a [cartridge] shell in the garden. There's a wonderful description in the book of Holmes moving through the rose garden "like a golden retriever." [This] is a wonderful image, but when you actually try to do it it's very funny.

What I love [as an actor getting into the part] are the moments when Holmes fails, because that makes him human. Now, for example, in "The Dancing Men," when he arrives at the station and hears that Cubitt's been shot. He's absolutely off kilter. His client is dead! I like scenes showing cracks in the marble.

On March 27, 1985, The Priory Scholars, a scion of the Baker Street Irregulars founded by Chris Steinbrunner and Bob Thomalen, met at Bogie's Restaurant in New York City. They presented Jeremy Brett with a certificate declaring him to be an honorary member of The Priory Scholars.



Jeremy Brett and noted Sherlockian collector Marvin Epstein at Bogie's Restaurant. Brett holds the original manuscript for "The Adventure of the Priory School" which is owned by Epstein.

Herbert: **I thought that the dramatization of that story was far more poignant than the reading of it, particularly in regard to the loss of Cubitt. He seemed such a good man!**

Brett: Just out of interest, during the course of that time, that marvelous actor, Tenniel Evans, was ordained a lay priest. He's still an actor, but he's also a lay priest now.

Herbert: **Were there any other moments which are particularly memorable for you?**

Brett: I'll tell you why I liked "The Naval Treaty" so much. It is the only time when any metaphysical religious identification takes place. [Holmes] makes a remarkable, quite non-sequitur speech about a rose. This is very surprising. And he does talk about a hereafter. It's the only time in the Canon that he does. [The story] was also very much up my street because it's Doyle's knocking of the English class system. That one was very near to my heart.

Herbert: **Can you tell us something about yourself and how you came to be an actor? What were you like as a boy?**

Brett: Well, my mother was a remarkable lady. I was the youngest of four sons, and I'm told [that my mother] had made up her mind long before I was born that she wanted something like an actor. I was not discouraged when I used to dance a lot as a child.

At school, I had a soprano voice. I was at Eton, one of the great English public schools, and I got through that basically on my voice. When that broke, my gimmick had gone!

I was always accused of having histrionic tendencies. I was the number one chorister in the boys' choir, so I had all the solos. I used to dramatize them quite dreadfully and get quite emotional.

I remember one time it was evensong in a wonderful college chapel, with shafts of light coming in through the window. Of course, I moved into the light. But, being sunlight, of course, it moved a little bit, so I had to move with it. This was spotted. *(He laughs.)*

I had a speech impediment as a child.

Herbert: **Unbelievable!**

Brett: I was tongue-tied. *(He had an extra attachment of skin beneath his tongue.)* I had a very weak *r* sound and had to work hard on it. I didn't have the condition corrected until I was seventeen. And then I went to the Central School of Speech and Drama in London to relearn how to speak.

Herbert: **Where had you grown up?**

Brett: Warwickshire. Take a pin and put it right in the middle of England, and that's Warwickshire. It's the black country—coal-mining country.

Herbert: **What did your father do?**

Brett: He was a soldier.

Herbert: **A soldier of fortune?**

Brett: A soldier *par excellence*. He was a very strong, rather Edwardian soldier. [He was decorated for bravery in the First World War.] He had the incredible grace to tell me in his latter days that the only reason he behaved bravely was because he was so frightened. And here was this old soldier who really would have liked his sons to become soldiers, and he had to face the fact that he had a priest, a painter, an architect, and an actor!

My mother had this extraordinary way of making us all flower. She wasn't just "my mother"; her name was Elizabeth, and she had open doors and open windows in her soul—that's the only way I can put it. Everybody came to my mother. She was like a light of great warmth.

My father would come back and find not just friends but whole gypsy encampments or tramps that my mother had taken in. In fact, my painter brother Michael painted one of these tramps [posing in] my father's chair, and my father got fleas from him. He had a lot to put up with!

I remember one time he came back and found four huge men lying around this immense drawing room in the country, all exquisitely dressed in lovely clean white shirts, trying to work out what they were going to do with their lives!

Herbert: **Do you think you inherited an open, childlike quality from your mother which helps you in acting, which makes it possible for you to be sensitive to a part?**

Brett: I owe a great deal to my mother. My mother and father were desperately unhappy, and they stayed together for the children. I knew that at the age of six. Therefore, I had an enormous sense of responsibility to make it worth their while. I was the youngest by five years. As I used to say, "The tail of the alligator is so heavy." I had to carry a lot of weight. I think that extended me and deformed me to a certain extent in my endeavor. At the same time, it gave me a stimulant. But the whole thing crashed when my mother was killed in a car accident when I was twenty-six. My father lived a little longer, but he'd lost his best fighting partner. People didn't get divorced in those days; they stayed together. Looking back, I'm very proud of what my parents did. They sacrificed a great deal. [The parental differences exacted] a very great cost of my brothers, who suffered a lot between the crossfire, my mother saying, "Wait until you know what you *want* to do," my father saying, "Get married." Her impracticality was balanced by his practicality. But he was also a man of spirit. My brothers suffered, but, being the baby, I would watch. When it came my turn, I could dodge it. And I was spoilt too because I was the baby.

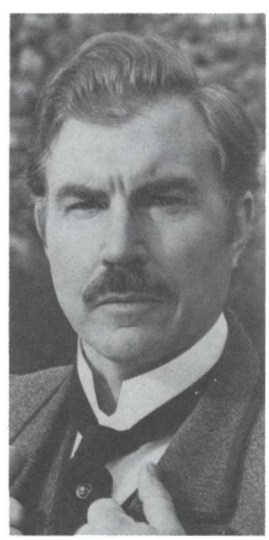
Herbert: **How did you get your start in acting?**

Brett: I was at Cambridge and I ran away. I'm a rebel and that's because my mother gave me this freedom and confidence. So I went down to London. I knew I was going to be an actor from about the age of eight. We're talking about the age of about seventeen and one-half that I walked into Tyrone Guthrie, who was doing *Tamarlane the Great* at the Old Vic. And I said, "I want to be an actor vewy, vewy much." He was kind of overwhelmed at this idiot. I remember I was wearing my brother's coat to make me look bigger. And he said I could have a walk-on part in *Tamarlane*. "Or," he said, "you should go with that *r* sound to Central School," which I did.

About ten years later, I worked with him on Broadway when I played Troilus for him. T*rr*oilus! "As true as Troilus," I had to say.

Herbert: **There was your triumph. What would you regard as your triumph in playing Sherlock Holmes?**

Brett: The most exciting thing for me, having done the original stories, would be if people discovered Doyle. The person I feel very much for out of *all* this experience is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. And so if



Doyle comes winging through this immense experience that's what I would love most of all. To have people actually reading, going back to the books.

Herbert: **Does the Holmes character still hold some mystery for you? What *is* the chief mystery of the character?**

Brett: Well, I think the great mystery will always be, why is he so alive when he never existed? How *can* it be that a man who never lived has such identity? It is fascinating. It is Doyle's miracle—Conan Doyle's miracle. □

The Last of the "Golden Age" Writers

Gladys Mitchell 1901-1983

By William A. S. Sarjeant

GLADYS MITCHELL published her first book in 1929, at the very apogee of the "Golden Age" of detective fiction writing, and her last posthumously in 1984, long after that age had ended. She was a prominent member of the Detection Club, contributing to one of its early collaborative entertainments, *Ask a Policeman* (1933 [66]), and also to a short, jointly authored book that was published after her death [67]. In all, she was the authoress—she would not have resented that feminine form—of some 88 books, more than one for each year of her long life, and almost all of them mysteries.

Nor did the style of her writing stand still in the stuffy atmosphere of the country house, so beloved of the "Golden Age" writers and their readers. Indeed, scarcely did she enter, in her stories, that cushioned and curtained environment. As Jessica Mann has noted:

> Her England is not class-ridden and changeless. She has always set her books in places of contemporary interest, like a progressive school at the time when A. S. Neill was scandalizing public opinion at Summerhill, and her environments have changed with the times.

Moreover, the titles of her books are often arresting—*The Devil at Saxon Wall* [6], *Dead Men's Morris* [7], *A Hearse on May-Day* [45], *Uncoffin'd Clay* [57]—and sometimes positively surreal—

Groaning Spinney **[23]**, *Twelve Horses and the Hangman's Noose* **[29]**, *The Mudflats of the Dead* **[56]**, *Death of a Burrowing Mole* **[62]**. They are the sort that catch the eye of a casual browser in bookshops and libraries, the sort to attract the exploratory reading so vital if an author is to become known. Yet Gladys Mitchell's books remain little known in North America. Of Mitchell's 88 books, only sixteen have yet found North American publishers. Moreover, one of those, *Watson's Choice* **[28]**, was published here, I suspect, only because its plot—a murder at a gathering of Sherlock Holmes enthusiasts—practically guaranteed a sale to the numerous collectors of Sherlockiana. Her death, though it signified the ending of an era, occasioned singularly little remark over here.

The murders may be remarkably unpleasant, even grotesque—a wife boiling up her unfortunate husband in an old-fashioned copper boiler.

While this neglect is unusual, it is by no means unprecedented. Such excellent British writers as George Bellairs and Glyn Carr remain equally little known here. (Bellairs, like Gladys Mitchell, did gain mention in Steinbrunner and Penzler's *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection*; Carr is not even accorded that honour, richly though he merited it). In the cases of those other two authors, the reasons for the neglect are hard to understand, but in the case of Gladys Mitchell one can comprehend why many American readers have found her writings too disconcerting, even stupefying, to return for more.

Why is this? Well, there are a variety of reasons. Most North Americans, unfortunately it seems to me, prefer to travel along well-trodden grooves. They like cheese processed to flavorlessness, books predigested to eliminate anything troublesome in verbal or conceptual terms, hotels all built to the same model, beer tasting more like fresh spring water than anything alcoholic. In their television viewing, they prefer soap operas with familiar characters facing familiar problems or thrillers written to a safely predictable formula. Even in their human contacts, a recognizable product is preferred to one that is unfamiliar. Eccentricity is frowned upon and novelty avoided, in reading as in life.

As Michele Slung has commented: "To put it mildly, eccentric goings-on are Mitchell's hallmark." Not for her the cosiness of an Agatha Christie or the essential predictability of John Creasey's writing (in most, not quite all of his multifarious manifestations). Nothing can be taken for granted. The plots may be deceptively simple when one comes to perceive them properly, or so convoluted as to verge upon incomprehensibility. (Even after two careful readings, I am not sure I have correctly followed that of *Lament for Leto*! **[44]**) The sweet young couples are quite as likely to be guilty as innocent; the most obvious suspect may have done the murder, after all. An unexpected or bizarre element in the story may be crucial to the unraveling of the plot, or entirely extraneous to it. Conventional values are never to be taken for granted; nor are they necessarily to be disregarded. When the central woman character goes to bed with a young man, they are quite as likely to sleep the night through in childlike innocence as to make love.

Yet the novels remain discernibly English in style—and this also can be a problem for the American reader. To quote Michele Slung again, Gladys Mitchell had a

> special feeling for the mystical nature of things British. Barrows and earthworks and Arthurian relics, morris dancing and May-day rituals: all of these are carefully and intricately dealt into the stories, illustrating Mitchell's lifelong fascination with the antiquities of the British Isles and their accompanying superstitions. The "green man" of legend figures in one book, and Mitchell being an unregenerate believer in the Loch Ness monster, a cousin of "Nessie" surfaces to wink a wet eye at Mrs. Bradley in another.

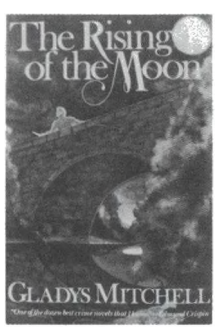
The murders and other crimes may be carried out discreetly off-stage or with clinical fastidiousness on-stage. Alternatively, they may be remarkably unpleasant, even grotesque—a wife boiling up her unfortunate husband in an old-fashioned copper boiler **[18]**, a murderer carefully dismembering the victim into joints and hanging them up in a butcher's shop **[2]**. Witchcraft and the supernatural may play a part; such elements are always handled knowledgeably and sometimes can be made quite disconcertingly believable (e.g. **6**].

Then there are the characters. Gladys Mitchell drew them, on the whole, very well and sometimes quite memorably. Yes, they do include a few

perfectly ordinary, credible people—the sort who live across the street, the sort whom one meets daily in the town or in the countryside—but such characters serve mostly as contrast or foil for the plethora of extraordinary people who predominate in her books. Some of these are merely unusual or mildly eccentric, whereas others are truly bizarre. Some of them are sane enough; others are (harmlessly or dangerously) deranged, covertly or overtly.

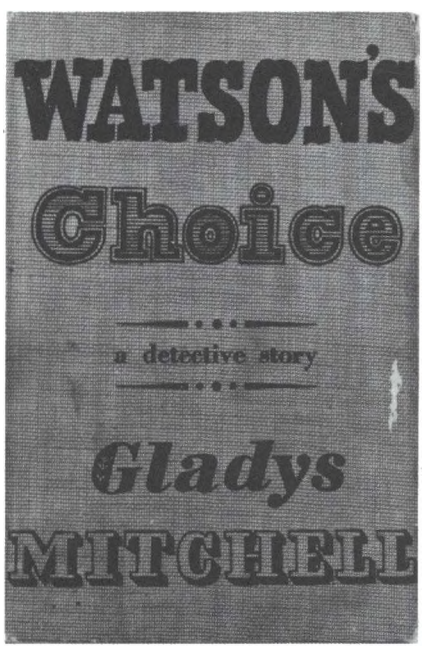
There is her principal central character, in particular. Mrs. (later Dame) Beatrice Adela Bradley, who has appeared in no fewer than 66 books and at least one short story, is not an ordinary or a comfortable person, on any definition. Though twice married and the mother of a successful son, Ferdinand Lestrange, in whom she is prepared to exhibit a degree of pride, she is a character to gratify the heart of any Women's Liberationist, entirely in command of herself and her environment, physically strong, and morally and intellectually formidable. In appearance, there is nothing of the paper doll about her. She dresses badly because she cares little about dress, though capable of following convention whenever necessary. She is quite old now and, even in youth, cannot have been physically attractive. Not only is she characterized as "witch-like" but also as "saurian," having been compared at different times to a pterodactyl, a lizard, a serpent, or a crocodile. Indeed, she accepts the nickname "Mrs. Croc" with complete good humour.

Yet, having initially repelled adults whom she meets, she can charm them with her bewitching honey-sweet voice—one is reminded of Saruman in *The Lord of the Rings*. Moreover, she can succeed, whenever necessary, in persuading them into actions which they would not otherwise contemplate but which serve the interests of her investigations. The harried curate Noel Wells, though he has described her as "an old woman with the outward appearance



of a macaw, the mind of a psychoanalyst and the morals...of a tiger shark" [5], nevertheless risks his life in serving her. With children and animals, she has no problems; they like and respond to her from the very outset.

Intellectually, as I have noted, she is formidable. She is a psychoanalyst, the holder of a whole row of earned and honorary degrees, with many abstruse publications to her credit. She runs a psychiatric clinic, is the holder of a Home Office appointment, and serves as consultant to hospitals, other clinics, and medical and lay colleagues. (Her assistant ensures, by discreetly phrased letters, that she receives adequate financial recompense for such services). She is entirely self-assured in her judgments, treating adulterous relationships with sympathy, liberal in her opinions of such things as "filthy" postcards and erotic literature, and arguing for birth control—all these even in books published before 1935 (which was decidedly adventurous of her creator!). She is capable of over-riding conventional legalities when she considers them absurd, allowing murderers to go free if she feels the crimes to have



been excusable, and even, in her first appearance [1], committing a morally justifiable murder herself. (She is found "not guilty" of the crime by a jury, but afterward admits to her son, who has served as her defense lawyer, that she is indeed culpable).

In the solving of her crimes, not only are her skills, her judgment, and her persuasive gifts important but also her wide range of reading, her retentive memory and habit of making case-notes, and her sense of humor. As Craig and Cadogan noted, Mrs. Bradley

doesn't resort to feminine subterfuges, but keeps her wits about her: . . . She is not accorded special narrative treatment on account of her sex; her qualities might be transferred to a male detective without loss of credibility. Allowing for the edge of fantasy, she exemplifies a type of professionalism which transcends sexual distinctions.

For the criminal, she is a formidable adversary indeed. For the reader, however, she may not be easy to accept as a central figure or to like.

Mrs. Bradley is old on her first appearance, with a grown-up and qualified son who is subsequently honored by a knighthood for his legal work. Witch-like in this particular as in many others, she shows no further signs of aging over the 54 years spanned by the chronicles. She needs a younger assistant, though. In earlier works, she is aided reluctantly by the harried, not-too-brainy curate Noel Wells, who is in some measure a parody of Christie's Captain Hastings and his unsubtle equivalents in the literature of that period. He is a likable enough character, but not at all memorable. Later, during a stay at a women's training college where the minor crimes that have caused Mrs. Bradley's services to be invoked are succeeded by more major ones, she acquires a more effective and original assistant.

At her first appearance, Laura Menzies is a student —an athletic, indeed Amazonian, young lady of considerable physical attractions and prowess. Later, she is employed by Mrs. Bradley as a general assistant, arranging her work schedule, checking references, typing letters and bills, writing up notes on Mrs. Bradley's medical and/or criminal cases, seeing that the household runs smoothly, driving the car when chauffeur George is unavailable, and, in particular, doing the more energetic legwork during the criminal

Mitchell argued for birth control—even in books published before 1935.

cases. In many ways, she is a female counterpart to Nero Wolfe's assistant Archie Goodwin, treated as a daughter by Mrs. Bradley as Archie is treated like a son, and, like Archie, she does no cooking, since a professional cook of high calibre serves the household. Laura's doings, however, are less central to the cases than are Archie's, and, though her descriptions of her activities might occupy the odd chapter, in no instance does she recount a whole case. She differs sharply from the determinedly celibate Goodwin in that she marries a Scotland Yard policeman, Robert Gavin, and bears him two children [42], but these provide only trivial handicaps to her service to Mrs.

Bradley. In all, Laura Gavin provides a recurrent and welcome counterpart of sanity and stability to the eccentric goings-on; but she does not serve, as does Goodwin, as a bridge between detective and reader.

What, then, is the attraction of Gladys Mitchell's writings to the considerable band of British, and the proportionately much smaller band of North American, readers whose purchases and library borrowings have allowed so steady a flow of her books to be published over so many years? Well, first of all, there is a richness of texture and variety of flavor calculated to appeal to the jaded reading palate. Secondly, there is the unexpectedness of the stories, the fascinating unpredictability of pace, plot, and solution. Thirdly, there is the great diversity of settings, from the solidity of English universities **[52]** and colleges **[14, 31]** to the windy wildness of stone rings on remote Hebridean islands **[58]**. Fourthly, there are the fascinations of a specialized knowledge, of folklore, witchcraft, classical literature, and British or Mediterranean landscapes. Fifthly, and perhaps most importantly of all, for me at least, there is the wit and sense of humor—a humor of comment and observation, sometimes "black" but only rarely becoming slapstick—that pervades her writings.

All these features are equally evident in the six books written under the "Malcolm Torrie" pseudonym **[78-83]**, the central character of which, Timothy Herring, runs a Society for the Preservation of Buildings of Historic Interest. (I have not found, and thus cannot comment on, those written as "Stephen Hockaby" **[84-88]**). James Sandoe has observed:

> There is nobody writing detective stories who could possibly be confused with Gladys Mitchell. Her sardonic literacies and unkempt plots, bland indifference to consistency and vivid evocation of schoolboys, their masters and sharp old crones is unsurpassable.

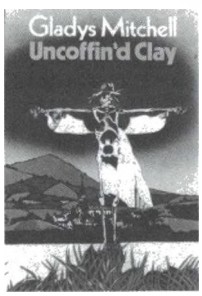
This seems to me a very fair judgment.

All authors must inevitably reflect themselves, and their own particular concerns, in their books. It is unsurprising, therefore, that Gladys Mitchell's personality, preferences, and prejudices should be echoed in her writings; but it is interesting to note how neatly she has shared her own attributes and concerns between her two principal characters, Mrs. Bradley and Laura Gavin.

Gladys Maude Winifred Mitchell was born on April 19, 1901 at Cowley in Oxfordshire. (Cowley, destined soon to be engulfed by industry and incorporated into the spreading, increasingly industrial city of Oxford, was then a separate and still-tranquil village.) Her mother was English, born Annie Julia Maude Simmons. Her father, James Mitchell, was of

Scottish descent, the sixth child of a family of eleven. He had been educated by the Cowley Fathers, a High Church Anglican community, but had been forced by family circumstances to go to work at the age of thirteen. (For a period he worked as a "scout" in Oriel College.) He was determined that his children, Gladys and her sisters, should have a better and more complete education than his own and sought, by changes of jobs, to attain the financial means which would make this possible.

The family moved first to London, then to Hordle in Hampshire, where Gladys attended the village school and decided immediately to become a teacher.



Her education continued at the Green School, Isleworth, Middlesex, where she won, at the age of ten, a third prize in a short-story competition designed for girls of fifteen. After graduating from that school in 1918, she proceeded to Goldsmith's College, University of London, obtaining a Board of Education Teacher's Certificate in 1921. Thus equipped for the career she had always desired, she went to teach English and History at St. Paul's School, Brentford, Middlesex (1921–25), and then at St. Ann's Senior Girls' School, Ealing, London (1925–39).

During those years, she was pursuing her academic studies as an external student of University College, London, and in 1926 she was awarded a diploma in English and European History. This ended her formal education, but she continued to read widely, developing her interests in folklore, prehistoric and classical archaeology, and architecture. Favorite fictional authors were Louisa May Alcott, Ivy Compton-Burnett, and P. G. Wodehouse. She delighted in participating in or watching vigorous sports (athletics and swimming in particular), taught games when required, and even acted as a coach in hurdling to promising pupils.

Why, in this already full and vigorous life, she decided to begin writing mystery stories is not clear. Was it through a desire to earn extra funds, or was it a result simply of that urge to write so familiar, and yet so inexplicable, to persons who become authors? (I share it myself and cannot attempt to account for it.) Why did she decide to write in this particular genre? For someone with so wide a range of concerns, other options were open. Was it because she wished to give full rein to her enthusiasms and covert expression to her opinions—very advanced ones for those days—without becoming didactic or a center of public controversy? (One suspects, even so, that in writing even incidentally about such taboo topics as birth control, adulterous love, and transvestism, she must have weathered some storms in school staffrooms and elsewhere!). Whatever the reasons, whatever the stimuli, Gladys Mitchell published her first novel in 1929 and, with only two exceptions (1931 and 1937—but there had been two books published in 1939 and two in 1936), produced a steady output of at least one a year for the rest of her long life, at least three of her books being published posthumously.

In her listing in *Contemporary Authors*, she is quoted as saying:

> My vocational [writing] interests are governed by British Ordnance Survey maps, as a definite, real setting is usually necessary to the formation of my plots.

Indeed, though English cities feature rarely in her books, there are few parts of the English countryside that are not featured in one or other of her works. Settings include her native Oxfordshire **[50]**, inland and coastal Dorset **[36, 42, 60]**, Cornwall **[54]**, and even such relatively little-known settings as the peninsular Island of Portland **[40]** and the island of Lundy in the British Channel, very thinly disguised as "Great Skua Island" **[46]**. Several of the most bizarre stories take place in different parts of Scotland **[12, 35, 48, 58]**, and one, at least, takes the reader into Wales **[51]**.

Moreover, Gladys Mitchell, like so many other maiden English schoolmistresses, was an indefatigable traveler during her vacations, but one who preferred benign climates. She visited all the Mediterranean countries except Egypt, traveled in most Western European countries, and voyaged to Madeira and the Canary Islands. These wanderings furnished further material for her books. Two mysteries and one children's story **[8, 44, 77]** were set in Greece and its islands, one mystery in the Italian island of Capri **[30]**, and another in The Netherlands **[37]**, while a death in Madeira is pivotal to a further plot **[55]**.

In 1939, she left St. Ann's School, for reasons unknown to me. Was she, perhaps, hoping to make a living wholly by her pen? If so, the outbreak of war ended that ambition. By 1941, she had taken up an appointment at The Senior Girls' School, Brentford, Middlesex, remaining there until 1950. At that point, she decided on an early retirement—but she became bored without the stimulus of teaching and so joined the staff of Matthew Arnold School, Staines,

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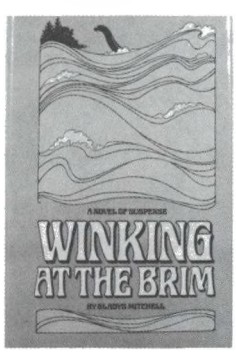
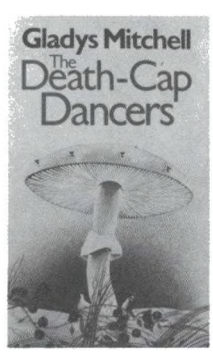
Middlesex in 1953, remaining there until her second retirement in 1961. For many of her London years, she lived at Swyncombe Avenue, Ealing, a West London address from which she could travel conveniently to the Middlesex schools. On retirement, she left London without regret and moved to Dorset, a county particularly beloved for her, with its variety of scenery and richness of prehistoric monuments. Her new home at 1 Cecil Close, Corfe Mullen was almost in the shadow of Corfe Castle. There she continued to write at an undiminished rate until death claimed her in July 1983.

Over the years, the calibre of her books varied to some degree. Craig and Cadogan summarize this so accurately as to merit quotation:

> Many of Gladys Mitchell's early novels occupy a dangerous area between spoof and classic detective fiction; this makes for originality but requires a high degree of narrative assurance and control. Of course they are not uniformly successful. There was a period in the 1940's when contrivance, absurdity and carelessness supervened. Instead of the effective combination of precision and intricacy we find gratutious convolution. *Hangman's Curfew* **[12]** and *Death and the Maiden* **[20]** are probably the most extreme examples of the author's tendency to resort too blatantly to the bizarre and inconsequential.

From this abyss of absurdity, she managed to recoil successfully enough, and the later books were managed better, though the improbable and the bizarre remained, to the end, spices in the literary mix. Furthermore, as Craig and Cadogan note:





> The presentation of Mrs. Bradley becomes less exuberant and quirky in the course of the series; the detective is toned down but not diminished, as she abandons that extravagant gesture for a smoother kind of omniscience. An increasing note of mellowness is sounded, but Dame Beatrice remains uninterested in the central concept of propriety and seemliness which activated other women investigators. The moral schema can still accommodate an act of murder which goes unpunished: this is due solely to the detective's heroic disregard for the conventional viewpoint. She has the courage not to insist on convictions.

What was Gladys Mitchell like personally? Earle Walbridge gives a good description:

> Readers who cherish the likeness of Miss Mitchell on Penguin covers (a bit startled, with slightly dishevelled hair) may care to know that she has blue eyes and fair hair, is 5'6½" in height, and weighs 9 stone 4 lbs. (130 pounds)."

She was a member of the P.E.N. Club, the Society of Authors, and the Crime Writers Association, as well as of the Detection Club, but seems not to have joined any of London's women's clubs; although she was a Conservative in politics, it is likely that her views were too advanced to be acceptable in such establishments. In religion she was again unconventional, self-avowedly an agnostic, without church affiliation but "certainly *not* an atheist!" She was a fervent admirer of Sigmund Freud but admitted that her interest in witchcraft had also colored her outlook on life.

The critical attitude to her works has been sharply divergent and is likely to remain so. Positive reactions include those of detective-story writer E. R. Punshon, who wrote of one novel **[13]** in the *Manchester Guardian* that "her narration is clear, motives are distinct, complications are both bewildering and reasonable, and the...pursuit ends in an exciting climax." Ralph Partridge wrote more restrainedly in the *New Statesman* of another work **[31]** that "The plot, as usual with Miss Mitchell, sizzles with absurdity, but admirers of her puncent style will not be disappointed." The anonymous writer of the obituary notice in *The Times* of London noted that:

> She frequently satirized or reversed traditional patterns of the genre, succumbing to black humour, creating tongue-in-cheek mysteries and treading with extreme narrative confidence the hazardous path between spoof and classic detective fiction.

The award of a Silver Dagger in 1976 by the Crime Writers Association was a tribute to over fifty years of original and stimulating creativity.

For my own part, I can enjoy her writings greatly, *provided* that I read them at intervals. I am never tempted to read two or three in succession—whether because their flavor is too strong or because the intellectual exercise they present is too demanding, I am not sure. I do believe, however, that her books will long continue to be enjoyed by that minority of mystery story readers who revel in eccentric characters, unusual settings, and plots that are never predictable—and to irritate thoroughly the many others who wish all in a fictional work to be believable and tidy! As Michele Slung summarized it in 1980: "Miss Mitchell is significant, most of all, because she is *sui generis*."

Yes, indeed, Gladys Mitchell was the only one of her kind—and that, for those of us who do enjoy her works, is a matter for regret.

PUBLISHED WRITINGS BY GLADYS MITCHELL

Only first publications in England or the United States are listed. A large number of the mystery stories have been republished in paperback by Penguin Books or other publishing houses. I am indebted to my wife, Anne Margaret Sarjeant, for help in preparing this listing and in research for the article.

I. *Works published under her own name*:

A. Mystery Novels featuring Mrs. Beatrice Lestrange Bradley

1. 1929 *Speedy Death* London: Gollancz. (Also 1929 New York: Dial Press)
2. 1930 *The Mystery of a Butcher's Shop.* London: Gollancz. (Also 1930 New York: Dial Press)
3. 1930 *The Longer Bodies.* London: Gollancz.
4. 1932 *The Saltmarsh Murders.* London: Gollancz. (Also 1933 Philadelphia: Macrae Smith)
5. 1934 *Death at the Opera.* London: Grayson. (Also 1934 as *Death in the Wet* Philadelphia: Macrae Smith)
6. 1935 *The Devil at Saxon Wall.* London: Grayson.
7. 1936 *Dead Men's Morris.* London: Michael Joseph.
8. 1937 *Come Away, Death.* London: Michael Joseph.
9. 1938 *St. Peter's Finger.* London: Michael Joseph.
10. 1939 *Printer's Error.* London: Michael Joseph.
11. 1940 *Brazen Tongue.* London: Michael Joseph.
12. 1941 *Hangman's Curfew.* London: Michael Joseph.
13. 1941 *When Last I Died.* London: Michael Joseph. (Also 1942 New York: Knopf)
14. 1942 *Laurels Are Poison.* London: Michael Joseph.
15. 1943 *The Worsted Viper.* London: Michael Joseph.
16. 1943 *Sunset Over Soho.* London: Michael Joseph.
17. 1944 *My Father Sleeps.* London: Michael Joseph.
18. 1945 *The Rising of the Moon.* London: Michael Joseph.
19. 1946 *Here Comes a Chopper.* London: Michael Joseph.
20. 1947 *Death and the Maiden.* London: Michael Joseph.
21. 1948 *The Dancing Druids.* London: Michael Joseph.
22. 1949 *Tom Brown's Body.* London: Michael Joseph.
23. 1950 *Groaning Spinney.* London: Michael Joseph.
24. 1951 *The Devil's Elbow.* London: Michael Joseph.
25. 1952 *The Echoing Strangers.* London: Michael Joseph.
26. 1953 *Merlin's Furlong.* London: Michael Joseph.
27. 1954 *Faintley Speaking.* London: Michael Joseph.
28. 1955 *Watson's Choice.* London: Michael Joseph (Also 1976 New York: McKay)
29. 1956 *Twelve Horses and the Hangman's Noose.* London: Michael Joseph. (Also 1958 New York: British Book Centre)
30. 1957 *The Twenty-Third Man.* London: Michael Joseph.
31. 1958 *Spotted Hemlock.* London: Michael Joseph. (Also 1958 New York: British Book Centre)
32. 1959 *The Man Who Grew Tomatoes.* London: Michael Joseph. (Also 1959 New York: British Book Centre)
33. 1960 *Say It with Flowers.* London: Michael Joseph. (Also 1960 New York: London House)
34. 1961 *The Nodding Canaries.* London: Michael Joseph.
35. 1962 *My Bones Will Keep.* London: Michael Joseph. (Also 1962 New York: British Book Centre)
36. 1963 *Adders on the Heath.* London: Michael Joseph. (Also 1962 New York: British Book Centre)

37. 1964 *Death of a Delft Blue.* London: Michael Joseph. (Also 1965 New York: British Book Centre)
38. 1965 *Pageant of Murder.* London: Michael Joseph. (Also 1965 New York: British Book Centre)
39. 1966 *The Croaking Raven.* London: Michael Joseph.
40. 1967 *Skeleton Island.* London: Michael Joseph.
41. 1968 *Three Quick and Five Dead.* London: Michael Joseph.
42. 1969 *Dance To Your Daddy.* London: Michael Joseph.
43. 1970 *Gory Dew.* London: Michael Joseph.
44. 1971 *Lament for Leto.* London: Michael Joseph.
45. 1972 *A Hearse on May-Day.* London: Michael Joseph.
46. 1973 *The Murder of Busy Lizzie.* London: Michael Joseph.
47. 1974 *A Javelin for Jonah.* London: Michael Joseph.
48. 1974 *Winking at the Brim.* London: Michael Joseph. (Also 1977 New York: McKay)
49. 1975 *Convent on Styx.* London: Michael Joseph.
50. 1976 *Late, Late in the Evening.* London: Michael Joseph.
51. 1977 *Noonday and Night.* London: Michael Joseph.
52. 1977 *Fault in the Structure.* London: Michael Joseph.
53. 1978 *Wraiths and Changelings.* London: Michael Joseph.
54. 1978 *Mingled with Venom.* London: Michael Joseph.
55. 1979 *Nest of Vipers.* London; Michael Joseph.
56. 1979 *The Mudflats of the Dead.* London: Michael Joseph.
57. 1980 *Uncoffin'd Clay.* London: Michael Joseph.
58. 1980 *The Whispering Knights.* London: Michael Joseph.
59. 1981 *The Death-Cap Dancers.* London: Michael Joseph.
60. 1981 *Lovers Make Moan.* London: Michael Joseph.
61. 1982 *Here Lies Gloria Mundy.* London: Michael Joseph.
62. 1982 *Death of a Burrowing Mole.* London: Michael Joseph.
63. 1983 *The Greenstone Griffins.* London: Michael Joseph.
64. 1983 *Cold, Lone and Still.* London: Michael Joseph.
65. 1984 *No Winding Sheet.* London: Michael Joseph.
66. 1984 *The Crozier Pharaohs.* London: Michael Joseph.

B. Mysteries Jointly Authored

67. 1933 (with others, as DETECTION CLUB) *Ask a Policeman.* London: Barker. (Also 1933 New York: Morrow)
68. 1984 C. Brand, A. Gilbert, E. C. R. Lorac, G. Mitchell and D. L. Sayers. *Crime on the Coast* (with J. D. Carr, M. Cronin, E. Ferrars, J. Fleming, L. Meynell and V. White; *No Flowers by Request*). London: Gollancz.

C. Children's Novels (mostly mysteries)

69. 1936 *Outlaws of the Border.* London: Pitman.
70. 1940 *The Three Fingerprints.* London: Heinemann.
71. 1948 *Holiday River.* London: Evans.
72. 1949 *The Seven Stones Mystery.* London: Evans.
73. 1950 *The Malory Secret.* London: Evans.
74. 1951 *Pam at Storne Castle.* London: Evans.
75. 1954 *Caravan Creek.* London: Evans.
76. 1954 *On Your Marks.* London: Heinemann. (Revised edition 1964 London: Max Parrish)
77. 1959 *The Light-Blue Hills.* London: The Bodley Head.

D. Short Mystery Stories

1938 "The Case of the 100 Cats" in *Fifty Famous Detectives of Fiction* (London: Odhams Press).
1940 "Daisy Bell" in Raymond Postgate (ed.), *Detective Stories of Today* (London: Faber).
1951 "Stranger's Hall" and "A Light on Murder" in *The Evening Standard Detective Book* (London: Gollancz). The second story features Mrs. Bradley.
1951 "The Jar of Ginger" and "Manor Park" in *The Evening Standard Detective Book—2nd Series* (London: Gollancz).

E. Other Writings.

1977 "Why Do People Read Detective Fiction?" in Dilys Winn (ed.) *Murder Ink: The Mystery Reader's Companion* (New York: Workman).

In addition, Miss Mitchell wrote some serial stories for women's magazines of which I have no details.

II. *Novels published under the pseudonym "Malcolm Torrie":*

All books are mystery stories featuring Timothy Herring.

74. 1966 *Heavy as Lead.* London: Michael Joseph.
75. 1967 *Late and Cold.* London: Michael Joseph.
76. 1968 *Your Secret Friend.* London: Michael Joseph.
77. 1969 *Churchyard Salad.* London: Michael Joseph
78. 1970 *Shades of Darkness.* London: Michael Joseph.
79. 1971 *Bismark Herrings.* London: Michael Joseph.

III. Novels published under the pseudonym "Stephen Hockaby":

80. 1933 *Marsh Hay.* London: Grayson.
81. 1934 *Seven Stars and Orion.* London: Grayson.
82. 1935 *Gabriel's Hold.* London: Grayson.
83. 1936 *Shallow Brown.* London: Michael Joseph.
84. 1939 *Grand Master.* London: Michael Joseph.

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Craig, Patricia, and Mary Cadogan. "Grandmotherly Disguise" in *The Lady Investigates: Women Detectives and Spies in Fiction.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981.

Hubin, Allen J. "Mitchell, Gladys (Maude Winifred)" in *Crime Fiction 1749–1980: A Comprehensive Bibliography.* New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1984.

Mann, Jessica. *Deadlier Than the Male.* New York: Macmillan, 1981.

Sandoe, James. "Mystery and Suspense." *Herald Tribune Book Review.* (New York), June 15, 1958.

Slung, Michele. "Mitchell, Gladys (Maude Winifred)" in John M. Reilly (ed.), *Twentieth Century Crime and Mystery Writers.* London and New York: Macmillan, 1980.

Steinbrunner, Chris, and Otto Penzler. *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection.* New York: McGraw-Hill; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976.

Walbridge, Earle F. "Gladys Mitchell." *Wilson Library Bulletin,* Vol. 34, No. 6, 1960. □

AJH REVIEWS

Allen J. Hubin, Consulting Editor

Short notes...

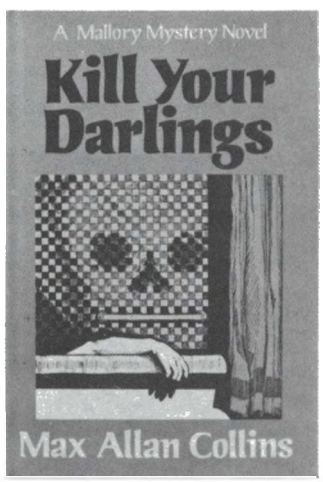
I joyfully discovered Catherine Aird with her *Henrietta Who?* in 1968. Now I wish I could be as enthusiastic about ***Harm's Way*** (Doubleday, $11.95), her latest about Insp. Sloan. This begins well, and the hiding place for a body is probably unique in crime's fictional annals. But the tale is overstuffed with tiresome conversational posturing among Sloan and his subordinates—posturing that is only sometimes witty. Two members of a society that entertains itself by walking rural footpaths are less than entertained by what a passing crow drops for their edification: a fragment of overripe corpse. Enter the Inspector. Beguiling views of rural England here; too bad the coppers all think they have to talk cute.

The eighth novel about L.A. private eye Jacob Asch is ***Three With a Bullet*** (Holt Rinehart Winston, $13.95) by Arthur Lyons. As the title suggests, this is about the music business, the hard-rock music business, and a more rancid trade cannot be imagined. Drugs, alcohol, and sex are the currency; hardly an attractive human emotion can be found anywhere. Asch is invited to a friendly little gathering where someone replaces the usual cocaine with heroin. This leads to corpse #1. Rummaging around in this incredible sewer produces more corpses, and Asch eventually figures out what links them. Impressive but hardly enjoyable.

Death in a Deck Chair (Walker, $12.95) by "K. K. Beck" (who is Kathrine Marris, a regional vice-president of the Mystery Writers of America) comes across more like a period Nancy Drew novel than, I suspect, was intended. The time is 1927, and we board the *Irenia* for the voyage from England to New York. The usual assortment of characters boards with us, and shortly the first corpse is produced for our delectation. Nineteen-year-old Iris Cooper, on a round-the-world trip with her aunt to rub off some of her innocence, serves as narrator and, ultimately, identifier of the key clue. Naturally, a variety of shipboard romances and several levels of intrigue relating to a vanishing European microprincipality add spice to the proceedings. Pleasant of its type.

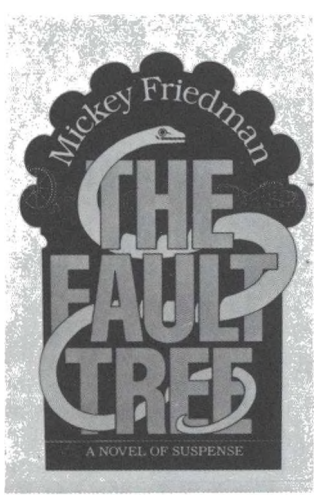
A Local Matter (Walker, $13.95) is a nicely capable start in our field for J. M. Bennett, a Columbia graduate living in San Francisco. He admits to a love for the classics and so sets his narrative in England in 1914 and populates it with references to the literary figures of that day. Our hero is Lord Tigraines, apparently owner of some earlier successes in the science of ratiocination. The story is told by his secretary, an American and "grandfather" to our present author. Our victim is Sir James Hart, assyriologist, found dead of poison in his home, which is adjacent to that of Lord Tigraines near a rural village. The police investigate, but Tigraines, archetypically polite and lordly, comes to different conclusions in every respect. Agreeable, though I fear we don't get to know anyone well.

Finally someone has used the annual Bouchercons for a mystery setting: ***Kill Your Darlings*** (Walker, $13.95), the third Mallory novel by Max Allan Collins. Chicago is the site—and Collins presciently picked the same hotel in which the actual



Bouchercon was held last October. Various named real persons attend, as well as other real ones thinly disguised. Mallory is there as a writer and as principal worshipper of a retired private eye writer named Roscoe Kane, scheduled to get a special award. Instead he gets dead, drowned in a bathtub, and Mallory thinks it's murder. A broken-down, drunken shell of a man, hardly worth killing, one might think... Good work.

Mickey Friedman's *The Fault Tree* (Dutton, $14.95) is about Marina Robinson, a Ph.D. in engineering who does failure analyses for a San Francisco firm and who has lost a younger sister to an Indian mystic. The current client is an amusement park where a roller coaster collapse has produced some fatalities. Her investigation turns up some oddities, but then a phone call and letter from India, from, it seems, her sister, dead these ten years, compel Marina to fly to that country to chase a phantom. This story is thus mostly about Marina—weak/strong Marina, on evidence capable of sex but not love, haunted by guilt,



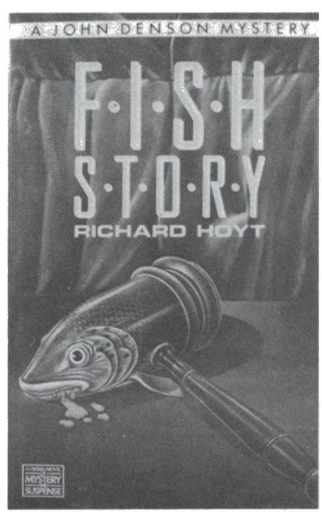
seeking a sister, a mystic, an exorcism perhaps. A very unusual story, not fully persuasive, but most intriguing.

Ron Goulart practices much in the overlap between crime and science fiction, but *A Graveyard of My Own* (Doubleday, $13.95) is fully in our field and draws well on the author's knowledge of comic strippery. Bert Kurrie has fled the slavery of drawing comics in New York for the liberation of commercial art in Connecticut. While jogging one morning, he happens upon a corpse. Accidentally thus, opine the police; murderously thus, believes the Kurrie. And there the matter might rest, were it not that another corpse—also related to the New York comic scene—appears in Bert's way, and it seems (to Bert, if none other) that someone wants lots of people dead. Light-hearted tale in a fresh milieu.

Tucker Halleran, a Florida management consultant, introduces a worthy protagonist in *A Cool Clear Death* (St. Martin's, $12.95). He's Cam MacCardle, once married, once a professional football star, once engaged in life. Now he's pulled from his existence of dedicated hedonism when a lawyer friend asks for help: a client is accused of the murder of his wife. It's an open-and-shut case, except that the client—an unlovable chap—says he didn't do it. So Cam backtracks on the apparently blameless victim's life, turning over rocks. A solid debut by Halleran, even if the dénouement has by now a sort of packaged liberal air.

The highlight of Thomas Hauser's suspenseful tale of music madness, *The Beethoven Conspiracy* (Macmillan, $14.95), is a New York detective, Lt. Richard Marritt. He comes into the affair when someone executes three talented classical musicians outside Lincoln Center. Why did they have to die, and why are certain musicians being paid $10,000 to learn music for a mysterious November engagement in Europe? And the music—could it possibly be a just-discovered tenth symphony by Beethoven? Marritt, well worth another novel or two, is much more at home with violence than sensitive emotions and the passions of art. But he's willing to learn, to become the support on which a terrified young violinist can lean, to pursue an insane conspiracy to its deadly ends in Austria.

Fish Story by Richard Hoyt (Viking, $13.95) brings back Seattle private eye John Denson. Hoyt's interests in this novel are in Indian salmon fishing rights and treaties, and I rather think there's quite a good story lurking here, better than the one that gets out, with its overdone gruesomeness. A judge who is about to pronounce on a lawsuit between Indians and sports fishermen disappears, as does Melinda Prettybird. Melinda's brother Willy is

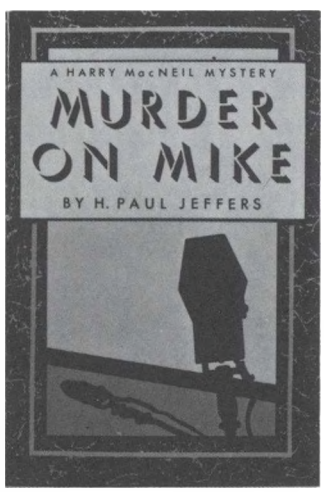


Denson's good drinking and dart-playing buddy, so John agrees to help find her. About this time, pieces of frozen corpse start turning up in a little Seattle park much frequented by down-and-out Indians. Naturally, the cops are upset by this, especially when they can't figure out how the human steaks are getting there nor prevent their

continuing deposition. And they decide that the Indians—likely Willy, primarily—might be rendering summary judgment on the judge.

Nostalgic private eye tales have had a certain popularity in recent years, and we've another: ***Murder on Mike*** (St. Martin's, $12.95) by H. Paul Jeffers. The time is December 1939; the place is New York, where shamus Harry MacNeil operates out of the standard threadbare office wrap-up. Peter Derwent, unsuccessful manager of the family estate in England, is shot in the back while walking through his woods in a downpour. Supt. Thorne finds a shortage of motive, although some puzzles are uncovered in Derwent's finances. His family, especially his youngest daughter, thirteen-year-old Holly, is an interesting lot as they cope with shock after shock. And a killer, fondling a stolen rifle, is not yet done with his work...

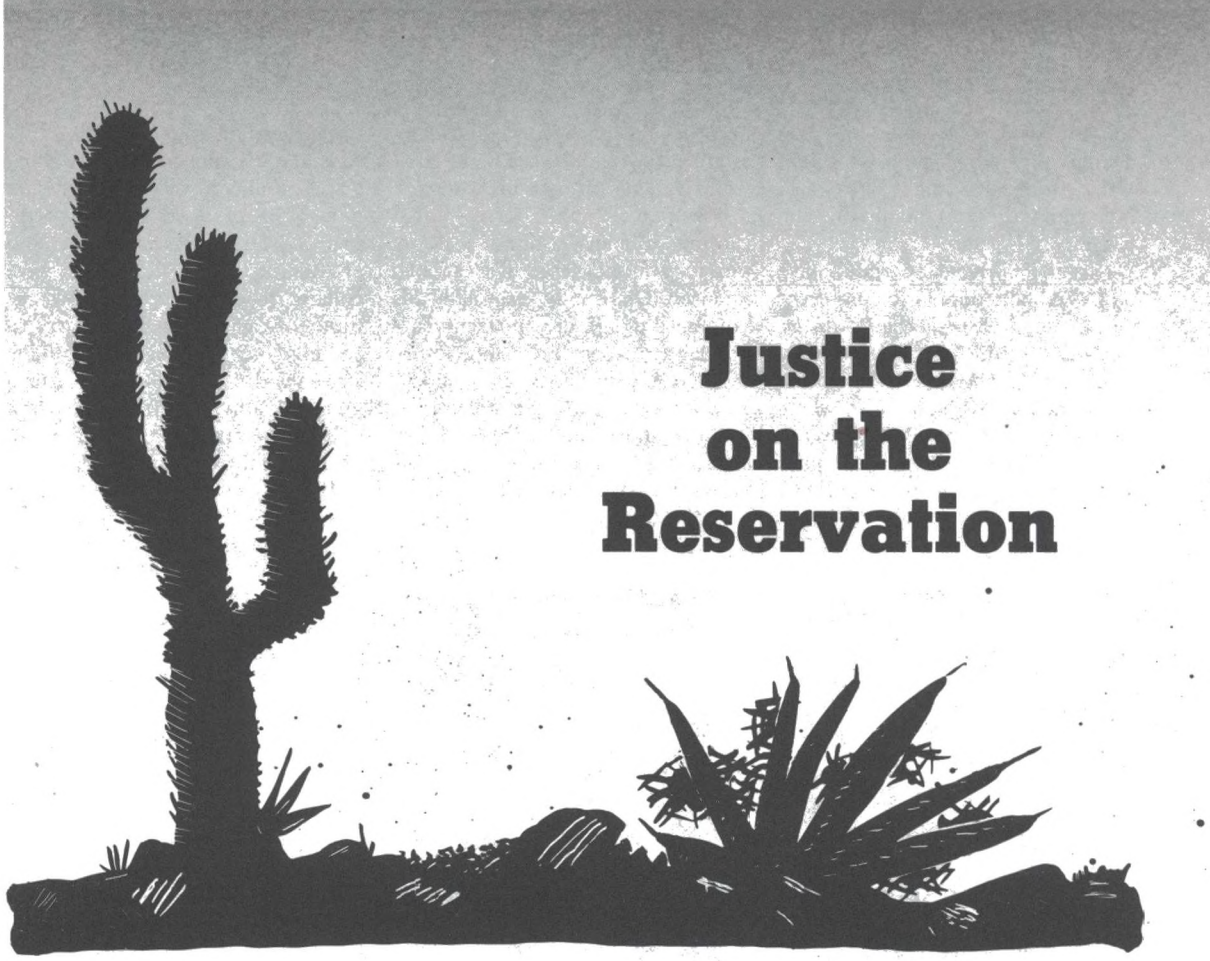
above the Onyx Club on 52nd Street. You'll recall that 1939 was in the heyday of dramatic radio, and someone dispatches radio's leading actor-producer, the cordially and universally despised Derek Worthington. The death scene is a studio at Radio City. The police have collared the obvious suspect, whose beauteous girlfriend hires Harry to get him off. This is a mild affair, strewn with name-dropping, using a gimmick obvious from the first chapter, and borrowing a denouement from Agatha Christie.



John Penn's third mystery is ***A Will To Kill*** (Scribner's, $12.95), perhaps the strongest of his efforts, though not fully satisfying in the

Free Draw (St. Martin's, $12.95) is the second of Shelley Singer's novels about Oakland private eye Jake Samson. Here an executive of an outfit peddling correspondence courses is killed in a Marin County canyon. Canyon denizens are naturally suspect since they share a common motive—the dead man threatened their property values—and two have connections to his company. Cops fix their suspicions on one likely prospect, and Jake is hired to prove him innocent. Most of the characters range far to the left of odd, and it's difficult to take any of them very seriously. Average fare.

—AJH

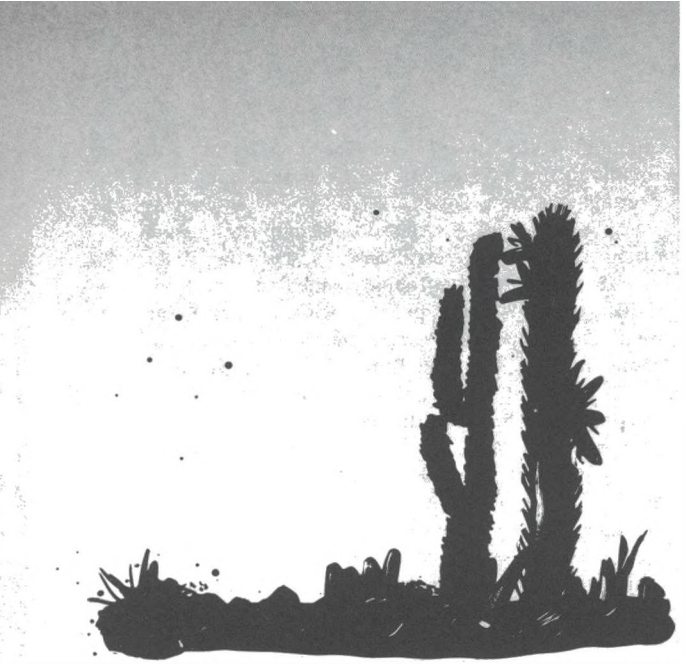


Justice on the Reservation

By Tom Quirk

Early in Tony Hillerman's detective novel *The Dance Hall of the Dead* (1975), the Chief of the Zuni Police, Ed Pasquaanti, discusses the problem of jurisdiction among state, county, and Navajo tribal officers. He does so because he wants it clearly understood that, on the Zuni reservation, the Zuni Police will be directing the investigation of the suspected murder of a Zuni boy, Ernesto Cata. The various law enforcement agents defer to Pasquaanti's assertion of authority, but behind their acknowledgment is the tacit recognition of and familiarity with the fact that almost any major crime committed on an Indian reservation may involve problems of jurisdiction. According to William C. Canby, Professor of Indian Law at Arizona State University, almost all crimes committed on an Indian reservation have a jurisdiction problem at bottom, and a great many cases are dismissed on that basis.[1] Such problems are generally complicated, if not bewildering, and typify the bureaucratic, legalistic blend of complex, sometimes paradoxical, sometimes absurd relations of state and federal governments to Indian tribes. In Hillerman's detective novel, however, this jurisdiction problem implicitly provides a bureaucratic background against which his main character, Lt Joe Leaphorn, a Navajo tribal policeman, emerges as a genuinely heroic figure. For a cultural sense of justice and communal harmony, at once more ancient and more pure than the legal fictions that constrain him, claims his attention and motivates him.

Briefly, the novel concerns the ritual-like slaying of a young Zuni boy. Leaphorn is called into the investigation to locate George Bowlegs, a young Navajo friend of the slain Zuni. Bowlegs is a suspect in the murder case and Leaphorn's job is to bring the boy in for questioning. His search for the youth takes him back and forth between the Zuni and Ramah reservations and eventually onto private land in Arizona. In attempting to obtain information that might help him find the boy, Leaphorn travels to a hippie commune, which may or may not be on Navajo land, where Bowlegs was a frequent visitor. He questions a graduate student in archaeology, Ted Isaacs, and



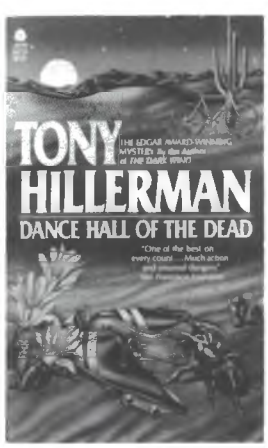
Professor Chester Reynolds, a noted anthropologist, at the site of an archaeological dig on the Zuni reservation. He visits the Bowlegs hogan on Navajo land in Ramah, where on one occasion he sees a figure wearing a Zuni mask and later finds the boy's father murdered. And he travels to a lake sacred to the Zunis but located in Arizona and therefore not part of the Zuni reservation.

It soon becomes apparent to Leaphorn that the masked figure he had seen in the darkness is probably the real murderer, who is also looking for the Navajo boy. His quest for Bowlegs then becomes a race to find the boy before the mysterious figure does. He finally finds Bowlegs in Zuni during the celebration of Shalako, but too late. Bowlegs is murdered, and Leaphorn glimpses the masked figure as he is being dragging away by Zunis, who will surely kill him for profaning this holy event. If Leaphorn is unsuccessful in bringing in the Bowlegs boy, he nevertheless does solve the crime: Professor Reynolds has been salting the dig site and allowing his unsuspecting graduate student to find abd document information which will support Reynolds's theories about Folsom man. The young friends, Cata and Bowlegs, mischieviously picked up samples of the fake artifacts. Discovery of Reynolds's deception would destroy his professional reputation, so the anthropologist has murdered three men, including Cata, in his efforts to retrieve the damning evidence.

Such an oversimplification of Hillerman's ingenious plot is a disservice to his novel, but it is sufficient for an examination of the jurisdictional problems in question. Quite apart from these strict legal considerations, however, the responsibilities of the Navajo police are awesome. Approximately 230 officers cover an area roughly three times the size of New Jersey and operate on an annual budget somewhat smaller than Newark's.[2] But added to these severe limitations are the general federal restraints under which tribal law enforcement operates.

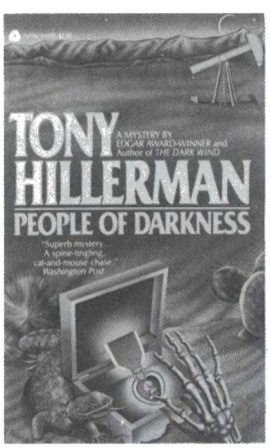
It is generally agreed that the powers of Indian jurisdiction in criminal and civil cases occuring on land known as "Indian Country"[3] is historically derived from the Supreme Court decision in the case of *Worcester vs. Georgia* (1832).[4] In that case, the state imprisoned with tribal consent a white man living among the Cherokees, but the Court ruled that states had no power to infringe upon the rights of the federal government to regulate intercourse with Indian tribes. In the words of Chief Justice Marshall: "The Indian nations had always been considered as distinct, independent, political communities. . . . The Cherokee nation, then, is a distinct community, occupying its own territory, with boundaries accurately described, in which the laws of Georgia can have no force. . . . The whole intercourse between the United States and this nation, is, by our constitution and laws, vested in the government of the United States."[5]

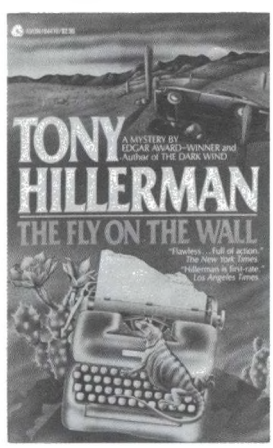
So complete was the sovereignty of Indian nations and the authority of the federal government above state powers that the Supreme Court later ruled (*Ex parte Crow Dog,* 1883) that the criminal jurisdiction of a tribe extended even to capital punishment,[6] where no express limitation for those powers existed. Congress found this ruling obnoxious, however, and less than two years later enacted a law which made the crimes of homicide, manslaughter, rape, assault with intent to kill, arson, burglary, and larceny committed on reservation land federal crimes and therefore subject to federal jurisdiction. Later, notorious cases of robbery, incest, assault with a dangerous weapon,[7] and embezzlement[8] were added to the list, making these eleven major offenses areas in which federal jurisdiction displaced tribal jurisdiction. In all other criminal and civil cases committed



by Indians on Indian land, tribal laws have force so long as they do not conflict with the U.S. Constitution or are not restricted by individual treaty agreements. The relation of an Indian nation to federal and state governments is much like that of a territory: except where limited by federal act, it has concurrent powers of investigation, prosecution, and punishment. And an offender who has been punished under tribal law is exempt from additional federal punishment.

Federal limitations of tribal jurisdiction are fragmentary at best, however, and perhaps ill-conceived. A man may beat another with his hands near death, for example, but, if it cannot be established that his hands are "dangerous weapons" or that he assaulted the person with the clear "intent to kill," the offense does not come under federal jurisdiction. And the list of federal offenses does not include kidnapping, blackmail, or poisoning (if the victim does not die).[9] Moreover, even among the so-called major offenses, federal jurisdiction is sometimes limited or arguable. There are no federal provisions for statutory rape, for instance; and a case of embezzlement might be tried in either a federal or tribal court, depending on the severity of the crime. The question of jurisdiction, from the point of view of the offender, is not merely one of legal technicalities, however; it may mean substantial differences in penalties and punishment. As jurist Felix Cohen has pointed out: "The maximum punishment





specified in the Indian penal codes is generally more humane, seldom exceeding imprisonment for 6 months, even for offenses like kidnapping, for which state penal codes impose imprisonment for 20 years or more."[10]

Apart from strict legal jurisdiction considerations, there exist geographical considerations as well. Mark Twain noted the whimsicality of such legal fictions as borders in *Life on the Mississippi* when he observed that the ever-shifting course of the Mississippi River might alter the state boundaries of Missouri and Illinois in the days before the Civil War and, this, overnight, make a slave of a free man while he was asleep in his bed. The same sort of complications are often present with reservations. The boundary lines of Indian Country are often ill-defined and disputed. (Hillerman hints at this problem when he locates the hippie commune on disputed territory; the hippies claim they are living on Bureau of Land Management land, but Leaphorn says that Navajo maps show the land to be on the reservation.) And in the case of the so-called "checkerboard" area of the Navajo reservation, in Northwest New Mexico, there exists a constantly shifting mosaic of Indian and non-Indian lands which come under separate jurisdiction.

In a lecture some years ago, Roland Dart, then Chief of the Navajo Tribal Police, remarked that it was not uncommon to call in a surveyor to determine the exact location of a criminal act in order to ascertain jurisdiction in the case. More recently, in a conversation with a B.I.A. investigator, I learned of a rape case which occured in the "checkerboard" area. It appears that the rape took place in an automobile parked across the boundary separating state and Navajo lands, and it had to be determined whether the criminal act took place in the front or the back seat of the car. The distinction was an important one, for statutory rape in New Mexico may be a first-degree felony and carry a maximum penalty of life imprisonment (*New Mexico Statutes* 31-18-3); whereas the Navajo Tribal code provides a maximum penalty of six months' hard labor and a fine of $500. It was decided that the sexual act occurred in the back seat and therefore was subject to New Mexico jurisdiction, but one wonders what legalistic metaphysics would have been involved if the car, rather than crossing the line, had been straddling it.

Hillerman betrays his familiarity with the special jurisdictional complications in the "checkerboard" area in *People of Darkness* (1980). The Valencia County sheriff warns a Navajo tribal policeman, Jimmy Chee, that problems of this sort are especially knotty on this part of the reservation. "You're driving along and one minute you're on the Navajo Reservation and the next minute you're in Valencia County jurisdiction and usually there's no way in God's world to know the difference." Jurisdictional problems are pervasive everywhere on the sprawling reservation, the narrator observes, "But here on the southwestern fringe of the reservation, checkerboarding complicates the problem. In the 1880s, the government deeded every other square mile in a sixty-mile strip to the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad to subsidize extension of its trunk line westward. The A & P had become the Santa Fe generations ago, and the Navajo Nation had gradually bought back part of

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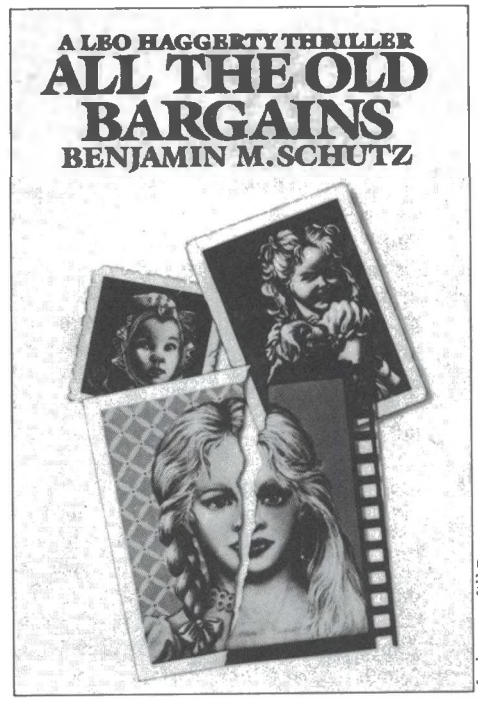

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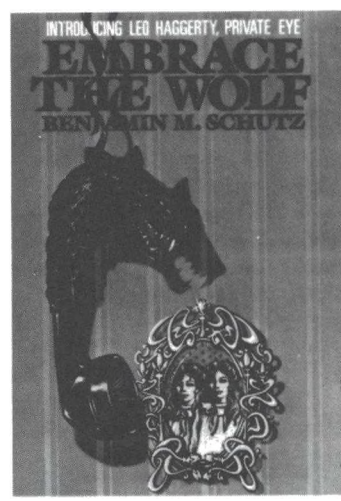

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this looted portion of its Dinetah, its homeland, but in many places this checkerboard pattern of ownership persisted."

The author never fully integrates his self-evident awareness of jurisdictional difficulties into the texture of his plot in *People of Darkness,* but Jimmy Chee emerges, as does Leaphorn, as someone more mindful of native tradition than bureaucratic restraint. Hillerman provides a concrete example of jurisdictional problems in *Dance Hall of the Dead,* however, when he identifies Leaphorn's involvement in an embezzlement case, a case that in all probability would never go to court.

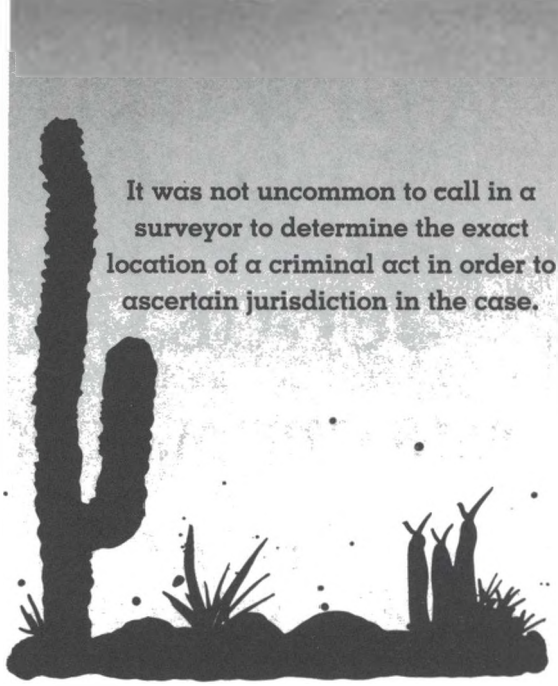
A Navajo man has given a Navajo woman $800 to take into Gallup, New Mexico, to make a down payment on a pickup truck. The woman, however, uses the money to get her jewelry out of pawn. The man claims the money changed hands on non-reservation lands, but the woman maintains that they were standing on the reservation when he gave her the money. If it could be established that the man is correct, the case will be tried under New Mexico embezzlement laws, where the crime will constitute a fourth-degree felony, carrying a penalty of not less than one year nor more than five years' imprisonment and/or a $5,000 fine (*New Mexico Statutes,* 30-16-8; 31-18-3D). But if the woman is correct, the maximum penalty will be six months at hard labor (*Navajo Tribal Code,* Title 17-391), provided the federal courts decline jurisdiction in the case. Since the exact location can probably never be determined, however, and since it is simply a matter of one person's word against another's, the case will in all likelihood be dismissed.

It is amidst this dizzying complexity of jurisdiction and the sometimes absurd discrepancies in laws and penalties that the Navajo tribal policeman works on a day-to-day basis. And the Navajo Tribal Code plainly recognizes these special circumstances. In outlining the functions of the Navajo Law Enforcement Agency, the code specifies that:

> Due to the peculiar nature of the land ownership pattern on or near the Reservation and due to the multiplicity of the agencies having jurisdiction over these lands, the Department must establish satisfactory working relationships with other law enforcement organizations in order that crimes may be expeditiously investigated and crime prevention programs established. (*Navajo Tribal Code,* rev. 1978, Title 2-1114)

And Hillerman, of course, is aware of this multiplicity: "At the moment," says the narrator of *Dance Hall of the Dead,*

> six law-enforcement agencies were interested in the affair at Zuni (if one counted the Bureau of Indian Affairs Law and Order Division, which was watching passively). Each would function as its interests dictated that it must. Leaphorn himself, without conscious thought, would influence his actions to the benefit of the Dinee if Navajo interests were at stake. Orange Naranjo, he knew, would do his work honestly and faithfully with full awareness that his good friend and employer, the sheriff of McKinley County, was seeking reelection. Pasquaanti was responsible first to laws centuries older than the whiteman's written codes. Highsmith, whose real job was traffic safety, would do as little as possible. And O'Malley would make his decisions with that ingrained FBI awareness that the rewards lay in good publicity, and the sensible attitude that other agencies were competitors for that publicity.



Moreover, the author also expresses here the probable feelings of frustration and anger that a tribal policeman might feel in an investigation of this sort. Leaphorn's task of finding George Bowlegs takes him over several hundred miles of inhospitable territory, and the evidence he acquires in his dogged pursuit, as any tribal policeman knows, will and must be turned over to the FBI. And Hillerman is probably right, too, that these "proper authorities" will seldom acknowledge the efforts of a mere Indian policeman, nor for that matter even inform him of the progress or eventual prosecution of a case:

> If the case broke, and the Albuquerque FBI office issued a statement explaining how the arrest had been made, Leaphorn wouldn't be told. He'd read about it in the Albuquerque *Journal* or the Gallup *Independent.* Leaphorn considered this fact without rancor as something natural as the turn of the seasons.

Whether or not Leaphorn feels any resentment toward the FBI, one wonders if Hillerman is not voicing the opinions of many Navajo policemen when he has his hero distinguish Agent Baker, actually an investigator for the Bureau of Narcotics, from the run-of-the-mill FBI man:

It had occurred to Leaphorn earlier that Baker was not, in fact, an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He didn't look like one. He had bad teeth, irregular and discolored, and an air of casual sloppiness, and something about him which suggested a quick, inquisitive, impatient intelligence. Leaphorn's extensive experience with the FBI suggested that any of these three characteristics would prevent employment. The FBI people always seemed to be O'Malleys—trimmed, scrubbed, tidy, able to work untroubled by any special measure of intelligence.

While Leaphorn may accept his working conditions as "natural," he is hardly complacent nor does he act passively or according to political expediency, as do the other law enforcement agents. Rather, he is motivated by simple curiosity and a personal impulse to see a pattern in the perplexing circumstances of this case. This is not to say, however, that Leaphorn acts illegally or disregards his proper duties.

Strictly speaking, he never exceeds the bounds of his authority in his pursuit of Bowlegs, but this is due to the special arrangements which govern the actions of tribal policemen. Leaphorn's several trips into Zuni fall within his proper jurisdiction, as does the visit made by the Zuni police to the Bowlegs hogan, because with contiguous reservations, as are Ramah and Zuni, a tribal policeman may pursue and apprehend a suspected Indian felon without violating his authority. In the case of non-contiguous reservations, however, an arrest warrant is no longer valid when the officer steps onto non-reservation land and then enters another reservation.[11] And, since Navajo policemen are cross-deputized in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah,[12] Leaphorn's excursions onto state land are proper as well, though he would have been acting as a state deputy rather than as a tribal policeman had he apprehended Bowlegs. Thus, while Leaphorn threatens to run the hippie Halsey into the McKinley County sheriff's office for a violation of state game laws, he is acting as a sheriff's deputy. When he tracks George Bowlegs into Arizona, however, his authority is questionable. As an Arizona deputy, he may pursue a suspected felon onto private property, but had he found Bowlegs there it is doubtful that he could have arrested him, since no warrant existed in Arizona. Rather than powers of arrest, Leaphorn would merely have the power to detain the boy and deliver him to other authorities.

While Leaphorn appears to be aware of the special circumstances of his position and the limits of his authority, he is hardly a company man. His impulses are governed more by a native, traditional sense of values. As a Navajo Division of Public Safety paper states, "the traditional religious system [of the Navajos] placed a great value on the maintenance of a harmonious relationship between man and his environment. . . . A system of taboos and informal laws governed human behaviour." Rather than statute and code, crime and punishment, Leaphorn seeks a pattern to the puzzling case, and he is, at first, frustrated:

Leaphorn studied the sky, his face dour. He was finding no order in his thoughts, none of that mild and abstract pleasure which the precise application of logic always brought to him. Instead there was only the discordant clash of improbable against unlikely, effect without cause, action without motive, patternless chaos. Leaphorn's orderly mind found this painful.

Hillerman describes Leaphorn's motivation quite simply. Navajo tradition taught

that the only goal for man was beauty, and that beauty was found only in harmony, and that this harmony of nature was a matter of dazzling complexity. . . . Every cause has its effect. Every action its reaction. Thus one learned to live with evil by understanding it, by reading its cause. And thus one learned, gradually and methodically, if one was lucky, to always "go in beauty," to always look for the pattern, and to find it.

By temperament and tradition, Leaphorn is perfectly suited to his role as detective. More than allegiance to duty, his native values spur Leaphorn's search for Bowlegs and an explanation to the mystery. And he is angry and resentful, not because he must answer to

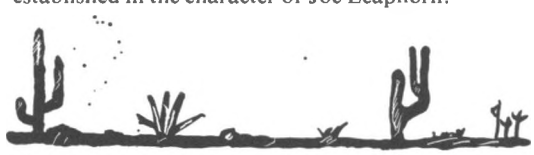
and suffer abuse from the bungling FBI agent O'Malley, but because he can't see a pattern to the evidence he uncovers. He tracks the Navajo boy into Arizona simply because his curiosity demands it. And when the pieces begin to fall in place, Leaphorn is relieved: "For the first time since he had heard of George Bowlegs, something seemed to be working out with that rational harmony Leaphorn's orderly soul demanded." If he fails in the job assigned to him by a federal agency, Leaphorn is nevertheless successful in the more important task of discerning a pattern in complexity. He reads the cause of evil and attains, through understanding, the beauty that comes with harmony.

Though he cannot appreciate the motives of a man who kills to protect his professional reputation, he does understand them. And there is a certain satisfaction in the fact that Reynolds dies, not simply because he has killed three men, but because he violates a Zuni taboo. By wearing a kachina mask in which the spirit of the god does not live, Reynolds had committed the vilest sacrilege, and "the penalty for sacrilege is death."

"There is an old law," Leaphorn explains to Ted Isaacs, "that takes precedence over the white man's penal code. It says 'Thou shall not profane the Sacred Ways of Zuni.'" The Zunis restore the sacred harmony of their village by exacting that penalty which religious tradition demands. They achieve communally what Leaphorn achieves individually, a harmony that is the goal of life. Both Leaphorn and the Zunis transcend the narrow bounds of temporal law and the complications of jurisdiction by adherence to their respective primitive and pure cultural codes. And the background of jurisdiction questions and petty legal distinctions, by contrast, emphasizes the dignity of older laws and simpler personal satisfactions.

Though *The Dance Hall of the Dead* is a conventional detective novel, supplied with a hero with whose devotion to seeing a pattern in the apparently patternless any devotee to that genre may readily identify, and full of adventure and intrigue, it is nevertheless strangely reminiscent of Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge*. In that play, too, community taboos are dramatically poised against federal laws, and as the lawyer Alfieri says in the play: "Nowadays we settle for half. And it is better." But he senses the glory and majesty of the days in ancient Sicily when justice was pure and uncomplicated. The Zunis do not settle for half in Hillerman's novel, nor does Leaphorn. Though the conditions of his occupation urge complacency, compromise, and halfhearted endeavor, he nevertheless emerges as one untainted by the technical constraints under which he labors, one quietly loyal to the primitive, tribal claims upon him.

In Hillerman's three Joe Leaphorn novels—*The Blessing Way* (1970), *Dance Hall of the Dead* (1975), and *Listening Woman* (1979)—the author has moved his hero all over the Navajo reservation: into the secret recesses of Canyon de Chelly, as far north as Lake Powell on the Utah border, and as far south as Ramah. With *People of Darkness,* Hillerman promoted Leaphorn to captain and stationed him in Chinle, Arizona, and made Jimmy Chee his new hero. Thus far, Chee has worked on and off the reservation in the checkerboard area of New Mexico and, in *The Dark Wind* (1982), on the "Joint Use Area" of the Hopi and Navajo reservations. Chee differs from Leaphorn only in incidental ways, though he may have a bit more pep and a little less patience than his predecessor. But Chee, too, displays a devotion to seeing a pattern in mysterious events and a capacity to rise above bureaucratic technicalities. But then, Chee's heroic proportions had already been established in the character of Joe Leaphorn.



Notes

1. Professor Canby patiently answered several questions of jurisdiction that I put to him and was most helpful in many other ways as well.
2. The information about the number of police officers comes from an article by John Orr of the Dine Bureau entitled "Navajo Police Go With Times," *Gallup Independent,* May 25, 1979, p. 2, sec. C.
3. The term "Indian country" is defined in 18 United States code, Section 1151, and is meant to include rights of way and patent land within the exterior boundaries of a reservation.
4. See Monroe E. Price, *Law and the American Indian* (New York: Bobbs Merril & Co., 1973), pp. 40-43; Brend H. Gubler, "A Constitutional Analysis of the Criminal Jurisdiction and Procedural Guarantees of the American Indian," diss. Syracuse University, 1963, pp. 57-63; or *Felix Cohen's Handbook of Federal Indian Law* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, rpt. of the 1942 edition), pp. 116ff and 122ff.
5. Quoted in Cohen, p. 123.
6. Cohen, pp. 124-125.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
8. Murray L. Crosse, "Criminal and Civil Jurisdiction in Indian Country," paper presented to Southwest Indian Tribal Courts Conference, University of Arizona, June 22, 23, 24, 1960, and rpt. in *Program and Proceedings* and published by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Branch of Law and Order, Phoenix Area Office. Crosse notes that embezzlement was added to the list in 1956.
9. Cohen, p. 147.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
11. William Truswell, "Extradition," speech presented to the Second Southwest Indian Tribal Courts Conference, University of Arizona, March 21, 22, 1962. Highlights of the speech reprinted in *Program and Proceedings,* n.d., published by the B.I.A. Branch of Law and Order, Gallup Area Office.
12. Orr, p. 2, sec. C. □

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The Politics of Detective Fiction in Post-Mao China
Rebirth or Reextinction?

By Jeffrey C. Kinkley

Detective fiction in the People's Republic of China is one topic apt to draw a blank from the most enthusiastic of American aficionados (though the Japanese, characteristically, are a little better tuned in to the situation). The very mention of the Chinese literary scene conjures up visions of *Keep the Red Flag Flying, Bright Sunny Skies,* "The Happy Vegetable Vendor," *The Broad Path That Shines in Golden Light,* and *Our Production Bridage Read All Four Volumes of Chairman Mao's Works.* There's no denying it—these are authentic titles from the Mao years, 1949–76. No mystery fiction was published during all that period, except for some Soviet-influenced novels about sleuthing for Kuomintang, CIA, or, more recently, KGB spies. Even spy novels ("counterespionage fiction," they're called in China) saw print mostly as instruments for raising the masses' vigilance against foreign agents feared to be hiding under every *kang* and pallet. Sherlock Holmes had become a genuine *Chinese* literary hero during the first half of our century, thanks to translations and numerous pulp imitations, but this only led Communist pundits to use him to denounce detective fiction as a genre. They claimed that whodunits originated with Holmes's society and its "bourgeois morality," so obsessed with "base lust and violence." But that's not the half of it. By the 1960s, it was incautious to introduce ambiguity into any genre—simply foolish to try to work with mystery. If workers, peasants, soldiers, and cadres were by their class standing *beyond suspicion,* how could they function as red herrings in literature? What writer, on the other hand, would dare endow a class-enemy murderer with positive characteristics? Whom would they confuse, except readers still wavering in their class consciousness, precisely those who ought to be protected from such ideological clutter? The final blow came during the late 1960s. China in reality, if not in literature, had trained a body of quite professional detectives, though all of them worked for the state. With the Cultural Revolution, however, came Mao Zedong's war on authority and his instructions for "the proletariat" to "smash" Public Security Bureaus wherever they walked the "capitalist road." Red Guards pursued the attack on the police state with relish, even as they made up their own romances and thrillers, which they copied out by hand and circulated underground.

One of the most intriguing and least heralded consequences of Mao's death, then, is the revival of Chinese crime fiction and police procedural, after thirty years of adversity. Perhaps the comeback is not so strange, for the Chinese state had put itself fundamentally at odds with Chinese popular taste. The recent outpouring of detective fiction is not simply a function of China's reopening to international literary culture; it represents the revival of a native tradition, for the Chinese have enjoyed dramas and novels about legendarily sagacious hero-magistrates such as Judge Bao and Robert van Gulik's Judge Dee since the Mongol dynasty (1279–1368). The victory won by China's detective story aficionados seems the sweeter now that the genre has already had to lie low again, since the campaign against "spiritual pollution" in late 1983. Popular genres in the People's Republic have to assert their right to exist not only in the face of Party and state authorities, but against the elitist tastes of high-powered intellectuals—and other writers, who in China, are *organized.*[1]

The rebirth of Chinese detective fiction . . . was countenanced at first because it so well served the political purposes of Deng Xiaping.

The rebirth of Chinese detective fiction, like many other new trends of the Peking Spring (1977–80), was countenanced at first because it so well served the political purposes of Deng Xiaoping. Authors were allowed to experiment with all sorts of "bourgeois" conventions, including the highly suspect element of "suspense," if they furthered the political end of exposing the "criminal" Gang of Four. Detective heroes in the new stories were not private eyes, of course, but good cops and upright judges or procurators (state's attorneys) who had managed not to be affected by Chin's "ten years" of "feudal fascism" under the Gang. Typically, the detective hero was a public security officer who had escaped moral and political contamination by having sat out the bad years in "the Gang's" prison farms—a not unrealistic scenario.

The earliest and most celebrated work of this kind is Wang Yaping's "Sacred Duty" (September 1978), about a labor camp prisoner whose spirit has been broken by eight years of police brutality. The real hero is a policeman on the outside, one who has himself just been released from a May Seventh Cadre School (reindoctrination farm). His sacred duty is to

Jeffrey C. Kinkley is an Assistant Professor of Asian Studies at St. John's University in Jamaica, N.Y.

unmask the conspiracy of provincial-level public security officers and other Cultural Revolution powerholders who framed the victim. As the good-cop detective homes in on the bad (ultra-Leftist) cops' motive for thwarting justice, they obstruct the investigation, going so far as to make an attempt on the life of his star witness. The public security hero saves the situation by sacrificing his own life.

With plots like that, such writing clearly was less a literary breakthrough than a new melodramatic political literature, sleuthing out Leftist rather than Rightist treason, not plain crime. In spirit, the new detective stories were like the Maoist spy stories, a counter-conspiracy fiction. Gang of Four villains simply succeeded to the literary role of Soviet agents. Indeed, the literature was as good as authorized, for it seconded a new myth disseminated by the post-Mao state during its first years: that rising crime in China at the turn of the '80s was the legacy of a 1966–76 counterrevolutionary conspiracy in the state apparatus. Even problem plays about juvenile delinquents, very popular in 1979 and 1980, attributed the terror of street gangs to protection 'way upstairs within the Gang of Four's political machinery. Hoodlums were portrayed not as ordinary unemployed youths fleeing rustication, but as the privileged sons of high, renegade Leftist military commanders (some in fact were, as Liang Heng tells us in his startling autobiography, *Son of the Revolution*). Yet the post-Mao regime's own rhetoric was sanctioning a detective fiction that any good Marxist ought to think "hardly conceivable in a socialist state, above all for lack of the corresponding social phenomena"[2]—a crime fiction not just hard-boiled but inspired by the Western fantasy of a modern state run from behind the scenes, by gangsters.

The floodgates were open. Crime fiction more genuinely just for passing the time reappeared next, thanks to the precedent set by stories such as "Sacred Duty" and a generally liberalized atmosphere. In order to stay profitable, a new goal of the post-Mao era, the official presses reprinted translations from Doyle, Agatha Christie, and Dashiell Hammett, in runs of *hundreds of thousands,* according to complaining Shanghai officials. The crime these Western authors describe is not edifying, but it shows crime in the West, not in China. On shakier territory was a new crop of Chinese imitations, fifth carbons of classical Western whodunits, rich in Chinese local color but devoid of political, social, or dialectical "deeper meanings." Crime in these stories is committed not by reactionaries but by greedy teen-agers and middle-aged men with bad habits. A new stock villain is the mother-in-law-to-be, who will do anything to ensure herself a suitable son-in-law. When her daughter shows a mind of her own, inevitably announcing a poor worker as her fiancé, the old lady eliminates him, quietly and efficiently—perhaps in a People's Park, as comfortable a counterpart to the vicarage as socialism will admit.

"The Case of the Gold Buddha" (1980) by Cen Zhijing and Wang Wenjin is typical of this genre, which could be called the post-Mao Chinese "classical detective story." Any reader used to fiction from the Mao era would be shocked to see antisocial behavior portrayed as this one does, without any ideological lessons implicit in the identity of the criminals. The only trace of conventional politics is that the villains of the piece have been contaminated by contact with capitalist Hong Kong.

There being no country estates in socialist China (yet), the crime, a theft, takes place in an exclusive Canton antique shop (catering to us foreign tourists, one would think—one doesn't see many others in China). The young woman on night duty is found tied up and bloodied, the morning after, by her co-worker and girl friend. Already we seem to have a Chinese version of a gothic convention, the young lady who stumbles upon a sordid crime. One cabinet has been unlocked and a precious gold Buddha removed from it. Soon the master detective arrives, accompanied by his protégé, a young man whose slightly inferior intelligence is a foil to the master's.

(Other post-Mao whodunits carry the Watson convention through to the end, by having the apprentice detective narrate the tale.) Clues are gathered, including fingerprints and a broken coat button. The master detective takes out his magnifying glass. "Two-thirds of a button?" he exclaims. The culprit must be someone who washes his clothes by beating them.

After collecting more clues, interrogating suspects one by one, and engaging in much conspicuous ratiocination, the tecs come to suspect an inside job. They list their deductions: the thief picked the only night of the week when a woman was on duty (the Victorian social ethos of the classical detective genre is still quite agreeable to Chinese males today); he quickly found the key to the storeroom; picked the most important cabinet; knew which key opened it, since marks would have been left if different keys had been tried out; and knew which item in the store was most valuable. The Great Investigative Cadre holds up the bottom to his sidekick and quizzes him: "What can we learn from this clue?"

Subsequently, the light goes on in the chief detective's head, and later in the protege's. But the detectives' reasoning is not disclosed to the reader, who is thereby invited to match wits with the cadres. There are red herrings, one of whom is a man afraid to tell his alibi because at the time of the theft he was committing adultery (a serious offense in China). There is a re-enactment of the crime before a group of suspects all assembled in one room, and eventually the solving of the mystery with the help of railroad timetables. A would-be "Sherlock Holmes of the Seventies," who reads Ellery Queen mysteries and spies on people with binoculars, presents misleading testimony. The master sniffs him out, but keeps his own counsel, wryly thanking "Comrade Holmes" for the time being. Finally, the detectives set a trap. They locate the Hong-Kong connected fence and go in disguise to negotiate for the Buddah. Ultimately, the shop manager is unmasked as the mastermind of the plot. It all makes sense in retrospect because the manager had previously been found guilty of minor corruption. That is, he stood out because of his

simple greed, not his money, expertise, or some other "political" aspect of his background antithetical to Redness.

The Chinese pieces make use of genre conventions loved by us all—and, if they seem old-fashioned, let it be remembered that the Chinese do have an old-fashioned concern for keeping their trains on time and their ladies chaste that puts them solidly in the nineteenth-century mainstream. There are escapes from locked rooms, large- and small-scale maps of the scene of the crime, and preambles in which the Great Investigator deduces amazing, typically irrelevant, details about a person from the least prepossessing of clues. Yet the classical detective story, "a ritual drama around a corpse in which a wavering finger of social condemnation passes over a group of 'suspects' and finally settles on one,"[3] demonstrates with unnerving clarity how vigorously even Western bourgeois "formula" fiction can break down the socialist clichés of still less spontaneous Maoist "recipe" fiction. For red herrings in a proper whodunit have to look suspicious—they have therefore to be "negative characters," unsavory types such as young hoodlums and people who have friends overseas. Truly devious post-Mao whodunits even select sons of cadres as suspects, aware that public malaise, and post-Mao exposure fiction about cadre corruption, have turned cadres and their spoiled offspring into symbols of doubt rather than trust. Yet the negative characters so convincingly constructed must turn out, by a twist at the end, not to have "done it." The criminal will be the little old lady, the mother-in-law, even "the worker." By toying with socialist criminological conceptions and reader cynicism about Maoist political culture to achieve surprise, whodunits make moral and political anarchy possible: they sometimes exonerate people with acknowledged social "attitude" problems, even criminal records. Maoist literary orthodoxy explicitly forbade writing about "characters in the middle." How much less were "negative characters" to go unpunished for their bad attitudes!

Ordinary whodunits therefore exist in a Communist literary universe only on sufferance. But Chinese intellectuals disdain the classical story for their own, more traditional, reasons. They can accept the sleuthing out of a criminal from among characters whose moral and political status is ambiguous, but they want the mystery interest elevated, made "serious." Fortunately, there was, indeed, a way of writing "serious detective stories" at the turn of the '80s that both satisfied *engagé* writers and passed government scrutiny. One could use a mystery plot to advocate more "rule of law" in China, in protest against totalitarianism and cadre corruption, and China's destabilizing two-millenia tradition of "rule by men." At the time, the official Chinese press, too, criticized the state's preference for humanistic judges such as the legendary Bao and Dee over the status-blind working of law, whose impartiality was now presumed to be necessary to Modernization. To be sure, Chinese political theory had long found law too "arbitrary" for practical use. Nationalist and Communist revolutionaries in their turn had made veteran Party members judge, jury, and executioner,

to achieve "historical" goals beyond situational justice.

The "serious," rule-of-law detective stories that filled the new demand still pursued concealed crimes, often apolitical murders, like the "classical" whodunits. But the "serious" story would in the end uncover a more terrible wrong, a political miscarriage of

justice *triggered* by "the crime." Typically, the public security investigators would be on the verge of pinning the rap on the wrong person, due to improper police procedure or social bias against people with political records as "capitalist roaders," extracting clues about a bigger criminal, the apprehended one's boyfriend. It develops that the couple under attack are being persecuted because of their politics; actually these "criminals" are true revolutionaries, even though the male was long ago

These illustrations are from *A Selection of Mainland Chinese Detective Stories* edited by Cen Ying.

when a detective with a higher consciousness, one aware of the power of Law, would intervene and reveal the real culprit. As in exposure literature, the state itself would be cast in the role of obstructor of justice and, because of its great power for good or evil, reap far more opprobrium than the petty murderer.

These stories thus picked up where "Sacred Duty" left off, going a long step farther by exposing biases in the justice system without attributing them to the Cultural Revolution. An example would be "Statement from a Woman Preliminary Hearing Interrogator" (1980) by Xu Xiao. It raises relatively complex moral and psychological questions, despite the B-grade romance interest it shares with so many other post-Mao stories (the legacy of another of Mao's literary taboos, a total ban on depicting love between the sexes as an end in itself). In this piece, a policewoman comes to sympathize with a female culprit from whom she has systematically been officially classed a Rightist. The woman investigator moreover discovers that the Rightist is her own former boyfriend, one she jilted years ago, to clear her dossier of associations with people of bad class status. At first, she scorns the woman who has succeeded her in her old lover's arms. Her detainee is the privileged daughter of a general, all the easier to despise. But, by the end of the story, the interrogator has amassed a case that awakens her to her own selfishness and to the fact that she is on the wrong side. She wants to warn the male suspect, who is in hiding, but it is too late. The Rightist is picked up by Public Security. The investigator is due for some kudos for breaking the case.

The solution to miscarriage of justice proffered by most such stories turns out really not to be "rule of law" but judgment by better men, or in this case, women: updated Judge Baos who are up to the challenges of the Four Modernizations. This is to be expected. "Rule of law" is a concept not yet fully

distinguished in China from the ancient ideal of "rule by wise men." Traditional literary expectations, too, call for justice to be carried out by a hero, and one whose powers are moral and intuitive rather than technical. Ratiocinators entered Chinese literature only at the beginning of this century; Perry Mason is bound to look like a shyster to most Chinese even now. In fact, since the real villain is not the murderer but the crooked system, one run by evil, ultra-Maoist judges and fanatical Leftist cops who want to throw all educated people in jail, the rule-of-law detective hero finds himself in very "hardboiled" situations, to the detriment of the message about legal procedure. He's not just looking for clues but being chased by bad guys who want to kill him, so he must prevail by virtue of his prowess as much as by his wits. The most formidable problem of the serious detective story, though, is that any piece worthy of the name can flourish only so long as the state tolerates hard probing of the defects in its justice system. "Sacred Duty" has been made into a movie, but writing like "Statement from a Woman Preliminary Hearing Interrogator" has withered in the face of political criticism turned out as early as 1980, even before the crusade against "spiritual pollution."

In fact, China's rule-of-law stories, as literature, were rather weak from the start. If they betray the fact that readers are not ready yet for some of the criminological and moral ambiguities of our newer, more amoral, and experimental mystery genres, they seem in other ways already too unsophisticated for China's post-Mao readers. The "classical," Westernized detective stories, like "The Case of the Gold Buddha," are "low" art by Chinese lights, not to mention clumsy by international standards. Yet they have achieved a formulaic refinement in their detached, aesthetic treatment of small crimes. The "serious detective stories," on the other hand, inevitably shade into melodrama if the nature of justice itself is not fully open to literary exploration. Such stories are bound to appear irredeemably "low" one day, when the political critiques that seem so daring now become widely accepted. And evidently they are doomed, by their very "seriousness," to treat only China's highest (which is to say, most shocking and political) crimes and misdemeanors. An author can in truth play it quite safe politically, and undoubtedly delight many readers, by choosing the most sensational formula of all—the black-and-white vengeance saga which pursues the vilest rebels-against-socialist-law with the most unconstrained and uncomplex Communist Mike Hammers.

Traditional Chinese attitudes about the proper role of literature, as much as Communist dicta or popular taste, have created a difficult situation for detective fiction as we know it. Maoist political culture may have succeeded in further reducing Chinese intellectuals' idea of what is edifying (which always was moral and political) to a few well-worn socialist concerns such as national security, production, and social order. In any event, politics still controls the press. Since 1981, publishers have been deflecting the detective interest back into more politically uplifting tales that sleuth out spies and landlord counter-revolutionaries. Last year, even the reprinting of Western mystery classics in translation came to a near halt. The New China News Agency exulted over the fact that sales of detective fiction declined from 1,170,000 volumes in 1983 to a mere 25,000 (to June 1984).

As of early 1985, there seems to be yet another upswing in freedom for Chinese writers. Since the detective story in China survived the Cultural Revolution, it is hard to imagine that the genre is dead again already, particularly as the People's Republic gets ready to absorb that great capital of crime fiction, Hong Kong. It would be ironic, though, if China went through another period in which her taste for crime fiction had to be satisfied mostly by mystery fiction written by foreigners and Overseas Chinese. Might not the future even see Sino-American joint publishing ventures, once China accepts international copyright conventions? Writers, to your stations. Two billion eyes are waiting. So, too, are the competition: mystery writers of Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan!

Notes

1. The organized nature of writing in China can also be turned to good effect. The Chinese Writers' Association, Beijing (Ba Jin, Chairman, now ill; Zhand Guananian, Deputy Chairman), has recently come to the fore in asking for a fuller restoration of artistic freedom in China. It might be useful for international writers and aficionados to join with the Association in dialogue about the high international literary prestige of detective and mystery fiction.
2. Quoted from an East German, Ernst Kaemmel, in *The Poetics of Murder: Detective Fiction and Literary Theory,* ed. Glenn W. Most and William W. Stowe (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), p. 61.
3. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 46.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Hardly any post-Mao detective fiction is available in Western languages, except for "Sacred Duty," in *The Wounded,* tr. Geremie Barmé and Bennett Lee (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1979). The stories highlighted in this article may be read in Chinese in Cen Ying's anthologies, *Zhongguo dalu zhentan xiaoshuo xuan* (A selection of mainland Chinese detective stories) and *Zhongguo dalu zuian xiaoshuo xuan* (A selection of mainland Chinese crime stories), both published in the early 1980s by Tongjin Press of Hong Kong. This author has a longer essay on Chinese crime fiction, accompanied by colleagues' essays on other aspects of Chinese popular fiction (notably Perry Link's, whose statistics were cited in this essay), in *After Mao: Chinese Literature and Society, 1978–1981,* ed. Jeffrey C. Kinkley (Cambridge: Harvard University, Council on East Asian Studies, distributed by Harvard University Press, 1985) □

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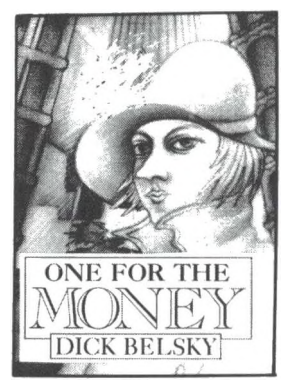

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Saul Ferrett Albinodetective

By Dan Crawford

"Something squealed. It sounded like an astronomer explaining the Einstein Theory. Something struggled in his hand like a metaphor in an old maid's love letter."

—"The Great Yellowish Mystery"

He was forty-three years old, with pure white hair, bulging pink eyes, false eyebrows, and long brown fingernails. He was, we are informed, a terrible kisser, but, like any good detective, attracted scores of women. These included his wife, who had, however, died by the time of the last story. Naturally, this was the only story in which she had any lines.

"There is something very peculiar about my husband," says one of his clients, in "The Partial Eclipses of Blibber." He shows himself as one of the new breed of American detectives by his reply:

"Naturally." The Albino detective gave one of those grins you see at the fishmongers on the lips of married mackerel. "The peculiar thing is, of course, that he is your husband. That anyone is, in fact."

This pale white specimen of hardboiled consulting detective was Saul Ferrett, the albinodetective. (Sometimes, since it is difficult to restrain a fertile mind in these things, referred to as Ferret the Albino Detective. Various other spellings were also available.) He combined the best traditions of the clue-hunting sleuth of the past with the style of the modern gumshoe, and made his own peculiar mush of it.

In style, however, he owed much to the new school. The description of the culprit in "The Murder of Jemima Jazz," for example, brings to mind Lindsay Marriott of *Farewell, My Lovely*.

He had from the first made a three-base-hit with himself and had elected himself the It of the Civilized World. Every time he approached a looking-glass he accepted his own enthusiastic applause with a low bow.

Even his name, Saul Ferrett, shows echoes of Sam Spade. But the albino detective can hardly be dismissed as a parody of the American private eye. For when he made his brief dash across the pages of American letters, it was just 1920. Sam Spade was still a decade away from being created, and Raymond Chandler was an oil executive with no thought of entering the fiction trade. Ferrett could not parody the hardboiled detective for the simple reason that there were none around of a stature that called for parody.

Saul Ferrett was one of the bizarre brainchildren of Gelett Burgess, the American humorist who wrote that he liked to create characters just for the pleasure of knocking them down. In 1920, most of the work for which Burgess would be remembered—the Goops, the Purple Cow—was behind him. The "deteckative narratives" he produced for *Judge* in 1920 were hardly new either; he had already created another investigator, the infamous Astrogon Kerby, now remembered almost solely for the anagrams concealed in his stories.

But detective stories were booming again, and Gelett Burgess thought the time was ripe for another investigator. Saul Ferrett made his first bow in "The Great Yellowish Mystery" in the May 22, 1920 issue of *Judge* and passed from view forever with "The Girl in the Green Box" on September 11, having appeared in just eight stories, tackling cases of arson, bank robbery, theft, murder, and missing persons.

Some of the stories appeared with an explanatory preface by the editors, who might have feared that the reader would not realize the humorous intent of the stories. This was hardly necessary, as anyone who had ever read any mystery story would recognize the parody of their favorites in such opening paragraphs as this:

Now all this, my little friends, was after the kidnaping of Mrs. Van Poop's prize Portugese poodle, Flipflap III, which Ferret had so cleverly traced to the machinations of the Pedigreed Sausage Company. It was after the recovery and reconnection of the Governor of Michisota's great toe, which the Albino detective had discovered alone, and starving, in the Museum of Hysterical Historical Society. And it was just before New York was flooded with wooden money by a master gang of bargain counterfeiters, foiled by the man with the wonderful pink eyes. So now you know when it was, and there is a great load off your mind. But what was it? That is the probloid.

—"The Jellyjumper Marriage Mystery"

When Saul Ferrett investigates, he omits nothing. He haunts post office boxes, sometimes from the inside, and dons clever disguises, such as that of a wealthy

Venezualan tripe manufacturer. He will search endlessly for clues, though the results are consistent when he does so:

Nothing had been discovered. It was Ferret himself who had discovered it. Mrs. Hash congratulated him warmly. It was, she said, at least a beginning. —"The Dancing Dentist"

But Gelett Burgess never allowed his detective enough success to be taken seriously. When Ferrett finally did find something, it was generally something he would rather not have found.

An ordinary detective, of course, would have simply crawled through the keyhole, or crept quietly in on all fours, pretending to be a corpse in gum shoes. But Ferret was not an ordinary detective; his eyes were far too pink. And, besides, he was afraid to enter. He simply hated dead people, and the deader they were, the worse he hated them, especially when they were visiting.

—"The Partial Eclipses of Blibber"

And, when Gelett Burgess was not making fun of detectives in general, and Saul Ferrett in particular, he was writing what he wrote best: pure absurdity.

On her body there were no wounds, except a smallish mosquito bite, though it was quite as large as if the insect had been a large one. Nor was there any trace of poison in that chamber-like room. The saucer of fried soup on the clock had, upon psycho-analysis, proved innocent. An unopened can of Frisco fleas had likewise been thoroughly acquitted by the coroner's jury.

What, then, and also who, had killed Jemima Jazz to death? The answer, so far, was zero. The room had been thoroughly demonstrated with a vacuum cleaner, and no clue had been found. —"The Murder of Jemima Jazz"

"Who are you, if possible, and why?"

"Dr. Blibber's nurse. That is, I keep his patients patient. I also sharpen his bills. I lie into his telephone and extract same from receiver when duty or the operator calls. I tell how old women are, and describe, in words of one syllable, how men make love in the waiting-room, under chloroform, and sometimes between meals."

"A sad life," remarked Ferret, kindly, "but then, it isn't as if you had to smoke cigarettes for a living, or pack soap-bubbles into barrels. And now," he added, "as Mr. Burgess is anxious to get along to Chapter Three, will you tell me where Blibber spends his Tuesdays?"

—"The Partial Eclipses of Blibber"

Mr. Burgess did not mean to break any new ground in the mystery story. He was just in it to have fun. It is for that reason that he seems to foreshadow the tough detectives to come. Slang that would not have sounded right coming from a straight upholder of justice was perfectly acceptable in a humor magazine:

"Draw it mild, Daisy," warned Ferret. "It may be used against you." —"The Murder of Jemima Jazz"

"Cut the psychology!" ordered the President.

—"The Great Yellowish Mystery"

In search of humorous similes, too, Burgess reached heights (or depths) that would be approached, but never matched by even the worst of the hardboiled writers:

"It was like the corpse of an old maid pounding on the inside of a coffin—only more so."

—"The Jellyjumper Marriage Mystery"

Through the stories, Saul Ferrett solves his cases less through brilliant clue-reading than by footwork, eavesdropping, and observation, another characteristic of later detectives that Gelett Burgess adopted largely because it was funny. For the same reason, the great albino detective was occasionally broke, frequently out of work, and generally got no respect at all, particularly from masculine clients.

He was as far out of work as a corkscrew-maker, and his landlord was havily daily conversations with him, through the keyhold. And the world was full of $$$!

Yes, how rare are trillionaires in August! It was days before Ferret caught one and when he did the man had nothing whatever to be detected, except a rather hootchy breath. He said, however, that he would keep Ferret in mind, in case anything particularly venomous turned up.

—"A,E,I,O,U, or The Mysterious Letters"

Even if he didn't mean to, though, Gelett Burgess nevertheless got a head start on the world of detective fiction with the Saul Ferrett series, creating one of the first fictional detectives who was allowed to be less than brilliant, less than capable, and hardly handsome—a detective who dealt with bankers and bootleggers (though Burgess had to be careful here; Prohibition was new and *Judge* a strongly Republican magazine) of the modern age with modern age language and methods. Ferrett sometimes sneered at his customers and sometimes felt fear, not for an innocent bystander or a potential victim, but for himself:

Midnight happened, as it so often does in cemeteries. A gibbous moon, like a half-eaten slice of butter on a restaurant plate, decorated by a sky half-hidden by cold-gravy colored clouds. The wind whinnied like a lovesick tom.

And Ferrett was afraid. No one ever died laughing, you know, at seeing a long heavy box being shoved into a receiving tomb. You don't at all feel like going up and knocking at that iron door and saying, "Whose little corpse are you?" Do you? No, you don't!

—"The Partial Eclipses of Blibber"

The Continental Op might have said that differently. Philip Marlowe might have said it better. And Sam Spade probably never would have said it at all. But this is irrelevant to Gelett Burgess's creation of the mighty Albinodetective, who, if he does not deserve to be saluted as the forerunner of the modern private eye, at least deserves a place in the memory of mystery readers. ■

COLLECTING MYSTERY FICTION

By Otto Penzler

Since beginning this column in TAD 15:1 (Winter 1982), we have received many inquiries from beginning collectors about the basics of collecting. We have decided, therefore, to re-run the first column, which gives any new collector all the information needed to approach rare mystery fiction intelligently.

This first of a series of columns devoted to the collecting of mystery fiction will be an informal introductory potpourri presenting some of the elements of book collecting in general and mystery collecting specifically. It will be occasionally difficult—but always essential—to remember that the concern here is with *collecting*, not *reading*, and when these two distinct fields overlap it is a matter of happenstance and irrelevance.

Collecting, in the sense that will be addressed in this column, will have a rather specific definition. It will not mean picking up old paperbacks and saving them; it will not mean trying to put together a shelf of battered hardcover editions of the complete works of Edgar Wallace. It *will* mean (since all detective fiction and most mystery fiction has been published during the past two centuries) the pursuit of fine first editions. There will be several, or perhaps many, exceptions to this practice, but the overall aim will be to regard mystery fiction as other collectors perceive the works of Ernest Hemingway, or Americana, or poetry, or modern drama, or any of the hundreds and thousands of avenues open to them.

The ideal collection will consist of first editions in condition identical to their appearance on the day they were published. If issued with a dust jacket, the ultimate copy must have a dust jacket. That it must also have its original binding is self-evident. One can accumulate a wonderful library of reprint editions, or even shabby copies of first editions, and derive from it an enormous amount of pleasure. That is to be applauded, of course. The day would be black indeed when books are collected but not read. But, to reiterate for the final time, assembling that type of collection falls outside the working definition of collecting that has been adopted for this column.

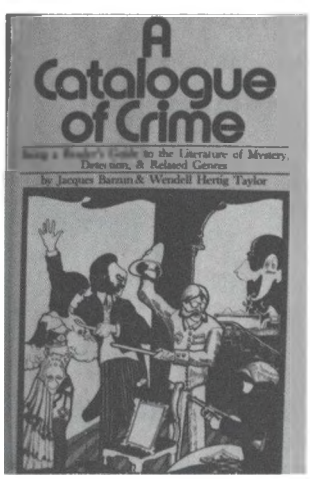
Perhaps a few definitions would be appropriate at this time. The word "collecting" has been dealt with, and the short phrase "mystery fiction" will mean works of fiction in which a crime, or the threat of a crime, are central to the theme of the book. Thus the definition extends far beyond the range of detective fiction to include crime stories (such as those featuring the exploits of A. J. Raffles, The Saint, the characters who populate the works of James M. Cain and W. R. Burnett and the zany world of Donald E. Westlake, etc.), espionage fiction (which often involves crimes against nations, rather than individuals), suspense stories (such as those by Cornell Woolrich and Francis Iles), and even out-and-out thrillers (in which adventure and chase play such large roles; after all, how can one consider the mystery genre and ignore such writers as John Buchan and Sax Rohmer?).

It is safe to suggest, and intelligent to accept the suggestion, that some limitations be placed on a collector's pursuits. Very few have the space, time, money, ability, ego, energy or inclination to attempt to assemble a complete library of mystery fiction first editions. A conservative estimate would place that number at 60,000 volumes, with more being added every week. Only a few collectors have made a serious attempt at completeness, the one coming closest thus far being Allen J. Hubin, who amassed approximately 27,000 volumes (although a large percentage were not first editions, the library having been planned for the reader rather than for the collector).

The limitations can be as strict or as loose as the collector chooses, depending upon imagination, taste, ambition and the realities of finance. A collection can be confined to one or two (or *any* number) of authors; a specific type of fiction (such as British "Golden Age," hard-boiled private eye, gothics, locked room, etc.); locale (books set in New York, or London, Southern California, Hoboken, and so on); subject matter (as books with backgrounds in the world of art, magic, opera, gambling, medicine, ballet, sports, or books themselves); a specific period (as Graham Greene's collection of Victorian detective fiction, or books written only between the two world wars); or any other special interest, such as books involving sinister Orientals, or lawyers, or female detectives. In short, the structure, the parameters, of a collection are solely the province of the collector. It is often true (and is to be desired) that the area of collecting is that portion of the mystery genre which most interests the collector, so that special knowledge and affection can be brought to it.

As with so many other things in this world, it is not necessary to have wealth to be a collector; it just makes it easier. The overwhelming majority of collectors function within a limited budget, but it is nonetheless possible to achieve a respectable, even enviable, shelf or bookcase or library with the slimmest of wallets.

In 1934, the eminent bibliophile John Carter advised impecunious collectors that detective fiction was one of the best "new paths" to follow. Ten years ago, Eric Quayle, in *The Collector's Book of Detective Fiction* (London: Studio Vista, 1972), proved the correctness of Carter's prediction when he wrote, "In the entire field of literature, I know of no section that has appreciated more quickly in value during the last two decades, than works of detective fiction." And that is



merely the beginning. The strides made between 1934 and 1972 were dwarfed by the developments of the next decade, and it seems most reasonable to theorize that the next ten years will see an even more escalated rate of increase in value of fine first editions in the world of mystery.

While it is a mistake to undertake the assemblage of a collection for profit motives, the expenditure of sometimes substantial sums requires that at least some thought be given to the matter. And it is an irrefutable fact that a *great* collection cannot be formed without occasional (or frequent) major purchases being made.

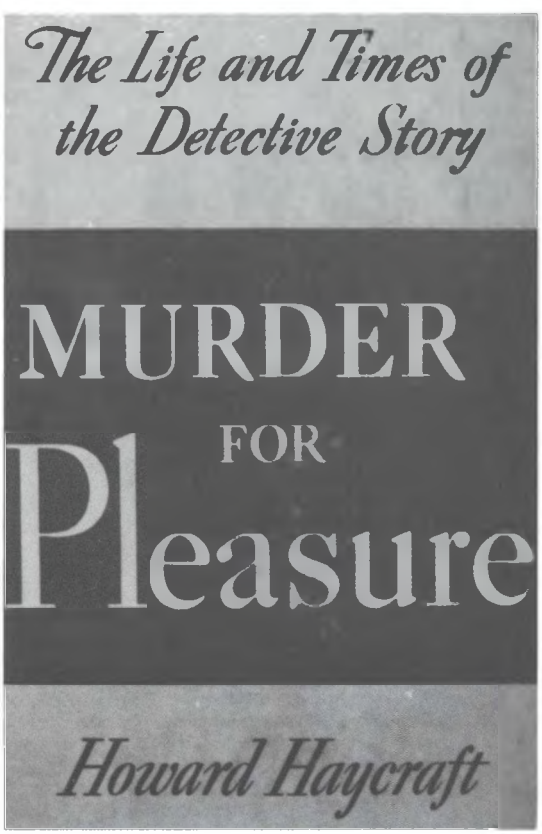
Any number of circumstances contribute to escalating values, the most obvious being that of supply and demand. In recent years, more and more people have begun to collect mystery and detective fiction. At the same time, books (being a perishable commodity) have decreased in number as fire, water, children, pets, insects and other disasters have claimed their victims. As long, then, as the number of collectors is great, the value of good books will inevitably and inexorably rise, as there is no one this side of heaven who can create another first edition copy of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* or *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Still, if the world economy, the price of gold, war in the Sudan, the overthrow of a Latin American dictator or other esoteric factors conspire against increased values, the first and greatest pleasure should be derived from the formation and ownership of a collection, not from its sale. Realizing a bonanza, if the collector has bought wisely, should be a bonus, a lagniappe.

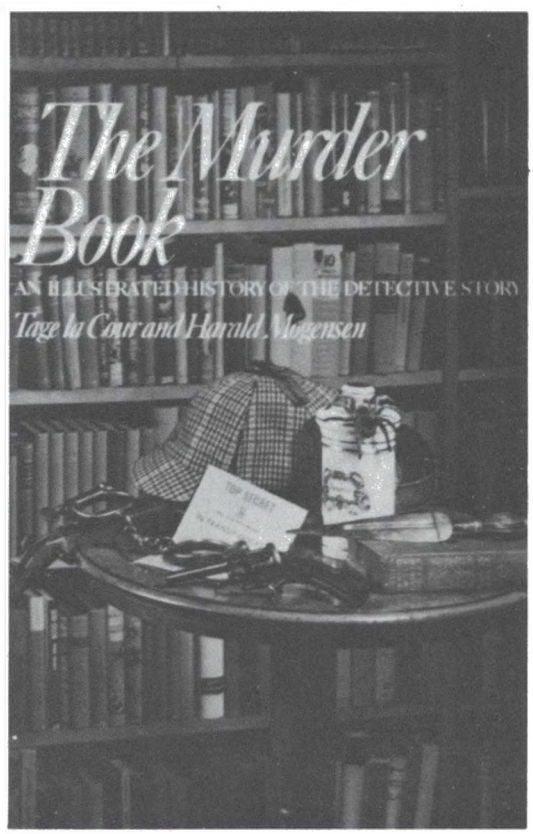
Once the decision has been made to collect, the next step is to determine how and where. No matter where books are to be found, the possibility exists that something suitable for the collection will be on the next shelf or just behind the next book. Salvation Army outlets, tag sales, antique shops, auctions, garages, attics, thrift shops—all have books and it is always possible to find something worthwhile. A more fruitful source of supply for books is, not surprisingly, a bookstore, though the prices will be generally higher. The next step up, to a bookstore specializing in mystery fiction, means that it will be still easier to find books for the collection but, again, prices will be higher, and often higher than in a general bookstore. You will spend more money, as a rule, by going to the specialist who has devoted time, money and expertise to finding books for his customers, but you will save considerable time and effort.

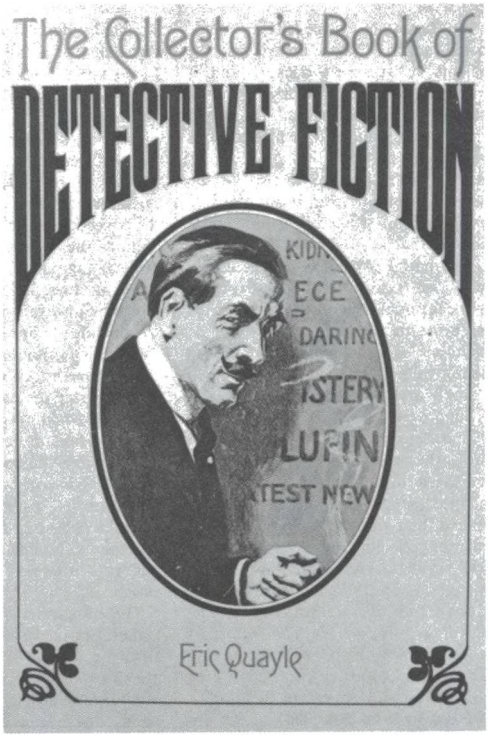
There are other mystery booksellers in the United States, to be sure, but the majority advertise in *The Armchair Detective*. They are either shops, open to the public, or mail order firms which issue lists or catalogues. An open bookshop provides the collector with the advantage of seeing a book before it is purchased. Nevertheless, there is rarely *caveat emptor* in the book business. Protection is afforded a prospective book buyer who may be ordering through the mail or over the telephone.

It is customary in the honorable profession of bookselling for a dealer to accept the return of a book for any valid reason. If a book is not as described in a catalogue or on a list, *in the buyer's opinion*, the bookseller should accept its return without complaint. This practice keeps the pressure on reputable booksellers to describe their books honestly and correctly. Of course, the street goes two ways. If a collector frequently returns a large percentage of his books, he may expect to be dropped from the dealer's mailing list. Why he would continue to order books from a dealer whose books are invariably disappointing is a pertinent question.

Before ordering through the mail, it is advisable to become familiar with standard booksellers' vocabulary. In most cases, the prime factor to consider when making a decision about a book is its condition. If a book is described as MINT, it should be exactly as new; a VERY FINE copy is just a shade below, with no noticable flaws; FINE means fresh and crisp, though a bit of dust soiling to the cover or dust jacket may be present; VERY GOOD begins the descent into secondary copies, permitting a little loosening of the binding (not a cracked hinge, of course, but the sense that a book has been







read several times), some soiling, slight rubbing and even fraying to the dust jacket; a GOOD copy is an average second-hand book in used condition with its attendant, expectable flaws; FAIR may mean that part of the cloth has worn away, exposing the cardboard covers, there are stains on the cloth and pages, names and/or bookplates, ragged dust jackets, if present at all—not a collector's copy, in short, unless an exceptionally scarce book; POOR means exactly that—a reading copy only.

Some other frequently used bookseller's terms are:

-ANA A suffix indicating that the material is about the author or subject listed (Sherlockiana and Chandlerana, for example, deal with Sherlock Holmes and Raymond Chandler but—in the latter case—is not *by* the author).

AS ISSUED A term indicating that the item is in its original format (as when a book is offered "without dust jacket, as issued" and is therefore not lacking something which ought to be present).

BACKSTRIP The covering of a book's spine.

BLIND-STAMPED An impressed mark on the book's cover or page, without gold or ink (can be lettering or ornamentation).

BOARDS The cardboard covers of books, usually themselves covered with cloth or paper; generally used nowadays to mean covered with paper, books covered with cloth being described simply as "cloth" (which means cloth pasted on cardboard); abbreviated as BDS.

BOUND A book with a cover of any type. UNBOUND means that the book has never had a binding. DISBOUND means that the book has been removed from its original binding.

CASE-BOUND Hardcover, rather than paperback.

CHIPPED Describes dust wrappers or paper covers with small pieces torn away or frayed.

DUST JACKET (or DUST WRAPPER) The generally decorative paper wrapper placed around a book by the publisher to protect it. Abbreviated as d.j. (d/j) or d.w. (d/w); often shortened to "jacket" or "wrapper" (but not to "dust").

ENDPAPERS Two sheets of paper in each book, one in front and one in back, which are used to attach the pages to the binding. Half of each sheet is pasted to the inside of each cover; the other half is then referred to as the "free front (or rear) endpaper." Abbreviated as e.p. (or f.e.p.).

EPHEMERA Items, such as flyers, programs, handbills, advertising or promotional pamphlets, intended to have only fleeting use and therefore unlikely to have survived. Ephemera can be interesting, important and valuable, and are generally scarce. They are often exactly what they appear to be—junk.

EX-LIBRARY A book formerly in a library, with predictable markings such as ink or blind-stamped labels, pockets, and countless other desecrations. The least desirable copy for a collector. Abbreviated as ex-lib.

FOXING The browning of pages due to a chemical reaction of the paper and air; found mainly in nineteenth-century books and those published on pulp paper (especially during WW II).

FRONTISPIECE An illustration facing the title page.

HALF TITLE A page bearing only the book's title, generally immediately preceding the title page.

HINGE The inner joint where the cover and the pages meet; the part of the book that bends when it is opened, and thus is the point of most frequent damage. When the endpaper has taken too much wear, it begins to tear; this is described as (front, usually) "hinge cracking" or "splitting;" a general weakening and small tears is described as "starting."

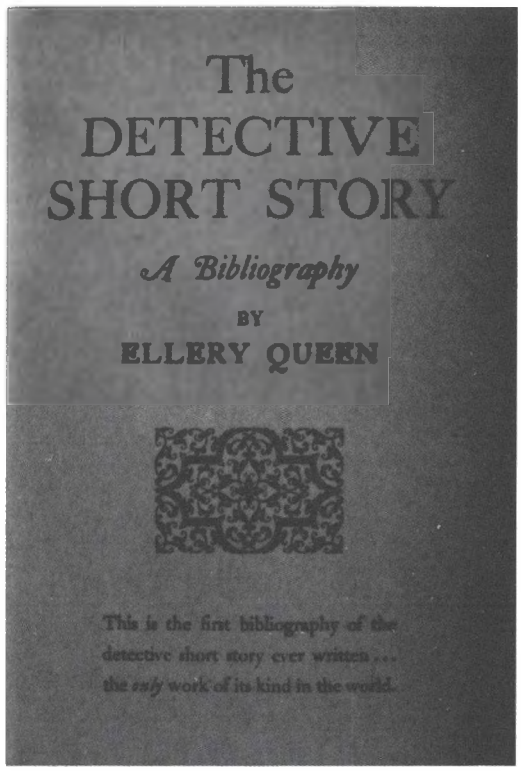
OUT OF PRINT A book no longer available from the publisher; abbreviated as o.p.

POINT A distinguishing characteristic (such as a typographical error) which suggests (and occasionally proves) priority within print run of an edition.

PRIVATELY PRINTED A book designed for sale or presentation by an individual or group for private, or personal, distribution, and not to the general public.

PUBLICATION DATE The date on which the book is officially placed on sale—usually four to eight weeks after the book is actually available. The book is manufactured (printed, bound, etc.) well in advance of publication.

SIGNATURE A large sheet of paper, printed and folded to make up the pages of



a book. In modern books, a signature is generally eight, sixteen or thirty-two pages. Signatures are sewn (in well-made books) or glued (in what is inexplicably termed "perfect-bound" books) into the binding. When a signature comes loose, it is often described as "sprung."

WRAPPERS Paper covers for a book or periodical; not to be confused with dust wrapper. Abbreviated as wr., wrs., wrps., wrapps.

Finally, a few words about bibliographers' terms, often used inaccurately by booksellers: edition, printing, issue.

The first edition of a book includes all copies printed from the first setting of the type. As long as the type remains unchanged, a book may go through a hundred printings over a ten-year period and still remain in its first edition. A printing includes all the copies produced during a single press run; printing is virtually synonymous with "impression" in this context. When booksellers and collectors refer to first editions, they invariably mean the first printing of the first edition. Variations in the pages or in the bindings, within a single printing, are referred to as "issues" or "states." Thus, if the printer spots an error and corrects it during a print run, or if the binding material is used up before all the sheets have been bound, these different forms of the book are variant issues, or states. While these variants are usually accidental, they have also been planned, as when publishers (especially in the nineteenth century) offered more than one color of binding for their customers. Priority is frequently impossible to determine in these cases.

That should be enough of the technical part of book collecting for the moment. Now, perhaps a word or two about philosophy, and a bit of pedantry here is irresistable.

Buy the best book you can afford. There is no bargain in picking up the cheaper of two copies if the condition is inferior. The bookseller prefers to see an inexpensive and battered copy of a book leave his shop than to part with a fine, crisp copy which may be impossible to replace. If a good bookseller is nearby, it is worthwhile to establish a relationship with him or her. Most people in the world of mystery fiction are friendly and willing to share knowledge, experience and enthusiasms. A bookseller will begin to save good books for a serious collector, or search for them, and that collection will mature nicely.

The word "relationship" implies reciprocity. Loyalty is much prized. Instead of buying the new Dick Francis or Robert B. Parker from the local chain store, it is regarded as a gracious gesture by booksellers if the collector drives a few miles extra or waits a week to make the purchase from the dealer with whom a relationship is being established.

Everyone loves a bargain, and most everyone, if he is beaver-like, will find one—or many. But a collector will win no friends in bookshops by pulling a book off the shelf and saying, "Wow! Ten dollars? I just picked this up in a garage sale for a quarter!" It is unreasonable to expect the dealer to share the moment of excitement. The collector will also do well simply to decline a book, rather than telling a bookseller that it is "too expensive." If it is too expensive *for you*, that is both acceptable and understandable. It is inevitably true for everyone that one book or another will be too great a strain on the budget. But that is quite different from telling someone who earns a living (presumably) by being expert enough to know the value of a book that it is too expensive. The bookseller's competence has been insulted, and the matter is improved not at all if the remark is true. Other matters of bookshop etiquette tend generally to be merely those of normal good taste and manners.

Once books have been acquired, it is recommended that the best care possible be taken of what are valuable pieces of property or likely to become so. A bookcase with glass doors is the best possible storage place for a collection, but other forms of protection exist. The first is common sense. Dampness, in the form of direct contact with water or humidity and moisture in the air will destroy a book. Direct sunlight will fade the spine of a book very quickly. Tremendous heat or cold will do books no good, nor will resting drinks on them, using them as doorstops, leaning them at an angle for a long period of time, or having them make contact with pets, children, or food. A novice should never attempt to repair books; the damage will be compounded. If one insists on writing a name on the endpaper, pasting bookplates into a book, gluing dust jackets down, or eating fried chicken while handling the volumes—forget about collecting. A piece of Mylar (a clear plastic available at library supply houses) wrapped around a book will keep it clean and protect the dust jacket from dirt as well as wear and tear. Cut it a quarter of an inch or so larger than the book so that it takes more of the actual wear. For truly exceptional books. slipcases can be made to protect books. but these are quite expensive and are mainly for the advanced collector.

One of the wisest investments for any collector, new or sophisticated, is a good shelf of reference books. This is an occasionally painful necessity because a limited number of dollars often means having to choose between a reference book and a collectible first edition (which sometimes seems more urgent, or is a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity). In fact, good reference volumes will teach a great deal, help to avoid costly errors in the future and are, in themselves, often worthwhile collector's items.

Some of the basic reference tools which belong on the shelf of any collector of mystery fiction are:

ADEY, ROBERT. *Locked Room Murders.* London: Ferret, 1979. An annotated bibliography of locked room and other impossible crimes.

BARZUN, JACQUES, and WENDELL HERTIG

TAYLOR. *A Catalogue of Crime.* New York: Harper & Row, 1971. An idiosyncratic reader's guide to detective fiction.

CARTER, JOHN. *Collecting Detective Fiction.* London: Constable, 1934. A 63-page pamphlet containing the pertinent chapter of his larger volume, *New Paths in Book-Collecting.* The first serious approach to collecting volumes that had been previously regarded as unworthy.

GREENE, GRAHAM, and DOROTHY GLOVER. *Victorian Detective Fiction.* London: The Bodley Head, 1966. A catalogue, with bibliographical and historical annotations, of the joint collection (or 471 books) formed by the two friends. It was bibliographically arranged by Eric Osborne, with an introduction by John Carter.

HAYCRAFT, HOWARD. *Murder for Pleasure.* New York: Appleton-Century, 1941. Subtitled, "The Life and Times of the Detective Story," it is the first and best comprehensive history of the genre.

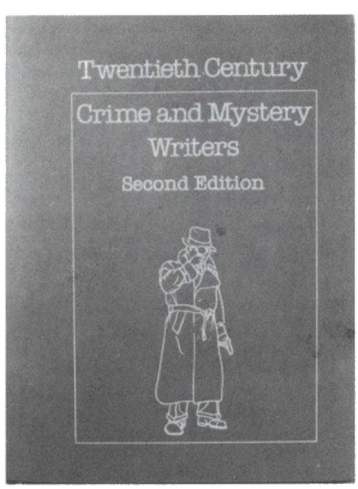
____. *The Art of the Mystery Story.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1946. A collection of critical essays, edited by Haycraft. The volume contains Carter's long article, "Collecting Detective Fiction," among many brilliant pieces.

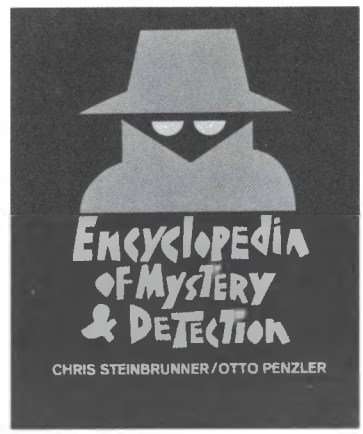
HUBIN, ALLEN J. *The Bibliography of Crime Fiction 1749-1975.* Del Mar, Calif.: 1979. The most remarkable reference book in the world of mystery fiction, listing, as its subtitle claims, "all mystery, detective, suspense, police and gothic fiction in book form published in the English language."

LA COUR, TAGE, and HARALD MOGENSEN. *The Murder Book.* New York: Herder and Herder, 1971. The first heavily-illustrated overview of mystery fiction.

MUNDELL, ELMORE, and G. JAY RAUSCH. *The Detective Short Story: A Bibliography and Index.* Manhattan, Kansas: Kansas State University, 1974. A catalogue of short-story collections and anthologies, listing the titles of each individual story contained therein, as well as the name of the detective, and pertinent publishing data.

O'BRIEN, GEOFFREY. *Hardboiled America.*





New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1981. An uneven history of mystery fiction in paperback format.

QUAYLE, ERIC. *The Collector's Book of Detective Fiction.* London: Studio Vista, 1972. A beautifully produced, if erratic, history of detective fiction from the collector's point of view, by a noted collector.

QUEEN, ELLERY. *The Detective Short Story.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1942. The first bibliography of the detective short story in book form and, in spite of some errors and numerous omissions, an extraordinary pioneering work of scholarship, and still the best book of its kind yet published.

____. *Queen's Quorum.* Boston: Little, Brown, 1951. Subtitled "A History of the Detective-Crime Short Story as Revealed by the 106 Most Important Books Published in this Field since 1845." Each title annotated with references to its historical significance, literary quality and scarcity. Controversial but perceptive and intelligent.

REILLY, JOHN M. *Twentieth Century Crime and Mystery Writers.* New York: St. Martin's, 1980. A giant work, exceeding 1500 pages, of biographical and critical material on most of the major mystery writers of this century, as well as many others, including comprehensive lists of all their work.

STEINBRUNNER, CHRIS, and OTTO PENZLER. *Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976. An accurate and authoratative guide to mystery fiction in all media, including a section devoted to "Collecting Detective Fiction" by Norman S. Nolan.

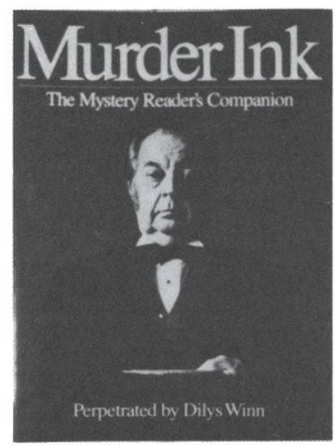
WINN, DILYS. *Murder Ink.* New York: Workman, 1977. Contains countless essays on an implausible number of subjects, including "The Haycraft-Queen Definitive Library of Detective-Crime-Mystery Fiction" and "Collecting Detective Fiction" by Otto Penzler.

Not specifically created for collectors of mystery fiction, but important nonetheless, are:

BOUTELL, HENRY S.: *First Editions of Today and How to Tell Them,* which has gone through several editions, all of which are useful in helping to identify the first edition (and first printing) of most books published in England and the United States.

SADLEIR, MICHAEL: *XIX Century Fiction,* published in 1951 in two volumes. Subtitled, "A Bibliographical Record Based on His Own Collection," these volumes illustrate how great a collection can be. Among the mystery writers covered are Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle, B. L. Farjeon, Hawley Smart and Mrs. Henry Wood.

WILSON, ROBERT A.: *Modern Book Collecting.* New York: Knopf, 1980. A basic guide to the subject.

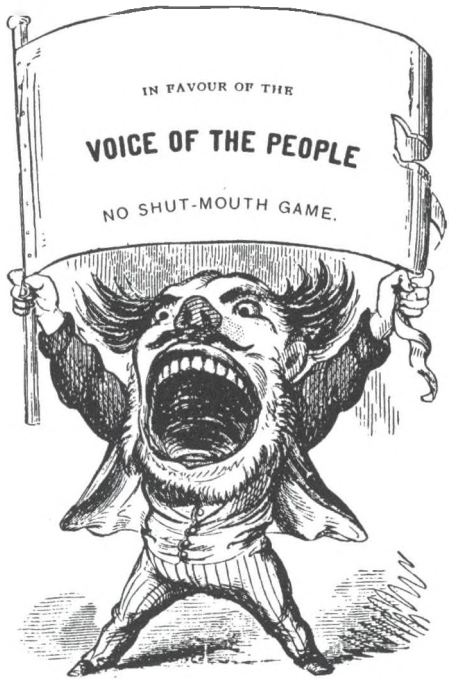


In addition, there are many volumes devoted to a single author or aspect of the mystery genre; these will be noted with the appropriate article.

Future columns will examine various possibilities in the realm of collecting mystery fiction. Individual authors will be featured, as will series characters, subject collections, some of the narrower sub-genres covered by the broad definition of "mystery" fiction, esoterica—whatever seems interesting or necessary. Every attempt will be made at comprehensiveness and accuracy, but additions and corrections are earnestly solicited. Illustrations will be heavily in evidence, providing information about dust jackets, title pages, bindings, authors' signatures, and related ephemera. An attempt will be made to identify and describe first editions, and to place an approximate value on them. (When selling books, it is reasonable to expect twenty-five to seventy-five percent of the retail price from a bookseller, with the percentage increasing in direct proportion to the desirability of the book.)

Suggestions and requests about areas to be covered are welcome, although a personal response cannot be promised because of the absurd but immutable fact that a day is comprised of only twenty-four hours.

Next issue, then, the game (to paraphrase The Great Detective) will be afoot. □



Detective Novels

By A. E. W. Mason

ONCE AGAIN, in our never-ending quest to surprise and delight the reader, we present another departure for this corner. While attempting to bring obscure, rare, significant, or merely curious fiction back into print in this space, we have never offered a piece of early criticism. Herewith, we shatter that record.

"Detective Novels" by A. E. W. Mason is not a long essay, but it is surprisingly perceptive when we recollect that it is now sixty years old. It is charming and astonishing to think that it was written at a time when someone needed to plead a case for Father Brown's acceptance as a significant series detective! Christie, Sayers, and Earl Derr Biggers were newcomers; Carr, Queen, Hammett, Chandler, and Van Dine had not yet written their first mysteries.

This essay was first published in *The Nation* (London), February 7, 1925, and I have been unable to locate any American publication. It is, therefore, offered as the first printing in this country (letters of contempt at my ignorance, with correct dates and prior appearances, will be published in future issues of TAD).

—OTTO PENZLER

IT is an illusion widely credited that the detective novel is one of the easiest forms of literary composition. A very distinguished man of letters, speaking to me the other day of *The House of the Arrow,* said, "You must have found it a rest from your ordinary work." And most people cherish a conviction, that if they had the time to try, they could turn out quite an enthralling one. The greater number of them would fail because they would become aware, to their surprise, of the enormous difficulty of writing at all, and would lose the heart to go on. Of those who persevered, some would assuredly succeed, but it would not in all probability be at either the first or the second attempt.

The subjects, the skeletons to be clothed, and quickened, and brought to fresh life, are, of course, everywhere for those who have eyes to see them. Invent what you will, a

complication however intriguing with a solution however startling, and life will still beat you at the game. An obvious instance of that old truism is at this moment occupying the Law Courts. Another occurred a little while ago when a woman was condemned for murder on the strength of a series of letters which she had written to her lover. She, on the other hand, in accordance with her promise, had destroyed all the letters which her lover had written to her. What more likely than that the series of destroyed letters contained the real incitements to murder? And that her replies were just false statements of almost puerile attempts which she was supposed to be making, and which in fact she was not making, written week after week in a passionate desire to hold a lover who was obviously growing weary? Here is anyway matter enough for as tragic and thrilling a story as anyone could wish for—a woman condemned upon half of a correspondence and the only possible hope of proving her innocence lying in the discovery, by some ingenious means or another, of what was written in the half which had been destroyed. It may be perhaps of interest to tell how, in the case of one author at all events, two detective stories came to be written. One evening, in the private dining-room of the old Star and Garter Hotel at Richmond, I read the names of Fougère and her companion scratched on the glass of the window by a diamond ring. The murder of Madame Fougère, a rich old woman, at Aix-les-Bains, by a girl whom she had befriended and some accomplices, was still fresh in memory. To this hotel the old woman and her companion had come during a visit to London, and thus like so many tourists they had left the record of their names. I was led by this chance to get hold of the French newspapers which had reported the trial and read them. The case was not merely one of strong and cruel melodrama, for the old woman's history, her kindliness, her vanity, the intense jealousy and avarice of the woman she had befriended, half companion, half maid, and certain other details, gave to it a curious and rather bizarre interest, which lifted it a little out of the sordid ruck of such crimes. However, having read the accounts, I tucked the story away into some pigeon-hole of my mind and there it remained for four years. A trial at the Old Bailey brought it back to memory.

In the novel *At the Villa Rose* a good deal hangs upon the actual hour of the night when the murder was committed. The time is fixed, because a policeman finds first the gate of the villa shut, then later on in the night finds it open, and seeing that the windows of the villa are dark, shuts it, and later on still finds it once more open. Between his last two rounds the crime was committed. The trial at the Old Bailey—I quite forget the names of the participants—showed precisely the same sequence. An old maiden woman who kept a newspaper shop in the Commercial Road, had Madame Fougère's passion for displaying her jewellery. Only in her case it was cheap and most of it probably false. She used to lean over the half-door of her shop in the evening and parade it for the admiration of the passers-by. The newspaper boy who delivered to her her batch of papers was in the habit of knocking upon her door between five and six in the morning. The old lady then came down, opened the door, received her papers, locked the door again and retired to bed again until what the late Mr. W. H. Mallock used to call "a more gentlemanly hour." On the morning of the murder this custom was duly observed. But it happened that on this particular morning, for some reason—very possibly a test-match—there was an unusual demand for newspapers. The boy, accordingly, went back by the same road to get a fresh supply, and as he passed the old lady's door he saw that it was ajar. He was surprised, since it was not yet seven o'clock. Returning with his fresh batch of papers half an hour later, he saw that the door was closed, and that two men were standing on the kerb, reading the news. Now no news-shops were as yet opened. The two men were convicted, and admitted their guilt upon the scaffold. A second point in the trial to cause surprise

was that at the time of the arrest the two men were penniless, and had not so much as a pawn-ticket between them. The explanation came some time afterwards when some workmen repairing the house found the jewellery in a cache below the old woman's bedroom floor. These two circumstances joined themselves on to the story of Madame Fougère; and a day or two spent for the most part in an electric launch on the lake of Geneva, one summer when I had come down from Zermatt frost-bitten, gave me the rest of *At the Villa Rose.*

The House of the Arrow was built up in much the same way. A Professor of Medicine, who served with me in the Mediterranean in 1915, talked to me one summer night off Alicante of Strophanthus Hispidus. He sent me afterwards the treatise on the poison with its diagrams and the actual poison-arrow itself. The name of Waberski came from a young German officer of the *Dresden* who, escaping from the wreck of that warship, obtained a Russian passport in the name of Waberski, and, armed with that, went north to destroy munition factories in the United States. He was caught as he crossed the Rio Grande. Some portion of the novel was suggested a few years later by one who told me a story in a southern town of France. Finally came the reports, cropping up time after time in the newspapers, of a whole country district devastated by anonymous letters, which were in the end traced to a young girl employed in a Government Department. Thus the raw material for detective stories is lying about in the streets, for whosoever can make use of it. The making use of it is, of course, the difficulty.

For the ordinary conditions of fiction remain, plus something else. The locality and setting must be worked into the woof of the story with even greater care than usual. For one touch of fairyland ruins it altogether. It must appear to be a record of located facts. Defoe would have written the perfect detective novel.

"There is, perhaps, in everything of any consequence, a secret history which it would be amusing to know, could we have it authentically communicated," Mr. Boswell wrote of Dr. Johnson's trouble with Lord Chesterfield; and that sentence contains the whole theory of detective fiction. First the facts as known to the public and then the secret history authentically communicated. Again, if the characters are wooden and react obviously to the author's plan rather than to their own natural lines of conduct, the detective story fails, as will any other kind of fiction. The conditions are the same except that in the detective story the form is a little more rigid, and there is something else—the puzzle.

No doubt, for its entertainment, the book will rely considerably upon its puzzle. It is fun for the author, who tries by whatever ingenious means he may be master of, to keep his secret to the last possible moment. It is fun, too, for the reader, who seeks to disentangle the threads and beat the author. For this reason, if the book is to succeed, the author must play fair, he must not seek to baffle his reader by introducing some new character, or some new factor at the very end of the book without which a solution of his mystery is impossible. But he must so conduct his story that the reader shall be tempted to go back and read the book again; and that on such a reperusal, he shall be compelled to say: "Yes, the truth was there set out for me to see, if I had been able to see it."

I have left the greatest of all the conditions necessary in this kind of book to the last. All the great detective novels are known by and live on account of their detectives. Dupin, Sherlock Holmes, Monsieur Lecocq—above all, I think, Monsieur Lecocq in the volume of the novel which bears his name. Has not Father Brown joined that select company? The detective must be an outstanding person, actual, picturesque, amusing, a creature of power and singularity. Without such a being, the detective novel, however ingenious, will pass back to the lending library. With him it may find a permanent place upon the bookshelf. □

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The Longest Goodbye: Raymond Chandler and the Poetry of Alcohol

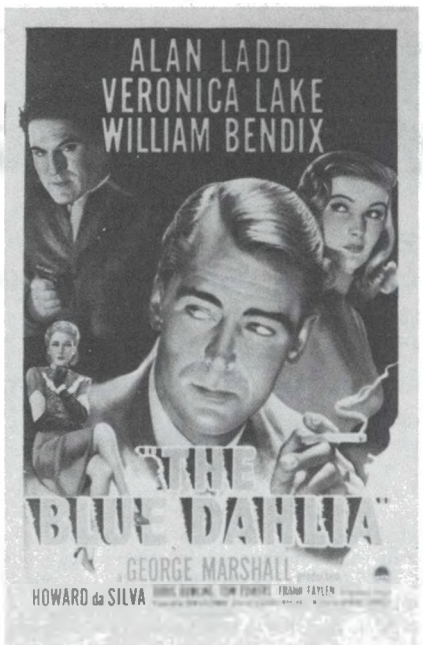
By J. O. Tate

A host of legends and biographies maneuver us into difficulties about the intentions of writers who were more than familiar with Demon Rum. *The Great Gatsby, The Sun Also Rises,* and *Sanctuary* are harder to "read" than we would like to admit. Who is not aware of Fitzgerald's love for Keats, and the source of his most evocative title, *Tender Is the Night*? Remembering Fitzgerald's life may lend a certain chill to such warm lines as those of the second stanza of Keat's *Ode to a Nightingale*. The "beaded bubbles winking at the brim" of an imaginary glass of wine are a defining quality of an object of unique poetic totality. But consider the stanza as perceived by an alcoholic, and the bloom is off the rose.

Raymond Chandler's references to drinking are part of the hardboiled ethos parodied by S. J. Perelman and Woody Allen: the hardboiled dick must have his office bottle. But at least once, Chandler followed Fitzgerald in pursuit of a poetic suspension which we may think of as poetic if not Keatsian. And, like Fitzgerald as an artist and possibly as a man, he found bitterness in the dregs. But he would not, could not have come to such knowledge without first exploring the lambent golden greenness—the translucent green goldenness—the chartreuse astringency of a cocktail around which he structured his greatest and most personal work. *The Long Goodbye* (1954) is a ninety-proof revelation of self, an articulated fantasy, and a novel of manners written by a man who resented nothing so much as not being taken seriously as a writer.

John Houseman's well-known memoir "Lost Fortnight" tells perhaps the most dramatic story of Chandler's drinking. An aggrieved Chandler (whom Houseman, himself a veteran of the English public school system, portrays as an inhibited victim of his stay at Dulwich College many years before) demands and receives elaborate secretarial and medical support for a prolonged jag so that he can finish the shooting script of *The Blue Dahlia* (1945)—drunk. When the deal was struck, says Houseman, "We left the studio in Ray's open Packard and drove to Perino's where I watched him down three double martinis before eating a large and carefully selected lunch, followed by three double stingers." Chandler lived on intravenous injections and bourbon and water, and finished the job.[1]

The whole story is illustrative of Chandler's pride, his professionalism (!), and his peculiar relationship with alcohol. But the longer one considers the story, the more one sees: there's a connection demonstrated, in Chandler's mind and behavior, between alcohol and creativity, a "controlled" drunkenness and an ideal of gentlemanliness, which, for Chandler, was somehow specifically *English*. In Chandler's mind, this was, or could be, connected with the work of creation, the craft of writing. Chandler and Houseman were both in Hollywood trying to make a living, but, to Chandler, their



English public school background was most important. One cannot imagine such an absurd but serious proposal being made to anyone else—or, perhaps, to any other kind of person. A similar fusion of pride, self-regard, friendship, Anglophile snobbery, and alcohol is the ostensible subject of Chandler's most ambitious, longest novel, *The Long Goodbye*—his last strong work.

Another memoir, Natasha Spender's "His Own Long Goodbye," offers a sophisticated analysis of an older Chandler, alcoholic and suicidally depressed by the death of his wife. Natasha Spender's comments and analysis are the most insightful we have:

> He wrote *The Long Goodbye* as Cissy lay dying, and we who tried to see him through the subsequent "long nightmare" recognize in the book three distinct self-portraits. It may well reflect the interior dialogue between facets of his own personality as he looked back upon their long life together, which he was soon to lose. Afterwards his London conversations. . . strikingly resembled the dialogue of all three characters in turn. . . .
>
> Like Terry [Lennox], Raymond was a young ex-soldier in the early twenties, battle-scarred and scared, whose pride was that "of a man who had nothing else." [Lennox], when castigated by Philip Marlowe for being a moral defeatist, says that his life is all "an act." Raymond often

PHOTO: CAROLYN HARTMAN

knowledged his own tendency to fantasize and play-act. . . .

Like that of Roger Wade, the successful, middle-aged, alcoholic and egocentric writer, Raymond's drunken stream of consciousness could also at bad moments be full of self-hatred, writer's angst, and sarcastic hostility. . . .

Marlowe of course, represents Chandler's ideal self, the conscience which punished the Roger Wade within him though not without commendation for achievement (for Wade in the book is "a bit of a bastard and maybe a bit of a genius too"), and befriended the Terry [Lennox] within, not without censure. . .

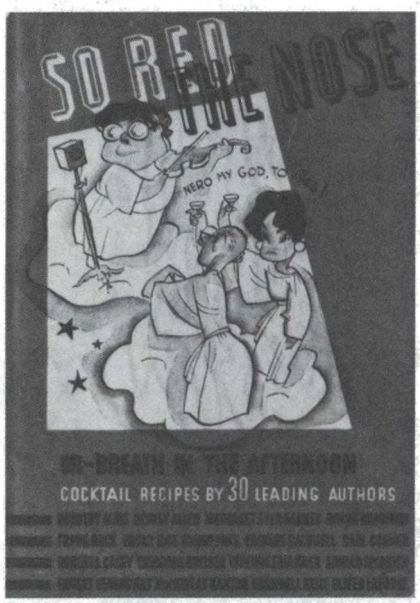
The Long Goodbye is in part a fond farewell to, a criticism of, an homage to, and a pastiche of _The Great Gatsby_.

All three characters were drinkers, like Raymond himself, two of them disintegrating and despairing, for only the ideal-self Marlowe shows a disposition towards integrity. As aspects of Raymond's own character their dominance veered with his mood, Roger Wade his "bad self," Philip Marlowe his "good self" and Terry [Lennox] his anxious one. These three, often in conflict, were in good times subordinated to a fourth, the genial, gererous, and benevolently paternal friend.[2]

Natasha Spender speaks from a knowledge of Chandler the man and from a psychological insight into his work. Her identification of the three leading male characters as a splitting of their creator's personality is a key to the structure and meaning of *The Long Goodbye* which I aspire to employ to unlock further of its secrets. Her specific identification of the fragments of self out of which characters are created has the power to remind us of works of E. T. A. Hoffmann, Poe, Dostoievski, and Conrad. But I wish to emphasize, not the splitting of the selves, but the alcoholic obsession of all three. *The Long Goodbye,* like many if not most fictions, may be a form of wishful thinking; but if so it is uniquely a picture and sublimation of wishful drinking.

Yet Frank MacShane, in his brilliant biography of Chandler, has made it clear that, at the time of the composition of *The Long Goodbye,* Chandler had "mastered his desire for [alcohol]."[3] Yet the novel is at least superficially about drinking. It is what the characters *do*. Drinking is the basis of the relationship of Marlowe and Lennox. Drinking causes the acquaintance of Marlowe and Wade. Marlowe meets Linda Loring (his bride to be) at a bar. Marlowe meets Howard Spencer at a bar, and Mrs. Wade at that same bar. Chandler had mastered his desire for alcohol, at least temporarily; but alcohol was on his mind.

Chandler wrote his first draft worn down by his wife's declining health and his own self-doubt, yet carrying on. He sent the draft to his agent in May 1952. The reaction touched a nerve and led to a break between Chandler and the firm of Brandt and Brandt; the reaction also led to Chandler's revisions, which were interrupted by a trip to England. In a letter to Hamish Hamilton, his English publisher, Chandler declared



The long relationship between writers and alcohol is evidenced in this 1930s publication.

I wrote this as I wanted to because I can do that now. I don't care whether the mystery is fairly obvious, but I cared about the people, about this strange corrupt world we live in, and how any man who tries to be honest looks in the end either sentimental or plain foolish. . . . You write in a style that has been imitated, even plagiarized, to the point where you begin to look as if you were imitating your imitators. So you have to go where they can't follow you.

As MacShane puts it, "There is no doubt that Chandler intended to put all of himself into *The Long Goodbye.*"[4] As Natasha Spender suggests, "all of himself" means, in effect, three selves—three drinking selves. But let MacShane advance the story of the composition of Chandler's most ambitious work:

When Chandler returned to La Jolla in 1952, he announced

that he had learned how to drink on the *Mauretania* returning from his first trip to England since 1918. He had discovered the gimlet, a cocktail made with gin and Rose's lime juice. In the evenings before dinner Chandler and his wife would have a single gimlet and that would be all. It was the first time he had done any drinking in his own house for six years. Gradually, as Cissy grew weaker and the situation more obvious, Chandler began to increase the amount he took.[5]

A year after he had first sent out his draft, he was four-fifths of the way through his revision of the novel—and the gimlet was a substantial part of that *re-vision*.

And another year later, after Cissy's death, Patrick Doncaster interviewed Chandler in England for the *Daily Mirror* in a piece that

was never published because of a newspaper strike. They talked about Hollywood girls, and then Doncaster changed the subject:

"Mrs. Chandler," I said gently.

He put down his gimlet, a gin and lime drink you associate with pukka sahibs and outposts of Empire rather than a Hollywood thriller writer whose chief character swigs Scotch.

"What about Mrs. Chandler?" he said edgily. "She's dead. Died last year." He looked away across the bar. He twitched a little, jumpy. Then something choked in his throat.

"I've not got over it yet," he said quietly. And a big tear rolled down his cheek.[6]

Doncaster's anecdote sends a chill up the spine because it not only portrays Chandler the suffering man but also gives a glimpse into the imagination of Chandler the haunted artist. We must notice here the association of alcohol with sentiment, even if that sentiment is a deeply felt and genuine grief. In *The Long Goodbye,* it is the gimlet which is the image of a certain sentiment. That potent and noble cocktail is the emotional solvent, the emblem of Marlowe's love for Lennox, and the connection by which Marlowe meets the woman who (in the unfinished *Poodle Springs Story*—1958) was to become his wife. If *The Long Goodbye* is a novel about drinking, then it is a novel about drinking gimlets. But what does drinking gimlets mean? Well—why did Daisy cry about Gatsby's imported English shirts? What do such *shirts* mean? As an image in context, everything. I do not compare Terry Lennox's gimlets—or Jupiter-Jowett—to Gatsby's brilliant collection of various commodities casually.

One measure of the seriousness with which Chandler addressed the composition of *The Long Goodbye* is its sturdy structure. The gimlets mentioned at the beginning, middle, and end of the novel are emblems as firmly placed (though not so meaningful) as the scaffolding/pillory scenes similarly placed in *The Scarlet Letter.* Chandler's firmness of design clarifies for us the unraveling of a tangled skein of action and emotion. The scenes with Lennox at the beginning and end enfold the interior episodes involving Roger Wade; at the end we understand the relationship between the two. Between the Lennox material at the beginning and the introduction of the Wade episodes are a number of lesser actions involving Endicott the lawyer, Morgan the reporter, Peters the private detective, the police, and Menendez and Starr, the gangsters. After Wade's death, these same people and connections are recapitulated before Marlowe finally sees Lennox again. This symmetry, a "geometric structure" or "framing device", strongly resembles the "ring composition" known to classicists.[7]

Marlowe expresses a profound ambivalence between English good manners and an American vernacular.

Chandler's self-consciousness can be appreciated also by his self-inflicted criticism. The taunts of the gangster Menendez, placed about one-fifth of the way into the novel, are not idle street chatter but cunningly devised insults designed to pre-empt the reader. The well-heeled Menendez sneers at Marlowe's relative poverty and then strikes at the heart of the novel. Saying early what Chandler doesn't want the reader to think later, the criminal tough guy effectively discredits an intelligent position by taking it. He puts his finger on a sentimentality of which Chandler was aware.

"You got cheap emotions. You're cheap all over. You pal around with a guy, eat a few drinks, talk a few gags, slip him a little dough when he's strapped, and you're sold out to him. Just like some school kid that read *Frank Merriwell.* You got no guts, no brains, no connections, no savvy, so you throw out a phony attitude and expect people to cry over you." (Chapter 11)

Menendez's—that is, Chandler's—citation of Frank Merriwell is an acute piece of literary and even moral analysis. Gilbert Patten's dime novels (signed by the pseudonymous Burt L. Standish) sold millions of copies from 1896 on. Frank Merriwell, that "wholesome college athlete," was a popular reduction of prep-school fantasy, whose sporting adventures may lie behind Marlowe's reference to a football injury (Chapter 8). Such a connection not only mocks but

clarifies Marlowe's, and by extension Chandler's, romantic, even adolescent, code of honor. We may associate this further with Owen Johnson's Dink Stover, or better with a British tradition of boy's books by such writers as Thomas Hughes and R. M. Ballantyne. Chandler, that public school boy, never forgot Dulwich College.

And we must not forget—he never got over it—that Chandler began the career for which he is remembered as a pulpwriter himself, in Joseph R. Shaw's *Black Mask* magazine. Menendez's cutting phrase, "Tarzan on a big red scooter," is not only an effective sneer at Marlowe but a stinging rebuke written by the man whom it hurt most, Chandler himself. Edgar Rice Burrough's Tarzan, the son of a British nobleman, was a popular fantasy-figure of imperial association not as distant from Marlowe as it is comfortable to think. Switching from the vein of prep-school gentility to that of the street-wise tough guy, Marlowe expresses a profound ambivalence between English good manners and an American vernacular, the tension of which drives Chandler's novel. In an unsportsmanlike gesture that indicates a nerve has been touched, Marlowe punches Menendez in the stomach, which action is in effect Chandler lashing out at his own critical sense, setting an example for the reader to suppress the nay-sayer within. Such are the requirements of masculine romance, as written by an elegant and despairing artist of that genre. (The association of public school honor and the composition of "thrillers" is not so dated as it seems, surviving literally and healthily in Gavin Lyall's *Blame the Dead* [1973] and John le Carré's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*.)

Another measure of the seriousness with which Chandler addressed the project (the working title of which was *Summer in Idle Valley*) is its richness of literary allusion and reference. We find Walter Bagehot (Chapter 13), T. S. Eliot (Chapters 32 and 49), Keats (Chapter 34), Shakespeare (Chapters 26 and 47), Marlowe (Chapter 24) and Robert Frost/Blaise Pascal (Chapter 38), Sir James Frazer (Chapter 35), Flaubert (Chapter 23), Coleridge (Chapter 14), and William Inge (Chapter 23). If Marlowe's name repeats Christopher Marlowe's, it also encapsules Sir Thomas Malory's, for Marlowe was first named Mallory. Similarly, the publisher Howard Spencer conjures Edmund Spenser. But I think that the most important of these references—the most meaningful, the least incidental or decorative—is to F. Scott Fitzgerald, in Chapters 13 and 14.

For Chandler, that sensitive man, critical reader, and professional writer, was well aware of Fitzgerald and, I think, to some extent identified with him. He too labored in the sour vineyards of Hollywood, after Fitzgerald did (and as others such as Faulkner, Hammet, O'Hara, West, and McCoy did). Like Fitzgerald, he wrote a Hollywood novel (*The Little Sister,* 1949), and he had highly developed opinions about Fitzgerald's unfinished *The Last Tycoon.*[8]

One example of Chandler's awareness of Fitzgerald's achievement (in a letter dated May 2, 1949) is stated at the expense of lesser writers:

> But somehow [Marquand's] successful, oh-so-successful soufflés always make me think of little lost books like *Gatsby* and *Miss Lonelyhearts*—books which are not perfect, evasive of the problem often, side-stepping scenes which should have been written (and which Marquand would have written at twice the necessary length) but somehow passing along, crystallized, complete, and as such things go nowadays, eternal, a little pure art—great art or not I wouldn't know, but there is such a strange difference between the real stuff and a whole shelf of Pulhams and Forsytes and Charlie Grays.
>
> Not that I class myself with any of these people. . .[9]

Again, in a letter to Dale Warren of November 13, 1950, while he was working on *The Long Goodbye,* Chandler wrote that

> Fitzgerald is a subject no one has a right to mess up. I think he just missed being a great writer, and the reason is pretty obvious. If the poor guy was already an alcoholic in his college days, it's a marvel that he did as well as he did. He had one of the rarest qualities in all literature, and it's a great shame that the word for it has been thoroughly debased by the cosmetic racketeers, so that one is almost ashamed to use it to describe a real distinction. Nevertheless, the word is charm—charm as Keats would have used it. Who has it today? It's not a matter of pretty writing or clear style. It's a kind of subdued magic, controlled and exquisite, the sort of thing you get from good string quartettes. Yes, where would you find it today?[10]

I think that to a degree Chandler here identifies, in effect, with Fitzgerald: alcoholism, charm, the magic of style, music. The alcoholic identification needs no comment, except to note that alcoholism is associated with both literary accomplishment *and* failure. The word *magic* Chandler used about good writing—and about his own writing. "All good writers have a touch of magic."[11] Or again: "But a writer who hates the actual writing, who gets no joy out of the creation of magic by words, to me is simply not a writer at all . . . How can you hate the magic which makes of a paragraph or a sentence or a line of dialogue or a description something in the nature of a new creation?"[12] Thinking of himself, he wrote that "[A] writer to be happy should be a good second rater. . . . He should definitely not be a mystery writer with a touch of magic and a bad feeling about plots."[13]

In *The Long Goodbye,* the word "charm" is used by Marlowe about Lennox: "[H]e had charm."[14] "Music" he used eloquently and elegiacally about his

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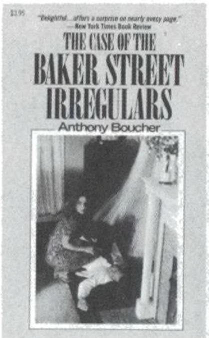

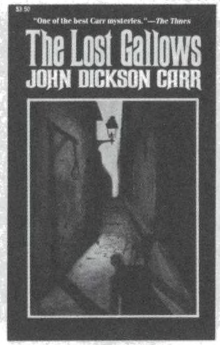

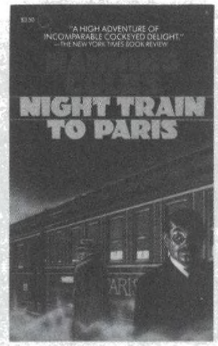

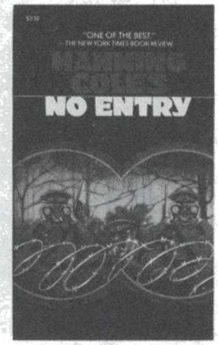

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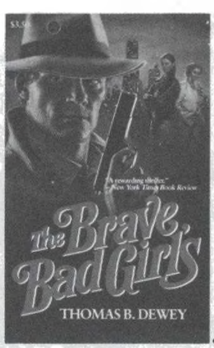

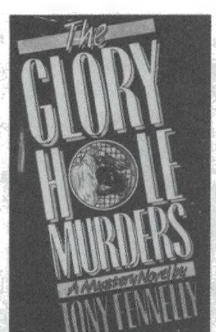

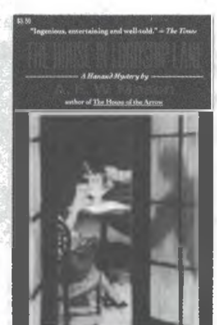

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wife, who had been a fine pianist: "She was the music heard faintly at the edge of sound."[15] At the end of *Playback,* Marlowe has received a long-distance proposal from Linda Loring. The last sentence is: "The air was full of music."

"Charm" and "magic" are directly related. The word *charm* is derived from the Latin *carmen,* meaning song. A charm is a poem or song, an incantation that may ward off evil spirits or bring good luck. By extension, a charm may be a talisman, hence "charm bracelet." This identity of terms—charm, magic, poetry—through the persona of Fitzgerald, or through his legend, is connected by Chandler with alcohol, a distilled magic, a bottled poetry, both the lift of inspiration and the subject of poetry itself. Edward Fitzgerald's arbitrary, antiquarian translations of Omar Khayyám remove us to an ancient world; through the poetry of Callimachus and Anacreon, the tradition reaches further back.

But Chandler and Fitzgerald have a bit more in common than alcohol, charm, and magical writing—which Chandler inplies were the same thing, both in Fitzgerald as the other, and in himself as a conscious self. There's the Hollywood connection already mentioned; their membership in the same World War I generation; the profound romanticism that expresses itself variously in both writers as a complex social snobbery, both conscious and unconscious; there's an infatuation with the dialectic of class; an ambivalent "idealization" of woman; a shaky adherence to a prep-school idea of manliness. All of these qualities and themes, rich material for the writer of talent, are present in *The Great Gatsby.* My contention is that *The Long Goodbye* is in part a fond farewell to, a criticism of, an homage to, and a pastiche of *The Great Gatsby.*

Fitzgerald is loudly mentioned in *The Long Goodbye,* through the alcoholic, writerly bitterness of a character Natasha Spender has identified as a projection of Chandler himself: "I do not care to be in love with myself and there is no longer anyone else for me to be in love with. Signed: Robert (F. Scott Fitzgerald) Wade. P.S. This is why I never finished *The Last Tycoon.*" Eileen Wade's comments extend the identifications: "Just attitudinizing. He has always been a great admirer of Scott Fitzgerald! He says Fitzgerald is the best drunken writer since Coleridge, who took dope. Notice the typing, Mr. Marlowe. Clear, even and no mistakes." Marlowe himself suggests that "the Scott Fitzgerald allusion might merely be an off-beat way of saying goodbye."[16] A long goodbye, indeed.

Wade's (and Chandler's) allusion to Keats in Chapter 34 mixes the contemplation of suicide with alcoholism in a blend fixed by the aesthetic mode. "A pretty color whiskey is, isn't it? To drown in a golden flood—that's not so bad. 'To cease upon the midnight with no pain.' How does that go on? Oh, sorry, you wouldn't know. Too literary. . ." Chandler's Keats is filtered through Fitzgerald, and anticipates his own feeble, alcoholic attempt at suicide after *The Long Goodbye* was published and his wife was dead.

I think that Gatsby's seemingly fraudulent "Oxford education," English shirts, Rolls-Royce and pseudo-English diction ("old sport") were latterly re-

incarnated in Lennox, with his English suitcase and automobile, his British war experience, gangster friends, and mysterious identity. This is a projection of Chandler's self *through* Fitzgerald's lyricism. Chandler served in the Great War in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Lennox was born in Canada. To further show the connection between Chandler and Fitzgerald, I must also point out that Frank MacShane has demonstrated the imaginative connection between "the girl with the cornflower-blue eyes" from Chandler's poem "Nocturne from Nowhere" (1932) and such later blond incarnations as Eileen Wade in *The Long Goodbye.*[17] In emphasizing the connection with Fitzgerald and *The Great Gatsby,* I do not at all mean to deny the truth of MacShane's assertions but to amplify that truth. In the first place, Chandler's fantasy about the girl was written well after *The Great Gatsby* (1925). When Marlowe meets Mrs. Wade, we have a lush outpouring:

> [A] dream walked in . . . She was slim and quite tall in a white linen tailormade. . . . Her hair was the pale gold of a fairy princess. There was a small hat on it into which the pale gold hair nestled like a bird in its nest. Her eyes were cornflower blue, a rare color, and the lashes were long and almost too pale.

Thereafter, this blonde is called "the golden girl" three times. She has a low voice "like the stuff they used to line summer clouds with."[18] We must be reminded of Fitzgerald's Daisy Fay Buchanan, with her "low, thrilling voice" which is " 'full of money.' "

> That was it. I'd never understood before. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it. . . . High in a

white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl.[19]

When Chandler's Eileen pays the waiter at the Ritz-Carlton, "he looked as if he had shaken hands with God."[20] As for Gatsby: "He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God."[21]

Joseph Louzonis has suggested that Philip Marlowe's lengthy digression or disquisition on blondes (Chapter 13)—a polished excursus—is inspired by Semonides of Amorgos's satire *On Women,* written around the middle of the seventh century B.C. Considering Chandler's background in classics, this may be so; but I think that this aria is also indebted to Fitzgerald, and matched by Lennox's set-piece on gimlets.

Ernest Lockridge has written that "Gatsby's dream divides into three basic and related parts: the desire to repeat the past, the desire for money, and the desire for incarnation of 'unutterable visions' in the material earth." Lennox wants to repeat the past by re-marrying Sylvia; in so doing, he seizes wealth. The unutterable vision of *The Long Goodbye* is incarnated in such emblems of wealth as British automobiles, stories of the spoiled rich, and English manners incarnated in the gimlet. Besides: Eileen Wade wants to repeat the past by recovering her first love for Paul Marston; Linda Loring is for Marlowe a sexual lure associated with wealth; the whole novel is a circular gesture of futility less over-reaching, less grand, and less tragic than *The Great Gatsby.*[22]

The Long Goodbye has in common with *The Great Gatsby* the elements of adultery and desire, alcohol in profusion, various forms of violence (including fatal gunfire and violence at cocktail parties), an attempt to recapture the past, Anglophilia, ineffable effusions, a beautiful blonde, an investigative structure, a studied contrast between the low and the high, the squalid and the glamorous, the world of work contrasted with a corrupting and irresponsible wealth, a display of status symbols (automobiles, mansions, etc.), and an inarticulate friendship or male bonding or love or identification or sympathy, the displacement of which excites and explains the writing of both first-person narratives. No more imagination is required to see *The Long Goodbye* as a "lyrical novel" than is required to see *The Great Gatsby* as a detective story.

The world of *The Great Gatsby,* like the world Chandler imagined in *The Long Goodbye,* is both an underworld of the sinister and sleazy and an overworld of glamour and glory. The overworld is chiefly embodied in commercial talismans, advertising emblems, the obvious emblems of status, the thrice-familiar clichés of mass-cult entertainment, the stuff of a thousand B-movies. Both Gatsby and Lennox—and by extension, Nick and Marlowe—are involved

with blondes, booze, big bucks, and guns. In context, the underworld and the overworld are hardly distinguishable. *The Great Gatsby* is a *dolcissimo* expostulation, a *legato* apostrophe, and a vulgar tragedy. Both novels are "novels of manners" set in an unmannerly country and a rude century. But *The Long Goodbye* ends not with a bang, but a whimper. Fitzgerald's prophetic, apocalyptic masterpiece still has the power to excite. Chandler's effort is an elegy to his own lost energy, a plaint for his illusions. Gatsby has two names and dies. Lennox has three.

The poetry of glamour and glory must, in a fallen world, be charged with alcoholic inspiration.

He dies as a man, but is still walking at the end. *The Long Goodbye* is a ponderous farewell to illusion, a laid-back Californian revision of Fitzgerald's fable of East and West. The profoundly shallow elements of these fictions, their superficial depths, are so much a part of the American imagination that it is difficult for us to see them, much less to evaluate them. But Norman Mailer, demonstrating both the power and his knowledge of the power of these cultural symbols, in his underrated *An American Dream,* shuffled a well-worn deck and again dealy us familiar cards—the blonde, the booze (and prohibited marijuana), the bucks, the gun, and so forth. These are (must be?) the stuff of a modern, specifically American melodrama. Not for nothing did Chandler suffuse his mysteries with the imagery of medieval romance so often commented on. His knightly, chess-playing narrator is obsessed with honor, chivalric behavior, the chastity of women and the *gentillesse* of men. When Chandler mounted his greatest production, he made his Anglophile version of good manners and proper behavior the subject of his novel in the most complex way he ever achieved. Marlowe's empathy with Lennox had been foreshadowed, I think, in his sympathy with Moose Malloy in *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940). The opening scene presents Moose staring at the defective neon sign denoting Florian's, where his "little Velma" used to work. This image of irrecoverable romance is highly reminiscent of Gatsby and the green light on Daisy's dock. Like Nick, Marlowe must sympathize with and admire the forlorn, doomed romanticism of such a gesture. Moose is murdered by his dream-girl at the end, as Gatsby was betrayed by Daisy. "Little Velma," who was "cute as lace pants," remakes herself into "Mrs. Lewin Lockridge Grayle" and disastrously ends a career of self-transformation not unlike Gatsby's transmogrification from James Gatz. Like Nick, Marlowe is the narrator-witness who uniquely *knows.*[23]

Farewell, My Lovely also anticipates the "double plot" of *The Long Goodbye,* wherein two seemingly unrelated adventures *are* related in the very unknotting of their covert relationship. In *Farewell, My Lovely,* the Moose Malloy-Velma-Jesse Florian business is revealed to be causally, not casually, related to the Lindsay Marriot-Mrs. Grayle episodes. This is the "mystery" which is solved. Similarly, in *The Long Goodbye,* Marlowe finds that the Lennox matter is causally, not casually, related to the Wade material: he would not have been hired by Mrs. Wade if he had not kept faith with Lennox; but also, Mrs. Wade, as the real murderer, has ulterior motives. The synthesis of the novel is its resolution in the person of Linda Loring, Sylvia Lennox's sister, and Marlowe's attachment to her both in and out of the text of that novel.

For Chandler, the Fitzgerald "magic" and "charm" and "music" required a relaxation into a spontaneity. The poetry of glamour and glory must, in a fallen world, be charged with alcoholic inspiration. Now when I say that *The Long Goodbye* is "about" drinking, I mean what I say—literally, but not exclusively. Perhaps a précis—an alcoholic one—will reinforce the point.

Ch. 1 Marlowe rescues the "plastered" Lennox and takes him home, where there's a half-empty Scotch bottle. The words *drunk* and *booze hound* are used.

2. Marlowe rescues Lennox again; the drunk tapers off on beer, and later they sit over "a couple of very mild drinks." Marlowe leaves Lennox alone with a whiskey bottle, which goes untouched.

Ch. 3 Lennox, remarried, takes Marlowe to Victor's for gimlets and talk. The gimlets become a ritual of friendship. They discuss Sylvia's drunk/hung over friends.

Ch. 4 Marlowe and Lennox sit in a bar, drinking, discussing drinking. They exchange words.

Ch. 5. Lennox appears suddenly. He must go to Tijuana. Marlowe serves coffee and Old Grand-Dad. He puts a pint of bourbon in Lennox's suitcase. Lennox refers to Sylvia as "dead drunk."

Ch. 6 Tijuana and back. The cops are waiting. "We had a drink together once in a while."

Ch. 7 Marlowe stands up to two police beatings rather than betray a friend.

Ch. 8. Marlowe behind bars. The drunk tank. Visit from Endicott. Marlowe says, "I'm not here for him, I'm here for me."

Ch. 9. Grenz of the D.A.'s office exhales the smell of whiskey. Marlowe challenges him to "Take another quick one."

Ch. 10. Lonnie Morgan of the *Journal* takes Marlowe home. He refuses Marlowe's offer of a drink.

Ch. 11. Phone call from Endicott. Visit from Menendez. Call from Spencer: "Let's discuss it over a drink." Menendez's war story: Lennox "hit the bottle."

Ch. 12. Letter from Lennox with portrait of Madison (a $5,000 bill): "So forget it and me. But first drink a gimlet for me at Victor's. And the next time you make coffee, pour me a cup and put me some bourbon in it."

Ch. 13. At the Ritz-Beverly bar at 11:00 A.M., Marlowe sees a middle-aged drunk. "There is a sad man like that in every quiet bar in the world." Marlowe has a weak Scotch and water. Enter "the golden girl." Enter Spencer; who orders a gin and orange for himself and one for Marlowe. Spencer broaches the subject of Roger Wade. Marlowe says, "I like liquor and women and chess and a few other things..." Spencer tells the story of Wade's wild drinking. A second round of gin and oranges arrives. "The golden girl" introduces herself as Eileen Wade. Marlowe later has a martini with dinner.

Ch. 14. Coffee with Mrs. Wade reminds Marlowe of coffee with Terry. "A neighbor of ours knew the Lennoxes." Discussion of Wade's drinking problems; mention of Fitzgerald and Coleridge.

Ch. 15. Visit to George Peters at the Carne Organization. Discussion of a "well-heeled alcoholic" at a "sobering-up joint." Mention of Marston: "The guy was drunk all the time..."

Ch. 16. Earl and Dr. Verringer. "The guy's a wino."

Ch. 17. Dr. Vukanich. "He lives on the sauce for days on end." "Shoot yourself in the vein, don't you, Doc?"

Ch. 18. Dr. Varley. "Wade, a well-to-do alcoholic..."

Ch. 19. "Hooch cases." A whiskey sour at Rudy's Bar-B-Q. Marlowe intervenes and retrieves Wade. "I was foul with strong drink."

Ch. 20. Marlowe takes Wade home. "You the guy that was mixed up with Lennox?" "Aren't you coming in for a drink or something?" Eileen: "Don't you want a drink yourself?"

Ch. 21. Eileen invites Marlowe "for a drink the next evening." Reminded of Terry and the gimlets at Victor's, Marlowe heads there.

Ch. 22. A woman at the bar is drinking a "pale greenish-colored drink." Marlowe orders a gimlet—a double; the bartender mentions Rose's Lime Juice. Discussion of gimlets, England, and Terry. "A couple more of the same...in a booth." "A bit of a sentimentalist, aren't you, Mr. Marlowe?" "I reached for my glass and dropped the contents down the hatch." "I need another drink" (third gimlet). Harlan Potter said "Terry was a gentleman twenty-four hours a day instead of for the fifteen minutes between the time the guests arrive and the time they feel their first cocktail." "I came in here to drink a gimlet because a man asked me to." "Three gimlets. Doubles. Perhaps you're drunk." "You had one and a half, Mrs. Loring. Why even that much?" "Maybe I *was* a little drunk." Scene with Agostino. Big Willie Magoon.

Ch. 23. At the Wade's: "It was the same old cocktail party...everybody talking too loud, nobody listening, everybody hanging on for dear life to a mug of the juice, eyes very bright, cheeks flushed or pale and sweaty according to the amount of alcohol consumed and the capacity of the individual to handle it." Scene-setting mention of the bar, drinks, etc. Marlowe: "I got Lennox killed..." Wade: "Let's go get that drink."

Ch. 24. The party is "About two drinks louder." Dr. Loring makes a scene with Wade. Marlowe gets a Scotch. A drunken scene between a man and his wife. Marlowe's thoughts on alcoholism. Discussion with Mrs. Wade concerning Wade's status. Wade enters with drink in hand and accuses Marlowe. Wade: "Drunks don't educate, my friend. They disintegrate. And part of the process is a lot of fun." Marlowe thinks that "Alcohol was no more than a disguised reaction."

Ch. 25. Wade's emergency phone call. Marlowe takes care of the Wades.

Ch. 26. Candy assists. Wade claims guilt.

Ch. 27. Examination of Wade's drinking leading to fall. Marlowe drinks as he reads Wade's "wild" writing.

Ch. 28. Wade's drunken writing jag: self-loathing, drinking.

Ch. 29. A shot. Fake suicide attempt scorned by Marlowe. Erotic confrontation with Eileen. Marlowe knocks himself out with a bottle of Scotch.

Ch. 30. Scenes with Candy and Eileen.

Ch. 31. Marlowe decides to kill his hangover with "a tall cold one." Meets Mrs. Loring at office. Heads for Potter.

Ch. 32. Potter rings for tea. He calls Wade a "dangerous alcoholic." Mention of gimlets.

Ch. 33. Calls from Wade and Ashterfelt.

Ch. 34. At Wade's, Marlowe "got that look on my face when a drunk asks you to have a drink." Cokes and sandwiches and beer are ordered. Wade calls for a bottle of whiskey.

Ch. 35. Wade has drunk over half the bottle. He gets

another bottle. Wade passes out. Speedboat and lake.

Ch. 36. Webley again. Wade a suicide?

Ch. 37. Olds: "Your friends get dead." Mention of demerol. Marlowe home to a couple of cold drinks.

Ch. 38. Candy's accusations. Marlowe has "a stiff one."

Ch. 39. Inquest. At lunch, Marlowe has "a brown Swedish beer that could hit as hard as a martini."

Ch. 40. Calls Endicott and Menendez and Peters. Date at Romanoff's.

Ch. 41. Meets Howard Spencer at the Ritz-Beverley. Spencer orders Amontillado, Marlowe a rye whiskey sour. Spencer quaffs Marlowe's drink when shocked by Marlowe's suspicion of Eileen.

Ch. 42. Spencer: "A writer needs stimulation—and not the kind they bottle." Marlowe contradicts Eileen's story of the pendant. Spencer: "I need a drink badly. . . . Straight Scotch, and plenty of it." Marlowe takes a bourbon on the rocks. "She killed both of them."

Ch. 43. Demerol again. "*La señora es muerta.*" Coffee.

Ch. 44. Wade was too soaked with alcohol to have killed himself.

Ch. 45. Eileen's note: Paul Marston (Terry) "an empty shell." Lonnie Morgan and photostat. "Remember the night you drove me home from the City Bastille? You said I had a friend to say goodbye to. I've never really said goodbye to him. If you publish this photostat, that will be all. It's been a long time—a long, long time." Mady and Potter.

Ch. 46. Marlowe returns to Victor's; a gimlet with "two dashes of bitters." He has two. Ohls warns him at home. "I wanted to clear an innocent man."

Ch. 47. Calls from Lonnie and Mrs. Loring, who asks for a drink—in Paris. She warns Marlowe. Menendez.

Ch. 48. Beating. Ohls: "Did the nasty man hurt your facey-wacey?" "In a way cops are all the same. . . . If a guy...gets drunk, stop liquor . . . Let's have a drink." Marlowe asks Linda Loring to have a drink. Call to Starr.

Ch. 49. Visit from Linda. Two bottles of Cordon Rouge champagne: "A really auspicious occasion would call for a dozen." "The sting of it brought tears to my eyes." Making love to Linda, Marlowe mentions "that first time I met you in the bar at Victor's. . . . That night belonged to something else." "But liquor is an aphrodisiac up to a point."

Ch. 50. Discussion of marriage. Tears and champagne. "To say goodbye is to die a little."

Ch. 51. Interview with Endicott. Señor Cisco Maioranos turns up with a reference from Starr.

Ch. 52. Maioranos is revealed as Marston/Lennox. "I suppose it's a bit early for a gimlet."

Ch. 53. Lennox takes back the "portrait of Madison." The novel ends bitterly. Lennox says, "Let's go have a drink somewhere where it's cool and quiet. It wouldn't be much risk going to Victor's for that gimlet." "Well, how about that gimlet?"

The gimlets at the beginning, middle and end of *The Long Goodbye* are its symbol and seal. When Terry takes Marlowe to Victor's for the first time, though, the gimlets are not perfected as they will be by the time Marlowe runs into Linda Loring in the same bar:

"They don't know how to make them here. . . . What they call a gimlet is just some lime or lemon juice and gin with a dash of sugar and bitters. A real gimlet is half gin and half Rose's Lime Juice and nothing else. It beats martinis hollow."[24]

Terry's words are more than a recipe; they are deeply felt exactitudes. The emotion he gets into the little speech makes it an aria or soliloquy. He later has another *cri de coeur,* a less specific one about the beauty of drinking, the poetry of alcohol:

"I like bars just after they open for the evening. When the air inside is still cool and clean and everything is shiny and the barkeep is giving himself that last look in the mirror to see if his tie is straight and his hair is smooth. I like the neat bottles on the bar and the lovely shining glasses and the anticipation. I like to watch the man mix the first one of the evening and put it down on a crisp mat and put the little folded napkin beside it. I like to taste it slowly. The first quiet drink of the evening in a quiet bar—that's wonderful."

I agreed with him.[25]

We also have to agree with Terry: his description rides on its own energy, sweeping our reason before it. But at least part of Terry's love for the ambience of a saloon is Chandler's, and Terry's gimlet lore Chandler picked up on the *Mauretania.* I think it's telling that Terry Lennox's most memorable pronouncements are lyricisms devoted to alcohol, *bel canto* rhetorical swoops that are as moving as they are sincere.

What is a depressant is perceived by the drinker as

The Long Goodbye is a ninety-proof revelation of self . . . written by a man who resented nothing so much as not being taken seriously as a writer.

a stimulant. The special identifying, refined and superior qualities of the gimlet are the property of the gnostic initiated. These qualities exercise connoisseurship. This is the specific image of Marlowe's love for Lennox: the gimlet. That property is "English," a commodity available to any citizen with acceptable clothing and a couple of dollars. Yet the manners—and the charm for Marlowe and Chandler—must go with it, or the magic and the music of love's intoxication are missing. When at the end Marlowe returns for a final gimlet, believing that Lennox is dead, and knowing that Wade is, he is asked by the bartender at Victor's, "You like a dash of bitters in it,

don't you?" Marlowe doesn't. He likes the recipe as Terry Lennox gave it. But he says, "Not usually. Just for tonight two dashes of bitters." Two dashes of bitters for the bitter deaths of his two dead Doppelgängers, his perished shadow-selves.[26] But the next subject mentioned is Marlowe's friend, "the one with the green ice": Linda Loring. Having met through alcohol (gimlets) and loved through more (champagne), Marlowe and Linda will survive as a relationship—though not one that Chandler lived to represent fully.

The history of Rose's Lime Juice, as related in documents sent to me by Mr. John Maher, a vice-president of Cadbury Schweppes, with a letter of April 14, 1983, is perhaps what one would expect. The second Lauchlan Rose (1829–1885), a Scottish descendent of a shipbuilding family from Leith, Edinburgh, founded L. Rose & Co. as "Lemon and Lime Juice Merchants" in 1865. Finding a means of preventing fermentation in the bottle by the use of sulphur dioxide, he was granted in 1867 a patent which made possible the first fruit juice preserved without alcohol. In that same year, the Merchant Shipping Act was passed, dictating that all ocean-going vessels carry sufficient lime juice for a daily issue to ships' companies. Earning the name "Limey" for all Englishmen, the British sailor put scurvy behind him; and the original exporters, outfitting ships, had literally been *Chandlers*.

The business expanded. Headquarters was moved from Scotland to London in 1875. The company purchased the Bath Estate in Dominica, West Indies in 1895. When the company entered the U.S. in 1901, South Africa was its best market. A lime industry was established on the African Gold Coast (now Ghana) in 1924. Suffering in the Blitz, operations were removed from London to St. Alban's in 1940. In 1957, L. Rose & Co. merged with Schweppes and today sells more lime juice than any other company in the world. This history—combining England and Scotland with naval associations—shows Rose's to be an elixir of Empire and Chandler's use of it connected with the themes of adventure, exploration, colonialism, and imperialism as viewed by Martin Green in his *Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire* (Basic Books, 1979), wherein the connections of "adventure tales" and "boy's books" with political and economic developments are firmly drawn.

So a gimlet is a commodity with British associations and provenance and the alcoholic effect, however illusionary, of poetry. Is friendship, affinity, love, magic, or loyalty a commodity which can be condensed and bottled? Symbolically, yes. The fact that a gimlet is a commodity is perhaps most important in *The Long Goodbye*; this fact offers a key to a code of values. These values are perhaps confused, but their entanglements are human; these values are the ones which Chandler worked into the most personal and deliberate of his works.

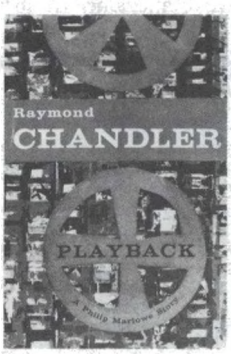
The bartender at Victor's declares, when Marlowe shows up to memorialize his friend, that he has heard that friend talking; he has obtained a bottle of Rose's Lime Juice. Marlowe orders a double and proceeds to meet Linda Loring.

> "So few people drink them around here," she said. . . . "Gimlets I mean."
>
> "A fellow taught me to like them," I said.
>
> "He must be English."
>
> "Why?"
>
> "The lime juice. It's as English as boiled fish with that awful anchovy sauce that looks as if the cook had bled into it. That's how they got to be called limeys. The English—not the fish."
>
> "I thought it was more a tropical drink, hot weather stuff. Malaya or some place like that."
>
> "You may be right."
>
> The bartender set the drink in front of me. With the lime juice it has a sort of pale greenish yellowish misty look. I tasted it. It was both sweet and sharp at the same time. The woman in black watched me. Then she lifted her own glass towards me. We both drank. Then I knew hers was the same drink.[27]

The transference of allegiance from Terry to Linda is through the sign of the gimlet, whose disinihibiting alcoholic dispensation is both an identification and an entrée. Later in the novel, Marlowe and Linda spend the night together. At the end of *Playback*

(1958), Linda calls from Paris and proposes. When Chandler died, he was attempting to write the story of Marlowe's marriage to the wealthy Linda (*The Poodle Springs Story*).[28]

But it is the first conversation with Linda Loring that gives us our clue to the meaning of the gimlets in the novel. Whether associated with the Home Country or the Empire, it is specifically *English,* a cousin of the pink gin instead of the American martini. The "sweet and sharp" Englishness of the gimlet represents Chandler's powerfully ambivalent feelings about his return to England in 1952 as well as his ambivalence, his equivocation about his own identity as an American of English education. The potency of the gimlet—not to put too fine a point upon it, it is, like a martini, a glassful of cold gin—dissolves these contradictions, the self-aware inhibitions of self, in a unity of feeling and effect. The drinker, not drinking, writes a novel about drinking. The drinkers in the novel discuss drinking, sometimes not drinking, but usually drinking. The narrator/drinker, having lost his drinking friend, goes off to rescue a drinker, who later dies drunk.



If the gimlet is a commodity of magical properties and British associations, it is not alone. Lennox himself, born in Canada and a veteran of the British Army, is a commodity with redeeming good manners. His wife buys him once, disposes of him, and then buys him again. Otherwise, we must note that Marlowe first meets Terry "drunk in a Rolls-Royce Silver Wraith" in the first sentence of the novel. When Terry first takes Marlowe to Victor's for a gimlet, he does so in "a rust-colored Jupiter-Jowett with a flimsy canvas rain top. . . . It had pale leather upholstery and what looked like silver fittings." Another English commodity is Terry's suitcase, which he leaves as a marker in Chapter 2. "The suit case was the damndest thing you ever saw and when new had been a pale cream color. The fittings were gold. It was English made and if you could buy it here at all, it would cost more like eight hundred than two." Eileen Wade's second interview with Marlowe (Chapter 14) ends with her leaving in "a slim gray Jaguar." This automobile is mentioned again in Chapter 42. When Marlowe motors to Idle Valley, (in the first sentence of Chapter 23), he sees another "low-swung Jaguar." Even the sleazy Mendy Menendez claims to own, besides two Cadillacs and a Chrysler station wagon, a Bentley and an MG (Chapter 11). Mrs. Loring drives a humdrum Cadillac, but Roger Wade manages to be killed by an imported British item: a double-action Webley hammerless. George Peters mentions an Upman Thirty cigar; Marlowe, in a tense moment, talks about the virtues of Huggins-Young coffee—but these brand names aren't English.

Imported British luxury items—or other such items—are distinctive in some way, and expensive. In one sense, it is their expense that makes them distinctive. In another sense, for Chandler such items are totems of his own nostalgia and fantasy, emblems of what is fine and refined. Marlowe, the "shopsoiled Galahad," "Tarzan on a big red scooter," is a *qualified* narrator because he *understands* about Jaguars and gimlets and Webleys.[29] But even more, this understanding is a necessary qualification for Marlowe to be able to perform the two absolutely necessary functions of *The Long Goodbye*—to appreciate Terry Lennox and, in the end, to reject him. Lennox betrayed the code and used Marlowe: he is no longer a gentleman, not even a drunken and irresponsible one. Having broken faith, he is nothing. There will be no more gimlets for Marlowe in *Playback* or *The Poodle Springs Story.*[30]

The Long Goodbye is Chandler's most revealing because it is his most personal work. Chandler's trouble with plots he tried to finesse by replicating types in a shadowy circle leading nowhere. His highly idiosyncratic vision, his own synthethis of conflicting values, is in this text reflected and refracted into a spectrum of tones that register the stresses of his imagination. The unity of style, like the coherence of personality, begins to fray. No wonder Chandler, old and tired, depressed and lonely, could not pull his act together again. He could not balance the forces within. It was the composition of *The Long Goodbye* itself, as well as his wife's death, that marked him.

Unlike Gatsby, Lennox does not turn out "all the right in the end." Although Marlowe thought at one time that Lennox was "worth the whole damn bunch put together," Marlowe ruefully admits that he was wrong. In effect, Chandler killed off one weak version of himself, in the form of Wade, and then dismissed the other, in the form of Lennox. Then Marlowe and Chandler had to grow or die. Chandler tried to push his imagination further on in the years remaining to him. His attempts were weak; they were the best he could do. Chandler had already said goodbye at length to the most emotive and fictionally strategic parts of himself in *The Long Goodbye.*[31]

Notes

1. John Houseman, "Lost Fortnight: A Memoir." *Harper's Magazine,* August 1965.
2. Natasha Spender in "His Own Long Goodbye" in *The World of Raymond Chandler,* ed. Miriam Gross, New York: A & W Publshers, 1978.
3. Frank MacShane, *The Life of Raymond Chandler* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), p. 191. All students of Chandler must be indebted to MacShane.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 232. The trip to England and the return on the *Mauretania* gave Chandler not only a renewed awareness of England and a taste for gimlets—it also gave him a Homeric simile which directly connects the subject/theme of the novel with ocean voyages:

   > [Terry] was like someone you meet on board ship and get to know very well and never really know at all. He was gone like the same fellow when he says goodbye at the pier and let's keep in touch, old man, and you know you won't and he won't. Likely enough you'll never even see the guy again. If you do he will be an entirely different person, just another Rotarian in a club car. How's business? Oh, not too bad. You look good. So do you. I've put on too much weight. Don't we all? Remember that trip on the *Franconia* (or whatever it was)? Oh sure, swell trip wasn't it?
   >
   > The hell it was a swell trip. You were bored stiff. You only talked to the guy because there wasn't anybody around that interested you. Maybe it was like that with Terry Lennox and me. No, not quite. I owned a piece of him... (Chapter 11)

7. See Chapter XI of *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* by Cedric H. Whitman (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965). I am as obliged to Joseph Louzonis, Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs at St. Francis College, for this suggestion as I am for other wisdoms concerning the elusive nature of the gimlet.
8. MacShane, p. 150.
9. Dorothy Gardiner and Katherine Sorley Walker, eds., *Raymond Chandler Speaking* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p. 83.
10. Frank MacShane, ed., *Selected Letters of Raymond Chandler* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p. 239. Hereinafter *Letters.*
11. *Letters,* p. 285.
12. *Letters,* p. 289.
13. *Letters,* p. 293. This admission about plotting goes back to Chandler's first novel, *The Big Sleep,* "cannibalized" from short stories. "WHO KILLED THE CHAUFFEUR, AND WHY?" When Howard Hawks asked Chandler this question by wire in 1946 during the filming of *The Big Sleep* (a movie on which Faulkner worked), Chandler wired back: "I don't know." So he was determined to plot well in the personal *magnum opus* we are discussing. See MacShane, p. 126.
14. Raymond Chandler, *The Long Goodbye* (1954), Chapter 33. As Chandler's novels have gone through so many cheap editions, it has become conventional to ignore pagination.
15. *Letters,* p. 373.
16. *The Long Goodbye,* Chapters 14-15.
17. MacShane, pp. 20-22 and 201-4.
18. *The Long Goodbye,* Chapter 13.
19. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (Scribner's 1953), p. 120.
20. *The Long Goodbye,* Chapter 13.
21. *The Great Gatsby,* p. 112.
22. "Introduction," *Twentieth Century Interpretations of The Great Gatsby: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. by Ernest H. Lockridge (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968).
23. See George Grella, "The Hard-boiled Detective Novel" in *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. Robin W. Winks (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), pp. 113-14. The analogy between Carraway/Gatsby and Marlowe/Malloy has been emphasized by John G. Cawelti in his *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance* (University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 180-81. I must add that the Hemingway references in *Farewell, My Lovely* remind us that Chandler's paratactic style and Marlowe's tough romanticism are derived at least in part from the author of the Nick Adams stories. Marlowe's retreat into process in Chapter 5 of *The Long Goodbye* is right out of *Big Two-Hearted River* and the fishing episode in *The Sun Also Rises.* (Marlowe elaborates on the process of making coffee for Lennox, who has shown up carrying a gun.."Why do I go into such detail? Because the charged atmosphere made every little thing stand out as a performance, a movement distinct and vastly important. It was one of these hypersensitive moments when all your automatic movements, however long established, however habitual, become separate acts of will." And so on.) Nick Adams meets Nick Carraway in *The Long Goodbye.* Chandler's specific parody of Hemingway may be found in *The Notebooks of Raymond Chandler,* ed. by MacShane: "Beer in the Sergeant Major's Hat (or The Sun Also Sneezes)," written in 1932, is dedicated to Hemingway, "the Greatest American novelist," and is about alcohol. Chandler later defended the weak *Across the River and Into the Trees*: "That's the difference between a champ and a knife thrower. The champ may have lost his stuff temporarily or permanently, he can't be sure. But when he can no longer throw the high hard one, he throws his heart instead. He throws something. He doesn't just walk off the mound and weep" (*Letters,* pp. 229-30). Chandler's athletic metaphor is particularly appropriate to the athletically minded Hemingway; but Chandler also was *identifying* with Hemingway,

hinting that his own project (the novel under discussion) was a matter of throwing his heart on a day when he didn't have his best stuff.

24. *The Long Goodbye,* Chapter 3.

25. *The Long Goodbye,* Chapter 4. Terry's soliloquy on gimlets doesn't quite square, though, in its formula with that recommended by L. Rose & Co., Ltd. The recipe printed on Rose's Lime Juice bottles today recommends a ratio of 1 part Rose's Lime Juice to 4 or 5 parts vodka, gin, rum, or tequila. The result should be served either "on the rocks or straight up." Professors Antonia Bek and Henry Radetsky of Dowling College have generously shared with me their knowledge of gimlet lore. I am also indebted to Lowell Edmunds's *The Silver Bullet: The Martini in American Civilization* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981). Edmunds's astute observations on the martini are pertinent to the gimlet, particularly his "Ambiguity 3: The martini is sensitive—the martini is tough" (p. 51ff).

26. *The Long Goodbye,* Chapter 46. Robin W. Winks, in his splendid *causerie, Modus Operandi: An Excursion into Detective Fiction* (Boston: Godine, 1982), is instructive on Chandler's imitators. But he lets a specific pastiche go unmentioned. I refer to Gavin Lyall's finest production, *Midnight Plus One* (Hodder and Stoddard, 1965; variously reprinted). Lyall's wise-cracking protagonist is a masculine derivative of Marlowe worthy of the original. Instead of being a closet Anglophile, Lyall's Cane is English. His alcoholic *Doppelganger,* Harvey Lovell, is another self reminiscent of Terry Lennox. Lyall composes for Harvey a tender Aria on Martinis to match Lennox's lyrical Soliloquy on gimlets:

> "You just remember going into some place in Paris where they know how to mix a real martini. Get in there around noon, before the rush starts, so they'll have time to do it right. They like that: they like a guy who really cares about a good drink—so for him, they get it right. Mix it careful and slow, and then you drink it the same way. They like that, too. They don't have to think you're going to buy another one. Just once in a time they like to meet a guy who'll make them so some real work and appreciate it when they've done it. Pretty sad people, barmen. . . .
>
> "Just cold enough to make the glass misty. . . . Not freezing; you can make anything taste as if it might be good by making it freezing. That's the secret of how to run America, if you want to know it, Cane. And no damn olives or onions in it, either. Just a kind of a smell like summer" (Chapter 18).

Notice that, like Lennox (and at times like Marlowe), the alcoholic Lovell claims the status of connoisseurship.

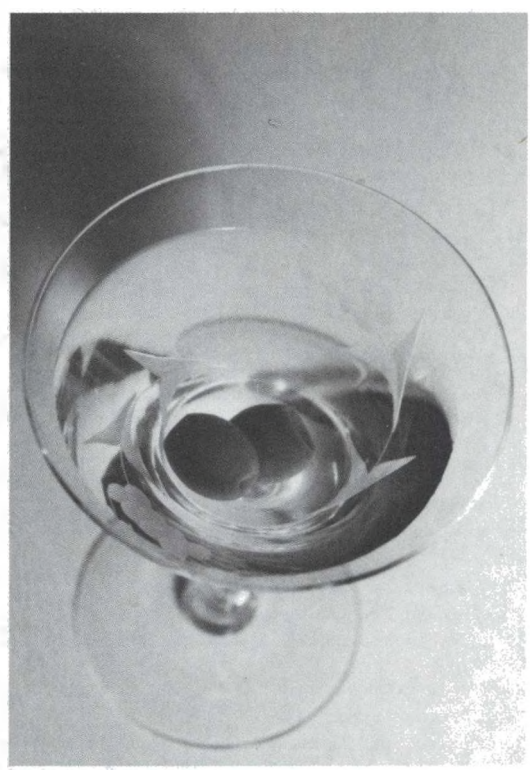
27. *The Long Goodbye,* chapter 22.

28. What is extant of *The Poodle Springs Story* may be found in Gardiner and Sorley, *Raymond Chandler Speaking.*

29. Let's face it: There's little to choose between the Marxist's "bourgeois commodity fetishism" and Madison Avenues "brand identification." Several of Fredric Jameson's observations are pertinent in this context, particularly on the structure of Chandler's plots, on the nature of nostalgia, and on the significance of commodities and brand-names. See Fredric Jameson, "On Raymond Chandler," *The Southern Review,* Summer 1970.

30. Every reader of Chandler should behold the photograph of Chandler in his cups in 1958—disheveled and holding a glass—reproduced on the unnumbered p. 84 of *The Notebooks of Raymond Chandler and English Summer: A Gothic Romance by Raymond Chandler,* ed. Frank MacShane (New York: The Ecco Press, 1976).

31. Jerry Speir effectively discusses Chandler's last struggles in Chapter 4 of his *Raymond Chandler* (New York: Frederic Ungar, 1981). He compares Marlowe to Conrad's Marlow, and Lennox to Kurtz (p. 115). □



PAPER CRIMES

By David Christie

The Man Who Risked His Partner by Reed Stephens, Ballantine Books, 1984, $6.95. **Black Knight in Red Square** by Stuart M. Kaminsky, Charter Books, 1984, $2.95.

The affecting cover art for Reed Stephens's **The Man Who Risked His Partner** is perhaps unusually understated, showing a rumpled Mick Axbrewder, the title character, entering a park on a blue-gray winter's night. He is in such heavy shadow that one cannot distinguish the features of his face; he seems in danger of losing any sense of identity, which is as it should be, for the picture depicts a moment from the book at which he is dangerously close to that ultimate loss of identity—death. But that artwork is also entirely appropriate for the excellent novel it represents: Stephens's story includes not only a complex plot set in a harsh, lonely world, but also writing that satisfies because it is as understated, yet subtly right, as the cover illustration.

The story begins with Reg Haskell, the chief accountant of a bank, claiming that someone wants to kill him and hiring Fistoulari Investigations for protection. But Ginny Fistoulari, who owns the detective agency, has had her left hand blown off by a bomb in an earlier case, and she remains deeply depressed and devoid of self-confidence. Axbrewder, her partner and the book's narrator, is a 6'5", 260-lb. alcoholic who, prompted only by the sudden need to look after Fistoulari, has managed to go without a drink for six months. He convinces Fistoulari to take the case in the hope that it may shake her out of her depression, but both know that it is an exceptionally dangerous case which may unhinge them. Not only are they barely in control of themselves, but, should the death threat prove real, the most likely killer is El Senor, the most powerful, entrenched criminal in the Southwestern city of Puerta del Sol, and Haskell claims to have lost more than he can pay in El Senor's casino. In addition, Haskell seems not so much frightened as childishly excited by the prospect of his own murder, and he gives the impression of hiding something. "He was the wild card in the deck, and that made him dangerous," says Axbrewder. To complicate matters further, Axbrewder is eager to look into an apparently unrelated case, the disappearance of a Chicano boy whose parents Axbrewder knows and respects.

Axbrewder is not the sort to make brilliant deductions. He concedes, in fact, that "Ginny was better at sorting things . . . out than I was. She was our expert on sifting the facts to get at the truth. I was the one who made intuitive leaps and landed in trouble. And my intuition wasn't saying much. It had probably gone south for the winter." He depends on doggedness and a professional awareness of what he can expect, of who is likely to do what to whom. He is, in a word, straightforward.

The language with which Stephens endows Axbrewder suits the character precisely. Stephens makes much use of simile and mild hyperbole, often to good effect, as when "the air had a gray, grainy quality, like amateur photography." Yet there is never a sense of literary pretension; one never feels that Stephens strains for an image or that Axbrewder uses language more ornate than that likely for a detective who is tough, matter-of-fact, and sometimes desperate. Stephens does have a keen eye for detail, and one does have a sense of detail being added to detail, fact added to fact, until they amount to a story.

But if Stephens's style seems simple, it is deceptively so, for he is in careful control of a complex plot, he creates characters skillfully, and he maintains a well-realized atmosphere of tension. Although that tension is based on the two detectives' infirmities and self-doubts, and builds gradually with increasing danger and their increasing doubts about Haskell's real predicament and real motives, it is conveyed, in large measure, linguistically. Images become gradually more emphatic; Axbrewder, for instance, might near the beginning of the book have to contend with "a glare that would've withered chickweed," but by book's end must face a situation which he describes as "a pure gold immaculate and absolute sonofabitch."

Reg Haskell is perhaps the novel's most complex character. Because he is a chronic liar and self-professed player of people, one hardly knows how to take him. He seems disingenuous even though his stories seem plausible, perhaps because the excitement he feels seems so out of place with the danger he says he is in. But that excitement contributes to a peculiar charm that prompts one, reluctantly, to go along with him. "It's hard," says Axbrewder, "to dislike somebody who enjoys himself that much." So, as Haskell is caught out in half-truths and comes up with new, more elaborate stories that agree with the old ones but explain away discrepancies, the reader sympathizes with Axbrewder and Fistoulari, who half-heartedly believe him but simultaneously don't trust him.

Ginny Fistoulari is also a fine creation. She seems to crumble as one watches her, and whether she will recover is genuinely in question. After all, her having lost a hand shows that Stephens does not spare his principals from the harshness of their world. Axbrewder, too, is an engaging character. That he possesses a sensitivity to counter his defects is suggested by his being the only character who can move successfully between Puerta del Sol's Hispanic and Anglo populations. (Stephens seems able to capture Hispanic culture well, and his renderings in English of police Spanish are particularly interesting.) The two detectives' relationship is a difficult one, with each to some extent dependent on the other and fighting that dependency, and the book is at least as much about whether they can come to an understanding as it is about preventing Haskell's murder or finding a lost Chicano boy. Other characters have secondary roles, but nevertheless are vividly portrayed.

The protection of Haskell, with the myriad possibilities Haskell himself adds to the job, the relationship of Fistoulari and Axbrewder, and Axbrewder's inquiries after the missing boy provide Stephens with a great deal of material from which to fashion his plot. Yet all these parts mesh nicely, none seems extraneous; the book's pace never lags; Stephens is able to manipulate the reader legitimately in the service of the plot; and the book builds to an exciting climax.

The Man Who Risked His Partner is highly recommended.

Stuart M. Kaminsky's **Black Knight in Red Square** recounts the attempt of a Moscow policeman, Porfiry Petrovich Rostnikov, and his assistants to capture a band of terrorists intent on disrupting the Moscow Film Festival and so embarrassing the Soviet Union at a time when international attention is focused on it. The terrorists have already had some success: Rostnikov is brought into the case when four people, one of them an American journalist covering the festival and another a Japanese also connected with it, are found poisoned and dead in Moscow's Metropole Hotel. At this point, no one is quite sure that terrorists are involved or, if so, that they have any further plans. But the matter is already delicate because foreigners have been killed, and, this being the Soviet Union, Rostnikov knows that, if he fails to apprehend the killers, "his enemies could throw him to the dogs. He was expendable, and this precarious state was becoming more a part of his life with each delicate case he handled." Partly for that reason and partly because his wife is Jewish, he and she choose to emigrate, and he conceives of a way to use the case to get them out.

Happily, Kaminsky has chosen to write something other than a standard suspense novel. Automatically, writing for a Western audience from a Soviet viewpoint is unusual. But Kaminsky goes further by exercising a lively sense of humor which lampoons both the suspense genre and Western preconceptions of the Soviet Union. For example, Rostnikov, when he first appears, is about to embark on a crucial mission, comparable, we are told, with the time he took out a German tank in World War II. We are treated to the delicious foreshadowing which the Robert Ludlums of this world have trained us to

believe lead to an assassination, or to the foiling of one. But Rostnikov's mission turns out to be to fix the toilet of a Bulgarian couple who are living temporarily in the apartment above his; a leak in their plumbing is causing his own to overflow, but he has been instructed to do nothing about it, lest the Soviet Union be embarrassed before the Bulgarians. It's a very funny scene.

But Kaminsky goes beyond Western preconceptions in his portrayal of the Soviet Union. It is true that, in this book, official Russia is authoritarian, that the newspapers do lie, that minor officials tend to be officious, that people are slow to do their work and are apparently uninterested in it. But this is not the monolithic society that Westerners tend to imagine; in *Black Knight in Red Square,* characters are individuals. Rostnikov is perhaps typically Soviet in his devotion to weightlifting, and he is also highly intelligent and adept at the game of survival in the Soviet Union, which "often depended on how many secrets you knew and could call upon." But being without political interests, he is neither particularly in favor of, nor opposed to, the U.S.S.R. Emil Karpo, one of his assistants, is equally crafty, but so fanatically devoted to his country that he seems almost without personal characteristics. Another assistant, Sasha Tkach, is younger, newly married, and comparatively innocent, so that his approaches to police work and to life are materially different from those of the other two. And so on: all the characters are clearly products of their country, but all are as individual as the people one might find anywhere.

And all of this is not to say that the book is not suspenseful. Quite the opposite is true. As the plot develops, the KGB manages to wipe out all of the terrorist gang but one, and that one, intent on completing the mission, impresses into service various left-leaning filmmakers who are in town for the Moscow Film Festival. Simultaneously, an old adversary in the KGB is bearing down hard on Rostnikov, who, simultaneously, is trying to catch the final terrorist, solve various other crimes, win a weightlifting competition, and implement his plan to leave the Soviet Union. Whether the terrorists will succeed; what, indeed, they are up to; how those impressed into service will react to their enlistment; and whether Rostnikov and his wife will manage to leave the country remain very much in question, and the answers to those questions add up to a fine story. The outcome seems particularly right, for, as is the rule in Kaminsky's U.S.S.R., Rostnikov wins a compromised, rather than complete, victory.

And so it is particularly unfortunate that Charter Books did so bad a job of producing what is otherwise so pleasing a book. To begin with, the front cover identifies the novel as "a deadly game of espionage in Moscow's dark heart," but it really falls into its own class and is, if anything, closer to a police procedural than an espionage novel. The back cover singles out "a female terrorist" and "the dark-eyed woman" as the principal villain, and indeed that one surviving terrorist proves to be a woman. But Kaminsky goes to great lengths to avoid mentioning the sex of the terrorist until near the middle of the book, to let the reader imagine the terrorist is a man and then spring the surprise: she's a woman. Why is Charter so eager to spoil the surprise? And why did not Charter's copy editor notice that, on page 8, that terrorist is identified incorrectly as "the *man* with dark eyes"? In fact, the copy editor did an extremely sloppy job, allowing many inconsistencies to remain in the text. Another example: one of the original murder victims "felt no pain as he rolled heavily under the sink" and dies—but, only two pages later, "the look of pain on the man's face" terrifies the chambermaid who finds him. Has American publishing come to this?

But one cannot fault an author for the inadequacies of his publisher. Even with its faults, *Black Knight in Red Square* is well worth reading.

□

THE PAPERBACK REVOLUTION

By Charles Shibuk

ADRIAN ALINGTON

A criminal genius, in the employ of an unnamed foreign power, seeks to strike a devastating blow at the heart of England by disrupting the last and most vital test match with her most notable rival. **The Amazing Test Match Crime** (1939) (Hogarth) examines the English, Scotland Yard, criminals, and especially cricket (and its aficionados) with satire, farce, and downright lunacy. This unconventional item has its share of crime fiction elements, but is guaranteed to offend—if not outrage—all lovers of traditional Golden Age English mysteries.

JOHN BALL

Virgil Tibbs may not have been the first black series detective, but he certainly is the best. **In the Heat of the Night** (1965) won an Edgar for best first novel, and formed the basis for one of the most successful mystery films in recent years. Its successor, **The Cool Cottontail** (1966), is set in a nudist colony. Both of these police procedurals (with detection) have been reprinted by Perennial.

LAWRENCE BLOCK

Such Men Are Dangerous (1969) (Jove) combines the plot elements of a big caper novel with the deviousness of a cold war spy story. Its major characters are amoral—or worse—and there are occasional bursts of violence that are both powerful and unexpected. I'm not sure about the value of what this novel seems to be saying, but it is engrossing and very readable. (NOTE: *Such Men Are Dangerous* was originally published under the pseudonym of Paul Kavanagh—the name of its protagonist.)

DOUGLAS G. BROWNE

Many of this author's works are difficult (if not impossible) to come by. The few others which have been examined vary widely in quality. **Too Many Cousins** (1946) (Dover) features series character Harvey Tuke of the Public Prosecutor's office, and is one of Browne's better efforts. It's set at the end of World War II in England and concerns the systematic demise of a group of heirs to a huge fortune.

DOUGLAS CLARK

A double murder by poison gas in a secluded Sussex cottage presents an almost insoluble problem for Detective Superintendent George Masters and Senior Scene of Crime Officer William Green in **The Monday Theory** (1983) (Perennial). The author, a leading British practitioner of the police procedural novel, has had much of his recent meritorious work, including **Table d'Hote** (1977) and **Heberden's Seat** (1979) (both from Perennial), published only in paperback editions in this country.

R. AUSTIN FREEMAN

Straight from the heart of the Golden Age comes a revival that may well prove to be one of the major paperback publishing events of 1985. **Mr. Pottermack's Oversight** (1930) (Dover), a gripping inverted novel about the planning and execution of a "perfect" murder, evolves into an example of the classic detective story which poses a baffling problem for Dr. John Thorndyke—"the greatest of all scientific detectives." *Mr. Pottermack's Oversight,* Freeman's masterpiece, resides firmly on this columnist's "ten best" list, and its current appearance is as unexpected as it is welcome.

MICHAEL GILBERT

The Black Seraphim (1984) (Penguin) boasts an unlikely protagonist—Dr. James Pirie Scotland, a young pathologist. It's set in the small cathedral town of Melchester, and concerns a violent, but apparently unsuspicious, death amid problems of church rivalry and hints of civic corruption. It's very well written, urbane, and highly literate. It does lack some of the excitement and involvement of this author's best work, but it's still an excellent and very readable novel.

ROMILLY AND KATHERINE JOHN

I must confess that I'd never heard of **Death By Request** (1933) until its recent republication by Hogarth Press. It's set on a

country estate in rural England and is typical of the classic detective novels of its period. Unfortunately, the authors were only moderately talented, and this work suffers from stylistic problems including excessive length and a few interminable recapitulations. It is puzzling and ingenious, however, and certainly worth reading.

(WARNING: Avoid the introduction, which names too many clues, until after you have read this novel.)

MICHAEL Z. LEWIN

The '70s saw the rise of many authors who write hardboiled private eye stories told in the first person. Lewin's Albert Samson series, set in Indianapolis, is a notable addition to this genre, and I believe **The Way We Die Now** (1973), **The Enemies Within** (1974), and **The Silent Salesman** (1978) have all received favorable notice in this column.

Another series, featuring Lieutenant Leroy Powder of the Indianapolis Police Department, comprising **Night Cover** (1976) and **Hard Line** (1982), is also of value. All the above titles have been reprinted by Perennial.

PAUL McGUIRE

The radiance of the Golden Age burst forth on this slightly-better-than-average practitioner, who took a giant step into the Valhalla of great mystery writers by producing **A Funeral in Eden** (1938) (Perennial). This fresh and brilliant detective novel is unquestionably a masterpiece, and a serious contender for the all-time "best" list. Don't miss it!

Enter Three Witches (1940) (Perennial) received fantastic raves on its original publication. It's cited in Sandoe's "Readers' Guide to Crime" (along with **A Funeral in Eden**), and W. B. Stevenson's **Detective Fiction.** It has also been praised by Barzun and Taylor. This column dissents.

(NOTE: The former title was published in England as *Burial Service,* the latter as *The Spanish Steps.*)

ROBERT B. PARKER

Boston private eye Spencer's girlfriend has left him, and he's not in great shape. The job of finding and liberating a choreographer's girlfriend, allegedly kidnapped by a religious cult, promises to offer therapy, but it all turns into a violent and bloody shambles in **Valediction** (1984) (Dell). Its plotline is acceptable, and its entertainment value and wit are very high, but do I detect a note of pretentiousness creeping into the narrative?

(Astigmatics who have noted the alarming tendency of several publishers to issue paperback volumes with near-microscopic print will be overjoyed to discover that *Valediction* contains larger-sized print than the original hardcover edition.)

RICHARD STARK (DONALD E. WESTLAKE)

After a short hiatus, Avon continues to reissue this author's hardboiled studies in amorality.

The Jugger (1965) is a retired Nebraska safecracker who knows all of Parker's secrets and is willing to talk. Parker thinks about nullifying him, but finds a corpse—and his own name on a death list.

The Seventh (1966) details a perfect crime—the robbery of a sports arena. Later, as might be expected, things begin to unravel with a murder and the theft of all the loot. Will Parker catch up with this enemy—or *vice versa?*

JULIAN SYMONS (editor)

The Penguin Classic Crime Omnibus (Penguin, 1984) is an ambitious anthology of 25 meritorious short stories mainly from the usual authors (Poe to Hoch). Some care has been taken to select their slightly less familiar titles, and, in addition, a few "unknown" and unexpected items are also present.

(NOTE: At least twelve stories have been published in EQMM. Five (or more) are easily available in recent paperback editions. Furthermore, the important hardboiled genre is totally unrepresented in this anthology.)

ANDREW TAYLOR

An old document written in **Caroline Minuscule** (1982) (Penguin), the name of a style of medieval script, leads to the murder of an academic authority on the subject and a quest, hindered by various unsavory types, for a fortune in valuable diamonds. This is an unusually well-written first novel from a professional librarian in England whose future work should be of interest.

WALTER TYRER

A suburban triangle leads to death by drowning in a pond adjoining the local golf course in **Such Friends Are Dangerous** (1954) (Perennial). The police and a local reporter investigate an intricate case, leavened with humor, and find an unusual and startling denouement. This too-little-known work has been called a gem by Barzun and Taylor, who thought it "a tour de force of a non-repeatable kind."

LASSITER WREN and RANDLE McKAY

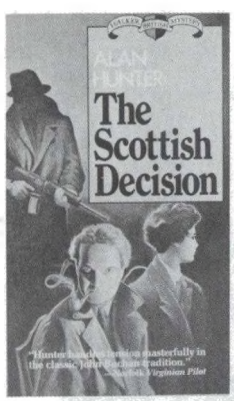
The Baffle Book was originally published in America in 1928 and "edited" by F. Tennyson Jesse for English publication in 1930. Hogarth has reprinted the British edition—with full credit to Miss Jesse on the front cover and spine. These 28 puzzles—many with illustrations—were designed to be used in a parlor game in which opposing teams could compete for the highest score. Many of these puzzles are examples of fair play problems in deduction, and just the right thing for armchair detectives with a bent for do-it-yourself ratiocination. □

CURRENT REVIEWS

The Scottish Decision by Alan Hunter. New York: Walker, 1985. $2.95

Raymond Chandler once said that a "love interest nearly always weakens a mystery, because it introduces a type of suspense that is antagonistic to the detectives' struggle to solve the problem. It stacks the cards, and, in nine cases out of ten, it eliminates at least two useful suspects." Chandler probably didn't like Andrew Garve, and he certainly wouldn't have liked Alan Hunter, who, in this Walker paperback issue, offers a classic thriller with a true love involvement. The reader of contemporary mysteries may find matters otherwise, as *The Scottish Decision* offers a full fare of detection *and* romantic interest—they are, in fact, intertwined—which catches and firmly holds interest.

The scene—not of the crime, but of the chase—is Scotland, and Alan Hunter reveals an excellently developed sense of place as well as an accurate insight into character. It seems that Hugo Barentin, a French industrialist, has been kidnapped by a multinational



terrorist group that demands, in return, the exchange of a number of imprisoned hijackers, bomb-throwers, and assorted meanies who spend their time making life miserable for capitalists and law-enforcers on either side of the Channel. Reliable intelligence sources—and a downed Piper Cub—suggest that the kidnappers and Barentin are in one of the remoter areas of Scotland. Inspector Gently of Scotland Yard, along with his "twisted" subordinate, Empton, is dispatched to the Highlands, where they promptly become at odds over the best procedural methodology. Empton suggests that the terrorists be sacrificed, if necessary, in the swift process of apprehending them, and Gently's conviction is that both Barentin's and the terrorists' lives be given serious weight in a more thoroughly considered operation to end the standoff. Complicating the matter is the independent intervention of Gabrielle Orbec, a figure from one of Gently's past cases (in which he rubbed elbows with Cartier and Starnburg) who haunts him. He is in love with her, and it appears that she is the contact between the kidnappers (through the plane's pilot, her ex-husband Henault) and the French police.

The bulk of *The Scottish Decision* deals, then, with the ways in which Gently attempts to find both the terrorists and Gabrielle, to save even the life of Henault (who fears that, for his part in the kidnapping, "he will be paid not in gold but in lead"), and to thwart Empton. Gently is aided by a French intelligence officer, Frénaye, who is, oh, so French and so polite. " 'Monsieur,' Frénaye murmured, 'I speak with regret, but I have fears that this task may be beyond us. Though the scenery continues superb, I find it fills me with misgiving.' " Frénaye and Gently work both with and around Scotland Yard, and the suspense packed into this thriller comes as much from the threat which the terrorists pose as it does from the violence which Empton advocates and practices. Hunter's message, in part, is that viciousness is not limited to the criminal element but rather extends to many of those who enforce crime. In greater part, though, Hunter writes of the courage of individuals to withstand situations in which their jobs and lives are in jeopardy. As such, Gently and Gabrielle are ideally matched ("Monsieur, but that woman has courage. Monsieur is a lucky man," states Frénaye, adding, "I too have such a woman for my own. It is happiness beyond all purchase"), and the love interest is integral to the plot of this suspenseful, well-paced thriller.

—Susan L. Clark

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A Graveyard of My Own by Ron Goulart. New York: Walker, 1985. $13.95

Detective and mystery enthusiasts whose interests also include the world of the comics probably know that Ron Goulart has similar tastes. His nonfiction writing in magazines and books has often been about comics and their creators.

Goulart's past mysteries have suggested his familiarity with still another category, that of the pulp thriller, and his new amateur sleuth is an artist named Bert Kurrie, once the author of the *Human Beast* comic books but now a freelancer in Connecticut who is out jogging when he comes upon a dead body. The story is under way.

The victim turns out to be a cartoonist also, and Bert recognizes him. Soon, there are other victims, all with a common past. They all once worked for the same comic book publisher. Still other artists, living at least for now, are the major characters populating the drama as Bert searches for the killer.

Jan is Bert's wife. They frequently talk about the investigation and the way in which Bert is risking his own safety, and Jan eventually takes a small part in looking for clues. Jan has a career and a mind of her own, with Goulart planting a few hints that this team could take on more detective assignments if readers like this one.

Other help, along with humor, is provided by Juan Texaco, a comic artist as well, with a penchant for spotting resemblances between women he meets and movie actresses of the past. "Say, there's a young lady who has got to be an exact double for Dolores Del Rio in her prime," he exclaims, casually causing a break in a serious discussion about violent murder.

The title of this novel has no apparent relationship to the story. At the same time, the story seems to come and go as a convenience for comedy and breezy talk about the world of the professionals responsible for the comics.

There are also generous opportunities throughout the book for barbs at comic book publishers, kids who attend comic conventions, and the phenomenon of the expensive correspondence school for artists. "Nobody with any real ability would spend his days grading lessons from acned schoolboys and little old ladies in print dresses."

The mystery of who has been killing all the comic strip artists is finally solved, but one puzzle remains. "You're a brick" is quoted as a line from the movies to describe a strong and reliable friend, but the film is never identified. Can anyone out there help me?

—Martin Fass

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An Old-Fashioned Mystery by Runa Fairleigh. New York: Avon, 1984. 239 pp. $2.95

For the ardent, diehard mystery aficionado, this little gem is the *pièce de résistance*, the ultimate murder mystery. The introduction presents a mystery surrounding the author, which then leads into the first chapter of the murder story. On isolated Komondor Island, ten guests wait for Rosa Sill—their hostess—to arrive and begin her 25th birthday celebration, the day on which she comes into her inheritance of the family fortune.

The guests are eccentric, to say the least, and include a society-girl detective and her twin brother, Rosa's fiancé, a lawyer, a secretary, and a strange housekeeper. One by one, guests and servants are violently murdered, not unlike those in Christie's *And Then There Were None*. But the climax and

solution surpass even Dame Agatha's skills.

An absolutely rollicking good mystery—one especially to delight fans who enjoy parody.

—Gloria Maxwell

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Hostage to Death by Jeffrey Ashford. New York: Walker, 1985. $2.95

"I wonder if I could get away with stealing it." How many of us will admit to having had such a thought at least once? How appealing is it to read about a bank employee who has a powerful need and a supreme opportunity to steal a large amount of money? Consider that the unique situation here is that the money has *already* been stolen, and the formerly honest person about to take possession of the funds was a hostage with his life at stake when the robbery occurred.

It seems natural to feel great sympathy for Bill Steen and hope that neither the criminals nor the law will catch him. Bill's wife has health problems which are likely to worsen if they stay in England, and the money will allow them to move to Majorca. So greed has nothing to do with Bill's actions, and he applies his sharp intelligence to grabbing the money before the original thieves come for it. Next, he must manage the complex maneuvers for a move to the Mediterranean paradise, leaving him free of suspicion.

Suspense builds because the reader constantly is switched from observing Bill Steen's actions to the progress of the police search. It isn't long until Bill is being discussed by the investigators. Meantime, Val Thomas has already killed one person he thinks double-crossed him and absconded with the money. It seems clear what he will do if he realizes that Bill is his target.

The story is packed with irony, and developments are not always what the reader expects. There is humor, too, in the action plan which Steen initiates to cover himself in Majorca, and in the way that subsequent events influence some revisions in his scheme.

While they are treated lightly, there is also a special way in which the detectives and other law-enforcement people are drawn, emphasizing the relationship of character traits and personal motivation to the manner in which they do their job. One British officer is concerned about having called Spain so often and how the expense is going to wreak havoc with their phone budget. Later, he complains: "I've been on to Spain so often I'm beginning to speak Spanish. *Un vino tinto, pronto.*"

All of this could hardly sound better to the reader, who hopes the police will be so incompetent and impatient that they will eventually tire of the search and leave Bill Steen at peace with his gentle wife. *Hostage to Death* suggests that the quality of a crime depends on the nature of those who commit the act. One is allowed this perception, in any event, as part of the private act of reading fiction and contemplating one's own behavior (and fantasies) as a thief.

—Martin Fass

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Blunt Darts by Jeremiah Healy. New York: Walker, 1984. $12.95. **Death at Charity's Point** by William G. Tapply. New York: Scribner's, 1984. $12.95

Two Boston-based detectives—is there anywhere else?—made their debut accompanied by critical acclaim in 1984. In both cases, the praise is deserved.

Personally, I prefer William Tapply's *Death at Charity's Point* to Jeremiah Healy's *Blunt Darts*. But I won't argue with you if the latter title is preferred. They are both well plotted, and the writing is uniformly good.

The Tapply book features Brady Coyne, lawyer to the wealthy, who accommodates a client by playing detective to investigate the apparent suicide of her son. His client will not accept the coroner's verdict, only partly because there is a million-dollar, double-indemnity insurance policy which will not be paid in a case of suicide.

Coyne is a talented amateur, unwillingly conscripted into service. He possesses a good mind and an agile wit. All of the characters are interesting and attractive. The solution is somewhat predictable, but I didn't care.

The Healy hero, John Francis Cuddy, is more like Robert Parker's Spenser character. He is subject to a megadose of terminal smart-aleckism. The comparison may be extended to include their irritating habit of consorting with women whose lack of femininity would drive a satyr to celibacy.

The plot involves the search for an eccentric young man who may have been kidnapped. In finding him, his family is forced to once again deal with the tragic death of his mother many years prior. Shades of Ross Macdonald.

There are no attractive people in this book, and none even manages to generate much sympathy. Cuddy often appears to be of dull, normal intelligence, a limitation in detective work, and one for which he pays dearly. Curiously, the only person he relates well to is his dead wife, with whom he visits at the cemetery *à la* John Wayne in the movie *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*.

With minor reservations, I recommend both books, preferably read one after the other. They're fun and they're very promising series debuts.

—George H. Madison

Death at Charity's Point by William G. Tapply. New York: Scribner's, 1984. 213 pp. $12.95

This book was the winner of the 1984 Scribner Crime Novel award.

The Gresham family is dying out quickly. Dad Gresham shoots himself in the upstairs bathroom ("Messy," his wife Florence declares). Their son Winchester is then killed in Vietnam. Only a few years later, the second and last son, George, is found dead—his body washed ashore after falling from treacherous Charity's Point. The insurance company declares George's death a suicide, their case helped by the note found in his pocket.

Florence Gresham is less concerned with the money involved than with the notion that George would commit suicide. She contacts her attorney, Brady Coyne, and asks him to check out the details surrounding George's death.

Brady discovers that George was a contented teacher who recently started a research project of some interest but who had his share of enemies. Brady finds George's fellow teachers at Ruggles School less than cooperative and often secretive. He stumbles onto a radical, neo-Nazi group of students and a case of plagiarism which could threaten the career of a star athlete. Suicide seems less likely.

Tapply has written an engaging, fast-paced mystery which couples good characterization with a sturdy plot. Brady Coyne's little asides add a sparkle and dimension which bring the story to life and leave the reader hoping to meet this sleuth in another story—a wish that comes true with *The Dutch Blue Error*, a recent publication, also from Scribner's.

—Gloria Maxwell

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The Bay Psalm Book Murder by Will Harriss. New York: Walker, 1983. 190 pp. $12.95

"If only he were Hercule Poirot, he reflected ruefully, he could sit back and could put his little gray cells to work and solve the problem with a brilliant flash of deduction, or at least seize on a glaring clue that everyone had overlooked. His little gray cells merely lay in his skull like oatmeal, however." Those are the thoughts that Professor Cliff Dunbar has as he begins investigating the details of Link Schofield's murder.

Schofield's daughter asks Dunbar to examine the details of her father's death after the police classify it as "open but unsolved." Dunbar agrees to take a preliminary look, since Link was a close friend and because he faces a great deal of free time. Dunbar's wife has unexpectedly died of cancer several months earlier, and he has resigned his faculty position because of differences with the chairman and doubts about teaching in general.

Perhaps the most curious aspect of Link's murder is that the killers took $14 from his wallet yet left *The Bay Psalm Book* in his hand—a rare book worth $300,000. Cliff's investigation brings him into dangerous con-

tact with forces that soon spell personal danger. The trail leads to Las Vegas, with its blackjack tables and corruption behind the scenes, and California politics, with its ruthless campaign tactics.

Along the way, Cliff enlists the services of a bright, pretty proofreader named Mona. She provides the professor with a little romantic uplift.

Winner of the Edgar Award for the Best First Novel of 1983, this book sparkles with style and panache. Harriss has created a delightful mystery that is extremely well plotted, filled with enjoyable, full-bodied characters, and one which maintains a brisk pace that never falters. The first sentence glitters with quality and serves as the first clue that the reader is in store for an award-winning mystery treat!

—Gloria Maxwell

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Tourists by Richard B. Wright. New York: Walker, 1984. 180 pp. $13.95

"In my room I lay on the bed and browsed through a textbook of literary criticism for senior students. The book had been sent to me by a publisher in the hope that I would find it suitable for classroom use and purchase two hundred copies. I fell asleep over an essay on Mark Twain written by some man who teaches at Hullabaloo U." This is the way Philip Bannister's mind runs—rather caustic and superior. Bannister is a professor of long standing at The Gannymeade, a boys' prep school in Canada.

Staff and students alike were shocked when Bannister gave up his bachelorhood to marry Joan Tushy, a woman with the air of "an English tavern wench," as Bannister himself described her after their first meeting. After a year, Joan has begun looking outside their marriage for additional affection. Their relationship is at an all-time low when they decide to take a trip to Mexico.

Instead of recapturing their mutual affection, their marriage is strained to the breaking point (or, in this case, the killing point) when they meet an obtrusive couple from Nebraska, Corky and Ted Hacker. With hints of orgies, sexual innuendos, and Ted's bizarre pranks toward Philip, attractions lead to spouse swapping—at least where Ted and Joan are concerned.

Then, as Philip says, "Beating her was out of the question for, although I am a murderer, I am not a man of violence." For, you see, the story is narrated from Philip Bannister's viewpoint, which is that of a murderer sitting in a Mexican jail cell when the story opens.

What drives Philip to this extreme level of frustration and desperation is couched in wry humor and ironic dialogue. An absolute delight for the reader who enjoys inverted mysteries.

—Gloria Maxwell

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The Curse of the Giant Hogweed by Charlotte MacLeod. New York: Doubleday Crime Club, 1985. $11.95

MacLeod's books have never had much to do with reality, but there was enough caricature to let us recognize types and attitudes with which we were familiar. This time, however, she sends Peter Shandy off on a fantasy trip, much as Alice wandered through Wonderland. It seems that a giant hogweed plant is virtually taking over parts of England and Wales. Shandy is part of a Balaclava contingent at a symposium/war council. When he steps into an old pub, he is somehow transported back to the tenth or twelfth century and smack into the middle of courtly mayhem.

It seems that Sir Torchyld has been accused of doing in King Sfyn's pet griffin. The path of recovery is anything but straight and involves witches, spells, giant hogweed, lusty young knights, and various other obstacles. A murder occurs, but that is probably Shandy's easiest problem to solve. Although it is not as satirical or as humorous as MacLeod's other books, *The Curse of the Giant Hogweed* is still enjoyable on its own terms. There is little to detect or play fair about, but the twists and turns of this strange adventure leave little time for it anyway.

—Fred Dueren

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The Curse of the Giant Hogweed by Charlotte MacLeod. New York: Doubleday Crime Club, 1985. $11.95

Fans of Timothy Ames and Peter Shandy, professors at Balaclava Agricultural College in Western Massachusetts, will no doubt welcome their return in *The Curse of the Giant Hogweed.* The current crisis is the giant hogweed, or *Heracleum mantegazzianum,* which is threatening to take over the British Isles, and Ames and Shandy have been dispatched to an academic conference "among the lush green hills where England blends so delightfully with Wales and the sheep all begin bleating in Cymric as soon as you cross the border."

Wales is, of course, one of the haunts of the legendary King Arthur, and the next thing Shandy knows, he is deep in a medieval mystery. Is he dreaming ("Was this more than a mere sleep-induced vagary?") or has he—and his agricultural college compatriots—been actually transported back to a time when griffins and Druids overran the United Kingdom?

King Sfyn, it appears, "has lost his pet griffin. Sir Torchyld is accused of having spirited it away. Therefore, King Sfyn has in turn hidden Lady Syglinde somewhere and says Torchyld can't have her back until he produces the griffin in reasonable condition." Mystery buffs will immediately recognize that MacLeod is not out to write another medieval spinoff imitation of the runaway success *The Name of the Rose.* Nor does she have the substantial insight into things medieval with which Ellis Peters gives her monk protagonist Brother Caedfel. What she does have is a passing familiarity with the alliterative revival of the fourteenth century, since her characters "wax exceeding wroth" and talk in a style which is supposed to be "medieval," whatever that means to her. "Forsooth, verily. Wist ye not?" "Why not? That he his hight." . . . "Me seemed ye druids be supposed to wot this stuff." The reader is tempted to ask, "Can this be real?" To be sure, medieval writers did worry a great deal about illusion and reality—and this figures passingly in MacLeod's current offering—but there this author's resemblance to medieval writers ends. MacLeod is laughing *at* the characters in her "medieval" puzzle, and, because of that stance, it is difficult to laugh *with* her.

—Susan L. Clark

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First Hit of the Season by Jane Dentinger. New York: Doubleday, 1984

In *First Hit of the Season,* actress-coach-director Jocelyn O'Roarke pursues her theatre career amid the professional chaos resulting from a feud between two friends, an actress and a critic. When the critic is murdered, Jocelyn's circle, especially her volatile buddy Irene Ingersoll, are suspects, most of them having been on the scene at the time of the killing. The fact that police officer Phillip Gerrard, Joceylyn's current love interest, is assigned to the case gives Jocelyn, an amateur sleuth, both an inside track and a good chance at blasting their relationship to smithereens. Dentinger's characters are interesting (even the stereotypes are just a *bit* atypical), the theatre background is fascinating, the clues are fair, useful, and not too obvious—all very satisfactory. Even more intriguing, perhaps, are the portrayals of Jocelyn and Phillip. Though *First Hit of the Season* is first of all a crime novel and only secondarily a love story, the lovers are so nicely drawn—not too wonderful, not too beautiful, not too unaware of others or the world around them—that they tend to dominate the plot a bit. Their concerns, though, are the concerns of most modern, youngish professionals, dressed up in the glamour of exciting jobs, and this mixture of realism and romanticism is very appealing.

—Jane S. Bakerman

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Close Her Eyes by Dorothy Simpson. New York: Scribner's, 1984. 224 pp. $11.95

Dorothy Simpson joins the ranks the crime writers who examine religious fervor and its impact upon the human personality in *Close Her Eyes,* a fine novel which will please established readers of the Luke Thanet series and surely draw new readers into the fold. Here, Thanet investigates the disappearance of the teenaged daughter of strict, devout parents who are members of the Children of Jerusalem, a sect which regards even comfort (let alone gentleness, tenderness, or beauty) as dangerous to the soul; to defeat temptation, the Children of Jerusalem avoid it, and adult members expect their children to be as strictly conformist as they are, to live in a restricted, narrow world, abjuring what their peers consider normal, enriching relationships. Thanet discovers that the victim, Charity Pritchard, has sustained a friendship outside the sect and correctly suspects that under-

standing Charity's relationship with Veronica Hodges will help him solve the case. This pattern allows Simpson to compare the Pritchard, Hodges, and Thanet families. As usual, she sets the crime against Thanet's personal problems—in this case, his growing fear that Joan, his wife, will not return to him and their children after the completion of a training course she has been taking for the last couple of years. Crime fiction fans are familiar with all these devices of comparison and contrast and plotting, but in *Close Her Eyes* they are garnished with the Simpson touch and become once again new, once again good reading.

—Jane S. Bakerman

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The Convivial Codfish by Charlotte MacLeod. New York: Doubleday, 1984

When Max Bittersohn married Sarah Kelling, most of MacLeod's fans were delighted. Perhaps even better, both Max and Sarah seem delighted with their union, despite the fact that each must cope with a number of the other's variously demanding relatives. In *The Convivial Codfish,* Max takes center stage to help Jeremy Kelling, aged rake and toper, locate the great chain of office stolen from his neck during the Comrades of the Convivial Codfish annual Christmas celebration: Scrooge Day. His investigation takes Max into the heart of the Kellings' elderly, wealthy, tradition-bound (but sometimes very appealing) Beacon Hill crowd, among whom eccentricity is the norm. The villain is, perhaps, easy to spot, but the true center of interest is the zany antics of MacLeod's very large cast of dippy characters, who are neatly balanced against the likeable, calm, clever Max and a few capable, sensible new acquaintances. As is generally the case in the Sarah Kelling series, the sanest, most effective folk are those who neither have—nor pretend to have—great wealth, and, also as usual, the bridge between the two groups is Sarah. Though some readers will miss her presence in the major action, MacLeod's followers will enjoy the book—especially when the commercialized joy of the Christmas season becomes a little overwhelming.

—Jane S. Bakerman

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Run for Your Life by Barbara Abercrombie. New York: Morrow, 1984. 249 pp.

Barbara Abercrombie's *Run for Your Life* is a novel about a novelist who is training for a marathon and writing a novel *about* a novelist training for a marathon. Sarah Flynn, the protagonist, copes not only with her training but also with her adolescent children, her newly acquired husband, his problems with step-parenting and with his hypochondriac mother—and the threat of murder. All this and writer's block followed by writer's preoccupation once her book is begun. Listed this way, the complications boggle the mind, but Abercrombie manages to control all the strands of her plot and to produce a very good characterization of Sarah as well. The novel raises questions about modern American family life, about the writing life, and about the dangers of seemingly secure, upper-middle-class urban living. Above all, however, *Run for Your Life* captures and holds the reader's attention immediately and retains it throughout Sarah's long race against family stress, time, and a devious, unbalanced killer.

—Jane S. Bakerman

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Pop. 1280 by Jim Thompson. Black Lizard Books / Creative Arts, 1984. $3.95

Jim Thompson's literary stock has gone blue chip. Judging from the recent spate of articles appearing in the *Village Voice, Film Comment,* and the *New York Review of Books,* you'd think he was the hottest thing since James M. Cain. Which he is. Unlike Cain, though, Thompson's works are darker, less concerned with formal ironies, and tilted even more toward violence. Why he is being rediscovered and his works reissued in the '80s is a matter for social historians and psychologists to explain. Thanks to Black Lizard Books (a subsidiary of Creative Arts, Berkeley, Ca.), however, it is now possible to assess the literary career of this controversial and somewhat shadowy figure.

Pop. 1280 is as good a place as any to start. Like its companion work, *The Killer Inside Me, Pop. 1280* centers around a small-town sheriff who kills people, but, unlike the psychopathic figure in *Killer,* the sheriff of *Pop. 1280* is a lazy, seemingly ineffectual man, despised by his wife and townspeople and mocked by the sheriff in the neighboring county. The sheriff (and narrator of the novel), Nick Corey, uses his laziness and seeming spinelessness as a mask to construct three murders and set up two others and is on his way to sending the neighboring sheriff to the gallows near book's end. The terse, humorous writing at first seems to undercut the brittle, almost barbed-wire nastiness of the novel until you realize that the narrator is crazy, seeing himself as a Biblical hit man sent here to "punish heck out of people for bein' people." The reader is as much taken in at first by the narrator's relaxed, corn-pone personality as are the people of Pottsville, the small town which he sees revealed one evening as representing the total emptiness and meaninglessness of life.

What makes the novel so typical a Thompson work, besides its fine ear for dialogue, the totally unnerving way in which it absorbs you into its craziness, is the sense of hopelessness which eddies around every character until they stagnate and become frozen in their own personal hells. Thompson's vision is succinctly summed up in the sheriff's vision of some night beetles as "they go swooping around, looking for each other, and then come together in mid-air and go plunking down on the ground." Thompson is Cain's darker brother.

—Stephen Schicker

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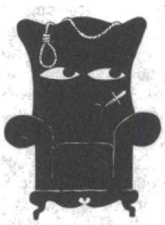
The Ace of Spades by Dell Shannon. New York: The Mysterious Press, 1984. 158 pp. $3.95

I must confess that, prior to this review assignment, I'd never read any of the classic mysteries featuring Dell Shannon's (Elizabeth Linnington) incomparable Mexican-American detective, Lt. Luis Mendoza. After gambling with *The Ace of Spades,* the second in this superb series, I'm a confirmed addict.

An investigation into the grisly death of a drug addict reveals no prior use and the elegant Lt. Mendoza meets some treacherous individuals as he attempts to reconstruct the circumstances surrounding the alleged junkie's demise. An insidious blackmail project and a cache of Greek coins figure in Mendoza's venomous journey inside the deceptively resplendent elements of Los Angeles.

Renowned for their reissues of timeless mysteries, ranging from Stuart Kaminsky's Toby Peters to Peter O'Donnell's Modesty Blaise, The Mystrious Press's paperback line also currently offers Shannon's *Case Pending* (1960), *Extra Kill* (1962), and *Knave of*



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Hearts (1962) on their exclusive list—with additional Mendoza titles undoubtedly slated for future release.

The masterful tones of this series have insured its endurance into the '80s, as typified by *Destiny for Death* (1984).

—Andy East

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Murder on the Hudson by Don Flynn. New York: Walker, 1985. 193 pp. $13.95

Don Flynn's Ed Fitzgerald shows much promise as a durable series character. Introduced in *Murder Isn't Enough* (1983), Fitzgerald emerged as a contemporary Mike Hammer had Hammer chosen journalism as a career. Fitzgerald, as a tough, cynical newspaperman for the New York *Daily Press*, is reflective of Flynn's background as a reporter for New York's *Daily News*.

Flynn's creation encounters more bodies than headlines and seems to have a permanent personality crisis with his city editor, Ironhead Matthews. Detective Jim Lawler of the 10th Precinct often finds the tenacious reporter obstructing his investigative duties. Fitzgerald frequently reflects upon the philosophy of Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius to help him comprehend the inequities around him and laments his consistent failure in reconciling with his live-in girlfriend Belinda.

With all these admirable qualities, *Murder on the Hudson,* Fitz's second roving-assignment-in-print, develops as an uneven albeit well-written mystery. An unemployed actor, Howard Ritter, is found murdered on a Hudson cruise boat, and, allying with Ritter's sensuous daughter Jennifer, Fitzgerald embarks on a foray into the ambivalent world of New York's Off-Broadway landscapes and comedy cabarets. A money-delivery scheme and a sadistic killer punctuate Fitzgerald's violent trek as he uncovers Ritter's assailant.

Flynn dedicates so much narrative power to the conception of his alter-ego that the supporting characters, not to mention the plot, are frequently neglected in the process. The concept of a newspaperman as a continuing detective figure is certainly an inventive one, however, and this series will unquestionably improve over time. Flynn's New York locales evoke an atmosphere reminiscent of vintage Mickey Spillane.

—Andy East

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The Gift Horse by Mary McMullen. New York: Doubleday Crime Club, 1985. 180 pp. $11.95

Darrell Hyde is the solitary black sheep in his otherwise distinguished New York family. Intimidated by the sterling achievements of his advertising executive sister and film maverick brother, Darrell ventures to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where his affluent Aunt Lally resides. Conveniently, Darrell is the heir to Lally's estate and contemplates her murder...

Edgar winner (for *Stranglehold,* 1951) Mary McMullen's *The Gift Horse* will ultimately catch the reader off guard with its seemingly conventional story line as Aunt Lally endures a particularly savage death by mysterious hands. McMullen (daughter of Helen Reilly and sister of Ursula Curtiss) delineates her characters in this mystery, notably Darrell and Lally, with an artist's strokes, and executes the intricacies of Lally's murder with polished finesse. She devotes so much attention to these points, however, that the sense of narrative play occasionally lacks direction. Despite this flaw, *The Gift Horse* is an offbeat, engrossing mystery which will challenge the acumen of even the most seasoned devotee.

—Andy East

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Murder in the Collective by Barbara Wilson. Seattle: The Seal Press, 1984. 183 pp. $7.95

During the regular weekly meeting of the Best Printing collective, a merger with B. Violet Typesetting is proposed. Best Printing is a politically correct collective: it opposes racism, sexism, and most U.S. foreign policy, and provides free printing for most of Seattle's indigent and short-lived leftist

groups. B. Violet Typesetting is the lesbian splinter of the formerly "co-ed" Mobi-Print collective. (Without female labor, the Mobi-Dicks withered into bankruptcy while B. Violet bloomed.)

The proposal to merge collectives does not bring out the best in Best. Hours after the four B. Violet women accuse the seven Best heterosexuals of homophobia, and the racially-mixed folks at Best question the uniformly white skins of the Violets, the typesetting shop is ruthlessly vandalized. And the next night someone murders Best's fair-haired and air-headed camera man in the darkroom. Jeremy Plaice, whose "thoughts were swathed in such soft blankets of disclaimers and fillers that they usually died of suffocation before they were lifted out of the mental crib," seems an unlikely victim. The in-house (or intra-house) appearance of the crimes induces Best's Pam Nilsen and B. Violet's Hadley Harper to do some collective detecting.

The investigation involves more than figuring out the motives and opportunities of the possible perpetrators. Hadley gives Pam the opportunity and the motivation to expand her own sexual predilections. The partners in detection become partners in bed.

Although Wilson's heroines may be partial to lavender, she does not stoop to purple prose. Sexual pleasure is a matter of sensibility, and Pam Nilsen's coming-out story is not marred by voyeuristic accounts of physiological goings-on. The romantic subplot is subordinate to the larger issues. And the issues do get larger and larger. What seemed to be an internal struggle among Seattle's alternative alternatives actually has international ramifications.

Murder in the Collective is an ambitious effort to use conventional forms and traditional narrative devices to examine contemporary social and political concerns from a non-traditional perspective. Pam Nilsen is a lively and welcome addition to the affirmative action sorority of feminist detectives. Wilson promises subsequent Pam Nilsen / Best Printing adventures. Collectors will want to begin collecting the whole collective.

—Patricia Clark Koelsch

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School for Murder by Robert Barnard. New York: Dell, 1985. 201 pp. $2.95

Adolescent mischief gone too far in a dinosaur of a British private day school is the subject of Robert Barnard's 1983 *School for Murder,* recently released in paperback. This well-written, engrossing novel has for its keystone Hilary Frome, an obnoxious and manipulative fifteen-year-old who despises The Burleigh School as much as its teachers loathe him.

A bright, handsome young man, Hilary is determined to get ahead, a goal far too ambitious for a Burleigh student, so he is doing his best to discredit Burleigh and its teachers so that his father will have him transferred. Hilary is an expert at bullying or charming and at ferreting out people's weaknesses, sexual or otherwise, and exploiting them. An incipient and skillful young blackmailer, he enjoys having a hold over people. "All power enriches," he tells his girlfriend, "and absolute power enriches absolutely."

In a much more pleasant fashion, Barnard quickly establishes his power over us, his readers, an easy rapport which succeeds in drawing us into the life and times at Burleigh. Though attentive readers can guess the plausible solution to Burleigh's—and Hilary's—troubles, Barnard provides enough equally plausible red herrings to tease and confuse even the most alert reader.

More importantly, we care how things turn out. We are delighted when Hilary "gets his" though anxious lest some more innocent, and likeable, character be found responsible for Hilary's misfortune.

But the greatest delight of the book is its characters: all degrees of flawed teachers, inexperienced teachers; earnest boys, devious boys; doting parents, unwilling parents. With his characteristic wry humor, Barnard has created an amazing list of silly names which border on caricature, and has given them to people whose behavior also border on caricature, except that we have all known teachers and boys and parents and people like this.

A small, failing school, Burleigh has attracted more than its share of eccentrics and misfits. One, Percy Makepeace (who cannot), is an ineffectual mathematics teacher whose "square of the hypotenuse" the boys gleefully transform into "the square on the hippopotamus," which becomes "the square hippopotamus," all in the midst of a glorious schoolboy riot.

Then there is Edward Crumwallis, a headmaster less interested in Scholarship than in cultivating his Manner, a "decidedly impressive" manner, especially to those of limited intelligence. Best of all is his wife, Enid Crumwallis, an insensitive penny-pincher who collects fees from the faculty for sherry offered them after a staff meeting and who doses any sick boy, whatever his ailment, with patent stomach medicine of questionable value.

The images conjured up by names alone are confirmed by Barnard's careful sketches: Septimus Coffin, an aged Classics teacher; Corbett Farraday, the science instructor; Onyx, the less-than-faithful wife of Bill Muggeridge, the gamesmaster who smells too often of stale sweat. When death—a horrible death—does occur, we are glad that the police summoned, Superintendent Mike Pumfrey and Sergeant Fenniway, are refreshingly normal human beings. We are glad, too, to know Toby Freeley, a likeable young temporary staff member on his way to Cambridge, who is father-mother-elder brother to the few boys who board at Burleigh.

One of these boarders is a particularly vulnerable thirteen-year-old, Malcolm Pickerage, who proudly claims Hilary Frome as his best friend. Though Pickerage is far younger and far less experienced, Hilary seems to find pleasure in his company, a relationship that worries Toby Freeley. In an ominous moment before Things Happen, Pickerage pooh-poohs a poem by Thomas Gray which describes boys surrounded by "The ministers of human fate / And black misfortune's baleful train." Of all the boys at Burleigh, young Pickerage is, we discover, most threatened by baleful black misfortune.

School for Murder's combination of wicked satire and serious social commentary is reminiscent of the best of Dickens, though to the modern eye this book is far more readable. Barnard handles characters and plot with the deft touch of a professional, a touch which makes *School for Murder* one of his best and a *bona fide* page turner: deadly, but never dull.

—Mary Frances Grace

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Through a Glass, Darkly edited by Barry Woelfel. New York: Beaufort, 1984. $16.95

Thirteen vintage stories of wine and crime, all by notable authors, have been assembled in this unusual anthology, which will appeal even to the soberest reader.

It seems that spirits and mystery have an affinity for one another. Terry Robards, who writes a syndicated column on wine, provides an introduction. He states that *Through a Glass, Darkly* is "a collection of stories in which wine or spirits play a central role, enhancing the plots woven by some of the greatest writers in the English language." The editor, Barry Woelfel, a freelance writer, adds that the stories "involve lawbreaking of one sort or another, including several murders for the detectives to solve."

Among the stories, each with a distinctive flavor, is "The Last Bottle in the World" by Stanley Ellin, about a rare bottle of Burgundy, Nuits Saint-Oen 1929, and its effect on a triangular domestic situation reeking of jealousy and revenge. "The Unknown Peer" by E. C. Bentley, one of the important pioneers of modern detective literature, features Philip Trent solving a baffling murder through the analysis of a fish and claret dinner. Roald Dahl describes a fateful wine-tasting bet in "Taste," while the master, Edgar Allan Poe, is represented by "The Cask of Amontillado," the classic tale of revenge.

Raffles, the famed British gentleman-burglar, manages to smuggle twelve cases of exceptional champagne for both a patriotic cause and personal profit in a World War I yarn penned by Barry Perowne. The protagonist of Bill Pronzini's "Connoisseur" kills and dies because a cellar full of rare, aged, and irreplaceable wines have been accidentally reduced to vinegar.

In "An Educated Taste" by Maralyn Horsdal, a thirst for wine leads to larceny, while "You Don't Smell It: You Drink It" by William Price Fox demonstrates how good Southern whiskey will win over big-city folks any day.

Other intoxicating tales of chicanery, theft, and murder, hinged on the maxim that *in vino veritus* (in wine there is truth), include "Moving Spirit" by Arthur C. Clarke, the well-known science-fiction author, about an ingenious scientist who may aid the Allies during World War II; "The Lost Blend" by O. Henry, master of the surprise ending, a charming story of love and liquor; and "Deerglen Queen" by Bill Knox, noted British crime writer, about a one-woman fight to run a family distillery.

Altogether, *Through a Glass, Darkly* is a fine literary bouquet. It is the ideal book to peruse by the fireplace, on a wintry night, with a glass of refined vintage to savor the occasion.

—Amnon Kabatchnik

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The Hobbema Prospect by John Buxton Hilton. St. James Press, 1984. $10.95

Hilton presents a straightforward, relatively simple tale of current murder growing out of old actions. The dialogue and narration are serviceable and functional, if not inspired. Eventually, the characters are passably interesting but easily forgotten. Although it is billed as a Supt. Kenworthy novel, he does no more of the detecting than the other policemen and does not stand out.

Nevertheless, it is not a bad book. Newlywed Ann Larson is the main character. She was oddly close to her mother, even though they had little in common and did not really like each other. While still on her honeymoon, Ann gets word of her mother's death—an easily seen-through false suicide. Searching for the cause of her mother's death, Ann is led to her own children and secrets of the past.

—Fred Dueren

* * * * *

Corpse in a Gilded Cage by Robert Barnard. New York: Scribner's, 1984. $12.95

This review is prejudiced. And very personal. I admit it from the beginning. In fact, I admit it from the last twelve or so Barnard books I've reviewed. He's only written thirteen. I've said before that Barnard has never written a bad book. Actually, they have all been very good to great. How much plainer can I get? I'm stuck trying to find some new phrase to explain how enjoyable his novels are. Do you get an idea when I tell you that this is the only author since Christie whom I go out and buy, at publishers' prices, the day a new book hits the stores?

After all this buildup, be certain. This book is one of his best. As usual, his witty, satirical viewpoint and sense of the ridiculousness of mankind had me giggling and laughing to the point at which I had to stop to recover.

His victims this time are the gentry, but with several odd barbs thrown out at the legal profession, relatives, "commoners," servants, jailers, and anyone else who happens to walk into view. The springboard for it all is the unexpected inheritance of an earldom by a distant relation of the Claphams. The new earl is plainly unhappy in his new castle and wants only to sell out and return to his little cottage. But then his children begin maneuvering for their shares of the money and power and all hell breaks loose.

Prejudices aside, it is a great book which everyone but dead-in-their-coffins realists will enjoy. Wait until it comes out in paperback, if you must, but read it.

—Fred Dueren

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Raven's Shadow by Donald MacKenzie. New York: Doubleday Crime Club, 1985. 183 pp. $11.95

Donald MacKenzie's eleventh case featuring retired Detective-Inspector John Raven is a crisp, pulsating addition to this celebrated series. Raven is summoned to investigate the perplexing death of a British Airways pilot, and he unmasks a dark trail leading to his former police unit and the satanic environs of

the London underworld. A missing videotape and a cache of stolen diamonds figure into MacKenzie's taut web of deception and treachery. MacKenzie depicts a murder scene which approaches Hitchcockian dimensions. *Raven's Shadow* is hypnotic, escapist fare.

—Andy East

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Flowers from Berlin by Noel Hynd. New York: The Dial Press, 1985. 330 pp. $16.95

On the surface, Noel Hynd's *Flowers from Berlin* impresses the reader as a polished contender for the Frederick Forsyth throne of political intrigue. After three previous novels, *Revenge* (1976), *The Sandler Inquiry* (1977), and *False Flags* (1979), Hynd—the son of the late Alan Hynd, a renowned suspense author of the '30s and '40s—can now claim membership in the elite corps of thriller practitioners presently represented by the likes of Forsyth and Jack Higgins.

Hynd bestows a chilling sense of irony on his fiction, and nowhere is this more apparent than in his current effort. FBI agent William Thomas Cochrane is selected by President Roosevelt and J. Edgar Hoover to apprehend an elusive German master spy known only as Siegfried. Into this provocative plot, Hynd has integrated a Nazi conspiracy to assassinate Roosevelt on his yacht, the machinations of a seductive *femme fatale,* and the startling mystery surrounding a self-righteous minister.

Flowers from Berlin offers authenticity as well, for, in addition to the presence of Roosevelt and Hoover, no less than Adolf Hitler and Hermann Goering materialize as they evaluate Siegfried's activities in the U.S. and Europe—and the intricate operations of the Gestapo and the Abwehr reflect the malevolence of world history's perilous tide in 1939, the year in which this absorbing thriller is primarily set.

Hynd manages to be simultaneously gripping and entertaining. The book's prologue and Part Eight are placed in May 1984, in which Cochrane, now an eminent professor of political science at Harvard, delivers a lecture to an auditorium full of students. It is here—in the context of his principal plot—that Hynd displays his quality of haunting irony.

Noel Hynd achieves with *Flowers from Berlin* precisely what John le Carré accomplished with *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold.* He is deserving of a much wider audience.

—Andy East

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Green Trigger Fingers by John Sherwood. New York: Scribner's, 1984. $11.95

Occasionally, one runs across mysteries which utilize very specialized—and even esoteric—knowledge in a fresh and engaging manner. They're often the sorts of mysteries that a friend recommends with a disclaimer such as, "You don't seem like a 'dog and gun' sort of person to me, but *I* really liked *The Revenge Game,* and it *is* very different." John Sherwood's *Green Trigger Fingers* is such a mystery, and it centers around the world of horticulture, revolving around plant breeding, hybrids, and old-fashioned yard work. There are bodies, in the good English tradition, in the herbaceous borders, skeletons in respected family closets, and nefarious doings with bedding plants — and human bedhopping.

The recently-widowed protagonist, Celia Grant, starts a nursery business in the village of Westfield after the death of her botanist husband, and hires herself out as a part-time gardener to supplement her income. While working at The Towers, ancestral home of the Armitage family, she uncovers the decomposing foot of a body she first believes to be that of Kenny Cooper, the prime suspect in the recent axe-murders of a weekending couple from London, held by all to be "a very messy double murder." But when the body disappears in the interval during which Celia goes to summon the police, and when the village starts to perceive her as mad, and a troublemaker to boot, Celia begins to investigate in earnest.

Viewing flowers—and people—as genetic puzzles, Celia sets out to solve the mystery that has increasingly to do with flowers, which crop up everywhere: in her greenhouse (where she succeeds in developing rare double primroses), in stately homes' gardens, and in forged flower prints reputed to be those of Van den Berghe. Then, too, there is Hobson's, the rival greenhouse which fronts for a house of prostitution and which would like to gobble up Celia's enterprise in order to provide a more discreet back entrance for its clients. And, finally, there are the economically but richly drawn village people, both upper- and lower-class, who measure Celia by their varying yardsticks and who resent her easy movement between the classes, as well as her dedication to a more classless society.

Green Trigger Fingers makes for fascinating reading, as Celia looks into families for "genetic mysteries" which parallel horticultural secrets. Sherwood clearly obeys the mystery writer's dictum that one should write about what one knows, hence Celia's frequent recourse into the Royal Horticultural Society's *Dictionary of Gardening,* Gerard's *Herbal,* and the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society.* To paint an individual's unique world accurately is a rare skill, and to present it plausibly in a mystery setting is impressive. Sherwood's talent is such that he pulls the reader into his specialized focus and working terminology without condescension and without missing a beat of the narrative. Moreover, he maintains narrative tension to the degree that even the mundane act of weeding presents several possibilities for interpretation, depending upon the status of the crime investigation. *Green Trigger Fingers* is, without a doubt, an excellent mystery to "dig" into!

—Susan L. Clark

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Fog of Doubt by Christianna Brand. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1984. 254 pp. $3.50

With style and attention to detail, Christianna Brand has created an intricate tale of deceit, secrecy, and murder. The atmosphere is that of a foggy night in London—the very dense kind of fog that was known as a "pea-souper"—but which now no longer occurs, thanks to pollution control.

On such a night, Raoul Vernet is murdered inside the home of Tom and Mathilda Evans, where he was visiting Mathilda. The subsequent investigation shows an abundance of likely suspects—most of whom have an inadequate alibi, that of being "out in the fog," which distorts both time and place. Most of the motives revolve around Rosie Evans—Tom's young sister—who is less innocent than when she went abroad to attend school, and now very pregnant indeed.

The male suspects all have Rosie's honor to avenge, assuming Raoul was the guilty party. As for the women, they have jealousy to spur them to murder, each having known Raoul as closely as they assume Rosie did.

Timing and motivation are significant factors in this marvelous mystery. A delight to read—characterization and plotting are top-notch.

—Gloria Maxwell

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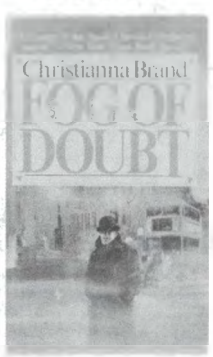


Stalker by Lizy Cody. New York: Scribner's. $11.95

Anna Lee, the Brierly Security operative featured in *Dupe* and *Bad Company,* receives an apparently routine assignment in *Stalker.* She is to determine the whereabouts of one Edward Marshall, a London antiques dealer who has eluded his creditors for months. Days of surveillance at Marshall's deserted shop produce no leads, and it is only when she locates his wife and engages in a bit of breaking and entering that she pinpoints the rural setting for his last country antique buying trip: Frome, Somerset. Her enquiries in rural England are tedious as she trundles a photo of Marshall from one bed-and-breakfast to another. Her dictum throughout is: "If you want to get away with being professionally nosey, unremarkable is the effect you should try to achieve. At one time she had thought this might be a romantic job. But people with romantic illusions find it hard to make a living."

By the time Lee has found Marshall, she has been threatened by thugs *and* by her employers (who turn suddenly cool to the direction the case has taken), she has learned

that Marshall poached deer on his "buying trips" and stole hearts of country girls as well, and she has been snared herself by an attractive telecommunications whiz who woos her with a heady combination of sex and power. Cody so intermingles Lee's professional and private searches that parallels between Lee's detective case and her "case" on Ian Olsen leap out in the text, both in similar circumstances and in Lee's symbolic dreams. Lee sees in Olsen precisely what one of Marshall's girlfriends sees in him, so that each of the women's lives becomes a time of "waiting endlessly for the one creep who had brought some romance into her life." Lee allows Olsen to choose the restaurants, and, after he manipulates her to redecorate his flat according to her sure sense of what suits him, he shows that *he* prefers *not* to choose: either she or his wife is to "win" him, and he is to be the passive member, the trophy, as it were. Cody takes this huntsman theme (and all the bars Lee visits sport mounted game heads, antlers and all, while all of her dreams highlight severed human body parts) and marries it to the furniture theme which links the antiques dealer to the man who can afford to have the furniture of his flat rearranged and replaced, but cannot refurbish the prison of his mind.

When Marshall turns out to have a prison record, *Stalker* becomes, if anything, almost too tidily plotted, but the symbolism is not, in the last analysis, labored. Cody's style carries the reader so quickly, so effortlessly, from one event to the next, and it is not without justification that she is compared favorably to P. D. James, who in turn compares equally favorably to Dorothy L. Sayers. Anna Lee is a worthy counterpart to Cordelia Gray, who takes mental attitude and methodology directly from Harriet Vane. Anna Lee bears further knowing, and one hopes that she does better in her next affair, or that Ian Olsen gets some control over his personal life—he exercises *so* much professionally—and comes back to this woman, to whom professional—and personal—success comes so grudgingly. She's well worth it.

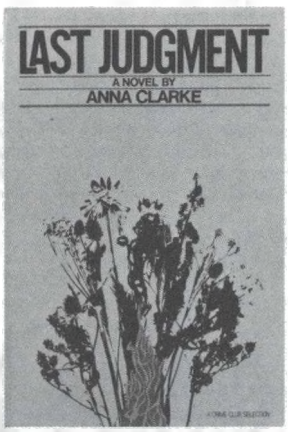
—Susan L. Clark

* * * * *

Last Judgement by Anna Clarke. New York: Doubleday, 1984. $11.95

"More like a national monument than like a living human being," G. E. Goff, Britain's greatest living novelist, is about to turn an irascible ninety years old. Attended by day by his step-daughter, Mary Morrison, and by night by nurse Hector Greenaway, Goff is settling into senility, rousing himself occasionally to write a vitriolic rejoinder to those literary critics who dare give his novels bad reviews. Virtually everyone is waiting for the old man to die: Mary, who watched her mother serve him for twenty years and who has been such a servant herself for five years; grandson James Goff, who teaches English literature at the University of London and who desperately wants to inherit his famous grandfather's papers, diaries, and manuscripts; Richard Grieve, the critic, broadcaster, and author, who could do far better justice than James to writing Goff's definitive literary biography.

James, long out of favor with his grandfather, has worked for six months to insinuate his way back into the old man's graces and has found, to his surprise, that he has fallen in love with Mary, "a most extraordinary



girl" who demonstrates "old-fashioned virtue." James's obsession is with finding out the terms of his grandfather's will: Is he or Mary to receive the old man's papers? Mary, on her part, feels that she will lose James if the elder Goff refuses, as he does, to permit James to do his biography. The stage is ripe for murder, with the identity of the prospective victim in no doubt—although that of the murderer is in question until the book's denouement. Clarke, author of over fifteen mystery novels, skilfully communicates an atmosphere of tyranny, tension, and repression, and *Last Judgement* is seen to be not only the title of Goff's last novel and the fate that overtakes him, but also the patriarchal burden which his descendants—by blood and by marriage—must bear until it becomes unbearable.

—Susan L. Clark

The Tragedy at Tiverton: An Historical Novel of Murder by Raymond Paul. New York: The Viking Press, 1984. 352 pp. $19.95

This is the second in a series of actual nineteenth-century murders—historically unsolved—which are fictionally settled through the efforts of Lon Quincannon, an unusual defense attorney who usually wins his cases.

On December 21, 1832, Sarah Maria Cornell—a 29-year-old millworker four months pregnant—is found hanged to death. She has left behind a note reading: "If I be missing, enquire of the Reverend Mr. Avery of Bristol." Which is how Quincannon comes to be hired to defend the Reverend Ephraim Avery, the first minister in American history to be tried for murder. The defense base their case initially on suicide, even though Quincannon knows that Sarah was actually murdered.

A second plot revolves around Christy Randolph, a young attorney whom Quincannon feels has promise, and who helps Quincannon on this sensational case. Randolph is troubled by questions of ethics as he learns to what lengths lawyers are expected to go in order to defend their clients—even when they know they are guilty. Randolph believes Avery is guilty, yet he is compelled to give him an adequate defense. Quincannon is determined to give Avery an exceptional defense—because he believes him to be innocent (a lecherous scoundrel, but yet innocent).

A third storyline revolves around Randolph's own troubled love affair with a beautiful young lady. There are many suspenseful moments which require quick page-turning and edge-of-the-seat posture. The flavor of the period is marvelously evoked, and the characters are ones whom you hate to leave.

This book is equally as well done as Paul's first historical mystery, *The Thomas Street Horror*. He is an author to watch—so that succeeding books can be quickly snatched up as soon as they are off the press. If you have any proclivity for history in mystery—and even if you don't!—do not overlook *The Tragedy at Tiverton*.

—Gloria Maxwell

Death in a Deck Chair by K. K. Beck. New York: Walker, 1984. 167 pp. $12.95

Replete with the vintage scenery of shipboard antics and romance, this book provides an airy, enjoyable read. Young Iris Cooper is completing an around-the-world cruise with her aunt aboard the luxury liner *Irenia*. Shipboard life becomes strained when a rather inconspicuous young man is found knifed in the back while sitting in a deck chair.

Iris becomes an impromptu amateur detective when the captain accepts her offer to take shorthand during the murder investigation. A blackmail plot is discovered which points to several likely suspects: a seductive screen vamp with a lurid past; a journalist eager to find a story; a prince traveling incognito; and a mysterious professor. An anarchist plot to depose the monarchy in Graznia is disclosed, which is intertwined with the victim's identity and purpose in traveling aboard this particular ship.

Light touches of romance pepper this sprightly mystery, which evokes a pleasant period ambience. This is a must for those who favor old-fashioned mysteries.

—Gloria Maxwell

* * * * *

The Rising of the Moon by Gladys Mitchell. New York: St. Martin's, $11.95

St. Martin's here reissues the 1945 Gladys Mitchell classic, and readers of period mysteries will find much to appreciate in it. Full of British schoolboy talk, this Dame Beatrice Lestrange Bradley mystery features a pubescent narrator, Simon Innes, and his younger brother Keith. Their parents having died, both boys live with their older brother Jack, his wife June, and their young lodger Christina, in a riverfront town which offers infinite excitement to the adolescent mind. There is, in fact, the crowded junk shop, run by odd Mrs. Cockerton ("who did not like girls"), where swords and pistols of many ages are sold. Then there is the mysterious figure on the bridge, brandishing a knife, visible to the boys the night before the grisly murder of a tightrope walker at the circus camped on the town's edge. Then there are the second murder (a barmaid at "The Pigeons") and the third (a dairymaid) and even a fourth (a children's nurse). And the boys are absolutely a-quiver, particularly because suspicion seems unjustly to rest on their brother, so much so that they tamper with evidence, forcing Mrs. Bradley, the Scotland Yard psychiatrist assigned to sex crimes, to admonish them: "There is often a great deal to gain by being frank. I do not press you, of course. You know your own business best, but . . . could we not do without one more mystery in this very complicated affair?" Her respect for them, evinced in stilted language, is comic, but it gets results.

It's actually a toss-up as to who is funnier: Mrs. Bradley, who delivers lines such as, "There are ways and means of discovering the presence of human gore," or Keith, who opines with twelve-year-old sincerity, "All detective work is sneaking. That's why only gentlemen and cads can do it." Only by combining forces do Bradley and the boys run the criminal to earth, but before this can be accomplished the boys risk their lives and race over the town and riverfront geography which Mitchell has painstakingly established throughout the earlier, more leisurely, part of the mystery. Mitchell is a master at creating atmosphere, as she has a well-established sense of place. Yet *The Rising of the Moon* treats of a Britain in which wartime is ignored but in which "all murderers are lunatics," since "killing is not a sane reaction to the circumstances of life." And, in the final analysis, the motivation behind the serial killings in *The Rising of the Moon* is as senseless as the deaths which come suddenly and unexpectedly to victims of the Blitz. The sentiment, "There will always be an England," is an apt commentary on wartime pluck as well as on Mitchell's boyish *persona's* doggedness in pursuing the murderer who first flashed a knife on Dean Man's Bridge.

—Susan L. Clark

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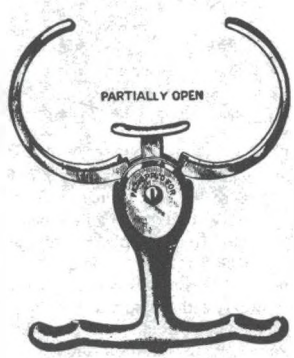


Things Beyond Midnight edited by William F. Nolan. Santa Cruz, Calif.: Scream Press, 1984. xxiv + 220 pp. $15.00

"What have we do do with walking corpses who can only be held in their grave by stakes?" the Master asked his colleague, Dr. Watson, in "The Sussex Vampire." "This agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply."

Yet his next case started with a scene of gruesome horror—a young wife rising from her baby's bedside, with red blood bright on her lips from a rip in the infant's throat.

The solution, macabre enough in all conscience, did not, however, involve vampires. Holmes was right.

And yet—the detective must follow where the facts lead. And since we live in a universe which we do not, even now, fully understand, those facts may lead us to things terrible indeed. They led Holmes to the strange contents of the vial from Prague, the dark serum which sent Professor Presbury, on a night of glowing moonlight and barking dogs, not a step upward but a step down on the scale of evolution. And at the climax of his most famous case, Holmes knew who was trying to kill the heirs to Baskerville Hall—but left unsolved the mystery of the death which the killer tried to copy, that of Hugo Baskerville a century and a half earlier, pursued screaming, attacked and savaged in rolling fog by a huge hound shining with a light not of this world and bigger and blacker than anything natural could be.

There is then a bridge between the strict, classical detective story and the tale of the supernatural, leading to lands which may be strange and terrible indeed. Detective story writers have often set their themes and sent their detectives into that world of twilight, sometimes just once and sometimes more frequently. Leslie Charteris's Robin Hood of modern crime, The Saint, took "The Darker Drink" more than most. T. S. Stribling's Prof. Henry Poggioli, the modern American rationalist, who believed only in what science could account for, met with the inexplicable several times, once most distressingly on "A Passage to Benares." Private detective Dan Kearney of DKA once went "Beyond the Shadow," and hardboiled Carella of the 87th once encountered *Ghosts,* and approximately half of the cases of *Carnacki the Ghost-Finder* involved the genuinely supernatural.

Thus, while only about a fifth of the nineteen short stories (and one teleplay) in William F. Nolan's new, handsomely printed collection, *Things Beyond Midnight,* are formal detective-crime stories, the book still fits within the genre, for approximately three-quarters of the tales center around a crime, its investigation and final solution.

Take, for instance, that "Lonely Train A'Comin' "...

Rancher Paul Ventry's sister has vanished. Amy was last seen trudging through the snow toward an isolated Montana railroad station. Ventry receives a postcard from her, telling how thrilled she is about her new job in the city, breaking off because the train has come unexpectedly early—"this beautiful old train! Didn't know they still ran steam locomotives like this one!"

It is weeks before Ventry learns that she has not arrived in the city, that the railroad no longer runs steam locomotives on its line and hasn't for years, before the snows melt and the sheriff finds bones along the track and a red purse Ventry recognizes as Amy's.

Ventry investigates and discovers that a surprisingly large percentage of missing persons in Montana over the past decade have been traveling by rail—and over the same section of line where Amy has disappeared . . . and always in winter.

A psycho, Ventry figures. Running his own train out of an abandoned railway tunnel, coming out only in winter when the snow hides the long unused spur, to lonely stations where only a single, easily handled passenger or so is likely to board.

Easily handled—

But this time it won't be a teenaged girl that boards. It's Ventry who is waiting at the deserted station, as the black Montana skies darken and the snowclouds come, waiting with Granddaddy's Frontier model Colt in his belt and a holstered axe at his side, waiting for something iron and monstrous to loom out of the drifting snow and the blowing cold

and slide to a grinding stop in front of the station...

What follows makes this a masterpiece of nightmarish terror, combining the power of Stephen King's best work with a poetic beauty lacking in King. The Montana landscape and season is beautifully and accurately rendered, and an intense cold pours through the very interstices of the story. First published in *Gallery* for October 1981, this is the first complete version of the story to be printed, restoring several passages which the author was forced to leave out of its magazine appearance.

The crime stories are mostly shockers with surprise endings, but they delve fairly deeply into psychology and are more than merely gimmick tales. We murderers, little Mr. Pryn points out respectfully, "seldom look like what we really are." Which poses a problem for Lt. Bendix, who gets the crazies, the screwballs who like to confess to crimes they never committed. But he has to listen, for once in a while the story one tells may be true. Maybe Mr. Pryn really is what he claims to be—the slasher who has killed six women, and who is now walking "Into the Lion's Den."

In "A Real Nice Guy," the so-called Phantom Sniper, who does not—will not let himself—see his victims as people, who views them only as randomly selected targets, treats himself to a night on the town with a fresh, innocent-looking girl he's picked up after a successful stalk and kill. But she wants to talk about the Sniper, who he is, and the motives for his actions. What she tells him so upsets him that he decides to violate his standard rule: pick only random targets, so there's absolutely no connection between you and your victim. The girl will be next...

In these and some other stories, Nolan implies that for some murderers, at least, crime has a "demon child" quality, that it is a game in which targets and not human beings are torn; that the killer does not see—does not want to let himself see—reality. (It is this which accounts for the inclusion of the volume's one funny story, seemingly as out of place as a polished rock in a box of candy—"One of These Days," a fantasy about a mental patient who sees his doctor as a dog wearing glasses, who talks to mice living behind the wallboard of elevators, who sees a fat woman shoot a cop and turn into a pelican. When you stop to think about it, Nolan states in his introduction to the story, that isn't funny at all.)

Anyone irritated or infuriated by the law's cost and delay, by fallible, prejudiced, or corrupt judges, has often wondered—and increasingly so in recent years—if human judges could not be replaced by machines. Couldn't a computer do it better? In "Violation," Nolan gives us a brief but chilling glimpse into a neon-lit nightmare of the near-future city, in which a slightly drunken driver and his girlfriend are pursued by a robot cop—unbribable, unstoppable, perfect. ("Welcome aboard. Your plane is being flown entirely by computer. But do not worry; nothing can go wrong...go wrong... go wrong...") A microcosm rather than a vignette, the story is a small classic of modern science fiction.

In "Starblood," a series of seemingly inexplicable murders and suicides occur when aliens telepathically visit a future Earth of professional assassins, religious fanatics, and robot books shaped in the images and personality patterns of their authors. A science-fiction variation of the old theme of demonic possession, this group of vivid vignettes presents a solution to the violent deaths which is entirely new to science fiction.

"The Underdweller" is a grim and suspenseful tale of pursuit, as the last man left alive on Earth after an attack by alien starships is hunted through the huge storm-drains below Los Angeles by a small, vicious, growling horde the identity of which is not revealed until the shocking ending. Most authors would have played this solely for the shock value of that ending. Not Nolan. The motivation which moves the man out of his safe hiding place for a dangerous trip through the night city is his need for books to read. Civilization, Nolan is saying, the achievements of man's spirit and intellect, are worth such risks.

"The Underdweller," first published as "Small World" and later as "The Small World of Lewis Stillman," was Nolan's first major success and remains today his most frequently anthologized work. It has also appeared in radio and TV form. (Nolan's works seem to adapt easily to other media. See, for example, the teleplay version included here of "The Party," another well-known short story about a man who finds himself attending a penthouse cocktail party without quite being able to remember who invited him or how he got there...)

Even more impressive, though in a different way, is a more recent story, "The Pool." A subtle air of disquiet pervades the story from the start, when Lizbeth's boyfriend drives them through the winding Hollywood Hills, down Sunset Boulevard to their new home, a two-story Spanish house set high on a bluff. Yet everything seems to be coming up roses for Liz, a first-year drama student. She's got youth, beauty, a boyfriend who looks like Robert Redford and is lucky, who got the expensive house for nothing by winning it in a poker game. And the owner didn't even seem bothered by losing it. The house probably had bad memories for him; he's had it closed for the past ten years, ever since his wife disappeared from around here...

There's even a swimming pool—her own swimming pool!—set a few feet below the house in back, and bigger—much bigger—than Liz could have imagined. But when she stares at the dark waters of the pool, despite the California heat, Liz feels an icy cold sweeping over her. There's something *wrong* about, or in, the pool...

What happens to Liz and her boyfriend in the house afterward, and how they learn what happened to the lost wife, provide a permanent shudder for the reader. Permanent, for this is the rare kind of story which keeps coming back to you, weeks and months apart, again and again, apropos of nothing, and bringing back with it that same original icy *frisson* of horror it produced the first time. The effect is much the same as if you felt a sudden weight on your back and looked idly over your shoulder to see a spider bigger than your hand crawling up between your shoulder blades... "The Pool" is a masterpiece of horror.

The book, in fact, collects the author's finest short work, Nolan at his best and blackest, and stands alongside his best long work, the three science-fiction novels published jointly as *The Logan Trilogy*.

Most collections in which a large number of the stories are mysteries and the others fantasy/science fiction do not seem to work well. Like William Hope Hodgson's *Carnacki the Ghost-Finder,* many resemble two different books accidentally stuck together at the bindery. *Things Beyond Midnight* does not have this flaw. Nolan's concept that the criminal mind is out of touch with reality to a lesser or greater degree points to the theme which unifies the book: in all its stories, the characters deal with the demons without, the demons within.

In addition, the work contains two introductions, one by Richard Christian Matheson on Nolan as man and writer and one by Nolan himself on how to create horror in fiction—it's the buildup that does it—as well as brief, informative introductions to each story. The volume is well bound and well printed on good paper, a bit taller and wider (at about 9¼" × 6¼") than normal, and with decorated endpapers and six illustrations (one a double-page spread) by J. K. Potter which are almost as scary as the stories. The production values are on a level with Arkham House and The Mysterious Press.

I should note that, while this collection is dedicated to me, critical opinion regarding its stories during the quarter-century span they cover has been both remarkably high and remarkably consistent. The book is recommended especially for the reader who likes Bradbury, Beaumont, and Matheson—and for the fan of the macabre in any field.

—Frank D. McSherry

MINOR OFFENSES

By Edward D. Hoch

As I've reported here recently, anthologies of mystery short stories seem to be thriving, thanks largely to the work of tireless editors such as Martin H. Greenberg, Bill Pronzini, and others. Davis Publications has cut back on the number of anthologies being edited by Eleanor Sullivan and Cathleen Jordan, but we hope this is only temporary. Overall, the anthology picture is bright.

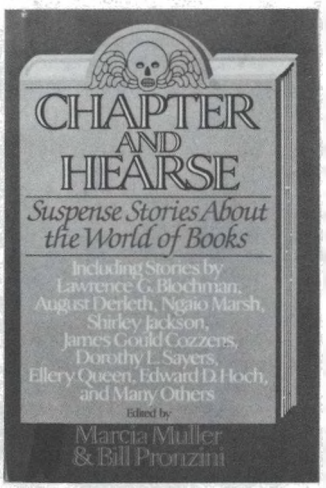
There is still some reluctance on the part of publishers to issue single-author collections, apparently because these do not sell as well as the multiple-author anthologies. A few publishers, notably The Mysterious Press, have bucked this trend for years, and the "Mystery Makers" series from Southern Illinois University Press is continuing publication of its handsome single-author collections. Following publications of volumes devoted to the short stories of Anthony Boucher and Christianna Brand in the fall of 1983, SIU Press has now issued *Carnival of Crime: The Best Mystery Stories of Fredric Brown* ($22.95), and two further volumes are due this fall.

The 23 stories in *Carnival of Crime,* ranging from fifty words to 55 pages in length, were chosen by editors Francis M. Nevins, Jr. and Martin H. Greenberg. Bill Pronzini has contributed a knowledgeable introduction about Brown's life and work, and Nevins adds a complete checklist of his fiction. The stories themselves include the classic "Don't Look Behind You" and such memorable tales as "Town Wanted," "Little Apple Hard to Peel," "A Voice Behind Him," "I'll Cut Your Throat Again, Kathleen," "The Laughing Butcher," and "Cry Silence." One of the rarest of Brown's novelettes, "The Case of the Dancing Sandwiches," is also included, along with several stories reprinted for the first time since their original publications.

Unlike Brown's novels, few of his best short stories are traditional whodunits. The reader will find some here—notably "Blue Murder," "Mr. Smith Kicks the Bucket," and "The Laughing Butcher"—but many of the others are that particular blend of paradox, irony, and terror at which Brown excelled. This book is a fitting tribute to him, and, along with *The Best of Fredric Brown,* a 1976 collection of his science-fiction tales edited by Robert Bloch, it should be on the shelf of every lover of memorable short fiction.

Two of last year's Edgar nominees, Lawrence Block's "By the Dawn's Early Light" and Michael Z. Lewin's "The Reluctant Detective," are included in *The Eyes Have It,* the Private Eye Writers of America anthology mentioned here a couple of issues back. It's interesting to note, for the information of future bibliographers, that the texts of these two stories have been published in different versions.

"By the Dawn's Early Light" first appeared in the August 1984 issue of *Playboy,* and there are extensive, if minor, editorial changes from the PWA version. "The Reluctant Detective" was published in the British edition of *Winter's Crimes 16* about a month before the PWA version appeared, and here the differences between the two are major. In *Winter's Crimes,* the story opens with the sentence, "It started as a tax fiddle," and continues in a straightforward manner. The PWA anthology, showing possible second thoughts by the author, opens well into the story, with the "tax fiddle" section appearing as a flashback. (Both stories are reprinted in my own anthology, *Year's Best Mystery & Suspense Stories 1985,* and I've used the first American text in each case—the *Playboy* version for Block and the PWA version for Lewin.)



This year promises to be a banner one for mystery anthologies, possibly surpassing the 25 volumes published (by my count) during 1984. One of the first to appear was *Ellery Queen's More Lost Ladies and Men* edited by Eleanor Sullivan (Davis Publications, $3.50 paperback). The 22 stories reprinted here (all but one from EQMM) cover a wide range and include some special delights: Clark Howard's Edgar-winning "Horn Man," Robert McNear's Edgar nominee "Death's Door," Brian Garfield's Edgar nominee "Scrimshaw," and fine tales by Cornell Woolrich, Georges Simenon, Stanley Ellin, Ruth Rendell, and Ellery Queen.

Another excellent new anthology is *Chapter and Hearse* edited by Marcia Muller and Bill Pronzini (Morrow, $18.95). These sixteen mystery and suspense stories about the world of books include Lawrence G. Blochman's novelette "Murder Walks in Marble Halls," about a killing at the New York Public Library, and stories by Ngaio Marsh, Shirley Jackson, James Gould Cozzens, Dorothy L. Sayers, Ellery Queen, and others. The individual introductions are as knowledgeable and interesting as one always expects from this team of editors.

Among the mystery magazines, I was especially pleased with the third issue (May 1985) of *Espionage.* Both the design and content of this magazine continue to improve, and I hope it will be around for a while. This issue contains a Frederick Forsyth interview, a nice period spy thriller by Ron Goulart, and stories by Al Nussbaum, Francis M. Nevins, Jr., Joe R. Lansdale, Arthur Moore, and others.

Although this column is devoted to short fiction rather than nonfiction, I should call attention to Walter Albert's *Detective and Mystery Fiction: An International Bibliography of Secondary Sources* (Brownstone Books, $60). A labor of several years, with assistance from mystery scholars and fans around the world, this massive 781-page volume is indeed impressive, listing thousands of books, articles, and introductions about mystery writers and mystery writing. It stands as a landmark volume of scholarship in the field. □

CRIME HUNT

By T. M. McDade

On the morning of September 6, 1913, an eighteen-year-old girl, Mary Bann, and her eleven-year-old brother were outside the tarpaper house which was their home in Woodcliff, New Jersey, overlooking the Hudson River, which lapped at their feet. Seeing an odd-shaped bundle floating in the water, Mary caught it with a pole and pulled it onto a landing dock. She then lost interest in it, and, later, two boys with more curiosity unwrapped the brown paper and twine to disclose to their horror the torso of a woman.

The body had been severed at the waist and lacked head and arms. The coroner's superficial opinion placed her age between twenty and thirty and said that she had been dead less than a week. The corpse had been wrapped in a pillowcase on which the manufacturer's tag was still visible. The next morning, a similar package floated ashore at Weehawken, three miles downriver from the first. It contained the lower part of the torso. An attempt had been made to weigh down the package with a piece of greenish-gray stone known as schist, peculiar to the original bedrock across the river in Manhattan. Like the first, this was also wrapped in a pillow slip which bore an embroidered letter A. Part of the wrapping consisted of a newspaper dated August 31, 1913.

Though the pillowcase had been manufactured in New Jersey, the police traced the only significant shipment of such cases to a furniture dealer, George Sachs, whose shop was at 2762 Eighth Avenue near 137th Street in Manhattan. When the police located a store near Sachs's which had sold the tarpaper wrapping and another, also nearby, which supplied two sheets of medicated manila paper, the major investigation centered in that area under New York Police Inspector Joseph Faurot.

A few days later, a leg was found in the water at Keansburg, New Jersey, and this proved to be one of the missing limbs. Though still lacking the head, the remains were viewed by relatives of missing persons and three different families made tentative identifications, all erroneous. These kept the police busy running down dead ends, and in addition they were having difficulties with the New Jersey authorities, who were reluctant to surrender the parts of the body in view of the lack of real proof that the crime had been committed in New York.

A week slipped by. The press had been following the case with great zeal, though lacking anything positive on the identity of the victim or her killer. So when newspaper readers picked up their papers on September 15, they were astonished to read a long account of the police activities of the day previous, when they had not only identified the victim but had arrested the murderer, who had already confessed.

The hunt had started at Sachs's furniture store, where among the sales slips was found one issued on August 25 for a chair, bed springs, and an enameled bed, plus two pillows with cases identical to that which had been used to wrap the torso. The moving men used by Sachs had delivered these articles to a third-floor, four-room flat at 68 Bradhurst Avenue in Manhattan. From the superintendent, the police learned that the flat had been rented that same day to an H. Schmidt, who said he wanted it for a young relative who was to be married. For five days, a watch was kept on the apartment, but no one was seen to enter or leave. It was during these days that the police had been simultaneously exploring the three identifications of the body which all proved to be mistaken. Exhausting these avenues, it was decided to search the flat.

FATHER SCHMIDT, MURDERER

On Saturday, September 13, detectives entered the apartment and knew immediately that they had found the scene of the dismemberment. Bloodstained floors, a gory knife and saw, women's clothing, and a bloody bathtub all bespoke the fatal transaction. The only furniture in the rooms besides Sachs's chair and bed and the remaining pillow was a trunk in which were found a number of letters addressed to an Anna Aumuller. After sorting through these, the detectives fanned out, visiting those writers whom they could identify.

One of those letters took them to St. Boniface Roman Catholic Church at 47th Street and Second Avenue, where they interviewed the pastor, Father John Braun. The girl Anna Aumuller had worked at the rectory from December 1912 until just two weeks earlier, when, on August 31, she had been discharged by Father Braun because he "was not satisfied with her way of life"—thus obliquely referring to a suspected pregnancy which had not, however, been confirmed by the autopsy. The Father was unable to tell where she had gone. In the course of these inquiries, Braun happened to mention a priest named Hans Schmidt, who had formerly been Braun's assistant. Recalling the name Schmidt in connection with the renting of the Bradhurst flat, Inspector Faurot obtained the priest's address and departed.

It was now 11:30 P.M., and the detectives hurried to St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church on West 125th Street and Morningside Avenue, where a Father Quinn admitted them and went off to summon Father Schmidt. When the priest entered the room, it was apparent to the detectives that their visit was a profound shock to him. His whole body was shaking, and, even as he was asked his name and age, his quivering hands gave evidence of his personal terror. Only by interlocking them was he able to keep them still.

Faurot told him that they were police officers, that he need not make a statement but that they had come to see him about a matter of great importance. Faurot solemnly introduced each of the three detectives accompanying him and asked Schmidt where he had been born.

"Germany," Schmidt answered.

"When did you hire the flat at 68 Bradhurst Avenue?"

There was no answer, the priest simply staring at his hands. He was shown a photograph of Anna Aumuller. "Who is she? Do you know her?"

Schmidt was still silent.

"Is she Anna Aumuller?"

"Yes," he answered, and, dropping his head upon the table, he wept.

"Did you kill her?" he was asked.

"Yes. I loved her."

After that, the whole story came out.

With this admission, Schmidt was taken to the Bradhurst flat, it now being early Sunday morning, and quietly described to the detectives how the girl had been killed and dismembered. For a motive, he would say only that he had received a message: "Anna will be a sacrifice of blood and atonement," and that acting on this instruction he had cut her throat while she was asleep, then cut up the body in the bathtub. At different times, he admitted to such ghastly details as drinking her blood and having intercourse after she was killed. Then, he said, wrapping the parts in several bundles, he had made various trips on the 125th Street crosstown car to the Fort Lee Ferry, which he rode to mid-stream and dropped his grisly parcels off the end of the boat.

In all the retelling, he maintained a quiet,

resigned air and assisted officers to reconstruct the crime in the greatest detail, supplying names of shops where the implements had been bought, identifying receipts for the rental of the flat, and declaring the crime to be solely his and his alone.

Considering the enormity of the outrage, it is not surprising that one of the priests asked Schmidt if he had really been ordained. His history, which the police and the press reconstructed in great detail, showed that he was 32 years old, having been born in Ascheffending in 1881, the sixth of ten children of a moderately placed railway official. His mother, a Catholic (his father was a Protestant), had encouraged his interest in the Church, and he had attended the St. Augustine Seminary in Mainz. He was an indifferent scholar and left the seminary to study in Munich. Later, he was re-admitted to the seminary on presentation of a graduate certificate from Freising Seminary. He was ordained in Mainz after two more years of study and served brief periods at churches in Offenbach, Seligenstadt, Ascheffending, and Darmstadt, but always there were reservations about him. He appeared distracted, remote, and secretive, along with other personal idiosyncrasies. Finally, when he absented himself from his church in Gonsenheim in October 1908, he had been quietly dropped from the active priesthood.

In December 1908, he had been arrested in Munich and charged with forgery. Using the name Dr. Zantor, he had written letters to some two hundred students at the university, claiming to be a specialist "to teach especially quickly and prepare for examination for regents." A search of the room where he lived under the name Dr. Sensheimer revealed forged seals of the Royal University of Munich, pads of faked regents certificates which he had caused to be printed using the name Dr. Maier Urbach of Frankfurt, and a forged diploma made out in his name and purporting to attest to a Ph.D. from the University of Munich. The authorities, with Teutonic thoroughness, interviewed everybody, and, when Schmidt was brought into the *Langericht*, or Superior Court, they ordered a medical examination. In his report, a Dr. Hermann characterized him to the court as a psychopath, erratic and incoherent in his views. The court, finding him in a "diseased mental condition" and therefore not responsible, discharged him. Left in the custody of his father, he was taken to a spa in Jordenbad, where he took only one tub of the standard cold-water cure and departed soon after.

The Ecclesiastical Court of the Bishop of Munich, on the basis of the record of his case, suspended him from all priestly functions—*suspensio a divinis*—and gave him written notice of its ruling. Shortly thereafter, he departed for America.

His life in this country showed the same uncertain behavior which had moved him from place to place in Germany. Without revealing his defrocking in the Old Country, he gained acceptance as a priest at St. Mary's Church in Louisville. He was there for six months before moving to Trenton, New Jersey, where he spent a year at St. Francis's and arrived at St. Boniface's on East 47th Street in 1910. As assistant pastor, he remained for two years before moving to St. Joseph's, where he had been arrested, in November 1912. None of the American churches had looked beyond the credentials which he had shown, all very impressive with seals and signatures—all his own work.

But stranger revelations were still to come. Through rental receipts found among his effects in the rectory, the police were led to another flat at 516 West 134th Street. There they discovered a complete printing plant for counterfeiting ten- and twenty-dollar bills. No complete bills were found; some were partly printed on bond paper and found still lying in the machines. Schmidt had purchased the equipment and rented the premises in June under the name of George Miller. His associate in this venture was a Dr. Earnest Arthur Muret, practicing as a dentist for which he had no license and whose real name was Heibig. Muret, who had studied dentistry in Germany for two years and spoke fluent French, German, English, and Russian, was wanted in London for fraud. Schmidt tried to assume full responsibility for the whole operation, claiming that Muret was not involved. Though Schmidt was charged with counterfeiting, only Muret was tried for it. Schmidt appeared at the trial as a witness in Muret's behalf, taking full responsibility for procuring the equipment and making the plates. Despite his testimony, Muret was convicted and sent to federal prison.

It was obvious that Schmidt's defense on the murder charge would turn on the question of his sanity. His strange behavior, and a history of suicide in his family, dictated his counsel's course. A commission was appointed by the court to take testimony in Germany about Schmidt's prior activities and about the suicide and insanity among his relatives.

Father Hans Schmidt's trial opened before Judge Warren W. Foster in General Sessions on December 6, 1913. W. K. Alcott was leading counsel for Schmidt. The priest had not had his hair or beard cut since his arrest and presented a scraggly appearance. Many women had turned out for the trial, and the *New York Times* reported that "most of them were chewing gum." Jury selection proceeded rapidly.

Alcott made little effort to limit the evidence. The *Times* saw the case as a contest of alienists, the defense conceding the murder, the only question being Schmidt's sanity. Schmidt's father and mother had arrived from Germany, but for some time he refused to speak to them.

The prosecutor presented evidence that Schmidt had attempted to insure Anna Aumuller's life. An insurance company doctor testified that he had examined the girl, who was represented to him as Schmidt's wife. The Postal Life Insurance Co. refused the application for a $5,000 policy, no reason being given. Schmidt, who was quiet and well-behaved during the trial, rose in protest when Alcott, in his opening address, called his client insane, but thereafter he assumed his former indifference. His sister testified to his visions at the age of ten, and to his disposition for cutting off the heads of geese with an unnatural interest in the blood. His father also testified to his son's excessive interest in blood, recalling his visits to local slaughterhouses.

The defense called no fewer than four doctors to testify to Schmidt's insanity. The leader of the quartet, Dr. Smith Ely Jelliffe, pronounced him a victim of *dementia praecox*, paranoid type. In this view, he was supported by three other doctors—Dr. W. A. White of the U.S. Hospital for the Insane, Dr. Henry Cottos, New Jersey State Hospital, and Dr. Perry Lichenstein of Bellevue Hospital. The prosecution countered with four doctors, leading with Dr. Carlos MacDonald, who confidently announced that Schmidt was shamming. His opinion was supported by Dr. George H. Kirby of the Manhattan State Hospital, Dr. Allen H. Diffendorf, Dr. W. Mabon, and Dr. Menas Gregory. This outpouring of psychiatric testimony caused the *New York Times* editorially to say: "Irritabled discontent with the testimony of 'experts'. . . was probably never better illustrated than in this case." The opinion of the newspaper was that the experts should serve the court and not the prosecution or the defense.

The jury received the case at 1:26 P.M., December 29, and, unable to agree, were locked up for the night. The next day, after 34 hours and still no agreement, the judge reluctantly dismissed them. The foreman, noting a ten-to-two vote for conviction, reported to the court: "Your Honor, we have on the jury two men whom the other ten of us consider mentally, temperamentally, and morally unfit to do jury duty."

The new trial started almost immediately. In January, Alphonse Koelble, one of Schmidt's attorneys, made a curious discovery. Going through some of Schmidt's papers, he came upon a letter which his client had received from Muret while in jail. In this letter, Muret referred to Anna's death as due to an illegal operation and not murder by Schmidt and claimed that the body had been cut up to conceal the real cause of death—but, while the second trial was in progress, Koelble was committed to the insanity plea and could do nothing about the new information.

The second trial ran much the same course as the first, but this time there was no delay in a verdict. The jury took but two and a half hours to convict Schmidt, a verdict which carried a mandatory death sentence.

Koelble now opened an investigation into the data which he now had on Anna's death due to an abortion. Among Schmidt's former cellmates in the Tombs, he located Philip Musica, who had been convicted of larceny and fraud and who years later would be revealed as the mastermind behind the famous McKesson-Robbins fraud. Musica told Koelble that Schmidt had admitted to him and others that Anna had died during an abortion. To protect his friends from

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prosecution, he had admitted to killing the girl.

Koelble spoke to Delehanty, the assistant district attorney, and the two men held long interviews with Schmidt at Sing Sing, where Schmidt, reluctantly, told a new story. According to him, the apartment at Bradhurst Avenue had been hurriedly rented when the girl was ordered out of the rectory at St. Boniface. Schmidt bought some furniture, but the bed collapsed on Anna, hurting her back and perhaps bringing on complications in her pregnancy. She was in pain and suggested the abortion, which Muret agreed to do. Assisted by a woman, Bertha Zeck, who had worked for him before, he performed the abortion, removing a fetus which was disposed of down the toilet.

Soon after, Anna had a hemorrhage which Muret was unable to stem, and she finally became unconscious. Muret was not sure whether she had died, and for hours they waited to see if she would revive. When it was apparent that she was dead, Muret explained the hazard of calling an undertaker, as he would surely inform the coroner. It was decided to attempt to dispose of the body, and, after Schmidt obtained tools, a saw and a knife, Muret dismembered the body. The parts were wrapped in bundles which the three carried to the ferry and cast into the river.

The question for Koelble was how to proceed with his appeal, for, as the matter stood, Schmidt was under a death sentence. In his presentation to the Court of Appeals, Koelble made it plain that Schmidt was never insane but had adopted that story to protect his friends. Koelble therefore argued that, on the basis of newly discovered evidence, the conviction should be reversed and a new trial ordered. The court's opinion in the case was written by one of the leading jurists in the country, Judge Benjamin N. Cardozo. Cardozo wrote that Schmidt had left himself open to a charge of murder instead of manslaughter because "he believed that he could feign insanity successfully and after a brief term in the asylum he would again be set at large. To confess to the abortion would implicate his confederates. . . . To confess to murder but at the same time to feign insanity might permit everyone to go free. . . . The men and woman who are said to have been the confederates deny such a compact was made. . . . In any event the defendent tells us he was not insane, that the tale of monstrous perversions and delusions was false and that he did not hear the divine voice calling him to sacrifice and slay."

But the evidence, continues Cardozo, was not newly discovered since the trial, as it was known to Schmidt from the beginning. Therefore, the court was without power to grant a new trial on that basis. "The remedy . . . was not in the processes of the courts or the machinery of the law; it is an appeal to the clemency of the Governor." The court therefore affirmed the conviction and left Schmidt under the threat of death.

The usual application was made to the Governor for clemency, but with one marked difference. Governor Whitman had been the New York City district attorney whose office had prosecuted the case originally, and it seemed unlikely that he would find any cause to change the result. He did not, and the final sentence was carried out on February 19, 1916 in the Sing Sing death house. Schmidt, a realist to the end, correctly characterized his end, saying that he was going to the chair for lying and not for murder. He was right. As he entered the death chamber, he said to the witnesses: "Gentlemen, I ask forgiveness for those whom I have offended or scandalized. I forgive all who have injured me."

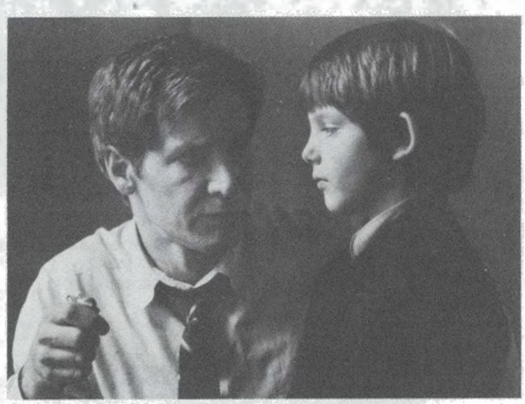
Perhaps the question which comes to students of crime is: How can we trust the opinions of doctors who are so easily misled as to declare a man such as Schmidt insane? In the past three quarters of a century, our courts do not seem to have improved their proceedings. □

By Thomas Godfrey

TAD at the MOVIES

As I was born in Philadelphia and raised amid the Amish farmlands of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, I approached **Witness** with the keen anticipation of one returning home after a long absence for a special event.

The expectations of the journey were considerably heightened by a respect for the guide, Australian film director Peter Weir (*The Last Wave, Picnic at Hanging Rock, The Year of Living Dangerously*). On the evidence of these past efforts, he seems a filmmaker with a strong conception of character and "inner" fantasy life, which he has married to a talent for creating the kind of mood you can feel in the back of your mind. He has an unfailing ability to draw audiences into his stories emotionally, and if, as happens in *Hanging Rock,* there come long stretches of style without substance, he at least gives you the sense of having experienced an adventure of imagination.



Ford and Haas, hero and witness: sophistication revealed as weakness and corruption

Here, in his first film for an American company, Weir embarks on a theme he has explored before—that of the threatened, ignorant, civilized sophisticate confronting some representative of the stark, powerful forces of nature and the earth. This time, his sophisticate is single, Philadelphia police detective John Book (Harrison Ford), investigating the death of an undercover narcotics cop in a public restroom at the Thirtieth Street train station. Book is a figure familiar to anyone who has watched TV cop shows in the past twenty years, just as Ford is a familiar face to anyone following the extravaganzas of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg the past ten. The audience will have no trouble identifying with Book.

The witness is young Amish boy Samuel Lapp (Lukas Haas), traveling to the Baltimore area with his recently widowed mother

Weir directing Godunov, Ford, and McGillis: setting a mood you can feel in the back of your mind.

(Kelly McGillis). When these two innocents are held for questioning, they encounter some of the rawest aspects of urban civilization, as Book is discovering that the perpetrators of the crime are men of position within his own precinct. He is ambushed and shot, but manages to escape with the child and his mother back to their farm, where he will be nursed back to health as his former associates hunt for him. Here he will also encounter some of the basic forces of nature and the earth, and find them more seductive than he might have imagined. The intrusions of the city seem even more ugly and evil, both in the forms of thoughtless tourists and contacts by phone with his sympathetic, doomed partner. Inevitably, he is drawn into an idyllic flirtation with the young Amish woman, set against the wholesomeness of this anachronistic, unspoiled setting.

As in the past, Weir's storyline is neither tightly drawn nor tensely plotted. There seems to be less interest in the events of the story than in the feelings and images they provoke. The great impact of *Witness* lies in the camerawork and the director's eye for framing action. There is not a shot in the film that does not look carefully planned and set up in advance. Yet within these frames Weir allows the action to proceed with some semblance of spontaneity. This is no self-conscious succession of images like *Barry Lyndon*. These pictures breathe and sweat and have life.

Perhaps most captivating of all is the moment when Book's broken car radio suddenly comes to life in the Lapp barn, pouring out the ingenuous 1950s rock tune "Wonderful World," provoking Book to take the young widow and lead her in a cautiously passionate, yet deeply felt, dance.

These few moments have a magic not found even in scenes more characteristic of Weir's past work—the sequence in which Book finds the young woman unclothed and bathing, for instance. The frustrated sensuality is theatrically underscored by the lightning storm in the night sky, but it overwhelms the characters and their feelings in a way that the barn sequence does not. For the most part, the hallmarks of Weir's cinematic suspense-building are all present—hushed, ominous pauses, eccentric, unexpected shots, tensely held movements—but they do not dominate the storytelling. Instead, they season it and give it some flavor.

Weir's suspense films are diametrically opposed to those of, say, Levinson and Link (see the following review). The film succeeds apart from the plot, almost divorced from the plot. Some of the Philadelphia cop-dominated scenes are too unimaginatively plotted for their own good. They not only show the city as corrupt and ugly, but boring and clichéd as well. When the film moves to the country, it moves to a higher level artistically. Weir seems more emotionally involved in what's happening here, and more inclined to build on what his scriptwriters have supplied. In the end, however, he allows a shoot-'em-up climax to stifle the subtleties which have come before, and the writing again becomes wildly conventional and of only limited imagination, though Weir does his best with it.

As Book the cop, Ford gives a likeable, uncomplicated performance. His style does not scream technique at you. You don't leave the theater dying to see him tackle Shakespeare or O'Neill either. But you don't tire of him, as you can of some of his more intense contemporaries such as De Niro and John Hurt. He counts on his looks but avoids the narcissistic preoccupations of Richard Gere or Matt Dillon. He's just up there on the screen the same way Gary Cooper and Clark Gable used to be.

McGillis as the young widow gives just the right air of well-scrubbed sensuality. She may seem a bit too conscious of herself physically for a farm girl from a conservative religious order, and sometimes her accent suggests that Bryn Mawr is just up the road, but generally I thought she had been glamorized just enough to make her a credible romantic figure without pushing into another Elizabeth Taylor "milking-the-chickens" joke.

Young Lukas Haas is wonderfully unforced as the boy. Jan Rubes strikes just the right note as the stern, puzzled grandfather. Danny Glover is just as convincing as the sartorially splendid killer as he was as the saintly Mose in last year's *Places in the Heart*. Most remarkable of all, one searches the performance of Russian emigré dancer

Alexander Godunov, as McGillis's Amish suitor, for some hints of borscht among the sauerkraut and finds none.

Only Josef Somer as Ford's slimey boss is a letdown. He makes your flesh crawl right at the start.

John Barry's music is properly portentous, as any score for a Weir picture would have to be, and he offers a striking "Kanon" to accompany a barn-raising sequence that deserves to be known on its own.

In spite of minor flaws, Weir again proves himself one of the most genuinely entertaining filmmakers of the current generation, both intelligent and sensuous in his conceptions, thoughtful and visual in his expression. In many scenes, I saw familiar sights of this farm country in ways I had not seen them before. Surely this must be the mark of a great filmmaker, to add to the perceptions of things we already know.

Rehearsal for Murder, Richard Levinson and William Link's intelligent, well-conceived television film about a playwright considering the death of his fiancée, has just been released on video cassette. If you missed it the first time, you should treat yourself to it now in this form. It leaves just about anything that's been done lately in the plot-dominated mystery genre in the dust. What's more, it avoids the sterile, intellectual Tinker Toy atmosphere that creeps into some of their other efforts.

By now, this team is so smooth, so polished at designing complex mysteries at work on several different levels, that they have brought the form to new heights and dimensions. This time, their efforts were greeted by the talents of some glorious actors, including Jeff Goldblum, Patrick Macnee, William Daniels, and Lynn Redgrave, who seem to be having as much fun performing the script as I did watching it. If I single out Robert Preston as the playwright-sleuth, it is only to mark another great day in the Indian summer of a long and varied career.

I doubt if there will be anything at your local theater, by the time this column meets your eye, that will give you half the fun of this wonderful entertainment. At last, caviar for the home video moviegoer, after an awful lot of celluloid fish sticks.

One small warning: the cassette has not been re-edited for continuous viewing, so the places where the commercials used to intrude are still rather painfully obvious—but this is a small price to pay for such riches.

Once Upon a Time in America is an ambitious saga about a quartet of gangsters who rise from New York's Lower East Side Jewish ghetto. James Woods, the volatile Max, is the brains of the outfit. Robert De Niro as "Noodles" is the more solid, romantic figure who holds them together.

At the end of Prohibition, Noodles betrays his friends to the cops in order to prevent their getting involved in a more desperate scheme of Max's. Ironically, they are killed instead. Years later, he emerges from hiding to discover who undid them, and what happened to the money they had cached away.

Director Sergio Leone's long, lyrical film was originally chopped down by its American distributor, but was later re-released in its present 3½-hour form. The longer version is more comprehensible, but there are still basic problems built into the concept.

Most strikingly, the ethnic overtones are stubbornly Italian, not Jewish, so that the occasional "Mazel Tov" tossed out in the dialogue sounds phony. De Niro gives a thoughtful performance without in any way seeming of Eastern European ancestry, and even Woods seems more Italianate in gesture and expression. Leone handles the crowd scenes like choruses in an opera. A street full of Eastern European Jews on their way to Friday night services seem ready to break into "Regina coeli" from *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

The tale is incredible, overly episodic, and still a mess in its chronicity. The foursome come across as purely male fantasy. They seem to chum around into their thirties, though the gravestones tell us they died in their late twenties, and the actor who plays Max as a younger man looks much taller than Woods. I had the sense that they all slept together in a club treehouse right up to the bitter end.

This aside, you cannot deny the film a certain romantic sweep characteristic of all the best epics, here considerably abetted by Ennio Morricone's tuneful Neapolitan score. It misses greatness (maybe it tries too hard to be different from *The Godfather*), but in this later, longer version, it is a thing to behold and enjoy, within its stylish limitations. □

TAD ON TV

By Richard Meyers

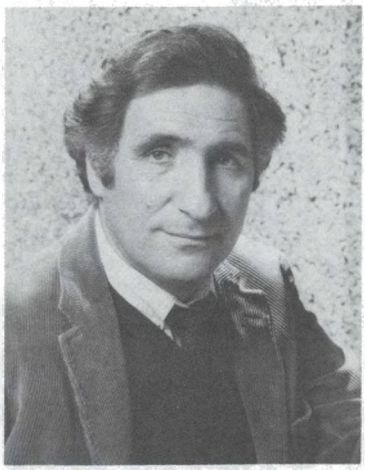
The best of times, the worst of times. This is the TV Detectives' State of the Union Address. Seemingly everyone in Los Angeles has decided to dropkick every other genre except this one. As of March 1985, a new mystery or private eye or cop show is premiering *every week*. Given this reality, you'd think they'd learn the lesson the ten top-rated shows give them: make more excellent productions. But no...all they seem to know is that murder mysteries and PI programs such as *Magnum* and *Simon and Simon* are going great guns.

Since being out here, I've discovered that the networks don't know the meaning of "bad" or "good." They seem to figure that if a show has run the gauntlet of their Business Affairs offices and their censors and their executives, it *can't* be bad. If it fails, it has to fail because of the stars or the time slot or the genre. For instance, no one at CBS wants to mention the term science fiction. Because *Otherworld* failed and *Otherworld* was "science fiction." The idea that *Otherworld* failed because it stunk like a year-old egg seems beyond them.

So they're not doing great, groundbreaking shows—they're just doing detective shows. Like **Detective in the House.** I have to admit that I have a low threshold for this sort of thing—a frumpy husband with a gorgeous wife and adorable kids living in a beautiful house with rooms the size of Shea Stadium's infield. Judd Hirsch is the dumpy daddy who always wanted to be a private eye, so, with his family's hesitant blessings, he apprentices under a legendary PI played by Jack Elam.

This show has a pretty serious case of Remington Steelitis: lots of "cute" character scenes which sashay nonchalantly along, building up to not much. It's a leisurely series done in pastels—mostly blue. This creates a feeling of artificiality that's hard to get around. It doesn't help that the main characters keep worrying about where the paycheck is coming from when they live in an immaculate suburban palace crammed with every amenity.

Slightly more realistic is **Eye To Eye,** ABC's answer to *Crazy Like a Fox.* Instead of veteran screen star Jack Warden, the ABC series has veteran screen star Charles Durning, who has been one of my favorites since his portrayal of the cop in *Dog Day Afternoon.* The man has a way of rising *way* above his material...almost singlehandedly saving the movie version of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (almost...the weight of that atrocity was too much for even him to bear).



Judd Hirsch

If the premiere/pilot was any indication, he doesn't have to do any Space Shuttle-like rising, but some Hindenburging might help. The plot is simplicity itself: a veteran private eye's partner is murdered, and he teams with the dead man's dizzy daughter to solve that, and many other, crimes. Stephanie Faracy is properly breezy as the dead man's daughter, and together she and Durning handle the familiar fare handily.

But is that enough for me? Not really. This is the age of *Hill Street Blues, Miami Vice, Cagney and Lacey,* and *Murder, She Wrote.* Things have to be better than average to get my unequivocal thumbs-up—and sometimes not even then. As I remember, I wasn't wild about any of the aforementioned greats when they first appeared. That's what happens when you write six months prior to publication. Your old opinions stay the same while the shows improve. So I suggest you take my present critiques with lots of lox.

Next on the hit parade is **Half Nelson.** Now this is a weird one. It started real well: showing a real policeman, played by Joe Pesci (so good in *Raging Bull* as De Niro/La Motta's brother), foiling a drug deal, then having him audition for the TV-movie version of the event. Only one problem . . . Rocky Nelson, the cop, is only about five-foot-three. So the Rock doesn't get to play himself in the teleflick and is stuck in L.A. with no job.

Lucky for him that the studio security chief also works for Beverly Hills Patrol a security firm. They give Nelson a job while one of the business's owners, Dean Martin (yes, *the* Dean Martin), lets Rocky stay in his guest house. That's the premise; here's the plot of the pilot/premiere—Rocky's best friend and the guy's girlfriend run afoul of a corrupt businessman who films bigwigs bedding the girl. The duo get killed and Rocky wants to know who actually did the deed—the businessman, the several-star general, the ex-astronaut, or the television executive?

So far, so good. In fact, very good. The solution to the mystery was unexpected and

interesting, while the cast, even in the small roles, was crammed with heavyweights. In addition to Dean Martin and Fred Williamson (who plays Nelson's immediate superior), there was Robert Webber, Bernie Kopell, Rod Taylor, Tony Curtis, Gary Lockwood, Dale Robertson, Denny Miller, Doug McClure, Rory Calhoun, and George Kennedy as Rocky's LA cop connection.

The problems with this show are technical. From the very outset, the editing and overdubs have been tackily obvious. The same goes for the lighting and photography. Ditto the direction. The story is solid, but the script doesn't exactly sparkle. It's a half hour before the plot gets going, and everything is stagey, flat, and fake-looking.

Still, Pesci is engaging, and, in addition to the actual mystery, there are some other cute ideas—such as: since Rocky has the run of the studio lot, he keeps borrowing the automotive props. During the pilot, he tooled around in Magnum's Ferrari, the Knight Rider's Trans Am, and the Fall Guy's truck (all with their respective shows' theme songs playing on the soundtrack). Rocky Nelson could be a real "TV Detective."

Tacky as it was, I'll be watching *Half Nelson* again. But remember, I'm the guy who wrote *For One Week Only: The World of Exploitation Movies* and *Martial Arts Movies* (with Karen and Bill Palmer). I like strange things.

I also like actors John Getz and Kathryn Harrold. What I don't like is their co-starring vehicle **MacGruder and Loud.** This is one thankless show. *I* certainly won't thank them. In fact, this series boggles the mind. All the intensity of an avocado! All the tension of cotton candy! All the emotion of Mr. Spock! This tale of married cops who must keep their situation secret from their superiors is dross to the Nth degree.

The entire approach is so "California laid-back" that the police partners take all the abuse that any illegal alien, washerwoman, priest, or car thief dishes out. Okay—maybe they clench their jaws once while their brows furrow with consideration. "Sometimes life really stinks, you know that?" one was heard to say at one point. Even if this show weren't in the same system as *Hill Street Blues*, it would still rot.

Then here's my official report. Dialogue: pedantic. Direction: pedestrian. Rating: five yawns. Comments: so poor it almost defies my belief and understanding. Conclusion: a horrible way to spend six minutes, let alone sixty.

Following fast on the program's heels was **Moonlighting.** Since it was shown after *MacGruder and Loud* originally, I had little hope for it. But then, wonder of wonders, it was good. It's not as great as *MacGruder and Loud* is bad, but it's close. It's stylish, imaginative, and clever beyond its regulation premise: a rich man dies and his widow gets involved with one of his holdings—a private detective agency.

The inherited dick is played by Bruce Willis and played beautifully. Here's a hardboiled wise-cracker to warm the cockles of my heart. "Money can't buy happiness. . . but then again happiness can't buy government-insured C.D.s." This sort of stuff rolls off his tongue as if the words were born there. In fact, *Moonlighting* sets the record for the number of times the word "boink" was used in a scene.

Boinking is very important to both the private eye and the widow, who just happens to be young and beautiful and played by Cybil Shepherd. She's still getting over her husband's death, and the PI is still trying to get over her. Interestingly, not a single person I talked to likes Cybil Shepherd (just on principle), but both she and Willis handle very well the sexual tension the scripts ask for. The scripts also ask for good direction and high production values, and they get them. This is a program that goes down the cerebral cortex real smooth. And naturally, it's the show ABC put out to pasture first—in front of *MacGruder and Loud* and everything else that passes for entertainment on that channel.

I spoke to Bruce Willis on the set of *The Twilight Zone* (a new version I'm working on in a promotions capacity). He told me that ABC is passing down a decision on *Moonlighting* in April—some five months before you read this. Let's hope they got wise and gave it a big green go. Everybody should take at least one look at this show.

Meanwhile, I'm certain I don't have to tell anyone to look at the PBS *Mystery!* presentation of the new "Sherlock Holmes" stories starring Jeremy Brett. All right, so he *isn't* Basil Rathbone (as *People* magazine so witlessly pointed out). And Roger Moore isn't Sean Connery, and Dick Powell isn't Humphrey Bogart! Crack your preconceptions and be free! Hallelujah!

I don't have to do this, you know. Who cares what my opinion of this series is? William L. DeAndrea already reviewed it in his "Foreign Intrigue" column, for one thing, and all the Sherlockians will no doubt have their firm attitudes. But this is what I'm not paid for, so here goes.

I like it. A lot. Brett is a wonderful actor who brings out the prickly manic-depressiveness of the character in flashes of quirky brilliance. If only he'd been teamed with James Mason as Watson. Or maybe if John Wood (the Royal Shakespeare Company's Broadway Sherlock) had been teamed with Mason . . . or if Raymond Burr and Ted Danson had been TV's Nero and Archie . . . or maybe Burr with Dirk Benedict . . . or Charles Durning with Wayne Rogers . . . no, Burr with Tom Selleck . . . or Edward Herrmann as Ellery Queen . . . or even Anthony Perkins as the haunted, guilt-ridden Queen of the later books . . . !

The cast of *Guilty Conscience.* Left to right: Blythe Danner, Anthony Hopkins, Swoozie Kurtz

I'm sorry . . . I went away, but now I'm back. Speaking of Ellery, the duo who brought us the latest TV Queen, Richard Levinson and William Link, have completed their trilogy of TV murder mystery movies with **Guilty Conscience**, a twisty television tease starring Anthony Hopkins and Blythe Danner.

They started it all with *Murder By Natural Causes*, then followed with *Rehearsal for Murder*. The same director as before, David Greene, handles the proceedings just as capably as ever—which is saying something since he had to light and film not one but two Anthony Hopkinses. One was a corrupt attorney who was trying to figure out a way to murder his blackmailing wife, while the other was his imaginary prosecutor, who kept poking holes in his plots.

This was a watchable affair, if only for the cerebral fun a viewer can have trying to figure out—not whodunit, but—what-the-heck-is-goin'-on? I spent the two hours saying to myself: "Is this 'reality' or his imagination? Is he plotting with her to kill the other or are they plotting to kill him?" Swoozie Kurtz was the third wheel on this trike, playing Hopkins's not-quite-latest mistress.

I was certain Hopkins and Danner were *really* plotting to kill Kurtz, but that only goes to show how wrong I can be and how ultimately successful *Guilty Conscience* was for me. Whatever my reservations, the thing kept me guessing for two hours with good acting and direction. And that was its job. But I can't talk any more right now. In the time it took me to write this, three more TV Detective shows have premiered. The commercial break is over. Back to the salt mines. □

The Radio Murder Hour

By Chris Steinbrunner

Despite having been professionally active for more than four decades, radio actor Jackson Beck looked energetic, robust, and fit as he addressed members of the Maltese Falcon Society recently at Bogie's Restaurant in New York about his years playing *Philo Vance* on radio. José Ferrer had appeared briefly as the literary detective in 1945, as a summer replacement, but the role became Beck's in 1948 in a more ambitious series syndicated by the Ziv company—104 shows were produced in all. Beck's voice still has its characteristic rasp, and he has always been identified with blue-collar roles (currently he is heard in a radio commercial as a plumber), tough guys, thugs, and gangsters. This man as Philo? Actually, his range on radio has been far wider than the rough roles on *Superman* and elsewhere of which we first think of him—for some time he was both host and chief player in a *First Nighter*-type radio anthology show—and as the more than sophisticated Philo Vance he was surprisingly apt.

Beck's interpretation, a sort of bemused, aristocratic tone, sounds astonishingly like the early Orson Welles. But it is a commanding, confident voice, less reserved and ivory-tower than we would imagine the real Vance to sound. It is also, by Ziv's directive, more masculine. The world was not ready, Beck noted, for radio's Vance to be *too* effete. Despite the Regie cigarettes and gold holder which Beck remembers from the Van Dine books he had read long before being cast in the part—Beck to this day, by the way, smokes strong Camels—the role had to be tempered to middle-class tastes. "When you're playing to a mass market, you play what a mass market will accept," Beck recalls. "I couldn't play it too fancy." At any rate, José Ferrer was a Princeton man and had made Vance rather ivy-league. William Powell, the movies' most familiar Vance, played him basically like William Powell. The Vance of the films was also in transition, for by the time Beck inherited the role on radio the Vance of the screen had deserted his high-society ways for a private eye's trenchcoat.

The first few programs of the series were adaptations of the classic Van Dine cases, but the rest of the episodes were original mysteries uniformly titled "The So-and-So Murder Case"—although not restricting the insert word to six letters as Van Dine had. They were all fair-play mysteries as well, with the traditional gathering of suspects at the end and Vance going through his paces. This summing-up resembled the *Ellery Queen* program quite a bit, though they were hardly as clever or as well written.

But they *were* well paced. Quick scenes (separated by organ swirls) and mounting action were the rule. Most scripts were crowded with incident. In "The Teacup Murder Case," for instance, the story begins breathlessly with a crooked steward aboard a luxury liner smuggling a priceless diamond into New York. He drinks poisoned tea in his cabin with someone, dies, and the gem vanishes. Next, an elderly diamond-cutter attempting to split the stone is shot to death by a gangster. The gangster in turn gets into a fatal argument with his irate wife and the gem disappears again. The wife is one of three suspects Vance collects at the end—although he knows the killer must be English and masquerading as an American. Vance has each suspect read through a list of women's names, and the killer stupidly pronounces "Evelyn" the British way—the first sylible rhyming with "see." Vance has his man.

In the radio series, Vance is an actual private investigator, with an office and a secretary. Her name is Ellen Deering (sweetly played by Joan Alexander), and Vance, you may be assured, keeps a superior distance—although in one dialogue exchange he claims he will not be distracted by her during office hours. His relationship with her can be described most often as amused and good-natured (as when she tells him she's taken up ju-jitsu). District Attorney Markham is ever-present—and must really upset the city police command by calling in his close private eye pal Vance to interfere in every major crime incident. Indeed, Markham on a single program simply ignores legal search processes by battering down doors without hesitation *twice*. The radio series also told us things about Philo that Van Dine *never* did: he went to dude ranches, rode horses, shot guns in an exchange of bullets, and even lowered himself to engage in a fistfight. And win.

Philo, interestingly enough, seems on the radio to demonstrate that he is under a great deal of stress. On nearly every show, he says such things as, "I will name the murderer *in half an hour*." Or, "Give me twenty-four hours and I will *name the killer*." Or, "I will solve this case *by tonight*." Vance places himself under a self-imposed gun, and it gives the show—thanks to the nuances of Jackson Beck's thoughtful interpretation—an interesting surge of energy.

Jackson, in the close of his talk, made this surprising comment: "If I were to cast Philo Vance today, and if the man could act, I would nominate William F. Buckley, Jr. With his erudition and vocabulary, and he even smokes, Bill Buckley would be the living, breathing epitome of Vance!"

A fascinating observation. Certainly this Philo would be far from fey—as we being "The Firing Line Murder Case"...

This column thanks erudite radio historian William Nadel for his generous sharing of a Philo Vance radio program collection. □

The Whodunnit List

By Herbert Resnicow

Whodunits are fairy tales, and the conflict (see TAD 17:2) between the author and the reader is a game. The whodunit is a cheap, wonderful, unusually pleasurable game in which there can be no loss to the reader (Diminution of ego? — so don't tell anyone you failed) or to the author (loss of sales? — what reader could resist another battle?).

But to play the game properly, there must be rules — rules to which both parties to the conflict must adhere. For example, no self-respecting reader would think of looking at the end of the book before reading the part that comes before, or of telling another reader that the butler did it. There is little else required of the reader other than that he buy the book rather than borrow it. (This should be Rule No. 1.)

The rules for the author are much more severe, as they should be when a professional plays an amateur. Sets of rules were offered in the past for mystery writing. The last that I am aware of was presented by Howard Haycraft many years ago, but his rules were not specifically for the whodunit.

In spite of the recent boom in sale of mysteries, there have been fewer and fewer good whodunits published. Since the demise of Nero Wolfe and Ellery Queen, I — and, I am sure, many others — have been bereft, in both senses of the word. I miss the challenge to the reader — the early Ellery Queens had a strip of paper which stated that all the clues needed to solve the mystery had been presented by that point in the story — and yearn to match wits once again with the descendants of the brainchildren of Poe, Doyle, Stout, Dannay, and Lee. To this end, in the hope of encouraging old masters to shift gears and new masters to enter the fray, I have put together a set of rules for the writing of whodunits. These are, in truth, a list of musts, shoulds, and dislikes for those who want to please me and my like.

Although presented with the whodunit in mind, some of these rules will apply to all types of mysteries, while others will fit only one or a few of the many categories. As time permits, I will offer other lists covering each major division of the field. Suggestions from other aficionados will be welcomed, and, if I haven't thunk of it already, or where your version is better stated or better illustrated, first come will be credited.

1 A whodunit must be entertaining. I cannot imagine reading very far into a novel which is boring, dull, or plodding. There is a limited number of whodunits I can read in my lifetime, and I would prefer, sensibly, to spend these precious hours on that which gives me more pleasure rather then less.

2 It must be interesting. It must hold me — make me wonder about what happens next and how it happens, and make me care about it.

3 It must be educational. I want to learn how other people feel, think, love, hate, act; how they face their problems and resolve their conflicts. I want to learn about the world and how it works — how a

museum director operates, how a manufacturer runs his business.

4 The characters must be believable, fully rounded, exciting. If the lead players do not exist beyond three habits, if there is no indication in their thoughts, words, and deeds of a rich history which led naturally to their present situation in the story, if their every action is predictable in content, form, and style, don't bother giving them names—numbers will do. (For example, No. 1 could be the tall, lean, Scotch-drinking private eye who shoots blondes in the belly.) The hero who had to be fleshed out by giving the trade names of the products he consumed was slain some years back by the great Sol Weinstein when he wrote: "The smell of his Type A blood sickened and frightened him."[1] The suspects who, except for their names, are interchangeable, should be called A, B, C and D. Conversely, I am not really interested in the butler's life history—unless, of course, the butler did it—but I do want to know how each suspect got into his relationship with the dead body and why that suspect could possibly have killed the victim.

5 The story must be internally consistent. I'll give any author one willing suspension of disbelief, but, if he postulates a flying horse, he had better have an atmosphere so dense that a leaf takes an hour to fall from a tree and make sure that *Aerohippus* has a sixty-foot wingspread and back and pectoral muscles three feet thick. Plus retractable legs.

6 There must be charm, wit, and a bit of humor. Man does not live by plot alone, nor does characterization, in and of itself, fascinate me. The way all the story elements are presented and blended makes all the difference. There are some authors who are natural-born storytellers and others who are not. I am incapable of describing *how* to tell them apart, but I can *do* the job in a minute or less. So can almost anyone. Wit involves, at a minimum, recognizing at least two ways of looking at something and presenting the preferred way with an indication that another way exists. And humor involves, at the least, selecting a second way of seeing something which is incongruous with the common view and points up an unusual and unexpected relationship between the two. These descriptions are useless. If you are happy when you read the story and don't want it to end, if you stop and smile occasionally, and especially if you laugh several times, the book has passed the test.

7 There must be no gratuitous sex, violence, horror, or nausea. If it is intrinsic to the story that the heroine, in her seventy-third earth-moving orgasm, while committing incest with her nine-year-old paraplegic son in a septic tank, cuts out and eats his eyes raw, by all means tell me all about it. Otherwise don't. I have no objection to sex and violence if they are a necessary part of the story, and I understand that S&V sells better than cerebral locked-room whodunits. Nor would I take bread out of the mouths of any author's children. I just don't like to see S&V in whodunits and other inappropriate places. There is some jealousy involved here, for me. I envy the skill and talents—and bank accounts—of those authors who can blend S&V smoothly into their stories. If I could do it, I probably would, but my memory hasn't been all that good lately.

8 It must show a skill in the use of the tools of the writing trade: vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, structure. The rhythm of the writing must permit a flow of reading which is appropriate to the passage read or, where needed, the required hesitations and pauses. Unnecessary interpolation of Chinese ideographs and cuneiform inscriptions, merely to show that the author has access to a library, is not impressive. Neither is the incorrect or inapplicable French phrase or Latin aphorism. Especially jarring is writing which shows a lack of understanding of the meaning of the words used, such as using "sparse" for "spare," "stomach" for "belly," or "less" where "fewer" is intended. I admire, and require, the proper word, the graceful construction, the shining jewel of the felicitous phrase.

At this stage, it is clear that the rules listed so far apply not only to whodunits but to mainstream

novels as well. And why should they not? Doth not a whodunit have pages, covers, print? Why shouldn't a whodunit be held to the same standards as soft-core porn, gothics, family sagas, historical reconstructions, *Bildungsromane,* apologiae, filial protests, *Weltschmerzerei,* local catastrophes, liberated-wife flings, and other types of mainstream novels? Whodunits not only *should* be judged by the same standards as other literature, I *insist* that they be so treated. I demand of the whodunit the same skill and talent, the same application and care, the same commitment that I demand of all literature. And, in justice, I demand of all literature what I demand of the whodunit.

Possibly, then, reviewers and critics may give an appropriate portion of their time and thought to the whodunit and will also give a proportional amount of space to reviews of the genre. This will lead, I hope, to according to the master writers of the whodunit the same respect that is given to the master mainstream authors. Even more importantly, second- and third-rate whodunit authors will make as much money as the equivalent mainstream authors. (There is clearly self-interest in that last sentence. Well, why not?)

I have not yet touched on anything which is specific to the whodunit novel. Clearly, there must be additional rules for the whodunit, which do not necessarily apply to the mainstream novel. As follows:

9 The crime must be murder—the worst, the basic crime. There may be other crimes, too, but they must be directly involved with the murder.

10 All clues must be presented clearly, preferably more than once.

11 All information given to the detective must be given to the reader. The detective cannot read a found letter, stuff it into his pocket, and then say, "I knew at once who the killer was." This is also true of mysterious phone calls and whispered conversations.

12 The killer's motive must be strong enough for murder. The decision to kill is not taken lightly by most people, and squeezing the toothpaste from the top, even if it is the culmination of hours of equally unbearable tortures, is not enough motivation for the kind of murderess I want to read about.

13 The victim, the killer, and all the suspects must be important people who are also important to the plot as individuals. I do not find thrilling the quest to find which psychopath is killing Bowery derelicts on alternate Whitsuntides. Let us talk about the death of kings, please.

14 The killer must be one of the suspects, not the butler, who, it turns out, is really a renegade policeman in disguise, or the long-lost bastard son from Tasmania who is first heard of in the next-to-the-last chapter.

15 The murder must be premeditated, not spur-of-the-moment. It should be a well thought out crime, well executed by an intelligent, competent person.

16 The killer must be an amateur, not a professional killer, preferably someone who has not killed before and does not plan to kill again.

There is little else required of the reader than that he buy the book rather than borrow it.

17 The killer does not make mistakes by which he can be caught. If the killer is the intelligent, competent person I insist he be, and if he has the time to plan the crime and to make his preparations properly, which I also require, he will make sure not to leave his fingerprints on the coal scuttle, nor his hair medicine on the antimacassar, nor his birth certificate clutched in the victim's fist.

18 The crime must be a "perfect" crime which, but for the brilliant detective, would go unsolved. The solution to this "perfect" crime is possible, not because the crime was imperfect but because a "perfect" crime by an interested party—random killings (*yuch!*) are excluded—is necessarily of such complexity that, when the clues are fitted together in the proper pattern, the solution becomes obvious and the murderer known. (Here I exclude crimes such as "accidentally" pushing the victim off a scaffold, where the killer admits doing the dirty deed but claims his foot slipped. Such crimes are truly perfect crimes, but their nature makes them inadmissable for use in a whodunit, although they could very well serve for the psychopathological study or some other sub-genre of the mystery novel.)

19 The crime must be elegant, in the chess-puzzle or mathematical sense. The victim must be killed neatly, simply, and accurately, with no possibility of injuring another person by mistake—although framing a patsy is permitted. That is, there shall be no mass murder, such as blowing up an airliner or burning down an orphanage, just to kill the used-car

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These rules are not meant to be restrictive—art should not be restricted by rules—but rather to be definitive. Not everything is art, as the "happenings" fans claimed, for, if everything is art, then nothing is art. These rules, to me, *define* the whodunit, just as it is their respective rules which define chess and checkers. I read, recently, a particularly apt statement about several sonnet forms. The speaker said he enjoyed poetry because "I like to see people dance the minuet in a ball-and-chain." (This is quoted as accurately as I can remember. I think I read it in a mystery novel, and I'd like to credit the author, if someone will give me his name.) In addition, I believe these rules are "natural" or, at least, intrinsic to the whodunit, as opposed to the obvious artificiality of the rules of chess and bridge.

20 The detective may be bigger, stronger, and smarter than most people, and I prefer that he be unusual, even picturesque, but he must not be superhuman. I prefer that the hero be capable of making mistakes and wrong decisions, of being outwitted or outmuscled, of having human feelings and problems.

21 There must be two lines of reasoning for the reader to follow in his attempt to solve the mystery: one, inductive, by pure reasoning and analysis; the other, deductive, by examining the evidence and synthesizing an appropriate pattern which fits *all* the evidence.

22 There must be no extraordinarily rare drugs, animals, bacteria, or weapons used, about which only a *maven* of *mavens* could possibly know. If such *have* to be used—and I know how hard it is to plot a "perfect" crime—there must be two paths to the solution which do not involve an encyclopedic knowledge of esoterica.

23 The roles must be clearly defined and consistent in the story. The detective, whatever his faults, is not the murderer. The victim, after being pronounced dead by the Medical Examiner and identified by his wife, mistress, children and dentist, does not prove to be alive. The murderer, a bank president who once danced in the Hasty Pudding Revue, does not retain so well the fantastic makeup skills he learned forty years ago that he can put on a false nose and fool his wife and friends for a whole weekend which includes sunbathing, swimming, and sex. Nor is the body that of a tramp who showed up last night with exactly the same old scars, tattoos, and tooth repairs as the supposed victim.

24 The information given to the reader must be accurate. Since I get most of my knowledge from reading mysteries, when I casually work the conversation at a party around to the point at which I can impress the bright young ingénue by saying, "But that's obvious, everybody knows that the marinated exoskeleton of the Andalusian *zork* looks exactly like a Ming vase" (having learned this from Biff Krunge as he fingered the dastardly killer in *The Comidas Criollas Slay),* it is very embarrassing, and ruins my chances with the B.Y. Ingénue (I don't get them with my looks, you know), when I am told that the Andalusian *zork* has no skeleton, exo- or otherwise. It also makes me hesitate to buy books by *that* author again.

25 Red herrings, per se, are out. No person or clue may be introduced *solely* for the purpose of confusing the reader, nor shall any suspect perform a highly suspicious, *gratuitous,* or out-of-character deed which is sure to draw attention to him, especially when he knows he is being watched.

26 There must be no *clumsy* withholding of information by the witnesses, particularly when this is introduced to allow another murder to heighten the flagging interest in the story. When the half-drunk idiot ingénue announces at the dinner table that she saw the killer do it but won't tell the detective who it

is until midnight in the rose garden, it should come as no surprise to anyone but the author that the H.-D.I. is found by the brilliant detective—who was delayed by the nubile daughter of the house whose breasts are like unto two roe deer—is found, I say, beneath the flowering hydrangea with a plant stake in her heart.

27 There must be no subhuman foolishness. If the victim's daughter, who has just inherited fifty zillion dollars, provided she marries ere the dawn breaks or it all goes to the villainous half-brother, receives a note from the V.H.-B. which says, "If you want to know who killed your father, meet me at midnight on the Slippery Stones of the High Tower where the parapet is crumbled away. Don't tell the detective, and be sure to wear your high-heeled pumps," and she does exactly that, she deserves what she is positively going to get. So does the author.

28 The same goes for "Had I but known" and "That was the last time I was to see him alive." Double that for the simpering simpleton who, when the crazed killer is chopping down her door with the bloody halberd, doesn't phone the police or stick her head out of the window to scream.

29 Luck is OUT. If the detective, who up till now knoweth not his left hand from his right, is visited just before the obligatory denunciation scene by the famous Prof. Doktor Schneckefuss, ex-chief psychiatrist of the *Nüsse-Werke Institut* at Unterhochstabler, whose Tibetan Airlines Tour plane developed engine trouble and had to land on the completely isolated island where the house-party murder occurred, and who just happens to have in his bag the complete case history of escaped homicidal maniac Walther Ochsenschnause, who, in the guise of Waldo Alzo, is the Least Likely Suspect, and who—Forget it.

30 The same goes for guesswork. "I figured it was him," said Dom Berk, "because his eyes—they was too close, know what I mean? I couldn't even get a .45 slug between them. Maybe a .32 but not a .45. So I blew off his right kneecap and he sang right away, before I even had a chance to aim at the left one. Another case solved." And another author (?) on my list.

31 All questions must be answered, none left hanging. The solution must not only be complete, it must be satisfyingly complete. No "Why was Wimbly's left elbow painted red, white, and blue? That's not really important. But I suspect Zocknerl might have been sort of patriotic." *Yuch!* in no trumps, redoubled.

32 There must be growth and change in the lead character(s) and in the important people in the story. This requires that there be at least one subplot, and its resolution should be intertwined with the solution of the crime. If the story ends with nothing different, other than one victim dead, one killer under arrest, and one detective's fee paid, I feel cheated.

Although 32 may be interesting to students of the powers of 2, it is not a round number. Lists must be in round numbers. (Can you imagine The Seventeen Commandments?) So I would add some likes and dislikes, which, though not really rules, have the same effect for me.

33 I dislike treating the police and D.A.s as idiots. These people are usually experienced and competent professionals, skilled at their trades, doing the best they are allowed to do within the confines of the regulations they must obey. It is only in an extremely complex—the kind I like—amateur murder, without an obvious perpetrator, that the usual police techniques may not work well. In such a situation, an interested amateur may be able to solve the puzzle, especially if he does not interfere with police work and has access to the information uncovered by the police and the Medical Examiner.

34 I like a linear story, told, as much as possible, in real time; that is, in dialogue. If the murder is discovered on page 3, it will be necessary to use written reports, flashbacks, or someone who relates the history behind the crime, but this should be kept to a minimum. I particularly dislike novels that are fifty percent flashback.

35 I don't like overdescription of place, person, or time. I don't want everyone's Bertillon measurements; I don't need the heroine's cranial index unless it is critical to the story. Tell me the *least* you can about everyone and everything. Let the rest of the description come from speech and actions: show, don't tell. I have an imagination; that's why I prefer reading to watching television. Dickens could spend a whole chapter of *Bleak House* describing fog; his readers needed it, I don't.

36 I like all suspects to really be suspects, with real, varied motives—complex motives, at that. When the Seven Dissolute Nephews of the Miserly Old Uncle are gathered at the Old Manse to be cacklingly told that the M.O.U. is going to change his will tomorrow and leave all his money to the Home for Scrofulous Cats, eenie-meenie-minie-mo may be substituted for rational thought. Though all suspects may have a reason for murder in common—how many Basic Motives are there, after all?—it is the variations on the themes which make for the ecstasy. *Each* suspect's relationship with the victim should be such that, had the actual killer been hit by a car the day before the murder, he would have, unerringly, become the murderer instead.

37 The victim should not be a perfect angel, with no faults or vices, who, through sheer accident, got in the way of the vicious killer's evil goals. In fact, I like the idea that the victim deserved, to some extent—as don't we all—what he got. The character of the victim and his way of life must interact with the killer's life in such a way that, with hindsight, we can see that the victim was as driven to be the victim as the killer was driven to be the killer.

38 The killer must not be demented or a thoroughly evil monster. He should have human needs and desires, ideals— many good qualities. He should find himself in a position in which murder is the only choice left, as a result of his working toward a natural, understandable goal, even a laudable goal, which, under other circumstances, would not necessarily have led to his becoming a murderer. It is only with hindsight that the reader can see the first, apparently innocuous, step the murderer took on the road which led inexorably, as in a Greek tragedy, to his becoming a murderer. It is particularly delicious for the victim to have placed the killer in the position in which the killer is practically forced to kill the victim.

39 The killer should not collapse when the detective confronts him with the fact that the blond hair in the *Creme Singhalese* has a dark root. The killer especially must not scream that he is not going to say a word and then bleat out a complete confession. The murderer should, as most people would, deny everything and fight against the accusation until he is faced with an even less palatable alternative and/or offered an amelioration of his punishment, coupled with an airtight case which is good enough to warrant an indictment by a Grand Jury.

40 The whydunit is an inextricable partof the whodunit, the one leading to, and intermingled with, the other. But I like complexity in my puzzles—the more the better—provided that the complexity is an intrinsic part of the story and not dragged in for its own sake. So I want the whodunit, if possible, to be a howdunit too, involving an "impossible" crime. The "impossible" crime, however, must be reasonable and fully justified as the *best* way to commit the murder under the given conditions, not just the hardest way. Further, the howdunit must involve the reasonable human abilities of the murderer and not require practically impossible-to-realize powers, highly improbable circumstances, or out-of-the-blue techniques the reader could have known nothing about.

Although forty is a nice round number, it is not as round as one hundred. If anyone wishes to add to The List, please write to me.[2] I will issue annual addenda, giving credit where due.

And no, *I* do not write according to formula—any formula. I codified the list after, not before, I had produced four whodunits and fully plotted a fifth. I write what I like to read, and I am so imbued with the spirit of fair play—there is an ethic inherent in the

whodunit—and the high standards of writing I demand of others that my work cannot help but be a Shining Example of the Ideal Whodunit, that is, one which follows The List perfectly. Almost. Sort of. As a goal.

Setting forth the Forty Rules will do doubt send countless nit-picking pre-pedants to their libraries—they wouldn't dream of *buying* a book—to search through my works in hope of—good dissertation topics are *so* hard to find these days—finding a place where I have not followed my own rules precisely. Good. I hope they enjoy the stories.

I will answer all serious letters[3] and politely point out that, if the writer had not cavalierly skimmed p. 73, he would have found that I described the revolver as *diamond-studded,* not as carved out of a single crystal. And in case anyone—I don't really believe this—should catch me in a very minor—what else, major?—mistake, I will grudgingly grunt an acknowledgment in writing and point out, at length, that my books, and indeed all whodunits, were meant to be read for pleasure, not for psychopathic vindictiveness.

Notes

1. Sol Weinstein, *On the Secret Service of His Majesty, The Queen* (Pocket Books, 1966). And I don't lend my copy to *anyone.*
2. c/o St. Martin's Press, Inc., 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010.
3. That is, those accompanied by a sales slip. □

This Pen for Hire

By Raymond Obstfeld

January 3, 1985

Got off the phone with Michael Seidman, editor of *The Armchair Detective.* He wanted to know if my next column is going to be in the same diary format as the last one or am I changing it *again.* "I like to do new things," I said vaguely. He sighed. "I like new things. I just don't know if every issue you have to do something entirely new." "Okay," I said. "I liked the diary form. Let's do it again." "Fine," he said. Then he told me about his teaching creative writing to elementary school students. His enthusiastic description gave me an idea for a new format for the column. I decided not to mention it to him.

January 5, 1985

I have maybe fifty novels from publishers. I am picking through them for the twenty-third time, trying to find a few that I'd like to read. Two weeks ago, I finished writing a screenplay adapted from my novel *The Warlord.* During that time all I read were screenplays. I came to the realization that no screenplay reads well. Even movies I liked, like *On the Waterfront,* seem hokey in script form. I am anxious to read good prose now. I want to remember why I became a writer. I decide none of these books will do. I go out to the bookstore and buy Elmore Leonard's new novel **Glitz.** I take it home and hide it from Patty.

Last summer, while on sabbatical from teaching, I interviewed on videotape several writers. Elmore Leonard was one. Patty and I picked him up at LAX and drove him to the writers' conference in Santa Barbara. Patty drove while I held the video camera and, at the same time, interviewed him. He spoke happily about *Glitz.* We couldn't wait to read it.

I wait until Patty's asleep and pull out the book. I read the first two chapters. They are lean and tough and clever. I want to write my own book, but I don't want to stop reading this. The cats jump up on the bed and wake Patty up. She looks at the book and says, "When did you get that?" I quickly shut the light off and say, "Go back to sleep. You're dreaming."

January 6, 1985

I teach a late class on "Film as Literature." I talk about existentialism in Woody Allen's *Manhattan.* I talk about Kierkegaard and "leap of faith." I talk about Nietzsche. Inside I can't wait to go home and read about Lt. Vincent Mora and Teddy, the killer/rapist who is stalking him from Puerto Rico to

Atlantic City. "Now," I ask the class, "how does Hegel's dialectical materialism apply here?" But I am wondering how Lt. Mora will escape Teddy.

I get home at 10:30 P.M. Patty is in bed reading *Glitz*. I tell her that isn't fair. She smiles wickedly and says, "Life isn't fair."

January 9, 1985

Patty kept the book locked in her briefcase until she finished it. Now she gives it back. As punishment, I don't ask her opinion.

I reread the first two chapters again. They are as good as I remember. I keep reading. The book begins to slow down a little, wander somewhat. The early scenes in Atlantic City seem wordy, not as tight as usual. Plotting was never the reason I read Leonard's works—character was. But the looseness of the plot here seems to interfere with character development. I'm not as involved with Lt. Mora as I was with La Brava or Stick.

I blame the late hour and put the book aside for tomorrow.

January 10, 1985

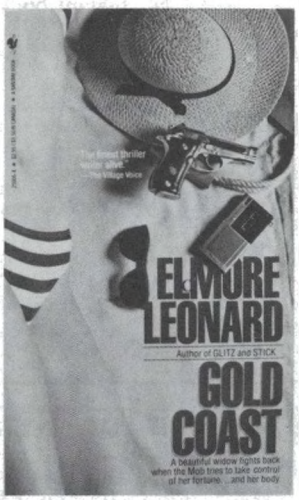
I finish *Glitz*. The man is a remarkable writer of great strength and power. Yet I never did shake those early convictions that the novel is not as tight as the previous two. This one is more like *Unknown Man #89*, with which I also had trouble. The style remained sharp, but the character got a little lost along the way.

January 18, 1985

More review copies arrive in the mail. The stack to choose from is now easily a hundred. None interests me greatly. Some English cozies, some maniac-on-the-loose stories, a couple of *Death Wish* ripoffs. One, entitled **.357 Vigilante**, arrives from Pinnacle. I read the first ten pages, shake my head that this is going to be a series of novels, and toss it aside. It reads like a bad translation of a Slavic primer.

I decide to go to the bookstore. I'm desperate to once again spend my own money.

I come back with Elmore Leonard's **Gold Coast** (Bantam). Patty won't be home for hours. I start the book now and read straight through. It is easily one of the best suspense books I've ever read. The writing simmers and seethes, just barely below boiling. Until the end. Then it bubbles over in a scalding climax. The plot is unusual: Karen DeCilia



has married a crime boss. Angered by his infidelity, she threatens him. When he later dies, he leaves a will stipulating that she never be with another man. And has a sadistic killer hired to ensure his instructions are carried out. When McGuire, a petty criminal going straight, falls for Mrs. DeCilia, his real troubles begin.

But it all works. The portrayal of Roland Crowe is so powerful that even months later I still recall his voice, his cowboy boots, his mannerisms. I spend the next few days recommending *Gold Coast* to my students and friends.

That night the book disappears and Patty's briefcase is locked. I smile when I tell her I finished it already. She unlocks her briefcase starts reading it. She doesn't ask my opinion. I give it anyway.

February 7, 1985

My agent calls. "You want to do a novelization?" she asks. I am already working on a novel and have three more due. I remember Woody Allen in *Manhattan* asking Diane Keaton why she wastes her time with novelizations. She replies, "Why? Because it's easy and it pays well." I have never done a novelization before, but I suspect it will not be easy. Also, the pay is less than I am already getting on the books I have contracted. There is no reason to do it. Except that I have never done one before and I'm excited by the challenge. "What's the movie?" I ask, but I have already decided to try it. "Chuck Norris's next movie, *Invasion, U.S.A.*" I have read about that in *Variety*—some kind of *Red Dawn* film. "Sure," I say. "I'll try it."

I decide I should read a novelization someone else has written. I've seen *Witness* with Harrison Ford and enjoyed it quite a bit. I go to the bookstore and find a copy of the novelization. I am encouraged because the novel is written by the screenwriters. I buy it and a copy of *California* magazine with a big article on who runs Hollywood. I wonder if anyone I know will be mentioned. (They are not.)

On the way home I consider what a novelization is. I remember having read a few as a kid. An *I Spy* and one *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* Why would the readers of these novelizations read the book after they saw the movie? To relive the scenes they enjoyed in the film? Or to get more information about the characters, to get to know them better? Both, I decide.

I look at the cover. Harrison Ford stares back in a grainy photo. The cover reads: **Witness**, a novel by William Kelley and Earl W. Wallace, based on the screenplay by Earl W. Wallace and William Kelley. They reversed their names. Had they fought over billing? When I get home, I realize that I too want to know more about the characters than I got in the film. I liked John Book, the detective. He was rough but vulnerable. And Rachel Lapp, the Amish widow who falls in love with him, had a sexy strength. I hadn't liked the film's ending and hope the novel might end differently, less self-consciously.

I am disappointed. The writing style is choppy and awkward. The dialogue crackles, but it also jars. Some scenes have been expanded and additional background information given. I like the info, but the writing style is so hesitant, so weak, I never get into the book. I am left preferring to see the movie again.

March 2, 1985

Finally a free book arrives that I actually want to read: **The Hahnemann Sequela** (Pinnacle) by Harold King. When the book was still in paperback, I read some positive reviews. Also, I'd seen in *Publishers Weekly* that Pinnacle has purchased the paperback rights for about $40,000. That is a lot more money than I am getting for similar books. I have been curious why. I would go into B. Dalton and read a few pages at a time, debating whether or not to buy it. I liked the pages I read, but I'd been fooled that way

before. I'd just had a bad experience buying *Armageddon Rag* and decided I would wait this one out until it came out in paper. Now it has.

The plot is promising: David Townsend is on the run from a sinister group of scientists who need his heart to keep David's twin alive long enough to give them vital information. I've tried to read two previous Harold King novels, *Closing Ceremonies* and *The Taskmaster*. Both began well, with strong characterization and compelling plots, but both fell apart in the middle, overpowered by wordiness, buried by a plot-heavy superstructure.

But $40,000 can't be wrong, I reason. I begin the book. There is an earnest Author's Note explaining the extent of his research and giving due credit. I am impressed by his conscientiousness to authenticity. I read on. The chapters are short and punchy, but point of view keeps changing so often that I am having trouble staying involved. As the book switches among Madrid and Texas and London and Oklahoma, the number of characters in a few pages becomes hard to keep track of. The writing style is very good, with just the right touch of detail to give it a rich texture. And the amount of medical and scientific information given is staggering, but with an authentic feel. I believe the author knows what he is talking about. There is so much going on, however, so much explanation, that I can't care enough about the characters.

I put the book down to try again later.

March 28, 1985

Finished. Impressed by Harold King's writing ability, but disappointed that he never licked the structure problems of the book. Too many characters, too much information, too much quick-cutting to different characters and locations. Dizzying rather than involving. Rather than being transported, I was always aware of the chair beneath me.

April 4, 1985

Two books arrive today from Knopf: **Self-Help** by Lorrie Moore and **Reasons to Live** by Amy Hempel. They are collections of short stories. One story in *Self-Help* is called "How to Be an Other Woman." I read it just because of the title. It is funny and touching, crisp and involving. In the other book I read "In the Cemetery Where Al Jolson Is Buried" just because of the title. It is a little more moody, but just as dynamic, energetic, fresh, and involving as the other story. I wonder if I should mention them in my review; they aren't really mysteries or anything.

Then I remember my interview with Elmore Leonard. I asked him whose works he usually read. "Lately," he said, "short stories by Bobbie Ann Mason and Raymond Carver." As I read these two collections, I realize that in these stories is a vital element that has kept the mystery and detective novel alive and flourishing so long: voice. In each of these stories is a clear voice, an honest, unfaltering voice that compels the reader to finish the story because we care about whomever that voice belongs to. We care about their fate because the tone of that voice causes a sympathetic vibration somewhere inside us: we know that, as they speak for themselves, they are articulating our own feelings. When they are good, mystery and suspense novels set off that same vibration. They are stories about people in jeopardy, people struggling for truth and justice, just like all of us, though not often as dramatically as in the books. Still, what goes wrong in so many of the review books that are stacked in my garage? They have no voice. They have all the right ingredients, but still no flavor. They are like impressionists imitating the actions and mannerisms of great actors but never capturing the inner light, the raw power.

I look at the clock. Is it that late already? Time to go check the mail, see what books came in today, and still make it by the bookstore before class. Money is no object.

LETTERS

From John L. Apostolou:

The comments on Donald Westlake's "The Hardboiled Dicks" in the letters column and in the piece by Messrs. Baker and Nietzel (TAD 18:1) bring some welcome controversy to the pages of TAD. It seems to me, however, that the question of latent homosexuality in Chandler's fiction is getting undue emphasis. Even if Westlake is wrong on this point (and I think he is), his major argument remains a strong one and is certainly worthy of discussion.

Sydney Schultze's article on Janwillem van de Wetering is so obviously the result of careful research that I was surprised to find in it the phrase "including stories about Inspector Sito written under the name Le Gru." This should read "including stories about Inspector Saito written under the name Seiko Legru." The same spelling errors appear in John C. Carr's interview with van de Wetering in *The Craft of Crime*, which Schultze used as one of his sources.

* * * * *

From Tex Wyndham:

"If an actively allegorical structure of plotting is forsaken for a pervasive realism, a debilitating pedestrianism can eventually overtake any attempt on the author's part to perpetuate the proper thrills upon the climax of the novel. If, on the other hand, an ill-conceived symbology proves the substantial portion of one's subtext, an overbearingly contrived resolve of artificial enlightenment awaits the reader upon the completion of the thriller."

Recognize those sentences? They are taken from the third paragraph of W. R. Turney's article about Jim Thompson [TAD 18:1]. I suppose there is room for differences in opinion, but in my view the above extract is representative of the obscure, pedantic, overblown, empty, incomprehensible and unreadable prose of which that article was constructed and to which over 10% of the space in the issue is devoted.

I recognize that a specialized journal with limited readership is completely dependent for material on whatever happens to come in. (In fact, I write for several such publications myself, in the even more specialized field of Dixieland Jazz and Ragtime.) I also recognize that it is desirable, indeed even essential, that articles in such journals will have data of purely academic interest. (Thus, I have gritted my teeth through Lowndes's extended series detailing the contents of the *Scientific Detective Monthly*, which at last appears to be at an end.)

But there are limits. If ever an article needed the benefits of sound editing, Turney's

article did. Instead, this tome is inflicted on the readership as a lead article with cover billing. Somebody is not doing his job. I admire TAD very much and look forward to receiving it. However, if Turney-style articles are the best TAD can find to fill pages with, perhaps it needs to be published less often.

The foregoing is intended as constructive input from a faithful reader. I much appreciate the job you're all doing in the mystery field.

* * * * *

From Arthur J. Cox:

I have been meaning for some time to write you to express my admiration for the series of articles written by T. M. McDade under the general title "Crime Hunt," but have been kept from doing so by the usual combination of busyness and laziness. That's my excuse, anyway. I don't know what excuses others may have—for I have been puzzled, on browsing through the issues of the last few years just now, to discover that, with one

exception (Lillian de la Torre, in TAD 15:1), no one else has taken the trouble to praise this writer, despite the strong inducements of his fine pieces on the Tichbourne case, the Lindbergh kidnapping, the Muenter murders, to name but three. That baffles me...or would, if it weren't for the example I myself have set.

The first thing I do when I receive a copy of TAD is to turn to McDade's contribution, to see what subject he is covering this time. I almost always read it first, and I have sometimes found it to be (forgive me) the best thing in the issue. I like the flavor of his writing: as dry and judicious as his by-line, but not without touches of humanity and humor; careful as to the facts; speculative where necessary but with no weak susceptibility to brilliant theories and suspect causes. I think that I would even trust him on the Sacco and Vanzetti case—and I am hardly capable of greater praise than that. I hope he continues to contribute to your pages for many years to come.

About the essay by Apryl Lea Denny Heath in TAD 17:4, "Who Was Hiram Grewgious? A Further Study of Identity in Charles Dickens' *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*": As a specialist in *Drood*, I of course often find myself in disagreement with other writers on the subject; but Heath's contribution is remarkable — I believe unprecedented — in that I find that I am unable to agree with so much as a single sentence in her two pages (other than those which she quotes from Philip Collins).

She argues that the dry and dusty old lawyer Hiram Grewgious has disguised himself as that mysterious figure Dick Datchery in order to spy on the sinister Jasper—basing her argument on some supposed resemblances of character between the two men. This seems to me not only mistaken but downright perverse. Consider. Grewgious has a remarkably inexpressive face: "The little play of feature that his face presented, was cut deep into it, in a few hard curves that made it more like work..." (see p. 109 of the Penguin edition—all my references are to this readily-available edition). He has "an awkward and hesitating manner; with a shambling walk and...near sight" (p. 110), and, as he says (p. 111), "no conversational powers whatever"—indeed, sometimes stammering (as he does on p. 116). But the gracious and ironical Datchery, "making a leg, with his hat under his arm" (p. 220), is, as he says of himself (p. 221), "a diplomatic bird": bowing, scraping, and smiling, ceremonious in manner, fluent (not to say glib) in speech, and terribly self-possessed: see almost any passage concerning him in chapters 18 and 22.

Heath says that "Grewgious claims that he is not an 'arch man' and pretends to have no understanding of irony." But, actually, he makes no such claim—I am puzzled by her use of quotation marks around the phrase "arch man"—and, I believe, no such pretense. She goes on to stress the "archness" that she thinks he shares with Datchery... but in the one recorded instance in which Grewgious tries to be arch (p. 138), he fails to bring it off! In fact, the poor man can't even wink properly (p. 141). He is a man of "incorruptible integrity" (p. 109)—*not* the best recommendation for a career of dissimulation and impersonation—but painfully lacking in those small graces that most of us fortunately take for granted. That this man, with his strongly-marked face, could disguise himself by putting on a white wig and fool Mrs. Tope and even John Jasper, who has good reason to remember him, is...well, not to bear down upon it too heavily... distinctly implausible.

Since Heath argues exclusively on psychological grounds, I suppose I needn't resort to what might be called circumstantial arguments. That is, I needn't mention the rather awkward consideration that Grewgious would seem to be in London at the same time that Datchery is settled in Cloisterham; nor need I point out that Datchery, when he first appears in Cloisterham, has obviously never been there before—"obviously," because the author gives us a glimpse of what is passing in his mind as he flounders about in search of Mrs. Tope's residence (p. 218); whereas Grewgious is of course already familiar with the town and knows very well where Mrs. Tope's is. I'm glad I'm spared the trouble of mentioning such things, for it would embarrass me to repeat arguments that were frequently advanced seventy to eighty years ago, during what might be called the Drood Decade (1905–15), when this notion of Datchery as a disguised Grewgious was first introduced. It was argued to death then and should have been laid to rest then.

One final remark: when, when, when are people going to learn that Rosa is not related to Billy?—that her family name is Bud, not Budd?

I open the letter again (as the Victorians were fond of saying) to add that I received TAD 18:1 today. I see that there are some interesting things in it—but where, where, where is T. M. McDade's column? I have searched the pages for it frantically, like Ray Milland searching for the bottle in *The Lost Weekend*, but with less success.

* * * * *

From Frank A. Petta:

The University Press of America has contracted with Professor Lawrence Clipper of Indiana University, who will serve as editor, to publish all of G. K. Chesterton's weekly columns from the *Illustrated London News*, two-thirds of which have never been reprinted. The columns began in September 1905 and ended with Chesterton's death in June 1936. $7,000 of the estimated $20,000 needed for the project has been raised, and about one-third of the work has been completed.

We are in urgent need of help to complete the project. We have been given a wonderful opportunity; we will receive a matching grant of $5,000 *on condition that we first raise $5,000.* We would greatly appreciate your publicizing this information to your readers. We have good reason to believe that there are many Chesterton lovers who would be willing to contribute if they knew about the project.

There are two additional incentives for Chesterton lovers. A valuable one-of-a-kind boxed bound volume of 320 original *Illustrated London News* pages with Chesterton's columns on one side and fascinating insights into the world of 1905 to 1911 on the other ("Mr. Wilbur Wright's... remarkable flight of sixty-one-and-a-half miles," the Boer War, Tolstoy's eightieth birthday, etc.) will go to one of the lucky donors of $25 or more at a June drawing. Also, donors of $100 or more will have their names printed in the first volume of the projected eleven-volume set. Contributions of *any* amount, however, are most welcome.

This is a great opportunity to help Chesterton, and the things he stands for, not only survive but prevail. Donations, which are tax deductible, should be made out to The Chesterton Fund and sent to: The Chesterton Fund, Box 353, Carpentersville, IL 60110.

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From Mollie L. Pryor:

This publication is *always* eagerly awaited. It is engrossing. Through the "Mystery Marketplace" in TAD, I've been able to find a place to buy *old* mysteries and thrillers.

* * * * *

From Joan Amico:

Granted that writers and reviewers have their prejudices, and far be it from me to censor them, but I found the reference to "revolting homosexual bits" in Allen Hubin's review of Joseph Hansen's *Nightwork* (TAD 18:1) a bit much. If what he means is "explicit sex," let him say so. I'm sure there are many gay mystery fans who have quietly put up with a lot of "revolting heterosexual bits" over the years.

* * * * *

From Richard H. Beaupré:

Usually I read Allen J. Hubin's book reviews with pleasure, but, in TAD 18:1, I was saddened to see one review marred by Hubin's homophobic views. In the seventh David Brandstetter mystery, *Nightwork* by Joseph Hansen, he wrote, "revolting homosexual bits are kept minimal." I do not care about Hubin's views on this subject. Just let him review the book. I have always found the Brandstetter novels to present the main character's sexual preference with enlightened good taste. It is a quality lacking in most other books that touch on the same subject. Just review the books, Mr. Hubin!

* * * * *

From Mike Nevins:

Thanks very much for TAD 18:1, which I enjoyed as usual. I was particularly interested, of course, in Larry Gianakos's letter commenting on my "Cornell Woolrich on the Small Screen."

At least in the area of Lawton, Oklahoma, where I was living at the time, the Woolrich-based "Jane Brown's Body" episode of *Journey to the Unknown* was broadcast on October 3, 1968, not on the 10th. I distinctly

remember noticing in a *TV Guide* or local newspaper that this episode was going to run on the 10th, but when I sat down on the evening of the 3rd to watch that night's segment—purely out of idle curiosity, since I hadn't been following the series—I was amazed to find that the episode that night was "Jane Brown's Body"! It turned out to be virtually unwatchable, but that's another story.

Gianakos is clearly wrong in attributing to Woolrich sources some of the additional TV dramas he listed in his letter. For example, "The Lie" (*Ford Theatre*, June 5, 1957) is definitely unrelated to Woolrich's story of the same name. The *Ford* story is about an Italian-American widow (Betty Field) who learns that her late husband's cousin (Cesar Romero) is coming to Manhattan to visit, and forces her three children to adopt old-country clothes and ways so that the cousin will feel at home. Woolrich's story is about a young man who tries to frame himself for a crime his adored father committed.

Here's another example: "Nightmare" (*Danger*, May 3, 1955) was an original teleplay by Edward Corn, having nothing at all in common with the Woolrich classic of the same name. In the *Danger* drama, a terrified wife tries to get her husband's help when she starts receiving threatening letters and mysterious phone calls, but he's too busy to pay attention to her frantic pleas. No way in the world that this storyline came from the Woolrich tale of the young man who dreams he committed a murder in an octagonal mirrored room and then finds objective fragments from the "dream" on his body.

The moral of all this is that the same title on a TV play and a Woolrich story, especially when the title is a common one such as "Nightmare," is no evidence at all that the play was based on Woolrich. You have to find a contemporaneous description of the teleplay and compare it with the Woolrich story in question. Unfortunately, my own *TV Guide* collection doesn't go back far enough so that I can check out the plays from 1950 through 1952 that Gianakos attributes to Woolrich sources, but if his collection is more complete than mine and he sends me descriptions I'll be happy to report back to him and to TAD's readers.

Incidentally, there was one mistake in my Woolrich article which Gianakos didn't catch. It turns out that I was too modest in my discussion of the Woolrich-based TV movie of 1973, *You'll Never See Me Again*. I had always been under the impression that ABC had bought the film rights to that story before I revived it in my 1971 Woolrich collection *Nightwebs*. Well, they hadn't. The contract between ABC and the Scott Meredith literary agency is dated February 23, 1972 and specifically credits the appearance of the story in *Nightwebs*. The Woolrich estate received $4,000 for the movie rights. Would you believe that no one ever bothered to send me a copy of this contract till almost thirteen years after it was signed? But I'm delighted to learn that I was, in a very remote sense, responsible for a quite decent little picture. The only other movie made from a Woolrich story I brought back to life in *Nightwebs* was the abominable *Union City*.

* * * * *

From Richard A. Moore:

Larry Gianakos writes in TAD 18:1 asking for information on Harold Lawlor. The name sounded familiar, and I found I had several stories by him in my scattered issues of *Weird Tales*. Lawlor had 29 stories in WT from 1943 to 1953. According to *Who's Who in Horror and Fantasy Fiction* by Mike Ashley (Taplinger, 1977), Lawlor was an Irish-American who aspired to be a concert pianist before deafness ended that hope. He worked as a clerk in Chicago during his writing years.

According to Donald Day's *Index to the Science Fiction Magazines 1926–1950* (Perri Press, 1952), there is a bio sketch and photo of Lawlor in the April 1942 issue of Ziff-Davis's *Fantastic Adventures*. Unfortunately, that is an issue I do not have, but it is probably the source for Ashley.

On reading a few of Lawlor's WT stories, I am surprised that he is not better known. His "Unknown Lady" in WT's September 1950 issue would have made an excellent *Twilight Zone* episode. He was certainly a better writer than many who have seen reprint volumes from the small presses. His style holds up very well.

Looking through those old magazines, I was startled to find that Carroll John Daly, old Mr. Hardboiled himself, had a story in *Weird Tales*. It was "Outside of Time" in the January 1950 issue.

* * * * *

From Michael Doran:

By now you've probably received quite a few letters about Mike Nevins's article in TAD 17:4, "The Live Television of Ellery Queen," and, unless I'm much mistaken, many of those will mention the videocassette now available from Video Yesteryear of Sandy Hook, N.J. Said episode, "The Hanging Acrobat," was Richard Hart's next-to-last episode before his death. I've watched this cassette a couple of times (and I'm screening parts of it now, even as I'm writing this). So, for what it's worth, a few points:

(1) The show's opening billboard reads "Kaiser-Frazer Adventures in Mystery," indicating that the legendary '50s automaker sponsored the show from the start. The actual commercials are deleted from the cassette, but Hart, in an on-camera narration at the beginning of the story, refers to driving to the carnival "in my Kaiser," a built-in plug typical of the period.

(2) As noted in Mike's episode log, ballerina Sono Osato is featured in this episode. There is one other "guest star" in this show: Kurt Katch, the bald-pated Czech actor of innumerable war films. This "semi-name actor" policy looks to be a fruitful field for future research.

(3) Florenz Ames does not appear in this episode as Inspector Queen. In his other articles on EQ-TV, Mike Nevins (perhaps deliberately) doesn't mention the role for which Florenz Ames is possibly best known to the current generation of televiewers: he played Mr. Dithers in the short-lived but perpetually rerun *Blondie* series of the mid-'50s. There can't be more than twenty segments of that show, but one national cable outlet runs them almost nightly, and, here in Chicago, one of the UHF stations ran them into the ground. *Blondie* was filmed; *Ellery Queen* was live. And so it went.

(4) Richard Hart spends most of the second act rolling on the floor, bound hand and foot, trying to free himself. As mentioned earlier, Hart died of a heart attack two weeks later. If this episode is any indication of what he had to go through on a regular basis, small wonder.

(5) Off the live episode itself, I found Mike's article valuable from both the EQ and early-TV angles. The time may be at hand for Mike to consolidate his two previous books and his TAD articles into the definitive EQ biography. When I finally got the radio book, I was frankly surprised to find that it was more biographical than *Royal Bloodline*.

(6) With the recent death of Peter Lawford, only George Nader (who works mostly in Europe) and Lee Philips (who quit

acting to direct) survive of the TV Ellerys. The only living radio Ellery is Larry Dobkin, who turns up all the time on the UHF stations as the pitchman for one of those lose-weight-while-you-sleep pills (bald guy with a neat beard). That ad and the pilot film of *The Streets of San Francisco* (in which he made a memorable psycho-villain) are about all Dobkin has done on camera recently, as he also prefers directing. For the record, Dobkin was also the narrator of the *Naked City* teleseries (he was required by contract to identify himself as "Bert Leonard, the producer"; a recent magazine article on the series set the record straight).

* * * * *

From Roy Troxel:

I am reading your magazine for this first time and am finding it very enjoyable. Evidently, you've been in business for a number of years now, so keep up the good work.

At any rate, after living in California for sixteen years, I have recently become very fond of the works of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, and, in regard to the latter, I've noticed that in your past issues a number of your critics have been rating *The Dain Curse* very low, as if it had been some kind of mistake. Actually, the novel is as intricate an intrigue as the Continental Op was ever ordered to solve, with the exception of *Red Harvest*, of course.

If you regard Hammett as a chronicler of American violence, then *The Dain Curse* provides an interesting variation on that theme, with members of the Dain family plotting against each other. Also, Hammett's observations on California cults are both witty and perceptive, exposing not only their manipulative gurus but also the kind of insecure people upon whom cult leaders prey. (Remember Jim Jones and The People's Temple?)

The manner in which justice is dealt to the murderer at the novel's conclusion is totally consistent with Hammett's other observations on American justice. It also provides a typically mathematical (though not predictable) balance to the novel.

Finally, we see a tender side of the Continental Op's character—something which a number of readers and critics have disliked. The Op's care and concern for Gabrielle Dain is not sentimental but instead makes him more believable as a character. He would be an incompetent detective, and would never solve the case, did he not show concern for the girl's plight. (Remember that she has been kidnapped, shot at, beaten, and forced into drug addiction.)

Furthermore: if we are to assume that the Op could go through dozens of violent adventures without once showing concern for the people involved, this would be to reduce him to self-parody, like some of the heroes in Hemingway's later novels.

After relating the whole story of her incarceration and rescue by the Op to her fiancé, Gabrielle Dain adds that the Op has acted as though "he hadn't a refining influence," especially while curing her of morphine addiction. At which point, her fiancé glares at the Op from across the table, as if the Op hadn't a refining influence. This is a very humorous way to end such a novel.

The Op may be past forty, fat, a smoker, a drinker, and a dead shot at close range, but anyone who could scam his way through Poisonville, or expose the Holy Grail cult, is a lot more subtle than some readers realize. □

DIAL N FOR NONSENSE

By Louis Phillips

On Writing Thrillers

"I rebel totally against the notion such work is always less than serious. It's part of a good writer's armory to know that suspense on any level is going to make an audience shut up and pay attention."

—from an interview in the *Dallas Times Herald*

* * * * *

Detection at Weight-Watchers

We all know certain overweight detectives. To start, we might list:

Nero Wolfe—off the scale
Gideon Fell—250 lbs.
Bertha Cool—200 lbs.
Dr. Sam: Johnson—well, we know he's fat

Would readers like to send in further nominations for detectives who should join Weight Watchers? While we're on the subject of weight, we should mention the punning name Avvie Du Pois, the colleague of Dr. Alcazar in the books of Philip MacDonald. Is there a funnier name in detective fiction?

Identity Match

Can you match each identity to the proper (or improper) detective?

1. The Avenger	A. Nick Charles
2. The Baron	B. Doug Selby
3. The D.A.	C. Moris Klaw
4. The Dream Detective	D. The Honorable Richard Rollison
5. The Thin Man	E. Simon Templar
6. The Toff	F. Richard Henry Benson
7. The Saint	G. Augustus S. F. X. Van Dusen
8. The Rambler	H. John Mannering
9. The Spider	I. Richard Wentworth
10. The Thinking Machine	J. Addison Francis Murphy

Great Moments in Crime

"A man was indicted for burglary, and the evidence showed that his burglary consisted of cutting a hole through a tent in which several persons were sleeping, and then projecting his head and arm through the hole and abstracting various articles of value. It was claimed by his counsel that, inasmuch as he did not actually enter the tent with his whole body, he had not committed the offence charged. The judge, in reply to this plea, told the jury that if they were not satisfied that the whole man was involved in that crime, they might bring in a verdict of guilty against so much of him as was thus involved. The jury, after a brief consultation, found the right arm, the right shoulder, and the head of the prisoner guilty of the offence of burglary. The judge sentenced the right arm, the right shoulder, and head to imprisonment with hard labour in the State Prison for two years, remarking, as to the rest of his body, he might do with it as he pleased."

—from *A Dictionary of Anecdotes* by the Reverend Walter Baxendale New York, 1888

Solutions are on page 413. □

A CATALOGUE OF CRIME

By Jacques Barzun and Wendell Hertig Taylor

S279 Clark, Douglas
High Table
Gollancz 1977

Clark has two uncommon merits: he writes adult dialogue, with only an occasional drop into vulgarism, and he succeeds in making the technical side of his *recherché* modes of murder both natural and suspenseful. In the present tale (in which Masters falls in love with a prime suspect), the plotting and inquiries are so well managed, and the final twist so plausible and unexpected, that the obviousness of the culprit does not matter at all. We are hypnotized by the menu which disposed of an unwanted wife and by the conversations between Masters and his aides while he tries to maintain detachment about the "rival woman" who cooked the meal and for whom Masters feels a sudden passion.

S280 Cody, Liza
Stalker
Scribner's 1984

In this third tale about Anna Lee, an operative in the hardfisted Bryerly Agency, the apparent skipping of a dubious antique dealer leads to the discovery of a killing on a remote moor. Anna has been for a short while on the official force, so her inquisitive wanderings in slums and her rugged resourcefulness on moors are not implausible. But we are surprised by her rapid love affair with a tweedy suspect in the country, because it is intellectual, sophisticated, and pleasantly discreet. It does not keep her from identifying the man killed by a bolt from a crossbow or from averting other violence. In short, the story would be first-rate, were it not for the tiresome haggling over expenses with Beryl, the agency switchboard woman, and the unamusing antics of the poet Selwyn, in whose house Anna is a boarder.

S281 Goodman, Jonathan (ed.)
The Railway Murders
Allison and Busby 1984

These accounts (illustrated) of killings in trains, from the long-delayed first in 1864—a whole generation after the invention of the railway—to that of Countess Lubienska in the London Underground in 1957, are relatively brief, except for the editor's retelling of the Brighton trunk murders of 1934. Ten cases in little less than a century seems a low score for the homicidal fraternity, but have the fiction writers done better? The setting is enticing, but the technique is arduous: the old compartmented coach seems made to order for the job, but when, where, and how do you get out before a stranger walks in on your handiwork? And now, with the American "open" car everywhere in use, all chances are gone. So read about the deeds of the golden age.

S282 Lewin, Michael Z.
Hard Line
Morrow 1982

After using one Samson as a feckless private eye in Indianapolis (see *Night Cover*, 1976), the author has shifted his sights to a regular cop, Lieutenant Powder, who is made out to be the toughest of the tough. Actually, he is a sentimentalist who believes in hard work, clean living, and justice. Naturally, he is divorced, has a wayward son, and is put upon by higher-ups in the force. His cases go on simultaneously *a la* Creasey and are duly sordid. But he has been sidetracked from Homicide to Missing Persons and given as assistant a young policewoman, now in a wheelchair after being shot in the spine. Powder is rude to her, she is improbably helpful, both are self-pitying and occasionally witty. A far cry from the Rover Boys.

S283 Parker, Tony
and
Allerton, Robert
The Courage of His Convictions
Hutch 1962

The play on words in the title is no doubt due to Allerton, who has written down the reminiscences of Tony, the blithe crook. Tony accounts for his choice of career by poverty, in part, and by perversity for the rest—he always wanted a free life: no work, no obligations, no use of common sense, though he has plenty. He also has regrets—that he stole two shillings from his mother (he had a good home and a kind father) and that lack of education prevented him from reading books in foreign languages, painting pictures, and being generally cultivated. He can be very funny about the fourteen people who tried to reform him and the way he fooled them. His creed is: a third of his life in prison is worth two-thirds doing what he wants. But his ratio is slipping: he is 33 and has spent 12½ years inside. The book is short, lucid, and light; it does not move one like Rupert Croft-Cooke's *Thief*.

S284 Pratt, Theodore
The Barefoot Mailman
Hawthorn 1943

This well-wrought story is based on the disappearance of one of the mailmen who used to serve a hundred miles of beach dwellers on the southeast coast of Florida. It takes us back to the 1880s for a quick view of living conditions then, and goes on to an untimed, vivid-present narrative studded with alligators, Indians, storms, boats, and crimes. The telling is sober and holds the reader, even though—period piece that it is—there are none of the gutter words and thoughts now needed for verisimilitude.

S285 Smith, J. C. S.
Jacoby's First Case
Athenaeum 1980

Quentin Jacoby, a widower aged 55, has retired from the New York City Transit Police and is living in the Bronx, looking for something to fill his vacant days. At the Mount Vernon racetrack, he is accosted by a girl obviously in a daze. He turns down her favors but escorts her home. The next day, she is missing. What follows is a tale of dirty, petty crime, told in commonplace prose without wit. There are odd lapses of sense ("cancer of the pelvis," says a doctor) and of likelihood in fact and idea. The author has written nonfiction under a slightly different name and a second tale, *Nightcap* (1984), which deals with killings in a fashionable restaurant. The place is tonier than the Bronx, but the narrative tone ain't, and it is doubtful if the author is cut out for the genre.

S286 Underwood, Michael
Death in Camera
St. Martin's 1984

This English writer is not appreciated enough in this country; his technical range and his sense of drama deserve the connoisseur's best attention. In this tale, we are back in court (the author's first specialty), and we are treated to an original narrative device: the murder of a judge while being photographed by the press before a trial is worked out in a series of short chapters which deal with different sets of people and often overlap in content. The thing is done so skilfully that neither choppiness nor clumsy repetition ensues. On the contrary, the mood of uncertainty—suspense—is heightened, subordinate little dramas keep developing, and odd behavior gradually wins our sympathy, while the intricate plot is made crystal clear. □

CHECKLIST

By M. S. Cappadonna

MYSTERY, DETECTIVE AND SUSPENSE FICTION PUBLISHED IN THE U.S. MARCH–MAY 1985

Adams, Harold: **The Naked Liar.** Mysterious Press, 15.95
Barnard, Robert: **Out of the Blackout.** Scribner's, 12.95
Beaton, M. C.: **Death of a Gossip.** St. Martin's, 12.95
Brett, Simon: **A Shock to the System.** Scribner's, 13.95
Bruce, Leo: **Case with No Conclusion.** Academy Chicago, 14.95, 4.95 pa.
Buckley, William F.: **See You Later, Alligator.** Doubleday, 15.95
Carr, Jess: **Murder on the Appalachian Trail.** Commonwealth, 16.95
Caudwell, Sarah: **The Shortest Way to Hades.** Scribner's, 12.95
Chaze, Elliott: **Little David.** Scribner's, 12.95
Craig, Alisa: **The Grub-and-Stakers Quilt a Bee.** Doubleday, 11.95
Delman, David: **Murder in the Family.** Doubleday, 11.95
Dobyns, Stephen: **Saratoga Headhunter.** Viking, 13.95
Doliner, Roy: **The Twelfth of April.** Crown, 16.95
Egan, Lesley: **Chain of Violence.** Doubleday, 11.95
Engel, Howard: **Murder on Location.** St. Martin's, 11.95
Finer, Alex: **Deepwater.** Doubleday, 11.95
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Gash, Jonathan: **Pearlhanger.** St. Martin's, 14.95
Gethin, David: **Point of Honor.** Scribner's, 12.95
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Grant-Adamson, Lesley: **Death on Widow's Walk.** Scribner's, 12.95
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Hilton, John Buxton: **The Quiet Stranger.** St. Martin's, 10.95
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Johnston, Velda: **Shadow Behind the Curtain.** Dodd, 12.95
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Kaminsky, Stuart M.: **Down for the Count.** St. Martin's, 12.95
Kellerman, Jonathan: **When the Bough Breaks.** Atheneum, 14.95
Kemelman, Harry: **Someday the Rabbi Will Leave.** Morrow, 14.95
Kienzle, William X.: **Sudden Death.** Andrews, McMeel & Parker, 12.95
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Lemarchand, Elizabeth: **Death of an Old Girl.** Walker, 12.95
Lovell, Marc: **The Spy Who Got His Feet Wet.** Doubleday, 11.95
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MacDonald, John D.: **The Lonely Silver Rain.** Knopf, 15.95
MacKenzie, Donald: **Ravem's Shadow.** Doubleday, 11.95
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Mitchell, Gladys: **The Crozier Pharaohs.** Merrimack, 12.95
Muller, Marcia and Bill Pronzini, eds.: **Chapter and Hearse: Suspense Stories About the World of Books.** Morrow, 16.95
Nabb, Magdalen: **Death in Autumn.** Scribner's, 12.95
O'Donnell, Peter: **Last Day in Limbo: A Modesty Blaise Novel.** Mysterious Press, 14.95
Ormerod, Roger: **Seeing Red.** Scribner's, 12.95
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Winslow, Pauline Glen: **The Windsor Plot.** St. Martin's, 13.95
Wood, Ted: **Live Bait.** Scribner's, 12.95
Wood, William P.: **Rampage.** St. Martin's, 13.95
Woods, Sara: **An Obscure Grave.** St. Martin's, 11.95
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Paperbacks

Anderson, John: **Murder She Wrote: The Murder of Sherlock Holmes.** Avon, 2.95
Asimov, Isaac: **The Union Club Mysteries.** Fawcett Crest, 2.95
Barnard, Robert: **School for Murder.** Dell, 2.95
Brand, Christianna: **Cat and Mouse.** International Polygonics, 4.95
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Carr, John Dickson: **Death Turns the Tables.** International Polygonics, 4.95
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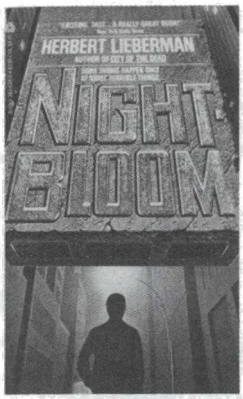

Cross, Amanda: **Sweet Death, Kind Death.** Ballantine, 2.95
Cudlip, David R.: **Comprador.** Avon, 3.95
DeAndrea, William L.: **The Lunatic Fringe.** Mysterious Press, 3.95
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Francis, Dick: **The Danger.** Ballantine, 3.95
Freeman, R. Austin: **Mr. Pattermack's Oversight.** Dover, 5.95
Fremlin, Celia: **The Jealous One.** Academy Chicago, 4.95
Garfield, Brian: **Necessity.** NAL, 3.95
Hansen, Joseph: **Gravedigger.** Holt, 3.95
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Keating, H. R. F.: **Filmi, Filmi, Inspector Ghote.** Academy Chicago, 4.95
Keating, H. R. F.: **Inspector Ghote Draws a Line.** Academy Chicago, 4.95
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Wood, Ted: **Murder on Ice.** Bantam, 2.95 □

Oh, Sherlock Holmes by Isaac Asimov Song of the Sixty

Oh, Sherlock Holmes, the Baker Street Irregulars
Are gathered here to honor you today.
For in their hearts you glitter like a thousand stars,
And like the stars you'll never fade away.
This year that's new will tick away its months and die,
For Father Time moves on relentlessly,
But even he can't tarnish as he passes by
Oh, Sherlock Holmes, oh, Holmes, your immortality.

Oh, Sherlock Holmes, the world is filled with evil still,
And Moriarty rages everywhere.
The terror waits to strike and by the billions kill,
The mushroom cloud is more than we can bear.
But still there's hope in what you've come to symbolize,
In that great principle you've made us see
For we may live if only we can improvise
Oh, Sherlock Holmes, oh, Holmes, your rationality.

Oh, Doctor Watson once took up his pen
To inscribe a tale of Sherlock Holmes.
He wrote first one, then two, then five, then ten,
Till he finished fully sixty tomes.
And we now read and we love them all,
We always sigh when we are done.
We find their virtues simply never pall
John, why not have written sixty-one?.

But let's not sit and weep of things gone by,
There's no use in sorrowful bewailing.
There's nothing to be gained by sad outcry
Or by grumbling, muttering, and railing.
Instead, let's all thank our lucky stars
And bless that clever design,
That gave the Baker Street Irregulars
Fully sixty tales, not fifty-nine.

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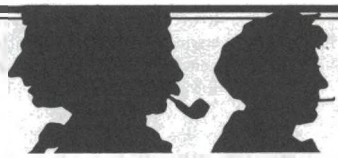

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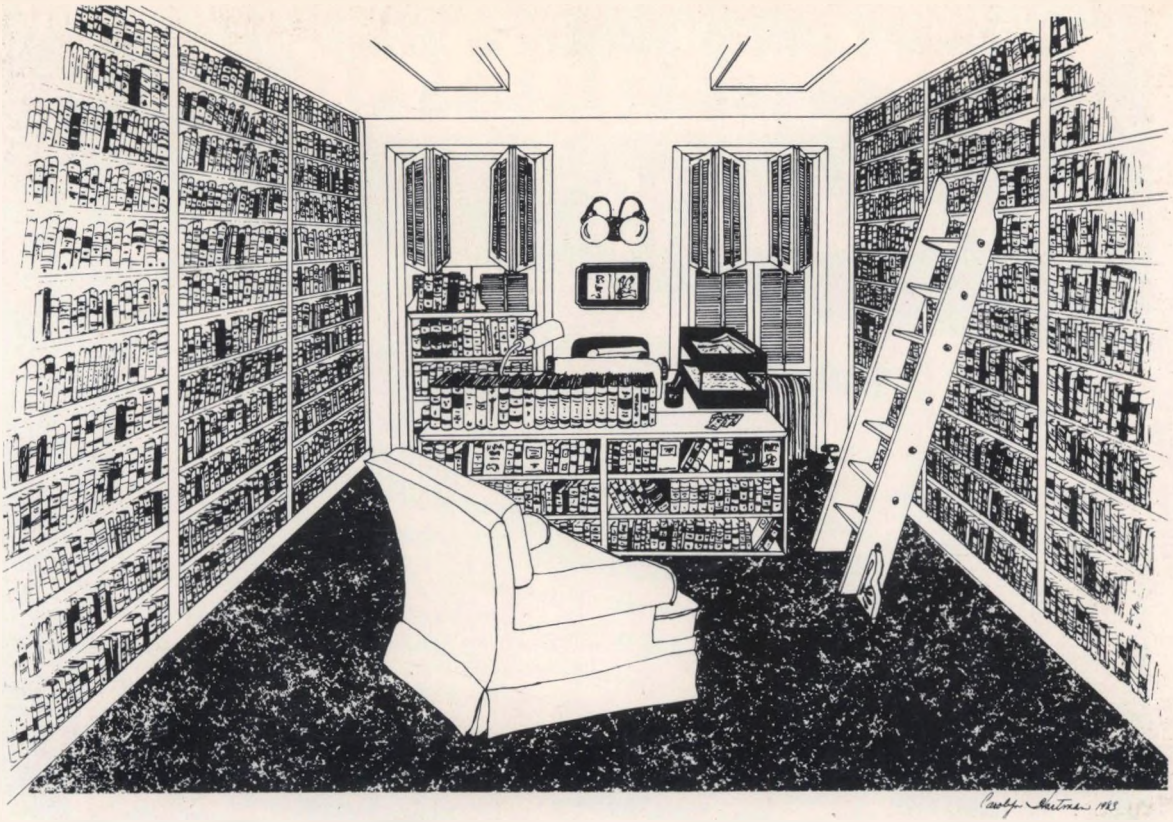

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