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Volume No. 17 Number 3 Summer 1984

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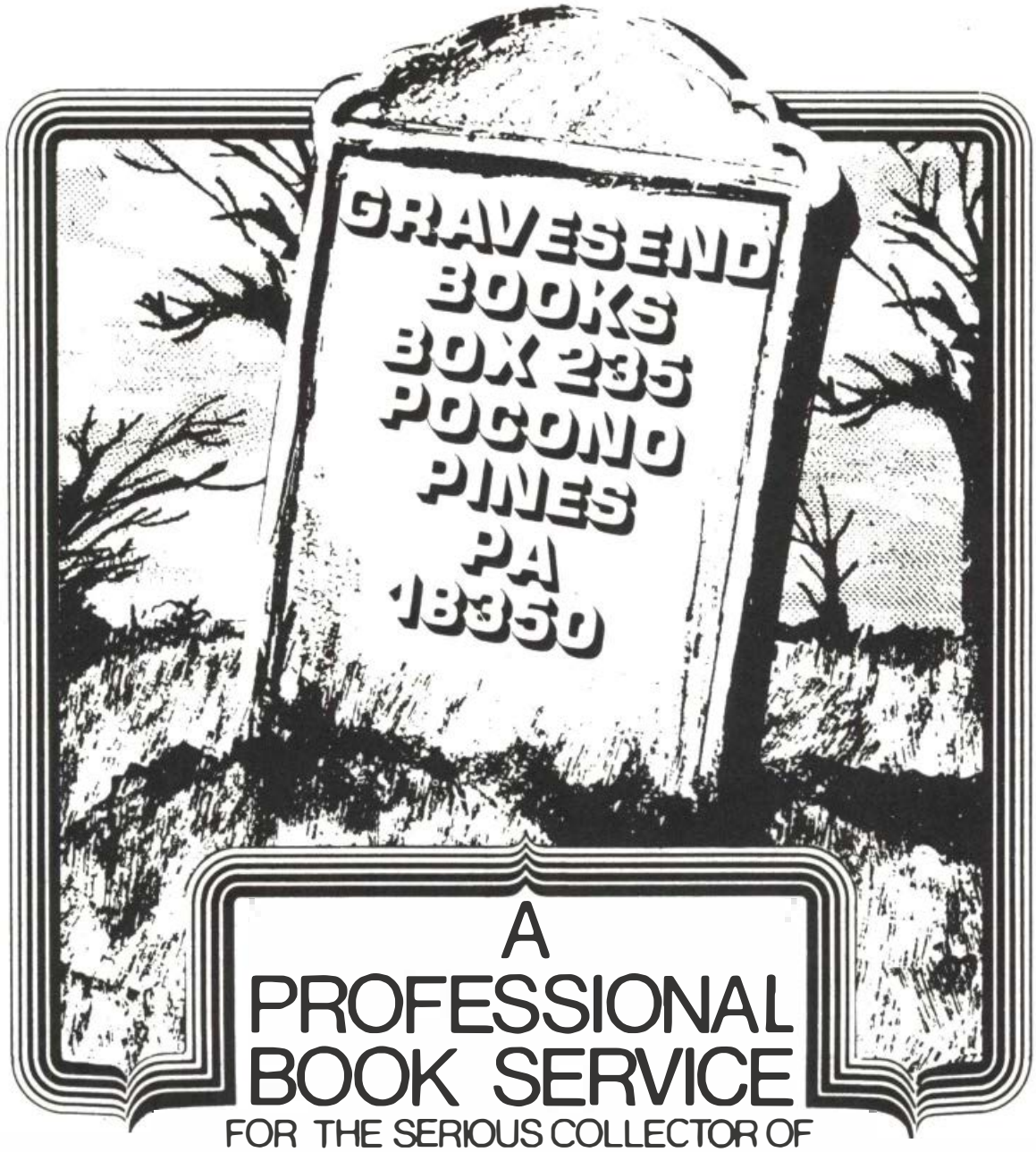
An Interview with Robert Barnard



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Number 3 Summer 1984

THE UNEASY CHAIR

Dear TADian:

It was bound to happen, I suppose. All the signs were there—the comments that computers and robots were going to take jobs from working people, the hyperbolic scare tactics of movies such as *War Games* (which I think has about as much connection with reality as did *Reefer Madness*), and the widespread attention to the various forms of computerphobia now manifesting themselves. Yes, it was bound to happen, and so it did. In Seattle. A group of artists and writers in that city have combined their talents (and, they say, those of the entire city) and, by putting all the data they collected into the memory of a computer named Scheherazade II, have written a mystery novel titled *Invisible Seattle* (coincidentally the name of the group responsible for the project)

Collaborative efforts on the literary front are difficult and complex at best. Here is one which uses the input of an entire populace (and passers-by were invited to pick up blue pencils and edit the manuscript), as put together by a computer. The group does admit that there was a person at the controls, which is reassuring, and I seriously doubt that any writer has anything to fear from computer-generated storytelling. It is, certainly, an interesting and harmless game, a variation on a conceptual art theme, an '80s happening. I cannot speak to the quality of the book (considered apart from its sociological and/or fad interest) because I've read only the Prologue. It was completed in the autumn of 1983 and has not been acquired for publication to this date. (Did any among our readers in Seattle hear the radio broadcast of the novel when it was aired in October and November? Any reactions?)

Now, I don't have anything against the computer as a tool (though I despise dot-matrix printers), but there is *one* thing about the Invisible Seattle project which bothers me. A lot. If the novel is good enough, how will the Edgar be awarded? To the machine? To the director of the project? To the Mayor of the City of Seattle? Fortunately, *Invisible Seattle* is not a contender this year.

In this column, in TAD 14:3, I went on at some length about the fact that not one of the nominees for the Best Novel award for a book published in 1980 was the work of an American writer. It still rankles, of course, but it was pointed out that the by-laws of the Mystery Writers of America, in keeping with democratic traditions, did not discriminate against a writer because of race, creed, religion, or place of birth. I also learned that the award for Best First Novel was limited to *American* writers.

And so, naturally, a book first published in Great Britain and written by an Englishman has been nominated. I have nothing against Andrew Taylor or *Caroline Minuscule*. I am certain that the author is an individual and not a machine. The book, however, is ineligible.

Speaking of the Edgars, when is Mickey Spillane going to be recognized with a Grand Master Award?

I suppose that, in the final analysis, no selection or nominating committee can do the job perfectly (see, for examples, the reaction to William Golding receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature and the Hollywood community's reaction to the Oscar nominations). We should remain ever mindful, then, of the fact that, while the awards are nice, it is our support for the writers—through book purchases and fanmail—that is the most meaningful recognition.

Best mysterious wishes,

Michael Seidman

MICHAEL SEIDMAN

THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

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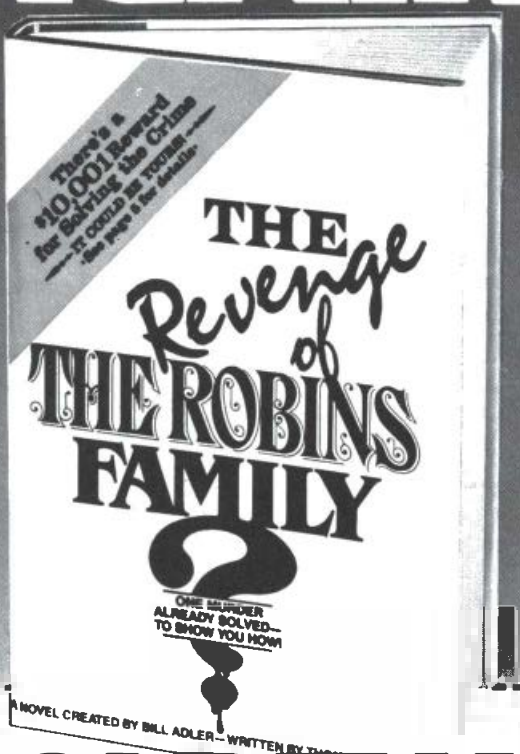

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William Morrow

The Mark of Cain

By Frank D. McSherry Jr.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Solutions to a number of crime novels are indicated in the following essay.*

". . [T]he most winning woman I ever knew," the Master said in *The Sign of Four,* "was hanged for poisoning three little children for their insurance money, and the most repellent man of my acquaintance is a philanthropist who has spent nearly a quarter of a million upon the London poor."

Appearances are deceptive, the Master warns his friend and Boswell, Dr. Watson, especially in the field of crime. And never more so than in the classical, fair-play detective story, for here the authors use all the skill and ingenuity at their command to give the guilty person the appearance of complete innocence, in order that his climactic identification as the criminal may come as the most shattering—and satisfying—surprise possible

Or do they?

Surprise, as psychoanalyst Theodor Reik has pointed out, is the emotion we feel when we recognize consciously something that we have known unconsciously all along.

If that definition is correct, its application to the surprise ending of the traditional detective story has some startling corollaries. One is that the reader (unconsciously) knows all along who the criminal is. Nor can this be due to the reader's unconsciously deducing the criminal's identity from clues deliberately planted for this purpose in the text by the author, for many of today's detective stories have abandoned this technique, and still achieve surprise at the criminal's identity.

This leads to a second corollary: if the criminal can still be identified under such circumstances, he must possess some identifying characteristic, one (or more) not consciously known to the author or reader. Since the author cannot tell the story from the criminal's viewpoint, revealing his innermost thoughts and emotions, without revealing his identity at the same time, it must present the suspects from the outside, as seen by narrator, detective, or reader/observer. And this implies that the telltale mark identifying the criminal has to do with his appearance.

What is there in the appearance of a fictional character that immediately identifies him to the reader's unconsciousness as a criminal? What is this characteristic which distinguishes criminal from non-criminal?

And since thousands and thousands of readers experience this emotion of surprise, this implies that this difference may exist not only in fiction, but in fact.

Is there in actuality an unconsciously recognized, literal Mark of Cain?

There is, of course, an obvious way to determine if this characteristic exists and if so what it is—or if Reik's theory of the nature of surprise is in error. We have only to list and compare descriptions of apparently innocent characters in detective stories who at the end of the tale are unmasked as the criminal; and see what, if anything, these descriptions have in common. (The detective story enthusiast should be warned that of necessity I must reveal the identity of the criminal and sometimes other plot surprises in the stories discussed.)

In *The Emperor's Snuff Box* by John Dickson Carr, Ned Atwood meets a retired prison warden who recognizes him as a escaped convict who broke out of jail some years ago while serving a term for bigamy. Before the warden can tell the police and force him to flee, Atwood (not his real name—we are

never told his real name) murders the man. Atwood wantsbadly tostay in town, hoping toregainthelove of Eve, one of his former "wives," who, knowing nothing about Atwood's past, has left him and is now engaged to another.

Here, through theeyes of Eve, the reader gets his first look at "Atwood" as they meet in the divorce

His famous charm...radiated from him now . . His expression of hurt and appealing penitence inspired confidence. Light-haired and blue-eyed, eternally youthful thoughpast hismiddlethirties, hestood bythe window as a picture of eager attention. Eve could admit that he was damna bly, entanglingly attractive...[1]

In *Death's Masquerade,* a novel by Maxwell Grant, we get our first glimpse of aged Ellery Gault, semi retired director of Gault Consolidated Industries and—though we do not learn this until the end—embezzler and murderer. His hobby is collecting modern pennies; he keeps some twenty thousand of them in an ironchest in his room, leading people to think him semi-senile.

Leaning on a heavycane, Gault enteredtheroom imposingly. His face was sharp and keen, belying the age that his snow-white mustache and flowing hair betrayed. His eyes sparkled asold Gault drewhimself to full height, asthough to begin an address. As suddenly, the white-haired man deflated. His shoulders bowed, his head dipped between them. Gault's face displayed an inanesmile, while hiseyes turnedhappily fromonedirectorto another.[2]

In a wheedlingtone, Gault asks thedirectors if they havebrought him the pennies heasked them for. His subordinates drop a half-dozen shiny new pennies eachintohis cuppedhands.

Gault...was...happilycrooning his thanks
Small wonder Gault looked young. He had dropped enough yearsto becomea child of five![3]

The "senility," however, is merely a deception to account for the collecting of pennies; for Gault has purchased gold with the huge sums he has stolen from the company and stamped it into imitation pennies, thus hiding the loot in plain sight

In *Spence at the Blue Bazaar* by Michael Allen, Mrs. Jennifer Cordwright, an enthusiasticperformer in amateur theatricals, dresses in men's clothes and knifes a schoolteacher and his young son to death one night for fear they will inform the police of a homosexual act committed by her teenaged son. Seventeen yearslater, a blackmailer stumbles across proof of Mrs. Cordwright's involvement in the double murders, and Mrs. Cordwright must dress in men's clothes andkill again. Here is the reader's first look at Mrs. Cordwright, through the blackmailer's eyes:

Mrs. Cordwright was in her mid-fifties; her hair was grey butit didnot ageher unduly, which wastheonlyreasonshe hadn't dyed it. She was of average height and weight and gave the impression of being a wiry and vigorous person perhaps five years younger than she was. She was very elegantlydressed in a navy-bluecostume and a blouse of a lighter blue thatmatched hereyes.[4]

The novel has another character who also turns out to be a criminal, astriptease dancer whoworksat the Blue Bazaar —

a gorgeous creature who called herself Thana; she also called herself Melody McFee, and...had lived and worked underat least threeothernamesin addition to herrealone.

Thanawas tall for a girl, with long flashing legson high heels...blonde shoulder-length hair, blue eyes, and the best complexion that Estee Lauder could concoct. She looked to be in her early twenties, but infact she had been born in Tinley thirty years previously. Her bust was particularly spectacular, which was only right considering the small fortune which had been spent on it...[in a] white see-through top...[5]

Early in the story, we learn that Thana is a blackmailer; only at the end do we find out that "Thana" wasthe son of a prominentlocal citizen who hadhad a sex-change operation and become a call girl who specialized in blackmailingher clients.

The multiple murderer in *The Mountains West of Town* by Warwick Downing bribes a female geologist working for an oil company to falsely report to it that his worthless land contains millions of dollars' worth ofoil, andthen kills her to keephispart in the huge swindle from becoming known. He later kills several other people to conceal his connection with the first murder, including a man who aids him to move the body.

Robert Dix, the murderer, is a loud-mouthed, crusty, eccentric, right-wing oilman who is first seen in a big-framed photograph hanging on the wall of hisoffice

A grim-looking man with a contrived smile gazed powerfullyintotheroom. "Isthathim?" I asked, pointing
"Yes. Ten years ago. He looks just the same today, except..."[6]

When narrator Nathan Lee meets him in person, Dix is shouting in fury at his wife, who works in his office, over a stenographic error, telling her to type the letter over again.

Themanlooked asyoungashis picture, just as hishafehad said the day before. "A fine man, your father, although personally I never liked him..."

Fromhis high-backedswivel chair he could reach everything in the small room: the massive rolltop desk behind him...a floor lampat one end, and Venetian blinds at the other. He wassixty-oneor two, although his bodyand face and voice bristled with the force and power of a much younger man. But there was a bitterness about him deeper than mine, and I wondered if the old bastard enjoyed

humiliating his wife.[7]

In Rex Stout's *The Red Box*, Mrs. Edwin Frost's baby daughter, Helen, the sole heir to the Frost fortune, dies at the age of one year. To keep control of the fortune, Mrs. Frost illegally and secretly substitutes another person's baby of the same age for her and brings *her* up as "Helen." Nearly two decades later, Mrs. Frost kills three people by poison to prevent the truth of her fraud and theft from being revealed. Archie Goodwin, assistant to private detective Nero Wolfe, sees her as

> the medium-sized woman with the straight back and proud mouth. She was good-looking and well made, with deep but direct eyes of an off color, something like the reddish-brown of dark beer, and you wouldn't have thought she was old enough to be the mother of a grown up goddess.[8]

We can see that all these characters who later are revealed as criminals have one characteristic in common: they look younger than they actually are. It's as if they were both young and old at one and the same time, physically young and otherwise old, like fantasies in which the soul of an old person is magically placed inside the body of a young person.

Let's examine some more cases of the appearances of seemingly innocent persons who are later shown to be criminals and see if they also exhibit this peculiar characteristic.

Our next group of examples will start with Ed McBain's novel *Give the Boys a Great Big Hand*, in which an obviously demented murderer is doing just that—mailing the boys of Isola's 87th Police Precinct bits and pieces of a dead body. While trying to identify the body and the killer, detectives Carella and Hawes encounter Charles Tudor, who books theatrical acts and especially stripteasers:

> Tudor was a large man in his late forties wearing a dark-brown suit and a pale-gold tie. He possessed a headful of short black hair which was turning white at the temples, and a black Ernie Kovacs mustache. He was smoking a cigarette in a gold-and-black cigarette holder . . . a diamond pinky ring glistened on his right hand.
>
> He spoke with the clipped precision of an Englishman But the elegant tones and rounded vowels were delivered in the harshest, most blatant city accent Carella had ever heard. And the odd part was that Tudor didn't seem at all aware of the accent that stamped him as a native of either Isola or Calm's Point. Blithely, he clipped his words immaculately and seemed under the impression that he was a member of the House of Lords delivering a speech to his fellow peers.[9]

In *Suddenly in the Air*, a novel by Karen Campbell, an airline stewardess examines a boarding passenger, Charles Vulliamy, who plans to hijack the craft, kill all aboard, and make away with its cargo of gold bullion, a feat he has performed once before:

> He smelled of some very strong man's cologne and faintly, underneath, sweat. "Aged forty and single. Do you really have to have all that down as well?"
>
> Another businessman . ? No A high-powered executive. Sales? Advertising? Insurance? He was from London, too. He had neatly cropped brown hair, a smooth rubbery face, well-built, neatly dressed, very affable. Not too much trouble there, I decided . . .
>
> He had a faintly mid-Atlantic accent like so many people these days, and restless hands . . . He squeezed my arm Ah, a different sort of trouble I recognized him now No flight was complete without one. The bottom-pincher.[10]

He's good at vocal tricks, too, imitating the dead pilot's voice on the radio well enough to deceive searchers about the course and location of the first hijacked and missing airliner.

In Theodore Sturgeon's short story "The Half-Way Tree Murder," a beautiful young woman named Brunnhilde Moot kills an elderly Chinese merchant for the thrill of watching her boy friend, Cotrell of the Jamaican C.I.D., investigate the case without realizing that the woman he's attracted to is the killer. Cotrell sees her as:

> An exotic brown-eyed blonde. . . [who] had come off a cruise ship three months before . . She apparently had unlimited credit. Her clothes told nothing about her but that she had exquisite taste. . . she spoke Dutch and Spanish, and her English was accented by no accent at all. Her passport was Swiss, which might mean anything.[11]

The traitor and multiple murderer whom British intelligence agent Jonas Wilde is seeking in *The Eliminator*, a novel by Andrew York, turns out to be a high-ranking officer in his own organization, a man named Stern.

> Stern was a remarkably small man, with a body like a matchstick; this made his head, with its large nose and thick lips, appear top-heavy. His eyes were green, and seemed as lifeless as his thinning gray hair. He was in his fifties now, but once upon a time his deceptive thinness and his apparent nonchalance had been fatal to a good many people . He spoke with conscious care, smothering all trace of accent. His parents had found their way from Bohemia to London's East End at the turn of the century, and he was the youngest of thirteen children. He regarded Wilde as his best friend in the organization.[12]

This second set of criminals also has a characteristic in common: there's something different about their voices, something unusual about those voices. It's almost as if the criminal has more than one voice. In three cases, one voice has an accent and one without; one voice is appropriate to the appearance of the criminal, the other is not. Tudor's voice and manner of speaking give him the sound of an Englishman, but his accent stamps him immediately as a native of the American city of the Mc Bain novel. Stern tries to give the appearance of an Englishman born and bred,

dropped an earlier voice and manner whose accent stamps him as a foreigner, Brunnhilde Moot speaks English so flawlesslythat itslack of accent is in itself an accent, the mark not of a native-born English speaking woman but of a foreigner, as the English detective points out. Mr. Vulliamy has two voices too, one, with a mid-Atlantic accent that fits his appearance, and another, the voice of the murdered pilot.

It's almost the way insurance investigator Julian Burroughs puts it, in his description of mass murderess Mrs. Candace Wardell, in Warren Murphy's novel *Fool's Flight*.

Mrs. Wardell, a spectacular blonde lesbian who marries her wealthy, much older, industrialist-turned-evangelist husband for his money, discovers too late that he has left every cent to the church he has founded. At the end of the novel, however, we learn that Mrs. Wardell has forged six million dollars' worth of insurance policies for forty of her husband'scult followers and putthem aboard a flight from which the pilot, an accomplice of hers, will see they do not return. The policies are all made out to Rev. Wardell, who is next onher murderlist.

The first time "Digger" Burroughs sees her is on stage, singing, at a Wardellrevival service, "a young blond woman with almost white hair, wearing a mid-calf-length white dress . . She looked like a snowflake, Digger thought,"[13] and he especially notices her voice,

> a pure voice that could sing on keyand that was what she did.Therewereno shadings, nonuances, no vocal tricksor experimentation. She sang each song the way it was written. . . bang, bang, bang, right on the beat. It was really a shame, Digger thought, because the voice might have been exceptional if it had been used, really used. It was Sarah Vaughan and Ella Fitzgerald and Cleo Laine. . .[14]

Henotes it a second timewhenhe visits therectoryto interview Wardell:

> It was a woman's voice,singing, andthevoicewaspureand clear. It had to be Wardell's wife, but she was singing "A Foggy Day in London Town" and her voice was teasing the song, playing with the melody, in a way that belonged in a recordingstudio, not a rectory.[15]

Later, Burroughs describes her frustration as Wardell'swife:

> She. . . plays Holy Mother Sister Superior, singing hersongs by the numbers and all the time that jazz singer voice wants to get out. ..[16]

Burroughs(and Murphy) are in effecttelling us that their criminal has two voices, not one, one voice trappedinside her, almost as if she swallowed it. It is a voicethat does not fit her appearance as the wife of anevangelist, does notseemto belongto her, but to a jazzsinger.

So far our criminal has two ages, one young, one old, and/or has two voices, onefittinghis appearance and one that seemingly doesn't. Let's examine some more of these fictional people who turn out to be the criminal atthe end of the story.

In Richard Forrest's novel *The Wizardof Death*, a man who calls himself"Rainbow" hires a hoodlum to kill state senator Beatrice Wentworth when she refuses to give to a corrupt candidate the political support that will make him Governor. When the assassination attempt fails, "Rainbow" kills the assassin and three other men to hide his own complicity in the crime

Senator Wentworth's husband, Lyon, a former intelligence officer in Korea, investigates, learning that "Rainbow" is "male, Caucasian, thirtyish, near six feet with a medium build"[17] and has a "slight Boston nuance to his voice, a certain inflection even though hisvoicehas beenmuffled,"[18] and finallythat hisrealnameis Danny Nemo

Nemo is a man of all work for embittered, unbalanced political figureWilkieDawkins, acripple whose life Nemo saved in Vietnam. Wentworth first meets Nemo atone of Dawkins'sparties:

> At the built-in bar. . .Danny Nemo was efficiently shaking cocktails. . . Dannyalways seemed to be smiling. Like the former tennisplayerand surferthat he was, he affablyand ingenuouslyradiated healthand exuberance. He had been a noncom in Wilkie Dawkins's Vietnam infantry company, and after Dawkins had received massive shrapnel wounds from an enemy rocket, Danny had carried him through enemyfiretothe evac helicopter.[19]

Jealousy is the motive for the murder of a barnstorming pilot in a 1920s flying circus in Edward D. Hoch's "The Problem of the Tin Goose." Mavis, the pilot's wife, kills him for his unfaithfulness. Narrator Dr. Samuel Hawthorne is unaware of the marriage until the end of this short story, for Mavis, a performer in the flying circus, does not use her married name. Here's their first meeting:

> I turned my attention to the other members of Winslow's Flying Circus. . . my real interest centered on the fourth. . . a long-haired blonde named Mavis Wing who gave me a slow smilelikenothingI'deverseenin Northmount.
>
> "I can't imagine women barnstorming and walking on wings," I saidwhenI'd foundmy tongue.
>
> "Oh, we do it, Dr. Hawthorne." The slow smile was back. "Lillian Boyer has her own plane with her name in big letters on the side. That's what I'm aiming for. My name's reallyWingarton, butthat wouldn't look good on the side of a plane, would it?"[20]

In Dashiell Hammett's famous novel *The Maltese Falcon,* Brigid O'Shaughnessy steals a fabulous gold statuette filled with precious gems and flees to San Francisco with her accomplice. Here she murders a

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private detective, as part of a scheme to get her accomplice arrested and executed for the crime, leaving her in sole possession of the stolen wealth.

She uses the false name of Miss Wonderly when she first enters the offices of the Spade and Archer Detective Agency.

> A voice said, "Thank you," so softly that only the purest articulation made the words intelligible, and a young woman came through the doorway [Her] cobalt-blue eyes were both shy and probing. She was tall and pliantly slender... her legs long, her hands and feet narrow. She wore two shades of blue that had been selected because of her eyes. The hair curling from under her blue hat was darkly red, her full lips more darkly red . . . Her hands in dark gloves clasped a flat dark handbag...[21]

After the murder, Spade finds her in an apartment under another false name, Leblanc, and learns her real name. The names worry Spade, as he reveals when he asks his secretary what she thinks of the [redacted]

> "I'm for her," the girl replied without hesitation
> "She's got too many names," Spade mused. "Wonderly, Leblanc, and she says the right one's O'Shaughnessy."[22]

In Lionel Booker's short story "The Dubbing Clue," a former radio actor kills the woman he loves when she rejects him in favor of her husband and casts suspicion on the husband by duplicating his voice in a darkened studio where they are dubbing the voices of actors in a foreign film for American release. Here is the narrator's first look at Herb Layton:

> [H]e came to radio from his nightclub act where he imitated everyone in show business and politics. I used to love his show, "Call for Murder," which featured a different mystery every week with Layton playing all the parts. . . I spun around to see a tall grey-haired man with a flabby, jovial face I never would have connected this elderly, somewhat stiff-jointed figure with the voice from my boyhood.[23]

Layton is "stiff-jointed" because he is carrying the murder weapon, a long iron rod, up his sleeve. Layton then murders the wife and, to conceal the actual time of the crime, which would point to him alone as the killer, plays not only his role but the woman's role—that of a twelve-year-old girl—in the darkened studio as well. The husband, Sam Fields, then enters the studio to play his role with Layton. Later, Layton tries to destroy Fields's alibi by falsely claiming that Fields wasn't in the studio at all, but asked Layton to imitate his voice and play both their roles.

> Layton... welcomed the chance to prove his story. Instead of having him repeat all the loops, Andy selected the most difficult ones that featured both voices. Layton stood at the script-stand and amazed us all by not only imitating Fields perfectly but also managing to synchronize the lip movements of both film actors.
> "He's even got the right pitch Sam would use for that character," said Andy. "I can't hear any difference."[24]

We can now see some other things characteristic of the criminal. He has more than one name—the female wing-walker has a stage or professional name; the murderer and swindler "Rainbow" uses a military-type code name for his criminal activities; Miss O'Shaughnessy uses a false name; and the radio actor answers to the names of fictional, movie characters as well as those of real people—and the various characteristics we have noted that seem to mark the fictional criminal seem also to overlap. "Rainbow," for example, not only has an extra name but something odd about his voice, a Boston accent; and Layton not only has extra names, there's something odd about his voice too—he seems to have more than one, being able to impersonate people with remarkable skill.

This leads us to another, related characteristic of the criminal of fiction. In *Murder on Safari,* a novel by Elspeth Huxley, professional hunter Danny de Mare finds and keeps thirty thousand dollars' worth of jewels stolen from Lady Baradale by her lover, believing she will say nothing to avoid embarrassment and possible divorce. When Lady Baradale informs the police, de Mare kills her in a pretended hunting accident to cover his theft.

De Mare is a short, slight, fifty-ish man who acts constantly on impulse and is quite attractive to women. When he first appears in the novel, he looks like this to policeman Vachell of the C.I.D.:

> His face was lean and sallow and a long, beaky nose gave it a bird-like look . . . he reminded Vachell of a small, compact hawk. His thick, dark hair, brushed until it shone, was grey at the temples...[25]

> He had... social assets such as ease of manner, ability as a raconteur, and attraction for women... a reputation for reckless courage and a sort of bravado which belonged to a past age and generation once the Masai had permitted him to join a warrior's lion hunt he would spend a month's salary on a couple of wild parties... and he was said to be always in debt. He once got out of the country wearing a red beard and a turban, having disguised himself as a Sikh merchant and joined a party of his own creditors travelling down the coast to intercept his flight.[26]

The criminal not only imitates peoples' voices, he impersonates people; he takes on another personality and identity.

These qualities of having more than one voice / more than one age / more than one name / more than one identity, characterize, I estimate, approximately two-thirds of the criminals of fiction (we will mention later the characteristic making up the last third). Frequently, several or all of these qualities are

used to characterize onecriminal in the course of the story (in *Suddenly in the Air,* the criminal has an accent, imitates another person's voice, and impersonates the pilot of the plane he is hijacking). This strongly suggests that all these different qualities symbolize one underlying concept.

We have now seen enough examples of the criminal in fiction to suggest what the unconscious of author(and reader) is trying to tell us about him: the criminal(singular) is two(or more)people, one inside theother like a handinsidea glove.

If this is so, we can now see why the criminal is described as seeming younger than his actualage. If he is two people, one inside the other, he will possess their total number of years, while his outer body will show only its own—younger—age. He will naturally possess another voice, that of the person swallowed (introjected), and equally cannot only impersonate another person but be another. Naturally, too, he would have two or more names.

If this is true, these qualities should be found describing criminals in mainstream fiction, crime fiction, and detective stories in which no attempt is made to provide clues for the reader about the identity of the criminal. This concept of two-or-more-in-one should also be capable of accounting for descriptions of the criminals in stories that are, apparently, exceptions to the above and do not mention the criminals's conflicting ages, double voices, names, or abilityto impersonateothers.

Ronald Dahl's crime short story "Lamb to the Slaughter" gives this brief description of Mrs. Mary Maloney, who hits and kills her husband with a frozen leg of mutton and escapes arrest when the police destroy the evidence by eating the murder weapon for dinner.

> There was a slow smiling air about her, and about everything she did . . . Her skin—for this was her sixth month with child—had acquired a rather wonderful translucent quality; the mouth was soft, and the eyes, with their new, placidlook,seemedlarger,darker,than before.[27]

Thereader is givenlittle chance todeducethe identity of the villain in Theodore Tinsley's novel *The Fifth Napoleon* who enters his skyscraper headquarters through a concealed elevator.

> like a pillar of crimson flame. He was robed from head to foot in scarlet . . . His face was hidden behind a silken red mask. He wore scarlet slippers and gloves
>
> His voice was the tremulous, high-pitched quaver of a very oldman.[28]

> Under his blood-red robe and mask he walked with the solid tread of a young, heavily built man. But his bent shoulders, thethin squeak of hisvoice,tolda differentstory . . . [Leaving] he left behind. . . the echo of a laugh. There was no squeak in it, no thin quaver of an aged man. It was deep, full-toned, filled withthe strength of youthfullungs.
>
> The Fifth Napoleon was far from decrepit, either physically or mentally. . . a genius of crime in the prime of life![29]

In Robert Bloch's crime short story "Sock Finish," silent movie comedian Artie Ames kills the female star of his comeback film when he realizes that she and her producer boyfriend have sabotaged his scenes—and his last chance in films—to make her look good. Here narrator and reader get their first look at Artie Ames:

> I was moreor less prepared to greet an elderly man . . . Ames went out with the talkies almost thirty years ago, and I expected that time would have takenits toll. .
>
> But Artie Ames was a complete surprise. . .
>
> He heldhimselferect; he was neitherhangdog or fidgety, and he was wearing a suit made. . . at $200 a copy. On top of that, he wasn't old. Oh, you wouldn't peg him as a youngster, buthecouldpass for a man in his forties. And a well-preserved man atthat, with a full head of greyinghair and a facedevoidofwrinklesorpouches.
>
> When he opened his mouth to greet me. . . I got the biggestsurprise ofall.
>
> ArtieAmes had a bassoprofundovoice.
>
> . [O]fcourse. The voice—that's what killed him. It was wrong for talkies, wrong for a slapstick comic playing a Timid Soul character. Sound slaughtered his career. . .[30]

Ames demonstrates histalentsforthe narrator:

> Here he went into an impromptu imitation . . . He aped JerryLewis perfectly. His miming capturedLewis'sgestures and facial expressions precisely. . .[31]

Ames falls in lovewith the female star, not realizing she'sleading himon—"the tabseven carried a picture of the two of them dancing, and I must admit they didn't make such an incongruous couple. He was close to thirty years her senior, but the picturedidn't show it"[32]—until he sees what she's done to his

> Ames faced the camera foroneofhisrarelinesof dialogue, and I wondered how they'd corrected that bass voiceofhis I found out as his mouth opened and a squeakemerged.
>
> It was the nasty, subhuman vocalization of a tape recorder run in reverse. . . an insane gibberish
>
> The sequence itself was cut drastically, and some clever craftsman had speeded up the action until what remained was a frenzied flicker. . . while out of his mouth came this *Silly Symphony,* this *Loony Tune* noise. . . the voice of pig, squealingin slaughteredagony.[33]

Again we can see the telltale factors that alert the reader (unconsciously) to the criminal. Ames has something wrong with his voice; he has two ages, like the Fifth Napoleon; he has two personalities (imitating another comic skillfully); and he is given another voice (that of a squealing pig). Thus the author both makes his surprise ending (when Ames murders the woman he loved) believable and creates the emotion

and feeling of surprise.

Another variation of this double theme, one frequently used by Agatha Christie, is to have a murder seeminglycommitted by one person turn out to have been committed by a team, usually a man-and-wife (or lover) team (in, for example, Dame Agatha's *Hallowe'en Party, The Body in the Library,* "The Blood-Stained Pavement," *Death on the Nile,* and most notably *Murder on the Orient Express.*)

Yet nearly a third of all fictional criminals show no such characteristics. In *Hallowe'en Party,* Mrs. Rowena Drake drowns a twelve-year-old girl whom she believes has witnessed a murder for money committed months ago by her and her lover, Michael Garfield. Garfield, as first seen by detective Hercule Poirot, hasthe doublecharacteristic:

> . . [T]he young man came out from the trees to greet him. His youth seemed the most characteristic thing about him yet, as Poirot saw, he was not really young. He was past thirty, perhapsnearerforty.[34]

But Mrs. Drake has none of the previously-noted double characteristics. She is described only as "a handsome middle-aged woman"[35] and regarded by others asbossyand dominating—and that is all.

The man who is revealed to be the criminal in S.S. Van Dine's *The Kidnap Murder Case* is described as briefly: Eldridge Fleel, the family lawyer of a kidnapped man, is "a solid, slightly corpulent man of successful, professional mien."[36] To get money to pay his largegambling debts, Fleel has kidnapped his client and stolen jewels from his gem collection; the money used to gamble with was embezzled from his client's estate."Someone," comments detective Philo Vance, "wanted money—wanted it rather desperately, in fact . . . the person who mapped out the plot was blinded and confused by a passionate desire for themoney."[37]

In *The Smiling Dogs,* a novel by "Kenneth Robeson" (Paul Ernest), Dr. Augustus Fram conducts a terrorist campaign against businessmen and U.S. Senators in order to acquire public parklands that he alone knows contains a fortune in radium deposits. Dr. Fram is first seen as "a tall, distinguished-lookingperson with a small goatee on a lean jaw, and with a tiny mustache which looked waxed but wasn't."[38]

Building superintendent Harry Potter poisons an elderly lady for the money she has hidden in her apartment in "The Adventure of the Seven Black Cats," a short story by Ellery Queen. Potter is described as "a shortthickset man with heavy,coarse features."[39]

Harry Ortley, in "Blood-Red Gold," a crime novelette by Erle Stanley Gardner, murders his partner in order to steal the gold mine the man has discovered. But there is no trace of the double qualities mentioned when the narrator first meets Ortley, rolling up the windows of his car in the desert heat, locking ignition, transmission, and doors. One of the watching mencomments:

> "If that fellow everraised a betit'd be a cinch heheldbetter than three of a kind . . ."
>
> And somehow . . . it was the best description of the man's character you couldmake
>
> Ortleywalked intothe restaurant
>
> He was fat, not paunchy fat, but the smooth, well-distributed sleek fat that comes to people who are accustomed to getting what they want. He was about forty, and his eye was as cold as the top of Telescope Peak in the winter. His cheeks were round, but his mouthwasunusuallysmall
>
> "Gentlemen," he said in a thin, reedy voice, "Good afternoon."[40]

Though these examples seem to have no connection with the double qualities, they do have something in common: in every case, the motive for the crime is money. Perhaps these two groups, the double qualities and the money motive characterizations,are both expressions and symbols of the same thing, a deeper, morebasic concept of the nature of the criminal.

This possibility is strengthened by the fact that occasionally thesetwogroupsof characteristicsapply to the same fictional criminal. In Emma Lathen's novel *Going For the Gold,* bank officer Roger Hathaway murders his confederate when their scheme to embezzle millions from the bank during an Olympic ski meet at Lake Placid collapses. One of the first things we are told about Hathaway is that he looks younger than hisactual age:

> Normally Roger Hathaway's rugged blondness and lean vigor made him look right at home at Lake Placid. But now he was showing his thirty years. The tight frown creasing his forehead was echoed by a score of tiny wrinkles at his temples, and hiseyes wererred with fatigue . . . he reminded Thatcher of a man readytofacethefiringsquad . . .
>
> "Mr. Thatcher, we've taken in a half-million dollars' worthof fakesover ourcounters."[41]

A witness confirms this later when the masked Hathawaytries to fleeon skis: "Theguy I waschasing was such a good skier I never figured it could be anyone that old."[42]

His motive, we learn at the end, is money. Briefly married to a wealthywife, he has become addicted to jet-set living; the divorce leaves him broke and working for a living—and determined to regain that golden life at any cost. Like Fleer, he's *hungry* for money.

(And see Lathen's *Murder To Go,* in which the criminal's motive is again money—fear of loss of the family income—but in which he dons a disguiseand poses as another person.)

In short, the money motive—the criminal's loss or feared lossofhisownmoney, oritsmirror-equivalent,

the illegal possession of someone else's money—is, like the double name, the strange contrast in ages, just another aspect or symbol of the unconscious concept of the criminal.

What, exactly, *is* the unconscious concept of the criminal?

Let us start with the odd legal phrase, "the weight of the evidence." In criminal cases, the actual physical weight of most evidence is irrelevant (fingerprints, etc.) or non-existent (eyewitness identification, character testimony, etc.); how did this phrase come to be applied to all evidence?

I suspect it is based on centuries-long court practices and legal procedures, themselves based on an underlying superstition. For centuries in the Holy Roman Empire, beginning with the Emperor Charles V, the following legal procedure was used to determine guilt or innocence in cases of murder, adultery, witchcraft and theft, etc. As historian Henry Charles Lea has said:

> The suspect who desired to clear himself presented himself to the magistrates. They guessed his weight by his appearance and put that amount in the balance [of a huge pair of scales in the courtroom]; if he overtopped it, he was innocent; if he was outweighed he was guilty.[43]

A similar test was used for centuries in England, according to Tindall's *A Handbook on Witches*. This was the practice of weighing people accused of the crime of witchcraft "against the Bible—that is, the great Bible in the parish church. Witches would allegedly weigh lighter than the book."[44]

In short, the accused person was weighed and his weight estimated, exactly as weight-guessers do at county fairs. We note that the weight alone determined guilt or innocence, if the accused were heavier than he appeared to be, he was acquitted; if he were lighter than he appeared to be, he was guilty. At that time, it was a widely-held belief that a witch loses weight. (The same belief also appeared in its mirror-equivalent form; people believed that a sure sign of a person's being bewitched was a sudden, inexplicable loss of weight.)

Another legal procedure used for determining guilt or innocence at this time was the so-called "swimming test," popularized in films and fiction as a test for witchcraft. The accused was cross-tied, left wrist to right ankle and vice versa, and thrown into the nearest pond. If she floated (most defendants were female in witchcraft trials), she was assumed to be guilty; if she sank to the bottom she was assumed to be innocent. Comments Geoffrey Parrinder in his book *Witchcraft*:

> The swimming test . . . was long in use; James I of England . . . advocated this because "the water shall refuse to receive them in her bosom, that have shaken off the sacred waters of Baptism."[45]

The swimming test was abolished as legally valid in England in 1219, but, Tindall states, "Unofficial 'swimming' continued briskly in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries."[46] Indeed, the practice itself was not made specifically illegal until themiddle of the seventeenthcentury.

The test, Tindall states, was

> used also to determine guilt in cases of adultery, theft and murder; it was never primarily associated with witchcraft although, as a "miraculous" device for assessing guilt, it naturally remained popular in connection with witchcraft cases.[47]

This superstition, that the sinking or floating of a bodyhad something to do with crime and criminals, appeared in other forms in courts. In 1699, English lawyer Thomas Cowper, (grandfather of the poet), was charged with murder when the body of a young lady, missing forthreedays, was found floating in a millstream. She had drowned herself when Cowper broke off their romantic affair, but both the public and the law firmly held that dead bodies found floating hadbeenvictimsof violence.

Indeed, to provemurder,the prosecution put three doctors on the stand who testified that this was true, as well as naval veterans who testified that it was the custom in the Royal Navy to load the bodies of seamenkilled in battlewith chain to make them sink. One seaman stated that at the Battle of BeachyHead he had seen many men in the water, and that, without exception, those killed by enemy action had floated and the livingmen had sunk.

Cowper, the first English lawyer to defend a client (himself) on a murder charge in court, countered with a defense so effective it is used to this day. He brought his own expert witnesses, ten of the nation's best-known doctors from London, who testified that the floating of a body was not medical proof of murder. Cowper was acquitted.

Thecase providesanother illustration oftests used to detect witches being used to detect other criminals as well. Three young men, the last to see the deceased, were suspected of murderand were asked to touch the corpse to see if it would bleed. When they refused (the corpse had been in the water three days then), theywere arrested alongwith Cowper.

It was widely believed then that a corpse will bleed if the witch whose spells caused the death approaches. In the 1612 trial of the Lancaster witches, England's most famous witch trial, Jennet Preston was convicted and hanged for bewitching one Thomas Lister when witnesses testified that his corpse bledwhenshe touched it.

The people who usethe same test to detect a witch, who kills by supernatural means and makes corpses bleed, to detect a criminal who kills by non-supernatural means and makes corpses bleed, obviously believe thatwitchequalscriminalandvice versa.

Criminal isanotherwordforwitch.

If this is true, it therefore follows that what accounts for those odd beliefs about the witch—the loss/gain of weight, the corpse that bleeds at her approach, etc.—would also account for the odd beliefs held about the criminal—one who has more than one voice, more than one age, one name, who has lost or will losemoney,etc.

This simplifies the problem, for psychoanalysis has such an explanation for witches. All we have to do is to apply it to criminals in general. We will make one slight modification in that explanation, for that explanation of witches applies only to female witches; we will expand it to include male witches, such as warlocks, coven leaders (always male), and

With this as our basis, let us try to explain the picture and characteristics of the criminal unconsciously held by the public.

These superstitions (really neurotic symptoms) about both witch and criminal can be understood if we make one assumption: that, unconsciously, people think and believe that human beings are containers, hollow inside like a bottle, and filled with such body contents as blood, air (breath), semen (sexual potency), food, feces, and (unborn) children, and, in more abstract terms, the soul, the personality, the being, words and voices, or anything elsethat symbolizes body contents.

According to psychoanalysis, there are many things that can be used by the unconscious to symbolize body contents in one form or another. Jewels symbolizechildren, for example, as in the legend of the poor Roman matron who, when asked by malicious wealthy friends to show them her jewels, presented her sons and said proudly, these are my jewels.

Money represents body contents, specifically feces, as pointed out by Freud and Ferenczi (hence such popular—and significant—phrases as "the smell of money,""filthylucre,""dirtymoney," and so on; and in fact wealth in any form refers to body contents in the unconscious).

Like any other container, the human body, too, can have its contentsdrained, added to, transferred, filled, or exchanged with the contents of other containers. This would naturally follow for anyone who believed that human beings were such contain-

If people unconsciously believe that a witch is empty and hollow inside, like an empty bottle, we can see why both the weighing test and the swimming test became long-lasting and accepted legal procedures. An empty bottle naturally weighs less than a full one; and of course a witch would float in water and a person who wasn't a witch would not, just as

an empty bottle will float and a full bottle will sink.

This loss/gain-of-body-contents-in-real-or-symbolic-form is the basis for other superstitions about witches as well. For example, there is the belief that a witch is incapable of shedding tears. Tears of course are a part of body contents; and a witch, being empty, would have none to shed.

A person whose body contents have been taken away will, of course, wish to get them back or replace them with others' body contents, for who wants to do without such body contents as breath, blood, sexual substance (potency), and soul?

Hence, down through the ages, the witch has been accused of causing abortions (removing or stealing unborn children) and of stealing children in general; of making men impotent (removing their semen or sexual potency); stealing milk from cows and thus drying them up; making wells go dry (removing the contents of a container). Popular belief accused witches of making rain (removing the contents of clouds). Witches were said to dry up the milk of nursing mothers, to cause wasting diseases (the victim loses weight), to make cattle and fruit trees sterile, and to steal souls (since the soul is popularly believed to exist inside the body, it is thought of as body contents). Thus too the witch was accused of drinking blood, like a vampire, and of eating (usually unbaptised) children, "for magic rather than . . ghoulish reasons."[48]

(We can now account for that belief so popular among those superstitions of the past and films of the present—the belief that the victim of a vampire becomes a vampire himself. The vampire, like the witch a supernatural being, is a hollow, empty being; when he drains his victim of his body contents, the victim then becomes himself a hollow, empty person—a vampire. And like the thing that drained him, he too will seek to replace his lost body contents by getting his own back or stealing others'.)

As any container may be emptied, it may also be filled; hence the witch is accused of the mirror-image equivalent of the above superstition. The witch was believed to place inside the stomachs of bewitched persons "an extraordinary selection of things," Tindall says, "from pins and needles and snails, puppy-tails and live frogs; and . . . cases [were reported] of 'bewitched' women giving birth to . . . kittens."[49]

Witches were thought to sell magical love potions to increase the buyer's sexual powers. "Love potions" are merely symbols of semen and sexual liquids and substances in general; naturally an increase in their amount would increase the buyer's sexual capacity.

Since poison, like food, is also part of the contents of the body (and often symbolizes them in dreams), the witch was accused of poisoning. Tindall states that "poisoning was a large part of the witch's activities, a common Continental name for her was 'venefica'—the poisoner."[50] We see here a telltale overlap between the witch who commits crimes with supernatural means and the criminal who commits crimes with ordinary means.

For the same reasons—the removing or gaining of body contents in real or symbolic form—other groups in history have been regarded as witches or accused of the same irrational charges. Midwives, for example, were often regarded as witches; de la Vega writes that, among the ancient Incas, "no one must help a woman in childbirth, and any who did would be regarded as a witch."[51]

Indeed, in many cases, Dr. Mary Chadwick points

> the village witch was also the village midwife . . . [she] gave medical advice . . . helped women in labor as well as causing a miscarriage of someone who had injured her . . . her duties comprised healing and the devising of cures, the diagnosis and relief of diseases of cattle and providing lovelorn maidens and youths with charms and potions to obtain affection . . .[52]

Witches were also said to have the power to make wounds heal rapidly, delay birth, and stop blood from flowing from a wound. This is another version of the superstition that the witch can empty bodies of their contents (that a corpse will bleed when the witch whose charms caused its death approaches it): the person who can empty a bottle can also stopper it up, can keep it from being drained.

Another variant is the belief that the witch can create zombies, the walking dead, and can animate a dead body and/or possess it with her own soul or personality. A witch is someone who is empty (or filled with someone else's body contents); a body with its contents (soul, blood, breath, etc.) removed is of course a dead body. To the unconscious mind, "dead" means "empty" (hence the popular description of an empty liquor bottle as a "dead soldier"). Once the witch fills up the dead body (the empty body) with new contents (a new soul), it becomes alive again, possessed by that new soul.

(We can now account for the superstition that the zombie can be cured by feeding him salt, or killed by shooting him with a salt bullet. Salt is another popular symbol for body contents, especially sexual contents. When the zombie, a person without body contents, gets or eats salt, a symbol of body contents, he ceases to lack body contents and therefore ceases to be a zombie.)

Witches were also believed to be able to change shape. They could become bats, in order to fly to Sabbat ceremonies, or cats or wolves. Parrinder states that witches

> were thought . . . to change into animal forms . . . usually into small animals which go about silently at night and were regarded as unlucky. The widespread belief in werewolves

and vampires which sucked human blood belongs to the sameclassofideas.[53]

We can now see why all the animals into which the witches changed were, significantly, those who swallowed body contents either symbolically or in actuality; "werewolf" and "vampire" are merely code words for witch, literally witches in another form. The bat swallows human blood; the wolf eats human children (the contents of female bodies); the cat was (then andeven now) widely believed tokill babies by sitting on their chests and sucking the breath (body contents) out of theirlungs.

The witch possesses many of the powers which legend and superstition attribute to other supernatural beings. Shedrinks blood, like a vampire; she can turn into a wolf, like the werewolf; or a bat, as the vampire does. Some legends hold that a witch, like a werewolf, can only be killed by a silver bullet (silver, like salt, is a symbol of body contents, of wealth, money, and hence feces; thus the witch, empty of body contents, can be killed in the same way as the zombie, by being filled with body contents in real or symbolic form and thereby ceasing to be empty—and a witch). Records of British witchcraft prosecutions credit her with possessing the power of the Evil Eye and "cast[ing] the evil eye on a field of wheat so thatit becameblighted."[54]

The similarity among all these various supernatural figures suggests strongly that they are only variations of one such figure—the witch. The others —vampire, werewolf, etc.—are created by stressing one or more of the witch's powers and ignoring or downplaying the others.

We can now define the witch as a person who is hollow and empty inside, and/or filled with the body contents of anotherperson, in realor symbolicform. All her acts and powers are consequences, variants, and results of that loss/gain-of-body-contents-in-real-or-symbolic-form (as are saints, priests, ministers of all religions; since a witch is someone whose magic spells—prayers—induce supernatural powers and beings—gods—to intervene against us, what is a saintor priest, etc., but a witchwhosemagicspells—prayers—induce supernatural powers and beings—gods—to intervene on our side? like "vampire," priest and saint, etc., are only other words for witch and warlock).

If this is true, we can account for some of the peculiar legal punishments and superstitionsinflicted on witches (as well as criminals in general) in the past. If the trouble is caused by a person who is hollow and empty inside, then the solution to the trouble is simple: fill 'er up. Hence, the so-called water torture used in the France of Louis XIV by Le ChambreArdente to deal withan outbreak of witchcraft and poisoning cases: "Vast amounts of water [were] poured through a funnel into the prisoner's throat, the accumulation in the stomach and intestinescausingexcruciating pain."[55]

If the trouble is thought to be caused by the mirror-opposite, a witch who has swallowed someone else's body contents, again the remedy is simple: remove the stolen body contents. Thus, "the bodies of convicted witches were always burnt," Tindall says, "even when they had been hanged first."[56] The purpose behind burning witches at the stake was not mere sadism; unconsciously, the real purpose was *dehydration*—that is, the removal of the (liquid) body contents. This is also oneof the foundations for the belief that the vampire cannot walk abroad in daylight, for that popular climactic scene of vampire films wherein the vampire, exposed to sunlight, ages and changes into a pile of dust. The fire of the sunlightdehydrateshim.

(The extremely rapid aging seen in the vampire exposed to sunlight is explicable in the same way. Loss of sexual capacity is believed to be a consequence of aging; hence the removal of sexual capacity—sexual liquids/body contents—induces aging, and the faster thosecontents are removed the faster the aging. This scene also contains other influences, such as photophobia and progeria, but there is not space hereto discussthese.)

This conforms with the conclusion of psychoanalyst Theodor Reik, thatthe punishment for crime is the (symbolic) repetition of the crime, on the body of the criminal, with a negative sign. Thus the penalty (and cure)for being empty is to be filled; and the penalty for swallowing body contents is to have them removed.

It should not be surprising that another group, whose members really do lose body contents, should be the object of the fear and revulsion felt for witches, and have exactly the same kind of superstitions arise about them as about witches. Menstruating women, Dr. Mary Chadwick states in *The Psychological Effects of Menstruation*, were believed in ancient times, and in primitive societies today, to have

> blighted crops, blasted gardens, killed seedlings, brought down fruit from trees...caused mares to miscarry Their presence in a boat was said to raise storms . . . A chance encounter with a menstruating woman will bring ill-luckor death to any man in war or any otherenterprise orthe lossof his virility.[57]

Dr. Chadwickconcluded thatthewitchof legend

> was to a great extent the menstruating woman, or that she belonged to thetype...mostlikely to be disturbed atsuch timesand who repeat in their dreams and fantasies during the monthly flux wishes or obsessions comparable to the actions and behavior of witches that brought so much discredit uponthem.[58]

Again, there is a connection with crime. Such women, Dr. Chadwick believes, are genuinely dangerous to others at such times, committing crimes triggered by chemical imbalance and the resulting emotional stress of the experience. Several statistical studies support her conclusions. Dr. Otto Pollack, in *The Criminality of Women,* provides a long list of them and concludes from his examination of them that:

> Thefts, particularly shoplifting, arson, homicide and resistance against public officials, seems to show a significant correlation between the menstruation of the offender and the time of the offense. The turmoil of the onset of menstruation and the puberty of girls appears to express itself in the relatively high frequency of false accusations and incendaries . . . The menopause finally seems to bring about a distinct increase in crime, especially in offenses . . . such as arson, breach of the peace, perjury . . .[59]

Note that all three occasions found by Pollack to cause an increase of crime—puberty, menstruation, menopause—among women are all examples of the actual loss/gain-of-body-contents-in-real-or-symbolic-form. If the theory presented in this article is correct, this is what we should expect to find.

Freud diagnosed the "witch" as a victim of the obsessional neurosis.

Taking Freud's definition as it is, and expanding Dr. Chadwick's to include male as well as female witches, and following our conclusion that witch equals criminal, we may now define crime as an obsessional neurosis and the criminal as a person unconsciously thought of as being hollow and empty inside or filled with the contents of someone else's body in real or symbolic form.

If this is true, we can account for the characterization of the criminal in fiction as having any, several, or all of the following telltale qualities: more than one age; more than one name, personality; and short of money or possessing someone else's wealth. If reader and writer unconsciously equate the criminal with the witch, the being who is empty of body contents and swallows other people's body contents (souls, etc.), then we can now see the basis for the unconscious belief that the criminal has double qualities: by swallowing someone else's soul (being, personality), he naturally acquires another's name, voice, identity, extra years of life and age, and, since money is a symbol of body contents, more money too. Since the criminal (witch) is unconsciously believed to be empty inside, he is also believed to be short of money. And since this loss/gain-of-body-contents naturally results in a loss/gain of weight, the weighing test and swimming test would apply to the criminal as well as to the witch, for the same reasons in both cases. The double qualities mean full, the money motive means empty.

We can thus account for the emotion of surprise created in certain kinds of detective stories by the climactic revelation of the criminal's identity: unconsciously, the reader already knew who he was, usually from his first appearance in the story.

If crime is an obsessional neurosis, then we can also explain several other puzzling factors about it, for instance, why the criminal always—

But that is another matter, and another article.

I have tried to cover the major categories of criminal description in this brief article, but several variations have been left out, for several reasons. All of them, however, seem to me to confirm the concept of the criminal as a person empty of body contents or filled with someone else's.

Some variants are left out because they so seldom occur; for example, the description of the murderess in Elspeth Huxley's *The African Poison Murders.* Overworked, underpaid, and unbalanced, Miss Anita Adams, governess and hired girl on a South African farm, commits two murders, including that of her employer, a brutal Nazi who starves and sexually abuses her, and tries to commit two more, including that of her employer's domineering wife, and also mutilates animals.

This is Superintendent Vachell's first view of her, in a farm shed:

> The governess was a tall, long-limbed girl with a thin, pale face and straight, mouse-colored hair badly cut and innocent of wave. She was not attractive, and her skin was an unhealthy color, but when she came into the sunlight Vachell saw she had interesting eyes . . . light blue, with unusually pale irises, and very restless. He thought that she looked hungry, and wondered how much Munson employees were given to eat.[60]

The killer is described as hungry—that is, she is hollow and empty inside.

The hunger is stressed and even related to witchcraft. When Vachell asks scientist Sir Jolyot Anstey what kind of person mutilates animals, Anstey diagnoses homicidal mania:

> "[s]omething that in the old days would have been put down as a form of sorcery or witchcraft . The abnormality perhaps has its origins in some condition of the ductless glands. A colleague of mine, for instance, once treated a patient who displayed the most inordinate and insatiable appetite. She would eat a whole shoulder of lamb at a sitting and still rise hungry from the table . . . in due course she was certified as insane."[61]

Vachell himself speculates that the governess's motive for murdering her employers is to gain possession of their two children, whom she deeply loves.

Again we see the criminal viewed as someone hungry, who has lost and deeply desires body contents—food, children, money.

For lack of space, two frequent characteristics of the criminal have not been discussed. One is a group of cases in which the character later revealed to be the criminal is first encountered as a voice on a mechanical device, such as a telephone, intercom, or tape recorder (as, for example, in Bill Pronzini's "Who's Calling?" in which an unbalanced woman poses as a man with a disguised voice to make threatening, obscene phone calls to the girl who has stolen her boy friend; Nero Wolfe's famous antagonist, Arnold Zeck, first appears as a cold and threatening voice on the phone; and so on).

Another, almost as frequent, characteristic is the appearance of the criminal who is carrying some object, something dead or inanimate (for example, in John Dickson Carr's *Till Death Do Us Part,* the criminal first appears carrying a golf bag, in which the murder weapon is concealed).

In Ian Fleming's novel *From Russia With Love*, Donovan "Red" Grant, a psychopathic professional murderer employed by the Russian Secret Service agency, SMERSH, is first seen with a book beside him, a copy of a popular novel by P. G. Wodehouse. Much later, we learn that the "book" is really a weapon, concealing inside it an electrically-operated pistol. Grant also looks younger than his real age, uses several names, and has an accent.

In Patrick Quentin's novel *Puzzle for Fiends*, the killer, who has murdered her father and brother for the family fortune, is first seen carrying a cocktail shaker filled with liquor. She also impersonates people and possesses a second, different voice.

The multiple murderer whom detective Hercule Poirot seeks in Agatha Christie's novel *Curtain* is first seen carrying a pair of field glasses with him, and is often seen with them throughout the story.

The most famous example of this, of course, is Coleridge's great poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," in which the hero kills the albatross, the friend of sailors, and for punishment is made to wear the dead albatross slung around his neck.

Those familiar with psychoanalytic symbolism will have no difficulty in seeing that these characteristics also symbolize the criminal as one possessing the body contents of another. There is not space in this already long article to present this theoretical background in convincing detail.

I should add that while the criminal always shows these empty/full characteristics, the reverse is not necessarily true. Sometimes a non-criminal character may show some of these characteristics.

Some especially clever uses in fiction of the double qualities of the criminal will be found in three novels in *The Shadow* magazine by Walter B. Gibson, writing as "Maxwell Grant"—"The Gray Ghost" (1 May 1936), "The Freak Show Murders" (May 1944 and in *The Shadow: A Quarter of Eight and the Freak Show Murders* as by Gibson, Doubleday, 1978), and "The Shadow Meets the Mask" (the first of three Shadow novels with this title, in the 15 August 1941 issue)—and, of course, in the famous *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson (1888).

Regarding the double age of the criminal, who so often appears much younger than his actual chronological age, there are, for some reason, almost no examples of the mirror-image equivalent and opposite. In fact, I could find only one, Mrs. Creedy, in Charles Merrill Smith's *Reverend Randolph and the Wages of Sin* (1974), a fanatically religious church housekeeper, compulsively neat and clean, overworked and deliberately underpaid by the church's Board of Directors, who murders a beautiful, talented choir singer whose "immoral" lifestyle reminds Mrs. Creedy of the woman who took Mrs. Creedy's missionary husband away from her years ago. Mrs. Creedy, who looks sixty-five, is actually forty-eight.

Note also the murderer's motive in Robert Bloch's famous, frequently-filmed short story, "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper" (*Weird Tales*, July 1943), supernatural horror presenting the Ripper, whose horrifying, mutilating murders were committed in the 1880s, as still alive in today's Chicago—and still young, for his murders were really ritual sacrifices to dark gods, regularly performed when the stars were right, gods who in return give the Ripper the gift of eternal youth: with each murder, the Ripper grows younger.

1. John Dickson Carr, *The Emperor's Snuff Box* (Berkley, 1969), p. 6
2. Maxwell Grant, "Death's Masquerade," *The Shadow* (January 15, 1943), pp. 27-28
3. [illegible]
4. Michael Allen, *Spence at the Blue Bazaar* (Dell, 1981) p. 28
5. *Ibid*, p. 9
6. Warwick Downing, *The Mountains South of Town* (Dutton, 1975), p. 59
7. [illegible]
8. Rex Stout, *The Red Box* (Pyramid, 1968), p. 34.
9. Ed McBain, *Give the Boys a Great Hand* (Permabooks, 1961), pp. 92-93
10. Karen Campbell, *Suddenly in the Air* (Stein & Day, 1969), p. 59.
11. Theodore Sturgeon, "The Half-Way Tree Murder," *The Saint Detective Magazine* (March 1956), p. 91
12. Andrew York, *The Eliminator* (Lippincott, 1966), pp. 51-52
13. Warren Murphy, *Fool's Flight* (PocketBooks, 1982), p. 24
14. *Ibid*, p. 25.
15. *Ibid*, p. 124
16. *Ibid*, p. 185
17. Richard Forrest, *The Wizard of Death* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1977), p. 158
18. *Ibid*
19. *Ibid*, p. 42

20 Edward D. Hoch, "The Problem of the Tin Goose," *Ellery Queen'sMysteryMagazine* (December 1982), p. 139

21 Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon* (Pocket Books, 1944), pp. 1-2

22 *Ibid*, p. 36

23 LionelBooker,"The DubbingClue," *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* (May20, 1981), p. 24.

24 *Ibid*, p. 30

25 ElspethHuxley, *Murder onSafari* (Harper, 1982), p. 1.

26 *Ibid*, pp.7-8

27 Roald Dahl, "Lamb To the Slaughter," *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* (April 1956), p. 81

28 Maxwell Grant, (TheodoreTinsley), "TheFifth Napoleon," *TheShadow* (1 February 1938), p. 16

30 Robert Bloch, "Sock Finish," in *Show Business Is Murder* edited by Carol-Lynn Rossel Waugh, MartinHarry Greenberg, and IsaacAsimov (Avon,1983),pp. 38-39.

34 Agatha Christie, *Hallowe'en Party* (Pocket Books, 1976), p. 76

35. *Ibid*, p. 2

36 S. S. Van Dine, *The Kidnap Murder Case* (P. F. Collier, n.d.), p. 20.

37. *Ibid*, p. 298

38 Kenneth Robeson, *The Smiling Dogs* (Paperback Library, 1973), p. 18.

39 Ellery Queen, "TheAdventure of the Seven Black Cats," in *The Adventures of Ellery Queen* (Pocket Books, 1943), p. 259.

40 Erle Stanley Gardner, "Blood-Red Gold," in *Whispering Sands* (WilliamMorrow, 1981), p. 170

41 Emma Lathen, *Going for the Gold* (Pocket Books, 1982), p. 26

42. *Ibid*, p. 251

43. Henry Charles Lea, *Materials Toward a History of Witchcraft*, (ThomasYoseloff, 1957), Vol. II, p. 893.

44. Gillian Tindall, *A Handbook on Witches* (Panther, 1967), p. 139

45. GeoffreyParrinder, *Witchcraft* (Penguin, 1958), p. 81

46 Tindall, p. 139.

47 *Ibid*,pp.48-49.

48 Parrinder, p. 106

49. *Ibid*, pp. 132-33

50 Tindall, p. 106

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52 Mary Chadwick, *The Psychological Effects of Menstruation* (Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1932), pp.22-23

53 Parrinder, p. 44

54 Chadwick, p. 20

55 Frances Mossiker, *TheAffair of thePoisons* (Knopf, 1969), p. 146.

56. Tindall,pp. 48-49

57. Chadwick, p. 21

58. *Ibid*, p. 11

59 Otto Pollock, *The Criminality of Women* (University of PennsylvaniaPress, 1950), p. 158.

60. Elspeth Huxley, *The African Poison Murders* (Harper 1981), p. 25.

62. Ellery Queen (attributed to Jack Vance) *The Four Johns* (Pocket Books, 1964), pp. 13-14.

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Dr. Crippen & the Real Inspector Dew

By Peter Lovesey

This is about a case of murder. A real murder. One of the classic English murders. And the strangething is that the murderer and his victim were Americans.

Dr. Crippen. In England, his name is a byword for homicide, like Sweeney Todd or Jack the Ripper. He has pride of place in the Chamber of Horrors in Madame Tussaud's waxwork museum in London. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, Dr. Crippen is not withouthonor, except, I havediscovered, in his own country.

In my small way, I would like to remedy the deficiency. It's the least I can do for the gentleman. He was the inspiration for *The False Inspector Dew,* a mystery novel which has had more success thananything else I havewritten.

Peter Lovesey's most recent novel is KEYSTONE. *This article was originally presented as a talk at Mohonk in March 1984.*

Hawley Harvey Crippen was born in Coldwater, Michigan. His wife was also an American, from New York City. Brooklyn, in fact. Her name was Kunigunde Mackamotzki, also known as Cora, also known as Belle Elmore. Blonde, brown eyes, rather on the blowsy side, but very energetic. Dr. Crippen murdered her in 1910.

He was a doctor with a degree in homeopathic medicine from the University of Michigan. Their first meeting was in 1892, when Belle swept into his surgery in Brooklyn. Shewas nineteen, pretty, full of bounce. Belle told the doctor candidly.that she had met a married man called Lincoln. Lincoln had fixed some singing lessons for her, becauseshe planned to be an opera singer. I don't know whether Lincoln reallyadmired hervoice, but he sure admired the rest ofher, and that waswhy she needed to see a doctor.

Doctor Crippen was thirty and a widower. His first wife had died the previous January—from natural causes. Exactly what it was about him that appealed to women has fascinated everyone who has studied the case. He was short—5 foot 3—and quietly spoken, with receding hair and a wispy moustache. Possibly it was his status as a doctor that made him attractive to Belle. Perhaps it was the sympathetic treatment. Whatever it was, she persuaded Crippen to pick up the checks for the singing lessons, and in twomonths they weremarried.

The first years of their life together were tough. It was the period of Grover Cleveland's secondadministration, when there was deep economic depression, widescale unemployment, with millions on the breadline and twenty thousand sleeping rough in New York City. Plenty of work for a doctor, you would think, but not much use if nobody paid his bills Pretty soon, Belle had to drop the singing lessons.

She also needed a major operation. This may have resulted from the previous episode, some inexpert doctoring by Crippen, who was no gynecologist. He had qualified as an ear, nose and throat man. Anyway, Belle (and this has significance later) went into the hospital and had her ovariesremoved.

WhenBellecame out of hospital, she had newsfor Crippen. She still wanted to be a *prima donna* at the Metropolitan. If Crippen couldn't afford to pay for her lessons, he must go where the money was, and that wasinto patentmedicines.

You know the racket—exploiting people's real or imagined health problems throughheavy advertising ofwondercures,usuallybasedon narcotics, alcohol, or colored water. At this time, it was a 75-million-dollar-a-year industry. Send your troublesome child to sleep with Grandma's Secret; get rid of colds and catarrh withPerunaJag, also efficaciousfor restoring vigor to married gentlemen.

Dr. Crippen went to work for one of the top manufacturers of patent medicine in America,

Professor Munyon. Munyon's amazing pile cure apparently brought relief to millions who suffered from amazing piles.

Well, Crippen worked hard in his office on East 14th Street, and Professor Munyon took a liking to the little doctor. He said Crippen was "one of the most intelligent men I ever knew." The following year, he madehim manager of the Philadelphiaoffice and paid him handsomely. Belle now had lessons fromthe finest teachers of Bel Canto, and fur wraps, and real diamond brooches.

When Munyon opened a new office in Toronto, he asked Crippen to set it on its feet. It was to be for six months, and Belle decided to remain behind in Philadelphia. It was a pity that Crippen agreed. As Professor Munyon delicately put it, "Mrs. Crippen was a giddy woman who worried her husband a good deal. He had reason to be jealous of her."

Crippen came back from Toronto to all kinds of rumors about his wife and other men. Belle was unrepentant. She said she was moving to New York, to be nearer to the operacompany. In fact, she had been told by her singing teachers that she would never make an opera singer; she had the shape of a Brunnhilde, but not the voice. In Manhattan, she decided toseek a newcareer as a singer in vaudeville. As she explained to Crippen when he visited her, this meantdecking herself in diamonds and furs to make herself attractive to the managers andtalent scouts.

Maybe Professor Munyon took pity on his bright little manager. Anyway, he sent the Crippens to England, to open a new branch of the company in London, on a salary of ten thousand dollars, pretty good money in 1897.

Dr. Crippen was worth it. He discovered a whole new population preoccupied with piles. Unhappily, his married life was not so promising. Belle was making her own discoveries in London, and one of them was an ex-boxer from Chicago called Bruce Miller. He was helping her to break into the English music hall.

If you can't beat them, join them. Crippenstarted to take an interest in the music hall. He hired a theatre for Belleto appear in her own mini-operetta. To pull in an audience, she announced that in the performance she would scatter a wad of bank-notes intothe auditorium. It almostcaused a riot.

Buttherewas worse. Professor Munyonheardthat Crippen was dabbling in the theatre. This was the worst kind of publicity. You couldn't have Munyon's medicines mixed up with the entertainment business. He recalled Crippen to America and told him he was fired. The good times were over.

Crippen returned to England, where Belle was still deceiving herself into thinking she was an up-and-coming star of the music halls. By offering her charms around, she did get a few chances, but as a performer in the *theatrical* sense,she flopped.

Crippen took a new job with the Drouet Institute, selling a cure for deafness. Actually, it was just anotherquack medicineracket. The curefor deafness consisted of a mysterious plaster that the patient stuck behind his ear. But there was something else about the Institute: a certain shorthand typist who worked there.

Her name was Ethel Le Neve. Well, really it was just Ethel Neave. She added the extra syllable to make it sound more romantic. Like most other girls of seventeen, Ethel had a strong sense of romance. She had large, gray-blue eyes, long, dark hair, and full, rather sensuous lips. She alsohad a crush on Dr. Crippen. He was a married man of 41, but that didn't stop her dreaming. And we have their word that for sevenyears it was nothing more than a dream.

Meanwhile the Crippens moved into a three-story house in Hilldrop Crescent, in Holloway, North London, an area that had come down in the world, but so had they. Still, Belle soon found some congenial companions in a social club called the Music Hall Ladies' Guild. They gathered once a week forteaand conversation aboutthe varietystage. As a member who had actually trodden the boards, Belle was quite a celebrity.

She was happy. She had the interior of the house redecorated in her favorite color of pink. Even the pictures had pink ribbons attached to them. She had her own pink bedroom. Her little pink husband brought her breakfast there each morning because she rarely moved before mid-day. If she wanted him for any other reason—lovers had been in short supplysince BruceMillerhadgonebackto Chicago—she found him ready to co-operate. She knew about his silly typist, and she was sure it would never come to anything, because hewas such a decentlittleman.

And he was. True, he and Ethel sometimes had lunch together, went for walks, shared confidences, but they remainedchaste. When the Drouet Institute wentbust, Ethel stayed with him as his secretary. She encouraged him to go into a new line of work—dentistry—as the Yale Tooth Specialists. As an astonishing example of trust—the kind of wild, romantic gesture which no writer would dare to invent—she invited him to pull her own teeth as a cure for neuralgia. He extracted twenty-one at one sitting without anesthetic, and she swore that it was painless.

Belle needed moremoney to keep up appearances, so the Crippens decided to take some lodgers. Three German students were soon installed. There were merry evenings in the parlor, like scenes from *The Student Prince,* with Belle at the piano, while the lodgers waved their beer mugs and sang drinking songs. And Crippen? He usually went to bedearly. It was his job to be up at 6 A.M. and lay the fires and

cleanthe lodgers'shoes andtakethemall breakfast in bed. Until one morning in 1906, when he found one of the German lodgers in bed with Belle. He closed thedoorandleft them.

It was the last straw. From that time, Crippen decided heneed no longer respect the marriagevows. He and Ethel Le Neve became lovers. They invented a private ceremony of marriage. He called her "wifie"; he was her "hub." They didn't hide their relationshipfrom Belle. As Crippen wrote at the end of his life, "About my unhappy relations with Belle Elmore, I will say nothing. We drifted apart in sympathy; she had her own friends and pleasures, and I was a rather lonely man and rather miserable. Then I obtained the affection and sympathy of Miss Ethel Le Neve. I confess that according to the moral lawsof Church and Statewe wereguilty and I do not defendour position inthat respect. But what I do say is that our love was not of a debased and degraded character. It was, if I may say so to peoplewho will not, perhaps, understand orbelieve, a good love."

And for several years, the Crippens lived in a sort of harmony. Belle amused herself with the Music Hall Ladies' Guild—and the occasional gentlemen—while Crippen and his Ethel played hub and wifie in various hotel rooms.

Then, in 1909, something happened that destroyed the equilibrium. Ethel found that she was pregnant. She talked to Crippen. They agreed that she should go ahead and bear the child. You see, they really believed inthis secret marriage of theirs. It wasmore real, more pure, than Crippen's marriage to Belle, whom they believed had forfeited the right to be his wife.

You can imagine the effect on Belle. She was outraged. Imagine the gossip there would be at the Music Hall Ladies' Guild. But it went deeper than that, because Belle's operation several years earlier meant that she was incapable of having a child herself. Andanotherthing. It was againsther religion to give Crippen a divorce. She was a practicing Catholic and went to Mass every Sunday, though it's fair to say thatshe regarded the Seventh Commandment as a deadletter.

As it happened, Ethel miscarried. It was not an abortion. We have their word for that. But it changedeverything. Ethel wentintoadeep depression. Her landlady remembered her shutting herself in her room and weeping for days on end. Dr. Crippen's business went from bad to worse. He asked Belle to help by selling some of her jewels. She refused, point blank. She told him to sack Ethel, and save the money that way.

On January 17, 1910, Crippen bought some poison: seven grains of a little-known poison called hyoscine. He made no secret of it. He went to his usual druggist in Oxford Street, where he bought chemicals to make up the patent medicines he sold. Hyoscine was a new item on the order. They had to send away for it.

So we come to the crucial evening of January 31, 1910. The Crippens are entertaining some old friends, the Martinettis. After supper, they play whist. The Martinettis leave at 1:30 A. M. Belle stands at the door, waving. Mrs. Martinetti calls out, "Don't standoutside, Belle. You'llcatchyourdeath."

Two days after, the Music Hall Ladies' Guild receive a letter, in Crippen's handwriting but apparently dictated by Belle, who is resigning from the committee. "I have just had news of the illness of a near relative and at only a few hours' notice I am obliged to go to America."

The same afternoon, Crippen takes some of Belle's jewelry to a pawnbroker's and obtains £80 for it. That night, Ethel Le Neve joins Crippen at the house in Hilldrop Crescent.

Dr. Crippen must surely go down as the world's most incompetent murderer, going from blunder to blunder like Charlie Chaplin in a Keystone comedy. That's one ofthe reasons why I like him. On February 20, there is a charity ball, a gala night for the Music Hall ladies. Two tickets arrive for the Crippens. Whatdoes he do? He turns up at the ballwith Ethel on his arm, she wearing one of Belle's diamond brooches.

Tongues are waggingfaster thanthe band-leader's baton. Who's that woman? Is that Belle's broochshe is wearing? It's not like Belle to give her jewelry away. "Dr. Crippen, whatever happened to Belle?" "Shehad to go to America, on legal business." "Have you got her address?" "No, she is somewhere in California, in the mountains. When she is settled, I'll let you know."

Early in March, a furniture van pulls up at 39 Hilldrop Crescent and takes away five large cardboard boxes containing Belle's clothes. On March 12, Ethel movesin permanently.

On March 15, Crippentells the Martinettis he has heard from one of his family in America. "I can't make it out. They say Belle is very ill. Something the matter with one of her lungs. At the same time I got a letterfrom Belle saying not to worry."

March 21. The news is worse. A cable to say she is dangerously ill with double pneumonia. The Music Hall Ladies ask for Belle'saddress. "It's nouse," says Crippen. "Any time now, a cable will come to say she isgone. If anything happens, I'mgoingto Francefor a week to getoverit "

March 24. Mrs. Martinetti receives a telegram from Crippen. "Belle died yesterday at 6 o'clock. Shall be away a week." By this time, Crippen and Ethel are on theboat to Dieppe. There is a theory—and it's only a theory—that they were carrying a bag which they dropped over the side. It was said to contain Belle

Elmore's head

Meanwhile, the Music Hall Ladies are doing some detective work, talking to Crippen's neighbors, checking the passenger lists for America, writing to their contacts in America asking them to check on Belle's death. Finally, one of themgoes to Scotland Yard and tells her suspicions to Inspector Walter Dew

Inspector Dew. Oh, no. Anyone but Dew. As a detective, he was not much better than Peter Sellers as Inspector Clouseau. If you think Inspector Card of Scotland Yard isn't up to much as a detective, you should hear about Inspector Drew. On his very first job as a policeman, 22 years earlier, he caused a panic in London when a man threw a brick at him. He took out his truncheon and chased the man through the streets. People got the idea he was chasing Jack the Ripper and took up the chase. Hundreds of East Enders joined in. Finally, Dew had to callthe police to rescue the man

We're back in 1910. Inspector Dew points to the filing cabinet behind him. "You see that? It's chockful of reports of missing persons, most of them married people. When a man's wife walks out, you can't blame him covering up. I should forget about this, my dear."

Threemonthsgo by. Crippen andEthel are backin Hilldrop Crescent. TheMusic Hall Ladies' Guildare still working away. No one in California has any record of Belle's death. Each time they speak to Crippen, he contradicts himself. Soback to Scotland Yard, to see Dew'sboss, the Superintendant.

Dew is sent to interview Crippen, and these two great men confront each other, the world's most incompetent murderer and the world's most inept detective. Theinterviewtakes place in the surgery. At intervals, Crippen goes out to pull a patient's tooth. Pity the patient; what a day to visit the dentist! Between extractions, Crippen talks to Dew. He wants tomake a cleanbreast of it. He hasbeen telling lies to the Music Hall Ladies. Belle is not dead at all. She has left him for another man. She has gone to Chicago to find her lover, theboxer, Bruce Miller.

Dew is happy with the explanation. He likes the little doctor. They get on so well that they go out to lunch together, at the local Italian restaurant. Over a steak lunch, Dew helps Crippen to draftan advertfor the Chicago papers appealing to Belle to comehome. That afternoon, they go back to Hilldrop Crescent, and Crippen invites his new friend to have a look round. Nothing suspicious is found, so Dew takes a statement and leaves.

There the case should have ended. Dew wrote later, "If Crippen had stood his ground and continued to live quietly at Hilldrop Crescent, maybe the mystery would neverhavebeen solved." But Crippen wasn't leaving it to chance. That weekend, he and Ethel took off. Ethel cut off her hair and dressed as a boy. They became Mr. Robinson and son. They crossed the sea to Rotterdam and booked a passage on the S.S. *Montrose,* boundfor Toronto one week later.

On Monday, Inspector Dew went back to the surgery to check someminor detail in the statement and found Crippen absent. He went to the house, and got no answer. Suspicionarousedat last, he went inside and made a search. He found nothing of importance. He brought in somemen and dug up the garden. Stillnothing. Afterthree days, he was about to give up. He took one last look at the coal cellar He picked up a poker and worked at a loose brick in the floor. It came up. He prised out some more. Some time later, he came up from the cellar and pouredhimself a largeglassof Dr. Crippen's brandy. He had found what was left of Belle Elmore

Therewasn't much. Not a single bone. Just a large pieceof flesh wrapped in a man'spyjama jacket. And a hair curler with a tuft of hair, six inches long, brown at the rootsand bleached blonde. On analysis, the remains were found to contain traces of poison. Hyoscine.

One week later, the S. S. *Montrose* set sail for Canada. By then the papers were full of what was known as the "cellar murder." The captain of the Montrose fancied himself as an amateur detective, and he liked to lookout for cardsharps. On thefirst day out, he noticed Mr. Robinson and son. "They were squeezing hands immoderately," said Captain Kendall, "and I suspected them at once." Of what he suspected them, he didnot say.

He invited them to lunch at his table. Young Master Robinson tried to speak in a low voice, but it got progressively higher as the meal went on. His clothesdidn't seem to fit. As for his father, he looked as if he was used to wearing glasses and had lately discarded them. After lunch, the Captain opened a paper andcheckedthe press picturesof Crippenand Ethel. With a piece of chalk he whited out Crippen's glasses and moustache, and shortened Ethel's hair. Then he sent the radio message that made the *Montrose* the most famous shipafloat: HAVE STRONG SUSPICIONS THAT CRIPPEN LONDON CELLAR MURDERER AND ACCOMPLICE ARE AMONG SALOON PASSENGERS. MOUSTACHE TAKEN OFF, GROWING BEARD. ACCOMPLICE DRESSED AS BOY. VOICE, MANNER AND BUILD UNDOUBTEDLY A GIRL. BOTH TRAVELLING AS MR. AND [illegible]

As well as being a smart observer, Captain Kendall was a smart businessman. Within hours, he had a contract to send regular radio messages to a newspaper syndicate.

Let us spare a little sympathy forDr. Crippenand his Ethel aboard the *Montrose* for nine days, trying tokeep up the pretensethat they werefatherandson,

while Captain Kendall and his crew and everyone else in the world who had seen a newspaper knew exactly who they were. Captain Kendall's dispatches missed nothing. ETHEL'S TROUSERS ARE VERY TIGHT ABOUT THE HIPS AND SPLIT A BIT DOWN THE BACK AND SECURED WITHLARGESAFETYPINS.

As a newspaper story, it was a terrific cliff-hanger. Inspector Dew got aboard a faster ship and raced the *Montrose* across the ocean. As they steamed toward the St. Lawrence, he sent a message that he planned to come aboard at Father Point, just off Quebec. He added, PLEASE KEEP THIS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Captain Kendall replied, WHAT THE DEVIL DO YOU THINK I HAVEBEEN DOING?

Even when the great moment of confrontation arrived, Dew turned it into an anticlimax by saying politely, "Good morning, Dr. Crippen." Crippen just stared back. Hecouldn'tseewithout his glasses.

It was not one of the great murder trials. The evidence was stacked too heavily for that, and Crippen was defended by a poor attorney who was no match for the prosecution. The line of defense was unbelievably naïve: that Crippen had no idea how the human remains had got into his cellar, or whose they were. The great forensic pathologist, BernardSpilsbury, answered the question by passing a dinner-plate around the court. On it was Belle's operation scar. They had also traced the shop where Crippen had bought the pyjama jacket. Before he was cross-examined, his fate was sealed. But the way he stood up to a devastating three-hour cross-examination impressed everyone in court. The *Daily Mail* reported, "He gave a marvellous exhibition of nerve-power underthestrain of a terribleordeal."

He was found guilty and sentenced to death. The greatadvocate of the day, Sir Edward Marshall Hall, had wanted to defend Crippen, and believed he was innocent. If Crippen had agreed to his defense, he was certain he could have won an acquittal. The defense would have been quite simple. They would have admitted everything, the hyoscine, the dismemberment of the body, the burial in the cellar. Everything except the intent to murder. You see, hyoscine could be used as a sexual depressant, an anti-aphrodisiac. The defense would have been that Crippen, repelled by Belle's sexual demands, dosed her with hyoscine to cool her passion. But when Marshall Hall put it to Crippen, he refused to agree. He was afraid that,if it failed, it would incriminate Ethel. And Ethel was still foremost in his thoughts.

Four days after, she was put on trial accused of being an accessory after the fact of murder. In his statements to the police and at the trial, Crippen had given not one jot of evidence to help the case against her. She was acquitted without even going into the witness-box, although the circumstantial evidence against her was formidable. After the trial, the Lord Chief Justice asked Ethel's defense lawyer, "Why didn't you put her into the box?" Her lawyer replied, "My Lord, I knew what she would say."

In the days before his execution, Crippen wrote a series of beautiful love letters to Ethel. To the last, he protested his innocence, and many believed him. A petition of 15,000 signatures was collected. And for the only time in Britishcriminalhistory,the governor of the prison went to the Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, and pleaded for the condemned man to be spared. It was not to be. He was hanged on November 23, 1910. The great American crime writer, Raymond Chandler, wrote later, "You can't help liking this guy somehow. He was one murderer whodied like a gentleman."

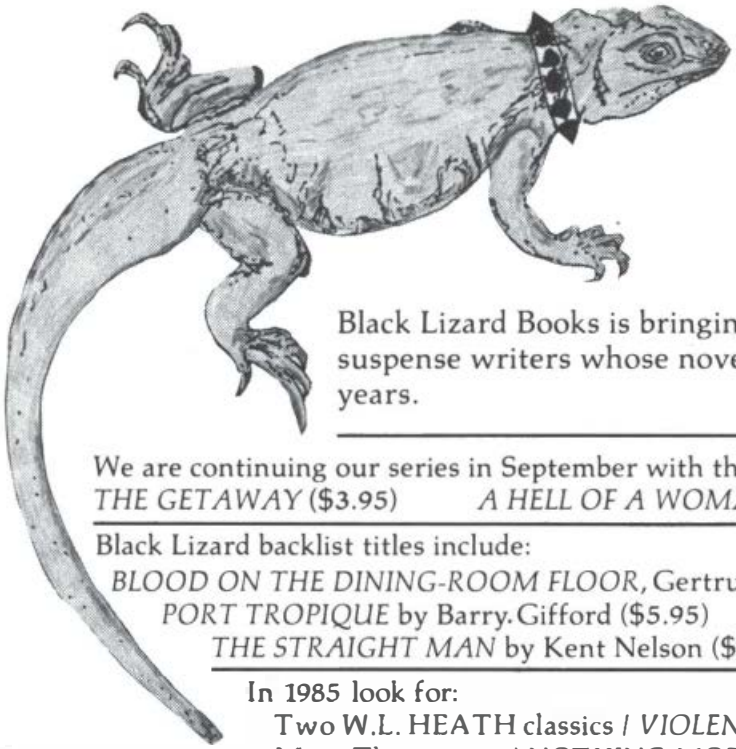
And what of Ethel Le Neve? On the day of the execution, she left England for Canada, but after two years she returned with a new identity and lived in obscurity until 1954, when she was traced by the writer Ursula Bloom. Ethel was then 71 and married, with a son and a daughter, but the meeting was just with Ethel. They talked about her lifesince 1910, and then, as Miss Bloom records it:

> Myeyesaskedthe question I could not put into words. "My husband doesn't know," she whispered. Neither did her son or the daughter. I asked her if Crippen could come back again, would she marry him now. Her eyes almost pierced me. "Yes, I would,"shesaid

And Inspector Dew? He resigned from the police on the day Crippen's appeal was turned down. At 48, he was young for retirement, but nobody at Scotland Yardasked him to change his mind.

Let's give the last word to the real villain and the real hero of this story:

> In this farewellletter tothe world,written as I face eternity, I say that Ethel Le Nevehas loved me as few women love men, and that her innocence of any crime, save that of yielding to the dictates of theheart,is absolute.
>
> We were as man and wife together, with an absolute communion of spirit. Perhaps God will pardon us because we were like two children in the great unkind world, who clungtoone another andgaveeachother courage.
>
> I myself have endeavoured to be courageous, yet there have beentimesduringher visits to me when an agony of intense longing has taken possession of me, when my very soulhas cried out to claspherhandand speakthosethings which are sacred between a man and woman who have loved. Alas! We have beendivided bythe iron discipline of prison rules, and warders have been the witnesses of our grief.
>
> Why do I tell these things to the world? Not to gain anything for myself—not even compassion. But because I desire the world to have pity on a woman who, however weak she may have seemed in their eyes, has been loyal in the midst of misery, and to the very end of tragedy, and whoselovehas been self-sacrificingand strong.
>
> These are my last words. I belong no more to the world.
>
> In the silence of my cell I pray that God may pity all weak hearts,allthe poorchildren oflife, and His poorservant,
>
> H. H. CRIPPEN



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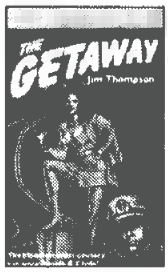

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THE MYSTERY NOVEL AS SERIOUS BUSINESS

by Joseph Hansen

The point of fiction is to give the reader for a few hours the chance to be somebody else, to broaden and deepen his understanding of himself and the strangers among whom he has to pass his days. The best novels do this now as they have always done it. It is a noble thing.

I maintain that there is no reason in the world why detective fiction cannot be as honest as any other kind. There is every reason to believe that its very nature almost forces seriousness upon it. It deals, after all, with that most solemn of the facts of [illegible]

Yeats said that there are only two subjects worth writing about, sex and the dead. I suspect he meant that these are the two ineluctable mysteries of life—and it is the function of honest writers to ask questions. Not to offer answers.

Philosophers, theologians, mathematicians, other breeds of men look for answers. Writers know better. In a weak moment—she was dying, after all—Gertrude Stein asked, "What is the answer?" But she

recovered herself quickly. She was a writer to the last gasp. Her final beautiful sentence in this life was, "Very well,then—what is the question?"

When I say that the mystery novel is, or ought to be, serious business, when I say that it ought to look straight at the real world around us, when I insist that it concern itself with real problems that face real people, I don't mean that it ought to shape up neat formulae for solving those problems. The task of the fiction writer is to be a faithful observer and reporter ofthings astheyare.

It struck me as a youngster that a good many people put out a good deal of energy every day of theirlives making believe that lifewas different from the way it really was. When I got to readingheavily, duringsnowbound wintersin Minnesota, I discovered that a good many writers, as well, faked, and colored up, and dodged thetruth.

From the age of nine, I knew I was going to be a writer. And I knew that I was going to try to be dead honest about people and what they said and did. Long before I could write well enough to be published, I recognized a truth that has grown in importance to me over the years—as a writer and as an ordinary,everyday man.

That truth is that what people say doesn't amount to much, that what you want to keep your eye on is what people do. This is partlythe explanation of why my books are so filled with action. This isn't so only of my mystery novels, where it passes unnoticed. Afterall, so-called "sensational"literatureissupposed to be filled with action. In most such writing, action replaces—no: it displaces—thought. But even in my mainstream novels and stories, the doing outweighs the saying. Because in life, doing is what makes all the difference.

Naturally, action in itselfdoesn't qualify writingas good. Bugs Bunny, Spider Man, Mickey Spillane are all action. Honesty is required, the dedication to look open-eyed at the way things happen, the way people act, and give a straightforward account of them. Then something gets written that is worth someone else's time to read.

In the murder mystery, it is almostalwaystruethat someone has been driven to an extreme. Most of us are spared this in our lives. We go from cradle to grave without ever murdering anyone—though we may have thought we wanted to more than once. But murderdoes happen. Everyday. Several times a day, in Los Angeles alone.

And it is never a polite parlor game—Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers and Michael Innes to the contrary notwithstanding. Nor is it ever a comic romp—Craig Rice, Nick Charles, and Elliot Paul to the contrary notwithstanding. It is a grave and agonizing business. It is also often sordid, squalid, and more often than not—to steal Hanna Arendt's definition of evil—banal. But it is always serious business.

Tone is terribly important to any piece of writing, and the natural tone for dealing with such solemnities as suddendeath has no businessbeing lightsome. Ofcourse, as we all know, laughter canintrude in the darkestsituations, theplay of wit is what separates us from the other animals. And surely irony, that most adult of answers to the lives of quiet desperation most of us live, belongs in anystory of murder.Irony is the overwhelming element in one of the best such books of our time, George V. Higgins's *The Friends of Eddy Coyle*.

And with this inescapable setting of tone by that darkest of all deeds, murder, it follows that the writer of a mystery has an unparalleled chance to include in his novel other matters of powerful and troubling aspect. Of course, what he chooses must connect in some way to the murder that is the reason for his book. But this is a demand any good journeyman plot-buildercanmanage.

I have come around again, here, it seems, to this matter of the opportunity—and in my view the responsibility—which the writer of mysteries has to deal with important and meaningful aspects of contemporary life, and now I'll talk about how I have gone at this myself in my own books, by way of illustration.

I wrotethefirst DaveBrandstetter mystery in 1967, but it wasn't published until 1970, and the reason for this was that it dealt with homosexuality. Now, novels, even some good ones, like *Two Men* by Donald Windham, that had dealt honestly and without sensationalism with this subject had been published, it is true.

But not mysteries. George Baxt had published *A Queer Kind of Death* in 1966. It featured a New York City Police Department detective named Pharaoh Love, who was not only black but homosexual. So, you see, Dave Brandstetter was not the first However—Pharaoh Love is far from being a hero. He falls in love with the murderer in the novel and covers up the youngman'sguilt. Worse than this, he later on murders theyoung man to cover up his own dereliction. And he also disappears from George Baxt's books forever.

Pharaoh Love, therefore, did nothing to clear away the general misunderstanding of homosexuals promoted through a long, long series of miserable characters in the novels of dozens of mysterywriters, from Dorothy Sayers to Raymond Chandler and backward, and onward. Where there was any sympathy evinced toward homosexuals in mysteries, it almost invariably took the form of pity or mildly sneering amusement, as in the ballet-dancer types of NgaioMarsh.

In Dave Brandstetter, I hope you know, I set out to

write about a decent, upright, caring kind of man, though a man without illusions, a tough-minded veteran insurance investigator who was, as *The New Yorker* remarked, "thoroughly and contentedly homosexual." It took a while for establishment publishers in New York to getovertheir shock at this approach.

Nor was I content with one shock. I laced the book with contradictions of accepted ideas about homosexuals—Dave, for example, has had a faithful and lastingrelationship with an interiordecoratornamed Rod Fleming for over twenty years, a relationship only lately ended through Rod's death from cancer. At the same time, Dave's father, Carl Brandstetter, has had nine marriages and eight divorces. As Dave remarks in a later book, "Divorce has become the great American pastime."

The common stereotype is, of course, that homosexuals cannot maintain close relationships. Nonsense. Another witch's tale is that homosexuals spend half their days in pursuit of young males with seduction in mind. Truth to tell, where seduction enters the picture, it is ordinarily the other way around. This I pictured in the relationship between Dave and a young Latino boy, Anselmo. In a later Brandstetter novel, it is young Cecil Harris who invades Dave's bed.

1970 was a longtimeago, and I don'trememberall the other common misconceptions about homosexuality I set out to stand on their heads in *Fadeout*. I have gone steadily on with my portrayals of homosexuals, good, bad, weak, strong, in all of my mysteries. It is a side of life I know something about and can speak of with authority, and my work was cut out for me. Not as a propagandist. As an honest reporter.

But homosexuality has been far from my only concern. I feel fine about the fact that Dave's homosexuality and that of other characters gets less and less mention in the media as the years roll on and more books appear. It says to me that at last I have gotten readers to accept that homosexuality is simply anotherthread in thebroad fabric of the lifearound us, and that homosexuals are, after all, no betterand no worse than anybody else. This may not seem big news, but, out there in the greatworld, homosexuality is still alarming and repulsive to a good many millionsof honest citizens.

Enough of that. If the subject bores you, you can imagine after all those books what it does to me. As I started to say, I have cocnerned myself with other matters than this. In *Death Claims*, I dealt with a problem medicine and society at the time did very little about—how drug addiction often begins in hospitals, wheremorphine and other drugsare given forpain, and how thiscan destroy a man.

In the same novel, I went into the matter of catastrophicillness andwhat it can do to the solvency of a family. In this case, the need for large sums of money turns an honestscholarto forgery. I alsodealt with how the collapse of an industry, cutting a skilled artisan adrift with no place to work, can push him overtheedgeinto crime.

It may be interesting to you to know where some of these characters and situations came from. Take John Oats. I based him on a one-time neighbor of mine who had an accident with gasoline in his garage that burned him terribly. In the hospital, he was given morphine for pain. When he came out of the hospital, he still craved the drug, and he was soon arrestedtrying to steal drugs at three in the morning from the neighborhood pharmacy.

As to that skilled artisan—he had become in his days of prosperity an avid collector of fine bindings and rare books. When the motion picture studios collapsed with the onslaught of television, he no longer could find work for his specialized skills. But he also couldn't stop collecting books. At first, he charged them, and failed to pay the bills. Later, he paid forthem with checks that bounced. And at last, hesimplystole them—and, of coursewascaught.

Sometimes a writer is lucky enough to run across stories like these from real life. At other times, situations arise which suggest characters, demand characters. There are all sorts of ways into novels. But we'll go into that later. For the present, on with the serious matters I have tried to deal with in the form of the mystery novel, which is still too often dismissed as at bestan amiable waste of time.

The man who gives the title to the novel *Troublemaker* is a crooked, down-homey lawyer who preys on young women trying to collect child-support payments from deliquent husbands. In case you haven'tbeenreadingyour newspaperlately, men who fail to pay child support, who run away from it—their name is legion. And the hardships they create could furnish out the plots for a hundred serious novels.

The hardest hit are often children. The hardest hit in our society by any number of small and large adversities—particularlyhumanand socialcallousness—are children. It is getting worseratherthan better. For a while there, the federal government was the only entity which seemed to give much of a damn about them—and now even that resource has dried up. They are stuck with their parents. And God help them.

The matter of parents and children occupies a lot of space in my books. In *The Man Everybody Was Afraid Of*, the title character is an autocratic police chief in a small town who, in the name of law and order, patriotism, and other lowbrow conceits, makes life hell for his wife, his children, and any stranger who comes in contact with him. Naturally,

he is a crook. His kind of blustery self-righteousness never fails to cover up a creep. It is satisfying for a writer to have a truly loathsome murder victim from time to time.

But it is not by any means invariable in real life thatthose murdered might besaid by some to deserve what they got. More often, to go back to that most necessary of ingredients, irony—more often the victims in reallifeare accidental, sometimespathetically so. In *Skinflick,* a cinematographer who has the misfortune to look something like the intended murder victim loses his life in a dark parking lot. A case of mistaken identity. The irony was that this man, a refugee from Hungary, lived his life in desperate fear of political assassins and probably died believing they had caught up to him at last, when in reality he had been netted in a wholly different web of circumstances.

In *Troublemaker*, a barowner is shot in an alleyby a murderer who mistakenly believes this bar owner has given away the murderer's identity to Dave Brandstetter, when all that really happened was that the bar owner had told Dave he was wanted on the telephone on a matter of concern to no one but Dave and the friend who was telephoning. The coming to grief of an innocent bystander is a theme I keep returning toagainand again.

Maybe this is because of the growing violence around us in our streets, to say nothing of the growing violence around us in the world, where we are innocent bystanders numbering in the billions, while a few extremely mortal and unexceptional politicians, priests, and generals have our lives in their hands and apparently are most of the time unaware of how lethal is their power to wipe us out.

For years, I wondered how to deal with the phenomenon of the lunatic mass murderer. You have probably noticed that these creatures have been flourishing in our beloved California, and in other parts of the U.S.A. as well, in recent years. The Freeway Killers and Hillside Stranglers have their weirdand sickening counterparts all over,thesedays. But a writer of mystery novels, it seems to me, confronted with such real-life horrors, runs the danger of trivializing desperately sombermaterial.

It took me a while to find a way to treat such a monster as, let us say, Charles Manson in a detective novel setting. With *Gravedigger,* I undertook it. I went at it with all the seriousness at my command. I did what I could with the skills I possess to keep the full grisliness of the crazed girl-murdering boy who calls himself Azrael, the Angel of Death, from swamping thestory. For nine-tenths of it, he remains a background, though I hope sinister, figure. Only at theend doesthe fullimpact of the monster in human form he is strikethe reader with full force. And some reviewers found this too much. Possibly so did some readers. But it was a phenomenon of our times with which I felt an honest novelist should deal. I haven't any solution for the mass murders of this world. I wish I did.

Maybe there is no solution either to the irresponsible dumping of the toxic wastes that seem the inevitable consequence of the marchof industrial technology in the dying years of the twentieth century. But if selfishness and heedless greed can be overcome, maybe we have a chance to stop the poisoners of our earth and water and air before it is too late. When I came to write *Nightwork*, it was with the idea in mind of bringing to readers'attention a problem which no one, not on any level of government, no one in the world, is effectivelydoing anythingabout.

And this led me to do something in a mystery novel that I had never done before, and that I think no writer has done—except by mistake, perhaps. The murderer in *Nightwork* is, of course, finally run to earthby Dave Brandstetter. I would neverdisappoint my readers by notgoing through this vital ritual. But the larger question posed by the book is left wholly unanswered, because that's therealityofthe situation as it stands. The real villain of the book, the killer of who knows how many people by slow poisoning, remains at largeand untouched and untouchable. So art imitates life—sometimes.

To go back for a moment to accidental victims and victims without a chance, I wrote a book, outside the Dave Brandstetter series of mysteries, called *Backtrack.* It got some very nice praise. The *New York Times* called it "brilliant." I never had a book called "brilliant" in print before. It may or may not be brilliant. But I enjoyed the word. *The New Yorker,* on the other hand, called it a "silly little book."That I enjoyed far less.

But whether they liked it or disliked it, all the reviewers missed what it was really about. There is a little bit of homosexual sex, treated with exactness, someplace in the story, maybe two or three places. That stunned a few reviewers. *Publishers Weekly* mourned, "We are spared nothing." Little did they know. Others praised the writing, the characters, the picture of the seedy underside of the motion picture business. But they all overlooked the point.

The point was that parents don't give a damn about their children any more, what they do, where they go, who theysee, whatthey eat, drink, watch on television. They don't give a damn. They spawn like fish. And when theyhavean argument, one walksout on the other, and that's the end of the marriage, and it is none of the children'sbusiness.

In *Backtrack,* I set out to show that, when nobody you live with really gives a damn about you, you are likely to go off in search of someone who will. This is thestory behind those runaways you readaboutwho take up prostitution on Sunset and Santa Monica

Boulevards—boys, girls, ages twelve and up, and sometimes twelve and under. Again, I don't know whoto blame. I'm not interested in blaming anyone. If people are so deadly selfish that they can't care about anyone else, that's how it is. And that was what I set out to show in *Backtrack*. So—now you know, and that makes you unique. Nobody else came close to guessing

Alan Tarr, the protagonist of *Backtrack*, is a very smart kid, but he is a kid just the same, and he runs into too many situations which demand that he grow up fasterthan possible, and faster thanwould bewise even if it werepossible. He chooses bad companions and gets into awful scrapes which wound him in his body and his mind. This "silly little book" was one I was so serious about that I spent twelve years alternately writing and rewriting it and trying to get somebody to publish it. Once, after yet another publisher whohadtaken it on went out of business, I even offered the book free to a friend of mine who wasstarting up a press. He turned it down.

So another moral emerges in this highly moral lecture of mine. If you have something to say, keep saying it, and eventually someone will hear you. If you write a book and you know it is a good book, hangonto it, keep trying toget editors to read it, and someday, years down the line, maybe, it will be published. Alan Tarr is a funny, cocky little kid—"bad company," one dyspeptic reviewer said—but others have liked his wisecracks and taken him to their hearts. He has begun a journey around the world now, with British and French editions, and I expect hewill eventually reach Japan. I keep waiting forsomeoneto realize that I am saying terriblethings about the American family in our disintegrating times. If the review that does this comes out in Japan, ofcourse, I'llnever know, will I?

To go back to *Nightwork* for a moment—another phenomenon which makes life such a treat in our cities these days is that of street gangs. The level of terrorthesewolf-packsproduce inthe neighborhoods that are their battlefields is scarcely measurable. In dealing with two of these warring gangs as a background for a considerable part of the action of *Nightwork,* I hoped to convey again how deadly urban living is today for the innocent bystander, particularly the poor, who can't afford to move out ofthelineof fire.

If my courage doesn't fail me, when I write my next book about Dave Brandstetter, he will be turning up some nasty stones by investigating circumstances in the area of rest homes, nursing homes, for the elderly. This particular racket has been exposed morethanoncein newspapers and in a scarifying book called *Tender Loving Greed.* We treat our old people in this country as badly as we treat our children, perhaps even worse. We do this for the same reason. But there are sharks out there eager to take theold offourhandsjust for the sakeof getting hold of their Social Security and welfare checks. Nobody wants children—except child molesters, of course, who are having their day in the headlines at the moment. Will I ever write about them? I hope not—though the fronts used to hide their activities from an unsuspecting publicare often ingeniousand sometimesdownrightpious.

But while social problems are important if one wants to shoulder his responsibility as a writer of fiction, the everyday, intimate problems of living with our families and our fellow workers and our friends, if we have any, can, if handled with due gravity, lend weight to a story and add richness, giving the reader something to carry away with him which will make him a wiser and better human being

After all, when a writer sits down to put a story about human beings on paper with honesty and directness, he is in possession of a kindof magicthat has never been explained. No one really knows how the novel and the story manage it, but it is their specialability to take us inside themindsand hearts of strangers as we can never be taken in life, no matter how hard we try, no matter how we may love these strangers. A good and honest novel lets us experience for a brief while what it is like to be another human being, with another form, another background, another set of problems different from

I maintain that the mystery novel, when wetreat it as serious business, has a unique capacity to work this magic, since its people move inside a compelling story, a mystery of death which at one and the same timeilluminatessome corners, if it will,of the greater mystery of life.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF JOSEPH HANSEN'S CRIME FICTION

(Compiled fromAllenJ. Hubin's *CrimeFiction, 1749-1980: A Comprehensive Bibliography,* with additions)

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A POEM

—Mel D. Ames
(with abjectapologies
toBrett Haliday)

M is forthe macho way he scratches
with a thumbnail at his bristly,ruggedjaw.

I is for theitch that plagueshis earlobe,
that he tugson when there'ssomething in his craw.

C is for the cognac thathe tipples:
"Martell, of course—iceand water on the side."

H is for a head of hairthe likesof
an Airedale's kinky, red'n'rusty hide.

A is for an Angel—juicyLucy—
his"girl Friday" at theoffice (and in bed?).

E is forthe endless foesbe battles
with"knobby knuckles,""ham-like fists"and,
uh—ricocheting lead.

L is forthe "littleboy"that lingers
'neaththat rough'n'tough (butlovable)outershell

Put them all together, theyspell MICHAEL—
SHAYNE, that is, the P.I. fromMiami, *immortel!*

Third Annual PWA "SHAMUS" Awards Ceremony

This year's award ceremony will be conducted at BOUCHERCON XV, which will be held October 26-27-28, in Chicago.

The Private Eye Writers of America, founded in January of 1983, has created the SHAMUS award for the best in Private Eye fiction, and has produced an anthology of original Private Eye short stories, THE EYES HAVE IT, which will be published in the Fall of 1984 by The Mysterious Press.

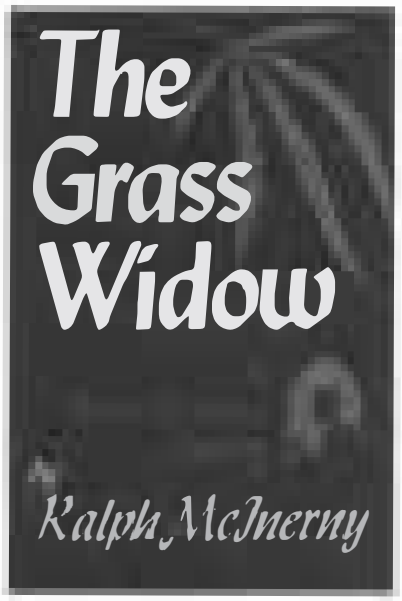
PWA wouid aiso like to thank The Armchair Detective for its 17 years of devotion to mysteryfiction.

The Private Eye Writers of America have active memberships available for $15.00 a year, and non-active memberships available for $10.00 a year. For information write PWA c/o Randisi, 1811 East 35th Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11234.

For further information on BOUCHERCON XV write Mary Craig, Bouchercon XV, 301 Lake Hinsdale Drive, Number 112, Clarendon Hills, Ill. 60514.

Short notes . .

Marian Babson's *A Fool for Murder* (Walker, $12.95), a domestic mystery, offers us the household of Sir Wilmer Creighleigh. Wilmer, at 70 a popular economist, is expected home from an American tour. His family, with inheritances on their collective minds, gather for a birthday welcome. So too his neighbor, who thinks to pluck him matrimonially. Wilmer arrives late, with a surprise, and murder follows shortly—with an unexpected victim. A smoothly told tale of its type, and



instantly forgettable.

Irish novelist John Broderick has not previously strayed into our precincts, but he now offers tranquil intrigue in *A Prayer for Fair Weather* (Boyars, $13.95). British Intelligence deposits a mole in a nest of anti-Semitic terrorists in London. We follow the mole's efforts to identify the head of the operation, various machinations among terrorists-in-training, and the eventual revelation of a Red mole in the British machinery. Read this not for suspense or surprise but for expert characterization.

With *Strained Relations* (St. Martin's, $10.95), Alison Cairns, Glasgow-born graduate in economics from London University and a lecturer in sociology in Cornwall, debuts strongly with a properly puzzling exploration of pressured character and relationship. After a spat with her husband in London, Caroline Quinn disappears. Did she head for the Quinn enclave in Cornwall? Was she murdered somewhere there by her husband? Or by a young layabout of criminous antecedents? Toby Wilde, newly minted solicitor, hopes to make contact with a girlfriend of college days, Alexis Quinn, while tramping Cornwall on vacation. The cast is gathered for the kill.

Anna Clarke's seventeenth suspense novel, *Soon She Must Die* (Doubleday, $11.95), deftly treats complex situations and emotions. Jane Bates, nurse, dreams and schemes of wealth. She is hired to tend a beautiful, rich woman dying of leukemia. She introduces the woman to Robert Fenniman, her live-in boyfriend, and he's immediately and hopelessly smitten. Meanwhile, the woman's relatives, impatient for presumed inheritances, do their own scheming... A rewarding tale.

Angel Without Mercy (Doubleday, $11.95) by Anthea Cohen establishes an eminent murderee in a hospital in a small British city. The candidate for killing is night nurse superviser Marion Hughes, a cold, calculating and critical fish. She capitalizes on the weaknesses—drug pilfering, alcohol, lack of confidence, errors in judgment—of all around her, nurses and surgeons alike. Hatred abounds, and naturally murder follows. This novel is not without interest, but the ending is weak.

Din of Inequity by "Mark Denning" (St. Martin's, $11.95) is a piece of pulpish sleaze that inadvisedly strayed into hardcovers. It's a superficial affair with the monumentally gratuitous sex of its ilk; it has the merit of shortness (149 pp.). Mike Wade was in the wrong part of the CIA and spent a year in jail when someone turned on the lights. After release, he's hired by a Reno casino operator to look into a series of possibly connected incidents of violence. That's all we hear about that, for into town comes a controversial U.S. Senator and his insatiable daughter. So too comes a killer. This is promised as a series; my patience for the second will be inexhaustible.

I feel curiously unfaithful as I convey my lack of enthusiasm for the latest novel by R. B. Dominic (a.k.a. Emma Lathen), *Unexpected Developments* (St. Martin's, $11.95). Oh, this is no bad book—the writers Dominic are unlikely to produce such. But is my memory betraying me in believing that earlier books offered more wit, more naturalness, more freshness of expression? Congressman Bed Safford (D-Ohio) has here the problem of a constituent, an Air Force pilot whose crash in a new aircraft is about to be blamed on his lack of competence. Safford contacts the members of the board of inquiry for information and finds one of them very dead, surrounded by scattered currency. Matters turn messy and political; the plane's manufacturer throws weight around, using its own tame, bought-and-paid-for Congressman Elected officials don't like the smell of things at all, but Stafford and his constituent keep raking the coals. .

Jack Early debuts with *A Creative Kind of Killer* (Franklin Watts, $12.95), which introduces retired

(young, with money) NYC cop Fortune Finelli. A New Jersey teenager's corpse is found in a Manhattan shop window. Finelli, his heart (he has two teenagers himself) and mind engaged, sleuths around artsy reaches of his town and around the curious family from which sprang the girl—and her younger brother, who's missing. Meanwhile, a Meryl Streep lookalike moves into the apartment next to Finelli, which serves to take his mind off his hobby. Which could be fatal when a grisly killer is enjoying his work. Pleasant story; Finelli is wortha return engagement.

Crime for Christmas (Doubleday, $11.95) is Lesley Egan's twenty-fourth mysteryand thirteenth about VicVaralloandhis colleagues of the Glendale (Calif.) police. It's in the current Egan/Linington/Shannon format: a succession of unrelated cases—murder, robbery, manslaughter, other assorted malefactions—with one extended investigation to carrythe story. A pair of thieves gets into the houses of the elderlyby subterfuge; whatlinksthe victims? Meanwhile events conspire to turn the policestation into a zoo. Agreeable.

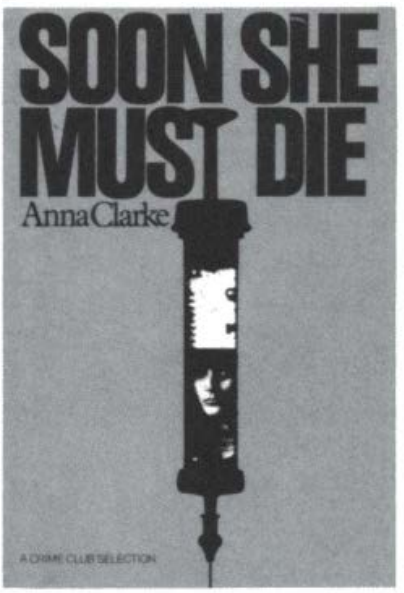
Lovejoy is the antiquedealerwith the sexual and professional morals of an alleycat (apologies to alleycats) and the ability to "divine" the genuine antique. His seventh adventure by Jonathan Gash is ***The Gondola Scam*** (St. Martin's, $12.95), a slangy caper set largely in Venice. Lovejoy, engaging despite all faults, cons his way to Venice on the intriguing winds of a monumentalswindle involving practically all the artwork of the drowningcity. There he falls into bed, tries to identify the perpetrators, falls into bed, hunts an art forgery warehouse, falls into bed, looks for a way to join the scam, falls into bed, and tries to stay alive. Sometimes this tale is a bit murky, but Lovejoy followers will rejoice.

When a British seniorcitizengives every evidence of havingmurdereda man in Spain, embassy troubleshooter Charles Llewellyn is asked to lend a hand. This is in Paula Gosling's ***The Woman in Red*** (Doubleday, $11.95), and the case seems hopeless. But to Llewellyn it hasn't the right feel. Together with the citizen's irascible daughter, he pokesabout in an affair whichmight involve art forgery and/or a dozen lost Goyas of fabulous value, worth—some might think—almost any villainy. Nicely diverting.

Gerald Green is a mainstream writer, but many of his eighteen novels reach into our genre. For example, ***Karpov's Brain*** (Perigord/Morrow, $15.95), his latest, is a tale of KGB machination and medical experimentation set in Moscow. Karpov is after some noisy Jews who want to leave Russia. Their leader is Levitch, and Karpov mounts a scheme to imprison him for the remainder of his shortenable life. Involved are Karpov's former mistress, a renowned brain surgeon, and a dimwitted American newsman. Events are well in train when Karpov falls victim to epilepsy, comes under the surgeon's knife, and has the connections severed between the two sides of his brain. Epilepsy cured—but what curious side effects result . Green's point—that Jews are good andRussiansbad—is clearlymade.

Evelyn Hervey, "the pseudonym of a popular and prolific British mystery writer," offers ***The Governess*** (Doubleday, $11.95), a readable if wholly unmemorable tale of murder in the London of 1870. The head of the prosperous Thackerton household is stabbed. Evidence points to Harriet Unwin, governess of young Pelham Thackerton. Shehas little in the way of supporters or resources, and to thepolice she is a socially acceptable solution to the crime. But murder isn'tdone, and who will findthe real killer if she doesn't?

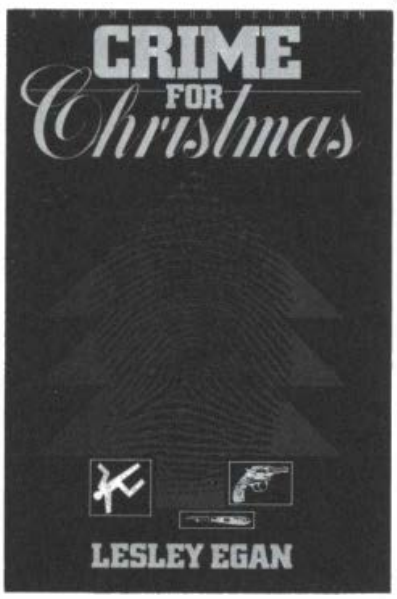
Joseph Hone's trilogy about Peter Marlow the spy (***The Oxford Gambit, The Sixth Directorate, The Private Sector***) is now followed by one about Marlow the retired, ***The Valley of the Fox*** (St. Martin's,



$13.95). It beings smashingly, with Marlow in hiding in rural England, accused of the murder of his new wifeand convinced the real killer to have been sent by his old Intelligence boss. He's filled with hatred and an intense thirstfor revenge: it's the classic confrontation of everyman against the all-powerful state. But then the suspense and pace disappointingly slow to a walk, as the focus shifts to exploring character and relationships; however well this is done, thetwo parts ofthe story don't fit together. Marlow

loses his drive for vengeance and turns to his own survival and that of his autistic stepdaughter, to enlisting as ally a strange and wealthy woman whose lonely mansion adjoins his forest hideout. Interesting story; could have been much better.

In *Appleby and Honeybath* (Dodd Mead, $13.95), a corpse and sundry other curious evidences unaccountably disappear, to the considerable embarrassment of Michael Innes's here joined series characters, retired Insp. John



Appleby and portraiturist Charles Honeybath. The scene of this sedate and literatecomedy is GrintonHall, whose owner has a passionate dislike of books. Accordingly, the family library, an accumulation of centuries, is kept locked. But, one day, Honeybath briefly finds the corpse there. What matters joins books and body? Appleby diffidently sorts it out.

Although the plot of *Mayday from Malaga* (Doubleday, $11.95) by Michael Kirk (a.k.a. Bill Knox, Noah Webster, Robert MacLeod) is transparent, by now, after over forty crime novels, the author is a polished storyteller. So his tale is enjoyablydiverting. It's set in Spain and features (for the fifth time) marine claims adjuster Andrew Laird. The *Sea Robin* goes down in shallow Mediterranean water. It's an old tub, hardly worth the effort of attempting to raise her. But its self-made millionaire owner insists on doing just that. Is there something in the cargo which is not on the manifest? Thefirst adjuster sent to the scene dies in a car wreck; Lairdthengetsthe assignment.

Bill Knox's eighteenth Supt. Colin Thane novel, *The Hanging Tree* (Doubleday, $11.95), topically treats of video-tape piracy. A cyclist, accidentally killed on a Glasgow street, is carrying tapes of ablockbustermovienotyet released. Panic in filmdom. Organized crime seems to haveadded video piracy to its enterprises; but where's the organizer—Glasgow or London? And who's handling distribution? An agreeable tale, as usual with Knox.

In *A Limited Vision* (St. Martin's, $10.95), Roy Lewis brings back Eric Ward, who left the police when his vision failed, studied law, had eye surgery, and is here recovering and looking to re-establish his career. Philip Scarne, an industrialist, asks Ward to represent him in efforts to develop "entertainment centers." Ward's life is immediately threatened, he somehow runs afoul of the police, and the local villain who runs the existing "entertainment centers" takes a dim view. In massive bewilderment, in pain because hiseyeshavenotyet healed, Ward gropes for reasons, for connections. Good lightweight British suspense.

Ralph Mclnerny's eighth Father Dowling mystery, *The Grass Widow* (Vanguard, $11.95), is, like the others, set in Illinoisand offers intriguing glimpses into contemporary Catholicism, which the author—a professor at Notre Dame—knows well. A lady comes to Dowling to say her husband, a well-known dj, has threatened to kill her. She's then founddead, perhaps a suicide, in a local motel. Dowling's friend Capt. Keegan focuses attention on the motel, where drugs and death seem to abound. Engaging characters, interplay and situations; a very consumable tale, suffering only fromobscurity in killer motivation.

Retired Scotland Yard detective John Raven fares unwell in *Raven's LongestNight* (Doubleday, $11.95), Donald MacKenzie's tenth tale about his principal series character. John and wife Kirstie are in Portugal when a Hungarian refugee asks for help. A court has just finally declared himowner of a great World War II fortune he took out of his country as the official representative of that land's pre-Communist government. The Communists now want it back. Raven eventually finds himself on the run for murder, his marriage in disarray. This is neither Raven's nor MacKenzie's finest hour.

Jessica Mann fails to make me believe either in setting or characters in *No Man's Island* (Doubleday, $11.95), her ninth suspense novel. Forway, a grim piece of weather-battered rock and infertile soil between Cornwall and Ireland, seems to have gained strategic importance. London sends a newly recruited spy, Tamara, who's also an archaeologist and fresh from detonating her lover's killers. Said lover came from Forway, so it's natural for Tamara to go and nose around. Does the island really

intend to declare independence? If so, what will other countries do? How does oil figure in all this? Not really a successful story.

The pseudonymous John Penn's second novel is ***Stag Dinner Death*** (Scribner's, $11.95), published as *Deceitful Death* in England. Here, well-to-do Gerald Hinton's impendingmarriage to Elizabeth, of the stuffy Lydney family, is interrupted in grisly fashion. His stag dinner at his club is invaded by a pregnant actress accusing him of paternity. The dinner decomposes, and then a corpse—*not* that of the actress—is found in the club's dressing room. Dr. Breland, Gerald's good friend, investigates. Entertainingenough, but in no wise puzzling.

The usual straightforward, easy reading Hugh Pentecost narrative—that's ***Murder Out of Wedlock*** (Dodd Mead, $11.95), the thirteenth JulianQuist adventure.Quist, head of a New York P. R. firm, is asked for help by an old friend. The friend is staging a fabulously expensive musical with a fabulously expensive star, who's coming apart at her oversexed seams. A malevolent villain seems to be orchestrating evil—multiple murder before it's over, with Quist's life also on the line. Pentecost crosses series a bit here, bringing in the Beaumont—thehotel fromthe Pierre Chambrun tales—as a murder scene.

Ellis Peters, having spun well the tales of policeman George Felse and his family in a dozen novels, has latterly turned her eye to twelfth-century England, to the Benedictine abbey of Shrewsbury and its wise and compassionate Brother Cadfael. The seventh account thereof is ***The Sanctuary Sparrow*** (Morrow, $12.50). An assault and robbery at a Shrewsbury house sends a lynch mob after an itinerant acrobat, who takes refuge in the abbey. There he is not exactly welcomed but by law is entitled to forty days' sanctuary. He protests his innocence, and Cadfael—if none other—is inclined to believe, to investigate. Sympathetic story telling once again, with sharply limned cultureand setting.

A publisher new to our field, Perseverance Press, launches its mystery line with the timely and topical ***Murder at the Winter Olympics*** ($6. 95, trade paperback) by Meredith Phillips. The author's two years of research have paidoff: the book abounds in Olympic facts and personalities, even if to the point of overload. The heroine and unwilling sleuth is British figure-skater Lesley Gray, who's enslaved to satyric Dmitri Kuznetsov, a Soviet skaterand potential defector. Setting: Squaw Valley, filled with athletes, spectators, agitators, security people—and murder. The color and excitement of Olympic competition come through here; would that the principal characters were more appealing.

Quicksilver(St. Martin's, $11.95) continues Bill Pronzini's account of his nameless San Francisco private eye, here with misgivings about going into partnership with his retired policeman friend Eberhardt. He'sasked to find out why someone is sending Haruko Gage expensive gifts, and the trail leads to the Japanese-American community, to a series of deaths, even to World War II internment camps. A tale well told and absorbing.

The selections in the latest MWA anthology were made by vote of the membership. Each was asked to name five favorite stories, and the result is ***The Mystery Hall of Fame*** (Dial, $17.95) edited by Bill Pronzini, Martin H. Greenberg, and Charles G. Waugh. The tales and authors are for the most part very familiar and oft-anthologized, as would be expected: Poe, Doyle, Chesterton, Hammett, Christie, Chandler, Futrelle, Thomas Burke, W. W. Jacobs, Woolrich, Carr, plus a few more of the moderns are here. Classic stories they are, and it's good to have them all together under hard covers.

Joseph Wambaugh's ***Lines and Shadow*** (Perigord/Morrow, $15.95) is dramatized nonfiction, a lively

and endlessly profane story about BARF, a special police unit formed in 1976 to combat murderous bandits feasting on the aliens illegally pouring across the border at Tijuana. BARF started because a San Diego cop figured aliens—though not the most popular of folks—didn't deserve butchery as their introduction to the land of the free, but the leadership of BARF fell to Manny Lopez, a silver-tongued publicity hound who didn't know enough to be afraid under fire. Wambaugh follows the

eighteen-month degeneration of the BARF team—women, alcohol by the vatful, a fearful dependence on Lopez, the thirst for blood, the excitement of imminent death on the scrubby hillsides south of San Diego. Not an uplifting story, this, not even one with much of a point, buthard to put down nonetheless.

I'm not terriblyenthusiasticabout the prolific John Wainwright. He knows whereof he writes—he was a policeman fortwentyyears—buthis vision seems unrelievedly grim and hiswriting style is not felicitous. Yet his images do linger—as in ***Spiral Staircase*** (St. Martin's, $10.95). Here ex-Supt. Lennox is out of prison, where he served a term for killing someone. Prison taught him many things, and while he was inside the balance in society shifted from respect for the police to villain ascendancy, supported by public bleeding hearts. Lennox is induced—by the current superintendent, his successor—to lead a vigilante attack by a group of disenfranchised cops on the local kingpin, an affair thatquicklygets out of hand.

·CharlesWilleford defines his protagonist in ***Miami Blues*** (St. Martin's, $12.95) in one word in the opening paragraph: Junior Frenger is a psychopath. The resulting story, despite its crude and dark vitality, neither entertained not edified me. Frenger, prudently forsaking his native California, arrives in Miami and almost instantly produces his first corpse. A mind-boggling coincidence links that casual killing to theviolencethatfollows,and brings him to the attention of a vengeful cop. I think I should like to avoid Miami.

Murder at La Marimba (St. Martin's, $10.95), is the debut of "Carson Wolfe" (pseudonym of a NYC criminal lawyer) and introduces Carlito Rivera, Bronx criminallawyer. A disco confrontation between young Puerto Ricans and Dominicans leaves one of the latter dead and Ricky Betancourt in jail for murder. Ricky's fiancee and her mother hire Rivera, whose inquiry turns up severalcurious features, notably police incompetence and confusion. That's not enough to get Ricky off or namethe realkiller, so Rivera carries on. This is a modestbeginning forMr. Wolfe.

—AJH

Otto Penzler

NEW PATHS IN COLLECTING

COLLECTING MYSTERY FICTION

After taking a quick glance at the prices of the first editions of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, the prospect of collecting mystery fiction can be depressing to anyone who hasn't discovered a secret passageway into the vaults of Fort Knox. This, of course, does not need to be the case.

As with all kinds of collecting, whether books or art or antiques, some items become more highly prized than others. Often, it has a great deal to do with the quality of the work. A splendid Titian oil is apt to be somewhat better than the still life perpetrated by your Aunt Hattie three summers ago, and so it is valued more highly than Aunt Hattie's minor masterpiece.

Fashion, however, also has a great deal to do with collecting, and there is an ebb and flow at work that defies comprehension. While the paintings of Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein undoubtedly have their merits, it would not come as a major surprise to some art collectors if their paintings failed to maintain their level of collectibility in future years.

The same is true of book collecting, with certain authors going in and out of favor from one era to the next; Rudyard Kipling, John Galsworthy, and William Dean Howells peaked in the 1920s. While it is generally impossible to predict what public tastes will be like in future generations, certain precautions may be taken in the present to ensure that collecting will be as rewarding as possible.

The first precaution is simply to collect what you like. You should receive pleasure from the books you collect. This does not necessarily require that you enjoy *reading* the books you collect, but you should enjoy collecting them. The other major precaution is to avoid the bandwagon. Merely because the rest of the world seems to be collecting an author or a style of books does not mean that you must collect the same thing. This requires a measure of confidence in your own taste and predilections—not always an easy task in the face of withering criticism from those you respect.

Collecting Chandler and Hammett is not really a bandwagon, because their work is so inarguably important that, like Leonardo da Vinci or Chippendale in other fields, they will always hold a certain place in history.

Collecting some other modern writers may well be bandwagon, however. It is difficult to predict, at this time, where Robert Parker's books, or Stephen King's, or Dick Francis's, for example, will rank in the history of twentieth-century fiction. They are near the beginning or middle of their careers, and, while they are all exceptionally talented writers, it may be reasonable to think that the current boom in the price of their works is disproportionate to the scarcity of them and to their long-range desirability. *Maybe.*

Great collections have been assembled with moderate means by those willing to attempt something different, something off the beaten path, something risky. In many ways, this is the most interesting kind of collection—new ground being broken in order to assemble a unique collection with a totally individual perspective—a kind of creativity that has added immeasurably to scholarship through-
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The most traditional kind of collecting (and we will now restrict the discussion to mystery fiction, rather than books in general, or art, or barbed wire) has been author collections. One or a group of authors is favored by a reader, and that becomes the aim of the collection: "I love Rex Stout, so I want all his books in first edition." An admirable and sensible method of collecting, of course, but it does not have to be the exclusive approach.

Allen J. Hubin permitted his collection to expand to the point at which he attempted to collect a copy (although not necessarily a first edition) of every mystery book ever [illegible]

One collector, a young ophthalmologist in Texas, is now working on a collection of American detective fiction for which he seeks a fine first edition, preferably in dust jacket, of every book ever published in the genre, as long as it was written by an American. A quick calculation indicates that the collection would need to be at least 25,000 volumes to be complete, apparently a hopeless undertaking, but he has already acquired about 8,000 volumes in less than three years of serious collecting. The level of quality staggers the imagination. In addition to the first editions, he has numerous proof copies, original manuscripts, and cover paintings; in short, it is already one of the greatest collections of American genre fiction ever

This level of collecting is not for everyone It requires a certain income level, a lot of space, and the correct personality; a healthy ego doesn't hurt here, because the overwhelming difficulty of achieving such a goal would defeat most people before they began

There are other collections, somewhat more modest in scope, which are wonderfully satisfying and fascinating, and much more possible. The restrictiveness of a collection can be as rigid or as loose as the collector desires. The focus of the collection can be as obvious or as creative as the idiosyncracies of the collector. The possibilities are nearly limitless.

Collecting a favorite sub-genre of mystery fiction has, in recent years, become a popular method of narrowing the field a bit. Collections are being formed of espionage fiction, private eye or hardboiled fiction, and police procedurals. Since the publication of Robert Adey's excellent bibliography, *Locked Room Mysteries,* impossible crimes have been an avidly sought group of books numbering, incredibly, in excess of a thousand volumes. As is true of all types of collections, this cuts across several lines, such as those forming author collections of John Dickson Carr and Carolyn Wells (believe it or not, there are Wells collectors!)

There are numerous sub-genres that may be in the process of having collections formed, but I know of no one, at this time, collecting English "cozy" novels, or flat-out adventure novels, or psychological suspense novels

Several lists of the "best" books in the genre exist and have formed an excellent starting point for many collectors. One of the most popularly collected lists is *Queen's Quorum,* which is Ellery Queen's selections of the 125 greatest short-story collections in the history of mystery fiction, beginning in 1845 with Poe's *Tales* and concluding in 1967 with Harry Kemelman's *The Nine-Mile Walk.*

Equally popular is the Haycraft-Queen list, correctly titled, The Haycraft-Queen Definitive Library of Detective-Crime-Mystery Fiction. This is a list conceived by the eminent mystery historian, Howard Haycraft, and supplemented by Ellery Queen, who essentially added mystery and crime stories to the detective stories selected by Haycraft, numbering 167 volumes; it begins in 1748 with Voltaire's *Zadig* and ends in 1948 with William Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust.* There was a short addition of twelve titles in 1956 in an attempt to bring the list up to date, though these additions are less avidly collected than the original Haycraft-Queen list. One collector, a true purist, collects only the original Haycraft list, ignoring Queen's additions

James Sandoe compiled an excellent list of "tough" books, *The Hard-Boiled Dicks,* which is the first attempt at compiling a list of cornerstone volumes in a mystery sub-genre. The titles chosen are somewhat erratic and include many lesser-known titles, though few critics through the years have questioned Sandoe's consistently good and intelligent

An extremely popular method of establishing an unusual and worthwhile collection is to limit it by location. Several splendid collections are being formed of books set in Southern California, and at least two of books set in San Francisco. One sophisticated collector grew up in New England and, remembering the region with affection, has specialized in books set there. The Southwest is a popular collecting region, as is New York City. Clearly, the choices are varied, limited only by the collector's affection for the region, though that affection need not be rooted in real life. More than one collector buys books set in Italy or Spain because he loves to read about those backgrounds, never actually having visited there. Strangely, I know of no one collecting books set in Chicago, which seems a rich source of good material, nor books set on tropical islands, in Alaska, Russia, Germany, South America, any of the Iron Curtain countries, or, perhaps most remarkably, London. I know at least one collector each for Japan, China, Africa, India, Spain, Australia, Greece, Hawaii, Scotland (but not Ireland), Texas, New Orleans, and no doubt a dozen other locales that slip my mind at the moment.

Not too surprising, perhaps, is the number of collections formed around certain professions. Often, the more colorful the profession, the more often it is used in mystery fiction as a background, and the more interest there is in collecting books set in that particular milieu

The theater, for example, is a rich mine of wonderful books in the mystery genre, with various methods of narrowing down, according to the individual collector. Shakespeare-related books have their cult, as do Broadway and London's West End, and one person (at least) collects books only involving summer stock shows.

Closely connected are books in other of the performing arts, particularly film. The Hollywood depicted in mystery fiction is laden with murderers and potential victims, as passion seems nearer the surface there than elsewhere. It is his evocation of this eccentric flavorful location which contributes heavily to the collecting interest in Stuart Kaminsky's Toby Peters novels.

There seems to be an unusually strong connection between those who love music and mystery fans, so it is not at all surprising that a large number of people collect mysteries with an opera background, as well as murders set in the worlds of ballet, symphonic music, jazz, and less specific music backgrounds

Perhaps the most popular of all the performing arts as a source for good mystery fiction is magic, brought to its zenith by the excellent impossible-crime stories of Clayton Rawson. The number of books with a magic background is surprisingly high, and they are avidly sought after by a large number of collectors, probably because the elements of the detective novel are no different from those employed by the stage magician, who seeks to misdirect the attention of his audience, just as the mystery writer attempts to fool his or her readers

No background exceeds in popularity that of books, bookstores, and libraries, resulting in several booksellers' catalogues specializing only in mysteries with a bibliographic background. Bibliomysteries, as they have come to be known, naturally appeal to the collector, who is assumed to have a great affection for books, else he would be unlikely to be collecting them in the first place. This field is so vast that it even has its specializations within the sub-genre: those who collect books set in libraries may eschew those set in antiquarian bookshops, for example, and vice-versa. Some collectors will want mysteries involving only rare books, while a B. Dalton setting may be sufficient for some others. One collector wants books dealing only with Thomas J. Wise, the notorious nineteenth-century forger, and another wants books involving only rare book dealers. So many fine writers have devoted at least one mystery to this sub-genre that a comprehensive collection would fill several bookcases, including the nearly complete works of Elizabeth Daly, Michael Delving, and George Sims, himself a rare book dealer, together with major works by Julian Symons, Michael Innes, Robert B Parker, and Vincent Starrett

Collectors of books are often collectors of other things as well, and it is not unusual for a special affection to be had for mysteries relating to the other interests. Numerous books are set in the world of art and antiques, and these can form an excellent collection of mysteries. For some inexplicable reason (perhaps my imagination), the percentage of excellent books written with an art background is higher than in any other sub-genre.

More than a dozen books exist which are devoted to the world of rare stamps, and probably an equal number to the world of rare coins: a small shelf, perhaps, but an attractive one for the philatelist or numismatist

Who could be surprised that a collector's ca[illegible] would h[illegible] influe[illegible] his ch[illegible] of mysteries? Many lawyers collect books in which the hero (or villain) is a lawyer or judge, several doctors collect books set in the medical profession (though I do not know of a dentist who collects dental mysteries, nor an accountant, insurance salesman, or engineer who collects books in his milieu), and dozens of academics who prefer books set at universities. A well-known newspaper editor has compiled a collection of more than six hundred volumes about journalist detectives. Can something be deduced from these patterns?

While athletes may not necessarily collect books with a sports background, that is a particularly popular collecting area. The most collected sports books in the mystery genre, by a fairly good margin, involve golf, with the next greatest number being about baseball. A few collectors like all sports, and some specialize in boxing backgrounds, horse racing, or sailing, but I know of no one who specifically collects football,

basketball, jockey, wrestling, track and field, tennis, or any motor sports. Even the Olympics, at which several mysteries have been set, do not command collecting interest yet

Chess has several mystery collectors, as does bridge and poker (in fact, gambling has at least two collectors in the mystery field), but no other games or pastimes come to mind as a collector's specialty

Several areas that seem obvious as fertile fields for collectors seeking new paths remain untouched, inexplicably. The endlessly fascinating methods of murder have not a single collector known to me. It strikes me that someone ought to have begun to assemble all the known volumes, for example, in which murder is achieved by poison, or with bow and-arrow, or via strangulation, but no one has, to my knowledge.

And how about a collection in which the butler actually does it—or servants in general? Or in which the niece or nephew committed the crime? The possibilities there are large.

Has anyone assembled a collection of mysteries based on motive? Revenge, say, or for an inheritance, or out of jealousy, or xenophobia. What a lovely collection it would make to discover a hundred volumes in which murder was committed solely to protect someone else (and how often these murders are committed needlessly), and what a terrific article could be written about it!

Several collections are being formed based on the ethnicity of the detective or villain—generally sinister Oriental villains or Asian detectives—but there seems an opportunity to collect books in which the detective (or crook) is Indian, black, Eskimo—whatever There are certainly enough stereotypical Irish cops to fill a wall. Many collectors acquire books featuring woman detectives (and crooks), or religious detectives (and crooks), but has anyone assembled books in which the central figure, whether detective or crook, is a child?

While at least one person is attempting to collect the first editions of all books involving a series detective, has anyone specialized in collecting detective teams? Or "little old lady" detectives? Or millionaire detectives? Or detectives with dual identities (such as the Scarlet Pimpernel, The Shadow, Zorro, Batman, Superman), or is this more of a comic book concept than mystery fiction?

To me, an extraordinary opportunity has been thus far almost entirely missed in the collecting of a particular publisher. In the world of science fiction and fantasy, one of the major collecting areas is the assembling of all books published by Arkham House, or Shasta, or Donald M. Grant, or any of the other major houses specializing in science fiction and fantasy. While the mystery world has had far fewer specialty publishers, those which do exist have been largely ignored

Although many collectors are working to complete collections of the Doubleday Crime Club (these are true original publications, not book club editions), especially those published prior to World War II, almost no one has shown particular interest in such publishers as Phoenix Press (which published books in other genres as well as mystery, but is notable for its interesting dust jacket art and for the incredibly poor literary quality of most of its productions), made famous by Bill Pronzini in *Gun in Cheek,* Arcadia, Mystery House, and Hillman-Curl. There are many Mystery League collectors, which is a little less challenging, since there were only slightly more than thirty books published by this short-lived company, all of them being produced in relatively large numbers and fairly sturdily made, so that a large equantity has survived to the present day

Recently, there has been tentative interest shown in such imprints as The Tired Business Man's Library, Simon & Schuster's Inner Sanctum mysteries, the Collins Crime Club, Harper Sealed Mysteries, and Dodd, Mead's Red Badge Mysteries, but I know of no one collecting in any serious way all the Joan Kahn mysteries (surely a mark of consistent excellence) or publishers who may have done only occasional mysteries without a special imprint, such as Farrar & Rinehart, Morrow, and Knopf—certainly the greatest American publisher of mysteries, being the original publisher of probably the four greatest of all American mystery writers: Dashiell Hammett, James M. Cain, Raymond Chandler, and Ross Macdonald (in chronological sequence).

Books in unusual formats may be one of the most fascinating and quirky kinds of collections, and may one day be the subject of a separate article. There are at least eight examples of boxes containing a short story in pamphlet form in which the ending is not revealed, requiring the reader to assemble a jigsaw puzzle in order to solve the crime. The famous crime dossiers of Dennis Wheatley and others have approximately a similar number of examples and are exceptional specimens of the ingenuity of book publishers

A related area is mystery-related games and puzzles, of which there are scores of examples of card games, board games, and assorted hybrids. These do not have the collecting attention they deserve, though they are also, admittedly, quite fragile and therefore scarce and somewhat expensive, on the whole

One collector has attempted to collect every mystery which features an illustration of an automobile on the dust jacket, or on the cover in the case of pictorial bindings and paperbacks. He isn't sure if the collection has any significance, but it is truly something to see! I know of no one else assembling a collection based on cover art or design, except in the world of paperback mysteries, which has an avid collecting community of people specializing in "leg" art, bondage covers, and other forms of illustrative material that may be strongly influenced by prurience. This is clearly an area of no interest to those of us who despise blatant appeals to our baser instincts.

The shape of a collection is limited only by the creativity of the individual. Much of what is collected, and even more of what is not, is baffling. While several people collect mysteries set on trains, fewer collect those set on ships, and none collect them set on planes, buses, carriages, automobiles, or any other kind of transportation

There are collectors of mysteries involving caves, mountain climbing, mushrooms, cooking (quite popular), twins, Egyptology, the American Revolution. On the other hand, there are no collectors known to me who deliberately seek books that would surely make exquisite collections: historical mysteries, or mystery fiction based on true-life crimes or criminals; books involving great capers; books about gentleman thieves, or crooks as the good guys; books in which someone is intent on world conquest; books in which the detective is a mystery writer (there must be hundreds!); books involving paradoxes and dilemmas, such as several G.K. Chesterton works and "The Lady or the Tiger?"; mysteries written by poets, or Nobel laureates; mysteries written in a language other than English and translated; mysteries in which no one is killed.

The above list merely scratches the surface—thoughts that have come to me as I write, or which have been discussed with other collectors or potential collectors in the past

The point, really, is that it is possible to create a collection which may be the finest in the world—of its kind. It can provide a splendid opportunity for examination and analysis. It is possible to achieve it for relatively modest sums of money because it is generally supply and demand that determine the price of a book. While virtually any collection will inevitably cross certain boundaries, making a small portion of it competitive with other collectors, it may be entirely possible to assemble an exemplary collection for very little.

I would be interested in hearing of anyone collecting in areas not mentioned above, and TAD would especially welcome articles of a comprehensive nature dealing with a specific subject, whether that collection be six titles (mysteries set in North Dakota, say) or six thousand (Golden Age mysteries—any volume published between the World Wars in England, for example, though the number may be greater).

The important thing is to enjoy what is collected, and then make a good job of it

It is now two and a half years since the first column on collecting appeared in TAD, and it is appropriate to note that that first column, in Vol. 15, No. 1, was devoted to the basics of collecting for novices and some intermediates. Since it deals with subjects as varied as reference books, where to collect, and how to grade the condition of books, it may be of interest to most collectors. After examining a recent parcel of books that arrived from a bookseller in the Midwest, it occurred to me that the section on grading condition may be of value to alleged experts, as well.

If questions or problems remain, most booksellers will be happy and able to help, particularly those who advertise in the pages of TAD □

Foreign Intrigue

BY WILLIAM L. DeANDREA

This is a city that knows how to honor its famous men. Lord Nelson stands on top of an enormous tower, so tall that only pigeons can look him in the face. Prince Albertsits grandly under a canopy high enough to be a cathedral spire, whilearound hisfeet sithugegroupingsof whitemarblestatues, representingthe adoring peoples ofthe *Em-pah*.

The tribute to Sherlock Holmes, though, is perhapsthe greatest ofall, because it is so simpleand unpretentious. It's the Baker Street Station of the London Underground. It'snotthe architecturewhich constitutes the tribute (at least not yet—more about that in a minute). The Baker Street stop looks as if it belongs to the same school of design as, say, the Bowling Green stop on the New York subway, or *anyplace* on the Washington Metro or San Francisco's BART—the Gaudy Toilet School. Tiles up to eye level, likean endlessmen'sroom.

At Baker Street, the tiles happen to be bright red. But on every singletilethere is a silhouette of a hawk-nosed figure (pronounced "figgah") wearing a deer-stalkerand smoking a pipe. Every single one of these modern monstrosities bearsthe image—the onefixed point,one might say, in a changingage. There are no labels, no tourist information anywhere. They aren't necessary. After all, he wasn't a lord or a prince. He was a man of the people who loved the hustle and bustle of London. In the Baker Streettube station, he would have gotten all the hustle and bustle he could have handled.

There are big doings afoot in Baker Street these days, though, or rather under it. The London Transport Company are (English people talk this way) restoring part of the station to its opening-day glory—brick walls, with cleverly designed openings to the street to let in light and letoutthe smoke ofthe steam engines that pulled the Underground trains *circa* 1869, when the system opened. The photographs look marvelous. It will be open by the time

William L. DeAndrea is the back-to-back Edgar winner for KILLED IN THE RATINGS *and* THE HOG MURDERS. *His "Foreign Intrigue" reports will continue in TAD until hecomes home.*

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you read this, so, when you come to London, bring your beaver hat and your cape and sword-stick. Send a commissionaire to Putney with a message, and we'll meet you in 1869.

Orania Papazoglou and I were married on New Year's Day in a country inn in South Norwalk, Connecticut, by a judge who forgot the words to the ceremony. On January 6, we came to London, to be here when Orania's book (*Sweet Savage Death*, Doubleday Crime Club) came out back in the States, so I wouldn't have to hear everybody telling me I'm married to a better writer than I am. People only say things like that because they're true.

We've taken a flat in Putney, a villagey neighborhood on the south side of the Thames. We buy fish and chips and give milk to the neighborhood cats who meow outside our back door (talk about mysteries—they call cats here "moggies"; I've been afraid to ask).

And we read mystery stories. Orania took off on an Agatha Christie kick, and I followed, within reason. British mysteries take on a whole new dimension when you read them *in Britain*. You'd be surprised how many murder suspects (clerks and government workers) were living in Putney in the 'thirties and 'forties. When Hercule Poirot goes to South Kensington and interviews somebody who lives in Queen's Court, I know the building! It's the same kind of feeling kids have when they hear their school mentioned on the radio.

There would be more to tell you about the state of mystery publishing in England if I could talk to some British crime writers. I would do it gladly, if I could only get *hold* of the silly sods. (Language here is amazingly unbridled—the nicest people say "Bastard" or "sod" in the most genteel situations as a synonym for "human being." Apparently, the last bloke left these islands some years ago, in the company of the last blighter. Also on the linguistic front, Orania reports one "pip pip," while I have heard one "cheerio" and two "ta-tas.")

Where was I? Oh, the Crime Writers Association.

Well, for one thing, they're not listed in the phone book. For another thing, they're not *not* listed in the phone book (ex-directory, they say here). When you call the operator and ask for them, the operator calmly, but politely, assumes you are nuts (she also assumes you are Canadian, but that's another problem) and hangs up on you.

These Crime Writers are harder to find than blighters.

What I finally did was to call Doubleday's London office, figuring *they* had probably been let in on the secret. They had, too, up to a point. They knew you had to reach them by way of the Press Club.

If the Press Club hadn't been in the phone book, I was going to start a novel about this business immediately, but there they were. They even admitted that the Crime Writers existed. What they wouldn't do is put me in touch with any of them. What you do do is, you write them letters, and "every so often someone from the Crime Writers comes by and picks the letters up." And no doubt dusts it for prints, and steams off the stamp in search of a microdot.

Anyway, the letter is in the post. Tune in next issue for further developments.

Judging from what there is to see in the bookstores and read in the newspapers, the mystery publishing business is in the same sort of doldrums here as it was in the States four or five years ago. Every bookshop has a paperback crime section, but it's loaded up with Christie and Marsh and English thriller writers. Dick Francis is enormously popular, as he deserves to be, but there have to be a lot of good British detective-story (as opposed to thriller) writers who never make it to paperback here. If they do, they're not getting terrific distribution.

Americans get published here if they're hardboiled or write police procedurals. Ed McBain, Mickey Spillane, the Flying MacDonald/Macdonald/Mcdonald Brothers, and all the Hammett clones flourish in British paperback.

The best selection of current mystery fiction in London (there are no shops specializing in mysteries like the ones in the States) can be found at Foyle's, not surprisingly the largest bookstore in town. The trouble there is that they sort the books by type and by *publisher*. If your favorite author is reasonably prolific, and has books in print from more than one or two houses, you can go quite mad trying to track down the title that just might be on the other side of this bookcase, or thirty yards across the room.

This system gives way to aberrant rationality when it comes to hardcover backlist, however. The books in this category at Foyle's are listed alphabetically by author, just like in the real world. Here, there *is* quite a good selection, English and American. I look this section over just before I leave the place, to help me catch my breath.

I have two gripes about English publishing. First, the hardcover books, at least the fiction, are incredibly cheesily made. They make even the economy jobs in the States look like Gutenberg Bibles. We're talking top authors here—Dick Francis, Peter Lovesey. Very distressing. Apparently, it has to do with the infamous £10 Barrier that is tearing British publishing apart. Do they dare charge ten pounds of money for *fiction?* Will the public stand still for it?

The guess from this foreigner is that they would. I mean, the Queen hasn't come down on one side or the other, so the issue is still wide open. As this is

written, ten pounds sterling is worth a little less than fifteen bucks American, a figure left crushed in the dust by U. S. publishers for top-of-the-line fiction years ago. I think readers who are already paying £9.95 would go for the extra shilling in exchange for a hardcover book that would retain all its pages through the end of the first reading.

My other gripe is what they do to American books. They translate them into English, as opposed to American. It's ludicrous. Nobody in the 87th Precinct could ever write a cheque or leave his car by the kerb after driving off the West Side Motorway. U. S. publishers have been leaving American readers to figure out bonnets and lifts and gaols for years now, and all it does is give us the authentic flavour (ha-ha) of the story. I don't think the English publishers give their readers credit for enough brains. They'd probably be glad to get a book that sounded American when they shell out for an American writer.

What *is* done well here is criticism. All the full-sized daily and Sunday papers (and there are a lot of them) review mysteries once a week, some twice. A few of the tabloids do, too. Some of the critics are snotty, but all of them can write, and all of them show signs of having started reading mysteries more recently than three hours before they wrote the column. American papers please copy.

If there were nothing but the movies, English television would still be a treat for the mystery fan. There's a Charlie Chan movie every Monday — early Sidney Toler vintage; screenplays by Philip MacDonald; Key Luke or Sen Yung as an appropriately numbered son — you know, the *good* stuff. There's a Margaret Rutherford Miss Marple every Friday. Miss Rutherford's Miss Marple is like Johny Weismuller's Tarzan — unrecognizable, if you judge by the literary original, but great fun all the same.

There are one-shots, too, of varying vintages — Bogart in *Conflict* and *All Through the Night,* and Frank Sinatra in *Tony Rome* and *The Detective,* Clint Eastwood in *Magnum Force,* Robert Mitchum in *Farewell My Lovely,* and lots of others, all with the original language, blood, and nudity intact. Amazing, and gratifying to someone who'd gotten used to hearing HBO come out of his TV speakers.

There are American detective series, old and new. Great old 1953 vintage *Dragnet* is on late Friday nights. Terrific stuff. Alfred Hitchcock on Sundays. They show hits such as *The Rockford Files* and flops like *The Devlin Connection.* They show *Remington Steele* episodes which aired in the States last year, and *Blue Thunder, The A-Team, T. J. Hooker* and *Mike Hammer* episodes that must have been seen in the U. S. last week.

The British do crime shows of their own, of course.

The Agatha Christie Hour airs every Thursday afternoon on ITV, produced by Thames Television, the commercial franchisee here in London. This is an anthology series, presenting dramatizations of Christie short stories that don't have Poirot or Miss Marple in them. As you might expect, it's uneven, varying as the quality of the stories themselves. The best episodes haven't properly been mysteries at all. "The Fourth Man" was a borderline supernatural tale about possession and multiple personalities; "The Case of the Discontented Soldier" was the story of a crime-story-like real-life charade staged to get two lonely people together, and to earn a fee for Mr. Parker Pyne. Maurice Denham played the "happiness consultant" as sort of an urban Wizard of Oz (as portrayed in the books), with a twinkle of the lovable humbug about him. Angela Easterling was efficient and appealing as Miss Lemon. I'll be looking for more of these in the series.

Also on daytime is *Crown Court,* produced by Granada, the Liverpool and Merseyside commercial franchisee. This is like the old *Day in Court* show, with actors trying a case before a jury of people off the street. It's incredibly hokey, and you're never going to get the crime of the century tried in three days, but it's surprisingly fascinating. Educational, too.

The BBC seems to have set aside the Saturday-night-at-nine slot for crime. They just finished a limited run of *Bergerac,* a crime series set in the beautiful Channel Island of Jersey. Jersey, from what we can see of it on the show, looks like Bar Harbor, Maine, and everybody goes there to relax Including criminals. The biggest problem Sergeant Bergerac had each week was staying awake. The acting was good; John Nettles was suitably handsome and rugged as Joe Bergerac, but somehow the BBC-Australian TV co-production (*I* don't know why Australians care about the Channel Islands, either) didn't generate enough excitement for this violence-crazed Yank.

Its replacement is considerably better, a three-part adaptation of N. J. Crisp's novel *The Odd Job Man.* Jon Finch, who starred in Hitchcock's *Frenzy,* Roman Polanski's *Macbeth,* and the Time-Life/BBC productions of *Richard II, Henry IV,* parts 1 and 2, and *Henry V,* plays a hard-luck spy who loses his regular gig and has to freelance for whomever is willing to give him a sleazy assignment. It's gloomy enough, and Finch suffers enough personal misery for this to be a Southern California privateeye novel, but the situation is intriguing and the execution is good.

Nobody has to be told how good *The Avengers* is. They run it here in prime time, Saturday nights, on Channel Four, the new commercial network. Good

shows stay good—it's hard to escape the feeling that Steed and Mrs. Peel (Tara King, right now, actually) will always be on the air somewhere in the English-speaking world (they were running in the States when I left), fighting "extraordinary crimes against the people and the state" in perpetuity.

They just got done showing *The Prisoner* on Channel Four, too. In honor of Patrick McGoohan's fifteen-year-old request that the show air in 1984. It's still intriguing; it still doesn't make any sense; people still talk about it.

Another Channel Four rerun people are talking about is *Whoops! Apocalypse,* a London Weekend Television production of two years ago. This blackest of black comedies tells the story of the events leading up to World War III in six half hours. Canadian Barry Morse, who played Lieutenant Gerard on *The Fugitive,* stars as President Johnny Cyclops of the United States, a former actor who became famous playing Tarzan in the movies. President Cyclops is a well-meaning, brainless wimp, totally under the control of the Deacon (John Barron), a religious maniac who says things like, "If God wanted us to revere the elderly, he never would have given us the Supreme Court." In a bizarre plot to restore the Shah of Iran (who is alive and traveling ceaselessly back and forth on the Dover-Calais ferry), the Deacon fakes the theft of the super-deadly Quark bomb from a missile base, then gives it to an authentic terrorist, L'Acrobat (John Cleese, of Monty Python fame), who will use his mastery of disguise to smuggle it to the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the Russians, who whip leaders in and out of clone-preserving deep freezes whenever one shows signs of sanity, are learning all of America's secrets by way of Britain. The Prime Minister isn't worried—as he tells his aides, "If a bomb is aimed at us, I shall see it coming with my X-ray vision in time to push Britain aside with my super strength and let the missile fall harmlessly into the sea." He smiles gently, and tries to get the red cape tucked into his pants.

From here, the situation deteriorates. No one and nothing is spared, least of all good taste, but it is undeniably funny in a horrible sort of way, and painfully on target. Running through the whole series like a demented fugue is the super-fast, ultra-banal, happy-news commentary of Jay Garrick, played by Ed Bishop, who gave no indication of this (or any) kind of talent when he starred in the short-lived *UFO* TV series.

As far as I know, *Whoops! Apocalypse* has never been shown in the States, which is a shame, but I *think* it's available on cassette. Spend the money, if you can find the tape, and see this show. You will laugh. And you'll be haunted by the opening sequence—scenes of devastation against a background of flaming red, over the sound of a clanging bell. We zoom across the landscape to see a staring, emaciated figure selling something from a tray. The sign on the tray reads, "Wear Your Mushroom With Pride."

There's a recycled show on Thames that we haven't seen in the States—*The Sweeney*, named in Cockney rhyming slang for Scotland Yard's famous Flying Squad. Flying Squad—Sweeney Todd. See? Easy, unless you're just plain Dan Cupid. *The Sweeney* was an enormous success here; ran for years and would be going still if John Thaw hadn't gotten tired of playing Jack Regan, London's answer to Kojak.

The show, created by Ian Kennedy Martin, who did a couple of books, based on the series, which did appear in the States, plays like a combination of *Kojak*, in the gritty urban realism and the single-mindedness of Regan, and *The Streets of San Francisco,* in the joshing-affectionate by play between Regan and his sidekick, George Carter, played by Dennis Waterman.

The Sweeney is a solid show, but as good as it is, and, as popular as it was first time around, I think the reason Thames has resurrected it is the popularity of Dennis Waterman's new show.

It's called *Minder,* and it is, quite simply, the best British crime series since *The Avengers.* Like *The Avengers, Minder* restricts its adventures to one segment of British society. John Steed met no one but the upper classes; *Minder* functions much more realistically in a world of Cockneys.

A "minder" in Britain is what in America we call a bodyguard. The minder in this case is Terry Mc Cann (Waterman), a former middleweight contender who did a stretch in prison for throwing a fight. Out of jail and out of luck, Terry goes to work for Arthur Daley (George Cole), the most engaging semi-honest businessman on television since Sergeant Bilko. Both are constantly hounded by Chisholm, a young, ambitious copper with a large vocabulary and a lean and hungry look, played with a kind of righteous menace by Patrick Malahide.

The show has been beautifully crafted by creator Leon Griffiths, who also writes most of the scripts. The show revolves around Terry's various dilemmas—how to remain on the right side of the law without betraying old friends; how to stay honest while working for Arthur; how to protect Arthur from the law, the *real* villains he sometimes upsets with his sharp deals, and himself, not necessarily in that order; and how to have some fun in the process.

It's a terrific show; Waterman is a TV-star presence along the lines of David Jansen or James Garner, and he's as skilled as they are at portraying a good man trying to get along in a dangerous and dishonest world. George Cole brings a sort of middle-aged,

seedy elegance to Arthur, and a conviction to Arthur's moral rationalizations which almost convince theviewer, who knowsbetter.

Minder is the best show in the genre I've seen in years, bar none. It ought to be on an American network, but it won't be, more's the pity. It has two language barriers against it. The first is Cockney. Rhymingslangabounds, and no explanation isgiven. The viewer has to know (or figure out) that "tom-foolery" or "tom" means jewelry, or that a "tealeaf" is a thief.

The other barrier is "adult" language. Realistic vulgarity. Characters on *Minder* constantly refer to eachother by thetwo great Britishsynonyms alluded to earlier, and it's not unheard of for someone to be described as "sharp as a s** *house rat." Forget about network TV; I'm notevensurethe phrase I just typed isgoing to makeit uncensored intothe magazine.

Maybe there's a cableberth available for a quality show that asks just a little from an American audience. Is there an HBO executive in the house?

There's even a nicely done little mystery commercial on British TV, clever and fairly clued. It's an ad for a cleaning/polishing product called Sparkle. Thescene is a luxury compartment on a train. We see a woman's worried eyes. Voice-over narration: "The new Orient Express—and a new murder. But can the killer coverher tracks?" We see the Sparkle can in a woman's hand, then a montage of shots of her cleaning the room as the announcer talks about how great the product is, and all the things it will clean. He concludes with "...but has she left any clues for our detective?"

We see the detective frombehind. Trenchcoat and fedora—he dresses like Clouseau but talks like Poirot. "Hmm...a ver-ry polished zhob. Must have used Sparkle. But I think the killer overlooked some-thing..." Ane he picks up the Sparkle can itself, showing the two big fingerprints on it. Beautiful. And all donein thirtyseconds.

Finally, while we're discussing Poirot, a little culinary note. Fans of the little Belgian detective know that his favorite drink is *sirop de cassis*, or black-curranr syrup. I always thought he was being very Continental and exotic.

Forget it. The flavors in this country are vanilla, chocolate, and black-currant. Everything that *comes* in flavors, from yogurt to cough syrup, comes in black-currant. It's delicious, and I don't know why we don't have it in the States, but that's not the point. The point is that, even though Poirot always orders it in French, his taste in this regard is about as English as it can get. □

"The Devil Is With Power"

Joshua Clunk and the Fight for Right

By William A.S. Sarjeant

Most readers of mystery and detective fiction like to have a central character with whom they identify or for whom, if identification is impossible, they may develop either a liking or, at least, a measure of admiration. The anti-hero exists in this genre, but few authors manage to create such a figure satisfactorily. When they *do* succeed, their creation cannot normally be sustained beyond one book, and perhaps, a sequel; the morally despicable Arthur Abdel Simpson, of Eric Ambler's *The Light of Day* and *Dirty Story,* is one of the most successful and yet has appeared only twice.

Whether Joshua Clunk is to be considered hero or anti-hero is an open question. On the whole, his machinations seemed designed to attain justice; but quite often they bring him in a considerable profit also. He may be seen as a successor to that earliest of fictional lawyer anti-heroes, Randolph Mason, the creation of Melville Davisson Post. At least in his earlier cases (*The Strange Schemes of Randolph Mason,* 1896), however, Mason was consistently using the law to thwart justice. It is true that Clunk does this also at times and, indeed, one account of him might fit Mason equally well:

> Though his repute among other solicitors was incomparably bad, though judges had publicly denounced him and in private prayed that they might have him in the dock, he went on from victory to victory, and still the talk of the clubs declared that his most profitable cases were never heard of. (4, 15)

Yet, while Clunk may successfully defend on occasion a man whom he knows to be a criminal, the release of that man from custody does not necessarily mean that Clunk is finished with him. Sometimes Clunk is concerned to obtain information from him (1); sometimes Clunk will ensure, directly or indirectly, that his former client shall pay the penalty for a greater crime (9). Those who call upon the services of Joshua Clunk do so at their peril.

A recurrent problem for the reader is to discover whether, in any particular case, Clunk is acting from motives of altruism or self enrichment. From some of the investigations she instigates, through the police, his own staff, or both, Clunk does very well indeed (4, 8); in other instances, it seems likely that he has profited, but it is not altogether clear how (6); but there are cases also in which he has interceded wholly with an aim of attaining justice for the weak or oppressed (1, 7). The obscurity of Clunk's aims, the reasons why he acts as he does or causes others to act for him, and the problem whether all the villains will meet their just deserts because of or despite the processes of law — these are questions to irritate or, as in my case, to intrigue the reader in each account of Clunk's adventures.

For his own part, Joshua Clunk is quite confident whose side he is on, as the comment of another lawyer makes clear:

> "I never played a hand with anyone who sickens me like Josh Clunk . . . Do you remember what old Labby said, 'I don't mind his always having five aces up his sleeve but I object to his telling me the Almighty put 'em there.'" (3, 17)

It is indeed, Clunk's sanctimoniousness that most irritates his associates, whether of his own staff or of the police. At the successful conclusion of one case, one of his assistants comments sarcastically:

> "It is a masterpiece . . . the way you've managed to make one crime after another help you along."
>
> "No, no, no," Mr. Clunk exclaimed with fervour. "Not I, not you, Hopley. We mustn't praise ourselves. Give God the glory, great things He hath done. Wonderful are all his

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ways. Whathave I done, what haveyou done? Nothing of ourselves, nothing, but trust and obey. And now—" He turned and waved a plumphand fromthe ashes of the Vineyard to the splendour of the western sky. "Ah, look—

> I look awayacrossthesea
> Wheremansionsarepreparedforme,
> AndWatchthe shininggloryshore
> My Heaven, my homefor evermore." (8, 301)

Joshua Clunk was bornintothe inheritance of a law firm. His father had built up "a small respectable practice in people whowouldnot pay theirownbills" (1, 2). Respectable? Well, perhaps, though elsewhere we learn that father Clunk's practice was "reputed of the sharpest" (6, 180) and that "Victims of society whoneeded every trick within andwithout the law to getlittlebillspaidand evadepaying themhad learned to rely on him" (4, 14). It was young Joshua, however, who steered the firm of Clunk & Clunk in thedirectionofcrime.

> It wasdiscovered bythesmallfryofthe criminalprofession that no lawyercould make somuch of theirhopelesscases asJosh Clunk. Though he failed toget them off, he would atleast have agamewiththe police andgivethem a run for their money—even when money was lacking they had their run, if the case would make a show in the papers. So he attracted themore successfulpractitioners, the engineers of large-scale crime and its financiers, and the amateurs of talent, the respectable citizensadventuring intoample theft and fraud, learned that Joshua Clunk was the man for them. (1, 2)

Clunk is, indeed, a powerful figure to have fighting for one! His knowledge is deep and ranges widely, within and without those long rows of legal tomes thatepitomizethecasesand judgments of the past:

> Othersolicitors might sniffathis nameand counselpredict that old Clunk would end in the dock himself. All who knew anything knew there were manifold dangers in fighting Clunk & Clunk. Only the rash were confident his labours would not find an awkward gap in the strongest case, his cunning, his intimacy with the world of crime, play tricks with it for which the law had not provided. It was commonly said that he knew more of what was going on underground than any man in London and not uncommonly believed he was up to his neck in most of it. (1, 3)

By the time at which the chronicling of his cases begins, father Clunk is long dead and Joshua's practice well established. Though Joshua's age is nowhere stated, we know that in 1930 he has been in practice for more than 21 years (1, 5), so that, assuming he qualified as a solicitor at about the age of 25, hemust be at least 46 yearsold.

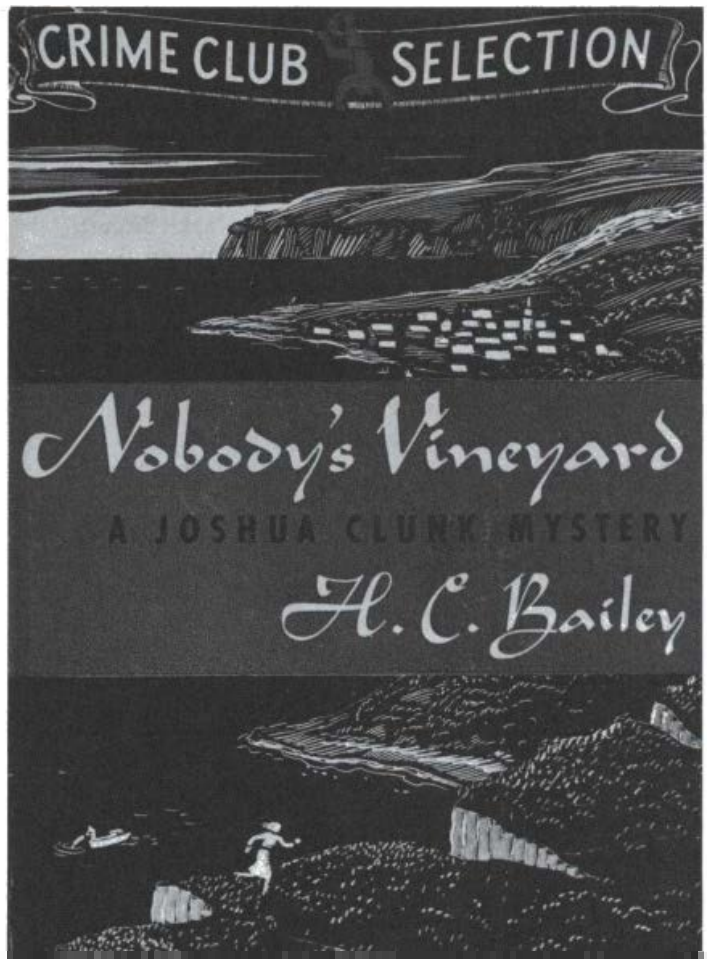
> In these days of his maturity, hedid not himself takea case in the police court unless it was big enough to fill the papers. The name of Clunk & Clunk commanded respect enough forthe young men from hisofficewho had learned aportionofhis bland persistence, hiscynicalfeelingforthe popular, hislack of scruple. (1, 3)

Of some of those young men, we learn only a little. There is Morris, encountered only when sent out to meet trains during the Garstons business (1, 256), and Charles Simmons, given some of the more uncomfortable duties duringthe difficult case of the twittering bird(4, 62, 68). Perhaps these two are not associated for long with Clunk, but, if so, their departure from his service is unusual. Though Clunk "admits no partner...it is rare for any of his very various staffto leavehim"(7, 19).

Theoutbreakof the Second WorldWar, however, causesseveral departures, presumably includingthat of his secretary Carter (6, 48-49). Since in wartime, men have become scarce, he is replaced by a lady, Miss Briggs (9, 52); probably she remains long with Mr. Clunk, butshegainsno subsequentmention.

Of the persons who continue in or return to his service, the most senior in position is his managing clerk, Jenks, "the only man in the firm who looked what a prosperous solicitor should" (4, 15). Though recurrently mentioned and conducting interviews with clients on occasion, however, Jenks remains in back stage. The members of the staff of Clunk & Clunk whom we come to know better are the four on whom Josh relies for his legwork—Lewis, Scott, Hopley, and, inthe later adventures, MissJohn.

Herbert Lewis, though junior in rank to Jenks, is



the eldest member of Clunk's staff, "a cadaverous man on whom nature had bestowed a rabbit's facial angle and a fox'scunning" (11, 64), bald (4, 15), and with prominent teeth that give him unmeritedly the look of a simpleton (1, 57). Lewis fought in the First World War, having been "through Passchaendale" (4, 74). He is "well acquainted with theworld and the flesh" (7, 37), and, though unmarried, he has his liaisons with the opposite sex (1, 59). He likes the good life, resenting it greatly when cases intrude upon his leisure time (1, 37) and, on one occasion, grumbling to Jenks,

"...Anybody can have my job for twopence. He's [Clunk's] got no bowels. Just a nasty bit o' wire."

"Livewire," said Jenks, and fled to make the tea. (1, 259)

Lewis serves as driver for Clunk on occasion (1) and is a reluctant pedestrian, walking "with lurching strides" (9, 66). Though always devious and distrustful and often complaining, Bert Lewis is more knowledgeable of the underworld than any other of Clunk's staff; he monitors for Mr. Clunk the day-to-day happenings in the police courts and is an expert at obtaininginformation fromdubious sources. Heis justly labeled by the police as "One of Mr. Clunk's prizesharpers, that fellow" (4, 127).

Jock Scott, so called because of his name rather than his origins, is the "robust member" of Clunk's staffand "the firstchoice for a case concerned with violence or the use of cars" (7, 50). He is a short, thick-set man with "an unobtrusive care in keeping out of people's way rather at variance with the pugnacity of his heavy face" (1, 220). Clunk considers him "a dear fellow who gets the confidence of the common people" (7, 134) and calls him "My Captain Greatheart" (7, 247),no doubt toJock's disgust!

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Scott joins the army, to be involved in the fighting on the Somme and left behind in France after the retreat of the British forces. After hiding in the Normandy woods and farms and dodging the German posts, he steals a small boat from a fishing village and, at full tide, sets out to sea. In the dawn, his boat is seen and shelled by an E-boat. Though British torpedo-boats came swiftly to his aid and sink the E-boat, Scott is badly wounded and, after amputation of his right arm, invalided out of the army. Despite this disability, he returns immediately to Clunk's employ (9, 34, 50–52; 10, 90). It is probably in an earlier combat that Scott has gained his cauliflower ear (9, 77).

In some matters, Scott is more informed than Clunk, as an exchangebetween themshows:

"...I have never met more thorough police work."

"My mistake." Scott grinned. "I didn't understand they meant this for work. I thought they were playing Slippery Ann."

"Slippery Ann?" Mr. Clunk repeated with disgust. "Whatever do you mean? I hope you will not be coarse."

Scott was even more amused. "Keeping it quite clean, sir I learnt Slippery Ann at mother's knee. Nice round game fortheyoungand innocent."

"Oh really. I begyourpardon. But I don't follow."

"Slippery Ann is the Queen of Spades and the game is not togetcaughtwithher."

"A card game!" Mr. Clark said sadly. "Dear me, why do youtalkofsuch thingsnow?"

"Pardon me, not such things. I haven't a word to say against Snap or Beggar My Neighbour or Chicken Feed But Slippery Ann seems to be the police game." (9, 77)

Victor Hopley, the third of Mr. Clunk's particular aides, has been described somewhat maliciously by Lewis as Clunk's "blue-eyed boy" (4, 15) and by others as "Josh's baby" (8, 49). He is a "spruce little man, of perky features" which suggest "both fun and earnestness." As "the only lieutenant of Mr. Clunk preserving a natural simplicity of mind," he is "the first choice for negotiations with the innocent" (4, 163). It is a help to him that "Not many men can gossip with such engaging simplicity, such unobserved capacity for observation as Hopley" (6, 103).

Of all Mr. Clunk's aides, it is Hopley who figures most frequently in the cases chronicled, helped on one occasion by his wife Polly of the "cheerfulapple-cheeked countenance" (8, 81). That participation is ended before Polly finds that she has a baby on the way (8, 277). Like Scott, Hopley serves in the army, at first in the Tank Corps and later in Intelligence (9, 50); but he returns unscathed. Later, when theirpost-war home serves as refuge for an injured fugitive, we learnthat he and Pollyhave a small boy and a small girl (11, 132). Hopley has a genuine affection for his employer, sharedby fewothers:

Many years with Josh Clunk had made him believe the little man a realgood sort under thetricksand the sobstuff and thepreaching. (11, 33)

Fay Delicia John, like his secretary Miss Briggs, enters Mr. Clunk's service during the war years (9, 50). She is a "plump young woman, her lively prettiness impaired by too much paint" (10, 70) and with a mischievous sense of humor which she is prepared to direct at her employer. When instructed to reside in a hotel room while awaiting a fictional fiancé, shehas this exchange:

"I've bought the ring," said she. "I've booked the rooms. How muchlongerdo Iwaitfortheman?"

"This is quite nice," Mr. Clunk smiled. "Yes. An engagement ring of rubies and white gold suits you, my dear."

"I'm so pure," said MissJohn."But what's the use with-

out a man?" (**10**, 101)

She is well equipped, physically and in quickness of intellect, to play her part in Clunk's schemes, and there are indications that, in Scott, she has found her man at last (**10**, 216).

Mr. Clunk has associations with a French law firm, the Beaucourts, talking in his "Cockney French" to young M. Beaucourt when the latter visits England (**4**, 108–10). Though ruefully respected, however, Mr. Clunk has few friends outside his office. The reaction of the police to him is ambiguous at best. When Mr. Clunk greets two policemen in the earliest chronicle,

> Superintendent Bell of the Criminal Investigation Department passed on with a nod and a grunt. "Who is your dear old friend, sir?" the younger, larger man asked.
> "Smug little cat, ain't he?" Bell growled. "Don't you know him, Underwood? You will. He's Clunk & Clunk, Joshua Clunk."
> "What, the crook's solicitor?"
> "That's the fellow. I'd say he's given us more trouble than any man that's never gone to jail."
> "I suppose so," Sergeant Underwood nodded. "Sails pretty near the wind too, don't he?"
> "And then some," said Bell. "Nasty little bag of tricks."
> "I've never seen him before. Looks like a churchwarden or deacon or something."
> "Most likely is," grunted Bell. "He would be." (**1**, 1–2)

The principal police characters in these stories are encountered also in H. C. Bailey's chronicles of police surgeon and detective Reginald Fortune (TAD 14:4)—naturally enough, since Mr. Fortune and Mr. Clunk are pursuing their separate careers in London at the same time. Indeed, Mr. Clunk plays a brief but significant role in one of Reggie Fortune's cases (**5**, 97–118) and was off-stage in another, contributing obliquely to its solution (**2A**, 136, 180–81). Mr. Fortune's advice has been important during several of Mr. Clunk's adventures (**4**, 126, 284; **6**, 261, 265; **10**, 203). Mr. Clunk, however, moves in a less elevated police sphere than Mr. Fortune; consequently, he has encountered Bell's immediate superior, the chief of the Criminal Investigation Department, on only two recorded occasions. The Hon. Sidney Lomas does not enjoy either encounter:

> Mr. Clunk came in with quick little steps. "Can I have your attention at last?" he squeaked, taking no notice of Lomas. "I remind you that you have a duty to the public, Mr. Bell. Your department has ignored it scandalously throughout. This is the most flagrant example."
> "Sit down sir," Lomas spoke loudly. "I have just given orders to send for you."
> Mr. Clunk consented to become aware of his presence. "Oh, Mr. Lomas! Are you here?" He laughed unpleasantly. "That is gratifying. I am happy to point out to you what will be said of your handling of this affair. You have done more than anyone would have thought possible to frustrate the course of justice."
> Lomas pointed to a chair. "I quite understand you're frightened, Mr. Clunk."
> "Are your misunderstandings deliberate or fatuous?" Mr. Clunk enquired. "Well, well, well. I must try to give you the benefit of the doubt. I will allow you are not corrupt, but, then, you have been supremely stupid. I can't condone it. No. You had a murder committed with clear indications of purpose. You took no useful action—you were idle and impotent. You allowed another murder to be attempted, and still ignored your duty. Now you have permitted a second murder, and still you do nothing but confuse and delay investigation." Mr. Clunk sat down and arranged himself with care. "I am here to put an end to this, Mr. Lomas."
> "You're here to explain your own conduct," said Lomas. "You realize you have involved yourself in grave suspicion? That is—"
> "Oh, no, no." Mr. Clunk interrupted. "I reject all that nonsense."
> "That is the position," Lomas went on. "Anything you say may be used in evidence. Are you—"
> "It will be used in evidence," Mr. Clunk broke in again. "I shall make sure of that." (**4**, 206–7)

And, on the second occasion, Mr. Clunk asks acidly: "Have you brought me here to assist you without informing yourself of the elements of the case?" afterward launching a series of verbal broadsides that reduce Lomas to a condition of hapless frustration (**7**, 250–52).

Superintendent Bell is "a square, slow man on whom hair grows thick," with "a shrewd downright way of thought and a vigorous determination" (**1**, 46). He was a member of the police force by 1908 and has good relations with all his associates, superiors and juniors alike, because of his essential honesty and fair mindedness. Clunk has called him

> ". . . A most persistent creature."
> "Oh, Bell's a bloodhound."
> "A terrier, I should say," Mr. Clunk corrected mildly. "An honest terrier. Very worrying." (**1**, 72)

Though at times they have acrimonious encounters (**4**, 104; **7**, 93) and Bell has, at times, lost his temper with Clunk (**1**, 172), Bell regards the solicitor with considerable respect:

> "Take it from me, I'd rather work with you than against you, Mr. Clunk," Bell said with a grim smile. "I know that much."
> "But it's charming of you to say that," Mr. Clunk tittered. "I hope you will. I hope we shall." And he began to hum:
>
> "There's work in my vineyard,
> There's plenty to do;
> The harvest is great
> And the labourers few."
>
> "How is the young lady?" said Bell hastily. (**1**, 291–92)

Indeed, after the Garston affair, Superintendent Bell figures in at least four other of Mr. Clunk's cases and

comes, if not altogether to trust, then at least to place a considerable reliance, in him. When asked by another policeman if Clunk runs straight, he smiles:

"And that's a teaser. I can only tell you nobody's ever caught Josh Clunk where he couldn't make out he had good and lawful reason. I've had a try or two myself, and he's always got away with it." (3, 192)

Yet, when Mr. Clunk is attacked by another colleague, Bell leaps to his defense:

"When you do want to be nasty, old man, I'll get out," said Bell. "Josh Clunk as a nark double-crossing the coppers is pretty good. I have thought that way myself in my time, though I never said it so sweet. But take it from me, when Josh says he'll work with you, he will, through or over, and you won't be under at the finish, however the case goes." (9, 97)

In fact, during that case, Clunk told Bell only so much of the truth as he saw fit, and, at the end of it, Bell was not permitted to learn the complete story.

Sergeant Underwood is a "natty square-built" man with a "faithful spaniel face" (11, 54)—quite another sort of dog! When he reappears in the Clunk saga, he has become Inspector Underwood (7, 150) and has been involved in the wartime fight against German espionage. By a still later encounter he has been promoted again:

Outside the court, Chief Inspector Underwood and Mr Clunk met with equal exhibitions of surprise.

"My dear friend, how odd but how pleasant!" Mr. Clunk cried.

"Not your lucky day," said Underwood.

"No indeed, nor yours, till this providential minute," Mr Clunk answered. "I have been sorely troubled on your account."

"Much obliged," said Underwood. "Though I don't get the idea."

"Ah, what a strange, what a happy event that you encountered me. Let us make good, wise use of it now. Pray come and take tea with me. There is need we should apply our minds together, you know there is."

"I'll hear anything you like," said Underwood. "You buy the risk it may be used as evidence." (11, 14)

Although prepared to recommend a client to Mr. Clunk (10, 65), Underwood has not, perhaps, gained quite the regard for him as has Supt. Bell. Underwood, however, recognizes that the solicitor deserves to be treated with respect:

The fervour, the oily affection, Underwood's experience assured him didn't mean a circumstance. But his pains-taking brain insisted that the religious lamentations went beyond the ordinary Josh Clunk humbug.

Josh sincere, ranting crazy fright—impossible—but it happened. Not all crazy, say half, the little shyster. He did smell out some realities and point at 'em. (11, 19)

Another associate of Reggie Fortune's who enters one of Mr. Clunk's adventures is the American secret service man, Waldo Rosen (10, 65), but they do not encounter one another.

There are other policemen and security agents whom Mr. Clunk respects. The walrus-moustached Inspector Hubbard, who figures in the unpleasant affair of the home for orphans, is one (7, 174–75 *et seq.*). In general, however, Mr. Clunk does not get on well with officials within or without London. He has commented:

"A man must be very good to be a good policeman and have brains, too. There are such dreadful temptations. We mustn't judge, Hopley. We shouldn't be hard. No, indeed. Let us be thankful we're not tempted like the poor police." (3, 103)

and, concerning another sort of official with whom his skirmishes are frequent:

Mr. Clunk, whose piety requires him to believe that whatever is is best for us, has never objected to the existence of coroners. He accepts them as creatures designed by Providence, like insects, to make life unpleasant that man's higher nature may be stimulated. (7, 49)

Except for regular associates such as Bell and Underwood, the administrators of justice, within or without the courthouses, do not tend to love Mr. Clunk. Since, so far as they are ever aware, he stays safely within the law, this does not distress him. After an encounter with a coroner in which Mr. Clunk wins all the honors, he observes complacently to Bell:

"You know, there are not many things I like better than thwarting an arrogant, foolish official. No. It's a great delight, Mr. Bell. And a pure delight." (7, 70)

And frustrate them he does, not only on that occasion but on many others, chronicled or unchronicled (see 1, 75–76; 3, 155–64; 7, 62–63).

The offices of Clunk & Clunk are located in Paul Place, Convent Garden, London (10, 67), occupying a house which

shows a front of snug domesticity, windows with Venetian blinds and plush curtains, as in the far-off days when the first Clunk lived there and throve on what no one else would touch. (7, 19)

Clunk's office "was once his mother's drawing room and still looks like it" (7, 20). It is on the second floor and, since there is no elevator (9, 34), must be reached by way of the stairs. It is "a dark and silent chamber at the back" of the house,

in red rep and mahogany and Brussels carpet. A gilt clock in a glass house held the middle of the white marble mantel piece and on either side in a glass case a stuffed canary

perched on artificial vegetation.

Mr. Clunkmoved each of themwith affectionate care a quarter ofan inch, contemplated the result, sat down at his table, andrang thebell and asked his clerk forthe Walker papers. (1, 3)

Quite often, Mr. Clunk will stand by the hearth, twittering to the stuffedbirds:

He was occupied in making little birdlike noises to them while the door opened. For a moment he continued to twitter,then started round."Oh,pardonme. I'm forgetting myself. I do so lovemy dearbirds." (4, 131)

And indeed, he scatters bags of crumbs on the room's twin window sills to feed the Covent Garden pigeons (10, 60).

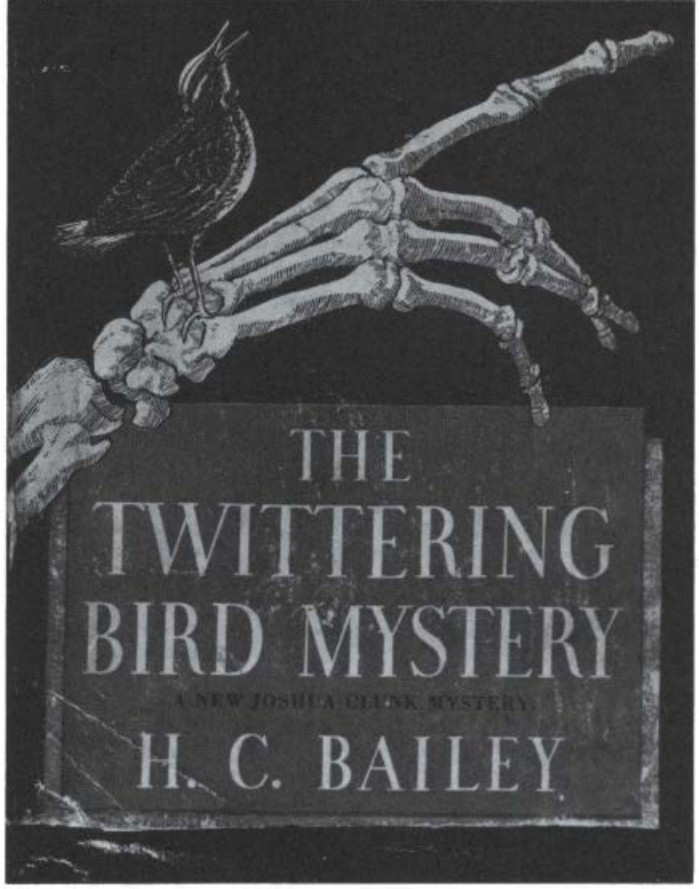
Between the two windows is a pierglass "of massive gilding" (10, 60) before which Mr. Clunk likes to standand preen himself (4, 108; 7, 20). The room contains at least seven chairs for visitors (7, 20), sometimes placed before the table but, more often, drawn back tomake space.

Mr. Clunk is a punctual man. When, on one occasion, he arrives"hours late without warning. these phenomena shocked the office" (4, 187). Originally he travels to CoventGarden by bus or streetcar and, on longerjourneys, exclusively bytrain:

It was the gloomy conviction of his staffthat he would be the last man in the civilized world to discover that cars existed. His fatuous preference for trains continually crampedtheirexpenseaccounts. (6, 81)

When he does purchase a car, he engages an ancient chauffeur, Barker, to conduct it along "at a stately processionalspeed" (6, 181); yet whendriven at much higher speed by Scott in a sports car, after complaining, "Oh dear, how low the seat is. I have neverbeen in a car like this before," he adds surprisingly: "It's not really comfortable, no, but most exhilirating. Go on, go on. I like it, I do really" (7,222).

Mr. Clunk has been always a Londoner, living originally in the house in Covent Garden, for a time (around 1908) in Highbury (1, 8), and then, as business prospers, purchasing "a castle of grey brick" (9, 66), originally "on the rural side of Highgate" (1, 12) but now entirely engulfed by the growth of London. The house is called "beulah" and has an extensive flower garden which contains a fountain (3, 80). During the war years, thegarden is turned to vegetables (9, 30), to Mr. Clunk's patriotic resignation. In the house is a "cupboard upstairs which he calls his study" and where he writes his sermons (1, 58), though it is usedalso for interviewing members of his staff when necessary. Its "most conspicuous elements are a harmonium and a large cage of canaries." (6, 135). Indeed, since birds are encouraged in the garden, and since Mrs. Clunk keeps canaries in the drawing room (1, 280) and lovebirds in the conservatory (4, 45), there is plenty at home for Mr. Clunk to twitter at, with a hope of more response thanfromthe stuffed birds in his office!



Mrs. Maria Clunk shares her husband's fondness forbirds:

She took Hopley intothe garden, telling him what a lot of thrushes theyhad that summer and there was a sweet little jenny wren had her nest in the hawthorn bank, who was actuallygoing to have a second set of babies, Mr. Hopley, such a darling— Mrs. Clunk was maternally arch—Listen to her ducky little husband singing to cheer her up, look at him,wasn't he just a fairy withthatfunnytail?

Allof thisdid not conceal fromHopley thathewas being taken into the garden because Mr. Clunk was at the telephone. (3, 80)

In due course, after Mrs. Clunk had fed the birds almost as amplyas she doesher husband,

Mr. Clunk came tripping on tiptoe, he stopped, his glossy, yellow face shone, his teeth gleamed. He put his hand on Hopley's armand whispered: "'Each little birdthat sings' Yes, indeed." With a gentlepressure hedrew Hopleyaway. "Do you remember that lovely saint who was the friend of allthe birds?SweetSt. Francis, ah, yes. Isn'tshelikehim?"

Any incongruity in the comparison of Mrs. Clunk's feminine amplitude to St. Francis of Assisi was not within Hopley's knowledge. "Yes, sir, very nice," he said. "Shall wegeton now?" (3, 80-81)

The marriage of Joshuaand Maria is a happy one, as isoftenmade evident:

Mr. Clunk sat in his drawing room drinking tea. The hour was two o'clock. The massive midday meal provided by Mrs. Clunk was inside him, the tea strong. His glossy face shone with deep content. He bit a piece of sugar in half, walked to the window and gave one half to each of the two canaries, chirruped to them, caressed the row of scented geraniums underneath them, came back to his easy chair, arranged his little legs on a hassock and a peppermint lozenge in his mouth. Mrs. Clunk, kissing the top of his head, rustled to the harmonium. After a little while, she also sang. Mr. Clunk, gurgling peppermint, joined in:-

"If we knew those baby fingers,
Pressed against the window-pane,
Would be cold and stiff tomorrow,
Never trouble us again,
Would the bright eyes of our darling
Catch the frown upon our brow?
Would the print of baby fingers
Vex us then as they do now?"

To this domestic felicity was introduced Superintendent Bell. He stopped short, he seemed uncomfortable, whether at the pathos of the lyric, or the mingled scent of peppermint and oak-leaf geraniums." (1, 280)

The Clunks have no family (11, 198), which is a pity, for Joshua is good, if indulgent, with children (3, 123–24) and Mrs. Clunk very maternal by nature. She looks after her husband with devotion and displays no undue curiosity about his doings—which, in view of their devious nature, is perhaps as well! As her husband has commented:

"... Mrs. Clunk doesn't like to hear business talk. She says it bothers her, dear soul. She likes me to tell her the points afterwards, if they're interesting. She's the best of counsellors." (1, 281)

The Clunks are hosts of the type who feel that any guest must instantly be fed:

Hopley was brought into a dining room fragrant with the steam of soup and cocoa and buttered toast.

Napkin in hand Mr. Clunk tripped to greet him. "My dear boy, this is so attentive of you, it's like you." He turned to his deep bosomed wife. "It's just like Hopley, my dear," and she gleamed and twinkled and purred that it was and would Mr. Hopley have some soup, just a veal broth, but it was so strengthening—a cup of cocoa then and the anchovy toast, Joshua—

Hopley protested that he had only just had dinner

"Come, come, a young fellow like you and you've been in the sea air all day," Mr. Clunk rallied him. "You can eat a bit of supper. I should hope so! Now there's a good pork pie. We make our own, you know, and I will have it, there's nothing like Mrs. Clunk's."

"I'm sure there isn't," Hopley was alarmed. "No, really, sir, I couldn't eat anything more to night."

"Dear me, I don't know what's come over you young people. You're so frugal, so abstinent. It's not right, my dear boy. The kindly things of the earth, we should enjoy them, that's the way to give thanks."

"But he must have what he likes, Joshua," Mrs. Clunk cooed. "We mustn't bother him. Just a little cocoa, then, my dear, and I'm sure you like sweets." A creaming cup, a plate heaped with trifle, were put before Hopley's anxious eyes

"There we are then," Mr. Clunk nodded satisfaction. He cut himself a slab of pork pie, he added to it spoonfuls of apricot jam, he ate with gusto. "Now my boy, what were you going to tell me?" (3, 66–67)

Mr. Clunk does not consume alcoholic drinks, to the disgust of at least one publican (1, 110), and does not smoke: indeed, when on one occasion Hopley dares to have a cigarette in his presence, it requires considerable temerity (8, 68). In contrast, as will be evident already, Joshua revels in his food. At home, it is amply provided. When away from home, Mr. Clunk is exigent in ensuring that he is provided for equally amply:

The laying of the table began. Hopley watched with awe half a cold goose arrive opposite pickled macherel, enquired nervously what was in the first pie and being told giblets, had no heart for more knowledge. A fat brisket came to the sideboard and brawn

Mr. Clunk bustled round a servant and her steaming tray. "What's this, Rachel, hare soup? Set it down. That's all, isn't it?" He shut the door upon her and beamed at Smith. "How good of you to come round at once my friend. You are just in time for our little supper. Won't you take a bite with us?" (8, 211)

In between meals, Mr. Clunk crunches boiled sweets and butterscotch (3, 18; 1, 260), frequently proffering them to clients or colleagues, though they are rarely accepted.

He fumbled in a pocket and brought out his bag of sweets and offered them. "No? Really? I find them so stimulating. Sugar! One of God's best gifts, pure sugar." He sucked with gusto. (1, 196)

As a consequence of these gustatory self-indulgences, Mr. Clunk is far from being lean of figure. In an early chronicle, he is described thus:

Mr. Clunk has been said by enemies to look like a small owl. He has large, pale, gogglingeyes, there is a lot of fluffy grey and white about his head, for his silvery hair is still abundant, and he has a grey moustache and white whiskers He does display an owlish solemnity at times when he is hard pressed and most dangerous.

But what he normally suggests is the smug, dowdy virtue of an easily satisfied nature. He is small and plump, he dresses in dark clothes of last century's cut, and is faithful to the flat white cravat of his father and grandfather, which he decorates, as they did, with one large ruby. His face has the shining yellow of old ivory and beams philanthropy (4, 16)

Occasionally, at least in earlier years, he follows the now almost extinct customs of wearing a flower in the lapel of his jacket:

Mr. Clunk was sprightly. He had a buttonhole of pelargoniums; he showed it off, he told Lewis they were his favourite flower; and Mrs. Clunk had made her

conservatory a sweetparadisewith them. (4,45)

Whether or not he has abandoned this custom, his dress has not changed with the years (10, 60). Moreover, in tune with the relatively primitive dental techniques prevailing in England until 1950s, Mr. Clunkhas false teeth(10, 164).

Mr. Clunk can be generous at times, contributing lavishly to charities when he recognizes them at all (9, 66, 94), and he has a simpletaste in music

He got on well with the sailors. Their taste in songs and singers was the same as his. The showy ones made him, for such a mild old codger, goall roguish; the sentimentalones delighted him. Between whiles, packets of cigarettes and even matches came from him without stint and at the end he took them round to the snuggery of the Anchor and stood drinks. They called him "uncle," they agreed that he was "that human," he assured them he took the greatest pleasure in hearing them spin their yarns—if he had the phrase right. He hadandtheyspunhim many. (9, 144)

He is always carolling hymns, to the delight of his wife and the despair of his associates. Sometimes they are cheerful, sometimes doleful. They do not necessarily match his mood:

As twilight fell, Mr. Clunk hurried away from the central post office of Sturton. His short steps kept time to the dolorous, jerkyhymnhe crooned:

"No wordscan declare,
Nofancycan paint
Whatrageand despair,
Whathopeless complaint,
FillSatan'sdark dwelling,
Theprison beneath,
Whatweepingandwailing
andgnashing ofteeth "

But he lookedserenelyjoyful (9, 137)

In his religious beliefs, he is fervent but particular:

No religious denomination could satisfy the ample spirit of Mr. Clunk. His place of worship was established by his own money and called a Gospel Hall. There three times on Sunday and once in the week Mrs. Clunk played the harmonium and Mr. Clunk preached the Larger Hope, whenbusiness allowed. (1, 3)

When away from home, he seeks other chapels if available (3, 127–29), going only with reluctance, or not at all, tootherplacesof worship (1, 107).

If he is a fervent believer in God, he believes equally fervently in the power of evil. "The Devil is with power," he hasstated (1, 167):

"Thought reading," Mr. Clunk made noises of sad disapproval. "I don't like that, Lewis. No. It's full of evil. PoorKingSaul was soright when he put away wizardsand familiar spirits out of the land. And yet he was tempted to use them, and he fell. The devil is an old serpent, Lewis. A subtle serpent. Don't be led in temptation." (4, 71)

Yet he is quite clear that it is his duty to be valiant in the fight against wrong. As he observes sharply to Lomas:

"As an officerof the HighCourt, as a citizen, I endeavour, in my humble way, to see that justice is done. Yes, indeed! 'Protect the children of the poor, punish the evildoer!' Those are our marching orders sir. Why do you disobey theminthis affair?" (4, 208)

And, on anotheroccasion, he exhortsBell:

" 'There's a war to wage, there's a foe to engage.The world is very sinful and the Devil's in a rage.' " (9, 71)

Only very rarely does he lose heart in this struggle, andthen only briefly:

". . .Oh dear, it is most painfulto know of wrong and have no power to work for justice. But we shouldn't repine, Hopley. 'It may not be my way, it may not be thy way but yet in His own way the Lord will provide.' Let us wait trustfully." (8, 173–74)

By waiting, sure enough, Mr. Clunk secures justice on that occasion—and a considerable profit for Clunk & Clunk. While Mr. Clunk is conscious that he is "Just a poor, humble vessel," he sees his duty plain before him·

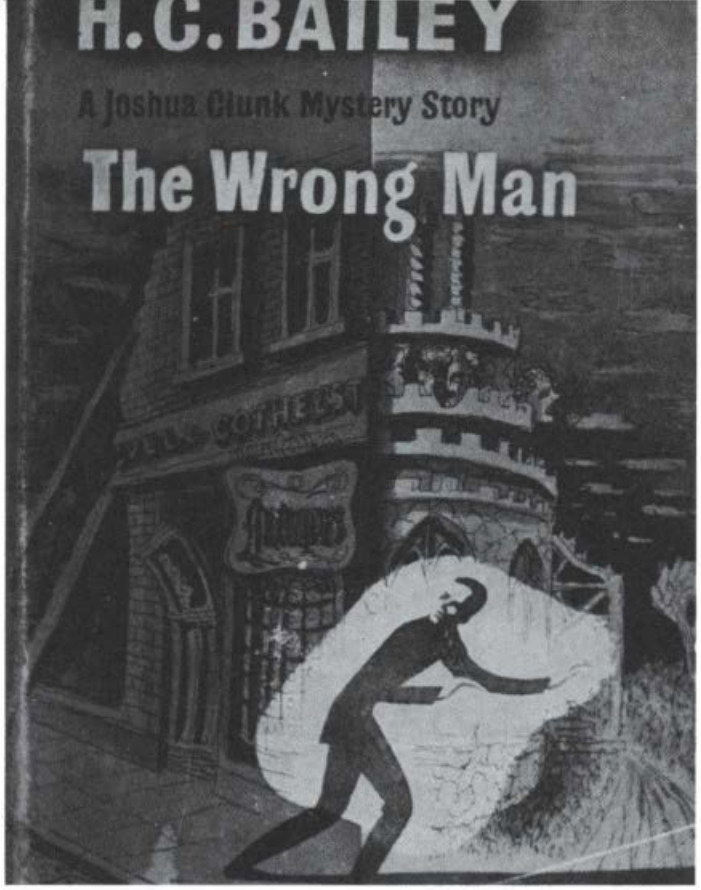
"There are foxes to take, there are wolves to destroy,
Therearesheep to be tended andlambs to be fed,
Thelostmustbe gathered, the wearyonesled

Such is my work,my friend." (3,297)

He considers that "The greatest pleasure here on earth is to win a hard battle in a righteous cause" (10, 224)andthat, ashe sings:

"There's acrownlaid upin glory
Therearerobes for all towear,
Andwe neverneedbe sorry
Thatwedid life's troublesshare.
Forourcrownwillshinethe brighter
Forthe battles wehavewon,
Andourrobewillbe thewhiter
Whenour travellingdaysaredone." (3,307)

Nevertheless, he has a nose for sniffing out cases which, along with the anticipated Heavenly glory, will bring actual profit for Clunk & Clunk! He has perceived this prospect, for example, in the apparently accidental drownings of a London estate agent(4) and of a small boy (8) and in a request for assistance against police persecution by a garage owner (3). His ability in recognizing an opportunity forprofitarousesthe half-resentful admiration of his associates, Lewis in particular (10, 64). He has been known to accept a commission from a woman whom



he perceived to be a blackmailer and, after smelling out and extirpating a great evil, to accept his small fee fromherquite cheerfully(7).

The complexity of Mr. Clunk's character, and one's continuing uncertainty about his motives, is a principal fascination of these chronicles. He is, indeed, hard to assess. He has caused Underwood to blink by saying, "I hate hypocrisy," (11, 167); and, in fact, many consider hiin a hypocrite. A lady to whom he talks may be impressed by his "simple charm," but we distrust him in the character of "a devout old fellow" and are not surprised when, within two pages, Scott is characterizing him as a "tricky old monkey" (9, 95, 96, 98). When Clunk dismisses the practice of another solicitor as "one of the worst in the profession," Bell "enjoys silent laughter" (9, 178). That Clunk can be sanctimonious, there is no doubt. Afterrecounting the storyof threedeaths in the same family, he rhapsodizes:

> "Oh, Lewis, whata gladsome dayforthem if they allmet in golden crowns besidethe crystal sea. Let us hope theydid; let us pray they did. Yes, indeed. All their woes a thousandfoldrepaid." (4, 73)

We are not surprised that Lewis growls in response! And yet, perhaps that rhapsodizing is genuine enough; one cannot be sure. Indeed, only rarely can one be sure that a Clunk comment is to be taken at face value—when he is annoyed with an associate, perhaps, as when he tells Bell or others: "Do apply your mind!" (1, 288) or when he is purringly complacent: "There are possibilities of infinite suspicion. That'salways sohelpful"(3, 126).

It hasbeen said of him that "Before they knew him most people were apt to feel superior to Mr. Clunk and desire to instruct him" (3, 83). When he allows them to do so, however, it is because he needs information from them or is using them. He is, indeed, very adept at manipulating people to attain his own purposes, as when, for example, he maneuvers a newspaper reporter into exposing a speculative building ramp (3, 88–90). Though he may give his subordinates direct orders, quite often they are left unsure what exactly he is after and may be destined never to find out.

Though Mr. Clunk prefers to leave the legwork of his cases to his subordinates or the police, Clunk is himself a percipient investigator. His observations of the evidences for arson, when on the site of a major fire, impresses the fire assessor considerably (8, 200–5); and we are furnished with many other examples of his acuteness of observation. He is aided also byan exceptional powerof recall:

> When he had ushered her out he rang the bell for Hopley. "Now my boy, I want you to take a note of the lady's instructions to me." His memory, which has been treated with incredulous derision by bench and bar, repeated almost every word she had said. (7, 23)

And, in that instance, both Hopley and he perceive clearly the hidden intent behind the instructions. It is not easyto fool JoshuaClunk.

Mr. Clunk is too small and too elderly to contemplate any involvement in energetic action; for that, heuses Scott. When, on one occasion, hecomes closer than desired to being embroiled in a scene of violence, he retires discreetly to Hopley's car (7, 230–35). When Bell, Mr. Clunk, and another encounter a murderer with a revolver, however, Joshuaacts courageously enough (1, 268).

If he is not physically brave, Mr. Clunk has his own, considerable moral courage. He does not hesitate to take any action which, he believes, will attain the endsof truejustice. Nordoes he hesitateto assume a burden of moral responsibility that many would find awesome. On one occasion, he allows a murderer to evade the law because he believes the murderer less guilty, in an absolute sense, than the victim (3). In another instance, he conceals the crucialevidence of a murderhe considers justified(6, 8). He has, quite deliberately, framed an evil woman for attempted murder (10) and he has allowed the conviction of members of an evil family for a "murder" he knows to have been suicide (4). He has even, on one occasion, deliberately set up a murder, so that the supremely evil victim, her scarcely lessvile murderer, and an unpleasant associate might be

brought to punishment (7). That those criminals who have died or been executed go straight to Hell, Mr. Clunk does not doubt. On the expiry of one, he

"Yes, the wretched man is gone'Forever to dwell, In sin's tormentssure, With devils in Hell.' Ah, yes." (9, 162)

He views the fact, if not with gratification, at least withoutregret.

All in all, whenClunk reproves Hopley:

"...You surprise me. You hurt me. I thought better of your judgement. This is so timid, so fee-eeble. Dare to be a Daniel, my boy. Dare to stand alone. Dare to have a purpose firm and dare to make it known. That's the right way. That's thewiseway." (3, 175)

We may be amused, as so often, at his sanctimoniousness, but we know that he is enunciating the principle hehas himselfadopted.

It maybe truethat·

From experience of the manifold and uncovenanted devices in a case managed by Clunk & Clunk, other solicitors, barristers, some magistrates and some judges of the High Court—to say nothing of the emotions of the police—cherish hopeand faith thatsomedaythe tardy hammer of justicewillfalluponJoshua'shead.(7, 19-20)

Those same persons, however, have admitted that "you must get up very early in the morning to catch Josh Clunk" (9, 30). We need not doubt that the "great little shyster" (10, 75) will succeed in traveling undisturbed his own particular path to Eternity. Perhaps he will indeed find that crown of glory waiting for him!

THE PUBLISHED CASES OF JOSHUA CLUNK

In the listwhich follows, the edition referred to (if any) is placed first,whetherEnglish or U.S., andits exact pagination is given. Information concerning otherеditions, with alternative titles where necessary, is given in parentheses All works are, of course, by Henry Christopher Bailey (1878–1961),Clunk's only chronicler sofar

(1) 1930 *The Garston Murder Case*. Garden City, N.Y.: for The Crime Club, Inc., by Doubleday, vii + 293 pp. + 1 p. advt. [English title: *Garstons*. London: Methuen]

(2) 1932 *The Red Castle*. London: Ward [U.S. title: *The Red Castle Mystery*. Garden City, N.Y.: for The Crime Club, Inc., by Doubleday] Not seen.

(2A) 1934 *Shadow on the Wall*. London: Modern Publishing Co., 184 pp. [Also publ. New York Doubleday]

(3) 1935 *The Sullen Sky Mystery*. Garden City, N.Y.: for The Crime Club, Inc., by Doubleday Doran, vii + 308pp. [Alsopubl. London: Gollancz]

(4) 1937 *The Twittering Bird Mystery*. Garden City, N.Y for The Crime Club, Inc. by Doubleday Doran, ix+299 pp. [English title: *Clunk's Claimant*. London: Gollancz]

(5) 1939 *TheGreat Game*. Garden City, N.Y.: for The Crime Club, Inc., by Doubleday Doran, vii + 309 pp. [Alsopubl. London: Gollancz]

(6) 1939 *Mr. Clunk's Text*. Garden City, N.Y.: for The Crime Club, Inc., by Doubleday Doran, ix+303pp. [English title: *The Veron Mystery*. London: Gollancz]

(7) 1941 *Orphan Ann*. Garden City, N.Y.: for The Crime Club, Inc. by Doubleday Doran, ix+307pp [English title: *The Little Captain*, London: Gollancz]

(8) 1942 *Nobody's Vineyard*. Garden City, N.Y Doubleday Doran, vii + 301 pp. [English title: *Dead Man's Shoes*. London: Gollancz]

(9) 1944 *The Queen of Spades*. Garden City, N.Y.: for The Crime Club, Inc. by Doubleday Doran, vii + 231 pp. [English title: *Slippery Ann*. London: Gollancz]

(10) 1945 *The Wrong Man*. London: Macdonald, vii + 7-224 pp. [Also publ. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Doran]

(11) 1947 *Honour Among Thieves*. London: Macdonald, vi + 7-221 pp. [Also publ. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Doran]

(12) 1950 *Shrouded Death*. London: Macdonald. Not

Thewriterhas heard that one of Mr. Clunk'scaseshasbeen published as a short story. If this is indeed so, he would welcome details. □

Published in London by Ward, Lock and Co. in 1904, Perils of the Red Box *is an extremely scarce short story collection by Headon Hill, one of the more prolific authors of his time. Many of his stories are much like the work of William LeQueux, which is a hearty recommendation only if one is a fan of detective stories without detection, mystery stories without an element of mystery, and espionage tales with no hint of subterfuge or intelligence on the part of the bad guys (who change from decade to decade, according to which European country seems most threatening at any given time). The value of the stories, however, as with LeQueux's, is as mirrors of their era as they reflect popular xenophobia. The present story is not the best in the book from which it was taken (though it is reasonable to state that there is a narrow gap between the best and the worst), but it has the most interesting illustration, reproduced here, by a good turn-of-the-century book illustrator, Henry Austin. The author, Headon Hill, is best remembered (if at all) for* Zambra, the Detective, *which may politely be said to have been strongly influenced by Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories.*

—Otto Penzler

CLASSIC CORNER

Rare Tales From The Archives

The Tsarina's Wedding Present

by Headon Hill

When I took my two months' leave, and went north for the grouse-shooting in the year of the present Tsar's marriage I had only one regret. I was compelled to break off a very interesting flirtation with Fraulein Netta von Friednau.

Netta was altogether charming—a real golden-haired German blonde with a peach-blossom complexion and sea-blue eyes, not for one moment to be confounded with the pasty-faced, cane-coloured type that is all too common. She held the position of maid of honour to the exalted personage whom I am constrained to disguise under the pseudonym of her Serene Highness the Grand Duchess of Silesia. The Grand Duchess was a very great lady indeed, nearly related to our Royal Family, and given to spending a great portion of her time in England, where she was a favourite both at Court and in the inner circle of society.

I returned to town in the early part of November, and dining at the Duke of Selhurst's on the night after my arrival, I was agreeably surprised to find the Fraulein Netta and her Serene mistress among the guests. What could have induced the Grand Duchess to remain in England contrary to her usual practice, so long after the close of the London season, I could not imagine; but whatever the cause I rejoiced in the opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with Netta von Friednau.

I told her so the moment I got a chance to speak to her, which was not till quite late in the evening, when every minute I was expecting to hear the Grand Duchess's carriage announced. But her Serene Highness seemed in no hurry to go, and seeing her embarked on a duel of playful badinage with our host, I managed to catch Netta's eye and direct it towards the winter garden adjoining the drawing-rooms. I slipped out, and a moment later she joined me among the palms.

"It is nice of you to say so," she said in answer to my expressions of pleasure. "But I fear that we only meet to part again immediately. We are off to Russia for the Tsar's wedding in a few days."

"To Russia—to Petersburg!" I exclaimed. "Then you must not make so sure of having seen the last of me. My duty may, and probably will, take me to Petersburg before the week is out. Do you not remember, Fraulein, that I told you that I was a Queen's Messenger—on the Russian service?"

I was huffed that she should have so soon forgotten; but her next words, spoken in the

caressingtone I knew so well, and all the more piquant for their faint trace of foreign accent, set my pulses throbbing.

"I remember now, but you said so many other pretty things at the same time that I had forgotten. It was of you—not of what you were—that I was thinking. Poor little me!"

After this we had to be silent for a while, and then she told me why the Grand Duchess had prolonged her usual sojourn in England to so late a period in the year. Her Serene Highness, who was distantly related to the future Tsarina, being convinced of the superiority of English workmanship, had entrusted an order for a superb wedding-present to Messrs. Bolton and Field, the well-known Bond Street jewellers. The present was in the form of a tiara of diamonds, having for its centre a noted stone known as "the Mogul's Gem," and itself worth £20,000. Reckoning the price of the smaller stones, and of the setting, the total cost of this princely offering would not fall far short of the enormous sum of £50,000. The Grand Duchess took the greatest interest in every detail of its manufacture, which she might almost have been said, from Netta's description, to have personally supervised. It had now been completed, and it was the intention of the Grand Duchess to herself convey it to Petersburg, whither she had been invited as a guest to the wedding.

When the fair Von Friednau had imparted this information it was high time for her to return to the drawingroom, and soon after the carriage of the Grand Duchess was announced. With the departure of Netta and her Serenity I dismissed the subject of the tiara from my mind as not concern of mine, beyond having given me a pleasantquarter of an hour with a very pleasant little friend. For all that the tiara was to concern me intimately, and I was to learn in what way before I left the house that night.

The Duke of Selhurst, it may be remembered, was not only the father of my friend Poindexter, who had procured me my post as Queen's Messenger, but was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and as such the head for the time being of the department which I served. On my advancing to take leave of him, he asked me to postpone my departure for a few minutes, and led me into the library. I noticed that he closed the doorcarefully behind us.

"You will have to go to Russia with despatches the day after to-morrow, Melgund," he began "You will hear of the despatches in the ordinary routine from the Foreign Office, and I only mentionyour journey because I have a commission for you rather out of the common "

And to my surprise he proceeded to recountwhat I had so lately listened to—the story of the costly wedding-present which the Grand Duchess of Silesia was making to the future Tsarina—and wound up with the requestthat I would convey the tiara to Petersburg

Coming from him the request was virtually a command, but in assenting I must have permitted my face to show astonishment. For the Duke smiled slightly as he condescended to explain.

"It is very irregular, of course," he said; "but I am really as powerless in the matter as you are. Her Serene Highness not only preferred the request to me personally to-night, that the Foreign Office would take charge of the tiara, but she backed it with an autograph letter from the—" (he mentioned a high personage) "endorsingthe proposal."

"I understood from Frauleinvon Friednau that the Grand Duchess was on the point of starting for Russia in order to be present at the ceremony," said I

"Meaning, though your chivalry prevents you from saying so, that she might very well carry her present herself," laughed his Grace. "That was her original intention, but it appears that the jewellers who have been making the thing have received an anonymous warning that certain professional criminals have a design for attempting to steal the tiara *en route*. This so scared the Grand Duchess that she bethought her of getting her present entrusted to the care of a Queen's Messenger, who would never be suspected by the thieves of having it in his charge. Knowingthat she was to be my guest to-night, she armed herself with the high authority that I have mentioned, and mootedthe question in a way there was no refusing."

As a result of this conversation, and of certain instructions which the Duke gave me before I left, I drove up to the shop of Messrs. Bolton and Field two days later to call for the tiara. I was on

my way to Victoria, since I always used the Queenborough and Flushing route. As I had already been introduced to Mr. Bolton at the Foreign Office, and I called by appointment, there was no difficulty about my credentials. The senior partner at once handed me the glittering ornament, which for my satisfaction he packed into its own case before my eyes. I locked it into the red box immediately.

"I suppose that this is really all nonsense—that the anonymous warning was nothing but a hoax," I remarked, as I prepared to return to my cab.

"Possibly; yet I think that the Grand Duchess is wise to be on the safe side," replied Mr. Bolton gravely. "You see, on receipt of the letter I communicated with Scotland Yard, and the authorities there held the opinion that it was probably genuine. They could conceive no object in the sending of it otherwise. The view they took was that it emanated, not from a traitor in the criminal camp, but from some female friend alarmed for the safety of the intending thief, and therefore anxious to thwart the attempt by enabling precautions to be taken. The letter was in a woman's hand-writing, though disguised, and was written apparently under the misapprehension that the tiara was to be conveyed to Russia by us."

"No details of the nature or place of the proposed attempt were given?" I inquired.

"There was nothing of the kind," the jeweller replied. "Here is the letter, if you care to see it."

The half-sheet of note-paper which Mr. Bolton proffered was of the best quality and texture, and I could understand that it would be practically useless as a clue. It bore the water-mark of well-known makers whose goods have an extensive sale at all high-class stationers. No more was to be gathered from the words written upon it, which were brief and vague—

"Look out! There is a plot to steal the diamond crown that you are making to go to Russia. It will be done on the journey. Your man should watch himself."

The slangy colloquialism of the warning—as instanced by the phrases "Look out!" and "watch himself"—seemed so much at variance with the elegant stationery as to suggest that it might have been purposely affected. Indicating this to Mr. Bolton as the only point that occurred to me, I thanked him for showing the paper and bade him good-night.

I arrived at Victoria with but little time to spare, my stoppage at the jewellers having been longer than I had intended; but, as I had arranged for a reserved compartment, that was rather an advantage. The passengers had all taken their seats, so that I had not the anxiety of safe-guarding the now doubly-precious red box on a crowded platform. The run to Queenborough was made without incident, and as it was raining heavily I made my way as quickly as possible on board the steamer, where I at once gave the box into the care of the captain, and saw it safely locked up in the bullion-room.

Satisfied that during the passage at least my charge would be out of danger, I went into the saloon and amused myself with watching the entry of the other passengers. At that season of the year there were not a great number, but as one and all sought shelter from the rain the saloon was soon as full as it often is on a calm summer night. I had just come to the conclusion that no suspicious-looking characters had made their appearance when the chief steward entered, and with an obsequious bow ushered in two ladies, a gentleman, and a tall footman who retired after depositing a pile of cloaks and wraps. I was somewhat startled. The ladies were the Grand Duchess of Silesia and the Fraulein Netta von Friednau, and I had no difficulty in recognizing the gentleman as Herr Baumann, the Grand Duchess's private secretary.

A moment's reflection showed me that there was no real reason for astonishment. I knew that the Grand Duchess was due at Petersburg for the wedding in the course of a few days, quite irrespective of the costly present she was giving. Her travelling in the same boat with the tiara which she had been afraid to convey herself was therefore a quite intelligible coincidence—a coincidence which was altogether delightful as suggesting my obvious duty in demanding explanations from Netta von Friednau.

This I was unable to do at once, for as I had never been presented to the Grand Duchess it would have been a gross breach of etiquette to approach Netta while she was in attendance on her

Serene mistress. But as soon as the boat sheered off from the landing-stage her Highness retired to her state-room, after a few whispered words to the deferential Baumann, accompanied, I was nearly certain, by a fleeting glance in my direction. From this I concluded that the Grand Duchess knew me by sight, and took an interest in me as the Queen's Messenger entrusted with the care of her property. I had no doubt that her scrutiny of me had convinced her that she might sleep soundly, in the certainty that the tiara was in safekeeping.

Netta vanished into the stateroom with the Grand Duchess, and Herr Baumann seated himself at the saloon table with a newspaper, over which I began to have the impression that he from time to time watched me. Not rudely or obtrusively—for it was hard to catch him at it—yet I resented the peeping and prying as an ungentlemanly impertinence. As he had never been introduced to me, and his manner was not openly offensive, I could not very well take notice of it, but I presently moved my seat to another part of the saloon.

In about half-an-hour Netta von Friednau came out of the state-room, and was passing close to me when I rose up and detained her, in some uncertainty as to whether she was aware of my presence on board. Her lack of surprise on seeing me dispelled all doubts on that head.

"I am going to find the Grand Duchess's maid," she said. "She is with the other servants in the second saloon. When I come back I have something funny to tell you. I do not know whether it will make you angry or make you laugh, but you will please me best if you laugh."

"Then I shall go into fits," I said.

In a minute or two she returned with the lady's-maid, and having conducted her to the state-room came back to me. I did not know if the fair Netta had been apprised of my having charge of the tiara, and during her absence I had decided that, much as I admired her, it was no part of my duty to impart the confidence. Her very first words, however, showed that I need put no restraint on myself in that respect.

"So it is you who like a brave knight have come to the assistance of two frightened women," she began. "When the Grand Duchess told me that the wedding-present was to be taken to Russia by a Queen's Messenger, I said to myself, 'That will be nice. It will be Captain Melgund.'"

Her artless simplicity touched me to the quick. "You dear little girl," I said. "But how could you be sure it would be nice? It was all a chance that we journey together."

"That is part of the funny thing I am to tell you," she was beginning, when I noticed that Herr Baumann had changed his position and was furtively observing us. A woman, that is to say a pretty woman, can do anything to me, but I am quickly annoyed by men who transgress the code of politeness. I interrupted the Fraulein rather more briskly than I could have wished.

"Pardon me! One moment!" I said. "I have not the pleasure of Herr Baumann's acquaintance, yet he seems to take a very close interest in my proceedings. He has been watching me ever since we came on board, and now he has moved nearer to us in a manner that I regard as offensive. If it is that he is jealous of your kindness to me, Fraulein, I can pity him, and forgive him, but I think I must go and ask him not to make himself a nuisance."

Netta, who was looking her best that night, tucked a stray curl into her smart little travelling toque and smiled up at me archly.

"That also is part of the funny thing I am to tell you, which will make you angry or make you laugh," she said. "Do not, I beg of you, be cross to poor Herr Baumann, or you must be cross to poor me too. For I also am watching—by the orders of her Serene Highness."

"I am only a stupid old soldier, and I do not understand," I said in genuine astonishment.

"It is like this," replied Netta. "Her Highness is gone—what you call it?—crazy over that tiara, I think. First there is a letter to the jewellers, and she fears that she will be robbed if she takes her present to Petersburg herself. Then she uses her influence to have it taken by a Queen's Messenger. No sooner is that arranged than she fears that the Queen's Messenger—which is you, my dear friend—will run off with the tiara himself. That is why we travel by the same train and boat, and why she commands Herr Baumann and little me to—what you call it?—keep an the eye on you."

To be angry or to laugh? Well, I have a fairly developed sense of humour, yet I really for the

moment failed to see the fun of the situation. A great responsibility, and, it might be, personal risk, had been thrust upon me, entirely unsought, at the request of the Grand Duchess, and here she was shadowing me by the eyes of her suite as though I was a common thief. A righteous wrath seemed to be the only tribute that I could pay to my wounded dignity.

But the torrent of resentment that rose to my lips was stemmed by Netta von Friednau's roguish eyes, which said as plainly as in words that the laugh was not at my expense. The expression on her face was infectious; I felt the muscles of my mouth begin to twitch, and whether I would or no I foundmyself enjoying thejoke from her point of view.

"Is not her Highness too ridiculous!" she said when we had finished laughing. "This is not the first instance I have had of her suspicious nature, I can assure you. She gives me some pretty work to do sometimes. And that is not all the fun. There is the unfortunate Baumann. He knows the—what you call it?—humbug of the thing as well as me. He is the sleepiest of the sleepy, yet he dare not go to his berth, but must sit there blinking like an owl for fear you run away—into the sea."

We sat chatting for sometime, the Fraulein indulging in some rather disloyal mirth at the expense of her soverign, and then, as then most merciful mode of releasing my charming little friend and her colleague, the sleepy Herr Baumann, from their vigil, I said good-night and went to my berth. After all, I argued as I turned in, the extraordinary behaviour of the Grand Duchess towards one of her Majesty's Messengers had given me a very pleasant reunion with the pretty maid of honour.

But though I promised myselffurther delights on the journey, that conversation on the boat was the last of any duration that I was destined to secure with Netta before entering Russia. At Flushing a special saloon-carriagefor the use of the Grand Duchess had been attached to the train, with compartments for the suite and the servants, and all I could do was to watch the dainty Frauleinfrom afar as she tripped across the carpeted platform in the wake of her Serene mistress. Baumann, the lady's-maid, the tall footman laden with wraps, and halfa-dozen other servants sorted themselves into their appointed places, and I went to take my own seat in an ordinary *coupé*.

So it was at Brussels, and at Berlin, and at the other important stations where there were stoppages for meals. I got no chance of a word with Netta, nor so far as I could see was the watch upon my movements by any of the suite resumed. It is true that I carried the red box ostentatiously, and put myself much in evidence in the neighborhood of the saloon carriage during the stoppages, so that I supposed that the Grand Duchess was at length goodenough to be satisfied of my honesty.

At Wirballen, the frontier station where the train enters upon the Russian railway system, I got the first opportunity of questioning Netta upon the point. At this place the customs' examination of passengers' luggage is made, and while this ceremony was in progress the Grand Duchess remained in the waiting-room, the Fraulein von Friednau being delegated to overlook the officials. As a well-known Queen's Messenger with a British Foreign Office pass I had more latitude than is accorded to ordinary travellers in Russia, and I walked boldly into the baggage-room. Netta was standing by while a burly, blue-coated Muscovite overhauled a trunk of silk and satin fripperies. I touched her on the arm

"So I am no longertreated as a criminal?" I said.

"No, she has recovered," replied the Fraulein demurely. "You see, when she found that you came on in the train she thought that she might trust you. It was at Flushing she feared you might—what you call—give the slip, eh? Poor Baumann—he can sleep now."

"Her Highness is most kind, and you may tell her, Fraulein, if the etiquette of your exalted Court does not forbid, that she also may sleep soundly now," I replied. "In Holy Russia I am beyond the reach ofeven the most skilled English criminals, and to-night I shall deliver the tiara at our Embassy. Then it will be my turn to laugh, and I shall not fail to do so when I get back to my clubs."

Netta trilled out a joyous ripple of merriment. "Yes, you will be entitled to tell the story against her Serene Highness," she replied. "I should wish to be there—in your great solemn

clubs—to hear you. But seriously, dear Captain Melgund, I am pleased that you have brought the tiara to safety without danger to yourself. As you say, here in Russia such people as wrote the lettercould not come. They would not be able to get passports."

I stayed by her during the remainder of the examination, placingat her service my knowledge of Russian, of which neither Netta nor any of the suite seemed to know a single word. The customs room was very crowded, the herd of passengers, mostly American and French, jostling and pushing to get early attention from the officials; but by my aid the Silesian baggage was quickly passed. The Fraulein was murmuring her thanks, preparatory to hastening back to the Grand Duchess in the waiting-room, when a man's voice, pitched in a tone of authority, called distinctly —

"Fraulein von Friednau!"

"Your Serene Highness!" replied Netta promptly, turning, as though startled, to look for the speaker. Then, in an instant, she broke into one of her warbling laughs. "How silly of me!" she cried, her colour deepening. "I fancied I heard the Grand Duchess calling. That, of course, is impossible; she would not come among this rabble. Again a thousand thanks, and *au revoir* at Petersburg." And she was gone before I could assure her that she *had* beencalled, though not in a voice which even in the prevailing din could be mistaken for that of a woman.

Now, at the sound of Netta's name spoken so authoritatively, I had also turned in search of the owner of the voice. Rapid as was my glance, I could pitch upon no one amid the throng who seemed to have addressed the Fraulein, or who was affiected by her promptly-uttered reply. Yet I was positively certain that her name had been called, and by a man. The only male member of the suite visible was the tall footman whose chief function seemed to be the carrying of rugs and wraps. He was leaning against the wall just inside the door of the customs room, gaping abstractedly at the crowd. He did not accost Netta as she passed out, but drew himself up and bowed low, which would hardly have been his conduct had he been sent to her with a message. Besides, the maid of honour would never have replied so naturally to the footman, "Your Serene Highness!"—almost as if it were wrungfrom her by force of habit

And then, as I looked at the fellow again, I was startled by the germ of an idea that that hurried "Your Serene Highnesss" of Netta's might have been the result of force of habit after all. The Hohenmeisters of Silesia are an ancient race, impoverished somewhat, andfallen from their high estate as independentsovereigns; but their degeneration into mere understudies ofthe omnipotent Kaiser has failed to stamp out certain marked peculiarities of feature and mien handed down to them through many centuries. The footman with the wraps and rugs possessed no less than three ofthose peculiarities to a pronounceddegree.

Could it be, I wondered, that the Grand Duke of Silesia was accompanying his wife to Petersburg in such strict incognito that he had assumed the character of a menial servant? Though my life was spent in carrying political despatches, I troubled my head but little with international affairs, and it was quite possible, I told myself, that there might be political reasons why the Grand Duke could not enter Russia in his own august personality. In that case—if my wild surmise was correct—the phrasing of Fraulein von Friednau's prompt response to her unavowed interlocuter was intelligible. It would have been a sudden slip due to her preoccupation at the moment, and smartlyrectified by both parties to the secret.

Anyhow, it was no affair of mine, and could have no bearing that I could see on my official duty or my private pleasure—the one being to deliver my despatches and the tiara to Petersburg, the other to make love to Netta von Friednau afterwards. I lounged out of the customs room on to the platform, staring the footman full in the face as I went. He blinked stupidly at me—more especially at the red box that I was carrying under my arm—but close to him I was able to strengthen, if not to verify, my suspicion. The resemblance to the Hohenmeisters of Silesia—to the reigningGrand Duke, from my recollection ofhis photographs—was distinctly traceable

The tedious exigencies of the frontier being completed, the train started for its long fifteen-hour run to Petersburg. On the Russian system also a private saloon had been put at the service of the Grand Duchess; so that had I been so disposed I should have had no opportunity of cross-

examining Netta as to the truth of my surmise. The Fraulein, as maid of honour in personal attendance, travelled in the saloon, the rest of the suite being accommodated in the end compartments of the same carriage; and I particularly noticed that the footman took his seat with the inferior servants, not in the compartment occupied by Herr Baumann, the confidential maid, and a newly-arrived, black-coated individual whose functions I had yet to learn.

I shared a compartment with a couple of American tourists, whose amusing chatter so enlivened the journey through the dreary Russian landscape that when the train stopped at Dwinsk at eight in the evening I was surprised to find that we had come so far. Dwinsk is the junction for Riga, and there was a stoppage there of ten minutes. Having made an early dinner at Wilna, I did not leave my compartment, and about half the wait was over when the Fraulein von-Friednau, looking hot and worried, appeared at the window. She shot a quick glance at my fellow-travelers, and beckoned me to her.

"I am ashamed of my errand, after the way you have been treated," she began. "It is only because I know your good nature that I dare. Her Highness has been taken ill with one of the attacks to which she is subject, and her medical man, who travels with us, has forbidden her to go on. We cannot make the station officials understand that we want the saloon detached, so that we may take her Highness to the hotel and go on in the morning. Will you speak to them in Russian for us?"

Of course I was out on the platform in a twinkling, and, reassuring Netta, accompanied her to the saloon, where Baumann was gesticulating to the station-master and the guard of the train. Taking the matter into my hands, I soon made it clear to the officials, who began in leisurely Russian fashion to arrange for the shunting of the saloon. Before this could be done it was necessary to remove the illustrious patient, and I remained to make myself useful. The Grand Duchess had fainted, and the black-coated man, who turned out to be the court physician, was plying her with restoratives.

Her Serene Highness is by way of being a "fine woman," and the vociferous gratitude of Baumann and the doctor for the help of my strong arms in lifting her from the train would have made a vain man of me were I not proof against such weakness. What I valued more was the furtive squeeze of the hand which Netta gave me when we had got the still unconscious patient on to the station litter

"It is noble of you," the Fraulein whispered. "How you brush away all difficulties! But it makes me sad, because I fear that my troubles are only beginning. How shall I manage at the hotel with all these stupids—poor little me, who cannot speak Russian?"

She waved her hand scornfully at the suite, who had left the train and were standing dejectedly around, the tall footman among them, seeming as abstracted as ever. I saw very well what she wanted, but I was not quite sure that it tallied with my duty. I had reason to believe that the despatches I was carrying were not important, and had in fact been made up more or less for the purpose of putting on a Queen's Messenger to "oblige" the Grand Duchess. Yet I was on Government service, and it was a law of that service to go straight to one's destination.

"There is nearly sure to be some one who speaks French at the hotel," I said.

"Ah, but there might not be, and then think of poor Netta's difficulties," pleaded the little tempter. "You *will* stay and help us, will you not? Every brave soldier is a friend of ladies in distress."

There was need for instant decision, for the engine was backing on to the hinder portion of the train, after shunting the saloon. One final arrow from the bright eyes touched my heart and settled the question

"Very well," I said. "I am in her Highness's service already to some extent, and that must be my excuse. I am wholly in yours, and that ought to need none."

She rewarded me with a look of more than gratitude—it was almost triumph—and I hurried to extract my portmanteau from the train. The red box I already carried in my hand. Then I rejoined the Grand Ducal party, which, headed by the litter borne by railway porters, at once moved off to the hotel

The hotel adjoined the station precincts, so that my services as interpreter were quickly in requisition. Not so really, for as the train panted away to Petersburg I made the discovery that the proprietor was a Frenchman, and my conscience pricked me all too late that I need not have stayed. The Fraulein's "Parisian" would have been quite adequate to the occasion

The Grand Duchess was carried up to the best apartment in the house, and as Netta went with her there was nothing for me to do but to kick my heels in the public rooms and hope that my little friend would come down. But Baumann and the doctor, who appeared in the *salon-á-manger* later, and took supper together, informed me that, though her Highness was better, the Fraulein would not be able to leave her side that night. The two gentlemen flunkies seemed sheepish, evincing a disposition to avoid me—I supposed because of my having put them to shame in conducting what ought to have been their affair—and, not being attracted by either of them, I made no advances.

When it became evident that Netta von Friednau had no intention of leaving the Serene invalid, I retired to my bedroom for the night. I was a little annoyed, after the breach of duty that I had perpetrated on her account, that she had not made an opportunity of meeting during the evening; and smarting under the neglect I sent her a curt message by one of the waiters that, as she had no further use for me, I should continue my journey to Petersburg by the first train in the morning, whether her party went on or not.

True to this purpose I rose early and descended to the *salon-á-manger,* which at that hour was deserted, save by the waiter who was laying the breakfast ordered by me overnight. I had hardly taken my seat, with the red box on the table at my side, when Netta burst into the room, radiant as a newly-opened blush-rose.

"You must come with me at once," she cried. "The Grand Duchess does not know how to be grateful enough, and she wants to thank you in person before you leave. She is much better to-day; but, alas! we shall travel together no longer, for the physician has forbidden her the excitement and fatigue of the Imperial wedding. Imagine my disappointment! We return to Germany at mid-day."

I rose at once, tucking the red box under my arm, and quitted the saloon, Netta chattering as she led the way upstairs to the first floor

"I have no business to tell you," she ran on, "but her Serene Highness intends to make reparation for her behaviour on the boat. There is high honour in store for you."

Stopping at a door in the corridor, she tapped and after a slight pause entered, motioning me to follow. The apartment, which was darkened by the blinds being down, was the outer one of a set, an inner door at the far end communicating presumably with the bedroom beyond. The Grand Duchess was lying on a couch, the head of which was close to the slightly open inner door Baumann and the doctor stood respectfully at hand. I advanced, bowing as gracefully as the carriage of the red box would permit, and Netta glided to her mistress's side.

The Grand Duchess raised herself a little, and smiled graciously. She was a good-looking woman of thirty or so, more English than German, and I could find no trace of illness on her well-known features save a certain sallowness that might have been caused by the yellow window-blinds.

"I have sent for you to thank you, Captain Melgund," she said rather faintly. "You will not put me to shame by asking me also to apologize for my unjustifiable treatment. Let that remain nameless and forgotten. As a reward for very valuable services I intend to confer upon you immediately the Knighthood of the Golden Sword of Silesia. Kneel down, sir."

Still hampered by the red box I obeyed, and the Grand Duchess tapped me on the shoulder with her forefinger for want of a sword. I was about to rise—rather shamefacedly, for a Briton does not set much store by foreign orders—when she checked me.

"The ceremony is not complete," she said. "Baumann! the Bible! That is right. Take it in both hands, Captain Melgund, and repeat after me."

The secretary was offering me a book, but for the moment my hold on the red box prevented prompt obedience to the command. Baumann, as though divining my difficulty, held out his hand; and, perceiving no danger to my precious charge in the presence of the august owner of most of its

contents, I allowed him to relieve me of it

And then, suddenly, while I was mumbling certain out-of-date vows after the Grand Duchess, a slight movement at the head of the couch caused me to raise my eyes. *Two* exactly similar red boxes met my astonished gaze, one being passed by an unseen person in the inner room to Baumann, who was exchanging for it the genuine article which I had just surrendered to his keeping. Even as I looked the exchange was effected, but I was on my feet in an instant, and rushing into the inner room pinned the tall footman to the wall. He held the red box—my red box—in his trembling hand.

"Come in here, you rascal!" I cried, dragging him into the outer room, and taking the box from him. "Your Serene Highness," I continued to the Grand Duchess, who had risen pale and agitated from the couch, "this fellow and your secretary have conspired to rob me—to rob you, in fact—by substituting a dummy box for the real one. See! Baumann still holds the counterfeit. I shall at once summon the police and give them into custody. In Russia they will meet with quick justice."

Light had dawned on me, and I knew pretty well how the land lay. It scarcely needed the furious face of Fraulein von Friednau, whom failure had changed from a pretty kitten to an angry cat, to tell me the conspiracy in which she had been the prime instrument. But I wanted to force them to a confession, and it came at once from the ashy lips of the Grand Duchess. I will do her the justice of recording that she made it with more dignity than most women could have called up.

"I am the robber, Captain Melgund," she said. "If you will release your grip on your prisoner, who is my husband, the Grand Duke of Silesia, I will explain to you. We are at your mercy, and I address you as a suppliant."

I loosed my hold on the Grand Duke's collar and his wife ran to him.

"We are very poor, for princes, we of Silesia," she went on. "Yet as relatives of the Imperial House it was necessary to recognize this wedding with a present which we could not afford. It was I who hit upon the plan of ordering a costly tiara, of insuring its safe delivery at its destination for a sum, far exceeding its full value, at Lloyd's, and of robbing you of it *en route* in the manner which you have by your vigilance prevented. We were encouraged to hope for success by your intimacy with my faithful friend, Fraulein von Friednau, and you will allow me to say, sir, that for a man in your position you are very free with ladies. It was the Fraulein who wrote the anonymous warning that gave me a reason for asking for the use of a Queen's Messenger; it was I who planned the pantomime on the boat, so that, thinking that I suspected you, you might not suspect me. If we had succeeded the stones of the tiara would have been sold, and with the proceeds of that sale and of the policies of the insurance we could have bought another present and yet have gained money by the transaction. It is all very low and shameful, but, Captain Melgund, it is hard to be poor and a princess. I take all blame. My husband did what I told him."

Looking at the shivering Grand Duke I could well believe her.

"But what of me, madam?" I said. "You should have ruined me. I should have had to bear the brunt of the thing. They would have charged me with losing, or even with stealing, the tiara."

"I know," said the Grand Duchess. "You cannot be expected to forgive that. But oh, Netta, plead for me!"

The Fraulein, dutiful to the last, shaped her face for the effort, and came to me smiling. But I turned from her.

"I would rather forgive your Serene Highness than her," I said, gripping the red box and turning to the door. "I shall deliver your property at the British Embassy according to my instructions; and I shall keep my own counsel and my own opinions. I should prefer also, if you desire to earn the forgiveness which I accord, that my name should be erased from the chapter of the Golden Cross of Silesia."

The splendour of the present of the Grand Duchess to the Imperial bride was the talk of the Russian capital for months, and people were still talking when an interesting announcement appeared in the press. The Grand Duke had sold the Schloss Verrelstein, one of his princely seats, to a Berlin banker. □

AN INTERVIEW WITH A MAN CALLED BOB

ROBERT BARNARD

BY ROSEMARY HERBERT

I met Robert Barnard in the library of Scribner's bookshop/office building on Fifth Avenue. Outdoors it was mid-March and, as the English would say, "absolutely pouring down with rain." The library, however, was cozily packed with first editions of Scribner's titles. As there was no corpse on the floor for us to speculate upon, we talked about Bob Barnard's work. ("By the by, I'm Bob to everybody," hesaid, with characteristicfriendliness.)

The author of thirteen published detective novels, a book about Agatha Christie entitled *A Talent To Deceive* (Dodd, Mead, 1980), several academic articles, and a forthcoming bookabout thehistory of English literature ("aimed at foreign students, mainly"), Barnard has just abandoned academe to be a full-time writer. He reached this decision after traveling a long road throughsomeunusual places.

Born November 23, 1936, Bob Barnard grew up without literary pretensions. Home was "a dreadful dreary little town called Brightlingsea in Essex," located near the oldest Roman city in Britain, a place called Colchester. Throughout his school days, Bob felt himself to be unremarkable and a not particularly distinguished student. But his exams placed him near the top of his form (class) and helped send him on his way to Oxford. Impressed by a memorable history teacher who made him feel that "history was all around us," Bob went up to Oxford as a history major. It was only in his final year that he changed over to study literature. In Oxford, he began to feel a sense of liberation and to develop the witty intellect and expansive humor that sets off his conversation, personality, and fictiontoday.

After Oxford, he worked for the Fabian Society for one year and then took off for Australia and a teaching post at a university in the outback during 1961–66. There he met his wife Louise, a librarian. He also produced his first publisheddetectivenovel, entitled *Death of an Old Goat*, based on the Australian scene.

When the Barnards were debatingwhether or not to buy a house and settle in Australia, a job offer came through from the University of Bergen, Norway. In its way, it was another frontier experience for the Barnards, not to mention a total reversal of hemispheres and climate. It was also another job with free time for writing, and Bob used it to turn out

detective fiction, eventually writing a novel every eight or nine months. After ten years in Bergen, the Barnards moved to Tromsø, Norway, where they worked in the northernmost university in the world from 1976until 1983.

As sales of his novels increased, and the desire to return to England grew, Bob decided to write full-time. He and his wife now reside in a mixed working-class neighborhood on the outskirts of Leeds, England, where Bob is so far meeting his goal of writing twonovelsper year.

Barnard's fiction is characterized by witty dialogue, strong, definite characters (whom he fondly calls "grotesques"), oblique social commentary, and a reliable dedication to playing fair with the reader His novels generallyfollow the GoldenAge tradition of taking an isolated group of characters and exposing them to stress caused by murder in their midst But he updates the Golden Age tradition by his awareness of psychological motivation and by a willingness to portray a society which is not stodgily stable to begin with. While his novelshave satisfying "tied-up"conclusions, they are not as obsessed with "tidiness" as were most novels in the Christie tradition.

When you meet Bob Barnard today, whether in a library or not, you will find a cheerfulcharacterwith a boyish face. A mischievous twinkle in his eye accompanies many of his remarks. Shy in childhood, he claims he remains so but is able to cover his shyness. In any case, he is a lively conversationalist with some unusual answers to a few often-asked questions, as this interview willshow.

RH: P. D. James has said that she thinks detective novelists andpeoplewho readdetective fictionavidly areoften especially aware of the tenuousness of life. Wouldyouagreewithher?

BB: Yes. I think that is true. But also I think detectivefiction provides the reader with a particular thrill of excitement to think along these lines. I think the average person has a resentment about the fact that his life is bounded by so many rulesand regulations. I mean, even the fact that we drive on the left hand side of the road—you sort of resent it. I'd like to use thewholeroad, although I know it wouldbe chaos.

I think there is a sort of thrill in saying, "Here is a basicallylaw-abidingcommunity, but underneath the surface there *is* that instinct which results in the unpredictable destruction of a life." This is part of the appeal of the old-fashioned sort of detective fiction that I write. It gives a thrill and shock to the reader.

RH: Would you say that the type of novelyou write assumes that law and order have some basis that is sensible, sane,and desirable? I don't mean by this to imply that you or your readers arenecessarilypolitically conservative, but you do feel thatthereis somethingvalidabout justiceadministered by the law.

BB: Yes. It's an awful pity, I think, that the law and order thing has been hijacked by the politically conservative. For instance, I thinkit's very sad that many socialists in England have an absolute paranoid hatred of police. After all, any left-wing political ideology doesn't overlook a lot of rules and regulations and, if you like, marginal taking away of people's freedom.

I'm sort of center-leftpolitically. I don'tregardthe police as supernaturally good or virtuous. And, though I often laugh at my policemen, I certainly would hate to think of myself as anti-police. I think that's rather disgusting unless you are living in a country wherethepolicearequite appalling

RH: Would you like to talk a bit about your childhood?

BB: Yes. The only interesting thing, I suppose, is my father wrote. He wrote very cheap and awful women's romance stories, of the lowest kind. I mean sub-Barbara Cartland. *Very* sub-Barbara Cartland. He wrote for cheap weekly women's magazines, sort of factory-girls' magazines, if one wants to be snobbish. His name was Leslie Barnard, but he very often wrote under the name Peter Burnham. Nobody would know of him now. He also did some other work, including some children's things for BBC. And hemade a perfectlyreasonable living most of his life. He'd been a farm laborer before he went on to writing fulltime, which I think is veryremarkable.

So writing was in the family. The only time I wrote a story as a boy, I remember him taking it and I wouldguessalteringit drastically. It was published in a children'sannual round about 1948–49. That's the only time I thought about writing as a child. It was only much, much laterthat I reallystartedwriting. I was about thirty-three when I started thinking I might be able to write a whole book. *(He smiles.)* And it was quite a lot afterthat before I got the first one published.

RH: Often the artist or writer feels a little bit different, even during childhood, than the average person. As a boy, did you feel set apart from your peers in anyway?

BB *(smiles)*: No! The only way in which I felt set apart was in that I was *supernaturally* boring. I was appallingly dull! I wasn't academically bright in any way. In class I was quiet. I didn't joke. I didn'tmake witty remarks. I was *so* boring until I went up to

Oxford, I hate to think of it! *(He chuckles.)* And this is why I say, I think at one point in *School for Murder*, that childhood days are the most irrelevant days of your life. Contrary to what Wordsworth said, the child is *not* the father to the man. I don't believe that at all.

I was in a bookshop four or five years ago, and I heard a voice in the back of the shop, and I said to myself, "I know that voice." The voice was talking about English literature, Crabbe or Trollope or something. And I thought, "I'll wait for him to come out." And as I was waiting, I thought, "My God, doesn't he sound to be the most typically boring academic." I mean just as you think the most *dreary* academic must be. And when he came out he was one of the boys in school whom we all thought was the most wildly romantic and dashing and exciting.

RH: So just as that boy turned out to be quite a different adult than one would expect, you, too, regard yourself today as quite different than you were as a boy.

BB: Oh yes, thank God.

RH: Wasn't there even a trace of humor and wittiness in you then?

BB: I must have kept it horribly quiet if there was. I can guarantee that none of my schoolfellows will ever remember any witticism from me. I can guarantee that absolutely.

RH: Then what caused the change in you?

BB: It must have been the liberating effect of Oxford. Everybody talks about it, as in *Brideshead Revisited*. There were perhaps two liberating effects for me. First of all, you know the English school system is dominated by exams. Well, after I took the first of the major exams, that is, the "GC Ordinary Levels," at the age of sixteen, I remember coming back to school. I had always been in the best form, but I'd always been halfway down and terribly dull—so quiet and shy. But I remember getting the test results and finding that I'd done jolly good. And I suddenly realized that (a) I was so much better than I'd thought and (b) that I had that wonderful gift of doing better on exams than I deserved, rather than the reverse.

But then, when I talk about the liberating effect of Oxford, I made no sort of *splash* at Oxford. It was just that one got a little like-minded group around one, and one enjoyed oneself much more. One had a bit of freedom and a bit of money in that beautiful place. I think that began the liberating process.

RH: But you didn't have any inklings of a desire to write, even when you were at Oxford?

BB: No. After I was at Oxford, I worked for the Fabian Society in England for a year. I wrote an academic article on Dickens; I think that was taking a wrong road in a way. And then I went out to an Australian university. You won't have heard of it; it is in New South Wales, up in the mountains north of Sydney. It is a very small university with a big rural science section and a very big external section which was marvelous, teaching adults via post. It was more or less the prototype of the English open university, and I enjoyed that part very much. But the trouble with Australia is that there was so little to *do*—except drink! *(He laughs.)* And I'm quite sure that if I'd stayed I'd be an absolutely *unredeemable* alcoholic, instead of only a fairly far gone one.

While in Australia, I wrote a few articles, I think, but no fiction. And then I went to Norway. And when I found that I could lecture and do it well, that left me with an awful lot of time. Particularly because in Norway one didn't change the syllabus very often, so I tended to be lecturing on *Wuthering Heights* and *Pride and Prejudice* over and over and over again.

I first wrote a very bad novel about Norway that luckily was never published. But my English editor said she would like to see my next one.

I thought, "If I don't write something about Australia now, it will go." I thought I had to record the flavor of this hick university with the near alcoholism, the fighting and the spite and the back-biting. And I think I did it fairly well, because somebody later told me that whenever somebody spoke of taking a job at an Australian university he would tell him, "Read *Death of an Old Goat*!"

It's about a very elderly, almost snuffed-out visiting academic going the rounds of the Australian universities and unfortunately getting murdered at a little outback university which was the equivalent of the one I was at. It's very, *very* nasty *(he says, with a gleam in his eye)*. It's my nastiest, I suppose.

RH: Are you fond of other detective fiction with an academic setting or tone?

BB: No. Not really. I hate the way some writers just fling quotations backwards and forwards; it is so irritating. I mean, you would think that academics spent their *whole lives* throwing quotations back and forth! I have never lived in universities of that sort!

RH: Then I suppose you would be against the sort of novel in which recognition of a literary allusion is essential to solving the plot, to being on an equal footing with the detective.

BB: Quite. Quite. But I must admit I did that sort of thing once, by the by. In reading *Death of an Old Goat,* there would be an enormous advantage for an English reader who has had a university education. I will say no more.

But I never expected that book to be published; I was writing the book for myself, for my wife and a few friends. And so that would be my apology if any aspect of that book seems rather elitist or unfair to American readers.

RH: But your literate education does show up in yourwork, doesitnot?

BB: You *will* quite often find in my books quotations hidden under the surface. It's really terribly snobbish; it's a signalling to the educated reader, "All right,you'vereadEvelynWaugh; you'll recognize the quote and I'll quote it for your benefit." But it won't disturb the other reader. He won't see that it's a quotation at all. And I likethat much better.

RH: What writers have most influenced you? Previous to taking up writing, did you read lots of detectivefiction?

BB: Oh, yes. And I do it now. I think that, when I went on from children's books, I began reading lots of Agatha Christie and Ngaio Marsh. Margery Allingham really is my absolute favorite. But I won't hear anything nasty said about Agatha Christie! I admireChristie enormously. I think she is absolutely themost professionaldetective-story writertherehas ever been. If you look at her books between 1930 and 1950, you've got, I would say, a 99-percent success

RH: And there were somany!

BB: Sometimes three a year. I find that sort of professionalism admirable. So many first-rate, sparkling ones with wonderful endings.

The trouble is, so many people come to the crime novel looking for the same sort of thing as they would look for in an ordinary middle-brow novel. Now, Christie, as everybody knows, is very slim on characterization, very slim on writing; but her whole emphasis is on miraculous plotting. She is dragging thenovelbacktowardthe storytellingelement. And I don't think one should downgrade that and try to pretend it's something any fool can do, because they can't. Her books are so wonderfully planned. I can't do it myself. I wish I could. They're so beautifully plannedthat everything is going to slotinto place.

RH: I was wondering what you personally find appealing aboutthatsortof novel.

BB: I tell you, it's a confession of weakness, really. Theonly time I'vetried to writereal ordinary novels, I've come unstuck with the plot. I get the characters working nicely. And I get a nasty, ironic, witty—hopefully—atmosphere going. And then I think, "What are the characters gonna do?" And I can't actually think of a plot. And the great saving for me has been to turn to writing detective stories where I know I've got to have a body at some point and a solution at another point. And I know the solution has to be gradually worked roundto.

RH: Are there any conventions of this kind of novel that you find confining?

BB: I've probably enjoyed all of them. We aren't really as confined now as Christie and otherswere in the 'thirties. I *have* feltthat I could bring to the crime story more humor and irony and social comment than I think Christie or Marsh would have felt comfortable with.

RH: Yes. I think that's a very good assessment of whatyouhave achieved.

BB: Well, other people have done it, of course. Another thing that was confining [for the earlier writers] was that people did tend to want a conclusion where the culprit was seized; he was probably going to be hanged, or else he would kill himself. But today youdon'thave this rathercrude sort of justice, with a capital "J," coming at the end. I've enjoyed exploiting that

RH: Would you agree that in mystery fiction today there is more of a feeling that characters are people whoselivescontinue after the puzzle is solved? That the readercan imagine them facing other situations?

BB: Yes. I think that oftenhappens, especiallywhen youhave slightly grotesquecharacters as I sometimes do. I think grotesque characters are fine. As long as Dickens used grotesque characters—like, for example, UriahHeep—it's all right for therest of us! There's a touch of the grotesque in Hillary Frome [*A School for Murder*] and in Lil in *Death of a Perfect Mother*.

RH: Would you tell me something about where your ideasforthemore grotesquecharacters stemfrom?

BB: Lil was suggested by the biography of Joe Orton, the English playwright who was murdered by his lover boyfriend. In the marvelous biography by John Lahr, called *Prick Up Your Ears,* you get a wonderful sense of the ghastly vulgarity of his mother. Lil didn't turn out to be a carbon copy, but I'd seen enough of thesevulgar mothers to knowthat they exist.

RH: Will you reveal anything about your next book?

BB: Do you know the old musical song, "I was only a bird in a gilded cage"? It's about a young chorus girl actress who's married into the aristocracy. She's just in a pretty, gilded cage somewhere where she doesn't belong. *A Corpse in a Gilded Cage* [to be released in Autumn 1984] is about a very ordinary Cockney family who suddenly find themselvesinheriting an old stately home. But it's a stately home with

a twist.

And then the one I'm finishing now is totally "un-Barnard" and has no humor. It's more a who-am-I? than a whodunnit. I think it is fairlygripping.

RH: Do you have a working title for it?

BB: I'm calling it *Out of the Blackout*. It's about a little boy in 1941 suddenlyturning up with a party of evacuated children at a country railway station. This is the height of the Blitz. The other children are all accounted for on the listand given foster parents, but he's not on the list. He lies about his name, and he goes to a foster family, but he seems to have dreams of violence tormenting him.

RH: Do you find it satisfying, in writing a detective novel, to be in the position of controlling the situationeventhoughyour charactermay not be?

BB: I certainly think that writing detective stories may minister to your power lust in the sense that here arethese people; one of them is going to be killed by the time page sixty comes along—my murders tend to occur round page sixty—and now I'm going to act like some sort of Thomas Hardy god. Perhaps even making the murderer be the character you have made most sympathetic to the readers! I'm neverobsessed by evil, by the way. I'm much more interested in

RH: You used the word "nasty." What do you think is the most fascinating human failing?

BB: From a writer's point of view, the human failing most useful for me is lack of self-knowledge. The general propagation of the ideas of Sigmund Freud has made everybody awfully self-conscious these days. People feel that they're giving themselves away by all sorts of things, by expressing mother love, by neatness, even! So I rather value the person who gives himself away effortlessly. Whether it's money-meanness orvulgarity,or whatever.

RH: Would you hint at where people tend to give themselvesaway in your work?

BB: I think dialogue is very important. Characters give themselves away in dialogue. I like the fact that you can just write the dialogue and have the character condemn himself out of his own mouth.

RH: Your books do take into consideration the psychological *motivations* of the characters and really go a step beyond the Agatha Christie story, which looks much more at tangible, material *motive*. Do you agreewith Julian Symonsthatthe detectivestory isin general heading toward the psychological crime novel?

BB: I think a detective storyought to be happy to be the detective story. It's a jolly good, popular form, and if you try to write miniature *Crimes and Punishments* you will soon find out that you are not Dostoyevsky!

It's funny that with the loss of religion we have embraced still further so many Puritan attitudes. The distrust of entertainment is quite pathetic. If you go "from the detective story to the crime novel," you've got to be damned careful not to throw out the baby with the bath water. And the baby is entertainment.

RH: The detective novel often takes a group of people and introduces something very stressful into their midst. So it talks about a segment of society under stress. What do you enjoy about workingwith that kind of situation?

BB *(eyes twinkling)*: Oh, it's just purely malicious fun. One alwaysenjoys in the short term going to a partyor being in a familysituation wherethere areall sorts of tensions pushing up to the surface, like geysers bubbling in the mud. That sort of thing is marvelous to observe, and I likedealing with it.

And I think you could say about my detective stories that I play down the stability part. Christie, for instance, tends to create the stable society threatened or undermined temporarily. My situations tend to be pretty uncertain fromthe beginning. I also try to bring the social class I portray closer to the working class.

RH: What is your personal attitude toward death? Do you have any religious convictions, or do you believe thatdeath isfinal?

BB: I'm one of those fairly rare people in my generation who hasn't even been christened. I've alwaysgrown up in a totallyunreligiousenvironment. On the other side, I'm somebody who is always taken up with churches. You know, Thomas Hardy called himself "churchy," not Christian or religious, but "churchy." And I'm definitely "churchy" in that

RH: When writing, the author must portray the characters convincingly. I wonder if when you're writing about the victim you ever experience a sense of *frisson*, if you feel identified with what is happening to him?

BB: Not so far. Probably because I've never been particularly preoccupied with death. Oh, when you reach my age—which is, as far as Senator Hart is concerned, said to be young but in my eyes is the antechamber to death—you do startthinking about death. But I can't say I've thought about it much in the past. And my feeling about the kind of detective story I write is that in fact it is onlyabout death on a very superficial level. □

In TAD 16:4, Fred Dueren ends his review of Robert Barnard's *A Little Local Murder*, published in England in 1976 but just issued in this country last year, with this comment: "Barnard has not written a bad book. No student of crime fiction should lack ownership of all his works."

For someone who has been so impressed with Barnard's works that I have not only read them all and collected them—all except one, *Murder on the High C's*, which is out of print—but have been preparing an article and a bibliography, Dueren's remark was all I needed to complete my small task.

ROBERT BARNARD

A First Bibliography and a Note

by William White

So for those who would like to know just what "ownership of all his works" entails, I have put together this first list of Barnard's writings, which I should like to preface with a note about him and his articles, book reviews, and books, for very little has been written about him other than reviews of his books in newspapers and magazines.

According to *Contemporary Authors*, Barnard was born in Burnham, England, on 23 November 1936—though his entry in H. R. F. Keating's *Whodunit? A Guide to Crime, Suspense and Spy Fiction* gives the year of his birth as 1940. He took his B.A. (with honors) from Balliol College, Oxford, in 1959, worked for a short time for the Fabian Society in London, and later at a technical college in Accrington. He was a lecturer in English at the University of New England, New South Wales, Australia, from 1961 to 1966, when he became a senior lecturer in English at the University of Bergen in Norway until 1976. He also earned his Ph.D. from the University of Bergen in 1971, with a dissertation on the novels of Charles Dickens, published as a thesis in 1971 and as a commercial book in 1974—if

an academicpublication can be called "commercial" (published in this country by Humanities Press, it is now out of print both here and in Norway). At any rate, it was Barnard's first book.

His first detective story was *Death of an Old Goat* (not, as Fred Dueran says, *A Little Local Murder*), which came out in 1974. It takes place at Drummondale University, in Australia, where a doddering old goat of an English professor is murdered, and itshilariousdoingsare wonderfully satirical, with a marvelous set of the most unpleasant characters in a down-undersetting you'llnever find in travel books. In addition to his devastating sense of humor, Barnard shows to beautiful advantage his deep knowledge of English literature, his feeling for language, and his background of Australia from his six years of teaching there. Once you've read this book by Barnard, you'll be hooked on him, as I was.

In 1976, he became Professor of English Literature at the University of Tromsø in Norway and head of its English Department. The institution has the distinction of being Europe's most northerly university. He remained there, with his wife, Mary Louise Tabor, a librarian, until 1983, when he returned to Leeds, England, where he now lives and writes full-time.

Before writing crime novels himself, he began his "literary" career with articles and book reviews on Dickens—as a professor of English literature should—in such journals as the *Review of English Literature*, the *Southern Review* (Australia), *Dickens Studies Annual*, and *English Studies* (Amsterdam). He continued writing scholarly pieces, on Evelyn Waughand the Brontës, as well as on Dickens, until the present time. Although his earliest book review is of Philip Collins's *Dickens and Crime*, his first article on crime and mystery writing is "Murder, Cranford Style" for the London *Books and Bookmen* in June 1970. His article on Agatha Christie in the October 1979 *London Magazine* was followed the next year by his book-length *A Talent to Deceive: An Appreciation of Agatha Christie*, one of the best things written on the Queen of Mystery, my first acquaintance with Barnard's writings, which I read for an article of my own on Agatha Christie. Two of his most recent articles in this genre are on the English detective story in H. R. F. Keating's *Whodunit?* and on Ruth Rendell, a favoriteauthor of his, in TAD 16:2

But it is for Robert Barnard's twelve murder mysteries—with a thirteenth, *A Corpse in a Gilded Cage*, to be published in 1984—that he is and will be remembered aslong ashe continues to turnthemout. If his writing skill, his deft handling of the English language, his malicious sense of humor, and his full use of literary allusions are what makes Barnard's novels stand out above the crowd—and to me nothing is more important that an author's command of prose, and a love and feeling for words—this does not mean that he lacks two other essentials: a depiction of timeand place and a deepand appreciative background against which the characters put on theiract.

As I have already pointed out, in *Death of an Old Goat* you get an absolutely murderous picture of small-town college life in Australia from someone whocould say, likeHuck Finn, "I been therebefore." The very same thing can be said about the British town with the delicious name of Twytching in *A Little Local Murder*. As for this novel, read what Newgate Callendar has to say in his 8 May 1983 *New York Times Review:* "It is the writing that counts here. Mr. Barnard goes about it with a quietly malicioussense of humorand has given us a comedy of manners that looks back to Jane Austen and Trollope. He knows his Thackeray too. The murder of the lady is writtenalmost as an aside, in muchthe same way that George Osborne's death is tossed off in *Vanity Fair*, with much the same kind of shock." High praiseindeed.

In *Death on theHigh C's*, you feel as if you're not just sitting in the audience watching a murder at the operabut you're backstage withthesingersand stage hands taking part in what's going on. In *Death and the Princess*, you are similarly brought inside the royal palace and other high places where Royalty comes and goes; and while it is easy to understand how Barnard knows so much about academic life—as seen in *Death of an Old Goat* and *Death in a Cold Climate* (set in a Norwegian college town)—it is striking how much he tells us about opera in *Death on the High C's* and about royalty in *Death and the Princess*. This, plus writing style and wit and humor, is what sets Barnard apart from other mystery

Among the accolades to come Barnard's way have been four nominations for Edgar Awards and—which I find more interesting—no fewer than six of his books have been selected by G. K. Hall& Co., the Boston publisher, for inclusion in its Large Print Editions and the Nightingale Series for the partially sighted. These came out between 1980 and 1983, and allofthemare stillin print.

Praise from reviewers usually reserved for writing of a more serious nature than the usual mystery/detective story has also come to Barnard: the reviewer for *Publishers Weekly* calls *Death by Sheer Torture* (entitle *Sheer Torture* in England) "witty, intelligent and a joy to read," and says, "behind thewritingthereis obviously acivilizedmind that is rather amused at the foibles of humanity." T. J. Binyon writes in *The Times Literary Supplement* that *Death on the High C's* is "as bright and lively a detective story as one is likely to meet this year [1977]: good characters, good detail, a lot of

music. . . and a lot of humour."

In the bibliography below, I have arranged the material chronologically in foursections:articlesand book reviews by Robert Barnard, his books (with theclothboundand paperback editionsand printings both in England and this country), material about Barnard, and the book reviews I have been able to find of his books. I certainly do not claim completeness—reviews have been quoted on the book jackets and on paperback covers I have not found—and I am grateful especially to Robert Barnard for kindly replying to my letters and giving me details about his periodicalpieces I should otherwisehavemissed.

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A Janeite's Life of Crime

By James P. Devlin

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Solutions to several of the mystery novels of Georgette Heyer are contained in the following article.*

I could not sit down to write [seriously] under any other motive than to save my life; and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter.

The words are those of Jane Austen, who never wrote a mystery novel, but the sentiments are also those of Georgette Heyer, who wrote a dozen, although she first made her name as a writer emulating Austen's work.

Georgette Heyer was an active writer from 1921 until the time of her death in 1974. Her work as a detective novelist spans only twenty of those years—1932 to 1953—but places her, by period and quality, as part of the "Golden Age." Most of the rest of her career was dedicated to those bubbling fictions which led to her proclamation (by one of her publishers, no doubt) as "England's Mistress of Romance."

Although Miss Heyer's plotting is generally far more intricate than Austen's, the two ladies share a delicious use of dialogue and humor, ranging from the deliberately absurd to jokes so subtle that you wonder if they were actually intended, as in this example from *The Conqueror:*

Watching from the narrow windows of the house where she lodged ashore, Matilda's straining eyes saw the banners slowly rising to the mastheads . . . She stood motionless until the *Mora* had become a speck on the horizon . . . thinking how she might stitch the scene with threads to make a tapestry worthy of her skill. She would do it, she decided, she and her ladies, while they were left lonely and anxious in quiet Rouen . . . It would take a long time, she thought, but the end would justify the labour

Were we meant to chuckle at this picture of the Rouen Sewing Circle, or is this a serious account of the origin of the Bayeux Tapestry?

If the majority of Miss Heyer's nearly sixty titles are the historical romances once inaccurately described as trifles "where no one loses their virtue, their lives, or even their tempers," we will not make the mistake of treating them too lightly. Most of them are set in England during the Regency (the last nine years of the reign of King George III, ending in 1820); the author's knowledge of the history, customs, and language of this period is considerable, and provides a firm foundation of detail for the romantic and comedic escapades of her lords and ladies. This thoroughness is also an asset to Miss Heyer as a mystery writer.

Although most of the Heyer crime stories take place in the present, suspense and violence are very much a part of her romantic world. Much of the action of *The Unknown Ajax* (1960) centers around the conflict between smugglers and revenue agents; the Black Moth, in the novel of the same name, is an infamous highwayman. Among other novels having a particularly criminous flavor are *The Masqueraders* (1928), *Regency Buck* (1935), *Faro's Daughter* (1942), and *The Foundling* (1948).

Some biographical data: Georgette Heyer was born in Wimbledon, Surrey, England, in 1902, one of three children. She married the late George R. Rougier in 1925; they had one son. The couple lived

in East Africa (Tanganyika) for three years after their marriage, and then in Macedonia and Yugoslavia. Later, and finally, they made their home in London, at the Albany in Picadilly. Miss Heyer's early seminary education was supplemented by her own reading and research, which her husband describedas "enormousand meticulous."

Her first novel, *The Black Moth, a Romance of the 18th Century,* was written in 1919 to amuse a convalescing brother; offered for publication two years later, it was accepted immediately. Following in 1923—and leading off a fifty-year career—were *The Transformation of Philip Jettan* (*Powder and Patch* in later printings) and *The Great Roxhythe*. Although a few of the earliest romances have contemporary settings, by 1930 she had securely establishedher reputation as a writerof historicalpieces

Although Miss Heyer "shunned public attention," her work became popular and well known in England; it was through her mystery novels, however, that her writing came to the American notice. Then, when she returned to the mystery form in 1951—after an absence of nearly ten years—two publishers began to reissue her books here, interspersed with new stories.

"Her publisher described her, despite her shy nature, as a verybrightandamusingpersontomeet," said the *New York Times,* in its obituary notice, "with conversation which sparkled with verve and wit. She worked quickly, they said, and made few corrections."

Readers of the Heyer "thrillers" may be disappointed that there weren't more of them, but Miss Heyer did not considerherself a mysterywriter. In fact, according to her son (in a letter to this writer), "she regarded the writing of mystery stories rather as one would regard tackling a crossword puzzle—an intellectual diversion before the harder tasks of life have to be faced." It must have been a relief for her occasionally not to have to concentrate on the Regency period and its details, but to write from a modern frame of mind.

Miss Heyer's first try at a thriller—never reprinted, alas, and missing from the Library of Congress since its 1982 inventory—seems to have been *Footsteps in the Dark* (1932), subtitled "a novel of mystery." The *Catalogue of Crime* calls the book "a less than successful effort to combine banter with spookery, and to ring the changes on the old dodge of covering up criminal activities in a ruined abbey by ghostly happenings that should scareaway the new tenants." The author is commended for a "born detective mind," however, "thinking of clues even after they don't matter." *Footsteps in the Dark* was most likely a trial balloon for a different type ofstory from what Miss Heyer had been writing by that time for ten years. But Miss Heyer once said that readers would find all they needed to know about her in her books . .

Why Shoot a Butler? (1933), although still somewhat experimental on Miss Heyer's part, shows her moving toward the later puzzle stories. The central character is Frank Amberly, who is a barrister, not a professional detective. This is the only one of Miss Heyer's regular mysteries in which the bulk of the detective work is done by an amateur; in the stories that followed, the detecting is always done—at least officially—by policemen.

The title of the book is itself one of Miss Heyer's jokes; the author removes the butler from suspicion in the first chapters—by making him the victim. But as soon as another butler arrives on the scene, the police are ready to pin the crime on him:

> "I don'tmind tellingyou I got my eyeon thatbutler. That's yourman, Mr. Amberley, you mark my words!"
>
> "I think, Sergeant," said Amberley, swinging round a sharp bend,"thatyou are nearer thetruththanyou know."

The pun may not be so easilycaught by the American reader, but the new butler is Amberley'smanservant, brought up undercover fromLondon.

The story begins with Amberley's discovery of the corpse of the butler of the title in an automobile by theside of the roadto his uncle's countryhouse.Near the car is a sullen girl with a gun; Amberley believes her when she tells him she didn't do it, and does not mention her presence to the police when he reports the crime.

To the official theory of murder, Frank explains that the motive for the murderwas theft of a different kind: "When you have discovered the answer to thatriddle, you will in all probability have discovered your murderer" (p. 69). He also predicts that the murder itself"is likely to prove the least interesting feature of the wholecase" (p. 82).

The stolen item (although the reader doesn'tlearn this until the end) is half of a will which cuts Basil Fountain out of his expected inheritance in favor of his cousins, Mark and Shirley "Brown." Two of the family servants, Dawson and Collins, have torn the document in half; Collins is blackmailing Fountain with his half, while Dawson is threatening to sell his portion to the Browns.

Dawson (the butler) is killed by Collins but manages to tellShirley (thesullengirl) where his half is hidden. Theplotbecomessothick at this point that toattemptto describe it wouldbe counter-productive: it mostly involves the progress of the will from one place to another in an intricate series of misunderstandings. Fountain, trapped between blackmail and exposure, kills first Collins and then Mark Brown.

Although Amberley knows by now who is responsible, he still needs proof for the police. He sets a trap

to catch Fountain in an attempt to kill Shirley, but both the attempt and the trap fail. While he is in London investigating the will (this is the first of Miss Heyer's law-laden motives), Shirley is kidnapped. A suspenseful chase ensues, with Amberley and the unfortunate Sergeant "hurtling along at over fifty miles an hour" (p. 217). Shirley is saved, of course, and Frank proposes to her. Fountain, finally confronted by the police, kills himself.

Why Shoot a Butler?, like the early Agatha Christies, shows the strong influence of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Amberley works a lone hand, althoughenjoying official cooperation. Like Holmes, he knows—almost from the beginning—who the guilty party is and conceals several pertinent facts from the police (and the reader) for reasons of his own.

At a costume ball celebrating the engagement of Fountain's step-sister, Amberley guesses who Shirley really is when he seesthe resemblance in a portrait of Fountain's great-grandmother. Shortly after this, Shirley comes up to the picture gallery to find Dawson's half of the will; by switching the point of view from Frank to Shirley, Miss Heyer not only glosses over Amberley's recognition butalso conceals from the reader the fact that he has already found andtaken what she is lookingfor.

Onemight consider this dodgejustified by the fact that Amberley is going to keep his find a secret until thevery end of the story, and of course it is necessary to theplot, but it is a little exasperating to the reader who is accustomed to the "fairplay" detective novel. This kind of trick—and it turns up again, only legitimately— is made easier for Miss Heyer by her stylistic trait of never using a first-person Watson.

Another, deliberate, Sherlockianism occurs when Fountain getsaway from Amberley's trap at Shirley's cottage:

> Amberley saidoverhis shoulder: "I would liketo drawyour attention to one small but significant point. The man who broke intothis placetonight did not know of the existence ofBill."
>
> The sergeant cast an eloquent glance at Corkran. "And who,"he inquired,"might Billbe, sir?"
>
> "Bill," said Mr. Amberley, "is Miss Brown's bull-terrier Think it over."

Miss Heyer alsotakesan amusingpoke at "a novel in a lurid jacket":

> Sir Humphrey put on his pince-nez and took the book. "*The Stalking Death*," he read. "My dear, surely this doesn't entertain you?"
>
> "Not very much," she admitted. "The nice man turned out to be a villain after all. I think that's so unfair, when onehad becomequite fondofhim."

There are, in addition, several nods cast in Jane Austen's direction by her loyal admirer. Like Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice,* Frank Amberley is referred to as the rudest man in London. There is even a direct quote from *Emma* by Sir Humphrey, who, "like Mr. Woodhouse, was of the opinion that thesoonerevery partybreaks up the better."

Why Shoot a Butler? is, by the standards of the later Heyers, unusually action-packed. She went on to makethe later mysteriesuniquely her own in style, depending less on physical excitement and more on dialogue, humor, and suspense.

Publishers Weekly in 1970 described her next mystery, *The Unfinished Clue* (1934), as "such a marvelous period piece. . .it almost reads like pure camp." Certainly, Miss Heyer could have been amused by this description, since comedy plays a relatively small part in this book, which is a very standard country house party puzzler. Sir Arthur Billington-Smith is found stabbed (not shot, as according to the *Catalogue of Crime*) in his study, and, with the exception of his sister-in-law Dinah Fawcett (who also has an alibi), thereseems not to be a person on the premises who didn't have a reason to wish him dead.

The first part of the story, typically, sets up the host and his assemblage. Sir Arthur is the perfect victim for murder, the kind of man who marches around shouting, "In this house my word is law," and offending and bullying everyone in sight, family or friend. The long-suffering Fay is his second wife; Geoffrey, who is under constant threat of being cut off without a cent, is his son by his first wife, who walked out on him.

His nephew Francis hascome to hit up the old man formoney; when he doesn't get it, he robs the safe in the study. The general is quite willing to give large checks to Camilla Halliday, however, despite the violent objections of her husband Basil. Completing thepartyare StephenGuest, who is in lovewith Fay, and Lola deSilva, an exotic entertainer who is engaged to Geoffrey. Alsoaround and about are the vicar and his wife, Hilary and Emmeline Chudleigh, and Julia Twining, an"old friend."

Havingrenderedthe general thoroughlydislikable to the reader, Miss Heyer disposes of him with his own Chinese letter opener. The investigations of the local police turn up little more than Sir Arthur's dying message—the inscription "there. . ." scrawled on a piece of paper, so the Yard is called in. Inspector John Harding seems at first the type who will solve thecase through persistence ratherthan brilliance:

> Miss Fawcett, realizing that her frank stare was being returned with a rather amused twinkle, had the grace to blush. She steppedforward, and heldout herhand. "How doyoudo?"she said politely.
>
> "How do you do, Miss Fawcett?" said Harding, shaking handswithher.

"How on earth did you know I was Miss Fawcett?" asked Dinah, visibly impressed.

"The butler told me he would fetch Miss Fawcett," explained Harding gravely

"Oh!" said Dinah, disappointed. "I thought you were being frightfully clever."

"No, I'm afraid I wasn't," said Harding apologetically.

The second phase of the plot now begins—the game of questions and answers played between the suspects and the police. The inspector is normally cordial, but he has another side when the occasion calls for him to show it:

"There are two ways of giving evidence to the police," continued Harding in his even voice. "One is to answer the questions that are put to you, and the other is to have the truth pulled out of you. I recommend the first of these. You will find it less unpleasant."

While there is some amusing conversational by-play in *The Unfinished Clue,* the questions and answers are mostly serious. Throughout the book, the major comic relief is supplied by the colorful Lola deSilva, whose speech is completely frank and whose behavior outrages the more old-fashioned members of the party. "I love very often, you understand," she tells them, "and always passionately." She cannot understand why there are no showers in the house, or why the cocks crow all morning in the country. She is perfectly willing to be arrested for Sir Arthur's murder, but only after she has consulted with her publicity agent.

Nearly half the book is taken up with Inspector Harding's interviews of the people involved in the case, all of which lead nowhere, although he does score neatly from time to time:

Harding moved several of the papers on the table, and chose one from amongst them. With his eyes on it he said: "You hadn't at any time during the weekend allowed Sir Arthur to kiss you?"

Camilla, her gaze also riveted to the paper, hesitated. The Sergeant, aware that amongst the various statements before Harding there was none in the least relevant to the question, nodded his head slowly in appreciation of this stratagem..

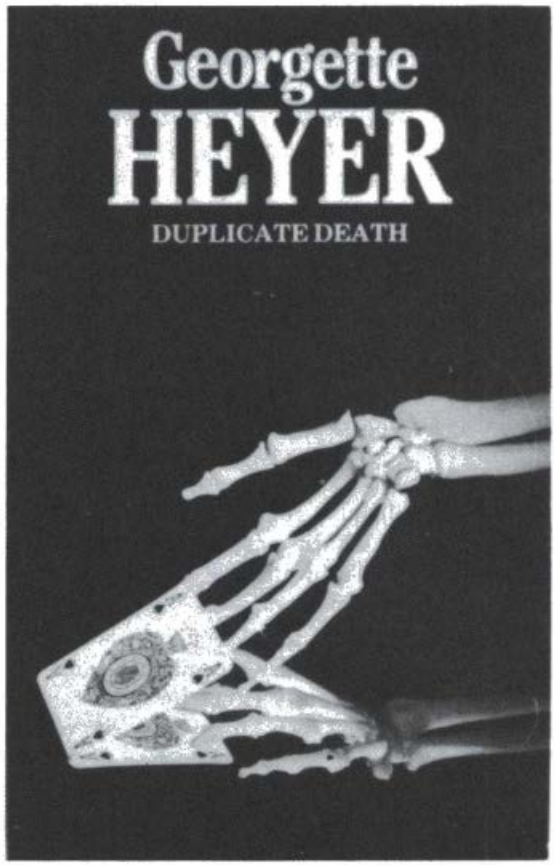
"I don't know who's been spying on me," Camilla said, "but I think it's the absolute limit!"

Harding did not pursue the question any further. He laid the paper down again and sat back in his chair

"The trouble is they're all lying," Harding tells Sergeant Nethersole, without making any attempt to tell him, or the reader, who is lying the most. Suspicion is balanced pretty evenly until Mrs. Chudleigh, in an attempt to provide an alibi for Geoffrey, inadvertently tells a *truth* that breaks the

The last portion of the book contains just about the only real action in the entire story. While Harding investigates this alibi, a last-minute red herring by Miss Heyer is supposed to distract us from the fact that Mrs. Chudleigh, by protecting Geoffrey, has effectively confessed to the crime herself. It is at this point that the story—as a mystery—falls apart.

The reader is faced with another Conan Doyle situation when he learns that Harding has guessed, from the paper on the general's desk, that Mrs. Chudleigh is really *Theresa,* the general's first wife (perhaps he had read *A Study in Scarlet,* where the dying inscription turns out *not* to be part of a woman's name). He never explains what put this thought into his mind ("something Geoffrey said ")



nor does he present—even at the end of the story—any more solid a motive for her than he could for any of the other characters, who had just as much opportunity.

Not to worry about the absence of clues: Mrs. Chudleigh, confronted with her guilt, kills herself (which has always seemed a tacit admission by the novelist that his detective's case doesn't really have a leg to stand on). She has thoughtfully written out a confession for the Inspector, however, which he turns over to his Superintendent. The book ends with Harding's proposal to Dinah Fawcett, with whom he has meanwhile fallen in love.

It is with *Death in the Stocks* (1935) that Miss

Heyer comes firmly into her own as a mystery writer. In the best known of her early thrillers, she brings the "comedy" to the fore, while skillfully weaving it through the "action" of the plot. The *New York Times* later remarked, "Rarely have we seen humor and mystery so perfectly blended . . . Some of the humorous episodes which seem least relevant actually contain the clues which lead. . . to the correct solution of a very difficult problem."

She also introduces, on this occasion, the main characters for the rest of her detective novels: Superintendent Hannasyde and Sergeant (eventually promoted to Chief Inspector) Hemingway. *Death in the Stocks,* finally, is the book which, under the title *Merely Murder,* established the Heyer reputation in the United States; *Why Shoot a Butler?* was not published here until the following year.

Like *Why Shoot a Butler?*, *Death in the Stocks* starts right off with the discovery of the body of the victim. The word-picture drawn in the first few pages is positively cinematic, as the moonlight glides across the village green, finally revealing the macabre figure of Arnold Vereker, dead in the stocks, in full evening dress.

There are only a few principal characters in the story, which makes the least-likely-person dénouement all the more surprising, even more since murderer and motive have been in fairly plain view the entire time. Antonia and Kenneth Vereker are the half-sister and -brother of Arnold; Rudolph Mesurier and Violet Williams are their respective fiancées. Giles Carrington is their cousin and solicitor; Roger Vereker is Arnold's brother, at first believed long dead, and later genuinely so.

Hannasyde's efforts to clear up the murder are hampered by the steadfast refusal of Kenneth and Antonia to take seriously either the murder or the possibility of their own arrests. Their constant arguing and fantasizing about the case enable Miss Heyer to throw literally dozens of red herrings about. When the others express shock, Tony replies, "Arnold was our relative, and if we don't mind discussing the murder, why should you?"

The motive for the crimes is the ownership of the Shan Hills Mine Company, left to Arnold by his father but understood to be left to Roger, and then Ken, in the event of his death. Kenneth's fiancé, Violet, has killed Arnold so that she and Ken will be able to live in the style in which she is interested. The unexpected return of Roger throws a monkey wrench into her plans, so he has to go, too, in a faked suicide.

At the end, an astounded Hannasyde tells Giles, "But—she never came into the case at all!" Here, however, Miss Heyer has been more than fair with the reader, throwing into apparently casual conversation clues which are, in fact, unavailable to the police (Hannasyde is, in the end, given the solution by Giles). We see, more than the official investigators, what Hemingway calls "psychology—which the Superintendent here doesn't hold with" but which shows why a person might commit murder: "If you'd been born with a taste for nice things, and never a penny to spend which you hadn't worked and slaved for, you'd feel the same . . . I want all the nice things that make life worth living . . "

Even while Miss Heyer is using the squabbling of the Verekers to befuddle the police, she is tossing out clues for the benefit of the alert reader: "My fiancée says it's such a rotten story, you're bound to believe it. She reads about seven detective thrillers a week, so she's pretty well up in crime." Violet herself even makes the remark, after Roger's death, "It seems to me that any one of normal intelligence can get away with murder."

Here again, a few words on "point of view" as utilized by Miss Heyer will not be out of place. The style of the story (as noted before) is very cinematic. Nothing that takes place "on screen" is concealed from the reader. Of course, there is a certain amount of direction of our attention, just as there would be in a film. The treatment does not focus on the police, even though they are ostensibly in charge of the investigation; nor does it really focus on any one of the other main characters (the focus in *Why Shoot a Butler?*, by contrast, is almost always on Frank Amberley).

The advantage of this method is that it makes the novel more of a "fair play" puzzle simply by its style. If, in the first-person story, we can see only what the "Watson" sees, here we see everything, apparently indiscriminately. If Violet Williams seems never to come to the center of the frame, it is because we find the antics of Kenneth and Antonia Vereker more interesting.

Those readers of a classic bent will recognize the quotations from *Hamlet* with which the participants bedevil each other in Chapter XIV and will also recall a similar exchange in Dorothy L. Sayers's *Busman's Honeymoon,* not published until 1938.

It should be noted that the solution in this case is based on a solid piece of evidence, fairly presented (although certainly easy enough to miss) and conclusive of guilt. Giles's presentation to Hannsyde is logical and clearly done. Every piece of the puzzle fits neatly into place, and Miss Heyer has produced the first of her masterpieces.

A theatrical version of *Death in the Stocks,* adapted by A. E. Thomas, and produced in New York with the title *Merely Murder* on December 3, 1937, was less of a masterpiece. Thomas makes the play a comedy, not a mystery, adding characters not in the book and setting the entire show in the Vereker flat, thus losing the pace of the original story alto-

gether. (Those curious about this can find a typescript of the play in the Billy Rose Collection at the Library of Performing Arts at Lincoln Center.)

One of the most interesting reviews of the show was written by Richard Lockridge, then a drama critic for the *New York Sun* (later, of course, the famousmysterywriter):

> Georgette Heyer's *Merely Murder*, carefully strained of all solid particles by A. E. Thomas, was presented as a play lastevening . Admirers of Miss Heyer's neattight little mystery may want to know how Mr. Thomas has accomplished this . . [By] leaving out all the action and emphasizing thepatter,thus cleverly turning the tables on Miss Heyer, who wrote it the other way around . . . They may also want to know why, but there, I am afraid, I cannothelpthem.

Merely Murder closed after only three Broadway performances, thus fulfilling the prophecy ofanother critic, who described the show as "one of the casualties of the. . . season."

The next yeat—1936—brought two crime stories from Miss Heyer. *The Talisman Ring,* although clearly cast in the mold of the romantic stories (its original title page calls it "an exciting and witty romance of the period of formal manners and informalsmorals"), offers a classic thrillersituation: how to unmask a suspected murderer and retrieve a missing family heirloom.

Eustacie deVauban, fleeing a *mariage de convenance* with her older cousin Tristram Shields, encounters a band of smugglers (they prefer to be called "free traders") in their woods. Their leader also turns out to be a cousin of hers: Ludovic Lavenham, who was thought to be in exile in France, suspected of the murder of Sir Matthew Plunkett, who had won the Ring of the title from him in a game of cards. The ringitself disappeared afterthemurder.

Eustacie and Tristram determine to clear Ludovic's name by pinning the crime on the real killer—their cousin Basil (yes, another cousin), known without affection as "the Beau"—by finding the ring, which they believe he stole after despatching Plunkett. In this they are assisted by one Sarah Thane, her brother, and the usual assortment of Heyer characters, as the danger to Ludovic, who has been wounded in a battle between the free traders and the excisemen,growsgreaterand greater.

While not a mystery in the "detective" sense of that word, this is surely one of Miss Heyer's liveliest stories, in which the comedy and suspense are mixed in just the right proportions, and the plot always takes precedence over the romantic elements. An anxious break-in at Basil's house and an attempt to murder Ludovic at the inn where he is hiding are balanced by the hilarious masquerades of first Ludovic and then Sarah Thane as Eustacie's (non-existent) maidservant, to confuse a rather slow-witted pair of Bow Street Runners.

The Talisman Ring is finally discovered in a rather clever hidingplace, Basil is tricked into admittinghis guilt, the romantic couplings line up as they should, and all ends happily.

In *Behold, Here's Poison* (the title is from the first act of *Pericles*), her other mystery for 1936, Miss Heyer introduces a new element into her stories. The question in the other mysteries has always been simply "who done it?" but she now adds "how did they do it?" to the puzzle.

The victim is one Gregory Matthews, who, we are told, "had many sterlingqualities. It wasn't his fault that he was brought up to be selfish through and through." Making up his household at the time of his death are his sister Harriet,"the elderly lady with the economy mania," and his sister-in-law Zoe, who "hadcontrived to make herself, if not the mistress of the house, at leastthe cherished guestwhose comfort must be everyone's first consideration" and her children Guy and Stella.

Although Stella's fiancé, Dr. Deryk Fielding, thinks at first that Matthews's death is due simply to syncope, Gregory's other sister, Mrs. Lupton, "a massively-built woman of about forty-five, reinforced wherever possible with whalebone," demands a post mortem. The result: nicotine poisoning—"one of the earliest uses of nicotine as a despatcher,"according to the *Catalogue of Crime*.

Hannasyde's investigations, made with the aid of Giles Carrington, who turns out to have also been solicitor for Matthews, unearth a business associate—Mr. Hyde—no one in the family has ever seenor heard of, and whom no onecan locate. Nor is Hyde the only skeleton in the family closets: the meek Henry Lupton is keeping a mistress on the side, and Dr. Fielding is concealing the fact that his father died in an Inebriates' Home.

> TheSergeantopened hiseyes atthat. "Whatthingstheydo get up to in the suburbs!"he remarked admiringly. "Now, somepeople mightcallthat blackmail,Super."
>
> Hannasydenodded. "I do myself."
>
> "Blackmail's one of the most powerful motives for murder I know, Super."
>
> "Admittedly. . . "

Although Hannasyde and Hemingway do not find out until much later, Matthews—under the rather obvious name of Hyde—has indeed been carrying on a lucrativetrade as a blackmailer. When his nephew andheir, Randall, described variously as "an amiable snake, smooth and fanged. . .utterly poisonous," finds this out, he does some investigating of his own and soon concludes that the murderer is their neighbor, Mr. Rumbold, who "seemed to have been created especially to be a Friend of the Family .

[If] he found the recital of other peoples' troubles wearisome. . . he was far too well-mannered to show it." This position he has carefully built up over a period of four years, while waiting for an opportunity to eliminate his blackmailer.

Randall, who hated Gregory anyway, is prepared to let well enough alone; sooner or later, the police will have to give it up. So he keeps his information fromthe authorities (and,ofcourse,fromthe reader) while the others go through the repeated questionings and the ordeal ofthe inquest:

> Mrs. Matthews came up to suggest that they should all of them devote the rest of this unhappy day to meditation, but. . .since Guy. . .flatly refused to meditate with his mother, andStella could not be found, abandoned theidea of a contemplative day,and ordered the chauffeur tomotor hertotown forthe purpose ofbuying mourningclothes.

A second death, however, upsets the apple cart. When Harriet Matthews dies, Dr. Fielding immediately calls the police. Hannasyde is now able to discover that the poison had been injected into a tube of Matthews's toothpaste, which Harriet took for her own use rather than see wasted—a grim confirmation of Hemingway's "psychology!"

Randall now confronts Rumbold and extracts a written confession from him. The murderer's subsequent suicide effectively closes the case, as Randallexplains to an irate Hannasyde.

Hannasyde certainly has every reason to be annoyed, and so has the reader, as Miss Heyer has reverted to someof her worst Sherlockianisms in this story. Here is the crucial clue in the case:

> The drawer held an untidy collection of oddments. Hannasydeturned over a packetof labels,disclosing a pair of horn-rimmed sunglasses underneath, a scattering of paper-clips, and a tubeof seccotine. Forthe rest,therewas a quantity of stamp-paper, some sealing wax, a pen-knife, a bottle of red ink, and a roll of adhesivetape . . . Randall was looking at the heterogenous collection, a slight frown between hiseyes

Even though Hannasyde sees Randall make the connection, he is unable to guess what it is: "I wish very much that I knew what Mr. Randall Matthews found to interest him amongst this collection [W]hether it was in something he saw, or in something he expected to see, and didn't, I don't know."

Randall, who knows that his uncle hated sunglasses and never wore them, links Matthews—by this simple means of disguise—with the mysterious Hyde. By getting to Hyde's papers before the police, he uncovers (andthe conceals) theblackmail records. The reader can only feel cheated at this, and at Randall's conniving at Rumbold's "escape" from justice.

On the other hand, the idea of putting the poison in the tube of toothpaste is, at the same time, both hilariousand horrifying. Like the hiding place of the Talisman Ring, it is simple enough to be practical, and not to tax belief, but unexpected enough to be dramatically effective. Miss Heyer's best effects are usually the most simple at bottom, although they may be carefully and cleverly tangled in details. The novel which followed *Behold, Here's Poison,* however, comes close to sinking under the weight of its own complications andplot contrivances.

They Found Him Dead (1937), according to the original American edition, "contains, in the words of the author herself, a real surprise: 'Dear old Superintendent Hannasyde. . .[who] might be allowed to solvethe mystery, just for a greattreat. He has never solved oneyet, and I'm afraidthey'll leave him out of the C.I.D. if I don't let him do some good once in his life' . . ." In spite of this wry preface, *They Found Him Dead* contains an unusually small amount of the Heyer wit; indeed, after the last few stories, it is almost disappointingly straightforward in the telling.

It is almost as if, having proved that she could spoof the pants off the detective story, she was now going to show that she could do it straight, too. *They Found Him Dead,* if it does let us down in some respects, is an illustration of thered herringraised to the level of a fine art. Oscar Roberts, the murderer, has not even appeared as a character whenSilasKane apparentlysuffers a heartattack and falls to his death at his family's seaside property; but this is fair enough, since no one even considers thepossibilityof murder at this point. Nor is this terribly odd, since Silas is the first person murdered in a Heyer novel who has not made the world a significantly better place by leaving it.

The centerpiece ofthe plot, however, is the murder of Silas's nephew, Clement Kane, who succeeds to his shares in the partnership of Kane and Mansell Although Clement is obviously shot, with people all around his study, no one sees the perpetrator making his escape:

> Miss Allison. . .picked up the detailed list for Clement and was about to take it into the study when. . .Oscar Roberts stepped overthe threshold. Roberts smiled at Miss Allison and wasabout tofollowthebutlerwhena suddenreport, as from a gun, startled them all into immobility.
>
> Then Pritchard. . .ran to the study door . . . Clement Kanelay crumpledacross hisdesk, one arm hanginglimply athisside

The gimmick here is a sort of reverse alibi: not so much to prove the murderer elsewhere at the time of death, but to shift the apparent time of the crime itself. The "report" that the people hear is produced, not by the actual shot, but by a blastingcap attached to a three-minute fuse concealed near the study win-

dow. This trick came from Miss Heyer's husband, who was her uncredited collaborator (although it was no secret) on the mysteries. Their son says: "My father...worked out how the murder was committed. At one stage in his life he had been a mining engineer . .

Hannasydecatches on to this trickafter he makes a simple but logical deduction about the location of the missing gun, which is then found with a silencer still attached. This opens the formerly narrow field of suspects to includealmost all of the characters again, but then Roberts makes a stupid psychological mistake, which Hemingway picks up: "He...went to some trouble to demonstrate how unlikely it was that two such dissimilar murders should have been committed by the same man. Until that moment, he had insinuated that Paul Mansell was responsible for both deaths."

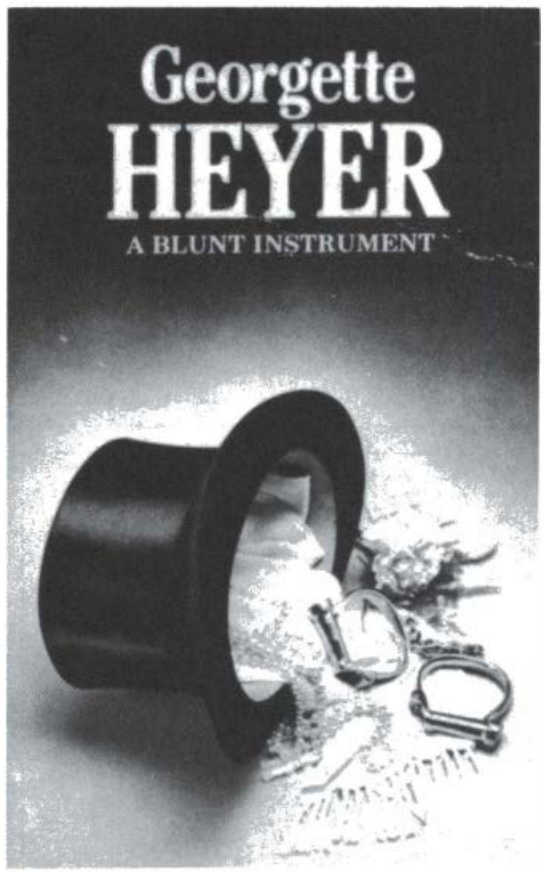
Perhaps a little more of the Heyer fun would have covered some of the rampant implausibilities in this tale of a man who has traveled halfway around the world, and murdered two people, so that his estranged wife could come into the Kane fortune. There is no denying thatmotive is usuallythe weakest link in Miss Heyer's mysteries when it is founded in some legal complication.

Another big problem is the ruse by which Roberts insinuates himself into the circle of the Kanes and Mansells, as the representative of an Australianfirm interested in handling the nets the companymakes. The coincidence of Roberts working for the firm which wants to do business with Kane's outfit is almost on a par with the passenger list of the infamous Calais Coach. On the other hand, we dare not assumethisstory to be a complete fake, sinceit could be so easily disproved, but, astonishingly, no one in the novel—not even Hannasyde—ever questions Roberts's *bona fides!*

Probably the worst obstacle to credibility in this story is the extraordinaryamount ofluck that attends Roberts in his murderous plans: after only one visit to the Kanes, he knows that Silas invariably takes a solitary constitutional before retiring; the night he chooses for themurder is further blessed with a dense fog. In the second murder, no one happens upon the body before he has set up his fuse gimmick; no one sees him skulking aboutthe house—even though the place is crawling with people; the fuseoperatesas set (*not* an infallible assumption!); and all the timings of all the other people's actions fall right in with the length of the fuse. Finally, in two separate attempts to kill young Jim Kane, who unexpectedly turns out to be ahead of Roberts'swife in the line of succession (the property is entailed, like in *Pride and Prejudice*), he is ableto sabotagefirst a large boat and then Jim's roadster without being observed.

Very little of this is apparent on a first reading, since the reader is caught up in the suspense of the story; it is only on reflection that we see how action has been substituted for probability. Most of theother details of the crimes areneatlyworkedout, however, and the red herring—the business deal between Kane and Mansell and Roberts's firm, which seems to be the motive through the story—actually points at the real killerwithout implicating him.

In place of the usualcomedy, Miss Heyerhasgiven us some very well drawn characters, even if a few do verge on caricature. Young Timothy is every bratty young relative you ever knew, peppering his conversation with expressions from American



gangster films; the embittered old lady, Emily Kane, is also good. Even the people who are a little far-out have their moments of truth. Rosemary, Clement's wife, dramatizes herself beyond belief, and Lady Harte, "the African explorer," is just too good to be true. Yet, when they come together, they produce the following exchange, quite different from the usual Heyerrepartee:

"I don't suppose youevenfeelthe atmosphere in this awful house," said Rosemary, shuddering . . . "I expect you have to be rathersensitive tofeelit."

Lady Harte raised her eyes from the cards. "I do not in theleastmindbeingthoughtinsensitive,Rosemary; butas I fancyyou meantthat remark asaslur . I canonlysay that

it was extremely rude . . ."

"Of course, I know I'm very selfish," replied Rosemay withtheutmostcalm . . .

"You are not only selfish," said Lady Harte; "you are indolent, shallow, parasitic, and remarkably stupid . . ."

"When you have seen your husband shot before your very eyes," said Rosemary, a trifle inaccurately, "perhaps you will have some comprehension of what it means to suffer . . ."

"My husband, as I think you are aware, died of his wounds twenty years ago. I saw him die. If you think you can tellme anythingabout suffering, I shallbe interested to hearit."

Although all her mystery thrillers are set in the present, Miss Heyer's use of invectiveremainsalmost historicallyelegant; it is not until *Envious Casca* that sheallows one of her characters to referto anotheras a bitch.

For someone whose avowed specialty was the past, Miss Heyer shows on more than one occasion that shewas never far out of touch with the present: "Mr. Harte said he hadn't had such a cracking nightmare since the occasion when Jim took him to see *The Ringer*." This must have been the English Players' production, since Miss Heyer was out of the country when the Edgar Wallace play was originally produced in 1926. Thenovelsarefilledwith references to plays, and her son told this writer that she read a great deal: "She was a great admirer of Raymond Chandler, and, to a slightly lesser extent, Agatha Christie, Erle Stanley Gardner, and Patrick Quentin."

It might be well to state, right off, that *A Blunt Instrument* (1938) is this writer's choice for Miss Heyer's real masterpiece. There are no unacceptable contrivances here, no gimmicks, just a brilliant bit of misdirection sustainedthrough to the end—when the case is even solved by the detective in charge. The reader who has never read this novel is advised to skip the following paragraphs, so that he can enjoy the book when he does so.

The story begins with P. C. Malachi Glass standing over the body of the late Ernest Fletcher only moments after the murder; the local police, however, quickly call in the Yard, and, before too many pages have passed, our old friends Hannasyde (for the last time)and Hemingway are on the scene.

The murder seems, at first glance, to be fairly simple: Fletcher was beaten over the head repeatedly with the proverbial blunt instrument. Yet, although no fewer than four people were known to be in or near the deceased's study at the critical time, no firm evidence can be found as to the killer'sidentity—nor can any trace of the weapon itself be located!

P. C. Glass, who speaks in a Biblical language of quotations, aphorisms, and other pieties, is assigned to help the Yard men in their investigation, but, the deeper the three dig, the more difficult the case becomes. Hemingway complains at one point that "the only conclusion I've come to is that the whole thing'simpossible from start to finish. Onceyou start putting all the evidence down on paper youcan't help but see that the late Ernest wasn't murdered at all. Couldn't have been."

Their assistant, who has a scriptural reference for every occasion, is also a constant source of irritation to the other two policemen:

Hannasyde said: "Why do you encourage him, Skipper . . I believe you enjoy him . . ."

The Sergeant grinned. "Well, I'vegot to admit it adds a bit of interest to the case, waiting for himto run dry . . . He hasn't, though. I certainlyhave to hand it to him: he hasn't repeated himself once sofar."

A second murder only adds to the confusion, until Hannasyde suddenly sees the "common factor" in both cases. The final confrontation between the man from the Yard and the killer is wonderfully managed; Glass's statement that "I alone know the murderer" and the questions which follow heighten the suspense until Glass himself is finally revealed as the villain. Again, the death weapon—a policeman's truncheon—is horrible in its simplicity, and so much a part of him as to be, in effect, invisible.

The *Saturday Review* originally disparaged the

solution as "a double fracture of mystery-story ethics," but a second reading will show that this is merely due to the reader's assumption—taken into account, and carefully fostered by Miss Heyer—that a policeman must be above suspicion. Of course, there is no legitimatereason for this to be so; besides, the author makes a pretty clear distinction between her detectives, Hannasyde and Hemingway, and the otherpolice in the story.

To put the reader even further off the trail, Miss Heyer uses Glass throughout for comic effect, as a foil for Hemingway and Neville Fletcher, the dead man's nephew. Her humor does not mock the Bible itself, nor genuine religious belief, but rather that certain type of pious fanatic who can practice intolerance—and even murder—in the name of religion. The point, of course, is that we are cleverly led not to take Glass too seriously.

Yet, in view of *Roger Ackroyd,* it is the reader's place to suspect *everyone,* and all the clues are perfectly fair. It is the mystery novelist's job to deceive thereader byany legitimate meansavailable—and Miss Heyersucceeds here, admirably.

After *A Blunt Instrument, No Wind of Blame* might seem to be rather a let-down. The novel's chief interest, for the detective story fan, will be in the mechanical contrivance by which the murder is committed. No matter how well drawn the characters are, however, 107 pages of them is quite a bit to bear before Wallis Carter is finally sent to meet his Maker.

When Carter is shot dead on the footpath near the Dower House of his wife's country property—with no one anywhere near him—the stage is set for another Heyer entertainment...and 'stage' is the word. If *Death in the Stocks* was conceived in cinematic terms, *No Wind of Blame* and its successor *Envious Casca* are theatrical, from their Shakespearean titleson.

Everyone in *No Wind of Blame* is playing a part, either literally or figuratively. Carter's widow, Ermyntrude, is a former actress who has never lost her love for the Grand Scene; her daughter Vicky ("I'm hardly ever 'Victoria'") acts out her life as a succession of differentcharacters.

Early on in the investigation, an attempt by Inspector Cook to question Ermyntrude ends in total chaos as the two ladiesgive full rein to their thespian inclinations. Mrs. Carter is particularly amusing, as she alternately swears that she will say nothing and delivers tirades on everysubjectgoing.

There are also a greatmany references to playsand acting. "I remember I saw a play once," says Wally, "about speaking nothing but the truth..." (probably W. S. Gilbert's *Palace of Truth*). He also opines: "Don't ever marry an actress, unless you're the kind of man who likes having a wife who carries on like Lady Macbeth and the second Mrs. Tanqueray and Mata Hari, all rolled into one! Before breakfast, too!"

Inspector Hemingway, who is the Yard officer on the case—not appearing until page 186!—also relies heavily on theatrical terminology: "Now let's go over the dramatic personae . . . I'm bound to say I don't fancy him for the chief part . . . Decor and scenery are my specialties."

Hemingway, now out from under the shadow of the more sober Hanasyde, begins to develop a character of his own: the "brisk and bright-eyed Inspector," accompanied by Sergeant Wake, "disarmed hostility by a certain engaging breeziness of manner, which had long been the despair of his superiors." Nor does he forget to refer to his "psychology."

The investigation, which turns up nothing of any value until almost the very end of the book, centers mostly on securing the best possible motive for the crime. Wally is described as having "no moral sense whatever, and [was] as weak as water." Almost everyone (as usual) has one reason or another for wanting him dead: Prince Alexis Varasashvili, the Carter's house guest, who is wooing Mrs. Carter almost openly; Robert Steel, who is also enamored of the former Mrs. Fanshawe; Mary Cliffe, Carter's ward, and the supposed heir to his alleged fortune; Percy Baker, whose sister is thought pregnant by Carter—and these are onlythe morelikelyones.

The point here seems not to be the detective work, but the entertainment. If Miss Heyer were conscious of the structural deficiencies of her criminal plot, she made up for it in the dialogue, the characters, and the continuous wit of the telling. Two examples are particularly reminiscent of Jane Austen's gently satiric styleofhumor:

> Wally was pardonably affronted, and animadverted bitterly upon the license permitted to the young in these unregenerate days. Upon which austere pronouncement he strayed away grandly, but a little uncertainly, in the directionofhis bedroom.

> As Alan had expressed his intention of starving before he ate another meal at the Dower House, Janet did not think hewouldappear againuntil suppertime.

The motive, when it is finally revealed (in a phone call from Hannasyde, who has stayed in London), turns out to be one that has not even been hinted at in the story: an obscure bitof legalizing whichprovidesthat Harold White, one of Wally's neighbors, will inherit a large fortune if Carter dies before his senile aunt. This confuses the reader as much as it does the police, since Miss Heyer has been at great pains all along to show us that White could not have pulled thetrigger on thegun that killedCarter.

At this point, Miss Heyer plays a clever game on one of the most famous Sherlockianisms, the one

about the dog in the night-time from *Silver Blaze* (which she had also used in *Why Shoot a Butler?*). Here, Vicky Fanshawe's dog has given no alarm when the two of them arrive at the death scene, which at first is taken to mean that the killer is someone the dog is well acquainted with (as in Doyle). Hemingway turns it neatly around: suppose it means that no one was there at all?

Hemingway and Wake now piece together a few odds and ends and produce the *deus ex machina*—an infernal machine responsible for the shooting, operated by remote control, electro-magnetically. This idea was definitely supplied by Miss Heyer's husband, the former mining engineer; their son says that "this accounts for the considerable expertise in the method of killing in *No Wind of Blame*. They actually got the experts at the Home Office to try it out, and it worked."

There is nothing in *Envious Casca* (1941) that Miss Heyer hasn't used before, yet the wonderfully grotesque situation of a murder at Christmas—which ought to shock us profoundly—is instead turned into a piece of great fun.

The theatrical types from *No Wind of Blame* are back again, as is the legal motive; again we have the house-party murder, and the belated appearance of Hemingway on the scene; as in *Why Shoot a Butler?* a book figures prominently in the complications, and the killer, like the one in *A Blunt Instrument,* is a person we have been led not to take seriously.

Nathaniel Herriard, the owner of Lexham Manor, has been prevailed upon by his brother Joseph to throw the house open for a "real English Christmas [which] meant, in his experience, a series of quarrels between inimical persons bound to one another only by the accident of relationship, and thrown together by a worn-out convention which decreed that at Christmas families should forgather."

Yet Joseph, who "was like a clumsy, well-meaning Saint Bernard puppy, dropped amongst a lot of people who were not fond of dogs," has his way, and Nathaniel invites his business partner, a distant cousin, and his nephew and niece to Lexham to spend the holidays. Stephen and Paula bring their respective fiancées, of course, a bubble-headed socialite and a penniless dramatist, putting the fat well in the fire. Mathilda Clare, the cousin, later describes the results to the police:

> "Miss Herriard treated the assembled company to a dramatic scene—she's an actress, good in emotional roles. I wasn't present, but I'm told she and Mr. Herriard had a really splendid quarrel, and enjoyed themselves hugely."
>
> "Seems a funny way to enjoy yourself, Miss."
>
> "It would seem funny to you or me, Inspector, but not, believe me, to a Herriard."

The festivities reach their apex two days before Christmas, when the yound playwright reads his exceedingly modern and realistic piece, entitled *Wormwood,* to the guests at the Manor. The unpleasantness which follows is capped by Nathaniel's murder—in an apparently locked room—only a few hours later.

The early investigation is in the hands of a local inspector, deputizing for his chief, who is "in bed with influenza. It wasn't as though the case was likely to do him much good . . . The Chief Constable would be bound to call in Scotland Yard, he thought, and some smart London man would get all the credit. . . ." After about fifty pages of entertaining stalling, this is exactly what happens; not that our old friend Hemingway accomplishes very much at first either.

Joseph's wife, Maud, immediately singles out the Inspector as the logical person to find her copy of *The Life of Empress Elizabeth of Austria,* which is unaccountably missing. "And it. . . belongs to the lending library, and if it is lost, I shall be obliged to pay for it. Besides, I hadn't finished it." No one is very inclined to hunt for the book, from which Maud has been reading passages aloud for several days.

What suspense there is in the story comes from the fact that almost everyone suspects Stephen of the murder, and his attitude is certainly very bad. On the other hand, although he feels that he has at least four good suspects, Hemingway admits that he is unable to actually prove anything about the crime:

> The Inspector, with the simple intention of unnerving the household, was spending the morning pervading the house with a notebook, a foot-rule, and an abstracted frown. His mysterious investigations were in themselves entirely valueless, but succeeded in making everyone . . . profoundly uneasy.

Like its immediate predecessor, *Envious Casca* is short on clues and real detection but long on clever and amusing talk—not any substitute, but enjoyable after all on its own terms:

> "I'm blessed if I know how we're ever going to make any headway."
>
> "That's right," said Hemingway cheerfully. "And all the time I wouldn't be surprised if the clue to the whole mystery has been under our nose from the outset. Probably some-things so simple that a child could have spotted it . . ."
>
> "If it's as simple as all that it's a wonder you haven't spotted it," said the Sergeant sceptically.
>
> "It's very likely too simple for me," Hemingway explained. "I was hoping you'd hit on it . . ."

Hemingway talks about "psychology" and "flair" but doesn't use them until the very end, when Nat's will is discovered to be invalid, thanks to a brilliantly managed bit of stage business which tips him off that, in fact, "Uncle Joe" is too good to be true.

With his motive finally in hand (the best of all Miss Heyer's legal trickeries), Hemingway happens upon

thesingle genuine clue in the entirestory,which gives him the means in a case "which reminds me of the Hampton Court Maze more than anything else."

The only question left at this point is: how was the locked-room business arranged? Well, it wasn't at all. If you'd been paying attention, you would have realized that Maud's book had to be missing for a reason. Hemingway comes to this conclusion and looks up the Empress in an encyclopedia. There he finds that Nat's murder has been based on an historical incident in which the victim was stabbed without realizing what the pain was from. Nat obligingly locked himself into his room, and died according to plan.

Rather thin, when all is said and done, but amusing in the accomplished hands of Miss Heyer, who has her detective complain about "all those thrillers that get written nowadays by people who ought to know better than to go putting ideas in criminals' heads..."

After these two lesser efforts, Miss Heyer changed tactics. *Penhallow* (1942) is unique among her thrillers in that it is not a detectivestory at all. Our friends Hannasyde and Hemingway are absent, and the police on the case accept a totally incorrect solution of the crime. Since the reader watches the crime being committed, it is not even a mystery.

Instead, *Penhallow* is a simple story of suspense, of a largecountry family held in thrall by old Adam Penhallow, and an account of how his power over them extends even beyond his death. Although bedridden for much of the book (and dead for its last third), he fills the story, as he dominates the characters,especially his secondwife,Faith:

> Nospiritruledat Trevellin otherthan Penhallow's, andthe tyranny he exercised was so complete that it left no member of the household untouched . . The wounds his rough tongue haddealtduringthe years of his rampant strength andhealthhad seldom been intentional; nowthathis health had broken down, and his strength had failed, nothing seemed to please him more than to...upset the peace of mind of any of his household...as if he were bent on revenginghis physical helplessness on his family.

At one point, the only mystery in the story seems to be: *who* is going to kill Adam Penhallow? Margery Allingham wrote, in *Black Plumes:* "A great deal has been written aboutthe forthrightness of the moderns shocking the Victorians, but there is no shock like the one which the forthrightness of the Victorians can give a modern." Adam's last—and ugliest—act of ill-will in the book is to reveal to Raymond, his oldest son, the true story of his birth. The almost casual cruelty is the culmination of a series of incidents in which noneof the principalcharacters emerges unhit.

Faith goes from expecting Adam's death to wishing for it:

> If he were todie, as the doctor hinted thathe would, every troublewould vanish, andtheywould be free, all of them: free to disperse, to follow their own inclinations; free from the fear of Penhallow's wrath; free from their degrading dependence upon him for their livelihood . . . She saw clearly that Penhallow's death would be a universal panacea . . . No one could think it a crime to put an end to a lifeso baleful; indeed, if Penhallow's brainweregoing, it wouldalmost be a kindness.

The thought soon becomes father to the deed, and the old man gets his when Faith poisons him by dumping a bottle of her sleeping draught into his liquor decanter. She littledreams that the horrorwill only *begin* with the death of Penhallow. Her dream of all the family members going their merry ways is gradually destroyed as she comes to realize that Trevellin is the only thing that makes them a family at all.

Raymond Penhallow suffers as much as Faith. Adam's revelation is the end of Ray's world, since he has expected to inheritthe estate. As the policeinvestigationseems to be drawingnearer andnearerto the truth, he fears that he will not be able to keep the matter a secret, and kills himself. This is taken by the others as an admission of his guilt in Adam's death.

Far from freeing herself from Penhallow, Faith has tied herself to him until her dying day, with the

additional burden of Ray's unnecessary death to bear...a considerable punishment for one who might otherwise be said to "get away with murder." The awful irony, saved by Miss Heyer for the last page, is that the police never do discover Raymond's

Thelight touch is not absent from *Penhallow,* but it is never allowed to distract from the tension and suspense of the story. Thejuxtaposition of the stylish talk of the city dwellers and the blunt frankness of theircountrycousins joltsthe reader morethanonce. There are also multiple examples .of the elegant phrasingand quick wit we havecome to expect from MissHeyer:

In their several ways, they were all of them imperceptive, and insensitive enough to make it impossible for them to understand why anyone should be hurt by their cheerful brutality.

Red to the ears, Clay played first with the idea of murdering all his half-brothers, and then with that of committing suicide; while Penhallow made the Vicar sheer offfrom his side in a hurry by once more stating his doubts of Clay's parentage.

"I am afraid my errand toyour fatherwassadlyunexciting. Tut, tut! You silly child, have you been picturing a mystery? Theinfluenceofthe moderncrime novel."

"I neverread them."

The character of Adam Penhallow is one of Miss Heyer's most fascinating creations. He behaves like "an eighteenth-century squire," in a house which has beenrenderedan anachronism by design—there is no electricity, no telephone service, no central heating, and the hot water system isn't much good either. Since horseflesh is one of his passions, it's almost out of character for him to own an automobile. This suspension of time is all part of the atmosphere Miss Heyer creates for the tale—floating Trevellin somewhere between World War One (which is mentioned) and World War Two—which was going on at the time but is never even referred to, much as JaneAusten ignores thewars ofher own time.

Miss Heyer was certainly aware of the conflict, however. A 1942 plug for the Crime Club describes Heyer and Allingham as "on voluntary leave of absence from heavy writing schedules...doing war work in England." 1943, in fact, was the first year since 1927 which did not see a new Heyer novel. She continued to produceromances duringthewar years, but not at the pace she had maintained previously. Heyerwas not to writeanothermysteryuntil 1951.

Once back in the game, she presented the world with three suspense stories in a row, two with Hemingway and one a romantic novel. The first two, unfortunately, are below the standards set by previous works.

One wishes that Miss Heyer's return to the detective novel could be more in the nature of a triumph, but when shenotes at the beginning thatthe book was written "in response to the representation ofcertain members of the Bench and Bar,"the reader may know, with a sinking feeling, that he is in for another obscure legal motive.

Duplicate Death brings back Chief Inspector Hemingway (he'd *have* to have gotten a promotion in ten years), who has now been granted the first name of Stanley, and the Kanes, who find themselves involved with the murder of Dan Seaton-Carew, an unpleasant customer who traffics in drugs and homosexuality.

The "gentleman" meets his end during a bridge party (the first pun in the title) given at the house of Mrs. Haddington, a real social climber, and her daughter Cynthia, the descriptions of whom show that Miss Heyer has lost noneofher comictouch·

[Mrs. Haddington's]beautifully waved hair showed no grey streaks, being of a uniform copper, and if it occasionally seemed to be rather darker toward the roots this was a blemishwhich could be,and was,veryeasilyrectified.

Those who disliked [Cynthia] said that she was totally devoid of intellect, but this was unjust. Whenever she had a few minutesto spare between her variousengagementsshe would turnoverthe pages of societyjournals, even reading the captions underthe pictures; and she never entered her

room without turning on the radio

Hemingway has barely gotten the suspects in the first death settled in his mind when Mrs. Haddington herself is murdered, in precisely the same fashion as Seaton-Carew—strangulation (the second pun)—and there doesn't seem to be anyone who could have committed both the murders.

It's a nice situation, and Miss Heyer milks it for all it's worth. For sheer story telling, *Duplicate Death* ranks with any of the other novels, and the characters are all good. Only the solution fails.

Just when we're ready for Miss Heyer and Hemingway to pull a really neat trick out of their sleeves, it is admitted that there isn't anyone who could have been responsible for both the crimes: Mrs. Haddington herself killed Seaton-Carew, who had been giving her daughter cocaine; her death is completely unrelated to his, except in the copying of method.

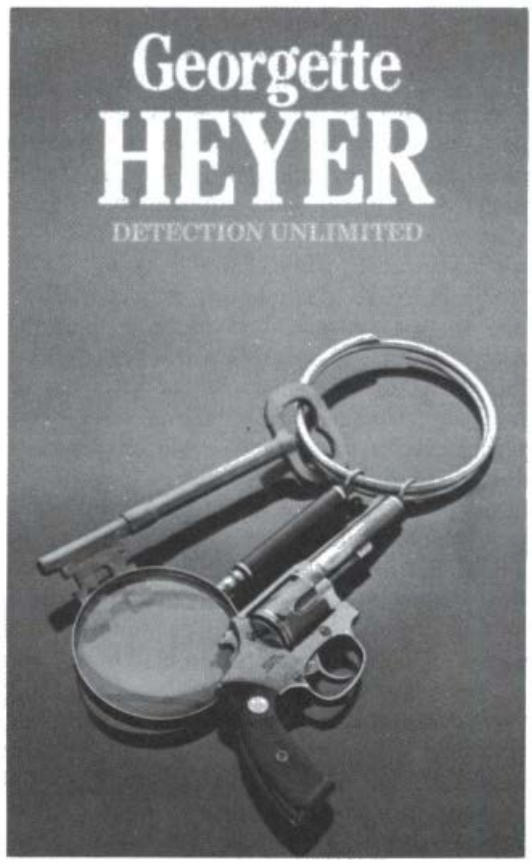
The less said about the second murder, the better; huddled and almost perfunctory, it isn't nearly as interesting as the first. The personal element is replaced by the legal, and the substitution is no improvement. The wrap-up is much like *Why Shoot a Butler?* which is a real disappointment after so much good work in this book.

This occasionally terrifying but ultimately unsatisfactory tale was followed the next year by *The Quiet Gentleman,* hailed by the *Saturday Review* as "for those who love a mystery." In fact, however, neither the romantic nor the criminal outcome of this story will escape the reader for long.

Gervase Frant, also known by his title Lord St. Erth, has come home to claim his estates after some years of soldiering, during which his father has died. His half-brother Martin has had free rein of the property in the meantime and resents St. Erth's return. The strength of this resentment comes under much discussion as a series of attempts is made on the Earl's life, but, since all the signs so obviously point to Martin, even the least alert reader will quickly transfer his suspicion to the only other possible miscreant. Although the story takes one or two clever turns, Miss Heyer's tricks are for some reason inadequate to this lengthy novel.

Perhaps her mind was already otherwise occupied. It was at about this time that she began work on "the *magnum opus* of my latter years," a medieval trilogy, the first volume of which was eventually to be published as *My Lord John.* These three novels were to cover the great years of England's House of Lancaster, 1393 to 1435. Miss Heyer's plan to devote five years of work to this trilogy did not take into account "the penal burden of British taxation, coupled with the clamor of her readers for a new book," according to her husband. So the Middle Ages—actually her favorite historical period—were laid aside for another Regency novel. Her return to the trilogy was again interrupted, as, apparently, were the mystery stories; *Detection Unlimited* was to be the last Heyer crime book.

The only thing keeping *Detection Unlimited* (1953) from the list of Miss Heyer's classics is her apparent uncertainty whether she was writing a mystery or a comedy. Her dedication is a joke ("To all such persons as may imagine that they recognize themselves in it, with the author's assurance that they are mistaken"), and the original British dust jacket shows five people—and a number of disembodied hands—



all pointing away from themselves.

Certainly, the author does a pretty good job of having it both ways. She doesn't do much more than set up the *dramatis personae* (as Hemingway is fond of calling them) before the murder of Sampson Warrenby occurs. Soon the Chief Inspector, assisted by Inspector Harbottle, is on the scene, and the "detection" begins. Everybody in the village has his own idea of who committed the crime; most of their time and conversation is occupied in trying to focus Hemingway's attention on someone else—for spite, for amusement, out of fear for themselves.

This goes on for quite some time, with little sign of progress, even though the case seems dreadfully

simple: "a plain case of shooting . . . no locked rooms, or mysterious weapons, or any other trimmings." Although he has to listen to a lot of apparently pointless conversation, Hemingway says he likes the case—"Why shouldn't I, when I've got half a dozen peopledoing myjob forme?"

Onceagain, MissHeyerhas based thetelling of the story on the method of the murderer, who has set up the crime to look as if it took place at a different time than it actually did—not so much to alibi himselfas to drag as many people into the affair as possible. Thus the story itself reflects that confusion, until the police catch an important clue.

The architect of this bizarre situation is Gavin Plenmeller, a detective-story writer who is also what Barzun and Taylor call "one of Georgette's favorite 'snake' types, who [usually] turn out to be decent once the motive for the foulness is made clear." Gavin goes about making just the type of remark this character has always made in her stories: "I never heard her say an unkind word about anyone. There is no affinity between us . . . The people of Thornden are too respectable for me. I won't say dull, leaving that to be inferred . . . You know verywell that I find not the smallestdifficulty in saying to people's faces precisely what I say behind their backs." It's no wonder that another character is given to ask Hemingway "whether these fellows who are so damned clever at murdering people on paper ever puttheir methods into practice. . "

Although, in any other Heyer novel, this type of behavior would immediately disqualify Plenmeller as a suspect, he is in fact guilty of two murders, and Hemingway settles down to pin them on him. At this point, much of the comedy subsides, and the murder turns out to have been part of an elaborate scheme which Hemingway is able to peel away bit by bit. "The mistake we've been making . . . is to have paid a sight too much attention to what you might call the important features of the case, and not enough to the highly irrelevant trimmings I ought to have spotted at the outset that it was much *too* simple."

Elaboratethough thewholething is, it all hinges in the end on a single item that Hemingway is unable to find, and the tone of the story changes again, into a battle of nerves: he has the evidence that will prove the old murder but needs the gun used to kill Warrenby. Finally, Hemingway pulls one of the oldest tricks in the book, based on his famous "flair"; Plenmellerfalls for it, and thecaseis over.

Hemingway's last assignment blends humor and detection as well as many of the earlier mysteries, with—oddly?—a bit of nostalgia: he refers more than once to those past cases—*No Wind of Blame, Envious Casca, They Found Him Dead,* and *Duplicate Death.* There are good, fair clues to what's going on slipped in among the chatter, and the wonderful irony of the over-clever novelist tripping up at the end.

It may be noted that the taxation problems alluded to were already being felt, since Miss Heyer, in Hemingway's person, takes the opportunity to make a complaint about them:

> The road had led them past a small horse-farm . . . and what had once been an extensive vegetable garden, with an orchard beyond it; and had reached the front-drive byway of the stableyard, where weeds sprouted between the cobblestones, and rows of doors,which should have stood withtheir upper halves open, were shut, the painton them blistered and cracked. Where half a dozen men had once found congenial employment one middle-aged groom was all that was to be seen. "Progress," said Chief Inspector Hemingway. But he said it to himself, well-knowing that his companion, inevitably reared in the hazyand impracticablebeliefsof democracy-run-riot, wouldderive a deep, if uninformed, gratification from the reflection that yet another landowner had been obliged, through excessive taxation, to throw outofwork the greater part of his staff.

In view of Miss Heyer's statement that readers would find all they needed to know about her in her books, it is rather tempting to read between the lines of that passage. .

Although her "life of crime" ended with *Detection Unlimited,* Miss Heyer continued to work for another twenty years, turning out the light novels in which she specialized and even a book of short stories. We must not picture her, either,just dashing off any old thing to keep ahead of the tax man—*The Unknown Ajax* (1960) and *False Colours* (1963) are as neatlyplotted and amusing as anything in her entire output.

The collection *Pistols for Two* (1960) is an excellent introduction, for the mystery fan, to the "other" Georgette Heyer; most of the talesare simply romantic escapades, but "Night at the Inn" is not only a neat little thriller but a virtual lexicon of the slang andcant ofthe period.

Miss Heyer had still another surprise in store for her readers—*Cousin Kate,* published in 1968—a rather grim-shaded Gothic story, complete with mad relations and an old dark house. Her last complete novel was *Lady of Quality* (1972); *My Lord John,* still unfinished at the time of her death two years later, was published in 1975 with notes by her husband.

Although she might have been disappointed not to havedone more serious historical work, she took to the end a craftsman's pleasure in her writing and refused to allow certain of her earliest books to be reprinted, which might have given her time to complete the trilogy.

In any event, the work she left behind, in both the comic/romantic and detective fields, is substantial in quality. Miss Heyer has earned a special place in

many readers' affections by combining them into what one writer (Elaine Barder, TAD, July 1978) has called the "What Fun!" school of detection, "in which, instead of issuing appropriate sounds of outrage and anxiety, the suspects cracked jokes over corpses and honed their wit upon blunt instruments, burlesquing but not injuring the once-solemn conventions." Surely, after Miss Heyer, there would be no excuse for the detective story to take itself too seriously again.

But this, after all, is in keeping with the spirit of Jane Austen, whose own defense of her work—from *Northanger Abbey*—might be a fitting conclusion to this survey:

> Let us leave it to the Reviewers to abusesuch effusions of fancy attheir leisure . . . [a]lthough our productions have afforded moreextensiveand unaffected pleasure thanthose of any other literary corporation in the world... there seems almost a general wish of decrying the capacity and undervaluing thelabourofthe novelist, and of slightingthe performances which haveonly genuine wit, and taste, to recommend them . . . I willnot adopt that ungenerous and impolitic custom.

THE NOVELS OF GEORGETTE HEYER

1921 *TheBlackMoth*
1923 *The Transformation of Philip Jettan* (also *Powder and Patch*)
TheGreatRoxhythe
1924 *Instead of theThorn*
1925 *Simonthe Coldheart* (reprinted 1979)
1926 *TheseOld Shades*
1928 *Helen*
TheMasqueraders
1929 *Pastel*
Beauvallet
1930 *BarrenCorn*
1931 *TheConqueror*
1932 *Devil'sCub*
Footsteps inthe Dark
1933 *Why Shoota Butler?*
1934 *The UnfinishedClue*
TheConvenient Marriage
1935 *Regency Buck*
Death inthe Stocks
1936 *BeholdHere'sPoison*
The Talisman Ring
1937 *An Infamous Army*
They FoundHimDead
1938 *RoyalEscape*
A Blunt Instrument
1939 *No Windof Blame*
1940 *The Corinthian*
TheSpanishBride
1941 *EnviousCasca*
1942 *Faro'sDaughter*
Penhallow
1944 *Friday'sChild*
1946 *The Reluctant Widow*
1948 *TheFoundling*
1949 *Arabella*
1950 *TheGrand Sophy*
1951 *DuplicateDeath*
1952 *TheQuiet Gentleman*
1953 *DetectionUnlimited*
Cotillion
1954 *The Toll-Gate*
1955 *Bath Tangle*
1956 *SprigMuslin*
1957 *AprilLady*
Sylvester; or, The Wicked Uncle
1958 *Venetia*
1960 *The UnknownAjax*
Pistolsfor Two (shortstories)
1961 *A CivilContract*
1962 *TheNonesuch*
1963 *FalseColours*
1965 *Frederica*
1966 *BlackSheep*
1968 *CousinKate*
1970 *CharityGirl*
1972 *Ladyof Quality*
1975 *My Lord John* (incomplete)

The author apologizes for any inaccuracies in publication dates, but evenwith the bookin one's handtheseare sometimes hard to determine—the Heinemann reprint of *The BlackMoth,* for example, still says "first published 1929," but that must be when they took it over from its original publisher. The Library of Congress catalogue cards are even less help, since the American editions were not published in the same sequence asthe British. The dateson the mysteries, however, have been verified with every possiblesource. —J. P. D. □

CURRENT REVIEWS

Destiny of Death by Dell Shannon William Morrow. $14.95

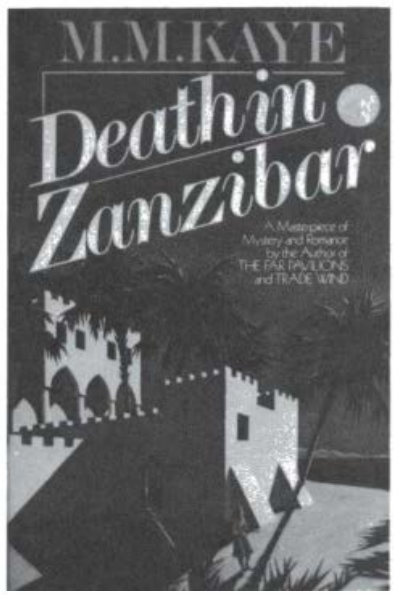
It's business as usual in the Los Angeles Police Department's Robbery/Homicide Division, and Dell Shannon utilizes the conventions of the police procedural subgenre to link the random succession of crimes assigned to Luis Mendoza's unit for investigation: a series of violent rape/robberies on the University of Southern California campus, a string of grocery and liquor store hold-ups committed by a man invariably described by witnesses as a gorilla, and the murders, the shared destiny of death, of Stephanie Herna Hernandez (an innocent three-year-old), Robert Maulden (a 54-year-old invalid), Al Newman (a sailor on shore leave), and Edna Faulkner (a suspicious wife who confronts her philandering husband in the parking lot of a Japanese restaurant). But that's not all, for Mendoza and his staff also have to contend with a heist at L.A.'s Jewelry Mart, a quirky robber dubbed "Jack the Stripper" because of his technique of leaving his victims in the buff, and the strange case of Linda Kent, a bewildered twelve-year-old kept as a virtual prisoner by her foster mother, a prostitute

Shannon not only interweaves Robbery/Homicide's violent cases deftly but also self-consciously juxtaposes them to the predominently serene home lives of Mendoza's team, so that the policemen of necessity focus in upon the tenuous safety of their families in a sprawling city characterized by both random and premeditated violence It's no coincidence that most of the policemen are expectant fathers ("Funny how all the wives are producing babies at the same time"); it's as if procreation makes up for the number of lives snuffed out for, so often, the pettiest of reasons (the wino murdered in a fleabag hotel over a dispute about a bottle of whisky), the most senseless of motives (the slaying of a seeing-eye dog), and the least profitable of justifications ("Mom never gives me no bread, and it's a drag—the other kids get to take girls out and have some fun, I never did, what girl's gonna go anywhere with a guy can't even buy her a hamburger?").

The cops' urge to produce families, moreover, keeps pace with their desire to deduce, to create plausible solutions to the problems that come across their desks, and a good deal of tedious legwork, as well as an occasional lucky break, help in the end to crack all of the cases. In fact, if *Destiny of Death* has a weakness, it would have to be the tidy way in which all of Robbery/Homicide's cases get cleared up. It's a little too pat, but, folks, this *is* fiction, and a flaw such as this should easily be overlooked when the novel's other strengths (an ear for dialogue, a strong sense of place, and a tightness of structure) are considered. And it can also be argued that the ordered way in which Shannon ties up her plot strands functions as a necessary antidote to the constant life-threatening dangers L.A. poses to its citizens and law-enforcers. The essentially moral nature of detective fiction, so that the guilty are caught, is thus reaffirmed by *Destiny of Death*. Death, then, has some meaning, if those who bring it about are hauled in by the arm of enforcement, if not always of justice

—Susan Clark

Death in Kenya by M. M. Kaye. St. Martin's Press, 1958, 1983. 205 pp. $12.95 **Death**



in Zanzibar by M. M. Kaye. St. Martin's Press, 1959, 1983. 270 pp. $12.95

There are several similarities in these two romantic mysteries by M. M. Kaye. Both are pleasantly reminiscent of Agatha Christie's recipe for murder: take one exotic setting, add one naïve heroine and a dash of romantic interest, then sprinkle liberally with suspicion and toss with at least one corpse

The charm of these two mysteries lies in their exotic settings, which Mrs. Kaye can attribute to her husband's military career, which afforded them the opportunity for such personal exposure. Also, these books evoke a simpler [illegible] period in time which accounts for much of the dated dialogue and actions of the characters

The storyline for both novels is that of a young woman traveling to a far-off land, amidst the company of an oddly assorted group of individuals also going to the same destination. Understandably, a murder occurs, and the heroine is attracted to someone that is also a suspect in the crime

The flaw in both books is simply that these are dated in style and evoke the melodramatic approach of earlier romance/suspense writing. The heroines are frequently in near hysterical states and speak in a way that seems quite unrealistic today.

In their defense, however, the plots and mysteries are sufficiently complex, enough to provide interesting and entertaining reading. For light enjoyment, with a garnish of the exotic, *Death in Zanzibar* and *Death in Kenya* fit the tastebuds

The Name of Annabel Lee by Julian Symons. Viking Press, 1983. 191 pp. $13.95

Drawing on the poetry of Poe, Symons fashions a slow-moving story of one man's obsession with a strange young woman Dudley Potter, middle-aged professor of seventeenth-century poetry, leads a solitary existence, never quite recovered from losing his fiancée to his father. He lectures about love but never practices it. Then he meets an eccentric, nomadic actress named Annabel Lee. She moves in with Potter for a brief affair and as easily abandons him.

Obsessed with his affection for her, Potter travels to her home in England, searching for her. His pursuit takes him to a Yorkshire cottage named "Kingdom by the Sea" and into her troubled past, which includes a sister and a slightly crazy mother Potter then finds his way to Boston's Combat Zone for his final confrontation with the elusive Annabel Lee

The ending has a surprise twist, expected by Symons's fans. The revelation, however, is not sufficiently unique to compensate for the plodding pace which comprises most of this mediocre story.

C. B. Greenfield: The Piano Bird by Lucille Kallen. Random House. $13.95

Lucille Kallen's detective duo—active Maggie Rome, star reporter for a New York City suburban weekly, and sedentary C. B. Greenfield, her editor and publisher—perform another of their Archie Goodwin/Nero Wolfe take-offs in *C. B. Greenfield: The Piano Bird*, and the interest for the detective fiction fan lies as much in the parody as in the genuine insights into the genre which Kallen offers

Maggie's mother is laid up with a bad back in her Sanibel Island condominium, and the dutiful daughter trades New York ice and slush for the humid lushness of the Gulf Coast, leaving Greenfield to get out the *Sloan's Ford Weekly* on his own. The reader knows that it's only a matter of time before an island murder distracts Maggie and attracts Greenfield, her "employer confederate . . . adversary . . . ally . [and] affliction." Greenfield out of Westchester County is not unlike Nero Wolfe away from West 34th Street. He's momentarily out of his element, and Maggie, as "legperson," does her share by running down the clues that her armchair detective collabo-

ratorsensesare available

Significantly, the murder victim, actress TheaQuinn, is as much a fish out of water as is Greenfield. In the words of Sarah McChesney, a native islanderwhoworksas a botanist for the Conservation Foundation, Thea was "an import. An exotic plant. She didn't fit into the eco system." Kallen lets the reader ponder first the exact cause of Thea's death and then the list of possible suspects: Sarah, who vehemently opposes the plans of Thea's sugar-daddy boyfriend to purchase beach property; GaryGrafman, the aforementioned sugar-daddy and backer of the Broadway musical that is to showcase Thea; Leroy, a handsome hunk at the charter boat service, with whom Thea may have been romantically involved; and the squabbling writers, Sherman Ruskin, Alvin Persky, and Mitch Webber. The latter three occupy most of Kallen's collaborators' attention, as there is considerable friction among them, and the ring of verisimilitude fromKallen'sscriptwritingdays(shewritefor the acclaimed 1950s TV series *YourShowof Shows*) is loud and clear: "Nobody *writes* a musical. A musical is a group of unrelated goalsthat *collide*, like a seven-car pileup on the New JerseyTurnpike. Somebodycomes up with a book. Somebody else comes up with a score. A producer comes in and destroys half the book and a third of the score. Director comes in and destroys the rest. . . The real trouble starts when the stardecides he or she really wants to do a different story in a different locale with a differentwriter,director, composer. . ."

Maggie and Greenfield succeed in unraveling the tangle of motives, and the murderer's motive and identity are well concealed until the novel's conclusion. Kallen concocts a fine blend of sleepy landscape and tense emotions, and this, Greenfield's furthest-to-date foray away from Sloan's Ford (he's earlier gone only as far as the Tanglewood Music Festival) works well. These series detectives are alive and well

—Susan Clark

The Mystery Hall of Fame edited by Bill Pronzini,Martin H. Greenberg, and Charles G. Waugh. Morrow. $17.95

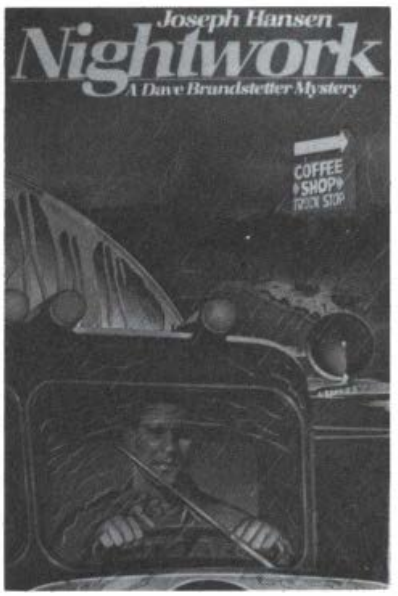
Being a romantic lot, fans of the mystery and suspense genre sometimes like to dream about a detective hall of fame, a sacredshrine of sleuthing in which whodunit buffscould pursue the clues of classic cases, revisit the scenes of legendary crimes, and reacquaint themselveswith gumshoes (DupintoCaptain Leapold) whose investigations have given the whodunit some of its finest moments and highest claimstobeingregardedas literature

That pleasant pipe dream has taken tangible form in *The Mystery Hall of Fame*, an anthology of twenty classic tales selected by a blue-ribbon panel of experts from the Mystery Writers of America.

Each ofthejudges,wearetold, wasinvited to nominate the fivegreatestmysterystories of all time in the English language. Their selections are presented here, not according to popularity rating or voting preference, but in chronological order of original story publication. Missing are two tales (Agatha Christie's "Witness for the Prosecution" and Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery"), the reprint rights to which proved impossible to obtain from theestates of their authors.

Are these really the best stories of their kind? The choicestspecimens of the mystery andsuspense writer'sart?

Most of the offerings do indeed demonstrate how rivetingand rewarding a well-told tale of detection can be. Still, a few of the entries may cause you to arch an eyebrow. What, for example, is San Francisco's own Bill Pronzini doing, allowing himself to be "persuaded" by his brother writers into



joining the company of the masters?(Whatever happened to editorial modesty?) Why must it *always* be "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" when it comes to Sherlock Holmes? (Hasn't anyone bothered to read "Silver Blaze" or "The Adventure of the AbbeyGrange"?) And how is it that a tired old chestnut like "The Monkey's Paw" gets called on for the umpteenth time in an anthologywhereitspure supernatural theme seemsdistinctly outofplace (as opposed, say, to John Dickson Carr's deft blend of detective story and ghost story in "The House in Goblin Wood")?

Quibbles such as these aside, the *Hall of Fame's*case for the mystery short story is an appealing one. While many readers tend to think of "mystery milestones" in terms of landmark novels such as *The Moonstone*, *Trent's Last Case*, and *Malice Aforethought*, it was in the short fiction form that the modern detective story was introduced (by Poe) and in which some of the most distinctive contributions to the genre have been made. That is a pointworth pondering and, inthe presentvolume,worth commemorating.

"The short story," as critic Howard Haycraft reminds us here, "has often been called the perfect and ideal form of expression for detective fiction. It has surely been the most influential Think of the authors and detective characters who have survived from an earlier day to the present almost without exception, they have flourished in the short medium."

First prize honors in *The Mystery Hall of Fame* were accorded Stanley Ellin's "The Specialty of the House," a charmingly sinisteraccount of *hautecuisine*and homocide, though I personally believe that Ellin's"The Crime of EzechieleCoen" is a greaterstory

Second placesaw a tie betweenPoe's"The Purloined Letter" (the story which instructs us that the perfect hiding place is often the most obvious one) and Roald Dahl's leg-of-lamb whodunit, "Lamb to the Slaughter," whichseems to me a cut below his"Parson's Pleasure," a gem about a clerical con man who gets his richly deserved comeuppance.

Third was Thomas Burke's "The Hands of Mr. Ottermole," a solve-it-yourself thriller about a journalist's patient search for an "invisible" murderer preying on foggy London town. It comes complete with one of themost stunning and unexpectedsurprise endings in all of mystery fiction (and don't say I didn't warnyou!)

Among other familiar pleasures which I delighted in rereading were Raymond Chandler's poetically hardboiled "Red Wind," Edward D. Hoch's memorable investigation of a bizarre campus killing in "The Oblong Room,"and G. K. Chesterton's Father Brownadventure,"The Oracle of the Dog," a leisurely, old-fashioned, yet curiously compelling account of an "impossible" murder(of a man alonein a latticed summerhouse) and a canine's curious behavior at the seaside.

Sincequalityratherthan novelty is thecrux of this surprisingly conservative collection, some widely read whodunit buffs may find much here (perhaps too much) that is old hat.

On the other hand, this is an ideal book for any reader seeking a definitive anthology of short fiction mystery masterpieces. And nostalgic fans will certainly enjoy the opportunity to go back one more time to the classics which, with varying degrees of accuracy, they so fondly remember. The ability of thesestories to entertain us afresh, to prove so inexhaustible and timeless in appeal, is surelyone of the best of all reasons to go browsing andwandering in this "Hall" ofdetectivedelights

Rutland Place by Anne Perry. St. Martin's Press, 1983. 235 pp. $12.95

Rutland Place is now the fifth mystery in this Victorian series written by Anne Perry The storiesrevolvearound InspectorThomas Pitt of Scotland Yard—commoner through and through—and his wife, Charlotte, who is descended from the upper class. This in itself makes for an interesting contrast, as well as allowing entry into the divergent worldsofgentryandworkingclass

Charlotte's heritage allows her continued access to the homes of the wealthy, yet only

slightly alleviates her husband's difficulty in gaining information from this elite group. Charlotte's marriage alters her everyday existence, bringing her—and the reader—in constant contact with the woes and tribulations of the poorer members of English society in the late 1800s.

In *Rutland Place*, the insidious possibility of blackmail arises when Charlotte's mother discovers that her locket is missing—a locket that could prove embarrassing if shown to the wrong person, as it contains a portrait of someone other than Charlotte's father. The implication of a love affair is not difficult to deduce.

In her capacity as amateur detective, Charlotte initiates a little artful investigating of her own. She soon discovers that several residents of Rutland Place are missing personal articles. A more sinister mood takes over when one of the occupants, Mrs. Wilhelmina Spencer-Brown, is found poisoned by belladonna in her own withdrawing room.

What marks Anne Perry's books as authentic is the flavor of Victorian priggishness and rigidity of manners where class is concerned. Pitt is unable to effectively question the inhabitants of Rutland Place as he is considered much less than their equal and not someone in whom they will confide their indiscretions. It is Charlotte who will be able to wheedle information from their tight lips and who will discover many secrets worth killing for in order to keep hidden the mysterious death of Ottilie Charrington, one which is not discussed by her parents; the strangely close brother/sister relationship between Eloise and Tormod Legarde; amd the quixotic marriage of Wilhelmina and Alston Spencer-Brown.

The charm of Perry's mysteries lies not only in deducing the solution to the crime(s) but in savoring the ambience of Victorian England, with its swirling fogs, elegant teas in elegant drawing rooms, the grime and drag of the working class, and the intricate charade played by the gentry as they strive to maintain separation of classes with the implication of their superiority.

Rutland Place is one of the best in the series and is highly recommended for any mystery fan who enjoys a little history tossed in with basic detective adventures.

—Gloria Maxwell

The Suicide Murders by Howard Engel. St. Martin's Press. $11.95

Benny Cooperman, private investigator in Grantham, Ontario, works at being hard-boiled, but the consciously ironic Philip Marlowe/Sam Spade-type posturing only renders him, a Jewish-Canadian detective, comic. Benny walks the mean streets of his crumbling industrial town not far from Niagara Falls, and business, when he has any, mostly consists of divorce cases ("I'm just a peeper!") and the occasional deed work he can scrounge from his cousin Melvyn, the lawyer. So when Myrna Yates ("She was the sort of woman that made you wish you'd stayed in the shower for an extra minute or taken another three minutes shaving") hires him to find out if her husband Chester is seeing another woman, Benny tails Chester to his weekly "assignation," which turns out to take place at the office of one Dr. Zekerman, a psychiatrist. Later that day, Benny is ready to return his retainer, the case having solved itself, when Chester, a prominent contractor and real estate dealer, is found to have committed suicide. Or has he? For Chester Yates bought a brand-new ten-speed bike two hours before he died, and suicidal types, Benny argues, don't buy bicycles before they shoot themselves. Or do they?

The cops in Homicide don't buy Benny's story, nor does the widow, nor her good friend Bill Ward, nor Dr. Zeckerman, but Benny proves to be tenacious, and his investigations into the shady dealings, both past and present, of some of Grantham's most eminent citizens are punctuated with egg salad sandwiches at the United CigarStore, overdone, TV-punctuated meals at his parents' condominium ("Benny, it does you good to get a home-cooked meal for a change, after the *chazerai* you eat in restaurants"), and the business of daily living ("Once again, I won't bore you with the details of my weekend. The secrets of the laundromat will die with me, as will those of the car wash and an attempt at stapling the hanging hem of my trouser cuff"). And slowly, impressively, Benny assembles a case, uncovering information about a number of people who, over the years, knew Chester Yates and committed suicide—or were murdered.

Before the novel is over, Howard Engel has shown the reader some nice surprising plot twists, an impressive ability to sketch character with an economy of words, and a thoroughly likeable, smart, if klutzy, sleuth. Moreover, he does so without being cute or overly serious, avoiding that pitfall which troubles many writers of ethnic or non-traditional detective fiction, and he maintains the right blend of humor and sociological seriousness (the decaying city as metaphor for inner moral rot) to put together a thoroughly good read. Benny Cooperman bears further acquaintance.

The Perfect Murder by H. R. F. Keating. Academy Chicago, 1983. 256 pp. $4.95

This 1964 reprint is the first in the Keating series featuring Inspector Ghote of the Bombay police force. *The Perfect Murder* received the Mystery Writers of America Edgar Special Award and the Crime Writers Association Golden Dagger.

How interesting that *The Perfect Murder* refers to an attack on Mr. Perfect. But will he survive, or succumb to, his injuries, Inspector Ghote not only must try to solve this crime with little help from Lala Varde (Perfect's employer, who talks annoyingly in rhymes) but must also try to solve a theft. The mysterious disappearance of one rupee from the desk of a Very Important Person, the Minister of Police Affairs and the Arts, is equally crucial where Ghote's boss is concerned. Struggling amidst bureaucratic red tape and incompetency, and a wife who is less than understanding about him working overtime, Ghote nevertheless forges ahead with both investigations. A definitely different and amusing murder mystery.

—Gloria Maxwell

Act of Darkness by Francis King. Little, Brown, 1983. 332 pp. $14.95

Based on a true crime, *Act of Darkness* recounts the cruel murder of a young British child in India in 1930. The first part of the book utilizes multiple viewpoints so that the major characters can be revealed through their own observations. Hypnotic in its presentation, this book explores the darkest reaches of the human soul, where evil battles with honor.

Who would want to kill a beautiful, charming boy who was the center of his mother's world? The step-daughter, jealous of the attention bestowed on him? Or the philandering father and the governess recently turned lover?

Years after the fact, and shattered lives later, an unbelievable confession is made, one which changes the lives of those remaining survivors—who won't necessarily benefit from truth declared at such a late date.

For the confessor, is peace finally attained? Or, is only a tortured need for self-destruction obtained?

King has fashioned a mirror with which to explore the innermost disparities and tortured windings of the human heart. A fascinating and eminently readable book.

—Gloria Maxwell

The Murder of an Old-Time Movie Star by Terence Kingsley-Smith. Pinnacle Books, 1983. 183 pp. $2.25

The murder of former Hollywood star Mary Callendar causes Detective Pete McCoy to search his files from 1935 for clues to the crime. In the process of dredging up dusty memories, McCoy finds himself only steps ahead of a murderer who savagely punctures his victims with a mysterious weapon the police can't seem to identify.

McCoy fears that those people closest to "American's Little Girlfriend" in 1935 will be murderously close to her again—in death—unless he can quickly pinpoint the killer.

Written in the hardboiled style, this mystery is a fast, entertaining read—well constructed in plot and stylistically evocative of Raymond Chandler.

EYEVIEW

Being a brief catalogue of some of the private eye novels published during the first four months of 1984:

True Detective by Max Allan Collins (St. Martin's Press, $14.95). This is a period novel

set in Chicago in 1933, which introduces P.I. Nathan Heller, who takes on the Chicago underworld as well as the world of Chicago politics, specifically Mayor Anton Cermak. There are guest appearances by Eliot Ness, Al Capone, Walter Winchell George Raft, Ronald "Dutch" Reagan, and the 1933 World's Fair. Don't start reading this one unless you've got a lot of spare time. A sequel, *True Crime*, is on tap for 1985

DeadHeat by Linda Barnes (St. Martin's $11.95). Quite a few private eye writers seem to have sawed their best efforts for 1984. Such is the case with this, the third Michael Spraggue novel. Spraggue is once again thrust into the role of private eye instead of actor when he becomes involved with politics the Boston Marathon, and murder

Deadlock by Sara Paretsky (Dial Press $14.95). V. I. Warshawski returns to find out who killed her cousin, an ex-hockeystar now working for a Chicago shipping firm. If you're interested in the Chicago shipping industry, this one is for you. I like Warshawski—she, Sharon McCone, and Kinsey Milhone are carrying the ball for the female P.I.s right now—but I liked her firstcase, *Indemnity Only*, better.

Quicksilver by Bill Pronzini (St. Martin's $11.95). On the eve of his new partnership with his friend Eberhardt, Nameless takes on one last solo case when he's hired to find out who is anonymously sending a woman expensive presents. Nameless becomes involved with the Yakuza here, in a case which stretches all the way back to the Japanese relocation centers of 1942. Pronzini's best since his Shamus winner, *Hoodwink*

Games to Keep the Dark Away by Marcia Muller (St. Martin's, $10.95). In the fourth Sharon McCone novel, Marcia Muller shows why she and McCone are developing an impressive following. A missing persons case leads to a more puzzling problem of murder and mysterious deaths at an exclusive "hospice." McCone juggles the case and a new romance with equal dexterity—thanks to the talented typewriter of her creator. The best McCone ever

Nightwork by Joseph Hansen (Holt Rinehart, Winston, $12.95). This is the eighth case for Joseph Hansen's gay insurance investigator, Dave Brandstetter, and it appears to be just as competently done as the previous books in the series. This is one series I have never been able to build up much enthusiasm for, but many people feel that Joseph Hansen is the finest P.I. writer around today. If you feel the same way, you'll enjoy this book

Die, Again, Meacready by Jack Livingston (St. Martin's, $13.95). This is much more ambitious than Livingston's first novel, *A Piece of the Silence*, both featuring Joe Binney, deaf private investigator. I can't help feeling that, in writing a longer book this time, the author has succeeded in doing just that, writing a longer book. If that were his aim, then he succeeded, but, if his aim were to write a better book, I don't think he did. I feel the same way about this that I do about the second Paretsky book: I like Binney, but I preferred the first one.

What follows are two impressive debuts by [illegible]

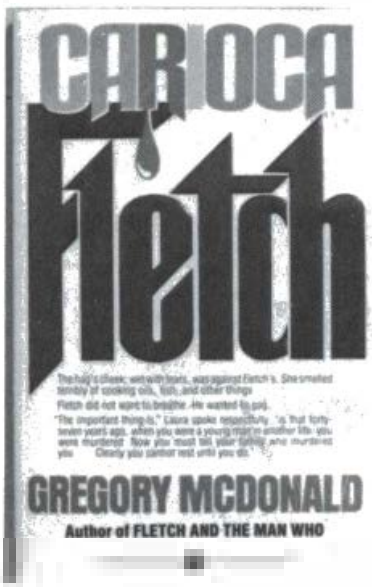
A Creative Kind of Killer by Jack Early (Franklin Watts, $13.95). This novel introduces private eye Fortune Fanelli, who lives in the Soho district of New York City. He lives there—and the reader can taste it. The author knows the city, and an excellent opening scene—in which a dead body is discovered in a window full of mannequins—leads to better things. Fanelli himself is very reminiscent of Lawrence Block's Matt Scudder, except that Fanelli got custody of the kids and drinks Coca Cola by the barrel This is a helluva debut in what I hope will be a long-running series.

Squeeze Play by Paul Benjamin (Avon, $2.50). This is a paperback original about New York-based P.I. Max Klein. It's a very traditional P.I. novel, and I enjoyed it without reservation. A retired baseball player hires Klein to find out who is threatening his life and then ends up dead. Naturally, Klein has to find out who did it. With luck, the first in a series which is a valid argument for the traditional P.I. story.

PAPER CRIMES

By David Christie

Carioca Fletch by Gregory Mcdonald (Warner, 1984),$3.50. **Lamprey's Legacy** by Richard Shaw (Avon, 1983), $2.75. **False Prophets** by Sean Flannery (Charter, 1983), $3.50



Fletch, the first book in Gregory Mcdonald's series about I. M. Fletcher, ends with the title character flying by private jet to Rio de Janeiro. The second book, *Confess, Fletch,* begins in Boston, where Fletch has arrived from his home on the Italian Riviera; the book leaves the implicit question—what happened to Fletch in Rio?—unanswered. The question remains unaddressed in the next four books, but in **Carioca Fletch**, the latest in the series, Mcdonald goes back a bit in time to fill in the missing segment of Fletch's history.

The answer is, plenty happens. In this complex, intelligent, and enjoyable novel, Fletch finds himself in Rio during Carnival, involved amorously with Laura Soares, a Brazilian pianist. He is befriended by the Tap Dancers, a group of four young men who are celebrated for their sleekness and welcome in all segments of Rio society. He is pursued by Joan Collins Stanwyk, a character from *Fletch* who, Fletch surmises, may believe that he has killed her husband. And he encounters an old woman, Idalina Barreto, whose husband was murdered 47 years before; she's convinced that her husband has come back to life in Fletch's person to identify the murderer. What's perplexing is that, with the exception of Fletch, everyone takes her completely seriously.

All of these story lines play out within the context of Brazilian culture and superstition, which Mcdonald renders very convincingly. It is a society in which the ordinary attitude is to be contemptuous of the past—as Laura says, "Anyone can make up a story and say it is the past"—and yet in which the past can have considerable force, as when Laura and others insist that Fletch take Idalina Barreto's story seriously. It is a democratic society, one in which a "deception of class difference" is provided "for the tourists," yet in which a difference between the poor and the affluent does not merely exist but is pronounced. It is above all a tolerant society, one in which contradictory forces ebb and flow, and people with them, in ways not wholly comprehensible even to natives and nearly incomprehensible to Fletch. Mcdonald's controlling image is the samba bands one hears constantly, with "rhythms beside rhythms on top of rhythms beneath rhythms."

Like the samba rhythms, the story lines intermingle in various, shifting ways. There are mirror-image parallels between some of them: if Fletch is presumed by Joan Collins Stanwyk to have murdered her husband, he is presumed by Idalina Barreto to be her murdered husband. The Tap Dancers mirror the Brazilian sense of democracy: as the affluent accept, and acknowledge an obligation to, the poor, so three of the Tap Dancers are genuinely friendly with the fourth, who is poorer in a different sense, being more ungainly and drinking too much. As the novel progresses, the four story lines converge gradually. Their one common feature is, of course, Fletch, and, while each reaches its own conclusion, they come together in the sense that they draw Fletch further into a culture he does not understand and away from one with which he is familiar, further toward emotion and away from rationality, and, at the novel's climax, he reaches a point, really the heart of the book, at which his character changes. That climax is impressively powerful.

Although the book's principal focus is Fletch, the remaining characters are by no means slighted. Laura Soares and Joan Collins Stanwyk are both complex characters who are developed skillfully; this is true for Joan Collins Stanwyk even though she is absent from the action most of the time. I confess I was most taken with the Tap Dancers, who are, as they are meant to be, completely charming even as they are self-absorbed and irresponsible.

One does not want, of course, to say too much about the murder mysteries—about whether Fletch uncovers Idaline Barreto's husband's murderer or whether Joan Collins Stanwyk exacts revenge on Fletch. It should be noted, however, that these are lesser parts of the novel, and intentionally so. They serve a purpose, which is to help define an epiphanic moment in Fletch's life. A reader looking simply for an account of a clever murder investigated even more cleverly would probably not like this book. But a reader looking for an individual and exceptionally well-written book can't go wrong.

In Richard Shaw's **Lamprey's Legacy**, there are neither private eyes, nor policemen, nor amateur detectives. Moreover, there is no murder, nor an attempted murder; there is, in fact, only one brief flare-up in an otherwise nonviolent mystery. The most serious crime is the consumption of marijuana. But if the book is rather unusual by mystery standards, it is nevertheless unusually good.

The story revolves around Karl Weber, a New York lawyer who has been appointed executor of the will of Noah Dexter, who in turn has died a millionaire—he made his money as the guiding force of an advertising agency and, before that, as the creator of a successful soap opera. Dexter has stipulated that the bulk of his wealth go to his son, but no one, including several past wives, knew that Dexter had a son. Disenchanted with both the routine of his job and with the thirst for money so prevalent among his colleagues, Weber becomes obsessed with finding the heir.

He begins with no leads; the son could be any age, anywhere, in any circumstances. But in a series of interviews with people who knew Dexter, Weber gradually narrows possibilities and is rewarded in time with the son's name, Michael d'Eca, and a 35-year-old address. At that point, of course, he is obliged to begin a new series of interviews, tracing the son rather than the father. Weber is an inexperienced investigator, and a certain amount of believable luck comes into play, but he is also intelligent and persistent; a nicely detailed, and amusing, account of his attempt to extract information from the New York University bureaucracy is evidence of that. His search for the missing heir is satisfying indeed.

But Shaw reveals also a talent for complex, intricate characterization. Dexter is both chameleonic—time and again he achieves success but then abandons his life, taking up a new career and associating with new people—and a metaphorical lamprey (hence the title): the nourishment he draws from others is their ideas, which he turns into commercially successful schemes. Yet he views himself, and others perceive him to be, an artist, and even those most closely involved realize only after the fact, if they realize at all,

that his ideas are borrowed rather than original. What makes the depiction convincing is that Weber's interviews are conducted with people who knew Dexter at various times in his life, and the reader sees his character develop; he is not static, not one-dimensional.

The reader is meant to see the son in terms of the father; however, Shaw quite skillfully makes the correspondences between them valid, yet imprecise, so that one is left with a sense of two distinctly individual people who share a strong family resemblance. Similarly, the reader is meant to see Weber, the book's principal character and narrator, in terms of the other two. Weber begins to compare himself to d'Eca—or at least to what he can learn of d'Eca—and the reader realizes that Weber hopes to define himself as much as he hopes to identify the elusive heir. Here again, however, any correspondences are imprecise, and Weber remains a clearly distinct character.

One key to Weber's sense of himself is his relationship with his father, and, in describing this relationship, Shaw is at his best. He is capable of defining their relationship simply by describing the way that they used to hold hands when Weber was a child; the gesture is made to demonstrate both love and restriction. Similarly, late in the book, Weber describes the first time he was physically ill; it proves to be a genuinely moving passage, really a short story within the novel, in which Weber discusses obliquely the first time he realized he was ashamed of his father's poverty

So really, the book has two points: Weber's search for d'Eca, and his search for his own sense of purpose. Both come to entirely satisfactory conclusions. A cautionary note: the book is unusual in one other way, in that it is told in the present tense. There's a good reason for that, the discussion of which would give too much away. I found it disconcerting at first but was surprised at how quickly I grew used to it. Don't let it throw you off; if you do, you'll miss a fine book.

One of several annoyances with Sean Flannery's **False Prophets** is the series of small contradictions spread throughout the text. At one point, for instance, two new characters are introduced into the action and are brought up to date by a third character they thought to be dead. "It took a bit of time" to recover from the shock of finding him alive, and "some time was wasted" filling them in. How, then, can Flannery write only a paragraph later that "they caught on almost immediately"? Or why is a woman described in one place as "young, good-looking," but a few sentences later, "older, haggard"?

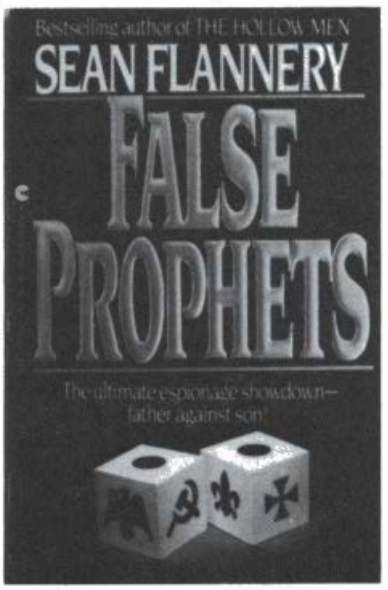
More often, these contradictions are merely annoying, but one is considerably more damaging. The novel revolves around a highly secret international network of traitors, all of whom hold important positions in the world's major intelligence organizations. Wallace Mahoney, a CIA agent, has obtained detailed evidence of the network's existence; he appears to die suddenly, but not before arranging for his son John, who is not an agent, to receive the evidence. The network, knowing John to be possessed of this dangerous evidence, attempts to kill him but succeeds in killing his family instead; he vows vengeance. Wallace's death proves to be an elaborate hoax, and he leads a team of CIA agents secretly against the network

The relationship of Wallace and John Mahoney is one of several family relationships which Flannery uses to humanize his spies, by showing how their private affections and professional decisions bear upon one another. The professional spies lead very nearly schizophrenic lives—their normal, or if anything heightened, emotional bonds with their families making their professional selves seem all the more cold and calculating by contrast. As Wallace Mahoney concedes, "In his business, family was never, never to be involved. When that began to happen, no one would be safe." Yet Mahoney does allow his professional judgment to be clouded by a concern for his son, and it is just this intermingling of his two lives that sets him favorably apart from his colleagues and especially from his principal adversary, who handles his relationship with his daughter in a very different way.

So if Wallace Mahoney's feelings about his son are an important key to his character, Flannery renders that character all but indecipherable by saying at one point that "he would always look back on this period as the time he abandoned his son," and a mere 37 pages later, when Mahoney considers for a moment giving up his pursuit of the network, that "he could no more do that than he could abandon his son." Would the author have us believe that Wallace does, or does not, turn his back on John? It's both important to the story and impossible to say.

Much of the novel's suspense derives from the elder Mahoney, as a seasoned professional, and the younger Mahoney, the unpredictable amateur, acting as rivals in pursuit of the same goal: which will reach his objective first? Will one unwittingly endanger the other? Here too there are problems. At the outset, John Mahoney is depicted as diffident, even dependent on his wife and father His transition into a determined, cunning man is well written, but in fact he becomes too good to be believed. His adversaries are among the best in the business (as we are told endlessly; this is one of several phrases that Flannery uses entirely too often, and he also tends to repeat certain mannerisms in one character after another). Even so, John manages to kill four of them, commit a kidnapping, and outwit and delude his opponents. It's a lot to accept from someone whose beginnings were so unpromising.

The remaining suspense, of course, comes from learning what the network is up to, and whether it will be stopped. Unfortunately,



the explanation that Flannery offers is incomplete, and the ending is consequently quite disappointing.

Lastly, the role of the narrator in this book is incompletely conceived. Flannery affects a tone which suggests he is relating incidents that have actually happened; he writes, for example, of "archivists who later put all the pieces together," quotes characters as if they had been interviewed about their roles in the affair. In so doing, he calls attention to his narrator as someone delivering a report of this episode. The reader's consciousness of the narrator raises the question, never answered or even alluded to by Flannery, of who the narrator is and how he came by his information. He is certainly not one of his characters, and he concedes early on that "no one on the outside really ever had the complete picture." This makes it frankly impossible for the narrator to exist. Flannery presumably adopted this narrative tone in an effort to lend an air of authenticity to the story, but his strategy backfires.

Despite all these flaws, the book in intermittently exciting, and Flannery is clearly not an incompetent writer. However, the book seems carelessly written, and it is not recommended □

REX STOUT Newsletter

John McAleer

For many years, Rex Stout subscribed to a clipping service. Thus he had complete files of reviews of each of his books. It is always interesting to know how a book was received on its first appearance. Here is what the critics had to say when *Might As Well Be Dead* was published in the fall of 1956.

First, there are the brief reviews. "Get it now," said the *New Orleans Picayune*. "Among his best," said the *Saturday Review*. The *Toronto Globe & Mail* thought it "Ingenious as usual and good reading." "Customary fast-paced job," conceded the *Philadelphia Bulletin*. The *Raleigh Observer* said, "This is good." Bill Loomis told readers of the *Washington Post & Times Herald* that it was "a first-class mystery." The *Kirkus Bulletin* granted it "All the tricks of the trade." "Nero never had to think faster, Archie never had to act faster," said the Hobbs, New Mexico *News Sun*, "than in this latest from the mystery master." The *Providence Journal* also conceded Rex's mastery, insisting: "Of the famous writers having books in the recent lists Rex Stout perhaps fares the best in supporting his reputation." The reviewer's sole complaint was that "It is shorter than some Nero Wolfe mysteries." That was not the way it struck the reviewer for the *San Francisco Progress*, who characterized it as "a big bundle of fascinating reading." The *Buffalo Evening News* told its readers that *Might As Well be Dead* "rates as one of the best recent Nero Wolfes." The *Fort Wayne News Sentinel's* Richard Kramer [*sic*] called it "a good story in Wolfe's best tradition . . . . A superior job." "This is standard Rex Stout," said the *Nashville Banner*, "which means an entertaining and cleverly plotted story." The reviewer for the Durham, North Carolina *Herald* threw reviewing standards to the winds: "Nero Wolfe fans don't care about the plot of the latest—they simply want to know if the big old fellow is still puttering about his orchids, being deviled by Archie, eating fine food, and accomplishing miraculous feats of crime detection while sipping his beer." For his part, he seemed overjoyed to take the book on these terms.

In fifty words, the reviewer of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* essayed a mini-critique: "This Nero Wolfe story has much the same fundamental basis of appeal as *The League of Frightened Men* but is a more compact piece of work . . Admirers of the sluggish genius of detection and his dynamic Man Friday will find this one meets their expectations fully."

Some reviews teetered between praise and blame. The *San Francisco Chronicle* remarked, "There's a secondary crime whose mechanics may confuse you, but surely you can't ever get tired of Archie's way with suspects, and Wolfe's interpretation of clues." *Best Sellers* said: "This is up to the high standard of Nero Wolfe stories with the one exception that too many murders are done before Wolfe and his cohorts can find the something that 'stings' which will lead to the culprit. However, even so, it is not too implausible; and it is good fun." Anthony Boucher, pursuing his favorite thesis that the Wolfe novellas were superior to the novels, told the *New York Times's* readers: "*Might As Well Be Dead* is a trifle less meaty, in characters and background, than many of the Nero Wolfe novelettes at one-third the length." Then he half way relented: "Readers who have followed this outsized private eye in his long and deceptively otiose career will welcome his latest exploit, even though the telling *is* a bit under par." Another review, from an unidentified source, said: "Solution a little below Stout's best standard but the narrative is wonderfully alive." Then, rather weirdly, he concluded with a parenthetical aside: "How many people have pointed out that Nero Wolfe is merely Mycroft Holmes, with American citizenship and a Yugoslav background, practicing detection for a living?" The *Saturday Review*, already noted above, said further: "Nice start, fine pace, but wrap-up perhaps a bit tight; dialogue typically breezy and brash."

The British reviews did not appear until the summer and autumn of 1957, when the book became available in Britain in a Crime Club edition. "This may not be vintage Stout," said Vernon Vane (perhaps hampered by blood ties to Lady Harriet Wimsey [the former Harriet Vane], and therefore hardly objective), "but it is nourishing to those who like it." This comment appeared in the London *Sphere*. The *Yorkshire Post* all but contradicted itself: "The action here is rather static, with Nero Wolfe wallowing in lucullan meals and Archie receiving reports from operatives, but it is extremely smooth and lively." The London *Lilliput* seemed to think that *Might As Well Be Dead* was a comeback book for Rex: "Stout's best for several books." The *London Observer* was of the same mind: "Much more like Stout's lively original form." And so was London's *New Statesman*: "This is the most delightful and plausible full-length detection Mr. Stout has produced in recent years." It then went on, however, to question Rex's fairness: "The reader cannot expect to solve it for himself except by guesswork. The vital evidence is suppressed until twelve pages before the end; and an attempt by the publisher to remedy that defect in the preliminary blurb has been defeated by the printer. On the dust-jacket the misprint is corrected; but who sees that, except a reviewer?" (If this does not elicit a comment from many readers of this newsletter, I shall be surprised). The *Queen*, another London publication, also tilts one way and then the other: "Wolfe . . . is rather less unattractive this time, but maybe still eats too much. The story, however, is far from indigestible and makes a pretty meal." The *London Spectator* goes the same route: "Rather too laboriously contrived a tale, about rather too many murders, to be on the top of Mr. Stout's big basket of books, but lazy, gourmandizing Nero Wolfe, and the impressionable Archie Goodwin are characters in their own right, and the dry, urbane manner is, as the dress shops say, stylishly Stout." The *Winnipeg Free Press* likewise frowned and smiled: "Most fans of Nero Wolfe will agree that the fat detective is always excellent, only the author Rex Stout varies from good to best. This book is one of Stout's good stories, not one of his best . . . even if it falls a little short of his usual mark, it's a palatable dish of detective story and provides a good evening's entertainment."

A few reviewers were unabashedly expansive. The *Vancouver Daily Providence* said: "Surely one of the reasons for the success of Mr. Stout as a modern detective story writer, far above the majority of his fellows, must be his consistency. In his latest story . . . Mr. Stout happily maintains the standard of entertainment to which his readers have become accustomed." Entering into the Goodwinian mood, the *Toronto Star* concluded a favorable review with the observation: "Nero proves he's not greedy by accepting the small end—$16,666.66—when a $50,000 fee is split three ways." The reviewer for the *Battle Creek Enquirer* began with a frank admission that "For years I've been a loyal fan of Rex Stout's obese detective, Nero Wolfe, and his brash henchman." It means something, therefore, when he states that *Might As Well Be Dead* "shows no decline in the sleuthing abilities of . . . the redoubtable Wolfe." For him it was a book certain to "amuse, intrigue, and delight" Wolfe's votaries. The New York *Herald Tribune* also beamed: "One could say 'standard brand' only if recalling how high Mr. Stout's standards are. Admirable."

The *Yorkshire Evening Post* likewise was expansive. Its reviewer found Wolfe and Archie "at the top of their form" and the book itself "a well-written story, packed with surprises and tension . . . a thriller well up to

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Rex Stout's best standard." The *Montreal Gazette*, with a prescience the multiplying decades have vindicated, declared: "This is pure vintage Stout and will remain fresh and unchanging after a dozen readings, this year and perhaps a score of them from now." London's *East End News* assured its readers that the book "is brilliantly told and retains attention from the opening chapter." The reviewer, perhaps young since it was rather gushy for a British critic, further averred: "It is a book that is certain to attract mystery seekers—an unusual story with all the ingredients necessary for a successful thriller. Of these the author makes full use." Yet Anthony Lejeune, the veteran critic of the *London Tiablet*, was as friendly as if he expected a cut of the royalties: "Mr. Stout wears his accustomed formula as comfortably as an old coat. This is a full-length Nero Wolfe story, as ingenious and amusing, as ripe and mellow as any he's given us. . . . Fritz, the cook, has the last word. 'No washout in this house!' he says to Archie. 'Not with Mr. Wolfe and you both here.' Them's my sentiments exactly."

Janet S. Berkov, writing in the *Columbus Citizen* was solidly in Stout's corner: "Nero Wolfe towers above most other American fictional detectives. . . . Rex Stout has probably never turned out a really dull book about the mountainous mastermind and the current one is up to par." Leo Harris, writing in *Books & Bookmen*, London, thought that "The egregious, self-indulgent, conceited, and successful Nero Wolfe" handled himself well here, "by sheer brain power" digging himself out of a tough spot.

The *Houston Post* reported that "the durable mastermind . . . routed and exposed" his prey "in the familiar audience participation scene which I personally am getting rather tired of." The remorseful reviewer ended by conceding, however, that "As might be expected of Rex Stout, the writing is fast and literate."

Only the august London *Times*, which entrusted the book to the apparently dyspeptic Pat Wallace, gave up on *Might As Well Be Dead*: "*Might As Well Be Dead* is such a good title that it's a pity Mr. Rex Stout hasn't thought up a first-class story to go with it . . . the mystery is tiresome instead of absorbing and the plot grunts along. Too many braised pork fillets with spiced wine, maybe." After working his way through this batch of reviews, Rex Stout could hardly have been put off by that one. The vote went clearly in his favor. He had a mandate to continue. How thankful we are that he did.

By T. M. McDade

A CASE OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

"If it were up to me, I would never convict anyone on circumstantial evidence." Spoken like a true ignoramous. Invariably, when I challenge such a speaker to explain what he means by circumstantial evidence, it is quickly evident that (1) he knows nothing about the meaning of the term and (2) that he is equally ignorant of the whole question of proof.

In 1850, Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, in the trial of Dr. John White Webster for murdering Dr. Parkman in the Harvard Medical School, charged the jury on the subject:

"This, Gentlemen, is a case in which a person suddenly disappears . . . under such circumstances as to lead to a strong belief that some person or other had done the act which deprived him of his life. Now this is to be proved by circumstantial evidence; that is, nobody saw the act done. And therefore it becomes important to state what circumstantial evidence is, and to give you some idea of the mode in which an investigation is to be pursued.

"The distinction between direct and circumstantial evidence is this: direct or positive evidence arises, where a witness can be called to prove the precise fact which is the subject of the issue in the trial; that is, did one man cause the death of another? That is the fact to be proved. Well, no witness saw it, but can it not be proved? Circumstantial evidence may be of such a nature as to warrant a conclusive belief that somebody did it; and it would be injurious to have it so ordered that circumstantial proof cannot avail. If it were necessary always to have positive evidence, how many acts committed would go entirely unpunished? There may be evidence quite as strong, indeed, sometimes considered stronger, from circumstantial evidence as from positive."

The classic illustration given for circumstantial evidence is the naked footprint which Robinson Crusoe saw on the beach and from which he concluded that other men had come to the island. He had seen no one, but he had concluded from the print that they had been there. So also is a prosecution of a milk dealer for diluting his milk with water; evidence that a trout had been found in the milk was high probative, though no less circumstantial.

Opposed to this kind of evidence is direct evidence—someone testifies that he saw the thing done—so-called eyewitness testimony. There have been many studies of eyewitness testimony, and uniformly all have shown how unreliable it can be.[1] The weakness of such testimony has been remarked by many judges; I cite but one by the United States Supreme Court:

"The influence of improper suggestions upon identifying witnesses probably accounts for more miscarriages of justice than any other single factor—perhaps it is responsible for more such errors than all other factors combined."[2]

In almost every *cause célèbre* wherein the dispute arises from the question of guilt, it is invariably the failure of the eyewitness testimony. Examples will occur to the reader. I mention but one—the Scottsboro case—but the newspapers continually report examples today. As I write this, the *New York Times* of January 24, 1984 reports the freeing of a man convicted in 1982 of the murder of his mother-in-law on the evidence of his wife, who, now recanting, admits she committed the crime.

With this introduction, we might look at a case involving a conviction based on circumstantial evidence and its review by a higher court. On September 15, 1911, Theodore Czarniejewski was killed by the explosion of a bomb in the outskirts of Battavia, New York. Josef Razezicz, who boarded at the victim's house, was charged with making and planting the bomb. Stella, the wife of the victim, testified at the trial to the circumstances of her husband's death. He had gone to the water pump outside their dwelling and called her to observe a box and barrel lying nearby. She testified: " 'Look at that box that is laying there,' and we look at that box ' Then I said, 'Don't take that in your hands. It might be something bad in there.' I said, 'I will see with my foot what is there,' and I touched it with my foot and it was heavy. The box turned once and stopped. It looks like a tin can from tomatoes; there was a newspaper around it and a string. My husband break the paper open like this, and it make an explosion. It strike me in the face, and I did not see nothing, because it goes in my eyes. I was blind."

The defendant, a Lithuanian Russian, had commenced boarding with the deceased in February but left in May after some dispute about his washing. A month later, he returned and shared a room and bed with Mrs. Razezicz's brother, Stanislaus. The state was unable to produce any direct evidence as to who made the bomb or who placed it near the pump. After the explosion, ten slugs were taken from the victim, four from his wife, and another from a hole in the ground; one was found a quarter of a mile away. These slugs consisted of a small, regular piece of an imitation babbitt metal. No wood, glass, plaster of Paris, or other substance was

found. Someslugs had a small quantity of a whiteandyellow powder; onseveralof them was a greenpaint. On such slugs, there was a smallquantity or trace of chlorateof potash, sulpher, and plaster of Paris. The body of Theodore was horribly mutilated, and on one side of the face were certain grayish markings which experts said were burns from nitric acid. It also appeared that chlorate of potash in dry form, when mixed with a lightersubstancesuch as sawdust, maybeignited with nitricacid and produce an explosionof greater strength thendynamite. It was the theory of theprosecution that thebomb consisted of chlorate of potash and sulphur mixed with small pieces of paper, together with the slugs held together by plaster of Paris, and that a bottle of nitric acid, uncorked,wasso placed thattheacidwouldnot run from the bottle until moved, and that, when it was touched by Stella'sfoot, theacid fan on the other matter and the explosion occurred in seconds.

A search of the defendant's room disclosed a bottle containing a solution of chlorate of potash and another of nitric acid. Heexplained theseby showing a recipe for a gargle madefrom chlorate of potash, which he had purchased, and from which he had made up the gargle. The nitricacid he said wastobeusedtocleanhis bicycle. Therewas no evidence that he had purchased any other materialslike those used, and the evidence showed that at least a half-pound of chlorate of potash would be needed to make the bomb.

It was urged by the state that, by leaving the bomb at the well, it would attract the attention of the victim when he usually went there for water. The probability that if so left it would be he who would discover it wasfar from a reasonablecertainty, for it appeared that his wife also on occasion went there and mighthavebeentheone tohavefoundit.

Dudkiewicz, a fellow workman of the defendant, testified that about two months before theexplosion, while he was fishing on the bank of a creek, he saw the defendant coming along a path and enter a grove220 feet from himand passed fromsight.About ten minutes afterward he heard a terrific explosion about where the defendantentered the grove. When the latter came out shortly thereafter, thewitnesssaid he asked him what the explosion was and the defendant charged him with being responsible for it. After Razezicz had left, the witness went to the grove and found a hole several inches deep and two feet across. It was shown that there had been a disagreementon religiousmatters between the two shortly before this time, and thatthey rarelyspoke to oneanother.

For motivation, the state depended on the testimony of the wife Stella, which was in no way corroborated. She testified that several times the defendant had tried to kiss her, had belittled herhusband,andhadonce suggested thatshe go away withhim.

There were other minor bits of evidence, all of them remote and circumstantial. The defendant had brought plaster of Paris from his work, but witnesses at the trial explained howhe had used it in the repair of pictureframes. Thesheriff anda jail prisoner testified to statements made by the defendant which might be interpreted to show a sense of guilt at best; thesewere denied by Razezicz. One week prior to the fatalexplosion, there had been two other explosions, aboutone minuteapart, about half a mile from this blast. The first was on the porch of an Italian workman; the second tore a hole in a cement sidewalk. Two Italians had been arrested for these offenses but were later discharged. There was no evidence connecting thesee with the present case.

Raazezicz was convicted of murder in the first degree, and an appeal was taken to the Court of Appeals. Here the court reviewed all the evidence and stated the principles which wouldguideitsdecision

"In attempting to prove a factby circumstantial evidence there are certainrules to be observed that reason and experience have found essential to the discover of truth. The circumstances themselves must be established by direct proof and not left to rest upon inferences. The inference which is to bebased upon the facts and circumstances so proved must be a clear and logical inference, an open and visible connection between the facts found and the proposition to be proved."[3]

Applyiing this general rule to the evidence adduced inthiscase, theCourtsaid·

"In this case, while the testimonyabout a bomb having been exploded near the creek is properly in evidence, the defendant's connectionwith it, if at all,is sought to be inferred. As such inference must be solely based upon an underlying inference it is unsafe and dangerous to rely upon it as the controlling fact to establish the defendant's guilt. The massof testimonypresented to the jury includes many facts that are consistent with thedefendant'sguilt. They arouseone's curiosity and suspicion, but donot convince thejudgment. If the People hadevidence of one factpointing more directlyand conclusively, although circumstantially, to the defendant's guilt, such as evidence of his possession of the bomb, or that he wasseen going in the direction of the pump with a package resembling a bomb, the conclusion that the defendant is guilty could and would besustained. There is no onefactorseriesof facts that point inevitably to the defendant's guilt. The facts shown by the People singly and combined are consistent with the defendant's innocence. He was never seen engaged in making a bomb; he was never seen with onein his possession; hisconductbeforeand atthe time of the explosion was not unusual."[4]

TheCourt concluded that, in the case presented, there was not such a proof of facts as to make a valid conclusion of the defendant's guilt:

"The inferences shown from the facts are notsufficiently conclusive aswehaveseen,to exclude all other inferences and to justify the judgment obtained against him. The testimony as a whole is consistent with the defendant'sinnocence. It is tobe hoped thatwith a new trial the defendant's guilt or innocence may be more clearly and conclusively established."[5]

With the case being returned for a new trial, asso oftenhappens, the prosecutorwas reluctant to go to trial again. He was no doubtaware thatwithoutsomenewandadditionalevidencea conviction wasveryunlikely. Razezicz, who had been confined at the Auburn prison since his conviction, had shown signs of erratic behavior, and there were questions about his sanity. A much easierdisposition of the matter was at hand, and the state took it; Razezicz was deported to Lithuania as an undesirable person.[6] This ended the matter, and today the case stands as one example of the limits of proof in a case of circumstantial evidence.

1. Elizabeth F. Loftus, *Eyewitness Testimony* (Harvard University Press). Lawrence Taylor, *Eye Witness Identification* (Charlottesville, Va.).
2. U.S. *v.* Wade, 388 U.S 229 citing: *Eyewitness Identification in Criminal Cases* by Charles C. Thomas(1:965).
3. People *v.* Josef Razezicz, 206 N.Y. 249 (1912).
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. *The Daily News* (Batavia, New York), December 6, 1912, p.6. □

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★By Thomas Godfrey★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

TAD at the MOVIES

★★★

There is a danger to remaking the films of the past which becomes a major failing in producer-director Taylor Hackford's updating of the 1947 *film noir*, *Out of the Past*. At first it makes the audience mildly uncomfortable, but later real pain sets in for which razzle-dazzle car chases and flurries of good acting cannot compensate. Whether judged as a remake or on its own merit, **Against All Odds** just never clicks together as a whole. Individual moments, and individual contributions (especially the acting of Jane Greer) impress, but this film is always fighting itself, and in the end it loses.

The story is rather complex. Jeff Bridges, cast as a footballl lineman for the Los Angeles Outlaws, is cut from the squad by his sadistic headcoach. He protests to management and his duplicitious agent-lawyer (Saul Rubinek in a performance that comes close to burlesque) but gets brushed off by both.

A former friend (we're never sure why) and local promoter-fixer James Woods takes advantage of his financial predicament to hire him to find girlfriend Rachel Ward, who slashed him in the groin and made off with $50,000. Complicating this assignment is Ward's relationship to her mother (greer), who is the owner of the Outlaws and a Brentwood dragonlady.

Greer and her attorney Richard Widmark try to hire Bridges themselves with promises of his old job with the team, but in the end he's off to Mexica as Woods's man.

He finds the girl after some terribly unimaginative scenes that open the picture and falls totally and physically in love with her. After a series of lovemaking scenes set against every conceivable *tourista* backdrop in the country, they decide to stiff Woods and run off. Another of the gambler's hirelings catches them in a Mayan ruin and is shot by Ward, who immediately disappears.

Bridges drifts back to Los Angeles and finds her once again nested in with Woods, who now forces the compromised Bridges to break into his ex-attorney's office and steal some files being used for blackmail. To no one's surprise but Bridges's, this is a frame-up for murder which the football player sidesteps with the help of one of the lawyer's secretaries, Swoozie Kurtz.

Bridges now turns the tables on Woods and forces him into a confrontation with the real behind-the-scenes villains.

If you've stayed with me this long, I will reward you by not recounting the 1947 plot (scripted by Daniel Mainwaring from his book *Build My Gallows High* with uncredited help from James M. Cain) in detail. It differs in the following ways:

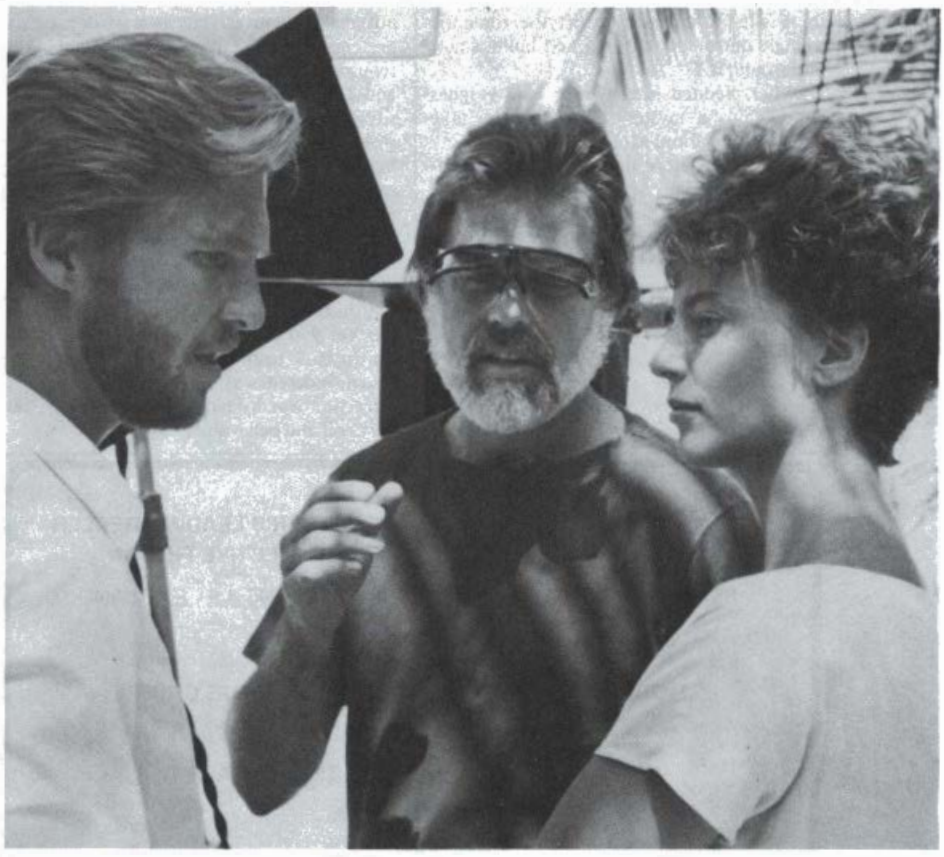
1. The pivotal female character, played in the original film by the same Jane Greer who portrays the mother here, was an opportunistic, amoral mink, devoid of the family connections supplied by the remake.

2. The lawyer's secretary, played in 1947 by the voluptuous Rhonda Fleming, was also party to the murder, giving the film an over-all misogyny characteristic of *film noir* but an anathema to contemporary feminism.

3. The male lead in *Out of the Past* was a detective whose involvement in all this intrigue seemed quite natural. Played by Robert Mitchum, he was surrounded by accessory characters, a new "good" girl friend, a deaf-mute assistant and a slimy, repellent partner who helped flesh out the character.

4. Some of what now takes place in Mexico and Los Angeles took place in San Francisco and on piney sets in Northern California which provided another artistic din ab he ke.

5. There was a great fatalism about the characters of *Out of the Past* as they were caught up knowingly in these whirlwinds of greed and sexual obsession that made them tragic. In 1984, there is no internal struggle at the close. They are squashed by a big external conspiracy of graft and political



Hackford directing Bridges and Ward: a confusion of style and stylization

corruption. Their ends have no consequence and no poignance.

Maybe these five points don't seem like much, but they do define important areas in which the style of the remake jars with the story of the original. What was once an intimate personal account, suddenly veers off into a *Chinatown*-style indictment of good *versus* evil, the evil being something vague and "out there" as opposed to a part of the characters themselves.

Here's Hackford on the film, from a piece by Janet Maslin for the *New York Times*:

"...I've tried to add Los Angeles as a character, almost an extra character. I think Los Angeles is a place that's more ruthless than most cities. Its image—fun in the sun and everyone kind of laid back—is the antithesis of the way things really are here."

And in this regard, Hackford, once an investigative reporter for the Los Angeles PBS station, has succeeded. It's hardly an original idea. Nathaniel West and Raymond Chandler were experimenting with it over a generation ago. But it does not lend itself well to retelling in terms of the story of *Out of the Past*. Los Angeles overweighs the other characters and robs them of stature The story and the style do not go together. The story itself reflects the style of the time in which it was written, and the danger of its not lending itself to the style of the remake is crippling

"The style today is not to credit the original, and you really don't need to. . . I think what I did was to lift the romantic triangle out of the old film and build a new one around it."

(What credited screenwriter Eric Hughes did remains a mystery. My guess is, take notes and dictation. More of this later.)

But there is more than just the basic triangle here. Many parts of the original construction have been taken with it, some in detail too obvious to be considered coincidental. The money the female character takes from the gambler is present but now superfluous since she has plenty of her own back home.

The romantic triangle Hackford feels he has removed from the original has been somewhat mangled in transition. At its vortex was Mitchum's lazy sexuality, a heavy-lidded mask that covered a force of steam and passion which could erupt to the surface at any moment. When he said the voice-over narrations, it was arresting in its artistically bright, pseudo-smart way, so typical of the pulp writing of the time

When Bridges talks, it all comes out boring, banal twaddle. The new story has given him greater social stature, but he gives the part only Magic Fingers motel room sexuality, and nothing that remotely looks charismatic. He's just dull and thick-headed, and Hackford allows him to kill scene after scene with an incessant flow of witless dialogue that goes way beyond mere tedium

There's no steam to his scenes with Rachel Ward. Greer and Mitchum generated the heat of a personal chemical reaction, but Bridges and Ward just seem horny. Ward has not been given much to work with either. She's been fashioned into an androgynous Beverly-Hills-High-School-Girl-in-Trouble and denied much allure or clout as a feminine presence. The decision to turn her into an upgraded Valley Girl may be faithful to modern realities but not to the needs of the story. She might get a wink from the clerks at the local McDonald's, but does she have what it takes to drive Bridges and Woods into a frenzy?

Woods's performance is more problematic. He is a fascinating film actor. The angular face, small thick lips, trapped vulpine eyes always command attention, and he knows just how to deploy them. But he cannot make them salable as a strong carnal presence, and that's what the part still requires. In *Eyewitness, The Onion Field,* and TV's *Holocaust,* his coiled-spring intensity, coupled to a nervy, over-heated delivery, stole scenes from the nominal stars, but he's fighting a losing battle against miscasting here, and his attempts to make the role his own get no help from the production.

Kirk Douglas, who played the part in 1947, presented a figure who was commanding and charming, a Mr. Nice Guy exterior that hid a cunning, vicious, obsessed neurotic. Yet you could feel why Greer would be drawn back to this man. The menacing fear he engendered was a sexual turn-on. Their attraction was hysterical and unhealthy, but very real and believable

Woods does not physically command the space he occupies, as Douglas could. Nor does he have the sunny, hearty veneer that might once have attracted Bridges to him. He's much too weasely and wheedling. The camera catches him once too often like a Luther League Woody Allen. When he and Ward are finally rounded up for the big confrontation, they have been physically demeaned to such an extent that they look like a high school couple caught trying to elope after the Senior Hop

You sense that Woods the actor is constantly trying to make his character meaningful and human. In the early, superbly executed but dramatically expendable, car race scene, Hackford allows Woods to suggest that he is a man who will risk anything to be what he wants, but he's never allowed to build on this characteristic. Later Woods is dressed up in a black beach outfit with All-Male overtones, but, if there's anything to be drawn from this, the picture never follows it up. The worst sabotage comes when Ward, recently returned to Los Angeles, effectively kisses the Woods character off rather wanly. Douglas couldn't have survived this. You don't generate any dramatic tension by trivializing part of a triangular relationship.

There were other things to regret, too. In addition to banal dialogue, Hughes often comes up with a scenario that's downright amateurish. The music is loud and anti romantic. Alex Kerras as a football coach in Woods's employ isn't just miscast, he's bad. And there's a nightclub sequence with a ridiculous musical number (Carmen Miranda Lives!) which seems successfully to have resisted updating.

"To me, the important thing is for a film to have a point of view, rather than just a style."

Hackford again, this time from the *Los Angeles Times*

"I have the skill and technique to do a real stylistic movie, but I eschew style."

And there is the reason why Hackford was unable to avoid the danger in remaking a film such as *Out of the Past*. Whether unconsciously applied or not, every film has a style. There is style in how an actor crosses the set, how the shadows fall across his face, where the camera catches them, and how they balance with the other elements of the film.

There is certainly style to the way director Jacques Tourneur rendered Mainwaring's story, one that fit it like a glove and gave it a firmer grip on its audience.

Perhaps Hackford has confused style with stylization, in which the technical tricks of moviemaking overweigh everything else. Or maybe he just doesn't know what he's talking about, because there is a style to *Against All Odds*, an immature one, which prevents his beloved point of view from emerging with one strong voice. There is a style to miscastings, bad dialogue, and inattention to detail that can stick to a director whether he eschews style or not. And that is the danger to Hackford's career □

TAD ON TV

By Richard Meyers

Miss me? I missed you. Actually, what I should have missed was a lot of penny-dreadful TV shows and TV movies, one or two of which have already drifted into the thick tapioca caverns of my memory.

What is it with American television nowadays? Viewing used to be so simple. Twenty-five weeks of regular watching, twenty-five weeks of reruns, and then two weeks introducing the "new season" every September.

In this Orwellian year, there are new seasons every fortnight. New shows appear in September, November, January, March, and May like clockwork, while failed pilots and abortive teleflicks are also crammed in.

And, for the most part, they are either clichéd concepts given fresh approaches through characterization or they are interesting ideas realized in the most hoary way imaginable.

Happy and **This Girl for Hire** belong in the latter category. First came the Dom Deluise co-plotted, co-produced vehicle in which he starred as "Happy the Clown," an ex-kiddie show host run afoul of a hit man.

To keep solvent, Happy rents himself out and on one such occasion is witness to a mass murder by a homicidal maniac played in crisp fashion by Henry Silva (basically reprising his role from Burt Reynolds's self-indulgent movie *Sharkey's Machine*).

If there's one thing Dom DeLuise does well, it's whimper. The man trots out an encyclopedia of whimpers for his character as his best friend (Jack Gilford) dies of gunshot wounds, the police don't believe his eyewitness accounts, and he attempts to prevent the assassin's next killing.

Whimpering and whining I can handle; I do both fairly well myself. It was the completely unrealistic love subplot which dropped me off at the cliché express. DeLuise's real wife and son played his sex-wife and estranged son in the film, so that incredibly gorgeous Dee Wallace (of *E.T.*, *Cujo*, and *The Howling* fame) could fall in love with him. I should be so lucky.

But that wasn't the worst of it. As is, I could simmer in the fantasy of the babe going for an overweight, bearded, immature schlep. It was just that Wallace was cast as a cocktail waitress who was an amateur sculptress who lived in a loft apartment as big as the Houston Astrodome filled with artwork—any one of which would cost the gross national product of a small Latin country.

That's where they lost me, sad to say. *This Girl for Hire* lost me as soon as Bess Armstrong started getting misty-eyed. Here she was (in a part originally written for Farrah Fawcett), playing a supposedly "1980s counterpart of the kind of tough male characters" of *film noir*—"complete with deadpan wisecracks, snub-nose .38, and rakish fedora"—in a "mystery-comedy spoofing 1940s detective movies," who becomes a consultant to a hardboiled mystery writer who, in turn, gets bumped off (all quotations courtest of network publicity).

Everything would have been fine if Armstrong's character, Brady, had been a strong female P.I. with brains and savvy. Instead, producer Bernard Rosenzweig and director Jerry Jameson made it clear by the end that Brady was just a simpering wimp who was play-acting toughness. She had to get her teary bacon saved by young cop Cliff De Young at the fadeout.

To add insult to injury, she was moronic to boot. Jim Rockford would have shot his cookies if he had seen how stupidly she handled herself. Well, what can a person expect from a script that is listed on the credits thusly: "Teleplay by Terry Louise Fisher and Steve Brown adapted from a story by Barbara Avedon, Barbara Corday and Barney Rosenzweig and based on a character created by Jean and Clifford Hoelcher"?

Speaking of Barney, Barbara, Terry, and Barbara, they had much better luck with the return of **Cagney and Lacey**—which they executive produce, created, and creative consult, respectively.

CBS, the broadcasters of the originally aborted, then resurrected, series, still advertise it in a fittingly begrudging manner. In *TV Guide*, the motto is: "You Wanted 'Em, You Got 'Em!" as if they were washing their hands of the whole sorry deal.

Actually, the network is handling the situation with a lot more style and decorum.

Tyne Daly (right) and Sharon Gless in *Cagney and Lacey*

than the likesof NBC, whichacidlybrought *Star Trek* back more than a decade ago also"bypopular demand."

Wellsir, I enjoyed the first new episode of *Cagney andLacey*,, w'hichpremiered the week several otherseries wrapped their 1983season, more than I enjoyed their original premiere episode. All the messy character kinks and police procedural stuffhad been slicked up and streamlined down, all the details and textures needed for an engrossing viewing were in place, andthe plotneatly balanced detective work with personal conflict.

But as much as I liked that, the females can't hold a candle to Stacy Keach as **MickeySpillane's Mike Hammer.** Thisis one of the greatest balancingacts in the history of the television-circus. On the one hand, this is a joke; filled with blazing gats, gorgeous gams,and glibgusto. On the other hand, it is an homage to all hardboiled private dicks, filled with *film noir* touches, voice-over narrations, and right-wing philosophy.

On the thirdhand, it is the most accurate translation of Spillane thus far, complete with sudden violence, meaningless violence, gratuitous violence, and essential violence. Reportedly, Spillane required three things of producerJay Bernstein to securetheHammer rights: one, the hat, two, the .45 (if you'll remember,Darren McGavin packed a .38 in the first Hammer TV series), and three, the cleavagecome-ons

The program uses all three to good advantage. I haven'tseen oneepisodein which the murderer wasn't almost totally obvious, but I also haven't seen one show I didn't enjoy immensely. It's the little touches that make it sing for me, up to and including the recurring appearance of Hammer's dreamgirl, listed in the credits only as "The Face." He never meets her, onlyseesher on themean streets.

And mean they have to be, with all Hammer's past friends, associates, and even passing acquaintances getting abducted, asphixiated, blackmailed, beaten, blown up, or riddled with lead. Hammer, with the help offaithfulsecretaryVelda (Lindsay Bloom), policecaptain Pat Chambers (Don Stroud), and bar owner "Ozzie the Answer" (Danny Goldman), and with the hindrance of Assistant D.A. Barrington (Kent Williams), evens the scales of justice by shooting, beating, electrocuting, or just generally making the murderers take"thelongfall."

Or, as one of the heinous killers said to Hamner as his murdering fingers were losing theirgrip on the edge of a precipice, "I can't hold on much longer." Said Keach in inimitableHammerstyle, "I can wait."How can I possibly dislike a show that has the likes of thatevery week? Don'tanswer. . .read on

If *Mike Hammer* isn't original, at least its clichés come from Mickey Spillane.. All of **Airwolf's** clichés come from Clint Eastwood. Although ostensibly CBS's answer to ABC's predictable and boring TV adaption of *BlueThunder, Airwolf* isactually a combination of the movie versions of *Firefox* and *The Eiger Sanction.* Jan-Michael Vincent stands in for Clint as an alienated, art-collecting, cello-playing pilot asked to steal a futuristic supercopter from an enemy stronghold

The only "nice" thing about this effort is that, whenAirwolf'sweaponsspat,they spat death. On *The A-Team,* the boys fire "neutron bullets"—you know, the ones that can onlydamage property, notpeople. Theyalso get in neutron car chases, neutron plane crashes, and neutron fistfights. Not so Airwolf; it fires Roy Rogers bullets—you know, the onesthat kill but don't draw blood.

If Eastwood begat *Airwolf,* then **The Master** was begat by Lustbaden, Smoke, Golan, Kusogi, and me. Once upon a time, Eric Von Lustbaden wrote *The Ninja.* Then Steven Smoke created *The Ninja Master* for Warner Books. Then Manachem Golan created a Ninja movie series for Cannon Filmsstarring ShoKosugi.

Surprise, surprise—MichaelSloan,lastresponsible for *The Return of the Man from Uncle*,.creates *The Master* for NBC. I was hoping for a crackling good show since Warner Books had asked me to refashion the Ninja Master for 1985. An exciting, popular show could only boost the new paperbacks' chances.

Un-for-tun-ate-ly, *The Master* is not only derivative, it is very, verybad. It starts with the theme song by BillConti. He merelyrewrote a track he used in his *For Your Eyes Only* soundtrack rather than coming up with an evocative, completelyoriginal theme. Lee Van Cleef plays the man almost everyone refers to as "the Ninja Master" or "a Ninja Master," while Timothy Van Patten (half brother of Dick Van Patten, the daddy of *Eight is Enough*), plays his slightly obtuse student.

Whenthe dialogue isn't literallydreadful, it is being directed or spoken in the most stilted orbland way possible. Whenthe plots aren't being "borrowed" from *The A-Team,* they arebeing borrowed from Ninja Master novels.The only savinggrace oftheshoware the fights, staged by Sho Kosugi, who co-stars as The Master's arch-enemy.

As has always been the case, ever since Bruce Lee was rejected as the star of theTV show *KungFu* in favor of David Carradine, American producers missed their golden opportunity. If *The Master* is to be saved, Van Cleef and Kosugi should change roles. And, naturally, I should become creative consultant. Ahem. Cough, cough. (Stage whisper: "Do you think I was a little. . .well ..subjective in that last review, Michael . . . ?" Long pause."Naaaaaaw.") □

Stacy Keach and Tanya Roberts in *Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer*

The Radio Murder Hour

By Chris Steinbrunner

In the last column of "The Radio Murder Hour," a discussion of fat detectives on radio led easily to a report on the Nero Wolfe Dinner at which Himan Brown discussed his memories of Rex Stout and the old NERO WOLFE *radio series, which he produced. Brown, who was the consummate master of the radio mystery form in its golden age, is such a treasury of the past—a radio past the history of which is ephemeral at best—that it would be short-changing the reader if we did not allow him to elaborate upon the few comments permitted him last time. This column will be Hi Brown's words exclusively from that memorable dinner, rich and detailed reminiscenses of those golden years when radio ruled the air.*

I was fortunate enough to meet Rex Stout forty years ago. In 1942, we all were part of a thing called the Writers War Board. I was considerably younger than most of the men on the board, but I was working with Henry Morgenthau and the Voice of America, which was just beginning in those years. I don't even think we called it the Voice; it was the United States Information Agency or some such form. But Rex was the head of the Board.

In those days, we did radio programs, and 39 weeks was a career. You did 39 programs and you laid off for the summer for a hiatus, and the sponsor would then do something else, to keep the time spot, and keep the audience alive—even though in the summer it was supposedly much smaller. I got a call, in 1944, from the J. Walter Thompson Agency, which had a shaving cream as a sponsor. "You do a lot of detective mysteries, Hi. What kind of detective story can you do for us? We would like you to go on for thirteen weeks."

They offered a miniscule sum of money, so I budgeted myself and figured I had something like $250 for rights, which was in those years not too bad. Since Rex was a part of the Writers War Board and I admired the Nero Wolfe stories, it occurred to me that this would make a heck of a good radio series. They had made a few movies from the character, which were not very good at all. I knew that with my ability, through radio, *your* imagination would dress Nero, give him his avoirdupois. You'd see Archie, and he would not be Lionel Stander. The brownstone, the orchids, the whole ambiance of Nero, *you* would help me and you would create it.

So I proceeded, and talked to Rex. I got the rights—but I was not to use any of Rex's stories; I had to create my own. I was going to go on for thirteen weeks with thirteen original half-hour shows. And part of the deal was I had to please Rex. I had to have dialogue which he approved, because if nothing else Rex was a master of dialogue. His stories more than anything depend on the dialogue of his characters as much as they do the descriptive passages.

Radio had its own descriptive passages: the most important thing for me was the challenge of creating a signature for Nero Wolfe. *[Brown had created the signature sounds for* GRAND CENTRAL STATION, BULLDOG DRUMMOND, *and* INNER SANCTUM'S *creaking door, as reported in the last column.]* There was a wonderful actor, who is passed away some years now, named Santos Ortega. I said to him, "Sandy, laugh for me the way a fat man would laugh." And Sandy worked on it, and when he came back, I'll never forget his laugh. The first thing you heard was a deep, wheezing chortle, and then the laugh followed; you felt the flesh. There was a strange harmonic to it. In those days—1944—most of your radio speakers were made of paper cones, if you remember. Sandy's laugh rattled the paper cone, and you *knew* Nero Wolfe was on the air. It was a tremendously effective signature, that laugh, and it has remained as part of the industry.

The most wonderful guy in the business was Archie for me. He was an actor called Everett Sloane. Everett starred in the Mercury Theater. If you saw *Citizen Kane,* he plays Bernstein, one of the editors of the newspaper. But Everett was a consummate actor, and bouncing him off Santos Ortega was really the most magnificent ensemble—and of course the rest of the cast was simply wonderful. And now Everett's gone, Sandy's gone. The man who wrote the scripts for me was a man called Lou Vittes., who absolutely enchanted Rex. He never failed to have a 22-minute plot which we could develop and conclude within that short period of time. I don't think I'd ever undertake a half-hour series again. You simply cannot develop characters and tell a story in a half-hour. I won't do anything under an hour any more, ever again, as long as I'm in radio.

But Rex was pleased with the dialogue, Rex was pleased with the quality of the show, the quality of the music cues, and so forth. The thirteen shows were so successful that J. Walter Thompson said we have another client, we're going to continue. We stayed on the air 52 weeks a year for seven or eight years, because the program was unusual, it wasn't just run of the mill detective material. The wonderful thing about Nero is that you have a character. Actually, I didn't really belabor the fact that he had those idiosyncracies, that he was fat, that he cultivated orchids, or that he was a gourmet. That wasn't nearly as important as the bite, and the wit, and the compassion that this man had. And, of course, his brillance in solving mysteries.

The irrepressible Hi Brown had much, much more to tell, but there is just so much space. His astonishing vitality continues undaunted, though, and even now he plots more melodrama radio. □

story in the April 1984 EQMM, "Hare's House," is quite different but almost as good, presenting the familiar fantasy situation of a couple moving into a house where a murder has been committed. As one expects from Ruth Rendell, her reworking of this theme is entertaining, original, and highly readable.

Joseph Hansen's Edgar-nominated story "The Anderson Boy" (September) was this popular author's first appearance in EQMM. Another popular mystery writer and two-time Edgar winner for his Fletch novels is Greg-ory Mcdonald, who made his first appearance in EQMM in the May 1984 issue. "The Robbery" is a fine story of crime in a remote area of South America, quite different from the Fletch stories, and I hope it's the first of many short stories from Greg Mcdonald.

Before leaving the subject of EQMM authors, I should mention that MWA this year presented its first Robert L. Fish Award, for the best first short story published during 1983. The winner was "Locked Doors" by Lilly Carlson (EQMM, October), and the runner-up was "An Educated Taste" by Maralyn Horsdal (EQMM, September). Both are excellent debuts, and the award honoring the memory of Bob Fish is planned as an annual event.

At times it might appear that there are no mystery-suspense stories at all being published outside the familiar genre magazines, but a few do turn up in unlikely places. The unlikeliest place of all was probably the January 1984 issue of *Life* magazine, which featured a tale of computer crime, "Mouse-trap" by bestselling author Michael Crichton.

And a close second for unlikely places must be the April 1984 issue of *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, in which the featured novelette was "The Big Dream" by John Kessel, a private eye tale in which Raymond Chandler's wife hires investigator Michael Davin to look into her husband's increasingly frequent absences from home. The story is set in Los Angeles in the late 1920s, prior to Chandler's writing years. It could be viewed as a sort of fantasy but would have been just as comfortable in many of the mystery magazines. It's worth seeking out, especially for readers interested in private eye fiction.

Next time, for sure, we'll review the long-delayed return of *The Saint Magazine*. □

THE PAPERBACK REVOLUTION

By Charles Shibuk

A Little Local Murder (1976) (Dell) is a sharp and satiric glance at the village of Twytching, which is about to be the subject of a radio documentary. This hamlet is typical of those found in British mystery fiction: somnolent and conservative on the surface, but teeming with dark, repressed passions. There are also the usual eccentric characters, a series of anonymous poison-pen letters—and murder.

SIMON BRETT

Murder Unprompted (1982) (Dell) is the eighth Charles Paris tale and is better, and more readable, than its predecessors. The theatrical background—putting on a show in the provinces and moving it on to London—is fascinating, and Brett's narrative drive and characterization of his protagonist are at their best. The crime problem comes late in the novel, and seems slight, but its solution is logical.

AGATHA CHRISTIE

Berkley has wisely acquired the rights to 35 of this author's works and plans to reprint them all within the first half of 1984. Spearheading this drive are two better-than-average series efforts. **The Murder at the Vicarage** (1930) marks Miss Marple's first book appearance, and **Appointment With Death** (1938) features M. Poirot on holiday in the Holy Land.

MICHAEL JAHN

The tale of the serial murderer is perhaps too much with us these days, but **Night Rituals** (1982) (Jove) is a bit more persuasive and compelling than most. This procedural is set in New York City, stars Lieutenant Bill Donovan of the West Side Major Crimes Unit, and concerns the unrelated ritualistic murders of young women in Riverside Park—including Donovan's girlfriend's sister.

An American business executive, temporarily working in East Berlin, meets and becomes infatuated with an attractive woman who urgently wishes to defect to the West in **Crossing in Berlin** (1981) (Charter). This lengthy (392 pp.) Cold War effort has attractive characters, moves at an acceptable pace, and is narrated with crystal clarity in its plotline.

JOHN MORTIMER

Rumpole for the Defence (1981) (Penguin) was originally published in England as *Regina v. Rumpole*, and this is the first American edition. The seven short stories are both clever and witty, and most show the celebrated British version of Perry Mason extricating his clients from the toils of the law via adroit cross examination of hostile

Also available from the same publisher is **The First Rumpole Omnibus** (1983), consisting of two collections of shorts, *Rumpole of the Bailey* (1978) and *The Trials of Rumpole* (1979), and the novel *Rumpole's Return* (1980).

GEORGES SIMENON

Maigret at the Crossroads (Penguin, 1983)

contains the titular short novel which was originallypublished in France as *La Nuitdu Carrefour* (1931) and represents thisauthor's closestapproach to the detective story. Also included are *Maigret Stonewalled (M. Gallet Decédé)* (1931)—the first published Maigret—and *Maigret Mystified (L' Ombre Chinoise)* (1932).

(Note: the contents of *Maigret at the Crossroads* havebeenpublished in individual volumes byPenguinon severaloccasions.)

ELEANOR SULLIVAN (ed.)

ElleryQueen's PrimeCrimes(Davis, 1983) is herein cited for both its novelty and its merit. Thisisthe48th anthologyofits kind—but the first to contain a complete table of contents making its initial American appearance. Fifteen short stories by such EQMM reliables as William Bankier, Christianna Brand, Joan Aikin, Ron Goulart, and Edward D. Hoch arewellcomplemented by an eighty-page PatriciaMoyes novelettethat'stopnotch

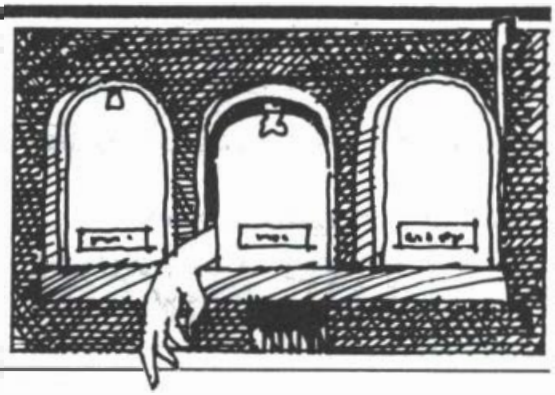
JULIAN SYMONS

This author's recent delving intothe past has produced some of his best work, and **The Detling Secret** (1982) (Penguin) shows Symons at just about the top of his form It's unobtrusively set in the 1890s and centers around an aristocratic British family There are also elements such as financial skulduggery, Irishterrorists,two murders,an unexpected villain—and an even moresurprisingdetective.

A Three-Pipe Problem (1975) (Penguin) should be of great interest to Sherlockians because its protagonist, appearing as the Master in a successful TV series, startsoveridentifying with his role while a serial murderer stalks London.

The Money Harvest (1975) (Perennial) contains an elaborate plot designed to reap a fortune, two juvenile killers, and the attempt by an ex-private eyeturnedmillionaire to investigate the senseless murder of a 93-year-old man. These(and other)disparate elements do not quite coalesce into a really satisfactory conclusion, but *The Money Harvest* does move, and is the most readablebook ofthe quarter. □

LETTERS



FromRobert S. Napier:

I hope you'll find room in TAD to announce the formation of a letterzine for mystery fans now being formed by yours truly. The name of this zine is *Mystery & DetectiveMonthly*, and it will bea forum for informal, personal, and interesting discussionsaboutall facets of themystery/detective genre—books, plays, movies, television, radio, conventions, fanprojects, and special projects ofinterest to m/d fans. In addition, noted mystery fan Jeff Smith will edit a section of MDM which notes and previews upcomingbooks.

As the title suggests, the frequency of this magazine will be monthly. Size will vary, as the bulk of the material will consist of letters from our readers and other fans, but as an inducement to get those letters I offer a free issue to everyone who submits andhasprinteda letter of 100 words or more. Those people who have subscriptionswill have theirsubs extended oneissue foreach letter of 100 words or more that is printed. I have faith in mystery fans. I believe thereareenough interesting,informed people outtheretokeepMDM supplied with material *ad infinitum*, and once this thing gets rolling I expect there will be an excess of good material ontap

Mailing date for the first issue is June 1, 1984—sooner if the response from my ads and announcements is adequate. Priced as follows: $2.00/issue, $5.50/3issues,$10.00/6 issues, $19.00/12 issues. In Canada add $.50/issue to those prices (e.g. $7.00/3 issues).OutsideNorth America, theprice is a flat$3.00perissue,no discounts.

All issues will be mailed flat in a protective envelope viafirst class (airmailoverseas)and beashandsome as I canmakeit.

From Mel D. Ames·

TAD is doing great. And I, for one, do notconsiderthe dollar increase in cover cost excessive. For what it's worth, I particularly enjoyed "The Changing Face of Evil" by Frederick Isaac(TAD 16:3), as wellas "The Oddly Colored Thread: Logic in Detective Fiiction" by Louis Phillips(same issue). I'm not much into the line-by-line dissection of authors'works, as some readers seem to be, but, I guess, everyone to their own weird proclivities. Also, "Minor Offenses" by the unbelievably prolific Edward D. Hoch is a "must read." And if we can think of the "letters" page as the genre's lifeline, then "Classic Corner"must surely be its impetus Keepitall coming

FromRinehart S. Potts:

Those of your readers whoare interested in Luis Merndoza, Ivor Maddox, Vic Varallo, and Jesse Falkenstein will want to know of a quarterly newsletterabout them. It began in January 1984 and willbe devoted to all the works of Lesley Egan, Elizabeth Linington Dell Shannon, Egan O'Neill, and Anne Blaisdell, at $12 peryear.

The firstissue included the first half of a preliminary Linington bibliography, subscriber want list, list of publishers of Linington books, and biographical data on her. Scheduled for later issues: biographies and time-lines of characters, notice of forthcomingLinington books,andletters;alsothe second half ofthe bibliography and periodic

A CATALOGUE OF CRIME

By Jacques Barzun
and Wendell HertigTaylor

S236 Bagley,Desmond
TheFreedomTrap
Doubleday 1972

Surprise endings are a dime a dozen, but surprise "middles" are rare. The late Mr. Bagley uses one here that deserves high praise: one-third of the way through his story, we are catapulted into what seems an entirely different genre—enjoyably so. A [illegible] ir[illegible]iv[illegible] dialog[illegible]nd i[illegible]venti[illegible] this author deserves more credit than he has receivedforhistalesofcrime, espionage,and generalmisdoing.

S237 Goodman, Jonathan
Bloody Versicles
D&C 1971
[illegible]

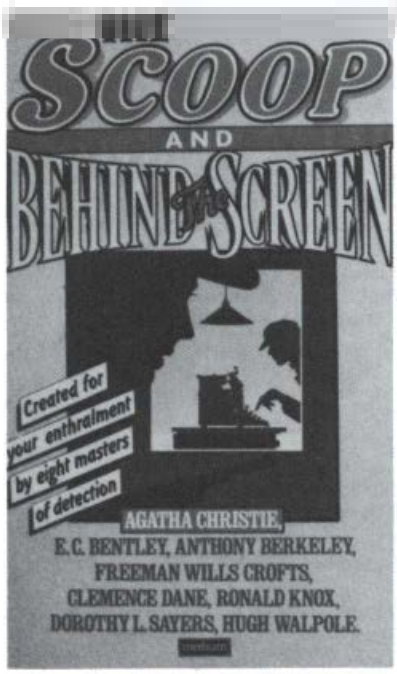
The editor, who is surely the greatest living writer of true crime, has gathered upwards of eighty ballads, rhymes, couplets, and verse parodies sprung from some of the best-knowncrimesofthelast250 years.They are introduced by the editor in matchless summaries of the circumstances and tied together by astute commentary full of little-known facts. Any collector of trials and recitals of famous crimes needs this supplementoflilting(andlimping) metricals

S238 Kallen,Lucille
C.B. Greenfield: NoLadyinthe House
Wynd 1982

The oddity of the title is explained by the author's wish to give her hero top billing in a conspicuous place. Greenfield, an amateur cellist and chief of *The Reporter* in the village ofSloan'sFord, N.Y., has figured in two previous books: *Introducing C. B. G.* and *C. B. G.: The Tanglewood Murder.* If he is as undistinguished in those as he is in this, he is miscast as hero. But then, such a crowded scene, such talkative people, such lurid pasts, and such agonizing souls as the author provides would extinguish a much brighterlightthan C.B.G.

S239 Kaminsky, Stuart
Death of aDissident
Ace 1981

Of the several recent tales of murder in Moscow, of policework biased or baffled by political control, and of Russian life in general, this one is the most able and the most moving. Inspector Rostnikov is the humane and intelligent investigator of the killing of a manwho is on the verge of being tried for harm to the state. Thepeoplewho suffer as a result of the put-up job are well conceived, andthe writing is efficient without any of the outworn tricks of the tough genre.



S240 Krasner, William
Death of a Minor Poet
Scrib 1984

Welcome back to Captain Sam Birge after a quarter-century! For here he is in his old and best form, to investigate the murder of an art-struck youth who lives among an odd lot of splendid characters in a shabby tenement and beerjoint. The author's sensitive touch and intelligent writing keep the tale from being sordid and show Birge's spiritual staturefurther enhanced

S241 Merrilees, Francis
The Pit
[illegible]

Thoughthefinal-clearing upcomes through a confession, this story holds attention from theoutsetand providesalong thewayallthe necessary details to keep up suspense and give the feeling that inquiry is genuineand progressive. The unusualsetting—oldmining country—and some sharply defined Scottish and English characters render the tale memorable and make one regret that the author never wrote another.

S242 Radley,Sheila(pseud.)
The Quiet RoadtoDeath
Scrib 1984

A decapitated body on a main English road, threats posted on a door, vandalism, then another murder face our attractive friend Chief InspectorQuantril withthe task of discovering a pattern of causeand effect. He is helped by Policewoman Hilary Lloyd and hindered by all the other North Suffolk characters. This tale marks a fine recovery after the diffused interest of *A Talent for Destruction*

S243 Symons, Julian
The Blackheath Poisonings
Coll 1978

Knowing this able writer, one is not surprisedthat hisfirst attempt at a period piece (1890)shouldbefaithfulin manners andlanguage. Unfortunately, some of the attitudes about state, church, and society are of the twentieth century, andthe author's narrative *élan* is strangely weak, though the plot outline is excellent. The managerial dowager's actsand commands ruin half a dozen lives, butthe individualsremain dim, and it is only in spots and in the surprise dénouement that one finds the true craftsman.

S244 VariousHands
*TheScoop*and *BehindtheScreen*
Harp 1983 (Golll982)
Introductionby JulianSymons
Appendixby Milward Kennedy

Eight members of the (English) Detection Club collaborated to produce these works for theBBC, first as serial broadcasts,then as instalments in *The Listener*. The writers (Bentley, Berkeley, Christie, Crofts, Dane, Knox,Sayers,and Walpole)eachwrotechaptersin alternation,coping withthe detailsinvented byeach to decorate thecommonplot outline. *The Scoop* is excellent and shows in particularthedexterityofChristieand Sayers. *Behind theScreen,* shorter by a third, uses a good idea but does not allow room for the stylistic touches that make characters and events credible. □

CHECKLIST

MYSTERY, DETECTIVE AND SUSPENSE FICTION PUBLISHED IN THE U.S. JANUARY-MARCH, 1984

Abelman, Paul: **Shoestring.** Parkwest Publishers,9.95,3.50 paper
Ashforth, Albert: **Murder after the Fact.** St. Martin's, 13.95
Banks, Oliver: **The Caravaggio Obsession.** Little, 14.45
Barnard, Robert: **School for Murder.** Scribner's, 12.95
Barnes, Linda: **Dead Heat.** St. Martin's, 11.95
Baxt, George: **Process of Elimination.** St Martin's, 13.95
Boucher,Anthony:**ExeuntMurderers.** SouthernIllinoisUniversity, 16.95
Breen, Jon L.: **The Gathering Place.** Walker, 12.95
Candy,Edward: **WordsforMurderPerhaps.** Doubleday, 11.95
Cohen, Anthea: **Angel Without Mercy.** Doubleday, 11.95
Collins, Max Allen: **True Detective.** St. Martin's, 14.95
Cross, Amanda: **Sweet Death, Kind Death.** Dutton, 13.95
Denning, Mark: **Din of Inequity.** St. Martin's, 10.95
Dexter,Colin:**The Riddle of the Third Mile.** St.Martin's,12.95
Dominic, R. B.: **Unexpected Developments.** St.Martin's,-11.95
Dunnett, Dorothy: **Dolly and the Bird of Paradise.** Knopf,14.95
Egan, Lesley: **Crime for Christmas.** Doubleday, 11.95
Ellroy, James: **Blood on the Moon.** MysteriousPress, 15.95
Fackler,Elizabeth: **Arson.** Dodd, 12.95
Ferrars, E. X.: **Something Wicked.** Doubleday, 11.95
Gash, Jonathan: **The Gondola Scam.** St. Martin's, 12.95
Gerson, Jack:**The WindfallSanction.** Beaufort, 14.95
Gilbert, Michael: **The Black Seraphim.** Harper, 13.95
Gosling, Paula: **TheWoman in Red.** Doubleday, 11.95
Grayson, Richard: **Crime without Passion.** St. Martin's, 10.95
Hamilton, Nan: **Killer's Rights.** Walker, 12.95
Hardinge, George, ed.: **Winter's Crimes.** St. Martin's, 12.95
Harris, Charlaine: **A Secret Rage.** Houghton, 13.95
Holland, Isabelle: **A Death at St. Anselm's.** Doubleday, 13.95
Jordan, Cathleen, ed.: **Alfred Hitchcock's MortalErrors.** Doubleday/Dial, 12.95
Kallen, Lucille: **C. B. Greenfield: the Piano Bird.** Random, 13.95
Karlin, Wayne: **Crossover.** Harcourt, 12.95
Knox, Bill: **The Hanging Tree.** Doubleday, 11.95
Lewis, Roy: **A Limited Vision.** St. Martin's, 10.95
Livingston, Jack: **Die Again, Macready.** St Martin's, 13.95
Lovell, Marc: **How Green Was My Apple.** Doubleday, 11.95
MacKenzie, Donald: **Raven's Longest Night.** Doubleday, 11.95
McManus, James: **Out of the Blue.** Crown, 12.95
Minahan, John: **The Great Diamond Robbery.** Norton, 13.95
Morice, Anne:**Murder Post-dated.** St. Martin's, 10.95
Muller, Marcia: **Games to Keep the Dark Away.** St. Martin's, 10.95
Papazaglou, Orania: **Sweet, Savage Death.** Doubleday, 11.95
Paretsky,Sara: **Deadlock.** Doubleday, 14.95
Paul,Raymond: **TheTragedyat Tiverton:an Historical Novel of Murder.** Viking, 13.95
Pronzine, Bill and John Lutz: **The Eye.** MysteriousPress, 15.95
Pronzini, Bill: **Quicksilver.** St. Martin's, 11.95
Queen, Ellery and Eleanor Sullivan, eds: **ElleryQueen'sPrimeCrimes.** Dial,12.95
Rathbone, Julian: **Watching the Detectives.** Pantheon, 13.95
Spillane, Mickey: **Tomorrow I Die.** MysteriousPress, 14.95
Tapply, William G.: **Death at Charity's Point.** Scribner's, 11.95
Underwood, Michael: **A Party toMurder.** St Martin's, 10.95
Van Ash, Cay: **Ten Years Beyond Baker Street: Sherlock Holmes Matches Wits with the Diabolical Dr. Fu Manchu.** Harper, 14.95
Warner, Mignon: **Illusion.** Doubleday, 11.95
Wolfe, Carson: **Murder at la Marimba.** St.

Barnard, Robert: **A Little Local Murder.** Dell,2.95
Block, Lawrence: **Sometimes They Bite.** Berkley,2.95
Braudy, Susan: **Who Killed Sal Mineo?** Pocket, 3.95
Brett, Simon: **Murder Unprompted.** Dell, 2.95
Clarke, T. E. B.: **Murder at Buckingham Palace.** St. Martin's, 5.95
Cody,Liza:**Bad Company.** Warner, 2.95
Fisher, David E.: **Katie's Terror.** Ace Character,2.95
Francis, Dick: **Banker.** Ballantine, 3.95
Granger, Bill: **The Shattered Eye.** Pocket, 3.95
Innes, Michael: **The Case of Sonia Wayward.** Dodd, 3.50
Kaminsky, Stuart: **Never Cross a Vampire.** Mysterious Press,3.95
Lathen, Emma: **Going for the Gold.** Pocket, 2.95
Leonard,Elmore: **Stick.** Avon,3.50
Lewis, Roy: **A Certain Blindness.** St. Martin's,5.95
McConnor, Vincent:**The ParisPuzzle.** Ballantime, 2.50
Marshall,William: **PerfectEnd.** Holt,3.95
Marshall, William:**SeiFi.** Holt,3.95
Marshall,William: **Skulduggery.** Holt,3.95
Mitchell, Gladys: **The Death Cap Dancers.** St. Martin's, 5.95
Mortimer, John: **A First Rumpole Omnibus.** Penguin, 7.97
Mortimer, John: **Rumpole for the Defense** Penguin,2.95
Mortimer, John: **Rumpole of the Bailey.** Penguin,2.95
Mortimer, John: **Rumpole's Return.** Penguin,2.95
Mortimer, John: **The Trials of Rumpole.** Penguin,2.95
Nabb, Magdalen: **Death of an Englishman.** Penguin,2.95
Pentecost, Hugh: **The Homicidal Horse.** Dodd,3.50
Radley, Sheila: **A Talent for Destruction.** Ballantine, 2.50
Rendell, Ruth: **The Fever Tree and Other Stories.** Ballantine, 2.75
Robertson, Charles: **TheOmegaDeception.** Bantam, 3.50
Sherry,Edna:**Sudden Fear.** Dodd,3.50
Symons, Julian: **The Detling Secret.** Penguin,2.95
Truman, Margaret: **Murder in the Supreme Court.** Ballantine, 3.50
Truman, Margaret: **Murder on Capitol Hill.** Ballantine, 3.50
Upfield, Arthur W.: **The Will of the Tribe.** Scribner's, 3.50
Van Dine, S. S.: **The Scarab Murder Case.** Scribner's, 3.95
VanGulik, Robert: **The Red Pavilion.**Scribner's,2.95
Wager, Walter:**Designated Hitter.** Tor,3.50
Wambaugh, Joseph: **The Delta Star.** Bantam,3.95
Woods, Sara: **Exit Murderer.** St. Martin's, 5.95 □

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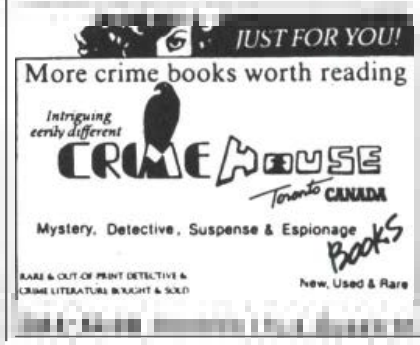

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Katherine Daniel, Joseph Bitowf, Jose Salcido