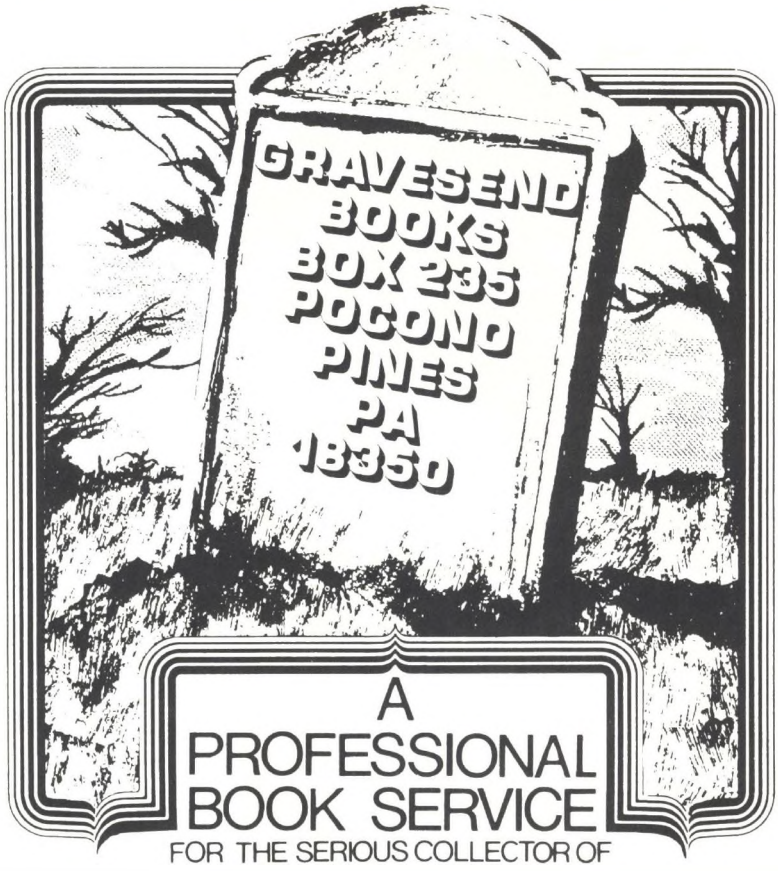
THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

$6.00 SUMMER 1987 VOLUME 20 NUMBER 3

INTERVIEW WITH JONATHAN VALIN

- *A Look at Hitchcock's NORTH BY NORTHWEST*
- *Japan's Mystery Writer Seicho Matsumoto*
- *An Interview with Dorothy Salisbury Davis*
- *The Novels of Elizabeth Daly*



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Subscriptions to *The Armchair Detective:* $20/year in the U.S., $24 elsewhere. Subscriptions and advertising correspondence should be addressed to: TAD, 129 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019, U.S.A. Submissions of material for publication are welcomed and should be addressed to The Editor: Michael Seidman, 129 West 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.

Second-class postage paid at New York, New York, and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to: The Armchair Detective, 129 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019.

The Armchair Detective, Vol. 20, No. 3. Summer 1987. Published quarterly by The Armchair Detective, Inc., 129 West 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.

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ISSN: 0004-217Z
ISBN: 0-89296-335-2

The Uneasy Chair

by Michael Seidman

Dear TADian:

We'll call him Joe, it's as good a name as any. Joe's a writer; suffice to say, a novelist—genre is beside the point. His new book will be released in a couple of months. Coincidental with the publication, Joe is going to be in Des Moines (as good a place as any) to visit his folks. There is a big shopping center down the road a piece, with the obligatory Waldenbooks and B. Dalton Booksellers; off in the other direction, in town, is a small bookstore. Joe wants me to set up some autographings...

Right. The first thing I did was take down my copy of TAD 19:4 and, turning to the beginning of Stephen Greenleaf's "One to Three," began to read. The only thing unique about Greenleaf's article is his skill as a writer. Unless you're show biz, no one gives a damn that you are sitting there, fresh Flair pens at the ready, waiting for what may be the longest two hours of your life. And, if your editor is sitting with you (which sometimes happens), the time passes yet more slowly; you are both embarrassed, discomfited, prone to awful jokes and comments about the passersby passing by—often looking guiltily at you.

I've been to signings with relative superstars in the various genres, as well as the guys like Joe, those who are just beginning to get published. I've been with them at the big chain bookstores, those that devote a window to promoting the event, and at the specialty shops (which will also devote a window—a smaller window, of course—to the party, that being what the smaller stores usually call them), and seen nothing happen, seen three or seven books sold in all the time spent sitting and waiting. From the perspective of my desk, it is worse than receiving the third unsolicited manuscript of the week from the same unpublishable author. Indeed, I may prefer the manuscripts; I don't have to face the writer.

Why don't the readers come in? I don't know, really. One conjecture is that they are in some way frightened or intimidated by writers, afraid, perhaps, that they will in some way, shape, or form not be "intelligent" enough, "hip" enough. As is the case with all fears—with most fears, then—it is silly. The writer doesn't expect you to say more than "Thank you for the entertainment." That's what it is all about, after all. The writer has been locked away, hard at work. The only human contact he may have had (if you'll excuse the hyperbole) is with his characters.

Recently (well, in the autumn of 1986), a California writer was in New York, passing through on his way to France. Billy and Karen Palmer, the owners of Bogie's (you know, the eatery that's become a permanent set for many private eye writers), decided to give signings one more chance; they held a party. Their own mailings announced the event, and, in separate mailings, virtually all of the New York mystery community (people who have undoubtedly sat alone at signings, many of them) were informed. And seven people showed up.

Bob Randisi, in an editorial in *Mystery Scene*, took the writers to task for not supporting one of their own. Several writers expressed a certain, well, discontent, with Bob's comments, saying that they were not obligated to show up at events of this kind. Perhaps they are right: The writer's editor did not appear, either.

Still, it gives one pause: If the readers won't, can't, or simply don't come, and if the writers are not obligated to offer even moral support, what's the point of having the author show up someplace?

So I told Joe to enjoy the visit with his folks, to give his Mom a kiss for me, and to stay away from the bookstores . . . unless he wanted to offer the managers—as I offer you —

Best mysterious wishes,

Michael Seidman

MICHAEL SEIDMAN

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THE CINCINNATI KID

AN INTERVIEW WITH JONATHAN VALIN

CREATOR OF THE HARRY STONER PRIVATE EYE SERIES

By David A. Bowman

I FIRST MET Jonathan Valin as he strolled across the lobby of the Baltimore Hilton with his wife, Kathy, and a large fluffy white dog named Sailor. The three of them had flown in from Cincinnati to attend the seventeenth annual Bouchercon. As Valin registered, a man who resembled Colonel Sanders introduced himself to Kathy and me as "a gentleman from Virginia" and made polite inquiries about Sailor's pedigree. It turned out that Sailor was a Samoyed—a Siberian breed once bred to herd reindeer. Sailor was a remarkably cooled-out dog. As he shed fur on my black trousers, it seemed as if he were comtemplating some genetic Arctic memory.

I believe you can tell a man by his dog. Valin was very friendly, but, unlike Sailor, he was intense—as if small helicopters of energy were spinning inside him. But, then, I had to remember that Sailor's owner was also the author of the intensely violent Harry Stoner private eye series.

At an outdoor café, Valin relentlessly swatted at a kamikaze bee until he drowned it in his wife's beer. Then, as she reached for the bottle, he deadpanned, "Kathy, don't drink that. You don't know where that bee has been."

Back at the convention, I saw more of Valin's wry sense of humor. After a panel of fellow private eye writers solemnly introduced themselves, Valin leaned into his microphone and said, "Hi, my name is Raymond Chandler..."

The following interview was recorded over the telephone several months later. Valin was at his home in Cincinnati, smoking a cigar, and I sat in my New York City apartment with the lights out. After a lengthy discussion of Harry Stoner's bleak world-view, Valin reminded me: "You mustn't make the mistake of confusing me with Harry in all respects. I do like having a good time."

Then he mentioned that he was planning his first trip to Las Vegas to play poker. He revealed that he had supported himself for a year in college by playing five-card stud. Indeed, there had been rumors of various detective writers leaving the Bouchercon with empty pockets after a hot game up in Michael Seidman's hotel room. "The high you get outfoxing people at the poker table is unique," Valin said. "If I wasn't a writer and had the wherewithal to do it, I would have loved to have been a professional gambler."

TAD: I can't think of a more intense private eye novel than *The Lime Pit*. As a matter of fact, it was your book—not the works of Chandler or Hammett—that got me writing in the genre. I read somewhere that you wrote the book in only three weeks. How did you manage that?

Valin: You have to remember that *The Lime Pit* was not the first thing I wrote. I had been writing fiction for better than eleven years.

TAD: What were you writing before you wrote *The Lime Pit?*

Valin: Short fiction. Some of the stories had mystery elements in them, but they certainly weren't detective stories. They were experimental things—serious prose, as opposed to whatever mysteries are now being called.

TAD: Who were you influenced by?

Valin: John Hawkes, for one. My work was very "hawkesian." I still love his book, *The Lime Twig*, which is why *The Lime Pit* is called *The Lime Pit*.

TAD: How did you get interested in detective fiction?

Valin: A very good friend of mine who is a mystery buff lent my wife Kathy *The Big Sleep* and *Farewell My Lovely*. At the time, I was a student at the University of Chicago. My field was seventeenth-century English literature, and my specialty, such as it was, was Dryden. The only mysteries I had read up until then were Sherlock Holmes and Edgar Allan Poe.

Kathy loved Chandler and urged me to read him, so I did. Kathy said that she was going to sit down and write a detective story—I guess, just for the fun of it. I decided I would do the same.

TAD: This sounds like Percy and Mary Shelley's famous ghost-writing contest.

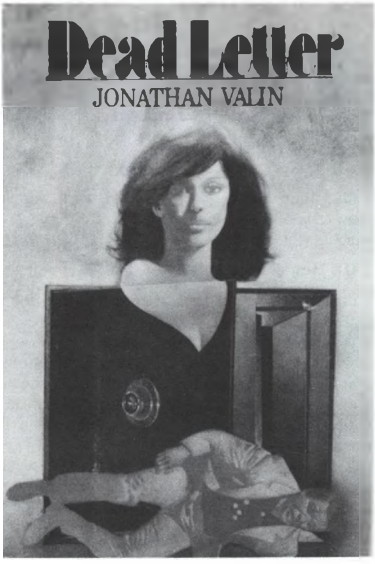
Valin: It was really just a game to amuse Kathy. I wrote the first chapter of what later became a novel called *The Celestial Railroad*. It was very Chandler-esque. I let it go after completing one chapter. The next year, we moved to Washington University in St. Louis. During the summers, when school was out, I started writing detective stories again. There was nothing else to do in St. Louis between June and August. It was incredibly hot, and, as grad students, we were very poor—so poor we couldn't even go to the movies. Just for the hell of it, I dug up *The Celestial Railroad* chapter and decided to finish it. I have never published the novel, although I've cannibalized bits and pieces of it in other books.

TAD: What's it about?

Valin: It's the first Stoner book. Harry tries to find a politician's daughter who has run away from home. She ends up in a commune very much like the one in *Day of Wrath*. It's got a strong love story. Harry gets involved with the wife of the candidate. It's a good book—not unlike *Day of Wrath*.

TAD: What did you do with the novel after you finished it?

Valin: Nothing. I never showed it to anybody except for Kathy. It was not for show—it was for fun. You have to understand how it was at Washington



University. My writing teacher was Stanley Elkin, a terrific writer. He was a big influence on me. But a detective story wasn't something you'd show to Stanley Elkin. If it wasn't serious prose, he wasn't interested. So my detective stories were a secret vice to me.

TAD: What did you write after *The Celestial Railroad?*

Valin: The next summer, I started a book that became *Dead Letter*. It was changed quite a bit by the time it got published, but it was the same basic story.

Then, the following summer, in 1978, a woman called up the English Department wanting some help writing a book. This happened a lot at Washington University because of the reputation of the writing program. They referred her to me. She had been married to a famous pro football player and wanted to tell the story of her life—the life of a football player's wife. I was about as far from a commercial writer as you could get, but even I knew that this was going to sell. I interviewed her and then wrote a sample chapter and an outline. We sent it to Dominick Abel, an agent in New York. He liked it, and for a while it looked like we were going to make a lot of money. Then, at the last moment, the deal fell through because, although the lady had been married to the football player, she hadn't been married for very long. She just didn't know that much about the world of professional football. The woman had a story to tell, but, without more of a football hook, it wasn't a saleable story. I was disappointed, and the woman was broken-hearted. It was a catastrophe.

If it hadn't been such a catastrophe, I wouldn't have done what I did—I sent Dominick the first 75 pages of the mystery story I was working on that summer, *The Lime Pit*. He liked it and asked me if I could finish it. I completed it in two and a half weeks working non-stop. All I did was write from the moment I woke up until the moment I went to sleep.

TAD: Have you ever written another book that fast?

Valin: I'm a sporadic writer. I don't write every day like a lot of writers do. But, when I write, that's all I do. I'm like a dry-cell battery. I store up a lot of energy and then release it in extended bursts. The length of those bursts depends on the book.

TAD: The violence in *The Lime Pit* is almost apocalyptic. Were you aware of the uncharted territory you were entering?

Valin: Not really. At that time, my ideas of detective stories were mostly derived from movies and television. God Almighty, somebody ought to do a body count on old television shows—probably more stiffs than all the world wars put together. I thought that was the way detective stories were written—lots of violence, lots of death. I thought Chandler was old-fashioned because his books were more polite about violence. As it turned out, I was wrong. My books are, I guess, more violent than most.

But I don't want to cop out on this. I also *like* violence in movies. And real violence fascinates me. It exercises a kind of spell. It's something I don't completely understand because I have never experienced the kind of violence I describe in my books first hand. But violence has a morbid fascination for me. There's no denying it.

TAD: The intensity of *The Lime Pit* is relentless. I'll always remember the scene in which Stoner slaps Laurie Jellicoe and she is so terrified that she loses control of her bowels on the kitchen floor.

Valin: That scene is based on a scene from another book—*My Life as a Man* by Philip Roth—in which the narrator has a fight with his ex-wife. He's so furious that he punches her repeatedly and she dumps. I was so struck by the horror of this scene that I stole it for *The Lime Pit*.

TAD: It seems to me that the intensity of the violence died down after *Final Notice*.

Valin: I don't think that's true. The violence may not be as splashy as it once was, but it's always part of the books. I think, for instance, that *Day of Wrath* is the most violent book I've written—it's horrifically

"I LIKE VIOLENCE IN MOVIES; REAL VIOLENCE FASCINATES ME. IT'S SOMETHING I DON'T COMPLETELY UNDERSTAND BECAUSE I HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED IT."

violent. And *Life's Work* is no slouch when it comes to violence either. (Christ, do I sound like I'm selling the stuff?) What I mean is that I don't think that I stopped being interested in violence. I'm just not playing it the same way. I'm not as clinical about it as I once was. Also, violence is not easy to write about. It's not something that I want to write about all the time.

TAD: At the end of *Final Notice*, Stoner's girlfriend Kate is tied to a tree by a psychotic murderer, and yet the psycho doesn't kill her. Plotwise, I just didn't buy this. I wondered if violence had become a burden and you couldn't kill off that character.

Valin: Killing Kate would have made it a very different kind of book. I consider *Final Notice* predominantly a comic novel, although there is some pretty horrible stuff that goes on in it. You can't play that kind of light comedy in the beginning of the book and then suddenly kill off the ingenue. It just doesn't work.

TAD: You consider *Final Notice* a comic novel?

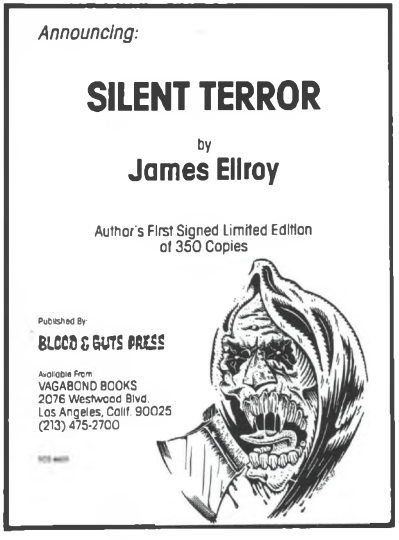
Valin: Half comedy, half horror story—like many of my books. I'm a fairly funny guy. I've always had a good sense of humor. After *The Lime Pit*, I thought, "Jeez, I want to do something with a little more humor in it." So I deliberately set out to write a book that was funnier, less intense, more conventional. I think it's one of my least successful books precisely for that reason. The humor is too cute. The ending is contrived. I now think I was trying to be too commercial in *Final Notice*. And I vowed that I would never do that again.

TAD: Why did you decide not to publish *The Celestial Railroad* or *Dead Letter* after *The Lime Pit*?

Valin: I didn't submit *The Celestial Railroad* because *The Lime Pit* was about a little girl who gets lost and I thought two stories in a row about runaway girls was a bit much. I did submit *Dead Letter* after *The Lime Pit*, but Peter Weed, my editor at the time, wasn't that crazy about it and asked if I had anything else. I had just been working on *Final Notice*, so I finished it quickly and sent it to him. He then decided in his infinite wisdom to publish *Final Notice* first and then *Dead Letter*.

TAD: The biggest problem I have with *Dead Letter* is that Lester Grimes, the six-foot-nine psychopath, really has nothing to do with the main plot of the book, which is Professor Lovingwell's hateful relationship with his daughter.

Valin: *Dead Letter* is my least successful book. I don't like it for all sorts of reasons. While *Final Notice* represents a failure of judgment, a mistaken decision about what kind of book I was going to



write, *Dead Letter* is just a failure, period. It's not particularly well written. It is confusing and confused. Also, it was started back in '76 and was finished in '81. It doesn't cohere because it's made up of bits and pieces of prose that were written over a very long time.

TAD: *Day of Wrath* is much more on target. In that book, you describe Cincinnati with as much love and hate as Chandler described L.A.

Valin: I grew up on Eastlawn Drive, the first street described in the book.

TAD: What does Cincinnati mean to you?

Valin: I was born in Cincinnati. It's my home town. Although I lived in Chicago for three years and St. Louis for four years, I moved back to Cincinnati after *The Lime Pit* was published. And now I've think I still do. I've cut my hair a bit, that's all. I'm still an outsider. And I've cultivated that. I think I will always be an outsider. Moving to a different city wouldn't change that.

TAD: Are you well received as a hometown writer?

Valin: Oh, yeah. It's one of the minor pleasures of celebrity, such as it is. People here, those few who read books, know who I am. Every time a new book comes out, the papers trot out their people. The local magazines do something. I'm on all the local TV and radio stations. It's nice. I like it. I'm sort of an institution, along with the Reds and the Bengals – on a much much smaller scale.

TAD: I would really love to make a video entitled "The Jonathan Valin Driving Tour of Cincinnati." I almost considered faking this interview and saying that we were in Cincinnati, driving around.

"I'M SORT OF A LOCAL INSTITUTION, LIKE THE REDS AND BENGALS— BUT ON A MUCH SMALLER SCALE."

spent all of my thirties here. You asked me what Cincinnati means – what does your home town mean to you? You know, the meaning is so complicated, so multivalent, it's an inexhaustible source of frustration and amusement. Cincinnati is a notoriously conservative town. That reputation is earned, it's not just a joke. It's extremely inhibiting to a person like me who is not bedrock conservative. It's been a thorn in my side for as long as I've been able to remember.

TAD: Several of your books are peripherally about radical politics – *Dead Letter* has a militant conservation organization, and *Day of Wrath* is about a '60s-style commune. Were you involved with radical politics?

Valin: It depends on what you mean by involved. In the '60s, I flirted with it, but everybody did. I went to a couple of SDS meetings. When they closed down the campus here, I marched. I marched against the war. I was a child of the '60s, God knows, and very much a hippie. I lived the hippie lifestyle. In fact, I

Valin: Well, I could certainly give you a tour – do all the spots that are X'ed in the books. There really is a Delores and a Busy Bee – although the Busy Bee is now closed. I hadn't been there in the final two years of its existence, and much to my surprise and dismay I was told that the Busy Bee had turned into a gay bar during its last few months. Something tells me Harry wouldn't be drinking there.

TAD: Is Kentucky evil? Usually, the bloodbaths in the books take place across the Ohio River.

Valin: Well, you might well ask the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce the same thing. Southern Kentucky is not evil. For years, Kentucky was something like the subconscious of the city. It was the place where people went when they really wanted to have a good time. God knows, you couldn't have a good time in Cincinnati. I think it's a city ordinance.

You probably don't realize this, but, back in the '40s and '50s, Newport and Covington were almost as widely known for their gambling and nightlife as Las

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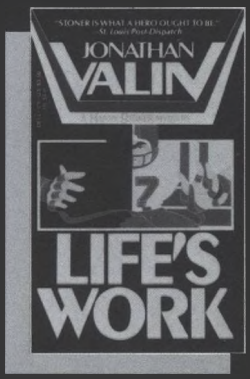

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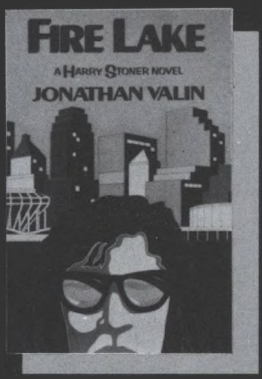

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Vegas was. Anything you could possibly want, you could get there—whores, gambling, gangsters. It was wide open.

TAD: Apparently, Kentucky can't hold a candle to the moral sleaze of Beverly Hills and the television industry. How autobiographical is *Natural Causes*?

Valin: After *Day of Wrath*, I worked for Proctor and Gamble, writing stories for the soap opera *Texas*. After about nine months, I quit in frustration and disgust and immediately wrote *Natural Causes*. If I've ever written anything like a *roman a clef*, *Natural Causes* is it. It's very much drawn from life, with the big exceptions that I did not really observe any drug use or murders. The kind of people you meet in that book are very realistic. Believe me.

TAD: I think it's truly a mainstream novel that just happens to be narrated by a private eye.

Valin: I almost agree with you, although I do think it's a detective story too. It's a book that I've become increasingly fond of—and I'm not fond of all my books, as I guess you can tell. *Natural Causes* has some solid dialogue in it, perhaps the wittiest I've ever written. And, if you know the world of TV, the dialogue really is witty. It's incisive.

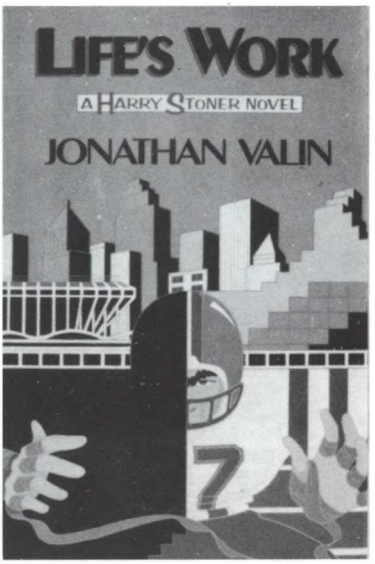
I have a special fondness for *Day of Wrath*, too, because it's drawn from my own past, but so was *Natural Causes*. *Day of Wrath* is a much more personal book than *Natural Causes*—perhaps too personal. The feelings that I had about the late-'60s world of the book were so overheated that it was hard to keep them under control. *Natural Causes* was written with a very cold eye on a place that truly disgusted me.

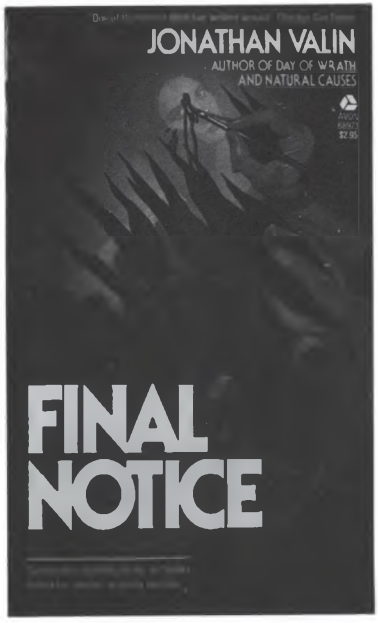
TAD: Quentin Dover, the dead writer, is a fascinating character. In every other chapter you think he was a vicious schmuck, and then in alternating chapters he's redeemed. Is he based on anyone you met?

Valin: No, he is a pure piece of invention. I tried to imagine what I might end up being like if I spent twenty years or the better part of my life trying to write soap operas. There's a lot of me in Quentin. He's the opposite of wish fulfillment—he's a nightmare fulfillment. He's an interesting character.

TAD: Was it invigorating to take Stoner out of Cincinnati and put him on the new turf of Beverly Hills?

Valin: I enjoyed it so much that I did it again in *Life's Work*. It seems realistic to assume that a detective would not spend all of his time in one city. He lives and works there, but certainly his cases would carry him outside the city.





TAD: It's certainly the Chandler tradition that your private eye has his one *milieu*, his one city you always see through his eyes.

Valin: I think that's quite an interesting convention and one that I've found very useful because of the very strong feelings I have about Cincinnati. However, I think realistically, and conventionally as well, the detective needs to move around in the course of detection. Until *Natural Causes,* I hadn't done that very much. So in that book I started using places that I'd been to. I'd been to Los Angeles. To Las Cruces, New Mexico, which is also in *Natural Causes.* I've been to Missoula, Montana, which is a spot I use in *Life's Work.*

TAD: *Life's Work* is another book about football. Do you love football?

Valin: Yes. Remember, Harry is an ex-football player – although not a professional one.

TAD: How did you move from soap operas to the world of pro football?

Valin: After I wrote *Natural Causes,* I became friends with Kim Wood, the strength coach of the Bengals. He's a fascinating guy. It was through meeting him and meeting other football players that I decided to write another book about football. I think I can say this: Kim is the model for Otto Bluerock in *Life's Work.* The steroid business was also from Kim, who is an expert on the abuse of steroids.

TAD: Billy Parks's mutation through steroids into a deranged hermaphrodite is right out of a horror novel.

Valin: When I was a kid, I used to read Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne constantly. The element of horror in my books is almost dominant. I sometimes think I write horror novels instead of mysteries.

TAD: I agree. I can't forget the end of *Day of Wrath,* when in the middle of a shootout Stoner finds a severed hand in the refrigerator. . .

Valin: What about the guy on the porch strapped to the chair with his face cut up like a jack-o'-lantern? That's pretty awful, too. . .

TAD: . . . but there's real genius in the hand in the fridge – combining horror and consumer appliances. Jack the Ripper meets Frigidaire.

Valin: There's a strong element of horror in all of my books – just as there is a strong element of humor. I

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try to dwell on the terrible stuff. And I don't try to sensationalize it. I just want people to take notice—to care. And they do. You don't just skim those passages in my books. I think there is a reaction. For better or worse, there's a reaction.

TAD: How much of you is in Harry Stoner?

Valin: Oh, a lot. I always try to play that down, but it's a lie. Harry is more like me than any character that I've ever created. Although there's a bit of you in all of the characters you create. Harry's a lot tougher than I am. In some ways, he's more articulate than I am, and in other ways he's not. He's certainly more foolhardy. He takes some risks that I would never take in a million years. He's certainly more prone to physical violence than I am.

TAD; Why, after the first two novels, was Stoner's love life jettisoned?

Valin: I made a decision to curtail his love life. His relationship with Kate in *Final Notice* was too damn cute. I decided that Stoner was a loner and his love life didn't have a place in the novels. He might get involved with women in the case, but he wasn't going to have a steady girl. But, then, bachelorhood is fairly conventional in the genre.

TAD: I think what isn't conventional is that Stoner sleeps with women that you wouldn't expect him to—a street drifter, an alcoholic nymphomaniac, a whore without a heart of gold. They're not glamorized Linda Lorrings. It seems as if you've given these characters a lot of care.

Valin: I give care to all of my characters—even the monstrous ones. What I learned from Stanley Elkin is that you've got to love your characters while you're writing about them, even if they're completely rotten sons of bitches. You have to try to sympathize with them while you're writing about them. I've tried to do that in all instances—even with my most villainous villains—to give them some sort of glimmer of humanity. Or at least to make them ambiguous.

TAD: You particularly succeed with Harry's love life. It would be so easy to dismiss those women as lowlifes or fuck-ups.

Valin: My life belongs to the lowlifes and fuck-ups, having been one for almost thirty years. I don't have a whole lot of sympathy for the rich and the content. I have much greater sympathy for the people who have nothing or very little, which is why they populate my books in such abundance. In my new book, *Fire Lake,* Harry gets emotionally involved with a woman who is not particularly fucked up. But it doesn't work out happily for either of them.

TAD: What is *Fire Lake* about?

Valin: It's about a musician junkie whom Harry knew when he was in college and who shows up in Harry's life again, bringing with him all sorts of terrible problems. *Fire Lake* is about the '60s as they continue into the '80s. Not only the spirit of that time but the people from that time. What's happened to my generation as I remember them and as I see them now. And what's happened to me too. *Fire Lake* has a serious theme to it. I think in all my books—even the ones I don't particularly like any more—I try to say something meaningful about the world as I understand it.

TAD: Does Delacorte have any strategy about breaking you out of the genre mold? It's worked for Robert Parker and Elmore Leonard.

"MY LIFE BELONGS TO THE LOWLIFES, HAVING BEEN ONE FOR ALMOST THIRTY YEARS."

Valin: Yes. They're definitely trying to break me out of category. I don't know exactly how they're going to do that. My books are much more violent than most. I don't write happy-ending kinds of books. The world is not a particularly cheerful place the way I view it. It has its share of humor, but it is black humor. I think that *Life's Work* is in some ways a black comedy. It was deliberately conceived as a black-comic version of *Farewell My Lovely.*

At any rate, if I made the books more cheerful, I'd end up with a book like *Final Notice.* And as accomplished as that book is, it's too slick, and I just don't want to do that again. If I'm going to write detective stories, then I want to do it my way—as if it were serious prose—within the limits of the genre. I've started every book I've written as if I've never written a detective story. I swear to you, that's the truth.

Every one of them I began as if Harry were just starting off—period. I think some people don't like that—there's not enough continuity—but it's the only way I can write and still try to be fresh, still try to make something new rather than something that's just tired and formulaic.

TAD: What are the limits of the genre?

Valin: The limits are unbelievably numerous. The first one that occurs to me is that the language you can get away with using is very limited. I came from a kind of writing that didn't have that limitation. I could use any kind of metaphor, simile, or literary device that I wanted to. You can't do that in detective stories. It just doesn't wash. Elaborate prose doesn't sound right in the mouth of a first-person narrator who is supposed to be a private detective. And this is a big limitation for a writer who loves words as I do.

TAD: So you're saying that one of the limitations is writing in the first person?

Valin: No, it's writing in this particular first person that is limiting. If it were a different kind of character, I could use a different kind of language. I have to constrain Harry—his flights of fancy, if you want to call them that. His use of language has to be thematic and realistic. That limits me to the kind of rhetoric and vocabulary that would be accessible to a man like him.

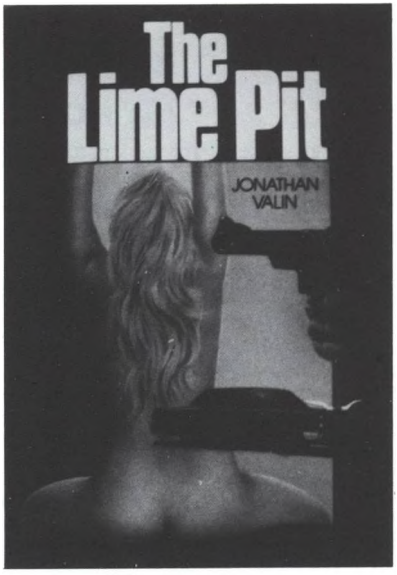
TAD: Have you read *Tough Guys Don't Dance?*

Valin: No, I deliberately didn't. It's bad enough that Norman Mailer rules the literary world in every other aspect, I don't want to read his detective stories.

TAD: I've been in mystery bookstores where clusters of customers were damning that book to hell, and yet I think Mailer pushed the detective story past the limits you're talking about.

Valin: Yeah, it would be swell if I had Norman Mailer's cachet, but I don't. The biggest fight I have with myself in every book is to make myself write down. It's frustrating for me, because I don't want to do that. My instinct is the exact opposite. In fact, I have been accused of doing too much of that already. Of being too lyrical. Too purple. Too violent. Whatever. You know how Stanley Elkin writes—lord, that's the way I used to try to write. It's very difficult for me to fit my literary pretensions into the detective story mold. And they may in fact just be pretensions. It's hard to know.

By the way, there are all sorts of other limitations in the genre—plot, for example. You always have to have a murder. It would be nice for once to write a book without a murder. The whole plot is geared to discovering whodunit. I've tried to emphasize why they did it. And I try to make the endings of my books as inconclusive as real life is. Most mysteries



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I've read are so goddamn pat. It's like, "Yeah, that's him. This is why he did it. That's that." Well, real life is never like that, for goodness sake. At least not the trials and transcripts that I've read. You never really do know why somebody "did it." How does somebody get that fucked up? Yeah, yeah, he got beaten as a kid. Well, a lot of people get beaten as kids, but they don't go out and burn someone up. Violence is mysterious. That's why I'm fascinated by it.

TAD: Your books aren't so much "whodunits" as "who-was-it-done to?" The murdered or missing character is usually the most interesting character in the book.

Valin: That's deliberate. In *Natural Causes*, you don't ever really know what happened to Quentin. You can never really quite get him fixed. You can't put a pin through him and stick him to a piece of corkboard. He's a little more elusive than that.

TAD: I love that *Rashomon* framework. We listen to all the characters describe the missing or murdered person, then try to draw our own conclusions.

Valin: I've tried to do that in all my books to a certain extent. I feel this approach is more realistic and satisfying. Maybe true mystery addicts don't find it satisfying at all. I might be incredibly frustrating and distasteful to them. To me, it's a lot more interesting to write about people who are that complicated, rather than writing about something that ends in a period. My books end with ellipses.

TAD: Do you want to write a non-Stoner book?

Valin: Sure, maybe someday. But I'd like to break Harry out of category first if I could. I would like to get some financial security and then try something without the limitations of the genre. My agent has been after me to do a thriller, a non-Stoner book. This is something that I've wanted to do for a long time. I've never written a novel that wasn't a detective story. It's going to be interesting for me.

I told you the story of how I became a detective story writer. I have discovered that piece of serendipity is not unique. A lot of writers have been in the right place at the right time, and that's how they got on a particular track. It's going on eight years since I started this enterprise, and to be honest with you it's still hard for me to believe that I ended up writing detective stories. I never planned this. It's been an incredible piece of good fortune for which I simply can't account. It's odd how one's life is shaped and turned by forces you can't control. □

David Bowman is presently working on a biography of Paul Cain, and has had a short story published in NEW BLACK MASK *No. 4.*

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PHOTO: KARL DIMLER

Elizabeth Daly in the Bryn Mawr College Class Book, 1901

Death Strikes the well-to-do in Elizabeth Daly's Mysteries

By Barbara C. M. Dudley

I SUPPOSE it's simply awful for a little old lady to go around bopping people," Elizabeth Daly once told an interviewer, "but I do so enjoy this type of writing." Always a reader of detective stories, she was 61 years old before she discovered that she could take murder into her own hands. It was 1940, and Rinehart and Co. had agreed to publish her first book, the mystery novel *Unexpected Night*.

From that date, the books tumbled out of the "little old lady," rapidly and professionally, fifteen in eleven years, and then stopped as abruptly as they began. As far as I can learn, Daly wrote no others between 1951 and her death in 1967 at the age of 88.

Over the years, reader interest has remained strong and has led to continuing re-issuance of the books in paperback – and to increasing prices for signed first editions, which are snatched up by collectors for prices as high as $650. In addition, she received an Edgar from the Mystery Writers of America for her work in 1960. Yet, with all this attention, Elizabeth Daly is one of the most critically neglected authors of detective stories.

Elizabeth Teresa Daly was born in New York City on October 15, 1878, the daughter of a New York Supreme Court Justice, Joseph Francis Daly, and Emma Barker Daly. She studied at Miss Baldwin's School and took her B.A. from Bryn Mawr in 1901 and an M.A. in English from Columbia a year later. Her comfortable knowledge of English literature is reflected in the quotations scattered among titles and texts, quotations from Poe, George Herbert, Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus,* and John Ford's play *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* ("whose title we never mention," commented Daly, one imagines with a smile).

At sixteen, she published light verse and prose in *Life, Puck,* and *Scribner's* magazines. As a Bryn Mawr undergraduate, she wrote plays and skits, including *The Holy Morality Play: The Fall of Man,* in which she acted the Imp to a Satan played by Katharine Hepburn's Aunt Edith. In 1900, her version of the tale of Robin Hood was performed at May Day, the traditional celebration at Bryn Mawr, and would continue as the text used every four years at least until 1928.

With Amelia E. White, she edited, in 1903, an anthology called *A Book of Bryn Mawr Verse.* Then, from 1904 to 1906, she returned to the college as a reader in English.

Then follow more than thirty silent years, broken only by an occasional report. Between 1910 and 1914, she directed Bryn Mawr's May Day Pageants, which, with medieval plays, maypole dancing, and processions led by white oxen, attracted special trainloads of visitors from New York, Washington, and even Chicago. At her class's twentieth reunion, she wrote and produced a skit parodying the Edwardian versifier Austin Dobson. In 1922, her obituary for a classmate's father appeared in the Alumnae Bulletin. Her own *New York Times* obituary described her as having "coached and produced amateur plays and pageants in schools and colleges." Perhaps that is how she filled these years, but I have found only one more specific reference: in 1926, the Alumnae Bulletin told classmates that she "coached the girls at Nightingale School in *She Stoops to Conquer* which won much applause from the audience."

So who is this Elizabeth Daly who put so much energy into amateur theatricals? We might think we recognize the type: one of these earnest, educated women, putting too much seriousness into too slight a project. Their shoes are sensible, their clothes are a little severe, hair pulled back to provide as little resistance as possible to forward motion. We've met them as volunteers at church bazaars and library benefits, where they make it clear that this project is too *worthwhile* to be fun. Elizabeth Daly might have been one of these. She confessed once that, in her walks about the city, she often rang doorbells for cats "hopefully waiting on door steps."

How shall we reconcile this image with the little old lady who got so much pleasure from "bopping people"?

She began to experiment with writing mysteries in the late 1930s. Inspired apparently by the Wilkie Collins stories which her father had read to her as a child, and by her own wide reading, some of her first efforts drew kindly and helpful comments from editors. Encouraged, she continued to write.

At last, in 1940, at the age of 61, she was awarded an honorable mention in the Mary Roberts Rinehart Mystery Novel Prize Contest for her first book, *Unexpected Night.* She was called a find, and critics commented on her skill, wit, and suavity. The little old lady had begun a distinguished, if delayed, career sleuthing with her urbane detective Henry Gamadge, whom she had "just snatched out of the air."

She thought of Gamadge as "the semi-bookish type, but not pretentious. He's not good-looking, but eye-catching. He represents everything in a man eager to battle the forces of evil. He knows a lot, but he doesn't talk about it. He is basically kind, but at times can be ruthless."

Gamadge lives and works in Manhattan's East Sixties, in his family's brownstone house with the dining room converted into a laboratory for the analysis of paper, ink, handwriting, and print. In this first book, he explains his profession: "If somebody wants to sell you a rare old pamphlet about Nell

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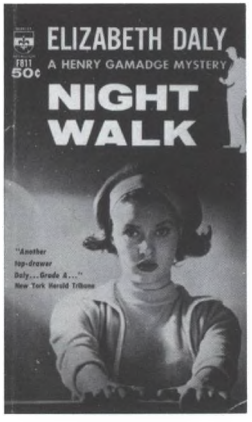
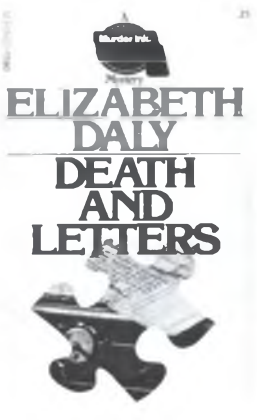
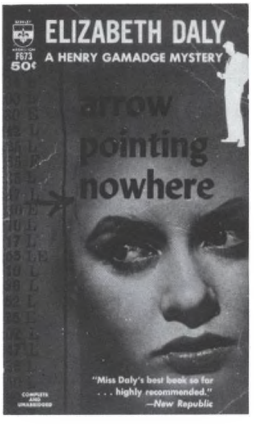
Barbara C. M. Dudley is a founder of the Bryn Mawr Book Shop of Albany, the first of nine used- and rare-book shops run by alumnae volunteers to raise scholarship funds for the College.

Gwynne with Charles the Second's autograph on the fly-leaf and marginal notes by Louis the 14th, I'll perhaps be able to tell you whether it was made later than 1900 and what part of Michigan it comes from."

In *Unexpected Night,* as often in the future, Gamadge finds inheritance a powerful motive for murder. The setting is Maine, where a group of New Yorkers scheme in the foggy, echoing spaces of a summer hotel. Nearby, a theatre company presents *Cathleen ni Houlihan* on a makeshift stage in a converted fish house. But on this evening, Yeats is not the only author of murder, nor does all the Gamadge stories, like the first, is placed in Ford's Center, Maine and offers a cast of artists, families of old wealth, gypsies, and the introduction of Gamadge's ally, insurance investigator Robert Schenck. Poisoned blackberries and mistaken identities compound the puzzle which Gamadge is asked to solve. *Murders in Volume 2* (1941) finds Gamadge in New York, tantalized by a problem in the fourth dimension, a subject much discussed in those days because of experiments at Duke University and popular treatment in such books as J. B. Priestley's *Midnight on the Desert.* How could an







make-believe and violence occur behind the footlights.

Theatre is Elizabeth Daly's world, not only because of her years of writing and directing amateur theatricals, but through her uncle, the late nineteenth-century producer and playwright, Augustin Daly. Her fourth book and only novel of manners, *The Street Has Changed* (1941), is the story of a successful actress, of the theatre and of the clash between old and newly rich in turn-of-the-century New York. She was amused that reviewers commented on her extensive research, since family background and traditions provided her with everything she needed for the book. *New York Times* critic Charlotte Dean praised its "subtlety, wit and sometimes clever indirection." Was it familial acquaintance with the theatrical world or experience at a woman's college which underlay her creation of an actress-heroine emancipated before her time?

Deadly Nightshade (1940), the second of the English governess, in 1840, disappear from a summer-house with Volume 2 of a set of Byron, only to re-appear with it a hundred years later?

Gamadge, the bibliophile, describes the book as in "fair condition, engravings foxed, binding faded," one of ten volumes published by R. W. Pomeroy, No. 3 Minor Street, Philadelphia, 1830, small 8vo, brown cloth gilt. Daly's knowledge of cataloguing terms, along with immersion in the theatre, may also have come from her uncle. Judge Daly, her father, had a gentleman's library in which she read widely. But Augustin Daly was a book collector, and his large library included a First Folio Shakespeare. In 1878, there had been an auction of books from his collection of the theatre. In 1900, soon after his death, another auction was held of "Augustin Daly's Valuable Literary and Art Property, including autographs, manuscripts, play bills, prints and photographs." What an impressions this must have made on an intellectually curious college senior.

The Encyclopedia of Mystery and Detection, which devotes one column to Daly and another to Henry Gamadge (his is by far the longer) calls *Murder in Volume 2* one of her best, as does *The Reader's Guide to Crime.* The first of her books to be published in England, it was immediately successful and aroused the interest of Agatha Christie, who called Elizabeth Daly her favorite American author.

Although highly regarded, these first three mysteries are the hardest to find in *any* edition. They are not among the titles currently in print in paperback, and first editions come on the market infrequently; and consequently, some bring substantial prices. For example, in 1985, a copy of the first edition of *Deadly Nightshade,* with an owner's bookplate, lacking a dust jacket but otherwise in good condition, was listed at $25, and a first with dust jacket and signed by the author was catalogued at $650.

The value of manuscripts, of old and rare books, is a continuing theme in the Daly stories themselves. *The House Without the Door* (1942) confronts Gamadge with an inscribed but forged copy of *The Poems of John Pipkin,* an unimportant poet; the only authentic copy is in the British Museum, and "even that's not worth much." Why is it valuable to a woman who, though acquitted of killing her husband, asks Gamadge's help in clearing her name and protection against attempts on her own life? We are puzzled with him: is the poison in the mackerel a red herring? Who put the arsenic in the fruitcake? Why did a young woman disappear? Frantic train trips to upstate New York lead Gamadge to a neatly turned solution.

In an article appearing in *The Writer* in June 1948, Elizabeth Daly warned against allowing description or characterization to dominate a novel. "The plot is the thing," she emphasized. The characters in her stories are drawn vividly but succinctly (Gamadge's assistant Harold is "a youth of short stature and morose countenance"). The only one she allows to develop is Henry Gamadge; his life progresses from book to book. In the first two, he is a bachelor, known as good at golf and bridge. Then, in *Murders in Volume 2,* he first sees Clara, a rangy young woman in riding costume, and falls for her at first sight. By the next book, *House Without the Door,* they are already married and Clara is learning to help with Gamadge's work. The story begins as she and Harold catalogue a manuscript collection while attempting to preserve its leaves from the exploring paws of an old yellow cat. The doorbell rings. The plot takes over. In ensuing tales, we learn more of Gamadge's background—"I used to run into his father at the Caxton Club"—and his associates in the pursuit of crime, McLoud the lawyer, Schenck the former insurance agent, Lt. Durfee of the New York Police, Homicide. His household includes a succession of laboratory assistants, Theodore, the old houseman "who takes care of me," and eventually not only a wife but a baby. The reader who wants to know more about Gamadge than his skill at detection is fed just enough. The dynamics of Gamadge's life, as well as his urbane charm, carry the reader from book to book, making apt one viewer's description of Gamadge as America's Lord Peter Wimsey.

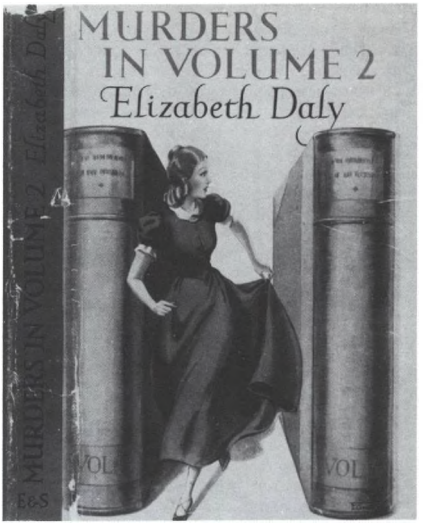
Public events also influence Gamadge; with the publication of *Nothing Can Rescue Me* in 1943, he is "up to his ears in war work." Although in a postscript Daly claims to be writing "escape literature," both the dust jacket's advertisement for U.S. War Bonds and her caution against "an indiscreet word" bring back the urgency of World War II. "The fanatic and the secret agent actually do hang about us awaiting for the password. We must all learn detective story rules," Daly wrote.

While Gamadge is still involved in mysterious war work in *Evidence of Things Seen* (1943), Clara visits friends in the Berkshires. In a vivid opening, she sees a sunbonneted woman silhouetted against the sky just at twilight. Still, disturbing, she appeared suddenly and, just as suddenly, she is gone. In the murder which follows, Clara becomes the obvious suspect, forcing Gamadge to hurry to her rescue. The Council on Books in Wartime, pioneering publishers of the paperback Armed Services Editions, chose

Evidence as #101 in its series distributed to military bases overseas. This was the first publication of a Daly detective story in paperback, and, after the war, it became the first of her titles to be brought out by Bantam for civilian consumption.

The next book to appear, *Arrow Pointing Nowhere*, introduces rare-book dealer Jervis Hall, expert on Americana, who puzzles with Gamadge over the missing plate from a book of views of Fenbrook, a pre-Revolutionary Hudson Valley estate. Published in 1944, it was re-christened *Murder Listens In* when Bantam issued it in paperback in 1949.

Before the year 1944 was over, *The Book of the Dead* added Shakespeare to her roster of biblio-puzzlers. Daly dangles before us Volume 1 of a



Agatha Christie called Daly her favorite American author

Harper's edition of the book published in 1839 which, though "tight and virtually unused," contained cryptic marginal jottings about *The Tempest*. What does Shakespeare have to do with the murder of a young dental assistant who mends her clothes with a kit shaped like a matchpack? Or with the terminal illness of a Californian in a New York hospital?

In *Any Shape or Form* (1945), we learn that Gamadge is himself the author of a highly regarded little book, *Guilty but Insane*, of problems never officially solved. War refugees and a shortage of help "gone to defense" lead Gamadge toward the solution to murder in a rose garden. He also recruits a young suspect to replace his assistant, Harold, now a soldier. By February of 1946, when *Somewhere in the House* was published, the new young assistant is so much at home that he is observed standing in the middle of the room, "with an arm upraised above his head and on his palm the Gamadge baby was balanced as a waiter balances a tray." Such homey details, while striking, are brief. The presence of antiquarian books is often minor as well, but here their role is important and even involves the presence of solanders, precisely described as "a box made to look like a book, not a book made into a box." Having already set herself some of the classic puzzles of detective fiction—mysterious disappearances, mistaken identities—she now takes her turn at the problem of a sealed room. Her always effective use of surprise makes the unexpected ending seem both natural and inevitable.

In *The Wrong Way Down*, another publication of 1946, Gamadge has been called in to appraise the books in an estate. Because of their untouched condition, "you'll get good money for this little library," he advises Miss Julia Paxton, an old friend of Clara's family. "Dealers hate great readers." Once again, there is a puzzlingly lively mixture of real and red herrings, spiritualism, and antiquarian touches, this time a Bartolozzi engraving after Holbein, are combined into a well-plotted mystery.

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The second book in the celebrated Matt McCall series, featuring a maverick investigative reporter who believes in vigilante justice. In *BLOOD BATH*, McCall hunts down a psychopathic killer who goes on a rampage, murdering beautiful women. The first two books in the Matt McCall series, *DEAD EVEN* and *BLOOD BATH*, labeled by the critics as "classics of their genre," will soon be major motion pictures.

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by Caleb Pirtle III
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LAST DEADLY LIE is a chilling, fearful tale of a small town church that has smoldered too long in the diabolical fires of jealousy and selfish greed, then is finally blown apart by lies, gossip, and, ultimately, murder. A maddening horror grips the lives of God-loving, God-fearing people who become as demonic as the satan they curse in their nightly prayers.

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With *DEVIL ON THE WALL*, Burke has solidified his reputation as one of the nation's top writers of historical fiction. His saga of the 1830s portrays the lives and times of four men who are drawn by fate, perhaps by the devil himself, to a date with destiny and death in Texas. He vividly captures a bloody era where men were sometimes heroes and sometimes villains, but whose deeds can never be quite forgotten.

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by Gary Clifton
$14.95 ISBN 0-918865-10-7

Written by a veteran federal agent who knows well the seamy side of an explosive town, *BURN SUGAR BURN* follows a dead-end murder investigation that gradually expands into a web of prostitution, sex, incest, and finally violent death. Clifton graphically weaves together actual incidents that he has encountered during his 24 years in law enforcement.

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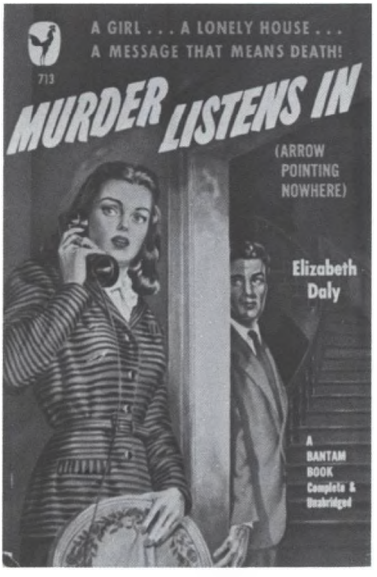
In Elizabeth Daly's novels, there is not a great variety of locales—Maine is as far from Manhattan as she ever gets—nor is there much range in the backgrounds of her characters ("They all come from nice families. It would take a good deal to make any of them kill") nor in motive (usually inheritance). Rather, she has charmed and intrigued us over and over with humor, careful plotting, a delicate handling of surprise, and telling sketches. "Florence looked as if she no longer cared to be young, but had no idea how to be old." However macabre or seemingly improbable, her people behave in character, her twists and surprises are based solidly on prior facts and earlier actions. She never cheats. She describes herself as taking "as much pains as Proust," usually going through four drafts. She has the plot firmly in mind when she starts writing, but then "all sorts of things turn up later."

She wrote well, she plotted well, and, above all, she created witty and likable Henry Gamadge. Through fifteen mysteries, she presented him as urbane, thoughtful, rarely fooled by appearances, tormented by evil.

Night Walk, published in 1947, appraises Gamadge anew through the eyes of Garston Yates, who has known him all his life but has not seen much of him in recent years:



> Yates remembered him as an easy-going amusing character, quite unassertive, a good listener; cool-headed at bridge and golf. Clever, of course, he had written some brilliant little books; but had Yates underestimated a personality which now struck the young man as obscurely formidable, certainly to be reckoned with? . . . whatever else he might be, he was still casual in manner and without much apparent ego: a green-eyed, tallish man, well-dressed, easy mannered, a little stooped from sedentary occupation.

And again, in *Night Walk,* Durfee the Homicide Lieutenant from New York and frequent colleague in Gamadge's detective pursuits, explains to the Connecticut Sheriff:

> He's read damn near everything . . . hates being in the paper. If he does find out anything, he'll dump it right in your lap . . . He'll open a book and find a gun in it. He'll study a piece of writing and make out it isn't a laundry list, it's the missing will.

Night Walk is as assured in technique and tangled in plotting as any detective story which Daly had written until that time. In it, she discloses her own approach to constructing a plot, as well as the method she permits her detective to use in unraveling it: "It was that touch of the unusual," Gamadge explains, "that one always looks for and hopes to find in the background of a crime. Something unexpected, something off schedule, something that might possibly have had unusual results."

She also summed up her attitude toward the craft of detective fiction in her 1948 article for *The Writer.* "Without plot, without rules," she wrote, "a detective story loses its identity. But with good writing the framework does not show, and formula seems to disappear—a good writer, with freshness of invention, never interprets the rules too strictly."

"No kind of fiction requires good writing more than detective fiction does; a puzzle unadorned makes dull reading." Commenting on one author who found the research hard, the writing easy, she was "goaded by the bitterest envy." "Was good writing ever easy?" she asked.

No! But, in Elizabeth Daly's work, the effort behind it does not show. Here is the opening of *The Book of the Lion,* published the same year:

> [S]o far the Spring of 1947 had been moist and chill. Gamadge was sleepy. He had been looking up the sales history of an old book in old catalogues and there was nothing about the job to keep him wakeful. Nothing in his surroundings either—the quiet of the office, the low fire in the grate, the timelessness of a rainy day.

Asked to appraise the correspondence of a deceased poet and playwright, Gamadge makes a startling discovery of an almost unknown twelfth-century illuminated manuscript which had, in fact, actually resurfaced briefly in 1945. Commissioned by Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria, it contained

Perhaps Daly stopped writing because crime and espionage fiction better reflected the world of the '50s

more than 1,500 illuminated initials, as well as 41 full-page miniatures, the work of a Benedictine monk. Called the Henry the Lion Gospels, it became the property of the King of Hanover in 1861, was seen once in the 1930s and again briefly in London in 1945 before disappearing for another 38 years until it was auctioned in 1983. Using the brief fame of this ancient manuscript, Daly even had the courage to refer to it by name, where a less assured writer might have felt the need to disguise.

From 1947 on, the writing of her books slows from two to one a year. *And Dangerous To Know,* published in 1949, places us in the by-now familiar environment of old brownstone houses on the Upper East Side, "among the bright remodelled dwellings and the glossy apartments that hem them in... [inhabited by] people who have plenty of money but are careful about spending it." These are people who, Daly knows, lead lives of quiet desperation, who frequently conceal extra-marital affairs and activities, and who occasionally explode into violence—although rarely are they, like Sylvia Coldfield in *Death and Letters* (1950), held captive by their very proper relatives. The death of Sylvia's husband seems to be connected to the discovery of love letters written many years ago by a famous Victorian poet to Coldfield's grandmother.

Gamadge appears as sleuth once more in *The Book of the Crime,* which pulls together the accustomed threads into yet another new pattern of mystery and detection. Once again, the scene is New York, the characters drawn from old established families living near Central Park. The protagonist, a very young and happy bride, finds her marriage to a wounded, wealthy war hero turning into a nightmare after he sees her take a particular book from the library shelves. Published in 1951, *The Book of the Crime* is a characteristic and beautifully accomplished story with false clues, indirection, gathering tension, and horror. And once again, Gamadge's resolution of the mystery startles us.

Then, without further announcement (perhaps she knew better than to push him off a cliff) Elizabeth Daly retired Henry Gamadge.

Why did she stop? Was it ill-health? She did not attend the fiftieth reunion of her Bryn Mawr College class that May. (Or was it that, having snatched the bookish detective out of the air, she had Gamadge in public view long enough?) I had hoped for clues in her correspondence with her publishers, Rinehart and Co., and its successor firms, Farrar and Rinehart and Holt, Rinehart & Winston. When pressed, a representative told me that no Daly files are available; all are packed away in a New Jersey warehouse and cannot be seen. Nancy Noonan, spokeswoman for Bantam, which is publishing many of her books

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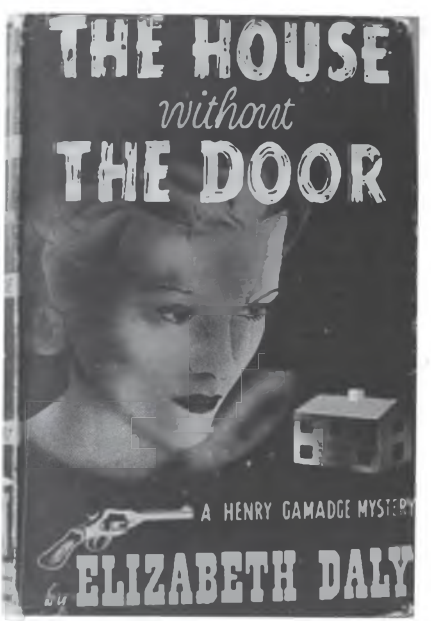
In '49 she complained, "People write to Gamadge in care of my address. That can be embarrassing to a single lady."

in paperback today, said, "We know nothing about her except what appears on the book jackets."

Perhaps there was a very different reason. After World War II, the world did not seem orderly in the old ways—justice did not always prevail, the world did not follow detective-story rules. In a world of spies and moles, inheritance no longer seemed a plausible motive for murder—and besides, there usually wasn't much left after Internal Revenue had taken its share of the now-substantial inheritance tax. She had written of a world she knew, the world in which she had grown up and which had remained relatively stable for the first sixty years of her life. Now it was changing. Crime and espionage reflected the world of the '50s; action, not intellectual puzzles, attracted readers. The United States was possibly just slightly less paranoid than its avowed enemy the Soviet Union. In a country terrorized by McCarthyism, what place was there for a writer who believed that the detective novel stood as Elizabeth Daly herself had said, "for the broad principles of law against chaos, justice for the individual and a fair trial for all"? In *The Writer,* she commends Rex Stout for a scene in *Too Many Cooks* in which Nero Wolfe is shown as a civilized, informed, and liberal man just by the manner in which he interviews the black waiters in a hotel. Possibly this was the world that made sense to her, and the only world in which she could write.

In 1948, Elizabeth Daly believed that "detective fiction does not gain many converts. It is a special taste, and seldom an acquired one." Perhaps, three years later, she believed that there were no longer civilized, informed, and liberal readers with that special taste. Perhaps she no longer believed, as she had written a few years earlier, in the ability of "the great detective to solve the problem." "When he does," she had said, "justice and virtue triumph, all the criminals are foiled and Professor Moriarty's bomb does not go off."

Or maybe there was still another reason. In 1949, she complained, "People are writing to Mr. Henry Gamadge in care of my address. That can be embarrassing to a single lady, you know."



This article grew from one written for the Bryn Mawr Alumnae Bulletin on the College's alumnae who are authors of detective stories. In addition to Elizabeth Daly of the Class of 1901, these include Cora Hardy Jarrett, '99, author of nine; Fredericka De Laguna, '27, two; Esther Buchan Wagner, '38, whose second will be published in 1986; Gwen Davis, '53, author of many novels and now writing her second murder mystery; Marcia Biederman, '70, also writing her second; and two Ph.D. alumnae of Bryn Mawr—Julia McGrew, who with Caroline Fenn wrote two Rinehart mysteries under the *nom de plume* of "Fenn McGrew," and Carol Clemeau, recent winner of a Scribner Crime Novel Award.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WORKS OF ELIZABETH THERESA DALY, 1878–1967

The Holy Morality Play: The Fall of Man, published in *The Nineteen Hundred and One* edited by Caroline Seymour Daniels (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, June 1904). Included is a one-act play, "Les Precieuses Ridicules" by Daly with Madge Daniels Miller, and reference to "The Eleventh Eclogue" by Daly, presented November 6, 1897. 17 cm x 25.4 cm

Book of Bryn Mawr Verse edited by Elizabeth T. Daly and Amelia E. White (Bryn Mawr: Gillis Press, 1903, 77 pp.)

Unexpected Night (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1940). Honorable Mention, Mary Roberts Rinehart Mystery Contest. Red cloth, black stamped lettering with star. N.B.: No date appears on the title page of this or subsequent first editions.

Deadly Nightshade (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1940). Red cloth binding with black lettering.

Murders in Volume 2 (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941).

The Street Has Changed (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941). Beige cloth with blue stamped lettering and diagonal lines as of a street in perspective.

The House Without the Door (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1942). Jacket design by Richard Lawrence includes an advertisement for War Bonds.

Nothing Can Rescue Me (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1943). Light green cloth with darker green stamped lettering. P. 29, beginning of third paragraph, quotation marks missing.

Evidence of Things Seen (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1943). Gold cloth, lavender stamped lettering on top cover, blue on spine, "reduced size in accordance with paper conservation orders of War Production Board." Jacket design by Edmund Marine in black, purple, and yellow.

Arrow Pointing Nowhere (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944).

The Book of the Dead (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944).

Any Shape of Form (New York and Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1945).

Somewhere in the House (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., 1946). Published in February 1946. This and subsequent books carry the words "A Murray Hill Mystery" on the title page and are bound uniformly in dark blue cloth with lettering stamped in red.

The Wrong Way Down. (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., 1946). "A Murray Hill Mystery." Dust jacket design by Niedler in black, lavender, yellow, and white.

The Wrong Way Down (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., 1946). Published October 1946. "A Murray Hill Mystery." Dust jacket design by Niedler in black, lavender, yellow, and white. "Popular" wartime reduced size.

Night Walk (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., 1947). "A Murray Hill Mystery." Jacket design in blue and black by Jack F. Cesario.

The Book of the Lion (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., 1948). "A Murray Hill Mystery." Jacket design in red and black by Robert Ritter.

And Dangerous To Know (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., 1949). "A Murray Hill Mystery." Published September 1949.

Death and Letters (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., 1950). "A Murray Hill Mystery." Cover design by Sol Immerman.

The Book of the Crime (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., 1951). Red cloth with white and yellow print on spine. Dust jacket design by Warren Nardin.

An Elizabeth Daly Omnibus (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., 1960) includes *Murders in Volume 2, Evidence of Things Seen,* and *The Book of the Dead.*

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A Partial List of Subsequent Editions

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Several months after the first editions, the following were published with detective novels by two other authors in each volume:

Nothing Can Rescue Me (1943)
Evidence of Things Seen (May 1943)
Arrow Pointing Nowhere (1944)
Somewhere in the House (March 1946)
The Wrong Way Down (November 1946)
The Book of the Lion (1948)
And Dangerous to Know (1949)
Death and Letters (1950)
The Book of the Crime (1951)

Armed Services Edition (paperback)

#101 *Evidence of Things Seen* (1943) 287 pp., 10 × 14 cm

Bantam Paperback Editions:

Evidence of Things Seen (November 1945) 25¢
Nothing Can Rescue Me (August 1946)
Unexpected Night (1949)
Murder Listens In (*Arrow Pointing Nowhere*) #713 (October 1949)
House Without the Door

Re-issues by Bantam at $2.95; cover designs by Dennis Ziemanski:

Evidence of Things Seen (October 1983)
The Wrong Way Down (October 1983)
Somewhere in the House (August 1984)
The House Without the Door (October 1984)
Nothing Can Rescue Me (October 1984)
The Book of the Lion (May 1985)

Mercury Mystery Paperbacks (35¢):

#151 *And Dangerous To Know* (1949)
#199 *Death and Letters*
Cover design and typography by George Salter

A Jonathan Press Mystery, L. E. Spivak, New York

Arrow Pointing Nowhere (abridged edition, 1944) 128 pp.

Berkley Medallion Paperback Books (50¢) (dates given to those which can be verified):

#F629 *Murders in Volume 2*
#F644 *Evidence of Things Seen*
#F656 *Book of the Dead*
#F673 *Arrow Pointing Nowhere*
#F700 *Book of the Lion*
#F724 *Somewhere in the House*
#F745 *Nothing Can Rescue Me*
#F759 *Deadly Nightshade*
#F779 *Death and Letters* (June 1963)
#F801 *The Wrong Way Down*
#F811 *Night Walk*
#F882 *Unexpected Night*
#F901 *Any Shape or Form* (April 1964)
#F959 *The Book of the Crime* (August 1964)

Dell Paperbacks (Murder Ink Mystery Series, $2.25):

#21 *Death and Letters* (1980?)
#27 *Any Shape or Form* (September 1981)
#55 *Night Walk* (December 1982)
#67 *Arrow Pointing Nowhere* (December 1983)

Very incomplete information on the British editions:

Eyre & Spottiswood, London

Murders in Volume 2 (1943)

Hammond & Co., Ltd. (succeeded by Hammond & Hammond):

The House Without the Door (First English Edition)

Hammond's Popular Thrillers:

The House Without the Door
Nothing Can Rescue Me
Night Walk
Evidence of Things Seen

Penguin Paperback:

Murders in Volume 2 □

The sixteen Gamadge stories have been in print, in hardcover or paperback, in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain, almost continuously in the more than thirty years since Elizabeth Daly stopped writing.

After the original Rinehart editions, they were first reprinted in Detective Book Club triple-deckers. Paperback reprints began, as we have noted, with the Armed Services Edition of *Evidence of Things Seen*, which was also published by Bantam in November 1945 as one of the first titles brought out to meet the new and exploding demand for good books in paperback form. By 1949, Mercury had published *And Dangerous To Know* and *Death and Letters*.

In England, Daly had earned a following from the time of the publication of *Murders in Volume 2* by Eyre and Spottiswood in 1943. Hammond & Hammond published her books both in hardcover and in its "Popular Thriller Series" at five shillings. Penguin soon added them to its distinguished list of paperbacks.

Between 1960 and 1964, the Berkley Publishing Corporation brought out fourteen titles in its Medallion paperback series, while also in 1960 Rinehart published the hardcover *An Elizabeth Daly Omnibus*, containing *Murders in Volume 2*, *Evidence of Things Seen*, and *The Book of the Dead*. I have heard of, but not seen, an abridged (128 pp.) edition of *Arrow Pointing Nowhere*, a Jonathan Press Mystery, published by L. E. Spivak, New York.

In September 1981, Dell reissued *Any Shape or Form* in its Murder Ink Series, which has since added *Arrow Pointing Nowhere*, *Night Walk*, and *Death and Letters*. In October of 1983, Bantam, which had published many Gamadge stories in the 1940s and '50s, began to re-issue the mysteries, starting with *The Wrong Way Down* and *Evidence of Things Seen*. Six other titles have followed, to make a total with the Dell editions of twelve books now available to a new generation of Daly devourers.

Prices are rising for those who wish to collect first American and British editions, although it is still not too late to find jacketless first editions for under $30. Paperbacks published twenty or thirty years ago command prices slightly higher than the new mass-market editions available on newsstands. □

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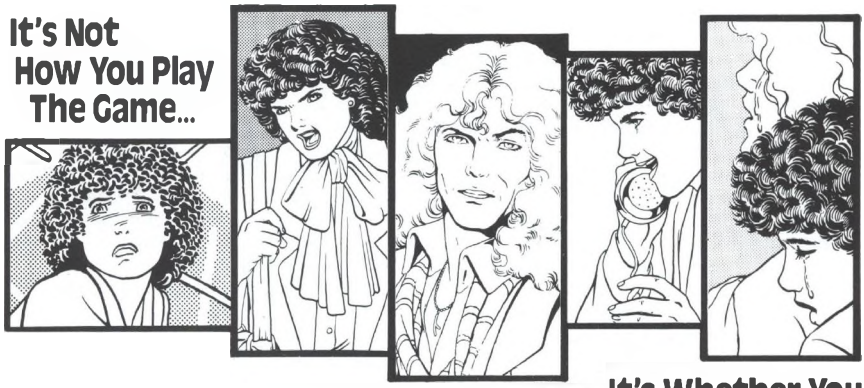

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ISBN 0-89865-507-2,
$6.95 Retail
Available October 1987

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AJH Reviews

by Allen J. Hubin

Consulting Editor

Short notes...

William Beechcroft's Chain of Vengeance (Dodd, Mead, $14.95) is something of an inverted mystery. We know who the killer is, his motivation is easily guessed, as is the link between the victims, and the suspense lies in if and how he will be tripped up. Vincento Arbalesta comes to the U.S. from Sicily to honor a vow of revenge given his mother on her deathbed. He produces the first corpse—a non-descript security guard—in Manhattan and goes on, in quick succession, to others around the country. Dan Forrest does rewrites for a sleazy tabloid sold at grocery checkout lines. He longs to be a reporter again, and, when he senses that the killings are tied together, he badgers his tight-fisted boss into letting him follow the story. All the way to the deadly end. This one holds interest quite effectively.

Always a Spy by Robert Footman (Dodd, Mead, $15.95) is a reprise for retired CIA agent Harry Ryder. This is a bit murky in narration, and the principals are not as appealing as we might wish; otherwise it's readable enough. Ryder is dragooned back to active duty when a colleague, who is officially dead, disappears in Yugoslavia. He's given an assistant, the widow of a British agent. She's fluent in the relevant languages, and we can of course expect human chemistry to run its course. While that's happening, friends and enemies become hard to differentiate, and we wend toward a showdown the nasties desire to make spectacularly bloody.

"Malcolm Gray" (Ian Stuart) returns with ***Stab in the Back*** (Doubleday, $12.95), in which the central crime harkens back to detective fiction's Golden Age: murder takes place in a locked room. This event occurs in the home of TV star Logan Chester, who is also a detective fiction enthusiast. His guests for the momentous weekend include the repulsive TV comic Tommy Boston, who is capable of arousing hatred on a moment's notice. Boston thus makes an unsurprising corpse, and Inspector Neil Lambert (himself a pseudonymous mystery writer) has to cope with both an abundance of suspects and with the impossibility of the murder. The puzzle doesn't add to the art of locked-room solutions, but the story is pleasing and well done.

The second novel about Samuel Holt by "Samuel Holt" (perhaps Donald E. Westlake) is ***I Know a Trick Worth Two of That*** (Tor, $14.95). The former Holt is the 6'6" former policeman whose hugely successful TV role as a private eye made him wealthy and seems to have destined him for typecast unemployment forever after. With time on his hands, he's drawn into other folks' murderous schemes. Here Doug Walford, with whom he once rode patrol on Long Island, asks his help. Walford is trying to ferret out a massive intrigue involving the mob and thus to render his own death unnecessary. Holt hides him in his Manhattan house, but not well enough. So Holt takes personal offense, and determines to find out which of the people he has thought a friend is, instead, a killer. Smoothly told, but a bit placid and talky compared to Holt's first.

Has there ever been a cleaning-lady sleuth? None comes to mind, so perhaps Elma Craggs is the first. She appears in H. R. F. Keating's ***Mrs. Craggs: Crimes Cleaned Up*** (St. Martin's, $14.95), a collection of fourteen short stories, and earlier had a role in Keating's 1936 novel ***Death of a Fat God,*** which is excerpted here. In the short stories, Craggs deals with murder and other transgressions most foul in such places as the House of Lords, a residential hotel, a museum, the "greatest newspaper in the world," the Royal Albert Hall, and various private homes and business establishments. She goes about her duties with pride, sweeping, washing, dusting—and in the odd moments helping stolid policemen see the right bit of evidence. These are light-hearted tales, well calculated to catch the flavor of each setting and its people.

The busy Keating also has a new Inspector Ghote novel for us: ***Under a Monsoon Cloud*** (Viking, $15.95). This is a more sober and somber story than usual. Ghote is posted to the bleak hill town of Vigatpore. While he's there, the police station is inspected by the fierce and demanding "Tiger" Kelkar, whom Ghote has revered. Accidentally, Kelkar kills another policeman; Ghote helps him conceal the matter. But suspicions later arise, and Ghote is put to the test: truth *vs.* lie, with career and family fortunes at stake. India is deluged by rain. Bombay is afloat. And Ghote's future is being judged. Evocative...

The eleventh of William Marshall's novels of Hong Kong's Inspector Harry Feiffer is ***Head First*** (Holt, $14.95). This is a bit off the

hilarious and inspired pace of Marshall's best, but certainly the maddest crimes on earth continue to descend upon Yellowthread Street. First of all, despite the Chinese religious convictions that dead bodies must be kept intact, someone is rearranging the parts of overripe corpses originating in China and shipped to Hong Kong for burial. And there's the baffling matter of mailbags exploding on the backs of postmen, including that of a terrified undercover policeman disguised as a Sikh. And finally, the Chinese secret service, locally doing business as the Ministry of External Calm, seems to have impure designs on policeman O'Yee.

Richard Poliak, magazine writer and editor, debuts with ***The Episode*** (NAL, $16.95). Daniel Cooper reports on New York matters—the more sensational the better—for a tabloid newspaper. Lately, he's been concentrating on the exploits of some real-estate tycoons, who turn poor people into the street in order to turn their buildings into fashionable digs for the well-to-do. Then a low-life strongarm creature employed by the tycoons is murdered and a socially conscious lawyer who has been helping the poor vanishes under curious drug-related circumstances. All this while Cooper is having his first major epileptic seizure in years. The police take a very dim view and believe that Dan could be a whole lot more helpful with their inquiries. Interesting story, with a good twist at the end, but it will slip out of memory quickly.

For sundry reasons, one of the pioneers of wise-guy private eye fiction, Richard S. Prather, stopped writing about L.A. shamus Shell Scott in 1975, after a run of 37 books. Now both return with ***The Amber Effect*** (Tor, $12.95), described as the first of a new series. Perhaps in earlier years these stories, mostly published as paperback originals, stood out more clearly among their peers, but in the 1980s *Amber Effect* is not remarkable. Scott is here involved in the affairs of the beauteous and mammarily protuberant Aralia Fields, Miss Naked California and leading candidate for Miss Naked U.S.A. Somebody clearly wants to kill her, but why is totally unclear. Scott to the rescue. Not, of course, to be taken seriously.

Martin Russell's ***Unwelcome Audience*** (Walker, $15.95), published in England in 1978 as *A Dangerous Place to Dwell,* contains a thread of American politics which

some may find even more intriguing now than then. This account of actress Anjelica Browne, come a long way from humble London beginnings, is leisurely told over 278 pages. After some success in England, she goes to Hollywood with stars in her eyes and hope in her heart. There she is betrayed in archetypical fashion, a sordid event which in the form of an unwelcome ex-husband comes back later to raise its ugly head. Interesting, but not as crisp and inventive as Russell's best.

James Reed, once of Scotland Yard and once husband of Hollywood film star Katherine Long, is the hero in ***Snowball*** (Holt, $15.95) by Jimmy Sangster, British novelist and screenwriter now resident in California. Reed lives in a Malibu beach house off the proceeds of a divorce settlement and dedicates himself to doing nothing. But Katherine wants some help for her daughter Caroline, and Katherine's fabulously wealthy fiancé thinks James is just the man to handle a spot of related bother. Out of affection for Katherine, Reed looks into Caroline's entanglement in drugs, which proves to be a perilous matter indeed. Reed is a nicely unconventional fellow, and Sangster spins this suspenseful tale with a deft hand.

The third case for Charlottesville, Virginia, private eye Loren Swift is ***The Dark Side*** (Mysterious Press, $15.95) by Doug Hornig. While Swift is tending the bedside of his love, who is in a coma from violence in Swift's last case, he is asked by an insurance company to look into a fatality in an alternative community called Babel. The death was called an accident, caused by the malfunction of a carbon monoxide monitor, the manufacturer of which the widow is suing for $20 million. So Swift and an undercover colleague enter Babel, where suspicions are quickly aroused. This is a well-written but slowly developed, conversational affair, exploring a crosshatch of sexual infidelities. □

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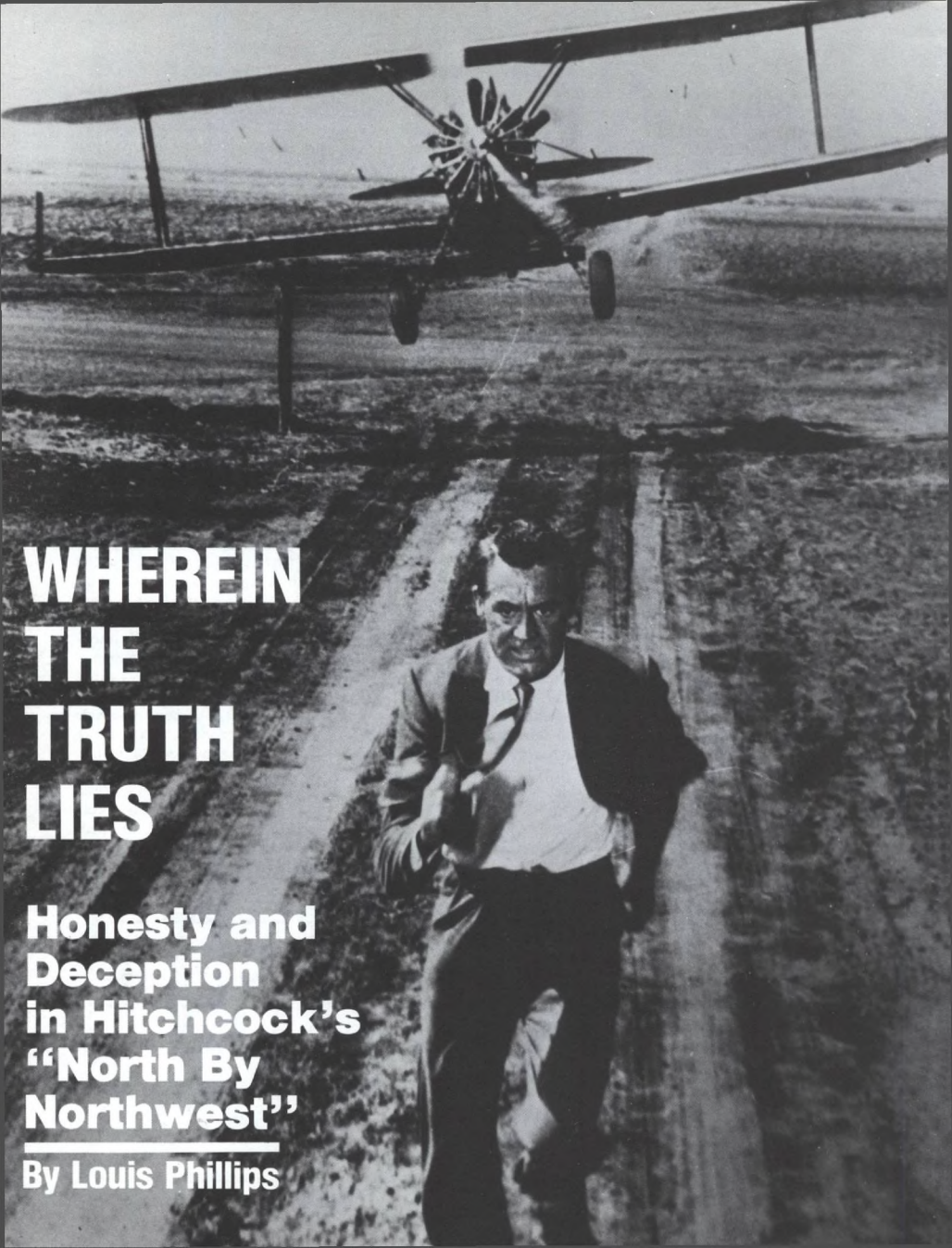

WHEREIN THE TRUTH LIES

Honesty and Deception in Hitchcock's "North By Northwest"

By Louis Phillips

Looking at the face of George Washington carved out of Mount Rushmore, I am reminded of the morals painted so graphically (and, if we are to believe more judicious historians, falsely) in Mason L. Weems's *A History of the Life and Death, Virtues, and Exploits of General George Washington:*

> Never did the wise Ulysses take more pains with his beloved Telemachus than did Mr. Washington with George to inspire him with an early love of truth. "Truth, George," said he, "is the loveliest quality of youth. I would ride fifty miles, my son, to see the little boy whose heart is so honest, and his lips so pure, that we may depend on every word he says. O how lovely does such child appear in the eyes of every body! his parents doat [*sic*] on him. His relations glory in him. They are constantly praising him to their children, whom they beg to imitate him. They are often sending for him to visit them, and receive him, when he comes, with as much joy as if he were a little angel, come to set pretty examples to their children.
>
> "But, oh! how different, George, is the case with the boy who is so given to lying that nobody can believe a word he says! He is looked at with aversion wherever he goes, and parents dread to see him come among their children."

Roger Thornhill, when you gazed upon the faces of Mount Rushmore, did you recall those words? And you, George, did you heed them? George Kaplan, I mean. Lies, impersonations, and deceptions. What an unholy trinity governs the textures of Alfred Hitchcock's *North By Northwest* (filmed from a magnificently well-crafted script by Ernest Lehmann).

Of course, there is always a danger in over-reading the work of a popular artist. Robin Wood, in his essay on *North By Northwest,* concludes with an apology (or is it a warning?) of sorts:

> It will be objected that this account of *North By Northwest* makes it far too serious. But its charms, its deftness, the constant flow of invention, its humor and exhiliration are there for all to see. All I have tried to do is adjust the balance; not to turn a light comedy into a smiling morality play, but to suggest why *North By Northwest* is such a very, very good light comedy.[1]

I agree with Wood that *North By Northwest* is a comedy, though it might be concluded that all mystery/adventure stories in which good triumphs are comedic in the sense that such stories end happily. Indeed, of all of Hitchcock's works, *North By Northwest* is my personal favorite. (Truffaut calls it "the picture that epitomizes the whole of [Hitchcock's] work in America.")[2] The film wears its more serious themes lightly, but in art a heavy hand is no guarantee of vision nor of profundity. In truth, we might look at all detective/mystery/suspense books and movies as offshoots of morality plays. If we the audience do not care about right and wrong, about good and evil, about truth triumphing over falsehood, then the very reason for the existence of the mystery/suspense genre is called into question. No morality means no suspense, and many a great comedy—Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* and Moliere's *Tartuffe* spring to mind—are all the more comedic for the seriousness of their themes. It is a mark of civilization to be able to laugh at what we take most seriously.

Robert Wood explores the movie in terms of one of Hitchcock's favorite subjects—the "wrong man" theme, the stripping away of identity when an individual, through no fault of his own, finds himself on the wrong side of the law. Far too often, people are in the wrong place at the wrong time. If Roger O. Thornhill (his middle initial O. stands for "nothing"), the film's main character as played by Cary Grant at his most sauve and debonair, had not inquired about sending a telegram at the very moment when a George Kaplan was being paged, then Thornhill would have blithely remained free of existential angst.

A second idea frequently mentioned by Hitchcock's critics is the director's fondness for setting his most evil scenes in commonplace settings. Alfred Hitchcock really is not of the midnight/dark-alley school. Writing a not-too-favorable review of *North By Northwest* for *The New Yorker,* Whitney Balliett stated that "Hitchcock's love of planting the grotesque in a commonplace setting, as if he were dropping water bombs out of a hotel window on a crowded sidewalk, is relied upon with such frequency—an official is stabbed in the back at the United Nations, Grant is hustled out of the Plaza lobby by two gunmen—that by the time the climax of the film is reached, atop Mount Rushmore, one is actually gratified when someone hurtles off George Washington's nose to his death."[3]

There is, however, a third and equally serious theme at work in *North By Northwest*—a theme which, as far as I know, has been overlooked in every discussion of the film. *North By Northwest* is a tightly crafted exploration of one man's education about the nature of truth and lies. Lest this be considered an example of over-reading, consider the distance that Roger Thornhill travels in the movie—not the physical distance, which in itself is considerable, but the spiritual distance, which is even more considerable.

This distance can be measured, not in miles, but by comparing two very different attitudes toward truth-telling. In the first few minutes of the movie, we see Thornhill as a well-dressed advertising executive making up a series of lies. While walking along a

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Essays by Louis Phillips have appeared in THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE, THE JOURNAL OF POPULAR CULTURE, EMMY, PLAYBILL, THE WEST COAST REVIEW OF BOOKS, *and many other publications.*

CARY GRANT, THOUGH CONFUSED BY THE CONVOLUTED PLOT, HAD NO TROUBLE IN THIS SCENE WITH EVA MARIE SAINT.

New York City street, he dictates an insincere love note – "Darling, I cannot count the days, the hours, etc." We know the note is insincere by the way he and his secretary Maggie react to the shallow sentiments and cliched language. He has used the same lies before. He manages to shanghai a taxi for himself and Maggie by pushing her inside and saying, "I beg your pardon. I have a very sick woman here." (This moment, by the way, sets up a gag later on when Thornhill and his would-be killers, running from the Plaza Hotel, steal cabs away from a bewildered man and woman.) Once inside the cab, Maggie upbraids her employer. "You knew you were lying," she says, and her debonair employer replies: "In the world of advertising, there's no such thing as a lie. There's only expedient exaggeration."[4]

No such thing as a lie, Mr. Thornhill? Well, let us flash forward. Many episodes later (too elaborate to recount here; Cary Grant himself had difficulty making heads or tails of the script), after Roger Thornhill's identity has become entwined with the mythical George Kaplan's, he stands in a forest. He faces the woman with whom he has fallen in love, Eve Kandall (played by Eva Marie Saint). Now he learns to his surprise, his horror, that the woman he loves is planning to fly out of the country with the spy Phillip Vandamm (James Mason). Thornhill turns to the Professor (a CIA agent played by Leo G. Carroll) and accuses him, with hurt, with anger. "You lied to me," he says.[5] Between those polarities, those boundaries – the world in which lies do not exist and the world in which lies cost personal pain and sacrifice – the identity of Roger Thornhill turns and twists. *North By Northwest* is a tapestry of lies and liars, of liars topping liars, of deceptions topping deceptions.

"The art of living is the art of knowing how to believe lies."
– Cesare Pavese

There are all kinds of lies of course. St. Thomas Aquinas cites three degrees of lies: the lie jocose,[6] the lie officious (i.e., a lie designed to help a given situation), and last, but far from least, the lie pernicious, the lie designed to hurt. Each of these kinds of lies is present in *North By Northwest*. Sometimes lies are believed, sometimes not. Sometimes the truth is perceived as a lie. Sometimes truths themselves are not believed. At the start of *North By Northwest*, Roger Thornhill is kidnapped, brought to a Long Island estate, and forced to drink a quart of bourbon. He is then placed in an auto-

mobile and sent forth to die. Unfortunately for his captors, Thornhill escapes death and ends up in a police station, where the notions of belief and non-belief are comically and sadly touched upon.

Thornhill calls his mother and tells her, "Mother, this is your son, Roger Thornhill." Outside of a death-bed scene or in the face of amnesia or senility,

This film is a tapestry of lies and liars.

has any child ever needed to make such a full identification? "Mother, this is your son, Roger Thornhill." Robin Wood feels that the announcement shows Thornhill's weak sense of personal identity:

> Thornhill's sense of personal identity is clearly weak, and undermined by the spies' unshakable conviction that he is George Kaplan; and indeed as an integrated human being he has about as real an existence. At the police station, he tells his mother on the phone, "This is your son, Roger Thornhill"—as if he had been brought to the point of doubting it. The only relationship of apparent strength, with his mother, proves worse than useless, her scepticism undermining him at every step.[7]

I find Robin Wood's conclusion overly harsh here. I think it could be better argued that Roger Thornhill's sense of identity is quite strong (we at least know his desire to survive is quite strong). Since we have seen little of the character in his everyday life, it is difficult to prove that his sense of personal identity is "clearly weak." The identification is drunken, comic, touching, and a reminder of the distance that exists between mother and son.

It is, however, the lines that follow which show the irony of the film script at its most subtle. The sergeant at the police station gives his own name as Emile Klinger, and Roger's mother refuses to believe that a police officer would be named Emile. Roger says, "No, I don't believe it either." Here is the identification problem in a minor and joking key. After all, in the previous scenes, Thornhill kept insisting that he was Roger Thornhill and not George Kaplan. He spoke the truth and none of the spies believed him. What was deadly serious in one context ("My name is Roger Thornhill. It has never been anything else.") becomes an insipid throw-away joke in the police station.

The problem of self-identification for Roger Thornhill reaches its (forgive me) thorniest moment a few scenes later when, at the United Nations, Thornhill informs the receptionist that he is indeed George Kaplan:

> RECEPTIONIST: Your name, please.
> THORNHILL: My name?
> RECEPTIONIST: Yes, please.
> THORNHILL: Mr. Kaplan. George Kaplan.

There is no George Kaplan, of course. He is merely a fiction, a decoy created by the Central Intelligence Agency. This deception, this theatrical touch by the CIA, is the core of the plot, but is it the lie officious? ("We didn't invent George Kaplan for our private amusement," the Professor states.) Or is it the lie pernicious? The answer depends on whether you are on the giving end or the receiving end. Still, the lie becomes real. Roger Thornhill, for all intents and purposes, becomes George Kaplan. Thornhill becomes what he denies he was. At least one other example of Roger Thornhill becoming what he had previously denied can be cited. At the police station, Thornhill is charged with stealing the car in which he

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has been picked up. But, of course, Roger is no car thief. Later, after surviving a plane chase, Thornhill does steal a car (actually a small truck that is carrying a refrigerator). There are lies that are perceived as truths (i.e., Roger Thornhill as George Kaplan). There are truths that are perceived as lies ("I tell you I am not George Kaplan") and actions that can be viewed simultaneously as lies and truths at the same time (Roger Thornhill picked up for drunken driving).[8]

On the train to Chicago, the lies get more inventive, jocose (Thornhill, for example, telling the blonde, Eve Kandall, that the cops are after him because he had seven parking tickets!). Eve Kandall helps Thornhill to escape by lying to the police. She tells the police that their quarry has gotten off the train—"He went that way. I think he got off." Eve turns out to be a good liar and playactor herself. When Thornhill meets her in the dining car, they have their first conversation. The subject is honesty, or at least Thornhill's reaction to honest women:

THORNHILL: Oh, you're that type. . . . Honest.
EVE: Not really.
THORNHILL: Good, because honest women frighten me.
EVE: Why?
THORNHILL: I don't know. Somehow they seem to put me at a disadvantage.
EVE: Is it because you're not honest with them?

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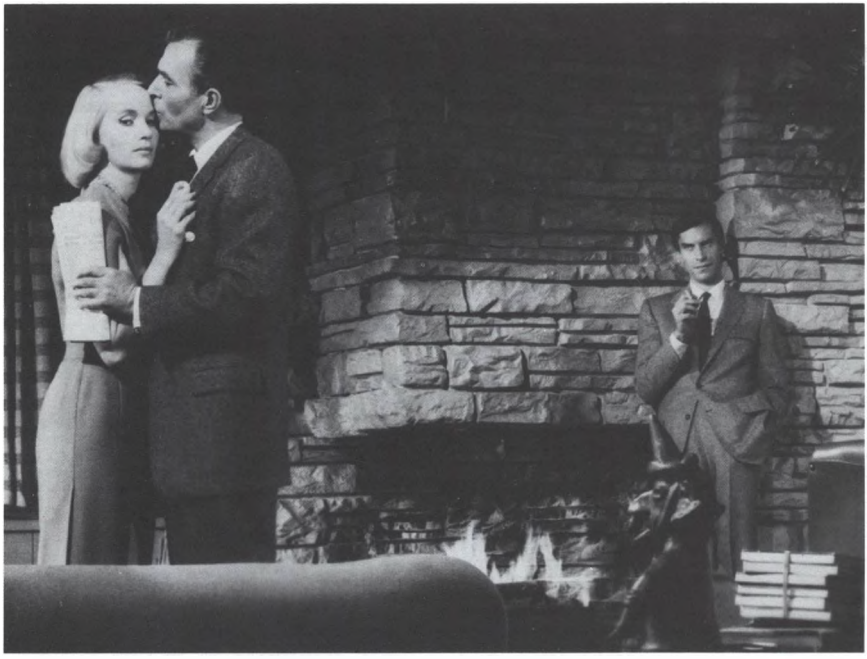
THORNHILL: Exactly. . . . What I mean is, the moment I meet an attractive woman, I have to pretend I've no desire to make love to her.
EVE: What makes you think you have to conceal it?
THORNHILL: She might find it objectionable.
EVE: Then again she might not.

Eve Kandall certainly has no objection to Thornhill's love-making. She pretends to be in love with him for the purposes of her spying. What starts out as pretense, though, turns into real emotion. Make-believe feelings of affection turn into real love. After Thornhill, however, discovers he has been lied to, his real affections turn into pretense. The cross-overs are delicious. The playacting, of course, culminates in a fake murder drama played out in the Mount Rushmore cafeteria.

Playacting as a form of lying and game-playing is underscored in the script. When Thornhill meets Phillip Vandamm for the first time, Vandamm asks, "Games? Must we?" and he tells his captive, "With such expert playacting, you make this very room a theater." Game-playing and acting (notice how skill-fully the villains play at innocence when Thornhill, Thornhill's mother, Thornhill's lawyer, and the police return to the Long Island estate to confront the kidnappers) form a spirited sub-text to the exploration of lying and truth-telling. Thornhill puts on quite another good performance at the Chicago art auction where he pretends to be a kind of mad hatter, a crazed bidder who refuses to go along with the rules of the auction.[9] When Thornhill is finally picked up by the Chicago police, he continues the deceptions within deceptions by telling them that he is "a dangerous assassin, or a mad killer on the loose." And here, in the safety of the police car, he feels once again called upon to prove his identity.

In pursuing this theme of honesty and deception, of characters saying one thing and meaning another (all lies are ironic), I should like to touch briefly on one tiny moment, the scene in which Roger Thornhill out in the middle of Indiana farmland waits for a meeting with "George Kaplan." He stands by the side of the highway and waits in the heat and the dust. Finally, a car appears out of the field, a man in a brown suit is let out, and the car retreats. The man and Roger Thornhill stand across from one another (the positions of the actors separated on either side of the screen is to be repeated later in the film when Roger and Eve meet in the woods), and Roger waits for a sign. The man in the brown suit gives no sign. Finally, Roger crosses the highway. "Is your name George Kaplan?" The man, who is merely waiting for the bus, answers in a curious way. He says, "Can't say that it is—because it ain't."

Can't say that it is, because it ain't. And onward we speed. In what direction? North By Northwest. For, somewhere in that direction, Honest Abe (the



THE DECEIVERS ARE THEMSELVES DECEIVED IN THIS SCENE WITH EVA MARIE SAINT, JAMES MASON, AND MARTIN LANDAU (FAR RIGHT).

working title for the film was *The Man on Lincoln's Nose*) and Honest George are waiting. Somewhere in that direction truth lies. ("Pa," asked George Washington, "do I ever tell lies?"—"No, George. I thank God you do not, my son.") Over the faces of our honest presidents, hero and heroine and pursuers scamper. Finally, after the audience itself has been lied to in a scene—the scene of Thornhill rescuing Eve changes location so that we see him pulling her up, not the side of a mountain, but up into the bed on a train, with the train going into a tunnel (Hitchcock's Freudian joke; Hitchcock's world, like Thornhill's world of advertising, is one of expedient exaggeration)—the main characters return to their real selves, their real lives, lives bearing the very real consequences of telling the truth and making sacrifices. The comedy has weight.

Notes

1. Robin Wood, *Hitchcock's Films* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1977), p. 105.
2. François Truffaut, *Hitchcock* (Simon and Schuster, 1966).
3. Whitney Balliett, "Hitchcock on Hitchcock," *The New Yorker* (August 15, 1959), p. 80.
4. The phrase "expedient exaggeration" also strikes me as a good description of Hitchcock's films. Like all fictions presented as fictions, films are examples of the lie jocose. The phrase "expedient exaggeration" also brings to mind Winston Churchill's definition of lies—"terminological inexactitude."
5. This scene, by the way—a key one to the film's meaning—was one that MGM executives wanted Hitchcock to drop from the final cut.
6. A joking lie is made when Roger Thornhill, disguised as a redcap, carries Eve Kandall's luggage from the train into the Chicago station. "What do you have in these suitcases?" he asks. "Bowling balls," she says. "Of course," he replies.
7. Wood, p. 99.
8. One of the more widely quoted scenes in *North By Northwest* involves having the truth blurted out as a question and denied as a joke. Roger Thornhill and his mother are in the Plaza Hotel elevator. Also in the elevator are Roger's potential killers. The mother turns to the killers and asks, "You gentlemen aren't really trying to kill my son, are you?" The question is greeted by general laughter. The mother herself, feeling a bit foolish, joins in. The truth is denied once again. The truth is turned into a joke. But it is not the lie jocose. It is the lie pernicious.
9. At the art gallery, Thornhill asks a very pertinent question. When a painting is put up for auction, he cries out, "How do we know it's not a fake?" □

Collecting Mystery Fiction

AUCTIONS
by Otto Penzler

One of the first questions that beginners ask when collecting books becomes a part of their lives is: where do I buy books to add to the shelves? As the novice develops into an experienced collector, and, perhaps, finally into an expert, the question remains virtually the same: where can I find books to add to the shelves?

Naturally, the primary marketplace for books is bookstores and, just as frequently in the more esoteric world of rare books, the mail-order bookseller who does not have a retail establishment in the usual sense of that term.

A bookstore is open to the public, has established hours, and welcomes customers who merely open the door and walk in. Booksellers who deal primarily through catalogues will generally make arrangements for clients to see their books by appointment only. These booksellers, whether full- or part-time, most frequently have their stock in their homes, attics, basements, or garages. Since books habitually outgrow the space set aside for them, the chances are good that a combination of locations will house the bookseller's stock.

When I first started to collect in earnest, I visited the store called, rather grandly, The House of El Dieff. It was run by Lew David Feldman (LDF, get it?), one of the first great booksellers to treat mystery fiction seriously. His shop was magnificent, but he had many volumes elsewhere, since it would not accommodate so great a quantity of books. His card file listed all his holdings, however, and he was willing to look up anything a customer might have wanted. I located a book, priced at about triple what I'd have expected to pay for it, in the card file and thought that the exemplary condition might make it worthwhile, and so I allowed as how I might want to buy it; how could I get to see it?

"Well," Mr. Feldman said, "are you going to buy it or not?" It turned out the book was located in his warehouse, he said, and it wasn't worth his trouble to dig it out if he wasn't certain that I actually wanted it. We had a chicken-and-egg situation, and so I withdrew.

About ten years later, I learned that his "warehouse" was, in fact, a ten-room apartment on Park Avenue that would have been suitable living quarters for any of the richest families in America.

Still, this is not only an unusual circumstance, it is positively unique. Most bookstores have their stock well displayed and make ready access to additional volumes that have been squirrelled away. Mail-order booksellers who are reliable will accurately describe books, whether in their catalogues, letters, or on the telephone. All reputable dealers offer a money-back guarantee on their sales.

While it is reasonable to assume that 90 to 95% of all books in a collection will be acquired from booksellers, every now and then an alternative source of books will pop up, and should not be ignored.

I guess we all live with the happy dream that we'll stumble into a garage sale (and its variations, tag sales, yard sales, rummage sales, etc.) and there will be a brilliant copy of a great rarity that fits perfectly into the collection. Or, if we're really fantasizing, a whole shelf, or even a collection, just waiting to be scooped up for a quarter apiece. Identical fantasies exist for that visit to the thrift shop, the college or library sale, and similar events. There is nothing wrong with the fantasy. It only becomes a problem if it paralyzes one into inaction when books become available through the more traditional channels. Anyone can get lucky. We could also win a lottery and, if a good mathematician were to compute the statistics, I'd wager that we have a better chance at the lottery than at finding a terrific book for pocket change.

The one area, however, where the collector has a chance at acquiring good books for his collection is the public auction. There are numerous local auctions, usually of the contents of a house or store, in which everything from dishes and towels to books and antiques are sold. This is about as fruitful as the tag sale.

Even better furniture, antique, and art auction houses seldom offer good books in their sales, unless one collects bindings, art and color-plate books, and so on. First editions of mystery fiction are unlikely to turn up at this type of sale, since the collecting of mystery fiction is a fairly recent phenomenon. It is only in the past half-century or so that anyone collected it, only within the past quarter century in which it was done with seriousness and frequency, and only within the past decade or so in which it has been a booming enterprise.

Readers of *The Armchair Detective* will quickly rise up and say "Nonsense," as they have been collecting for 25 years and they have a dozen friends who have done the same. Nonetheless, the statement is true. In 1950, one could easily name the four or five booksellers who handled any mystery fiction first editions. Feldman, Howard S. Mott, Ben Abramson, Arthur Lovell – perhaps one or two others. The collectors could be counted on the fingers of two hands: Ned Guymon, Fred Dannay, John Carter, Graham Greene, Vincent Starrett, Adrian Goldstone – a tiny handful of others.

Virtually every great collection in private hands today has been formed during the past 25 years. Prices have not merely doubled or tripled in that time; they have multiplied in many cases a hundredfold. The great competition today is not for first editions by Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Walter Scott, Oliver Wendell Holmes, or George Eliot; it is for the key works by Elmore Leonard, Robert B. Parker, Ross Thomas, Raymond Chandler, Agatha Christie, Dashiell Hammett, Dorothy L. Sayers, and other major figures in the world of mystery fiction.

Book auctions by those houses that specialize in selling only books, such as Swann, California Book Auction, and, less frequently, even Christie's and Sotheby's, offer great opportunities for the serious collector. Mysteries do not make up a large percentage of their offerings, so a sharp eye must be kept to spot those sales in which a few mysterious rarities may emerge. But, once the collector has learned that items of interest are to be auctioned, what is to be done next?

Buying at auction is entirely different from buying from a bookseller. First, the positive aspects are that it is sometimes possible to buy a book more cheaply at auction than in a bookstore. Most of the bidders in the auction room are booksellers. If they are buying for their own stock, clearly they must buy the book more cheaply than they will sell it, expecting to make a reasonable profit. This is not a universal truth, however. For major items, many booksellers will be attempting to buy for a client, who may be perfectly willing to pay full retail price for an item, or even more, if the item is precious enough. The other positive aspect of auction buying is that certain items are almost sure to be available only in the auction room. Manuscripts, for example, or great archives of letters and research material, tend to be offered less frequently in bookshops than in the auction room.

There are several pieces of bad news connected with auction galleries, which may weigh equally heavily.

Material generally is sold "as is" at auction. Thus, if a book is described as a first edition but turns out to be a later edition, it is not returnable. If a signature has been offered and it turns out to be a fake or a forgery, the buyer has no recourse.

There is a unique quality of the auction itself that is both good news and bad news. It is generally referred to as "auction fever," and no one is immune to it. Otherwise sensible, conservative people will be suddenly struck with it and decide that no price is too high to pay for an item that they might sneer at in a catalogue or in a book shop. The sense of competition, the desire to "win," outstrips

all other sensibilities. The trouble is that it's *fun* to bid at auction and to take away an item that has been coveted by others.

This is the way a typical auction works. A collector learns that an auction gallery will be selling material of interest to him in a few weeks. He may learn of it through newspapers or magazines, or a bookseller with whom he has a close relationship may inform him of it, or he may be on the mailing list of the auction house. Word of mouth also works wonderfully well to bring the news to someone who is likely to be interested.

The next step is to acquire a catalogue, which will describe the items to be sold. A word to the wise here: auction houses tend to have strengths that exceed their ability to accurately describe the condition of their books. Good booksellers are careful to note defects in the books they catalogue; even the best auction houses do not list this among their priorities.

Once the catalogue has been received, and the items seem of interest to the collector, several options are open. If it is possible, a visit to the gallery for the exhibition is the best possible method of checking on the authenticity of the items and the accuracy of the descriptions. Auction houses make excellent arrangements to display the materials to be sold and provide ample exhibition time – usually two or three days.

If geography or timing makes it impractical to personally examine the material, the usual next step would be to make contact with a bookseller who plans to attend the auction. Clearly, if the collector has established a good relationship with a bookseller, and there is mutual trust, it will make the most sense to work with this dealer. If no bookseller with whom the collector has a close relationship is attending the auction, the best alternative is a local dealer who comes well recommended.

The collector then makes an arrangement for the bookseller to buy, or attempt to buy, selected items at the auction. A commission is charged for this, and it should be a percentage of the sale price of the items and should be established very clearly *before* the sale. For very expensive items, the commission might be as little as 5%, though it is unreasonable to expect this. More common is 10%, and some dealers regularly charge 15%. If a collector is quoted a fee of 50%, he should find another bookseller with whom to work.

There are numerous benefits to having a bookseller be a representative at the auction. First, especially in the mystery field, there are several specialists who are well qualified to pass judgment on the authenticity of the material. Once the *bona fides* of the material have been established, a knowledgeable dealer can also advise as to the correct price. While auction catalogues do, generally, provide estimates, these prices are notoriously low, evidently designed to get more people into the auction room with the hope that auction fever will hit epidemic proportions.

If a bookseller is doing the bidding, he will not permit this momentary craze to strike, as he is bidding with his client's money. A client is perfectly within his right to decline an item purchased for him beyond his bid. The bid should be firmly established with the dealer before the auction. If the collector accompanies the dealer to the sale and encourages him to go beyond the established price during the bidding wars, he is responsible, of course.

Why, one may ask, would a collector hire a bookseller to bid for him, if he will be at the sale in person? For two good reasons: first, the bookseller will guarantee the material if he has had the opportunity to examine it. Second, the collector thus prevents the bookseller from bidding for the same material competitively.

Let us say, for the sake of discussion, that Agatha Christie's first book, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, is offered at auction, and it has a fine dust jacket. No such copy, to my knowledge, has been sold in the past forty years or more.

Much excitement would accompany this item to the auction block, and it would attract most of the major specialty dealers, many of whom would carry bids from clients with them. Let us say, furthermore, that the pre-sale estimate was $5,000, and that a dozen collectors have empowered dealers to go up to $7,500. Finally, let us assume that one of the dealers believes the item to be worth $12,000. If you are the collector who has hired that dealer to bid $7,500 for you, he is obligated to buy it for you at that price if he can. Had you done your own bidding, he would be competing with you, bidding well past the $7,500 that you were prepared to pay.

Many dealers would prefer *not* to bid for clients when great items are auctioned. In the above example, for instance, if the dealer got the book for $7,500 for his client, he stands to earn a commission of $750 (at 10%). Had he been able to buy it for stock at, say, $8,000, and he is able to sell it for the $12,000 he believes it to be worth, he could have earned $4,000. Of course, if he is wrong, he could be stuck with the book for months or even years, during which time he must continue to pay the rent.

At smaller auctions, less likely to attract booksellers from across the country and around the world, the collector may prefer to bid for himself. It seems arcane and scary the first time, but it is a terrifically exciting experience. The legendary tales of people scratching their noses and buying an expensive white elephant are utter nonsense. In an emergency, if a wave to a friend across the room has been interpreted as a bid by the auctioneer, it is always possible to speak up and inform him that no bid had been made. He may snarl, but he won't force you to accept the item. Trouble will surely ensue, however, if the collector changes his mind twenty minutes later.

Major houses use paddles. As the prospective buyer enters the auction room, he registers his name, is given a paddle with a number on it, and he makes his bid by raising the paddle. If he is successful, the auctioneer notes the number.

In most auctions, a bid is indicated simply by raising a hand. The successful bidder then gives his name either to a person sitting with the auctioneer or to an assistant walking in the aisles. It is to be expected that the buyer will be asked for a deposit on his purchases. Most items can be picked up and taken away immediately after the sale or on the following day. Most houses will also make shipping arrangements for the buyer.

Except for fairly major items, little description takes place during the actual sale, the auctioneer having assumed that serious bidders will have examined the items before the sale. Customarily, all items, whether a single valuable book or a carton full of junk, are referred to as a "lot."

Bidding will be solicited by the auctioneer. "Lot number one, three first editions by Anthony Abbot. Who will bid ten dollars?" is a reasonable expectation for the method of beginning a sale, which may continue in approximately that fashion for the entire day. On an average, an auction will move about a hundred lots in an hour.

Frequently, an auction house will have taken bids by mail or by telephone, and sometimes there will be reserves on an item. It is impossible to distinguish between the two from the audience.

If the auctioneer says, "Now, lot number 85, a first edition of Ian Fleming's first book, *Casino Royale*, fine copy in dust wrapper; the bidding will begin at one thousand dollars," it is possible that a mail order bid was received for a thousand dollars. It is equally possible that the seller would not sell the item for less than a thousand dollars (the reserve). In practical terms, it is of no difference to the buyer.

A recent development at auction houses has been the installation of a buyer's premium, generally 10% of the selling price. In previous times, the auction house earned its profit from the seller of material, who paid a percentage of the sale price to the house for conducting the auction, cataloguing the material, promoting the sale, and so on. Now, in addition to that commission from the seller (usually 10%), an additional fee is tacked on to the hammer, or selling, price. Thus, if the collector is successful with a bid of $100, he will normally also have to pay a $10 commission, increasing the price to $110, of which the seller will receive $90.

Auction catalogues have also become expensive, generally in the $5 to $20 range. It is virtually impossible to attend the auction without purchasing a catalogue.

The two best pieces of advice that can be offered to anyone contemplating a purchase at auction: first, work with a trusted book dealer if possible; second, if you are going to do your own bidding, examine the material carefully and check it a second time just before the sale so that you are confident that it is everything you expect it to be.

And, as a postscript, beware of auction fever. It's not unlike gambling at the roulette wheel with chips. The money doesn't seem as real, or as important, in an environment where everyone seems to be tossing it around without regard.

However, like the click of chips and the whirring of the wheel, an auction can be dizzyingly and dazzlingly exciting. □

J'Accuse!

by William L. DeAndrea

"I've just done something I've wanted to do since 1969 – I bought a 1969 Cadillac."
– Old joke

And *I've* just done something I wanted to do since December 22, 1986, or three weeks ago – I finished rereading *The Problem of the Green Capsule* by John Dickson Carr, a handsome paperback edition put out by Hugh Abramson for his International Polygonics Crime Classics series. Two hundred twenty pages. The last book that took me three weeks to finish was *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, roughly 2.5 million pages.

So what has the distraction been? The distraction has been the arrival and existence of Matthew William DeAndrea, born 9:41 P.M., January 2, 1987 (Isaac Asimov's birthday) at Danbury Hospital in Danbury, Connecticut. I know that new fathers can be insufferable, so I will not insist he is the cutest, smartest, strongest, best baby in the world. I will merely say that he is in large-scale tie for first.

Matt was delivered by Cesarian section after Orania had gone through twenty hours of labor, the last five or so absolutely excruciating. The kid's head was so big it would not even go *into* the birth canal, let alone get stuck halfway through, the way these things usually happen. G. K. Chesterton once expressed astonishment that, in the wake of World War I, some people were saying that women should be given the vote because they had now "proven their bravery." Every one of us, Chesterton pointed out, is by his very existence testimony to the bravery of some woman. I have now seen that particular type of bravery in operation, and awe is not too strong a word for what it makes me feel. Especially when the last stitch (staple, actually) had barely been put in, and Orania was looking at her blood-covered offspring and announcing that he was worth it.

Just a couple more points before I endeavor to discuss something relevant to the magazine. One, I feel a great sense of gratitude at this time for all of medical science. Fifty years ago or so, in the same circumstances, I would now be either the father of a dead child, the husband of a dead wife, or, most likely, both. That kind of realization makes the kid's unwillingness to do any sleeping whatsoever between 10 P.M. and 7 A.M. a little easier to take. Although if the kid expects to go to Yale, he'd better let his mother and me get a little writing done before too long.

And two, and here we're getting into mysteries at last, where does the happy daytime kid *go* when Baby Hyde shows up at night? I'm convinced that somebody is pulling some kind of switcheroo.

Last column – I *think* it was last column (if I'm a little more incoherent than usual, please forgive me), I talked about *1001 Midnights*, a collection of reviews of mystery and suspense stories edited by Bill Pronzini and Marcia Muller. Shortly afterward, Crown published *The Mystery Lover's Companion*, a book identical in purpose with the Pronzini/Muller volume but different enough in execution to make it worth a look.

For one thing, instead of a whole crew of reviewers, TMLC represents the point of view of one man – Art Bourgeau, owner of Philadelphia's Whodunit bookstore and creator of good-ol'-boy detective-adventurers Snake Kirlin and F. T. Zevich. Art talks to the reader in a personal tone, something I appreciate in any critic. He deals frankly and disarmingly with the potentially embarrassing tasks of mentioning his own books and those of his wife, Patricia J. MacDonald. The writeups per book are incisive but almost always too brief.

One thing I found interesting was that, while I generally agreed with Art about the worthiness of the writers listed, I was frequently appalled by his choices as the best or worst of each writer's books, including the listings for himself, me, and at least ten others I could think of.

TMLC is organized subjectively. Art has sections titled "The American Mystery," "The British Mystery," "The Thriller," and "The Police Procedural." This, I suppose, makes sense if you are in the mood to read a particular kind of book, but I think it causes more problems than it solves. For instance, *Cronus*, my first spy novel, is not to be found in thrillers but lumped in with my Matt Cobb stuff in the American mystery section. Also, where do you put John Dickson Carr or Marian Babson or Martha Grimes, Americans all who write of primarily British settings? Art puts them all in the British section, though only Grimes's American origins are mentioned. And how do you pigeonhole somebody like Donald E. Westlake, who has written practically everything beautifully?

But that's a minor fault. TMLC is not as much fun to read as one of Art's novels, but it's definitely worth a look.

This next section is the fallout from one of Orania's hobbies. She accumulates Writing Advice. She doesn't need it, or even listen to it, she just likes to read it. We buy *Writer's Digest* off the newsstand every month for Orania to get mad at. We don't subscribe because she refuses to be part of a statistic the magazine can flaunt to the vanity presses and editing services who provide a lot of the advertising. I'm used to hearing things such as, "You'll never get an assignment from a major magazine if you do this," and ruder comments as she thumbs her way through.

We also accumulate books of writing advice, most of which leave her somewhat calmer. One of the most recent is *Writing the Modern Mystery* by Barbara Norville published by (guess who) Writer's Digest Books. Barbara Norville is one of the legendary mystery editors, mentioned in the same conversations with Lee Wright, Joan Kahn, Fred Dannay, and our own Michael Seidman. She has worked with Ed McBain, Gregory Mcdonald, William H. Hallahan, Emma Lathen, and Robert L. Fish, an impressive group to say the least.

So far be it from me to say that her advice doesn't work, or won't work for you. What I don't get is how anybody who needs to *get* this stuff spelled out for him conceived the idea of being a mystery writer in the first place.

And that is my problem with advice for writers. Except for really specific, concrete stuff ("Use a good dark ribbon, and don't bind your manuscript, so the editor will find it easier to read") most of the writing advice I've ever seen is either (a) dumb or (b) so obvious as to be insulting.

I reproduce for you the contents entry for Chapter 7 – "Creating Memorable Characters": Plot vs. character: a matter of priority – First- or third-person/multi-viewpoint narrators: advantages and pitfalls – The sleuth's burden – The mind of the murderer – The victim's role – Suspects: their adversarial roles – Minor characters: information passers, local color, pace breakers – Crowd control: keeping the cast manageable – Variation: to create color and balance – The "male" and "female" point of view.

I resist with reluctance the temptation to speculate on the fascinating question of what the hell those quotation marks are doing around "male" and "female" and ask the following instead: If you need that kind of stuff spelled out for you, what the hell makes you think you have it in you to be a writer, for God's sake?

A person who has read a hundred mysteries (say eight months' worth, unless there's a new baby in the house) and has failed to get a pretty good insight into "the sleuth's burden" is the kind of person who could go to a hundred ball games and still have to be told to stand up when they play *The Star Spangled Banner*.

I will now tell you how to write a good mystery story. Good in this case means a publishable story you like and are proud of having written.

1. Read mystery stories, a lot of them. Think of reasons for why you like the ones you like and dislike the ones you dislike. Remember the reasons.

2. Think of something – a background, a

plot angle, a kind of character, whatever—that nobody you like has ever used, or that somebody you don't like has mishandled.

3. Sit down at the typewriter and hit the keys (This is figurative. You can use a mainframe computer or a quill pen, for all I care.)

4. When you've accumulated a stack big enough to read (thirty to fifty pages), read it. Forget it's you, and apply the same criteria you did to every other author. Discover the reasons for your likes and dislikes. If you like it, keep it, and repeat steps three and four until you get to the end. If you dislike it, lose it and go back to step two. If you hate it, throw it away and return to step one. If you have to go back to step one five times, you might start thinking of another hobby.

5. Let people read it, but never pay anybody more than fifty dollars to tell you what they think of it.

6. Listen to what they say, but don't worship it. Assess advice received the way you've assessed the manuscript.

The basis of my system of advice, you see, is that, unlike so many others, I do not assume any old jerk can be trained to be a mystery writer if he really, really wants to. You have to want to, all right, but you also need brains enough to know what you think a good mystery is, and how it got that way. You must also have a feel for the English language (or *some* language) and must have developed an instinct for how these things go together. Then you can create. But if someone gives you a formula, you will, at best, write to a formula. There are enough formula books already.

I'm going to pass along to you a favor Ric Meyers passed along to me a little while ago—I'm going to tell you about a novel. I haven't read the whole thing yet, because it's being published in installments, but if the last four parts are as good as the first eight, this will not only be the best thriller I have read this year, it will be one of the best I have ever read. The author is a young Englishman named Alan Moore, and the novel is called *Watchmen*.

And it's a comic book.

Yes, dammit, I said a comic book, published by DC, the division of Warner Communications that brings you Superman. If you are too sophisticated to read a comic book, just skip this section. It's your loss.

Because *Watchmen* is a comic book the way *Rebecca* is a Gothic, the way *Moby Dick* is a fish story. *Watchmen* is the finest comic book ever done, surpassing Moore's own work on a horror book called *Swamp Thing*. The man is a genius at what he does. I love comic books. I learned to read from comic books. When other six-year-old kids were puzzling out "See Spot run," I was working on "But in his identity as the Martian Manhunter, he is invulnerable." That could be another hint toward becoming a writer, by the way—build a vocabulary early, however you can. Anyway, I have a respect for the medium a lot of people lack. But I never thought I would be *poring* over captions and word balloons, lost in admiration of a comic book writer's style, dazzled by his transitions and plot construction. I've done that a lot since I've become familiar with Alan Moore's work. In *Watchmen*, I'm doing it constantly. If I were a publisher, I would not hesitate to sign Moore to write a novel based on this series of comic books.

Watchmen is drawn by Dave Gibbons, another Englishman, and if I am slighting his work, it is because it is merely excellent. It is worthy of the script it serves.

(All right, already, stop drooling and tell us what it's about.)

Glad you asked. *Watchmen* is about a lot of things. Thematically, it tackles something no one else has ever tackled. What would the world *really* be like if people dressed up in funny costumes and went out and fought crime? What kind of mentality would do such a thing? And what would be the *real* effects, social and political, of the existence of an honest-to-Godlike super-man? And what would it feel like to know him, to be him? Moore explores it in all its facets, and by the time he gets done, there is nothing humorous about the idea at all. It's all logical, and inevitable, and very frightening.

The characters range from a man who ages from a young Scaramouche to a cynical assassin, to a short, ugly psychotic who seems to have the world's last consistently uncompromised moral vision, to an easygoing young man who dies to return as the most powerful being the earth has ever seen, to the young woman chosen to keep him amused.

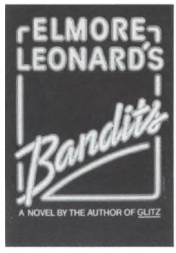
The plot is enormous in scope. As I say, a third of the story is yet to come, but at the very *least*, it seems to be about a conspiracy to murder the human race, to be remade in *somebody's* image. Sort of a malevolent inversion of *Atlas Shrugged*, except Ayn Rand on the finest day of her life was not the fiction writer Alan Moore is.

This was Ric Meyers's idea first, but I endorse it wholeheartedly, and he's given me permission to air it here. How about a special Edgar for Mr. Moore and Mr. Gibbons? Please go to a local comic book store and pick up a copy of *Watchmen* number one (they'll have it—they'll have this one for years) and read it before you dismiss me as a crank.

After all, the MWA is an organization that once gave a woman a special Edgar not because of any particular merit she possessed by her work, but only for her foresight in choosing to be born the daughter of a President of the United States. I think when someone working in our genre creates a masterpiece, whatever the form, he deserves some recognition.

Early reviews of Elmore Leonard's new book *Bandits* indicate that Leonard is entering the downside of the Process. The Process is what I call the means by which the critics get together by some beaver-like instinct, construct an idol of their own imagination, then tear it down.

It's analogous to the famous show business career summary: Who the hell is Esther Jenkins?—Esther Jenkins, huh?—Ladies and gentlemen, introducing Esther Jenkins!—Get me Esther Jenkins!—Get me an Esther Jenkins type.—Get me a young Esther



Jenkins.—Who the hell is Esther Jenkins?

With writers, it starts with "Here's a decent book you may have missed," then "Here's another fine book by the unsung Elmore Leonard," then "The great Elmore Leonard does it again!" peaking with "The greatest American mystery writer of all time!!!" (see *Newsweek* magazine's Elmore Leonard article).

Then the writer hits the bestseller lists, and the rot sets in. It's hard to see yourself as a taste leader when too many people already like what you're touting. So now we get reviews such as those at present—"Not up to Mr. Leonard's usual standard." Next comes the real killer—"Mr. Leonard is starting to believe his own publicity." Publicity generated, of course, by guess who. For the most part, critics can't stand anybody who makes money, even if they're the ones responsible for the money being made in the first place. After that, it's downhill all the way—"Leonard has apparently lost his touch"; "It's sad, what's happened to Leonard"; and finally, "Is he still publishing?"

Of course, not only will he still be publishing, he'll still be on the bestseller lists. The public is hard to shake.

Elmore Leonard is not as good as they said he was when they were trying to make a literary god of him; he is nowhere near as bad as they'll try to make out if and when they turn on him. It's just the Process. It happened to Hemingway in a big way, and it's happened to Robert B. Parker in a small way, and it will keep happening. If it happens to you (see advice on How To Be A Writer, earlier in this column), enjoy your turn at the top, but don't let it go to your head. □

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Crime Hunt

by T. M. McDade

I cannot recall when I last read in the daily press of the finding of a body in a trunk. This once popular method of disposing of a corpse seems to be no longer in style, although in a recent crossword puzzle there was a clue: "Trunk in a trunk." It would be easy to ascribe this decline in homicidal practice to obscure psychological feelings, but a moment's thought would suggest that it is due more to the disappearance of the trunk from the domestic household. With the advent of air travel, large trunks rarely play a part in our lives, and bodies must be disposed of in other ways. The true murder fancier must regret the loss of those fine cases which usually began in some baggage room with disagreeable odors leading to a large steamer trunk. A look at some of those more famous cases seems timely for the current connoisseur of homicide.

On March 24, 1906, a large new trunk tied with rope was brought to the Southern Pacific Railroad station in Stockton, California by an expressman who left it in the luggage room. When the baggageman returned from lunch, he wheeled it onto the platform for the afternoon train to San Francisco. The carman, however, refused to take it, as it lacked a labeled destination, and the baggageman returned it to the storeroom. Later that day, while an expressman and the baggage master were present, the trio noticed a peculiar odor which was traced to the trunk with no destination. The police were notified and, opening the suspicious parcel, discovered the body of a middle-aged man.

Within a few hours, the police had made considerable progress in their investigation. They very quickly found the expressman who had delivered the trunk to the station, and he led them to the California Rooming House, where he had picked it up. The landlady of that place identified the body as that of Albert McVicar, who, with his wife, had registered a few days before. The expressman had also picked up the new trunk from a shop in town, and the proprietor's description of the purchaser tallied with that of the woman who had registered as McVicar's wife. A third witness, the woman who had sold the rope which bound the trunk, added more details, and by evening the police had broadcast a description of their quarry. Within 24 hours, a Mrs. Emma Le Doux had been arrested in Antioch, near San Francisco, and was soon on her way back to Stockton.

The citizens of Stockton joined in the growing excitement, and a sizable portion of the town turned out to meet the train bearing Mrs. Le Doux. This 36-year-old woman of quite ordinary features did, despite her dubious position, possess an extraordinary self-assurance. McVicar, she admitted, had been her husband, her third or fourth, whom she had divorced. She denied killing him, but her many explanations were too transparent for belief. The report of the coroner added a macabre note when it was stated that, from the signs of blood in the trunk, it was believed that the victim had been alive when he was placed in it.

In due time, she was tried, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged, but an indulgent appellate court granted her a new trial based on some tenuous legalism. She thereupon pleaded guilty, receiving a life sentence. She was out in ten years, but her irregular habits did not satisfy the parole board and she was soon back. Released again in five years, she was returned once more, aged 58, and spent the last fifteen years of her life confined.

Even those who can imagine themselves in situations in which they might kill someone find the idea of disposing of a corpse as too revolting. Those who attempt it must be lacking in some sensibility which governs most people, and, with that lack, they seem to have a blind carelessness, a want of ordinary precaution which the circumstances dictate. How could Mrs. Le Doux have failed to put some tag, some destination, on the trunk which contained her victim? Had she done so, it might have gone to San Francisco and never been traced to her.

Winnie Ruth Judd was equally careless in 1931 when she shipped two trunks from Tucson, Arizona to herself in Los Angeles, also on the Southern Pacific. In Los Angeles, the baggageman saw blood dripping from them and refused to deliver them to her, though it was suspected only that they contained illegally shipped venison. They in fact concealed the bodies of two women whom Judd had killed. She was quickly traced and convicted, spending more than forty years in prison.

One of the more famous trials for murder involving a trunk was that of Tony Mancini in England in 1934. Mancini had many names: Herman Gold, Jack Notyre, Tony Watson. Oddly enough, his real name was Cecil Lois England. Shortly after being released from prison for some minor offense, this 26-year-old vagrant met Violette Kaye, a 42-year-old dancer who lived off her earnings as a prostitute. She was planning to move to Brighton, and she offered to let Mancini live with her there, if he would make himself scarce when she had clients. The arrangement seemed to suit both of them, though they never remained long at one address. Landlords, police, disputes with clients kept them on the move. In the first six months in Brighton, they had moved thirteen times, the last time to 44 Park Crescent, where a basement apartment was reached by a flight of stone steps.

In May, Mancini had gotten a job as waiter at the Skylark Café. The woman Kaye was not happy with this arrangement, fearing that he might become attached to one of the girls who frequented it, and she visited the place regularly to keep an eye on him. On May 10, she appeared at the café a little the worse for liquor and embarrassed Mancini with her remarks. She was finally induced to leave and went directly to the Park Crescent rooms, where a friend, Thomas Kerslake, called on her with the news that one of her regular clients had been taken to an insane asylum. Kerslake was probably the last person to see her alive.

The next day, Mancini turned up at the café and announced that Kaye had gotten a job and gone to Paris. That same day, Kaye's sister in London, who had been planning to visit her, received a telegram: "Going abroad. Good job. Sail Sunday, will write. Vi." A couple of days later, Mancini moved out of the Park Crescent rooms to a place at 52 Kemp Street. One item of his luggage was a large trunk which a fellow working at the café helped him to move.

One wonders how long Mancini might have let things run on. On June 14, however, he was startled by the screaming news posters

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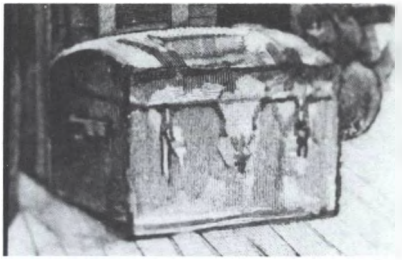
about the "Brighton Trunk Murder." The body of a woman had been found in the luggage room of the Brighton railway station, where it had been for ten days. The head and legs were missing, and the identification of the victim posed problems. Casting about through the "street people" of the town, the police interviewed Mancini himself, but seemingly he could tell them nothing of the woman. For Mancini, however, the interview produced pure panic. The day after their call, he took off for London with his few belongings, leaving the large trunk in the Kemp Street cellar. His instincts were correct, for the police returned that same day with more questions, only to find him gone. They did, however, find the trunk, and, on opening it, they found Violette Kaye, for whom they had not been looking.

It took the police just two days to run Mancini down in London. Although he was unquestionably frightened, his story never changed. "I didn't murder her," he said. "I wouldn't cut off her hand. She'd been keeping me for months." Back in Brighton, the signboards announced Brighton Trunk Murder No. 2. (The victim in Trunk No. 1 was never identified.) Arraigned for the killing of Kaye, Mancini was held for the Sussex Assizes, to be held in December.

When Mancini's trial opened in Lewes, he was defended by Norman Birkett, a leading trial counsel of the day and later to be one of the four judges at the Nazi war crimes trials at Nuremberg. The Mancini trial took but five days and was followed by a fascinated public through the press. J. D. Cassells, K.C., and Quentin Hogg presented the case for the Crown. It was simple and direct. The landlord of the rooms identified Mancini, who, under the name of Watson, had rented them with Violette Kaye. The owner of the furniture mart had sold the trunk to Mancini for 7*s.*6*d.* A fellow worker at the café had helped Mancini to move the trunk to Kemp Street; it was very heavy. Mancini had told him that it contained clothes and dishes. Kerslake testified to seeing Kaye in her basement doorway on May 10, apparently the last view of her alive. He said that she had seemed agitated, distressed, and even frightened. She also seemed to be drunk.

On cross-examination, Birkett drew from the witnesses that the prisoner and Kaye were friendly and seemed to be fond of one another. The handwriting on the telegram sent to Kaye's sister was identified as Mancini's. The medical evidence revealed for the first time the actual cause of death—a fractured skull. Sir Bernard Spilsbury, the famous pathologist, gave his opinion that the death wound had been caused by a blow from a heavy object. It was also his opinion that death must have followed in a few minutes. A trace of morphine was also found in the body. Several articles of Mancini's clothing, a shirt and trousers, were introduced because they contained bloodstains.

It was not an overpowering case, but Mancini had behaved in all respects as if he had murdered the woman. It was Birkett's job now to start pulling that case apart. He began by calling Mancini to the stand. He described his background, which included



two and a half years in the air force, and his meeting up with Kaye in London. Their life in Brighton was fairly ordinary except that she worried a lot and kept changing their rooms. Mancini said that, on May 10, he had returned to the rooms from the café and she did not answer his ring. He finally got in through a window and found the woman crouched on her bed. She did not respond to his calls, and he then noticed blood on her pillow. He touched her, feeling her "neither cold nor warm," and, putting his hand on her heart, could feel no beat. It was then he decided that she was dead. Asked by Birkett why he did not report it to the police, he replied: "I considered that a man who has been convicted never gets a fair trial. I thought they would say, 'You must be the man. You have been living with her. She has been keeping you. You are a convicted man and you found her.'"

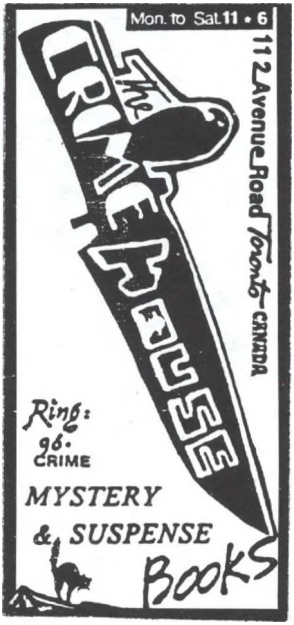
In the woman's bag, he had found a letter from Kaye's sister, who said she would be down soon. He then sent off a telegram saying that Kaye had taken a job abroad. He also bought a trunk for the body and had it moved to Kemp Street.

Under cross-examination, Mancini said that he thought she had been killed by one of her callers and related several instances of threats and violence. Birkett called two other witnesses, one of whom was Kaye's mother, who testified that Kaye used drugs. Perhaps his strongest evidence in rebuttal were witnesses to prove that Mancini's blood-stained clothes had all been bought long after Kaye's disappearance and could not be connected with her death.

In his closing speech to the jury, Birkett made two strong points. The first was complete lack of a motive for Mancini to kill Kaye; all of the witnesses had reported on their good relations. The second was the possibility that Kaye, groggy from some drug, had fallen down the stone steps to her basement apartment and struck her head on the stone coping. Nothing in the evidence was inconsistent with this hypothesis. Birkett also made plain that Mancini's actions were consistent with the panic he had felt on finding himself in this situation and expecting only disbelief from the police.

The jury was out but two and a half hours and to the general surprise brought in a verdict of "Not guilty." The press was generous in its praise of Birkett's performance. There had been no great highlight at the trial, no dramatic confrontation, but the barrister's workmanlike performance demonstrated that the Crown had not proved its case.

The Mancini case is a rarity among trunk cases, among which there are few acquittals. Undoubtedly, this was due to Birkett, and one wonders how Mancini was so fortunate to obtain the services of one of the great barristers of the time. His fee for the five days of trial was £200, a thousand dollars then, and a modest few for the quality of the work. Mancini was also lucky that his trunk was large enough to contain the body without cutting it up. I know of no case in which a defendant who admitted to dismembering a body got off. □



Gently into the Darkness

AN INTERVIEW WITH DOROTHY SALISBURY DAVIS, GRANDMASTER OF THE '84 EDGARS

By Lucy Freeman

PHOTO: DAVID HOLLANDER

"Constancy is her name."

The late Stanley Ellins wrote this of Dorothy Salisbury Davis. His tribute appeared in the *Mystery Writers Annual* celebrating the Edgar Allan Poe Awards dinner on May 10, 1985. Dorothy was to receive the Grand Master Award at this fortieth anniversary of MWA at the Sheraton Centre, New York—the highest national award a mystery writer can receive.

Stanley also paid tribute to Dorothy in other ways: "She is the born writer, invested with a disciplined imagination, an uncannily true ear for the right word in the right place, a fascination with, and intense concern for every species of erring humanity, and an innate sense of drama."

He praised her "finely wrought novels and stories, unique in the way they combined her sensitivity to her most aberrant characters with her never moralistic but always profound revulsion at violence of any kind." Away from the typewriter, Stanley noted, Dorothy is "distinctly a presence in whatever company she enters, and a delightful and heart-warming presence."

That heartwarming presence includes the smile that wins us all. Dorothy's whole face is in it. The wide brown eyes light up as she smiles. She is involved with the recipient, giving not only her spirit but her good sense. She is often the "wise mother" to anyone who consults her on professional or personal problems. You might call her the Dear Abby of MWA; this is part of her astonishing vitality.

Dorothy has served on the board of MWA whenever the rules of eligibility allow, since first being elected in the early 1950s. She insists it be noted that she ran two or three times before making it. She was president in 1956. As Stanley also observed, her constancy is particularly evident in her enduring marriage to actor Harry Davis and "in her thirty-six years—thirty-six years, for God's sake!—with the same publisher."

She says of her relationship to Charles Scribner's Sons: "I'm the oldest writer on their list in terms of being there since 1949—through ups and downs." If the late Burroughs Mitchell, her editor for thirty years, had ever left Scribner's, she would probably have followed him. In his autobiography, *The Education of an Editor,* he writes warmly of her as friend and writer:

> As a mystery editor, I lacked the desirable ingenuity that relishes plotting and so I was inclined to judge a book by its plausibility and tension, by the interest of the characters and of the milieu.
>
> I looked for some of the qualities of any good novel. They are to be found in all of Dorothy Davis's books. She has always pushed her achievement beyond the basic requirements of the mystery novel.

Her editor at Scribner's now is Laurie Schieffelin, for whom she has great affection: "I admire and respect her." Dorothy's latest book, her twentieth, *The Habit of Fear,* will be published in the fall of 1987. Most of her books are crime fiction, but two, *Men of No Property* and *The Evening of the Good Samaritan* are historical novels.

Dorothy is quoted as saying of her writing, in *13 Mistresses of Murder* (edited by Elaine Budd and published by Ungar-Continuum, where Bruce Cassiday is editor for mystery and suspense books), "If you wait long enough for what you want, you'll get it." She elaborated: "What I have in mind is this: Hang in there with what you want to say until you get it right." Then, during the interview for this article, she added in a rueful voice, "Though I've never written anything to my complete satisfaction. Even *Where the Dark Streets Go,* my favorite of my suspense books, is flawed. But I did get the essence, the emotion. And if you get that, you are on the right path. I'm also saying any story I haven't loved, I've lost. I simply couldn't do it."

She likes to learn something with every book. Learning "keeps the material fresh—and I like to think it keeps the writer fresh too. One of the frustrations I've enjoyed is what I've learned and not been able to use. I learned a lot about fire-fighting, for example. I even rode a truck. And I wanted very much to write a book that would do honor to the volunteers whose dedication in the community where we live and in a lot of other small towns is so admirable. But I just couldn't feel the stir of life in the book. I ought to have taken warning from the outset. For me a book has to start with a person. A person in trouble or on his way to trouble. If I get him right, he'll take over and I'll get home safely."

As Thomas Chastain, also a member of the MWA board, says of Dorothy, "Her stories illuminate the true mystery of life—the workings of wayward, yet always human emotions."

In the world of mystery writing—and the world as a whole—Dorothy is one of those rare persons who has the quality of being available when needed, even when on deadline. Those who have served with her on the board know her quiet conviction when she champions some measure or act but also her ready acceptance when a measure or act passes of which she disapproves—which seldom happens, for the board listens to Dorothy. She says with a laugh: "I've been wrong often enough in my life not to make the mistake of thinking I'm right all the time. Anyone who feels he is right all the time is likely to carry himself, and anyone who goes along, into trouble." Adds, eyes twinkling: "I'll always hedge my bets."

Dorothy wanted to write from the age of two-and-a-half. "I can still remember taking a crayon to the wallpaper and then, running out of space at eye level, climbing up on a chair to finish the job," she says. "I don't know what the punishment was, but I think I've been writing short ever since." Burroughs

Mitchell comments on her abrupt endings: "She tended to give the resolution of her plot in a manner so subtle and elided that it baffled not only me but her husband Harry as well. We managed to prevail on her to explain to simpler minds, such as ours."

Dorothy's own comment (in *Colloquium on Crime*, edited by Robin Winks, published by Scribner's) explained: "I so admire economy that I am sometimes accused of not finishing a book. But long-winded explanations can spoil a book by calling attention to little things that could have been tied up along the way. Or left untied (to the purist's distress, but not to mine). The sooner I can cut bait among the red herrings, the better."

Sitting in the living room of the writer of this article, looking north over Central Park, its trees bare of leaves in December, Dorothy muses on the craft of the mystery. She says that she constantly reminds herself "to *show, not tell.*" And not to underestimate the participation of her reader: "You slow yourself down with elaborate description and the acrobatics of getting from one place to another. Your reader is probably there ahead of you and got there by skipping the soft parts of your prose."

She thinks that most mystery writers would agree that movies are a great learning vehicle—"the establishing shot to make sure the audience knows where it is, and then action, the story in motion. The mystery story, suspense, even the puzzle, I think, has to be visual." The difference, she believes, between the writer and the would-be writer is the ability to get from here to there—"fast." She adds: "To generate that combustion by which a story moves forward."

"Even after my first book was published..." Dorothy interrupts herself, thinking back. "You know what I remember most about it? Harry arriving home with the first copy. We were living on West 86th Street. He'd met a Scribner's salesman he'd known in his Brentano days. Harry worked at Brentano's Fifth Avenue bookstore when he first came to New York from Montreal in the 1930s. The salesman took him up to his Scribner's office and gave him a copy of *The Judas Cat*. Harry ran all the way home with it—no bus, no subway. Pegasus would not have been fast enough.

"Anyway, I worked and worked on my second book, *The Clay Hand*, and I'd pretty well come to the conclusion that I was a would-be writer. That first modest success was an accident. But I gave it yet one more try: I opened in the middle of the story, in the middle of a scene at a bar in a mining town where a reporter had been murdered. The men were scared, hungry, angry. Combustion: the characters did it all. And, lo, I was a writer, God help me, for at least the next thirty-eight years."

She pauses, then says: "I'd like to pay tribute to a writer who died recently. John Bartlow Martin, who wrote an article in the mid-forties for *Harper's* magazine. The article was titled 'The Blast in Centralia Number Five.' We often talk about the writers who influenced us the most. I think of Hemingway, Woolrich, Dorothy B. Hughes. But as I look back on *The Clay Hand*, I owe the vitality of that book to Martin, his reportage of the causes of the mine disaster, its effects on the miners' families, who they were and who the villains and heroes were. From then on, I worked for texture in my fiction. Let's call it sub-plot. I wanted to write about the people whose lives contributed to the crime or were affected by it. More even than about the crime itself." She adds, with a laugh, "Once in a while, I find murder a nuisance. That's a terrible admission, isn't it?"

We ask Dorothy if, at the end of each book, she feels (as a number of women writers seem to do), "Now I can die." Psychoanalysts say that the creation of a book, which often takes nine or ten months, is equated in a woman's unconscious with the creation of a baby. There is in the writer, perhaps, the unconscious fear that, as the book ends, the baby is born

"Once in a while, I find murder a nuisance."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and the mother may die, as some mothers do in childbirth.

"I do have the feeling that it would be okay to die, at this point," Dorothy says. Then amends: "That's not it, really. Part of the relief in finishing a book is that I've paid a debt, fulfilled a contract. I guess I have the feeling that hell is plastered with unfinished books. For another thing, like most writers, I've often been fairly close to the borderline financially. A finished book—money coming in that could pay for my funeral." She laughs merrily. "A fine wake."

Does she think of herself as the optimist she appears to be? "I have my moments of pessimism, but they don't last long," she replies. "And I'm often depressed after I finish a book—empty. And that probably ties in with those thoughts of death. The best cure is to start a short story or another book. And I *do* have a temper. These days, I'm able to get mad. I used to repress my anger. I couldn't get it out unless I cried first."

She went to a therapist, who said to her, "It is no surprise that you write murder mysteries." Dorothy comments: "I think she was wrong. I don't think I write about murder as a release for my own violence. I bang a lot of doors but I've never kicked the cat—or Harry." She grins. "Sometimes, right in the middle of a quarrel, I'll burst out laughing. It seems so ridiculous. And pretty soon Harry comes around too."

What is it like being married to an actor? Is it difficult, as most wives of actors reveal in their often lurid biographies of infidelity and violence?

"You share a lot of heartaches," Dorothy replies. "Harry has often said that, when an actor's working, you feel as though you've never been unemployed, and, when you're not working, it's as though you'll never work again. The disappointments are legion, but somehow a good part wipes them out."

Harry is not "a very actorish actor," she says. "By that I mean—as he tells of himself—acting does not come first in his life. His home comes first, acting is second. But I think he would also say that everything starts with self, and, unless the self achieves and is identifiable, you have a pretty wobbly self—and maybe a shaky home. Now that I feel safe in calling myself a writer, I marvel at the ability of actors to sustain their confidence and keep their talent alive. Tough as it is sometimes for a writer to get published, it's one of the privileges of the trade to generate your own work.

"An actor must wait not only until he's called, but until he's chosen. There are times, I think, when Harry's one-man show, *People of the Shadows,* has been his salvation." Another laugh. "But I don't need to say, do I, that he'd do it all over again?"

Both Davises are ardent Met fans. Dodger transplants. Dorothy started as a Chicago Cubs fan, as was her father: "I think I can still name the Cubs lineup for 1929—Hank Wilson, Rogers Hornsby, Kiki Cuyler. Dad took me to every game he could on a farmer's schedule and a farmer's income. And then once, not long before my father died, Harry and I took him to a Cubs-Phillies ball game. The doggone Cubs couldn't even manage to win that one."

Dorothy and Harry live in Snedens Landing, New York, a few miles up the Hudson from the George Washington Bridge. "The address is Palisades," Dorothy says. "Snedens is a state of mind. Not quite true. It is an historic site. Washington brought his men up from a ship anchored in the river to rendezvous with Lafayette at Tappan. It is also where Molly Snedens is reported to have lost the ferry franchise to a family named Dobbs, owing to her Tory sympathies. Cavorting with the British soldiers is the way I first heard it. We cherish a lot of dubious history along with the real thing. I suspect a lot of history is written, not made."

The Davises share many interests—painting, theatre, music. Dorothy has a non-shared fondness for country music, as well as "all those B's" (Beethoven, Bach). Painting figures importantly in

DOROTHY AND HER OTHER *HONEY*

PHOTO: SALLY SAVAGE

DOROTHY RESCUED TWO WILD SQUIRRELS; THEY NOW LIVE IN BEAR MOUNTAIN ZOO.

her writing—in *Scarlet Night*, for instance, the second of the Julie Hayes books, and in a much-reprinted short story, "The Purple Is Everything" (one of her seven Edgar nominees).

She loves to tell where the latter story came from. It was a gift from the late Margaret Manners, Dorothy explains, bestowed "after a liquid and lavish lunch one day at the old Guffanti's Restaurant (where MWA met when headquarters were on West 24th Street; Dorothy Gardiner dubbed it Duffy's Tavern, so you know how long ago that was) when Margaret told me she knew how to steal a painting."

Dorothy recalls: "I just loved the idea, and I knew instantly what I'd do with it if it were mine. I told this to Margaret. 'Then take it, love,' Margaret said. 'I'd only muck it up.' She wouldn't have mucked it up—Margaret was a fine writer—but I shamelessly accepted on the spot and eventually gave her a bottle of Ballantine Scotch, all she wanted in return."

The Davis house is a comfortable mix of rooms, well over a hundred years old, in part if not in parcel, Dorothy says. Harry grows vegetables; Dorothy is "somewhat successful" at the flowers. She explains: "Some people's gardens thrive under benevolent neglect. I'm thinking of trying that from now on." There are sumptuous houses in Snedens Landing, most of them hidden away, and, except for the passing of an occasional stretch limo, you would not know that it was the retreat of several stage and screen famous. "They're mostly human and some are downright friendly," Dorothy sums up.

She loves to walk or bicycle the trails above the Hudson shoreline. She watches birds and keeps an eye out for lost or abandoned animals. Last summer, she and two friends managed to retrieve, over a period of six weeks, a mother cat and seven kittens: "There were two mothers at first, but, alas, we lost one." The animals had been dropped in Tallman Park and were running wild. "We got them in due time, one by one," Dorothy reports. "And, with the help of a wonderful vet and his technician, who gave them free shots, found homes for every one of them. A cop and his son from Staten Island took the last one."

Then there were the two baby squirrels found in a nest atop a tree about to be taken down on the grounds of the Community Church. The minister was carrying them in a paper bag when Dorothy asked if he were carrying his lunch. She fixed the squirrels a shelter in the Davis shed where she and the minister brought them through (Harry was then filming in Hollywood). A doll's bottle, a drop of whiskey in the milk, got the squirrels started back to life. Then mush, followed by carrots and nuts. Eventually, Dorothy found a new home for them in the Bear Mountain Zoo. "The world really needed another couple of squirrels if their names were Gilbert and Sullivan," she says.

At present, she has two cats. One, Honey, who follows her around like a shadow, belonged to the late Margaret Parton, famous newspaperwoman and author, who lived three houses away and became a good friend. "When Margaret died, I took Honey and kept the name. Margaret explained the name she gave the cat. She said, when she came home to the then empty house, she could call out, 'Hello, honey. I'm home.'" Margaret attended many an Edgar dinner and helped with the publicity, as a guest of the writer of this article. While a reporter on the *New York Times*, we had met Margaret, then on the *Herald Tribune*. As we covered the same story for rival papers, we sometimes sat in the sun if we had a few hours until deadline, dreamed of becoming foreign correspondents, which Margaret went on to do.

Margaret was one of the first of a group of Dorothy's friends with whom the Davises met every few months to read poetry aloud. Dorothy recalls: "Soup, wine and poetry. We celebrated Bobby Burns Day, Shakespeare's birthday, Hallowe'en, and, as Harry would say, *Tishabov*, an obscure Jewish holiday."

Dorothy has never had children. Does she mourn this? "Not greatly," she says. "I was never especially anxious to reproduce myself. There was a time when I realized how much family and children would mean to Harry, even though, as an actor, he could never be sure of steady income. We decided to have a child. I had a miscarriage. The likelihood of continuing to have miscarriages faced me, so we gave up on becoming parents. I didn't feel much regret. We would have been both marvelous and terrible parents. We had good things to give—energy, caring, a social conscience. God help us, though, I think Harry might have been overprotective and I might have been permissive, having had a pot of discipline

myself. Yet I would always have said, 'Go,' explore, find out what life is all about. This desire I got from my father. He taught me to be curious, to 'do.'"

Of her mother, she says: "Her imagination enriched my childhood; her melancholia saddened it. She had come to America from Northern Ireland at the age of twenty-seven, longed all her life for 'home' but never went back. Her language was rich in more than despair, but there was a lot of that. 'My heart's scalded with you,' when I was giving her trouble. To the question, What did you bring me? 'A bonny new

"There's more of me in my villains than in my heroes."

nothing with a whistle on the end of it.' What's for supper? 'Sweeps' heels and roasted snow.'"

Dorothy goes on: "I think a writer must have a folklore. In fact, everybody does have. It's a matter of searching it out, building on it, maybe even making it up. Every character I write must have a lore of his or her own. And he or she is part of me. I am—all writers are—their own best material. There's more of me in my villains than in my heroes. Or, come to think of it, more that *I* recognize of me. Yeah!"

A long pause. "I've been saying that for years. I take some weakness or fault in myself, something I've hidden away successfully (I think), and exploit it to the full. But since I've got rid of some of my holier-than-thou heroines (no examples, thank you), I'm fonder of my female protagonist."

She suggests: "Let's talk for a bit about Julie Hayes (the heroine of *A Death in the Life, Scarlet Night, Lullaby of Murder,* and the forthcoming *The Habit of Fear*). I didn't think there was anything of me in Julie Hayes, certainly not in the first book, except the urge to bite my thumb at psychiatry. I wrote it trying to break out of a slump. I tried to be outrageous, to defy the therapist, to mock my Catholic girlhood—'Jesus after open heart surgery' and me a graduate of a Sacred Heart college! But it was a kind of reverend mockery—the mix of anger and tears. And love. Well disguised, but I see now that I was there. And now that Julie grows into her own person in *The Habit of Fear,* I see that I've written an apocryphal autobiography."

The warm, embracing smile comes over Dorothy's face as she adds: "I assure you, Jeff in no way resembled Harry. If things weren't well mixed in this mish-mash, I wouldn't admit how near it is to the heart. And let's say in passing that *A Death in the Life* is dedicated to Lucy Freeman, 'friend and abettor.'"

Dorothy looks to her childhood for the emotional sources of her fiction (of what writer is this not so? she says). Her mother loved the city, loathed the farm. Her father loved the farm, loathed the city. Alfred Joseph Salisbury was born in Dorchester, England—Thomas Hardy country—the son of a gentleman farmer who transplanted half his family of three boys and their stepmother to America when Alfred was seven. He was an outdoors person all his life and passed along to Dorothy his love of animals and his way with them.

She milked cows and rode bareback everything except the gray goose by the age of seven. She throve on stories of her father's service in the United States Cavalry in the Spanish-American War, the

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Philippine Insurrection, and World War I. Meanwhile, her mother was trying to raise "a little lady." Dorothy came around eventually, at least halfway, she says, but there was friction in the household over how she was to be brought up, two people united in their love for an only child but divided against one another in many ways besides her upbringing. Margaret Greer Salisbury was a Catholic, "but with a strong tinge of Irish Jansenism." Alfred Salisbury was a convert and more Catholic than the Pope, "certainly more devout than his wife."

Dorothy's earliest recollections of her father were of his working in the Chicago steel mills. When she was five, they moved to Northern Wisconsin, where he worked on several different farms. This was near-wilderness country, what her mother called "the wilds of America." Dorothy's first Christmas of memory centers on her mother and her slogging through the snow to find a tree. Her father chopped it down for them, and they then cut illustrations out of the Sears-Roebuck catalogue to decorate it. There were several one-room schoolhouses during the first three years of her formal education. "I loved school," Dorothy says, "but I took a lot of cruel gaff as the kid from Chicago. I had a champion, though, in a boy named Heine Kroeger, with whom I walked the two miles to and from school. His gift of a 'string of pearls' that Christmas illuminated a new corner of my heart."

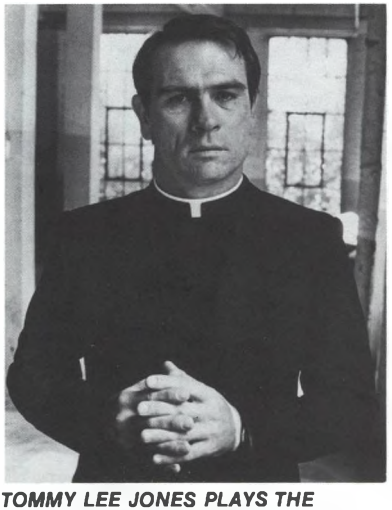
The family moved back to Illinois when Dorothy was nine. From then on, until she left home after her mother's death eleven years later, she lived on a farm between Lake Forest and Libertyville. She went to parochial grade and high school in Lake Forest and Waukegan. In the middle of the Depression, her mother bargained Dorothy's way into Barat College in Lake Forest, "a school to which I am devoted to this day. In spite of my digressions."

She says that what "must have been the crucial event in my remembered life occurred when I was seventeen. I volunteered to do a banking chore for my father when he and my mother were called to attend my grandfather's death. Rifling through the safety-deposit box, I came on something I must not even have known existed—my baptismal certificate. I learned that I'd been adopted at the age of one.

"The floor tilted and then settled into place again. It was a year before I told my parents I knew. All those days and especially the moments of telling—each parent separately—are etched in my mind forever. All the same, it took fifty years before I made the earnest effort to get a court order to open my natural birth record. Born M. Elzan Hill, a twin. Mother's maiden name, Sers. Father, William Hill, a medical student, dead within a year of my birth (my twin died before my birth was registered)."

She made "cursory searches," she said, "and then abruptly dropped the whole thing. I was losing the feeling for the deep parental attachment of my life—to the Salisburys." She amends, "Nevertheless, if anyone can tell me anything about the name Sers or Elzan, expecially Elzan, I'd love to know."

Her adoptive mother died when she was twenty, and she soon left the farm forever: "Or, as someone has said of me and the Church, you didn't leave it, you took it with you. So it is with the farm. I have to keep close watch on my imagery with Julie Hayes, who is city bred. However, since she spends so much of the latest book in Ireland in the company of a 'bucolic playwright,' she and I may further synchronize."



***TOMMY LEE JONES PLAYS THE PRIEST WHO FALLS FROM GRACE WHILE TRACKING DOWN A MURDERER IN* BROKEN VOWS.**

After finishing college, she worked on historical research in the Waukegan, Illinois, Lake County courthouse as part of the WPA Federal Writers Project. Following that, she traveled small-town America promoting a magic show: "It was the loneliest if, as eventually proved out, the most provident period of my life. So much of my fiction has roots in coal dust and the prairie." After that, it was librarianship and advertising.

She met Harry on a blind date in Chicago in 1944. The year before, on a trip to New York connected with her then employer, Swift & Company's wartime program for servicemen, she visited the Stage Door Canteen. It was then under the guidance of a

Athena von Dietrich had her day in court and was found innocent of killing her husband. Only later was it discovered that seven of the jurors had been bribed—but *which* seven? Athena knows why the bribes were given, but she doesn't know who is behind them. It could be the company her father works for, the CIA, the KGB, or any number of government agencies from around the world. Thrust into a maelstrom of death and deceit, Athena would find temporary refuge behind the walls of her heavily guarded estate...*but not for long.*

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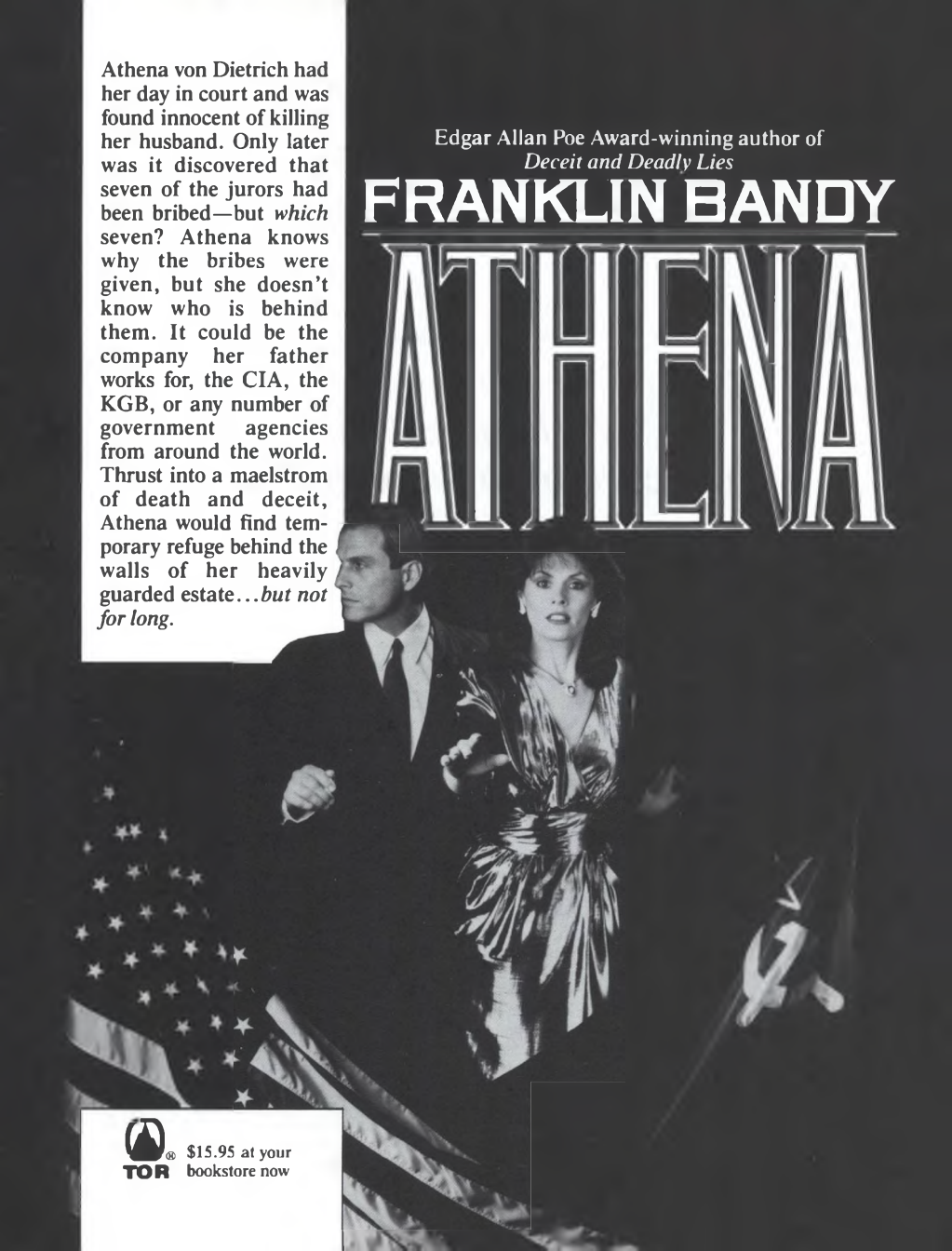

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publicist who subsequently came to Chicago with the touring company of *Jacobowski and the Colonel.* The publicist arranged a double date for Dorothy and herself with Harry and his roommate on the tour, E. G. Marshall (subsequently best man for the Davises).

"I could have put the kibosh on the whole thing right then," she reminisces. "I took a few hearty members of the *Jacobowski* company on a tour of the stockyards. For a long time, I was very sensitive when Harry reminded me of it—what got to him particularly were the lambs being led to slaughter by the Judas goat." She adds, "Oh, dear. I've come a long ways."

illiterate battalion of the United States Army, from which Harry was instrumental in rescuing him. Dorothy never finished the story, but it led her into another book in which paintings were involved, the locale far more familiar, a small town in the Midwest. Burroughs Mitchel said he liked *The Judas Cat* but that the denouement was wrong. Dorothy replied that she could fix that and "then went home and looked up the word dénouement."

In those days, she most admired Dorothy B. Hughes—"and I still do, for that matter"—Georges Simenon, and Cornell Woolrich. She adds that she "feels the presence of Poe in Woolrich more than in any other writer." The one crime novel she cherishes

"My best books concern human sexuality in conflict with the church."

Dorothy and Harry were married in 1946 in New York, where Harry was a stage manager of the play that started Tennessee Williams on his way, *The Glass Menagerie,* starring Laurette Taylor. Harry has since appeared in many television shows and films. The latest, still to be released, is *The Rosary Murders,* an Elmore Leonard script based on William Kienzle's first novel. Dorothy thinks that Harry's best work was in *America, America,* director Elia Kazan's own story of a Greek immigrant family. "It's the story of every immigrant family," Dorothy says, "including Harry's and my own."

When she married, she left the Catholic Church. She says that her bonds had already weakened and she would not ask Harry to convert. Nor did she think he would have if asked: "In marrying Harry Davis, an actor and a Jew, and leaving Chicago for New York, I awakened to a culture utterly alien, deeply enriching, and in time liberating."

In answer to how she came to write crime fiction, she says that over the years she has given many answers, some of them honest at the time. "But what seems the most ruthlessly honest version at this moment is that the mystery seemed to me the only possible thing I could write," she says.

Her first major attempt was a story which Harry had told her of an artist he met in the Army who won a prize in Austria, then saw the painting marked as an acquisition by the Nazis. The artist destroyed the painting, ran for his life. He wound up in the

above all others is *Brighton Rock* by Graham Greene. She says that, by and large, she would rather read about sin than evil (quoting Flannery O'Connor) because sin is more interesting: "But for pure evil the boy Pinkie in *Brighton Rock* has no equal. Beside him, Dorian Gray is a pussycat."

All of Graham Greene's work is important to her. She shares his human concerns and, generally speaking, his political views "as I understand them." Sometimes, she admits, she "bridles at his passive women and ugly Americans" but follows him closely in the recurring theme of man's struggle with and for religious faith.

She feels that her best crime books hinge on religious conflicts, "probably because it is the area of my deepest insights." Newgate Callendar in the *New York Times Book Review* said she had "carved a particularly relevant niche in the genre in the melding of crises of faith into the suspense novel." As she re-examines her own premise and the reviewer's accolade, she qualifies both: "My best books concern human sexuality in conflict with the strictures of the Church, which certainly positions the books more interestingly. A crisis of faith without sin, sex, or guilt wouldn't stand much chance in crime fiction."

She believes that the crime novel is more reflective of its own time and more confined within it than other kinds of fiction. One benefit lies in the feeling of immediacy, and usually those books that survive

do so not only because they are well written but because "they are steeped in the mores, the tempo, and the urgent concerns of the time in which they were written." Adds, "I think all the time capsules should contain a crime fiction of the day."

She maintains that the prevailing framework within which the crime writer must fashion fiction, even if his story is aimed at breaking down that framework, is law and order, the conserving of peace. In that context, she sees crime fiction as "inherently conservative." Which is not to say that "a radical hero—or an author if you will—cannot operate within the medium. His success will depend on the writer's performance *and* the predilection of all those readers out there, the majority of whom is undoubtedly conservative."

Dorothy says that she does not think anyone could read two or three of her books without knowing she is a liberal, "a liberal with a strong conservative streak down the middle." She describes herself as "one of those 'Mother, I'd rather do it myself' people." She is less interested in characters who reflect her point of view than in those who challenge it. She also prefers heroes who change in the progress of the book. She has trouble with those she calls "the fixed stars"—the police detective and her "early virginal heroines, who were too good to be true and weren't." She still believes in goodness; she is just more careful about where she goes to look for it, as she puts it.

She learned about police procedurals from Ed McBain, Michael Gilbert, and Hillary Waugh, as well as the late Maurice Proctor, a writer almost forgotten. He was a Yorkshire constable who wrote during the 1950s and 1960s with an authentic regional voice "so clear it touched the universe," according to Dorothy. Eric Ambler, "simply a master," and Josephine Tey are two other favorites. She says of Tey, "She has humor and she is wise, and it is sad she did not live to write more plays and more than those eight crime novels."

She rereads Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, Malcolm Lowry. Everything by Lionel Davidson, Joseph Hansen, P. D. James, Patrick McGinley, Ruth Rendell, Donald E. Westlake, "and, of course, my beloved Stanley Ellin."

She says that there is "no best way" to learn how to tell a story except that in which the writer is at his best: "I say to myself time and again: stay simple. Simenon would not have to say it at all, nor Deighton or Le Carré." She concludes: "Each to his own fiction. It will find its audience."

A Gentle Murderer, her third book, is generally considered her best. It is a classic, rarely out of print. Six different publishers have reprinted it. The book opens and closes with the words, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned," and, Dorothy says, "the reader is left with a kind of grief, the feeling of 'If only . . .'"

Her own favorite is *Where the Dark Streets Go*, which appeared in 1969. She believes Father Joseph McMahon her finest hero. The book, with a New York setting, opens on the last few minutes in the life of an unknown man, victim of an assault. He challenges the faith of the priest who arrives to help him. In seeking to learn, first, who the man was, then why he died as he did, the priest finds himself, "or loses himself," Dorothy explains, "depending on the reader's bent." The frontispiece of the current paperback features a quote about Dorothy from the *Denver Post*: "She belongs in the same company as Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and Josephine Tey."

The frontispiece also features some of the dialogue from the book, to lead the reader into the story. This dialogue shows Dorothy's succinct yet moving style:

"Where are you hurt my friend?"

"As deep as the knife could reach." The man tried to raise his head. His breathing was easier. "Who are you?"

"A friend. I'm a priest."

"Who, not what." The man rested his head on the back of his hand, the long fingers spread and glistening with spittle.

"Joseph McMahon," the priest said. "Shall I go for a doctor if you don't want a priest?"

"It's as late for one as the other, wouldn't you say?"

Dorothy talks about psychotherapy in connection with this book. She notes: "For a long time, I

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The prevailing framework for crime fiction is law and order; crime fiction is "inherently conservative."

thought I'd never got off the ground with therapy. My fear of and reverence for authority figures—including the therapist and most especially religious figures—was strong. I cherished my censors. How about that? With the therapist's encouragement, I tried to go right to the heart of a priest. The book had started long before, in a notation in my journal: 'I know what a priest is to other people, but what is he to himself?' "

That winning smile again. "And, of course, I've now taken care of the therapist in the Julie books."

How does Dorothy feel she has benefited from belonging to MWA, lo, all these years? "I've gotten a great deal out of it, mostly in friendships, in many of which Harry shares," she replies. "I agree when he says he knows of no other group of professionals so concerned and so willing to help one another." Dorothy has put much of her time and concern into MWA. She has served on virtually every committee and in every office except treasurer—"even my cats wouldn't trust me in money matters." Her commitment to MWA has inspired the comitment of many others.

She is a member of the newly formed Adams Round Table, founded by Mary Higgins Clark and Thomas Chastain, a group of nine mystery writers who meet monthly at Bella Vita, an elegant, quiet restaurant on York Avenue at 75th Street. "I like what the Round Table does for us," she says. "It makes us face specific problems in our craft. My therapist used to probe my silence. 'What comes up?' she'd say. Many important things come up at our round table that we ordinarily might not even have known were troubling us."

Out of this round table has come *Murder in Manhattan*, published by William Morrow in September 1986. It will be followed by a second *Murder in Manhattan* in the fall of 1987. Each member of the Round Table contributed a short story except for Frederick Knott, noted for his plays *Dial M for Murder* and *Wait Until Dark*, who may write another play, perhaps with the help of the other Round Table members—not because he needs help but as a Round Table project.

A number of Dorothy's books are coming back into print, either out in the past year, or due shortly. They include *Where the Dark Streets Go* and *The Pale Betrayer* from Avon and *A Gentleman Called, Old Sinners Never Die*, and *Black Sheep, White Lamb* from Ballantine. And her beloved *Where the Dark Streets Go* has been filmed as a CBS Movie of the Week, starring Tommy Lee Jones, Milo O'Shea, and Annette O'Toole. It aired on January 27, 1987. The reviews were excellent. John Corry, wrote in the *New York Times:* "It is more interesting than most television movies and won't leave you bored." He praised Tommy Lee Jones's performance as Father McMahon, a Catholic priest who tracks down a murderer and also breaks his sexual vows as he falls in love with the victim's ex-mistress.

Judith Crist, in *TV Guide*, described it as "an ambitious and intelligent work that raises issues rare to TV movies." She lauded the "excellent cast under Jud Taylor's direction" and the fact that "the complex moral issues dealt with largely by implication are given depth." She also calls "excellent" both Jones's and Annette O'Toole's performances.

Ricardo Hunter Garcia, in the *New York Post*, described the dialogue as "compelling." Kay Gardella in the *Daily News* spoke of Jones as "a fine actor" who "delivers a nice, low-key performance as the priest." All the critics mentioned Dorothy as author of *Where the Dark Streets Go*.

Asked what she thought of the television version, Dorothy replies: "I certainly wouldn't knock it. It's a good TV movie with a splendid cast on a theme I vaguely recognized." This observation is shared by many writers whose work has been adapted for television or film.

Stanley Ellin hit the truth dead center when he spoke of Dorothy's "constancy." For Dorothy, constancy has meant "to thine own self be true, / And it must follow, as the night the day, / Thou canst not then be false to any man." It is the open honesty emanating from Dorothy that endears her to us all, as well as the contagious smile and wholehearted support of her fellow man. She may write of murder, but as she does she illuminates the other side of the coin—man's ability to love and feel passion, as well as to hate and kill. □

MURDER ONCE REMOVED

We are pleased to welcome Walter Albert and the International Bibliography of Secondary Sources back to the pages of TAD. This supplement for 1984-85 appears in this issue and two successive issues.

A CONTINUING SUPPLEMENT TO DETECTIVE AND MYSTERY FICTION

By Walter Albert

This bibliography supplements *Detective and Mystery Fiction: An International Bibliography of Secondary Sources* (Brownstone Books, 1985), which is a comprehensive bibliography through December 1983, and resumes the annual surveys in TAD. There are three major sections in this update, with entries numbered consecutively within sections to facilitate cross-referencing. Although annotated references to writers of pulp and juvenile fiction and of dime novels are entered in Section II, these writers are all included in Section III (Authors), with cross references to the annotated entries.

John L. Apostolou, Jacques Baudou, Robert E. Briney, Kathleen L. Maio, Robert Sampson, and Charles Shibuk contributed to the compilation of this bibliography.

Abbreviations

AES	*Abstracts of English Studies*
AHMM	*Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*
CADS	See A41
DAI	*Dissertation Abstracts International*
DNR	*Dime Novel Roundup*
DQ	*Dickens Quarterly*
EQMM	*Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*
GP	*Golden Perils*
ILM	*I Love a Mystery* (See A40, item 4)
Int	Interviews
JB	Jacques Baudou
JLA	John L. Apostolou
JPC	*Journal of Popular Culture*
KLM	Kathleen L. Maio
MASR	*Mystery & Adventure Series Review*
NYTBR	*New York Times Book Review*
PF	*Paperback Forum*
PMLA 84	*PMLA International Bibliography for 1984*
PW	*Publishers Weekly*
RCSA	*Robert C. S. Adey*
REB	Robert E. Briney
Ref	References
Reilly 2	See A93
RS	Robert Sampson
RSJ	*Rex Stout Journal*
SSB	*The Savage Society of Bronze*
TAD	*The Armchair Detective*
TCBG	*The Comic Buyer's Guide*
TFF	*The Thorndyke File*
TLS	*Times* (London) *Literary Supplement*
TMF	*The Mystery Fancier*
TPC	*The Pulp Collector*
TPP	*The Poisoned Pen*
WLB	*Wilson Library Bulletin*
YL	*Yellowback Library*

I. General Reference Works: Bibliography, History, Criticism

A1. Albert, Walter, ed. *Detective and Mystery Fiction: An International Bibliography of Secondary Sources.* Madison, IN: Brownstone Books, 1985. xii + 781pp. This annotated bibliography is divided into four main sections: Bibliographies, Dictionaries, Encyclopedias & Checklists, pp. 1–18 (182 entries); General Reference Works, pp. 30–236 (1,337 entries); Dime Novels, Juvenile Series & Pulps, pp. 237–99 (503 entries); and Authors, pp. 300–731 (3,167 entries). The references were annotated by a team of 22 specialists and include materials in English, French, German, Italian, the Scandinavian languages, Spanish, Portuguese, and Japanese. The book was awarded a Special Edgar by the MWA in 1986. Reviews: TAD 19:1 (1986) 98–99; *Choice* Sept 85, p. 79; WLB June 85, p. 690.

A2. Anthony, Carolyn. "An Instinct for Mystery." PW, 25 Oct 85, pp. 34–35. Photo. Interview with editor Suzanne Kirk of Scribner's on Scribner's mystery publications, policy on author advances, and other topics.

A3. Atkins, John. *The British Spy Novel: Styles in Treachery.* London: John Calder, 1984; NY: Riverrun Press, 1984. 287pp. Index. Selected bibliography of primary and secondary sources. A history of the British spy novel with chapters on Childers, Maugham, Le Carré, Fleming, Greene, and Deighton.

A4. Baker, Robert A.; and Michael T. Nietzel. *Private Eyes: One Hundred and One Knights: A Survey of American Detective Fiction 1922–84.* Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1985. 385pp. Illus. Index. A quasi-encyclopedic study of American private eyes. Not seen but substantial reviews (with details on virtues and faults of the study) will be found as follows: WLB Dec 85, pp. 49, 79; TAD 19:3 (Summer 86) 260–61 (Breen); TAD 19:3 (Summer 86) 315–18 (William F. Nolan).

A5. _____. "The Science Fiction Detective Story: Tomorrow's Private Eyes." TAD 18:2 (Spring 85) 140–50. Extracted from A4. An introductory survey of the science-fiction detective story with discussions of novels/series by Mike McQuay, Ron Goulart, and William F. Nolan. A checklist/bibliography is appended.

A6. Bakerman, Jane S., ed. *And Then There Were Nine . . . More Women of Mystery.* Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1985. Hardbound and trade paperback editions. 219pp. In her introduction, Bakerman discusses detective fiction as formula fiction attracting authors who both work within the conventions, which imply some order in the universe, and experiment with testing and sometimes disrupting that orderliness. In this anthology of essays on women writers, Bakerman identifies Shirley Jackson, E. X. Ferrars, and Patricia Highsmith as authors whose work depicts "civilizations" in which order is not the dominant structure and in which it must be created rather than restored. Each essay is preceded by a photograph of the author—with the exception of the essays on Craig Rice and Shirley Jackson—and by a bibliographical chronology. Chapter notes for each author with bibliographical information. Contents: J. S. Bakerman, "Introduction," pp. 3–6; "Contributors," pp. 7–8; J. S. Bakerman, "Daphne de Maurier," pp. 10–29; Rex W. Gaskill, "Margery Allingham," pp. 30–57; Martha Alderson and Neysa Chouteau, "Anne Morice," pp. 58–79; George N. Dove, "Dorothy Uhnak," pp. 80–99; Neysa Chouteau and Martha Alderson, "Lillian O'Donnell," pp. 100–19; Peggy Moran, "Craig Rice," pp. 120–45; Susan Baker, "E. X. Ferrars," pp. 146–67; Kathleen Gregory Klein, "Patricia Highsmith," pp. 168–97; Carol Cleveland, "Shirley Jackson," pp. 198–219.

A7. _____; and Mary Jean DeMarr, compilers. *Adolescent Female Portraits in the American Novel 1961–81.* NY: Garland, 1983. xxii + 254pp. With a chronology, and subject, title, and author indices. There are 579 entries with bibliographic information and short plot summaries. A number of mystery novels and novels with criminous elements are included. Review: *Choice* May 84, pp. 1271.

A8. Ballinger, John. "Collecting Bibliomysteries." TAD 18 (1985) 127–39, 282–301. Commentary on collecting bibliomysteries and an annotated checklist of titles (by author) of works "that have something to do with book selling, rare books, book collecting, libraries, or publishing."

A9. Bargainnier, Earl F., ed. *Twelve Englishmen of Mystery.* Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1984. 325 pp. An anthology of critical essays on writers ranging from Wilkie Collins to Simon Brett. Format similar to that of Bakerman (A6). Contents: E. F. Bargainnier, "A Personal Preface,"


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pp. 1-4; "Contributors," pp. 5-7; Jeanne F. Bedell, "Wilkie Collins," pp. 8-33; Barrie Hayne, "A. E. W. Mason," pp. 34-63; Thomas E. Porter, "Gilbert Keith Chesterton," pp. 64-87; Nancy Ellen Talburt, "H. C. Bailey," pp. 88-119; William Bradley Strickland, "Anthony Berkeley Cox," pp. 120-41; Earl F. Bargainnier, "Nicholas Blake," pp. 142-69; George N. Dove, "Michael Gilbert," pp. 170-95; Larry E. Grimes, "Julian Symons," pp. 196-221; Marty Knepper, "Dick Francis," pp. 222-49; Mary Jean DeMarr, "Edmund Crispin," pp. 250-75; Meera T. Clark, "H. R. F. Keating," pp. 276-301; Earl F. Bargainnier, "Simon Brett," pp. 302-25.

A10. Barzun, Jacques; and Wendell Hertig Taylor. "Catalogue of Crime." TAD 17 (1984) 108-9, 221, 333, 445; TAD 18 (1985) 92-93, 220-21, 332-33, 443-44. Supplement to *Catalogue of Crime* (Harper & Row, 1971).

A11. Baudou, Jacques. "Notes sur les auteurs anglo-saxons du Corbeau" [Notes on the Anglo-Saxon authors of the Corbeau]. *Enigmatika* No. 26 (Jan 85), p. 31. Short biographies of Anglo-Saxon writers published in the "Corbeau" series (see A76): Joe Barry, John Dow, James G. Edwards, Katharine Hill, Isabelle Woodman Waitt, and Garnett Radcliffe.

A12. _____. "Troisieme Génération: le retour du prive" [The third generation: the return of the private eye]. In A99, pp. 123-31. Among the authors Baudou discusses are Michael Collins, Andrew Bergman, Stuart Kaminsky, Bill Pronzini, Arthur Lyons, and William Hjortsberg. As categories, he identifies the "nostalgic," the contemporary, and the fantastic private eye novel in which he sees the possible emergence of a fourth generation.

A13. _____; and Jean-Jacques Schléret. "Quelques Approches du roman noir" [Some ways of looking at the (American) *roman noir*]. In A99, pp. 3-12. A detailed consideration of the American hardboiled novel takes into account its links with the nineteenth-century Western and dime novel and insists upon its "plasticity" which allows it to escape the more rigid conventions of the puzzle novel and to encompass structures as varied as those of the hard-boiled novel and the police procedural.

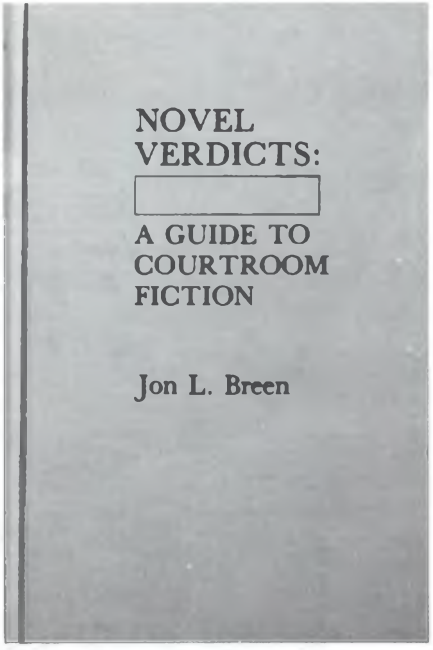
A14. _____. *Le Vrai Visage du Masque.* Roman policier, espionnage, aventure, western. Inventaire de 69] auteurs et de leurs oeuvres publiées à la Librarie des Champs-Elysées, suivi d'une filmographie complète [The true face of *Le Masque:* detective novel, espionage, adventure, Western. Inventory of 691 authors and their works published by the Librairie des Champs-Elysées, followed by a complete filmography]. Preface by Maurice-Bernard Endrèbe. Paris: Futuropolis, 1984. 2 vols. 479pp; 319pp. *Le Masque* was the first French series devoted to detective fiction and, from its inception in 1927, specialized in the puzzle novel. According to estimates in this bibliography, 90% of its titles are translations of English and American titles. In recent years, as the vogue of the puzzle novel has waned, the series has included the new British procedural and some hard-boiled fiction, along with supplementary series for spy, adventure, and Western fiction. This massive, and invaluable, critical work contains (in Volume I) an alphabetical biocritical dictionary of authors with checklists of titles; an introduction by M.-B. Endrèbe in which he discusses the early years of the series and his own work published in it; an interview with the founder of *Le Masque*, Albert Pigasse; and a bibliography of secondary sources. In Volume II, there is a dictionary of authors published in several other Masque series; a history of the fiction magazine *Le Masque*, with an index of the five issues and reproductions of the wonderfully melodramatic cover drawings for four of the five issues; a history of the series newsletter *Le Club des Masques*, which sounds very much like an early-day *Unicorn Newsletter* and contains interviews, articles, news items, and other material related to the series and detective fiction; and a filmography of films based on books published in the various collections. Finally, there is a list – by number – of the series' publications.

A15. Bishop, Paul. "The Sport of Sleuths." TAD 17:2 (Spring 84) 144-49. Illus. A checklist of racing ("turf") mystery novels and short stories with preliminary remarks on the popularity of this sub-genre and commentary on some of the principal practitioners.

A16. Bleton, Paul. "Mystère, secret et tromperie: sur la généalogie du roman d'espionnage français" [Mystery, secret and trickery: on the genealogy of the French spy novel]. *Orbis Litterarum* 39 (1984) 65-78. French spy novels developed not from the traditional *roman policier* but from "mysterious" adventure novels of the years 1830-40, written by authors such as Eugène Sue and Paul Féval. Includes a diagrammatic analysis of the principal plot/thematic structures of the spy novel.

A17. Blom, K. Arne. "A Report from Scandinavia." TMF 8:2 (March/April 84) 19-20; 8:3 (May/June 84) 19-20. Brief remarks on detective fiction, TV, and fanzines.

A18. *Book and Magazine Collector* (Diamond Publishing Group, Ltd., London). This monthly magazine contains occasional general articles on book and magazine collecting, but most of the articles are devoted to specific authors or subject categories.



Almost every issue contains at least one article on a mystery/detective author; authors of adventure and supernatural fiction are also frequently treated. Articles generally contain a brief biography and career summary of the subject; sometimes critical commentary on the author's works is included, but more often the discussion is from the collector's point of view: relative scarcity, comparison of various editions, typical prices, etc. Each article contains a checklist (miscalled a "bibliography") of the author's works, generally restricted to United Kingdom editions. Articles are well illustrated with authors' portraits, book jacket reproductions, and other illustrations. Articles on writers of mystery and detective fiction will be noted in the "Authors" section and referred to this entry with no further annotation. (REB)

A19. Borges, Jorge Luis. "The Detective Story." *Descant* 51 (Winter 85/86), pp. 15–24. Translated by Alberto Manguel from the transcript of a lecture delivered at the University of Belgrano, Buenos Aires, Argentina. No date given for lecture. After talking about the contributions of Poe (who "created" the reader of detective stories) and Chesterton, Borges concludes by stating that in a chaotic world the detective story preserves order.

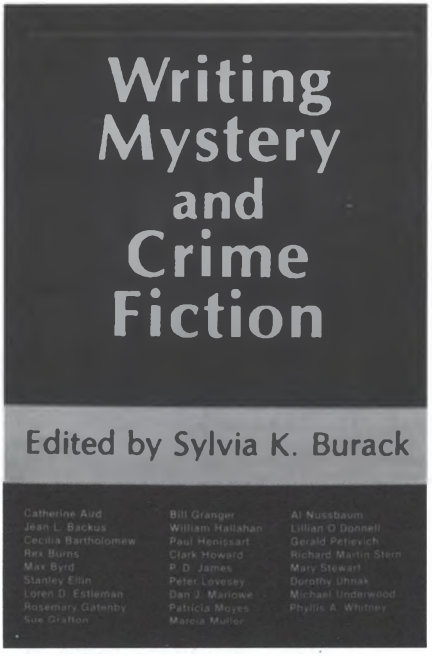
A20. Breen, Jon L. *Novel Verdicts: A Guide to Courtroom Fiction*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1984. xii + 266pp. Bibliography and index. 421 entries on novels and short-story collections with an unannotated supplementary list identifying more than 200 additional titles. The annotations contain plot summaries and critical commentary. There are three indices: author, title, subject (actual persons mentioned); cause-of-action; and a jurisdiction index by state or country. The entries cover English and American courts and courts in English-speaking jurisdictions. Reviews: TAD 19:1 (1986) 100; *Choice* April 85, p. 1136.

A21. _____. "*What About Murder?* A Continuing Supplement." TAD 18 (1985) 35–40; 204–9. The first two of a series of supplements to Breen's Edgar-winning *What About Murder?* (Scarecrow, 1981). These are substantial critical reviews and will be cited for books included in this bibliography.

A22. _____; and Rita A. Breen. "American Murders." TAD 17:1 (Winter 84) 80–85. A chronological checklist of the short mystery novels published in *American Magazine* 1934–56.

A23. Brooker-Bowers, Nancy. *The Hollywood Novel and Other Novels About Film, 1912–1982: An Annotated Bibliography*. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, No. 463. NY & London: Garland, 1985. xv + 293pp. Title index. Chronological list of novels (including juvenile fiction) related to Hollywood and the film industry. Annotations are short plot summaries and many of the titles are detective novels.

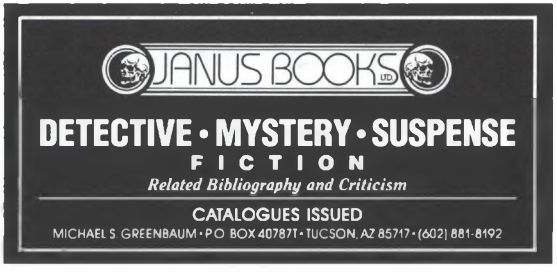
A24. Burack, Sylvia K. *Writing Mystery and Crime Fiction*. Boston: The Writer, 1985. 208pp. Bibliography. Not seen but described by Breen in TAD 19:1 (1986) 100.



A25. *Cahiers pour la littérature policière* #3 (Spring/Summer 84). Published by Centre d'etude sur la littérature policière, La Seyne-sur-Mer, France. Director: Robert Bonaccorsi. Not seen but is reported to contain material on "Club des cinq" and on writers Michael Gordon and G.-J. Arnaud.

A26. Caillois, Roger. *The Mystery Novel*. Translated from the French by Roberto Yahni and A. W. Sadler. Bronxville, NY: The Laughing Buddha Press, 1984. Edition of 200 copies. 49pp. Wraps. $7.50. To my knowledge, the first complete translation into English of Caillois's important essay, "Le Roman policier: évolution, jeu, drame," first published in 1941. The copyright reference is to the 1974 reprint of the essay and there is no citation of any earlier publication. For a description of the contents of the essay and a publication history of the French version and of the partial English translations, see Albert (A1), C145, pp. 140–41.

A27. Campbell, Ramsey. "Contemporary



Horrors: A Mixed Bag." *Fantasy Review* 9:6 (June 85) 37-38. Works of John Dickson Carr, Cornell Woolrich, Jim Thompson, and John Franklin Bardin considered as horror fiction. (REB)

A28. Cannon, Mary. "Booked and Printed." Column appearing regularly in AHMM. Author profiles included. Subjects will be entered in Authors section and cross-referenced to this entry. Individual items will not be further annotated. (REB)

A29. Carter, Steven R. "On Teaching Detective Fiction." TAD 17:4 (Fall 84) 404-6. An essay on his course and on patterns Carter has observed in detective fiction.

A30. "The Collection of Mystery Classics" [Bantam Books]. A set of uniform-format hardcover reprints available only by mail-order subscription. It is the successor-in-spirit to the Mystery Library and has almost the same editorial board. Each volume contains a new introduction by a writer or critic of mystery fiction. No checklists or other backmatter are included. Titles will be indexed in the Authors section and referred to this entry with no further annotation. Authors included are Christianna Brand, Chesterton, Christie, Wilkie Collins, Crispin, Doyle, Hammett, Innes, the Lockridges, Ngaio Marsh, Poe, Queen, Sayers, Stout, and Tey. (REB)

A31. Conaway, Norma; and Tom Feran. "Murder by the Book." *The Plain Dealer Magazine* (Cleveland), 5 Aug 84, pp. 8-13. "Crime writers have discovered mid-America." Includes editorial, "Murder, She Said," by Tom Feran, p. 4. Illus. with photographs of William Kienzle, Bill Granger, Rex Burns, Jonathan Valin, Loren Estleman, Thomas Gifford, Elmore Leonard. Career biographies. In addition to the writers already named, there is material on Charles Merrill Smith and Sara Paretsky.

A32. Dahlin, Robert. "Sleuthing Out Business Trends at Mystery-Specialty Bookstores." PW, 25 Oct 85, pp. 36, 40-41. Photo of Otto Penzler. Interviews with mystery bookstore owner/managers.

A33. Davies, Hunter. "Loan Stars." *The Bookseller*, 7 Sept 85. Davies, moderator of British television's "Bookshelf," interviews five mystery novelists about their earnings under the Public Lending Right for books borrowed from public libraries. The authors are Philip McCutchan, Elizabeth Ferrars, John Harris, Evelyn Anthony, and Brian Callison. John Harris writes detective stories under the pseudonym Mark Hebden.

A34. Davies, John. "Cricket and Crime." CADS 1:1 (July 85) 58. A checklist of authors who have written novels or stories in which cricket is a "central theme."

A35. Davis, Kenneth C. *Two-Bit Culture: The Paperbacking of America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984, xvi+430pp. Bibliography and index. Illus. A history of paperback publishing in America, 1939 to the present. With an appendix listing "fifty paperbacks that changed America." Passim for references to detective/mystery fiction.

A36. Day, William Patrick. "The Gothic and Creation of the Detective." In *In the Circles of Fear and Desire: A Study of Gothic Fantasy* (University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 50-59. Day comments that the Gothic heroine may be seen as a detective and traces a path to the twentieth century through Poe, Doyle, and Stoker.

A37. "Detection Issue: The Culture of Crime." *Descant* (Canada) 51 (Winter 85/86). Essays, fiction, poetry, photo section, play, interviews. Critical material only will be listed. Some material is indexed and annotated separately, as indicated. Contents: Jorge Luis Borges, "Sherlock Holmes," pp. 10-11 [poem]; J. L. Borges, "The Detective Story," pp. 15-24 [see A19]; Ted Goossen, "Detective Stories in Japan," pp. 27-29 [note serving as introduction to next article]; Brian Bowen, "Identity Unknown: Exploring the Labyrinth of Abe Kobo's Inverted Detective Fiction," pp. 30-37 [see D139]; Suzanne Jill Levine, "The Detective Genre and 'Fantastic Literature'," pp. 38-45 [see A70]; Bruce Elder, "Robbe-Grillet and the Drama of Subjectivity," pp. 208-15 [film]; Brendan Howley, "A Commotion in the Soul: Crime Novels and Metaphysics," pp. 219-28 [see D129]; "Timothy Findley: An Interview by Alberto Manguel," pp. 229-38; Howard Engel, "Mystery Writing Considered as One of the Fine Arts," pp. 239-44 [see A39].

A38. Dibello, Catherine Jean. "Every Woman's Secret: Subversion and Accommodation in Women's Sensation Novels." Unpublished dissertation. Indiana University, 1983. 153pp. DAI 44/10A, p. 3070.

A39. Engel, Howard. "Mystery Writing Considered as One of the Fine Arts." In A37, pp. 239-44. A defense of mystery writing and an appeal to its critics to "lower the class barriers" and to allow mystery fiction some room on the shelves where other fiction is housed.

A40. [Fanzines, American] At least one major American fanzine, *The Not So Private Eye*, has terminated its run, and *The Mystery Fancier* has been in hiatus since mid-1984, although a resumption of its activities is planned for late 1986. In the interim, in addition to several newsletters issued regularly by American publishers, there have been at least six additions to the ranks of regularly published fanzines.

(1) *The Drood Review of Mystery* (formerly *Cloak and Dagger*). Ed./Pub. Jim Huang. Box 8872, Boston, MA 02114. Monthly. Mostly short reviews of current fiction, but the magazine has recently begun to publish some review-essays of somewhat wider scope. No coverage of secondary material.

(2) *Hardboiled*. Ed./Pub. Wayne D. Dunee. 903 W. Jackson St. #8, Belvidere, IL 61008. Fiction, interviews, reviews, articles.

(3) *I Love a Mystery*. Ed./Pub. Sally Powers. Bi-monthly. P.O. Box 6009, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403. Has published transcripts of Bouchercon and other mystery convention panels and sessions, with photographs of participants.

(4) *Mystery & Detective Monthly*. Ed./Pub. Bob Napier, 14411-C South C St., Tacoma, WA 98444. Monthly/$2.50 an issue. A "Letterzine," with contributions by writers, critics, and fans. Each issue also contains a list of new releases, compiled by Jeff Smith, and some reviews by Jeff and/or Ann Smith. The letters include comments on mysteries, old and new, and discussions of related topics.

(5) *Mystery Readers of America*. Ed./Pub. Janet Rudolph. 1601 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94703. Annual membership fee includes newsletter, published four or five times a year. Of peripheral interest for this bibliography at the present time, but at least one recent (1986) issue has reprinted a scarce bibliographical item (on railway fiction) that will be included in the 1986 edition of this bibliography.

(6) *Mystery Scene*. Published at 3840 Clark Road S.E., Cedar Rapids, IA 52403. The editors (Ed Gorman and Bob Randisi) intend for this to be a national magazine covering the field in much the same way that *Locus* does for science fiction. The first issue was published late in 1985, and the 1986 issues are particularly strong in writer interviews. These interviews—and other appropriate material—will be included in future installments of this bibliography.

A41. [Fanzine, British] CADS (Crime and Detective Stories). Ed./Pub. Geoff Bradley. 9 Vicarage Hill, South Benfleet, Essex SS7 1PA, England. Published irregularly. Two issues appeared in 1985. Similar in format and contents to the American fanzine *Poisoned Pen*, and some items are indexed in this bibliography.

A42. [Fanzines, French] French activity remains fluid and diverse, and it is extremely difficult to keep up with the often ephemeral publications, many of them containing valuable research material. In the past year, *Polar* has succumbed after two superb valedictory issues, both visually and textually impressive. *Hard-Boiled Dicks* publishes irregularly dossiers on French and American writers, and *Enigmatika*—the longest-surviving magazine in the field—appears once or twice a year. *Les Amis du crime*, an excellent bibliographical source, has, unfortunately, almost ceased publication. Current titles include magazines such as *Thriller, Dare Dare, Encrage, 813, Le Petit Detective*, and *Magie Rouge* (Brussels), on which information is often received after the magazine has ceased publication or the issue is no longer available.

A43. Ferdinandusse, R.; Diny van de Manakker; and Rob Sijmons. "Detective en Thrillergids" [Guide to detective stories and thrillers]. *Vrij Nederland* No. 25, 22 June 1985, pp. 24-31, 34-52. 16 photos. A "gallery of honor" listing 641 recommended detective and thriller novels by 201 authors, with brief reviews of the books and background notes on the authors. The list is restricted to books which have been translated into Dutch or were written originally in that language. The arrange-

ment is alphabetical by author, and the list includes American, English, and European writers, many of the latter unfamiliar to an Anglophone audience. Entries range from Poe and Collins up to contemporary practitioners such as Elmore Leonard and James Crumley. The author with the longest list of recommended titles is Patricia Highsmith; Janwillem van de Wetering is second, Josephine Tey third. Most notable omissions: Edmund Crispin, Nicholas Blake, Michael Innes, Ross Macdonald. (REB)

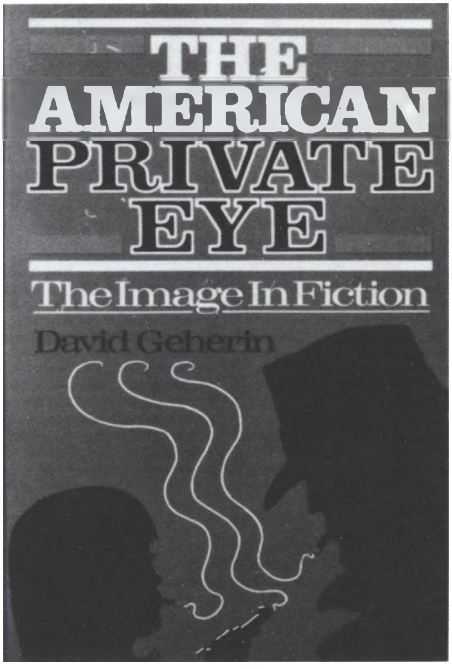
A44. Fine, David, ed. *Los Angeles in Fiction: A Collection of Original Essays*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984. 262pp. Index. A well-edited collection of essays on Los Angeles in fiction, with several essays that focus on detective fiction. In his introduction, Fine traces the fictional portrait of Los Angeles as it has been drawn over the last century and comments on uses of landscape. The essays treat various aspects of the subject. Each essay has a bibliographic note, and these are excellent introductions to general work on the subject and the authors. The contents listing will be partial and will include only those essays in which detective fiction is discussed. Contents: David Fine, "Introduction," pp. 1–26; Richard Lehan, "The Los Angeles Novel and the Idea of the West," pp. 29–41 [some discussion of Horace McCoy, Chandler, and John Gregory Dunne's *True Confessions*]; David Fine, "Beginning in the Thirties: The Los Angeles Fiction of James M. Cain and Horace McCoy," pp. 43–66; Paul Skenazy, "Behind the Territory Ahead," pp. 85–107 [the hardboiled narrative and Los Angeles]; Liahna K. Babener, "Raymond Chandler's City of Lies," pp. 109–31; Jerry Speir, "The Ultimate Seacoast: Ross Macdonald's California," pp. 133–44; Paul Skenazy, "History as Mystery, or Who Killed L.A.?" pp. 223–41 [discussions of John Gregory Dunne's *True Confessions* and Thomas Sanchez's *Zoot-Suit Murders* as fictional accounts of real crimes]; Liahna K. Babener, "Chinatown, City of Blight," pp. 243–55 [on the Polanski/Towne film *Chinatown*].

A45. Frank, Frederick S. *Guide to the Gothic: An Annotated Bibliography of Criticism*. Metuchen, NJ & London: Scarecrow Press, 1984. xvi + 421pp. In the "special subject areas," there are several annotated entries on detective fiction.

A46. Garfield, Brian. "'Vee Vere Young Then': The Filming of *Hammett*. An Interview with Joe Gores and Brian Garfield." TAD 17:4 (Fall 84) 420–26. Both Gores and Garfield worked on the screenplay for the film version of Gores's novel *Hammett*. The article was originally published in TAD 17:2 (Spring 84) 116–23 in a "garbled" state.

A47. Geherin, David. *The American Private Eye: The Image in Fiction*. NY: Frederick Ungar, 1985. xi + 228pp. Index. Bibliography of primary and secondary sources. After a brief introduction in which Geherin talks about the tradition of the amateur detective in American and British fiction, he portrays American private eyes in a series of short essays on 27 detectives and their creators. Each section has preliminary remarks followed by subject essays. It is refreshing to find that current popularity does not dictate the length of the essays; thus, Robert B. Parker and Spenser are allotted only two pages while "Nameless" and Bill Pronzini are given six. Contents: "Birth of a Hero," pp. 1–25; "Race Williams/Carroll John Daly," pp. 8–16; "The Continental Op/Dashiell Hammett," pp. 16–25; "The Pulpsters," pp. 26–62; "Jo Gar/Raoul Whitfield," pp. 30–35; "Tough Dick Donohue/Frederick Nebel," pp. 36–42; "Jack 'Flashgun' Casey/George Harmon Coxe," pp. 42–46; "Steve Midnight/John K. Butler," pp. 46–50; "Max Latin/Norbert Davis," pp. 50–56; "Dan Turner/Robert Leslie Bellem," pp. 56–62; "Life Beyond the Pulps," pp. 62–92; "William Crane/Jonathan Latimer," pp. 64–70; "Philip Marlowe/Raymond Chandler," pp. 70–77; "Rex McBride/Cleve F. Adams," pp. 78–84; "Mike Shayne/Brett Halliday," pp. 84–92; "Postwar P.I.s," pp. 93–131; "Paul Pine/Howard Browne," pp. 94–103; "Max Thursday/Wade Miller," pp. 103–10; "Carney Wilde/Bart Spicer," pp. 110–14; "Shell Scott/Richard Prather," pp. 115–20; "Mike Hammer/Mickey Spillane," pp. 120–31; "The Compassionate Eye," pp. 132–62; "Lew Archer/Ross Macdonald," pp. 133–39; "Mac/Thomas B. Dewey," pp. 140–47; "Brock Callahan/William Campbell Gault," pp. 147–55; "Dan Fortune/Michael Collins," pp. 155–62; "After Archer," pp. 163–96; "Spenser/Robert B. Parker," pp. 164–66; "Nameless/Bill Pronzini," pp. 166–72; "Albert Samson/Michael Z. Lewin," pp. 172–76; "Dave Brandstetter/Joseph Hansen," pp. 176–83; "Jacob Asch/Arthur Lyons," pp. 183–89; "Matt Scudder/Lawrence Block," pp. 190–95; "An Enduring Hero," pp. 196–202 [reasons for the lengthy, continuing popularity of the private eye]. Review: TAD 19 (1986) 261–62.

A48. Ghitelman, David. "Lowdown Lurid Literature." *MD Magazine*, July 85, pp. 115–18, 123, 127. Illus. On nineteenth-century American descendants of the British "broadsides." Some discussion of Poe's use of contemporary accounts of the murder of Mary Rogers for "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt."



A49. Gordon, Rachel. "The Deaths of Great Detectives." *MD Magazine*, April 84, pp. 161-63, 166-67, 171, 177. Illus. On the extinction and attempted extinction of fictional detectives. Authors discussed are Doyle, Christie, Freeling, McBain, Parker, and Le Carré.

A50. Gray, W. Russel. "The 'Eyes' Have It: Reflections on the Private Detective as Hero." *Clues* 6:2 (Fall/Winter 85) 27-39. Rambling comments on the enduring popularity of the private detective. In the final paragraphs, Gray describes the novels of John D. MacDonald, Stephen Greenleaf, Jonathan Valin, and Robert B. Parker as most interesting for their "anti-stereotypical elements."

A51. Greene, Doug[las E.]. "Murder by Committee: Some Thoughts on Round-Robin Detective Novels." CADS 1:1 (July 85) 5-10. A discussion of novels in which each chapter is written by a different author. The article includes material from a letter to Greene from Elizabeth Ferrars on "Crime on the Coast," published in *The News Chronicle* (England) during the summer of 1954. Greene also includes collaboration novels such as those of Pronzini/Willcox (*Twospot*) and Pronzini/Muller (*Double*). In an appendix, Greene clarifies the contradictory dating of the founding of London's Detection Club.

A52. Hale, T. J. "Introduction." In *Great French Detective Stories* ed. T. J. Hale, pp. 9-38. NY: Vanguard, 1984. A skillful survey of the most important French writers of detective fiction, from Vidocq to Leo Malet. Hale neatly summarizes each writer's most significant contribution and relates the writer to his Anglo-Saxon contemporaries. In addition to the major French figures (Vidocq, Gaboriau, Maurice Leblanc, Gaston Leroux, Georges Simenon, Jacques Decrest, Pierre Very, Jype Carraud, and Malet), Hale also comments on William Goodwin and his novel *Caleb Williams*, Poe, and Doyle.

A53. Hano, Arnold. "J'étais un veinard, ou les souvenirs d'un directeur de paperbacks." In A99, pp. 94-97. Hano became the editor of Lion Books, a paperback house, in 1950. Lion Books published, among others, works by David Goodis, Day Keene, Wade Miller, and Jim Thompson. Hano was a friend of Thompson, and he writes of their personal and professional association.

A54. "Hardboiled Hollywood." *Film Comment* 20:5 (Sept/Oct 84) 29-49. Photos and film stills. Includes a lead essay ("City Knights" by Terry Curtis Fox) on the hardboiled detective in fiction and Hollywood's "uncomfortable" relationship with the genre and mini-essays on the film adaptations of works of Cornell Woolrich (by Jonathan Rosenbaum, pp. 36-38), Mickey Spillane (by Richard Gehr, pp. 38-39), David Goodis (by Meredith Brody, pp. 42-43), Patricia Highsmith (by Marcia Froelke Coburn, pp. 44-45), Jim Thompson (by Meredith Brody, pp. 46-47), and Marc Behm (by David Chute, pp. 47-48). With filmographies on these writers on pp. 49-50. The critics show themselves to be familiar with the writers' fiction, and the essays, in addition to being informative about the film adaptations and, where appropriate, their film careers as scenarists, are good surveys of the fictional work.

A55. Heilbrun, Carolyn. "Keep Your Eye on Whodunit: The Mysterious Appeal of the Mystery." *Harper's Bazaar*, Nov 85, pp. 220-23, 260. With photos of film detectives. Heilbrun (a.k.a. Amanda Cross) discusses the continuing popularity of detectives in fiction, films, and theatre. Some comments on updating the conventional forms and the introduction of more "complex and knowing" modern female detectives.

A56. Heller, Helen. "The Rise and Fall of Raven House." TAD 17:1 (Winter 84) 42-44. Illus. A history of Raven House's short career with some comments on the novels.

A57. Henry, William A., III. "Blood, Blonds and Badinage." *Time*, 4 Nov 85, pp. 83, 86. Illus. A general survey of current mystery fiction, with reviews of several recent titles.

A58. Herbert, Rosemary. "The Cosy Side of Murder." PW, 25 Oct 85, pp. 20, 22, 24, 28, 30-32. Photos of authors interviewed. Interviews with Marion Babson, Simon Brett, Robert Barnard, Julian Symons, E. X. Ferrars, Anne Morice, H. R. F. Keating, Peter Lovesey, Michael Gilbert, and Reginald Hill. The writers are interviewed (and photographed) in their homes, where they discuss their writing and the field. The article also includes two inserts: "A Resurgence in the States," p. 30 [interviews with two British crime fiction editors]; and "America Is the Bread and Butter," p. 31 [on the importance of the American market for their work, with comments by several of the writers].

A59. Hoch, Edward D. "Second City Skulduggery: Chicago's Bouchercon XV." TAD 18:2 (85) 160-63. A report on the 1984 convention, with photographs of a number of attending authors.

A60. _____, ed. *The Year's Best Mystery Suspense Stories 1985*. NY: Walker, 1985. xii + 200pp. An appendix, "The Yearbook of the Mystery & Suspense Novel," has a list of the year's best mystery and suspense novels; a bibliography of collections of one-author stories, anthologies and biographical, critical and general nonfiction; awards by the MWA, the British Crime Writers Association and the Private Eye Writers of America; and a necrology. There is also a short introduction and brief notes prefacing each of the stories in the anthology.

A61. Hoppenstand, Gary. "Murder and Other Hazardous Occupations: Taboo and Detective Fiction." In *Forbidden Fruits: Taboos and Tabooism in Culture* ed. Ray B. Browne, pp. 83-96. Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1984. This disorganized and ill-defined article attempts a study of "social proscriptions of behavior" in detective fiction. The treatment is historical and ranges from the Gothic romance to the police procedural.

A62. Kakutani, Michiko. "Mysteries Join the Mainstream." NYTBR, 15 Jan 84, pp. 1, 36-37. Photographs: Margaret Atwood, Christie, Van Dine, Peter Dickinson, James M. Cain, Hammett, Le Carré, Chandler, Elmore Leonard, Eric Ambler, P. D. James, Dorothy L. Sayers. As modern novelists have begun to use techniques of detective/thriller fiction in their work, genre writers have increasingly used more sophisticated narrative techniques that may, critic Robin Winks believes, make it eventually possible for them to be seen as "serious writers." Novelist Margaret Atwood comments on the growing use of genre elements by mainstream and experimental novelists, and Kakutani uses the work of Joyce Carol Oates and Umberto Eco to reinforce the article's thesis.

A63. Kalikoff, Rita Beth. "Murder and the Erosion of Authority in Victorian Popular Literature." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Indiana University, 1983. 272pp. DAI 44/760A.

A64. Kinkley, Jeffrey C. "The Politics of Detective Fiction in Post-Mao China: Rebirth or Extinction?" TAD 18:4 (Fall 85) 372-78. On the revival of Chinese crime fiction and the police procedural in post-Mao China. Kinkley discusses some of the works and also provides some context for an appreciation of the role of detective fiction in both pre- and post-Mao China.

A65. Kramer, John E., Jr.; and John E. Kramer III, eds. *College Mystery Novels: An Annotated Bibliography, Including a Guide to Professional Series-Character Sleuths*. NY: Garland, 1983. xvii + 356pp. Author and title indices. This well-edited bibliography is divided into two sections: professional series-character sleuths; and "free-standing" college mystery novels which do not form part of a series. The first section is arranged alphabetically, by series character, and consists of a character sketch with a bibliography of the sleuth's book appearances. Each sketch also includes a biography of the author. The second section is an alphabetical listing by author, with a short critical essay on the non-series sleuth and, again, a short author biography. The essay-annotations are succinctly and informatively written, and this excellent bibliography is both informative and a pleasure to read.

A66. Lapham, Lewis H. "The Armed Teddy Bear." *Harper's*, Sept 84, pp. 10-11. A short essay on espionage fiction as bedtime "lullabies" reassuring the reader worried about international tensions that there is some "absolute control" working behind the scenes to assure our survival.

A67. Lebrun, Michel. *L'Année du polar 1985*. Paris: Editions Ramsay, 1984. 315pp. A new title and a new format for the annual publication *L'Almanach du crime*, five volumes published 1980-84. Pp. 11-248 consist of an annotated list of all crime fiction published in French from 1 Oct 83 through 30 Sept 84. Each annotation provides a short plot summary, a brief critical evaluation, and a quotation from the work. In addition, there is a list of mystery series published in France and an analysis of the year's publishing statistics; miscellaneous critical notes on female writers and the hardboiled novel; an "ideal library" of

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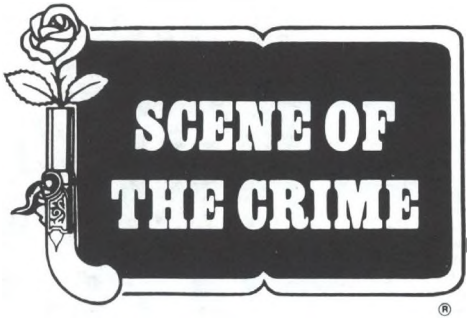

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detective fiction; and an article, "La Place du mort," reprinted from *Enigmatika*.

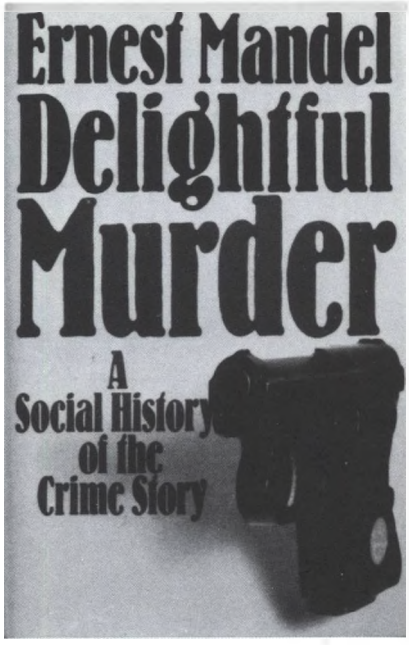
A68. Lehman, David. "Thrillers." *Newsweek*, 22 April 85, pp. 58–61. Illus. On the continuing popularity of thrillers/crime novels (the two terms are used interchangeably). Some historical commentary and observations on several contemporary writers: Ed McBain, Ross Thomas, Donald E. Westlake, John D. MacDonald, James Crumley, and Arthur Lyons. A glib, busy survey. Lehman also (on p. 64) lists his ten favorite twentieth-century crime novels.

A69. Lekachman, Robert. "Super Thrillers and Superpowers." NYTBR, 19 Feb 84, p. 1, 32–33. Also includes a short essay by Peter Maas, "Guess Who Reads Spy Novels," p. 32. On the "entanglement" of life and art in contemporary spy thrillers.

A70. Levine, Suzanne Jill. "The Detective Genre and 'Fantastic Literature'." In A37, pp. 38–45. Citing from Borges, Freud, Peter Brook, and Robert Louis Stevenson (from his essay "A Gossip on Romance"), Levine tries to establish a subterranean link between fantastic and detective fiction. She maintains that both genres propose an order that contrasts with the deviant chaos of the psychological novel. Finally, she sees in Kafka (where the protagonist is a kind of detective) a fiction that transcends detective fiction to become the modern novel. Most of the statements are generalizations with little textual support—except from other critics.

A72. McSherry, Frank D., Jr. "The Mark of Cain." TAD 17:3 (Summer 84) 229–43. Illus. Speculations on the external clue that identifies a character to the "reader's unconscious as a criminal." On the basis of his reading, McSherry estimates that "approximately" two-thirds of fictional criminals have one or more of these characteristics: more than one voice, more than one name, more than one age, more than one identity. The remaining third may be characterized by a motive based on money. McSherry attempts to establish a connection between criminals and witches, which leads him, finally, to a definition of crime in which "witch equals criminal."

A73. Mandel, Ernest. *Delightful Murder: A Social History of the Crime Story*. London: Pluto Press, 1984 (wraps); University of Minnesota Press, 1985 (cloth-bound and paperbound editions). viii + 152 pp. Bibliography. Index. After a discussion of the origin of the modern criminal villain in the pre-nineteenth-century idea of the "bandit/outlaw hero," Mandel traces a familiar path through the historical forest of detective fiction, touching on the major periods (with the exception of the pulp era) and ending with the hypothesis that a new trend in the genre, in which the bandit hero is reappearing, seems to reflect an increasing "skepticism about law and order, and the state." Mandel is a Marxist critic whose views are expressed, for the most part, in a non-technical style. His comments on readers and reading are sensible, and this book is a good example of intelligent social criticism.



A74. Martin, Stoddard. *California Writers*. London: Macmillan, 1983. NY: St. Martin's, 1984. 224pp. Index. Section Four is devoted to "The Tough Guys," and the chapter headings are as follows: I. Hammett and Puritanism; II. The Zeitgeist and Cain; III. Raymond Chandler. Martin's method is first to analyze closely one major work to show in what sense the writer is a distinctively Californian writer and then to give a short biocritical overview. The major works discussed are Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*, Cain's *Serenade*, and Chandler's *The Big Sleep*. None of the writers is considered primarily as a writer of detective fiction but rather as "mainstream." Definitions are unclear, and Martin tends to jump from topic to topic. Some bibliographic references are included in the notes, but the use of critical sources is limited.

A75. Melling, John Kennedy. "Detective Fiction as Police Textbooks: An Interview with Dr. Walter Gorski." TPP 6:3 (Fall 85) 27–28. Gorski, Chief Psychologist for the National Association of Chiefs of Police (USA), is interviewed on his recommendations for detective fiction which he might use in teaching police officers. Christie and Keating are commented on briefly.

A76. Mermet, H. Y. "Méditerrannée éditions ou de Béziers à Turin" [Mediterranean editions or from Beziers to Turin]. *Enigmatika* No. 26 (Jan 85), pp. 15–30. An inventory of mystery fiction published in the region of Marseille, on the Mediterranean.

A77. Mesplède, Claude. "Panorama (bref et partial) de l'édition policière 1984" [A brief and partial panorama of detective publications in 1984]. *Series B*, No. 6 (Oct–Dec 84) 15–18. Illus. A selective survey.

A78. _____. "La Première Génération du roman noir: McCoy, Tracy, Latimer et quelques autres" [The first generation of the hardboiled novel: McCoy, Tracy, Latimer and some others]. In A99, pp. 38–52. Mesplède talks about the diverse backgrounds of the writers of the "first generation" of hardboiled writers, all of them, he says, marked by the historical period which is reflected in their work. The body of the article is a series of overviews of several authors of the period: Horace McCoy, Don Tracy, Jonathan Latimer, Richard Sale, Paul Cain, Cleveland Franklin Adams, Wolfson Pincus Jacob, and Raoul Whitfield.

A79. _____; and Jean-Jacques Schléret, eds. *SN: Voyage au bout de la Noire, Additif mise à jour 1982–1985*. Paris: Futuropolis,

1985. 190pp. An updating of the *Série Noire* author bibliography, originally published in 1982. In addition to the 56 "new" authors covered, this edition revises a number of the earlier entries. With a first edition "errata," a filmography, and a complete list of *Série Noire* volumes published to date (July 1985). An indispensable reference tool.

A80. Mitchell, John W. "A Mystery League Checklist." TAD 17:4 (Fall 84) 427–28. List of Mystery League titles, in order of publication, with author and year of publication. Some remarks on the series in the brief preface.

A81. Mussell, Kay. *Fantasy and Reconciliation: Contemporary Formulas of Women's Romance Fiction*. Contributions in Women's Studies, No. 46. Westport, CT and London: Greenwood, 1984. xvii + 217pp. Bibliography. Index. Passim for some references to Gothic romances and mysteries. Mary Stewart, Helen MacInnes, and Phyllis Whitney are among the authors included. Review: *Choice* Sept 84, p. 99.

A82. "Mystery Writers Celebrate 40th Anniversary." PW, 31 May 85, p. 19. Photos. Picture story on May 10, 1985 MWA awards dinner. Among the authors photographed are Dorothy Salisbury Davis, Stanley Ellin, Donald Westlake, Ross Thomas, Phyllis Whitney, and Gregory Mcdonald.

A83. "Ned Guymon Memorial Volume." *Clues* 6:1 (Spring/Summer 85) 125–55. Photo, p. 124. Tributes to a noted collector of detective fiction. The following pieces comprise the Guymon material: Kathryn Guymon, "Living with Ned Guymon," pp. 125–28; John Ball, "Ned Guymon," pp. 129–32; Christianna Brand, "My Small Personal Tribute to the Late, Alas, Ned Guymon," pp. 133–35; Allen J. Hubin, "Interview: Allen J. Hubin–Author Ned Guymon," pp. 137–55.

A84. Nehr, Ellen. "Did It All Start with Ellery?" TPP 6:1 (Spring 84) 15–17. Pt. 2. An informal survey of mysteries with little old lady (LOL) detectives.

A85. Neveu, Erik. *L'Idéologie dans le roman d'espionnage* (Ideology in the spy novel). Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1984. 416pp. Not seen.

A86. Nolan, William F. *The Black Mask Boys: Masters in the Hard-Boiled School of Detective Fiction*. NY: William Morrow, 1985. 273pp. An anthology of stories first published in *Black Mask*. There is an introductory critical essay on each author and a bibliography of his *Black Mask* publications and fiction derived from them; an essay on "The Life and Times of the *Black Mask*"; and "The Rivals of *Black Mask*," a checklist of pulp rivals of the magazine. With its critical apparatus, the best introduction to this important pulp and its authors. Authors included are: Carroll John Daly, Dashiell Hammett, Erle Stanley Gardner, Raoul Whitfield, Frederick Nebel, Horace McCoy, Paul Cain, and Raymond Chandler.

A87. O'Brien, Geoffrey. "Juno Was a Man; or, The Case of the Hardboiled Homophobes." TAD 18:3 (Summer 85) 248–57. Illus. The homosexual in detective fiction. Authors discussed include Hammett, Chandler, James M. Cain, Ross Macdonald, Spillane.

A88. O'Connell, William (with Michael Houghton, Michael Masliak, and Richard Williams). "British Paperback Tie-Ins to American Movies: A Partial Checklist 1938–1959." *Paperback Forum* No. 2 (1985), pp. 27–32. Illus. Many crime/mystery paperbacks included; unfortunately, the authors of the books are not identified, only the stars of the corresponding movies. (REB)

A89. Pachter, Josh, ed. *Top Crime*. London: Dent, 1983. Anthology of stories chosen by the authors who were asked to select their favorite stories. Authors also provide commentaries on their selections. Authors included: Isaac Asimov, Michael Avallone, Gary Brandner, Leslie Charteris, Stanley Ellin, Michael Gilbert, Joe Gores, Patricia Highsmith, Edward D. Hoch, James Holding, H. R. F. Keating, Peter Lovesey, Florence V. Mayberry, Ed McBain, Pat McGerr, Francis M. Nevins, Jr., Josh Pachter, Bill Pronzini, Ellery Queen, Georges Simenon, Henry Slesar, Julian Symons, Lawrence Treat, Janwillem van de Wetering.

A90. Pennell, Jane C. "The Female Detective: Pre- and Post-Women's Lib." *Clues* 6:2 (Fall/Winter 85) 85–98. A derivative survey of women detectives largely based on information in Michele Slung's anthology *Crime on Her Mind* (Random House, 1975).

A91. Penzler, Otto. "Collecting Mystery Fiction." A regular feature in TAD in which Penzler gives bibliographic descriptions of first editions of books by mystery writers. He also gives a short biocritical introduction for each writer and often appends a selected bibliography of secondary sources. Useful for the beginning collector and also for the non-collector who appreciates an intelligent overview of a writer's work and publications. Illustrated with dust jacket or binding art. References to this series in the author section will not be further annotated. The column in TAD 18:4 (1985) 382–86 serves as a general introduction to the series of essays and provides a glossary of bookseller terms and some basic reference tools.

A92. Peterson, Audrey. *Victorian Masters of Mystery from Wilkie Collins to Conan Doyle*. NY: Frederick Ungar, 1984. 235pp. Bibliographies of primary and secondary sources. Index. A study focusing on mystery and detection in several major and minor Victorian writers. The writers whom Peterson treats are Collins, Dickens (with a survey of the various solutions proposed for his unfinished *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*), Le Fanu, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, James Payn, Anna Katherine Green, and Doyle. Review: TAD 19:1 (1986) 102.

A93. Reilly, John M., ed. *Twentieth Century Crime and Mystery Writers*. Second Edition. NY: St. Martin's Press, 1985. xx + 1,094pp. An equally recommendable

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successor to the Edgar-winning 1980 first edition. 83 writers have been dropped and 11 have been added; some entries have been revised. This makes both volumes indespensable for a reference collection, and libraries should note that the first volume is not to be disposed of. There is an index of titles of novels and collections. Review: TAD 19:2 (1986) 186.

A94. Resnicow, Herbert. "The 3rd Conflict." TAD 17:2 (Spring 84) 186–87. In mystery fiction, the third conflict is the one between author and reader, and, according to Resnicow, "excluding hardcore pornography, there is no literary genre which involves the reader more directly, more deeply, and more intimately than the whodunit."

A95. _____. "The Whodunit List." TAD 18:4 (Fall 85) 430–37. A playful piece listing forty "rules" for writers of detective fiction.

A96. Reynolds, William J. "Case Studies." *TWA Ambassador* 17:7 (July 84) 45–49. Illus. A survey of mystery/thriller fiction from Poe to Le Carré, with concise profiles of writers and detectives.

A97. "Rising Stars." ILM 2:2 (March 85) 3, 5–9. Transcript of a panel at Bouchercon XV (1984). Jane Bakerman, Allen Hubin, Kathi Maio, and John Ball discuss newer writers whom they consider to be "rising stars." Dorothy Salisbury Davis comments from the floor.

A98. Robinson, Doris, ed. *Women Novelists, 1891–1920*. NY: Garland, 1984. li + 458pp. Index of names by country; list of Black women writers. An alphabetical list of writers, with references for obituary notices and biographical and autobiographical sources. Coverage is not complete: Anna Katherine Green is not included, while "Mary" Rinehart is. Robinson notes in the preface that this work was designed as a companion to *Novels in English by Women* (Garland, 1981) and *Toward a Feminist Tradition* (Garland, 1982).

A99. "Le Roman noir américain." *Europe* Nos. 664–65 (Aug/Sept 84), pp. 3–154. A comprehensive look at the writers of the *Black Mask* and their successors. The French term *roman noir* has been traditionally used as the equivalent of the English expression "Gothic novel." However, in recent French genre criticism, it has been used to designate "hard-" and "soft-" boiled fiction and police procedurals. There is, thus, no convenient catch-all term in English, and the French expression will be used in this bibliography in its modern critical sense. While some of the articles are somewhat routine introductions (for a French audience) to Anglo-Saxon writers, some of the material deals with writers who are not part of the current critical pantheon in this country, and this aspect, and the attempts to establish a coherent theoretical base, make this an informative and important collection. In the list of contents, cross-references will be given for those articles which are further annotated in this bibliography. Translations for these titles will be given with the separate entries. Contents: Jacques Baudou and Jean-Jacques Schléret, "Quelques Approaches du roman noir," pp. 3–12 [see A13]; Walter Albert, "Les Pulps américains: une littérature souterraine," pp. 13–19 [see B1]; Jean-Jacques Schléret, "Carroll John Daly, le père fondateur," pp. 20–28 [see D67]; Jacques Baudou, "Dashiell Hammett critique," pp. 28–29 [an introductory note to Hammett as a critic of detective fiction, followed by his review of Ellery Queen's *Roman Hat Mystery*]; Alain Demouzon, "Sur un air de paradoxe: A propos du polar noir, de Phil Marlowe et Ray Chandler," pp. 30–38 [see D35]; Claude Mesplède, "La Première Génération du roman noir: McCoy, Tracy, Latimer et quelques autres," pp. 38–52 [see A78]; Jean-Pierre Deloux, "W. R. Burnett, D. H. Clarke: la loi des rues," pp. 52–63 [see D27]; Jean-Paul Schweighaeuser, "Le Noir dévoyé: Cheyney et Chase," pp. 63–66 [see D53]; Harry Altshuler, "Souvenirs d'un lecteur de pulps," pp. 66–68 [see B2]; Jean-Jacques Schléret, "La Seconde Génération: l'age d'or du roman noir américain," pp. 69–88 [see A103]; J.-J. Schléret, *"Manhunt*, la revue de la seconde génération," pp. 88–91 [see A102]; Harry Whittington, "Temps de crise," pp. 91–94 [see A128]; Arnold Hano, "J'étais un veinard," pp. 94–97 [see A53]; J.-P. Schweighaeuser, "Chester Himes: romancier noir noir," pp. 97–99 [see D124]; Daniel Compère, "Alice au pays des maléfices," pp. 99–104 [see D13]; François Guérif, "Robert Bloch, du noir gothique au noir polar," pp. 105–8 [see D14]; Paul-Louis Thirard, "Alias Donald Westlake," pp. 109–14 [see D257]; Jacques Baudou, "Isola Blues," pp. 114–23 [see D153]; Jacques Baudou, "Troisième Génération: le retour du privé," pp. 123–31 [see A12]; J.-J. Schléret, J. Baudou and Paul Gayot, "Biblio-Filmo-Chronologie," pp. 132–54 [a comprehensive chart for 1920–80, showing, by year, significant historical/social events with book/magazine publications and film releases].

A100. Sauerberg, Lars Ole. *Secret Agents in Fiction: Ian Fleming, John Le Carré and Len Deighton*. London: St. Martin's, 1984; NY: St. Martin's, 1984. British edition not seen but described in a catalogue as having 192pp. The American edition has 260pp. Bibliography. Index. Traces history of "secret-agent fiction" from Childers to Deighton. Discusses the formulas and their variations; the "spy-hero." Review: *Choice*, July/Aug 85, p. 1634.

A101. Saylor, V. Louise. "The Private Eye and His Victuals." *Clues* 5:2 (Fall/Winter 84) 111–18. The relative importance (and unimportance) of culinary topics in writers ranging from Hammett to Parker.

A102. Schléret, Jean-Jacques. "*Manhunt*, la revue de la seconde génération" [*Manhunt*, magazine of the second generation]. *Europe*, Nos. 664–5 (Aug/Sept 85), pp. 88–91. A career profile of the digest publication *Manhunt* and its French version, *Suspense*.

A103. _____. "La Seconde Génération: l'âge d'or du roman noir américain" [The second generation: the golden age of the American hardboiled novel]. *Europe*, Nos. 664–5 (Aug/Sept 84), pp. 69–88. Schléret sees the "golden age" as the late '40s and '50s. He devotes some discussion to Spillane and Ross Macdonald, but his approach is rather to identify the principal themes and characters. He talks about the survival of the private eye as a "privileged" hero, and of his "decadence" in authors such as Richard Prather, Richard Ellington, Frank Kane, Harold Q. Masur, and others; the new era of gangsterism, allied to the *film noir;* the rise of the police procedural; and other topics. He concludes with brief surveys of the careers of Bill Ballinger, Jim Thompson, and David Goodis.

A104. Schreiber, Mark. "Beyond the Yellow Peril." *Mainichi Daily News* (Tokyo), 16 July–8 Oct 84. Illus. A series of 11 articles on the Asian as portrayed in crime and mystery fiction, as well as in the movies, of the West. The series appeared on the Monday Arts page of the publication, an English-language newspaper. (JLA)

A105. _____. "The Unanswered Questions About Asia: Mysteries in the Far East." TAD 18:2 (1985) 164–66. Illus. The fate of Amelia Earhart, Peking Man's fossil, the Manhattan Project, and other unsolved real-life subjects as treated in mysteries set in the Far East.

A106. Schweighaeuser, Jean-Paul. *Le Roman noir français*. "Que sais-je" series, No. 2145. Paris: PUF, 1984. Historical and stylistic study of the French *roman noir*. The major portion of the work is devoted to a study of the evolution of the genre, from its origins in the immediate post-World War II period, when it was strongly influenced by Anglo-American models (notably James Hadley Chase and Peter Cheyney) to the post-1968 period when the genre underwent significant changes. There are some details to which one might take exception, but this is, in general, an intelligent and accurate portrayal of the French *roman noir*. (JB; abridged from a review in A99, pp. 218–19)

A107. Seidman, Michael. "Clues to Writing for The Mysterious Press." *Writer* 97:2 (Feb 84) 24–25, 46. An editor's advice.

A108. _____; and Otto Penzler. "*The Armchair Detective* Readers' Survey." TAD 17:2 (Spring 84) 128–30. The results of a questionnaire sent to subscribers asking them to name favorite author, character, and book. Readers also replied that they wanted more interviews, reviews, and bibliographies.

A109. Skinner, Robert E. *The Hard-Boiled Explicator: A Guide to the Study of Dashiell Hammett and Ross Macdonald*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1985. x + 125 pp. Indices: title, name, subject. 642 annotated sources in the following categories: articles; books, monographs, dissertations; major reviews of novels by the three authors. Skinner also has a section on "fugitive material," nine entries citing references given by other critics which could not be confirmed because of "misinformation" in the citations. Reviews: *Choice*, July/Aug 85, p. 1621; TAD 19

(1986) 262.

A110. _____. "Violence and Gunplay in Crime Fiction: From the Ridiculous to the Horrible." TMF 8:2 (March/April 84) 9-18. On the evolution of violence in crime fiction in authors ranging from Doyle ("possibly the first crime writer to make extensive use of violence and brutality") to Ken Follett ("how much further can they go?").

A111. "Spécial Angleterre." *Enigmatika* No. 27 (July 85). This issue is devoted to British writers. The articles are generally short essays consisting of a biography, a critical overview, and a bibliography. This issue was not paginated. The following authors are included: Dorothy Simpson, Peter Chambers, Gavin Lyall, Colin Watson, John Bingham, Desmond Bagley, Richard Clapperton, Nicholas Luard, Alfred Draper, Frank Parrish, Clive Egleton, Brian Freemantle, Scott Mitchell, George Markstein, John Wainwright, Alan Scholefield, P. D. James, Nancy Spain, Celia Fremlin, H. R. F. Keating, Peter Dickinson, Joan Aiken. The essays on Lyall and Simpson contain interview material.

A112. *Special Collections at Boston University*. Boston University Libraries, 1981. 84pp. The Mystery Writers of America placed its library "on deposit" with Boston University in 1976. In addition, a number of members of MWA have given their papers to the Twentieth Century Archives. On pp. 77-83, there is an alphabetical list of authors whose papers are currently represented (as of 1981) in the archives.

A113. "Special Crime Literature Issue." *AB Bookman's Weekly*, 16 April 84. Contents: Jon L. Breen, "The Classical Detective Novel in America," pp. 2879-80, 2880, 2882, 2884, 2886, 2888, 2990; Jonathan White, "The Mystery and Detective Paperback," pp. 2891-92, 2894, 2896, 2898, 2900, 2902, 2904, 2906; Matthew J. Bruccoli, "Notes on Collecting Ross Macdonald," pp. 2907-8; Peter L. Stern, "The Mystery Reference Shelf," pp. 2910, 2912, 2914; James Pepper, "Mystery and Detective Fiction Autographs," pp. 2915-16, 2918; Franlee Frank, "Crime Literature: Once Lurid, Now Stylish," pp. 2919-20, 2922-23. In addition, there are a number of reviews of recently published reference works on pp. 2924-30. This is the annual AB issue on crime literature.

A114. "Special Crime Literature Issue." *AB Bookman's Weekly*, 6 May 85. Contents: Patterson Smith, "The Literature of Gambling," pp. 3371-72, 3374, 3376, 3378, 3380, 3382, 3384, 3386, 3388, 3390, 3392, 3394 [of peripheral interest for this bibliography, fictional and "true" accounts of gambling in nineteenth and early twentieth century]; Peter L. Stern, "The Building of a Sherlock Holmes Collection," pp. 3395-96, 3398, 3400-2; Maurice Rickards, "The Ephemera of Crime and Punishment," pp. 3403-12 [based on an exhibition sponsored by the Ephemera Society of Great Britain and originally published as a booklet by the society; on paper forms, legal documents, and the like, generated by "the Law"]; Kevin Kiddoo, "Sleuthing the Hard-Boiled Detective," pp. 3413-17 [review essay on recent critical material].

A115. "Spécial Roman Policier." *Le Français dans le monde*, Aug/Sept 84. A copiously illustrated and documented historical and critical survey of detective fiction in France. There are also some games, puzzles, and exercises for classroom use that will not be cited in the list of contents. *Le Français dans le monde* is a magazine published under the auspices of the French Ministry of Education, and this special issue is a sign of some acceptance of genre literature in the French educational system. Contents: Frank Debyser, "Un spécial roman policier, pourquoi, comment?" [A detective fiction special, why? how?], pp. 4-5 (editorial); Michel Lebrun, "Le cadavre se porte bien" [The corpse is healthy], pp. 6 (editorial); Evélyne Diébolt, "Du roman populaire au roman policier" [From the popular novel to the detective novel], pp. 8-14 (nineteenth-century popular novels and detective fiction); Yves Olivier-Martin, "Le trio fatidique: Fantômas, Lupin, Rouletabille" [The fateful trio: Fantômas, Lupin, Rouletabille], pp. 15-21 (Allain, Leblanc, Leroux); Jacques Baudou and Paul Gayot, "L'école français des années 30" [The French school of the 1930s], pp. 22-25; Jean-Paul Colin, "La communication selon St. Jules (Maigret)" [The gospel according to St. Jules (Maigret)], pp. 26-107 (an apocryphal text constituting an interview with Maigret); Jean-Paul Schweighaeuser, "Les gangsters, les truands et les autres" [Gangsters, crooks and others], pp. 30-32 (the post-World War II French hardboiled novel); Jacques Cellard, "San-Antonio," pp. 33-34 (survey of the writer's work); F. Debyser, "Entretien avec Alain Demouzon," pp. 35-37 (interview with checklist of published work); Paul Gayot and Jacques Baudou, "Quand l'enigme fait peur: le suspense" [When the puzzle frightens: suspense], pp. 38-41 (suspense/thriller fiction 1950-70); Jean-Pierre Deloux, "Le nouveau polar à la français" [The new French detective novel], pp. 42-44; Jean-Marc Caré and Jean Maiffredy, "La bande dessinée policière" [The detective comic strip], pp. 46-51 (review essay, with a teaching plan and complementary bibliography); F. Debyser, "Entretien avec Michel Lebrun," pp. 52-53 (interview); François Guérif, "Le cinéma policier en France" [Detective film in France], pp. 56-60; Francis Debyser, "La lecture des romans policiers" [On reading detective novels], pp. 62-64 (structural/linguistic elements); Edwige Costanzo and Jean de Porla, "Meurtre à la calabraise" [Murder in Calabre], pp. 65-66 (true crime); Carmen Mata Barreiro, "Enquete au-delà des Pyrénées" [An investigation on the other side of the Pyrenees], pp. 67-70 (report on a Spanish mystery game involving 3,500 Spanish schoolchildren); Michel Amelin, "Suspense à la maternelle: le petit cochon sera-t-il mangé?" [Suspense in nursery school: will the little pig get eaten up?], pp. 71-72 ("The Three Little Pigs" as a prototype of the suspense tale); Marie-Isabelle Merlet, "Y a-t-il des romans policiers pour enfants?" [Are there detective novels for children?], pp. 73-76 (the answer is yes; with a bibliography of primary and secondary material); Jean de Porla, "Des énigmes au grand jeu de l'écriture" [From puzzles to the important game of writing], pp. 79-83 (style and structure in detective fiction); Francis Debyser, "Le roman policier français" [The French detective novel], pp. 84-85 (a selective bibliography of secondary sources, including magazine special issues).

A116. Spector, Robert Donald. *The English Gothic: A Bibliographical Guide to Writers from Horace Walpole to Mary Shelley*. Westport, CT: Garland, 1984. xiii + 269pp. Bibliographic essays on Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve, Charlotte Smith, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Gregory Lewis, William Beckford, Charles Robert Maturin, Mary Shelley. Spector, in his introduction, does not discuss any relationship of Gothic fiction to later detective fiction but does refer to its influence on Poe.

A117. Spencer, F. J. "Jazz and the Mystery Story: A Preliminary Note." CADS 1:1 (July 85) 44-46. A comparison of what Spencer sees as the similar development of jazz and detective fiction.

A118. Symons, Julian. *Bloody Murder. From*

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the Detective Story to the Crime Novel: A History. NY: Viking, 1985; (pb) Penguin, 1985. 262pp. Index. A revised version of *Bloody Murder* (Faber and Faber, 1972) [published in the United States as *Mortal Consequences* (Harper & Row, 1972)]. In his "Preface to the Revised Edition," Symons describes the major changes as the revision of the chapter on Simenon, the expansion of material on the American crime story, and the addition of chapters on the spy novel and on developments in the field since the original edition.

A119. Tani, Stefano. *The Doomed Detective: The Contribution of the Detective Novel to Postmodern American and Italian Fiction*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984. xvi + 183pp. Bibliography. Index. Tani's analysis of three types of anti-detective novel is based on a historical survey that locates a profound change occurring in the hardboiled fiction of the *Black Mask* writers (although Tani never mentions the magazine). His hurried survey of the period makes no distinction among the various writers (Daly, Hammett, Chandler), and he is most concerned with identifying a fossilized mythic detective to support his main thesis: the undermining of genre conventions by certain American and Italian post-World War II novelists. Once his potted survey is completed (pp. 1-34), he introduces a definition of the anti-detective novel, identifying three varieties: the innovative, or novel with an unresolved puzzle; the deconstructive, in which there is a suspension of the solution; and meta-fiction, or "book-conscious-of-its-bookness." Each of these types is discussed in seperate chapters devoted to representative writers and works. The writers are Leonardo Sciascia, John Gardner, Umberto Eco, Thomas Pynchon, William Hjortsberg, Italo Calvino, and Vladimir Nabokov. The most valuable sections are the discussions of individual novels and the close readings help to clarify some complex fictions.

A120. Terry, R. C. *Victorian Popular Fiction, 1860-80*. London: Macmillan, 1983; Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1984. xi + 194pp. Index. A chatty book which consists largely of plot summaries. Passing references to the public taste for murder mysteries.

A121. Trodd, Anthea. "The Policeman and the Lady: Significant Encounters in Mid-Victorian Fiction." *Victorian Studies* 27 (1983-84) 435-60. Study of a recurrent pattern in Mid-Victorian fiction: encounters between policemen/intruders and young ladies who are guardians of the home's "sanctity." These encounters exploit fears of police intrusion in areas where "ministers of public justice" should not intrude. References to contemporary detective fiction and to works by Wilkie Collins and M. E. Braddon.

A122. Tyas, Peter. "Hodder and Stoughton 'Signature Editions'—in particular Edgar Wallace—and Other Oddities." CADS 1:1 (July 85) 39-43. A preliminary checklist of a distinctive series published in the 1920s and 1930s. Tyas provides tables of original publications in the series by Edgar Wallace and E. Phillips Oppenheim, with commentary.

A123. Van Dover, J. Kenneth. *Murder in the Millions: Erle Stanley Gardner, Mickey Spillane, Ian Fleming*. NY: Frederick Ungar, 1984. xi + 235pp. Index. Bibliography of primary and selected secondary sources on Gardner, Spillane, and Fleming. All three writers are "superstars," and Van Dover discusses the work of each as cultural phenomena exploiting "moral, social, and political prejudices." Endings are revealed. Van Dover tends to discuss the "inaugural" novel by each writer most closely and to consider the later novels as they conform to or depart from this prototype. Review: *Choice*, May 85, p. 1337.

A124. Welsh, Alexander. *George Eliot and Blackmail*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985. 400pp. Index. Bibliography in notes. Several references (see Index) to detective fiction, although Welsh tends to try to separate blackmail fiction from detective fiction. However, the discussions of sensational fiction and of writers such as Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and M. E. Braddon suggest relationships with genre fiction that Welsh does not develop.

A125. Westlake, Donald E. "The Hardboiled Dicks." TAD 17:1 (Winter 84) 4-13. Photos. Text of a talk first delivered at the Smithsonian Institution on May 13, 1984. A tribute to the first generation of *Black Mask* writers, with particular attention to Hammett. Westlake, with increasing distaste, discusses the succeeding "waves" (Chandler, post-World War II, the present generation). The first generation was closest to "reality." Succeeding generations moved toward "ritualized refried fiction." Some appreciative comments on Joe Gores of the present generation. Francis M. Nevins, Jr., in a letter (TAD 17:4:44), while praising the article, pointed out a number of factual errors "both small and large." Robert A. Baker and Michael T. Nietzel in an article in TAD 18:1 (Winter 85) pp. 76-80, also comment on the essay and offer some corrections to the remarks on the post-Vietnam detective novel which include recommendations of writers of interest.

A126. Wheeler, Michael. *English Fiction of the Victorian Period 1830-1890*. London & NY: Longman, 1985. xi + 265pp. Index. Detective fiction is largely ignored (there is no mention of it in the index), but commentary on "subgenre" material—Newgate literature, for example—and discussions of work by Dickens, Braddon, Collins, Doyle, Le Fanu, and Robert Louis Stevenson make it all the more surprising that Wheeler is so circumspect on this subject. Reviews: TLS, 6 Dec 85, p. 1408.

A127. "Where Do You Get Your Ideas?" ILM 2:2 (March 85) 6-9. With Francis M. Nevins, Jr. as moderator, a panel composed of Joe L. Hensley, Teri White, Stanley Ellin, Tony Hillerman, and Julie Smith discuss sources of their "ideas." After a cursory treatment of this topic, the writers talk about how their careers began and the people who were most responsible for their writing mystery fiction.

A128. Whittington, Harry. "Temps de crise: les débuts du marché des éditions originales en lives de poche" [Time of crisis: the beginning of the sale of original editions in paperback]. In A99, pp. 91-94. Article translated into French by J.-P. Schweighaeuser. On the death of the pulps and the rise of the American paperback market. Some brief comments by Whittington on his own early paperback original years.

A129. Winks, Robin. "The Sinister Oriental: Thriller Fiction and the Asian Scene." JPC 19:2 (Fall 85) 49-61. A study of non-Western stereotypes in fiction, including thriller fiction. In part, this is an essay on how texts are read, although Winks only speculates on the question of the extent to which fictional stereotypes affect readers' attitudes. Numerous references to writers as diverse as Joseph Conrad, Eric Ambler, and James Clavell. The title of the article is misleading, since Winks does not deal substantially with the "sinister Oriental," and the range is not limited to thriller fiction. For a treatment of the "sinister Oriental" by Winks, see rather his essay on this subject in *Murder Ink* ed. Dilys Winn (Workman, 1977), pp. 491-93.

A130. Winn, Dilys. *Murder Ink*. Revised edition. NY: Workman, 1984. xv + 398pp. Illus. Bibliography. Index. Not seen, but Breen in his TAD review (19:3:262) points out that the revisions include much new material of which he lists some of the more interesting.

A131. Wood, Neville; and Jeff Meyerson. "Keyhole Crime." TPP 6:1 (Spring 84) 23-24. A checklist of the 82 titles published in the English Keyhole Crime series.

A132. Worpole, Ken. "Watching the Detectives." *New Statesman*, 13 July 84, pp. 26-27. On the reasons for the popularity of detective fiction and some comments on social issues in the genre. □

Part Two of Walter Albert's bibliography will appear in the next issue.

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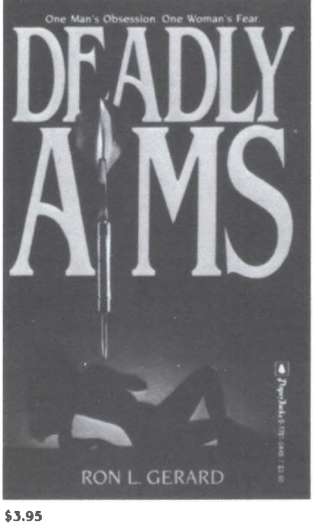

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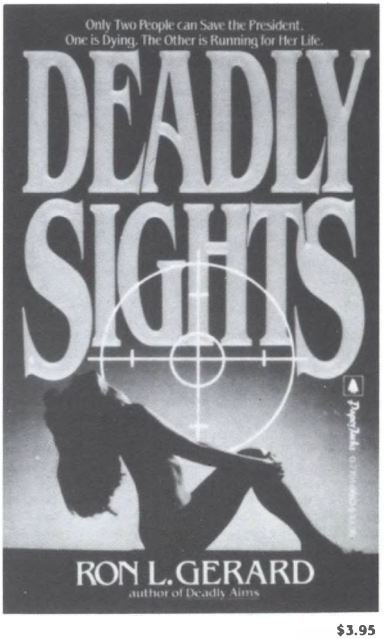

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TAD on TV

by Richard Meyers

I've said it before. This is the finest era of television in the history of the medium. And this time I've got proof. Your honor, exhibit one: not the show itself, but the fact that many other media critics are falling all over themselves trying to show why **L.A. Law** is *not* the best show of the year.

This is how far we've come, friends. Maybe *L.A. Law* is not the best new show of the year, and maybe it is, but the fact that there's even an argument shows just how high the quality of modern TV has become. Because, make no mistake, *L.A. Law* is a great show.

You may not like it, but that doesn't make it any less great. That doesn't diminish the quality of the writing, the acting, or the production, which are all top notch.

So saying, this leads us to exhibit number two: the Meyers Elsewhere Hill Theory. This hypothesis was created in light of the ongoing argument over whether this, being *L.A. Law*, and its auxiliary "franchise" programs, *Hill Street Blues* and *St. Elsewhere*, are "realistic" or not. The answer is yes . . . and no.

The M.E.H.T. states: "Everything that happens on any given episode *has* happened in real life . . . but at every precinct house, hospital, and law office in the entire country over a period of years." Television does what it always does: condenses and highlights.

But what *L.A. Law* specializes in are the quirks, which other critics call "surprises." A law partner dying with his head in a plate of beans, a wedding disrupted by a man in an ape suit, a mongrel eating a room full of flies, etc., not to mention sudden changes in character and approach.

L.A. Law is fun to watch because it is not predictable . . . yet. At last viewing, the score was as follows. Star: Harry Hamlin (of *Clash of the Titans* fame), as a sensitive soul trying to keep his morality moist in the hard-as-nails legal world. Love interest: Susan Dey (best known as co-star of *The Partridge Family*) as an assistant D.A. . . . "Joyce" to Hamlin's "Frank." Crusty know-it-all: Richard Dysart as head of the firm.

But what really keeps the series buoyant is the supporting cast. There's Corbin Bernsen as the alternately oily and vulnerable divorce specialist, Jill Eikenberry (gorgeous WASP) and Michael Tucker (diminutive Jew) as a seemingly mismatched pair of new partner lovers, and Jimmy Smits as a Puerto Rican aide who goes for the jugular in the court-room and collects office chairs from defeated opponents.

Finally, there's the Professor and Mary Ann . . . oops, wrong show. Actually, that's Alan Rachins and Michele Green as the firm's managing partner and skinny, wimpy young attorney, respectively. Originally, Rachins seemed to be groomed to serve as this series' Frank Burns or Lt. Howard Hunter (read: buffoon), but they had him go through a quick, surprising change of heart. And, since Green's "missing son" subplot has been fixed up, the writers don't seem to know what to do with her.

But I've got faith in this crew, even if they lose some characters on first cut. In fact, they do a good job of making no character completely likable but still eminently watchable. This is the one show I can think of that embodies true humanity: that is the mixture of good and bad which makes a person human. Just as I'm beginning to really like someone, they do something foolish or despicable. If that isn't life, well, at least it's interesting.

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Exhibit three, your honor: **Outlaws**. Uh . . . I'd like to declare a mistrial.

Remember all the stuff I said at the beginning of this column? I take it back on this one. This is the sort of series that makes me smack my head on the carpet. I blink, hoping it will be gone, or at least changed, when I look back. It's not just that it is a stupid idea, which it is, but because it is a stupid idea done so stupidly.

I mean, how can anybody at CBS rationalize the thinking that led to this one? "Hmmm, let's see . . . all the movie Westerns made last year proved a disappointment, right? And *The A-Team* and all its ilk are dying this year, right? So let's do a show that combines both! Brilliant, huh?"

There's only one answer: the creators and producers of this retarded travesty slipped it by the boneheads and network Nazis on the basis of the time-travel angle. "*Back to the Future, Peggy Sue Got Married*, and *Star Trek IV* were all big hits, right? Well, we got a time-travel story too! And it's blindingly original as well! Instead of people going back in time, we got a wild bunch of pistol-packing cowboys coming to the present! Woe! It's hip! It's with it! It's groovy!"

It's excrement. It's numbingly dumb. All the decent concepts inherent to the theme are totally ignored in favor of boring shootouts with all the guns having those fabulous A-Team anti-neutron bullets which damage only property. You want insult to injury? There's more. The show's proposal must have demanded the worst dialogue possible with every cliché spoken for.

"I am not pregnant, I am not barefoot, and I'm coming with you to rescue my son!" screeched one brain-dead guest star last week. Yes, the line was cringingly bad, but it could have been saved by the others. Here we have five cowboys, played by such desperate actors as Rod Taylor and Richard Roundtree, who don't blink. It might have worked, and even have been funny, if they had looked at her stomach, looked at her feet, and then, shrugging and raising their eyebrows to the insanity of the modern world, said, "Well, we can't argue with that logic."

But nothing, I repeat, zilch, remotely amusing or entertaining happens on this sorry series. Avoid at all costs. Don't even watch it out of curiosity. I want it out of my airwaves as soon as possible.

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I ran to the Arts & Entertainment cable channel to escape the bends from watching that show. Those fine folks, still laboring to get out from under PBS's shadow, have introduced their own *Mystery!* series, brilliantly entitled *Suspense*. But a rose by any other name, etc. The more the merrier, I say, so while I watch *Miss Marple* on PBS, I can watch **Lovejoy** on A&E. Lovejoy is the creation of Jonathan Gash, who has written nearly a dozen volumes thus far concerning this cad, this womanizer, this poverty-striken, English expert antiques dealer.

When reading the quirky, prickly books, I often pictured Michael Caine in the role, but this imported BBC production, adapted by Ian La Frenais, has Ian MacShane (perhaps best known to U.S. mystery lovers as co-star of *The Last of Sheila*, that monumental movie murder mystery written by Anthony Perkins and Stephen Sondheim) in the title role. And, while not nearly as delicious and informative as the books, the show is just tasty and interesting enough.

Gone from the television series are the novels' extremes—the character of his assistant, Tinker, has gone from a seedy drunk to a natty eccentric, and Lovejoy's one-of-a-kind antique auto has become a cranky Volvo station wagon. Other characters have been consolidated and streamlined, but it all serves to make the show palatable to non-antique fanatics and those who don't know or couldn't get into the books.

I can recommend the program highly, as I can recommend the Arts & Entertainment channel highly. It might be worth getting basic cable just for it. In addition to *Lovejoy* and *The Great Detective* (being the cases of Inspector Cameron of the turn-of-the-century Glasgow, Scotland police, which I mentioned last time), they also have the marvelous sequel to the political comedy satire *Yes, Minister*, which is now running on PBS. It is called *Yes, Prime Minister* and makes for a wonderful New York Sunday night, going from the sequel to the prequel at 8:30 and 10:00.

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Meanwhile, back on the networks, there has been a steady stream of interesting TV movies, resurrecting the most beloved of detective characters . . . but not always to the greatest of effect. **The Case of the Shooting**

MICHAEL PENNINGTON, PICTURED HERE WITH MARGARET COLIN, MAKES HOLMES HUMAN, VULNERABLE, AND LIKEABLE.

Star was the third Perry Mason telefilm made recently starring Raymond Burr, and, while enjoyable, it, like the others, did not contain the same thrill of the original series. The recipe has changed slightly. The measurements are different, adding a different weight to each character, if you'll excuse the expression.

Instead of the suspects taking up the first half, and Mason taking up the second, most of the movies' responsibilities are falling on the handsome young shoulders of William Katt, who plays Paul Drake's son, and who is actually Barbara Hale's (Della Street) son. Elsewhere, of course, Raymond Burr is now gigantic, Nero Wolfe-sized (I still maintain he would be an excellent Wolfe), which cuts his credibility. Would the "real" Perry Mason allow himself to be so out of shape?

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Nevertheless, it was still a credible, if not riveting, whodunit. Which, I am sad to say, cannot be said about **The Return of Remington Steele.** How ignominious. How unfortunate. How noisy. How desperate. A recap, for those uninitiated among us. *Remington Steele* was the uneven, but beloved, series concerning a good, tough, female P.I. named Laura Holt (Stephanie Zimbalist) who responds to sexism by creating a fictional male boss named Remington Steele. Imagine her surprise, then, when a rakishly handsome Irishman with a mysterious past (Pierce Brosnan) takes on the imaginary role of Remington against her will.

They become reluctant, then sparring, partners in a series of mysteries supposedly reminiscent of *The Thin Man Meets Adam's Rib*. But, from the start, I pointed out the singular lack of chemistry between the two stars. Thankfully, they were both good enough and the production unit canny enough to keep the show afloat by sheer force of personality. Then came the end. Still unable to consistently pull off the balancing act of romantic tension and lighthearted whodunit (and paling in comparison to the brighter, nastier, more ambitious and audacious *Moonlighting*), *Remington Steele* sank in the west just after Laura and Remington faked a marriage to avoid an Immigration man hot on Steele's trail.

It was a fairly feeble, redundant, ending, but there seemed to be a silver lining. Pierce Brosnan, the star of the show, was signed to be the new 007 in the next James Bond movie, *The Living Daylights*. All the attention which that got him started to put a unintentional seed in the NBC mind. Those bums refused to let him out of his contract by demanding additional episodes of *Remington Steele*.

The idea was cursed from the start, and the result, the telefilm under question, was a sordid affair indeed, in which, it seemed, nobody had his heart in it. Gone were many of the creative staff responsible for the best episodes. Gone was the energy. Gone was the edge. Gone, even, was the central concept which made the series so interesting. Instead of a romantic romp modeled on the best of Cary Grant and Irene Dunne, there was this feeble knockoff of *Romancing the Stone* as the supposedly honeymooning couple get involved in a raucous Mexican fiasco where the central frisson was not the solution to any mystery but whether they should have postmarital sex.

Ironically, I was originally going to write a loving tribute/epitaph to the show in this column. But now Brosnan has lost the 007 role to Timothy Dalton, and *The Return of Remington Steele* serves as a sour headstone: "*Remington Steele* . . . 1982–1986 . . . Did Not Rest In Peace."

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Finally, there's another return, **The Return of Sherlock Holmes.** You might want to take a salt pill when reading this, because I have to admit to a certain subjectivity. The writer and producer of this CBS television movie, Bob Shayne, is a friend of mine (and has been ever since inviting me to watch a *Simon and Simon* episode he had written). In addition, I arranged to have a scene from this film shown at last year's Bouchercon, making the guests there the first, outside of the production crew, to see the "new" Sherlock Holmes.

I really wanted to like this telefilm, for all the above reasons, and the fact that the unfinished Bouchercon clip had been publicly declared not of Edgar stature, or something to that unfair effect. So it was with a great deal of relief that I viewed the polished version and found it to be a loving, entertaining, and knowledgeable tribute to the master.

I feel that Bob, director Kevin Connor, and especially actor Michael Pennington, have pulled off a hat trick that almost every other recent network Holmes could not do: make the Master human, vulnerable, and likable without making him really dense (networks demand the former and producers seemed to think they could accomplish this by making Holmes the latter . . . see *Sherlock Holmes in New York*, for example).

Pennington/Shayne's Holmes seemed to absolutely delight in the chase as well as revel in the guises and disguises necessary to survive in the modern mystery world. Their Holmes seemed fascinated with the challenges of flying in airplanes and driving in cars, and, when attacked, responded with energy, reserve, and capability. My only real reservation was that Pennington's Holmes was too short. But then again, so is Jeremy Brett (PBS's Holmes).

As for the rest of the changes which Shayne wrought—a female Watson (the ingratiating Margaret Colin, playing the private eye granddaughter of Dr. Watson, who was forced to cryogenically freeze Holmes after Moriarty infected him with plague virus), the new "Mrs. Hudson" (a brassy secretary for Ms. Watson's P.I. firm, who reads Jessica Fletcher books), and all the Sherlockian in-jokes (as well as the London Bridge as a surprise guest star during a plot which mixed murder, counterfeiting, and the hapless FBI) —I leave that up to your own preconceptions, needs, desires, and critical acumen.

Me, I had a wonderful time. I hope it goes to series. I hope it wins an Edgar. So there. Nyah. □

What About Murder

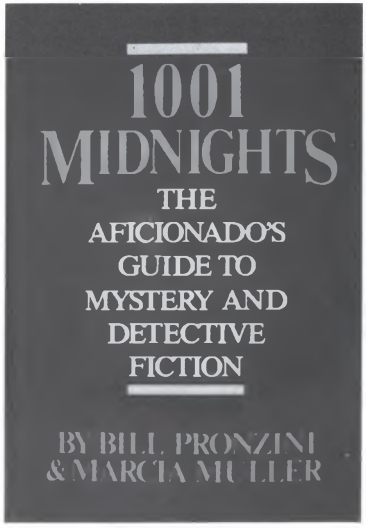
by Jon L. Breen

• **The Armchair Detective: A Facsimile of the First 10 Years in 7 volumes.** Introduction by Allen J. Hubin. New York: Garland, 1986. 7 vols. Index.

All the issues of this pioneering periodical's first decade are now available in seven handsome reprint volumes. Included in the final volume is Steven A. Stilwell's excellent index, previously published separately (see WAM #34). Readers who don't need the whole set will still be interested in the first volume for its fascinating and nostalgic 22-page introduction, in which founding editor Hubin tells the story of TAD's early days in greater detail than ever before, including an account of the journal's ill-fated San Diego sojourn in the mid-1970s. (The entire set is offered for $500, with individual volumes available at $85 each from the publisher or The Mysterious Bookshop. Also still available for $17 is Brownstone Books' reprinting of Volume 1, including a much shorter Hubin introduction. Address for the latter is 1711 Clifty Drive, Madison, IN 47250.)

• Barnes, Melvyn. **Dick Francis.** New York: Ungar, 1986. xvi + 184 pp. Bibliography. Index.

Following a brief, efficient biographical chapter, Barnes discusses all of Francis's novels through *The Danger* (1983), chronologically except for the two Sid Halley novels, *Odds Against* and *Whip Hand*, which are covered together. Barnes assesses the books both as general novels and as mysteries, avoids solution giveaways (usually a question of how or why rather than who with Francis), and makes an effective (i.e., restrained) use of plot summary. Barnes generally values the more recent novels over the earlier ones and seems to like *Trial Run* best of all. Aside from some repetitiousness—we are assured more times than necessary that Francis is not



just a writer of racing thrillers—Barnes has done his work thoroughly and well, making the reader want to seek out Francis's work, whether again or for the first time. The bibliography lists Francis's novels through *Break In* (1985); his short stories, anthologies, and nonfiction; and three pages of secondary sources. (Barnes is mistaken in his belief that Francis has won three Edgars. *Forfeit* and *Whip Hand* were winners, but *Reflex* was not even a nominee.)

• Marling, William H. **Raymond Chandler.** Boston: Twayne, 1986. 169 pp. Illustrated. Bibliography. Index.

Though he has nothing startlingly fresh to offer, Marling provides a very efficient overview of Chandler and his work, drawing effectively on earlier studies while providing his own intelligent readings. The first fifty pages are a very good short biography, drawing heavily on Frank McShane's standard life (see WAM #122) and Chandler's letters. Marling then devotes a chapter to the short stories, considering them in greater detail than have most critical summaries of Chandler's work. The final four chapters deal with the novels chronologically, providing full plot summaries followed by considerations of style, characters, themes, and critical reception.

• Pronzini, Bill, and Marcia Muller. **1001 Midnights: The Aficionado's Guide to Mystery and Detective Fiction.** New York: Arbor House, 1986. 879 pp. Bibliography.

The growing shelf of key mystery fiction reference books must make room for another hefty volume. The thorough reviews collected here touch on the work of virtually every major writer in the genre, plus a judicious selection of newcomers and interesting minor practitioners. Arrangement is alphabetical by author, Edward S. Aarons to Donald Zochert, giving place, publisher, and date of first American edition (or first British for books not published in the United States), and a symbol of the category to which the book belongs—e.g., AD for amateur detective, CS for classic sleuth, W for whodunit. The categories, undefined beyond a phrase, frequently overlap, and often more than one is assigned to a given book. (The symbols occasionally give some questionable signals—for example, surely Leo Bruce's classical satire *Case for Three Detectives* is not accurately described as a police procedural, even though Sgt. Beef is a professional

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policeman.) Especially good or notable works are marked * and cornerstone volumes are marked **. Most authors are covered *via* one representative volume, but for major authors several books are reviewed. Other notable works of the authors are mentioned in the annotations.

For some entries, biographical information is provided. The reviews emphasize plot summary, usually very effectively presented, and (as noted in the Introduction) most evaluative remarks are favorable. Unfavorable reviews are included for authors who are very popular, collectible, or historically important or who have produced what Pronzini labels "alternative classics"—e.g., the amazing Phoenix Press scriveners. Among the writers received less than glowingly are contemporaries Robert B. Parker, Margaret Truman, L. A. Morse, and Nathan Aldyne and old-timers Lee Thayer, Carolyn Wells, John Franklin Bardin, H. C. Branson, and Margaret Erskine. Receiving a fresh view, some vaunted classics are debunked, not as bad but as less than classic, notably Nicholas Blake's *The Beast Must Die*.

Besides Pronzini and Muller, an impressive group of other mystery writers, fans, and critics have contributed reviews, among them Robert E. Briney, Max Allan Collins, Edward D. Hoch, Marvin Lachman, John Lutz, Kathleen L. Maio, Francis M. Nevins, Jr., Art Scott, Charles Shibuk, and Julie Smith. The reader will note (and it is admitted up front) that there are quite a few cases here of friends reviewing friends, and sometimes reviewing each other, but we are assured that objectivity did its best to triumph over cronyism.

Since the two principal authors and their consultants know the mystery field intimately, inaccuracies are rare. Somehow, though, Herbert Brean becomes "Robert" and Gore Vidal becomes "George."

One could go on for pages about the delights and surprises contained in this book. A few examples: Pronzini describes Dolores Hitchens's *Sleep with Slander* as "the best hard-boiled private eye novel written by a woman—and one of the best written by anybody," preferring it to Leigh Brackett's better-known *No Good from a Corpse*. In a rapturous celebration of Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, Barry N. Malzberg theorizes that the novel must have influenced Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire*. Robert J. Randisi speculates that the shadowy paperback writer Jeff Jacks might have been a pseudonym of Lawrence Block.

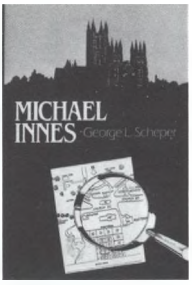
Is it possible to quibble about selection? Of course, though less about the authors chosen than the titles they are represented by. Why cover Robert Bloch's *Psycho II*, characterized as "a terrible letdown," rather than the original *Psycho*? Why represent Hillary Waugh by *The Con Game* rather than by the acknowledged classic *Last Seen Wearing*? Is it fair to the memory of Brett Halliday to include as one of only two Michael Shayne novels covered the ghostwritten (by Robert Terrall) *Nice Fillies Finish Last*, good though that book is? Why is George Bagby represented by an inferior later work rather than by an example from his best period? And why is the same author represented by two titles under his real name, Aaron Marc Stein, but not at all under possibly his best byline, Hampton Stone? Why are Michael Innes's best-known early novels, *Lament for a Maker* and *Hamlet, Revenge*, not even mentioned in the Innes entries? There's plenty to argue about, all right, but would the aficionado want it any other way?

The most similar earlier reference is, of course, Barzun and Taylor's *A Catalogue of Crime* (WAM #10), an equally entertaining and provocative volume that is both more error-prone and narrower in its enthusiasms. At times, this book is a direct reply to B&T, as when their description of David Alexander's *Madhouse in Washington Square* ("Close to unreadable") is heartily disputed.

To sum up, this is one of the half-dozen or so indispensable titles in any mystery reference collection.

• SCHEPER, George L. **Michael Innes**. New York: Ungar, 1986. xv + 224 pp. Bibliography. Index.

The first book-length study of Innes is an excellent appreciation of one of detective fiction's longest and most fascinating careers, happily still not over. Scheper values Innes's books both for their general literary virtues and for their ingenious use of detective story/thriller conventions. Following a good biographical chapter, Scheper covers the first three John Appleby novels together before treating the subsequent books in four categories: thrillers, academic novels, art mysteries, and country-house stories. Scheper seems to like all of Innes but has some of his highest praise (perhaps surprisingly) for *Stop Press* (1939; U.S. title *The Spider Strikes*), which he calls "his most ambitious novel and arguably the best country-house mystery ever written." The author makes a frequent and serious misuse of the term "sealed-room," applying it when he really means "closed-circle." Solution giveaways are constant, as the author warns at the outset, claiming that with Innes it does not matter much. Scheper may lose fans of Raymond Chandler (among others) almost immediately with his first-page claim that his subject is universally regarded as "far and away the finest writer among the practitioners of detective fiction." The claim may well be true, but surely it would at least produce a lively argument.



• WAGONER, Mary S. **Agatha Christie**. Boston: Twayne, 1986. 162 pp. Illustrated. Bibliography. Index.

Though I would have sworn there was not need for yet another Christie study, Wagoner has done an excellent and very thorough job here, covering material not usually considered in earlier studies and providing some fresh insights. A short biographical chapter leans heavily on Christie's autobiography (WAM #129), turning to Robyns (#136) and Morgan (supplement) only regarding the author's 1926 disappearance. The second chapter, oddly, concerns the short stories, giving more critical attention to them and to adaptation of their elements into novels than have other sources. The next five chapters deal chronologically with the detective novels. There follow separate chapters on the thrillers and spy novels (generaly disparaged), the Mary Westmacott novels, the plays, autobiographical writings, and finally "Bits and Pieces" (including the verse, a children's book, and Christie's participation in the Detection Club collaborative projects, *The Floating Admiral*, *Behind the Screen*, and *The Scoop*). Wagoner avoids revealing solutions almost entirely, managing an interesting analysis of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* without actually giving it away. As is appropriate in a study of Christie, criticism is focused on the novels *as detective stories* with much attention to their plot structure and provision of clues. Strictly as a critical account, Wagoner's book ranks second only to Robert Barnard's *A Talent to Deceive* (WAM #127). □

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SOME RARE FINDS FOR THE COLLECTOR

Murderous Affairs

by Janet A. Rudolph

Reading a mystery is usually a solitary affair, done alone in a comfortable chair, late at night in bed, or on the commute to work. Now, while this is pleasant and to some the height of entertainment, others lust after the idea of meeting other mystery lovers in a congenial setting over a drink or meal. I am one of those people who attains great joy from reading mysteries, but I like to share my ideas, opinions, and recommendations with others, and in turn learn from them. This is the main reason I founded **Mystery Readers of America** ten years ago. I became involved in mystery readership when I taught my first mystery course at U.C.-Berkeley. Since then, I have seen the "legitimization" of mysteries, and with it has come not only an acceptance of mysteries as literature but the burgeoning of mystery clubs, societies, conferences, magazines, and fanzines.

In this column, we will focus on trends in the mystery world as exemplified by those groups and periodicals which are of particular interest to the mystery reader. This first column will be an overview of the social scene. In later columns, I will report on specific happenings and events in the mystery world, including the journals. I am hoping that you will send information about mystery-related events in your clubs and area for inclusion. The idea is to broaden our mystery horizons.

Mystery Readers of America is perhaps the largest organized mystery society. We have over 1,000 members worldwide and five active chapters in the Continental U.S. MRA, of which I am Director, grew out of my teaching of mystery fiction at various campuses in the Bay Area around San Francisco. At first, Mystery Readers of America was confined to the 20 or 25 people in my classes, but I soon came to realize that there were other reasons that mystery readers might want to get together. I started holding one-day seminars in other areas – and always the same refrain: "I didn't know there were so many other people who read mysteries." Could this be true? The Bay Area chapter of MRA started holding monthly events – talks by mystery writers and forensic scientists, panel discussions, special Nero Wolfe and Lord Peter Wimsey dinners. Something for everyone. One hundred eighty-three people attended Tony Hillerman's talk to MRA in San Francisco. Over half of those people had not known about the existence of MRA before they saw the notice in the paper or heard me on radio. And we had been around for ten years.

But MRA also serves those who cannot or choose not to attend functions. The *MRA Journal*, which comes as part of the $20 membership, contains reviews, articles, and interviews on specific themes. In 1987, the issues focus on Religious Mysteries, Sports Mysteries, the Ethnic Detective, and American Regional Detective Fiction. In addition, there is a column on Members in the News, a world mystery Calendar, the reference shelf, and more. The *MRA Journal* has gone from a one-page flyer to a sixty-page magazine in just over a year. MRA welcomes the affiliation of other mystery groups or anyone who wants to start a chapter. Write to Janet A. Rudolph, P.O. Box 8116, Berkeley, CA 94707-8116.

I have found that, unlike science-fiction readers, mystery readers tend to be more solitary in their devotion to their reading and their authors. There are not the numerous conventions and costumed party events like those in the science-fiction world. There is one national convention which all mystery readers should try to attend, however – the **Bouchercon**. This is the world mystery convention, at which fans, readers, writers, publishers, and editors get together for panel discussions, movies, schmoozing, and exchanging information. The novice mystery reader should not be intimidated. Everyone is welcome, and the cost is minimal. The site for the Bouchercon alternates among East, West and Midwest. In 1987, the convention will be held in Minneapolis over the Columbus Day weekend. Contact Steve Stillwell at P.O. Box 2747, Loop Station, Minneapolis, MN 55402 for more information.

MRA may be the largest, but it is certainly not the only group which has been involved in bringing mystery readers together. **The Cloak and Clue Society** in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has been meeting to discuss mysteries on a monthly basis for years. They produce a nice newsletter, *The Cloak*. For more information about them and their activities, write *The Cloak*, 2816 North Interlaken Drive, Oconomowoc, WI 53066.

The Mystery Club in San Diego also meets monthly to discuss novels or have a special mystery dinner. Although friends of Phyllis Brown's Grounds for Murder, a mystery bookstore in San Diego, the Mystery Club is a separate entity. For more information on this club and its publication *The Crime File*, write Editor Laurie Gore at P.O. Box 1321, Bonita, CA 92002-0890.

The Maltese Falcon Society meets on a monthly basis in San Francisco. The focus is usually the hardboiled mystery, with eminent speakers and writers in the field. For more information write to MRA, P.O. Box 8116, Berkeley, CA 94707-8116.

The **Dorothy L. Sayers Society** is a British organization which produces a newsletter and wonderful publications, in addition to holding meetings and conventions in England. Write to Ralph Clarke at Pentlow Mill, Sudbury, Suffolk C010 7SP, England.

There are also professional organizations which hold monthly meetings. **Mystery Writers of America** is an organization open to published and non-published mystery writers as well as other interested persons. They have meetings and seminars on mystery writing, sponsor the Edgar Awards, and more. There are regional chapters. Write to Mary Frisque at MWA, 236 West 27th St., Suite 600, New York, NY 10001 for membership information.

The **Crime Writers Association** is the professional organization in England (The Detective Club is by invitation only). CWA is open to all involved in writing, publishing, or selling crime fiction or nonfiction. *Red Herrings* is published monthly and is informative, packed with membership news and information. Meetings are held regionally in England. For more information, write to Barry Musto, "Thistles," Little Adington, Ketering, Northants NN14 4AX, England.

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Almost every major city has a Sherlockian society—in addition to the national and international organizations—and they are too numerous to list here. A future column will be devoted to them, however. In the meantime, there are several major Sherlockian conferences planned for 1987, and you may contact your local society or write to me for more information.

There are many mystery clubs connected with libraries and some which have grown out of mystery courses at extension programs or universities. The Southeastern Connecticut Library Association recently spent a year hosting mystery programs in all of its libraries. In addition, they held a Symposium in October 1986 on Mystery Fiction featuring Robert Parker, Carolyn Heilbrun, and Robin Winks.

Associates of the University of the Pacific Libraries and Friends of the Stockton (California) Public Library sponsor a mystery conference every year in early March. The 1987 program was on Art for Art's Sake, with intriguing speakers and seminars on art fraud, art forgery, and the like.

Many "Friends of the Library" programs feature detective fiction writers. Check with your local libraries on speakers and reading groups.

Universities and colleges often feature mystery writers as part of their lecture programs. The Association of University Women often have mystery reading groups. The Mystery Caucus of the Popular Culture Association is one group that academic mystery readers should look into. They have a yearly conference at which papers on many subjects are offered. Write to Bowling Green University, Bowling Green, Ohio 43404. Extension courses are also a good source for meeting other mystery readers and learning about new authors. Why not teach it yourself, if there isn't one offered?

Specialty mystery bookstores offer a place for fans and readers to meet authors and each other. In addition, many produce good newsletters with mini-reviews of new and reprinted mystery fiction. A future issue of this column will offer an annotated listing of mystery bookstores. In the meantime, check your local mystery bookstore for scheduled booksignings, talks, and newsletters.

These are just a few of the many possibilities for meeting with other mystery readers in order to exchange ideas or listen to mystery writers or related specialists. There are, of course, many other options, and we will continue the discussion in future issues of TAD. For now, though, please send any mystery news to Janet A. Rudolph, Mystery Readers of America, P.O. Box 8116, Berkeley, CA 94707-8116. The more you share, the more we all gain. □

Book Reviews

Private Eye

Beyond the Grave by Marcia Muller and Bill Pronzini. New York: Walker, 1986. $15.95

Three levels of action—a modern-day museum director trying to learn more about an 1894 San Francisco detective's tracking down a mystery which took place in 1846—make *Beyond the Grave* fascinating reading. Structurally, it is a fictional variation on Sidney D. Kirkpatrick's nonfiction *A Cast of killers*, in which a modern-day biographer finally uncovers director King Vidor's account of how he solved a 1921 Hollywood murder.

Muller's Elena Oliverez, who has been featured in two earlier books, attends an auction, hoping to acquire an early Mexican wedding coffer and other items for the Museum of Mexican Arts. The coffer reveals a secret drawer which contains a ninety-year-old manuscript, a report from San Francisco private detective John Quincannon (who has appeared, in an earlier Pronzini novel). Quincannon had been hired to track down a cache of statuary and artifacts missing since 1846, when Mexican defenders buried it during a skirmish of the Bear Flag Rebellion.

The storyline alternates between time periods, with Muller writing in the first person, Pronzini in the third. Their styles blend well, and the writers do a fine job of creating mystery without (until well along) having a murder to solve. The amateur detective and the professional, separated by nine decades, develop "an eerie connection." And it is Elena, even though distanced by time, who has the necessary background to see a clue which Quincannon cannot, and finally solve the much earlier puzzle.

There is richness here both in character and in setting. Elena is worried about her mother, in the hospital with an ulcer, and about her boyfriend, who has just broken with her. Quincannon also has personal worries, how to get closer to his detective partner Sabina Carpenter. One sees modern-day Santa Barbara, nineteenth-century San Francisco, and glimpses of the 1840s *ranchos grandes* era in the southern part of the state.

The two writers previously collaborated on *Double* (1984), which paired their other series characters, Nameless and Sharon McCone. In this book, they seem more comfortable with the dual format. It's a good read.

—Bernard A. Drew

Embrace the Wolf by Benjamin M. Schutz. New York: Bantam, 1986. $2.95

When Herb Saunders receives a phone call from the vicious psychopath who kidnapped his two daughters five years earlier, the distraught father uses a telephone trace coupled with bitter ingenuity as he departs to mete out his personal justice. Realizing that her unhinged husband is about to deepen his family's suffering, Maggie Saunders hires Washington, D.C. private eye Leo Haggerty to stop him. When the detective follows the trail to North Carolina, he stops a rape-in-progress, thereby earning the wrath of a group of violent locals. A bonus, though, is that he earns the friendship of victim Wendy Sullivan, who becomes his companion and helper. As the novel progresses to its conclusion, Haggerty's attentions are divided between two groups of adversaries, as he examines themes of friendship, love, and hate.

Leo Haggerty is physically a standard-issue investigator: 35 years old, six feet tall, two hundred pounds. (Maybe there's literary logic here—Haggerty is young enough to function, old enough to know; he's big enough to fight, not too imposing to be invincible.) Haggerty has other common characteristics, as he explains to Wendy: "I don't join groups real well and I take orders worse. That's why I wasn't in Vietnam and it's why I'm not married." But Haggerty is no clichéd wise-guy with iron fists and wimpy philosophy. Rather, he is portrayed by Schutz, a clinical psychologist, as a decent man pragmatically concerned with impending middle age in a world in which violence is just a truckstop away. Fighting his attraction to twenty-year-old Wendy, Haggerty concedes that she is "A chance to make a liar out of time, to recapture that golden age that never was." He observes that "All thirty-five-year-olds would make great eighteen-year-olds the second time around."

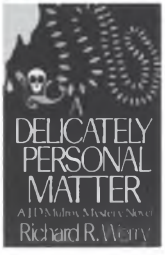
Wendy Sullivan is intriguing, neither a conventional victim nor heroine. Rescued by Haggerty from gang rape, she recovers to become his friend, a new variable for the detective in the male-female equation. Wendy is large (six feet, 150 pounds),

athletic, and attractive. Ironically, her drawback seems to be her youth. "Like most twenty-year-olds, she couldn't imagine a past longer than two weeks ago."

The villains in the book are hateful. Justin Randolph is intelligent but sadistic—a monster who uses mental torture as a prelude and postscript to his vicious abuse of children. Bubba Bascomb is "big as a bear, twice as ugly, and three times as nasty . . . Once he beat a man to death right there on Main Street."

Embrace the Wolf is a fine beginning to a projected series—five novels have been contracted. The main character is enough of an archetype to be familiar and sympathetic, but idiosyncratic enough to be distinct from Spenser and the other guys on the shelf. As Schutz gains confidence, he should emerge as a fine writer, eschewing such tricks as the occasional third-person interventions which intrude on Haggerty's first-person narrative. This reader is looking forward to the unfolding of a Haggerty canon—and what will happen when Wendy turns twenty-one.

—Bert Eccles



A Delicately Personal Matter by Richard R. Werry. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1986. $14.95

J.D. Mulroy is an easy-going, immensely likeable Michigan private eye with an impressive group of friends and associates who are always ready to help in her investigations and bail her out when she ventures, *à la* Nancy Drew, into dangers she cannot handle alone. Her current case involves discovering what has estranged proper accountant/stock-broker Emmet Harvey from his wife Charlotte. Approached by Charlotte's older sister, a prominent physician, J.D. is intrigued by the description of the case as "a delicately personal matter," and, later convinced that it cannot be an extramarital affair, she begins her investigations at the Colorado Beef House, tipped off by three matchbooks (with intriguing appointment notations) which she finds in Emmet's jacket pockets.

The Colorado Beef House is a businessmen's hangout locally famous for, as J.D. puts it, the scope of the waitresses' "mammarian exhibition," expensive food, and business deals that may not always be legitimate. J.D. has "enough common sense to realize that a businessmen's lunch place is not to be interpreted as a businessperson's lunch place despite the successes of women's lib" and accordingly invites Ed Rogers, her attorney and almost-fiancé, to accompany her, and subsequently she hires an associate, Harry Jenkins, to put the Beef House under surveillance. She herself infiltrates Emmett Harvey's office on the excuse that she wants "to learn the brokerage business." In short order, J.D. has peeped into enough files to know that Emmet is into something very out of his straight-laced league, and Harry has turned up enough possibilities of dirty dealings at the Beef House—gambling, real-estate speculation, and drugs—to get himself murdered. The next plant at the Colorado Beef House, nursing drinks while scoping out the varied clientele, is J.D.'s investigative partner, Ahmad Dakar, "ex-University of Michigan and Miami Dolphins tight end, karate instructor, and consumer of Jack Daniels Manhattans." Since Ahmad is "also an ex-Marine, six eight and very black," he fares better than Harry among the rough boys who stop in at the Colorado Beef House on a regular basis, to the point that he is actually recruited as a bodyguard for the kingpin of the group, Buford Hickory.

Ahmad and J.D. make an excellent team, backed up "with a little help from their friends" in the legal profession, the media, and the jewelry business, as they get to the bottom of the "delicately personal matter" which has turned Emmet Harvey from a moden husband and father into a reclusive, defensive workaholic and which has had devastating repercussions as well on other basically innocent and well-meaning people drawn into the fast track operating out of the Beef House. The chemistry and wit between J.D. and Ahmad work intriguingly and wholly successfully—in a manner not unlike that between Spenser and Hawk in the Robert B. Parker novels, so that the climax/apprehension scene is very, very funny, and equally as terrifying—and author Werry weaves their partnership seamlessly into a fast-paced and plausible mystery set in the Detroit area. *A Delicately Personal Matter* comes highly recommended.

—Susan L. Clark

Retrospective

Trouble Making Toys by A. M. Pyle. New York: Signet, 1985.

This first effort is a slow-grower but essentially worthwhile. Detective Cesar Franck of the Cincinnati police is assigned the task of finding the killer of Irv Golden, president of Golden Time Toys. The company, owned by the squabbling Golden family, is deeply involved in the production of Denver Dolls, capitalizing on a popular television evening soap opera. After a particularly vicious and argumentative sales-advertising meeting, Golden is bashed over the head. Is it a family affair, business espionage, or drugs that provided the motive?

Pyle's basic plot is good, but there is one glaring clue that any police detective should notice long before Franck does. But then, is a commonplace man, a semi-Columbo who worries as much about his widowed mother as he does about the case, likely to notice such things? In providing characterization, Pyle tells us much more of Franck's childhood and personal life than we want or need to know. His story is interesting enough, but, now that the background is out of the way, future books can concentrate on the case itself.

—Fred Dueren

A Cadenza for Caruso by Barbara Paul. New York: Signet, 1984.

For the opera enthusiast, *A Cadenza for Caruso* is a pleasant find. As one of the main characters, Enrico Caruso is portrayed as a friendly, likable fellow, ready to help anyone. Friends and strangers both are equally entitled to his giving heart and willingness to aid anyone in need. It is his generous personality that makes him take on the defense of Giacomo Puccini when Puccini is suspected of murder during the rehearsals of *La Fanciulla del West* at the Metropolitan Opera in 1910. At times, Caruso's eagerness to help and his rather bumbling attempts at detection are more hilarious than beneficial, but that is just part of the fun.

Other opera luminaries in the book include Emmy Destinn, Pasquale Amato, and Arturo Toscanini. How accurately they are portrayed must be judged by others more in the know. For a murder mystery, they make a

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nicely varied set of suspects with the operative egos and passions likely to lead to murder. The (deserving) victim is a hanger-on, trying to blackmail Puccini after the scandal of a girl's suicide. She was incorrectly accused of having an affair with the composer and could not stand the shame and pressure of the false accusation. Equally colorful are the various servants, maids, and attendants who also fill up the suspect list—after all, this is not a true-crime tale.

Caruso is nice, but undemanding. The reader with an interest in opera will enjoy the historical elements much more than the mystery. The reader with no knowledge of opera will have an agreeable but soon forgotten read.

—Fred Dueren

Nonfiction

The Whole Spy Catalogue: An Espionage Lover's Guide by Richard L. Knudson. New York: St. Martin's, 1986.

This is one of those books with which we are all too familiar: the nonfiction labor of love devised by a fan—in this case, a university writing teacher who once served as editor of the International Spy Society's journal, *The Dossier*. This particular effort is a trade paperback with a lovely cover and fine interior design. It looks very good. It is also very light, with large lettering and ample space between lines, as well as top and bottom margins.

Its shortcomings we are also familiar with. This volume suffers from an acute case of the galloping shallows.

The table of contents is filled with promise: "The Second Oldest Profession," "Spies on the Shelf," "Spies on the Screen," "The Gadgetry of Spying," "Cryptography," "The Espionage Hall of Fame and Shame." But then we find filler ("Could YOU Be a Spy?"), superficiality (Eric Ambler is accorded three paragraphs, the same number as *Bondage*, the publication of the James Bond 007 Fan Club—and, while Ian Fleming is given eight pages, John Le Carré gets one), and disorganization (for some reason, the movie chapter is alphabetized by *character* rather than by film, allowing mention of Maxwell Smart while completely omitting many great espionage and spy films).

The treatment is slight (the "Cryptography" chapter is four pages long), but there should be at least a few items of interest to almost every reader somewhere in this short volume, even though one would argue the sense in telling people where they too could buy such items as "The Urban Shiv" and "The Shaft" (a pen that turns into a knife) and for how much. Then, to fill out this, the gadget chapter, the author lists such "gadgety" cars as the Volkswagon Rabbit GTi and the Ford Escort.

Ultimately disappointing, *The Whole Spy Catalogue* still makes a halfway decent skimming exercise and passes the time just fine on a short plane or train ride.

Sorry about that, Chief.

—Richard Meyers

The Maul and the Pear Tree: The Ratcliffe Highway Murders, 1811 by P. D. James and T. A. Critchley. New York: The Mysterious Press, 1986. $17.95.

Every mystery reader should be familiar with P. D. James and admire her work for its detail and depth. It needs only to be added that T. A. Critchley is a police historian. Together, these authors have reconstructed a series of brutal and shocking murders that occurred in the London Docks area in 1811. Because of the heinous nature of the crimes—the slaughter of an innocent, hardworking couple, their infant son, and a shop boy; and, twelve days later, another couple and their servant—panic and an outcry for police reform resulted.

The authors examine the clues and follow the footsteps of the police as they muddle through the investigation. Results are hampered by inefficiency, communication failures, evidence that is misread, and clues that are overlooked. The most serious detriment to solving the murders is the lack of a co-ordinating body to manage and examine the clues and interrogations.

James and Critchley deliver a fascinating account of a gruesome crime, examine England's early police efforts, and pose a logical solution of their own as to who the real culprits were. Highly recommended.

—Gloria Maxwell

A Cast of Killers by Sidney D. Kirkpatrick. New York: Dutton, 1986. $17.95.

This book originated with the author's plan to write a biography of King Vidor, one of Hollywood's great film directors. As Kirkpatrick conducted his research, he discovered that Vidor himself had been obsessed with the 1922 murder of silent film director William Desmond Taylor. For years, Vidor had conducted his own personal investigation of the unsolved crime. Vidor had intended to make a film of the story, but changed his mind after coming to the conclusion that he had uncovered the killer—a discovery that proved too controversial in his own lifetime.

Kirkpatrick's book, then, is the reconstruction of Vidor's probings. The crime is carefully reconstructed; the cast is thoroughly introduced; and the events leading to Taylor's murder are presented from all sides. Suspects with motives abound: actress Mabel Normand, trying to hide her drug addiction; Taylor's homosexual houseman; Taylor's secretary, who looked very much like his own brother, the one who had mysteriously left a family and life back East; Mary Miles Minter, rising young star madly in love with Taylor; and Minter's domineering mother, Charlotte Shelby, who would do anything to keep her daughter unattached.

One of the major problems in finding Taylor's killer was the proliferation of people and clues found at the murder scene when the police arrived: the head of Paramount Studios burning papers in the fireplace; Normand searching for her love letters, which she claimed were in the house; lingerie scattered in the bedroom; and a mysterious "doctor" who left before the police could question him.

Vidor/Kirkpatrick's revelations now include the fact that Taylor was homosexual—thereby negating several of the previously considered suspects and motives. What results is a new set of motives and suspects, and evidence of payoffs to hamper the police's discovery of the true murderer.

This is a fascinating true murder mystery story. The glitter of early Hollywood pervades the pages, creating an ambience which will intrigue any reader who is a movie fan—and many who are not. It reads just like a movie!

—Gloria Maxwell

Espionage

The Spy Who Barked in the Night by Marc Lovell. New York: Doubleday, 1986. $12.95.

The author of *How Green Was My Apple* and *The Only Good Apple in a Barrel of Spies*, Marc Lovell, now presents, for our enjoyment, *The Spy Who Barked in the Night*, featuring his series character, a very tall (6'7"), blushing and bumbling, highly unlikely spychaser named Appleton Porter, affectionately known as Apple, and his trusty hound-dog sidekick, known as Monico. Both Apple and Monico bark in the night.

Whether driving a taxicab named Ethel in London traffic or working with a film crew in romantically melancholy Scotland, Apple is the man to watch. His natural innocence and awareness of his own limitations, as well as his awe of just being on a "mission," add a nice dimension of tenderness to the fantastic, delightfully escapist goings-on.

Marc Lovell writes with lightness and buoyancy as well as a deft sense of characterization. Apple's wonderful female encounters include three actresses: still glamorous but aging film goddess Miranda; very professional and popular second lead Helen; and the ambitiously vampy starlet Velma; and let's not forget Cookie, the gossipy former stuntperson who changes her outrageous wig colors at least once daily.

Apple also encounters four male suspects of similar physical size, one of whom is the genuine, villainous spy. Early on, I picked whodunit, but howdunit eluded me until the explanation at the very end.

Warmth and charm fill the pages of this genuine cozy, which, in genteel tastefulness, has no need for such things as explicit sex, violence, or murdered bodies. The only foul scent arises from the large pigsty near the filming location, which leads to some richly odorous humor and intrigue.

At the core of this Apple tale is a warm, easy-to-digest, tastily predictable, old-fashioned reading treat.

—Ira Hale Blackmann

Police Procedural

Fool's Gold by Ted Wood. New York: Scribner's, 1986. $13.95

There must be many one-man police departments in North America, but Reid Bennett is rapidly becoming readers' favorite one. Reid, Vietnam veteran and ex-police officer with Toronto Metro, represents the law at Murphy's Harbour, Ontario and, because of location, works with an interesting mix of rugged individualists and modern police technology. For crowd control, guarding and searching, he has Sam, his highly trained German shepherd.

In his fourth adventure in this series, Reid agrees to go to Olympia as a favor to his ex-wife, Amy, to investigate the death of Jim Prudhomme, the husband of Amy's friend, Carol. Prudhomme was a geologist, working for Darvon Company, and his body has been found, badly mauled by a bear, according to the official reports.

Olympia has become a boom town since Darvon's gold strike nearby, and Reid arrives in time to stop the beating of a traveling prostitute, who entertains the trade in her convenient Winnebago. Her attacker is one Carl Tettlinger, a giant of a man, whose reputation as camp bully is well deserved, and Reid's flattening of him wins new friends. Alice Graham, who manages the motel and restaurant, is one attractive applauder, and Police Chief Gallagher is officially grateful.

Chief Gallagher, a man near retirement age, is also helpful, giving Reid access to the official reports and photos regarding Prudhomme's death. After the geologist had failed to rendezvous with the chopper pilot who was to pick him up, Gallagher, a deputy, and an Indian guide searched for two days before the body was found.

Instead of simply verifying the official reports, as he intended, Reid is beginning to find some pieces of the puzzle which do not fit. Gallagher takes him to interview the gold mine manager, who verifies that Prudhomme was checking adjacent areas of the original gold strike for other lodes, but when the body was found there was no ore sample bag with it.

When the grateful prostitute, Eleanor, offers payment in kind, Reid asks her instead to help him trace Prudhomme's last days in Olympia, which is no problem, since clever Eleanor uses a hidden camera to photograph clients as they enter the Winnebago. Checking her records and photos, she is able to pinpoint Prudhomme's last visit, which was three days after the body was found. Before Reid can meet her to collect the photo, Eleanor is killed.

This load of conflicting evidence convinces Reid that a trip to Montreal and interviews with the widow and her attorney are definitely in order. Laval, urbane and unruffled, insists that their identification was correct, but Reid manages to wine and dine Laval's secretary, learning some highly suggestive facts about the attorney's business dealings and mob connections. To emphasize the latter, Reid is waylaid by two obvious pros before he can leave Montreal and, by a strange coincidence, Prudhomme's dentist's office is torched and all records destroyed.

When Reid returns to Olympia, a series of violent events explode, including the discovery of two more bodies, an apparent suicide, and a near-fatal sniping attack. Author Wood maintains the action-packed pace to the very end in this complicated tale of greed in rugged country, with some very rough characters.

—Miriam L. Clark

A Dismal Thing to Do by Alisa Craig. New York: Doubleday, 1986. $12.95

Do you believe in Mounties? I've lost faith in the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy, but I will not give up on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Fortunately for those of us who like our champions of justice stalwart, trustworthy, persevering, and clad in crimson, author Alisa Craig keeps the faith in *A Dismal Thing To Do*.

This adventure, the fifth for Jenny and Madoc Rhys, begins when Jenny goes hunting for an antique washstand. She ends up on an uninhabited stretch of New Brunswick back road, witnesses a strange truck accident, and, when she attempts to aid the victim, ends up stranded when the ungrateful wretch steals her car. Luckily, she has her trusty plastic emergency blanket and a husband who is a detective inspector for the R.C.M.P. While doing her best to survive, she overhears the conversation of a ruthless gang of thugs, a conversation which suggests that there is more to this chain of events than accident and casual criminality.

Madoc is doing his best to ensure his wife's safety. Duty calls, however, in the guise of the secretive Mr. X., who represents an organization he will not name and who is seeking the recovery of an object he will not describe. Madoc astutely connects this missing object with the strange truck accident his wife saw. The trail leads to Jenny's home town, Pitcherville. In this pastoral setting, the two encounter local gossip, inexplicable petty theft, a secret organization, moonshine, and murder as Mountie Madoc Rhys gets his man.

Craig seems to believe in the banality of both Good and Evil. Her protagonists are good scouts, decent and dependable but bland. Too often, we are privy to their innermost thoughts, which prove to be plodding and predictable. The bad guys, even those of international proportion, turn out to be small. Once exposed, they docilely submit to Canadian justice. Nothing here to seriously challenge Jenny, let alone Madoc. Minor characters, in contrast, are surprisingly deft and entertaining. The author has created a rural New Brunswick society made up of lively and memorable characters. I found myself more interested in Pitcherville than in the mystery.

Craig sometimes evokes a chill with her description of winter landscape and unexpected mayhem. As a whole, however, she fails to sustain tension or build to a suspenseful climax. Nevertheless, I found myself reasonably well entertained by its amusing local setting. *A Dismal Thing To Do* is a teddy bear of a mystery, it is cosy and comforting, but not terribly exciting. It is just the sort of book one could enjoy reading in bed on a blustery winter night, entertaining in a low-key way but not so compelling that you have to stay awake for the end.

PolPro —S. J. Krabacher

The Next to Die by Richard Fliegel. New York: Bantam, 1986. $2.95

New York City cop Shelly Lowenkopf is having a run of bad luck in *The Next to Die*. He pursues a kid who has just swiped the battery from his car, but the youth resists arrest by diving off a six-story building. He still loves his ex-wife, but her new husband is not tolerant of Shelly's visits to his son. And his partner Greeley gets more of the glory—and the girls—than he does.

Lowenkopf has to give testimony soon in a drug trial, but his superiors ship him to California to keep him out of trouble. He is

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Grounds for Murder

to act as a consultant on a Hollywood picture about the New York police department. But Shelly has barely arrived in California when he is seduced by the movie director's attractive assistant, finds an Arab wearing argyle socks in his bathtub, and discovers the director's charred corpse on a beach.

As may be gathered from this quick summary of the opening pages of this paperback, the writer mixes humor with police drama and murder mystery. It is a humor of exaggeration (Shelly busts into an airport women's room as if it were a mafia headquarters) and of bizarre situation (how did his stolen briefcase get from New York to California?). This style of humor – mixed with a pathetic character – is a mark of other recent paperback series, such as Milton R. Bass's Benny Freedman books for Signet. Distinction is made to warn the reader who may prefer his chuckles coming out of character, such as Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe or Michael Z. Lewin's Lt. LeRoy Powder.

In this mystery, the Hollywood characters have a hard time being anything but Hollywood caricatures, police department superiors are pretty much police department caricatures, and the ex-wife is definitely an ex-wife caricature. That is the case of most New York and Hollywood mysteries. Perhaps because the author is a poet, playwright, and college administrator living in California, I was expecting a bit more depth of setting and character.

– Bernard A. Drew

The Wabash Factor by E. V. Cunningham. New York: Dell, 1986. $3.50

Fast-paced, neatly written, *The Wabash Factor* is one of Cunningham's best – mainly, besides competent writing and unrelenting suspense, because of the characters Harry and Fran Golding. Harry, a seventeen-year veteran of the NYPD, is Jewish and self-conscious about never having gone to college. Fran, who is Irish, is an English instructor at Columbia University. Harry and Fran grew up in a tough New York neighborhood where, against all odds – and their parents' wishes – they fell in love and married. When the novel opens, they have a son at Harvard, a daughter at Wellesley, are still very much in love, and argue frequently, with a kind of crude but gentle banter that never lets them forget their ethnic differences. For example:

"I grew up to marry a shanty-Irish kid who went to college – "

"Hunter! Free! No tuition, and I waited tables."

"I never got there . . . And furthermore, you're an anti-Semite."

"You bastard . . . I am Francesca O'Brian O'Brannigan Murphy, and with the blood of kings on both sides, and you dare to call me an anti-Semite!"

They go on like this even when their lives – and the lives of their children – are in grave danger. The enormity of the evil they confront is another reason for the book's success. Without giving too much away, let us just say that the Wabash Factor, international in scope, is responsible for the apparently accidental deaths of several prominent Americans, including a popular Presidential candidate. How Harry becomes next on the hit list, and how he and Fran confront and ultimately help destroy the Wabash Factor, make for page-turning, action-packed adventure, with plenty of shooting every other page or so.

Smooth reading that lets your hair bristle and your pulse race without ever becoming overly bloody or depressing.

– Edward Lodi

Sleep While I Sing by L. R. Wright. New York: Viking, 1986. $15.95

The small town of Sechelt lies on Canada's Sunshine Coast in British Columbia. Its three-man police force is headed by Staff Sergeant Karl Alberg of the R.C.M.P. Alberg, who wears everyday clothes instead of his Mountie uniform, and Sechelt first appeared in L. R. Wright's last novel, *The Suspect*, which won the 1986 Edgar award as best novel. This second appearance stands a good chance of being a winner also.

In the prologue, a woman in her thirties scrambles out of a car which has stopped on the side of the Sunshine Coast highway and runs into the thick woods surrounding the highway. She is trapped among the bushes and is brutally killed, her throat slashed, by the driver. The murderer then totes the body to a tree, props it up against the trunk, washes off the face (it is pouring rain, as it does throughout the first half of the novel), and sings to the corpse.

Once the body is found, Alberg's problem is to first identify the woman (she is a stranger) and then catch the murderer. To do the first, he asks the town librarian, Cassandra Mitchell, to recommend someone to paint a portrait of the dead woman for distribution. (Alberg and Cassandra have previously been romantically inclined, and both seem still interested, though Cassandra is currently involved with another man. This adds something to the tension of the book.) She recommends Tommy Cummings who teaches art at the hight school. After Cummings's portrait is reproduced and hung up all over Sechelt and the neighboring towns, Cassandra's lover, Roger Galbraith, an actor from Los Angeles visiting his mother, gets extremely upset when he sees it for the first time. Galbraith thinks that it looks like a friend of his from L.A. but refuses to tell the police. When the woman is identified as Galbraith's friend, he of course becomes a prime suspect.

Galbraith is not the only suspect, which is one of the things that makes this book so good. The police are also investigating the man who found the body, and the author gives us hints as to the possible guilt of other people not considered by the police. This is done through a few chapters depicting the murderer as he plans the next murder. These chapters are so well done, however, that they do not give away the solution.

This is an excellent work of fiction. The beginning, after the murder and the discovery of the body, seems to meander, but it moves along at a nice pace, giving us information about Alberg, Cassandra, Guthrie, and other members of the community. None of this is in the least bit uninteresting, and, as the investigation picks up again when the body is identified, we can see that Wright has been making these people real to us, so that we care what happens, understand why the characters act the way they do, and can begin to fit the pieces together. Later, when we realize that the murderer is planning another killing, we are anxious that he be apprehended *before* the crime, and, when he is caught and confesses, we can understand him, yet be horrified at the reasons for his crime.

The relationship between Alberg and Cassandra, while not that important in determining the murderer, is important in making this book live. Both are over forty (Alberg is divorced, Cassandra still unmarried) and worried about their weight, and both keep wanting to get together, yet are prevented by Cassandra's current sexual affair with the visiting Galbraith. The outcome of this relationship is as interesting and important to the book as the capture of the murderer, and it helps to make Karl Alberg a fully rounded character, not just a Mountie out to "get his man."

Overall, this is an excellent novel that should really not be missed. It will undoubtedly be among the best of the year.

– Martin H. Friedenthal

Maigret's War of Nerves by Georges Simenon. Translated by Geoffrey Sainsbury. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986. $13.95

A reissue of an out-of-print Inspector Maigret detective novel is generally a treat, to say the least. In the 1940 *Maigret's War of Nerves* (*La tête d'un homme*), Maigret must determine if "a man's head [is] worth a scandal." The head in question belongs to Joseph Heurtin, a simple-minded delivery boy held in prison for killing the widow of an American diplomat, as well as her maid. Maigret, the arresting officer in this murder case, subsequently finds that he has no choice but to risk scandal, disturbed as he is by inconsistencies in the young man's story, and reverse his stand concerning Heurtin's guilt. He states: "As a policeman, I am bound to draw the logical conclusion from material evidence." As the man who was initially convinced of Heurtin's guilt, Maigret

becomes convinced that the accused is "either mad or innocent" and accordingly agitates placidly but resolutely for a re-examination of the matter of *l'affaire Heurtin*. When he encounters resistance, he engineers the accused's escape from the Santé Prison. Only Heurtin can lead the master detective to the criminal, and the Parisian police co-operating in Maigret's illegal caper are led a merry chase as Heurtin blindly dives into the maze of Parisian streets and watering holes.

Maigret, led by the fugitive, stakes out seedy rooming houses and stalks suspects among the international set of Paris café habitues of the 1920's, in which this police procedural is set. Maigret finds his murderer quite early on in the plot—yet cannot immediately bring charges. With his characteristic composure, he observes "people shouting at the tops of their voices and ordering round after round of drinks, people whose clothes were as eccentric as they were costly . . . and beings who seemed to have come from the four corners of the earth for no better purpose than to sit there embedded in that smart crowd without saying a word to anybody." From that varied group of active participants and passive observers, he finds his murderer and engages in intellectual and emotional warfare with him until the novel's dénouement.

As always, Simenon creates a good read, both for the psychological nature of the crimes he depicts and for the spare elegance of his prose—a close friend once confided that, as a high school student, she honed her French on Maigret's prose. This latter quality of style, to my mind, speaks also to the cleanness of plotting and characterization for which Simenon is well known over the hundred novels and short stories he has written around his signature detective. And Maigret himself is arguably one of the most tolerable and enduring series detectives, interestingly defined and with predictable quirks but rarely precious or obtrusive.

—Susan L. Clark

The Lure of Sweet Death by Sarah Kemp. New York: Doubleday, 1986. $12.95

What better way to keep in touch with violent death than to have a series character who is a forensic pathologist? That is Dr. Tina May's profession, while her avocation is starring on a TV talk show, *The Pathologist*— "Cases based on the files of Dr. Tina, Pathologist and Sleuth."

In this story, Dr. Tina becomes involved in a series of doubtful suicides that her close friend, Detective Chief Inspector Derek Arkwright, has labeled "Detective Sergeant Turner's Syndrome." The linking factor in this series of otherwise unrelated deaths is that, on the day before his death, each of the deceased had withdrawn a substantial amount of cash from their bank. In the first short chapter, we see violence done for "two thousand quid—not bad for an afternoon's work plus a few hours' ground bait." This certainly was not one of the "syndrome" suicides, but the computer matched it up with the others for the freshly withdrawn and missing twenty-pound notes.

Revolving around Dr. Tina's little house on Lochiel Street in Chelsea is a rather fearsome falconer named Jamie Farrel, who fascinates her. There is also a Queen's Counsel called Marc Struthers, who defends her before the Medical Board. In addition, there is her ex-husband Jock, who appears and disappears offstage, and several other characters such as "Norman," whom we met in Chapter One.

There is romance, not only for Dr. Tina, but for Maggie Wainwright, her charming and witty secretary. There is terror in a wild ride across the roads of Essex. And, underlying the whole fabric of "Detective Sergeant Turner's Syndrome," is a study of psychological motives involved in the deaths. As a "dance of death," Sarah Kemp's style is anything but morbid. The texture is as bright as a sunlit curtain. The "nice" people are nice and the evil ones are almost nice too. Even "Norman" is nice when he is not about his "afternoon's work." We shall look forward to meeting Dr. Tina again.

—Richard & Karen La Porte

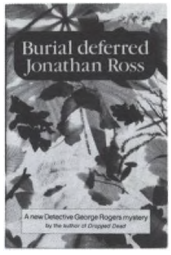
Wycliffe and the Four Jacks by W. J. Burley. New York: Doubleday, 1986. $12.95

If Superintendent Charles Wycliffe and his wife Helen were to vacation somewhere other than in part of his own police territory, they would have a peaceful fortnight in which to relax, sightsee, and do as they please. But, no, they pick a charming old town a mere fifty miles from home, and therefore Wycliffe is the senior officer on the spot when Celia Dawe is murdered. This is after the Superintendent learns that David Cleeve's life has been threatened. Cleeve, better known as the bestselling author Peter Stride, has been cheating on his wife Patricia, so it seems that she has become the innocent victim of an attack on Cleeve.

Cleeve is distinctly reticent about his early life. Even Patricia was in the dark when she married him after he established himself as an author. Wycliffe has the problem of sorting out the hidden ties. One is Cleeve's relationship to Kitson, the recluse who lives in a cottage on his land. Another is Prout, an archeologist who is conducting a dig in the field above Cleeve's house. And the third is Geoffrey Tull, an herbalist in the village who just happens to be Cleeve's brother-in-law. In addition, a local group known as the Celtic Society, led by a regal and violently intense Laura Wynn, is waging a campaign to stop the digging and blame Cleeve because it is on his land and he is financing it.

We enjoy Wycliffe and the gentle interplay with his wife, his subordinates, the victims, villains, and their associates. W. J. Burley must love Cornwall because he describes it so beautifully. We almost feel that we have been there with him. This, the latest of the Superintendent Wycliffe books, is well worth reading and gives us an intellectual puzzle to solve right along with him and his new Detective Sergeant Lucy Lane.

—Richard & Karen La Porte



Burial Deferred by Jonathan Ross. New York: St. Martin's, 1985. $12.95

A murderous attempt on his life lands Detective Superintendent George Rogers in the hospital with multiple injuries, including a nasty concussion. The knock on the head probably caused his amnesiac block, shrouding the events which led to his near fatal "accident."

Against doctor's orders, Rogers returns to duty and eventually to the scene of the crime, hoping to find something to jog his elusive memory. What might be a hastily abandoned burial site intrigues Rogers but does little to stir his memory. Then an ancient red brick mansion in a Gothic setting nearby, and the oddly assorted inhabitants of the household, lead Rogers to still another, possibly related, puzzle.

Is the disappearance of a young woman and her currently favored lover just a lark, or

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is something more sinister involved? When a corpse is washed ashore, the lodgers, now suspects, are less than co-operative. To Roger's mind, they are positively obstructionist – not necessarily because of the murder, but in order to cover up their own suspicious activities.

The maddeningly sensual Phaedra Haggar, proprietress of the bizarre establishment, proves to be a disturbing distraction to Rogers. Their relationship adds a tantalizing dimension to the tightly knit story, and with luck we have not seen the last of this unusual character.

Although the subplot is given rather short shrift, and the tale ends on a peculiar note that leaves the reader somewhat perplexed, the story is absorbing. Ross fans will not want to miss this one.

– Liz Tarpy

Under a Monsoon Cloud by H. R. F. Keating. New York: Viking, 1986. $15.95

The lovable Inspector Ganesh Ghote is back in his fourteenth mystery, *Under a Monsoon Cloud*.

Ghote is sent to a temporary post to take over the duties of one of his colleagues, who has taken ill. He is just in time for the yearly inspection of the station. Tiger Kelkar, a "no nonsense, everything has to be perfect man," does the inspection of the station. Kelkar is an archetypal character. He is much admired by Ghote. He is the man whom Ghote wishes he could be. This man whom Ghote hero-worships accidentally kills a sergeant, and Ghote help cover up the murder by assisting Kelkar in getting rid of the body. They are successful. They have good alibis. The incident is forgotten.

One year later, the family of the deceased begin to investigate the death. Inspector Tiger Kelkar commits suicide. Ghote may have to take the blame. What follows is the inner and outer conflict between Ghote and the inquiry into the murder. Should Ghote tell the truth and be a street-sweeper for the rest of his life, or should he lie and keep his job? Ghote asks Mrs. Vimala Ahmed, a "no nonsense, everything has to be perfect lawyer," to play his foil and defend him in his case. The trial keeps Ghote on the edge of his seat, and it kept me on the edge of mine.

H. R. F. Keating is a brilliant storyteller. No one will ever be able to imitate him or Inspector Ghote.

– Carl A. Melton

McGarr and the Legacy of a Woman Scorned by Bartholomew Gill. New York: Viking, 1986. $14.95

Every time I go to the public library or bookstore, I always ask the question, "Did the latest Martha Grimes novel arrive yet?" I have read everything by her, and I eagerly anticipate the next arrival. In the meantime, it is nice to be a late bloomer and discover an author for the first time who has plenty of books ready and waiting for you to read. When you encounter McGarr for the first time, you too will surely be hooked by him and will want to read the last six novels in the series.

Bartholomew Gill has created an engaging Irish detective named Peter McGarr, Chief Superintendent of the Garda (Irish police). While on vacation with his wife, Noreen, McGarr is called in to investigate the murder of Fionnuala Walton, who owns a well-established horse-breeding business. With the help of Noreen, he investigates into the past and present and discovers some shocking things going on in the horse-breeding world which lead to a second murder.

McGarr has a deep understanding of human nature. There are plenty of challenging twists and turns for McGarr to investigate, and he does it with a bold and true determination. Even if he does take a few nips too many from his whiskey flask.

– Carl A. Melton

Cozy

Murder in a Mummy Case by K. K. Beck. New York: Walker, 1986. $15.95

This innocuous little tale is a throwback to the simplistic mysteries of the 1920s, very similar to *The Bloodstained Egg-Cosy* and *The Affair of the Mutilated Mink Coat* by James Anderson several years ago. Through its token use of Egyptology and frequent talk of excavations and piecing together of pottery shards, it also evokes the spirit of Agatha Christie. But it is a very fleeting spirit indeed.

The narrator is Iris Cooper, a young co-ed from Stanford University, taking an Easter vacation at the home of her possibly-future-fiance, Clarence Brockhurst. (Once Easter is mentioned as the reason for the extended houseparty, the subject is never brought up again.) There is a nice assortment of odd guests in the house because Mrs. Brockhurst "collects" interesting people. Present are Madame Sarah, a medium (with Florence Smith, her maid, and Raymond Jones, her secretary). There is also Duke Boris, a White Russian who is rumored to have been a gigolo prior to the Revolution. The family includes Mr. Brockhurst, his business associate Mr. Leonard, Clarence's brother Henry, and precocious, obnoxious sixteen-year-old sister Bunny, currently working on her third secret engagement. The household staff includes (Charles) Chan, an impeccable butler who acts in a very mystifying manner. Finally, there is Jack Clancy – reporter for the San Francisco *Globe* and co-sleuth in Iris's previous adventure, *Death in a Deck Chair*.

Once the preliminaries are established, the plot moves on quickly to Madame Sarah's seance and the finding of a body in a mummy case that Clarence keeps in the attic. Iris and Jack soon establish themselves as the primary amateur detectives, much to Clarence's dismay. The police inefficiently set the cause of death as a heart attack, but a second death finally puts them on the murder trail. Iris and Jack both have the beginnings of good characters. If they are a bit flat right now, a few more adventures will probably be enough to flesh them out. In the meantime, this will do nicely.

– Fred Dueren

Let's Talk of Wills by Sarah J. Mason. New York: St. Martin's, 1985.

Feisty, cunning Kate Keepdown gathers her relatives together on the eve of her 90th birthday to announce the contents of her will. She blackmails the local doctor, solicitor, and Justice into helping her decide on the most deserving candidate to inherit her estate. Should it go to one of her nieces – timid Cicely or abrasive Marian – or to one of her late husband's nephews – mild-mannered Henry or blacksheep womanizer Gilbert? Also in attendance are the live-in nurse (Jane Nightwork!) and various servants (e.g., the cook – Alice Shortcake – ouch!). As would be expected in an English houseparty mystery, all are marooned by a flooding rainstorm, leaving the way open for schemes, assignations, and murder.

Although at times humorous and surprising, *Let's Talk of Wills* is riddled with far too many coincidences and red herrings (both prospective murderers and victims), and a detective who defines bland. The murder occurs late in the story, after a bounty of introductory material, and, always a disappointment, there is no possible way to guess the outcome, as the motive is revealed in the last pages of the book.

– Myrna Feldman

Political Suicide by Robert Barnard. New York: Scribner's, 1986. $13.95

The intricacies of British politics usually baffle voters on this side of the Atlantic, but Robert Barnard deftly steers the reader through a by-election and the death which causes it. When the body of Jim Partridge, Conservative M.P. for Bootham East, is fished out of the Thames, all parties sort through their candidate lists in preparation for the by-election to replace Partridge.

While all three candidates are stumping about the district, Superintendent Sutcliffe is patiently sifting through all aspects of Partridge's life, where he finds a few surprises. The fact that Partridge and Penelope had separated three months before the M.P.'s death only strengthens Sutcliffe's belief that suicide can be ruled out. Searching for political reasons for the death, Sutcliffe learns that Partridge was co-sponsor of a bill called the Animal Charter, which provided stringent protection for all domestic and wild animals. While all agree that the bill has no chance of being enacted into law, the resulting furor among hunters, research scientists, farmers, and many others amounts to political suicide and generates hate mail, all of which Sutcliffe tracks down.

The by-election is held, with surprising results, and Sutcliffe narrows his list of suspects to one particular person. Author Barnard's writing is, as usual, superb, and the satirical touches, which are his trademark,

add the final touch. This book is just too excellent to miss.

—Miriam L. Clark

Alibi for a Corpse by Elizabeth Lemarchand. New York: Walker, 1986. $14.95

After a discouraging run of bad luck, both financial and health-oriented, the Wainwrights' fortunes suddenly improve with an inheritance from Derek's Aunt Bertha, whom he has never met because of some ancient family feud. The estate includes a country home near Bridgeford, and the family sets out to inspect it, expecting to find a cozy cottage, but arrives instead at an ugly, yellow-brick Victorian house, completely stuffed with a lifetime's mementos, all carefully preserved by Aunt Bertha's longtime housekeeper, Nora Pearce. Derek and his wife Rachael agree that it must be sold, but the Wainwright twins, Clare and Philip, find the area a wonderful place to explore and meet their farmer neighbor, Reg Bickley of Twiggadon Farm, and have an unpleasant encounter with the eccentric Henry Stobart, who lives in Farm Cottage.

Several sections of the original Twiggadon Farm have been sold by its former alcoholic owner, including Henry's cottage and another called Watchers Way, now inhabited by the old Sybil Pendine, spiritualist and dispenser of herbal remedies. Another section of a field was sold to a junk-car operator, whose enterprise promptly failed, the derelict cars left to rust and, unfortunately, to conceal a skeleton. During their excited explorations, the twins make the horrifying discovery when they see an arm dangling from the boot of a car.

The local police are completely baffled, as there are no reports of missing persons and the lab can only give the vaguest of clues from the skeleton. The situation is not improved by the fact that the area around Bridgeford is a tourist favorite, and the death apparently occurred during the month of July in the previous year. The lab cannot even determine if the death were unnatural, but it is positive that the body of the young male was placed in the car after death.

Detective Superintendent Tom Pollard and Sergeant Gregory Toye of the CID are dispatched to Bridgeford to assist Inspector Crake with what appears to be an impossible assignment. The trail is already a year old, and, adding to the confusion, there has been a disastrous landslide and flood at Dincombe at approximately the same time as the murder. One body, that of a young man, remains unidentified for some time before a man named Bryce Twentyman arrives and verifies that the corpse is that of his half-brother, Stephen Finch.

Adding to the general frustration is the fact that the corpse would have to have been carried or carted to the derelict cars from the nearest road, yet none of the local residents admit to witnessing same, although the strange Sybil now concedes that she, as well as Henry, was in the vicinity at the time.

The result is a fascinating tale of police procedure, as Pollard and Toye backtrack and follow faint leads, sorting out the problem of the missing Steve Mullins, the identity of the Dincombe victim, and, more specifically, that of the skeleton in the junked car.

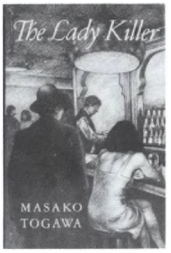
The American reader who is unfamiliar with Lemarchand's tightly plotted procedurals will be pleased to hear, after enjoying *Alibi for a Corpse*, that more are in store.

—Miriam L. Clark

Thriller

The Lady Killer by Masako Togawa. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1986. $15.95

This is an intricate psychological mystery in which single women are stalked, then murdered—yet the killer's motives remain obscured. The trail begins to lead to Mr. Honda, a ladies' man who specializes in one-night stands. All of the murder victims were also "victims" of Mr. Honda's seductions.



Mr. Honda feels a trap closing in on him, yet is powerless to stop it. Upon his arrest, his attorney believes in his innocence and attempts to unravel the web that shrouds the real killer.

The victims are sympathetically portrayed. The murderer's motives are believable and compelling, once revealed. The only drawback is that Mr. Honda is such a disgusting character that the reader is not readily anxious to have him exonerated. Otherwise, this is a fascinating suspense story.

—Gloria Maxwell

The Vanishers by Donald Hamilton. New York: Fawcett-Gold Medal, 1986. $3.50

Donald Hamilton has achieved another sterling coup with *The Vanishers*, the twenty-third in his bestselling Matt Helm series. The emphasis this time out, however, is noticeably different, accented on a more personal level from that in *The Detonators* (1985), the definitive Matt Helm novel.

Where *The Detonators* represents a culmination of the series' overall themes, *The Vanishers* elicits a more realistic tone when Helm learns that numerous celebrated figures have disappeared for no apparent reason—and that Mac, his shadowy intelligence chief, is in danger of becoming the next target.

The Vanishers emerges as the most complex Helm thriller since *The Annihilators* (1983), which is effectively recalled at the climax of this latest entry, involving the mystery surrounding the wife of a prominent scientist who has disappeared. After completing a mission in Mexico, Helm is assigned to ally with the woman in question, Astrid Watrous, who has recovered from a baffling heart disease. The trail leads from Maryland to Helm's native Scandinavia, where his seemingly inflexible convictions, personal and professional, are seriously challenged. For once, the customary global theme has been deleted from the Helm storyline. Using Astrid Watrous and Karin Segerby (a treacherous *femme fatale* who may have induced Astrid's cardiac condition) as narrative focal points, Hamilton creates an entertaining and provocative evaluation of Matt Helm after 26 years of lethal government service. On all levels, *The Vanishers* develops as the most personal Matt Helm book since the first in the series, *Death of a Citizen* (1960). Simply stated, Helm has come full circle.

An enigmatic Scandinavian village, some twisted family intrigues, a possible Soviet double, and a fanatical peace organization fit into the intricately crafted webs of *The Vanishers*.

Perhaps the most striking departure is Hamilton's reshaped depiction of Mac. Since

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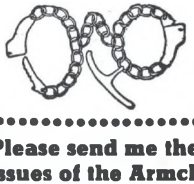

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1960, Helm's intelligence mogul has been portrayed as a ruthlessly methodical, inaccessible spymaster, protected by the formidable bastions of Washington power and globe-spanning influence. In *The Vanishers*, however, Mac is threatened with the fate he has coldly passed on to countless victims throughout the series. This mood is hauntingly contrasted with the author's presentation of the agency besieged by questionable candidates, paralyzing budget cuts aimed at the intelligence community, and an ominous inter-agency crisis. All in all, Hamilton has dramatically and effectively conveyed the darkening crises which Washington faces today in both the economic and intelligence sectors. To complement this theme, Hamilton incorporates Helm's intelligence nemesis of recent years, Bennett, into the taut proceedings.

Costa Verde President Ricardo Jiminez, who figured in *The Annihilators* (with family links dating back to the classic *The Ambushers*, 1963), plays a crucial role in the book's final segments, fusing all of the book's diverse elements.

In terms of characterizations, *The Vanishers* frequently recalls the early books, *Death of a Citizen* (1960) and *Murderers' Row* (1962) (shadowy villains). But the hypnotic Scandinavian locales of *The Vanishers* provide the strongest link to the series' origins, evoking *The Wrecking Crew* (1960), Helm's first official assignment for the agency of the same name, after his harrowing "re-entry" into espionage in *Death of a Citizen*.

The Vanishers supports the recent books as well, aside from the appearance of President Jiminez, with the inclusion of Doug Barnett, the focal point of *The Detonators*. The veteran agent assumes command of the agency in the thick of its menacing crisis.

Although the typical Helm interests of gun and photographic lore are played down in *The Vanishers*, this book signifies something of a catharsis for Matt Helm. It will be intriguing to see what transpires from the multi-faceted pen of Donald Hamilton beyond *The Vanishers*, for a new Matt Helm has emerged from these pages.

– Andy East

A Dark-Adapted Eye by Barbara Vane. New York: Bantam, 1986. $14.95

Bantam Books make no secret of the fact that this excellent novel is actually the work of Ruth Rendell, writing under a pseudonym, as the present novel is entirely apart from her well-known series.

The story is told by Faith Longley Severn, whose aunt, Vera Longley Hillyard, was hanged for murder in 1950. Both the crime and the trial and execution were a severe shock to the entire Longley family, both driving them apart in one sense and sealing them together in another in an effort to forget that it ever happened.

But now, in the 1980s, a journalist is approaching members of the family, asking for assistance with a book about the sensational case, which he is about to write. He sends a few chapters to Faith, asking for corrections and such additions to the whole story that she can provide. Reading them, Faith realizes that this is not intended as a work designed to thrill the public but is a serious study. She herself was not a witness to the murder, but she was intricately involved in the events that gradually led up to it, and she is forced to remember a past which she has buried in her mind. She hopes that somehow she can persuade the author, whom she meets and recognizes as a decent man, not to go through with his project.

The words that best describe this account that starts with Faith's grandparents are "richness" and "suspense." (I cannot agree with the designation "psychological thriller" that I have seen. The atmosphere is brooding, in a sense, but this is not a *Psycho* type of story.)

Faith's recollections are interspersed with her meetings with surviving family members today, so that we see what has become of them. They are not exactly likable, but it is impossible not to sympathize with them. Both approaches reveal the heart of a family whose members were beset with illusions, obsessions, secret loves and hates, and growing resentments – all concealed not only from outsiders but to a large extent from each other. Especially vivid are the portraits of Vera Hillyard's two sons, Francis and Jamie (the latter a child at the time), both of whom changed their names after the murder.

Although there is no mystery about the crime itself (we know it is coming from the first page), it still comes as a surprise at the actual moment of occurrence. And, at the end, a vital mystery still remains for the reader to give his own solution.

Here is a completely believable, impeccably worked-out novel that conceals its art and comes across as valid in every respect. It will reward reading and re-reading.

– Robert A. W. Lowndes

Veil by George C. Chesbro. New York: The Mysterious Press, 1986. $16.95

In many ways, Veil Kendry is a unique thriller protagonist. Born with brain damage that gave him preternatural psychic powers which had helped make him a legendary warrior in Vietnam, he turns to the life of the painter. He sells images from his extra-worldly dreams and works as an unofficial "street detective," who, in Travis McGee fashion, takes payment in kind from those "nobody else would pay any attention to."

While in temporary residence at a high-powered research institute which is doing work on "near death" studies, Veil is nearly assassinated. The double mystery is: who is behind this nasty business? and what really goes on at the Institute, where people with near-death experiences – Lazarus People – recite their histories of aborted trips to a kind of waiting room at the gate to heaven?

There are also ways in which Veil is not unique. Veil has a war record and personal combat skills that can only be described as Rambotic. At forty, he can be tortured, chased, drugged, sent halfway to heaven and back in the space of three or four days, and still leap from his near-deathbed to struggle with assassins and spies. There is a strange kind of character inflation setting in these days, even in books of considerable merit such as *Veil*, so that everyone is the highest example of his/her category whether it be beauty, guts, or menace.

Once you get past character inflation, there is much to enjoy in *Veil*. Parallel to its rather pedestrian spy plot, there is a far more interesting story of the Lazarus experience. This is inner-space travel to those realms that artists, writers, and theologians have always said were there. Veil Kendry may not work out as a series character, if that is what Chesbro has in mind, but the possibilities are there for him to send his hero into imaginative places and situations not often visited by P.I.s and secret agents. Chesbro has injected fascinating moral and existential questions into his plot without surrendering the traditional elements of suspense and action.

– Robert Sandels

Mr. Yesterday by Elliott Chaze. New York: Scribner's, 1984. $12.95

My first experience with an Elliott Chaze crime novel left me both intrigued and repelled. After several years of brooding over his appeal, I tried another. *Mr. Yesterday* is a compelling blend of macabre humor and startling insights into human frailty. A caution to the reader, however. Raw language and explicit sex predominate.

Kiel St. James, editor of the *Catherine Call*, a small Southern newspaper, has frequently assisted detective chief Orson

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Boles in crime probes during their twenty-year relationship. The latest puzzle is the questionable death of eccentric Elizabeth Cole. Senility was slipping up on poor old Elizabeth. Why else would she drive her dead nephew around for three days in her ancient Packard and then pull into a Burger King and try to stuff a cheeseburger into the dead man's mouth? Later, she apparently fell from a short stepladder while trying to change a lightbulb in a ceiling fixture twelve feet above the ground. The lady in question was vocally opposed to the possibility of the Pimm Salt Dome south of town being selected as a nuclear waste dumping site.

St. James assigns Briscoe Risk, a down-and-out newsman, to the nuke-waste story in the hope of establishing a connection with the elderly lady's death. Events accelerate when Risk is severely beaten and the body of Elizabeth Cole's sister is found with puncture wounds in her chest from what appears to be a small goat. (Chaze has a penchant for unusual murder weapons.) The dénouement results in a chilling cat-and-mouse game in the depths of the test shaft. When all is said and done, a link between the murderer and the victim indicates that it took too long to identify the villain, but the journey has been so engrossing that you do not really mind.

Chaze's prose is believable, often hilarious, but it is appalling to realize that he is talking about moral depravity. He writes with such convincing candor, however, that the reader feels less guilty about his own peccadillos.

Elliott Chaze is an acquired taste, but beware – he can easily become an addiction.

– Liz Tarpy

Any Man's Death by Loren D. Estleman. New York: The Mysterious Press, 1986. $15.95

The third Peter Macklin novel finds the Detroit hit man in a mid-life crisis. He has just moved back into his house, having purchased it for $60,000 from his ex-wife. His violent life has brought him few lasting material rewards. ("He was forty years old and the house was everything he owned, that and last year's green Camaro parked in the driveway.") His son Roger, a former heroin addict who hates Macklin, is now embarking on a career as a seventeen-year-old contract killer. Despite (because of ?) his filial antipathy, he is determined to carry on the family tradition. Macklin lacks wealth and love and is beginning to lose confidence in himself. ("He was forty and his reflexes were not what they had been.") But Macklin is a survivor; as a middle-aged freelance hit man, he is analogous to Richard Stark's career thief, Parker. Strangely, though Macklin's way of life is even more avowedly violent than Parker's, he has roots and while cold-blooded is not entirely amoral.

Any Man's Death finds Macklin embroiled in a war between aging Mafia chieftains Michael Boniface and Charles Maggiore. Retained for $20,000 by Boniface and his dangerous, ambitious henchman Picante, Macklin also has a personal stake: Maggiore has brought Roger Macklin into his current line of work. Macklin would like to eliminate Maggiore without hurting his gigantic bodyguard Gordy, but the assignment is not easy for a middle-aged man. Complicating matters further are subplots involving the Reverend Thomas Aquinas Sunsmith, an enormous black man with gubernatorial aspirations. The Reverend, a former musician currently masterminding a type of pyramid financial empire, might have stepped from the pages of a Chester Himes novel. Carmen Thalberg, a former entertainer cum hooker who widowed herself into a $16,000,000 fortune, is a victim of the Reverend's financial schemes and hires Macklin to extract revenge while recouping her losses. These plot intricacies are tied together by Police Inspector George Pontier, who views the whole mess as a dispute over the prospect of legalized Detroit gambling, with its ramifications for the financial future of the warring mobsters and the political hopes of Sunsmith.

Estleman, a master of hardboiled form and dialogue as evidenced by his Amos Walker novels, chooses a far less sympathetic protagonist in his Macklin series. That he nonetheless succeeds in creating suspense is a tribute to his updating/relocating of traditional fare. While the gritty violence is occasionally obtrusive, it is redeemed by the intricate plotting. Next time, perhaps, Estleman will incorporate the stylized descriptions of the Walker series; if he does, there will be no stopping him.

– Bert Eccles

The Romanov Connection by William M. Green. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 1984. $3.50

This is the story of a daring attempt to free imprisoned Tsar Nicholas II and his family during the 1917-18 Bolshevik Revolution. We follow the life of a crippled World War I hero, Lord Charles Aldonby, Romanov royal cousin, and his group of brave (or foolish) adventurers. They capture a Russian gunboat, ride horseback over ice and snow to the rescue, and carry off the Romanovs toward Vladivostok.

The story is carefully and systematically developed in London and St. Petersburg, in Siberian Tobolsk, in Moscow and other Russian cities during the White vs. Red civil war. We see city streets in revolutionary tumult, with peasants and workers believing that prosperity for all is at hand in spite of long bread lines, and such persons as Georgi Borodnev, sadistic Western District internal security chief, in powerful positions. Other leading characters are the Tsar's lovely daughters, the nubile nineteen-year-old Nadia Demanova, Bolshevik spy, and the swashbuckling Lars Dahlgreen, Oslo merchant sea-captain. Adroitly weaving the story threads together, Green brings us to the climactic abduction, the chase by horseback, sleigh, and rail, and the final days of reckoning.

The book reads rather like fictionalized history, since it builds its story around an accurate recital of facts. Several historically prominent figures play small parts – Lloyd George, Nicholas, Lenin, Alexander Kerensky, and even Britain's youthful naval hero, Mountbatten. Suspense is maintained until the last few pages, and the final secret of all, which enables us to classify the work as espionage if we wish, is kept until the final page.

While unquestionably an able effort, the book should not be confused with a spy or mystery novel. It moves quietly and is essentially a well-written, short, historical adventure story with a couple of romances added. Character development is adequate, plotting skillful. For clearer understanding, however, it needs a map and a list of characters.

– John F. Harvey

Anthology

Little Tales of Misogyny by Patricia Highsmith. New York: The Mysterious Press, 1986. $15.95

As the title indicates, this book is a collection of sharp, biting indictments of women. The author's theme is the destructive quality which women have over men – innocently wrought or with knowing spite. This destructiveness is sometimes personally fatal to the woman as well.

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Some stories are macabre, such as "The Hand," wherein the prospective groom actually receives the hand of the woman he loves after asking for her hand in marriage. Others are tongue-in-cheek fun—"Oona, the Jolly Cave Woman": "It was not necessary to club Oona to have her, but that was the custom. . ."

In some cases, the titles alone give an adequate preview of what is in store: "The Breeder," "The Fully-Licensed Whore, or The Wife," "The Prude," "The Victim." In all, seventeen tales of sparkling satire.

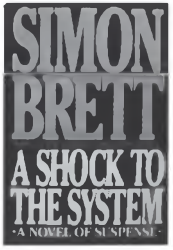
This book will not be for everyone, and the reader who tends to be squeamish or easily shocked is hereby warned to beware. But for he who is brave enough, or daring enough, to pick up this jewel, a definite reading treat is in store. Highsmith is truly a master of her storytelling craft and bold enough to tell it as it really is—in a unique, pulsating manner.

—Gloria Maxwell

General

A Shock to the System by Simon Brett. New York: Dell, 1987. $3.50

Success has always come easily to Graham Marshall: excellent grades, an attractive wife, a promising career in the personnel department of an international oil company. Graham has always expected his success to continue; he is sure he will replace the departing department head. But, when he is passed over for the job in favor of a younger man, Graham begins to re-evaluate his entire life. He begins to think that all his success has been a lie, all his work a waste of time.



While on his way home after a night of drinking with the departing department head and the man's replacement, Graham is followed by an old beggar asking for money. As they walk across a bridge, the beggar says to Graham, "I only have to look at you to see you're a success." Graham loses control of himself. He smashes the beggar over the head with his umbrella handle and dumps the body in the river.

For the next few weeks, Graham is seized by moments of panic over the thought of being caught, though he feels no guilt for his actions. As time goes on, and it becomes obvious that he has gotten away with the crime, Graham's feelings begin to change. The murder gives him a feeling of pride, and of power.

The Marshalls have purchased a new house, assuming Graham will be promoted. When the promotion does not come through, Graham feels financial pressure for the first time in years. He discovers that, according to his insurance policy, if either he or his wife Merrily should die, the insurance company will pay off the mortgage.

Graham has been increasingly dissatisfied with Merrily and with family life in general. That, combined with the financial considerations, gives him motivation for killing his wife. Besides, he has already gotten away with one murder. Why shouldn't he be able to do it again? "Thanks to the old man on Hammersmith Bridge, [Graham] had no doubts about his capabilities. He had committed murder. He had gone the distance."

A Shock to the System is a departure for Simon Brett, who usually writes detective stories featuring actor Charles Paris. This book is a brilliant character study of a classic sociopath. Graham has no emotional ties to anyone, including his family, and feels no guilt about his crimes. For Graham, murder is just a tool to get what he wants, and it is a tool he uses several times during the course of the book.

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The plot is tightly constructed, with a suitably ironic ending. *A Shock to the System* may be a departure for Brett, but it is a successful departure.

– David L. Myers

Advent of Dying by Sister Carol Anne O'Marie. New York: Delacorte, 1986. $14.95

"Get thee to a nunnery." The murder of the secretary to Sister Mary Helen prompts the old girl to get involved in another murder investigation. Another, you say . . . Her entry role was in *Novena for Murder*, the first book by Sister Carol Anne O'Marie, a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in San Francisco, the setting for our story. It is a pre-Christmas investigation, one with all the holiday rush and spirit, the Bay Area fog, and the twists and turns of a good mystery.

Sister Mary Helen, septuagenarian and mystery reader herself, is again working with the police duo of Kate Murphy and Dennis Gallagher, two interesting characters in their own right. Gallagher's appreciation of the Sister's involvement goes like this: "And that nun again." Kate Murphy has a closer and more positive view, while coping with a recent marriage, an involved mother-in-law, and the working-wife woes. Further character development occurs with the other sisters at the Mount St. Francis College for Women and the apartment dwellers where the murder took place. Of particular interest is Sister Eileen, the librarian, who trys to keep Sister Mary Helen out of trouble and often winds up stealing many of the scenes.

A variety of clues are presented, frustrating and challenging the reader to pull it all together. Sister Mary Helen's clever analyses lead the reader to numerous questions and answers, and the sister's practical efforts to cause her to become an unsuspecting prey.

Advent of Dying is an amusing and interesting mystery, filled with a variety of humor, Biblical homilies, and quotes and expressions. It also contains a believable and refreshing pathos that grabs the reader and makes one feel for the murdered victim, for the trials and tribulations of a nun, and for the hope of a solution to the murder before the holidays.

– Dustin A. Peters

Blood Test by Jonathan Kellerman. New York: Signet, 1986. $4.50

Blood Test is the sequel to Jonathan Kellerman's Edgar-winning *When the Bough Breaks*. Once again, child psychologist Alex Delaware and his friend, homicide detective Milo Sturgis, are in the middle of a case involving a child.

Five-year-old Woody Swope is being treated at the Western Pediatric Medical Center in Los Angeles for a curable form of cancer. When Woody's parents refuse treatment, the boy's physician, Dr. Melendez-Lynch, calls in Alex to try and change their minds. Before Alex can meet with the parents, Woody is kidnapped from the hospital. Melendez-Lynch suspects that the Touch, a cult with a commune in La Vista, the Swopes' agricultural community, are involved, since two members of the Touch have visited Woody in the hospital. Melendez-Lynch also suspects Augie Valcroix, his clinical Fellow, an aging flower child who has visited the Touch's commune.

Halfway through the book, the Swopes case changes from missing person to murder. From then on, there is one twist after another as the plot races to its conclusion. At the climax, the surprises come at a dizzying rate; I counted ten revelations in the last fifty pages. In the end, everything ties together to present a chilling portrait of greed, fear, and madness.

Blood Test has the same strengths as *When the Bough Breaks:* a complex, but logical, plot; strong characterizations; flashes of wit and psychological insight; and a likable hero. If anything, *Blood Test* is even better than *When the Bough Breaks*. In the first book, Kellerman occasionally became sidetracked. We learned much more about some of the minor characters than was necessary for the parts they played in the plot. In *Blood Test*, all the characters are fleshed out, without losing sight of the plot.

Blood Test proves that *When the Bough Breaks* was no fluke. Jonathan Kellerman is very good, and a new Alex Delaware novel is an event worth waiting for.

– David L. Myers

The Five Million Dollar Prince by Michael Butterworth. Doubleday, 1986. $12.95

Michael Butterworth is England's answer to Donald Westlake, with hapless heroes and outrageous scams. His latest side-splitting venture features one Horace Bunbury, whose fortunes have fallen upon evil times, until he has the dubious honor of meeting Thomas O'Leary, late of the Irish Guards, a man of many talents.

Bunbury's history includes attendance at Oxford, where all goes well until he falls into the clutches of the seductive Periwinkle Dawson, who persuades him to turn over a large sum of money and set up a joint checking account, and then leaves him literally at the altar, while scampering off with Bunbury's best friend and his worldly goods. Like many a jilted suitor before him, Horace turns to drink and shuffles through a series of unsuccessful jobs, finally fetching up as a tour guide for Scott and Lloyds, who cater to the well-heeled.

On what proves to be his last stint as a guide, Bunbury has a rich Texan, George G. Sawtry, in his flock. When the group tours the Prince Albert National Memorial, the American is so struck by its enormity and questionable taste that he tells Bunbury he would gladly part with $5,000,000 to be able to transport it to his Texas parkland. George G. and the Albert Memorial mean very little to Horace, though, during the next three months, which he spends in the hospital while his broken leg knits and he, incidentally, dries out. Horace has made the tipsy mistake of trying to stop traffic with an imperious gesture and has been shoveled up and over by a little red car.

Clutching £5 and wearing his second-hand suit, Bunbury finds lodgings in a men's dormitory after his release from the hospital. The gentleman occupying the cot next to his is the enterprising Thomas O'Leary, who promptly devises emergency plans to alter their present circumstances. Immediate action involves a successful racing bet and the redemption of a pawned cabin trunk, and the two unlikely conspirators are on their way to bigger things. When Bunbury casually mentions his employment as tour guide and Mr. Sawtry's interest in the Albert Memorial, O'Leary now has a definite mark, as the Texan is presently in London with his new, seventh, bride and entourage.

Among the treasures in O'Leary's enormous cabin trunk is a miniature printing press, and the next step taken by the con men is an authentic-looking invitation sent to George Sawtry, to attend an auction of the coveted Albert Memorial. To be held at a very discreet London Hotel, the auction will be the feature of an evening of drinks, food, music, and the promise of Royalty in attendance. Sawtry, nobody's fool, sends his head henchman, Tex Manacle, to scout the authenticity of the Crown Agents, who allegedly extended the invitation, and Tex duly reports them to be very dull fellows.

The nimble maneuverings of the con men following the auction carries the story through more complications and hilarity. Little matters such as the arrival of Mrs. Sawtry's undivorced first husband, Darkie Todd's demise in O'Leary's bed, and then a final twist caused by the charming ex-Guardsman, keep the plot rolling along and the reader howling. The reader who enjoyed *The Man in the Sopwith Camel* will already appreciate Butterworth, and this adventure will definitely bring him new fans.

– Miriam L. Clark

The Vines of Ferrara by Carolyn Coker. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1986. $14.95

Carolyn Coker's second novel is not a mystery, although there are several deaths in it, one of which is a murder. It is not really a novel of suspense, either, as the title page claims, lacking even enough suspense to sustain a short-short. It may best be described as an educational romance.

Andrea Perkins, a noted American art conservator, is retained by Count Geoffredo Gonzaga, ostensibly to restore a set of

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beautiful tarot cards which have been in his family's castle for centuries. His major interest, however, is in the beauteous Andrea, who, he hopes, will become his wife.

A servant is accidentally killed in the first chapter, and two more accidental killings occur at the three-quarter mark, but none of these deaths has anything to do with the murder. This we first hear about six pages before the book ends, when it is mentioned offhandedly by the murderer.

The novel is full of people who have nothing to do with the question of who did what to whom and who seem to have been brought in only to keep the covers of the book an acceptable distance apart. There is no detection, no mystery, no puzzle, and practically no suspense. What we have instead are long lectures on tarot cards and Lucrezia Borgia, and some discussions of reincarnation, primogeniture, and expressionist painting. *The Vines of Ferrara* might fare better considered as a romance novel; it would not take much rewriting to turn it into a successful TV movie.

– Herbert Resnicow

The Woman in the Moon by Donald Lehmkuhl. New York: Doubleday, 1986. $12.95

This is a story of desperation: that of a woman married to a man she does not love, with a child she does not understand, facing a professional crisis; the desperation of a man convinced that his wife has never loved him as he loves her; the desperation of a detective inspector who, having failed to solve his last two cases, fears forced retirement; and the desperation of a police sergeant who is so young and innocent-appearing that no one will give weight to his ideas.

Zena Baird, advice columnist for *Eve*– "The Magazine for Women Who Won't Take It Lying Down"– receives a letter from a woman whose lover has told her a secret and who will just die if she cannot confide in someone. She asks for an appointment, but, before Zena can respond, a woman's body is found at the end of Barnes Common, where Zena lives. Zena, facing mounting bills, the possible loss of her column, and the publisher's rejection of her latest book (and the demand of the return of a $5,000 advance), believes she can write a bestseller about this victimized woman and she sets out to investigate the life and death of Gladys Barker. When another woman, rumored to be Zena's replacement at *Eve*, is found dead in the Common, strangled as was Gladys, the police suspect Zena. Now her search for Gladys's killer becomes a driving imperative, for more than a book is at stake: Zena's freedom, perhaps her life, depends upon her discoveries. Her search leads her into the worlds of lesbians, nymphomaniacs, and drug users, worlds so very different from the upper-middle-class calm and respectability of Barnes Common.

The characters here are not especially attractive, although they are at times compelling. Zena is, especially through the first third of the book, an abrasive feminist, rude and waspish; she does become more moderate as the novel progresses, although one suspects that this is because she now has something other than herself to think about. Detective Inspector Grout, on the other hand, while displaying some wry humor in the opening chapters, becomes progressively more unpleasant, singleminded, even hysterical.

Lehmkuhl has created a mystery with a social voice, although not of the caliber to be found in the mysteries of Sjowal and Wahlöö. Here we find a story which pulls back the mask of the "normal" world and reveals a world too many people prefer to ignore, one which shows "human depravity in all its rich raiment." Lehmkuhl is a poet, and language such as this reveals his love of words. The story is textured with metaphor and simile which give surprising glimpses into the ordinary; language such as "drift of dishes" allows us to experience the characters' own reactions to the world.

This is not a comfortable story. It is often disturbing, at times distasteful. The clues are, however, neatly inserted and not too obvious, and enough are misleading so that the reader is kept intrigued by the mystery. The reader who does read mysteries in order to be comfortable will find this one worth reading.

– Krystan V. Douglas

The Killer Breath by John Wyllie. Academy Chicago, 1986. $4.95

In the 1970s, John Wyllie wrote several mysteries featuring Dr. Samuel Quarshie. Originally published in hardcover in 1979, *The Killer Breath* is the first of a planned series to be reissued by Academy Chicago.

The setting and the characters are exotic and colorfully depicted. Quarshie is a pathologist and general practitioner in a small West African town. His wife, Prudence, is a nurse/midwife. They have an adopted son, Arimi, who is twelve years old, small for his age, and almost steals the show.

At the beginning of the book, Quarshie is approached by Mrs. Artson-Eskill, Q.C. and asked if he will try to find her missing daughter, a student at the local university. The search leads to a football player, a university professor, a faith healer, and finally to Murder Mountain, which Wyllie states in the beginning of the book really exists. The rest of the setting, though accurately represented, is fictional. On Murder Mountain, there is a terrifyingly spooky Rat Cave (also real, according to Wyllie), and there the climactic action of the book takes place. Because Arimi is on holiday from school, he does a lot of the legwork for Quarshie, but even Prudence is roped in for her share. All ends well, with the people safe who should be, and the loose ends of the plot neatly (but not tritely) tied together.

This is a delightfully entertaining novel. The setting comes alive with Wyllie's vivid descriptions. The characters flow off the page and into the mind of the reader, becoming real people. The action is brisk and exciting. Wyllie's writing style is smooth, almost folklorish in places, and adds to the overall enjoyment of the book.

Although the other Quarshie novels are currently out of print, I was able to find three of them in my local public library. For anyone who enjoys *The Killer Breath*, others in the series will be a treat as well.

– Alice Christiansen

Dead Giveaway by Simon Brett. New York: Scribner's, 1986. $13.95

Simon Brett's latest Charles Paris novel hones in on the manic world of TV game shows. London's West End Television is making a pilot show of a *Dialing for Dollars/ $64,000 Question* clone, and the mindless idea for this program has been imported from America, where its authors, Aaron Greenberg and Dirk van Henke, have dubbed it *Hats Off*. The British executive producer, John Mantle, has cavalierly retitled the show *If the Cap Fits*, and the Americans at first are incensed because their idea has been tampered with, then mollified by an explanation of the British idiom (the American equivalent would be *If the Shoe Fits*) and then incensed by W.E.T.'s going ahead with the new title despite their subsequent objections when they learn that "cap" in British can mean "diaphragm" in American.

Charles Paris, ever weary and ever accomodating, witnesses much of this wrangling first-hand, because Maurice, his agent, has landed him a part as one of the "professions" on *If the Cap Fits*, where the premise is that the mystery guests, the "professions," all wear hats that do not fit their real careers, and the celebrities and contestants get to try different hats on the different mystery guests and speculate as to who is who. Charles lands the part of "actor" because, according to Maurice, the show's producers "rang me up to see if I'd got any actors on my books who the public were very unlikely to have seen." Charles weathers this insult, as well as numerous others at W.E.T., from the put-downs he receives from the receptionist and publicity types to the lack of time he is given to obtain a suitable number of drinks before the pilot is due to be taped. The former Charles takes in stride, as he has in earlier Simon Brett novels (as an out-of-work actor, he is the artsy equivalent of the constantly underemployed American private

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investigator), but the latter demands decisive action. When he receives only one gin-and-tonic from the bar before his make-up call comes, Charles takes a few nips of gin from the host's "special" glass at the podium, the one which TV personality Barrett Doran always needs at the finale, when the contestant last to be eliminated gets a chance at the grand prize. As Doran jovially says, seconds before he drinks the cyanide substituted in his glass, "Dear, oh dear, the excitement's too much for me. Need a drink of water to calm me down."

Dead Giveaway proves to be quite entertaining, acid-flavored reading but not quite up to Brett at his best, although Charles Paris continues his slide through life, interspersed with jobs, drinks, the occasional lover, and the reluctant but constant wife. Where *Dead Giveaway* proves disappointing is that the murder weapon is so obviously contrived: cyanide in a TV studio, even if the adjoining stage is being used for a discussion of criminal methods, is still stretching things, even if actors *are* quirky. Brett asks the reader to believe the possible—game show hosts sipping gin instead of water on camera—as well as the far-fetched idea that the host of *Method in their Murders* would feel the need to be absolutely verisimilitudinous and bring cyanide, "beloved of detective-story writers, though significantly less popular with real murderers," onto his soundstage. Still, all in all, less than stellar Simon Brett nevertheless manages to be better than the best of most contemporary writers, since Brett's intelligent writing style, eye for comedy and irony, and long view of humanity always guarantee an out-of-the-ordinary mystery selection.

—Susan L. Clark

Play Melancholy Baby by John Daniel. Menlo Park, Calif.: Perseverance Press, 1986. $7.95

Casey is a low-key musician who plays the piano at a bar in Morrow Bay. To his amazement, a dusky beauty named Dixie Arthur makes a trip to this hole-in-the-wall bar to request his services as a private investigator. Casey tries to impress Dixie with the fact that he is in no way, shape, or form a P.I. Yet Casey is intrigued enough by Dixie's proposition to help locate her daughter, especially when he recognizes Dixie as a torch singer and piano player from days gone by—and even more so when he realizes that her missing daughter is the same Molly with whom he has had a summer fling in Europe three years earlier.

The caper escalates when a body is discovered floating in the Arthurs' hot tub—the body of an obnoxious piano player who knew why Molly has run away from home.

Each chapter is a song title evocative of the era to which Daniel pays homage in this sprightly, stylish mystery. The pace is brisk, but not so brisk that the reader cannot stop to sniff the California countryside along the way.

—Gloria Maxwell

The Party Killer by Hugh Pentecost. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1985. $14.95

Larry Levine, aging song-and-dance superstar, opens a fabulous vacation resort. For the occasion, he invites his four ex-wives, who are famous in their own right. After the gala opening, Larry's cottage is blown up and the remains of two bodies found. When Larry turns up alive with an explanation of how he had loaned the cottage to one of his ex-wives, the question becomes, who was the real object of the homicide? Who would want to murder Larry, since he does not have any enemies? If the object were the ex-wife, how had anyone known she was there? What happened to Larry after the investigation started? How did he get off the grounds of the resort with the police on guard? And why?

Julian Quist happens to be the public relations man for the resort, so the investigation is in good hands. Quist has solved fourteen other mysteries. Even so, he is one of Pentecost's least memorable heroes. But Pentecost knows how to keep the reader off balance and how to turn out a slick product. If at the end there have been no real surprises or innovations, the reader knows he has been in the hands of a top craftsman.

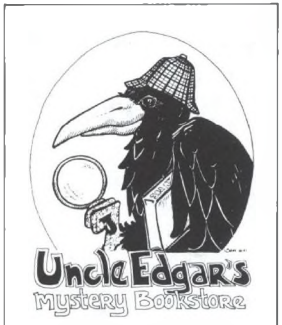
—Joe Coffey

Flawless Execution by John Logue. New York: Ballantine, 1986. $2.95

With short, journalistic sentences, John Logue sits the reader down in Joe Bar, where New York bonhomie and "regulars" gather—there is even a cat named "Doc." John Morris, sportswriter, and his love and partner in detection, Julia Sullivan, engage in sophisticated repartee reminiscent of Hammett's *The Thin Man*, drink dry martinis, and watch football games at Joe Bar. Much more to the point, they watch and listen to George Hoagland, the sportscaster whom everybody loves to hate. He also strikes a familiar note. From here on there is no more *déjà vu*. As Morris, Sullivan, and others watch Hoagland, there is a burst of fire around his neck, chaos in the press box, and electrocution has stopped Hoagland from ever saying anything more.

Investigation reveals the (1) Hoagland was going to make a startling statement at half-time, (2) his headset had been fixed to electrocute, and (3) only someone who knew electronics could have done this expert job. The author has developed an ingenious method of murder and goes into some detail about the wiring and expertise needed for its success, but I suspect that only another electrician will find it interesting. Perhaps that is because the pace seems to depend more on the romance, sex, martinis, daiquiris, and their partakers, Morris and Sullivan. There is an interesting story here, but Logue does not exploit the possibilities of it. It centers around three men who grew up together from childhood. Garland O'Barr, "rich, nasty, pushy kid from the time he was ten," is now the head of the NBS television network. George Hoagland, always able to outtalk O'Barr, even take his school sweetheart away and marry her, was the big draw on the network. The third man is Eddie Walters, now program director and all-around "go-fer" from way back.

The question comes up in the book and even more so in the reader's mind: Why would anybody want to kill Hoagland?—as hated as he might have been, he made money for everyone and was a valuable commodity. There are also those who love Hoagland, namely his wife and his mistress, but these are very unexplored personalities. The police, in the persons of Hatfield and Hitchcock, are cardboard figures and seem to be present only as a courtesy. In addition to all this, one is frustrated by the greatest sin of the mystery writer, which is to have the detecting protagonists in on something not given to the reader. Morris has one of those sudden insights which he mentions to the police and



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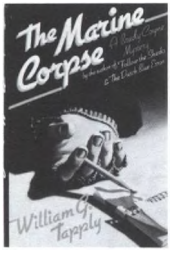
to his cohort Sullivan – but the reader is left with dots on the page.

One of the best parts of the book has to do with a stamp collection, and oddly enough this educative bit moves the action along. Aside from the cleverness of the murder technique, Logue has a snappy dialogue style and one senses that the potential for a better production is there. Characters need to be explored in greater depth and interaction between them used to reveal the conflict – and to cause the reader to care what happens.

– Maria Brolley

The Marine Corpse by William G. Tapply. New York: Scribner's, 1986. $13.95

The Boston police are not overly concerned with the discovery of a wino's frozen body in an alley. But, when his fingerprints establish his relationship to powerful Senator Woodhouse, the medical examiner takes a closer look and discovers a puncture wound in his left ear where an ice pick entered his brain. The police favor the idea of a random killing until more corpses complicate their desultory investigation.



Brady Coyne, attorney to the affluent, was acquainted with the first victim, Stuart Carver. He knows that Carver was masquerading as a derelict to gather material for a book. When some of the writer's notebooks appear to be missing, Coyne decides to explore the more bizarre angles of the case. His investigation turns up several possible motives. Carver was a homosexual. The murder might have been drug related. Even knowledge of a political assassination could have led to Carver's death.

Coyne's delving into the seamy side of life is a study in contrasts. He is totally out of his element, and this makes him all the more vulnerable. Nothing really touches him very deeply, however. Even his lover's death is given less significance than his passion for golf and fishing. Like the little boy with his nose pressed against the candy store window, he is always on the outside looking in.

I prefer to see the villain get his just desserts, or at least an appropriate form of retribution. Fortunately, Tapply avoids an unresolved solution – but just barely. For the growing list of Tapply fans – another winner.

– Liz Tarpy

Gestures by H. S. Bhabra. New York: Viking, 1986. $16.95

H. S. Bhabra's evocative first novel, *Gestures*, merges a leisurely, elegant, and detailed narrative style – notably akin to that of E. M. Forster or Henry James – with a puzzling mystery that spans generations, cultures, and continents. *Gestures*' British narrator is the meticulous, repressed, and often self-deprecatory and ironic octogenarian Jeremy Burnham, who looks back over his years as a career diplomat in Italy and England with a world-weary, troubled, and exacting eye and determines to write "an account, a memoir, even, perhaps an *apologia*" treating the events and people in pre-World War II Fascist Venice that inalterably shaped his subsequent life. This explanatory account, unfolding in Burnham's mind and over the pages the reader turns, tells of his friendship with the Jewish scholar and art historian Anthony Manet, the touchy embassy responsibilities that embroil him in the murder of British traveler Jane Carlyle, and his various love affairs with stereotypical "mysterious women with pasts."

Gestures is Burnham's first-person rendition, deliberately cliché-ridden and yet astoundingly perceptive, of the divided state of his mind (and of the divided minds in European states) during the days when work at the British Embassy fluctuated between party-giving and hustling endangered U.K. subjects out of Italy. Because it so consciously looks backward to a time gone by, this fictional autobiography is a window into an age, and into aging – a personal and a collective journey through violence-torn Europe in that volatile period between the wars. And it is a testament to those gestures that make up individual personalities, with a touch to the hair here or a wave of the arm there, and those larger token gestures that members of between-the-wars European society made to destructive internal forces.

This novel-as-autobiography draws on many literary conventions – the *Bildungsroman* (novel of education, the journal as journey, and the "gossip that is history" – and Oxford-educated Bhabra creates a shifting equation between what Burnham recalls and how Europe reacted to the rising presence of Fascism in the early decades of the twentieth century. Burnham's control of his material is accordingly and consciously as tenuous as conventional diplomacy's reactions to forces that do not recognize "proper British behavior" and choose not to participate in a "sheltered orderly world." His selective forgetting parallels Europe's collective remissness in acting to stem the tide of Fascism, just as Burnham's own reluctance to pursue Carlyle's murderer foreshadows the awareness of millions of other potential deaths that could have been prevented in the Holocaust that was to come.

Bhabra uses writerly selectivity to stress the ambiguity that surrounds each violent situation, as well as the consequences, individually and across society, for acting in one way or another, or for failing to act. Accordingly, as Burnham begins to write his narrative, he finds himself unable to explain – or even to recount in a totally coherent fashion – many of the events that surrounded Carlyle's murder, and yet this murder follows him through the years, overshadowing almost everything on the apparently unruffled surface of his comfortable life as a diplomat.

For Burnham, the overriding motivation to write comes from what his uneasy mind both remembers and does not remember: "Memory is a thoughtless tyrant, recalling fragments of the past unasked for yet failing to bring back those things we want to remember, even though it is only memory itself which torments us with the knowledge that we want to recall them." What he remembers is curiously and necessarily splintered, with primary significance going to the events around Carlyle's murder and the after-effects that he feels even a generation later. For the reader, the puzzle becomes just what Burnham chooses to record in this work that "one day my grandson, my youngest grandson, might turn to from simple interest or complex curiosity, to discover how we lived then." He writes little about his two conventional marriages or his children – he mentions them only in passing – but rather about those events in Venice in the 1930s which grafted onto his diplomatic life, so full of protocol and charming, evasive words, an inner significance that he cannot fathom, even after decades of willing and unwilling recollection, after pages of reminiscence.

What remains in his mind after all these years between Venice and the present? He records every detail of long-gone afternoon

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teas, of evening parties, of midnight walks to San Marco, and captures each exquisite nuance of dialogue spoken by those people who meant something to him: Manet, Carlyle and her lover Younghusband, and Eva van Woerden. Yet what remains in Burnham's mind of the countless others whom he encountered in his years in Venice, those he had planned to mention in this, his autobiography? "I cannot even remember most of their names though I suppose I could check my notebooks, if I cared, for a diplomat's life is filled with names and faces. I had thought I would come to write about them all . . . but I find I do not care to now. The older I grow, the fewer people who fill my recollection, expanding into the space left by all those other wasted faces, names, and unspeakable chattering tongues." Memory *is* selective, and in *Gestures* author Bhabra shows a man making literary motions to capture a lost life. The result is not only an introspective look into a past never to be recaptured and a mirror into a very privileged Venetian, cosmopolitan society, but also a novel that remains with the reader long after reading, much as Burnham's experiences stay selectively with him. The grace, perceptiveness, and complexity of *Gestures* mark an auspicious beginning for a writer of great talent.

—Susan L. Clark

The Second Curtain by Roy Fuller. Academy Chicago. $4.95

Remember the first time you tried escargot? You sat at the fancy table in the fancy restaurant and stared at the awful gray-brown things, swearing silently to get even with the person who, in all innocence, had ordered them for your pleasure. You did not want to hurt your friend's feelings, so you tentatively pulled a surprisingly tough little body from a garlicky shell, asked your tummy to behave, eased the little beast into your mouth, and bit down. Remember? The tender firmness? The flavors that began to permeate your mouth, your throat, that drove your tastebuds to ecstasy? *The Second Curtain* is escargot in the hands of a Cordon Bleu alumnus.

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Like the raw ingredients necessary to make a fine, delicate sauce, the reader must struggle through some very rough sentence structure and loose editing. I found this most aggravating, often having to re-read for clarity, but, about halfway through the book, I adjusted to the awkwardness and was completely caught up in the characters and the story.

The characters: I cannot possibly do Fuller justice in his ability to draw such completely three-dimensional, living, breathing people that we soon feel we have known forever. He begins the story with two average, all-but-uninteresting characters having lunch. We are guided, ever so gently, to concentrate on Garner, a mild, dull writer who has seen better days. He is offered a job from his lunch partner, of editing a soon-to-be-established, first-rate, literary publication with unlimited financing from a benevolent "industrialist." The idea of a relatively free hand and a first-class operation appeals to Garner, and he accepts.

We then follow Garner about the humdrum London streets and into his humdrum apartment. We meet his dreary maid, get some insight into a dull, lusterless life. It dawns on us that this fellow must be the protagonist. Whoopie.

Soon, though, I found myself caught up in Garner's life, his dreams, needs, desires. Fuller is a subtle and intelligent writer. He eases in the characters, glides in the murders, whispers the clues and suspicions ever so softly but urgently.

The first hint of mystery comes soon enough in the form of a letter to Garner from the sister of an old school chum. He and Garner have maintained a faithful correspondence over the years, and she hopes Garner knows where her brother might be. He has disappeared. Garner gives the matter little thought at the time, rather resents the intrusion into his life of this unknown lady. Later, though, to get out of a dinner he loathes to attend, he catches a train to the little suburb where Widgery, the college friend, lives, and visits the sister. The sister discloses that Widgery was a closet homosexual, had fallen for a cad of a fellow just prior to his disappearance.

Gently, surely, Garner is drawn into Widgery's disappearance, and before long the police are at his door, announcing that the missing man's body has been found drowned in the river. From this point, we are on a slow-motion rollercoaster. We learn that the company owned by the Widgery family, of which Widgery was the overseer, has recently been hounded by a powerful competitor to sell out. Widgery objected obstinately to the sale, refusing to consider it at all. A few days after Widgery's body is found, his assistant is "accidentally" killed on a London street.

Part of the fascination of the story is that Garner's vulnerability is so clearly drawn by Fuller, and understood by the reader, that Garner must be all the more admired for his quiet persistence in trying to determine just what happened to his friend.

Almost as soon as Garner admits to himself that the two accident victims have indeed been killed, he realizes that he is the next victim. The speed of the rollercoaster increases now. Our hair is ruffled, and we watch intensely for the next drop in the tracks.

Since nothing which Garner experiences is withheld from the reader, we know the dangers, feel his panic. When we must face, along with him, his cowardice in the face of physical attack, we are in total empathy with his reactions.

Faster, faster the car rushes over the rails until you cannot catch your breath. You will not guess the ending.

—Linda Lee Barclay

Razzamatazz by Jack Early. New York: PaperJacks, 1986. $3.95

I was hoping, after reading Jack Early's first book, *A Creative Kind of Killer*, that he would use that same character in his next book. Well, he didn't, but who cares? *Razzamatazz* is a terrific read, 385 pages that fly by.

Our protagonist, former Chicago newspaperman Colin Maguire, is covering the annual Memorial Day pool party given by the mayor of the small Long Island community of Seaville, where he is now the managing editor of the local paper, thanks to his friend (?) Mark Griffing, the publisher. Maguire is just recovering from a personal tragedy that involved the murder of his wife and children back in Chicago while he was on a drunk. The killer was never found, and for a while Maguire himself was suspected, but finally all charges were dropped and he took the editorial job to hold onto his sanity, since he blames himself for not being home when he was most needed. Now, at the party, the first in a series of bodies turns up, floating in the mayor's pool, with what looks like a letter or initial carved into it.

Colin has a hard time covering this story, and, before long, more local people are killed, including a small child, all with letters or symbols cut into them. Is the killer sending a message, is it his initials or just random marks that only look like they mean something? Meanwhile, to add complications, Colin is falling in love with the minister of a local church, Anne Winters, also a widow and nervous about getting involved again. Since he has told no one but his boss, Mark, about his former history, he is the perfect patsy for these crimes, and, while attempting to help Police Chief Hallock , he becomes the number one suspect.

The townspeople, who depend on summer tourists for their livelihood, are up in arms over the continuing death toll and remove Hallock and replace him with a total incompetent. Meanwhile, with Colin's help, he continues working on the problem and the two of them come up with the right answer, but the wrong killer.

Anne is captured by the killer, and now Colin must overcome his psychological hangups and assist Hallock in solving the mystery of Razzamatazz before she becomes another letter in the killer's alphabet.

There are likable characters, irritating ones, and real fools, just like real life. I also

enjoyed the little notes at the beginning of each chapter about what was going on in Seaville during the past 25, 50 and 75 years, just as often appears in your hometown newspaper. There are clues here too, if you know what to watch for. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and recommend it highly.

– Marietta Denniston

Guardian Angel by Anthea Cohen. New York: Doubleday, 1985. $12.95

According to the mini-biography provided on the jacket of *Guardian Angel*, Anthea Cohen is a trained nurse who has not only done both private and hospital nursing duty but also has written short stories and young adult fiction as well as medical articles. This is the fourth Sister Carmichael novel, stories which capitalize on Cohen's medical background, and here again – and again – Carmichael, trained to save lives, takes them. Rigid and rule-bound, Agnes Carmichael is no angel of mercy, but in this book, as in the others, the title is ironically suitable if one applies Sister Carmichael's own standards.

Carmichael observes to herself, "Well, I do not make promises to myself lightly," and she is exactly right; nor does she take insult, injury, or enmity lightly. He who crosses Agnes Carmichael must beware. The new reader of the series is early alerted to the fact that the sister on the men's and women's orthopedic wards at Greyfriars Hospital brooks no interference with her plans. When she takes steps to right a perceived wrong, the wrongdoer gets no second chance. Cohen generates as much tension about how and when Carmichael will kill as most other writers do about whodunit.

Using a killer as protagonist poses some problems for the author, of course, and Cohen addresses those problems to only a very limited degree. Usually, the victims are thoroughly disagreeable folk, perhaps even thoughtlessly cruel and wicked folk by anyone's standards. Yet the reader is never really glad the victims are dead because no true justice has been served. They are not disposed of because of any great moral conviction or commitment on Carmichael's part: they are in her way; they are annoying; or they have hurt her feelings. But not even the most bloodthirsty fan can take much pleasure in the law according to Agnes Carmichael because that law, though seemingly orderly, is merely idiosyncratic.

Accordingly, even though the reader readily understands why Carmichael wants to erase her victims, and even though coincidence (victims tend to appear in situations which lend themselves to murder) contributes to the Carmichael killings, one cannot empathize with her. Maybe sympathize a little? Well, yes, a little. The product of an orphanage, and then of a series of nurses' quarters, unattractive and aging in a world devoted to pretty young things, Carmichael is out of place almost everywhere. Unfeeling toward almost all people (she has loved once that we know of; she has a couple of friends), Carmichael lavishes her affection on her cats – and, when someone abducts her beloved pets, Carmichael is sick with fear, galvanized by fury. Like a cat, Agnes Carmichael is a good and patient hunter who bestows a purr or a push wholly according to her own desire. The result makes *Guardian Angel*, like its predecessors, diverting for a couple of hours, but not precisely entertaining; it is too cold, almost clinical.

– Jane S. Bakerman

Good Behavior by Donald E. Westlake. New York: The Mysterious Press, 1985. $15.95

Middle-aged professional thief and mastermind John Dortmunder can hardly be considered as the answer to anyone's prayers, but, when he literally falls from above, the nuns at the Convent of St. Filumena are convinced that he has been sent to solve their problem.

While coping with splinters and a useless ankle, the answer to prayers drops his burglary kit, and, instead of screams and calls for police from the nuns below, he finds himself hauled down by the silent sisters and pushed into a wheelchair.

Charades play a large part in Dortmunder's communications with the nuns, and eventually he learns that this order has taken a vow of silence, talking being permitted for only two hours each Thursday. With the help of gestures and notes, he learns from Mother Mary Forcible that, although aware of the police activity, the sisters do indeed feel he has been sent to help them recover a lost lamb. Sister Mary Grace, the latest to join their order, is not so much lost as she is kidnapped, and by her own father and minions.

When Dortmunder is sent on his way the following day, he has all of the discouraging facts, and, when he tries to explain the situation to May, the steadily employed half of his domestic life, she views the problem as simply as do the nuns. Dortmunder will just have to re-kidnap Sister Mary Grace and return her to the convent, to her dedicated life.

Andy Kelp, one of Dortmunder's partners in crime, agrees to help John scout the enemy territory, and it is worse than suspected. The imprisoned sister, Elaine Ritter, is being held under lock and key on the 76th floor of Daddy's Avalon State Bank Tower on Fifth Avenue. Frank Ritter owns and controls much more than this high-security building, and, while his other six children have dutifully taken their places in Templar International, the recalcitrant 23-year-old Elaine has defied him and entered the convent, and this simply will not do. She is not only being held captive at the top of the building, but she is also being deprogrammed by Walter Hendrikson, tops in his field.

Aside from the depressing presence of sophisticated security, Dortmunder knows that the manpower necessary to release Sister Mary Grace will insist on monetary gain, not just the nuns' gratitude. The answer to *his* prayer is the 26th floor, where a number of importers have wholesale offices full of jewelry, uncut stones, and ivory.

What could possibly go wrong? Plenty, if Dortmunder and his band of thieves are involved. For one thing, the gang is blissfully unaware that a group of sixty mercenary soldiers will be on the premises for final briefings before flying to a South American dictatorship, whose leader has severely annoyed powerful Daddy Ritter.

With these ingredients, and Donald Westlake, absolutely nothing can go wrong for the reader, and the entire book is a romp, certainly one of the best of the Dortmunder escapades.

– Miriam L. Clark

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★A DARK-ADAPTED EYE by Barbara Vine (Bantam) **WINNER**
THE STRAIGHT MAN by Roger L. Simon (Villard) *nominee*
A TASTE FOR DEATH by P. D. James (Knopf) *nominee*

BEST FIRST NOVEL

DEAD AIR by Mike Lupica (Villard) *nominee*
FLOATER by Joseph Koenig (Mysterious Press) *nominee*
LOST by Gary Devon (Knopf) *nominee*
★NO ONE RIDES FOR FREE by Larry Beinhart (Morrow) **WINNER**
RICEBURNER by Richard Hyer (Scribners) *nominee*

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THE CAT WHO SAW RED by Lilian Jackson Braun (Jove) *nominee*
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F/X, screenplay by Robert T. Megginson and Gregory Fleeman (Orion) *nominee*
THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE, story adapted by Ron Clements, Pete Young, Vance Gerry, Steve Hulett, John Musker, Bruce M. Morris, Matthew O'Callaghan, Burny Mattinson, Dave Michener, and Melvin Shaw from the book *Basil of Baker Street* by Eve Titus (Disney) *nominee*
MANHUNTER, screenplay by Michael Mann from the novel *Red Dragon* by Thomas Harris (DeLaurentis Entertainment Group) *nominee*
THE NAME OF THE ROSE, screenplay by Andrew Birkin, Gerard Brach, Howard Franklin and Alain Godard from the novel of the same name by Umberto Ecco (20th Ceutnry-Fox) *nominee*
★SOMETHING WILD, screenplay be E. Max Frye (Orion) **WINNER**

BEST TV FEATURE

THE DELIBERATE STRANGER, written by Hester Anderson from the book *Bundy: The Deliberate Stranger* by Richard W. Larsen (NBC) *nominee*
ONE POLICE PLAZA, written by Paul King from the book of the same title by William Caunitz (CBS) *nominee*
PERRY MASON: THE CASE OF THE SHOOTING STAR, written by Anne C. Collins; story by Dean Hargrove and Joel Steiger (NBC) *nominee*
THE SWORD OF GIDEON, written by Chris Bryant from the book *Vengeance* by George Jonas (HBO) *nominee*
★WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS written by Phil Penningroth from the novel of the same title by Jonathan Kellerman (NBC) **WINNER**

BEST EPISODE IN A TV SERIES

★"The Cop" from *The Equalizer* written by David Jackson, story by Andrew Spies (CBS) **WINNER**
"Deirdre" from *The New Mike Hammer* written by Herman Miller (CBS) *nominee*
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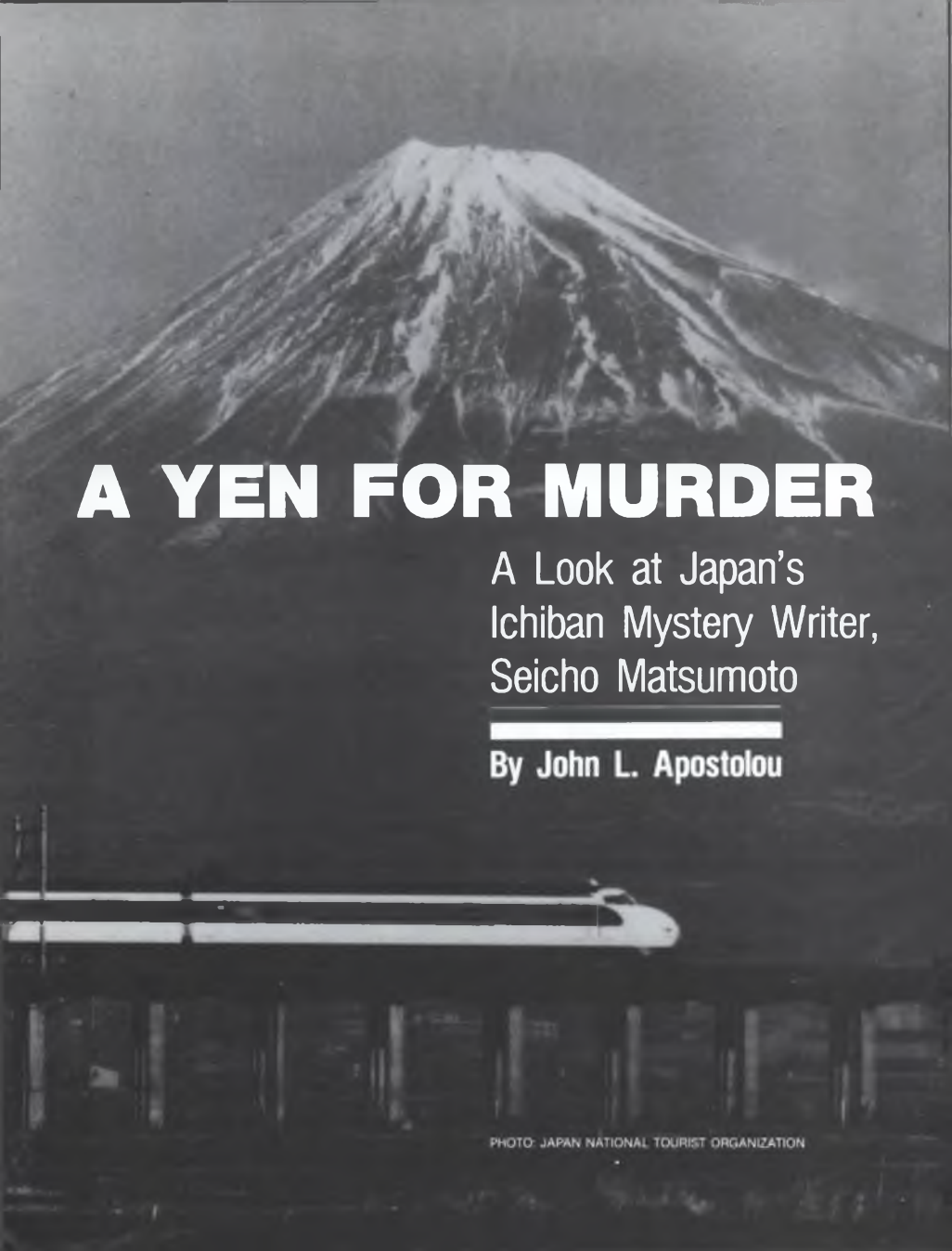

A YEN FOR MURDER

A Look at Japan's Ichiban Mystery Writer, Seicho Matsumoto

By John L. Apostolou

PHOTO: JAPAN NATIONAL TOURIST ORGANIZATION

THE JAPANESE EXPRESSION *ichiban* means best, foremost, number one. Japan's *ichiban* mystery writer is Seicho Matsumoto. He has occupied this special status for many years, certainly since the death of Edogawa Rampo, "the father of the Japanese detective story," in 1965. Even in years when Matsumoto is not the top-selling mystery writer (Jiro Akagawa, whose books appeal to a vast teenaged audience, currently holds that position), he is still considered number one because of his enduring popularity and his outstanding contribution to the development of the mystery genre in Japan.

Seicho Matsumoto was born to a poor family on December 21, 1909.[1] His birthplace was Kokura (now part of the city called Kita-Kyushu) in Fukuoka Prefecture on Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands. His formal education ended with graduation from primary school. As a young man, he worked in factories and held various jobs. At some point, he learned the printing trade of block-copy mechanics and, in 1942, began working for the *Asahi Shimbun*, a major Japanese newspaper. He considers his experiences during this period, his daily contacts with ordinary people, as more than an adequate substitute for a university degree.

A few years after World War II, Matsumoto started writing fiction, not mysteries but mainstream and historical fiction. His first published work was the novel *Saigo-Fuda*, which won a contest conducted by the *Weekly Asahi* and appeared in that publication in 1951. The next year, he wrote *Aru Kokura Nikki Den*, a novel about a crippled young man who traces the activities of a deceased man of letters. This novel was awarded the prestigious Akutagawa Prize; yet Matsumoto found it necessary to continue working at his regular job to support his wife, his four children, and his parents. It was not until 1956, at the age of 46, that he became a full-time writer.

With the short story "Harikomi" (1955), Matsumoto showed for the first time an interest in crime fiction. He later wrote some more crime stories, usually emphasizing the motivation behind criminal acts. A collection of these stories, *Kao*, won the Mystery Writers of Japan Prize in 1957. In the same year came the publication of *Ten to Sen*, Matsumoto's first mystery novel and his greatest success. It sold over 1,250,000 copies, a truly impressive total when one remembers that Japan has only half the population of the United States.

The plot of *Ten to Sen* involves the apparent double suicide of two lovers, whose bodies are found on a Kyushu beach not far from where Matsumoto was born. The detectives on the case are Jutaro Torigai of the Fukuoka Police and Kiichi Mihara of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police. They conduct a long and difficult investigation, arriving at a solution through hard work and careful study of railroad timetables. Matsumoto has a certain fascination with the Japanese railway system, and references to trains often occur in his fiction.

Ten to Sen established Matsumoto as a leading figure in the mystery field and helped to create the mystery fiction boom that continues in Japan to the present day. The novel has been translated into several Asian and European languages. The English version, *Points and Lines*, was published in 1970 by Kodansha International.

During the last thirty years, Matsumoto has worked at a feverish pace, producing several hundred books and short stories. Although he does not use series characters, he brought back the detectives of *Ten to Sen*, Torigai and Mihara, to solve another case in *Jikan no Shuzoku* (*The Spirit of the Times*, 1962). He has written many documentary-style novels based on real cases. One of these is *Amusuterudamu Satsujin Jiken* (*Amsterdam Murder Case*, 1970), which deals with the widely reported murder of a Japanese businessman in Amsterdam. In a more recent novel, *Jumanbun no Ichi no Guzen* (*A Chance in a Hundred Thousand*, 1980), Matsumoto tells the story of a young woman killed in a crash on the expressway linking Tokyo and Nagoya. A photograph of the incident, taken by a witness and submitted to a newspaper photo contest, gives rise to an investigation.

The subject of corruption and intrigue within the Japanese government has often been treated in Matsumoto's novels. These works are thinly disguised versions of actual facts that the press would not dare to print. Matsumoto claims to have access to secret information from a highly placed source in the government, his own "Deep Throat."

Little of Matsumoto's fiction has been translated into English. We have his novel *Points and Lines* and only six of his short stories available to us. Three of these appeared in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine:* "The Humble Coin," "The Secret Alibi," and "The Woman Who Took the Local Paper." The others are "The Cooperative Defendant," "The Face," and "Just Eighteen Months." All six can be appreciated as good examples of Matsumoto's realistic, low-key style; "The Face" and "The Humble Coin," however, lack the twists and surprises that American readers expect in short mysteries. For details about where these translations can be found, see the accompanying checklist.

Although most of his work falls in the mystery genre, Matsumoto has also produced many historical

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John Apostolou and Martin Greenberg have edited an anthology of Japanese crime stories, MURDER IN JAPAN, *a Spring 1987 release from Dembner Books ($15.95). The book contains two stories by Matsumoto.*

novels and a considerable amount of nonfiction, including essays on economics, archaeology, and other academic subjects. His views are those of an earthy, blunt nonconformist. Some of his nonfiction is said to reveal an anti-American bias, a not unusual quality for a Japanese who lived through the ordeal of World War II. His only nonfiction work in English is a short historical essay in the October-December 1983 issue of *Japan Quarterly*.[2]

More than a dozen of Matsumoto's mysteries have been made into feature films.[3] A highly prolific author, he has somehow found time in recent years to become involved in the production of motion pictures. He has his own film company, Kiri Productions, and supervises the making of movies based on his works.

Perhaps more important than the vast body of work Matsumoto has produced is his profound influence on the postwar generation of Japanese mystery writers. As he rose to prominence in the late 1950s, he urged his fellow authors, directly and by example, to take a more serious approach to the mystery genre. He championed what came to be known as the "social detective" story and attacked earlier mysteries, those written in the era of Edogawa Rampo's

comment. They succeeded in attracting a larger readership to Japanese mysteries than had ever existed before, although alienating some mystery fans in the process.

Two female writers, Shizuko Natsuki and Masako Togawa, could be considered members of the "social detective" school. Their works, several of which are now available in English, are excellent examples of this type of writing.

Some of Matsumoto's ideas seem to echo those of the British writer and critic Julian Symons. More striking is the parallel to Raymond Chandler's attack on the mysteries of the Golden Age in his famous essay "The Simple Art of Murder." Summing up his approach to mystery writing, Matsumoto has said:

> To know motives is very important in this day and age, and to show psychological reasons for crime makes a book literature rather than just a detective story. . . . I include all the essential strains of mystery, but cannot omit surroundings and circumstances. I cannot help but write about present conditions and the way people live.[4]

Anyone familiar with Japanese mainstream fiction or the films of Kurosawa, Mizoguchi, and Ozu knows of the strong emphasis on human values to be found in these works. Often the plot centers on the plight of

Matsumoto, now 77, turns out novels at a "leisurely pace" —four or five a year!

leadership, as nothing but unrealistic puzzles. He called for mystery writers to use a more literate style, to reject the fantastic and strive for realism, to stress motivation, and to turn away from Poe and Doyle and toward Dostoyevsky.

Many Japanese authors responded to his message and accepted, at least in theory, *Crime and Punishment* as their model. In their fiction, they began to delve into such matters as government corruption, industrial espionage, and the operations of the *yakuza*, Japan's organized crime alliance. While other types of mysteries continued to be written, Matsumoto and his colleagues became the dominant faction among the writers of crime fiction. It was their goal to enrich the mystery form with social

ordinary human beings, their problems, their struggle for existence or for a better life. With Seicho Matsumoto providing inspiration and leadership, mystery fiction in Japan has joined the great humanistic stream that courses through the history of Japanese literature.

Matsumoto lives in a house of traditional Japanese design on the outskirts of Tokyo. A railway line runs close to his house, but he is not bothered by the noise of the trains. In fact, during a strike when no trains pass, he misses them. "It's too quiet," he complains.

Still active at the age of 77, Matsumoto turns out novels at what is for him a leisurely pace—four or five a year. He writes almost every day, beginning

shortly after noon and continuing late into the night. Drawing upon his personal library of over 20,000 catalogued books, he does most of his research at home. Besides his literary activity, he also devotes considerable time to motion picture production.

In 1986, Kodansha International published a paperback edition of Matsumoto's *Points and Lines*, and a collection of his short stories in English, also from Kodansha, is scheduled for release in 1987. These two books should make Japan's *ichiban* mystery writer much better known in the United States.

Notes

1. I am indebted to Jiro Kimura and Mark Schreiber for much of the biographical information in this article. Their assistance is greatly appreciated. Biographical data was also found in Kawataro Nakajima, "Detective Fiction in Japan," *Japan Quarterly* 9:1 (January–March 1962) 50–56.
2. Seicho Matsumoto, "Japan in the Third Century," *Japan Quarterly* 30:4 (October–December 1983) 377–82.
3. Several Japanese feature films based on novels and short stories by Matsumoto have been exhibited in subtitled versions in the United States. The following is a list of these films, perhaps incomplete, each identified by its English title and the year it was shown in Los Angeles:
   Death in the Mountain (1961)
   The Shadow Within (1970)
   Shadow of Deception (1971)
   Crosscurrent (1972)
   The Castle of Sand (1974)
   The Round Wasteland (1975)
   The Demon (1979)
   The Wicked (1981)
   Suspicion (1983)
   The Politicians (1984)
   The Street of Desire (1985)
   Amagi Pass (1985)
4. Quoted in Vivienne Kendrick, "Personality Profile," *Japan Times*, November 2, 1970, p. 6.

THE FICTION IN ENGLISH OF SEICHO MATSUMOTO: A CHECKLIST

"The Cooperative Defendant." *Ellery Queen's Japanese Golden Dozen*. Ed. Ellery Queen. Tokyo: Tuttle, 1978. Reprinted as a Tuttle paperback, 1983.

"The Face." *Japan Quarterly* 27:4 (October–December 1980).

"The Humble Coin." *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, July 1982.

"Just Eighteen Months." *Ellery Queen's Prime Crimes*. Ed. Eleanor Sullivan. New York: Davis, 1983. Slightly different version in *Japan Quarterly* 9:1 (January–March 1962) and a new translation under the title "Wait a Year and a Half" in *The Mother of Dreams*. Ed. Makoto Ueda. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1986.

Points and Lines. Tokyo: Kodansha, 1970; London: Martin, 1979. Reprinted as Kodansha paperback, 1986.

"The Secret Alibi." *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, November 3, 1980. Slightly different version in *Japan Quarterly* 9:1 (January–March 1962) under the title "Evidence."

"The Woman Who Took the Local Paper." *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, June 1979. Reprinted in *Ellery Queen's Crime Cruise Round the World*. Ed. Ellery Queen. New York: Dial, 1981. □

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Dial N for Nonsense

by Louis Phillips

Will Cuppy on Detective Stories

In 1943, Will Cuppy edited and provided an introduction to *World's Great Detective Stories* (the title is a bit misleading because the book was published by The World Publishing Company, and so the title refers to the publisher and not to our great globe). In his introduction, the noted humorist expressed some concern over readers who take the genre too seriously:

"I might add, however, that what is frequently said and written about the purely intellectual nature of detective stories and the amount of fundamental brainwork required to read them has left its mark on some consumers. For there are fans who take this sort of doctrine a tiny bit too seriously. They will all but turn themselves inside out in a passionate effort to win what they regard as a battle of wits between themselves and the author, even to writing the clues down on a piece of paper and calculating the exact distance from the footprint in the rhododendron bed to the spot where the body was found. I am told they sometimes succeed in beating the detective to his own solution—at the risk, I fear, of shooting up their blood pressure and acquiring permanent wrinkles between the eyes."

In point of fact, however, I have never met such a reader. Have you?

* * * * *

Mystery Joke Chestnut

FERGUS: I understand that Mary J. Latsis and Martha Hennissart are writing mystery novels under the pseudonym R. B. Dominic.

HUME: Yes, and they've made quite a name for themselves.

* * * * *

On Collecting Mystery Novels with the Same Title

I guess there are all kinds of mystery book collectors, but I wonder if any collector has devoted himself to collecting novels that have the same title? Since titles are not copyrightable, and since so many books are published each year, it follows that a number of writers would hit upon the same name for their brain-children. I wonder what is the most oft-used title in the mystery field? There are five renderings of *Over My Dead Body*, for example. Rex Stout, in fact, used that title. Others who wrote *Over My Dead Body* are R. Angel, F. Mayfair, S. Mitchell, and M. Risco.

* * * * *

On Marriage and Crime

An item in Ripley's "Believe It Or Not" once reported that a young man in the Bhamta Tribe in India cannot marry until he has been arrested at least fourteen times! I wonder if the tradition still continues or whether it has just filtered down to the large American cities.

* * * * *

Bad Day in the Hold-Up Business

The following news item comes from East Providence, Rhode Island:

"June 12, 1954. A would be hold up man had one of those 'days' and swiftly landed in jail yesterday. He entered a hardware store and pointed a pistol at the proprietor, who snatched the weapon and called the police. The pistol turned out to be unloaded – and rusty. Worse still, a customer in the store recognized the thief.

"The police then found out the get away automobile at the curb was out of gasoline."

* * * * *

The Mystery Novel in Connecticut

It's not often that mystery writers receive wide-scale support from both librarians and the National Endowment for the Humanities, but two of Connecticut's six co-operative library systems, the Southern Connecticut Library Council and the Southeastern Connecticut Library Association, sponsored, from September 1986 to April 1987, approximately 100 discussions on the topic of mystery and detective writing. The speakers focused on three different themes: the evolution of the detective; the reader, the writer, and the detective; and the mystery novel as a reflection of its times.

Now, if we can only get other states to follow Connecticut's lead!

* * * * *

English Teachers' Horror

I hereby nominate Carter Brown's novel *Phreak-Out* (Signet, 1973) as the mystery title most likely to give an English teacher a heart attack, though of course any writer will tell you that speling spelling isn't everything. □

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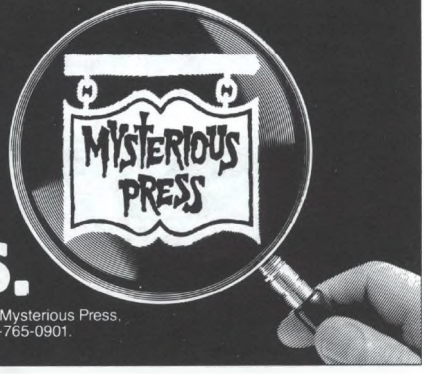

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Minor Offenses

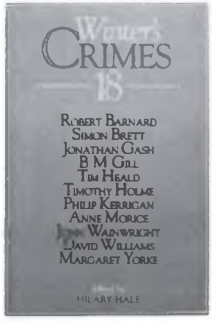
by Edward D. Hoch

Two of the best mystery anthologies of 1986 were both published in London, and we can only hope they make their way to this side of the Atlantic soon. A real landmark of British detective fiction is *The Best of Winter's Crimes*, edited by George Hardinge and published in two volumes by Macmillan London. This generous sampling of 41 stories from the first seventeen annual volumes of *Winter's Crimes* includes virtually every important British mystery writer of the past two decades.

Macmillan's George Hardinge, now retired as editor of the series, had a knack of coaxing new stories from just about anyone, including Agatha Christie, whose Mr. Quin novelette "The Harlequin Tea Set," included here, was the last short fiction she ever wrote and the only story which remains uncollected in any of her short-story volumes. The 41 stories are arranged alphabetically by author through the two volumes, and in addition to Christie there are tales by Eric Ambler, Christianna Brand, Simon Brett, Francis Clifford, Edmund Crispin, Lionel Davidson, Elizabeth Ferrars, Dick Francis, Antonia Fraser, Michael Gilbert, Winston Graham, Patricia Highsmith (one of the rare Americans admitted to this series), P. D. James, H. R. F. Keating, Michael Z. Lewin (another American), Peter Lovesey, James McClure, Ellis Peters, Ruth Rendell, Julian Symons, and twenty more.

For anyone who has not yet discovered the delights of *Winter's Crimes*, this double-barrelled anthology is the perfect place to begin. Many of the stories have since been published here in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, but a surprising number remain unknown in this country. Editorship of *Winter's Crimes* has now passed to Hilary Hale, formerly Hilary Watson, who had already edited five of the first seventeen volumes.

She upholds the series' high standards with *Winter's Crimes 18* (St. Martin's, $13.95),

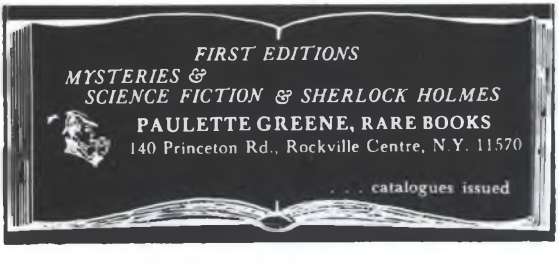


containing eleven new stories by such writers as Robert Barnard, Simon Brett, and Jonathan Gash. My favorite in the new collection is "A Certain Kind of Skill" by B. M. Gill, a Welsh writer who attracted a great deal of attention with her first four novels from Scribner's. Winner of the Gold Dagger from the Crime Writers Association for *The Twelfth Juror*, which also brought her an Edgar nomination in this country, Gill turns here to a familiar device from the Golden Age – the man who learns that he has less than a year to live and decides to commit a perfect murder. Gill's ending is both unexpected and satisfying.

Mystery anthologies built around a single theme can be fascinating if they are well edited, and one of the best themed anthologies of the past year also comes from England. It is *Deadly Odds*, edited by Richard Peyton (Souvenir Press), a collection of 23 mystery and crime stories about horseracing in Britain, America, Australia, and India. The authors include Dick Francis, Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, Edgar Wallace, Damon Runyon, H. C. Bailey, Anthony Gilbert, Ellery Queen, Lord Dunsany, Leslie Charteris, Robert Bloch, Julian Symons, Michael Innes, Jon L. Breen, and nine others, all introduced with generous headnotes by the editor, who gives biographical details and – in the case of Doyle – corrects a few racing errors in the story itself. The anthology begins appropriately enough with Dick Francis and then jumps back to a virtually unknown 1849 story by Angus Reach. It proceeds chronologically from that point, mixing familiar favorites such as "Silver Blaze" and "The Snatching of Bookie Bob" with lesser-known tales. Many are detective stories, and quite a few involve con games of one sort or another. The volume concludes with a clever parody of Dick Francis by Jon L. Breen.

At the risk of making this a virtually all-British column, I must say a few words about a new crime story by Roald Dahl, "The Bookseller," which appears in the January 1987 issue of *Playboy*. It is Dahl's first short story in a decade, and this alone should be cause for rejoicing. "The Bookseller" is clever, funny, and well written, but unfortunately it continues a recent trend of Dahl's to rework the plots of other writers. Admittedly, the reworking of others' plots has been practiced by writers as different as Shakespeare and Thornton Wilder, but still it seems not quite right. When people pointed out to me that Roald Dahl's 1965 story "The Visitor" brought back memories of other writers, I dismissed it as a coincidence. When a reader sent me a copy of Ed Lacy's story "Pick-up" (*Mystery Digest*, January 1959) and pointed out that it had the same plot as Dahl's 1977 story "The Hitchhiker," I began to grow a bit uneasy. Now we have "The Bookseller," an expanded, possibly improved version of a gem of a short-short, "Clerical Error" by James Gould Cozzens. I can only quote a rule laid down by Jacques Barzun in his recent introduction to *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural:* "As in crime fiction, an original idea fully developed may not be used by another hand."

Let's finish off with some news from America. For the second year in a row, the *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* Readers Award has been won by Clark Howard, this time for his fine story "Scalplock," which appeared in EQMM's July issue. Second place went to Thomas Adcock for "Thrown-Away Child" in the October issue, and third place to Nell Lamburn for "Tom's Thatch," also in the July issue. The EQMM Readers Award will be presented in May, prior to the MWA Edgar dinner in New York. □



Letters

From William White:

I've written so much about Ernest Bramah in TAD and elsewhere that I begin to feel as if I were Kai Lung's and Max Carrados's PR man. But on a recent visit to St. Thomas More College, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, I found in *The British Library General Catalogue of Printed Books to 1975*, Vol. 305 (London, Munchen, New York, Paris, 1985), p. 285, in the University of Saskatchewan Library, the following unrecorded book under Ernest Bramah:

A Handbook for Writers and Artists: A Practical Guide for Contributors to the Press and to Literary and Artistic Publications. By a London Editor [i.e., E. B. Smith]. London: Charles Wilson Deacon & Co., 1898. 191 pp. 21 cm.

Collectors of the short stories centering around the Chinese storyteller and the blind detective will be interested in this addition to my several bibliographies of Bramah. Unless you believe in book collecting miracles, however, the only way you will be able to read the book will be to go to the British Library in the British Museum in Great Russell Street, London.

* * * * *

From Ric Meyers:

What?! *Another* writers' organization?

Yes . . . *The Co-operative* (The Co-op): The Police & Espionage Writers' League.

At first, even I was assailed by the same doubts. There were the Mystery Wrtiers, the Private Eye Writers, and the Horror Writers. Did we need another fraternal group of genre authors, even though the procedural and spy people were overlooked?

At first, that was the only reason I created The Co-op, that and the fact that *I* wrote mostly about cops and secret agents and couldn't, in good conscience, join the P.W.A. or H.O.W.L. But then . . . !

It seems that the fine folks who are attempting to eradicate what they consider pornography are turning their power-hungry eyes toward bookracks. It has come to my attention that there is a plan afoot to force Waldenbooks and B. Dalton to eliminate what is perceived as excessively violent volumes from their stores.

The actual phrase I heard used was "things like 'The Destroyer' . . ."

"The Destroyer"? Excessively violent? Besides loving to see the likes of Warren Murphy, Dick Sapir, Molly Cochran, Robert Randisi, Will Murray, and myself in front of Congress, the very idea horrified me. Suddenly, the need for The Co-op became very clear.

Besides being a fraternal organization which will encourage membership communication and understanding (complete with newsletter, luncheons, awards, and the like), *besides* living up to its *co-operative* title by encouraging communication and understanding among the various genre-writing groups, it will also encourage communication and understanding with the *public*.

If you are interested in shaping, assisting, or joining this group, please send your name, address, phone number (comments, questions, critiques), and a dollar to cover postage costs. Thank you very much.

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* * * * *

From Mildred Bleier:

Let me take this opportunity to vote for bringing back "Classic Corner." As a member of TAD right from the start, I know what I like in TAD. Articles, interviews, items that cannot be found elsewhere. Now, "Classic Corner" had material which, for the reader, would be hard to find. That is a much wanted-service which TAD can provide for the reader. Reviews of books are everywhere —other fanzines, newspapers, all media—so increasing the reviews in TAD does not increase its appeal. To have something *unique* to offer the reader—that's what sells the magazine.

* * * * *

From John Loughery:

While it is certainly a great pleasure to be published in TAD, I was dismayed by the error which reversed the order of three paragraphs in my article on S. S. Van Dine ["The Rise and Fall of Philo Vance," TAD 20:1]. As it stands, footnote 8 precedes footnotes 5, 6 and 7. More importantly, Van Dine's decline in the early 1930s is described in the left-hand column on p. 68, and, a few paragraphs later (on pp. 68 and 70), he is finally published by Scribner's in 1926 and becomes an overnight success.

For the sake of those who read the article and were a bit confused, the chronology on pp. 68 and 70 of that issue should follow this more plausible line: Willard Wright (alias S. S. Van Dine) approached Max Perkins of Scribner's in early 1926 with his idea for the Philo Vance series. The phenomenal success that year of the first book in that series, *The Benson Murder Case*, rescued Wright from poverty and provided him with a new career. With the publication of *The "Canary" Murder Case* in 1927, Wright made even more money and became something of a national celebrity. He also wrote a lengthy essay on the history of detective novels for a Scribner's anthology. American detective fiction had, it seems, come of age. But the role of detective fiction "expert" and popular culture hero was not one with which Willard Wright was comfortable. In a famous essay entitled "I Used To Be a Highbrow, But Look at Me Now," he concocted a romantic story to account for his decision to turn to this kind of fiction. The problem was that Wright secretly harbored a sharp resentment at having made his fortune at "popular" writing rather than from the art criticism and literary studies that mattered more to him.

Beginning in 1928, Wright announced to the press, many times, that he would soon "kill off" Philo Vance and return to his other books. But, for a variety of reasons, he was unable to do this. The fact that the later novels were written solely for money, without any hope of escaping from the trap in which he now found himself, first became apparent with *The Scarab Murder Case* in 1930. The story of Wright's personal and professional life from that point on is a grim one. Wright's colorful, aristocratic sleuth became an increasingly stale character, as tired and defeated, eventually, as his creator.

I will say that my frustration at this error was somewhat abated by the fascinating picture of Philo Vance which you used on page 68, a picture I had never seen before. I would love to know who the artist is and where it comes from. My biography of Wright/Van Dine will be published next year, and that would make a great illustration. □

↙ Needless to say, we did not discover this error before it was too late (much to our chagrin). We offer our sincere apologies to Mr. Loughery and to any reader who was confused. The illustration of Vance was painted by Clark Agnew and first appeared in an omnibus called THE PHILO VANCE MURDER CASES, *published by Scribner's.* —*Ed.*

Novel Verdicts

by Jon L. Breen

Explanation of symbols:

- **A** All or more than three-quarters of the book devoted to courtroom action
- ½ One-half or more of the book devoted to courtroom action
- ¼ One-quarter or more devoted to courtroom action
- **B** Relatively brief courtroom action; less than a quarter of the book

FLIEGEL, Richard. **The Next to Die.** New York: Bantam, 1986. **(B)**

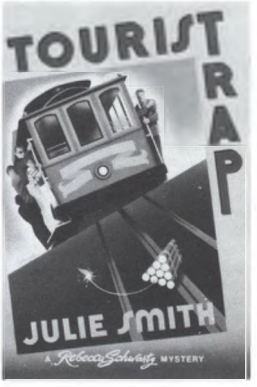
New York cop Shelly Lowenkopf (apparently named after a well-known West Coast writer-editor-critic) is sent to Los Angeles to serve as technical advisor on a movie and becomes involved in a Hollywood murder case. Back in New York, he testifies as the main prosecution witness in a drug case, and the defense lawyer uses his bizarre and farcical L.A. adventures to discredit his testimony. The courtroom scene is one of the best parts of a novel that has some promising elements but never really grips the reader—this reader, anyway. There are some fine individual sentences, such as the one that highlights the twelve-page trial scene: "Posner deftly accused the defendant of his crime but, unwilling to stop there, warned the jury against its own compassion and the judge against her innate sense of justice."

JEFFRIES, Roderic. **Exhibit No. Thirteen.** London: Collins, 1962. **(¼)**

Blayne Rusk, a lad of boundless promise in his public school days but now a policeman with the comparatively lowly rank of Detective-Sergeant, is investigating the rape-murder of a young woman found dead in the woods of Kent by a gamekeeper. Prime suspect is a former schoolmate, Jonathan Kremayne, expelled in disgrace from school but now a wealthy farmer. Though the circumstantial evidence linking Kremayne to the first crime is too weak, he is charged with a second, similar crime. Complicating matters is Rusk's attraction to Mrs. Kremayne. Jeffries brings his usual courtroom expertise first to Kremayne's murder trial, then to an unusual divorce case in which criminal offenses are adjudicated in a civil setting. The divorce action takes place in a "temporary" London courtroom "hastily built to take care of the 'temporary' flood of divorces after the First World War." It is surprising that this novel never found an American publisher, for it ranks among the author's best, not far behind *Evidence of the Accused* (see NV #234) and, as Jeffrey Ashford, *Counsel for the Defense* (#238).

MACKENZIE, Donald. **The Juryman.** London: Elek, 1957. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1958. **(B)**

London gangster-turned-car dealer Danny Sullivan is about to be re-tried on a charge of attempting to murder an underworld rival at a dog-racing track. If a hung jury results once again, the defendant's pal Gerry Steele is told by the solicitor, the Crown surely will not try Sullivan a third time. The case itself is a singularly boring one, though the forty pages of Old Bailey action are efficiently presented. The novel's real interest comes from the Canadian Steele's efforts to "fix" a juror (unheard of in Britain!) and thus assure the second hung jury. Reformed burglar MacKenzie is a natural storyteller who makes the most of his specialized knowledge and viewpoint.



SMITH, Julie. **Tourist Trap.** New York: Mysterious Press, 1986. **(B)**

The third novel about San Francisco lawyer Rebecca Schwartz is the first to get her into court. She finds a dead out-of-towner hanging on the cross at the site of the Easter Sunrise Services on Mount Davidson, and subsequent murders occur at other Bay Area tourist attractions. Rebecca agrees to defend Lou Zimbardo, who is charged with the crimes, with her lawyer father assisting. As discoverer of the first corpse, Rebecca becomes a witness for the prosecution, facing a female assistant D.A. who reminds her disquietingly of herself. It is an enjoyable, fast-moving novel with much humor and some interesting plot twists, though not much of a whodunit angle. The trial scenes seem more like other fiction than real life. The climactic scene depends for its dramatic impact on all the officers of the court being asleep at the switch, as when Rebecca is allowed to cross-examine her own witness without a peep of objection from her opposite number. □

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Catalogue of Crime

by Jacques Barzun

S336 Liza Cody
Head Case
Scribner's, 1986

Three earlier tales—*Stalker, Dupe,* and *Bad Company*—showed how Anna Lee, an operative in a London investigator's firm, handled cases that were difficult physically and intricate mentally. The plots were original and adroitly developed. Now we find the fatal descent into "psychology," and the result is tedious as well as irritatingly tearjerking. A young girl genius at mathematics and philosophy goes to pieces, runs away from home, and reappears in circumstances that point to her having killed a man in a hotel. Did she sleep with him? And in any case, why the murder? The unraveling brings out a mass of thought-clichés from the '60s and is as improbable as the by-play between Anna and the family she boards with.

S337 Arthur Conan Doyle
Letters to the Press
Ed. J. M. Gibson and R. L. Green
Univ. of Iowa Press, 1986

Something new by Doyle (and in book form at that) is a welcome surprise, all the more so when its merits are great. These letters cover Doyle's career from local physician to world-famous author and lecturer, and they must appeal to every reader who shares any of his varied interests. The Boer War, the Edalji and Oscar Slater cases, social and economic injustice, English customs and history, medicine, military weaponry—the list of topics touched on is large and the writing about them uniformly splendid. Newspaper correspondence in England was ampler in Doyle's day than now, and some of these letters are little essays in which the writer's reasoning and reasonableness are outstanding. His irony, too, is as good here as at 221B Baker Street.

S338 Warren B. Murphy
Leonardo's Law
Carlyle, 1978

Lieutenant Jezail of the Walton, Connecticut force is a smart aleck who tells his own story about the murder of one Barry Dawson in what is publicized as a locked-room mystery. Actually, it is solved by a Dr. Leonardo, also smart, but in another way. The tale is not without merits, but one finds it hard to make up one's mind about recommending or deprecating it. After some pages, one gets to overlook the lingo and enjoy the plot, and then something in the plot or the lingo throws one back into critical disapproval. The book is at least worth a try.

S339 Andrew Spiller
Murder on a Shoestring
Long, 1958

A good opening at an auction closes with the promise that Chief Superintendent ("Duck") Mallard is going to be involved. This announcement will sound rather like a warning to readers who remember *The Man Who Caught the 4:15*—as wretched a fiction as was ever cobbled together. But, eight years later, Mallard is not such a lame "Duck" as before. True, in order to solve the various robberies and murders, he has to be helped by a policewoman and several passers-by, but, despite the lack of power in body and mind, this tale makes for mild and pleasant reading.

S340 Audrey Williamson
Death of a Theatre Filly
Elek, 1980

The title hints of an unusual combination—theatre and racetrack—and the hint is fulfilled by the author, who is clearly familiar with both worlds. Besides, she has written about the Princes in the Tower, so crime and its enigmas also fall within her expertise. In this story, the second about Supt. Richard York, the root idea is excellent—sophisticated greed entangling people with social and intellectual pretensions. But the execution is disappointing. We get too much of York's irrelevant musings and not enough solid thought about events. The result is that the last chapter is a huddle of explanations about points that should have been taken up earlier, one at a time. Let me add that the filly who gets killed had no walk-on part in the play, so the title is misleading after all.

S341 Sara Woods
The Third Encounter
(In Britain *The Taste of Fears*)
Harper, 1963

This late author's output contains so much good work that any piece of it that one has missed along the way deserves looking into. Here the French Resistance, wartime treason, and double agents furnish the plot. When an old physician in London gets murdered, our familiar trio, the barrister Tony Maitland and his "extended family," get drawn in; but the story offers hardly any legal interest and the writing is below par. The hostile dialogue gets nowhere, and Inspector Sykes and Sgt. Briggs utter their chitchat absent-mindedly. As to Maitland, he twice gets into and out of a situation of hopeless danger. The verdict has to be: worse than mediocre but not representative. □

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experts...charlatans...artists...lovers
scholars...cosmologists...scoundrels

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The Paperback Revolution

by Charles Shibuk

LILIAN JACKSON BRAUN

The Cat Who Ate Danish Modern (1967) (Jove) stars a Siamese named Koko, "with a flair for mystery," assisted by his master, newspaper reporter Jim Qwilleman, who has just been promoted to editing an interior decorating magazine for Sunday's *Daily Fluxion*. His first two efforts lead directly to theft and murder. This is not a major work of detectival finesse, but it is relatively short, well-paced, attractive, and delightful.

JON L. BREEN

The Gathering Place (1984) (Walker) for famous writers has been Vermilion's bookstore in Los Angeles since the middle '30s. Now, the owner has died, and his niece Rachel Hennings has inherited it. Burglary, supernatural events, startling revelations, murder, and a very assorted cast of characters are some of the problems that face our intrepid heroine as she tries to operate a bookstore in this warm and appealing second effort by the noted critic and short-story writer.

SIMON BRETT

For some people, murder is so simple that it becomes addictive. A case in point is the story of rising executive and family man Graham Marshall, the protagonist of **A Shock to the System** (1984) (Dell). This is probably Brett's most accomplished work, but, while the spirit of *Malice Aforethought* hovers over this novel, the author has failed to capture the wit, the penetration into character, or the savage power of Iles's grimly ironic finale.

JAMES M. CAIN

The Enchanted Isle (1985) (Mysterious Press) is a tale told by a good-looking sixteen-year-old girl, in search of her father, who becomes disastrously involved in a big-caper bank robbery—with unexpected results. This posthumous novel is not a major Cain work by any critical standard, but there are enough plot twists and turns to entertain the most jaded crime-fiction addict.

AGATHA CHRISTIE

Christie's favorite sleuth stars and shines in **Miss Marple: The Complete Short Stories** (1985) (Bekley). This trade paperback's twenty selections include all thirteen stories from *The Tuesday Club Murders* (1932), one story from *The Regatta Mystery* (1939), four from *Three Blind Mice* (1950), and two from *Double Sin* (1961).

R. AUSTIN FREEMAN

Dr. John Evelyn Thorndyke, the world's foremost specialist in medical jurisprudence, made his auspicious debut in **The Red Thumb Mark** (1907) (Dover). This classic novel features genuine scientific detection and probably marks the first use of a forged fingerprint in crime fiction. It is also, to the best of this columnist's knowledge, the most monumental first novel to be published between *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) and *Trent's Last Case* (1913).

EDWARD GORMAN

New, Improved Murder (1985) (Ballantine) is a standard but amusing and agreeable medium-boiled private eye novel narrated by series character Jack Dwyer, an ex-cop looking for acting jobs and supporting himself (with a P.I. license) by working for a grocery store security company. This is Dwyer's debut, commencing when his ex-lover appears with a gun in her hand and tells him that her present lover is dead.

STUART M. KAMINSKY

Red Chameleon (1985) (Charter) is an interesting example of the police procedural—Russian style. It is set in Moscow and features Inspector Porfiry Petrovich Rostnikov, who investigates a bathtub murder, while several subordinates deal with a stolen-car ring and a rooftop sniper.

LEE MARTIN

A bloody case of multiple murder immediately produces an obvious suspect, whose long history of mental problems and penchant for violence are only the starting points in what appears to be a water-tight case in **Too Sane a Murder** (1984) (Dell). No one has any doubts whatsoever—excluding Fort Worth investigating policewoman Deb Ralston, who stars in one of the best first mysteries of 1984.

SARA PARETSKY

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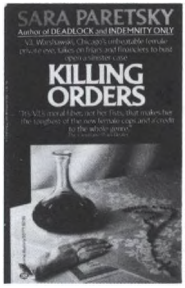

female sleuth V. I. Warshawski unwillingly offers to help her unloved aunt, who is troubled by the loss of valuable securities from her church's safe—a problem that involves religious elements, big business, and the Mafia.

DOROTHY L. SAYERS

Lord Peter (1972) (Perennial) is a trade paperback that contains all 21 short stories about this author's aristocratic sleuth. Here is the complete *Lord Peter Views the Body* (1928), the four Wimsey stories from *Hangman's Holiday* (1933), two from *In the Teeth of the Evidence* (1939), and the three uncollected stories—including the 1942 "Talboys." Also present are essays by James Sandoe, and Carolyn Heilbrun (Amanda Cross) and E. C. Bentley's marvelous parody "Greedy Night."

ANDREW TAYLOR

Our Father's Lies (1985) (Penguin) is a literate, civilized novel about the efforts of Celia Prentisse, her godfather Major Ted Dougal (formerly of British Intelligence), and Ted's son, series character William Dougal, to discover the truth behind the alleged and unmotivated suicide of Celia's father. This trio must follow a long, complex trail that involves several other deaths, and terminates in an unexpected climax.

CLIFFORD WITTING

Although this author, at his best, is a major British detective story writer, only three of his sixteen novels have achieved American publication. Talk about shameful neglect! The excellent **There Was a Crooked Man** (1960) (Perennial) is set in rural Devonshire, features Detective Inspector Peter Bradford and concerns the murder of an old handyman in his tumbledown wooden shack. This is probably Witting's fifth best novel, his first appearance in American paperback, and his last really major work. □

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