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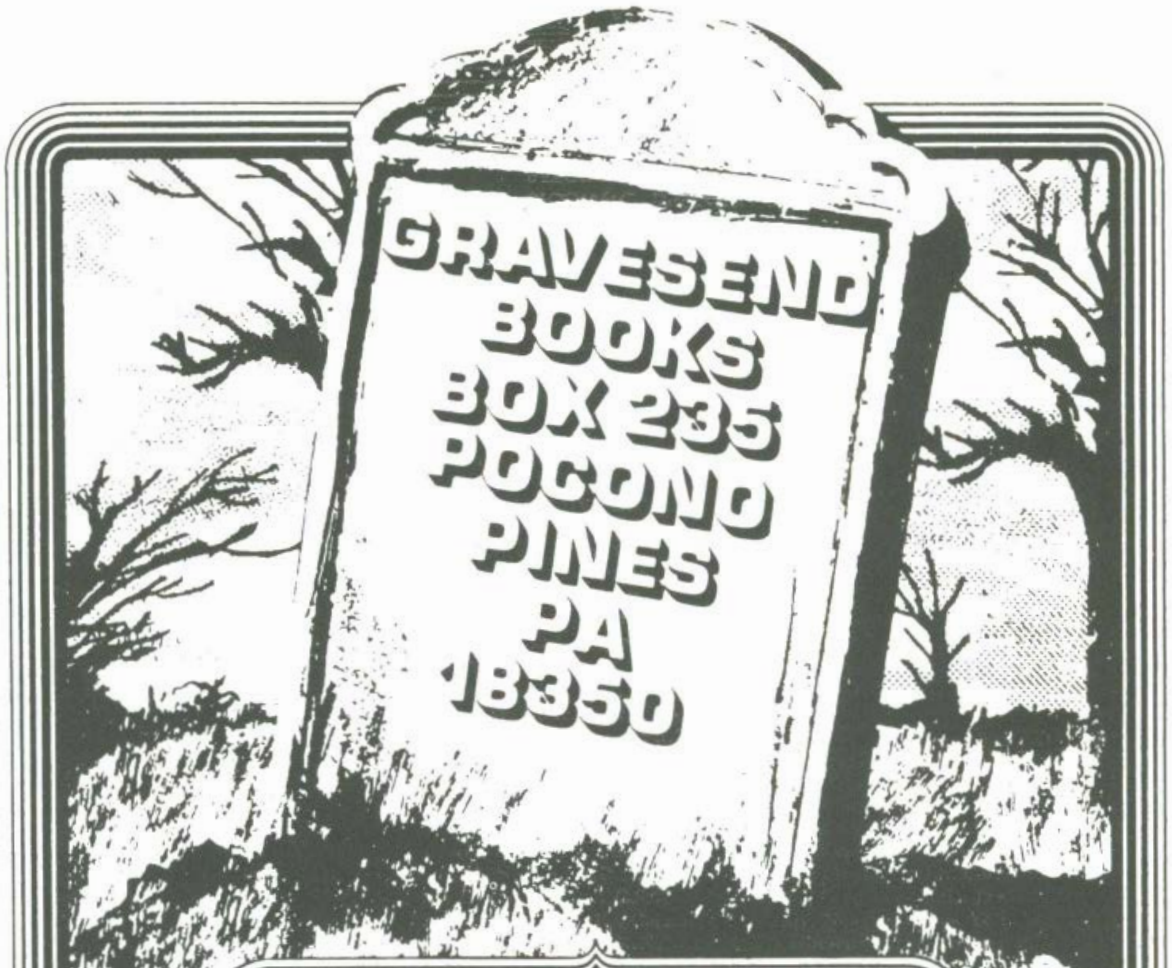
The Novels of Janwillem van de Wetering

Jim Thompson and the Instant Loss of Innocence

What Happened to Edwin Drood?



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The front cover illustration reproduces the famous "Spy" print of William Gillette as Sherlock Holmes which originally appeared as a supplement to *Vanity Fair.*

THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE

The Mysterious Press

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Subscriptions to *The Armchair Detective:* $20/yearin the U.S., $24 elsewhere.Subscriptions and advertising correspondenceshould be addressed to: TAD, 129 West 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019, U.S.A Submissions of material for publica tion are welcome 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: Ple asesend address changes to: The Armch air Detective, 129 West 56th Street, New York, NY 10019.

The Armchair Detective, Vol. 18, No. 1. Winter 1985. Published quarterly by The Armchair Detective, Inc., 129 West 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.

ISSN: 0004-217Z
ISBN: 0-89296-325-5

THE UNEASY CHAIR

Dear TADian:

It does not take remarka ble insight to recognize that wefilter whatwe see through theveil of our own prejudices. So it was not surprising to see a cover story in *Soap Opera Digest* (8/2/83) headlined, "Is 'Hill Street Blues' A Soap Opera?" Nor will you be stunned to learn that the answer in those pages is "yes." By the same token, it is easyto claim virtually all dramatic presentations as suspense. After all, the question is who shot J. R. or Bobby or Alexis; the puzzle the wherea bouts of Luke or Laura or Doug andJulie; themystery whatare the Cassadinesgoing to do next and was Beatrice murdered on the Orient Express? That last is a straightforward question: the character was seemingly killed by any one of dozens of people on *General Hospital* in what has been descri bed to me as a scene right out of the Agatha Christie thriller.

Our mass market entertainment (movies, books, TV) reflects, according to some pundits, national concernsand interests. I don'tknow that I agree. It is frightening to think that for the past decade the women of America were so unloved and unfulfilled that they had to turn to the pages of frighteningly unreal romancenovels to findan anchor, or thatthe puerile fantasies forming the framework for the suspense plotlines on soaps are of concern. Perhaps coming to it fromthe other side of the question will provide an answer. Is it true that in times of economic unrest, detective fiction risesin popularity?

This year, police and detective dramas seem to have risen to the top. Logically, one must assume we are now seeing the bandwagon created by the popularity of such programming as *Hart to Hart, Remington Steele, Magnum P.I., Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer,* and *Cagney and Lacey.* (I will, just as logically, leave mostofthe value judgmentsto Rick Meyers.) The "Jigglevision" of the late, unlamented *Charlie's Angels* is beingreplaced by Loni Anderson and Lynda Carter in *Partners in Crime.* Two ex-wives of a PI inherit his operation when he dies. . . Hmm, sounds vaguely like something that might happen to some characters I've met in a novel by Thomas Chastain; Mr. Spanner, are you listening? The action of Hammer (and the marvelous popularity of Clint Eastwood in his Dirty Harry persona) will have its imitator in *Hunter,* starring Fred Dryer, late of the L.A. Rams foot ball team, as a hardnosed cop teamed up with a hardnosed female cop (who isoh, sosoftonthe inside) goingup against the bad guys on the streets and the wimps in command. *Hawaiian Heat* is the illegitimate offspring of *Magnum* out of *Hawaii Five-O. Jessie,* starring the former bionicwoman, Lindsay Wagner, as a police psychiatristhas—even before broadcast—been altered to emphasize the car chases and put whatever social comment the producers had originally wanted to makeon a back burner.

And the list goeson. I'm certain we'llall find out about the programs together, in these pages and by seeing them through the veil of our prejudices. The ru b? There is *a lot* of genre-oriented programming being aimed at us. Too much of it—a theory fed by preview ads and blur bs, teasers, and a thorough lack of confidence in the studios—will be either glitzy banality or banal glitter. For every *Murder, She Wrote* (coming to us courtesy of one of the best writing teams around, Link and Levinson), there is going to be a *Partners in Crime,* for every *Miami Vice* (which maywind up beingdamaged by its high-tech visual production standards, recalling music video), there will be a *Hawaiian Heat,* for every *Hunter* there'll be. . . whatever.

My fear is that, as thepu blicturns away, rightly, from the dross, the good will suffer. ("Hey, look, they're not watching _____; I guess they really don't want that stuff.") Putting *Hunter* on in a slot that has it playing against *Dallas* is not going to help its chances, and if the serieslives upto the promise of the two-hour pilot movie, that would be a shame. Concomitantly, will the pu blishers now evidencing renewedand exciting interest in mysteries (Signet and Avon are both starting lines), draw back if the televisionglut backfires? (Another fear is that bythe time "TAD on TV" can review all the new shows, they'll be memories!) Let us hope for the best. Mysteriously.

Two items of business. First, thanks to everyone who has responded to the call for material. The quality and variety has been consistantly high and exciting.

Second, commencing with TAD 18:3, the cover price willgo to $6.00, as will theprice of back issues. HOWEVER, *the subscription price will remain at $20.00 a year,* and we will hold there for as long as possi ble.

Well, Ihear"HarlemNocturne"in the background, soit'stimeto go, leaving youwithmy

Best mysterious wishes,

Michael Seidman

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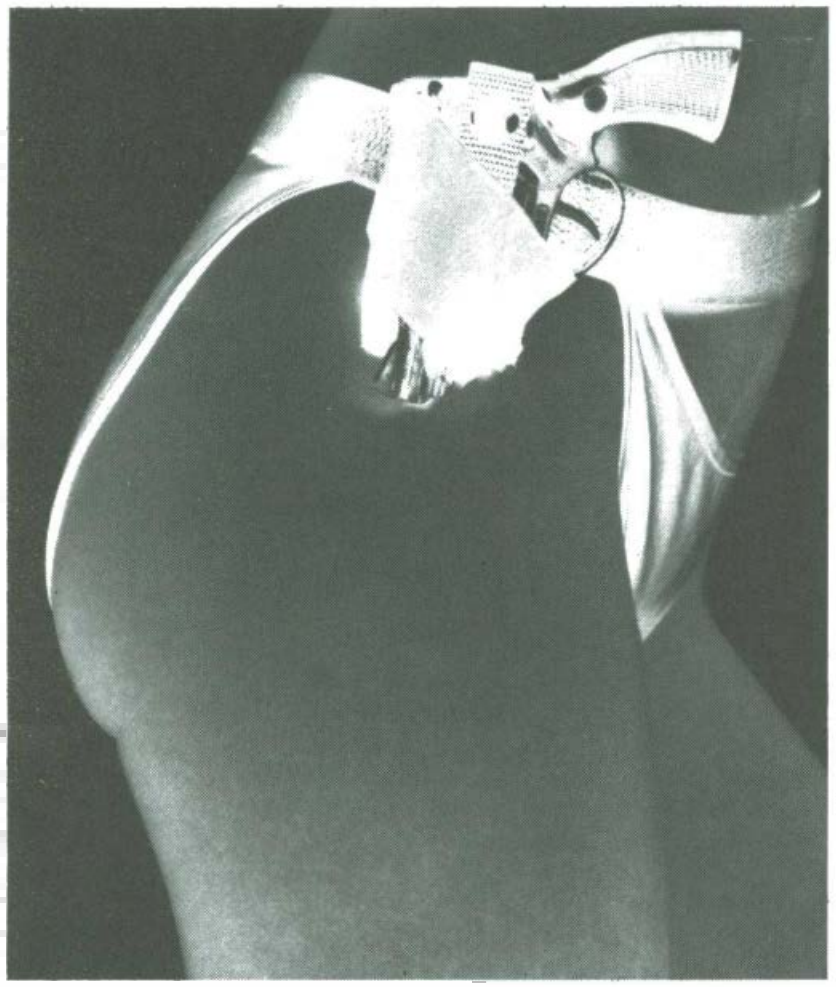

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Jim Thompson and the Instant Loss of Innocence

By W. R. Turney

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Major plot elements of Jim Thompson's novels* POP. 1280 *and* THE KILLER INSIDE ME *and his novella "This World, Then the Fireworks" are discussed in this essay, knowledge of which may diminish the enjoyment of a first reading of these works.*

Where have you hid yourself?
How have you known the miseries of your father?

— Albany to Edgar
King Lear V:III

Once upon a time, when the History of Mystery was not quite as old as it is today, it was far less difficult to draw a razor-sharp, definitive line between a thriller and a cozy ratiocination. Still, even today, any avid reader of mystery is always more than willing to confess an abysmal disappointment at that suspenseful and intriging thriller which simply dissolves into reflective apprehension once subjected to its far less than profoundly deft dénouement. For the most part, reason has, as of yet, not fully infiltrated the gunsel-haunted streets of the proletarian thrill.

Though many attempts, in many countries, have been made to humanize the thriller,[1] and thus overcome the aloof and essentially heartless viewpoint of the private or public investigator, only a handful of masters have even come close to succeeding at this outrageously difficult task. Margaret Millar, Ross Macdonald, Michael Gilbert, Stanley Ellin, Georges Simenon, and Patricia Highsmith come to mind. Although these formative crafters of the modern thriller excel in their portrayals of common, everyday people (from all walks of life) who find themselves involved in a criminal action, all of them succeed only to a degree at complete integration.

Given the moral and emblematic implications of such attempts, the resolution of any difficulties prove paradoxically simplistic. Even in their most thrilling and logically resolved works, these masters reveal the unique problem inherent to the creation of the Everyday Person Crime Story: if one fails to maintain a lively interfacing of irony between an illuminating symbology and an allegorically veiled plot, one invariably loses sight of one's goal. If an actively allegorical structure of plotting is forsaken for a pervasive realism, a debilitating pedestrianism can eventually overtake any attempt on the author's part to perpetuate the proper thrills upon the climax of the novel. If, on the other hand, an ill-conceived symbology proves the substantial portion of one's subtext, an overbearingly contrived resolve of artificial enlightenment awaits the reader upon the completion of the thriller. The key, of course, to the maintenance of this lively irony is simplicity of plot and a strong, well-defined, central protagonist. Here, even the best of our thrill-masters refuse to sustain the essential gig, hop, and croak of a simple Aristotelian deduction. In their insistence upon complexity and sophistication, they fail to paint, shall we say, the Black Mask completely white; in short, they fail to provide the illuminating backdrop for an ultimate confrontation of opposites. Certainly, to edge the thriller into the realms of tragedy clearly demands the commanding presence of a well-defined dramatic type over the peripatetic ramblings of a perfected stylist. Where other thrill-masters have failed, our native Oklahoman, Jim Thompson, has succeeded.

Thompson's novels are the long-awaited paradox of the thriller genre. While affirming the affinitive quest for the intelligent action story, they oddly

W. R. Turney is a playwright who lives in New York with his wife and child.

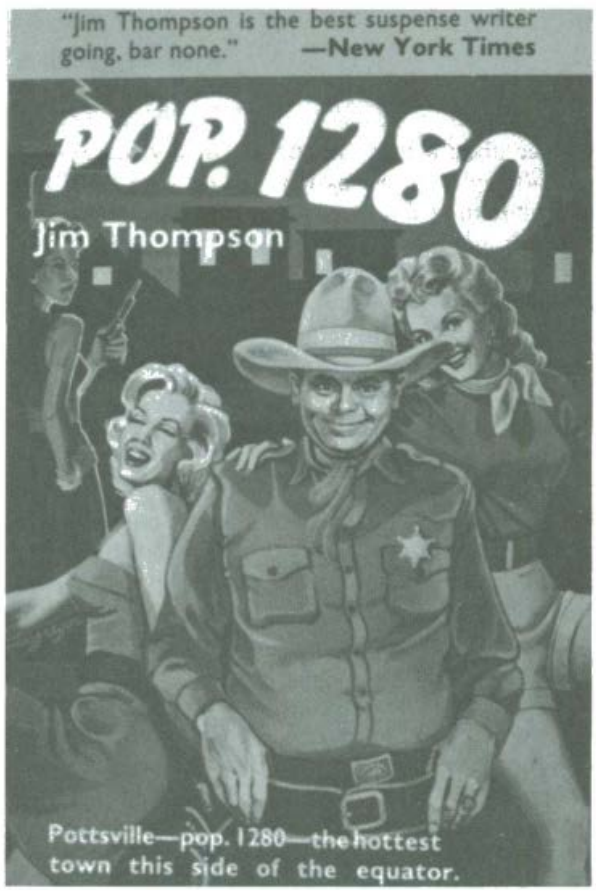
enough allow facts, as previously only the English enclosed mystery has, to remain hermetically sealed within a fully activated and relevant symbology. Once again, facts are as they ought to be in Thompson, and yet the thrill is not forfeited for an overt puzzle. Nor is the story surreptitiously undermined by the cold intracta ble indifference of an investigating inquisitor (Ross Macdonald) nor stylisticallyenhanced bythe perfectedaesthetic judgments of a "blueeyed" naturalism (Raymond Chandler). In insisting upon the constructs of the short dramatic novel and refusing to write in the operative voice of the wage-earning private eye, Thompson has indeed given us our first great domestically based tragic thrillers. To understand how this revisionist is a ble to steal back thehonors ofthe logicalactionstorywhile still maintaining a context thatis uniquely American, we must first know something of the curiously common experience of the man himself and then be willing to consider an ironical truth in the development ofthe mysterystory. Firsttheman.

Around 1931, at the age of 25, Thompson drifted back to the state of his birth. He was involved in a writing pro ject in Oklahoma City. Having come from a relatively wealthy family, and educated in journalism, he was a ble to stay above the herd who were struggling with the winds, dust, and drought. Nineteen thirty-one was about the time that men such as Woody Guthrie's father—Dust Bowl banker and 33-degree Mason—were setting themselves on fire after foreclosing on thirty farms in thirty days. Thompson, like many well-educated individuals of the Southwest at the time, saw the heart of his countrymen torn pu blicly in two. He observed the once- balanced fears anddesiresof capitalism'scharita ble fools falling on murderously hard times. Their unsuccessful efforts to maintain the pu blic's trust left them but one way out. Thompson not only survived the horrors of the Depression, he went on to confront the terrors of a country founded upon the cherished, yetruthless,realitiesofsuccessand failure.

After marriage, children, some newspaper work, and a num ber of pu blished short stories, Thompson took a chanceand triedto break into novels in 1941. According to the two interviews in Max Allan Collins and Ed Gorman's *Jim Thompson: The Killers Inside Him,* Thompson's wife Al berta and his pu blisher Arnold Hano differ in their reasons as to why Jim took the chance to break into New York pu blishing. Arnold Hano:

> Back in 1941, his father had been in an asylum in Oklahoma City, begging Jim to get him out. Jim needed money to get him out, so he said to his father, "Give me a month and I'll raise the money." His father brightened, because Jim never went back on his word. Jim took a bus to New York City and went door to door to the publishing houses asking for money for a hotel room and a rented typewriter and meals so he could write a novel. Finally, at ModernAge, theytook a chanceand in 10 days he wrotea novel (*Now andOn Earth*). But, thingsbeingwhat theyare in publishing, it was a month plus one day before Jim got his advance. That day a telegram arrived. His father had committed suicide, ripping the excelsior out of his mattress and stuffing it down his throat.

Thompson's wife and family deny the accuracy of this story. Jim's father did not commit suicide. He was in a resthome, not an asylum. Whetherspurred on from the actual fact of personal tragedy or the complete projection of his generation's nihilistic encounter with economic depression, Thompson's writings and life bespeak an untimate American desire for success coupled with the awesome reality of all-out failure. His life reflects the efforts of one who believed in his abilities yet was never recognized insales nor in any consistent critical acclaim. Indeed, his novels form sym bolic inroads into the miraculous, and at timesruthless, heartof thischiefly American deity. Thompson was an American through and through, and, like most of his fellow countrymen, he worshipped success. As R. V. Cassill has suggested in his famous essay on Thompson, "Fear, Purgation and the Sophoclean Light," success forms the whole thematic structure of Thompson's most acclaimed novel *The Killer Inside Me*. There is,



in fact, good basis to believe that success is the motivating desire of all Thompson's first-person criminals.

"The deification of success," wrote Nietzsche, "is truly commensurate with human meanness." All of Thompson's central characters follow the path of such a ruthless worship. They perform as priests at the alter of success, re-enacting ritualistically the offices of those trapped in the tortuous web of achieving their blessed mean. They are all possessed of a dark ambition that must of necessity come to some good. They will in fact perform whatever is necessary in orderto construct that reasonable interface between what was (innocence) and what must be (evil). Such an interface must retain a living impression that this world is still a place of innocent folly and godly trust. Thompson's protagonists have all achieved a unique individuality that is capable of performing darkdeeds in the name of yesterday's innocence, strangely enough, in hope of a better tomorrow. Something has already happened to their outlook, and they live beyond an irreversible point in their existence. Like Ross Macdonald's Lew Archer, though they walk the earth the very image of a Nemesis, they will still find humanity the victim and notthe assassin; the superior force ofevilwill always be utilized for the greater good. Though fully cognizant ofthe hideousauthorityunder which their lives revolve, all of Thompson's protagonists refuse to capitulate to such an auspicious evil. By reasoning otherwise, they will side with their victims, the unfortunate doppelganger of themselves, and rebel against the implications of their means. To their minds, the American dream of success, the satanic gift of their moderndeity, must be counterbalanced with the redemptive power to overcome such a dream's obvious limitations for those who have failed. To give voice to the proven failures of the world is indeed a key to much of Thompson's writing. As R. V. Cassill has accurately pointed out in his probing of Thompson's consummate evocations of "EEEVIL":

> Among a decent, godlesspeople thosewho are—and that which is—hopeless from the start find no repose in the bosom of theauthorof their inadequacy

Living at the heart of existence—knowing God only in terms of desire and fear—Thompson's protagonists are all uniquely American. Uniquely nihilistic. All are doomed to the repetitive burden of an inverted successthat remains theone godlygift in an otherwise godless world, its ruthless knowledge its only cherishedpossession.

Withthe publication ofthe masterful novella"This World Then the Fireworks," included in *Jim Thompson: The Killers Inside Him*, we have at last this revisionist's complete canon. We can now fully scrutinize hisuniqueabilityto divulgesuch out-and-out nihilismwhile showing, throughparticularcases, goodreasons forsuchan existence and, of course, its logical outcome. Thompson's achievement of this uncompromising image is a result of far more than his in-depth understanding of a uniquely American Godand necessitates an analytical journeybackward to what might be termed the coincidental origins of thethrilleritself. We willfind thatsuchan auspicious beginning occurred before Prohibition and the first overblowndrifts ofthe authorized Pinkerton whoset the literary style for our thrilling investigations of murder. In fact, we must investigate for ourselves this invention that came into its own about the time our cherished American capacities for doing, thinking, and knowing were giving way to a newer andgreater squaring-communal-means ofexistence.

An inventor may theorize upon the future use and ultimate worth of his invention, but very few ever clearly envision what precisely lies in store for their efforts, once left to the opposing whims and far more capable hands of posterity itself. In the case of R Austin Freeman's inventive use of the inverted

Thompson's novels are the long-awaited paradox of the thriller genre.

mystery story, this theory-condemning indifference, allotted to time, results in nothing less than a profound irony. By ridding the genre of its insidious plague ofendlessred herringsand superfluousthrills, Freeman believed he might gain a more sound and legitimateimpression of evidence and therebyreveal to a greater degree its highly intelligible inroads (clues) to justice. Ironically, having set out to revitalize what he saw as the thenwaning intellectual rigor of the detective story, he inadvertently wrote what can only be defined as incipient examples of modern suspense. In attempting to narrow the forensic distance between fact and fiction, by preceeding investigation withthe actualcriminalact, Freeman successfully placed his protagonist (Thorndyke) in an antagonistic position, thus giving credence to the possibility that a criminal could play the principal role in a mystery. The good doctor's original inversions arethe first crystal-clearevidence of suspense on record. Given the facts, can a murderer be found out and proven guilty? Say, *can he be stopped?* and you have a modern thriller.

In the works of R. Austin Freeman, the reader experiences the first pristine typifications of the

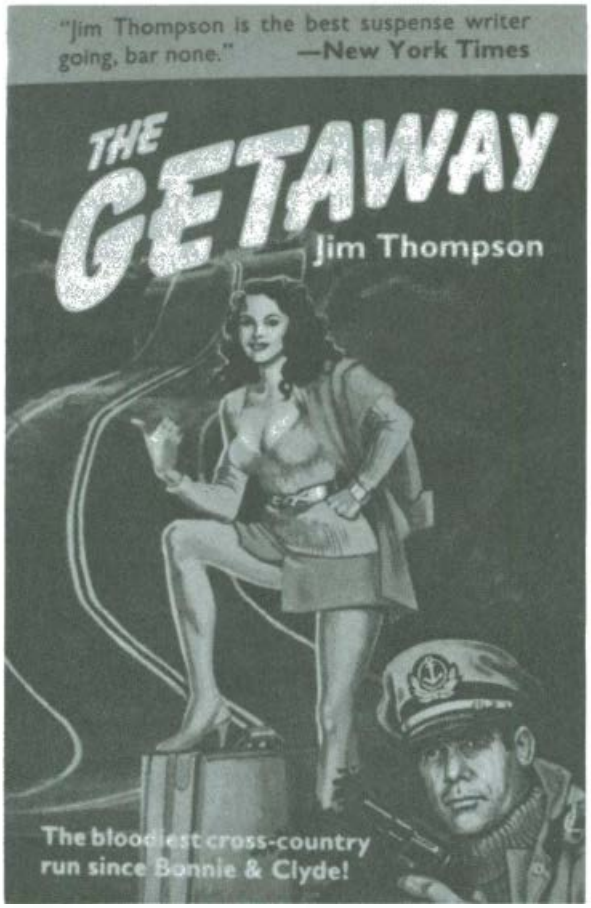
minds, deeds, and, most relevant to our present review, the motivating fears and desires of criminals themselves. No greater exponent of the American style than Chandler himself has nothing but praise for MasterFreeman:

> This Austin Freeman is a wonderful performer. He has no equal in his genre and he is also a much better writer than you might think, if you were superfically inclined, because in spite of the immense leisure of his writing he accomplishes an even suspense which is quite unexpected. The apparatus of his writing makes for dullness, but he is not dull. .

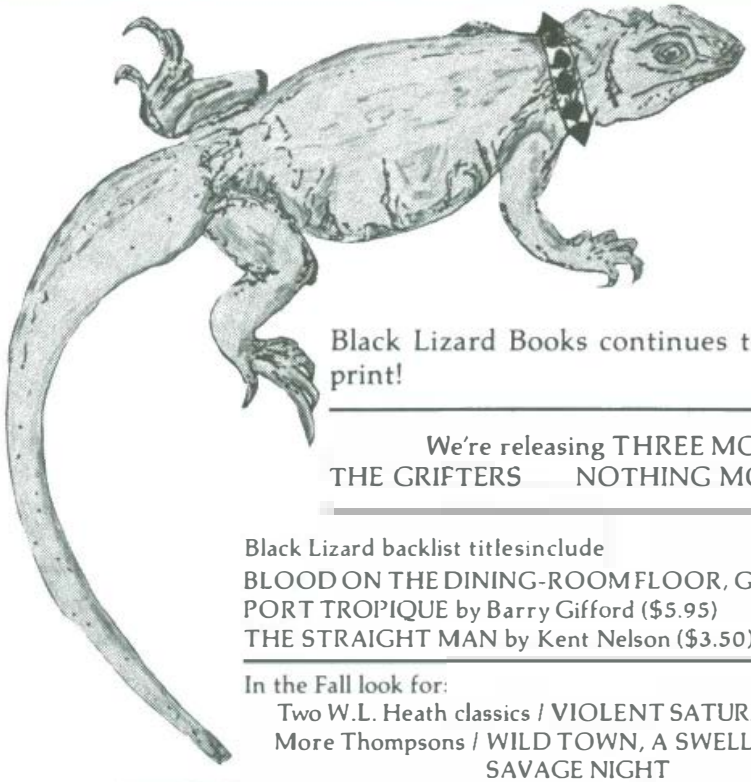
To say that Carroll John Daly, Dashiell Hammett, and Raymond Chandler re belled against such "apparatus" as the inverted mystery story and wrote in refutation of its dull, leisurely, humdrum existence is to understate an old argument. They took twelve-inch guns to the vicar's garden, blowing mysteryclean off the map of gentrified investiga tion as they triumphantly entered their own safe har bor of the hard boiled ur ban romance. Of course, Admiral Chandler, in the midst of the bombardment, had to admit tha t, in the production of this linear thrill, something had to be sacrificed. And that was a clear impression of criminal motive.

It only made sense that to maintain a style the merits of which are "less numerous than its defects and annoyances, but. . . more powerful," and thereforeproneto express "thingsexperienced ratherthan ideas," Chandler and the hard boiled school were bound to lose their grip on that clear and intelligent impression of criminal activity achieved by such an objective innovator as Freeman, who worked from within a highly domestica ted literary form of typi fication, as exemplified in the enclosed English fair-play mystery. In insis ting upon the linear private eye action story to achieve their thrill, Hammett and his emulators could only vie for the credi bility of criminal ac tivity and i ts motives, somewhere between their "original situation" and its, hopefully, "plausi ble dénouement." In the production of the knight-errant style ofthriller,clearcriminalmotiveis withdrawn, evaporating into a misty fog of irresisti ble blondes and back-alley fistfights. The full hereticaldisappropriation of the Hardboiled School's savage dismantlement of the dramatically enclosed mystery and their complete disregard for Freeman's type of thrilling innovation will become quite clear oncewe have analyzed Freeman'sironical revelation, in his unprecedented use of the inverted mystery story.

Freeman's inverted thrillers thrive upon their fertile foundations of typical criminal motive and acts of murder themselves. To successfully justify this traditionally irreverent beginning, the good doctor needed ultimately to demonstrate the redeeming results of the emerging science of forensic



medicine. For every dark murder in these modern times, professed Freeman, the intelligent light of innocent curiosity (science/Thorndyke) will dog the swine, find him out, and bring him to justice. Like Thompson, who will have his principal characters enact the paradoxical commandments of the New World's deity of success, the tragic quest to regain a significant and revitalizedinnocence by way of jus tice and not revenge was Freeman's own. Inversion, in its profoundest definition, demands a fall into primal darkness (Sins of Our Fathers) before a greater light emerges once again. Utilizing such classical revisionis t tac tics, while foregoing the linear sensationalists' preference for the induc tor of understanding (private eye/pu blic investigator) to precede the knowledge of the actual murder, the thriller can lead from the ultimate act of murder to the ultimate understanding of why one murders. The causal element in bo th Freeman and Thompson is more readily defined than in the Hard boiled School Though the criminal action and motive predominates their different forms of inversion, Thompson gains an intensity of inversion that Freeman could never dream of attaining by allowing "the intelligent light of innocent curiosity" to remain, in part, the rhetorical and dramatic elements of the criminal's self-revealing monologues rather than the redeeming



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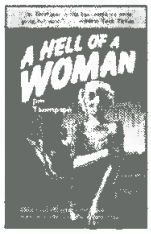

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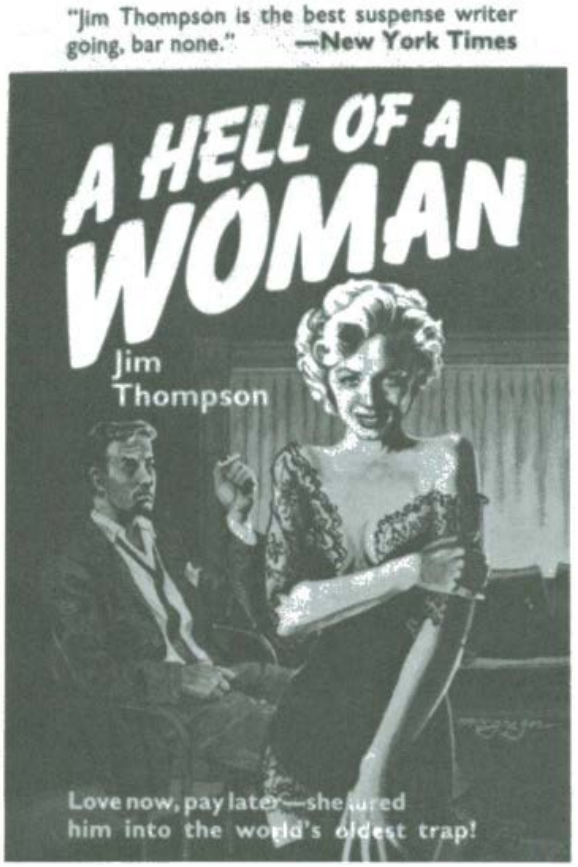
action of an antagonistic second character. To Freeman, inversion was a technical device: a precise method of individuation and clarification of events within his typical English environment. In Thompson's American hands, utilizing the invertible element of principal character, and not merely action, it miraculously becomes the complete upgraded transformation of protagonistic criminality to an unprecedented level of confession and revelation Here, the reader is the killer—investigating, scrutinizing, and reflecting within the inescapable framework of a known, tragic fate. The successor, who will not succeed, is fully involved in a story that will reveal the significance of his actions. Sophocles would have foresworn his Asklepian oath to have been as dramatically sound as Thompson, or at least to have possessed his in-depth psychological understandings.

Though *Heed the Thunder, The Grifters, The Getaway,* and other third-person endeavors are well worth the reader's time, it is in his first-person criminal masterpieces that Thompson leaps into a pure stream of down-home consciousness. This revisionist of plain speaking has given us unprecedented novels in first-person American killer. Thompson is the father of a genre, like Hammett before him. Only he is more typical and creates from within a more customary realm of relationships. The source of his conflict, like Freeman's, is the loss of innocence and not the gain of adventure

Recall the scene in Freeman's "The Case of Oscar Brodski," which transpires before Silas Hickler, the burglar, kills Oscar Brodski, the diamond merchant. Hickler's desperate contemplations and well-founded hesitations are evidence of an individual consciousness that is fully aware of the transgressive implications of a premeditated act of murder. Remember, both Hickler and Brodski live, think, and thrive within the honorable ambiance of thieves; the world of shady deals and "the ominous word . . . fence" is fully accepted by both the dealer in gems and the burglar. Yet neither is conscious-ridden by crimes against persons themselves. Here, Freeman, like Joseph Conrad in many of his stories, infers a state of Secret Sharing among these two men, a sharing which, once transgressed, implies an irreversible fall from innocence. A childish world of tricksters and con men that progresses by way of thievery is not a world engrossed in murder for the maintenance of their state. Hickler has already—out of necessity, not attitude—killed twice: once directly against the Crown ("that little affair of the Weybridge policeman") and again in a mere act of occupation and acquisition of property ("the old housekeeper at Epsom") . . . but never has he *killed his own.* Hickler contemplates the half-blind merchant, who does not recognize his fellow traveler, ponders what can be done with the body, then performs the murder. Once enacted, the amative bonds of fraternal grace are disavowed and the hermetic enchantment of a world that is by "nature and habit" criminal is totally displaced by the actuality of the ultimate criminal act itself, dominating all relationships. The assassin, not the victim, now stands at the foundations of the world



For Thompson, unlike Freeman, the fall from innocence is more often a simple adolescent fall and not murder. The majority of Thompson's murderers have experienced an irreparable, traumatic event that will haunt them to the end. Like James M. Cain before him, Thompson chose the obvious alternative when it came to justifying universal motivations under the guise of one strong central character within a domestic framework. Sexual desire is, indeed, the central motivating source behind *the fall* of the majority of Thompson's murdering protagonists. Still, by the early 'fifties, our Oklahoman revisionist is able to rise above the salaciously motivated plots of his precursor[2] and simply offers us the typical intelligence of those who have not quite survived their "dreadful summit" of adolescence. All of Thompson's inverted principal characters are living beyond life's stumbling block when we come upon them and their murders. Our interest lies, not in their inventive murdering, but rather in their reasoning as

to why they have murdered. Their ratiocinations read like the prayers of fools trapped within the remorseless vortex of their own folly. Thompson's novels offer us not so much the syllogistic deductions of the dénouement-prone murder mystery nor the inductive world of relentless shoe leather venturing to some profitable end, but rather the magnificent world of abducting fools reasoning their way to useful inferences that may enable them to enjoy some piece of the innocent action once again. Their tragedy, of course, is that they never fully succeed at their endeavor. All are conscious of the fact that they have no true consciousness left but can only rationalize from their enfeebled intuitions, their abductions the result of unquestionable loss, not the injections of a seven-percent solution. Such kidnappings of human reason break eggs and bend lines mercilessly.

Thompson's thrillers are, indeed, an advanced state of dark human comedy. They certainly reinstate, with a vengeance, the premise of the English enclosed mystery: let the bloody tale be told humorously. To this, Thompson adds a poignantly

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illuminating and picaresque sense of incident, forged from his obviously experiential knowledge of small-town life in the Midwest and Southwest. It is from within such a hilarious world, where innocence is lost and knowers of evil walk, that Thompson finds his *prima materia*. Through this innocuous world, Thompson's bedraggled princes of darkness attempt to rule their kingdom of unknowing fools. Yet they are no more than fools themselves, their sovereign reign plagued by their beggarly preoccupation to be but a common fool once more.

The reader encounters such a besot and fallen fool in High Sheriff Nick Cory of Potts County, Texas in the Year of Our Lord 1917. If read carelessly, one could miss the point of *Pop. 1280* (1964). It is a period piece and imagines, for the reader, a world that existed before the present one. This close-to-turn-of-the-century backdrop provides an illuminating symbology for the allegorical trials and tribulations of its knowing yet befuddled fool. Pottsville, with its population of 1,280, is in fact much the same cozy, hearth-side existence that one might find in Doyle, Christie, or Sayers—only here we are dealing with the American equivalent, with, of course, its extra added attraction of an inverted principal character. The novel is, nonetheless, the same universal reflection of a folly-driven world rifted in blood. Closer to a village than a town, the inhabitants of Pottsville buy their furniture in the local funeral parlor, have one man in town make all their suits, and can still be sure they'll get what they expect, not "what they got the right to expect." To all appearances, Pottsville is one of those fool-ridden places where one can expect to still get "nothing for nothing." Like the silent world of Holmesian abduction, this symbolic township visually reads true to type. A man's occupation is, indeed, some adequate indication of his intelligence; his health, the encompassing of his passions; his ultimate spirituality concomitant with an active and beautifying sense of charity. Nick Cory is the murdering High Sheriff of this pile of nothing... head macho of the compost in these parts, who proves not only unfaithful to his wife Myra but to his mistress (Myra's best friend) Rose. Nick is in the best of health and making it with his first love, Amy Mason. One might take for granted that Cory is the kind of guy who always tries to think things out. Well, he's really thinkin' now now that he's learned that people ain't no good. He actually thought once that a man could get through life with just a smile and bein' decent to folks; but Sheriff Cory's learned a thing or two since then. We have already experienced this apparently obsequious individual's murdering of three people when he informs us of exactly how it was that things went bad. Seems old Nick couldn't resist one last fling on the night before his marriage to Amy Mason and was, in fact, waylaid into marryin' a certain Myra, after she yelled "rape"; and he found himself in one of those situations where "the truth won't do and a lie's no help." We can't help but reflect on Sheriff Cory's latest attempt at cleanin' up his one-horse town, when he sighs:

"Or maybe I'm just kind a sour."

Seems the whole damn world's gone sour. The brainless pimps in town won't give the fool sheriff any respect any more (two ill-mannered pimps are Cory's first victims); a lawman like Nick can't play the grift any longer (no more two ends against the middle—imagine people wanting order beyond the honor of thieves); and damn, can you believe them dark hearted "Bullshevicks... you reckon they'll ever overthrow the Czar?" Cory asks this question of a city dude he meets one morning on a train as he journeys to the next county to ask advice of a sheriff friend of his concerning his troubling pimps. The city dude is wearing a "classy black-and-white checked suit, high button shoes with spats and a white derby hat." The scene that follows the initial question is one of the most scathing examples of political satire in all

of American literature. Here is the typical down-home American, who builds his apple-pie world upon his own damn good intelligence, spirit, and health, telling the ideologically conscious city dude (as symbolically inferred by Thompson) where to get off. Here is the perfect picture of the savage prankster confronting the bureaucratic barbarian. Cory is carrying his sidearm at the time. He is in full authorized regalia. The scene wreaks of the scatological compost at which Henry Fielding and Jonathan Swift worshipped and which Walt Whitman poetically illuminated in his *Leaves of Grass*. Cory, a consummate brother of nothingness, symbolizes a simple man of triune existence, refusing to fall onto the ideological all-four existence of those who would square the earth completely under political contract. He walks the world, a representative ghost of all those damn fools who still believe there's cream on top for anyone who can fall in line and not get too bitter about it in the process. Cory's drinking more coffee these days than eating, but he still has the common courtesy to ask this city dude if he ain't just as human as the rest of the good old boys and just might have a mind to use the toilet:

"Excuse me," I said. "Were you waiting to go to the toilet?"

He looked startled. Then, he gave me a mean look, and spoke for the first time. "That's some of your business?"

"Of course not," I said. "I just wanted to go to the toilet, and I thought maybe you did too. I mean, I thought maybe someone was already in there, and that's why you were waiting."

He glanced at the swinging door of the toilet; swinging wide now so that you could see the stool. He looked back at me, kind of bewildered and disgusted

"For God's sake!" he said

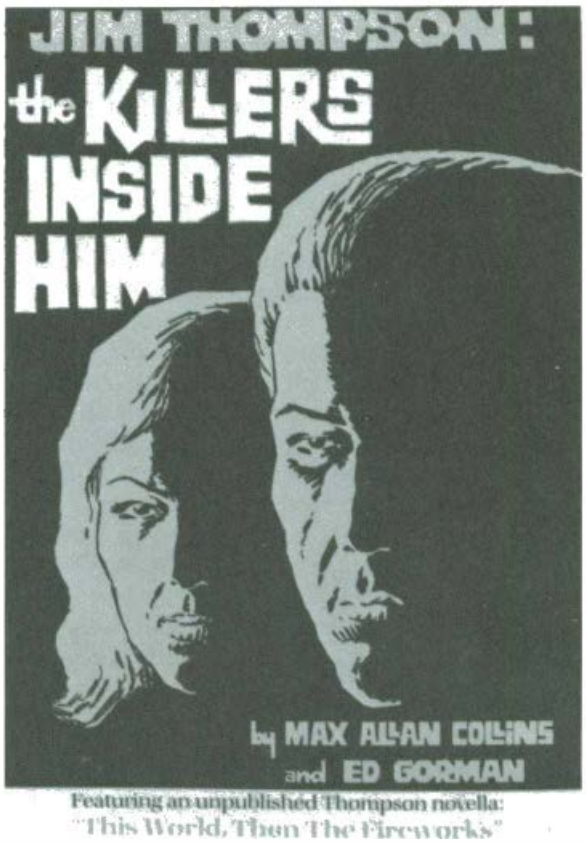
"Yes, sir?" I said. "I don't reckon there's anyone in there, do you?"

I didn't think he was going to answer me for a minute But then he said, yeah, someone was in the toilet. "She just went in a little while ago. A naked woman on a spotted pony."

The city dude will take the offensive and, in plain living view of the truth, insist that there is a naked woman on a spotted pony in the john at the moment:

"I'll show you! I'll show you, I'm telling the truth! You're gonna sit right there until that woman and her pony comes out."

Suddenly, two and two ain't five any more. One man can't match his own good common sense with another's. Suddenly, bread and circuses are taking place in very close quarters. Who can believe this proletarian insisting upon such absurdity? Doctrine and excrement have their place, and, in Cory's foolish world, that's the same place. Cory's not really interested in arguing, he just wants to relieve himself. He knows damn well that there's no naked woman (Symbolic of Customary Desire) or spotted pony



(Spiritual Beauty) in that room! Mind ya, that room's nothin' more than a pile of dirt, leaves and... nothing.

Sheriff Cory has had a great many traumatic encounters lately, but none that topped being waylaid into marriage. Why, it seems as late, the whole world's on the outs with Amy Mason and wants nothing more than to make up with her. This easy-going philanderer's souring on life has driven him to the murdering of four individuals. He finally decides to take revenge on his wife and her half-witted, Peeping Tom brother. Thompson's use of this climactic moment in the novel (Cory finagles Rose into murdering them both) provides us with an image of such melancholy evil that one is compelled to shiver and weep at the same time. The thrill is of an awesome sort, as one might expect of a modern gospel. It is here, as Cory is spying through Rose's window, anticipating what is to transpire from his manipulations, that Thompson abducts a triumphant insight into his fallen world of modern fools bent upon success. The Okie lets us have it point-blank with a number of those paragraphs that Max Allan Collins insists can hit you "in the face like a loose board." Better yet, Mr. Collins, imagine Thompson possessing that same heated intensity and impact of that "pair of deep blue eyes" that can melt platinum "if you put it near a bar of lead." This Chandlerian intensity exists in Thompson, but in a simpler more

emblematic form. Having provided his reader with a simple and typical context, yet not bogged down by the linear revelations of an inducting gumshoe, Thompson's inverted principals, in full possession of the voice and vision of evil, are able to soar rhetorically upward in their quest for justification in the innocent light of their own self-absolutions. Thompson's symbology, grounded upon an allegorically constructed story, is, of course, obtuse and therefore demands interpretation. As Cory looks through his window on life (this is the only murder in the novel that he has set-up—does not commit himself), he speaks with the voice of a great ironical deity. His simple insights demand inference to what is not literally there. It is through such symbolical inference that Thompson allows Cory to confess to his triune (highly abductive) world and obtain forgiveness in self-justification. Here is the way the world must be if Cory (the spittin' image of the successor) is even to regain an inkling of his once innocent world. Note, once the symbolic inference is applied, how the empowered paragraphs seem to ascend in degree. How, first, the human heart (once cleansed, the paradigm of the Edenic shelter—the cold, insensitive, inorganic, strength of the architectural imperative that brought the ignorant migratory hunter to his knees before a god of successful crops and thriving commerce) must be emptied of all desire, prejudice, and passion. Again, how the basic duplicity of mind (the essential sexuality and argumentive context of our sensual world—the compost upon which a wisdomed rose may grow) must be overcome and made one. And, lastly, how God's spirit is beautifully reconfirmed in this horribly modern world built upon success.

I'd maybe been in that house a hundred times, that one, and a hundred others like it. But it was the first time I'd seen what they really were. No homes, not places for people to live in, not nothin', just pine board walls, locking in the emptiness. No pictures, no books—nothing to look at or think about. Just the emptiness that was soakin' in on me here.

And then, suddenly, it wasn't here; it was everywhere, everyplace like this one. And suddenly the emptiness was filled with the sound and sight, with all the sad terrible things that the emptiness had brought the people to.

There were the helpless little girls, cryin' when their own daddies crawled into bed with 'em. There were the men beating their wives, the women screamin' for mercy. There were the kids wettin' in the beds from fear and nervousness, and their mothers dosin' 'em with red pepper for punishment. There were the haggard faces, drained white from hookworm and blotched with scurvy. There was the near starvation, the never-bein' full, the debts that always outrun the credit. There was the how-we-gonna-eat, how-we-gonna-sleep, how-we-gonna-cover-our-poor-asses thinkin'. The kind of thinkin', that when you ain't doing nothing else but that, why, you're better off dead. Because that's the emptiness thinkin' and you're already dead inside, and all you'll do is spread the stink and the terror, the weepin' and wailin', the torture, the starvation, the shame of your deadness. Your emptiness.

I shuddered, thinking how wonderful was our Creator to create such downright hideous things in the world, so that something like murder didn't seem at all bad by comparison. Yeh, verily, it was indeed merciful and wonderful of Him. And it was up to me to stop brooding, and to pay attention to what was going on right here and now.[3]

Once the worshipper of success has cleansed and purified his heart to the point of silent sheltering stone, and clothed his mind in transcendent unity, murder becomes his nurturing redemption—a veritable gift from God. It can now live, where De Maupassant put it, at the heart of natural existence, and proves the most beautiful and honorable of acts when performed by the means and to the purpose of what a traumatized and complex god would lead the seekers of success to believe, the only way back to goodness. With such godly decreed murders, the prehistoric hunter is reborn unto modernity. These murders, when justly applied, provide the only sensation of hunger left the modern individual who is still possessed of what might be termed a strong and natural sense of humor. Oddly enough, it is in this final and ultimate abduction that Cory betrays his

god. Though murder, in Cory's frightful proposition, comes as a gift from God, he forfeits this gift when he leaves the murder of his wife and her brother to Rose. Following out the symbolic inference of such action, it would appear that Cory is now no better off than the city dude he encountered on the train, who would have insisted that spiritual beauty and moral strength are found in that place that wise men know to be nothing more than a pile. Within a few pages of the murdering of the Waylayers, Thompson ends the novel in, if ill-interpreted, an obviously abrupt fashion. The ending is, in fact, quite appropriate. The world closing in on Cory from all sides, he bluntly relates his plight:

I thought and I thought and then I thought some more, and finally I came to a decision. I decided I don't no more know what to do than if I was just another lousy human being.

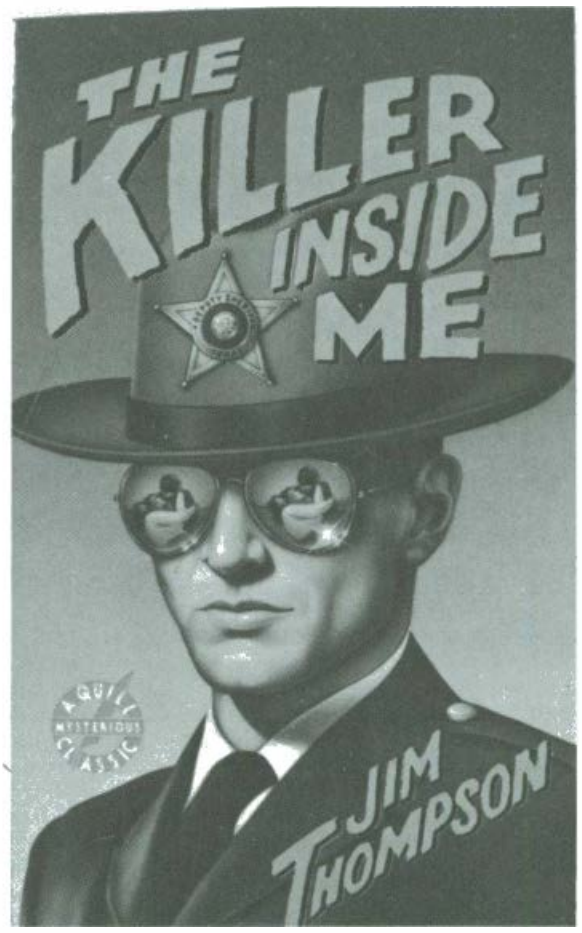
Silas Hickler kills Oscar Brodski; Nick Cory makes one too many abductions and there by forfeits the simple world of its blessed inferences. Sheriff Cory is now just another "lousy human being"; someone like Hickler who, killing for all-out gain, no longer kills out of necessity (habit) or love (nature). The mind now murders for its own sake; the compost grows now only thorns. Where Hickler gains the diamonds of his fellow traveler, Cory gains an all-too-complete picture of the world. Both Hickler and Cory, the former in his action, the latter in his thought, break the bonds of a simple world of thieving folly. For Thompson and Freeman (and certainly Arthur Conan Doyle) the fall beyond the fall is perpetrated when one deprives oneself of the freedom to abduct from the simplicity of facts themselves. Where Freeman utilizes an act of murder as a basis for his inversion, Thompson allows a typical fall from innocence to create a totally inverse character who can actually, upon reaching the climax of his story, expound upon a mystery that Freeman could only atmospherically imply.

Of course, this knowledge of God's ultimately terrifying gift did not first appear in Thompson's work as the full-blown murderer. The character of the eliminator, conservator, and, this, destroyer, who sits the chair of annihilation, first appears in its more customary form in that of the Elder, aged knower of the world. This inverse knower of evil first appears as Link Fargo of Thompson's second novel *Heed the Thunder* (1946). He is simply an old man who has experienced the world and has grown wise. He is hindsight personified. Having lived long enough to see the strength of the once strong Fargo clan falter under the pressures of outsiders (the railroads and their lawyers), bad crops, and bad choices on the parts of his sons, when the reader comes upon him he has no use for "war, lawyers or dentists" and can surmise after a long life of surviving the compromises of a country torn by civil war:

It was strange, shocking; the number of things he no longer cared about . . . could no longer trust. He had seen and had, all that was in his power to see and have. He knew the total and absolute lines of his periphery. Nothing could be added. There was only the process of taking away

No murderer under criminal law, lying upon his death bed, Link confesses to his daughter how he killed for the Union in Sherman's march to the sea Picked up a book one day, at a plantation they burned to the ground, but even threw that away after a while, as the Grand Army swept to the sea in Southern blood. Why, after the war, he was even involved in running Southern sympathizers out of his own valley of the river Calamus, right smack dab in the state of Nebraska. Sure he had done his bit of bushwhackin'. Why? So the other guy wouldn't do it to him first. Might is right, and ten angels cannot change that. . . hallelujah! In his last long breath he confesses:

I ain't very smart. It seems to me, though, that there was never a fight or a killin', or a war yet, that wasn't started to keep someone from doin' something to someone else. If they got a chance.



He is a bloody Epimetheus as he shares his death-rattling wisdom with his daughter:

I guess we don't never learn, Edie. We don't never learn. Thereain't none of us, can tell whether it'll rainthe next dayornot.We don't knowwhetherourkidsaregoingtobe boys orgirls. Or whythe worldturns oneway or the other. Or the what or why or when of anything. Hindsight's the only gift we got, except on one thing. On that, we're all prophets. We know what's in the other fellow's mind. It don't makeno difference thatwe'venever seenhim before, or whatever. We know he's out to get us, if he gets the chance.

This simple, meaty bone of contention, this nine-tenths of modern reality, forms a secretive thread throughout Thompson's work. In opposition to this dark, murderous reality of Elder understanding is nothing less than the innocent world itself. Where Freeman gives his reader Thorndyke and his redemptive forensics, Thompson gives his reader a gay world of unknowing innocence and curiosity. These pure and delicate images of innocence bring light to the hard, ruthless acts of Thompson's first person criminals. Here are some of the illuminating images set in opposition to the dark, inverted knowledge of Elder thought.

Link Fargo's grandson, Bob Dillon, will trust his mother when she assures him that Chinamen, from the other side of theworld, will not rip his little balls off if he dares the dark to use an unfamiliar outhouse.

Years later, Bob will experience his first act of sexual intercourse with his childhood sweetheart, Paulie Pulasky:

Thebed creaked.

"Alright," shesaid in a muffledvoice

He turned around and almost burst into laughter. She was on her knees with her face buried in the pillow. Her dress was neatly turned up around her bare, pear shaped bottom.

He did smile, but itwas a smile of tenderness and love Gently, helaydownathersideand pulled her prone, facing him. He patted herpink bottomplayfully, as if he had been yearsolderofthetwo

Thompson's ability to picture the picaresque ranges from the ironical image of Bob Dillon's first love affair to the terrifying truth revealed to black Uncle John (*Pop. 1280*) when he holds to the innocent belief, even when he has the chance to escape, that Mashah Nick won't blow him away for witnessing what no man, black or white, should have had the misfortune to set his eyes on. Uncle John has seen him and Rose naked together and learns from the woman's indiscriminate hysterics that Cory has murdered Rose's husband.

In one of Thompson's lesser works, *The Alcoholics* (1953), his ability to find redeeming humor in the most revolting and lewd situations is absolutely miraculous. Thompson possessed the Rabelaisian ability to undercut the gutterin order to rise aboveit. Read how a sadistic nurse gets her kicks from smothering a rich patient while asking him his name at the same time:

The smothering began, again. Again Miss Baker's body trembled witha hot orgiastictide

"Te-tell-me"—she panted: shewas breathing for both of them—"Tell-me-your-name "

And the billion uncohered images of Van Twyne's subconscious hurled frenziedly against themselves; they struggled upward, seeking a new exit for the one that was strangly absent.

Huh-huh-huh-c-a-t, man. C-A-T, Man?

"Name?" A rush, a void, a meaningful meaningless Huh-huh-huh-sugar, honey, darling, dear, mama's little man nowilayme goddamlilsnob on, daddy DADDY? What you do to me I said so didn't I well who the hell are you think becauseyou're assdeep indoughyoucan

"Name?" Everything, everything he ever remembered mixed up with allthe nothing

Multiply the diameter times pi which gives us well how would you have it if we are to employ the Socratic method and world according to weighs six sextillion four hundred and fifty quintillion short tons andyoucanhaveit brother and if we areto believe the theory of Malthusyou'd better talk fast YOU'D BETTER TALK FAST!

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Though the literal horror of the acts is there, the true non-innocents of Thompson's novels find comfort only in reflection, never in reality. Long-ago motives haveburst forth across generations, colliding to form the irreversible consequences of a traumatic event. As in the Greek tragedies, Thompson's world is a world of resolve, its condition and cause having nestled in sometime before. Sheriff Lou Ford, who was seduced as a boy by his housekeeper, and now likes to beat his ladies' behinds and murder innocent prisoners, is able to articulate a simple yet reasonable prayer for himself and those like him, in the concluding passages of *TheKiller InsideMe* (1952):

Yeah, I reckonthat's allunless ourkind getanotherchance inthe NextPlace Our kind. Us people

All of us that started the game with a crooked cue, that wanted so much and got so little, that meant so good and did so bad. All ofus folk..

All of us

A superior monologist, Thompson gives us the great wounded ones of our modern age and possesses a close to seismographic instinct for sensing the

traumatic possibility inherent to the most subtle or blatant of circumstances.

In "This World, Then the Fireworks," the novella included in *Jim Thompson: The Killers Inside Him*, Martin and Carol Lakewood are taken from their bed of innocence on the night of their fourth birthday party (they are fraternal twins) by the distant blast of a shotgun. As they near the house across the street—where their father has just blown the head off his neighbor—Thompson simply writes:

> We crossed the street, walking in great beauty. We crossed the lawn of the other house, the grass kissing and caressing our bare feet. We went up to the steps and peered through the open door.

There is no greater wound than an instant loss of innocence. The heart forever tortured at that exact moment of horror, when children, walking barefoot, having reached the porch of the temple of their Elder's sacrifice, peer forth.

Using this event as the causal (not casual—see Chandler's *Notes*—1949) source of Martin's rationalization (first-person criminal of "This World, Then the Fireworks"), Thompson has literally created an inscape into the conscience of a psychotic. Utilizing Martin's and his sister's early fall from innocence as a premised action (he tags it *1-Minus*) to the actual story, he has been able to create an inverted story of a sort—a story that is not only readable but dramatically sound. This miniature masterpiece's dénouement is both stimulated and completed not in words but in action.

Erle Stanley Gardner (English fairplay influence):
It is also interesting to note that many of the clues these days are clues of action. In other words, the detective doesn't find a broken cuff link or fragment of curved glass at the scene of the crime. Instead, one of the characters does something that turns out to be significant.

Gardner is thinking here along the lines of the well-made play. At the climax of such a construction, the protagonist must do something that seals his fate. In our story, Martin does just that. Rather than leaving town after he receives a phone call informing him of his sister's death in Mexico, he decides to remain with Lois, the woman cop he believes he is trying to rip off but with whom in fact he has fallen in love.

Raymond Chandler (American Hardboiled School):
The ideal dénouement is one in which everything is made clear in a brief sweep of action

Chandler is pointing here to the literal ending of a novel. Here Thompson is also successful. Twenty years after *1-Minus*, Martin returns home after a three-year sentence in the jug. Martin's mother is uneasy about the return of her beautiful son, the swindling journalist. After all, she already has to deal with her daughter Carol, who has grown into a sadistic, mother-beating prostitute. We quickly realize that Martin and Carol's relationship is incestuous. Their lives are a desperate attempt to regain those four innocent years on the other side of *1-Minus*. During the time of our story, in which Carol kills a john with a disappointing bankroll, and Martin a private eye who has been hired by Carol's ex, we experience Martin's growing attraction for Lois. What begins as a scheme to rip off her and her naval officer brother ends with Carol leaving for Mexico (after finally poisoning her mother), dying there, and Martin lying in bed with Lois. The closing lines of the novel are read:

> "I love you, Lois," I said. "We're going to go away together. We'll all go away together."
> A cab stopped in front of the house
> A man in uniform got out.
> He was supposed to just cable her, give her permission to sell; he wasn't supposed to show up. Well that was alright. We could all be together now—brothers and sisters.
> But of course, he wasn't her brother.

The man in the uniform is a cop,[4] no doubt having put two and two together concerning the death of the private eye. Martin's fate comes in a brief sweep of action.

While Hammett's, Chandler's and even Cain's killers stand boldly in the rain, proudly conscious of externals and savagely bound to life's mortal command that a punch is a punch, Thompson's murderers, while possessing the same American intensity, evolve into philosophies that attest to attitudes far less noble. These creatures, born far from the rain country of the hardboiled romance, refuse to leave the abortive warmth of their psyches for an instant. They are always there, these monologues—self-contained, relentless firebrands of psychotic intuition, capable of such ruthless manipulation, literal or reflective, that the reader is forced to

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admit that they have crossed boundaries and entered upon some dark interspace of tragic voice, vision, and deed. Martin philosophically reflects to his sister, who has just thrown up after killing the john with the Kansas City roll:

> .I talked to her—to myself. I talked to both of us, and for both of us. And if it was rationalization, so be it. Perhaps the power to rationalize is the power to remain the same. Perhaps the insane are so because they cannot escape the truth.
>
> We are culpable, I said, only to the degree that all life, all society, was culpable. We are no more than the pointed instruments of that life, activated symbols in an allegory whose authors are untold billions. And only they acting in concert, could alter a line if its text. And the alterations could best ve impelled by remaining what we were. Innocence outraged, the sacred defiled, the useful made useless. For in Universal horror there could be Universal hope, in ultimate bestiality the ultimate in beauty and good. The blind should be made to see—so it is written. *They should be made to see!*

R. Austin Freeman would have never dreamed himself capable of following Silas Hickler in mind, body, and spirit from the moment this thief turned murderer to his ultimate fate on that lonely shore "by Orfordness" ("An appropriate and dramatic end to a singular and yet typical case"—Thorndyke), but, as both a writer of mysteries and a one-time medical officer, he would have had to agree with Martin Lakewood's reasonable assessment of society's principle culpability. One might probe further and insist that he would have preferred Thompson's performances to Chandler's productions, the latter's successful Marlowe certainly reminding him much too much of that flamboyant and cocaine-addicted violinist of Baker Street whose adventures were nothing less than incredible.

Jim Thompson: The Killers Inside Him is an invaluable addition to both our enjoyment and understanding of this uniquely American talent. Besides the novella, there are separate interviews with Thompson's wife and publisher. Their agreements and disagreements concerning the late author are quite revealing. Collins and Gorman have performed a great service in bringing to the reading public this consummate novella and first-hand information on this great writer of tragic insight. Let us hope others follow suit and publish all those out-of-print novels of Thompson's

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Notes

1 Perhaps the word is civilize. In any case, such efforts involve an integration within the framework of a sound and entertaining beginning, middle, and end. These ratiocinations reinstate the spatial demands of dramatic form where one hears again the insistent barking of that old dog and his infamous proposition that .. "Character is Fate."

2 Again, sexual desire motivates the traumatic fall of Thompson's protagonists, not necessarily the plots of his novels. To regain an innocence that existed prior to the initial sexual encounter appears to illuminate much of Thompson's subtext and, in most cases, becomes the motivating f[illegible]uccess.

3 Thompson's abduction, from consequent to antecedent, reads as follows:

Rule: All who succeed in their actions in this duplicitic world must be capable of attaining a godlike emptiness and silence.

Result: There exists a state of godlike activity in which transcendence of duplicity is possible.

Case: This duplicitic world is successfully emptied and silenced in the unifying and godlike act of murder.

4 Max Allen Collins has another answer to this obviously oblique scene. He suggests that the man in the uniform may be Lois's husband. One way or the other, the novella ends with a definite sense of pending action □

The Doings at Dubuque:

A Sherlockian Seminar

The seminar was graced by the presence of Her Majesty Queen Victoria and His Highness the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) at the closing banquet.

The seminar ended with a dinner cruise aboard a paddle-boat called *The Spirit of Dubuque*. The guests gathered to sing Sherlockian songs.

By Ann Byerly

Imagine, if you would, the best college lecture that ever held you spellbound. Extend it for the duration of a weekend, change the topic to Sherlock Holmes and his world, and change the professor, no matter how wonderful, to two witty, knowledgeable, intelligent, and lovable gentlemen, both members of the Baker Street Irregulars. Imagine this, and you have just an inkling of what John Bennett Shaw's Sherlock Holmes Workshop with guest lecturer Michael Harrison, at the University of Dubuque, Iowa, August 17–19, was like, for it was much more than this. A veteran of five Shaw workshops, I consider myself a *connoisseuse,* and I think this one just about topped them all.

I could give you a list of topics covered by the two men and other speakers, such as Sherlock Holmes Then and Now, Arthur Conan Doyle, M. B., C.M., M. D.: Setting the Record Straight ("I haven't been fooled by this Watson thing," quipped Shaw in introduction; "Nigel Bruce did *not* write the stories"), The Gaslight Era, a description of architectural plans for a Sherlockian building to house the University of Minnesota's Hench Collection of Sherlock Holmes, a history and overview of the scion societies, The London of Sherlock Holmes, and Holmes's England Today. But that would be not only soporific, it would omit such fascinating tales as that of the Pittsburgh Sherlockian who stayed out drinking—in good Sherlockian company, I might add—until 4:00 A.M. the first night, and won Shaw's devilish quiz on "The Cardboard Box" scant hours later at 9:30 Saturday morning. (He did the same thing the following night and placed second in Sunday's quiz.)

There was the dinner banquet Saturday night

which Queen Victoria and Prince Edward attended in person, decorating both Harrison and Shaw with emerald tie-pins, as the Good Queen had done for Sherlock Holmes in another century. And there was the riotous seizing of the microphone aboard the Mississippi river boat dinner cruise by a motley crew who sang "We Never Mention Aunt Clara." There were room parties and book hunts, turning up such things as a 1925 volume of Christopher Morley's essays (Morley started all this when he founded the Baker Street Irregulars in 1934), an old edition of Doyle's *Beyond the City,* and Alexander Woollcott's *Long Ago and Far Away* containing *his* version of the first B.S.I. dinner—ah, but you have to know how to look! There were stories, ruses, boasts, *tours de force,* pranks, and, perhaps best of all, like-mindedcompany.

The star of the weekend, whether he'll admit it or not, was Michael Harrison, B.S.I. Harrison journeyed from Hove, Sussex, for a writer-in-residency at Du bu que University which "just happened" to coincide with Shaw's workshop. It has been said that Harrison knows more about Sherlock Holmes than any man alive, and I believe this is true. He has authored at least two pathfinding books on Holmes, and his new *A Study in Surmise* (Gaslight Publications) promises to be an instant classic. On top of this, he knows Holmes's era and world most intimately. In his Sunday afternoon lecture, he told usthat he hadhad cause a few years ago to complain about the service at Simpson's-in-the-Strand (where Holmes and Watson ate at the end of "The Dying Detective"). He called the manager over and said, "Now, I've been coming here since April 15, 1909, and I'm sorry to say the service has been going steadily downhill." Howcan you respond tothat?

In all, Harrison gave three lectures; it seems in retrospect that he gave many more, for each overflowedwith informationand discoveries. Listeningto Harrison's polite English accent and the ideas and stories it conveyed was like being lifted out of your body and the workaday world and being transported to a place andtime more real thaneventhe perpetual Sherlockian 1895.

Harrison received two standing ovations from the workshop's eighty-or-so participants. As he disclaimedduring one ofthem at the Saturday ban quet, he had been talking with someone who had lauded him for his knowledge, and Harrison had told him, "You know, I really don't deserve it." "Yes," said the man, "but how do you know?"

And how could *we* have known when he signed up for the workshop that we were going to attend the year's—andpossiblythe decade's—greatestSherlockian event? Elementary. With Shaw and Harrison—and the eighty-odd Sherlockians who helped take overDubu que—youcan'tgo wrong. □

Zen and the Art of Mystery Writing:

The Novels of

Janwillem van de Wetering

By Sydney Schultze

The appeal of Janwillem van de Wetering's detective novels stems not just from a rare combination of good character development, intellectual content, humor, exotic settings, and coherent plots. Written from a masculine point of view, they are marked by a certain sweetness, freshness, and more than a little weirdness. His novels are as distinctive in their own way as those of Ian Fleming. They appeal to the devotees of the world-weary/whiskey/slasher school as well as to the cyanide-in-the-fish-paste lovers.

The series of nine novels features immensely likable detectives as well as a whole gallery of unusually colorful suspects and victims, including a witch from Curaçao, a psychotic nature-loving Vietnam veteran, and a Papuan on a Harley. The ideas of Zen Buddhism give a focus to the books, which are set primarily in Amsterdam, but also in Japan, the United States, and other places. And every book is laced with humor, both subtle and broad.

Janwillem van de Wetering was born in Holland in 1931 and grew up in an upper-middle-class family. When his Jewish schoolmates were killed during World War II, van de Wetering began a quest to find out how such a thing could happen. His search led him right around the world, to South Africa, to England, to a Zen monastery in Japan, to South America and Australia, back to Holland, and to the United States. In Holland, he served as a part-time policeman and gathered most of the material he was to use in his novels. After writing two engrossing accounts of his Zen experiences in Dutch, *Die lege spiegel* (1972; translated as *The Empty Mirror,* 1973) and *Het dagende niets* (1974; translated as *A Glimpse of Nothingness*, 1975), he began writing detective novels. He reports that he wrote the first two novels in Dutch but had greater success in finding a publisher after putting them into English. Later novels were written in English and subsequently translated into Dutch. In 1975, the year the first novel in the series, *Outsider in Amsterdam,* came out, he moved to Maine with his wife Juanita, a Colombian of Spanish-Jewish background.[1] Since 1975, eight more novels in the series have appeared: *Tumbleweed* (1976), *The Corpse on the Dike* (1976), *Death of a Hawker* (1977), *The Japanese Corpse* (1977), *The Blond Baboon* (1978), *The Maine Massacre* (1979), *The Mind-Murders* (1981), and *The Streetbird*

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(1983).[2] He has also written two children's books, *Little Owl* and *Hugh Pine,* a non-series novel, *The Butterfly Hunter,* and several shorter pieces, including stories about Inspector Sito written under the name LeGru.

Van de Wetering's background has produced a series unlike any other. His novels spring from Holland, which gave us van Gulik's Oriental "Judge Dee" books and served as a setting for the Englishman Nicolas Freeling's Van der Valk books, but which otherwise has not been well known in detective circles. Not only is Holland an unusual setting for detective novels, but van de Wetering focuses on small groups in Holland which have particular interest for him, such as immigrants from the former colonies, or Jews. Although scarcely 14,500 Jews survive in Holland out of a total population of more than thirteen million people, several characters are Jewish (Cardozo, Zilver, the Rogges, Jacobs), and the issue of the complicity of the Dutch police in the elimination of the Jews in World War II is confronted squarely, as is the residual distaste for Germans that several characters exhibit. The influence of Zen Buddhism is felt not just in *The Japanese Corpse,* which is set in Japan, but throughout all the novels.

There are three main characters in the books, all members of the Amsterdam "murder brigade."

Highest in rank is the commissaris. Next is Adjutant Grijpstra, a non-commissioned officer who works with Sergeant de Gier. Their names are appropriate to their profession: Grijpstra means "to seize" and Gier means "vulture."[3] They are deceptive, however, for these are not unfeeling, hard-bitten cops. They are sensitive, personable men of whom we grow very fond as they work hard, suffer crises at home, joke with each other, and try to improve themselves. We come to know them rather well and enjoy watching themdevelop asthe series progresses.

Sergeant Rinus de Gier emerges as the hero of the series. Information about his personality, his appearance, and his background is given in the first novel, and each subsequent book adds new details to our knowledge. Unlike many authors, van de Wetering does not just repeat the same tag lines about his characters. In each book, it is as if he has observed a real person anew and told us what struck him that particular day about the character. Usually able to keep details straight, van de Wetering occasionally gives contradictory information in various books about characters, altering their eye color, their first names, their addresses, and eventheir personalities Nevertheless, he has managed to put together a vivid, coherent portrait of de Gier and the commissaris, and, to a slightly lesserextent, of Grijpstra, resulting in some of themost well-rounded series characters in recent memory.

Sergeant de Gier, by all accounts, is extremely handsome, like a movie star, athletic and elegant. Gathering evidence from various books, we find that he is a little over six feet tall, with a well-muscled back, narrow waist, long legs, wide shoulders, strong teeth (do they protrude a little?), a charming smile, noble forehead, high cheek bones, delicate hawk's nose, long, immaculately cut, thick brown curls (is the haircut too elaborate?), full upswept mustache, and strong, tanned hands. This elegance is marred slightly by his rather disgusting habit of scratching his bottom. What color are his eyes? Blue in *The Corpse on the Dike,* theysuddenly turn up a glowing brown in *The Blond Baboon.* Whatever their color, they are soft and expressiveand enliven his face. His dark blue denim suit with tight trousers was custom made for him by an illegal Turkish immigrant. He addsdash to his open shirt with a light blue or multicolored silk scarf, and at one point he buys suede ankle-length boots. He owns an orange undershirt and a Japanese kimono. Though he hates to wear it, he looks handsome in his uniform. A black belt in judo, he is very sensitive to Grijpstra's sly kidding that he might be developinga belly. He is reasonably intelligent, speaks English and some Spanish, and has a good sense of humor.

Although he turns fortymidwaythroughtheseries and is forty-onein *TheMaine Massacre,* he has never

been married. He occasionally gets involved with women, but in the early books his emotional life centers on his neurotic Siamese cat, Oliver. In fact, he gives up one woman because he must choose between her and his cat. Eventually, de Gier falls in love with Esther, sister of the victim in *The Corpse on the Dike*, and comes to love her even more than Oliver. Although de Gier wants to marry Esther, she does not give in to him. Esther, like many of the women in this series, never really comes alive for us, so we are more affected by Oliver's death than by Esther's when the two are killed in a street accident. De Gier, who has to shoot his mortally wounded cat at the scene of the accident, undergoes a severe crisis at this point, and we never see him as close to marriage again. In *The Maine Massacre*, he is pursued by Madelin, a forceful young American who reminds him of a princess in a storybook he carried around as a child, but he is put off by her cold lack of spontaneity. Finally, Asta, a well-endowed police-woman who likes to cater to men, breaks through de Gier's reserve in *The Mind-Murders*, only to disappear completely, without explanation, in the next book. But de Gier still has Tabriz, a lovable but ugly nine-pound Persian rug of a cat who likes to knock over marmalade jars.

De Gier grew up in Rotterdam, where his father was shot by Germans. He became a policeman at his uncle's suggestion. As the series begins, de Gier has served six years in the murder brigade, following five as a constable. His salary is not princely, but it allows him to have a decrepit bicycle and a small, comfortable apartment in the southern part of Amsterdam, in Buiten-veldert. The two rooms with hall, kitchen, and shower are furnished with an antique hospital bed with ornamental flowers on it, a mini-fridge, two hotplates, a chair for the cat, cushions, and a bookcase. A postage-stamp balcony has at various times a geranium, lobelia, asters, alyssum, begonias, nasturtiums. De Gier is bored by football and has no television. As simple as his apartment seems he still feels he has too many things cluttering it. Besides feeding the cat, watering the flowers, listening to music (he likes Bach and jazz), and entertaining an occasional woman, de Gier likes lying in his bed in a half-wakeful morning snooze, when thoughts flow so freely and creatively while the body is almost asleep.

Although de Gier enjoys relaxing at home, reading (he needs reading glasses), visiting museums and bookstores and libraries, and going to judo sessions and shooting practice, he is always ready, like his friend Grijpstra, to work weekends and evenings on cases. He and his friend are very close, sharing a love of music and Chinese food. De Gier buys a second-hand flute to accompany Grijpstra, who improvises on some drums which turned up one day at the police station. He likes his job, and, though he does not feel as powerful as he did when he first began as a constable, he thrills at racing through the streets in a battered old VW: he is still in some ways a little boy. An incurable romantic, he frequently fantasizes an exciting life somewhere else, on the desert among the Arabs, as a pilot, in the tropics, as a commando in a South American jungle. Grijpstra sees him as an adventurer, a knight on an eternal quest, fighting evil under the banner of the Goddess of Beauty.

His novels appeal to the devotees of the world-weary/whiskey/slasher school as well as to the cyanide-in-the-fish-paste lovers.

De Gier's attitude toward police work is slightly unorthodox. He says that he does not enjoy the hunt and does not even like fishing because of the cruel hooks. He faints at the sight of corpses, yet he has never disliked violence or a good fight, and Grijpstra thinks he is a ferocious hunter. He never kills a man until *The Maine Massacre*. Appropriately, the killing occurs in America rather than Holland, and true to form he faints dead away, pulling a palm down with him. He dislikes jails, and does not believe in punishment, since he thinks criminals are sick and should be treated in pleasant surroundings. His main interest in crime is to learn why criminals make mistakes. He has very individualistic routines and is seen as antagonistic to various systems of authority which interfere with his way of doing things. Grijpstra says that he likes to create chaos, often doing the opposite of what the situation seems to require. But de Gier is a good policeman—his impulsive nature is tempered by Grijpstra's mellowness and by the commissaris's guidance. He will probably rise no higher than adjutant because he did not go to the police academy, but he is not ambitious in any case.[4]

De Gier is more than just a policeman. He and the commissaris are the main vehicles for the illustration of van de Wetering's world view, which has been heavily influenced by Buddhist thought. The novels show de Gier on the path toward enlightenment, toward learning how to live. Although he agrees with Grijpstra that people are probably no good, he has

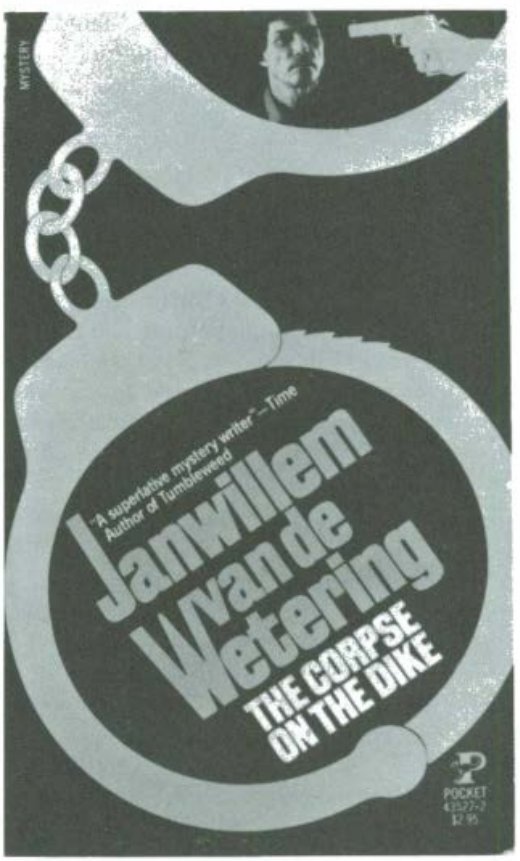
not given up on life. He works hard even though there might not be any favora ble outcome for his efforts. To improve himself, he tries, without much success, to cut back on his smoking and swearing, and he tries to be modest. Most of all, he remains alive to the miraculous, inexplica ble beauty of the world around him. Even if everything is going wrong, he can feel joy at the beauty ofnature.

The deaths of Esther and Oliver in *The Japanese Corpse* cause a profoundchange in de Gier, leading him toward detachment. In *The Empty Mirror,* van de Wetering says that the Dutch know how to do their best, butthat his Zen traininghas taught him to do his best while totally detached, without caring about the results of what he is trying to achieve.[5] Esther and Oliver are destroyed so that de Gier can continue to grow. De Gier is still disciplined and industrious after his nervous breakdown following their deaths, but he suffers from an inner rage and worries that he does not care a bout anything at all anymore. He is like a mirror in whichnothing seems to register, or a balloon that has popped. As he works on the case of the Japanese corpse, he comes toseethatthe commissaris is right in consideringhim a free man with some thing to live for. He learns that he can still feel some anxiety but can laugh at what once would have scared him. A suspect tried once to upset de Gier with a bloody rat; now he can look on a dead cat with detachment. De Gier dreams tha t he and Oliver are together in a forest and Oliver races ahead toward the light at the end of the path. On a subconscious level, de Gier realizes that Oliver has simply gone ahead of him to where we must all go—he has raced toward thelight of final knowledge. De Gier willcontinueto search for light on his own way todeath.

In *The Maine Massacre,* Madelin wants de Gier to stop pretending to be a self-sufficient ice floe, but he tells her not to get any ideas about him—he will end up on a fardistant island, and he will bealone. (In an interview, van de Wetering says he plans for de Gier to end up in New Guinea with the Papuan from *Outsider in Amsterdam* as a teacher.)[6] In *The Streetbird,* Grijpstra suggests that he should not be following enlightened teachers any more; that he should look for his own salvation. De Gier turns down an invitation for champagne and feminine company in order to stay with his cat and think through thematter of whe ther he is on the rightpath. He falls asleep and dreams he is with the villainous murder victim in a boat headed for rocks, going in the direction he himself chose. He asks Ta briz the meaning of the dream, but the cat only answers "Yoho." And that is the latest word we have so far on deGier's development.

Adju tant H. F. Gri jpstra, known as "Henk" in *Death of a Hawker* and "Hank" in *The Streetbird,* is de Gier's immediatesuperior, his partner and friend. Ten years olderthan de Gier, he is large, fat, with a heavy square head, thick lips, clean, sagging pink cheeks, short, bristly, un brushed, whitish-gray hair, bristly mustache, heavy eyebrows, pale blue eyes, and dentures. Peaceful, solid, mellow, fatherly, he looks like the kind of man an elderly woman would want for a son. He wears a baggy, crumpled suit made of expensive, dark blue pinstriped material, and a gray tie. Like de Gier and the commissaris, he smokes, preferring a smallcigar. Although he has a fine memory and excellent powers of concentration, he was not very good at school. He has a slow, dense brain and seldom reads, but he is not stupid. The commissaris regards him as good a t questioning suspects, a policeman who will plod his way toward solving a murder. In his own eyes, he is a middling policeman who follows orders unthinkingly, as the lower police ranks should.

Gri jpstra has never accepted the chaos of life and is puzzled why evil attracts him. He is unsure whether he has any morals. Yet he is a man of spiritual substance, an experienced policeman who soothes citizens lovingly, benevolently. Kind, trustworthy, and pa tient, he likesto do things forother people. He composes a song for de Gier's birthday, cares forhis plants while de Gier is in Japan, gets him a newcat, and arranges for de Gier to go to America with the commissaris



van de Wetering gives contradictory information about characters, altering their eye color, their first names, their addresses, and even their personalities.

For Grijpstra, humanity is made up of bounders, idiots, and idealists whom he does not trust. He believes in looking for the lowest possible motivation for crime. Sympathetic to some Communist ideas, he dreams of an "advanced" sort of Communism in which society will be ripe and have no need for police, and he will be able to devote himself to painting. An admirer of Henri Rousseau and the bird painter Melchior Hondecoeter, he wants to try to capture essences on canvas but cannot find the peace to do so at home. He is married to a bad-tempered blob in pink curlers who grows fatter with each book until she can no longer sleep on the bed and is beginning to crowd him out of the apartment altogether. Slightly deaf, she turns up the television and watches it all day. Grijpstra's oldest son, aged eighteen, has turned into a dirty-haired, buck-toothed thief who sniffs cocaine and smokes hash, but he still cares for his younger sons, aged eight and six, and does not want to leave them. Grijpstra's pleasures are few: he loves to play drums, he loves a hot shave, and he likes to eat nuts. He dreams of a quiet, uncluttered room with a river view and no television, where he will read the paper and paint, and de Gier will visit and play music. No women will come unless he is sure they will leave again. For years, divorce has filled his thoughts, but, when we know him, he is no longer sunk in the deep despair which once so exasperated the commissaris.

For solace, Grijpstra visits Nelly, a bosomy, retired prostitute who keeps a bar at first and later a hotel decorated with touches of pink to remind her of her former life. She is very fond of Grijpstra and rather pathetically tries to please him in all ways, including trying to stay slim. Eventually, Grijpstra's wife moves out, leaving him the small, uncomfortable, rented house with the bath with the peeling paint in Lijnbaansgracht opposite police headquarters (in later books called Oilmakerscanal). With de Gier's help, he cleans it out, whitewashes and sands it. Grijpstra's black cloud has lifted at last.

Originally conceived as a contrast to de Gier,[7] Grijpstra from the beginning is a sympathetic character, though in the early books he tends to take a gloomy view of most things. While de Gier rushes out to embrace life and new experiences, Grijpstra holds back and grumbles. For a while, it appeared that Grijpstra was being phased out of the series—his role in the second half of *The Japanese Corpse* and in *The Maine Massacre* is minimal, supplanted by that of the commissaris. From a minor character in *Outsider in Amsterdam,* the commissaris has become a major character, not just by virtue of his job as chief of the murder brigade, but as spiritual guide and model for de Gier.

The commissaris, based on a real police official, is a small, frail old man, with a wrinkled gray face, thin, bloodless lips, pale, gentle, inquisitive eyes behind round gold spectacles, long, yellowish teeth, carefully combed hair parted in the middle, thin legs, and a slightly protruding stomach. His expression is very innocent and inspires confidence. Grijpstra once described him as a dry stick topped with a razor blade. In *Tumbleweed,* he still has five years of service left, but by the time of *The Japanese Corpse* he is within a year of retirement. In *The Mind-Murders,* he is 63. In his worn, pressed shantung suit, complete with vest and tie, he looks like a headmaster or a miniature patriarch. Like Grijpstra and de Gier, he is not a native of Amsterdam. He grew up in a gray, boring town but learned about life in a near by swamp; he suffered an early loss when his friends the trees were cut down by laborers. Work with the Resistance resulted in the loss of six teeth and a prison term during the Second World War, while Grijpstra was fighting in the Dutch Indies and de Gier was still a child.

The commissaris's name is Jan, but all we know about his last name is that the Japanese consider it unpronounceable. He lives in great contentment with his wife Elise (Katrien in *Death of a Hawker*), who worries about his health and cares for him by drawing his bath and bringing him orange juice, cigars, and coffee. He admires the indifference of his friend the turtle, who lives in his garden and whom he feeds lettuce leaves. (He has a cat in *Outsider in Amsterdam,* but it is not heard of again.) His family is large and scattered: a sister in Maine, a brother in Austria, a relative in Hong Kong, a niece in Holland, and children, including a son who travels to France

The commissaris suffers from rheumatism, a legacy of his prison years, and the pain in his left leg, sometimes his right leg, occasionally drives him to bed and eventually forces him to use a cane. Despite his pain, he wants to remain active and fulfills a

longing to travel by going to Curaçao, Japan, Italy, and Maine—where he can use his very good English. At home, his pain is lessened by hot baths, slow breathing, alcohol, or by recalling a sensuous scene from a movie he once saw. He began reading books about ancient China when the rheumatism flared up, but he rejects the notion of a connection between wisdom and pain. He would rather have neither.

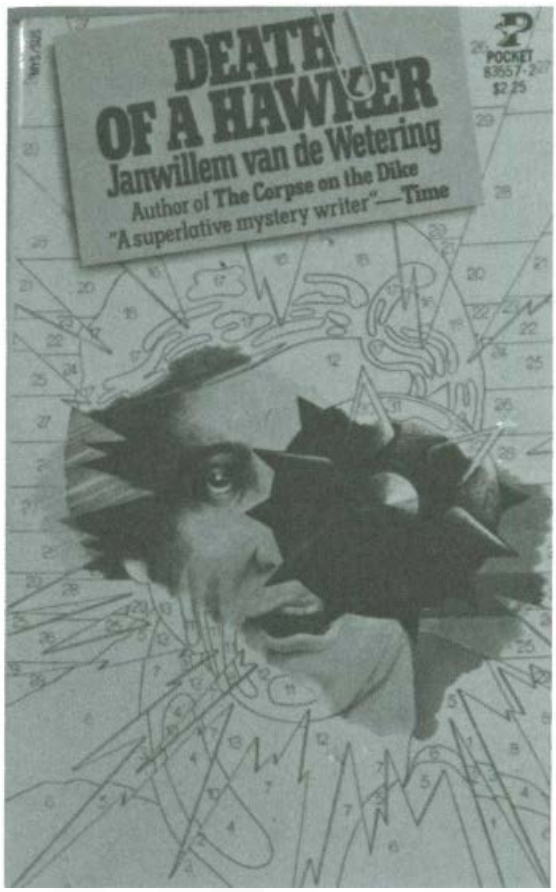
Like Grijpstra and de Gier, he has no high opinion of people, whom he considers the curse of our beautiful planet. He feels that everything is nonsense—permanent security or happiness is impossible, and only a fool or a saint claims to know anything. Yet he uses his calm, orderly mind to approach problems from an unusual angle and to restore order based on the premise that the police are useful. Human law he sees as a shadow of the Law at the core of each of us, and human law changes as our understanding of the Law changes.

As a policeman, he is known for his intelligence and tenacity. He is usually polite, though he can be very critical, even venomous. Despite his ill health, he does not leave all the legwork to his men and frequently finds himself in danger. At one time or another, he barely escapes being run down by a car, beaten to death with a cane, compelled to stab himself, and run over by a bulldozer. Yet he finds that concentration rather than action or thinking is often the method that will allow a solution to float into consciousness. He enjoys the respect and admiration of Grijpstra and of de Gier, whom he nurses back to health after his nervous breakdown.

Although the commissaris does his best at his job, he strives for detachment and is usually able to maintain it. His equilibrium, however, is severely shaken when he is shown a bloody mask of himself in Japan, and he knows fear in a close call in an airplane in Maine. The death of a Japanese criminal with whom he shared a moment of insight causes him to cry. Sometimes he gets depressed because he is getting old. He used to be unfaithful to his wife, but now stays home—out of necessity, according to his wife, though he claims it is out of love. But he feels very old when he is not jealous of de Gier's relationship with Madelin.

On balance, the commissaris is very content. Fate will bring whatever he needs, if only the desire is framed correctly, even if it is only smoked eel on toast or a serendipitous visit to Nellie's hotel. Relaxing at Nellie's, he muses that, with old age, far from his senses dimming, he has more insight and is closer to nature. He has learned what he knew as a child—all is a game.

Those familiar with Buddhism will recognize that the commissaris's character is based largely on the lessons of the Eightfold Path. To follow the Eightfold Path means to balance eight qualities,

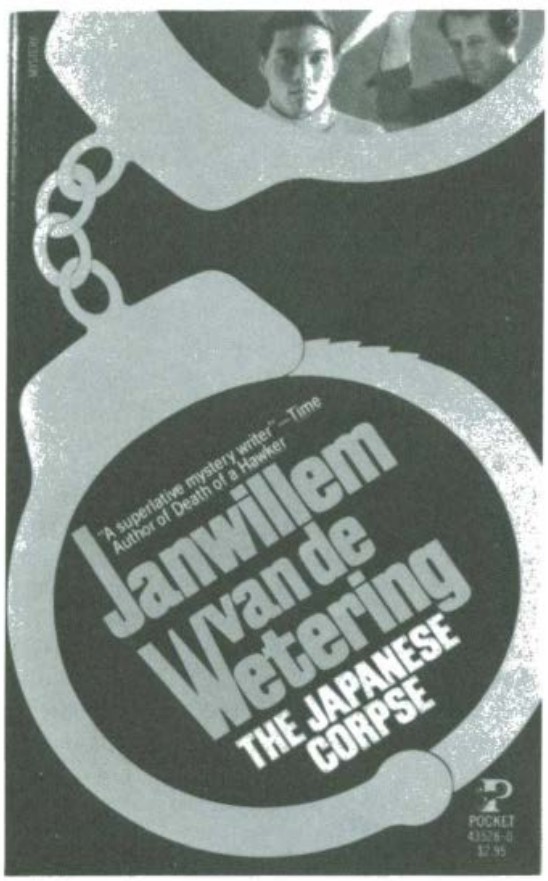


neither neglecting nor over-emphasizing any of them: Right Insight, Right Intentions, Right Speaking, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Awareness, and Right Meditation. The commissaris understands why things happen (Right Insight); he thinks deeply (Right Meditation); he watches what goes on around him (Right Awareness); he is careful what he says (Right Speaking); he means well (Right Intentions); he works at a decent job for a living (Right Livelihood); he does his best (Right Action); he never gives up (Right Effort).

Several other Buddhist concepts influence the delineation of the commissaris's character, as well as that of other individuals in the novels. The detachment experienced by the commissaris and de Gier illustrates the Buddhist belief that life is full of suffering which is caused by desires, and that suffering can only be eliminated by a cessation of all desires, by detachment. Buddhists also believe that each act brings its own inevitable result: good brings good, while evil brings evil. The commissaris believes that fate is a product of our past actions and that each one of us has the right to face the consequences of our own deeds, which is precisely what happens to many of the villains in the books. For instance, in *Tumbleweed,* Maria van Buren does not use her power properly and dies; the man who plans her death finally learns to his cost that to do evil in order

to gain some point is wrong, and he advises de Gier never to try to "win." Still another Buddhist concept embraced by the commissaris is that everything is void or empty. This idea of nothingness or zero is a tenet of many characters, including the members of the BMF gang in *The Maine Massacre*. In fact, throughout the series, the appellation "negative" is a sign of approval of sorts, showing that the character is detached and knows that nothing matters. *Death of a Hawker's* Abe Rogge is called a negative superman, while Jeremy in *The Maine Massacre* is labeled a negative original. Finally, the commissaris holds the Buddhist belief that there is an interpenetration and identification of all things in a universal consciousness, which explains his acceptance of peoplewhom others find abhorrent.

A miniature version of the Buddhist search for enlightenment appears in both of van de Wetering's books for children. *Little Owl* shows animals learning to follow the Eightfold Path, while *Hugh Pine* presents a commissaris-like intelligent porcupine who manages to accommodate to the world on his own terms, steering clear of other porcupines though helping them as best he can. The straight novel *The Butterfly Hunter* is a much darker work, illustrating the Buddhist idea of evil consequences for evil deeds. The main character, Eddy, finally achieves freedomand enlightenment by



accepting death and defeat, while other characters find defeat by choosing gold and sexual companionship. The title refers to Eddy's brother, who collects butterflies and who later appears as the Butterfly Hunter in a seriesof symbolicdreams.

Although the Buddhist idea is very creatively expressed in *The Butterfly Hunter,* it is more enjoyably presented through the Grijpstra-de Gier novels simply because the main characters are more sympathetic. The commissaris, de Gier, and to some extent Grijpstra show how a person who tries to act on the side of good might come to terms with life and achieve a measure of peace, based on the precepts of Buddhism. Although almost every page of the series is informed with the Buddhist idea, it is through the medium of these three characters that van de Wetering's world view is most appealingly communicated to the reader.

Van de Weteringhimself saysthathe would liketo be more like de Gier, who is handsomer, better at judo, and stays away from women. But de Gier is still burdened with a heavy Dutch conscience—what to do, what not to do. Van de Wetering's real goal is to be more like de Gier's mentor the commissaris, who does a good job yet can jump free of any situation.[8]

Besides the three major characters, few of the other police are very thoroughly developed. The best is Isaac, or Simon, Cardozo, a small constable with a long, thick mop of curly hair and a nobly curved nose,large deer-like eyes, usuallydressed in a shabby corduroy or velvet jacket, and the youngest member of the murder brigade. Still living with his close-knit family, Cardozo is the eternal younger brother, wanting to be included in the activities of the older boys but always feeling left out. His idol is de Gier. Though some times too eager, he is very helpful to the needy. He is more than ready to enjoy the good life whichhe thinks is a perquisite of being a detective—he sleeps with a woman on a case and must endure ribbing from de Gier.

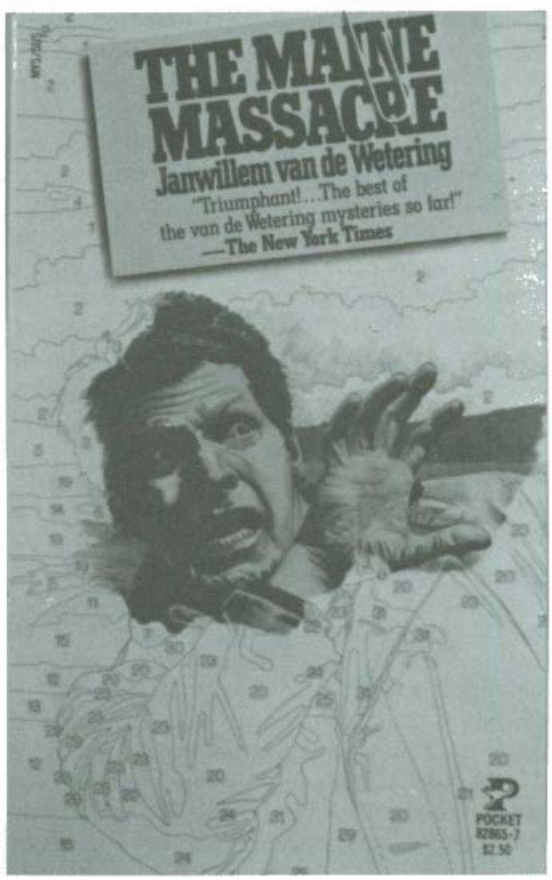
In *Outsider in Amsterdam,* a well-drawn chief inspector appears. He loves *genever* (Dutch gin), shrimp, snails, pineapple with whipped cream, peppersteak, and cognac. He likes dogs. Best of all, like most other Dutch people, he raises plants, in his case a cactuswhichhe secretly likesto measure. Only late in the book do we realize that the cactus represents an enormous green phallus. Other cameo police officers include the sleepy constable who drives the commissaris's Citroën, Adjutant Guerts and his partner Sietsema who was transferred to the crime squad after he fell off his motorcycle oncetoo often, and the chief constable, an elegant, gray-haired man of fifty. In the last books, Ketchup and Karate, a young pair of constables who are constantly in trouble, make their appearance. They are the younger generation, not so committed to a peaceful

His main interest in crime is to learn why criminals make mistakes.

smoothing-down of potentially violent situations, just as their names indicate. Other police introduced in the last book includered-haired, zealous Sergeant Jurriaans, the courageous Ambonese Orang Utan, and John Varé, a part-time, black policeman. As modern times come to Holland, several police-women appear: Asta with the messy car and fine body; Constable Anna with the cold eyes; Adjutant Adèle, the "lovely asshole" with the face of a Madonna, wiggly hips, and a good brain. Van de Wetering has fun with foreign police, among them the vicious, randy German, Röder, the admirable, unambitious American sheriff in his Boy Scout-like uniform, and his ill-fated deputy, who finds Europe soft.

The villains and other supporting cast in van de Wetering's novels frequently impress us with their talent and intelligence, sometimes even insight, though theymayhaveusedit wrongly. Anexampleis Beuzekom in *Outsider in Amsterdam*. Beuzekom, a drugdealer, is attractive, educated, and talented, but he is frittering away his abilities, as his name suggests—"beuzelen" means to dawdle or trifle in Dutch. Then there is Bezuur, who has left the creative life he ledwithhis old friendthe hawker Abe Rogge and has sunk into fat and decadence. His name, appropriately, suggests the word "bezuren" whichmeans to suffer or pay dearly. Other examples of impressive characters include *The Streetbird's* Beelema, "God's other son," who is greatly respected by his friends but takes the wrong path in manipulating the lives of others, ignoring the Law until he falters and succumbs to fear, the victim of his own actions.

Characters may go astray by succumbing to their desires, like Drachtsma the tumbleweed, who is unhappy, not really alive, blown about by his own desires. Or theymay just reject lifeentirely. In *The Corpse on the Dike,* van de Wetering contrasts Tom Wernekink, whothinkslife is a bad joke and sits in front of the television all day, with Diets the Cat, who hasno higheropinionof life butlaughs a lotand serves as a leader for other inhabitants of the dike. Or they may just be fools such as Bergen, who lives on the surface, makes the worst assumptions about essentially neutralevents, succumbs tofear, andloses control of his life. ("Bergen" means to hold or contain in Dutch— just what he cannot do!) Bergen is contrasted with the Blond Baboon, one of van de Wetering's best characters. He has enormous strength and, like the Cat and many of van de Wetering'sstrong characters, makeshis statement in life by doing the opposite of what might be expected. Instead of running fromhis fears, he confrontsthem by realizinghis nightmares in a painting of a rat and in a moving model featuring a cow's skull and a skeleton, devices designed to frighten him. Instead, the skull device ends up protecting him in a shooting attempt. Similarly, in *The Maine Massacre,* Jeremy is contrasted with his friend the geologist who shot himself because he thought humanity was a mistake. Jeremy does not dispute this but has an idea that thereis beauty in the worldand he setsout to find it. He exercises influence over the leader of the BMF gang, which is modeled loosely on a similar group in Dostoevsky's *Besy* (*The Devils*) which also seeks insight through experimentation. In *The Mind-Murders,* Frits Fortune is contrasted with Boronski.



In the face of misfortune, Frits becomes accident-prone, then recovers because he has insight into life, whileBoronski has no such resources and dies.

Van de Wetering pays attention to his minorcharacters as well as the major ones. So many cameo characters enrich the novels—old Elizabeth, the transvestite; Uncle Bert, the Communist capitalist; Mr. Johnson, the CIA agent who loves code words; Giovanni Pullini, who in a marvelous scene tries to bribe the commissaris Italian-style with a job, furniture, and entertainment; the Yakusa, Daimyo, who avoided a kamikaze's fate by getting too drunk to find the sea; Slanozzel, the trustworthy businessman who will not deal in drugs or weapons. Van de Wetering often surprises us by revealing unexpected sides of his characters. A dog poisoner turns out to be a lonely, retired engineer protecting his beloved old cat Tobias; a rat-faced homosexual involved in drugs enchants with a beautiful dance; a vicious Yakusa keeps a turkey named MacArthur and cries when he loses face. The many cats are beautifully individualized.

Holland's far-flung former empire brings many of the most unusual characters—from Papua, van Meteren, the policeman who reads Dutch history, rides a Harley(van de Wetering loves Harleys), and reveres theQueen; from Curaçao, ShonWancho, the peaceful old mentor of the witch Maria van Buren; from Surinam, Luku Obrian, who comes to Holland to disconcert the Dutch and avenge his people; and old Wisi, who stirs up potions and keeps a vulture.

Despite the many foreign characters, the focus remains Holland, land of tulips, windmills, and cheese, and, more particularly, Amsterdam, city of fineold Dutch buildings, canals, and, more recently, drugs and sex shops. Van de Wetering reveals Amsterdam as a perfect, complex setting for his exploration of our complex nature. We see the perfect beauty of the lovely, elegant old houses, financed by the slave trade. We see the beautiful canals, filled with condoms, beer cans, bicycles, chairs, and mattresses, so much rubbish that ducks have to poke a hole before settling down. We see gorgeous seabirds, who leave droppings everywhere. We see elegant, quiet, restored areas, not far from incredible traffic jams and the raunchy Quarter.

Most of Holland is conventional—the crazies go to Amsterdam. Throughout van de Wetering's novels, "crazy" denotes characters who have insight and originality, who carry genius and create art. Amsterdam is a city where almost anything can be found, where characters can do what they are not supposed to, as long as they do not cause too much trouble. Since Amsterdam is so cosmopolitan, it is not surprising to find people from Italy, Japan, Germany, Surinam, Curaçao, America—tourists as well as an influx from former colonies.

In The Maine Massacre, Madelin wants de Gier to stop pretending to be a self-sufficient ice floe.

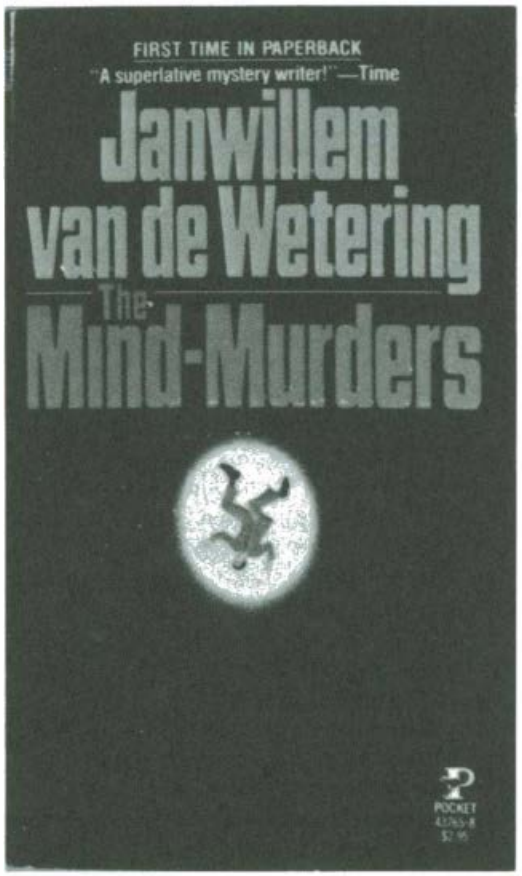
The Dutch system is socialist, relaxed, with low fines for minor crimes and only relatively light punishment even for murder or drug-dealing. To carry a gun except for sport is a crime, although guns can be had in Belgium, and there are German guns left over from the Occupation. Of course, other kinds of weapons are available for those inclined to use them. Yet Amsterdam's premeditated murder rate is very low—only five a year. In such a permissive, heterogeneous city, why is there so little violent crime? First of all, the Dutch in the novels seem very tolerant, careful, and helpful. The police, for instance, are polite even to rude motorists. They calm turmoil, rather thanadd to it. Secondly, van de Wetering mentions the Dutch habit of refusing to follow orders. A Dutchman turns mulish when told to do something. This trait would make it difficult for a criminal to order underlings to commit murder. Someviolencedoes exist around the edges of society. Tanksare called in tocalm riots over matters such as squatters.

In four of the books, van de Wetering takes his characters to more violent and colorful lands. His portrayal of those lands reflects his most charming trait, an openness to experience, a readiness to accept new places, ideas, and people on their own terms. Curaçao, Japan, and the United States are particularly vividly rendered. Sun-drenched Curaçao becomes an elemental island, closer to the secret of life than Holland's fertile, cloudy bog. Japan's land and people are brought to life with hundreds of details about such diverse subjects as Japanese restaurants, moss gardens, toilets (they do not flush), the elite corps of Snow Monkeys, the changing life of Japanese women, the hatred of flies, and the matter of sexual attraction (not breasts and legs, but necks and bottoms attract).

Van de Wetering's America—the hunting hats, bourbon, quilts, ice machines, clam chowder, personal license plates, guns—is well observed. But the author's years in flat Holland and his interest in the primeval cause him to welcome Maine with special joy, and that enthusiasm is communicated to the reader. He remarks on the ravens, which long ago disappeared from Holland but live on in the New World. He notices the snow, also only a distant memory in Holland. He sees the jagged, distorted beauty of Maine as dating back to the beginning, when the first shapes were created out of turmoil. For him, the elms reach up like natural ghosts, symbols of the planet's urge to join the sky, while high maples are frozen in gigantic moments of joy.

Van de Wetering's interiors deserve mention. He is fond of uncluttered interiors, and his advanced characters, those with insight, dwell in great simplicity. In contrast, Suzanne's hell-hole of bad taste, with its Dutch-motif wallpaper and its tacky porcelain collection, is emblematic of her whining, timorous character.

A hallmark of van de Wetering's books is the use of an unusual, often peculiar, painting or object which plays some central, symbolic role in the novel. The Blond Baboon's rat painting and skull ensemble, or Reggie's tableau of woodchuck skulls and Madelin's skeleton painting in *The Maine Massacre,*



or the boat painting in *Death of a Hawker* are all examples of this sort of thing. The objects often seem like realized fragments of a dream, which is often just what they are. Icons of this type, as well as strange dreams, figure prominently in every book and are probably influenced by the author's own experience with odd visions detailed in *A Glimpse of Nothingness*.[9]

All of van de Wetering's books are laced with humor, ranging from the crude to the hilarious to the gently wry. A lot of it is of the birdshit and farting genre, which may sound funnier to the Dutch and possibly the English than it does to Americans. Many funny anecdotes concern cats, sex, police procedure, and a variety of other topics. The adventures of the oversexed dog Kiran in *The Mind-Murders*, the penis-motif in *The Blond Baboon,* the account of the psychological exams given to new police recruits, the story of the missing scientist, the misadventures of the nude man attacked by the cat on his way to answer the door—all are extremely funny.

The police kid each other a lot, especially over rank, getting the coffee, and work assignments, which gives rise to much of the humor in the books. There is a running joke about who will pay for meals or coffee—often the lowest-ranking person gets the honor. De Gier enjoys making up truly bizarre stories about cases, which the more gullible policemen are unsure how to take. And there is gentle humor in the daily routine. Grijpstra and de Gier cannot find the suspect's address because both have left their notebooks in another coat. Grijpstra shows a credit card instead of his official identification. Cardozo goes to the wrong place for a meeting because he cannot tell north from south. Cardozo's brother does not want to lend him his boat to use on a case, and the whole family is drawn into the argument.

The Mind-Murders has a wonderful running joke about de Gier's attempt to quit smoking in order to show the long-suffering Grijpstra that it is possible to achieve freedom in this world. During his ill-fated attempt, he once contemplates smoking nineteen cigarettes at once. In another scene, his attention is drawn not by a poster beauty's bare breasts but by the cigarette in her hand. *The Corpse on the Dike* is enlivened by six-foot-three-inch Ursula Herkulanovna, who wants boom-boom orgasms and gets de Gier involved with a small pest of a boy and a car short on gas. In *The Maine Massacre*, Suzanne's attempts to fill the unwilling commissaris with *hutspot* and other traditional Dutch dishes "like mother used to make" are nicely done. So is the scene in which the tiny commissaris is trying on outsized winter gear and asks de Gier how he looks. De Gier tells him he looks like a movie star, and only when pressed admits that the star he had in mind was Dopey.

As to the mystery element in these detective novels, van de Wetering claims not to be too interested in the genre apart from van Gulik, Poe, Chandler, and a very few others, but he carefully constructs his plots and provides victim, suspects, weapon, clues, motive, and solution in the traditional fashion. The victims are a mixed lot: a leader of a Hindi streligious group, a witch from Curaçao, a Jewish hawker, a Japanese art dealer, a former Belgian chanteuse, several landowners in Maine, a small-time Dutch tycoon living in Colombia, and a black pimp from Surinam. All have some connection with a non-Dutch culture. Among the murderers, about half are not Dutch. This high percentage of non-Dutch victims and murderers adds an exotic touch to the novels and is appropriate in such a non-violent culture.

The killers use a variety of weapons, including a spiked ball, a machine pistol, and harassment. Why do they kill? In most of the books, the victims in some way provoke the attack, perhaps by taunting or ignoring the murderers, or by a kind of passive willing of the murder. Sometimes the murderers simply do not want other people to be able to lead their own lives. They perceive a right to interfere or punish. Or the killer may bring a new slant to what is acceptable in murder—murder of an infidel, or ritual murder of a bad chief. Murder may result from misplaced professional pride, or twisted philanthropy, or from a more traditional motive such as jealousy or momentary anger. Frequently, the person who actually commits the crime is just a pawn of the real murderer. For instance, the cold-hearted flyer Jan Heins is merely the instrument of another character, the real murderer. "Heins," by the way, is the nickname the Dutch give Death.

Many detective novels are ruined when the reader guesses who the murderer is before the grand revelation. There is a contest between author and reader which the reader is unhappy to win. In van de Wetering's novels, there are different rules. Neither the commissaris nor de Gier nor Grijpstra is a Nero Wolfe or a Hercule Poirot who takes in all the evidence and comes up with a solution which had eluded everyone else, in particular the stupid police, the dim assistant, and you, the slow-witted reader. Instead, the cases are solved in a very democratic fashion. Van de Wetering likes to show his detectives all coming to the same conclusion at the same time in parallel sections, in juxtaposed paragraphs or chapters. Often the detectives reach the same conclusions from different evidence and intuitions: many paths lead to the truth. Sometimes the detectives just suddenly realize some essential part of the solution, without consciously and logically deducing solutions from a formal list of clues. The commissaris in fact advocates concentration as a method of arriving at a solution because thinking can take too long. This is indeed how ideas often come—relaxing in the bath, lying in bed, sitting at the desk.

The reader may reach the solution at the same time as the detectives, since real surprises are rare. An exception is *The Streetbird*, in which most readers will not reach the correct conclusion as early as the police seem to. *The Streetbird* is an unusual case, based partly on the dubious premise that a man can gain power over a woman just by looking at her out of the corner of his eye. This is not to say that the murderer is obvious in the other books. Van de Wetering has plotted his cases satisfyingly well for those who relish the puzzle. But the puzzle element in these novels is not paramount. There is so much other entertainment that even a reader who guessed the outcome might not mind too much.

A note on the moral atmosphere of the novels seems in order. These novels are not moral tracts in which evil is identified, loathed, and summarily quashed. Nor are they fashionably cynical and amoral. Van de Wetering tries to have the best of all worlds. For instance, there is his treatment of drug use. Drugs are roundly condemned by policemen. They disrupt order and ruin lives. There are several portraits of people destroyed by drugs. Van Meteren and the character Dorin, whose brother is an addict,

go after drug dealers with a vengeance. But the deteached commissaris wonders if the fact that the Yakusadrugdealer exists at all provesthat Japanese society allows room for his existence, and wants him to be whathe is. Van de Wetering hasshowntheevils of druguse, but hasalso challenged the reader with a broader Buddhist viewof the matter.

How has van de Wetering treated the contemporary issues of homosexuality, race, and women? Gay characters of both sexes are sympathetically drawn. The police are very tolerant of them and do not consider homosexuality unnatural. When a transvestite proves too much for de Gier, the commissaris reminds him that all people are part of one another, andthat he mustnot feeldisgust. A black, part-time policeman with a Ph.D. is introduced to make Grijpstrarealizethat he has wronglyexpected a black mannot tobe intelligent.

With women, the issue is more complicated. A number of well-drawn women appear in the novels, but the ones closest to our detectives are rather stereotyped. There is the fat wife fit only to ignore or

The commissaris's name is Jan, but all we know about his last name is that the Japanese consider it unpronounceable.

insult. There is the large-breasted former prostitute with a heart of gold who is eager to mold herself to suitthe exacting standards of her marriedboyfriend (How van de Wetering loves to write about breasts!) There is the self-effacing wifewho worriesabout her husband's health and is usually seen bringing him treats in the tub, while hedoes little in return forher. And finally there is the Wonderful Girl Friend Who Dies. The female police we see are intelligent and well endowed. They wiggle nicely, and one, the most accomplished and successful policewoman of all, is ready to yieldto the district pimp. Thedumpy female constable who makes a desperate de Gier kneel and say he is a male chauvinist before she will give him somecigarettes may be on to something.

But perhaps we should not make too much of this. The protagonists are not paragons, nor are they meant to be. In *TheStreetbird,* de Gier declares that Grijpstra is neither good nor bad but acting on the side o f good. Like everyone else i n the world, h e is fascinated by evil, and we should not be surprised when he or his colleagues wish they had seen the beautiful prostitute compelled to perform oral sex in public with Luku Obrian, or are excited by the violence of tanks, or when polite little Cardozo rationalizes his lust by blaming the woman he longs to fondle. The moral atmosphere of the novels is accepting: everything that exists is natural. People are neither good nor bad, but they should strive to do the best they can, according to the precepts of the Eightfold Path.

Now that Grijpstra's wife has left, it will be interesting to see if he takes up painting seriously. What lies ahead for the commissaris, de Gier, Cardozo? They seem like real people, and it is as much to find out more about them as to see what new plots or settings van de Wetering can come up with that we eagerlyawaiteachnew book.

After an active burst which produced the first five novelsofthe seriesbetween 1975 and 1977, the books appeared once a year, thenonceev erytwo years. Van de Wetering has been engaged in writing stories, essays, children's works, the non-series novel *The Butterfly Hunter* (1982), and the illustrated *Bliss and Bluster,* which he himself calls "very weird."[10] The jacket blurb on *The Streetbird* mentions that he is at work on a new series of thrillers. We can hope that, despite all this other activity, van de Wetering will soon have the time, inspiration, and inclination to write another volume in one of the most well-written, unusual, and entertaining series of the last few decades,the Grijpstra-deGier novels.

Notes

1. Information about van de Wetering's lifecomes from two interviews—"An Interviewwith the Black Sheep of Amsterdam: Janwillem van de Wetering" by Chris and Janie Filstrup (TAD 13:2) and John C. Carr's *The Craft ofCrime* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983). pp. 289-321. In his introduction, Carr makes two small errors: he calls de Gier a blond, and says the commissaris suffers from arthritis. De Gier has brown hair, and the commissaris has rheumatism
2. The hardcover bookswere all published by Houghton Mifflin with the exception of *The Streetbird,* which was published by Putnam. Putnam chooses to capitalize Van de Wetering and De Gier; I have stuck with Houghton Mifflin's practice Paperbacks have beenpublished by PocketBooks
3. The"G" in deGieris pronouncedas if you weretry ing todislodge a fly stuck in your throat. The "ij" in Grijpstra sounds likethe"i" in"gripe."
5. Janwillem van de Wetering, *The Empty Mirror* (Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1975), p. 141
6. Filstrup, p. 103
7. *Ibid.*
9. Janwillem van de Wetering, *A Glimpse of Nothingness* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), p. 141
10. Carr, p. 321

AJH REVIEWS

ALLEN J. HUBIN

Short notes. .

Confessions of a Dangerous Mind by Chuck Barris (St. Martin's, $13.95) is imaginative if not even slightly edifying. Subtitled "an unauthorized autobiography," it incorporates certain elements of truth (relating to his creating of schlock TV shows) and extensive elements of fiction (relating to his secret career as a CIA assassin). The result is profane, raunchy, occasionally hilarious, and capable of being ignored with complete impunity.

Strip Search (Viking, $13.95) is the sixth of Rex Burns's novels about Denver detective Gabe Wager. It's an effective portrait, even if the setting is unrelievedly dreary and Wager is evolving into a person maybe none of us would like—or be able—to know. On Colfax Avenue—"one of the longest sex strips in the country"—bodies and drugs are the principal cash crops. Both require much police attention, especially when one of the bodies—a nude dancer—is murdered. Wager takes his cases personally, works them in his solitary fashion all his waking hours, role-playing, using his snitches, walking into death traps, single-mindedly seeking a killer whose identity remains maddeningly elusive.

Dorothy Salisbury Davis brings back Julie Hayes for a third time in *Lullaby of Murder* (Scribner's, $12.95). Julie has this curious relationship with Sweets Romano, who behind his courtesy (to her) and isolation runs much of the vileness that is New York. Julie is a stringer for a famous columnist, who sends her on a minor story: someone is planning to use a long-derelict building to run a dance marathon. Her boss rejects her write-up, unfairly she believes; then he's killed, and his death seems linked to the marathon, to the recent suicide of a theater publicist, to a new film featuring a former child star just resurrected from obscurity, to the empire Sweets controls. Interesting and enjoyable tale, even if the Hayes-Romano interaction is nearly impossible to credit.

Elizabeth Fackler's debut, *Arson* (Dodd, Mead, $12.95), is set in a Midwest city and offers a self-preoccupied, sexual-gratification-fixated reporter for our inspection. He's Frank James, who violates friendship and colleague and any who love him on the way to solving a thirty-year-old murder so that his career may be advanced. Fackler's telling is quite competent, the plotting is tight, but James is such a repulsive fellow. Sigh. .

William Campbell Gault returns to hardcover mysteries, after a 21-year hiatus, with *Death in Donegal Bay* (Walker, $12.95). This features Gault's long-time series character, Brock Callahan, who seems to be aging backward—he's now about forty years old. He went from pro football to private-eying; then he retired on inherited money and now he dabbles. Here he's helping a young man get started as a shamus and pokes around in an unshapely affair involving a con man, blackmail, drugs, murder, and suchlike. A tepid tale, alas, with nothing to remember it by.

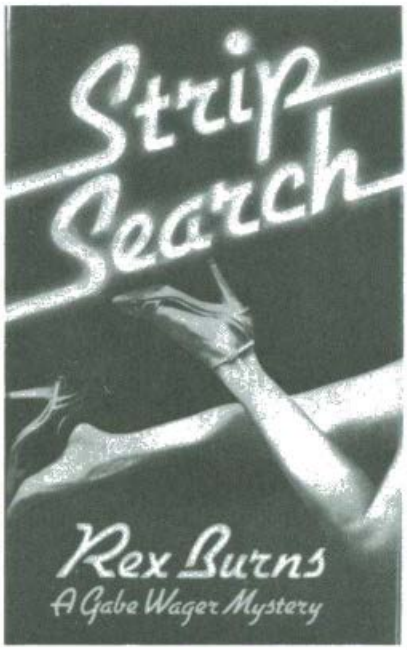
The seventh Dave Brandstetter mystery by Joseph Hansen is *Nightwork* (Holt, Rinehart, Winston, $12.95). Brandstetter works in California for an insurance company and here investigates the death of a trucker, who seems to have moonlighted running illicit and dangerous cargo. Dangerous not only to truckers, but to those around them and those who investigate. A good story, nicely moody and socially conscious, and—as is usual with this series—revolting homosexual bits are kept minimal.

Ed McBain's fourth novel about Matthew Hope, Florida attorney, is *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Holt, Rinehart, Winston, $14.95). Hope is hired to handle the purchase of a shabby farm. The buyer, a twenty-year-old, has lots of cash for the deal and a certifiably idiotic idea how to make the farm pay off raising snapbeans. He also has an early case of mortality via multiple knife wounds. Hope is losing his semi-true love, but the case brings him prospects for replacements as he noses around: how did the dead man get $40,000 for the farm, why was he killed, and why hasn't the killing stopped? Hope and the other characters are well cast, and McBain has a nice feeling for the locale. Good job.

In *A Death in China* (Atheneum, $14.95) by William D. Montalbano and Carl Hiaasen, Prof. Tom Stratton is visiting China as part of a package tour. He's not quite sure why he's come—perhaps subconsciously to exorcise some wartime

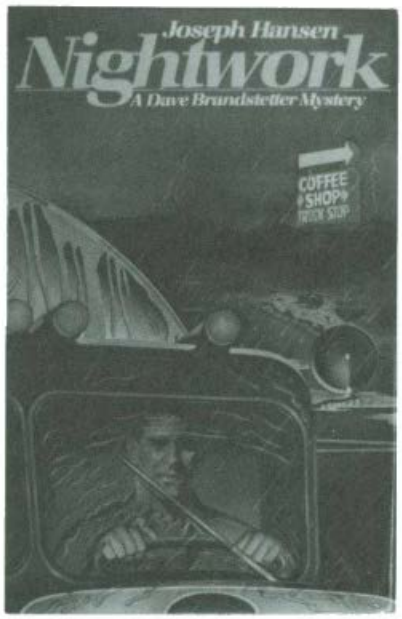
demons?—and the trip only becomes interesting when he runs across a beloved colleague in Peking. David Wang, born in China but long an American academician, has returned after forty years to visit his brother, a high Communist official. Then Wang dies, and Stratton, sensing a foul odor emanating from the official and from a fabulous archeological dig dating to 221 B.C., begins to ask unhealthy questions. This is an intriguing view of Chinese politics; it turns into an impressive dual between Stratton and a cold-blooded monomaniac.

Murder at Mt. Fuji (St. Martin's, $12.95) is the first English translation of the works of Shizuko Natsuki, described as a bestselling mystery in Japan. The setting is a



villa where the wealthy Wada family is gathered, with one outsider, an American student, to celebrate New Year's. The patriarch of the family, a notorious lecher, is killed, and Chiyo, the dead man's grandniece, confesses that she killed him while fending off an assault. The other family members construct a carefully elaborate story, with manufactured evidence, to show that the patriarch was killed by an intruder who arrived after Chiyo left for Tokyo. The police arrive, and the scheme begins to come apart. Interesting story, if a big stage dandhard to identify with.

Sister Carol Anne O'Marie starts well with *A Novena for Murder* (St. Martin's, $12.95). This introduces Sister Mary Helen, who at 75 has been retired from parish school-teaching to quiet, leisurely research at Mount St. Francis College for

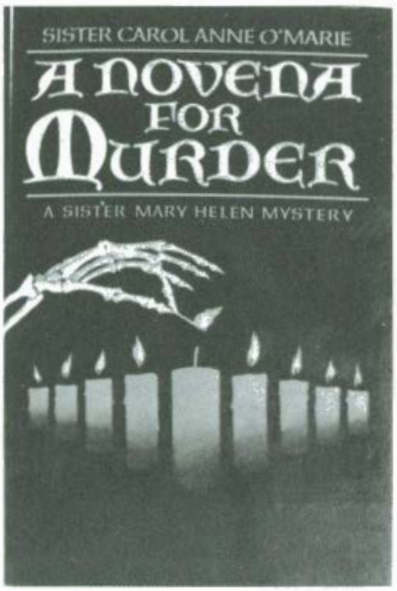


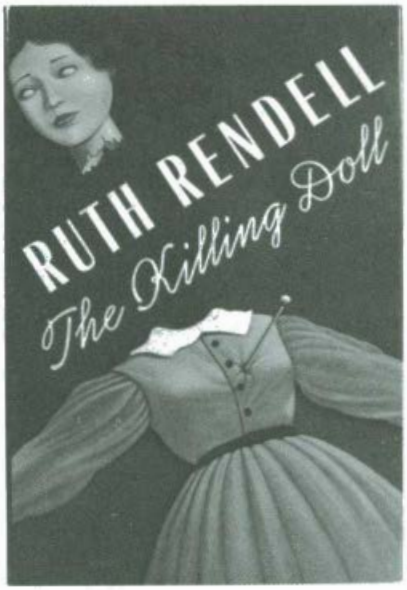
Women in San Francisco. A corpse is shortly produced as a welcome, and she finds herself alternately sleuthing, comforting, risking danger, and catalyzing marriage. Pleasantly done; and some self-consciousness in the telling and under-utilization of plot elements will doubtless improve next book around.

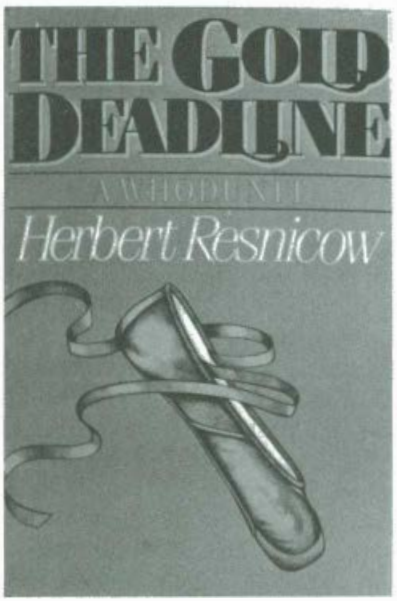
Julian Rathbone has created the North Sea country of Brabt as a setting to examine the flow of political and social tides. Commissioner Jan Argand is the sympathetic protagonist in the Brabt stories, of which ***Watching the Detectives*** (Pantheon, $13.95) is the third. Argand is here assigned to head a new department charged with investigating complaints against the police. He does not relish the role, but much is to be done: a moral regeneration move-

ment, aimed at sexual and social deviates, appeals to many and gives opportunity for violent expression of sentiment; a new political leader is trying to unite the left and overthrow those currently in power; and a nuclear power plant is turning a large area into a cancer-infested, radioactive wasteland and so arousing the populace. Intriguing commentary, well done.

Herbert Resnicow's debut, *The Gold Solution*, was a gem and an Edgar nominee. As a consequence, I came to his second, ***The Gold Deadline*** (St. Martin's, $12.95), with very high expectations; I came away muchdisappointed, having not been greatly interested in whodunit nor prepared to believe when I found out. Alexander Gold, an engineer recovering from a heart attack and dabbling in detection, agrees against a three-day deadline to solve an impossible murder for high stakes. Viktor Boguslov, ballet impresario and prime candidate for murder, lives up to his billing in his private box at his own theatre. He was alone when dispatched and thedoor to his box was guarded, so Gold has a bit of a challenge. A more significant puzzle: what became of the charm and sparkleof *Solution*?







I don't know quite what to make of Ruth Rendell's ***The Killing Doll*** (Pantheon, $12.95). It can be read as a cautionary tale: a fifteen-year-old sells his soul to the devil, and a mixture of deaths and financial successes takes place around him in the next five years. It can be read for its excellent character sketches: sharply captured are the weak and the strong, especially small-minded people rotating in their miniscule universes and those limp of mind traveling the road to psychosis. But ultimately the book is inconclusive—maybe *that's* Rendell's point—and left me unsatisfied.

Some years have passed since I last read any Mickey Spillane. Perhaps my expectations of his ***Tomorrow I Die*** (Mysterious Press, $14.95) were influenced by the popular view of higher criticism that what Spillane writes is essentially undiluted trash. But I find the nine stories collected here from original 1953–74 publication to be varied, well-crafted work with solid impact; with one exception they are not in the bed-'em-and-shoot-'em Mike Hammer mold. Note particularly the book's two novelettes, "Stand Up and Die!" and "Everybody's Watching Me," and the good introduction by Max AllanCollins.

I welcomed enthusiastically David Williams and his series about banker Mark Treasure when they arrived on the scene. By the seventh novel, ***Advertise for Treasure*** (St. Martin's, $12.95), however, I fear the freshness and spirit have thinned perilously. An omniverous American ad agency, which has sold its soul to a soft-drink concern, offers millions to consume a young London agency to which Treasure's bank has loaned money. Treasure advises acceptance of the takeover bid, but the British agency's board is split. Then death casts its vote. We meet several interesting folks—Williams pleasurably dismembers some Americans—but the ending is irresolute.

Amos McGuffin, the San Francisco private eye who is only sober when on a case, first appeared in Robert Upton's *Who'd Want to Kill Old George?* He returns in ***Fade Out*** (Viking, $13.95), in which he's hired to look into the alleged suicide of a Hollywood movie producer. Vastly hung over, he goes to Los Angeles, tours among the producer's film friends, who all grew up together in the Bronx, finds emptiness and betrayal and cocaine more common than any human virtue. He also has difficulty with rental cars and the preservation of life. In due course, he figures out what was done and by whom. Amusing in patches is this novel, but the author needs a more fluid writing style.

—AJH

What About Murder?

A Continuing Supplement

Supplement by Jon L. Breen

• Bargainnier, Earl F., ed. *Ten Women of Mystery.* Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1981. 304 pp. Bibl., illus., index.

This is a particularly admirable collection, sinceat least some of its subjects represent fresh scholarly ground. One highlight is a most welcome essay by Barrie Hayne on under-appreciated pioneer Anna Katharine Green. Jan Cohn's article on Mary Roberts Rinehart does not duplicate material from her 1980 biography *Improbable Fiction* (see WAM #202) and should satisfy readers who would have liked more discussion of Rinehart's mysteries in that book. Other subjects and their commentators include Dorothy L. Sayers (Kathleen Gregory Klein), Josephine Tey (Nancy Ellen Talbert), Ngaio Marsh (editor Bargainnier), P. D. James(Nancy C. Joyner), Ruth Rendell (Jane S. Bakerman), Margaret Millar (John Reilly), Emma Lathen(Jeanne F. Bedell), and Amanda Cross (Steven F. Carter). Each essay includes a photograph of the subject, a chronology, and notes. Indexes of characters and titles are provided

As is often truewiththis publisher, there aresome editing problems. The Sayers article should not have beentitled without the obligatory middle initial, and it is puzzling that the name of Margery Allingham (frequently referred to though not one of the ten subjects)should beso consistentlymisspelled.

• Bargainnier, Earl F., ed. *Twelve Englishmen of Mystery.* Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1984. 325pp. Bibl., illus.

The format is similar to that of *Ten Women of Mystery*, save forthe regretta bleabsence of an index. The dozen subjects are well chosen and mostly well covered in essays by a variety of mystery scholars. Especially good are the treatments of H. C. Bailey (by Nancy Ellen Talburt), Anthony Berkeley Cox (by William Bradley Strickland), Michael Gilbert (by George N. Dove), Nicholas Blake and Simon Brett (both by editor Bargainnier). Only Marty Knepper's article on Dick Francis is seriously flawed. To celebrate her subject (who surely deserves celebrating), Knepper feels she must denigrate the whole school of hardboiled detective fiction, a classification to which thriller/adventurewriter Francisdoesn't even belong. The critic has a feminist ax to grind, which further skews her view of Francis and leads her to more sweeping denunciations of other writers. (By the way, if Knepper wants to find a writer more solidly in the hard boiled tradition than Francis, who certainly does include many useful, independent women among his characters, she need look no furtherthan the much-abused Erle Stanley Gardner.) As for Knepper's statement that "Violence sells books easily" (p. 226), there is only one answer: nothing does!

Other subjects and their interpreters: Wilkie Collins(Jeanne F. Bedell), A. E. W. Mason (Barrie Hayne), Gilbert Keith Chesterton (Thomas E. Porter), Julian Symons (Larry Grimes), Edmund Crispin (Mary Jean DeMarr), and H. R. F. Keating (Meera T. Clark). The Keating essay is fine on the Inspector Ghote series but ignores his non-Ghote detective novels.

• Benvenuti, Stefano and Gianni Rizzoni. *The Whodunit: An Informal History of Detective Fiction.* Translated from the Italian by Anthony Eyre. Additional chapter by Edward D. Hoch. New York: Macmillan, 1981. 216 pp. Illus., index.

This is a well-illustrated but not particularly distinguished history, damaged by a frankly clumsy translation. The word "boring" is overused, I suspect in lieu of a more interesting Italian word, and a "criminal fiction writer" (p. 99) sounds like one who cheatshisagent.

The authors coverthe usual pioneers in theirearly chapters. They love lists, drawing sets of rules from Poe, Chandler, Van Dine, Knox, and Carr (on locked rooms), and reprinting Watson's catalogue of Holmes's knowledge from *A Study in Scarlet*. As usual in a foreign source, it is interesting to note which British and American authors are given greater-than-usual prominence—in this case, Stuart Palmer (hailed as the greatest of humorous mystery writers), Rufus King (seen in a rare photograph), Helen Reilly, and James Hadley Chase—and which European writers turn up who usually escape notice in English-language histories. The coverage of the French is one of the ma jor attributes of this book, discussing such writers as Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre (creators of Fantomas), Pierre Very, Claude Aveline, Boileau-Narce jac, Le Breton, Frederic Dard(Sanantonio), Hubert Montelheit, and others even less well known to British and American readers

Errors and questionable judgments abound. Gaston Leroux's Rouletabille (at eighteen) is declared the "youngest detective in the history of criminal fiction"! (p. 46) How about the Hardy Boys, to name only two? Ormond Sacker, an early name for Dr. Watson, is miscalled an early name for Holmes. It is mistakenly implied that Perry Mason was a *Black Mask* character, J. G. Reeder a "private investigator," Earl Derr Biggers a "thriller writer." Modern detectives are unfairly denigrated in the course of a deserved celebration of Sergeant Cuff. The Nero Wolfe novels are bizarrely credited with the "humor and style of P. G. Wodehouse" (p. 128). Maybe they read that way in Italian translation. In a fascinating but unsubstantiated throwaway speculation, the authors suggest that A. B. Cox wrote with a collaborator whenusingthe name Francis Iles.

Edward D. Hoch has the thankless task of having to squeeze into one chapter every important contemporary the Italians have missed—to name a few, Mickey Spillane, Josephine Tey, Ross Macdonald, John D. MacDonald, Donald E. Westlake, Dick Francis, Stanley Ellin, and virtually all thewritersofspy fiction

A "who's who" chapter, including both authors andcharacternames, isoflimitedreferencevalue.

• Bilker, Harvey L. and Audrey L. Bilker. *Writing Mysteries That Sell*. Chicago: Contemporary, 1982. vii + 134 pp. Index.

You would have to go back to 1936 and *Murder Manual* (see WAM #93) to find a mystery writer's how-to book as hopelessly inept as this one. Its problem can be summed up simply: No reader unsophisticated enough to profit by the advicegiven herewouldbe capable ofwriting publishablemystery fictionor anything else. A few of its offenses: idiotic definitions of story types that either belabor the obvious or betray the authors' confusion, hopelessly hackneyed plotting and suspense technique examples, a paucity of author-title references aside from very obvious ones, and such doubtful statements as calling Robert L. Fish's Schlock Homes series a "pastiche" (pastiche is serious—when you do itfor laughs, it'sa parodyor burlesque).

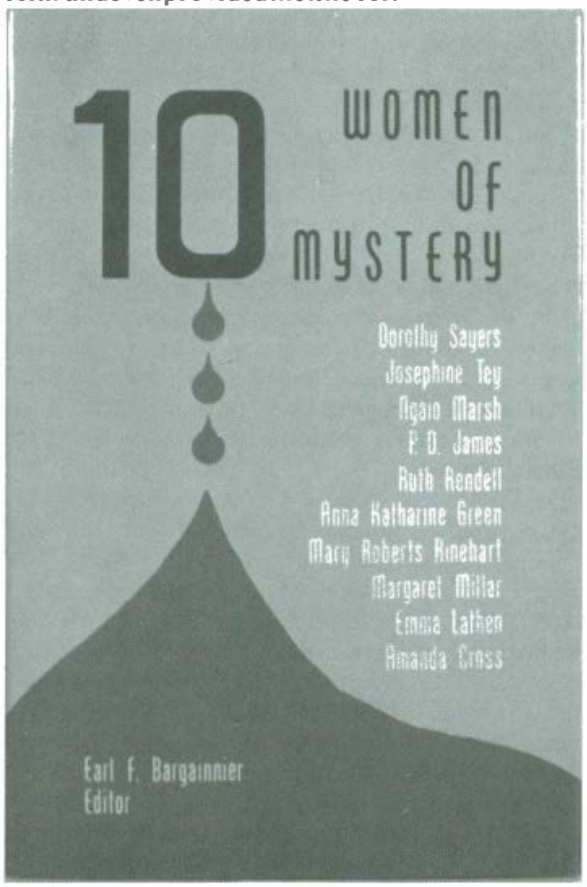
The section of market information is of some use but readily available elsewhere, as well as becoming quickly dated. The general writing advice is better than the specifically mystery-oriented advice, but even it is nothing special. The authors are claimed to have published in the mystery field, but the extent andnatureoftheir publications is not specified.

• Bruccoli, Matthew J. *Ross Macdonald*. (HBJ Album Biographies.) San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1984. xxi + 147 pp. Illus., bibl.,index.

Eventually Millar/ Macdonald will be the sub ject of a long, full-scale biography, but, until that day comes, Bruccoli's extensively illustrated, skeletal

preliminary will fill the gap. The author's scholarly prose is smooth, readable, and unpretentious. This is decidedly a literary biography, with some tragic personal events in the subject's life alluded to but treated very sketchily and discreetly. Like many who write of the handful of critically fashionable mystery-fiction authors, Bruccoli tends to treat the rest of the field rather slightingly. Typical is a snide swipe at *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* (page 17).

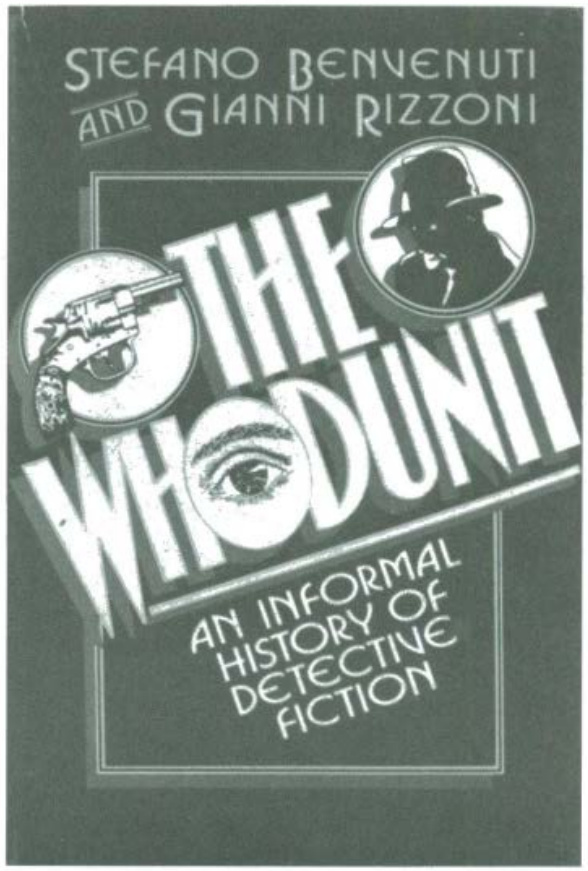
Among the interesting tid bits: One of the early title possibilities for Macdonald's *The Galton Case* was *Skull Beneath the Skin,* a title later used by P. D. James. Macdonald once reviewed for the *New York Times* a book by a friend that he had read in draft form and even provided the title for.



- Cooper-Clark, Diana. *Designs of Darkness: Interviews with Detective Novelists.* Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983. 239 pp. Illus.

Interview subjects include P. D. James, Jean Stubbs, Peter Lovesey, Margaret Millar, Ross Macdonald, Howard Engel, Ruth Rendell, Janwillem van de Wetering, Patricia Highsmith, Julian Symons, Amanda Cross, Anne Perry, and Dick Francis. For all but Cross (Columbia University professor Carolyn G. Heilbrun), photographs are included. The lack of a bibliography is unfortunate, particularly in the case of Canadian writer Engel, whose name is the one most likely to be unfamiliar to readers. One would like to know just how many of his private eye novels about Benny Cooperman have appeared in print, when, and who published them. (Since this book appeared, Engel's *The Suicide Murders* has been published in the United States by St. Martin's.)

The questions Cooper-Clark, a Toronto English professor, asks are those of the academic scholar rather than the fan. (She has also compiled a book of

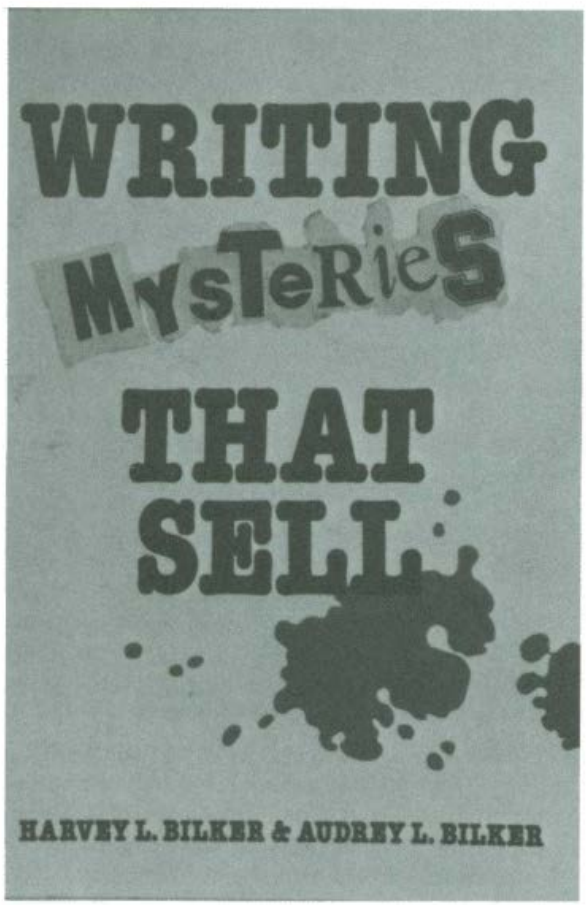


interviews with mainstream novelists.) Many of her subjects seem to be bemused by her sometimes-comically-pretentious questions, particularly Dick Francis, who is on a different wavelength entirely (He seems to find the probings of academic critics utterly pointless drivel but is too polite to say so. Q: "I take it from what you're saying that you are not really interested in reading academic, critical books about the novels that you are writing." A: "No. I'm not a well-read person, I suppose. I don't read nearly enough books.")

The interviews are successful, though, because they are revealing of their subjects. Van de Wetering, surprisingly, is as insistent as Francis that he is just telling stories, and he cautions Cooper-Clark not to read too much Zen symbolism into his Amsterdam police novels. Symons reveals that he turned to historical novels because he felt less able to write

about younger contemporary characters, knowing how they talk to him but not to each other. Engel endearingly lists the underrated Frank Gruber as an influence along with Hammett and Chandler.

Popular Press books are often criticized for editing lapses, and here again there are problems. I have no doubt that Cross, in a slip of tongue or memory, referred to "John Dickenson and Dickenson Carr" being the same writer, but surely the author or editor should have provided the correct names: John Dickson Carr and Carter Dickson. The lack of dates on the interviews is irritating in the extreme, particularly in the case of Macdonald, who was interviewed after the publication of his last novel, *The*



Blue Hammer (1976), but before he was disabled by Alzheimer's Disease. It would be good to know just when the interview took place. If it were at the same time that his wife, Margaret Millar, was interviewed (after she became legally blind and her novel *Mermaid* had been completed), it is astonishingly recent. The reader wonders how much of the handwriting was already on the wall, especially in Macdonald's last statement in the interview: "I'll write another book, if I can."

• Sampson, Robert. *Yesterday's Faces: A Study of Series Characters in the Early Pulp Magazines/ Volume 1: Glory Figures.* Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983. 270 pp. Illus., bibl., index. *Volume 2: Strange Days.* Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1984. 290pp. Illus., bibl., index.

Sampson's first volume, a beautifully written and wonderfully evocative study of dime novel and pulp heroes, is one of the great books of "fannish" genre history. For an example of Sampson's style, see this description of the "Justice Figure": "Seeking neither personal game nor revolution, he is an agent of stability, a free-lance law enforcement agent, like a white corpuscle with a gun" (p. 100). Beginning with a description of the anticipation felt by a youth while watching the magazine distributor's truck delivering his merchandise in the early hours before school, Sampson tries not just to describe these works and convey their great appeal but to put them in the context of their times.

Sampson is covering hero figures generally and includes a long chapter on Hopalong Cassidy, plus accounts of other Western figures such as Jesse James and Buffalo Bill and school boy sports heroes like Frank and Dick Merriwell. Most of his coverage concerns detective or rogue characters, however. He gives the most extended coverage seen to date of Frank L. Packard's Jimmie Dale (the Grey Seal) and Louis Joseph Vance's Michael Lanyard (the Lone Wolf) and devotes considerable space to Nick Carter, E. W. Hornung's (and Barry Perowne's) Raffles, Edgar Wallace's Four Just Men, Thomas W. Hanshew's Cleek, Maurice Leblanc's Arsène Lupin, Grant Allen's Colonel Clay, and Clifford Ashdown's Romney Pringle.

The author's care renders this book more nearly error-free than most Popular Press volumes. He does make the mistaken statement, however, that *His Last Bow* was, as it sounds like it ought to have been, the final Sherlock Holmes collection. It was followed more than a decade later by *The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes.*

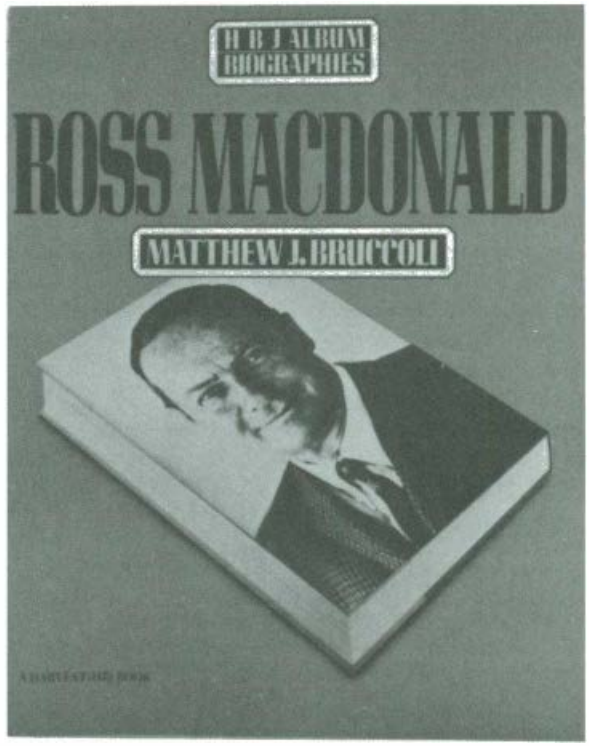
The second volume is equally rewarding. Sampson's style is long-winded, facetious, and self-indulgent, but it is also penetrating and evocative, capturing the flavor of the pulps and their time. He begins with the so-called scientific detectives, giving extended coverage to R. Austin Freeman's Dr. Thorndyke (one of the few who really deserved the label), Edwin Balmer and William MacHarg's Luther Trant, Arthur B. Reeve's Craig Kennedy, and Ernest M. Poate's Dr. Bentiron. By Sampson's account, Poate may be something of a lost giant—he is compared to John Dickson Carr! Even lesser-known figures are also covered, doubtless in more detail than they deserve. (But where if not here?) The author then turns to psychic/occult detectives: Algernon Blackwood's John Silence, William Hope Hodgson's Carnacki, J. U. Giesy and J. B. Smith's Semi-Dual

(compared to whom Luther Trant and Dr. Bentiron are household names), Sax Rohmer's Moris Klaw, Sea bury Quinn's Jules de Grandin, and others. Toward the end of the book, David H. Keller's nutty S F sleuth Taine of San Francisco is discussed at length, but most of the intervening space is spent on non-mystery pulp figures, nota bly Edgar Rice Burroughs's Tarzan.

- Sanders, Dennis and Len Lovallo. *The Agatha Christie Companion*. New York: Delacorte, 1984. xxcii + 523 pp. Bibl., index.

More a consolidation of material from other sources thanan original work, thisvolumeis careful, competent, and complete enough to be the best Christie reference handbook. The authors cover her detective fiction book by book, offering contemporary biographical details, an account of the criticalreaction, a plot summary (admira blyavoiding solution giveaways), a list of characters, identification of British and American first editions including pagination and price, and media adaptations if any. One uni que feature is the identi fication of the dedicatees of most of Christie's books. Non-mystery works are covered in a separate section, as are stage, film, and television adaptations, including criticalreception andmain cast credits in most cases. A section of Christie Lists identifies in which books variousseries characters appear (including both main characters like Poirot and Marple and a few secondary characters such as Ariadne Oliver and Inspector Japp). There is also a bibliography of secondary sourcesand a chronology.

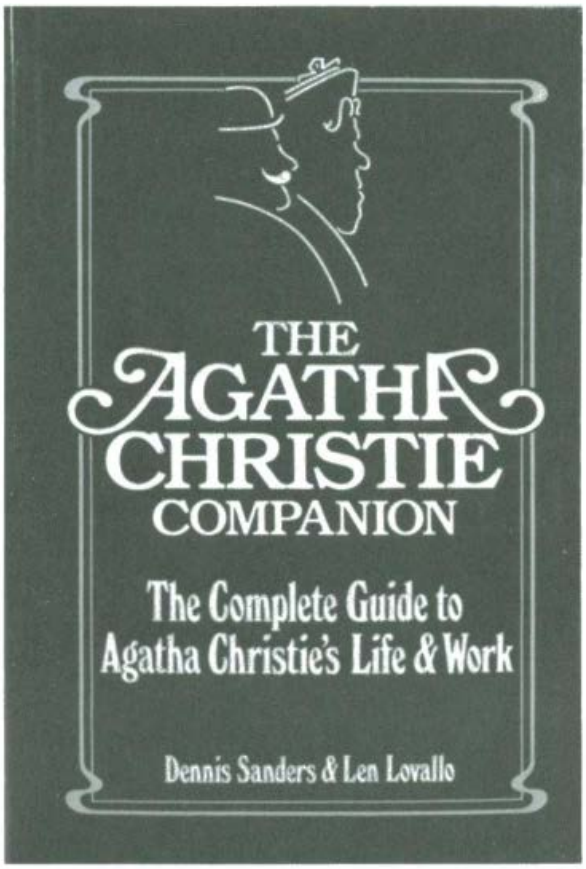
Errors are relatively few, though p. 327 has references to books called *The Chronicles of Mark Hewitt* (should be Martin) and to Michael Gil bert's *Small Bones Deceased* (should be Small bone). In their discussion of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1925), the authorsimplythatthat novelpredatedthe founding of the Detection Clu b in 1928. Language purists will shiver at a sentence which commits two teeth-grinding errors in syntax, announcing "One reason why. . . was because. . ." (p. 253).



In a few cases, the authors are unfair to their subjects. While it is true that Christie's novels, like many of the time, were full of racist attitudes, it is hardlyfair to say that a reference *in dialogue* to that "damned dago" was "made by Christie" (p. 142). And surely the following statement is a serious disservice to her: "If Agathahad been killed during one of the raids on London in the 1940s. . . she would now pro ba bly be remem bered as just a good solid mystery writer of the prewaryears" (p. 374). On the contrary, she would be remem bered, as she was already regarded, as one of the consummate masters of the form. Possi bly her work would not have enjoyed the same kind of runaway commercial success had she

not lived on into the 'sixties and 'seventies, but, given the revival in the 'seventies of interest in Dorothy L. Sayers, who did all her work in the mystery field before World War II, even Christie as commercial phenomenoncannot beentirelyruledout.

• Thorpe, Edward. *Chandlertown: The Los Angeles of Philip Marlowe*. London: Vermilion, 1983. New

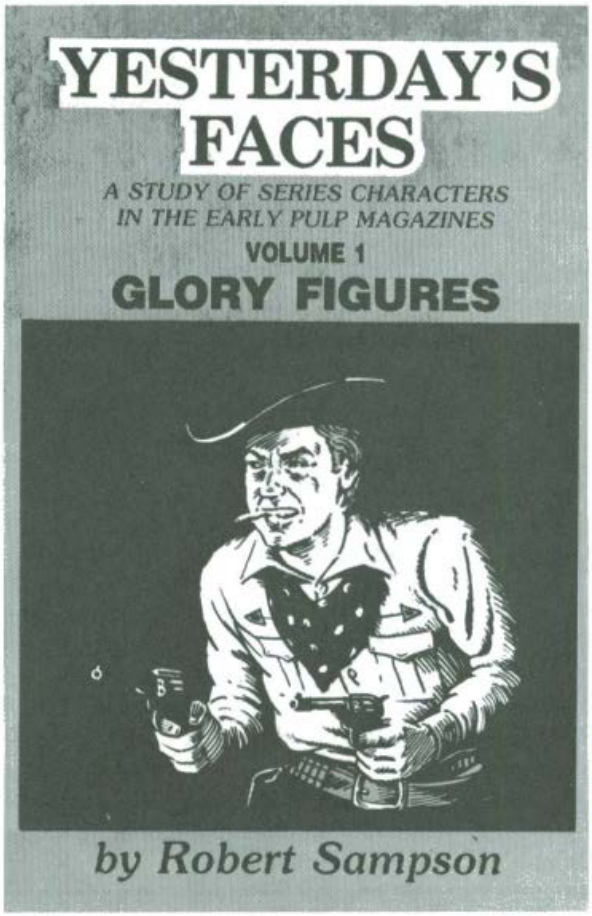


York:St. Martin's, 1984. 112 pp. Illus.

Englishman Thorpe visits present-day L.A., takes lots of nice pictures, and writes about the city and Chandler's view of it in the 'thirties through 'fifties. Approach is topical, with chapters devoted to architecture, sex, men, women, cars, food, and culture. Since he writes rather well himself and has Chandler's books to draw on for quotations, Thorpe manages to produce an entertaining and readable book, albeit one that gives a hostile visitor's narrow and distorted view of Southern California. The author ismuch better on Chandler's work than on the reality of the area today, which he explains like an anthropologist who hasn't been at his post long. What he describesare *aspects* of Los Angeles, but he presents them as the wholestory.

It took Chapter II, on the culinary and cultural scene, to make this tolerant Californian fighting mad. Thorpe seems abysmally ignorant of L.A. as a theatretown, and his statement that the city has only one outstanding restaurant makes the reader wonder how many he could have visited (and if there is only one, he certainly ought tohave namedit).

Thorpe has a tendency to swallow Chandler whole, not only in his acceptance as literal truth of Marlowe's narrative hyperboles. He quotes passages which suggest that Marlowe may have been homosexual or bisexual but then rejects the idea simply because the private eye expresses hatred of gays in other passages. Doesn't he think such behavior is consistent with a repressed closet homosexual? (I'm not suggesting Marlowe wasgay, merely pointing out Thorpe is naive to reject the idea so easily.) Thorpe's favorite noun for homosexual is "queer," which



may still be acceptable in polite circles in Britain but grates on the American ear in the 'eighties.

A matter not directly related to Chandler and Marlowe epitomizes Thorpe's sloppy pigeon-holing Dividing actors into those who have stuck to a "tough-guy" image (Eastwood, Bronson, Reynolds, Stallone) and those who have "sought a wider range" (Beatty, Redford, Nicholson), he places both Marlon Brando and Paul Newman in the former category. In Newman's case it may be arguable, but surely no actor, for better or worse, has tackled a more varied rangeofscreenrolesthan Brando □

Charles Beaumont:

A Bibliographical Note and a Checklist

By William F. Nolan

Although best known as a writer of fantasy, with his offbeat imagination most vividly showcased on *The Twilight Zone*, Charles Beaumont wrote a considerable number of crime-suspense stories. In addition to some twenty crime-based short stories, he co-wrote a novel-length crime thriller set in New Orleans, *Run from the Hunter*, and contributed scripts to at least nine genre T V series: *Alfred Hitchcock, Philip Marlowe, Naked City, Thriller, Richard Diamond, Suspense, The D.A.'s Man, Bulldog Drummond,* and *Climax.* Moreover, several of his screenplays, for such films as *The Premature Burial, Burn Witch Burn,* and *The Haunted Palace,* overlap into the crime-suspense field.

This checklist is not confined to his crime-related writings, although (with the exception of his TV work) I have indicated, by asterisk, works which fall into this genre. Since he has been critically and bibliographically neglected, I feel it is important to print a *complete* checklist of Beaumont's work. He deserves to be remembered for his many contributions to films, television, and magazines. His career ran through the 1950s into the early 1960s, and, as Bill Pronzini has pointed out, Beaumont was "a consummate craftsman of the modern 'popular market' short story."

He was born Charles Leroy Nutt in Chicago on January 2, 1929 and grew up on that city's North Side. The early years of his life were spent there, until he was bedridden for several months with spinal meningitis at the age of twelve. For reasons of health, he was subsequently sent to live with his aunts in Everett, Washington. Beaumont's formal education was sparse; he left high school a semester short of graduation for a short period of Army service. Upon leaving the service (on a medical discharge for a bad back), he attended the Bliss-Hayden Acting School in California on the G.I. Bill. After starring in a local version of the Hecht-MacArthur play *Broadway* under his now-legal name of Charles Beaumont, he was signed by Universal Studios as an actor. Beaumont was given a co-starring role in a Universal film, but when the production was finally aborted he decided to give up acting and pursue a career in commercial art. When this failed, he turned to writing.

From an early age, he had been an avid reader of the fantasy, mystery, and science-fiction pulps—and his first sale was to the pulp market S F magazine *Amazing Stories* in 1950. He was 21, married, and about to become a parent. His son Christopher was born in December of that year; he would later father three more children. (He had met his wife, Helen Broun, in Mobile, Alabama in 1948 while working a short stint as a railroad clerk.) He worked for Universal Studios as a multilith machine operator to support his family. The job bored and depressed him. When he was fired in June of 1953 (at the age of 24), he took the plunge into full-time writing.

In April of 1954, Beaumont made his first major sale, to *Playboy*, becoming one of the magazine's feature writers. During this same period, he began to break into films and television—and by 1958 he was solidly established in the entertainment industry. When Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone* made its network debut in 1959, Charles Beaumont became one of the show's chief writers.

The summer of 1961 found him in Southern Missouri, acting (at last) in his own screenplay version of his novel *The Intruder* for Roger Corman. The future seemed very bright. Six of his books had been published; he had cracked *Collier's, Esquire,* and *The Saturday Evening Post;* and film and television offers were coming in thick and fast.

But time was running out for Beaumont. By the summer of 1963, he found that he could no longer concentrate. At 34, the writing stopped. His last short story, "Mourning Song," appeared in *Gamma* later that year.

In July of 1964, after tests at UCLA, it was revealed that Charles Beaumont had become a victim of Alzheimer's Disease; he faced premature senility and an early death. There was (and is) no cure. By March of 1965, no longer able to remain at home with his family, he was taken to the Motion Picture Country Home and Hospital in Woodland Hills, California. He died there on February 21, 1967, at the age of 38.

**Indicates a work in the genre of mystery or crime-suspense*

* *The Hunger and Other Stories* (fiction collection). New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, [April] 1957. 234 pp.
Contains seventeen stories, seven of which are printed here for the first time. See SHORT FICTION
Note: A Bantam paperback edition was published in March 1959
Published in England as *Shadow Play*, with the short story "The Hunger" dropped from the contents, by Panther Books (paperback), December 1964.

* *Run from the Hunter* (novel). A collaboration with John Tomerlin as "Keith Grantland." New York: Fawcett Gold Medal Books, September 1957. Original paperback (#701). 142 pp.
Note: Published in England in its only hardcover edition by T. V. Boardman, 1959.

Yonder: Stories of Fantasy and Science Fiction (fiction collection). New York: Bantam Books, April 1958. Original paperback (#A-1759), 184 pp.
Contains sixteen stories, three of which are printed here for the first time. See SHORT FICTION.
Note: Three of the stories in this collection were published in England as part of Beaumont's *The Edge*, Panther Books (paperback), 1966.

Omnibus of Speed: An Introduction to the World of Motor Sport (anthology). Co-edited with William F. Nolan. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, [November] 1958. Illustrated. 480 pp
Contains 43 pieces, fiction and non-fiction, by various writers. "Introduction" and prefaces by the editors.
Note: Published in England by Stanley Paul, 1961, in a heavily abridged edition.

The Intruder (novel). New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, [August] 1959. 320 pp.
Note: Two Dell paperback editions were issued, the second of which, published in March of 1962, carries a new "Foreword" by Beaumont (discussing the filming of the novel).
First published in England by Frederick Muller, 1960.

* *Night Ride and Other Journeys* (fiction collection). New York: Bantam Books, March 1960. Original paperback (#A-2087). 184 pp.
Contains fifteen stories, four of which are printed here for the first time. See SHORT FICTION
Note: Eight of the stories from this book were published in England as part of *The Edge*, Panther Books (paperback), 1966.

* *The Fiend in You* (anthology). Co-edited with William F. Nolan, although Beaumont is bylined as solo editor. New York: Ballantine Books, 1962. Original paperback (#F-641). 155 pp.
Contains sixteen stories by various authors (six of which are printed here for the first time). "Introduction" and prefaces by Beaumont.

* *Remember? Remember?* (essay collection). New York: Macmillan, [November] 1963. 248 pp
Contains thirteen pieces, three of which are printed here for the first time. See NONFICTION.
Note: Five of these essays were written in collaboration with O Cee Ritch and Jerry Sohl. See NONFICTION.

When Engines Roar (anthology). Co-edited with William F. Nolan. New York: Bantam Books, September 1964. Original paperback (#FP-64). 169 pp
Contains nineteen nonfiction pieces by various authors. "Introduction" and prefaces by the editors. Note: This book is a "Pathfinder" edition for young adults.

* *The Magic Man—and Other Science-Fantasy Stories* (fiction collection). New York: Fawcett Gold Medal Books, 1965. Original paperback (#D-1586). 258 pp
Contains eighteen stories, all compiled from earlier Beaumont collections. See SHORT FICTION. "Foreword" by Ray Bradbury. "Afterword" by Richard Matheson.

* *Best of Beaumont* (Fiction collection). New York: Bantam Books, December 1982. Original paperback (#22760-2). 238 pp
Contains 22 stories, one of which is printed here for the first time. See SHORT FICTION. "Beaumont Remembered," an introduction by Ray Bradbury. "Afterword" by Christopher Beaumont.

SHORT FICTION (A: in magazines)

Arranged by magazine. Collected as noted.

H = *The Hunger and Other Stories*
Y = *Yonder*
NR = *Night Ride and Other Journeys*
MM = *The Magic Man*
BB = *Best of Beaumont*

Amazing Stories
"The Devil, You Say?" January 1951

Bachelor
* "Miss Gentilbelle" November 1958 (H, MM)

Collier's
"The Long Way Home" (collaboration with Eustace Cockrell and printed under Cockrell's byline) January 4, 1957

Esquire
* "The Murderers" February 1955 (H, MM)

Gamma
* "Mourning Song" Issue 1 1963
"Something in the Earth" Issue 2 1963
"Auto-Suggestion" September 1965

If: Worlds of Science Fiction
"The Beautiful People" September 1952 (Y, BB)
"The Jungle" December 1954 (Y, BB)
"Last Rites" October 1955 (Y, MM, BB)

Imagination
"Elegy" February 1953
"The Man Who Made Himself" (a.k.a. "In His Image") February 1957 (Y)

Infinity
"Traumerei" February 1956 (Y)
"The Guests of Chance" (collaboration with Chad Oliver under both bylines) Issue 3 1956 (NR)

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction
* "The Last Caper" March 1954 (Y, MM)
"The Quadriopticon" August 1954 (Y)

"The Last Word" (collaboration with Chad Oliver under both bylines) April 1955
"FreeDirt" May 1955 (H, BB)
"TheNewSound" June 1955 (Y)
"The Vanishing American" August 1955 (H, MM)
"I, Claude" (collaboration with Chad Oliver underboth bylines) February 1956
NOTE: "Gentlemen, Be Seated"was reprinted aspart of a special "BeaumontSection"along with a tribute to CB, "Beaumont: The Magic Man" by William F. Nolan (June 1967)

Manhunt
* "I'll Do Anything" (a.k.a. "Point of Honor") November 1955 (H)
* "TheFace of a Killer" December 1956

Mystery Digest
* "TheTrigger" January 1959 (NR, BB)

Nugget
* "Sin Tower" (a.k.a. "Last Night the Rain") as by "MichaelPhillips" October 1956 (H)
* "The Baron's Secret" (a.k.a. "Three Thirds of a Ghost") as by "Phillips" August 1960 (BB)

Orbit Science Fiction
"Fritzchen" Issue 1 1953 (Y, BB)
"Placeof Meeting" Issue2 1954 (Y, BB)
"Hairof the Dog" Issue3 1954 (Y, BB)

Playboy
"Black Country" September 1954 (H, MM)
* "The Hunger" April 1955 (H, MM)
"The Crooked Man" August 1955 (H, MM, BB)
"AClassicAffair" December 1955 (NR, MM, BB)
"MonsterShow" May 1956 (Y, MM)
"You Can'tHaveThemAll" August 1956 (Y, BB)
* "The Dark Music" December 1956 (H, MM)
* "Night Ride" March 1957 (NR)
"The Deadly Will To Win" (a.k.a. "A Death in the Country") November 1957 (NR, MM)
"Perchance to Dream" October 1958 (NR, MM, BB)
"TheMusicof the Yellow Brass" January 1959 (NR)
"Sorcerer's Moon" July 1959 (BB)
"BloodBrother" April 1961 (BB)

Road & Track
"The Grand Prix of Los Angeles" December 1958
"BeyondtheFire" January 1959

Rogue
"The Love Master" as by "S. M. Tenneshaw" February 1957 (NR, MM, BB)
"Mainwaring's Fair Dinkum" as by "Michael Phillips" April1957
"Charity Bazaar" (collaboration with W. F. Nolan as by "Phillips") December 1957
"Man to Beat" as by"Phillips"January 1958
* "The New People" as by "Philips" August 1958 (NR, MM, BB)
"The Howling Man" as by "C. B. Lovehill" November 1959 (NR)
"Genevieve, My Genevieve" as by "Lovehill" December 1959
"Gentlemen, BeSeated"asby"Lovehill" April 1960
* "Dead, You Know"asby "Lovehill" December1960

TheSaturday EveningPost
"WhatEveryGirlShouldKnow" March 17, 1956

ScienceFiction Quarterly
"MassforMixedVoices" May 1954

Sports Car Journal
"Farewell to the Yo-Yos" December 1957

Terror DetectiveStory Magazine
* "Laugh Till You Die"(a.k.a. "Down the Long Night") (collaboration with W. F. Nolanas "Frank Anmar") April 1957

Universal International News
"ChristmasEncounter" December 1952

VentureScience Fiction
"Oh, Father of Mine" (a.k.a. "Father, Dear Father") January 1957 (NR, BB)

NOTE: Three other short stories were sold by Beaumont earlyin his career, but wereneverprinted:
* "The Blind Lady" to *Malcolm's Mystery Magazine* in 1954
* "The Brixton Horror" for a projected magazine on Sherlock Holmes,dateunknown
"The Duplicity of Brutus Dubois" to *Stardust*, date unknown

SHORT FICTION (B: firstprinted in book format)

Time To Come (anthology) edited by August Derleth Farrar,Straus andYoung, 1954
"Keeper of the Dream"

The Hunger and Other Stories (collection—see BOOKS), 1957
* "OpenHouse" (MM)
"TheCustomers" (BB)

* "The Infernal Bouillabaisse" (BB)
* "NurseryRhyme"
"FairLady" (MM)

Yonder (collection—see BOOKS), 1958
"Anthem"
"Mother'sDay" (BB)
"A World of Differents"

Night Ride and Other Journeys (collection—see BOOKS), 1960
"TheMagic Man" (MM)
"The Neighbors"
"Buck Fever"
"Song fora Lady"

Best of Beaumont (collection—see BOOKS), 1982
"InsomniaVobiscum"

No attempt will be made to list Beaumont's many anthology appearances, but it should be noted that his work has appeared in such books as (in no particular order): *The Bedside Playboy, Best from Playboy, The Permanent Playboy, Playboy Annual, The Playboy Book of Crime and Suspense, The Playboy Book of Horror and the Supernatural, The Playboy Book of Fantasy and Science Fiction, TheFirst World of If, The Second World of If, Stories for the Dead of Night, The Graveyard Reader, Taboo, Terror in the Modern Vein, Shock, Invisible Men, Acts of Violence, Treasure of Jazz, Best Fantasy Stories, In the Dead of Night, Best from Fantasy and Science Fiction, Horror 7, The Hollywood Nightmare, Twenty Years of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Evil Earths, Last Train to Limbo, Masks, Above the Human Landscape, Social Problems Through Science Fiction, The City 2000 A.D.*, etc., etc.

Beaumont's first book appearance was in *Prize Science Fiction* edited by Donald Wollheim (McBride, 1953), which contained "The Beautiful Woman" (originally printed in *If* as"TheBeautiful People")

Six of his uncollected magazine stories were anthologizedas follows:

"The Last Word" (collaboration with Chad Oliver) in *The Best From Fantasy and Science Fiction, Vol. 5* edited by AnthonyBoucher(Doubleday, 1956)

"Mourning Song" in *9th Annual: The Year's Best SF* edited by Judith Merril (Simon and Schuster, 1964) (Beaumont's last story before illness forced him to abandonfictionwriting.)

"Mass for Mixed Voices" in *Man Against Tomorrow* edited by William F. Nolan (Avon, 1965)

"Elegy" in *A Sea of Space* edited by William F. Nolan (Bantam, 1970).

"Beyond the Fire" in *Stories of Road & Track* edited by James T. Crow (Bond, 1970)

"Laugh Till You Die" (as "Down the Long Night") in *Men & Malice* edited by Dean Dickinsheet (Doubleday, 1973). (This collaboration with Nolan is printed here underNolan'ssolobyline.)

NONFICTION (A: in magazines)

Arranged by magazine. Collected as noted in Remember? Remember? (RR)

Autosport
"See It Dry, See It Wet" February 15, 1957. Roadracereport

CarteBlanche
"The Lively Corpse" Winter 1960 Essay on Hollywood
"Spectacles" Spring 1961 Filmreviews

Fortnight
NOTE: Beaumont worked for this publication as an unofficial freelance editor, rewriting many articles and providing non-bylined material as well as the bylined work here listed
"TheHi-FiBug" February 16, 1955 Article
"The Comic World" May 1955 Article on his experiences in writing comic book stories for the Disney magazines
"A Sporting Proposition" May 1956 Article on sports
"Kaffeeklatsch for Hi-FiFans" April 1957 Report

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction
NOTE: Beaumont contributed a film column from late 1955 through 1957. One of these columns, on Bela Lugosi,was collected in RR as "TheUndead."
"The Science Screen" (film column) September 1955, December 1955, March 1956, June 1956, September 1956, December 1956, March 1957, June 1957, September 1957, December 1957
"The Seeing I" (TV column) December 1959 NOTE Beaumont did not continue this column beyond the firstone

Playboy
"RedBeansand Ricely Yours" February 1955 Personalityprofile
* "The Horror of It All" (collaboration with Hollis Alpert under their double byline) February 1959 Essay on fright films. Collected in RR as "Good Lord, It'sAlive!"
"Chaplin" March 1960 Personality profile (collected in RR as "TheLittle Fellow")
"Requiem for Radio" May 1960 Essay on radio drama(collected in RR as "Tune in Yesterday")
"The Comics" March 1961 Essay on newspaper comics(collected in RR as"Who'sGotthe Funnies?")
"TheGrandPrixde Monaco" June 1961 Racereport/essay
"The Golden Age of Slapstick Comedy" (collaboration with OCee Ritch under Beaumont byline) December 1961 Essay(collected in RR as "A Million Laughs")
* "The Bloody Pulps" (collaboration with OCee Ritch under Beaumont byline) September 1962 Essay on pulpmagazines(collected in RR)
"Requiem for Holidays" (collaboration with Jerry Sohl underBeaumontbyline) June 1963 Essay(collected in RR as "HolidaySong")
"Lament for the High Iron" (collaboration with Jerry Sohl under Beaumont byline) October 1963 Essay (collected in RR) NOTE: Almost all of this piece was writtenbySohl
"The Heavies" (ghostwritten under Beaumont byline) February 1965 Essay
"Fun for the Road" (ghostwritten under Beaumont byline by John Tomerlin) July 1965 Essay

Rogue
"Rogue of Distinction: Robert Mitchum" (first in a non-bylinedseries) February 1956 Personalityprofile
"Rogue of Distinction: AlyKhan" June 1956 Personalityprofile
"Rogue of Distinction: Frank Sinatra" August 1956 Personality profile
NOTE: This monthly series continued into 1959, but Beaumont did not write any of the other profiles. He did supervise theworkofotherwritersinthe series.
"The Hi-Octane Approach" (collaboration with W. F Nolan as "Michael Phillips") May 1957 Humor sketch
"Sports Car of the Month: Porsche" August 1959 Report

Show Business Illustrated
"Don't Miss the Next Thrilling Chapter!" (ghostwritten under Beaumont byline by OCee Ritch) March 1962 Essayonmovie serials(collected in RR)

SportsCarsIllustrated
"The Short, Unhappy Life of the Monzetta" November 1959 Article based on his experiences in racing (anthologized in Beaumont's *When Engines Roar*)

NONFICTION (B: firstprinted inbook format)

Omnibusof Speed (anthology—seeBOOKS), 1958
"Introduction"(withNolan) Also prefaces

The Fiend in You (anthology—see BOOKS), 1962
"Introduction" Alsoprefaces

The Intruder (novel—see BOOKS), 1962 (Dell edition)
"Foreword"

Remember?Remember? (collection—see BOOKS), 1963
"AndaGlassof Water, Please"
"There's Nothing To Be Afraid Of, My Child"
"WhoClosedthe Castles?"

WhenEngines Roar(anthology—see BOOKS), 1964
"Introduction"(withNolan) Also prefaces

Masques (anthology) Edited by J. N. Williamson. Baltimore:Maclay& Associates, 1984
"My Grandmother's Japonicas" (an auto-biographical account of his boyhood)
NOTE:Thisbook alsocontains a new tribute to Beaumont by Ray Russell and reprints William F. Nolan's tribute"Beaumont: The MagicMan "

NOTE: Beaumont writetwo screenplays in 1956–57 designed for low-budget production—*Confessions of a Teen-Ager* and *Invaders from 7000 A.D.*—but neither script was produced. In 1959, forOtto Preminger, he wrote a script for *Bunny Lake Is Missing*, but when the film was released (in 1965) his script was not used and he received no credit on this film.

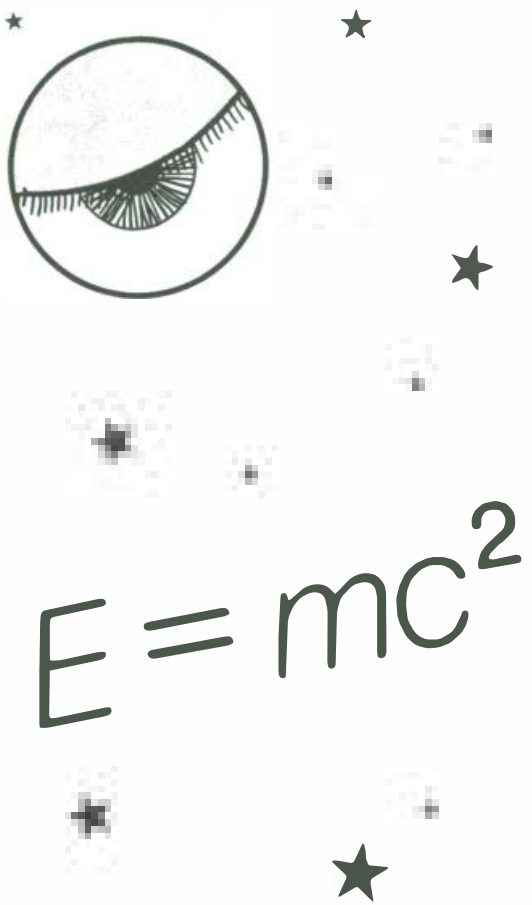
Beaumont received credit on the following nine feature films:

Queen of Outer Space Allied Artists (1958) Solo screenplay
The Intruder Pathé-American (1962) Solo screenplay, based on his novel(hewasalsoanactorinthisfilm)
The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm MGM (1962) Screenplay credit shared with David P Harmon and William Roberts, based on the Grimm fairy tales
* *Burn, Witch, Burn* American-International release of a British film (1962) Screenplay with Richard Matheson, based on the novel *Conjure Wife* by Fritz Leiber
* *The Premature Burial* American-International (1962 Screenplay withRay Russell,based on the Poestory
* *The Haunted Palace* American-International (1963 Soloscreenplay,based on H. P. Lovecraft's"TheCase ofCharles DexterWard"
The Seven Faces of Dr. Lao MGM (1964) Solo screenplay, based on the novel *TheCircus ofDr. Lao* byJack Finney
Masque of the Red Death American-International (1964) Screenplay credit shared with R. Wright Campbell, although Campbell wrote the entire script, based on the Poestory.

Mister Moses United Artists (1965) Screenplay credit shared with Monja Danischevsky, based on the novel by Max Catto

I. ScriptsandStoriesfor *The TwilightZone*

NOTE: Beaumont is best known today for his work on Rod Serling's anthology show. Following Serling, who



wrote 92 episodes, Beaumont was the most prolific *Twilight Zone* writer, involved in 22 of the show's 156 episodes.

"Perchance to Dream" Teleplay by Beaumont, based on his published short story Telecast November 27, 1959
"Elegy" Teleplay by Beaumont, based on his published shortstory TelecastFebruary 19, 1960
"Long Live Walter Jameson" Original teleplay by Beaumont Telecast March 18, 1960
"A Nice Place to Visit" Original teleplay by Beaumont TelecastApril 15, 1960
"The Howling Man" Teleplay by Beaumont, based on hispublishedshortstory Telecast November4, 1960
"Long Distance Call" Teleplay by Beaumont and William Idelson, based on an unpublished story by IdelsonTelecast March 3, 1961
"Static" Teleplay by Beaumont, based on an unpublished storybyOCeeRitch Telecast March 10, 1961
"The Prime Mover" Teleplay by Beaumont, based on an unpublished story by George Clayton Johnson TelecastMarch 24, 1961
"Shadow Play" Original telecast by Beaumont TelecastMay 5, 1961

"The Jungle" Teleplay by Beaumont, based on his publishedshortstory TelecastDecember 1, 1961
"Dead Man's Shoes" Original teleplay by Beaumont and OCee Ritch (solo credit to Beaumont) Telecast January 19, 1962
"The Fugitive" Original teleplay by Beaumont TelecastMarch9, 1962
"Person or Persons Unknown" Original teleplay by Beaumont Telecast March 23, 1962
"In His Image" Teleplay by Beaumont, based on his published short story "The Man Who Made Himself" TelecastJanuary 3, 1963
"Valley of the Shadow" Original teleplay by Beaumont TelecastJanuary 17, 1963
"Miniature" Original teleplay by Beaumont Telecast February 21, 1963
"Printer's Devil" Teleplay by Beaumont, based on his published shortstory"The Devil, You Say?" Telecast February 28, 1963
"The New Exhibit" Teleplay by Jerry Sohl (although credited to Beaumont), based on an unpublishedstory bySohland Beaumont Telecast April 4, 1963
"Passage on the Lady Ann" Teleplay by Beaumont based on his published short story "Song for a Lady" Telecast May9, 1963
"LivingDoll" Teleplay byJerrySohl (althoughcredited to Beaumont), based on an unpublished story by Sohland Beaumont TelecastNovember 1, 1963
"Number Twelve Looks Just Like You" Teleplay by John Tomerlin (although Beaumont also received credit), based on Beaumont's published short story "TheBeautiful People" Telecast January 24, 1964
"Queen of the Nile" Teleplay by Jerry Sohl (although credited to Beaumont), based on an unpublishedstory bySohland Beaumont Telecast March6, 1964

II. Scripts andStoriesforOtherTVShows

NOTE: Beaumont's first teleplay was "Masquerade," written in 1954 for *Four Star Playhouse*—but he did not become an active TV writeruntil 1957. In all, he was involved in some two dozen shows beyond *The Twilight Zone,* mainlyin collaboration withsevenother writers. (He often received solocredit on theseshows.) No attempt has been made here to list individualepisodictitles, but it is estimatedthathewas involved insomefortyto fiftyscripts.

With George Clayton Johnson·
Teleplayfor *Wanted: Deador Alive*

With Richard Matheson
Teleplays for *Have Gun, Will Travel, Nemo, The D.A.'s Man, Philip Marlowe, Buckskin, Markham* and *Wanted: Dead or Alive* (not all were produced)

WithWilliamF. Nolan:
Teleplays for *One Step Beyond* and *Naked City*

With Leonard Pruyn:
Teleplayfor*FourStar Playhouse*

WithOCeeRitch·
Teleplaysfor *Channing* (unproduced)and *Thriller*

With Jerry Sohl:
Teleplays for *The Outlaws* (unproduced), *Route 66, NakedCity,* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*

With John Tomerlin
Teleplays for *Have Gun, Will Travel, Savage, The Racers, Cheyenne, Whodunit, Richard Diamond, Route 66,*and *Bulldog Drummond*(not all were produced)

NOTE: Beaumont also contributed work to at least five othershows, but no detailsare available. Theshows: *Steve Canyon, Suspense, Climax, Heinz Playhouse,* and *Alcoa GoodyearTheater*

I. Early WorkFrom the 1940s

From Chicago, at age twelve in 1941, Beaumont began contributing heavily to the letters columns of various science-fiction magazines as "Charles McNutt." (His real name, at thattime,wasstill Charles Leroy Nutt, and he did not have it legally changed to Beaumont until he had moved to California fromEverett,Washington.)

Within a year, his letters had appeared in more than twenty SF publications. By 1943, he was also involved in art. Using the name "E. T. Beaumont," he sold cartoons to severalmagazines.

In California, he wrote, directed and acted in radio shows during 1944–45, and worked in the animation department of MGM in 1946

At eighteen, in 1947, he published hisown fanmagazine, *Utopia,* for which he functioned as editor, writer, and artist. In 1948, as McNutt, he illustrated an A. E. van Vogt collection, *Out of the Unknown,* for Fantasy Publishing Company.

By 1950, the year of his first magazine sale, he had abandoned art forwriting.

II. Comic Book Work

Beaumont sold thirty scripts to Whitman Publications' Dell Comics line in the mid-1950s—ten of thesein collaboration with William F. Nolan. Non-bylined, they appeared in *Mickey Mouse Comics, Donald Duck Comics, Walt Disney's Comics, Tweety and Sylvester Comics,* and *Woody Woodpecker Comics.*

He was also an assistant editor at Dell Comics during 1954.

NOTE: Harold Lee Prosser is now completing a study of Beaumont's fictionfor BorgoPress. Thebook will betitled *Charles Beaumont* □

What Happened to

Edwin Drood?

The Clues are in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

By Beverley Anne Miller

Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

This couplet, chanted by the three witches at the end of the brief first scene of *Macbeth,* establishes the theme and atmosphere of the entire play. An atmosphere of dark, gloomy evil is created by the words "foul," "fog," and "filthy"; the audience is told clearly that in this play the norm of goodness will be

inverted to evil, for these are creatures who believe that goodness is "foul" and that evil is "fair." A more recent story, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood,* is also a narrative in which darkness and evil prevail. In this novel, a young man named Edwin Drood disappears at midnight on Christmas Eve. Since its publication, the major question raised concerning it has been, "What happened to Edwin Drood?" The clues to the answer are to be found in the numerous parallels that exist between Dickens's tale of Edwin Drood and Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

"What happened to Edwin Drood?" The clues to the answer are to be found in the numerous parallels that exist between Dickens' tale of Edwin Drood and Shakespeare's Macbeth.

In the latter, a Scottish nobleman named Macbeth slays his cousin, King Duncan, in order to gain the throne for himself. This ambition stems from jealousy of Duncan's position and power, which Macbeth covets for himself, since he has been the one victorious in the battle to save Scotland from civil war, while Duncan has remained far from the battlefield at Forres. The audience knows that Macbeth wishes the assassination can be accomplished quickly, for he says in a soliloquy:

> If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well
> It were done quickly. (I:7:1-2)

He is, however, plagued by an uneasy conscience which presents solid reasons why he should not kill Duncan:

> He's here in double trust;
> First, as I am his kinsman, and his subject,
> Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
> Who should against his murderer shut the door,
> Not bear the knife myself. (I:7:12-16)

In spite of these warnings of his conscience, Macbeth's "vaulting ambition" (I:7:27) wins out, and he murders his cousin and king that night shortly after midnight, within his own castle at Inverness.

This situation parallels that of John Jasper. The prize here is not the crown but a beautiful young lady named Miss Rosebud, who is engaged to Jasper's charge, Edwin Drood. Jasper, like Macbeth, is dissatisfied with his boring lot in life—as choirmaster in Cloisterham. He envies Drood's prospects of a beautiful wife and a lucrative engineering profession in Egypt. Perhaps, by murdering his nephew, he can claim two prizes: Miss Rosebud and the financial independence which a marriage to her would provide.

The same arguments against the deed hold true here: first, Edwin is the nephew of Jasper; second, Jasper, too, owes a certain legal duty to Edwin, since he is his guardian; and last, since Edwin is visiting him for the Christmas season, Jasper should protect his guest, not kill him. Thus, from the very beginning, the situation parallels that of *Macbeth*. The one major difference is that in *Macbeth* the audience is certain Macbeth kills Duncan, while in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* the reader must deduce the identity of the murderer, if, in fact, murder has been committed. Since so many similarities exist between the two stories, the evidence points to a murder committed by an uncle, guardian, and host, John Jasper, on an unsuspecting nephew and guest, Edwin Drood.

As mentioned in the introduction, the witches open *Macbeth* on an evil, eerie note. They soon reappear in Act I to deliver prophecies to Macbeth which name him thane of Glamis, thane of Cawdor, and king hereafter. The recipient of these prophecies is both fascinated and puzzled by the proclamations. His eagerness to hear more is shown when he says, "Stay, you imperfect creatures, tell me more" (I:3:70). His confusion, however, is also evident:

> By Sinel's death, I know I am thane of Glamis,
> But how of Cawdor? the thane of Cawdor lives,
> A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
> Stands not within the prospect of belief.
> (I:3:71-74)

In contrast to Macbeth's apparent curiosity, Banquo, his companion, wonders if the two have "eaten on the insane root, that takes the reason prisoner" (I:3:84-85).

The reason that Banquo suspects the clarity of his logic is found in the atmosphere of the environment and in the appearance of the witches. Macbeth refers to the fact that "So foul and fair a day I have not seen" (I:3:38), which indicates the turbulence of weather and battle—they are on a deserted heath, accosted by thunder and lightning, having just survived a bloody battle. The witches themselves are described in Scene 3 as "wither'd, and so wild in their attire" (line 40), with "skinny lips" (line 45), and "beards" (line 46). Their unusual and frightening appearance leads Banquo to assume they are "instruments of darkness" (line 124).

The first chapter of Dickens's novel duplicates many of these elements of Act I. Here, too, are three unusual creatures: a Chinaman, a Lascar, and a haggard woman. All are observed carefully by a main character, John Jasper, and all have partaken of the "insane root, that takes the reason prisoner," namely

The Mystery of Edwin Drood, The Heritage Press, New York

opium. Just as the witches perform a chanting ceremony to increase the potency of their prophecies for Macbeth, so, too, does the haggard woman blow carefully at her opium pipe to kindle it, while she speaks of having "the true secret of mixing it." She bestows an almost supernatural quality on her movements, which is reminiscent of the witches. Though Jasper looks at her and the other two with repugnance, he is still very curious, as evidenced when he asks, "What visions can she have?" This interest in his companions' thoughts is further seen when he bends down to hear the Chinaman's mutterings and "listens to the incoherent jargon with an attentive frown." The unintelligibility of their remarks is indicated in the following:

> There has been chattering and clattering enough between them, but to no purpose. When any distinct word has been flung into the air, it has no sense or

Thus, like Macbeth, Jasper is fascinated, puzzled, and repelled by these unusual creatures. Clearly, too, as evidenced by the incoherent mutterings, the opium has taken reason prisoner in its victims. The norm of clear thinking has been inverted to something dark and sinister here, just as it is in the play.

The atmosphere exudes a combination of darkness, gloom, and underlying evil, as it does in *Macbeth*. This is first created by the setting:

> He is in the meanest and closest of small rooms. Through the ragged window-curtain the light of early day steals in from a miserable court. He lies, dressed, across a large unseemly bed

An addition to the eeriness of the setting is the sinister effect created by Jasper's hallucinations, in which he sees a spike intended for impaling Turkish robbers and scimitars flashing in the sunlight. The unpleasant mental effects of the opium are matched by the physical reactions, seen in the spasmodic shoots and darts that break out of the woman's face

One of the main factors in producing the eerie, evil effect is the presence of characters such as the witches and the haggard woman, who perform mysterious rituals.

and limbs. The Lascar, too, glares with his eyes, lashes about with his arms, and draws a phantom knife. These violent actions are also observed in Jasper, who "pounces on the Chinaman, and, seizing him by the throat, turns him violently on the bed." This combination of eeriness and violence duplicates the weirdness of the witches and the violence of the battle scenes in Act I of *Macbeth*. Moreover, Chapter I closes with Jasper returning to Cloisterham and singing "When the Wicked Man" with the choir; he is the wicked man who must hide his secret liaisons with the opium woman and his secret plans for Edwin Drood. Macbeth, similarly, has something to hide at the end of Act I and expresses it as follows: "False face must hide what the false heart doth know" (1:7:83).

In both *Macbeth* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, the tone of the story is established at the beginning, and one of the main factors in producing the eeerie, evil effect is the presence of characters such as the witches and the haggard woman, who perform mysterious rituals. In each case, the continuing presence of these women is important in the action. On Christmas Eve, the night Edwin disappears, he encounters the old woman at Jasper's gate:

> By the light of a lamp near it he sees that the woman is of a haggard appearance, and that her weazon chin is resting on her hands, and that her eyes are staring—with an unwinking, blind sort of steadfastness—before her

During this second appearance of the old woman in the novel, she issues warnings without realizing they pertain to the listener, Edwin Drood:

"You be thankful that your name ain't Ned. . . . Because it's a bad name to have just now. . . . A threatened name. A dangerous name."

These words unsettle Edwin, who notes mentally the fact that only John Jasper calls him by this name. Thus, the old crone unintentionally points to the murder, and Edwin, in turn, unintentionally points to the murderer.

The parallel to *Macbeth* is hinted at by the very title of the chapter in which this meeting occurs—"When Shall These Three Meet Again"—which is a parody of the line "When shall we three meet again" (1:1:1). An additional parallel is evident in the second major appearance of the witches in *Macbeth,* when they issue warnings to Macbeth. They foretell his downfall, but he fails to realize this fact because the language used is full of hidden meanings which will eventually come true:

> Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! Beware Macduff (IV:1:71)
>
> . . . none of woman born
> Shall harm Macbeth (80–81)
>
> Macbeth shall never vanquished be until
> Great Birnham wood to high Dunsinane hill
> Shall come against him. (92–94)

Macbeth is killed, in the end, by Macduff, who was born prematurely by a Caesarian section; Macduff camouflages his army with tree branches from Birnam wood, marches up the hill, captures the castle, and slays Macbeth. Thus, the witches purposely build up Macbeth's confidence in his safety, only to plunge him to his destruction. In *The Mystery of Edwin Drood,* the haggard woman points with her prophecies to Ned's destruction, but she does not plan the harm which occurs. She does, however, return to Cloisterham later in the story, and this time she is apparently following John Jasper with the intention of plotting some harm:

"My gentleman from Cloisterham, I'll be there before ye, and bide your coming. I've swore my oath that I'll not miss yet twice!"

This statement, and her earlier conversation with John Jasper while he is in halingopium, indicate that he has divulged his malevolent plans for Ned while under the influence of the drug, and she intends to use this knowledge to her financial advantage. Thus, she is in Cloisterham to establish his social and economic position so that she can blackmail him. For what? For the murder of Edwin Drood! This could mean the downfall of John Jasper, and, therefore, another connection is made between the behavior of the witches and the behavior of the old crone in Dickens'n ovel.

Besides this major similarity of the witches and the haggard woman, there are a series of smaller similarities which point the reader in the direction of a like crime. These smaller comparisons are links in a larger chain of circumstances that focus suspicion on John Jasper. One such likeness is the use of the pathetic fallacy to describe the horrible deed. On the Christmas Eve of Edwin's disappearance, the wind grows into a vicious gale:

No such power of wind has blown for many a winter night. Chimneys topple in the streets, and people hold to posts and corners, and to one another, to keep themselves upon their feet.

Macbeth after the murder of Duncan, and John Jasper after the disappearance of Edwin Drood, act out an identical pattern

Compare this to Lennox's description of the night during which Duncan is murdered:

> The night has been unruly: where we lay
> Our chimneys were blown down (II:3:54–55)

In both cases, the destructive, gale-force winds play the same role: just as an unusual event occurs in the natural world, so, too, does an unusual, violent destruction of life occur in the human world.

Supernatural voices are also used by both Dickens and Shakespeare to convey a sense of evil in the air. In his speech, Lennox continues:

> and, as they say,
> Lamentings heard i' the air, strange screams of death,
> And prophesying, with accents terrible,
> Of dire combustion, and confus'd events,
> New hatch'd to the woeful time. (II:3:55.59)

In a manner similar to Lennox reporting these "lamentings," "screams of death," and "prophesying," Durdles tells Jasper of his experience last Christmas Eve, when he fell asleep in the crypt of the Cathedral:

"And what woke me? The ghost of a cry. The ghost of one terrific shriek, which shriek was followed by the ghost of the howl of a dog—a long dismal woeful howl, such as a dog gives when a person's dead. That was my last Christmas Eve."

The "shriek" and the "howl" are "ghosts," according to Durdles, which gives them a supernatural connotation similar to Lennox's "lamentings" prophesying a period of woe for the people of Scotland. Since the shrieks occurred on the previous Christmas Eve, they foreshadow another unusual event this Christmas Eve.

In addition to the pathetic fallacy and supernatural voices, Shakespeare uses bird imagery to indicate doom. Again, in Lennox's speech it is mentioned that "the obscure bird clamour'd the live-long night" (II:3:59-60), and even Lady Macbeth refers to birds while Macbeth is in Duncan's chamber killing him

> It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman,
> Which gives the stern'st good-night
>
> (II:2:3-4)

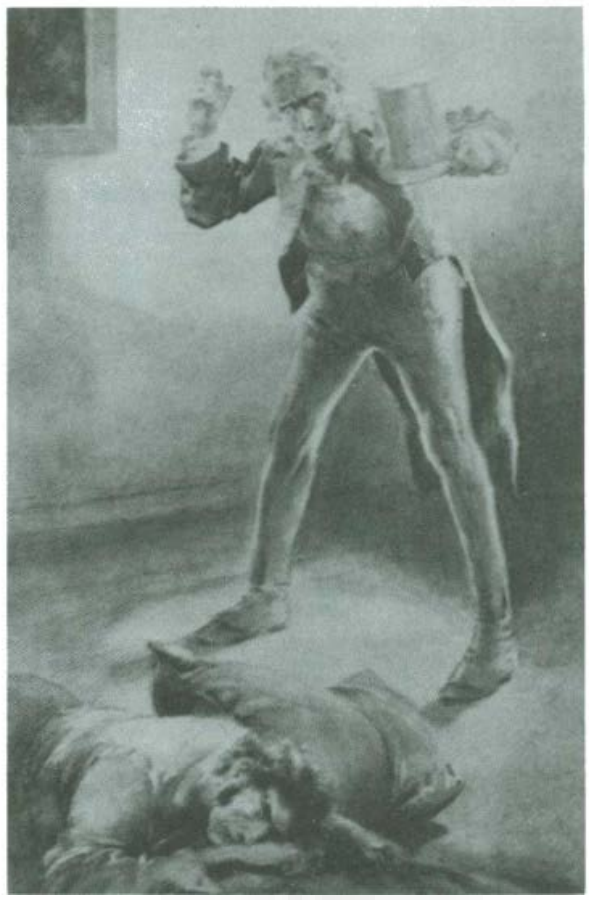
Both references are to the owl, a bird of ill-omen. The strongest bird image, however, is found in Lady Macbeth's soliloquy, when she announces her decision that Duncan's entry into her castle will be a fatal one:

> The raven himself is hoarse
> That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
> Under my battlements (I:5:38-40)

Such a dreadful deed is planned that even the raven, a bird of ill-omen, is shocked into hoarseness.

To cry the evil deeds in Cloisterham, Dickens selects a bird which appears at various times during the story. This bird is the rook, a black, hoarse-voiced bird of the crow tribe. It is a suitable parallel to the raven. The supernatural importance attached to these birds is indicated by the author's statement that when they poise and linger in flight it is as though they convey "to mere men the fancy that it is of some occult importance to the body politic." Their contribution to the eerie atmosphere continues when Durdles and Jasper climb the winding, dusty, dark staircase of the Cathedral tower. They hear the rooks: "The chirp of some startled jackdaw or frightened rook precedes the heavy beating of wings in a confined space." Finally, on the night of Edwin's disappearance, "The darkness is augmented and confused by . . . flying dust from the earth, dry twigs from the trees, and great ragged fragments from the rooks' nests up in the tower." Thus, these references to black birds supplement the sensation of evil and further point to the conclusion that a murder has been committed. Why else would Dickens choose the rook, a hoarse-voiced bird, so reminiscent of Shakespeare's raven?

A fourth likeness in this series of minor similarities involves time. While Durdles is in the crypt with Jasper, he is awakened from his intoxicated slumber as the bell strikes two o'clock. On Christmas Eve,



Edwin disappears shortly after twelve o'clock. In *Macbeth*, the murder occurs shortly after midnight. Fleance speaks to his father, Banquo, after the banquet, just before the murder:

> FLEANCE: The moon is down; I have not heard the clock.
> BANQUO: And she goes down at twelve.
>
> (II:1:2-3)

Soon after this, Lady Macbeth rings a bell signaling her husband to approach the murder chamber. Macbeth hears it and says:

> I go and it is done: the bell invites me
> Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
> That summons thee to heaven, or to hell.
>
> (II:2:62-63)

The audience later learns the exact time of the crime during Lady Macbeth's hallucinations while sleep-walking. In reliving the murder, she says, "One: two: why then 'tis time to do't" (V:1:35-36). This combination of bell sounds and the hour of two o'clock are repeated in ***The Mystery of Edwin Drood***, thus further pointing to an intended comparison of the two stories.

The most outstanding of the incidental likenesses in the two stories involves minor characters: in

Macbeth, the Porter, and in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood,* Durdles. The Porter is responsible for admitting guests into the castle at Inverness, but, when the audience sees him after the murder of Duncan, he is intoxicated and imagines he is the gatekeeper of hell, admitting criminals to the underworld. He announces his occupation in the following terms:

> Here's a knocking indeed! If a man were a porter of hellgate, he should have old turning the key. Knock, knock, knock! Whose there i' the name of Belzebub? (II:3:1-4)

The irony here is that, in a sense, he really is the gatekeeper of hell, since murder has just been committed within the castle.

Durdles, too, is a gatekeeper of sorts, since he has the keys to the crypt where the dead are buried under the Cathedral. He works among "the earthy damps there, and the dead breath of the old 'uns." Durdles, then, is in the underworld with the dead, just as the Porter imagines he is in the underworld with the dead souls. The gatekeeper image is strengthened when he escorts Jasper through the crypt:

> Durdles, holding the door open for his companion to follow, as if from the grave, fumbles among his pockets for a key confided to him that will open an iron gate.

Shortly after this, Durdles falls into a dazed sleep as a result of intoxication, a further similarity to the Porter. When he awakens, he chuckles "as though remonstrant with himself on his drinking powers" and "rolls to the door and unlocks it." This is again a reminder of the Porter, who "rolls" to the gate of the castle to admit Lennox and Macduff. The implication is that, just as the castle held the dead body of Duncan, so, too, might the crypt be the intended hiding place for the body of Edwin Drood. This impression is heightened when one considers the care taken by Jasper to ensure that no one knows of his midnight visit there with Durdles. He purposely avoids meeting Neville and Crisparkle earlier in the evening and is furious when the Deputy sees him emerging from the crypt with Durdles. These two incidents hint at some suspicious plan in the mind of John Jasper.

This character, John Jasper, provides the final link between the two stories. It is the behavior of the suspected criminal after the crime that cements the parallels. Macbeth after the murder of Duncan, and John Jasper after the disappearance of Edwin Drood, act out an identical pattern: exaggerated shock at the news of each disaster, flowery hypocrisy to conceal guilt, increasing isolation, and a growing tendency to spy on others.

On Christmas morning, Jasper hurries to Crisparkle's, announces that his nephew has not returned from a midnight walk to the river with Neville, and screeches to be let in. He is described as "white, half-dressed, panting, and clinging to the rail before Mr. Crisparkle's house." Macbeth, too, appears in his nightgown the morning after the murder. He announces that he has killed the two grooms as a result of the horrible shock of Duncan's murder:

> O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
> That I did kill them. (II:3107-8)

In each example, the suspected criminal behaves in a manner conveying shock and alarm to his listeners.

Immediately following the above speech, Macduff asks Macbeth, "Wherefore did you so?" (II:3:108).

Just as an unusual event occurs in the natural world, so, too, does an unusual, violent destruction of life occur in the human world.

This leads to Macbeth's realization that he must conceal his guilt from those around him. He explains in glowingly hypocritical terms the motivation behind the spontaneous slaying of the grooms:

> Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate and furious,
> Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
> The expedition of my violent love
> Outran the pauser, reason. (II:3:109-12)

He continues with an eloquent description of the dead Duncan, "his silver skin lac'd with his golden blood" (II:3:113), and repeats the refrain of love as the motivation behind the killing of the grooms. The language is too elaborate and theatrical to be the expression of true grief, revealing the criminal for what he really is—a cold-blooded murderer.

John Jasper is also in danger of inadvertently revealing his guilt to the observant Grewgious. After the lawyer announces that Edwin and Rosebud cancelled their engagement just prior to Edwin's disappearance, Jasper experiences what amounts to a seizure, uttering a "terrifying shriek" and falling in "a heap of torn and miry clothes upon the floor." Lest Grewgious suspect this intense reaction as an indication of guilt, Jasper delivers an elaborate speech in which he claims the fit was caused by his relief in knowing Edwin is probably still alive, having taken flight to avoid hurting Jasper with the news of the broken engagement. Some of his protests appear very theatrical and calculated. The following is one such example:

"When I had, and could have, no suspicion," pursued Jasper, eagerly following the new track, "that thedearlost boy had withheld anything from me—most of all such a leading matter as this—what gleam of light was there for me in thewhole bleaksky?"

Thus, both Macbeth and Jasper revert to elo quent theatricality tohide theirguilt. Unfortunately, just as the fit alerts Grewgious to Jasper's guilt, as seen in the "hard kind of imperturbably polite protest all over him,"so, too, does Macbeth alert Macduff to his guilt, which leads to Macduff's refusal to attend the coronation "lest our old robes sit easier than our new!" (II:4:38) In addition, when Macbeth sees Ban quo's ghost atthe ban quet, in a type of hallucination or fit, the final proof of Macbeth's guilt is presented to thelordsof Scotland.

The third stage in the pattern is isolation. The following description portrays Jasper in the period after that fatal Christmas Eve:

The determined reticence of Jasper, however, was not to be so approached. Impassive, moody, solitary, resolute, so concentrated on one idea, and on its attendant fixed purpose, that he would share it with no fellow creature, he lived apartfromhuman life.

Macbeth likewise removes himself from everyone, including hiswife, after themurderof King Duncan. This solitude is questioned by Lady Macbeth:

> How now, my lord, why do you keep alone,
> Ofsorriestfancies yourcompanionsmaking.
> (III:2:8–9)

Both gentlemen retreat further and further into themselves asthe action progresses.

Finally, this isolation so removes them from others thateachisdriventothe fourth stage inthe pattern—spying onthosehe dislikesor distrusts.For Macbeth, this includeseveryone:

> There's not a one of them but in his house
> I keep a servant fee'd. (III:5:131–32)

In Jasper's case, thespying focuses onNeville,whom he apparently has always disliked. Grewgious spots him across thewayfrom his office, watching theattic where Neville resides. He points thisout to Crisparkle:

"If you will kindly step here behind me, in the gloom of the room, and will rest your eye at the second floor landing windowin yonderhouse, I thinkyouwill hardly fail to see a slinking individual in whom I recognizeour localfriend."

In Macbeth's case, the audience is certain of his intentions—further killing, in particular Macduff's family. Jasper's intentions, on the other hand, are more obscure, because thereader is neverexposed to his inner thoughts—another convention indicating the guilty party. Previous events, however, point to malevolent intentions. Just after Crisparkle tells Jasper that Neville was enamored of Miss Rosebud, Edwin's watch and shirt-pin are discovered, leading again to Neville's detainment. The fact that Jasper's face turns paler at the announcement of Neville's romantic interest is the clue to his subse quent behavior. The reader of eachstory is impressed with the realization that crime begets crime, and evil begets evil. Macbeth kills Duncan, the two grooms, Ban quo, and Macduff's family and servants. Likewise, Jasperappears to be plotting harm to Neville by the time *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* comes to a stop. In each case, the same pattern occurs once the initial crime is committed.

Thus, these various pieces of evidence gradually accumulate and point to the conclusion that the answer to the question "What happened to Edwin Drood?" is to be found in Shakespeare's *Macbeth.* If *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* contained only one or two parallels to *Macbeth,* this theory would lack validity; but the fact that Dickens, an author renowned for specific detail, incorporated so many parallels to *Macbeth* in his own tale of suspense, leads the reader to the conviction that the mysterious disappearance of Edwin Drood was really the murder of Edwin Drood by his uncle, host, and guardian, John Jasper. □

The cover price of *The Armchair Detective* willincreaseto $6.00 beginning with Vol. 18, No. 3, Summer 1985.

However, *the cost of a subscription will remain the same.* For example, a one-year U.S. subscription will still cost $20.00.

The cost of back issues will also increase to $6.00. *Order your back issues before August 1, 1985* while they still cost only$5.00 each.

Dorothy L. Sayers at Thirty-one

Joe R. Christopher

O mea culpa! What folly I have done!
My liberty in London, a sad mistake:
for I have brought upon myself this ache,
bending beliefs to lies; so one man won,
quite easily, my heart—a bit of fun
for him, who wanted something less to take.
O foolish heart! pierced by the fiery stake,
for I have brought upon myself this son.

John Anthony, your mother's been a fool,
but work's the cure for mine and other folly:
and so I'll write a second novel now—
a pencil is my only craftsman's tool;
no verse, no French, till I support us fully,
which payment may the Carpenter allow.

Dorothy L. Sayers at Thirty-six

Joe R. Christopher

Domine, refugium. Dust to dust.
Beyond three score and ten, but not four score,
my father last year, filled with hope and trust;
my mother this, with quiet love in store.
I shall not raise a tombstone, to give their lore,
for Christians go to God who judges worth;
it is not meant for men to keep that chore—
but fall upon them gently, gentle earth.
How little in late years I gave them mirth,
what with my marriage to a divorced man—
but I shall honor those who gave me birth
in my true way: a detective tale I'll plan,
Set in the Fens, my father as the priest,
praising, beneath some other names, the deceased.

Poetic Justice

A.D. Accampo

A movie director named Hitchcock
Gave viewers scratch & itch shock
Viewers grew tense
Wrapped in suspense,
For his endings were unpredictable.

Filmerick

Louis Phillips

The poem that lay by his side
gave a clue to the way he had died.
For his words did not rhyme,
a most terrible crime,
which drove him to verse suicide.

Classic Corner

Rare Tales from the Archives

By William E. S. Fales

Most of the stories in this curious little volume arecriminous in nature, with tales of opium, theft, murder, revenge, and other elements of mystery fiction present in strongdosage.

Published in New York by Street and Smith in 1902, and in London by Henderson in the same year, *Bits of Broken China* has an interesting, if brief, introduction which addresses itself to a question that seems a little before its time. At the turn of the century, talesof Orientalmastervillains and Chinese cunning abounded. Thomas Burke is oftengiven credit forbeingamong thefirst to point out that these stereotypes had little or no validity. Yet here, in 1902, fourteen years before the publication of the monumental *Limehouse Nights*, is Fales's introduction: —Otto Penzler

THE MOUSETRAP

INTRODUCTION

THE STORIES in this little volume are based upon divers occurrences in the district of New York known as Chinatown, and the characters have been sketched from its citizens.

Though the events chronicled may seem somewhat strange from an Occidental point of view, yet in the actors will be found the same good old human nature that marks all children of civilization

The grotesque pictures of Western writers which represent the Chinese as monsters of iniquity and marvels of Machiavellian craft are about as true to fact as the concept of the little Chinese girl in Chao-chao-fu who asked an American consul: "Won't you please spit fire at my naughty cat?"

While Mongolian ideals are different from our own, the differences are in degree and not in kind. They have developed upon much longer lines, and perhaps may represent in a shadowy way the outcome of conditions to which our civilization is moving.

When it comes to the last analysis, the mandarin is indistinguishable from the university man, the Canton merchant from his New York confrère and the good fellow of the Celestial Empire from his colleague of the great republic.

Compensation rules the race. If human life is less sacred to a Chinaman than to an American, spiritual life is more immanent and actual. While he has less love of country and of liberty, he has a greater love for parents and children and for law and order. If his aims and ambitions are fewer, his enjoyment of what he has is greater. If he does not worry over the welfare of his neighbor, he accords to the latter the royal privilege of doing as he pleases. We may be able to teach him much, but have we nothing to learn?

WILLIAM E. S. FALES

The Mousetrap

When Mike Gerritty, opium fiend and ward politician, was smoking the seductive drug in the dilapidated joint at No. 9 Pell Street, his reflections were not so roseate as usual. He had incurred many debts of late, his credit was below par—in fact, exhausted—and his salary as inspector of services was sold in advance for five months to come, the buyer being the captain of his district. His daily expenses were never less than five dollars in amount, and of this two dollars were consumed upon the ever-burning altar fire of morphine.

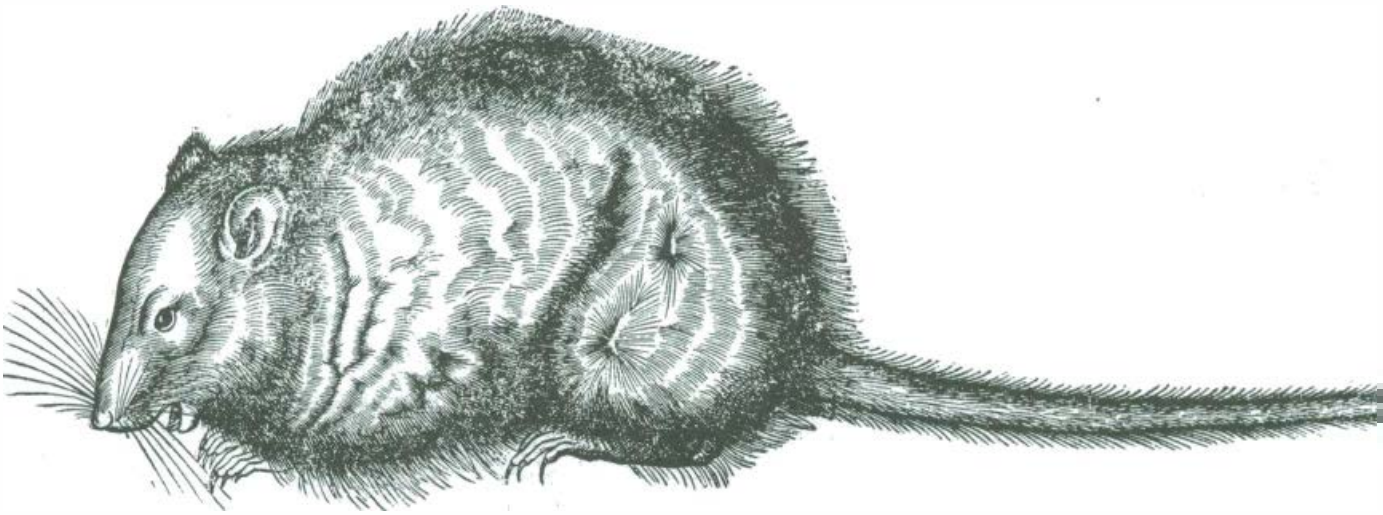
On this particular day he had experienced great trouble in raising enough to buy the five shells of Li-yuen gung-yen, which were his daily allowance at the joint. Midnight came and went without bringing the pleasant drowsiness so dear to the opium fiend.

Nearly all the other smokers were asleep, and as their tiny lamps were extinguished, the place grew darker and darker. In pondering over the problem of how to raise money on the morrow, he forgot his own lamp, and, after a few spasmodic flickers, it went out.

He reached mechanically for the matchbox on the smoking tray, and, opening it, felt for a match, but found none. The few that were there in the beginning of the evening had been used by him in lighting cigarettes. With a muttered curse he threw the box to the floor and resumed his meditations.

A faint gleam of light fell upon his face from a hole in the partition which separated the joint from the rooms of Sing Wah, a shopkeeper, which were on the same floor, in the rear of the building. Ordinarily, this would not have aroused any interest on his part, but tonight he was nervous, and something prompted him to see where the light came from.

He raised himself from the headrest, and, leaning on his elbow, looked into the adjoining apartment. There at a table sat Sing Wah, apparently closing his business



accounts. Before him lay a Chinese account book, whose yellow pages were covered with Mongolian characters, and—what was more fascinating to Mike's eyes—a pile of bills of various denominations.

The sight of the money caused his heart to beat faster, and his mind to form plans for its acquisition.

Sing Wah worked for half-an-hour, and then closing his account books he took the money, placed it in a small box and concealed the latter in a small cupboard ingeniously constructed in the headboard of an old-fashioned wooden bedstead.

During all this time, Gerritty's eyes were riveted on the aperture in the partition. He found the hiding-place of his "Chinky neighbor," as he contemptuously termed Sing Wah, and already he had evolved a half-dozen schemes for rifling the little hoard.

The light went out in Sing Wah's room, and, shortly afterward, the opium fiend left the joint and walked to the tenement where his parents resided. He stopped on the corner of Pell Street and the Bowery, where he chatted a moment with Officer Kehoe, who was on duty, and then, entering the saloon, took a drink with Pat Sullivan, the bartender. With some ostentation he declared that he was tired out and was going home for a square night's sleep.

He reached his residence, and, for half-an-hour, he was busy in the closet he called his room. To a spectator his actions would have seemed curious. They consisted in bringing from a table drawer a lot of keys of various sizes, all of them so filed and cut away as to seem skeletons in brass and steel. He also wrapped a piece of lead pipe two feet in length with a newspaper and then brown paper, until it looked like a sausage which a German brings

home from the delicatessen store.

At six in the morning, Sing Wah rose, made his toilet and was soon on his way to the store, No. 16 Mott Street, where he was a second partner. As he swung around the corner from Pell Street into Mott, Gerritty emerged from the dark doorway of No. 12, on the other side of Pell Street, crossed that thoroughfare and entered No. 9.

Mercury, the god of thieves, seemed to favor him, because the second key which he tried opened the door and allowed him to enter Sing Wah's room. The moment he had entered, he locked the door from the inside, removed the key and advanced to the bed. It took him some time to find and open the hiding-place and to extract the strong box. For a moment he paused, uncertain whether to force the box or to take it away.

It occurred to him that there might be people in the street when he came out and that the sight of an American carrying a Chinese box would arouse suspicion. Acting on the thought, he looked about for a screwdriver or other instrument with which to force the lock of the box.

He secured a pair of heavy scissors, and with these he managed to pry apart the hinges and break the stout brass catch which held down the front of the lid. There lay the money—ones, twos, fives, tens and even twenties. In the joy of possession he counted the bills and found that they amounted to over five hundred dollars. He placed them in his inside pocket and stepped to the door to leave the place.

Just then he heard footsteps on the stair. They came nearer, stopped in front of the door, and then came the sound of a key being inserted in the lock.

A grim look of rage came over Gerritty's face, mingled with one of cruelty which marked him in his frequent brawls. He stepped back a foot or two, and, raising the brown-paper package, waited in silence.

As the door opened, Sing Wah advanced a step into the apartment. His face was half-turned, and he did not see the intruder. The next moment the lead pipe fell, and without a groan the Chinaman sank to the floor.

Gerritty stepped out, closed and locked the door and returned to his home. Here, he concealed nearly all of his plunder and went out to celebrate what he regarded as a signal victory over the heathen.

He was drinking in Callahan's saloon in Chatham Square when some one came in and spoke of a murder having been committed in Pell Street that morning. Shortly afterward, a newsboy entered the place with an extra giving full details of the terrible murder. Gerritty bought a copy and read the story aloud to his boon companions. He smiled to himself when he saw that a Chinese Highbinder was suspected, and then, throwing the paper on the floor, resumed carousing.

That afternoon he was arrested on suspicion and thrown into jail. Four days afterward there was a hearing before a magistrate. The police had no positive evidence against him, and for the defense a dozen witnesses proved an unimpeachable alibi. Gerritty was discharged, and became the hero of Chatham Square.

On the day after the murder, the Long Gee Tong, of the Canton Masonic Lodge, telegraphed the news to Sing Gong, an elder brother of the murdered man, who had a large business in Denver. Three days afterward, Gong was in New York, and was an interested spectator at the hearing before the magistrate.

He made no outcry when the prisoner was discharged, but returned to the boarding-house in Doyer Street, where he was staying during his visit to the city. Here in one corner of the room was a mousetrap, and in it the body of a dead mouse.

Sing Gong removed the little rodent to the table, and then anointed it with the white

of an egg and with some green oil, which he took from a small vial from a pocket beneath his blouse. From another pocket he took two large, brass pins of Eastern make and inserted them in the body of the mouse. With a small string, he attached the latter to the chandelier, and, standing before it, he uttered what might have been a prayer, an imprecation or an incantation.

For the next five days Sing Gong seemed to do nothing but watch the mouse Decomposition set in, and a strange mold formed upon the velvety brown fur. It was gray at first, and then came green spots, which widened and merged into one another. After a time red lines broke out on the green surface until they formed what looked like a scarlet network over the little body.

Then with great care Sing Gong removed the pins and holding them by the head, fanned them until the ooze upon the surface had dried into a green glaze. Wrapping them in the finest white tissue-paper, he placed them in a small box and hid this within his garments.

In the meantime Gerritty had resumed his former way of living, and passed his nights in whole or in part at the joint. He did not notice that there was a new attendant in the place, nor did he recall that the latter had been an interested attendant at the court proceedings.

One evening, in paying for a shell of opium, he gave the attendant a five-dollar-bill.

The latter scrutinized it so closely that Gerritty, good-natured from opium and alcohol, said, with a laugh:

"This isn't queer, and, if it is, I got it from one of your own breed"

The eyes of the attendant were not looking for evidences of the counterfeiter's art, but at two characters in ink in one corner of the bill, so small as to be almost microscopic. They were Chinese for Sing Wah.

He bowed to Gerritty, politely saying:

"No likee this bill; have got another?"

Gerritty took the bill back, and gave the attendant a second. On this was the same tell-tale character. Change was brought, and the deadly recreation went on

At three in the morning the opium smoker, saturated with his favorite drug, fell into a deep sleep. His deep breathing told his condition more eloquently than words. Sing Gong approached him and drew from his blouse a box, from which he took two brass pins that, in the half-darkness, seemed made of some precious stone. He inserted one in each wrist of the unconscious sleeper, who merely muttered and became quiet again.

In the morning, Gerritty noticed a strange red mark on each wrist, and in one was a brass pin. He looked at it with the remark, "I must have been very dopy last night," and gave the matter no more thought.

A week afterward, Chatham Square and Chinatown were all agog over the strange news that Gerritty had been taken to Bellevue, suffering from a strange kind of blood poisoning, which the doctors could not understand, nor cure; that he had become delirious, and, in his delirium, had confessed the murder and told where the proceeds had been hidden, and, finally, after suffering unspeakable agony, had died in horrible convulsions.

In the boarding-house on Doyer Street, on the night of his death, Sing Gong knelt before a little altar which he had erected on the table in his room, and prayed and wept. In front of the altar on a porcelain dish lay the remnants of the body of the mouse, a lock of hair from Sing Wah's head, and a bronze bowl, in which nine burning joss sticks told the story of vengeance and gratitude to the gods. □

COLLECTING MYSTERY FICTION

THOMAS BURKE

By Otto Penzler

Mystery fiction, more than any type or genre of fiction, is noted for its proliferation of series characters—those monumental literary creations who take on lives of their own, towering above any of the tales recounting their adventures.

An odd variation on this concept was created by Thomas Burke, who employed no brilliant detective again and again, nor a villain whose dark powers were so immense that he dominated book after book.

For Thomas Burke, the repeated presence is not a person, but a place. In his most memorable work, Burke evoked the overpowering aura of Limehouse.

Limehouse.

It is nearly impossible to utter the word without a thrill of recognition and the anticipation of sinister adventure.

Certainly Burke's greatest book is his first, *Limehouse Nights*, which contains the famous, tender short story "The Chink and the Child," filmed twice. but especially remembered in its first version, D. W. Griffith's 1919 silent, *Broken Blossoms,* with Richard Barthelmess as a Chinese youth and Lillian Gish as the daughter of a sadistic prizefighter.

Perhaps Burke's finest and most enduring piece of fiction is "The Hands of Mr. Ottermole," a short story contained in *The Pleasantries of Old Quong*. This chilling tale, based on the Jack-the-Ripper theme, was selected as "the best detective short story of all time" in a landmark survey by Ellery Queen and eleven other critics.

Virtually all of Burke's mystery fiction is set in London's infamous old Chinatown district, Limehouse. Here opium dens were abundant. The streets were filled with dense fog, muted gaslamps, prostitutes, thugs, tough sailors from the world's seaports, and the poor Chinese who labored on the docks. Burke was among the first to portray Chinese characters sympathetically, not as sinister, godless, inscrutible stereotypes.

Born and raised in London's East End slum, Burke lived for many years on the fringes of Limehouse, haunting its alleys and dark corners and absorbing the atmosphere which permeates his sometimes violent and often poignant tales. He knew intimately the life of this area and understood the sounds and sights and mysterious doings of the dock district, where "on the flood-tide, floats from Limehouse the bitter-sweet alluring smell of Asia."

Burke (1886–1945) was orphaned early and spent his early years with his uncle in the London ghetto until he was taken into an orphanage, which he loathed. He began work as a clerk in a business office at the age of fourteen, but at eighteen went to work as an assistant to a second-hand bookseller, later becoming a reader for a publishing company and a literary agent. He was married to Winifred Wells, an author who used the pseudonym Clare Cameron; she wrote *Rustle of Spring*.

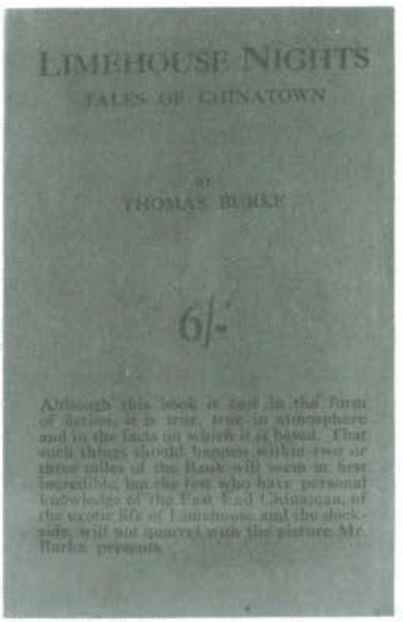
Burke's books, while less popular than they once were (they had been extravagantly praised by H. G. Wells, Holbrook Jackson, Clement Shorter, and most of the serious critics of his day), still retain much interest, falling into several areas of collecting activity.

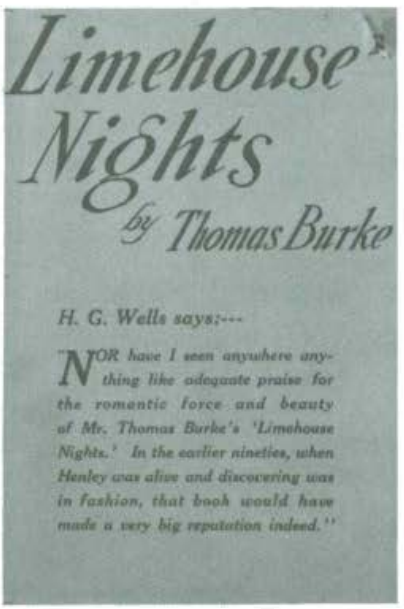
Limehouse Nights, the key book of his opera, is a *Queen's Quorum* title and is one of the few titles also selected for the Haycraft–Queen Cornerstone Library list. Both these lists of landmark books are actively collected.

Most of Burke's mystery fiction is in the short form, so is collected by those who enjoy short-story collections. A significant subgenre of mystery collecting involves books about Orientals, whether as demonic villains or as sage detectives.

A complete Burke collection would not be very large, although, as with seemingly all interesting collections, it would be a fairly slow and difficult one to assemble in choice condition. Age is a significant factor here, since the first book appeared in 1916 and finding a copy in a dust wrapper is no easy task. Several of the later books, however, are surprisingly common in nice dust wrappers—saved through the years, perhaps, because of the exceptionally attractive illustrations that adorn them.

Quong Lee, incidentally, who appears in *Limehouse Nights* and is the titular character of *The Pleasantries of Old Quong*, was a friend of Burke's. He ran an ostensible tea shop but was eventually imprisoned for being the proprietor of an opium den reputed to be one of the most vile in the entire London ghetto.





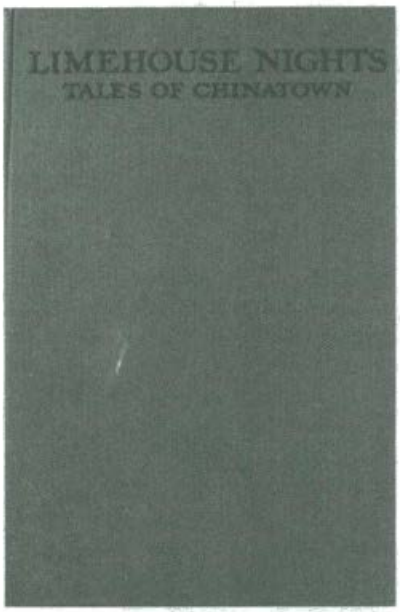
Limehouse Nights

First Edition: London, Grant Richards, 1916. Brown cloth, front cover and spine lettered in dark brown, with dark brown ornament also printed on spine; rear cover blank. Bottom edges untrimmed. Issued in a gray-blue dust wrapper, printed in dark blue.

First American Edition: New York, Robert M. McBride, 1917. Orange-yellow cloth, front cover and spine lettered in black; rear cover blank. Issued in a fragile, pale yellow

dust wrapper, lettered in black

Note: There are two different binding cloths on the first edition, almost precisely the same color but of very dissimilar cloths Binding variant A (so designated for identification purposes only, not to suggest any priority) is a trifle lighter in shade and has a smoother texture than binding variant B. Binding variant B has a greater evenness of color and is slightly more roughly textured. Establishing priority seems impossible, as the copy inscribed by Burke and presented to his



publisher (surely an early copy) is bound in the "A" cloth. The author's own copy (also, surely, an early copy) is bound in the "B" cloth. There is no appreciable difference in scarcity or value.

Estimated retail value:		
First Edition		
Good	$ 250.00	$ 25.00
Fine	750.00	75.00
Very fine	1,000.00	100.00
First American Edition		
Good	$ 50.00	$ 7.50
Fine	200.00	15.00
Very fine	300.00	20.00

Whispering Windows

(U.S. title: *More Limehouse Nights*)

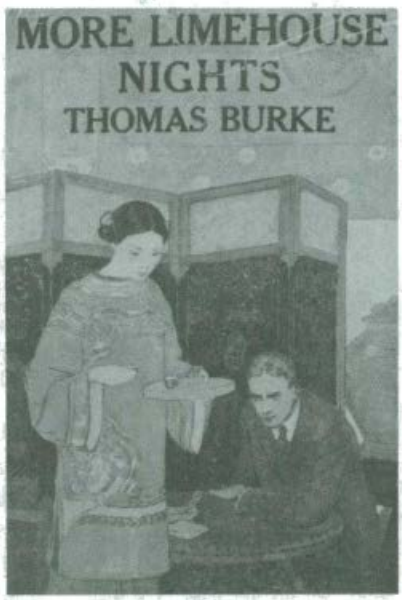
First Edition: London, Grant Richards, 1921. Tan cloth, front cover and spine lettered in dark brown, with a dark brown ornament also printed on spine; rear cover blank. Bottom edges untrimmed. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper.

First American Edition: New York, George H. Doran, (1921). Orange cloth, dark blue and deeper orange printed on front cover, with lettering and illustration dropping out; spine printed with dark blue lettering and ornament; rear cover blank. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper.

Note: Although the British and American editions have different titles, the contents are identical and all the stories have the same titles.

The first American edition must have the publisher's monogram on the copyright page, else it is not a first edition. Reprints appear to be identical in all other ways.

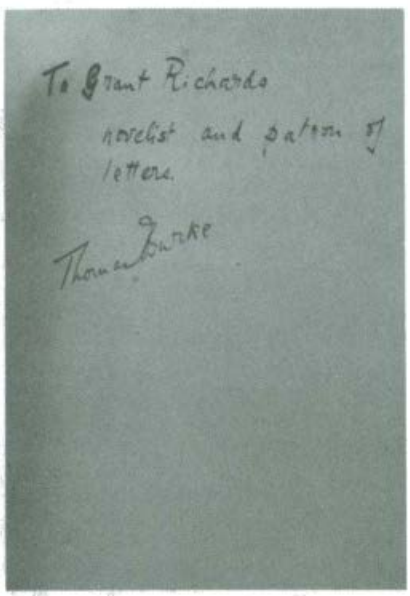
Estimated retail value:	*with d/w*	*without d/w*
First Edition		
Good	$ 25.00	$ 7.50
Fine	75.00	15.00
Very fine	100.00	20.00



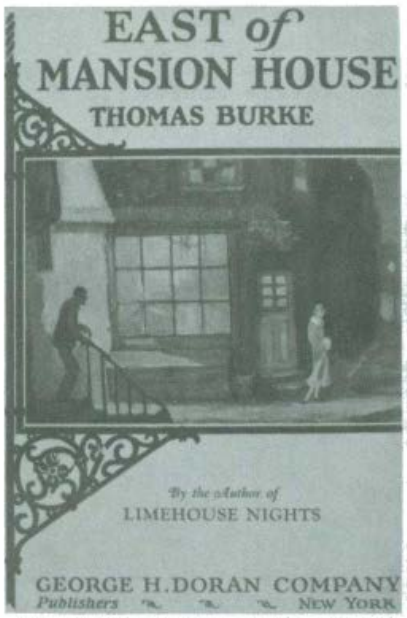
First American Edition		
Good	$15.00	$ 5.00
Fine	50.00	7 50
Very fine	75.00	10.00

First Edition: New York, George H Doran, (1926). Red cloth, front cover printed in black, with illustration and lettering dropping out; spine printed in black, with illustration dropping out, black lettering; rear cover blank. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper

First English Edition: London, Cassell, (1928). Green cloth, spine stamped with gold lettering and rules; front and rear covers blank. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper



Note: The first U.S. edition precedes the first U.K. edition by two years. When Ellery Queen compiled his bibliography, *The Detective Short Story*, in 1942, he did not list this title.



The first edition must have the publisher's monogram on the copyright page, else it is not a first edition. Reprints appear to be identical in all other ways.

		without d/w
First Edition		
Good	$20.00	$ 5.00
Fine	45.00	7.50
Very fine	[illegible]	10.00
First British Edition		
Good	20.00	$ 5.00
Fine	45.00	7.50
Very fine	65.00	10.00

The Bloomsbury Wonder

First Edition: London, The Mandrake Press, 1929. Black and yellow decorative boards, black cloth spine with white label, lettered in black. Issued in a white dust wrapper, printed in black

Note The Mandrake Press edition is the only separate publication of this short story, which was later collected in *Dark Nights* (see below)

Estimated retail value:	with d/w	without d/w
Good	$10.00	$4.00
Fine	20.00	6.50
Very fine	25.00	7.50

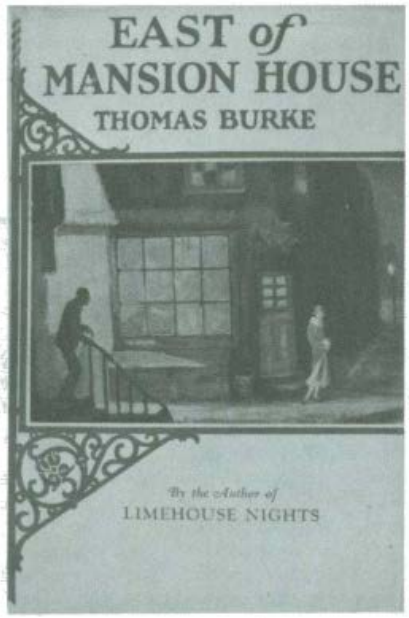
The Pleasantries of Old Quong

(U.S. title: *A Tea-Shop in Limehouse*)

First Edition: London, Constable, (1931) Orange cloth, spine printed with blue lettering and wavy lines; front and rear covers blank. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper.

First American Edition: Boston, Little, Brown, 1931. Magenta cloth, front cover and spine lettered in dark blue and decorated in yellow; rear cover blank. Issued in a decorated pale yellow dust wrapper.

Note: The U.S. edition lists the introduction on the Contents page, else the volumes are identical, except for the different titles.

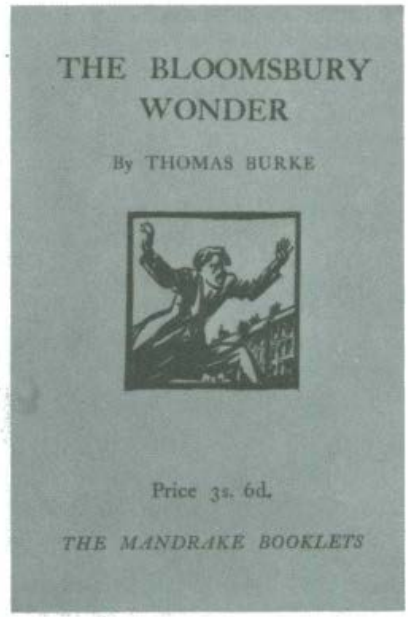


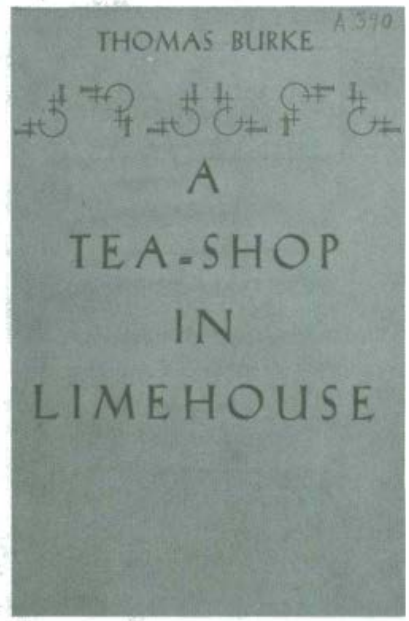
Night-Pieces

First Edition: London, Constable, (1935) Blue-green cloth, spine printed with rust brown lettering and two wavy rules; front and rear covers blank. Top edges stained burgundy. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper

First American Edition: New York, Appleton, 1936. Silver-gray cloth, lettered in blue on front cover and spine, with a short rule also printed on spine, rear cover blank Pale blue end-papers. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper.

Note: The copyright page of the first edition must bear the words: "First Published 1935." On the last page of text in the U.S edition, the numeral "1" must appear in parentheses. If the number is "2" or more, the volume is not a first edition, as Appleton distinguished its printing history in this fashion.





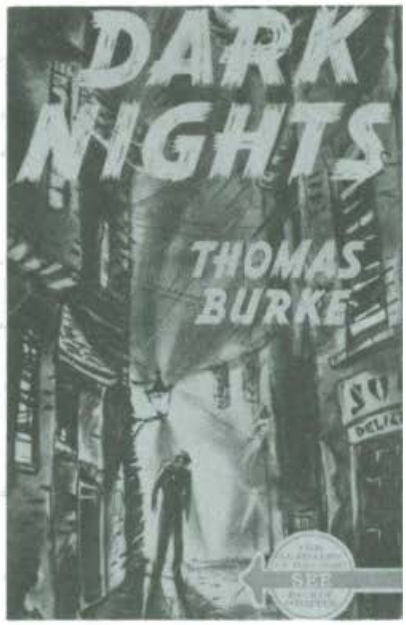
retail value:	[illegible]	[illegible]
First Edition		
Good	$20.00	$ 6.00
Fine	45.00	8 50
Very fine	65.00	10.00
First American Edition		
Good	$15.00	[illegible]
Fine	[illegible]	[illegible]
Very fine	[illegible]	[illegible]

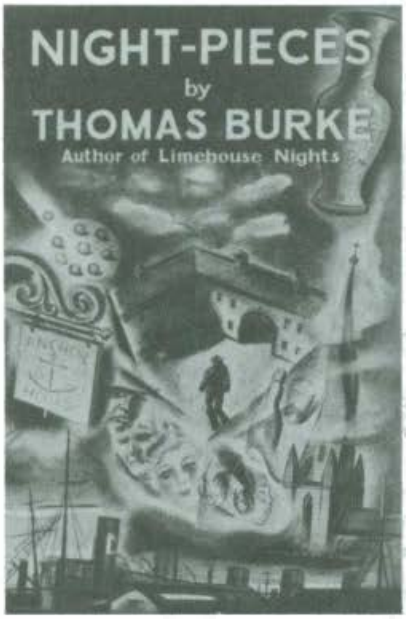
Murder at Elstree

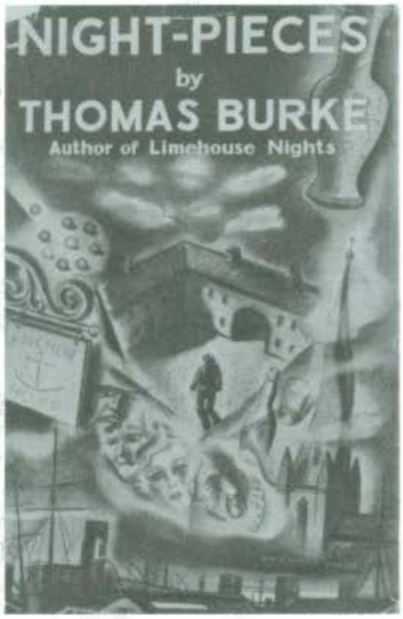
First Edition: London, Longmans, Green, (1936). Dark red cloth, spine lettered in gold; front and rear covers blank. Issued in a tan pictorial dust wrapper

Note: Sub-title *Mr. Thurtell and His Gig*, this is a fictionalized account of the notorious grave robbers, Burke and Hare

No American edition was published







Estimated retail value	*with d/w*	
Good	$ 7.50	$3.00
Fine	15.00	5.00
Very fine		

First Edition: London, Herbert Jenkins, (1939). Orangecloth, frontcover lettered in black; spine printed with black lettering, rules, and publisher's device; rear cover printed withblack publisher'sdevice. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper

Note: A novel set in Limehouse

NoAmericanedition was published.

Thewords"First Printing 1939" appear on the copyright page. It was the practice of HerbertJenkins to print the yearof the first printing on the copyright page of its first printings.

Estimated retail value:	*withd/w*	*withoutd/w*
Good	$10.00	$ 5.00
Fine	25.00	8.50
Veryfine	35.00	10.00

DarkNights

First Edition: London, Herbert Jenkins, (1944). Orangecloth, frontcover lettered in black; spineprintedwithblack lettering,rules and publisher's device; rear cover printed with black publisher's device. Issued in a pictorial dust wrapper.

Note: A collection of short stories set in Limehouse.

NoAmericanedition was published.

Thecopyrightpageofthefirsteditionmust bear the words: "First Printing." An examination of the copy owned by Burke's bibliographer, John Gawsworth, reveals that no date appears on the copyright page, suggesting that a reprint quickly followed the first printing.

Estimated retail value:	*with d/w*	*without d/w*
Good	$10.00	$ 5.00
Fine	25.00	8.50
Very fine	35.00	10.00

Two volumes which may be of some interest to Burke collectors are *Broken Blossoms* (Grant Richards, 1920) and *In Chinatown* (Grant Richards, 1921), short story collections selected from *Limehouse Nights*; no new material is published in either. □

A Gaggle of Wallaces:

On the Set with Edgar Wallace

By John Croydon

LONDON, 1931. Edgar Wallace was a journalist, novelist, and playwright of distinction. His books proliferated, and I read them all. As I later learned, he could write a novel over a weekend. His plays, not always adapted from his books, were immensely entertaining and successful.

When I joined the film industry in 1931, it thrilled me that my first assignment, as location accountant, was to work on one of his best, both as a novel and a play, *The Ringer*.

The film was to be produced at the British Lion studio at Beaconsfield, at that time a small country town in the Buckinghamshire countryside, and now the home of the National Film School. The director was to be Walter Forde, a former stylistic comic in silent films. His wife Culley was his constant companion, along with the grand piano with which he entertained, when on the set, not only himself but the entire crew with his repertoire of popular and classic pieces.

He had already directed a number of films for Michael Balcon at Gainsborough Studios in Poole Street, Islington, under the logo of the Gainsborough Lady, who bowed to her audiences with grace and elegance from her roccoco-style frame. The building was a disused power station with space enough to adapt easily to filmmaking.

Michael Balcon's participation in *The Ringer* and other Edgar Wallace subjects came about as a result of a partnership with Sam Smith of British Lion, who had wisely taken an option for filmmaking on all of Wallace's work. They joined their financial resources, the films to be produced at Beaconsfield, and that was how my film career started 54 years ago. I was 24 and my induction lasted about a month before I was precipitated into the hurly-burly of filmmaking.

In 1931, there were few unions and the word "demarkation" was not yet in the vocabulary. My work depended on which head of department grabbed me as I came in through the studio door. I might spend a day with the camera department wielding the clapper board, a wooden slate with a hinged bar on top, banged together smartly to create a signal on the soundtrack to synchronize with the picture and showing both slate and scene number for easy reference by the editor. I might steer a sound boom, the apparatus from which hung the microphone. I might carry film cans for the editor to his cutting room, where he worked with his Moviola, a small projector upon which picture and sound could be run synchronously. Occasionally I was pulled into the art department where my limited knowledge of draftsmanship would be employed making set layouts.

Asking why this? what's that? I gained a smattering of knowledge of the profession I was already declaring would become my life's work.

Then came the day when I settled to my own task. The studio manager gave me the script of *The*

On location for *The Ringer*. L to R: Brian Wallace (son), Culley and Walter Forde, Edgar Wallace

National Film Archive, London

The ballroom scene in *The Calendar*. L to R (principals only): Anne Grey, Herbert Marshall, Edna Best, Nigel Bruce

Ringer, written by Brian Edgar Wallace, the author's son, and Robert Stevenson, who later became a Hollywood director of distinction. The script was accompanied with instructions to prepare a budget not exceeding £20,000.

Fortunately, the package included two specimen budgets from other films, so the mean of both formed the basis of my budget, though I did add an extra £250 for good measure. I had already learned not to present an estimate at precisely the amount expected, but always a little higher so the top man could make his "cut."

When I was finished, the studio manager took me to Michael Balcon. He took three minutes to look over the figures, peered up and pronounced, "A good budget," and passed it back. Not even the £250 contingency was questioned.

On behalf of Gainsborough, I became responsible for the cash outlay and a watchdog on British Lion billings. The film took three weeks to shoot, meaning 21 consecutive days including Sundays. I rapidly became a workaholic, so enthralling was the experience, as much fun as work.

The cast of *The Ringer* was fascinating. I met in the flesh such actors as Gordon Harker, Franklin Dyall, John Longden, Esmond Knight, and my very first pin-up goddess, Carol Goodner—American, lovely, and nice.

About twice during the shooting, Edgar Wallace himself visited the set. Naturally, as the junior I never had the opportunity to speak with him, but his well-known flamboyance was exemplified by his Stetson hat, cravat, ridingjacket and jodphurs, and his long, black cigarette holder. Even at a distance, he conveyed his dynamic personality. His flair for horse-racing and gambling was conveyed in every move he made—lifelived to the full,lucky man.

He died in Hollywood in 1932, leaving an entire library of word-acclaimed writing.

Fortunately, I was not fired after completion of *The Ringer*. There were three more Wallace films for which to care—*The Frightened Lady, The Calendar,* and *White Face,* all directed by T. Hayes Hunter, an enormous, white-haired, craggy-faced American. Most went in fear of him. He dominated his actors ruthlessly and would tolerate no nonsense from his technicians. At first I had little to do with him, until one infamous Sunday during shooting of *The Calendar.*

One of my tasks was to pay out crowds—one pound and one shilling per person per day plus overtime. I also checked them into red London double-deck buses in the center of Piccadilly at 6:00 A.M. A smarter yet more bleary-eyed group of people under escort to Beaconsfield could scarcely be imagined.

The drive lasted approximately onehour, and they were due on set, ready to shoot, at 8:30 A.M. It was a ballroom sequence that had to be finished in one day. Shooting went on all day and well into the night, a

The Ringer. Carol Goodner and Patrick Curwen (in disguise)

The Frightened Lady. L to R: not identified, Cathleen Nesbit, Belle Chrystall (the frightened lady), Cyril Raymond, Norman McKinnel, Gordon Harker

contingency for which no one had prepared. Overtime had been incurred, and there was no cash to meet it! The only recourse was to undertake that the additional money would be paid through their Association on Monday. The promise was not well received, but it was impossible at that time of night to borrow. Not even the pubs were open! In the midst of the hassle, I was summoned to the set, leaving some irate people still awaiting their payment.

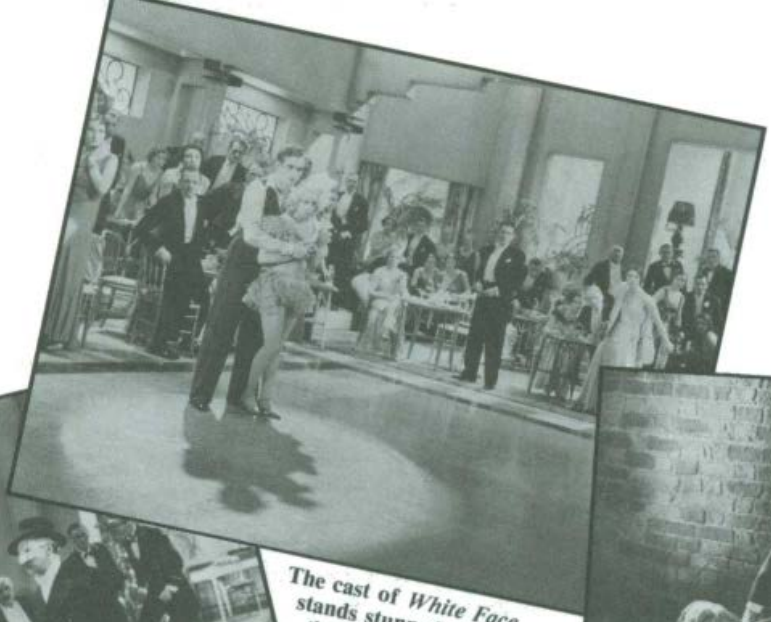
On the set, Hayes Hunter sat like Buddha in a large wing chair under the dim studio house lights, the debris of the day—streamers, burst and still-inflated balloons—stirring in the night drafts. He listened to a small, upright person—obviously a retired military man—alleging that I was "welching" on the wretched crowd. Tired and harassed as I was, I blew my top in a manner which surprised even me. Hayes listened, and I could sense his growing impatience. Suddenly, he rose to his terrifying height and let fly a flow of invective such as was rarely heard on a parade ground, mostly in my favor. Ex-military he may have been, but the little man fled faster than he must ever have done in the face of the enemy's guns. The scene was funny, but from that moment on I had never any trouble of any sort with Hayes Hunter. In fact, I came to like and respect him.

Despite being Edgar Wallace mysteries, there were few murders in the stories, and those that took place were never gory. Maybe, in those days, without color, blood in black-and-white did not have the same impact as now. Well, not quite. When I made *Fiend without a Face* in black-and-white with Richard Gordon, the "fiends" died very gory deaths. So much so that the British censor, even in 1960, made us cut some frames from every death. Admittedly the gore was spread prolifically, but even

Each of the Edgar Wallace films at Beaconsfield had its moments of special interest for me as the "new boy."

On the *The Frightened Lady,* I met Belle Chrystall, who had starred successfully in an earlier project, *Hindle Wakes,* a very different kind of story than those which Edgar Wallace wrote. There were other meetings, with Finlay Currie, D. A. Clarke Smith—that wonderful interpreter of melodrama whom we all called "Clarkie"—and of course Emlyn Williams. When traveling to Beaconsfield on the first morning train from London, Emlyn—when on call—was always there but would never sit with us. Perhaps appearing in a West End show, or preoccupied with writing one of his many successful plays, he always chose an empty compartment in order to catch up on an hour's sleep before assuming his role in *The Frightened Lady* as the mad murderer.

The Calendar provided a technical curiosity—the "manufacture" of a dissolve in the camera. We were almost, if not quite, still in the days of D. W. Griffith. A dissolve was especially difficult if two sets were involved.



The cast of *White Face* stands stunned during the holdup

White Face. J. H. Roberts holds up Richard Bird and Rennee Gadd.

The fight scene in *White Face* between Leslie Perrins and Richard Bird

National Film Archive, London

At the appropriate moment, in this case as an actor flicked a cigarette butt towards bottom right on the screen, the operator activated the fade-out mechanism while taking careful note of the numbers on the footage counter. He would then "wind on" to allow for the succeeding scene before a second take. He could even use a new magazine for take two, and so on. The magazine or magazines would be stored until the set was ready upon which the succeeding scene would be shot. It, or they, would be back-wound to the beginning of the original fadeout and the camera would be re-started with a fade-in, thus creating the dissolve from one scene to another. Woe betide any actor who forgot his lines for the second half of the dissolve.

The whole would be viewed at next day's rushes—an overnight print of the previous day's work. In this case, one take was in perfect synchronization, the cigarette end flashing across screen as an "introduction" to the following scene. As the cameraman and Hayes Hunter were heard to say, "How lucky can you get?"

Not so lucky was an actor who fluffed his lines. Herbert Marshall and his then-wife Edna Best were the stars of *The Calendar*. Marshall, in the story, was accused of "pulling" his horse during the running of the Ascot race meeting. He had been called before the stewards—one of whom was played by S. J. Warmington, a great friend of Alfred Hitchcock—to explain.

Warmington's lines included the phrase "Ascot Stakes." It came out fine in rehearsal, and also in Take 1—which, however, was rejected by Hunter. From then on, for a further fifteen takes, it came out "Ascot Skates"! No matter what encouragement he received from his fellow actors, the strain of the approach of the dreaded phrase showed plainly in his eyes and became worse the longer we had to go.

He tried many gestures to help himself, clasping his hands on the table, thrusting them deep into his trousers pockets, mopping his sweaty brow with a handkerchief, but no—"Ascot Skates" it always was. The entire unit was in a sweat, wishing him luck, and when in Take 17 it came out "Ascot Stakes" we did not know whether to laugh, cry, or merely cheer. I expected S. J. Warmington to collapse, but no. All he did was grin sheepishly and apologize for what he called "my stupidity." I was surprised he didn't call it "my sputidity"!

The last of my four Wallace films, *White Face,* was a disaster. Adapted from a Wallace play, *Persons Unknown*, it had a convoluted plot impossible after all these years to recollect. Production followed immediately on completion of *The Calendar*. After ten days, which would mean that there had been thirty days of continuous shooting, the entire unit went down with "flu"—well, not quite the entire unit. I just flaked out, went home, and slept for 24 hours.

I don't think Hayes Hunter thought much of the film as its shooting progressed, except for one

sequence—a fight between two characters played by Richard Bird and Leslie Perrins. As I remember it, it took place on a derelict building site, a studio set. No doubles were used, and it took all day to shoot. Hayes Hunter would not allow the actors, either by simulation or in reality, to "pull" their punches. It was a trait in Hunter's character that I did not like. On the rare occasion that he took a dislike to an actor, in this case Richard Bird, he would hammer away at a scene of violence to an almost sadistic degree.

After an hour or so, both actors came to hate the sight of each other. Neither was very robust, and from time to time both needed all of Hunter's ruthless drive to push them on. At the end of the day, each was exhausted and in considerable pain. Budgets in those days allowed no room for cars to transport injured actors to their homes. They were on their own.

Both were on call the next morning. Richard Bird needed make-up to cover a black eye and a small cut on the bridge of his nose. Leslie Perrins complained of a strained shoulder and a cracked rib. When he showed me the strapping, I had no doubt that it was a correct diagnosis. I was surprised that either made an appearance, but it was in the acting tradition that "the show must go on."

Meanwhile, I had my own work to do. What with one task and another, I found I was writing up my accounting books after shooting was finished. It made no difference that I had to report for duty at 8:30 the next morning. The accounting was not really heavy but, the main task being to take care not to exceed budget, had to be kept on a daily basis. Wherever possible, bills were settled in cash, especially on crowd days such as that infamous Sunday on *The Calendar*. There were daily payments and petty cash for small part actors and miscellaneous expenses. The studio was never keen on my sending bills for payment by check.

Checking Beaconsfield's bills was never simple. I had to learn the price of timber, paint, wallpaper, nails, and screws and to keep records of the use of every consumable item. I soon found it possible to estimate most of the expenses, and, at the end of the first week, greatly daring, raised a list of queries with the then studio manager, a nice man named A. W. Osborne. Winning a few minor reductions did give some credibility to my position.

Reading the electricity meters was my downfall. I had no idea what those dials meant or how to read them. At home, in 1931, we had not yet been wired for electricity. Our lighting was still by gas, and our cooking by a coal-fired range. The chief engineer, however, took me on a tour of the meters every morning. As he read the figures aloud, I entered them in my notebook, suggesting now and again that a figure might be a little high. To my amazement, he would sometimes agree, at other times express indignation that I should dare to dispute his accuracy. I began to think I was earning my place in the world of films.

At the end of *The Ringer,* I learned another lesson—never take an account for gospel. It was always surprising to me, when my studio manager met his opposite number, by how much the total could be reduced by no other means than force of argument. When I questioned the process, wondering where lay the value of my services, it was flattering to hear that they supplied the ammunition by which reductions could be made.

Assignments for two other films at Beaconsfield followed. They were nothing to do with Edgar Wallace but still in partnership with British Lion—*King of the Ritz,* directed by an Italian, Carmine Gallone, who always mistook me for someone else, embracing me Italian fashion every time I appeared on the set, and *There Goes the Bride,* directed by Albert de Courville of stage fame and starring—for the first time for Michael Balcon—Jessie Matthews. Little did I realize that it was the prelude to *Evergreen* and that host of other musicals made at the Gaumont-British Studios at Shepherds Bush in succeeding years. It also provided a welcome reunion with Carol Goodner, now that I was no longer the shy, new boy. That film completed the Beaconsfield stint for Gainsborough.

I had learned a great deal, not least the ability to form judgments and stand on my own two feet with considerably more confidence than ever before. □

SPY GUY

notice, and I wasn't sure I wanted to go anyway. Talk to any one of them alone and you were all right. But put them all in one room . . Well, I was nervous.

hotel room.

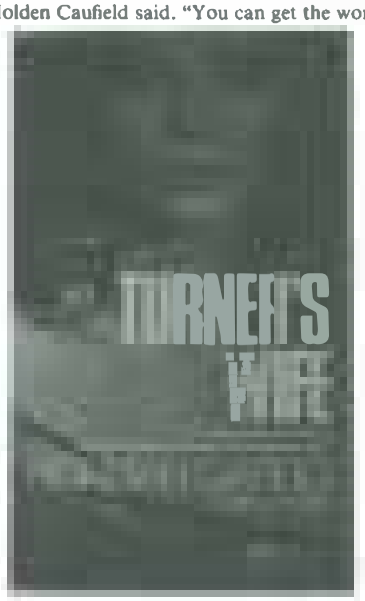
"Come in," answered and I entered.

hem were scattered aro room as if they didn't want to get too close to each other. Or me. I understood.

Because there, in the same room with me, were five of literature's most famous characters. I recognized each one immediately.

"Why?" I said taking the initiative. "Why me?"

A tall, lanky kid, wearing a hunting cap and carrying a baseball mitt covered with poems, answered. "You're a reviewer, right?" Holden Caufield said. "You can get the word



out to everyone else about all this crummy phony crap that's been going around. I mean, the rest of us have been sitting around on shelves getting picked apart by reviewers for years. Now we want our chance. And since we all read spy books and all, we figured you're the guy to talk to."

The man with the V-shaped face and satanic grin leaned in the shadow of the

Spade said.

I took out my notebook and sat down on the edge of the bed. "Okay, shoot."

Holden Caufield didn't hesitate. "Yeah, well, I read this ook, **Convergence** (Ballantine) by Jack ller. Me and Phoebe were down at the bus tion and she read the

by an American' Tha uote came from *The Chicago Tribune.* Then I open to the back where they usually have some stuff about the author's life and all and I see that the author of the book is an editor on *The Chicago Tribune.* I'm thinking, just how phony can you get, but I buy it 'cause maybe it's so good they don't care how phony it sounds.

"Well, it isn't. The story idea and structure is neat, with CIA agent Richard Harper facing an old enemy as well as an agent he personally trained. The book cuts back and forth between the current conspiracy and an earlier adventure that shaped their relationship. To further complicate matters, the

end. Good idea that never quite comes off. The writing style lacks the kind of energy needed to involve the reader in a dual story. It never transcends the time shifts. And even though the narrator admits he's taken liberties when describing what various characters were thinking, it still seems too contrived. Something D. B. might've done for his Hollywood crap."

I was writing furiously.

"It's got some okay dialogue between the minor characters, but too often it's self-consciously arch. Even the narration, which remember is by a third party, is obtrusive and pretentious at times, with lines like: 'The men wore white. The rich and their waiters always dressed alike.' It tries to be meaningful, but it tries too hard and ends up just dull."

" 'Dull,' " I repeated, writing.

"Ask Allie," he said, turning his hunting cap around.

"Enough, kid," Sam Spade said, lighting a cigarette and stepping forward. He immediately dominated the room. His eyes burned madly. "Listen. This isn't a damned bit of good. You'll never understand me, but I'll try once more and then we'll give it up. When a man reads a spy book, he's supposed to get some suspense out of it. Some sense of intrigue. It doesn't make any difference who wrote it or why. It's got to keep you wanting to read. **Turner's Wife** (Fawcett) by Norman Garbo just doesn't cut it." He began counting on his fingers. "First, the structure is similar to that book the Caufield kid was jabbering about. It starts in the present and keeps intercutting with the past as the protagonist, a Vietnam hero turned author, attempts to avenge his wife's death. This technique just doesn't work well. Too self-conscious, breaking down the pace and rhythm of the story rather than building suspense. Second, the narrator thinks he's witty with all kinds of little comments and insights about this and that. He's not nearly as witty as he thinks. More like preachy. And there's all kinds of stuff about the agonies of the writing profession, which seems more like author intrusion than characterization. Third, the

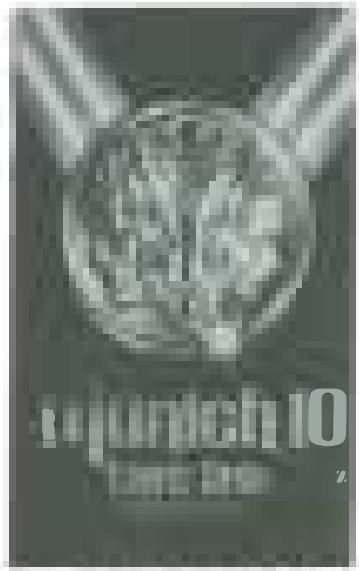
between Turner and his wife are meant to be endearing; they're just cloying. This all adds up to create a protagonist that I'm not crazy about spending 323 pages with."

"Didn't like it, huh?" I said, writing.

retreated back into the shadows.

"N ," I said, kind of getting into it now.

A rangy man in overalls stepped forward. His hair was gray, his face weather-beat . Snow dusted onto his shoulders



He held up a paperback book Zebra) by Lewis Orde He said:

The plot's okay, not much stlye though.
He will not see me buy another
That's written as if just for the dough."

"Catchy," I said.

"You like it?" He grinned shyly. "My little horse thought it queer."

"Anything to add?"

"Does it have to rhyme?"

"Suit yourself."

He sighed, relieved. "Good. I'm a plain man. No frills. When you're driving a sleigh through the snowy woods all day, there's not much to do but go home and read a good espionage novel. This one, *Munich 10,* fails for several reasons. It's about a famous actress who is also an agent for the Israelis, despite her public commitment to the PLO. It has a lot of awkward shifts in point of view, switching back and forth in a clumsy manner. Like I said, I'm a plain man, but the style of this book was too plain, even for me. It had more of the melodramatic style of a romance novel. I had the feeling the author had read romance novels to help him write from the

actress's point of view. She just comes off much too shallow. Also, her obvious comparison to Vanessa Redgrave is annoyingly campy.

"The author also uses some phony tricks to surprise the reader. There's a scene in which

press conference promoting her new film, to the obvious horror of her agent and producer. Later, we discover it's all an act

surprised, not just acting surprised. That just plain no-frills cheating. Orde is competent writer, but the style is flat, the plot fairly predictable. Whenever I have miles go before I sleep, I pick up this book and I'm out like a light, forget about any promises keep." He bowed slightly and perched himse on the edge of the desk and played with postcards showing the hotel.

I looked over to the natty dresser sitting the other bed. He was sipping a marti looking a little bored, in an elegant way said, "And you, Mr. — "

"Bond," he interrupted.

"Yes, I know. I just —

"James Bond," he interrupted again.

"God, that's annoying," I said angrily. know who you — "

I sighed.

"Licensed to kill." He paused, sipped from his martini, shaken, not stirred. "I just finished an interesting novel. **Brotherhood of the Rose** (St. Martin's/Marek) by David Morrell. This is the same chap who wrote *First Blood*. He's a marvelous stylist, lean and to the point, with just enough of poetry language to make his books vibrate with language. Enough so that I have gone out of my way to seek out and read all of his novels

"This one is his first espionage attempt, and

as orphans were raised and trained as agents by the kindly head of an American intelligence agency. The men are like brothers now, and the old man is like their father. Only now the old man is using them for his own sinister plot. And every agent in the world is trying to

"The book," I said, gleefully interrupting.

"Yes, of course. As I was saying, excellent idea. And Morrell does a superb job with characterization. The problem he has here is

Each of his novels has a strong concept and conflict, each has a wonderful opening. But each dies halfway through. As does this one. It's as if he takes the characters too seriously and must imbue every action with a sense of

earlier. He needs to trust his story more. And his reader. Still, despite this flaw, he is a fine writer with a spy book that's a little different than the others. Worth a peek."

I was about to ask a question when a stepped up and offered his hand. His grip was powerful though his hand was a little slimy and smelled fishy. "You are?"

"Call me Ishmael," he smiled.

"I didn't know you read spy novels."

His smile broadened. "Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet, then I account it high time to get to a spy novel as soon as I can."

"I see. Which one do you want to discuss?"

He held up a hardback called **Balefire** (Bantam) by Kenneth Goddard. The cover was striking: a pair of flaming eyes glaring menacingly from an all-white background

He shrugged. "It has possibilities. A terrorist plans and executes a series of random murders, terrorizing the coastal city of Huntington Beach, California, while a crack squad of police try to hunt him down, unaware that the killer's plans include the Olympics. The author has a penchant for action scenes and an instinct for pacing that keeps the story moving at a reasonable, though not quick, pace. The villain is properly horrendous, the police properly dedicated. The author, himself a forensic scientist for law enforcement, uses his knowledge to good advantage here."

"You are describing its strengths," I said, "but I sense a certain lack of enthusiasm."

same with a novel. The events are all here, the suspense, the characters, but the book has a flabby amateurish style. The editor certainly was lazy on this one. Adverbs flop through each paragraph like flying fish. He uses 'hesitant' three times in the first two pages. The same sentence structure is repeated until there's a dullness settling in. For example, one paragraph: 'Crouched low and tight against the rear bumper of the black-and-white, Branchowski... Reaching the driver's door, he... Seeing nothing, he Reaching in the window, he...' See what I mean?"

I nodded

"Therefore, if you are not too demanding, this book is a pleasant diversion on a long

I was glad to see him retreat into the bathroom. For a shower, I hoped, frowning at the

swaggered forward, a loading dock hook hanging from his shoulder Terry Malloy from Budd Schulberg's *Waterfront* "Movies

kid and the geezer. I been reading this here book, **Emerald Illusion** (Morrow) by Ronald Bass. A World War II spy novel that NBC is gonna make into their first feature film. Gonna call it *Emerald*. I dunno. This book is

dashing, the stakes high. But I gotta go along with Ish and some of the others, the style is a

No meat. We go back and forth between all these points of view, and none of them really

I'm getting a little tired of the triple agen who has to go behind Nazi lines to protect secret that could change the outcome of war. I mean, gimme a break already. T characters are stereotypical, the pl predictable It's a one-way ticket

I stopped writing. "Whew. You guys are tough You weren't overly enthusiastic about any of the books."

"That's okay," Terry Malloy said. "We ain't none too thrilled about you neither."

bathroom.

"But you served your purpose, old boy," Bond said. "Now the world will know what *we* think for a change. After all these years of being criticized and written about, we strike back."

But these guys didn't They were hard critics, but they'd made sense. Still, I'd be happy never to hear from them again, except from between the pages of their respective books. I started to close the door behind me when a

"By the way, Obstfeld," Spade said

"Yes?" I turned around.

"When's *your* next book coming out?"

Their laughter followed me all the way down the hall. □

Mortal Steaks:

Parker enjoying his favorite beer with other members of the party

A Dinner with Robert B. Parker

By Rosemary Herbert

Ever since he was the featured guest at the opening party for Kate's Mystery Books/Murder Under Cover, Robert B. Parker has been a special personality around the Cambridge, Massachusetts bookstore. He has done everything from signing autographs to installing shelves, and, although he says he doesn't "quite understand the mystery fan mentality," he has a sense of humorand absence of pretention that cause those who love his books to grow fonder ofthe author as well.

When Kate Mattes was working up plans for her store's one-year anniversary, she used the occasion not only to markthe date but to honor a writerwho has put the Boston area back on the map for many mystery readers. "The First Spenser Supper" celebrated Robert B. Parker and his sleuth Spenser as much as the success of the bookstore. Held May 20 at the Pleasant Stock Restaurant in Cambridge, the event was inspired from *hors d'oeuvres* to dessert by Parker's writings and Mattes's flair for fun. The meal was based on descriptions of food found in Parker's novels. A Spenser maxim, "When in doubt, cook something and eat it," headed the menu, and all dishes were identified by citations from the Parker *oeuvre* thatrevealed not only some of Parker's tastes but his characteristic humor. For instance, this "Appetizer and Aperitif" quote, from *Promised Land:* "Susan [Silverman] looked at the oysters.

The head table

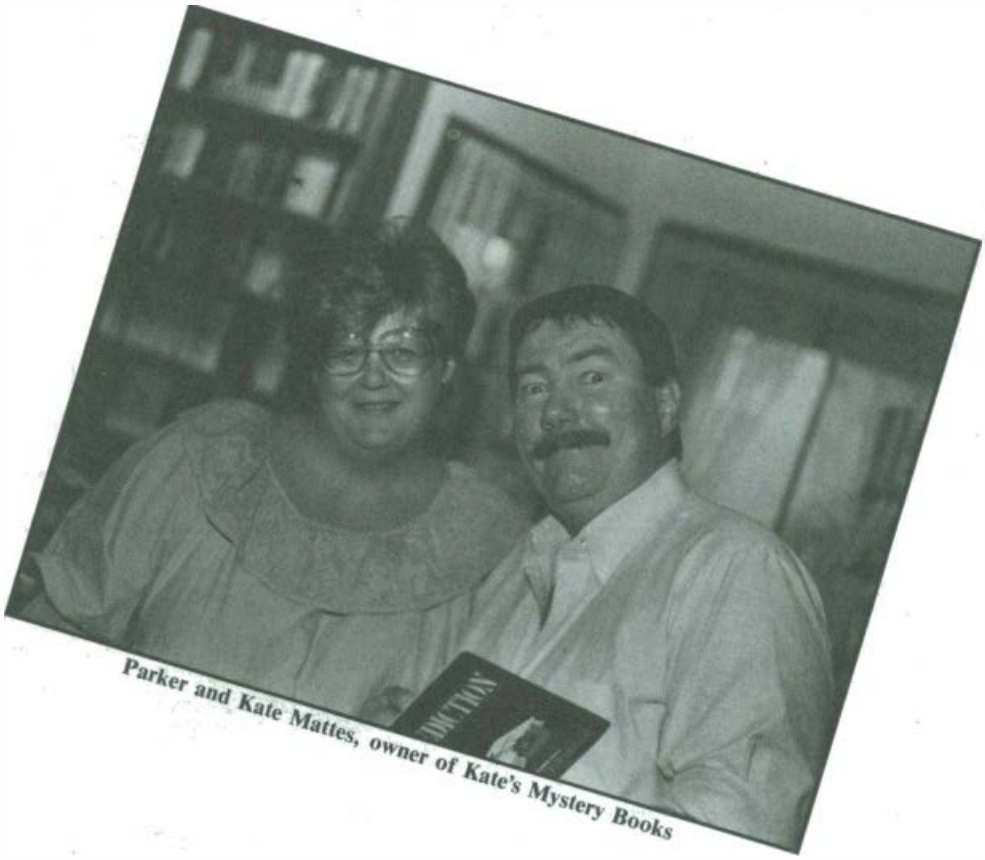
L to R: Arnold Reisman, consumer

'Trying to make a comeback?' 'No,' I said, 'planning ahead.'" Parker's "recipe" for the pasta dish also appeared in *Promised Land:* "My sauce was starting to bubble gently and I took enough spaghetti for two and tossed it into my boiling kettle. 'Plenty of water,' I said, 'makes it less sticky, and it comesright back to a boil so it starts cooking right away. See that? I am a spaghetti superstar.' I twirled out a strand of spaghetti and tried it. 'Al Dente,' I said. 'His brother Sam used to play for the Red Sox.' The spaghetti sauce was bubbling. 'Did you make the spaghetti sauce?' she said. 'Yeah. A secret recipe I got off the back of a tomato paste can.' She shook her head. 'Fighter, lover, gourmet cook? Amazing.'" Without recourse to recipes found on tomato paste cans, Peasant Stock chefs Tom Buckley, Gerry Pierce, and John Rapinchuk created and prepared the dishes. For souvenirs, guests were given numbered and autographed copies of themenu.

While Boston-area media personalities were noticeable in the crowd, WCBV-TV's (Channel 5, Boston) Arnold Reisman made a special contribution to the party by providing a videotape entitled "Spenser's Boston," which shows Parker at his side-splitting best, delivering terse one-liners and typing at his keyboard to the accompaniment of gunshot sound effects. Reisman produced the videotape for his station's evening program *Chronicle.* Reisman also took the prize, an inscribed copy of *Valediction,* by answering the most questions correctly in a quiz drawn up by Bob Pillock, president of "The Judas Goats," a fan club named after the title of a Parker novel.

One media personality who could not be on the

reporter Paula Lyons, Kate Mattes



Parker and Kate Mattes, owner of Kate's Mystery Books

scene sent her best wishes in the form of a celebrity-style glossy photograph, lavishly autographed. It seems Spenser likes to watch Diane Sawyer, while Sawyer is fond of Parker's novels.

Another highlight of the evening was the presentation to all guests of baseball hats with the "Judas Goats" logo on them. Baseball fan Parker has often said that he decided to become a writer when, as a boy, he discovered he couldn't hit a curve ball.

The evening was topped off when Parker received a gift with a story behind it. Back in February, when Mattes was pondering what to give Parker at the dinner, she learned that the author had no copy of his own novel *God Save the Child.* This being an early work and issued in a short print run, the first edition is the hardest of Parker's novels to find. Unable to locate a copy through her usual sources, Mattes asked an avid collector of Parker's works, Brewster Ames, Jr., if he had a copy to sell to her. After some thought, Ames delivered a copy at no cost. "He said," Mattes recalls, "'I agree that an author should have a copy of his own book.'" Coincidentally, when Kate ran a drawing for free tickets to "The First Spenser Supper," Brewster Ames, Jr. was the first name drawn. Poetic—or whodunit—justice! □

Rosemary Herbert is a Boston area writer who specializes in articles about the book world. Her work has appeared in THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, THE BOSTON REVIEW, *and* THE BOSTON GLOBE MAGAZINE. *She also teaches courses in detective fiction at The Cambridge Center for Adult Education.*

TAD at the MOVIES

By Thomas Godfrey

I was languishing around the typewriter about mid-August when the latest issue of TAD fell through the mail slot. I was expecting to see the review of *Against All Odds*, which I wrote the week it opened here in Hollywood, finally making it into print. Nope. Instead it was a column I thought I'd written years ago.

Good God, I thought. Is my memory starting to go that fast? I checked the calendar. No, still under forty, though just barely.

Oh, well, I guess this means the *Against All Odds* hot-out-of-the-theater column comes out next issue, when most of the stars will probably be involved in revivals of *On Golden Pond*. That means this column will probably be appearing posthumously. I can see the issue now being delivered to my grandchildren at their various retirement homes.

Anyway, kids, here's what I put in this particular time capsule:

★ ★ ★ **The 4th Man** (1984) Jereon Knabbé, Renée Soutendijk, Thom Hoffman (D: Paul Verkoeven)

A Dutch web of mystery spun from the filaments of *Spellbound*, *Don't Look Now*, and *Still of the Night*. The design is new, but the fit is much like *Rebecca* and *Jane Eyre*.

A stringy, dissolute, homosexual writer (Knabbé) leaves his indifferent lover and goes to a seaside resort to give a talk before a local literary society. After the meeting, he is lured back to the home of the group's female treasurer (Soutendijk), a frosty blonde with a Gioconda smile whose muscular young boy-friend (Hoffman) turns out to be something he pursued in a train station the day before

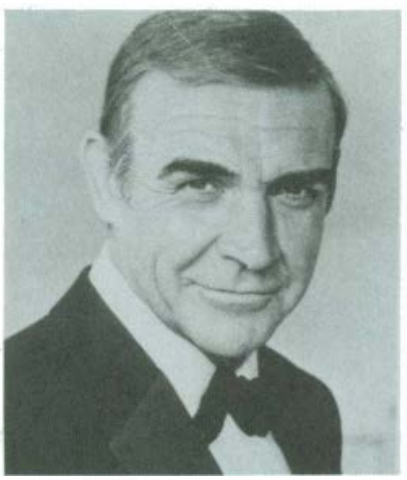
He agrees to stay on and write a novel, all the while scheming to get the stud back from his job in Germany. Just as his plans are taking off, he finds out that the young widow has been married three times to young men who've met accidental deaths. Is he to be the fourth? Or will it be hunky Herman, now the object of his bizarre erotico-religious fantasies? The thought throws the unstable writer into a paranoid frenzy and puts him on a collision course with disaster.

Verkoeven's work is full of quirky symbolism and flashy fantasy sequences designed to heighten the suspense of the film Some work remarkably well, others are over-played or over-used. The gender confusion is played almost for laughs, as though Knabbé's seedy writer were the ultimate socked-out variation on the damsel in distress.

Knabbé, though resourceful and energetic, seems just too sleazy and repulsive a central character. Verkoeven gives us little of Soutendijk's spider lady other than those smiles and glances. We really need to know what this woman is all about, and the film doesn't seem curious enough to tell. Hoffman's ordinary but ambitious Herman is much better sketched in much less screen

The ending, too, lets down, giving us a veiled religious message instead of a cathartic resolution to the busy triangle. Yet this is an intriguing, genuinely mysterious film. Two or three sequences will linger in your mind for sometime after seeing it.

Not for the squeamish or easily offended, nor for those who like their mysteries as neat little puzzles.



Sean Connery as James Bond in *Never Say Never Again*

★ ★ **Never Say Never Again** (1983) Sean Connery, Barbara Carrera, Klaus Maria Brandauer (D: Irvin Kirshner)

To those Bondophiles still yearning for the tart crispness of the early Sean Connery—James Bond films, the prospect of his emergence from retirement to do this film may have sounded like the promise of a vintage harvest. Never mind that he looked paunchy and bored in his last outing, *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971). The releases guaranteed a film that would take into account the passage of time without lessening the thrills

No such luck

What emerges is a soggy, garbled mess the continuity of which owes more to the editor than the screenwriter. Though the right gestures are employed, all the heart seems to have gone out of the project, and so has the tang and tease that might have made this star-returning-to-the-role-that-made-him-famous

The concession to age consists of some bits at the beginning of the film and a salt-and-pepper toupee that sits on Connery's head like a giant bird dropping. The thrills are weak, from the straightforward delivery of lines to the cartoonish villainess, played by Carrera, who seems to have wandered in from the pages of Action Comics. Kim Basinger's Domino may be the most forgettable leading lady Bond's ever had. Ten minutes after the film's over, you barely remember she was in it.

But then there's Brandauer, bringing more to the stock villain Largo than anyone had any right to expect. He turns this megalomaniac into a high-spirited prankster who occasionally gets carried away with the fun. He's so much more charming and alive than the competent but subdued Connery that you hope he gets a break in the end.

A series of star cameos in the familiar roles (Edward Fox as "M," Alec McCowen as "Q," Max von Sydow as Blofeld, etc.) have less than the desired effect. Kirshner's direction may have been victim to the reported confusion on the set. It's hard to tell, but there just isn't much consistency to it. And you'll miss John Barry's now-familiar Bond music, which was unavailable because of contractual arrangements. This film was done outside the Broccoli-owned Bond consortium.

It's sad to say, but it's just a disappointment all around. Any Bond film in which the villain is more interesting than the main ha[illegible]

★ ★ **The Star Chamber** (1983) Michael Douglas, Hal Holbrook, Yaphet Kotto (D Joe Hyams)

Contrived, heavy-handed drivel, mining the *Death Wish*-vigilante justice lode Douglas plays an idealistic young judge recruited into the ranks of nine jurists working outside the law to correct its shortcomings. When the group mistakenly marks an innocent but reprehensible man for execution, Douglas breaks ranks and fears for his own life. The screenwriters at this point, perhaps trying to protect their right-minded, right-leaning indignation, suddenly turn the other judges into a snarling group of

heavies who behave like they've allsuddenly contracted rabies. Meanwhile, the story continues on its mechanized way, the resulting verbal bones the way of the peripheral characters being murdered, raped, or terrorized to move theplotalong

This is a dishonest piece of filmmaking, one that seems forever to be looking out at the audience for a chance tosell out. Everything is up for grabs in this human showroom. In the end, there isn't anything they won't sacrifice to punch up a scene

Douglas looks understandably tired and uninvolved. Holbrook is about as phony as I've ever seen him. The whole production, save a few lighting set-ups, is devoid of anything youmightmistakefor artistry atall. The concept just looks like something dreamed up by a couple of law students on No-Dozbeforethebigexam.

Sorry, kids, butyouflunk

★★ **Octopussy** (1983) Roger Moore, Louis Jourdan, MaudeAdams(D: John Glen)

Pre-packaged gourmet goodies for those whomust havetheirBond-feast once a year. Likesomanyothersof Moore'sBond films,it isn't really bad, but it isn't very satisfying either. What we get is cookbook formula work that follows the same well-practiced basic recipe feature after feature. One time they start with veal, another time a Creole sauce, but it all comes out tasting like it came out of a can

The plot in this one is somethingaboutan international ring counterfeiting somecrown jewels and vault treasures andspiriting the real ones off to a drop in Afghanistan. But never mind—half the sequences in it could have come from any of the last Moore-Bond films.

Moore, as usual, is competent but a trifle bland. The action sequences are pat and computerized, the double entendres forced and slightly stale. Jourdan's villain doesn't make much of an impression. Nor does Adam's Octopussy, a siren with an unbelievablepastand a ludicrouspresent

The chancy mustard-and-garlic flavor of the early films has been almost entirely replaced withVelveeta.It'sbetterthan*Never Say Never Again*, butwho cares? Theaddicts won't notice, and the rest will probably squirmthroughboth.

It's time to give Bond a sabbatical, if not outrightretirement. Thegold watch,please!

★★ **St. Ives** (1976) Charles Bronson, Jacqueline Bisset,JohnHouseman (D: J. Lee Thompson)

If Charles Bronson had ever decided to participate in a TV private eye series, the pilot mightwell have come out looking likethis. CertainlyLalo Schifron's wall-to-wall bingo-bongo score suggests that a Tidy Bowl commercial can't be too far away. J. Lee Thompson's methodical, uninspired direction also has the small screen stamped all over it There's no snap or spark to the conceptionof thisfilm, just shoot-it-and-can-it efficiency.

Lucien Ballard's start-long-and-zoom-in-close approach to photographingevery scene is not to its advantage. Neither is Barry Beckerman's screenplay (fromOliver Bleeck's novel *The Procane Chronicle*.) Desperation clings to every line.

It is left tosome heavyweight acting talents to rescue the story, but Academy Award winner Maximillian Schell as a psychiatrist looks as if he should be selling used cars somewhere, and John Houseman simply gives us a wimp-variation on John Houseman. So no rescue.

Bronson at this stage in his career is no spark plug either. His acting has become monotonous and lifeless. His face suggests a Halloween pumpkin that's been sitting too long into November. For the record, he's Raymond St. Ives, an "ex-crime reporter" turned unsuccessful novelist, hired to recover some stolen ledgersfor Houseman, a Hollywood eccentric with a fondness for silent movies. Off the record, he'sstrictly Charles Bronson as he has appeared in most of his laterpictures

That Bisset, no doubt the warmest, sexiest Englishwoman since Lily Langtry, maybe Nell Gwynn, founders in a very confused, poorly conceived role, indicates somebody hascompletelymissedthe boatonthisone.

With Harry Guardino, Elisha Cook, and Daniel J. Travanti as a car-maker with a warpedsenseofhumor.

★½ **Mr. Wong, Detective** (1938) Boris Karloff, Grant Withers, John Hamilton (D: WilliamNigh)

Crude, graceless attempt by Monogram Studios to cash in on the Charlie Chan bonanza at Twentieth Century-Fox. Althoughadapted from a series ofstoriesby Hugh Wylie which appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Wong* sounds more like something thrown together over a chop suey dinneratthe studiocommissary

The plot had been done many times, but that wouldn't stop Monogram from Hollanderizing it as *Docks of San Francisco* with Roland Winters (1946) when it bought theChanseriesfive yearslater.

Karloffhas authority in the titlerole,but the wrong kind, suggesting John Maynard Keynes at a costumeparty. Grant Withers's Inspector Street is the prototypical dumb cop,bullinghiswaythroughsceneafterscene with all the subtlety of a rhinocerospassing a kidneystone

The rest of the acting looks under rehearsed andslightly confused. Which it no doubt was. It marked the beginning of an undistinguished series which Karloff must have done solely for the money. Even he would draw the line,giving wayto Keye Luke in the final film. □

Reflections on Westlake's "The Hardboiled Dicks": The Role of the

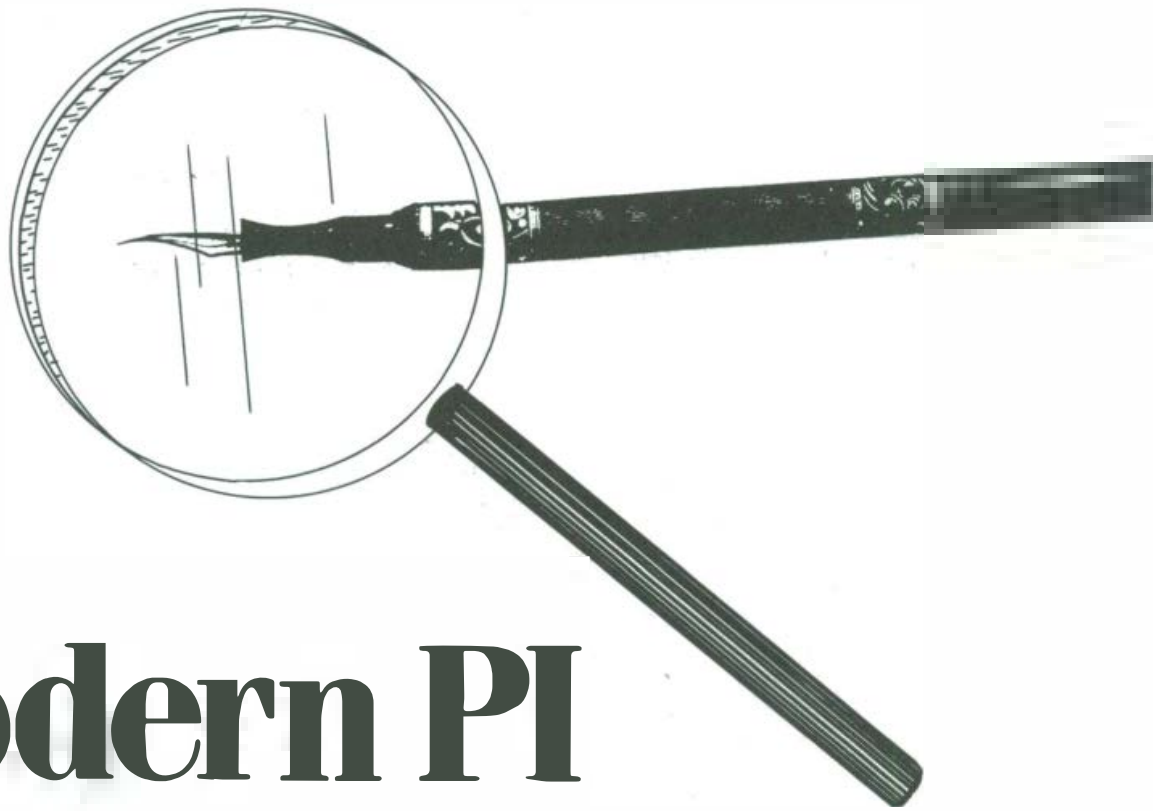
By Robert A. Baker and
Michael T. Nietzel

Donald A. Westlake's tribute to the "hardboiled dicks" is a succinct and insightful account of the private eye novel from its nineteenth-century beginning up to the work of the Donalds—Ross Mac, John D. Mac, and Hamilton. By Westlake's own admission, however, he pleadsunfamiliarity with the PIwritersin post-Vietnamtimes:

> Postwartimesseem to generate newprivate eyewaves,and I understand there's one goingon now, but I admit I don't know much about it.

Westlake, one of the most successful and all-round entertaining writers in modern fiction, undoubtedly knows more about the modern PI novelists than he cares to admit. Yet in a very plaintive and nostalgic conclusion to his article, he questions the relevance of the PI novel in its modernsetting, argues that "the vitality of novelty" isgone, asserts that"the reflection of an underlying truth is gone," and then declares, "I'm not really sure what's left." Though he agrees that the PI novel is "certainly not dead," he seems to believe that all that is left is a "hermetically sealed story" reflecting no reality of any sort and disconnected from everything of social or psychological importance. It has become, in his eyes, a "spaghetti private eye story" no different from Sergio Leone's "spaghetti"Westerns.

Certainly there is truth in these charges when they are applied to the type of PI we see weekly on television. As Westlake notes, "The real world never never never impinges on the entertainment side of television," and most of our video PIs are, indeed,



Modern PI Writer

"cardboard figures in trenchcoats." But this is only *part* of the total picture, only one facet of the literary jewel. The present state of the PI art, we will argue, *is* rooted in the real world, *does* reflect topics of social and psychological import, *does* deal with themes of universal and philosophic concern, and *is*—in many of the best examples of the genre at least—as well written as any of the widely hailed classics by the prototypic writers: Hammett, Chandler, and Ross Macdonald.

No one can turn back the clock. No modern would-be writer in his right mind would try to emulate Shakespeare. But this does not mean that would-be dramatists should never write plays, nor that, if they do dare to write a play, their work must ever be compared with the best of the Bard of Avon.

Good literature *is* relevant to its time and place, and, in all fairness to the modern writer, we should judge his efforts in terms of his artistic ability, i.e., his skill with the medium in which he works. For the writer of PI novels, this would mean judging his efforts in terms of the following sorts of criteria:

How skillful are his variations on the theme?

How credible are the characters of the hero or the heroine, the villain or villains? How lifelike is their behavior?

Does the world the PI inhabits resemble the same world in which the readers live?

Are the PI's pleasures, pains, values, morals, thoughts, and beliefs like those of other identifiable human beings?

Does the plot unfold in a realistic, lifelike, and believable manner?

Are the events and occurrences making up the details of the story like those we ourselves experience and encounter in our daily lives?

Does the narration expand or enrich our vision of modern society and/or the human beings making it up? Or, if the narrative moves in the other direction, are we disgusted and angered by the cruelty and inhumanity of man against man?

Does the story seize and maintain our attention and interest?

Does it entertain? Or amuse? Does it strike an emotionally responsive chord?

When we compare and contrast the author's efforts with those of other writers, do we feel that he has made an original and worthy contribution to the genre?

It is, admittedly, growing more difficult to make a unique contribution to the hard boiled dick story. There is only so much that can be said and done by a professional private investigator, and there are only a limited number of ways in which crimes and murders can be committed and their perpetrators unmasked within the bounds of realism and credibility. But these facts are part of the challenge, and the writer who is capable of successfully surmounting such obstacles is deserving of our respect and admiration.

A number of post-Vietnam, contemporary PI writers have overcome such hurdles, and, though working entirely within the restrictions and limitations of the PI format, have managed to create memorable heroes in an exciting style of expression, in a true and up-to-date social setting, in an accurately depicted geographical locale, with novel plot variations on the classic theme of pursuit and capture, which deal sensibly with the eternal questions of existence, human weaknesses and strengths, justice and injustice, society's winners and losers, and the human depths of love and hate.

Contemporary writers who have accomplished this in one or more PI novels, and who have created vital and credible PI heroes, are Loren Estleman with Amos Walker, Joseph Hansen with David Brandstetter, Stephen Greenleaf with John Marshall Tanner, Robert Parker with Spenser, Bill Pronzini with Nameless (Pronzini himself), James Crumley with Thomas Sughrue, Timothy Harris with Thomas Kyd, Richard Hoyt with John Denson, Arthur Lyons with Jacob Asch, Lawrence Block with Matt Scudder, Michael Lewin with Albert Sampson, Jonathan Valin with Harry Stoner, Max Byrd with Mike Haller, Marcia Muller with Sharon McCone, Jack Lynch with Peter Bragg, and Fred Zackel with Michael Brennan—to name a few. And as is the case with all such laundry lists, there are several more writers equally deserving. We could not agree more with Westlake's appraisal of Joe Gores's *Interface*, which is, certainly, as near to a classic *tour de force* as one can come. Certainly the DK Agency stories *are* alive and real, and if anyone can write the PI equivalent of *Shane* it may well be Joe Gores. Or it may well be one of the younger writers listed above. For our money, James Crumley's *The Last Good Kiss* is, in the PI genre, the equivalent of Jack Shafer's *Shane*. It is undoubtedly the most unappreciated "classic" in the history of this genre. If this appears to you an overstatement, read it and judge for yourself.

While there is so much of Westlake's article with which we agree, it may seem somewhat egregious to nitpick a rather minor point. Yet the point is a sore one with us primarily because the same lack of understanding of Chandler and Marlowe has occurred before. Westlake refers to "a smothered unacknowledged homosexuality. [in] particularly the novels," and later to "a homosexual coloring" particularly in the first five chapters of *The Long Goodbye*, wherein Marlowe is closely involved with Terry Lennox. Westlake asks: "If this is not a homosexual relationship, what on earth is it?"

It is, admittedly, growing more difficult to make a unique contribution to the hardboiled dick story.

The answer to Westlake's question would be very clear to anyone with an English school boy's education such as was had by Chandler. Neither Marlowe nor Chandler was a homosexual as anyone familiar with Chandler's upbringing would instantly recognize. Like many English private school graduates, Chandler had difficulty relating to the opposite sex, and these difficulties come through in the character of Marlowe (and in Chandler's life), in his relationships with nearly all the female characters in the novels. Chandler was in endless pursuit of women, and before his marriage he pursued, unsuccessfully for the most part, nearly every women he knew—including the secretaries in his own oil company office. Both Marlowe and Chandler were incurable romantics. For example, in *Farewell My Lovely*, Marlowe has an opportunity to bed Anne Riordan but turns down her offer of an overnight accommodation and later tells Lt. Randall "She's a nice girl. Not my type. I like smooth

shiny girls, hard boiled and loaded with sin." While this could be interpreted as an attempt at macho camaraderie with the lieutenant, much more likely is Jerry Speir's interpretation, found in his biography of Chandler. It is "a desire to keep his relationship with Riordan on a distant, impersonal level, unsullied by a contemptible reality—to keep her on a pedestal in an enchanted valley." Speir points to a second and perhaps even more important reason for Marlowe's avoidance of sexual entanglements, i.e., such romantic sub-plots would detract significantly from the singlemindedness of the main story—a literary tradition for mystery novelists.

Moreover, in *The Long Good'bye*, when Lennox attacks women for being deceptive, Marlowe responds, "Take it easy. . . . So they're human. What did you expect—golden butterflies hovering in a rosy mist?" It is clear that Marlowe is no woman-hater and that he is also aware of the absurdity of expecting women to be other than human.

Nevertheless, in *Playback*, Marlowe does become romantically and sexually involved with Betty Mayfield:

I grabbed hold of her. She tried to fight me off but no fingernails. I kissed the top of her head. Suddenly she clung to me and turned her face up.

"All right. Kiss me, if it's any satisfaction to you. I suppose you would rather have this happen where there was a bed."

"I'm human."

"Don't kid yourself. You're a dirty low-down detective. Kiss me."

I kissed her. With my mouth close to hers I said: "He hanged himself tonight."

Then, a few pages later, the heterosexual encounter is clear and unmistakable:

"I'm tired. Do you mind if I lie down on your bed?"

"Not if you take your clothes off."

"All right—I'll take my clothes off. That's what you've been working up to, isn't it?"

And apparently it is, because on the following pages:

I held her tight against me. "You can cry and cry and sob and sob, Betty. Go ahead, I'm patient. If I wasn't that—well, hell, if I wasn't that—"

That was as far as I got. She was pressed tight to me, trembling. She lifted her face and dragged my head down until I was kissing her.

"Is there some other woman?" she asked softly between my teeth.

"There have been."

"But someone very special?"

"There was once, for a brief moment. But that's a long time ago now."

"Take me. I'm yours—all of me is yours. Take me."

This ends Chapter 23, and Marlowe obviously "took" her. At least it was Chandler's intent to persuade us this happened, because, at the beginning of Chapter 24:

A banging on the door woke me. I opened me eyes stupidly. She was clinging to me so tightly that I could hardly move. I moved her arms gently until I was free. She was still sound asleep.

It turns out that it is Sergean t Green at the door, and the good sarge inquires: "You got a dame in there?"

Marlowe's reply is knightly and chivalrous: "Sergeant, questions like that are out of line. I'll be there."

Then, when Green goes away, Marlowe dresses and pens Betty a note which he leaves on her pillow. Later, whenhesees Bettyagain:

"Will you take me back to the hotel? I want to speak to Clark."

"Youinlovewithhim?"

"I thought I wasin love withyou."

"It was a cryin the night," I said. "Let'snot try to makeit more than it was. There's more coffee out in the kitchen."

"No, thanks. Not until breakfast. Haven't you ever been in love? I mean enough to want to be with a woman every day,everymonth,everyyear?"

"Let'sgo."

"How can such a hard man be so gentle?" she asked wonderingly.

"If I wasn'thard, I wouldn't bealive. If I couldn't ever be gentle, I wouldn'tdeserve to be alive."

Marlowe must have considered "wanting to be with a woman" because in the final chapter he receives a phone call from Linda Loring in Paris. In Linda's words:

"I've tried to forget you. I haven't been able to. We made beautifullove together."

"That was a year and a half ago. And for one night. What am I supposed tosay?"

After he confesses that he has not been faithful to her, Linda counters by proposing marriage and Marlowe accepts with the following statement, hardly the words of an overt or even latent homosexual:

"I'll come, darling. I'll come. Hold me in your arms. Hold me close in your arms. I don't want to own you. Nobody everwill. I justwantto love you."

Significantly, the last line of the novelstates: "Theair was full of music."

In the unfinished Marlowe novel, *The Poodle Springs Story*, Chandler has Linda and Marlowe married. Unfortunately, too many critics see only the superficial aspects of Marlowe's behavior and read more into it than Chandler intended. Readers interested in "real" homosexual behavior and an authentic look at the world of a homosexual private operative should pick up copies of Joseph Hansen's novels featuring David Brandstetter.

It is difficult for us to disagree with Westlake—someone whom we hold in high esteem—even on small points. We have read with great relish each and every one of Westlake's (Richard Stark) Parker and Alan Grofield series. Our admiration for his four Mitch Tobin PI novels written under his pen name, Tucker Coe, is enormous. And, as everyone knows, his humorous novels *The Fugitive Pigeon, The Busy Body, Bank Shot, Cops and Robbers, God Save the Mark,* and *The Hot Rock* are modern classics. Westlake's *Killing Time* isequal to, if not betterthan, Hammett's *Red Harvest,* and his *Brothers Keepers* is one of the funniest and most humane novels in a generation. Finally, even though there are a few moot points, Westlake's "Hardboiled Dicks" tells it "like it was." □

CURRENT REVIEWS

Chandlertown by Edward Thorpe. New York:St. Martin'sPress, 1984. $12.95

Chandlertown was first published in England in 1983and then distributed in this country in 1984 by St. Martin's Press. It is easy to becomeenthusiastic about the book when one sees the magnificentcolorphotoof Hollywood Boulevard on thedustjacket.The book's promiseseems toincreaseifthe reader looks at the photos, especially the stunning full-pagepicture ofSunsetTower

Unfortunately, thepromise fades with the text. *Chandlertown* is a little bit of everything: a brief biography interspersed with a little literary criticism, some inaccurate film history, and a very superficial geographical and historicalessay on L.A., yesterday and today.

There are a number of booksand articles which do a better job in theseareas, such as Frank MacShane's biography*Chandler*;there is Richard Lamparski's *Hidden Hollywood* (1981); Paul Bishop's article "The Longest Goodbye, or The Search for Chandler's L.A." which appeared in *Mystery* in March/ April 1980, and William Luhr's book-length study *Chandlerand Film* (1983).

The problems with *Chandlertown* include inaccurate captions, misleading generalizations, and lapses in film history. The caption forthe Hollywood Public Library is indeed a boner. It reads, "Thebuildingstill standstoday,totallyunchanged." In 1982the Hollywood Public Library burned to the ground, and by June 1983 it was relocated to the other side of Sunset Boulevard closer to LaBrea.

Thorpe makes generalizations which lead to misinformation. There really is a more activetheatercommunity than he credits to L.A. Oneonlyhastolookatthe Mark Taper Forum and the Westwood Playhouse. In addition, there are loads of summer theater groups which are the equivalent of off-Broadway. Similarly disturbing is his statement that good restaurants are a surprising rarity. I was amazed that there wasno reference to nor picture ofMussoand Frank's, a restaurant much frequented by Chandler andvisitedby PhilipMarlowe.

Many of the buildings, offices, apartments, and hotels associated with both Chandler and Marlowe are still standing today and can be found. It is unfortunate that there are no pictures of such places as the Bryson Apartments at 2701 Wilshire, a setting used in *The Lady of the Lake*. Similarly, the apartment where Joe Brody was killed in *The Big Sleep* is still standing at the corner of Palmerston Place and Kenmore near Franklin Avenue. And Franklin Avenue is not spelled Franklyn! And what about the Montecito, the apartment at 6650 Franklin Avenue which became the Chateau Bercy in *TheLittleSister*? When thenovelwas filmed with *Marlowe*, the setting was the Hotel Alvarado at 6065 West 6th Street. Still another important building in *The Little Sister* wasthe Hotel Van Nuys at 103 West 4th Street, now known as the Barclay. Finally, the Bank of America building on Hollywood Boulevard became the Cahuega building in *The High Window*, as well as Marlowe's office in *The Big Sleep*.

Sadly, there is also inaccurate film history in *Chandlertown*. First of all, the references to Chandler's experience as the writer of the original screenplay of *The BlueDahlia* are verysimplistic. The fullstory of his problems with thefilm goes far beyond thefact thathe thought there wasinterferencebythe director (compare John Houseman's introduction to the published screenplay). Thorpe misinterprets Chandler's feelings about Alfred Hitchcock; a fuller version of the relationship is described in MacShane's biography.

Finally, Thorpe writes of two films, *The Ladyin theLake* and*The Brasher Doubloon*, as being filmed in 1947. He has confused release dates with production dates. Both films were in production in 1946 and *The Lady in theLake* was released in January 1947 (many film catalogues list 1946 as the release date). *The Brasher Doubloon* was released a few months after *The Lady inthe Lake*. Thorpe alsomitsany reference tothe first film version of *The High Window*. In 1942, it wasdone as a Mike Shayne mystery, *Timeto Kill*(TwentiethCentury-Fox).

People who know Chandler, who know L.A., and who know film can read *Chandlertown*and realize that there are omissions and inaccuracies, but people who are not that knowledgeable about theseareas can indeed have a very falsepicture of Chandler andthe citythat bothattracted and repelled him.

—Katherine M. Restaino

Halo in Blood by John Evans. Quill, 1984 $3.95. **Halo forSatan** by John Evans.Quill, 1984. $3.95

A prettygoodargumentcouldbe advanced thatthe immediatepost-war years of 1946 to 1949 represented the Golden Age of the private eye novel in America. In that brief spanoftime,wesawthepublicationofWade Miller's *Deadly Weapon* and his first three novelsabout Max Thursday; Henry Kane's firstthreenovels(andashortstorycollection) aboutPeter Chambers;MickeySpillane'sfirst novel aboutMike Hammer; FredricBrown's first three novelsabout Ed and Am Hunter; Frank Kane's first two novelsabout Johnny Liddell; Thomas B. Dewey's firstnovel about Mac;Ross Macdonald'sfirst novel aboutLew Archer; Bart Spicer's firstnovelabout Carney Wilde; Raymond Chandler's *The Little Sister*, and thefirst three Paul Pine novels by John Evans.

The first and second of the Evans books, *HalointBlood* and *Halo forSatan*, havenow been reprinted in the admirable Quill Mysterious Classic series under the editorship of Otto Penzler. John Evans is a pseudonym of editor and screenwriter Howard Browne, and like many of the Golden Age writers mentioned above he abandoned his private eye character in the 1950s and went on to other forms of writing. A recent interview with Browne hinted at a return for Paul Pine, but for the present readers must be content with these two books, while hoping that Pine's other two novelswillalsobe reprintedsoon

Halo in Blood opens with Paul Pine becoming entangled in a funeral procession At the cemetary he sees twelve clergymen, representing twelve different faiths, officiate at the burial of a nameless drifter. Soon afterward, Pine is hired by John Sandmark to prevent the marriage of his stepdaughter Leona to a mysterious man named Gerald Marlin. Chicagopolice and a gangsternamed D'Allemand figure in the subsequent action, along with several more killings, as thetwo portions of the plot converge. Pine learns that themanburiedattheodd funeral mayor may not be the real father of Leona Sandmark, and he learns the reason why twelve clergymen were hired to take part in the interment. There are a number of surprising revelations along the way, althoughexperiencedmysteryreaderswillsee the ultimate surprise coming several chapters in advance

Halo for Satan continues Pine's involvement with the clergy when the Catholic bishop of Chicago hires him to locate a manuscript supposedly in the handwriting of Jesus Christ. Again thereare murders and gangsters and a beautiful girl who carries a gun, as well as a mysterious super-criminal named Jafar Baijan. But this timeEvansfoolsus completely, producingan endingI'verememberedsincefirst readingthe book 36 years ago as a teenager. It ranks, alongwith WadeMiller's *Deadly Weapon*, as one of the two most surprising endings in all ofprivateeyefiction.

I think it is theseelements of surpriseand the unexpected that make the Paul Pine books so readable today.Certainlythey are well writtenandwellplotted,but Evansoffers the reader something more. Some modern writerscouldlearnagreat dealfromhim.

Having said that, I must offer a minor reservation. These books, first published in 1946 and 1948, are true to the private eye tradition of the period in that Paul Pine seems to be knocked out from a blow on the head an unreasonable number of times. It was not until the Lew Archer novels of Ross Macdonald that hardboiled writers learned

their detectives didn't need heads of steel. But this is something the modern reader can overlook while enjoying some of the best private eye fiction from the best period in hard boiled history.

Sweet Death, Kind Death by Amanda Cross. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1984. $13.95

Amanda Cross has built her reputation on mysteries in academic settings, and, of late, particularly since *Death in a Tenured Position*, women's issues have figured more and more heavily in her plots and thematic concerns. In *Sweet Death, Kind Death*, Cross takes Kate Fansler to all-female Clare College, where the late Patrice Umphelby used to teach history, write provocative and bestselling novels, and get on almost everyone's nerves. Kate once had a conversation about God with Patrice, in a fog-bound airport in Scotland, and Patrice had written about it in her journal, and, after her death—presumed suicide, by drowning—her official biographers, academicians Archer and Herbert, contact Kate for details. As the biographers sift through more and more material, they find, despite Patrice's many references to death-obsessed female writers such as Virginia Woolf and Stevie Smith, that it was highly unlikely that Patrice committed suicide. So Kate is dispatched to the scene of the crime, ostensibly to participate on a committee examining the possibility of instituting gender studies at Clare, and actually to investigate the murder.

Clare seems peaceful, at first all-too-peaceful, until Kate begins turning up a multitude of motives, some more likely than others, for Patrice to have been murdered. As Bertie Justine, religion professor, reveals, "most of the history department and the entire departments of classics and English" despised Patrice. As one Professor Fiorelli explains to Kate, "I don't think women who want to study women *like* men; they want to turn each other on instead, ha, ha," and Patrice was one who, like Kate, believed that the female experience was worth scrutiny. In fact, Patrice was, at the time of her death, at work on a new project on women in middle age, writing "what might even have been a sort of *Passages* of late middle age," and she had begun to see that "many women's lives particularly were lived by another pattern beginning again just when it was all supposed to be over." For these reasons, it becomes apparent to Kate that Patrice did *not* commit suicide and was, in fact, murdered: she was perhaps "one of those people who become a sort of divine dazzle when recalled after their death, but whom may be a bit hard to live with on a day-to-day basis. Great intensity and originality may be hard to take as a steady diet." "She wasn't one of those people . . . who simply become more so with age," but rather one who challenged others, who often felt uncomfortable about that challenge, to grow intellectually and emotionally. One would think, on the surface, that challenge and growth would be welcome in an academic setting, but Cross demonstrates once more that conservatism and a resistance to change aptly characterize the fictional colleges and universities she describes.

Cross's cast of characters both reflects and defies the reactionary nature of academe, so that for every misogynist classics professor there is an open, supportive religion professor, and so that the college president, a woman in her thirties who has never experienced discrimination, stands in opposition to the many women at Clare College who have struggled to be recognized for their achievements: Veronica Manfred, Patrice's academic collaborator, who once sued her; Madeline Huntley, Kate's old psychiatrist acquaintance, who is directing an institute at Clare that "is supposed to deal with the problems of students and faculty as women"; Bertie's wife Lucy, who gives Kate insights on Patrice's dead husband and their marriage ("they trusted one another, had faith in one another's judgment and sense"). Then there are the male suspects and supporters—Cross's accurate portrait of academe shows that opposites such as these can be occasionally interchangeable—among them colleague Ted Geddes and, of course, even the witty Archer and Herbert themselves. Finally, there is Patrice's daughter, Sarah, a doctor (and Kate "did not like doctors of either sex or any specialty at any time"), who reveals to Kate that her mother had an unpublicized bout with cancer, had a lumpectomy, and had only recently before her death received a clean bill of health. Being Patrice's daughter was a mixed blessing. "It wasn't easy . . . to have a mother like mine But my mother was such a powerful personality; without ever meaning to, she struck you if you were her daughter with the force of a gale wind. . . . [B]ecause I was the first born, that gave her a power over me I hated her having. Oh, she never took advantage of it, not consciously. But she didn't understand, I think, the effect of just her presence, of her slightest word."

Cross sketches all of her major and minor characters wittily, urbanely, and unerringly, and one immediately senses the absolute rightness of the portrayal of Sarah, "who, according to the revolting jargon of the young, had it all," of Clare College president Norton, who "came along just in time to benefit from the women's movement" but "hadn't fought for it," of Gladys Geddes, a faculty wife who "likes to argue with academic women" and "feels faculty wives are underestimated," in the words of her husband, who caps that description with a prompt and patronizing, "Is dinner almost ready?" In short, Cross takes the stereotypes, shakes them thoroughly, and comes up with the enduring truth behind the clichés, and the women in the various stages of their lives, according to the various choices they have made, are drawn as recognizably and sensitively as are the men, including Kate's husband, Reed, who is going through a bit of a career crisis of his own, leaving the New York City D.A.'s office to teach at Columbia Law School and write. Cross's brand of detective fiction owes much to her academic predecessor, Dorothy L. Sayers (and Carolyn Heilbrun, *sans* her pseudonym Amanda Cross, has written insightfully on Sayers's canon), not only in its blend of personality and dry humor but also in the way that it uncompromisingly tackles the serious issues of relationships, both of motive and opportunity to crime and of women to men

* * * * * —Susan L. Clark

Tomorrow I Die by Mickey Spillane. New York: The Mysterious Press, 1984. 234 pp $14.95

Mike Hammer lured me to New York. So did James Bond and a host of other dead-shot heroes and crime fighters, but Mike the Hammer more than anyone else. He made New York look and sound interesting and exciting. This was the city he painted in *One Lonely Night*, a Babylon where push came to shove and one stood on a rain-soaked bridge in the night and wondered if the struggle was worth all the pain. And where one learned that it usually was.

But when I finally got to New York, Hammer had gone. So had the Manhattan he lived in, fought in, and almost died in. His office on West Forty-fourth Street was vacant, and the Blue Ribbon restaurant and bar downstairs had been turned into a tourist trap. Mike and Velda, his efficient and saucy secretary, had left the city and left no forwarding address.

Why, we'll probably never know. Mickey Spillane, Hammer's creator, by then had stopped writing the series—in fact, seemed to have simply stopped writing. In the 'seventies, he turned out some new novels, but their heroes—gray, embittered, malevolent juggernauts indistinguishable from the criminals and spies on which they did bodily violence—lacked the lure, snap, and moral fire of the Hammer series. No longer was it an issue of right or wrong; the Spillane plot had degenerated into a contest of mere ruthlessness. His characters grew uglier and gawdier in cadence with Times Square. Rest in peace, Mike, I told myself. You had a good run and wouldn't like the new scene at all.

But Hammer is back now in a three-page screenplay called "Screen Test," and it presents in nugget form the quintessential Hammer plot: a dead hood, a deadly babe, and Mike, who's figured all the angles.

And the other stories, including two novelettes, to be found in *Tomorrow I Die* are just as interesting, if not more so. They cover a period between 1941, when Spillane was writing for pulps and comic books, and 1973, long after he had established himself as a novelist. Most of the stories appeared in men's magazines in the 'fifties, under either his own name or a pseudonym.

The two best stories in this collection are set in the Southern hill country and a declining port town somewhere on either the Gulf of Mexico or the Dixie coastline. In

"Stand Up and Die!" a cargo pilot (and a consignment of lobsters) has engine trouble and bails out into a mountain valley the inhabitants of which are as insularly xenophobic as any Indian tribe in Borneo. Common objects such as radios, Geiger counters, and airplanes are referred to by them as alien "things." Mitch, the pilot, expected hostility from the rustics, but the hate he encounters is so pervasive and deep-rooted that children follow him around so that won't miss how he catches it from the adults. It'ssoon clear that thehill folk don't want him around, but inexplicablynotone of themwill tell him the way out of thevalley.

In "Everybody's Watching Me," Joe Boyle, a young man who works for a scrap-metal hauler, becomes enmeshed in a feud between crooked cops and rivalgangs in a somnolent port city. He runs an errand and delivers a message to a gang chief, then becomes the object of a search bythe policeand thegangs because he is the only onewho can identify the manwhogavehim the note. Thissinister andunknownman, Vetter, seems to wantto move in on the rackets and takeover everything. While it's a first-rate suspense story, Spillane has given it a surprising endingthat is disappointing and not at all convincing. Butit'sfungettingto

In both stories, Spillane deftly sketches portraits of cultural stagnancy; the city and the mountain valley share the same mental squalor.And hesketcheswithoutresortingto reams of adjectives and synonyms; his charactersmove and act and speak, and one can practicallyfeelthe fetidness in the streets and smell the mustiness of the lobby of a sagging, fourth-rate hotel. Above all, his protagonists are thinkers and movers, so these settings give Spillane ample scope to illustrate how teeth-gnashing frustrating it is to deal with mildewed minds.

The title story is set somewhere in the Southwest, in a town where an enigmatic transient is mistakenforthemayor by a gang preparing to rob a bank. Rich, the protagonist, leads thecriminals tothe limits of their collective intelligence, then lets them ruin themselves in the end

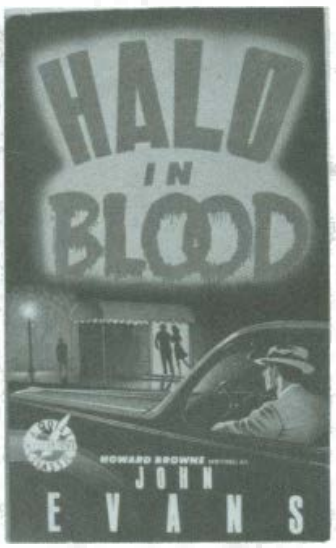
Two of the stories are described by Max AllanCollins inthe introductionashavingO. Henry-like qualities. This assessment is exaggerated, butit'snot Spillane's fault.The onlystoryaboutwhichone could say it is O. Henryesque is "The Girl Behind the Hedge"; what it lacks in O. Henry's benevolence it more than makes up for in a fiendish, typically Spillane twist in the end. It's an intriguing, deceptively gentle tale of how a quiet millionaire getsmurderouslyeven with a rapaciouscolleague, and it's thebestof the three third-person narrative stories which appear inthe collection

Not all of the stories are of equal craft caliber: some are not even entertaining (though they are, such as "Sex Is My Vengeance," psychologically compelling). Spillane has authored some wonderful adventure novels for children, and a considerablevolume of hiswritinghas been published inBritainbutneverseen American shores

A Creative Kind of Killer by Jack Early. New York:FranklinWatts, 1984.

In TAD 17:1, Donald Westlakesays that there is [illegible] private eye [illegible] boom admits that "I don't know much about it." Despite admitting ignorance, he nonetheless judges new private eye stories with such phrases as "the vitality of novelty is gone," "the reflection of an underlying truth is gone," and (becoming metaphorical) "I tryto inhale, and Id on't sense anyairhere."

In the general sensethat popularliterature



generally tries for sales ratherthan novelty, Westlake is correct that privateeye stories, likethe classic puzzlers of the 1930s, depend on formulas. What is noteworthy is how manyexcellentstories can be produced within those formulas and how certain writers—such as Jack Early—can play with the formulas

Early's *A Creative Kind of Killer* is an excellent firstnovel, notonlybecauseitis well written and plotted but also because it has fun with most private eye patterns. Fortune Fanelli has become a private detectiveafter an inheritance has freed him from being a cop. He has two teenaged offspring, but his ex-wife refuses to pay attention to them. He is a teetotaller who consumes gallons of Coca-Cola. He doesn't want to sleep withhis lady friend on theirfirst date. Now, having read many privateeye tales, youmay assume that it is a *sinequanon*for sleuthing to be an incipient or actual alcoholic, poverty-stricken, and willing to bed anything that moves. In short, you would label Fortune Fanelli awimp

Youwould bewrong.Fanelli is believable because heisnot hard boiled. Byallowinghim to have, and to love, children, Earlymakes him partof his society—no romanticloner in the Chandler sense, but someoneintimately involved with what's going on because it affects him. When Fanelli hears ofthe murder of a teenager whose body was put into the window of a boutique, he immediately associates the tragedy with what might happen tohis own children. As Fanelliinvestigates, he loses some of his prejudices against homosexuals and he tries to understand a killerwho arranges the corpses of his victims to form "dead living art." Early is a sensitive writer, his characters are genuine and his setting—New York's SoHo—is carefully realized

Even if you admit that you "don't know much" about the current private eye story, give Early's novel a try. It should certainly be a major candidate for best first novel of theyear.

—Douglas G. Greene

* * * * *

Keep It Quiet by Richard Hull. Dover, 1983 (reprint of 1935 publication). 191 pp. $3.95

Richard Hull abandoned his accounting career after reading Francis Iles's *Malice Aforethought*, the first "inverted" psychological mystery. Hull's first mystery was*The Murderof My Aunt*, which followed the inverted model. *Keep It Quiet* was his second mystery. It proved to be very popular and successful.

Set in a London men's club, theambiance isthat of quiet good breeding, tastefulmeals, and drinks served in the library. The Whitehall Club's atmosphere is predictable and ordinary—until one of its members dies shortly after eating dessert one day. The club'schef fears he isat fault,since it washis prescription for perchloride of mercury that wasmistakenforvanilla.Theclub's secretary wants only to "keep it quiet." And, with the victim's doctor (who is also a member of Whitehall Club), the death is labeled as one due to natural causes.

Thena second memberdies after a fewsips of sherry. Should the secretary and doctor keepthisone quiet, too? But, whataboutthe blackmail letters, and threats, that the secretary and doctor begin receiving.

Hull has created a traditional British mystery that blends subtle humor with unnerving psychological twists which will pleasemost any mysteryfancier.

—Gloria Maxwell

FuriousOldWomen byLeo Bruce. Academy Chicago, 1983 (reprint of 1960 publication) 191 pp. $4.95

Carolus Deene teaches history at a boys' public school in England. He has a private income and also enjoys solving baffling crimes.Onthis occasion,Deeneis called into thesmallvillageof Glad hurstto discover who murdered Millicent Griggs. What Deene discovers is a village full of "angry old women," any of whom had good reason to dislike Millicent intensely enough to murder her. Therealsoprove to be several men who are likely suspects. As Deene probes, he

discovers a tremendous rivalry between Millicent (Low Church proponent) and Grazia Vaillant (High Church promoter), with the Rector caught between both women and their money. Two more bodies will complicate Deene's investigation, as well as the pressure from his headmaster to take a more active role at school (which means curtailing his detective tasks). Clues abound, and Bruce is nothing but fair with the reader in providing all the necessary facts to solve the mystery. The solution is quite clever and carefully hidden! A delight for mystery fans with a bent for the British.

Thin Air by Howard Browne. Carroll & Graf, 1983 (reprint of 1953 publication) 209pp. $3.25

Ames Coryell, successful advertising executive, is bringing his wife Leona and their three-year-old daughter home from a peaceful, happy summer vacation. They arrive home at 3:00 A.M. Leona opens the front door and goes into their home. In the time it takes her husband to carry their daughter upstairs and come back down, she disappears—into thin air. No signs of a struggle, purse left behind, and no good-bye note. What happened to Leona? And why does their daughter tell the police, "Why didn't Mommy come home with us?"

Ames attempts to locate Leona himself, after feeling frustrated by the apparent unconcern of the police. On the other hand, the police consider it a strong possibility that Ames has killed his wife.

When a woman resembling Leona is found murdered (discovered by Ames no less!), the action and intrigue quicken

This is a tautly written tale, with strong characterization and a compelling style. *Thin Air* is not likely to disappoint any mystery fan

The Green Stone by Suzanne Blanc. Carroll & Graf, 1984 (reprint of 1961 publication) 182 pp. $3.50

"Perhaps it is not prophecy at all but the belief in prophecy that fulfills it..." and destiny that brings certain people together in a given place, at a given time. For Mr. and Mrs. Randall, their destiny is to be murdered on a Mexican highway by bandits. And for Mrs. Randall's emerald ring to be responsible for the danger and near death of Jessie Prewitt and ruin for Luis Pérez.

Jessie Prewitt comes to Mexico to flee the painful memories of her broken marriage. Luis Pérez, a tourist guide, hankers after a life of ease and wealth—and feels the possibility brush the tips of his fingers when the beautiful emerald comes into his possession. As quickly, police suspicion also brushes against Pérez, and he passes the gem on to Jessie (without her knowledge) when the police come to question him. Pérez intends to reclaim the jewel later—no matter what danger or force results

As pressure builds for the police to find the emerald and solve the Randalls' murder, so does the tension and suspense surrounding Pérez' determination to regain the gem, and Jessie's unwitting thwarting of his aim.

Told from the omniscient viewpoint, Suzanne Blanc's novel creates very human characters and allows the reader to understand their frustrations, anxieties, and pleasures. Like a finely tuned piece of machinery, all the parts of this book work together in unison. The result is an exquisite "gem" of a story—seemingly plain and simple, but full of depth and color when held to the light. Don't neglect this one!

—Gloria Maxwell

Death of My Aunt by C. H. B. Kitchin Harper & Row, 1984 (reprint of 1929 publication. 159 pp. $3.50. **Death of His Uncle** by C H. B. Kitchin. Harper & Row, 1984 (reprint of 1939 publication). 229 pp. $3.50

Twenty-six-year-old Malcolm Warren is a London stockbroker. He is suddenly summoned to his Aunt Catherine's home for a weekend—ostensibly to advise her about some investment. In the midst of his discussion with his aunt, she starts to choke, just after taking a dose of "Le Secret de Venus," a unique tonic

Thus begins an investigation into the murder of rich Aunt Catherine. Several relatives stand to inherit sizeable fortunes, and Catherine's arrogant assumption of "infinite wisdom" has offended many of them. Motive, however, seems only as important as opportunity. And opportunity and motive seem to point directly at her second husband, Hannibal

The investigation uncovers the fact that their marriage was anything but ideal and that Catherine was in the process of further revising her will and reducing Hannibal's portion. With the finger of justice pointed at Hannibal, only Warren seems to accord him the possibility of innocence. This fast-moving narrative combines with strong characterization to equal a classic mystery from the Golden Age

In *Death of His Uncle*, Warren is contacted by an acquaintance, Dick Friday. Warren knows Dick from their days at Oxford, yet does not consider him a close friend. Dick casually asks Warren to help him discover the whereabouts of his uncle, who has not returned from a mysterious holiday Warren intends only to help Dick learn whether his uncle is still on holiday or has met with an unfortunate accident (turning the case over to the police if the latter). Try as he might, Warren is unable to dismiss the observations and indicators that seem to point toward foul play. Even after evidence points to a bathing accident, he is unable to stop making deductions and pursuing interviews with possible suspects. The illogicality of a missing mackintosh, a pair of patent dress shoes and no dress suit, and a missing pad of paper provide Warren with the salient clues for a murder solution. Tremendous for those who like mysteries with an old-fashioned flavor!

The Dirty Duck by Marty Grimes. New York Little, Brown, 1984. $14.95

The fourth Richard Jury mystery more than adequately demonstrates that Martha Grimes has read and digested her fill of Sayers, Marsh, and Allingham (other reviewers will be certain to add Christie, but evidence suggests to me that Christie is a reviewer's red herring, as she was a plotter first and characterizer second, if not third or fourth, and Grimes still, thankfully, is a character and setting expert first) to produce another installment in an ongoing story the resolved detection segments of which form a nice counterpoint to the unresolved personal lives that Melrose Plant and Jury lead. In short, figuring out the killer in Grimes's mysteries, in the final analysis, comes in second to fathoming her heroes' motives, and there is a decided impression that Jury and Plant unravel a tangle of others' motives, opportunities, and methods precisely because their own are so undeveloped and, at the same time, so convoluted. As a result, by the end of *The Dirty Duck,* Jury is no closer to Lady Kennington, who drew him to the murder site, Stratford-on-Avon, in the first place, nor is Melrose Plant to the briefly mentioned Polly Praed, than before, and, if anything, the message gleaned from the Stratford serial murders is that one can't be too careful about the sort of family into which one marries

Accordingly, Grimes assembles a group of victims and suspects, all of whom are looking for or fleeing from relationships: Sarasota, Florida heiress Gwendolyn Bracegirdle, killed after a post-play drink at the Stratford pub called "The Dirty Duck"; Harvey Schoenberg, a computer-toting, Shakespeare-quoting American who outrages Plant with his theories about Christopher Marlowe's

death; the James Farradayfamily, consisting of Farraday himself, his roving-eyed wife Amelia Blue, promiscuous step-daughter Honey Belle, and adoptedchildren J.C. and Penny; tour director Valentine Honeycutt, he of the "daffodil ascot that bloomed in the V of his candy-striped shirt donein pencil-thin lines of green and yellow"; Cyclamen Dew, who"hadabouther that sham-supernal, self deprecating airof onewho, notbornto saint-hood, had gone out to get it," and who martyrs herself for her crusty, ancient aunt Violet;and ladykillerGeorge Cholmondeley ("Women like me, that'sall"). As with all of Grimes's novels, there's a lot going on in the wayof dramaticconflict, sothat the readeris presented with an array of plausiblemotives andopportunities

Moreover, Grimes's characters play their roles against a backdrop of past crimes: Schoenberg's running speculations about Marlowe's untimely end pull in Shakespeare, Webster, Nashe, and other Renaissance revengetragedians, and individual actions of charactersevokeother literary forebears, so that,forexample,J.C.'s headlongflightfrom captivity, ashe clutches acat, recalls asimilar escape in Wilkie Collins's *The Queen of Hearts*. In fact, J.C., one of Grimes's typi-callyprecocious, endearing child figures, has been steeped in the very mystery/adventure lore that he actually lives after he has been kidnapped; his literary mentors, as he plans hisescape, are the Man in the IronMask and SydneyCarton

And, in the final analysis, it is this back-ward-looking that informs *The Dirty Duck*, so that relatively healthy characters look back, not in anger, but to see what actually was. As a result, Melrose Plant responds to Schoenberg's comment about setting the clock back four hundred years by statitig "Setthe clock back? No, thankyou. Back to a day when goldsmiths were bankers and barbersweresurgeons? Toa day whenstreets wereno wider than lanes, so that only two creaking carts could pass; and lanes were as narrow as public footpaths? When those overhanging upper stories that Americans find so quaint were needed forlivingspace? When there were riots, fires, rabbit warrens of tenements, and the air was so fetid with pestilence that one had to draw curtains aroundone's bed to sleep through the night withoutgettingtheplague? . . . Set theclock back? Don't be an idiot." (Thevery English inn that Grimes eulogized in *TheMan Witha Load of Mischief* even comes in for revisionist scrutiny, and the "merry host" becomes "so much moneylender, guller of country bumpkinsand young gallants, as he was publican.") On Grimes's account, the criminal looks back for different reasons entirely, and *The Dirty Duck* gathers its shapefrom thepast injustices that havekept present wounds from healingover.

TheDirtyDuck is a thoroughlygoodread, packed with the literary allusions that Grimes, Professor of Englishat Montgomery College in Tacoma Park, Maryland, handles with the ease born of familiarity, and steeped in the half-mythic, half-real England that Grimeshas charted as her adoptedcountry

—SusanL. Clark

Nightshades by Bill Pronzini. St. Martin's Press, 1984. $11.95

To put crimeback intothe streets and be realistic, the private eye novel concentrates on modern themes—conservation, women's rights, ecology, etc. Ross Macdonald started the trend of expanding the private eye code by having plots which revolved around problems such as oil spills and forest fires. Robert Parker tried to make the eye more human by giving us more of Spenser's personal problems than clues to the mystery—if there even was a mystery. Pronzini's Namelessdetective (as obvious a gimmick as Hammett's nameless Op and Spenser's lackofafirst name)followsthenew tradition, struggling to be personally equalto his girlfriend Kerry while championing the rightsofthe obsessed and oppressed.

Whathappenedtothegoodold dayswhen the Op, and even Archer, were merely catalysts, igniting fuses and embers which had been laid by others? Nameless takes so much abuse in *Nightshades* that he'll probably need at least a year to recover Maybehe'll usethat timeto agree to a rela-tionship withKerrythat won't interfere with his next case. Or maybe Kerry will go solve the case while Nameless sits among his pulp magazinesand broods over the state of the world.

Nightshades? I'mnot exactly surewhatthe title means. Probablysomething to do with

the "shades" or ghosts of an almost dead town north of San Francisco. It seems that Northern Development wants to turn the place into an amusement park and the handful of leftover residents want to save their wayof life. Namelessis called inwhena firekills one of the developersand themoney-conscious insurance company doesnot want to pay on a doubleindemnityclause. Youcan fillinthe details.

Nightshades by Bill Pronzini. St. Martin's, 1984.

One of Nameless's shortercases, it never-theless has Pronzini's stamp on it: good writing (natch), excellent pace and plotting, with the usual cast of characters, personal problems, and a helluvadedication.

Namelessheads toMusketCreek(formerly Ragged-Ass Gulch) at the behest of an insurance company to investigate an accidental deathandgets caught smack in the middle of a war between townspeople and land developers. Along theway, he and his ladylove, Kerry Wade, have a few problems of their own, which actually hinges on some private crisis of Kerry's. Read it and see if theyworkitout.

Not as good as *Quicksilver*, the author's previous Nameless novel—and the best in some time—but a "Pronzini read," which is tosayworththe time and the money.

* * * * * —Bob Randisi

Trace and 47 Miles of Rope by Warren Murphy. NAL, 1984

Last year's *Trace* should have won an Edgar, and it *may* win a Shamus—check it out in October at Bouchercon. This year's *Trace*novelought towinboth. It's writtenin typical Murphy style: quick-moving, filled with enough unusual, wacky characters—not the least of whom is Trace himself—to last a lifetime, and a large dollop of irreverance toward—well, you name it. I really thinkthat with these books the plot is secondary to Trace, and to Murphy's writingand off-the-wallsense ofhumor. (Check out a sleazy P.I. named "R. J. Roberts." I'm starting proceedingseven as we, uh, as you read and I write.)

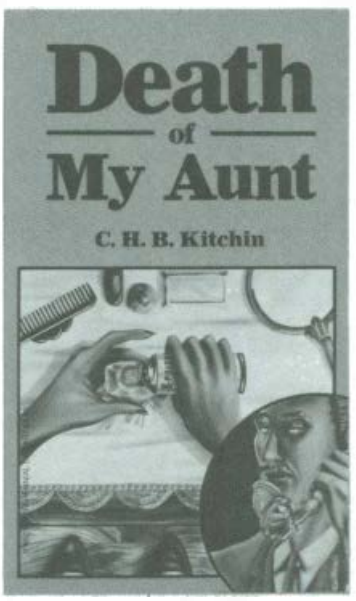
The Shadow Line by Laura Furman. New York:TheViking Press, 1982. $14.95

The title of transplanted Texan Laura Furman's first novel, *The Shadow Line*, serves as an intentionalallusion not only to JosephConrad ("One goes on. And thetime, too, goes on—till one perceives ahead a shadow-line warningthat theregion ofearly youth, too, mustbe left behind") butalsoto Raymond Chandler ("...you can never know too much about the shadow line and the people who walk it"). Furman deftlyfollows this"shadow line" over space (the amorphous yet freeway-bounded landscape of Houston) andtime(thepast and present of heroineLiz Gold, a New York City writer who moves to Texasandcoversassignmentsfor *Spindletop*, a magazine modeled after *Houston City*, complete with staff purges). The thread that sewsplace totime in *The Shadow Line* proves to be the twenty-year-oldunsolved Galveston West Beach murder of Carolyn Sylvan and herchild,at first merely astoryideathat Liz's editor wants her to research for the maga-zine's "Bad Old Days" feature. Yet by the novel'sunexpected conclusion it becomes not only a milestoneevent in the livesof monied Houston families (thelate William Osborne and Gus Corrigan as well as the widowed HelenDaytonandVirginiaOsborne)butalso a touchstone in Liz's own coming to peace

with her own "bad old days" (the death of her draft resister husband Willy) and with her "edge of adjusting" to her new relationship with Houston attorney David Muse. Liz's attempts to pin down the facts surrounding both Carolyn's and Willy's deaths accordingly parallel her forced coming to terms with an attachment to David that, with time, is rapidly turning into a commitment; she learns that her miserable past in Sweden with Willy and her loneliness in New York can give way to a happier future that includes an old age with David, which she first views as looking over the "border of a country she'd never walk in" and then concludes that "she would like to be there." And Liz's realization of ageing, her personal crossing of Conrad's "shadow-line warning" to leave behind "the region of early youth," is cast against the backdrop of her moving from New York to Houston, literally a city in transition, so that Liz's growing up mirrors Houston's growing out and coming of age. At the same time, Liz's investigation of the Sylvan murders makes her turn inward and causes her to re-evaluate those people around her—her friends and co-workers—who walk Chandler's "shadow line"; as the novel's startling dénouement demonstrates, "you can never know too much about [them]," and they remain as elusive as they are fascinating.

As *Spindletop* editor Cal Dayton, Liz's gay friend who once worked for *The Village Voice*, explains, Liz is to do a story on the April 1959 death of Carolyn Sylvan, a former Panhandle girl rumored to be the mistress of William Osborne, who at that time ran a successful public relations firm. Osborne was implicated, for he found Carolyn, shot in the back, and her little girl, run over, but he was never tried for their deaths. Frank Bone, retired D.A. from Galveston, notes when Liz approaches him that "an effort was made to find the killer, Miss Gold. Carolyn Sylvan wasn't what you would call a floater—a guy picked up out of the bay with a set of bullet holes. . . she got what a person of some status would get." In following what few leads she has, Liz speaks early on with Virginia Osborne, a curiously tragic figure who still keeps horses at her house on South MacGregor Way, whose "skin was leathered, not in the way of a woman who goes to resorts but like a farmer," and who, because she doesn't like to drink alone, gives Liz what little information she will only after several martinis: "She looked over at the glass pitcher on the bar as if it were a crystal ball." Despite "the clarity of Virginia Osborne's gaze," Liz cannot see beyond the smokescreens put up by Virginia, by Cal's mother Helen, who lives a meticulously fashionable life in a house near Rice University, and by Cal himself. Just when Liz has reached some conclusions concerning the Sylvan case, Cal kills the story, the magazine undergoes a major staff shake-up, and Liz is left with the painful information which her investigation has uncovered.

Liz's information bears as much on the Sylvan case as it does on herself. Throughout the novel, Furman expertly draws explicit and implicit parallels from the Sylvan tragedy to Willy's sudden accidental death, so that Liz's investigative sleuthing for her article is interlaced with flashbacks to her life with Willy. Willy was "a professional bad boy" who resisted the draft and fled first to Canada and then to Sweden, where Liz joined him. Her stay in Sweden lasted less than a year, for life in Sweden was "all Vietnam to her—the strange language, the darkness that extended so far into daytime." She didn't know the language and was profoundly uncomfortable with fears that this "exile would become their lives." Around her she saw men who freely traded possible incarceration in America for "a life of Swedish time," as well as Willy himself, a sad, zombie-like figure who "lived as though he was serving time." And then there were those decisive ones who'd "crossed a



shadow line," the deserters who married Swedish girls and had made the transition from exiles to immigrants. Liz left Willy, reasoning later that the marriage had ended prior to her departure, but they never divorced. Willy eventually returned to New York to serve his time in prison, and Liz's contacts with him were minimal. Once Willy urged her to do a newspaper story on the people now in hiding who bombed "a big Brown & Root construction site, the beginning of a bridge in Louisiana. Brown & Root was part of the consortium that was building South Vietnam—airfields, prisons. They made a bundle on the war." Liz felt that these "lives underground . . sounded unbearable. The constant fact of their lives was that they moved on and had to depend upon and trust a network of strangers, for their safety." That story on the underground bombers gave Liz considerable critical acclaim, which she rationalized on the grounds that it ran "on a day when nothing much was happening," yet she was grateful for its success.

The follow-up to the bomber story came in her visit to Willy at his home near Saratoga, she having come to ask Willy for a divorce, as it indirectly leads to her employment at *Spindletop*. She met Willy's housemates, stand-offish Ruby (an assumed name—Liz thought she looked more like a Charlotte or Sharon) and crazy Dick ("he was in Vietnam and came back a mess") and saw the seeds of Willy's death, the rifles in the closet, just as she came to see the reality of the passing of her relationship with him: "and we can look at each other and lean toward each other so that our shadows might intersect. But we never touch and we [illegible] spots." Willy's death occurred before the divorce was arranged, and two years before [illegible]

The Houston that serves as a backdrop for Liz's resolution with her past with Willy and, through this, her parents and upbringing, proves, in Furman's treatment of it, paradoxical. On the one hand, it stands in diametric opposition to the New York neighborhood in which Liz grew up and in which she subsequently, financially on her own, lived in her quintessential New York apartment with its north-lit windows. Houston seems uncompromisingly ugly, a city "constantly oozing liquid into its bayous," a city typified by its freeways edged by "nude dancing clubs that were dingy and mean-looking, their entrances flanked by the spread and muscled haunches of painted cut-out women," and defined by the money which allows Houstonians to live well, with groceries from Jarnail's, cocktails at Cody's and vacation homes at Walden, "followed into and sheltered by their dollars." For Liz (who sees Houston with the shock and openness with which I, also a Northeasterner, saw it, lo, these ten years ago), Houston is a city barely shaped by geography, unlike "the elongated almond of Manhattan Island, the three rivers meeting in Pittsburgh," a city instead circumscribed by a freeway system that functions as a "great mother river," and a city the initial unattractiveness of which—to a Northerner accustomed to other places—is countered by "the clear expansive sky" and the astonishing friendliness of those who welcome a stranger: "No one would have welcomed her to New York or pretended she would do anything for the city but try to survive in it." Yet on the other hand, Houston's newness, both in terms of its relative age and Liz's exposure to it, is of necessity deceptive, for it, like New York, has its old families and scandals, so that the "frontier Texas" mentality weighs against the stability established by the Houston rich, who, even if they "started out in the swamp so to speak," still command wary respect. For the crux of this paradox, the novelty and the established grid of relationships, proves to be represented in the Blue Bird Circle Resale Shop on West Alabama, the place which acts for her as a "small crack in time," a respite from the present as well as a connection to the past. Liz combs the racks at the Blue Bird for clothes for herself, thinking all the while what might have suited Carolyn Sylvan or Helen Dayton, much as she sifts through the news clippings and interrogates people from Houston and Galveston concerning the West

Beach murders; she pensively constructs her wardrobe just as she reconstructs the case, and it is fitting that her breakthrough clue comes as a "find" at the Blue Bird—it's new to her, while at the same time being old to those who don't want the Sylvan tragedy to become [illegible].

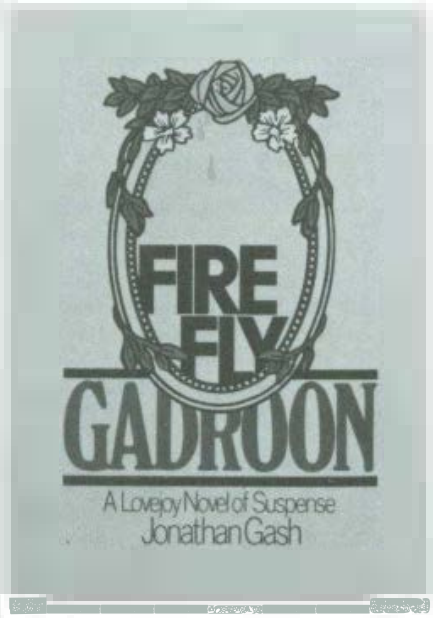
In short, much of *The Shadow Line* is about the old becoming the new, charted in the working out of a mystery, the growth of a city, the resettlement of an individual, and the maturation that time can, but does not always, bring. The Liz at the end of the novel is accordingly a new-old person who has grown and is growing, and who sees the "shadow line" in others' lives because she is passing—no, has passed by the end of the novel—this "region of early youth." Physically there is alteration: "Her hair was shorter now, and it seemed that a different face might be emerging." Emotionally, the "borderline days" ironically give way to an awareness of the "boundaries in . . relation-ship(s)," and Liz, who once said to Willy that she was not yet a "grown-up," finds that she is. Her relationship with David, which she sensed could never be "frivolous," even in a city in which fun was "a goal [toward] which to shape one's experience," proves to be the most serious thing that she can face. She has passed the shadow line. "When she'd first come to Texas she'd had a hard time in parking garages and large parking lots. She never followed the arrows, indeed drove automatically in the opposite direction." Liz comes slowly to realize that to be married to David "the accommodation would be to peace . . and she would. . . follow the arrows in parking lots, making life easier for herself. She would use OUT doors to exit, IN doors [illegible] she and David would live in a house with pecan trees out back and a magnolia in front . . . people would cease asking her how she liked Houston. Her accent would modulate. Already her hair was turning redder. After thirty or forty seasons in the sun her skin would be wrinkled and tanned permanently. She would become a new person . . . married to David, she would be one of the grown-ups." To admit to this possibility of stability, of maturity, to "immigration" into that strange country that is Houston with David is to "acknowledge that she'd moved past Willy," to grant that "it was hard to give up on sad ones . . . though it didn't do to stay with them," and this Liz does decisively at the novel's close.

The Shadow Line charts the growth and change of people, expressed in movement over time and landscape in a way that informs every aspect of the novel, from the larger movement of Liz from New York City to Houston, to the subtler changes marking signposts in alterations of life expectations. "Maybe no one expected to stay in Houston," Liz considers after she hears the callers on KTRH's call-in shows explain, "I've been in Houston thirty-five years now. Never thought I'd stay to spend my life here." Ironically, Houston, the "new" city in transition, raw and growing, is the city in which Liz passes her "shadow line" and elects to stay, and Fo[illegible]ma[illegible]' treatment of Liz's dec[illegible] proves to be ordered and seamless. Furman has, in the final analysis, done a splendid job, and the Sylvan mystery appropriately binds together all the separate threads of plots, past and present, that she devises. *The Shadow Line* is required reading

* * * * * —Susan L. Clark

Night of the Jabberwock by Fredric Brown. Quill Mysterious Classic (Morrow), 1984 (reprint of 1950 publication). 202pp. $3.95

Doc Stoeger, editor of the Carmel City *Clarion,* always goes over to Smiley's bar for a few drinks every Thursday night after "putting the Friday edition to bed." The hottest news is about the church rummage sale—and, on this Thursday night, a divorce settlement. Stoeger wishes, just once, he could run one hot story



On this particular Thursday night, Stoeger is about to be plunged into a nightmare of adventure and mayhem that will provide him with more than one hot story. It begins when two mobsters appear in town and take Stoeger and Smiley hostage. A fiery car crash and lucky escape bring Stoeger and Smiley back into town. A strange little man named Yehudi Smith rings his doorbell and intrigues him by reciting parts of Stoeger's favorite author Lewis Carroll's works.

Yehudi mysteriously informs him about a secret meeting being held in an abandoned house on the edge of town where unknown facts about Carroll will be revealed and discussion held on his works. Through a phone call, Stoeger learns that a lunatic has escaped from a local asylum. Could the lunatic be Yehudi, who is sitting in his living room? It seems likely.

By morning, the town bank will be robbed, four people murdered, and Stoeger will be the major suspect. Doc Stoeger gets a hot story at last!

A chilling, complex crime shapes up as Stoeger tries to prove his innocence. Tightly plotted, this mystery is one that blends the best Americana (small town U.S.A., [illegible] papers and journalists) ingredients to produce a mystery to rival the best of British classics. An exciting conclusion is the capstone to a brilliantly executed murder mystery. Don't miss this one!

—Gloria Maxwell

The Nebraska Quotient by William J Reynolds. St. Martin's, 1984

Reynolds introduces a new character here—most likely a series character—a self-proclaimed "retired" P.I. turned writer who, if this book is any indication, will have a hard time staying retired. In this case, his ex-partner dropping dead in his apartment has a lot to do with it. None of that Sam Spade "He's your partner and you've got to do something about it" junk for Nebraska, though. He gets involved in a case of porno pictures and murder because he smells a buck and because he's trying to help a politician he worked for in his idealistic youth.

Nebraska is a funny character. When he talks, he's tough, but when he thinks he's sort of medium-boiled. It makes for some surprises for the reader when he's thinking one thing and then opens his mouth and out comes this '40s P.I. dialogue.

Case in point: "'Talk from there,' I said. I growled it like a B-picture gangster. The idea was to mask the qua[illegible]er in my v[illegible]." And again: "I looked at him. '"Reach for the ceiling?" Bug off, sonnyboy, I don't take orders from snotnosed wimps who steal their lines from Quickdraw McGraw. "Reach for the ceiling,"' I added, sarcastically, and the kid looked like he'd been slapped with a fresh mackerel. Brave Nebraska. Fearless Nebraska. Macho Nebraska. Ninety percent USDA choice bull, partly to fool the opposition, party to fool myself."

He's fooling somebody all right.

Don't get me wrong. On the whole, I enjoyed the book, in spite of a rather anti-climactic, unbelievable ending, I think Nebraska might have what it takes to stay around awhile. All he's got to do is watch his dialogue, and stop saying "I'm tough" and thinking "I'm scared." It's all right to *be* scared, but don't keep thinking it, and then popping off like some B-movie dick

—Jack Miles

Firefly Gadroon by Jonathan Gash. St Martin's Press, 1982. $11.95

Firefly Gadroon is a notable change from the first Lovejoy novels. In those he was an appealing scamp, obsessed with touching, owning, and being around antiques. But he had enough brains to do a little detection and was not wholly self-centered. Now he seems more of a bottom-of-the-ladder loser who has a certain knowledge and talent about antiques, but everything he touches tarnishes. He has become an adventurer who blatantly uses women and who disregards everyone except a few chosen friends

This escapade begins when an unusual Japanese firefly box is purchased under Lovejoy's nose by an obnoxious but

determined woman. Lovejoy's pursuit of the boxleads him to the discovery of a theftring and the unexpected secrets of an old off-shore fort left over from Worlld War II. The identity of the villian is never in much doubt and suspense about the outcome is mild ratherthan riveting.

Something very unusual occurs at the end ofthebook, however. To say more wouldbe unfair, but it will be interesting to see the direction in which Gash leads Lovejoy with his next book

Valedictlon by Robert B. Parker. NewYork: Delacorte Press/Seymour Lawrence, 1984. $12.95

Valedictlon is Parker's eleventh novel featuring his "tough but sensitive" Boston private detective, Spenser. Its tone deliberately darker than the previous novels, *Valedictlon* charts the parallel plots of the hero's increasing difficulties with Susan Silverman and his growing tendency to become ever more violent. When Susan, armed with her new Ph.D., announces her immediate departure for San Francisco ("I have to be by myself. For a while anyway, I don't want you to know my address"), Spenserenters a period of depression broken up by interest in a new case and a new woman. The [illegible] the kidnapping/runaway of Sherry Spellman,the girlfriend of dance company leaderTommy Banks, with whom Spenser's surrogate son/brother Paul Giacomin (see *Early Autumn*) studies. The new woman is Linda Thomas, an art director for the ad agency across the street from Spenser's office. He's smiled and waved at her for years—Parker's the sort of careful plotcrafter tohave set up this affairbooksago—andthereader can't be surprised at all when Spenser enters into a passionaterelationshipwithher.

Thenew case Spenser investigates exhibits disturbing resonances both to his estrangement from Susan and to his own unresolved feelings aboutthedeathofCandy Sloan (*A Savage Place*), which he feels he could have prevented and which he relives as he sorts out the tangle of connections that explain Sherry's linkage withthe "Bullies," a fringe religious group, and with heroin trafficking. Sherry'sdeparture uncomfiortably echoes Susan's absence, and the unspoken question asked throughout the book, hidden like a palimpsest under and within the text, is the motivation for Susan's move to the West Coast. For Spenser to solve the problem of Sherry'sdisappearance andbehavior, andfor him to understand why Susan left him, he must come to terms with *his* having "in a manner of speaking" leftSusan for another, once with Candy and later with Linda. Spenser's chosen mode of therapyis violence, often in company with his black sidekick, Hawk (like Spenser, Hawk only has one name, a sign, almost, of a return to a more elemental society, one in which violence is more acceptable), while Susan's healing ("I'm. . . I'm not good. I'm in therapy") suits herpast experiences in counseling. The novel ends with Spenser's case resolved, his relationship with Linda on hold (she asks, "You mean we might not be able to be lovers?"), and his ongoing love with Susan fragile, but not destroved.

For the reader, *Valedictlon* proves to be emotionally draining, not merely because Linda, like Candy before her, doesn't have the articulation or emotionaldepth to match Susan, andbecausethe comparison isalways implicit, but also because Spenser is changing, too. As violence flattens him out (hevery nearly dies in this novel, and Hawk calls his return "the Easter season for you, babe"), he becomes less likeable—and likeability has always been one of Spenser's strong points. In *Valedictlon*, Parker has Spenser harrow a hell of his own making and accordingly creates a tension to solve problems, to tidy up loose ends. Susanand Linda—for *Valedictlon's* flashback scenes seem to have served finally to bury Candy—are the loose ends that Parker will no doubt carry over intothe next episodefeaturing his literate series detective, and, if Parker's knowledge of literary tradition andability to create depth of character continue to stand him in good stead, Spenser's descent into depression has been decisively effected and theascentback to goodemotional healthand vigor canbegin. *Valedictlon* is Parker's best novel yet, and most disturbing as well, for the ethical dimension that is so essential to multivolume serial detection (Van de Wetering, Sayers, and Sjöwall/Wahlöö come immediately to mind) is overwhelmingly present. The neat resolution of Spenser's cases stands in fascinating juxtaposition to the tangle of morals, customs, and cultural myths that entwine Parker's hero and hold him fast intheirgrip.

The Fourth Protocol by Frederick Forsyth New York: Viking/Penguin, 1984. 389 pp $17.95

Frederick Forsyth's books should come with a warning: "Caution—This product may be hazardous to your sleep." His latest opus, is no exception. It is almost guaranteed to keep the reader up until threeo'clock In the morning.

The action in *The FourthProtocol* switches betweenEngland andMoscow at anaccelerating pace. In London, a daringjewelry heist fromthe apartment of a BritishSecret Service official yields the thief more than just diamonds. He inadvertently comes into possession of secret government papers, which hefeelsduty-bound tosendbackto the properauthorities—anonymously, of course To the shaken Secret Service, it is immediately clear that there is a traitor among the ranks; someone is sending highly classifieddocuments toMoscow. Butwho?

John Preston, beleaguered member of the Service, is chosen to find the culprit—fast. But Preston soon learns that ominous bits of information, painstakingly gatheredand presented to his bosses, are not taken seriously. He forges on, only to realize thatthethreatto England may be greater than anyone believes.

In the meantime, Russia's Secretary-General hasbigplans.The Sovietshavespent decadespropagating dissentand fear around the globe. The seeds have taken root. Left-wing groups everywhere see only two alternatives—capitulation to Russia or nuclear war. The anti-nuke hysteria in England has proven particularly satisfactory. The Secretary believes that public anxiety has made Britain ready for its first Communist Prime Minister. And he will stop at nothing toensuresuch a coup.The British LeftWing faction is gaining in popularity, and the election is nearing. All that is needed is one incident to induce enough terror in the population to swing the needed votes. It is Russia's last chance. It must succeed.

Thesuspense mounts. The readerbecomes engrossed in a world, not of fantasysuperspies, but of real, blood-and-flesh human beings. It makes the story all the more chilling.

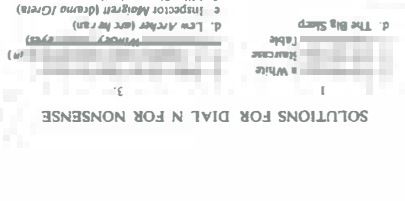
It is a pity that many aficionados of suspense consider such reading "light" and escapist. No such apologies are necessary. Forsyth gives us a look at what has been happening in the realm of international relations, particularly as it relates to the average citizen. Anti-nuclear groups abound and are shriekingly vocal. Who gains and who loses from the ensuing hysterics? Forsyth offers an answer, and it is wellworth thinkingabout.Soon, before it is too late

And what about the consequences of propaganda? A good "misinformation" campaign takesyears,narrowingthe schism between truth and lie toan unintelligiblegray fog. Forsyth appears to take it for granted that people can be and are being duped by distant and mighty powers. Unfortunately, he offers no solution. It is, however, too important an issue to ignore One obvious answer isto develop a heartysuspicionof *any* mass movement; to consider carefully what is really beingsaid—more importantly, why it is beingsaid, and what arethe consequences of such verbiage. It canbe easy toleanback and accept thelureofa powerfulmediablitz. It is even easier to activate the powers of one's ownmindandstartthinking

Frederick Forsyth has given his followers another provocative tale of intrigue. Let us hope that for some he has also given the kernel of an idea. It is up to the reader to rethinkpast tenets andperhaps take a stand. A pro-nuke sentiment won't guarantee popularity. But since when has majority opinioneverproven correct?

The Fourth Protocol is gripping, intense andenlightening—at3:00 A.M.oranyhour

—Virginia Fiddler



RETRO REVIEWS

The Secret Lovers by Charles McCarry Dutton, 1977. 285 pp

Thetitle refers notonlyto those wholove in secret, but to those who love secrets—those who, in theirquest for thetruth,must uncover secretsandthen manage tolive with the consequencesoftheirdeeds

McCarry has written a quartet of novels involving the Christopher family. Theyread like a history of the CIA and do more to humanize theagent than any otherwork I've ever read. Thisone's plotdealswith a blown covert operation to publish a masterpiece work of fiction by a Russian novelist living behind the Iron Curtain. It involves the typical cast of a McCarry book—brilliant menandwomenwhoselivesare complexyet motivated by those human drives commonly found in us all. The dénouement deals with personaltragedy, hasitsrootsinthe Spanish Civil War, and ultimately affects Paul Christopher's personal life.

Once again, McCarry has something very personal tosay to the reader. I'm left somewhat unconvinced by the personal relationships, buttheyworkwellwithintheplot. As a bonus, the European locales are authentic and, rather than being inserted as window-dressing, theytooworkwellwithinthe story

McCarry is a writer I much admire. *The Secret Lovers* is an example of just how good he is.

—George H. Madison

The Shattered Eye by Bill Granger. Crown, 1982. 320pp. $12.95

BillGranger hasbeen compared to Charles McCarry as a writer of espionage. If *The Shattered Eye* is any example, McCarry should violently protest the comparison. Both writers attempt to portray the difficult and ultimately thankless job of the secret agent. Whereas McCarrymanages to make a complicated plotsimpleinthe telling,Granger makesasimpleplot complicated

The Shattered Eye concerns itself with a scheme to drastically upset the balance of power in the world through the manipulation of a computer. Enter a James Bond type to save the day,and, somewhere about midway in the book, the reader realizes hehas readit all before.

This novel is well written but holds no surprises and fails to build suspense. The author manipulates his characters to advance the plot intooobviousa fashion. We see very smart people doing verystupid things. The opposition has a monopoly on intelligence, but our intrepid hero, a courageous woman, and an eccentric bureaucrat overcome the odds against and save the day for the good guys.

Devotees of Bill Grangershould be aware that the character, the November Man, is once again on the scene. Granger does manage toconjure upthe frightening prospect of an impendingdisaster should we place an over-reliance on computers instead of on humansand accurately depicts the mindlessness of terrorism. On balance, I wasn't impressed.

—George H. Madison

* * * * *

Natural Causes by Jonathan Valin. Congdon & Weed 1983.

With the further adventures of Harry Stoner, Jonathan Valin continues to impress me. He took what started out to be a "Who cares?" read and hooked me. I don't usually stay with a book if I'm not enjoying it, but, having enjoyed Valin's other Stone novels, I stuck it out and was rewarded.

Stoner is hired by a soapopera sponsor to go to California and find out if there was anything "smelly" about the death of their head writer. I guess it was inevitable that ValinwouldgetStoneroutof Cincinnatiand to L.A., but I much preferred the Cincinnati scenes in this novel to the L.A. ones.Stoner is a fish out of water, although he handles it very well and even manages to find a cop to helphimout—formoney,ofcourse.

Valin is doing what Robert Parkershould be doing. He's giving his readers their money's worth. All you can ask from this book is a faster start, but, considering what you end up with—a well-written, generally fast-paced, pure P.I. novel—it's forgiveable.

—Jim Fixx

PAPER CRIMES

By David Christ

Trace by Warren Murphy (Signet, 1983), $2.95. **Trace and 47 Miles of Rope** by Warren Murphy (Signet, 1984), $2.95.

by a shortened form of his surname, not by his given name. He is wisecracking, reckless, yet casual, unpredictable. He is

n the books in which he appears that the mystery sometimes seems almost forgotten. And he's pushing forty.

Only the last of these clues indicates that he is not I. M. Fletcher, the central

Tracy, a.k a. Trace. An insurance investigator living in Las Vegas, he is the creation of Warren Murphy. Murphy's original idea

But if Murphy is to some extent in Mcdonald's debt, that is about all the one can say against *Trace* and *Trace and 47 Miles of Rope*. And that debt is not so great as it might at first appear, for Trace is, in his peculiar way, an ingratiating and satisfying character. Peculiar, that is, in both senses of the word: Trace is, in the

to offend those who deserve it is offset by his inability to prevent himself from offending or betraying those who don't. Murphy goes out of his way to make Trace seem callous by having him refer to his two children, who live with his ex-wife, only as "what's his name and the girl." And finally, as Trace says, "I don't want to be a

enough finding a mystery to solve, let alone solving it. The insurance company that retains him has sent him to New Jersey, where the holder of a policy has died after naming the sanatorium where he spent his last days as his beneficiary. The policy-

policy. But Trace, very early on, realizes that their claim is pure nonsense, and his

on another patient at the sanatorium, a friend of the president of the insurance company. Three quarters of the way through the book, Trace still believes that "there was no murder plot, no reason. . . to

is considerably more obvious, but that doesn't seem to improve Trace's ability to solve it. The Las Vegas home of a beautiful countess, who is also Trace's friend, has been broken into, her jewelry stolen, and one of her employees killed. The employee was insured by Trace's company, and Trace is assigned to find the murderer. With the insurance company's management and sales force in town for a convention

Trace is under particular pressure to solve the case, especially because one vice-president is eager to see Trace fail. Yet Trace is frustratingly slow to investigate angles that are apparent even to the reader. It's not that he's unintelligent; in fact, he is clever enough to realize, as the police do not, that one object which should have been at the scene of the crime is not. It's

is unusual by its presence than by its absence. But he is content to take his time. He compares himself working on a case to a small dog with a big bone—as the dog needs only time before it chews the bone to nothing, so Trace needs only time and a certain doggedness before everything falls into place. Moreover, he lacks training, and in this book his father, a former New York cop, runs down many leads for him. Michiko Mangini, a part-Japanese, part-Italian woman who lives with Trace, also

But Trace is redeemed partly by the lunatic, and entirely agreeable, sense of invention with which Murphy endows him. Trace tries repeatedly to get Walter Marks, the antagonistic vice-president, to invest in hopeless get-rich-quick schemes. In one, he intends to manufacture signs, like those on mbulances, that are spelled backwards, olaced on automobiles, and read in the

cularly amusing because he has thought it ou in this much detail: "I tried R-A-C first for car, but those letters won't reverse in a mirror without special printing, so O-U-T-A works just perfect." Other inspired moments include Trace's reaction to a

for finding deserving targets for insolence—or his explanation of why a Gilbert and Sullivan composition is like a hockey game.

What's more, if Trace is morally suspect,

realize that there is a point below which he will not allow himself to sink. It's a nicely portrayed struggle with himself. And if his detection is uninspired, he's right to assume that, if he simply sticks to a case long enough, things will fall into place. Murphy

a period during which Trace seems to make little progress, things do come together, with Trace poised to take advantage of the convergence.

There is a small cast of characters

only Michiko Mangini, who's more commonly called Chico, and the dour Walter Marks, whom Trace likes to call Groucho (I hope that in the next book there will be a character named Harpo),

forbidding mother. Although they are depicted in varying degrees of detail, all are vividly portrayed. Chico is especially interesting: as a blackjack dealer and part-time prostitute, she provides a strong

character.

Trace and *of Rope*

series, is Robert E. Lee Hunter, a writer. As a reporter for the *Detroit Free Press* in the late '60s and early '70s, Hunter was the intimate friend of a student radical, Jack

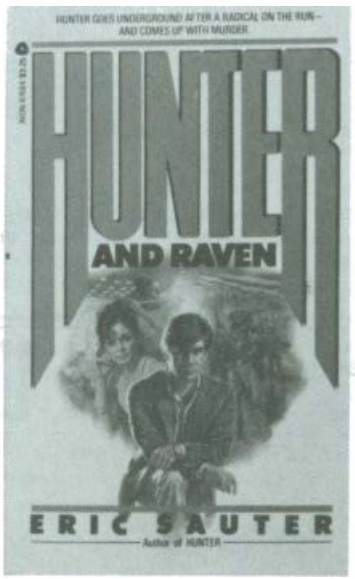
is living quietly in New Jersey and writing only occasionally; Raven went underground

in 1972 and is presumed dead. Hunter's quiet life is disrupted, though, when Raven's brother, an affluent lawyer, produces evidence suggesting that Raven is alive and hires Hunter to find him. From this starting point, Sauter develops a complex, satisfying plot and combines it with nicely realized characters to produce an enjoyable novel

Sauter's skill at characterization shows to particular advantage in his treatment of Hunter's and Raven's radical friends. As Hunter remembers them, they are a group boundloosely by shared political and social convictions and by an attachment to Raven. In thecourse of his search, Hunter looks up these old friends and learns that they have retreated from politics and revolution to private, and varied, concerns: One is a music producer, another an official in a religious cult, a third the wife of a carpenter living in rural Colorado, a fourth the curator of an archive of radical memorabilia, a fifth a drug dealer and addict. Any sense of camaraderie has disappeared; each feels either contempt or indifference for the others.

But Sauterimprovesupon what might all too easily have been stock characters by creating underlying personality traits that are reflected in the group's earlier commitment to radicalism and in their present day, more diverse commitments. Moreover, he doesn't discuss these traits explicitly but suggests them by the contrast between past and present behavior. The cultist, for one example, is a born follower, someone who needs a cause, or better yet a person, to attach himself to. He finds both first in the radical movement and Jack Raven, and, after that movement dies and Rawe disappears, in a religion that depends on the personality of its Indian-guru founder. The group comprises distinct characters who had varied reasons to band together for a brief period of their lives.

Precisely because they are so dictinct, however, they needed something more than an abstraction, a cause, to hold them together, no matter how loosely. That something, of course, was Jack Raven; Sauter uses these characters to suggest the power of Raven'spersonality. Undoubtedly, Raven's personality needs to be unusually appealing; there's no other reason for Hunter to want to look for him, and little other reason for the reader to be



interested in Hunter's search. But to define it too explicitly would be to spoil the book's suspense, for that hinges not so much on where Raven is (if he is alive), or whether he can be found, but on what he may have become. To define him too clearly, then, would be to give too much away, but to establish him as a vague, ubiquitous presence is to give the book its motivating force. Sauter does this nicely.

Hunter's character is well developed, and his motivations for undertaking his search—he's not a detective, after all—are also suggested, rather than spelled out, nicely. Hunter lives with a woman, a character who appears in the two earlier books; she is engaging in her own right, but also serves to bring out aspects of Hunter's character that the action-oriented plot would otherwise obscure. There are two other characters worth noting: a private detective who offers to help Hunter in his investigation, and a former FBI agent who spent much of his career chasing Raven. Both are surprising

The novel does have a few problems. One occurs when Hunter and Jamie Hale, the woman with whom he lives, arrive home to find that someone has broken in and attempted to beat their dog to death. The problem is not that the attempt seems in any way unbelievable, but that, unless I really missed something, it is never explained. One can make a reasonable guess at who did it and why, but one never knows for certain. Fortunately, this oversighthasnoreal bearing onthevalidityofthe plot, which is quite complex and yet holds together very well.

When Hunter interviews his radical friends, few trust him, and several ask whether he'scollectingmaterial for another of his books. If so, they won't speak with him. In each case, he says he is not, and the reader, who knows that Hunter was recruited for the search and has not considered writing about it, believes him. Yet the reader is also holding in his hands the very book, told in the first person as if by Hunter, that Hunter promised not to write. This contradiction is perhaps small and easily overlooked, but it's unfortunate that an author who tookso much carewith his characters did not consider the role of his narratorequally carefully

Even if slightly flawed, however, the novel contains writing that one has every reason to expect from a professional novelist, butall toooftendoesnotget □

THE PAPERBACK REVOLUTION

By Charles Shibuk

LAWRENCE BLOCK

Series character Evan Michael Tanner makes his debut in **The Thief Who Couldn't Sleep** (1966) (Jove), a fast-paced, readable, and entertaining—if slightly absurd—chase novel about the search for a valuable cache of gold coins hidden under an old Turkish house. Prominently featured are secret British papers, an abortive Balkan revolution, the CIA, and a first-person narrator who never sleeps. You wouldn't believeanyof this for a minute, butyou will enjoy it.

SIMON BRETT

Murder in theTitle (1983) (Dell) opens at a provincial repertorytheatre withthe troubled Charles Paris essaying the small role of a corpse in a fifth-rate thriller. Life begins to imitate art when a sword thrust narrowly misses giving Paris the chance to bring a greaterdegree ofrealismto his performance And then the complications ensue in one of Brett's better tales.

JAMES M. CAIN

The Baby in the Icebox and Other Short Fiction (1981) (Penguin) contains a fifteen-page biographical noteand introductions to the various sections by editor Roy Hoopes Theten entries in thesketchesand dialogues section should be of interest only to Cain specialists. Much better are the nine short stories, many of which are unfamiliar. Best of all is the excellent novelette"Moneyand the Woman" (a.k.a. "The Embezzler").

[redacted]

A professionalhuntertravelsacrossmuch of Nazi-occupied Europe, hoping to reach England, while pursuingviolentvengence for his murdered love in **Rogue Justice** (1982) (Penguin). This novel is a direct sequel to Household's masterpiece *Rogue Male*, and, while it lacks the power and desperate urgencyof its illustrious predecessor, it does manage to generate considerable excitement of its own.

BRIAN LYSAGHT

Special Circumstances (1983) (Avon), featuring recent law school graduate Benjamin AaronO'Malley, is set in a prestigious Los Angeles law firm and involves financial manipulation, legal skulduggery,

and multiple murder. It's a highly competent piece of work, and its ending is particularly strong and satisfying. It's also one of the better first novels of 1983, and shows much promise for even better things to come.

The Red House Mystery (1922) is a charming and classic detective novel that was published as #7 in Dell's Murder Ink series some four years ago. It's back again in all its glory. Can Anthony Berkeley's *The Poisoned Chocolates Case* and *Trial and Error* be far behind?

A lovers' meeting at a country estate culminates in the murder of a third party, and resourceful poacher Dan Mallett is forced to flee the scene of the crime, aided and abetted by a nine-year-old girl. Dashing all over the countryside to evade capture, Mallett devises a trap to catch an ingenious murderer and prove his own innocence in the short and suspenseful **Bait on the Hook** (1983) (Perennial)

HENRY WADE

Heir Presumptive (1935) (Perennial) is a masterpiece of the inverted form which narrates Eustace Hendel's efforts to kill several of his relatives in order to inherit a title and a huge fortune. It's lighter in style than usual for Wade, and compulsively readable. Its only flaw is that its ironic ending can easily be anticipated.

(NOTE: This author is one of the really major mystery writers, and he's at the top of his form in *Heir Presumptive*.)

DONALD E. WESTLAKE

Many of this author's hardboiled essays in amorality are signed "Richard Stark" and feature a professional thief named Parker who is often involved in the execution of big capers

His impressive debut **The Hunter** (1962) shows Parker seeking revenge after a near-fatal betrayal by an associate, and was filmed as *Point Blank* (1967). **The Man with the Get-away Face** (1963) starts with Parker's attempt to evade the vengence of the New York mob via plastic surgery. **The Outfit** (1963) selects a hit man to nullify Parker, but he fails, and the next move is up to Parker. **The Mourner** (1963) involves Parker's effort to steal a valuable statue from a Soviet diplomat. **The Score** (1964) presents Parker's most ambitious attempt in planning a big caper He intends to rob an entire town.

Slayground (1971) is set in an amusement park where Parker is hiding with a large amount of stolen money and being pursued by many gangsters after the money and his life. This is a tense and exciting chase novel, and the best of the series

All of the above mentioned titles have been reprinted by Avon □

A CATALOGUE OF CRIME

By Jacques Barzun and Wendell Hertig Taylor

S254 Chesterton, G. K.
"Dr. Hyde, Detective, and the White Pillars Murder"
Chesterton Review, May 1984

Yet another "unknown" story by the prolific prophet and verbal magician, but one that will be remembered as interesting rather than successful. It presents the powerful figure of a private investigator, who hires two eager young men as assistants and plays tricks to season them with a little humility as they investigate a bizarre murder. The least likely suspect is tagged implausibly at the end. (By the way, this reprint is flanked by several good essays about Father Brown, who is the subject of the whole issue.)

S255 Cross, Amanda
Sweet Death, Kind Death

Nobody knows the academic scene better than this writer—or her heroine Kate Fansler. But in the previous and the present story, both set in colleges, one finds less and less to enjoy there vicariously. As Kate is retained to throw light on an odd suicide a year after its occurrence and she performs, one is struck by the prevailing contentiousness in her and everybody else. The complex plot unwinds amid witty talk charged with current social issues; but one admires the pastiche without being warmed, like Kate's lawyer husband, who takes to teaching, perhaps to regain a bit of her attention. One wonders: Is Amanda cross?

S256 Dunn, Finley Peter
"Sherlock Holmes" in *Observations by Mr. Dooley*
R. H Russell 1902

The sage of Archey Road is little read these days, and learned Sherlockians under 65 are not likely to know this excellent sketch. Besides, they probably can't read the pure Irish. Mr. Dooley clearly perceived at that quite early date that Holmes was not "th' ordh'nry flycoplike Mulcahy," and he shows that he also understood the whole art of detection as expounded by the sage of Baker Street. He practices on his friend Hennessey by calling him Watson—not a compliment, he remarks: "Watson knows even less than ye do." But read the masterly sketch, which involves a dog in the daytime, as well as an "injiction of morpheen."

S257 Gilbert, Michael
The Black Seraphim
Harp 1984

After 37 years, the author has returned to Melchester, the scene of his first "crime," *Close Quarters*. Though still a cathedral town, its atmosphere has changed, its denizens have become more modern—but not less murderous. The antagonism among the well-drawn clerics arises from business tinged with corruption and mingled with church politics. The young barrister on a visit disentangles motives, getting rather manhandled in the process by his tough lady love: Gilbert at his best.

Of the several mystery series currently produced by the prolific Bill Knox, the one featuring First Officer Webb Carrick of the Fishery Protection cruiser *Marlin* is perhaps the most consistently interesting. The present tale deals with heroin smuggling in the Hebrides and features a charming lady doctor as well as a novel use of lobster pots. A sound piece of work, with a good chase and a smash finish to end it all.

S259 Meyer, Peter
The Yale Murder
Empire Books 1982

A shade too journalistic at first, this recital of Richard Herrin's killing of Bonnie Garland gets less self-conscious as it proceeds, and it winds up with an excellent account of the

trial [illegible] ng pair lived together at Yale in the [illegible] ncipating '70s and Bonnie, [illegible] possessive and hammered her to death. The crime was unquestionably premeditated, but the jury, confused by the experts, rejected both "murder" and "insanity." The author criticizes the experts and the options, without [illegible]

S260 Oates, Joyce Carol
Mysteries of Winterth[illegible]
Dutton 1984

This long novel is not for he who likes to run as he reads. It does contain mysteries—one of them a locked-room affair—and there is genuine detection by an intelligent agent. But he is also intellectual and widely learned, and he philosophizes like the author besides acting out for her and her readers an elaborate reconstruction of past times and literary attitudes. The book is in fact the third [illegible] American life at the turn of the nineteenth century in its own contemporaneous terms. Each part may be enjoyed separately, but only at the cost of spotting and savoring the period manners, the parody of styles, and the themes applicable to present-day emotions. If read for the plot, as Dr. Johnson said of Richardson's *Clarissa* the thing would make the reader go and hang himself.

[illegible]
A Novena for Murder
Scrib 1984

The heroine and amateur detective is Sister Mary Helen, tough and elderly and also full of charity. Her appointment to Mt. St. Francis College for Women in San Francisco makes her fear a life of little activity. But she is soon drawn into the action surrounding the murder of a professor, which she feels compelled to investigate despite the less than hearty welcome given her by the two officers in charge. The discovery of a second body on [illegible] so quite competently All in all, [illegible] addition to the churchly genre.

S262 Phillpotts, Eden
George and Georgina
Hutch 1952

This long-lived author's output was so vast that even an alert admirer of his mystery fictions periodically stumbles on a new one by accident. To say "new one" is slightly misleading True, this tale is an original conception of Phillpotts's latter years, and a very entertaining one it is; but the highly ingenious central problem was written out long before and published as a short story entitled "Three Men." What is delightful about the novel is the leisurely development of George's character and the sustained humor of his relation to Georgina and others. The irony of her narrative is an unforgettable triumph. To say more would give away too much; but it may and must be affirmed that the book is a genuine mystery story, free of any dragged-in significance □

Minor Offenses

By Edward [illegible] Hoch

Because I try to keep track of mystery short stories published in unlikely places, I'm frequently [illegible] mystery magazines—they can be found Looking over my notes for the past three months, I'm a bit surprised myself to find that the mystery short story is alive and well in all sorts of places.

[illegible] need to be told that the weekly magazine *Woman's World* publishes a mystery short-short in every issue. A quarterly magazine called *Pulpsmith* publishes articles, fiction, poetry, and serials, and a typical issue generally includes a few mystery authors. Joyce Harrington and Donald Olson both had new stories in the Spring 1984 issue. The [illegible] the August 1984 issue of *Playboy* carried a fine new Matt Scudder mystery, "By the Dawn's Early Light" by Lawrence Block. The story is also included in the first annual anthology of the Private Eye Writers of America, *The Eyes Have It*, edited by Robert Randisi and published by The Mysterious Press. More on the other contributions to this [illegible] combining mystery and science fiction most effectively, and he had a computer detective puzzle, "Pattern," in the July issue of *Fantasy & Science Fiction*. Unfortunately, his efforts were sabotaged by a misplaced column of type near the end of the story. Since it's only four pages long, let's hope F&SF will consider printing a corrected version.

A few issues back, I mentioned the British novelist and short-story writer Reginald Hill. He has now been announced as the winner of the annual CWA Short Story Competition, sponsored jointly by Veuve Clicquot and the *London Telegraph Sunday Magazine*. His winning story, "The Worst Crime Known to Man," is a fine tale of a game of tennis played under trying circumstances in the colonial Africa of a generation ago. It's the sort of story one might expect from John Collier or Roald Dahl—or Reginald Hill. W[illegible] understand American publication is due in 1985.

Speaking of awards, by the time this is published the Mystery Writers of America will be close to presenting its second annual Robert L. Fish Award for the best short story by a new author. My candidate at this point, based upon the first ten issues of the 1984 mystery magazines, would have to be "The Pickup" by Peggy Wurtz Fisher, in the October issue of EQMM. The issue is an unusually good one, with a fine story by Shannon OCork and an excellent Inspector Cockrill novelette by Christianna Brand. [illegible] there's a story by Jane Rice, "The Mystery of the Lion Window," in the October issue of AHMM. Rice has appeared in Hitchcock anthologies, but this is her first appearance in the magazine *The Saint Magazine* has moved [illegible] breather after publication of its third issue.

Just recently, I came across Ruth Rendell's fine story of death in wartime England, "The Orchard Walls," in the August 1983 issue of *Ms. Magazine*. Let's hope it's included in an anthology or collection soon so it can reach a wider audience of mystery readers.

Ruth Rendell is one of the few mystery writers whose short work is regularly collected by her publisher. We wish there were ma[illegible] bring a collection of recent mysteries by Lawrence Block *Like a Lamb to Slaughter* (Arbor House, $14.95), and a second collection of John D. MacDonald's early pulp stories, *More Good Old Stuff* (Knopf, $15.95).

Although this column is limited to short stories and collections, it seems the best place to mention a new anthology of short novels, that odd length which has never quite caught [illegible] fiction. *Baker's Dozen: 13 Short Mystery Novels*, edited by Bill Pronzini and Martin H. Greenberg, reprints both familiar and little-known works by some top writers—Fredric Brown, Raymond Chandler, Leslie Charteris, Daphne DuMaurier, Mignon Eberhart, Erle Stanley Gardner, John D. MacDonald, Ross Macdonald, Ed McBain, Hugh Pentecost, Bill Pronzini, Rex Stout, and Cornell [illegible]

The mystery short novel was not always a stepchild. During the period of 1934 to 1956, the *American* magazine ran a mystery short novel in almost every issue, as Rita and Jon Breen reported in these pages recently. Their anthology of a dozen of these short novels, titled *American Murders*, will be published in 1985 by Garland. We'll be watching for it. □

DIAL N FOR NONSENSE

By Louis Phillips

1. Can you guess which mystery titles are represented by the following word play? (NOTE: articles—*the, an, a*—may be omitted.)

a. WHIWOMANTE

b.
```
    E  S
  S
A       A
  C   I
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c. CARDS

d. SLEEP

2. Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Arthur Train.
Arthur Train who?
Arthur Trains running this late at night?

3. DOWN THESE MEAN STREETS A FICTIONAL DETECTIVE MUST GO. In the sentences below, the last names of well-known fictional detectives have been concealed. Can you find them?

EXAMPLE: X-rays show how alco*hol mes*ses up the human liver

ANSWER: HOLMES

a. The sailor cries out, "Bob, row near the shore."

b. I saw the person murdered up in Poe's attic.

c. When Dorothy Sayers swims, eyes follow her

d. The wolfhound—in a wide arc, he ran around the pool, and barked at the drowned man.

e. When I appear in drama, I, Greta Garbo, wish to be left alone.

f. For my horse: pile its hay near the door of the stable.

g. For immigrants, getting off Ellis Island was a happy experience.

h. "It's Pa!" Dennis called out to his mother.

4. On inviting Cyril McNeile to supper, and receiving an enthusiastic response:

Supper,
Sapper?
Super!

5. The most unfair mystery writer's palindrome:

None miss Simenon.

Solution on page 88

LETTERS

From John L. Apostolou:

Thanks for printing Donald Westlake's talk on the hardboiled dicks in TAD 17:1. It is, I think, the finest piece of mystery fiction criticism since Raymond Chandler's "The Simple Art of Murder" (1944). Westlake's thesis that the private eye form is essentially dead should generate some heated discussion. I am looking forward to comments on the talk from TAD readers, especially from writers who are currently producing private eye novels. □

From Robert E. Skinner:

In regard to William F. Nolan's rather hysterical review of Diane Johnson's new book on Dashiell Hammett, may I interject a few calm words?

First of all, it is true that Johnson's book is not as well researched or as well written as any of the other books about Hammett. In my opinion, Nolan's two are the best ever written. He obviously left very few stones unturned in his quest to unravel the life of a man whom he obviously admires a great deal. I personally feel that, if he had gotten access to the letters and had the full co-operation of Lillian Hellman, we would never need another book about Hammett.

On the other hand, his condemnation of Johnson's work is not only heavy-handed but reaches the point of being unfair. In the course of writing my own book about the hardboiled genre, I read all of the books about Hammett (including Dennis Dooley's valuable little *Dashiell Hammett,* which Nolan forgot to mention) and found that, while they varied in quality, thrust, and tone, each had something to offer the scholar and enthusiast. It is somewhat unsportsmanlike of Nolan to call Johnson's book "sick, weak, and ugly."

The sad thing is that the letters in Johnson's book, which Nolan derides as dull and useless, reveal Hammett himself as the sick, weak, and ugly one. We see, from his own words, how lonely, confused, and pitiable he really was. The romantic façade of the tough, determined gumshoe-turned-mystery writer dissolves under the impact of these unimportant and sometimes poignant notes.

For all of its faults, Johnson's book does something that none of the others about Hammett have: it humanizes him. Nolan's books have tended to romanticize someone who, to put it mildly, was not a very nice man. As a scholar interested in this field, I don't care about this. I want to know about Hammett, even if my notions about him don't survive my study of him. In learning, there is often pain.

As someone only beginning to write in this field, I hold an established old-timer such as Nolan in high esteem; he has succeeded in an area which I think is important. But I cannot agree with the tone of his review, because it is obvious that his emotions have gotten in the way of his judgment. Diane Johnson's biography has value for anyone interested in Hammett if, for no other reason, because it presents new information and a new view of the man. Her mistakes and omissions are deplorable, but anyone studying Hammett would be foolish to stop at the first book he reads.

From G. Spencer:

Your coverage of Dashiell Hammett in the "Collecting Mystery Fiction" column (TAD 17:2) did not mention Secret Agent X-9's two ventures in motion pictures. Scott Kolk played the role in a twelve-chapter Universal serial in 1937, titled appropriately enough *Secret Agent X-9.* In 1945, the same motion picture company released a thirteen-chapter serial with the same title, but with a different plot, starring the more famous Lloyd Bridges.

From Joe R. Christopher:

A couple of comments about fairly recent letter columns, if I may. First, in TAD 16:4, Bill Blackbeard mentions that Cleve Cartmill wrote "Henry Kuttner's" *Man Drowning.* I appreciate the information, but the fact that Kuttner and Moore did not write the book has been available for some time. Anthony Boucher, in his "The Mystery Novels of Henry Kuttner" (1958, reprinted in Boucher's *Multiplying Villainies* for Bouchercon IV in 1973), commented that he had "heard, on reasonably good authority, that a third hand was involved in the writing." I was happy when I saw that, for I had been disappointed by *Man Drowning.* And I'm happy to learn now who it was who did the writing. I rather enjoyed a couple of Cartmill's stories in the early days of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction.* But that doesn't create in me a desire to go back and re-read *Man Drowning.* (I consider it a pity that Kuttner used his name for commercial purposes like that, but no doubt there are sometimes extreme financial pressures on commercial writers.)

Blackbeard goes on about Jack Vance's use of the Ellery Queen name in his next paragraph, and about Al Hubin not noting the use in *The Bibliography of Crime Fiction;* of course, the second edition, *Crime Fiction 1749-1980,* is out—and it has Vance and some other users of the Queen byline listed. But I just checked: it still lists *Man Drowning* as a Henry Kuttner work.

In TAD 17:1, Frank D. McSherry calls for a *Queen's Quorum* of nonfiction on the detective story. In my opinion, Jon L. Breen's *What About Murder?: A Guide to Books about Mystery and Detective Fiction* (1981) has the option sewed up. I am not happy about Breen's decision to omit Poe, Dickens, Graham Greene, and some others whose major reputations are outside the mystery field—I think that, in those cases, there should be a note at the start of the checklists that they are selective, but basic bibliographies and biographies, and significant books with criticism of the detective fiction, should be listed. But, outside of that, anything adverse I said would be quibbling. (I don't mind quibbling and I may write a short note or two for TAD or *The Mystery Fancier* in a year or so about Breen's book.) Of course, Breen is not just listing the top items on detective fiction, but his annotations indicate clearly enough what he thinks good and bad, and why. I'm not trying to discourage anyone from doing a list of what criticism he holds dear in the mystery field—after all, that sort of thing is fun—but so far as serious checklists of critical or historical books go, unless a writer sees a clear way to surpass Breen, the [illegible] d.

✔ *Anent Jon Breen and* WHAT ABOUT MURDER? *we are pleased to announce that Jon has offered to provide updates to the book on a regular basis in our pages. The first installment appears in this issue.* —*Michael*

From Jeffrey M. Gamso:

Anne Ponder ("*The Big Sleep*: Romance Rather Than Detective Film," TAD 17:2) suffers from at least two serious misunderstandings which substantially weaken her essay. First, she believes that detection—the solving of a single problem by means of logical inferences and deduction—is or ought to be the central characteristic of the hardboiled detective form. Second, she believes that the hardboiled detective tale and the romance tale are examples of mutually exclusive genres.

Genre theory in general is built on the basic assumptions that understanding differences results in improving writing and provides richer reading experiences. But genres need not be formulaic. And not all fiction written within the broad outlines of a formula needs to fit neatly within the confines of a single genre.

Of course, the Hawkes version of *The Big Sleep* is a romance. So is Chandler's novel. So, for that matter, are *The Maltese Falcon*

(both the Hammett and the Huston versions), *The Moving Target* (and its filmed version, *Harper*), and all the other hardboiled novels and films of detection. Why? Because, quite simply, the hardboiled genre is a species of the romance. It is only incidentally concerned with detection (the incident is vital, certainly, but more of that later). As Chandler so well understood, in his genre "the ideal mystery was one you would read if the end was missing." That's surely not true of a form the essence of which is deductive problem solving.

From Chretien de Troyes' Arthurian tales to Jack Schaeffer's Western classic *Shane*, from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* to *The Last of the Mohicans*, and from Edmund Spenser to Robert B. Parker's Spenser, there is little difference in structural archetype. The Western took the knight from medieval Europe to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century frontier America. Hammet and his cohort of followers brought him to the twentieth-century city. Marlowe as knight is no different in function than Sir Lancelot or the Lone Ranger. But he's also no different in function than the Continental Op or Mike Hammer or Harry Stoner

The archetypal private eye is a freelance detective. Like the knight errant (from whose armory we draw the term *free-lance*), he takes on a quest, not for truth, but for justice. His adventure, like the knight's, is episodic not because his creators are incapable of linear plotting (though, of course, they may be) but because justice doesn't follow a linear progression. Rather, it works by fits and starts. And the quest continues though the problem may be solved. The Falcon, like the grail, is elusive

Spade knew Brigid O'Shaughnessy had murdered Miles Archer as soon as he heard the details of his partner's death. Were *The Maltese Falcon* a simple tale of deductive problem solving, it would have ended quickly. But Spade waits to send her over because simple truths, data, are insufficient for him. The opening problem (Archer's murder in the *Falcon*, Sean Regan's disappearance in *The Big Sleep*) is but the end of a loose thread. Solving it doesn't do much to stop the sweater from unraveling

At the end of Book VI of Edmund Spenser's epic romance *The Faerie Queene*, Sir Calidore captures the Blatant Beast. But he and we know that the creature cannot be long contained: "he broke his iron chain / And got into the world at liberty again" (VI.vii.38). The solution matters, but it's never enough.

The hardboiled tale is romance not because it fits into a formula but because it is an outgrowth of that formula, blending the quest with the puzzle. But it is also detection. The puzzle, incidental or not, is central to the plot, is its motive and its conclusion.

What is wrongheaded about Ponder's analysis of *The Big Sleep* are the assumptions of exclusivity and of formula. Both because the film is a romance and because it does not adhere to some abstracted formula, it cannot be detection. Nonsense. There is no reason it cannot be both. Indeed, the hardboiled tale of detection is necessarily both.

Ponder's argument looks strongest when she quotes Chandler on love in the mystery story. If he thought love doesn't belong in detection, she wants us to conclude, then it obviates detection as a possibility for a tale in which it appears prominently. But Marlowe does find love in Chandler (*Playback* and the fragment of the *Poodle Springs Story*). Do we conclude that he's no longer a detective? It's true that *Playback* isn't very good Chandler, and *Poodle Springs* doesn't look promising. But is that enough? I don't think so. The rule Chandler endorses is no more meaningful than the rules propogated by S. S. Van Dine or by the Detection Club.

The formulas exist to be broken: "To exceed the limits of a formula without destroying it," Chandler wrote, "is the dream of [illegible] writer who is not a hopeless hack."

From Michael T. Nietzel and Robert Baker

We couldn't help but be amused by Lawrence Fisher's letter of quibble about our Eye to Eye Survey published in TAD 16:3, particularly his boast about having just finished his doctoral dissertation. We received our Ph.D.s in 1952 (Baker) and 1973 (Nietzel) and between us have been in the business of training Ph.D. candidates for more than forty years. We doubt whether any of TAD's readers care, just as we doubt whether any readers are impressed with Fisher's credentials. Fisher appears to have acquired the level of perspective and arrogance one comes to expect of a recent Ph.D

However, because the readership of TAD might be inclined to accept Fisher's pronouncements as fact on statistical matters and survey methodology, we do want to offer the following corrections to his misstatements and responses to his nitpicks.

1. It is simply not true that a 50–60% response rate is the minimum accepted for questionnaire surveys. We challenge Fisher to find a majority of surveys in any literature he chooses that attain an average return rate of 50–60%. We agree with Michael Seidman and stated in our article that our return rate was a disappointment to us

2. We mean by "good deal" what any one familiar with the English language means by it. We see no reason to express this judgment in quantitative terms; if Fisher feels compelled to, that's his problem. Would readers of TAD feel more informed if we talked about confidence intervals, Spearman vs. Pearson coefficients, Type I vs. Type II errors? We doubt it, and that's why such information is not included. As Fisher should have recognized, the results of this survey were presented informally and for an audience that is largely unfamiliar with statistical concepts. We could care less whether he or anyone else regards this survey as "scientific" or "pseudo-scientific." We intended it as neither.

3. Relationships in the social sciences are replete with correlations of .30. The advice to not "bother" with correlations of this magnitude is absurd. However, if one follows Fisher's advice and mistrusts a correlation of .30, one ends up with a very similar conclusion to the one we made: familiarity and final grade were reminimally related to each other in Part II of the survey

4. Finally, after reading Fisher's letter, we are not in the least surprised that our use of "good sense" in evaluating our data offended him. When he learns more about data and hardboiled fiction, he may be able to call upon "good sense" of his own. Until then, our grades for Lawrence Fisher are:

[illegible]

From Jackie Geyer

I am a devout Sherlockian and cannot, therefore, quibble with the results of TAD's "readers' survey." However, I am also an ardent Thorndykean and am amazed that Thorndyke was barely represented in the survey results

Though long familiar with TAD, I am a very recent subscriber and was not among those polled for this survey—nor, apparently, were any other members of the R. Austin Freeman Society! Of the 847 responses, is it possible that most of those readers have never read Thorndyke?

I venture to say that readers who are devotees of Sherlock Holmes would be equally smitten with Dr. John Thorndyke for all the same reasons. After all, Thorndyke is second *only* to Holmes!

I call upon TAD to help in rectifying this deplorable situation by giving Freeman and Thorndyke some coverage in future issues. Enough with the hardboiled dicks already! Let's have some super sleuths from an earlier, bygone era!

Okay, okay, "Enough with the hardboiled dicks already!" is it? I've just taken a count, beginning with TAD 14:1, the first issue for which I was responsible. In three and a half years, then, in fourteen issues, we've published approximately 129 articles. Thirty-five of those articles deal with hardboiled fiction directly or otherwise. That number represents only 27% of the material which has appeared. Hardly an overabundance, I think.

I look forward to receiving an article on Thorndyke . . . perhaps from you? . . . as well as articles about other super sleuths from an earlier, bygone era. Otherwise, the mean streets will take over. —*Michael*

From Jon L. Breen:

The *American Murders* anthology which Rita and I are editing has been contracted for by Garland. The TAD publication of our

American Magazine checklist has brought forth additions and corrections from a number of readers. Most importantly, Bob Samoian notes that we left out Dorothy B Hughes's "The Wobblefoot," which appeared in the July 1942 issue. Brian KenKnight, Mike Nevins, and Paul M. James also offered valuablle information which will be incorporated into our final checklist

The Spring '84 issue is terrific. The three-way conversation on *Hammett* was particularly entertaining, though I had the feeling some of the material was in scrambled order. (For example, who was speaking in the paragraph on page 118 beginning "The screenplay of *Apocalypse Now*..."?)

The survey list of favorite authors is a good one, mostly reflecting the impeccable taste of your readers. I was sorry, though, to see Ellery Queen 'way down in ninth place. In my own view, the Queen team were greatest of them all, but I can understand why someone with different tastes might rank Doyle or Chandler or Hammett or maybe even Francis or Stout ahead of them. But Christie and Carr, who wrote the same kind of pure puzzle novel at which the Queens excelled? In an earlier survey I conducted back in TAD 6:2 (dated February 1973), which I hasten to admit drew a much smaller number of responses, twenty voters came up with the following sixteen favorites: (1) Queen, (2) Carr, (3) Christie, (4) Doyle, (5) Stout, (6—tie) Chandler, Hammett, Ross Mac donald, Sayers, Woolrich, (11—tie) Allingham, Boucher, Michael Gilbert, John D. MacDonald, Philip MacDonald, Tey. Of this group, the most surprising absentee from the new survey is Woolrich, whom I thought was enjoying a renaissance. On the other hand, the high ranking on your survey of Robert B. Parker (just ahead of Ross Macdonald!(astounds me. I admit that Parker can be quite entertaining, but for me his bright narrative and witty dialogue can't make up for his plotlessness and patches of Hemingwayesque pretentiousness. There are many, many private eye writers, past and present, whom I believe are better. (A few at random: Howard Browne, Bill Pronzini, Loren D. Estleman, William Campbell Gault. I could go on indefinitely.) I was also disappointed (but no, not surprised) that Erle Stanley Gardner, who would probably have ranked on top if a similar poll were taken thirty years ago, didn't make the list. Having just read (or reread) all the Perry Mason novels with trials in them for my upcoming book *Novel Verdicts*, I continue to think that Gardner is unjustly maligned, his reputation damaged by the inferior books of his last years and (perversely) by the long-running success of the Mason TV series, which I suspected a lot of people to believe the Mason novels have the cooky-cutter sameness of the small-screen version. They don't.

From Bob Randisi:

This letter is in direct response to Mike Seidman's impassioned "plea" for material in "The Uneasy Chair" for TAD 17:2. I'm enclosing some reviews with this letter, and, I hope, an interview. If not, it will follow, and it will not be with myself. That much I can promise

I knew I'd like 17:2 when I saw the cover. Still, "they" say you can't tell diddly-squat about a book by its cover, so I opened it. First "The Uneasy Chair," and I'm responding to that. Next, Garfield with Gores and Thomas. Can't get much more high-powered than that.

The *Armchair Detective* survey—now there was something interesting. Doyle (1), Christie (2), Sayers (4), Carr (8), Queen (9), Parker (10). Doesn't say much for the field, does it, to have the top ten dominated by dead people. Still, Chandler (3) and Hammett (6) might have made my top ten—well hell, let's see if they do. (I am not a subscriber to TAD—I buy it "off the rack," so I was not privy to the survey. I'll fill it out now.)

Let's see, five favorite authors. At one time Dick Francis and Ross Thomas would have been 1 and 2, but it's not that easy, any more. (1) William Diehl, (2) Elmore Leonard, (3) Bill Pronzini, (4) Loren D. Estleman, (5) Larry Block. (Just for the heck of it, my five favorite "dead" writers—Americans all—are [1] Thomas B. Dewey, [2] Chandler, [3] Richard Stark, [4] Tucker Coe, [5] Ross Macdonald.)

How many characters did you want—five? (1) Nameless, (2) Mac, (3) Parker, (4) Mitch Tobin, (5) Amos Walker/Matt Scudder (tie).

Books, that's a hard one. It doesn't come right off the top of one's head, but let's take a flyer: (1) *The Judas Cross* (Jeff Wallman), (2) *Sharkey's Machine* (Diehl), (3) *Red Harvest* (Hammett's best), (4) *The Fools in Town Are on Our Side* (Ross Thomas), (5) *Nerve/Forfeit* (Francis) (tie).

What would I like to see more of in TAD? Reviews, interviews, and LETTERS! The least Ditto the Sayers and Stout newsletters, and the Classics Corner.

Went out and bought *Metzger's Dog*, Julie Anyone with a character named "Chinese Gordon" has to be the next Ross Thomas.

Enjoyed the Nolan, Bishop (thanks for mentioning my first book, Paul) and Penzler pieces. The Ponder piece got ponderous, so I quit before I slipped into The Big Sleep. Some of the other stuff was okay, some of it wasn't, but ain't that the way it bees, sometimes? (Most of the time?)

Can't wait for Part XXX of Gernsback's revenge!

The regular columns were—well, regular (Thanks, Charlie, for the review.) Thanks, too, to Tom Chastain, for obvious reasons.

From William F. Nolan:

Regarding TAD 17:2, I must tip my Bogart fedora to Otto Penzler for his superb guide to collecting Hammett. It is remarkably detailed and informative. For the first time, collectors now have data on variant Hammett paperbacks as well as expert guidance in the tricky and difficult task of identifying DH first-edition dustjackets. I would dispute only one Penzler statement. In discussing *The Thin Man* on radio, he asserts that Hammett wrote "many of the scripts himself." Having been hot on the Hammett research trail for some sixteen years, I have yet to uncover a shred of evidence to indicate that Hammett actually wrote scripts for *The Thin Man* or any other radio show. (He *did* write two *Thin Man* original film treatments.) He very happily sold rights to his characters and stories for broadcasting, but kept far away from the world of radio itself.

Beyond Penzler's valuable contribution, the 17:2 issue offered several other delights. The fascinating Gores/Thomas interview on the making of *Hammett*, by Brian Garfield, offers chilling proof of Hollywood's madness in adapting books to the screen. (I had a taste of it with my own *Logan's Run*!) The fine, action-filled, visually evocative novel by Joe Gores certainly did not require four writers and 32 screenplays to reach the screen. It should have been treated exactly as Huston treated *The Maltese Falcon*—by simply putting the novel itself, slightly condensed, into screenplay form, dialogue and all. Furthermore, John Huston should have been asked to direct it, not a German surrealist with no sense of story structure. Ole Johnny H would probably have jumped at the chance to direct this one—particularly since *Falcon* launched his career. And who better to bring the *real* Dash Hammett to screen life? Ah, well...

I love printed checklists, meaning I was happy to see Paul Bishop's exhaustively researched study of horseracing-mystery novels in TAD, as well as Nevins's fine compilation of Woolrich on TV. And as for John Apostolou's "A.K.A. Philip Marlowe"—I have been working on just such a listing of Chandler's fictional protagonists. High time someone traced the character switchovers from pulps to books. By the way, speaking of name switches, I have found that many first-edition Marlowe collectors are unaware that beyond the seven well-known Marlowe novels there is a separate all-Marlowe collection. In October of 1951, Pocket Books took four stories from *The Simple Art of Murder* and published them as *Trouble Is My Business*, thus creating a Marlowe first edition! What Chandler had done for SAOM was to change character names in these four pulp tales from Dalmas, Carmady, etc. to Marlowe, but *The Simple Art of Murder* cannot be counted as the eighth Marlowe book, since a lot of other non-Marlowe stories were included. Nor can one count the first printing of the *Trouble Is My Business* title as the eighth Marlowe—since it came out first in England in 1950 and included non-Marlowe material. *Only* the 1951 Pocket Books edition can claim to be the eighth all-Marlowe volume, and therefore becomes an offbeat collector's item.

What *didn't* I like about TAD 17:2? Well, I was depressed by the woefully skimpy "Letters" section. One fact is self-evident: the editor cannot print letters he doesn't receive. If we TAD lovers want to see more letters in the magazine it is up to *us* to supply them. Right now, beyond assigned short fiction and articles, I am working on three new books and as many television projects, and, if I can find the time and energy for a letter, so can you.

Get off your Howard Duff's and *write*!

From Robert P. Ashley:

"*The Armchair Detective* Readers' Survey" encouraged letters from TAD's readers. Here's one, although it may not be the kind you want.

(1) In "Paper Crimes," David Christie is guilty of the following on page 206, first column: "Even so, Leonard is able to create considerable sympathy for him [Harry Mitchell of *52 Pick-Up*]. In part, of course, that's because he is opposed by three unconscionable people and he looks *well* [italics mine] by comparison." Apparently, the "three unconscionable people" are not in very *good* health.

(2) It would be helpful, especially for readers making lists of books to look for, if all reviews were printed alphabetically by the authors' last names, as in "AJH Reviews," "The Paperback Revolution," and "A Catalogue of Crime," but not in "Current Reviews" or "Paper Crimes."

(3) I much prefer short reviews such as Hubin's, Shibuk's and Barzun-Taylor's over longer ones such as those in "Paper Crimes" and "Current Reviews," especially if a policy of short reviews could lead to more reviews. What is the point of devoting two columns to an analysis of *Groomed for Murder* (pp. 206–7) only to reach the conclusion that the novel "has very little to recommend it"? I may not be typical, but all I want to know is whether or not a reviewer recommends a book and why; I do not need an extended analysis. Of course, exceptions could always be made for the exceptional longer review such as Allen Hubin's of *Fiction 1876–1983*.

✔ *Responding in order—*

I have no problems with letters of criticism and certainly welcome those which make mention of areas in which we might improve.

You are correct, of course, with regard to David Christie's use of well *in his review of* 52 PICK-UP. *Unfortunately, errors of this nature do slip through on occasion.*

I disagree strongly with the idea that reviews should be brief. TAD is a magazine of criticism, and, as long as a reviewer is discussing the strengths and weaknesses of a title, I have no objection to lengthiness. If a review consisted only of vitriol or unbridled praise, I would think twice about publishing it. As long as the writer is thoughtful, however, I will continue to prefer analysis over notice. —*Michael*

From Loren D. Estleman:

Ross Macdonald was dead. Mickey Spillane was undergoing oral surgery and could not attend. Robert B. Parker was too busy writing about his preppy P.I. and his sniveling female companions to leave Boston. Who, then, could the organizers of the 1983 Bouchercon get to speak to the assembled faithful on the subject of the private eye in fiction?

One can picture the committee meeting in round-the-clock session to determine the answer. How many other luminaries were considered and dismissed before the suggestion was made to approach Donald Westlake, author of supernumerary funny caper novels about crooked cops and bumbling burglars? It was a decision worthy of those rumpled television executives with coffee ulcers and hundred-dollar-a-day cocaine habits who voted finally to cast Marie Osmond as the heroine in "I Married Wyatt Earp."

However it was achieved, Westlake proved equal to the choice. Speaking from prepared notes to a packed auditorium, the author of *The Bank Shot* and *Cops and Robbers* spent half an hour or so bloviating on the history and past-due demise of the private eye of literature, then stopped a few minutes before the private eye panel convened to invite rebuttals. The tactic was tantamount to a boxer's getting in a kidney punch the instant after the bell ending Round One, then stepping back and taunting his opponent to retaliate.

One of the many injustices of art is that it ignores the light and entertaining for the heavy and significant. This is why the elephantine hero-worship of the movie *Gandhi* earned it last year's Oscar over the less pretentious and technically more proficient *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial*. It is also why Westlake's wryly humorous view of the American underworld will not outlive him.

while the more serious milieu provided by the late Raymond Chandler survives through multiple reprints and critical retrospectives.

Small wonder, then, that the living humorist should begin his attack with the dead serious artist. What has gone before is fair game in the ambuscade of literary criticism. But personal emotion overpowered cold reasoning in this case, else why would a writer of Westlake's originality fall back on that stale charge of latent homosexuality in Chandler's work?

Chandler himself slyly turned aside this accusation in his own time by questioning the masculinity of those critics who were unable to accept a friendship between two men at face value. Another vitriolic writer, taking Westlake as his target, might as easily delve more deeply into the constant companionship of his petty thieves and tainted public servants and find even darker perversions. (What, for example, might one make of the overt scatophilia in *The Hot Rock*—and who does Westlake think he's kidding with that orgasmic title?) But discussion of a fellow artist's sexual preferences has no place in a scholarly evaluation.

Westlake was on firmer ground when he criticized the redundancy of the Lew Archer series. Professional courtesy dictates a grace period following a writer's death, however, and Westlake's audience, fresh from a moment's silence in Macdonald's memory, sat with mouths agape as he spat venum into an open grave. On a scale of bad taste, the episode was topped only by Otto Penzler's ill-timed witticism about Joseph Hansen's last-minute decision to bow out of the Bouchercon because of his sister's serious illness.

Having finished with a sweeping condemnation of all modern private eye stories for their lack of "air," Westlake closed his tent meeting with a call for questions and rebuttals. Asked what he thought of the work of current P.I. practitioners Stephen Greenleaf and James Crumley, he shook his head and admitted that he had not read them. Pressed further, he confessed that he was not very familiar with what was being done in private eye fiction currently. The obvious question raised by these twin revelations, in the wake of a casual damning of books he had not read, was not asked. It didn't have to be.

A few more questions, and then the man who had poked at this beehive raised his hand and breezed out to sign autographs in the bookroom while a confused and angry panel of private eye writers took their seats. The rest of the day's program dissolved into a *mise-en-scène* of intelligent but hastily prepared responses and mindless vituperation.

Westlake's performance at the Bouchercon amounted to a bawl of fury from a writer breathing the noxious air of his own mortality. We who do not share his fears can not know the pressures he faces. But we needn't be subjected to his bitter cries.

From Larry Gianakos:

I am grateful to Francis M. Nevins, Jr. for his mentioning my *Television Drama Series Programming* chronicles in his "Cornell Woolrich on the Small Screen" (TAD 17:2) and thought that he and your many other mystery aficionados would be pleased to learn that Volume IV of *Television Drama Series Programming* (Scarecrow Press, 1983) and the forthcoming Volume V contain the video credits of dozens of mystery writers among several hundred literary figures represented.

Thus I am in a position to expand Mr Nevins's Woolrich videography accordingly:

"The Man Upstairs," *Suspense* (4/5/49)
"After-Dinner Story," *Suspense* (4/12/49)
"Post-Mortem," *Suspense* (5/10/49)
"The Phantom Lady," (from the film scenario) *Robert Montgomery Presents* (4/24/50)
"Black Friday," *Trapped* (10/13/50)
"Nightmare," *Suspense* (11/7/50)
"Nightmare," *Danger* (3/20/51)
"Nightmare," *Lights Out* (6/16/52)
"Nightmare," (restaged) *Danger* (5/3/55)
"The Lie," *Ford Theatre* (6/5/57)

Nevins was correct in assuming the "Nightmare" titles to have been based on the Woolrich story. I can also report that Brainerd Duffield adapted the Woolrich story "The Night I Died" for *The George Sanders Mystery Playhouse* seen here on August 31, 1957. I correct Nevins only in one respect: the teleplay "Jane Brown's Body" for the British ITC suspense anthology *Journey to the Unknown* can indeed be found in Volume II of my dramachronicle, with that series, and it was first seen in the United States not on October 3 but rather October 10, 1968. Otherwise, I found myself often enlightened by Nevins's thorough research of Woolrich adaptations for the small screen, and found myself in agreement with his opinions of which video transcriptions most faithfully adhered to their literary originals.

Perhaps your readers can assist me in a most baffling mystery of my own. Among the writers appearing in my most recent drama programming chronicles is Harold Lawlor, whose short stories were thrice adapted, and all times brilliantly, for the 1960-62 anthology *Thriller*. These were Alan Caillou's adaptation of Lawlor's "Terror in Teakwood" airing May 16, 1961; Robert Bloch's masterful rendering of Lawlor's "The Grim Reaper," my candidate for the most horrifying filmed teleplay in American television history, airing June 13, 1961; and Donald S. Sanford's adaptation of Lawlor's "What Beckoning Ghost?" which was directed by Ida Lupino and aired September 18, 1961. Is Lawlor the name of a writer or merely a pseudonym for one? The standard literary references either do not list him at all or merely list his name with no accompanying biographical information. The *Short Story Index* includes Harold Lawlor, but with no birth or possible death date, and with no indication that the name is a pseudonym. So I leave it to your readers: Who is Harold Lawlor?

Wishing you the best ratiocination. . .

From Stanley Ellin:

The Spring 1984 issue of *The Armchair Detective* is a super-satisfying issue in every way from start to finish. I thank you and your able contributors for it. □

THE UNIQUE MYSTERY MAGAZINE

PART X

HUGO GERNSBACK'S SCIENTIFIC DETECTIVE MONTHLY

By Robert A. W. Lowndes

The cover of the October 1953 issue had a flat yellow background, silhouetted upon which we see the head and shoulders of a man, looking in horror upon a rather small human skull which was the contents of a leather box he has just opened. Both the skull and the man's face and lifted hands are green, but the picture is effective. These days, I wonder whenever I see one of those flat-color backgrounds on a Gernsback magazine whether the color the artist actually painted was at all similar.[1]

Inside, we find the best illustrated issue of the mall. A young man named Mark Marchioni had just started working for the Gernsback fiction magazines, and I had seen his initial efforts in the September issue of *Wonder Stories*. Marchioni could draw human faces and figures very well, and we see five examples of his work in this issue.[2]

There was no editorial, this time; instead, the editorial page was occupied (as was the editorial page of *Wonder Stories*, October 1930) with an announcement that starting with the next (November) issue, *Amazing Detective Tales* would "be published in a more convenient size (7 by 10 inches) instead of the more or less bulky 9 x 12-inch size used at present." In addition:

> The contents of the magazine furthermore will be increased to 144 or 160 pages, which compares with the present 96 pages.
>
> The action was taken after an extensive survey conducted among a large number of readers to discover which size they preferred. We found that 87½ per cent voted for the more convenient size. The reasons for the preference were chiefly that the new size is handier and the magazine can be carried more easily, read in a crowd, and slipped into a coat pocket.
>
> Furthermore, a scientific test which we conducted showed that the 7 by 10-inch size causes less strain on the eyes. This alone, we think, entitles our readers to the new size.
>
> Incidentally, *Amazing Detective Tales*, in the new size, will also offer a number of important improvements in typography, artwork and far greater readability.
>
> Incidentally it will be possible to offer more stories in the new size than in the old without any increase in price."[3]

Knowing nothing about the mechanics and economics of magazine publishing at the time, I did not see what is obvious to a reader today. The magazine wasn't selling, and the publisher had decided to go to cheaper printing and to a size which would get the magazine displayed along with the other pulps on the newsstand, rather than with large-size magazines, in hope of attracting more buyers. I did realize at once that the magazine would look cheaper, though, and was far from delighted.

• "The Clasp of Doom" •

Doc Singer, whom we met in "The Painted Murder," returns in "The Clasp of Doom" by Eugene de Reszke.

Doc Singer is reading in his office when he gets a special sign alwhich means he's wanted in the gaming room. When he goes there, he sees two customers at the wheel whom he knows are deadly enemies. One is Mr. Haramid, who has a rug-cleaning business; the other is Sobieski, who runs a dance hall. Both are very rich, and Haramid has been trying to steal Sobieski's live-in girlfriend. And Singer can tell from a careful scrutiny of Haramid that the man is carrying a gun. He takes Haramid aside and suggests that he come back tomorrow night, unarmed. Haramid agrees.

> Doc Singer stood there for a while after Haramid had left. Then he saunteredleisurely over to the other side of the table and stood beside Sobieski.

"I know," said the big Pole before Doc Singer had said anything. "Youthink that Turk,or whatever heis, was just about ready to blaze my head off, eh? Well, he hasn't got the nerve. That kind don't shoot from in front. I ain't afraid of himandhe knows it. I ain't afraid of anybody!"

DocSingersmiled. "Justthe same, Sobieski, you've gotit coming. Soonerorlater.Sametrouble, I suppose."

"You mean a woman? Sure. I take what I want. I, Sobieski, byGod!"

"Sooner orlater,"Doc Singermuttered andwentbackto hisbook.

But Singer has trouble reading. He remembers that he was first introduced to Haramid by Bowker, a rug collector who was a customer of Haramid's and an oldtime friend of Singer's. He decides to call on Bowker to see what the man can tell him about Haramid.

It turns out that Bowker is furious with Haramid. "I'm going to ring that Turk's neck for him!" He drags forth a small rug from under his bed and spreads it on thefloor beforethem.

There was certainly something wrong with it. It was a portiere rug, the kind that are used by the natives in hangingover tent entrances, and hadthree sides to it—that is, a top and two long flaps. One of those flaps was a smudgy grey. The rest of the rug, however, was gorgeous in the symmetry of its repeated design motif—a form of diamondcontainingthe conventionalized figureoftheTree of Life which is characteristic of Turkoman workmanship. Thepredominatingcolorwas apeculiarred ina range ofsix orseventones. . . .

"The only Yomut Bloodflower in New York," Bowker raved bitterly. "Two thousand in cash and three years of searching up and down Transcapia! Now look at it!"

It seems that the Bloodflower signature is the mark only of a certainfamily.

"It took mea year to locate a Yomut Turkoman in America to whom I could entrust the cleaning of it. Imagine my delightwhen I foundthisYomut to be a member ofthevery family that possesses the secret of the Bloodflower—they were all dye makers and rug weavers. That man was Haramid. I gave himtherug.You seethe result."

It seems that Haramid claims that there was an accident—somebody spilled something—and that he will send away for some of the dye and restore the rug to its original condition, but Bowker is doubtful that the rug will ever be the same as it was before. Singer askswhattheycleanrugswith.

"Benzine, gasoline, something that will loosen thedirt off. Theusual. But I don'twanttotakeany chances."

Doc Singer put his nose closer to the rug and sniffed deeply. Helookedup witha puzzledexpression.

"Lime. Pure limejuice," he murmured. "What the devil! Loosen dirt? That stuff will loosen the shine off a bald head!"

That same night, Haramid visits Sobieski's Paradise Dancing establishment and waits until Sobieski's woman comes closeenough to the rail to talk to her. He tells herthat this is the last time hewill ask her to come back to him and promises that he'll treat her well. Everyone knows that Sobieski is as free with his fists as with his money and other endowments when it comes to women. But the girl laughs at him. She admits that Sobieski beats her, but she's going tostay with him.

Haramidhas bought eight tickets, and he chooses her; since she works there, she has to have eight dances withhim. He gives heralleight tickets.

She noticed he wore gloves. She said nothing. He was a queer sucker, anyhow. She took the tickets with a smile and her fist, already bulging with tickets, closed on them. They danced in silence. He was moody and abstracted. At the seventh dance she remarkedthat she was feeling dizzy. At the eighth she collapsed in his arms in a faint. He called to the floorman. The floorman called Sobieski. Sobieski barked anorderto the floorman to have hertakentohiscar outside. While this was being done Sobieski called Doc Singer on the phone. Sobieski's apartment was in the same buildingasDoc Singer's in theWest Eighties.

Singer says he'll be down in ten minutes, by which time Sobieski will have reached his apartment. Haramid accompanies them, holding the girl in the back seat. Singer is waiting for them when they arrive. They put the girl on thecouch.

Her left hand trailed down to thefloor and Haramid picked it up. He opened herclenched hand deftly. It still clutched the bunch of tickets and her tiny handkerchief. He took them out of her handand dropped themunobtrusively into thetop drawer of a nearbybureau.

Singer's examination is brief; he tells Sobieski that the girl is dead. Sobieski tells Haramid to get out, which he does, and Doc Singer remembers now that, while his friend Bowker has made some sort of reference to the Bloodflower's "signature," he did not specify what that was. He calls on Bowker again to in quire.

"The Bloodflower," Bowker explained, "is some kind of plant fromwhichthis particularfamilyextract that reddye peculiar to their rugs. The signature is this little circle with the ivory pepper spots in it"—he was indicating them on the rug. "See, they run around the seventh and last border in themiddleof the diamonddesigns. I understand thisplant is some kindof poison."

Singersays he has to borrowthe rugand that he can't promise to bring it back as he found it. He might spoil it altogether. But he is certain that the solution to the girl's death lies in the rug. Bowker is angry enough at Haramid, whom he also suspects as the girl'smurderer, to agree.

Singer is well enough up on botany, biology, and chemistry to perform the experiments he needs to. He procures lime juice and pays some kids on the East

Side to trap a rat and bring it to him. He soaks another corner of the rug in lime juice and gets an aureate color. Then he feeds the rat and puts some of the rug-soaked limejuice in a saucer. The rat drinks it—but nothing happens.

Next he tries precipitation, and what is left is a tumblerfull of dye, of a red color that he has never seen before. He tries that on the rat, sweetening it with sugar. Again, no results.

The astute reader, of course, is well ahead of Doc Singer. But now, Singerhimself recalls what has been nagging at him: Why was Hamarid wearing gloves on a hot night? Singer goes out for a walk to refresh his graycells.

When he comes back to the laboratory (Singer was a successful doctor and surgeon in the past), it is dawn.

Now, he was thinking, he had precipitated the lime juice, why not go further? After all a dye did not spring full bodied from the plant. What were the other parts in it—salt—alkali—gas—?

He searched his bottles and found what he was looking for at last. A collodian membrane. Merely a dried and treated piece of skin. If there was any solid substance in that tumbler he'd soon spot it. So he drained the dye through the collodion membrane. The result amazed him. It was all liquid! Now he was interested, absorbed. A chemically pure liquid vegetable dye. Incredible! Yet there it was!

Now he experiments with a bunsen burner and finally comes up with a residue of something, "and close examination under the light showed it to be nothing so much as a tiny and uneven film of pepper." He thinks of the pepper spots on the rug, puts the glass down, and notices that he has put on a glove while making the test. Now he puts on the other. He has here a powder which slipped through the collodion membrane.

He mixes a little of it with sugar and feeds it to the rat. Still no results. He goes to bed and dreams of gloves, waking up withthe solution of his problem.

He flewbackto the kitchenette, drugged therat and tookit out. He shaved off its fur close—a patch on its side, then moistened the tip of a long wooden shaving and touched it withthe powder andthen applied the powder to the patch. Allthiswith gloves on. Bythistimethe ratwasstirringback intolife and he put it back intothecage. Forsome seconds after it had awakened, it crouched still. Then it began moving about. Suddenly it began to drag on one side, the side on which the powder had been applied. Its distress grewmomentarily until it could do nothing but drag itself feebly round and round.

Four minutes after the application of the powder, the rat is completely paralysed on one side; in seven minutes, it is entirely inert, and in nine minutes it is dead.

Singer decides to callon Sobieski, eventhough it is only seven in the morning now, and tell him what he's discovered. Sobieski's new woman, drunk and amorous, lets him in. Sobieski is standing near the bureau, not drunk, but he has been drinking heavily. He tells Singer that Hamarid just called him from the police station, acknowledged that he killed the girl.

"Said if I wanted to knowhow he did it I could look at the tickets he handed herthat night and I'd find out. Said he took 'em from her hand and dropped 'em in the bureau here. And sure enough in the bureau they were. And here they are. But there's nothing on 'em. S'help me." . .

"Drop those tickets!" Singer screamed. "Drop 'em—they're powdered with death!"

"Can't, Doc. Funny. I been trying to open my hand a long time. Drink too much, I guess."

Singer pries Sobieski's hand open and the tickets drop to the floor. The man's arm is paralyzed. Singer grabs him by the other arm and drags him up to his suite, sixstories above.

Singer flungthe bigger man on a couchand disappearedfor a moment. He came back with a pad of gauze in his hand.

Even as he slapped the anesthetic-saturated cloth to the Pole's nosehewasspeakingin gasps

"God help you, John Sobeiski. You've had it coming to you and now you've got it. I don't think you'll be so fascinating to the ladies anymore after I take that arm of yours off.. Yes, right to the shoulder. And if you live. . ."

• "Death in a Drop" •

Professor Macklin returns in "Death in a Drop," which is a science-fiction mystery. Of Professor Macklin, for the benefit of those who have not read the first two tales in the series, author Ralph W. Wilkins tells us:

It sometimes seems that more crimes are committed in the vicinity of great detectives than anywhere else. Such is not, however, the case. The fact is that more crimes are *discovered* in the locality of a famous sleuth, due to his genius for uncovering things which are done in secret. Hence the percentage of crime about him *seems* higher than in other places.

(Italics in the quotation above and any to follow are in the original text.)

I must say that I found that little piece of wisdom enormously helpful, and trust that you will, too. Imagine all the lovely crimes that would have remained unsolved or perhaps have proven to be perfect—the perfect crime, of course, being that one inwhich no one suspects thatany crime has occurred in the first place—had not Sherlock Holmes, Philo Vance, or, in the present series, Professor Macklin been there. The narrator acknowledges that the lethal event in this story would have passed as a more or less inexplicable accident. The victim, an entirely likeable young man named Godspeed Brown, was

murdered in the presence of six men, not one of whom saw the deed *although the man was under their very eyes when death struck him.* And although six men were actually present, not one of them could give the police one iota of information concerning the commission of the crime. For *no one was within fifteen feet of the doomed man when he fell.*

The late Godspeed Brown is a laboratory assistant of the famous chemist, Dr. Reedy, collaborating in research along the lines of deadly chemicals. One of these is so deadly that even a drop of it touching the skin results in death within a few moments. Word of it has leaked out somehow, and a group of representatives from a small Balkan country named Carinthia are in Dr. Reedy's office that day to see if they can make a deal for the poison.

The five men talked quietly concerning the offer being made by Carinthia for the new liquid weapon. In the midst of the discussion young Brown, who was taking notes, seated at a table fifteen feet away from his nearest neighbor, emitted a fearsome scream . . . and was still. In a few moments his whole body had turned a ghastly green . . .

Brown was carrying a small bottle of the liquid in his pocket, in order to demonstrate upon animals the effect of the poison. Three of the Carinthian delegates had not yet seen the chemical in action; Brown had brought the liquid at the request of these three men. But the bottle had somehow broken. It is important to note that it had *not* exploded. The liquid was neither explosive nor inflammable.

The bottle was seemingly protected by a steel-wire receptacle for carrying it. Macklin tests a similar bottle in the same wire cage. He drops it from increasing heights, kicks it about the floor violently, hurls it several times against the safe in the corner, with increasing violence, then attacks it directly with a poker. The bottle remains unharmed. Then he tries to find an instrument which will penetrate the mesh of wires; again, no go. He has proved that no ordinary, or even extraordinary, blow could have shattered the bottle that Brown was carrying. Even if Brown has sustained a blow while carrying the bottle to the meeting, it could not have been harmed. Nothing short of a sledgehammer would have been effective, and, as Macklin notes wryly, Brown would have been killed by the sledgehammer blow in that case, before the liquid touched his skin.

The next day, Dr. Reedy brings Macklin a scrap of nondescript paper which he received before the meeting and forgotten. "On it were scrawled the words, 'Carinthia shall *never* possess your chemical. Cease your negotiations!' And it was signed, 'A Bithynian Patriot.'"

Later, Police Inspector Reynolds comes to Macklin with a clue that he has found in the furnace of the building where Brown lived. What remains of some charred fragments of paper indicates that a large sum of money was being offered for the poison and that a refusal on Brown's part to accept would be dangerous to his health.

Macklin asks Reynolds, and his assistant Burns, to accompany him to the scene of the crime. When they arrive, Macklin hands Reynolds the wire receptacle which Brown used as a protector. Then he takes a bottle which will fit into it and fills it with water. Are the chairs around the table in the same positions as at the time of the crime? Yes, he is assured. Very well; Reynolds is to put the bottle in his pocket and sit where Brown was sitting. Macklin himself drops into the chair before the desk. He tells Reynolds to look at the bottle again, then put it back into his pocket. "'I'm going to *break the bottle that is in your pocket* just as the bottle in Brown's pocket was broken.'" Reynolds and Burns are both highly amused.

Then Reynolds let out a wild yell, and made a grab for his inside pocket. "The bottle is broken!" He almost screamed the words.

There follows, of course, the reconstruction of the crime with all parties, except the original victim, present, plus Professor Macklin and the police. Macklin is carrying an umbrella, although there is not the slightest sign of rain, and en route seems to be practicing opening it quickly.

All the participants are instructed to seat themselves exactly where they were on the day that Brown died. Each of them is to take a bottle in a protector looking exactly like the fatal one. Price, the lawyer representing the Carinthian group, says that he did most of the talking. Then, he goes on, Dr. Reedy said:

"'. . . 'Now, gentlemen, let's get straight to business. We have a chemical here you want badly and we intend to sell it for as high a price as we can get. Without further wrangling I am going to state my price as five million dollars, in return for which you receive the formula for making the liquid.'

"I translated this to my clients, who debated the matter amongst themselves for a while, and I was just starting to tell Reedy that the delegates from Carinthia were requesting an extension of time to think the matter over when Brown emitted an unearthly shriek."

These words were hardly out of Price's mouth when, with a volley of cracks, a bottle broke.

Dr. Reedy leaped to his feet, emitting a horrible yell. I looked at him in amazement, hardly expecting so dignified a man to enter so literally into the reconstruction of the crime, but I saw that his eyes were nearly bursting in their sockets, and his face was corpse-like white.

"The bottle is broken . . . the bottle!" he screamed, staring with burstinge yes at the dripping fragments in his hands.

"Dr. Reedy, why did you kill Godspeed Brown?" rasped Macklin in the silence which followed this outburst. . . .

"Why try to brazen it out, Doctor? Surely you have the sense to see that if I can break that bottle in your hand, I know enough to send you to the chair! . . . Your fingerprint is on the button under your desk. And you know that the wires from that button are connected with . . Don't touch it! The connection's here now!"

Reedy, of course, then does what Macklin wants him to do. He jumps to his feet, holding a little syringe in his hand, and tells Macklin that if he comes a step nearer he will die in agony the way Brown did.

He started to back out of the room. Every man stood paralyzed with fear, excepting Macklin. He pressed his umbrella and up it flew! Holding it before him as a shield, he steadily advanced upon Reedy, covering him with a revolver.

"Your liquid can't harm me, Reedy," he snapped; "this umbrella has been soaked in oil. The poison will run off it like water off a duck's back."

Reedy, seeing that all is lost, turns the syringe upon himself, thus saving the public the expense of a trial.

What was that mysterious button connected to? Macklin admits that the room was so full of various types of machinery that he didn't recognize the essential clue at first.

"...but I had made a careful note of everything in the room, and among my notes was the observation that one of the machines was an *oscillator* which produces a high frequency electric current. Something like a radio wave, you know.

"That didn't mean a thing to me at the time, but I woke up in the middle of the night with the thought throbbing in my brain that oscillators are also capable of producing *vibrations in the air capable of shattering glass receptacles.* In fact, that is a *common experiment* in any laboratory that does work along that line...

"There was only one thing that could shatter a bottle protected as that that one was and that was a *high frequency well-directed vibration in the air.*"

The oscillator that Reedy has is not only enormously powerful but has been provided with a muffler so that there is no audible hum or whine when it starts up. Brown's chair had been set exactly to receive the

"See those marks? All I did for this morning's performance was to shift the machine's position slightly, so that its field would include the whole table and Dr. Reedy's desk as well."

As for the motive—Reedy was slowing up; in fact, it was Brown who had perfected the poison. Eliminating him would not only dispose of a rival but Reedy would enjoy the full benefit of selling the formula.

I wonder whether, had the magazine lasted longer, we would have seen any discussion in "The Reader's Verdict" about the ethics of selling such an invention to any country at all that was willing to pay a high enough price.

• "Shadows of the Night" •

The blurb for "Shadows of the Night" by Neil R. Jones tells us that we are about to read "The Further Adventures of the Electrical Man," but whoever wrote that line either had not read the story or had not read the first story. It's nothing of the kind. It's a *previous* adventure of Miller Rand, who invented the apparatus in the story which appeared in the May *Scientific Detective Monthly*. That would be forgiveable were this "prequel" at least nearly as good as the earlier-published story, but it isn't. Had the two been published in the proper order, the first one might have passed as moderately interesting. As it stands, it isn't worth discussing, aside from mentioning that a minor electrical device is used and there is not a shred of detection in it.

• "The Man Who Was Dead" •

Not much more can be said for "The Man Who Was Dead" by Arthur B. Reeve, the Craig Kennedy adventure in this issue. The writing is up to the level of the other stories in the series, however, and it does hold one's interest. The gimmick is that a man who has just died from some sort of alkaloid poison is resuscitated by electricity, and Kennedy mentions an earlier instance of a person being brought back through the use of an induction coil—a case in France. I do not know for sure whether the case Kennedy mentions is fictitious or whether that part of Reeve's story was rooted in fact.

• "The Flower of Evil" •

Luther Trant is not with us this time. Plants, however, are with us again in "The Flower of Evil" by C. R. Sumner, wherein a "mad scientist" has made some dubious advances in botany.

He led the way to a compartment set off somewhat to itself. There was a click and the greenish light blazed up to reveal a flower so sinister in its aspect that the girl caught her breath.

Long curling stems, like undulating bodies of writhing snakes, leaves of velvety blackness, thick and repulsive. The flowers, huge blossoms of a peculiar shade of green, splotched with yellow and flecks of black, seemed to be gangrenous, blobs of diseased deadflesh.

"The odor from that flower is as deadly as the bite of a cobra," Lindquist explained with the pride of a scientist in his accomplishment. "Nothing like it has ever appeared before in civilization. It is much like a species of *cypripedium* or 'Moccasin flower' that is found in the swamps of the Southeast, but is really a member of the family that flourishes in the Caracan jungle. The natives call it the 'Devil flower,' but this specimen has been multiplied a hundred-fold in its deadly qualities by my experiments. I call it the 'Flower of Evil.'

"Henderson says in his very able, but slightly incomplete work, that out of the 10,000 known varieties of flowering plants probably 1,000 are poisonous and out of that number possibly 50 are deadly. He lists the *Upas* tree, which has been greatly exaggerated in its powers, the

Manchineel tree found in Central America and many smallerplants but hehas missed the'Devil flower'entirely."

As the reader would expect, Dr. Lindquist has not perfected the "Flower of Evil" with the object of doing good, and one whiff of its aroma is sufficient to make the subject totally hypnotizeable. So while the heroine in the story did indeed commit allthe crimes and misdemeanors suggested by the evidence, she is quite innocent of them. Among them was delivering a blossom of the flower to a victim who was reduced tototalinsanity in no timeat all.

The story on the whole is imitation Fu Manchu, lacking both the charm and convincingness (while one is reading) of Rohmer. Needless to say, at the proper moment, when the brave hero is about to be reduced to idiocy, he throws a heavy glass vase through theplate glass case containing the flower of evil. Lindquist gets the full effect and dies of the uglies on the spot, while our protagonists, who are wearing masks, manage to get away without inhaling anything noxious.

• "Murder in the Fourth Dimension" •

"Murder in the Fourth Dimension" by Clark Ashton Smith is, as you would expect, a "different" crime story. Smith's excellent short stories had just started to appear in *Weird Tales,* and his first attempt at science fiction appeared in *Wonder Stories*(October 1930) concurrently with this issue of *Amazing Detective Tales*. The narrator has perfected a machine which will take him into the Fourth Dimension; he uses it to assist in a murder scheme, luring his victim into making a dimensional trip with him and doing him in as soon as they arrive safely. He'll leave the body there, and no one will know what has happened. His power sourceproves to be inadequate for him to get back, however. He manages to send a few smallobjects back, including an account of what has happened, but he and the corpse of his victimare marooned.

• "The Man in Room 18" •

"The Man in Room 18" by Otis Adelbert Kline (who was well known for his fantastic adventure novels in *Argosy*) has a clever gimmick. It appears to be an impossible crime. A jeweler, alone in his showroom with the door locked and a well barred window, is shot, and the diamonds in trays on top of his showcase are missing.

Mr. Block, junior partner of the firm of Sovinsky and Block, wholesale diamond merchants, has left the office to meet a customer at the depot, one Biddle, who has a large jewelry store in Peoria. In his absence, Sovinsky has laid out a display of diamonds. Biddle does not show up, and, when Block returns to the office, it is to find Sovinsky dead from a gunshot wound and the display trays empty.

The only access to the display room is the door, and Sovinsky's secretary testifies that no onecame in while Block was absent, nor did she hear any sound coming from the display room. The room's single window is heavily barred, and there is no sign of any tampering with the bars.

The police find "a smear of yellow viscous liquid" on one of the iron window bars and some varnish on the edge of one of the trays. Further investigation uncovers a little varnish on another, and a small diamond is sticking to the showcase with fresh varnish.

They find ropes trailing downoutside the bars and, looking up, see the edge of a swing stage. Painters, apparently—hmm.

Enter Mr. Byrd Wright, who is known as "The Ferret" both to denizens of the underworld and to the city detectives, the latter of whom are entirely in favor of him. After he has examined the room carefully, they ask him if he agrees with the chief's theory.

"Those painters let their swing stage down here and shot Sovinsky with a pistol equipped with a Maxim silencer. Thenthey reachedthrough thebarsand helped themselves to the diamonds. One of them had some varnish on his hands and smeared the trays and the bar. Pity the stuff don't hold fingerprints. Runstoofast. Butthechiefwillget them,anway."

Wright smiledand lighted along Oriental cigarette.

"If those men reached through the bars and took the diamonds," he said,"theymust havehadarmsat least four feet long.Quiteunusual."

Wright takes them on a little expedition around the corner of the building and downthe alley.

Turning again at a transverse alley, theyfound themselves behind the buildinginwhichthe crimehad occurred. It was built in the form of an L, apparently forthe purpose of admitting light to all offices. Directlyacross from it was a windowlessstoragewarehouse.

The Ferret squinted gravely up at the floors above him. It wasan easymatter to locate the windows of Sovinsky and Block,asthey were theonlyones protected byiron bars.

Wright tells his assistantthat there's just oneplaceto investigate. He leads the way past the offices of Sovinsky andBlockand around a bend in the corner, pausing in front of Room 18, an office marked "Swanson & Company, Minnesota Farm Lands."

As he reached for thedoor knob a youngman attired in a gray sport coat and knickers, and carrying a large shiny leather golfbagfromwhich the heads of a number of sticks protruded, openedthedoor.

"Not leaving for the day, are you Mr. Swanson?" asked the Ferret.

"Just going out for a little golf," replied the young man. "Anything I can do for you?"

Wright says that he's been thinking of buying a farm in Minnesota, well wooded and near a lake. Swanson expresses regret that he has no such at the moment, but, if the caller will leave his name and address, he'll see what he can do and write him within a few days. The Ferret says that will be fine and goes into the office, saying he'll write down his name and address. Swanson looks somewhat annoyed but follows him back into the office, standing his golf bag in the corner. While he's writing at the desk, Wright says he might as well get information on what Swanson does have, as a friend of his is also interested in going to Minnesota.

Swanson rather reluctantly produces some plates, maps, and charts, sits down, and says he hopes they won't mind if he leaves in a few minutes because he has an engagement to play a foursome.

"Perfectly all right," replied the Ferret. "I can go through these things in a hurry. By the way, my friend Mac, who is the one I had in mind, is waiting downstairs." He turned to Sikes with a very slight wink, not perceptible from where Swanson sat. "Sikes, suppose you go get Mac and tell him to come up here right away, as Mr. Swanson is in a hurry."

Well, the reader has all the clues now, and the astute ones know, of course, that Sikes would return immediately with the police. For those such as I, who rarely recognize a clue without a detailed introduction from the detective, we'll pick up the explanation that Wright gives when Chief McGraw asks where the evidence is.

"Haven't found it all myself yet," replied Wright. "Let's nose it out together. Suppose we begin on that golf bag. You will notice, chief, that neither the bag nor the clubs have ever been used. Rather unusual, I should say, for a young man who is so enthusiastic for golf that he leaves his business at this early hour to play."

Removing the sticks from the bag, the Ferret laid them on the desk. Then he reached inside, and drew a handful of small rods about two feet in length, each with a metal plug at one end and a socket at the other. After carefully fitting them together, he had a jointed rod about twenty feet in length, which greatly resembled an overgrown fish pole. Again he reached into the bag and this time drew forth a rather heavy object, also about two feet in length, which was wrapped in heavy cloth.

Very deliberately he unwrapped it, and produced a heavy-calibre take-down rifle and a Maxim silencer.

He finds nothing else in the bag, and scrutiny fails to reveal anything like a false bottom. But the waste basket under the desk proves to be more rewarding.

"Exhibit number three, chief," he said, drawing several cylinders of sticky fly paper to which bits of adhesive tape were stuck. "These cylinders were rolled around the end of the rod, and fastened there with tape."

Slipping one of the cylinders over the end of the rod, he made it fast with tape. Then he projected it out the window and between their on bars into the room where the watchful Hirschstood guard over the body of Sovinsky.

I'd feel more guilty about telling all in this case if the scene just described were not the one which Marchioni selected for his well-drawn illustration. Again we have the solution to the mystery flaunted graphically at the reader before he starts the story.

Where were the diamonds?

Wright says they will be found where he observed them while looking over the descriptions of Minnesota farmlands.

He turned to the handcuffed prisoner. "They are well concealed, Swanson, when you stand up, but when you sit down, *they* stand up. They are beneath that pair of neatly tailored but unusually voluminous golf trousers in two bags that are strapped just above the knees of the very clever young man who pulled this job. I am of the opinion that you will find them intact, even though they may be disgustingly sticky."

• "The Man No One Could Lift" •

"The Man No One Could Lift" by Fred Ebel is an unillustrated short-short (the Smith story had no illustration either) which, according to the blurb, "introduces some strange phenomena in the field of magnetism and electricity." The reason why no one can lift the not-too-heavy-looking corpse is that the victim always wore a bullet-proof vest and was trapped by an electromagnet under the floor in the house to which he was lured by the culprit. Once the magnet is found and switched off, there is no difficulty in lifting the remains.

• "The Carewe Murder Mystery" •

The balance of the fiction in this issue is the conclusion of "The Carewe Murder Mystery" by Ed Earl Repp, which would have made a fascinating ten-part movie serial back in the '30s. It has everything except rational detection, and I doubt not that, as a movie serial, it would have been as thrilling and amusing to watch as Flash Gordon.

Virtue triumphs in the end, of course. The protagonist, framed, convicted, and awaiting execution for the murder of Carewe, is saved by the labors of the detective, who must also rescue his daughter (who is in love with the doomed man) from a fiend in Chinatown, whither she has been kidnapped. The fiend lets her detective father know that she will be made into a hopeless drug addict and inducted into

the sort of service you would expect, somewhere in the Far East, unless Pappa puts an ad in the agony column within a day or two which will indicate that he is dropping the Carewe case. The detective, Blaney Hamilton, does so at once, then calls upon a man in Chinatown who owes him a favor, learns all the details of who kidnapped Arline, why, and where she is, then goes directly after the sinister Hongkong Charlie. Needless to say that, after many thrills, acting entirely alone, of course, the unlovable Charlie is done in and Arlinerescued.

Do you really want to know exactly who did Dr. Carewe in, how, and why? Well, it's a case of revenge. Carewe has not always been entirely Christian in his dealings with rivals and competitors, and a couple of them who particularly resented it manage to get his order and specs for the Nth Dimension goggles and make such adjustments that he'll get a fatal infusion of light when he tries to use them. Which, of course, he does; and, equally of course, Hamilton arranges for them to tell all while apparently alonewithhim, etc., so . . . I'm not sure that it's all so bad as to make it a masterpiece in its own way—but it comesclose.

• "The Most Dangerous of Forgeries" •

The fact article in this issue is "The Most Dangerous of Forgeries" by Edmond Locard, Director of the Laboratory of Police Technique, Lyons (France). In Locard's opinion, "among the numerous varieties of forgery, there is one particularly dangerous, which perhaps would never have been discovered but for the chance of a notable case: I refer to what I have called forgery by 'cutting out' (*découpage*)."

The criminal obtained a bundle of letters from the principal. He cut out phrases and words from those letters which would be required to make up the needed text. Then he made a lithographic copy of the cut-out text, went over it with the pen, and sent it to his principal. Locard notes that the forger "had the honesty to warn Guyard that his forgery would not withstand the examination of experts." But Guyard's solicitor believed that it would, and he proved to be right. The experts, "at least of one of whom was a very distinguished man and very competent in his field accepted as an original this lithographic transfer."

So what went wrong? What often does in what otherwise would be a successful crime. Guyard was greedy and paid the expert forger very poorly. The latter turned the evidence—the cutouts and the proofs of the lithographic transfer—over to the police. In the end, Guyard was sentenced to tenyears' imprisonment, while the forger, Charpentier, was acquitted.

Locard notes that we must excuse the experts who erred in thecase because"Nothing so closelyresembles an authentic text as a forgery by cutting out, since it is the exact reproduction of words and phrases taken from authentic texts." He adds that there have been other similar cases since, but, now that the means of the crime have become public knowledge, it would be inexcusable for an expert to allow himself to be deceived. As Charpentierwarned Guyard in the first place, the forgery should *not* have passed expert examination. There's no telling, of course, how often the cut-out method has succeeded because no suspicion was aroused and expert scrutiny was never called for.

We have the usual test, "How Good a Detective Are You?" with both observation and detection required.

"Science-Crime Notes" are reduced to a single column. Book reviews take even less space, dealing with two books: *The Thrill of Evil* by Harry Ashton-Wolfe and *The Greene Murder Case* by S. S. Van Dine, which the reviewer calls "perhaps the best of the Philo Vance series." (At that time only two further Philo Vance novels had been published: *The Bishop Murder Case* and *The Scarab Murder Case.* While the former received high praise from the critics, the latter was considered a let-down. Having re-read the entire series recently, I'm inclined to

agree, even though I find the *Scarab* case enjoyable and like the *Bishop* best of all.)

There are a number of interesting discussions in "The Reader's Verdict" this time. Talking about the way crime is handled in this country, one reader notes:

> Americans have come to feel that so long as a crook doesn't hold *him* up and gets away with a holdup of someone else, why worry? . . . The American public, in fact, tries hard to find extenuating circumstances for crooks who have been caught. Of course, I haven't said anything yet about the criminal lawyer, that vulture whose business it is to protect crooks and see that they don't go to jail. I don't refer to such men as Clarence Darrow, who try to save innocent men from their fate, but those shifty-eyed, callous, hardened sharpsters who find the tricks in the law, and the judicial palms who are ready to be greased, so help to swell the ranks of lawbreakers. Friends, one gets rather sick of it at times; and begins to feel it's silly to be honest when your friends are getting rich as bootleggers, racketeers, profiteers, pirateers, and all the rest.

The editor reiterates his stand.

> If our trouble is due to public indifference we need courageous men to awaken the public, and show them that if our crime bill each year is seven billion dollars, the public pays that tremendous sum itself in one way or another. That means that each family of three persons pays about $200 a year for the support of its criminals. A thorough appreciation of this fact should certainly serve to wake up our nation; to spend a small portion of its crime bills in educating children against crime, establishing saner prison conditions, sterilization of habitual criminals, and doing many of the other things that common sense dictates. What do our readers think? What is their opinion as to what should be done to reduce or abolish crime?

Alas, we would never learn what the readers thought about the subject, for reasons to which we'll come shortly. One wonders where Hugo Gernsback got the figures he cites above and how reliable they are. One also wonders what individual payment of law-abiding citizen for crime each year would come to today.

Another reader tells of bringing the August issue into his office "two days ago, and it is in tatters now owing to the rough handling by six real estate salesmen." He adds that the stories were greatly enjoyed "except by one man who missed a $20,000 sale because he could not tear himself away from 'The Painted Murder' and I believe he is inquiring on whether he has grounds to sue you on that account." The editor states his own appreciation of de Reske and says that they have several more stories from him, beyond "The Clasp of Doom," under consideration.

Still another reader objects to the change of the title; the editor replies:

> Our change of name was prompted by several reasons. In the first place there was a confusion of names between several magazines such as *Scientific Monthly*, which is a purely nonfiction periodical. Furthermore, possible readers got the impression that our magazine was a professional, technical periodical for detectives—which of course it was not. It was in order to fully describe the contents in the most understandable manner that we changed the title to the present. The results have shown us that we have taken the right track."

That may be true so far as it goes, but it doesn't explain the change projected for the next (November 1930) issue. A box at the bottom of a page on which a story did *not* end tells us that the first issue in the new, small size will contain a serial, "The Dunbar Curse" by Harold Ward, and a science-fiction mystery, "The Murder on the Moonship" by George B. Beattie (that story did appear the following year, retitled "The Murders on the Moonship," in the February 1931 *Wonder Stories*).[4]

On September 15, 1930, I went to the newsstand to hunt for the November *Amazing Detective Tales*. The new small-size *Wonder Stories* had appeared on time. Eventually, I did uncover a very unattractive-looking pulp magazine entitled *Amazing Detective Tales*. The cover was poorer than any of the recent ones on the large *Amazing Detective Tales*, the paper was extra cheap, there was no "HUGO GERNSBACK EDITORIAL CHIEF" or the symbol of the Gernsback publications on the cover. And inside, neither "The Dunbar Curse" nor "The Murder on the Moonship" could be found, nor did the magazine look in any way like a continuation (as did *Wonder Stories*) in pulp size. I did not buy a copy and didn't look for any more issues later.

In his book *Strange Horizons*,[5] Sam Moskowitz tells what had happened: Gernsback sold the title *Amazing Detective Tales* to another publisher, one Wallace R. Bumbar, who immediately transformed it into an action-gangster story magazine. Moskowitz does not say how long it lasted, and I myself never observed any copies on the newsstand beyond that initial November 1930 issue. I must confess that I do not greatly care. So far as I am concerned, it all ended with the October 1930 issue. Changing the title, using simpler, more effective covers, all apparently helped a little. Perhaps the trend toward more action-crime stories and fewer elaborately scientific stories helped, too—although I wasn't happy at that change. But either the suggested initial increase in circulation fell off, or, even with that increase, sales improvement was too small and too uncertain to warrant continuing the magazine.

A full set of *Scientific Detective Monthly/Amazing Detective Tales* can be found today, but not cheaply. At the time I started this series, I was lacking the July, August, and October issues. Thanks to Robert A. Madle, I obtained them at $30 each. In 1978, I

attended the Pulp Fans annual convention, held that year in St. Louis, as guest of honor. That was while I still did not have those three issues. I thought perhaps that one or more of them might be available at the hucksters' tables there. They were not. All I saw were mint copies of the first two issues, selling for $80 and $70. I don't doubt that prices have risen since then.

So ends my account of Hugo Gernsback's unique mystery magazine. Its like had never been seen before, nor has it since, nor is it likely ever to be imitated in the future.

Notes

1. Sam Moskowitz has a couple of Frank R. Paul's original paintings for covers which appeared on Gernsback issues—*Air Wonder Stories*, August 1929, and *Science Wonder Quarterly*, Fall 1929. In neither instance is the background color the same as that which we see on the printed cover. The first is a deep gray which blends perfectly with the other colors, where the cobalt blue on the magazine, while not bad, gives a far less artistic impression. With the *Quarterly* cover, the background on the original matters less, because that cover when printed was overlaid with gold, giving a sort of tapestry appearance, but, again, the original color would have been more effective.

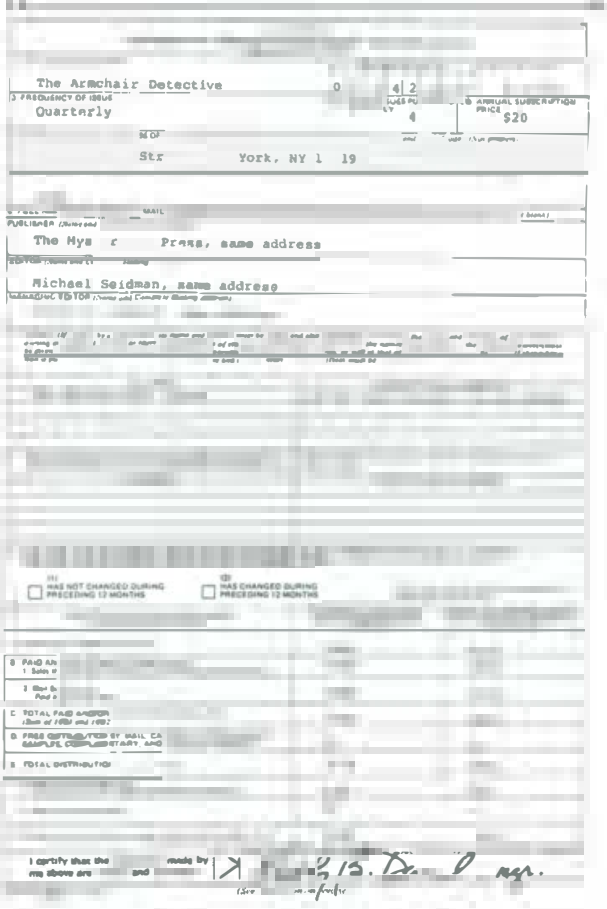
   It's true, of course, that three-color engraving had its limitations, but apparently Gernsback could not afford very good engravers. During the same period, the publishers of *Amazing Stories* were getting far superior results from three-color engraving.

2. In time, of course, as his output increased, Marchioni's work showed less care. What I did not realize at the time was that the pay for black-and-white drawings in the pulps was very low. In 1941, when I began to procure artwork for *Future Fiction*, I found that artists were paid $5 for a single (one-half to three-quarters of a page) and $10 for a double-spread—after publication. Some of the other pulp publishers were paying a little more, some even on acceptance, but not very much. During the Depression, a pulp illustrator had to turn out an awful lot of drawings quickly, so could rarely afford to spend much time with any particular one. The marvel is that there were as many excellent ones as there were in the old science fiction magazines, and in SDT and ADT.

3. The pulp-sized *Wonder Stories* did offer more fiction per issue than we had seen previously in the larger-sized issues. That was partly because the department "Science News of the Month," which had filled a number of pages each issue, had been dropped.

4. There is no mention of cover-contest stories coming up. The contest was dropped, of course. A few years later, the leading science-fiction fan magazine of the time, *Fantasy Magazine*, ran one of the entries in the contest, so some of us got at least one possible explanation of that cover. I'm not entirely sure, but I believe that that entry was by P. Schuyler Miller. Whether his story would have won a prize will never be known, but, since he had been the first-prize winner in an earlier Gernsback cover contest, I doubt that his story would have been chosen.

5. *Strange Horizons* by Sam Moskowitz (Scribner, 1976). Chapter 7 deals with crime and is titled "From Sherlock to Spaceships." Moskowitz gives a thorough coverage of the rise of the "scientific" detective in the popular magazines, with special coverage of the careers of Balmer/MacHarg and Arthur B. Reeve. We find, for example, that the very first Luther Trant story was "The Man in the Room" in the May 1909 issue of *Hampton's Magazine*. Reeve's first story, "The Case of Helen Bond," appeared in the December 1910 issue of *Cosmopolitan* and borrows its essential gimmick from the Trant story—which may be why the MS. was rejected when Reeve sent it to *Argosy* first. The title of the story was changed to "The Scientific Cracksman" when it appeared in the first hardcover collection of Craig Kennedy stories. □



CHECKLIST

By M. S. Cappadonna

MYSTERY, DETECTIVE AND SUSPENSE FICTION PUBLISHED IN THE U. S. JULY-SEPTEMBER 1984

Adler, Bill and Thomas Chastain: **The Revenge of the Robins Family.** Morrow, 10.95

Anderson, John R. L.: **Death in a High Latitude.** Scribner's, 12.95

Anthony, Evelyn: **The Company of Saints.** Putnam, 15.95

Babson, Marian: **Cruise of a Deathtime.** Walker, 12.95

Barnett, James: **Marked for Destruction.** David & Charles, 14.95

Borgenicht, Miriam: **Fall from Grace.** St. Martin's, 12.95

Burley, W. J.: **Wycliffe and the Beales.** Doubleday, 11.95

Cain, James M.: **Cloud Nine.** Mysterious Press, 14.95

Candy, Edward: **Which Doctor?** Doubleday, 11.95

Chaloner, John: **Bottom Line.** St. Martin's, 13.95

Cohen, Anthea: **Angel of Vengeance.** Doubleday, 11.95

Cohen, Carolyn: **The Other David.** Dodd, 15.95

Cunningham, E. V.: **The Case of the Murdered MacKenzie.** Delacorte, 11.95

Dunlap, Susan: **An Equal Opportunity Death.** St. Martin's, 12.95

Estleman, Loren D.: **Kill Zone.** Mysterious Press, 14.95

Freeling, Nicolas: **No Part in Your Death.** Viking, 13.95

Gardner, John: **Role of Honor.** Putnam, 11.95

Garfield, Brian, ed.: **Crime of My Life: Favorite Stories by Presidents of the Mystery Writers of America.** Walker, 13.95, 6.95 paper

Gash, Joe: **Priestly Murders.** Holt, 11.95

Gash, Jonathan: **Firefly Gadroon.** St. Martin's, 11.95

Gault, William Campbell: **Death in Donegal Bay.** Walker, 12.95

Gethin, David: **Wyatt and the Moresby Legacy.** St. Martin's, 12.95

Godey, John: **Fatal Beauty.** Atheneum, 14.95

Grady, James: **Runner in the Street.** Macmillan, 14.95

Harrison, Ray: **Why Kill Arthur Potter?** Scribner's, 12.95

Healy, J. F.: **Blunt Darts.** Walker, 12.95

Hirt, Howard F.: **The Heat of Winter.** 14.95

Hornung, E. W.: **The Complete Short Stories of Raffles, the Amateur Cracksman.** St. Martin's, 17.90

Hoyt, Richard: **Cool Runnings.** Viking, 15.95

Jeffries, Roderic: **Three and One Make Fire.** St. Martin's, 11.95

Johnston, Velda: **Voice in the Night.** Dodd, 12.95

Katz, William: **Surprise Party.** McGraw, 12.95

Keating, H. R. F.: **The Sheriff of Bombay.** Doubleday, 11.95

Lewin, Michael Z.: **Out of Season.** Morrow, 12.95

Lewis, Roy: **Once Dying, Twice Dead.** St. Martin's, 10.95

Linscott, Gillian: **A Healthy Body.** St. Martin's, 11.95

McBain, Ed: **Lightning.** Arbor House, 14.95

MacDonald, John D.: **More Good Old Stuff.** Knopf, 15.95

MacLeod, Charlotte: **The Convivial Codfish.** Doubleday, 11.95

Mailer, Norman: **Tough Guys Don't Dance.** Random, 16.95

Marshall, William: **The Far Away Man: A Yellow Thread Street Mystery.** Holt, 14.95

Masur, Harold Q.: **The Morning After.** St. Martin's, 11.95

Meredith, D. R.: **The Sheriff and the Panhandle Murders.** Walker, 12.95

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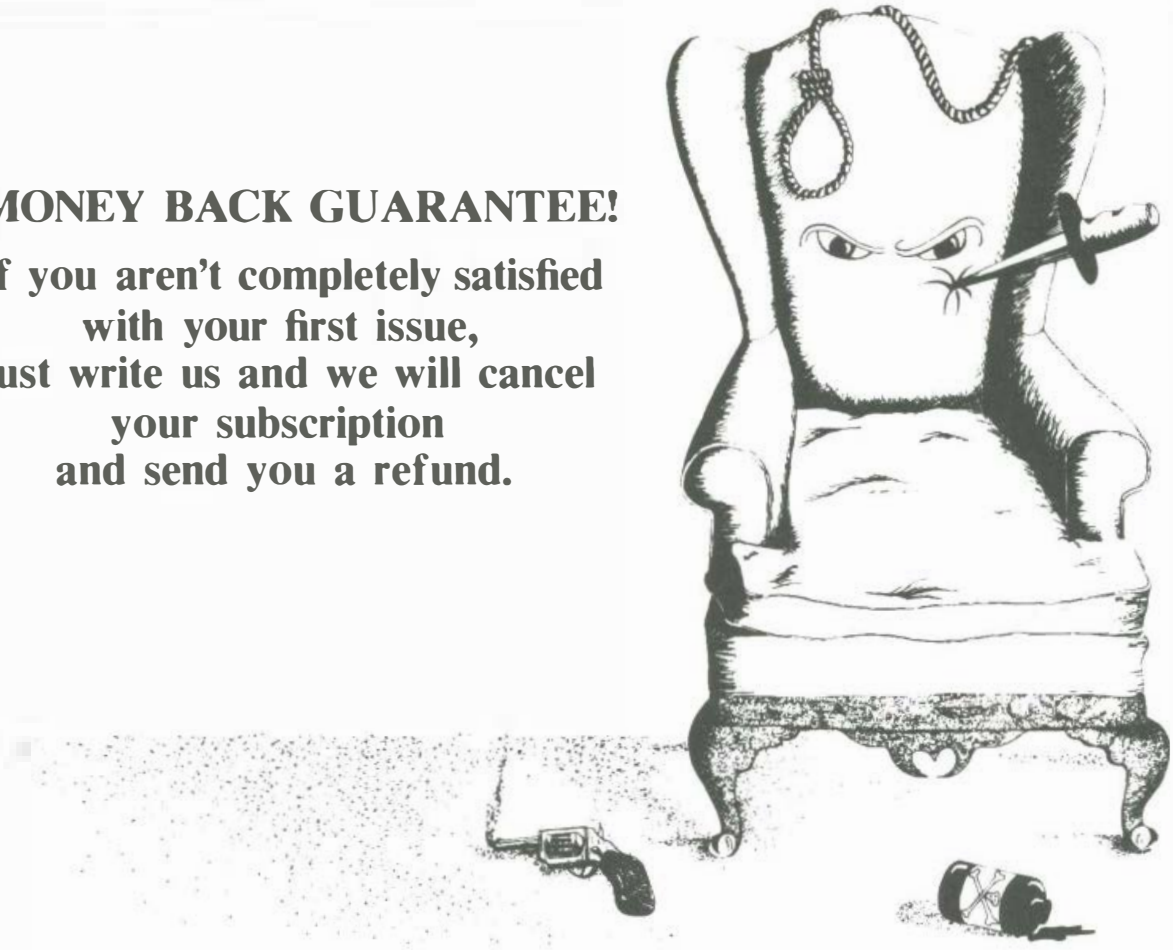

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