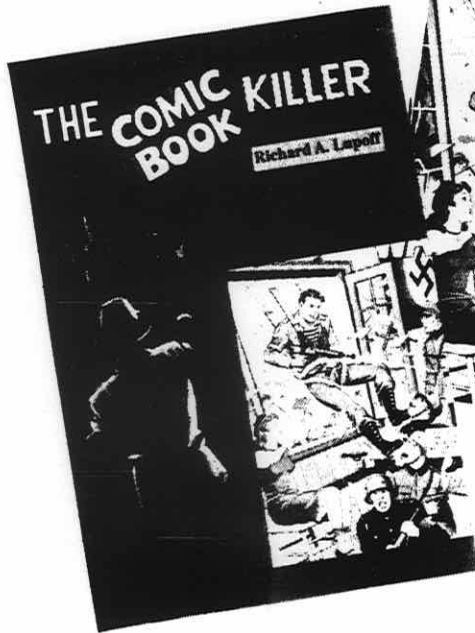


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WELCOME TO LEFT COAST CRIME

Welcome to the first Left Coast Crime conference, a gathering we hope and plan to make a part of your schedule for years to come. Appropriately, this first conference is being held in 1991, a year which commemorates two momentous events in crime fiction, the 150th anniversary of the first detective story, Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," and the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the most influential periodical in the field, *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. Again appropriately, your featured guests-of-honor are two of the brightest writers residing on the Pacific verge, albeit veterans both, whose stories feature West Coast detectives and locales.

Both Poe and the Queens lived on the East Coast. In the years since Poe and during EQMM's continuing reign, the detection community has spread across the nation in a sort of mysterious manifest destiny. Today's murderous locales range from New England's rural townships to Chicago's Southside to the Western states. Perhaps the freshest crimes are being committed in the imaginations of our New West writers, in the solid traditions of Poe and Queen, to be sure, but also on the firm basis of Chandler and Hammett (and Whitfield, McCoy, and Gardner, westerners all) and in settings ranging from hi-tech labs to Native American pueblos to frontier forests.

It is today's Western states inheritors of the tradition--authors, readers, collectors, and critics--that we intend to celebrate here. To this end we have scheduled challenging program events--including panels; formal and informal gatherings involving food and beverages (get your reservations in early for the banquet and the breakfast!); autograph sessions; street tours; a dealer room; and, of course, endless conversation--on a spectrum of subjects designed to entertain and inform. Details on these events appear in the following pages.

Whether you are panel members, speakers, providers of entertainment, or active as audience, we invite you to participate wholeheartedly in the proceedings. The ghosts of Poe, Ellery Queen, and the others that populated those 150 years are, we're sure, haunting the corridors of the Sir Francis Drake and listening in. Again, welcome!

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WE THANK YOU . . .

Left Coast Crime would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of our volunteer staff, and we especially appreciate the support and sponsorship provided by Sara Ann Freed of the Mysterious Press, Bonnie Graves at Delacorte, and our good friends at Ballantine/Fawcett. We thank our Guests of Honor and attending panelists for their generous contributions of time and expertise. And we hope you enjoy yourself most mysteriously at this, the first of what we plan will be many annual conventions here on the Left Coast.

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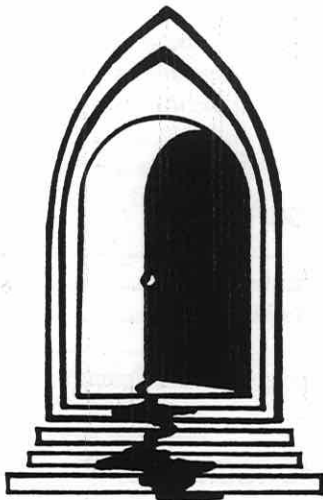
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Sharon McCone

By Bill Pronzini

It should come as no surprise to most readers that Sharon McCone is my favorite fictional sleuth. The fact that her creator, Marcia Muller, and I are household as well as literary collaborators is well known, and I admit to a bias on that basis. But I like to think I have a fair amount of objective critical acumen where mystery fiction is concerned, and on *that* basis, for reasons of complexity of plot, depth of characterization, and emotional content, I consider McCone one of the half-dozen most important series detectives being written by anyone of either gender.

There is a third reason that Sharon is my favorite sleuth. It's that I know so much about her, so many things that nobody else except her creator knows.

What sort of things? For starters, I know that contrary to popular belief, *Edwin of the Iron Shoe* is not her first recorded case. Her first case was actually recorded two years before *Edwin*. I can't give you the title; Marcia won't tell me what it is. She won't let me read the manuscript either. Nor will she reveal much about it. "It's unread and unpublished and it's going to stay that way," she says darkly.

This tantalizing manuscript is packed away in one of several boxes stored in the garage. (She hasn't destroyed it because, like me, she's something of a packrat. I suspect that she has also been cannibalistically gnawing off pieces of it over the years, but she won't admit to it.) Every now and then, when I'm home and she's out, I have a devilish urge to disinter and read it on the sly. I haven't given in to the urge so far, and I expect I never will; I have too much respect for Marcia and her feelings. The fact that she has threatened to hit me over the head with an iron pot rack if she catches me has nothing to do with it.

I know the reason McCone broke off her personal involvement with police lieutenant (now captain) Greg Marcus. (Would *you* want to have an intimate, long-term relationship with a jerk who publicly as well as privately refers to you as "Papoose"?) I know her most amazing physical feat, performed in the rough draft of *There's Something in a Sunday*. ("My mouth went slack-jawed.") I know what happened to the baby kangaroo that

lived in the pouch of Roo-Roo, the red-plush mama kangaroo Sharon had when she was little. (Poachers.) I know every nook and cranny of the old Victorian that houses All Souls Legal Cooperative, and exactly what is in each room. (A complete miniature reproduction of All Souls occupies a place of honor in our library, having been designed, built, even electrically wired by Sharon's multi-talented materfamilias.)

I know about McCone's Shocking Act.

A few years ago Marcia and I wrote a collaborative novel, *Double*, in which Sharon and my "Nameless Detective" team up on a cast that begins at a convention of private investigators in San Diego. We had a good time writing the book--and only one small argument. The argument stemmed from this Shocking Act (*I* found it shocking, anyway) perpetrated by McCone in the first draft manuscript. I can't reveal the exact nature of the Act; suffice it to say that it took place late in the novel at an isolated house in California's Anza-Borrego Desert.

Marcia wanted to leave the Act in, in all its graphic detail; I wanted it taken out. So we argued, and for a change I prevailed. McCone's Shocking Act does not appear in the published novel. Marcia still has the first-draft page on which the Act is described and periodically she threatens to take it to a Bouchercon or other mystery convention and auction it off to the highest bidder. "I'll bet there'd be a *lot* of interest in it," she says. She's probably right.

But I doubt if she'll ever do it. The mystery community is not ready--may never be ready--for such fictional indiscretions to be made public. Marcia, in her heart of hearts, knows this as well as I do. It's a matter of privacy, not to mention simple decency.

I know a lot of other secret things about McCone, too, but I think I'd better not divulge any more. In fact, I may have revealed too many already. I don't dare take any more liberties, lest Marcia chastise me even more roundly when she reads this little essay.

I have to live with Papoose, after all . . .

Just who is this co-guest of honor, Marcia Muller . . .

Elena, Joanna, Sharon, or Marcia?

By Carol Harper

Curator of a museum of Mexican art in Santa Barbara's Pueblo Viejo, she uses her degree in art history from UC Santa Barbara to advantage. Her Mexican heritage enhances her qualifications for director, assuming she can overcome the class and ethnic barriers. Her primary personal conflict arises from trying to live in two worlds--the Anglo where she must work and the Hispanic where she was raised. She is Elena Oliverez.

Wait a minute--that's not quite right. Let's start over . . .

After her husband, David, died, she moved to Sonoma, California, to establish an art gallery--something she had always wanted to do and knew enough about, having worked as an art-security expert for years. But first she has to fix up the old farmhouse. And then there's the garden . . . Her son, 22-year-old E.J., is backpacking around the country, taking on occasional odd jobs and popping in back home with little warning. And now, after three years, she has fallen into the routine of small-town life, a routine which leaves her vaguely uneasy and restless. The art gallery idea no longer appeals, nor does returning to work in the gallery security business. She is 42-year-old Joanna Start.

Ooops! Still doesn't ring true. Try again.

Seeing no future in department store security, she went to UC Berkeley and got a degree in sociology. But then, with no job to be found, she went back to work in security with a large firm; eventually they tried her for detective work. Now she has her license and works as the staff investigator for All Souls Cooperative, a legal services plan in San Francisco. She's strong and independent. Part Indian, part Scotch-Irish, she has long black hair with a gray streak dating from her teens. She is 30-year-old P.I. Sharon McCone.

Actually, *she* is none of these, and all of these.

Marcia Muller is the creator of these private eyes, and, if there is any truth in fans' beliefs that authors' creations are alter-egos, incorporating aspects of their own personalities into their characters, then she is all of these.

I barely know Marcia, having met her in a literature class at UC Berkeley in 1976. The class was on women in mystery fiction, and Marcia was that wonder of wonders--a soon-to-be-published AUTHOR! She sat behind me in class, and one



Marcia Muller

night she told us about this marvelous state of affairs. *Edwin of the Iron Shoes* (1977) was in press, and she was struggling with inaccuracies in the cover art. It seems that the artist had no conception of what a San Francisco Victorian really looked like, and we were all aghast that authors had so little say in how their books were presented. To be honest, that is all I remember. Marcia was a quiet, private person, and that was the last class I shared with her. So I cannot say which parts of Joanna, Sharon and Elena are Marcia and which are from her fertile imagination.

She *may* be part Shoshone, but unlike Sharon, she is no throwback. And she surely isn't Chicana. She looks more like the Scotch-Irish brothers and sisters Sharon describes as the norm in her family. She has degrees in journalism, not sociology or art history and not from UC. It doesn't matter--these are all minor background bits of characterization. Marcia doesn't dwell extensively on descriptions of her detectives. Rather, she gradually reveals bits and pieces of their lives as the series progress.

Marcia says she is attempting to portray a

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 39)

"The Nameless Detective"

By Marcia Muller

I first encountered the "Nameless Detective" in a used bookshop in 1976. We hit it off immediately, and since then I've spent many happy hours in his company. In spite of the fact that he has refused to properly introduce himself for fourteen years now, I know this man better than I know my own family. Oh, the things I know about "the Big N"...

Of course you're all wondering what his name is. I *do* know that: it's the same as his creator's. Bill Pronzini and his fictional detective are about as close as author and protagonist can get; they share common attitudes, views of the world, likes and dislikes; they even resemble one another physically. So why shouldn't this duo share a name?

I also know how "Nameless" feels about the nickname with which my investigator, Sharon McCone, has saddled him. He *hates* being called "Wolf" and only puts up with it because he has a fatherly affection for Sharon. And speaking of nicknames, I know why--many years ago--"Nameless" didn't take girlfriend Erika Coates breaking up with him all that badly. The nickname "Old Bear" was a heavy cross to bear (pun intended) and besides, what kind of woman would dress all in pink, down to shoes and handbag?

Another interesting fact about my nameless friend: his apparent death from lung cancer was strongly foreshadowed in the 1975 story "Private Eye Blues," a move based on bad advice Pronzini had received and one he later regretted. The story's ending was subsequently revised to be more ambiguous, and "Nameless" survived his health crisis to come to terms with his own mortality in the novel *Blowback*.

On the lighter side: I know the shameful aspects of "Nameless's" dietary habits (a tolerance for burned chicken once the "black crap" is scraped off, and a love for Guido's House Special Pizza with anchovies, shrimp, and garlic olives). Often after he's indulged in a Guido's, he does penance by drinking Slim Fast for both breakfast and lunch--although he would never admit to such kinship with Tommy LaSorda. I also know the color of the sheets on the bed he seldom makes or changes: plain white, tinged with gray (perhaps the reason why he spends too many nights at Kerry Wade's condo). "Nameless" keeps most of the

details of his relationship with Kerry private, but he *has* hinted at one tantalizing escapade, and I suspect most women will agree that in middle age it's hard to find someone who will do *that* under the Christmas tree! And here's something else I suspect: what kind of car "Nameless" drives. It just *has* to be a Buick Regal, circa 1986, medium brown--the kind of vehicle we young sportscar enthusiasts used to refer to as a "parents' car."

By the way, did you know that "Nameless" is godfather to his partner Eberhardt's eldest daughter? Neither did he--until I pointed the fact out to his creator a few months ago after rereading *The Snatch*. (Eberhardt, absent-minded man, didn't even remember he *had* daughters. Would that we all could forget our responsibilities with such ease!)

A couple of examples that demonstrate how much ardent fans can alternately miss or read into a book. In "Nameless's" and Sharon McCone's collaborative investigation, *Double*, the hotel bar is called Cantina Sin Nombre*. Not one person has ever reported getting the joke. However, at another convention in *Hoodwink*, the detective removes his nametag after a few minutes, and some readers saw great symbolism in the act--something which had entirely escaped the author.

Authors have many fears, insecure creatures that we are, but Pronzini's greatest is truly unnerving. Every now and then when he's just finished putting "Nameless" through an ordeal (getting shot, beaten up, imprisoned in a mountain cabin), he says, "If a big Italian guy with a mean look on his face shows up at the door asking for me, I'm not home." I don't blame him for fearing reprisal, given the things he's done to the fellow....

On the other hand, I'm certain "Nameless" would never harm his creator--doesn't, in fact, wish to harm anyone. You see, I'm privy to his secret fantasy. Revealing it here will tarnish his hard-boiled image, but that's something he's never cared for anyway. What this decent, compassionate detective envisions is to be put out of a job because the world is transformed into a harmonious place where man and woman treats his and her fellow with simple humanity.

* Translation, for those who didn't take Spanish 1: Bar Without a Name.

Our co-guest of honor is quite used to sharing the limelight--he's . . .

BILL PRONZINI: MASTER COLLABORATOR

by Jim Doherty

You may know him as the creator of "The Nameless Detective," the famous pulp-collecting private eye. You may know him as paperback thriller writer "Alex Saxon," or adventure novelist "Jack Foxx." You may know him as one of the most active mystery anthologists around, responsible for such top-notch collections as *Midnight Specials*, *The Edgar Winners*, and *The Arbor House Treasury of Detective and Mystery Stories from the Great Pulp*s. You may know him as the gifted critic whose book-length studies of the worst in crime fiction, *Gun in Cheek* (1982) and *Son of Gun in Cheek* (1987) are a pair of the most enjoyable, entertaining non-fiction works ever written about the genre. More than a half-dozen of his fellow authors know him as "Partner," for among Bill Pronzini's many talents is the uncanny ability to collaborate effectively with a wide variety of writers. Running the gamut from a nationally syndicated political column columnist to a quirky science fiction ace, no one has worked so successfully with so many different writers representing so many different approaches to the craft of fiction.

Pronzini's first collaborator was Jeffrey Wallman, with whom he worked on nearly 20 short stories. Most appeared under the pseudonym of "William Jeffrey," though several were published under their own names and one, featuring Brett Halliday's classic PI, Mike Shayne, appeared as the cover feature in an issue of *Mike Shayne Mystery Magazine* under Halliday's byline. The William Jeffrey persona also produced one novel, *Day of the Moon*, which, unfortunately, has never been published in the U.S.

One of Pronzini's fellow Bay Area writers, Michael Kurland, collaborated with Pronzini on two short stories in the mid-70s, "Dog Story," for *Mike Shayne*, and "Vanishing Act," for *Alfred Hitchcock*.

There are rumors, possible apocryphal, that one of Pronzini's most famous collaborative novel, *The Cambodia File*, a political thriller for which he shared credit with famed journalist Jack Anderson, was, in fact, not a collaboration at all, but a solo effort to which Anderson contributed nothing but his name. I don't know whether or not that's true - but it certainly seems likely that Pronzini, as the more experienced fiction writer, would dominate, if



Bill Pronzini

not completely take over, the partnership.

Versatile Edgar-winner John Lutz was Pronzini's partner on the well-received urban police thriller *The Eye*. Lutz and Pronzini have also co-written the short story "Tiger, Tiger" and together collaborated with yet a third writer to produce "Cheeseburger" as by "John Barry Williams."

Barry N. Malzberg, the third arm in the "John Barry Williams" triad, is, in terms of sheer quantity, the most successful of Pronzini's many collaborators. Aside from some 20 short stories, the Pronzini/Malzberg team has produced four novels, including *The Running of the Beasts*, about the search for a vicious serial killer terrorizing a rural community, *Acts of Mercy*, a political thriller involving a U.S. President, his chief bodyguard, and his most trusted advisor, *Night Screams*, in which a homicide investigation is conducted within a society of clairvoyants, and *Prose Bowl*, a futuristic, satirical sports mystery in which the writing of hack genre novels has evolved into an athletic competition.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 38)

SIXTEEN LITTLE MYSTERIES

A Criminal Trivia Quiz By Jim Doherty

- (1) In which police force did Lew Archer serve as an officer before becoming a private detective?
- (2) What was the name of the San Diego private eye created by Bob Wade and Bill Miller under the pseudonym of "Wade Miller?"
- (3) Which one of John Gardner's James Bond pastiches is partly set in San Francisco?
- (4) What's the title of the movie that features John Wayne as Detective Lieutenant Lom McCue of the Seattle police?"
- (5) On *The Streets of San Francisco*, Michael Douglas portrayed a young police officer named Steve Keller. What was Keller's rank on the series?
- (6) Who is the only actor to play Phil Marlowe in three different mediums: film, radio, and television?
- (7) What are the names of the real-life communities for which Raymond Chandler's Bay City, Sue Grafton's Santa Theresa, and Ross Macdonald's Luna Bay are the fictional analogs?
- (8) Former federal cop Gerald Petievitch has forged a second career as a writer of police procedurals. Most of his books feature federal investigators as the protagonists. What is the only Petievitch novel to feature an L.A. cop, instead of a G-man, as the hero?
- (9) In the comics, Dick Tracy is a local cop in a large midwestern city, but in the movie serials produced by Republic Studios he was an F.B.I. agent who *usually* worked on the West Coast. What is the title of the *only* Republic Tracy serial to be set on the *East Coast*?
- (10) In which Ellery Queen novel does Ellery, employed as a screenwriter, solve a murder involving two Hollywood families and fall in love with a movie gossip columnist?
- (11) What was the name of the Continental Op short story Dashiell Hammett sold to *True Detective* rather than *Black Mask*?
- (12) What is the name of Sam Spade's secretary?
- (13) What was the first book to win the "Shamus" award for best private eye novel of the year, and who wrote it?
- (14) What California mystery writer is the only person to have won three different "Edgar" awards in three separate categories?
- (15) L.J. Washburn's private eye character, Lucas Hallam was once a frontier law officer in the days of Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson. Many years later he opens a detective agency in Los Angeles. How does he supplement his investigative income?
- (16) In which Erle Stanley Gardner book does District Attorney Hamilton Burger first appear?

(Solutions on Page 37)

Collector, bookseller, raconteur, avid and active fan--he's our toastmaster . . .

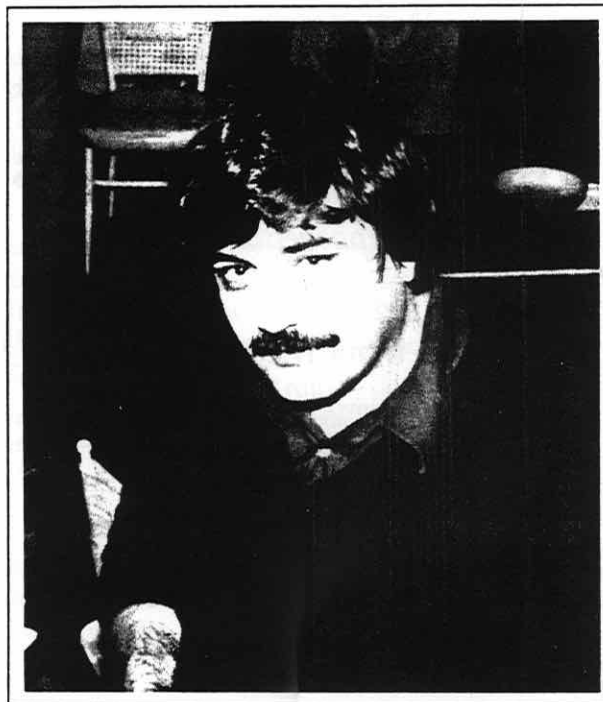
Bruce Taylor

by Steve Stilwell

What can I say about Bruce Taylor (and live)? That he's like the brother I never had (though I do have one)? That to know him is to see the Boy Scout oath personified? That to do business with him is like doing business with that fellow from *The Merchant of Venice*? That to have known him for these ten long years, has been a privilege (or so he tells me)? That he has a macro on his computer so he only has to use one key stroke to type the phrase "Send Me Money"? That he asked to be the toastmaster at this convention so that he could get into the banquet free? All of these and none of these.

For a true picture of Bruce Taylor, one must refer to the definitive piece, done by Bill Pronzini when Bruce was honored as the Fan Guest of Honor at Bouchercon XIX in San Diego (though the picture accompanying that article was taken in 1912). Since that article exists I feel no need to be truthful, honest, or forthright in drawing my picture of Bruce - thought the fact that he is six foot five and X number of pounds and I am five foot ten and half his weight may affect the way I put the words together (or *can* put words together after he reads this).

Suffice it to say that it *really* is a privilege and a pleasure to know Bruce Taylor and he well de



serves every (well, almost every) honor and accolade that comes his way. Those of you that have not had the pleasure of hearing him speak are in for a treat this weekend, those that have heard him before - well, you know what you're in for. Now, if someone would only buy me a banquet ticket I could enjoy it as well.





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The Fog Will Roll In

by Richard A. Lupoff

I'd been taking a stroll out through Golden Gate Park, and came back feeling braced and refreshed, the fog rolling in from the ocean, the air crisp and bracing with that life-giving thrill which is all San Francisco's own.

How can anyone start a piece about Northern California crime fiction except with a quote from Hammett? But that isn't Hammett, it's none other than Erle Stanley Gardner in a 1926 story about Ed Jenkins, "the Phantom Crook." It's one of 73--yes, 73--of them that ran in *Black Mask* between 1925 and 1943, and if your *Black Mask* collection is a trifle spotty you can pick up a couple of volumes of Ed Jenkins stories considerably reissued by Carrol & Graf in 1990.

Jenkins was pure pulp, pre-Perry Mason, Gardner. The self-styled Fiction Factory was a jack-of-all-pulp, ranging from "breezies" to Westerns to science fiction, and the Jenkins stories are full of wonderful period stuff. Flappers with rolled stockings and bobbed hair, slimy lawyers and treacherous vamps, gats blasting (although Jenkins seldom carried one) and roadsters screeching.

Not all the Ed Jenkins stories took place in Northern California, although the ones I've seen are all California-bound, due to a mysterious glitch in the extradition laws that left Ed a wanted felon in 47 states but a free man in California.

Erle Stanley Gardner was far from the first author to set his criminous fiction in our area. The illustrious Mark Twain, in fact, if not the very first, was certainly a pioneer. One of his most famous stories, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," is, if not exactly a mystery, certainly one of the landmark caper yarns of all time.

But Gardner or Twain or any of the hundreds of others will all give way to the master of us all, Dashiell Hammett. He didn't write for long, he didn't write very much, and what he wrote was of decidedly uneven quality. But Hammett at his best . . . Ah, Hammett at his best . . . was simply, the best.

The deck was deserted. A heavy fog, wet as rain -- the fog of San Francisco Bay's winter nights -- lay over boat and water, and had thus driven everyone else inside. It hung about us, thick and impenetrable; I couldn't see so far as the end of the boat, in

spite of the lights glowing overhead.

That's from a Continental Op story, "The Tenth Clew." In it, the Op travels out to Sacramento and returns to Oakland by train and boards a ferry for San Francisco. It's as close to a travelog of the region as Hammett ever wrote, and it's terrific.

But as much as anyone loves the Op, there's that even more famous Hammett dick. There has to be.

Samuel Spade's jaw was long and bony, his chin a jutting v under the more flexible v of his mouth. His nostrils curved back to make another, smaller, v. His yellow-grey eyes were horizontal.



The v motif was picked up again by thickish brows rising outward from twin creases above a hooked

nose, and his pale brown hair grew down—from high flat temples—in a point on his forehead. He looked rather pleasantly like a blond Satan. He said to Effie Perine: "Yes, sweetheart?"

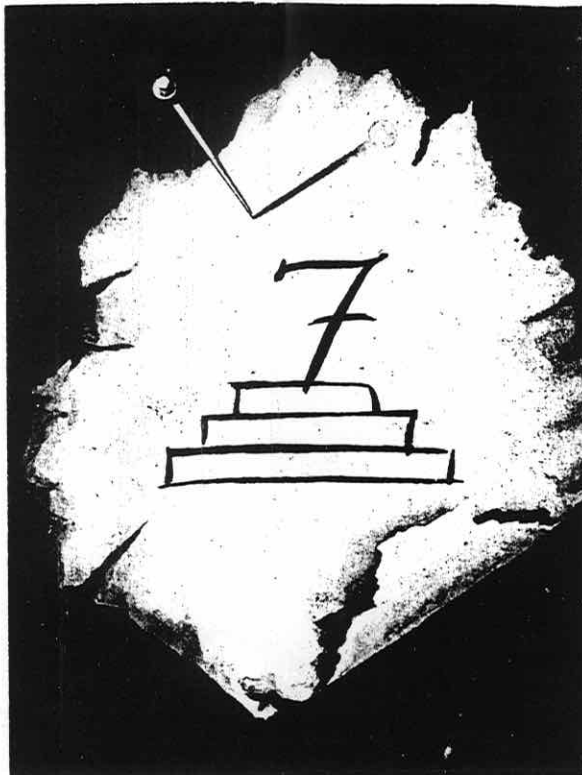
Ah, Hammett, Hammett. That description of Sam Spade—right there, those are the opening words of *The Maltese Falcon*-- was actually met more accurately by Ricardo Cortez in the first film version of the novel than by other, later actors. That first film version, in fact, is a terrific flick. Of course it was totally overshadowed in later years, and it isn't easy to get hold of, but it's a fine movie.

The second screen Sam Spade was Warren William, a John Barrymore lookalike who also had the distinction of playing Philo Vance and Perry Mason in later years. William's screen Spade is a travesty, probably more the responsibility of the director and screenwriter than this rather good actor.

And in the third version, ah, Bogie . . .

And as for Hammett, don't forget that Nick and Nora Charles hailed from San Francisco—at least Nora did--and they returned here for a notorious Christmas party even though their best known case took place in New York.

Northern California has a long history of producing outstanding mystery writers, some of



whose books are set hereabouts and others of which are scattered across the globe. David

Dodge's most famous book, *To Catch a Thief*, took place in Monaco, but Dodge himself was a Berkeley boy, and the scholarly Art Scott suggests that Dodge's PI team of Whit Whitney and Kitty MacLeod were a terrific pair of Nick-and-Nora clones.

Samuel W. Taylor, longtime resident of Redwood City, won immortality of a sort with his invention of "Flubber," that goofy substance featured in several Disney films. But Taylor was a top author for both the pulps and the slick magazines of the 1930s and 40s. His two forays into mystery-novel territory, *The Man with My Face* (1948) and *The Grinning Gizmo* (1951), are well worth investigating. Both work changes on the impossible crime motif, and no less an authority than Don Herron lists *The Man with My Face* as the second-best Bay Area mystery novel ever-- right behind *The Maltese Falcon*.

Taylor was born into one of the last of the old-time Mormon families, and he recalls his adventures with his father's six wives and his numerous full- and half-siblings in a marvelous memoir, *Family Kingdom*.

Husband-and-wife PI teams abound in Northern California fiction. Lenore Glen Offord's *Murder on Russian Hill* introduced Bill and Coco Hastings in 1938.

But Darwin and Hildegard Teilhet were a husband-and-wife mystery writing team. Bill Pronzini is fond of their carried-to-the-ragged-edge detective, Herr Baron Franz Maximilian Karagoz und von Kaz, originally of Vienna, later of San Francisco, Carmel, and other locations around the Golden State. Bill is particularly fond of the Teilhets' 1936 von Kaz novel, *The Crimson Hair Murders*. And a check of the standard bibliographies reveals a massive output by both Darwin and Hildegard, each on their own, in addition to their collaborations.

Miriam Allen deFord combined an interest in mysteries with a fondness for science fiction. Check out her novel *The Theme is Murder* (1967) and her anthology *Space, Time and Crime* (1964) with stories by local notables Reg Bretnor, Poul Anderson, J. Francis McComas and Anthony Boucher.

Speaking of whom . . .

Tony Boucher was born William Anthony Parker White in Oakland in 1911. A man of amazing talents and varied interests, he introduced the incidental detective Dr. John Ashwin, Professor of Sanskrit at the University of California in Berkeley, in *The Seven of Calvary* (1937). A more widely remembered Boucher detective is Fergus

O'Brien of the (alas) Los Angeles Police Department. But in addition to his non-supernatural cases (not to say conventional, for none of them warrant that adjective), O'Brien solved the marvelous case of "The Compleat Werewolf" in Berkeley.

Boucher also created one of the first nun-detectives, Sister Ursula of the Order of Martha of Bethany, and he instigated and managed the odd round-robin mystery novel *The Marble Forest*, published under the name of "Theo Durrant." And for years he was one of the nation's leading book reviewers, producing weekly columns on mysteries as Anthony Boucher and on science fiction as H. H. Holmes.

With Boucher's name is invariably associated that of J. Francis McComas, which is both a blessing and a curse, for McComas is entitled to be remembered for his solo achievements as well. His mystery fiction was apparently limited to short stories, but he instigated and edited a marvelous volume of mystery non-fiction, *The Graveside Companion*, with studies of California murders by Lenore Glen Offord, Miriam Allen deFord, and Stuart Palmer, among others. Palmer doesn't qualify as a Northern California writer, but his Hildegard Withers novels (and the marvelous films based on them, especially those teaming Edna May Oliver and James Gleason) hold up very well.

Walter Tevis was another native San Franciscan, and his pool-hall novels, *The Hustler* and *The Color of Money*, are close enough to crime fiction to make superb reading. In a radio interview some years ago, Tevis revealed that his science fiction novel *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, was a disguised autobiography. Tevis's family moved him from Northern California to Kentucky when he was a child, and he felt that same sense of desolating loss of the richness of culture that his tragic space alien does in the book.

This is said with due apologies to offended Kentuckians.

Not that every Northern California mystery writer (or every mystery writer using a Northern California setting) was brilliant, or very good, or even pretty good. There were the clunkers.

There was Tom Roan, primarily a writer of western fiction. Roan's 1936 yellow peril novel, *The Dragon Strikes Back*, contains this little rhapsody:

They drifted to a halt five hundred yards apart and just off Angel Island. Their anchors were let go. They lay there sleepily and with but little activity

aboard.

Then night settled. With it came a raging wind that was tearing across the ocean in fish-tailing blasts that wailed and bawled with the lament of thousands of dying cattle. The wind lifted the sea as if by the roots, whipping wishy walls of white water skyward and driving before it in flying sheets. Mountainous combers kept rolling in, growing higher and higher as they neared the shore to break in a final lunge against the rock-bound spurs of headlands up and down the California Coast with the terrific splatter and reverberating thunder-clapping of massed batteries of heavy artillery.

Yes, sir!

But, hey, Tom Roan couldn't hold a candle to Kelley Banks when it came to bad writing. Consider this, the very opening segment of *Ten the Hard Way* (1955):

WHOK -- whok -- whok -- WHAK! The unyielding, granite-hard edges of my calloused hands slam solidly against the coldly bare cement floor of San Quentin's death cell. Hope that somehow I may yet go free still flames savagely, hope that somehow these hands may yet go terribly to their inexorable task will not die.

Hoarsely, from where it crouches on the rocks, a foghorn eternally bellows its stentorian dirge to the damned, accompanied intermittently by the glaring silence of a fitful spotlight, worrying eerily through the swirling mists lowering over the prison yard.

Okay, I give up!

Why the urge to write mysteries set in our glorious region? Its variety, perhaps, of geography and climate, from the cold Bay to the magnificent Lake Tahoe in the High Sierras to the Trinity Alps to the north, the Central Valley to the east, the Sacramento Delta, the Monterey Peninsula. Fog swirls, snow falls, crops grow, the sun beats down. It's a living region, even when that life comes in the form of a killer earthquake.

Or maybe it's the glamorous history of our region, from Sir Francis Drake's visit to the discovery of gold, the tragic story of the Native Americans, the Russian colonists, the Spanish, the Californios and Mexicanos and Americanos, the Chinese who built the railroads in the 1840s, the Japanese who were imprisoned in the 1940s.

Then there are the Lemurians who still tramp around the mountaintops when there's nobody else around.

Maybe it was the Lemurians (and the Moonies) who inspired John D. MacDonald to

bring Travis McGee to Mendocino in *The Green Ripper* (1979) and Richard Prather to bring Shell Scott to the area in *The Sweet Ride* (1972).

When Earl Derr Biggers transported his Chinese-American-Hawaiian detective Charlie Chan to the mainland in *The Chinese Parrot* (1926) it was to San Francisco. Chan returned here in *Behind that Curtain* (1928), and if you're ever looking at some of the old Charlie Chan films, do not pass up *Charlie Chan at Treasure Island* (1939). It's the Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay that Charlie visits, during the World's Fair.

Maybe it was the mysterious Louis Felder who explained it in *Rocky Libido in San Francisco* (1962):

I had journeyed this great distance for one reason alone: to feel that wonderful gray anesthesia again--the fog. That was the thing I remembered most about the city. It cooled, it bathed, it purged, but most of all it numbed. You see, whenever my mind becomes groggy from thinking about Life and Destiny and Achievement and similar things, then I know it's time to head toward San Francisco, to the sea, to the fog, to clear my head.

What's the magic? Whatever it is, it has not worn off. Every writer mentioned in this essay is a member of a past generation, either deceased or no longer writing mysteries. Some of their books are still in print or easily obtained in second-hand copies. Others are distressingly tough targets for the collector.

But they are not just collectibles. Many of them are fascinating windows onto the culture of another age. Taut, colorful, well-written, and well worth reading.

And whole new generations of mystery writers have arisen in Northern California. They spread their nets far afield, for our home territory is not merely "San Francisco and environs" but a region as varied and populous as a country.

The longtime predominance of male writers has become more nearly balanced as women in increasing numbers create their cops and crooks and private eyes and set them about their appointed tasks. We're still of a remarkably uniform skin color, but the time must come when we'll welcome others to our ranks -- Asians, Native Americans, Hispanics, African Americans. The close-to-lily-white membership of the Northern California mystery community is becoming an embarrassment.

But as more writers arrive, as more stories are laid in our cities, among our hills and mountains

and along our waterways, they will surely bring more of the riches of the world's peoples and their cultures.

And as for the classic writers whom we recall so fondly . . . well, when Erle Stanley Gardner, late in his career, decided to revive the long-quiescent Ed Jenkins, he brought him back home. It was 1961, and even *Black Mask* was gone by now, so Gardner placed the final Phantom Crook story with *Argosy* magazine instead.

It was a night when a swirling fog scurried over the high peaks of San Francisco, to settle down in comparatively windless tranquility over Chinatown. Having hurried in from the ocean, the fog now became leisurely, settling down slowly upon the carved dragons, the distinctive roofs with their peculiar upturned corners-- down to the level of the second- and third-story windows--and stopping.

The fog will roll in, footsteps will echo along chilled sidewalks, the screams of victims will echo in the night only to be picked up by the screams of police sirens.

All will be well.



Southern California mystery authors just direct their feet to . . .

The Sunny Side of the Street

By Les Roberts

When the slightly down-at-the-heels Los Angeles private detective burst upon the scene with a vengeance back in the thirties and forties and became a familiar and beloved literary icon, I'm not sure how mean the "mean streets" really were. Back then Southern California was a lazy, almost bucolic kind of place, full of horse ranches and citrus groves and clean whitewashed buildings, and tall leggy women who wore their hair in snoods, where washing down a nutburger with an Orange Julius was about as rough as it got.

Not that there wasn't any crime. Wherever there's a big city you'll find slums, poverty, and big fish preying on smaller fish, and the Los Angeles Raymond Chandler immortalized had plenty of them. But I have the feeling that Philip Marlowe and Lew Archer and their brother shamuses had life a bit easier in those halcyon days than Aaron Gunner, Jacob Asch, Kinsey Millhone, and my own creation, Saxon, do now.

Drugs weren't casting their ominous shadow over the landscape, for one thing, but then neither were they in New York or Chicago. And the industrial cities of the east and midwest, populated by a largely immigrant population and their first generation children, built of dark piles of stone begrimed with the smoke of a million factories, frozen in winter, rain-drenched in spring, and airless hell-holes in August, produced a tougher, cannier, and more resilient kind of slimebag, skel, perp, or wise-guy. The alleys of Brooklyn and the Bronx and Hell's Kitchen were the natural breeding ground for the guys with busted noses and aggressively-jutting chins, the ones portrayed on screen by Raft and Cagney and Bogart and burnished to a brass shine by fighting their way up through the Irish or Italian or Polish or German ghettos, honed to a knife-edge just by the effort of surviving.

Why, then, the ongoing fascination with crime on the sunny side of the street in Los Angeles and its environs?

Maybe it's *because* of the sunshine and the palm trees and the bright blue ocean and the hot white sands, of buildings painted pastel or in the shape of derby hats or donuts or hot dog sandwiches. The thought of crime in such a paradise is



that much more titillating, that much more delicious. From any place lovely enough to be called Sunset Boulevard we expect the Good Life: backyard cookouts, high-breasted blond cheerleaders and bronzed and oiled demigods waxing their boogie boards and hollering "Surf's up!"

When we get murder and betrayal instead, it's almost like peeking into somebody else's apartment. A white summer frock with a marinara sauce stain on the bosom. The deflowering of a virgin. Talking dirty in front of a nun. It's forbidden. It's taboo. It's--sexier, somehow. Suntan oil is more sensuous than Three-in-One oil.

That is only how the rest of the world perceives Los Angeles. Some of us who have lived there know it's often about as sexy as a kinescope re-run of Beaver and Wally.

When we see a crumbling old Gothic mansion in a Hollywood movie, we relax and wait for the werewolves and vampires. But show us the Moorish mansions and sprawling Spanish haciendas of Beverly Hills bathed in the hard-edged desert sunshine and then let us find a body floating in the pool, the horror is more keenly felt. The serpent has arrived in Eden and unpacked its bags, and finding it and cutting off its head seems more

Observing two significant anniversaries . . .

THE "RUE MORGUE" AND EQMM

In the Philadelphia publication, *Graham's Magazine*, dated 1 April 1841, appeared a story titled "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." It featured C. Auguste Dupin in a tale of ratiocination as chronicled by his nameless companion. We celebrate this year the 150th anniversary of that story. Dupin was the world's first fictional detective, his chronicler the first "Watson;" and the story's author was 32-year-old Edgar Allan Poe, the inventor of the modern detective story.

"Our first meeting was at an obscure library in the Rue Montmartre, where the accident of our both being in search of the same very rare and very remarkable volume brought us into close communion."

Shades of Sherlock Holmes! We never do learn the title of this historic catalytic tome. Was it the *Necronomicon*?

In this story and its successors, "The Mystery of Marie Roget," (1842) and "The Purloined Letter," (1844), Poe shaped the models that were to dominate crime fiction to this day. In a fourth, "Thou Art the Man" (1844), he added his own



Edgar Allan Poe

brand of sick humor to a tale told by a nameless detective (another first!).

During the ensuing 150 years, the influence of Poe's invention went abroad, to England (Dickens,

ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK

EDITED BY
ELLERY QUEEN

VOLUME ONE

FALL 1941

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Title page of inaugural issue of EQMM. Early issues depended heavily on reprints, especially from English sources.

Collins) and France (Gaboriau), back to the U.S. (Twain), culminating in December 1887 with Doyle's first Holmes story, leading into the glorious '90s and the Strand magazine adventures. You can read all about it in Ellery Queen's authoritative *Quonum* and his exhaustive bibliographies.

Which brings us to our concurrent celebration. We all know that Ellery Queen was the pen name for cousins Manfred B. Lee (1905-1971) and Frederic Dannay (1905-1982). Fifty years ago, drawing on his own huge collection and his fearsome expertise, Fred Dannay founded a periodical that at once became the quality entry in a field previously dominated by the pulps. *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* appeared on the newsstands bearing the date Fall 1941 and promising to print, on book paper, not woodpulp, the best of old and new detective short fiction. For this half-century that promise has been fulfilled; along the way, many an old master shared its pages with the very first story of many a new master. Dannay is gone, but the tradition lives on. The files of *EQMM* are and continue to be a treasure trove of the best in short detective fiction.

Conference Events

REGISTRATION: MEZZANINE

At Registration sign up for Saturday Banquet, Sunday Brunch, and Dashiell Hammett Walks.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

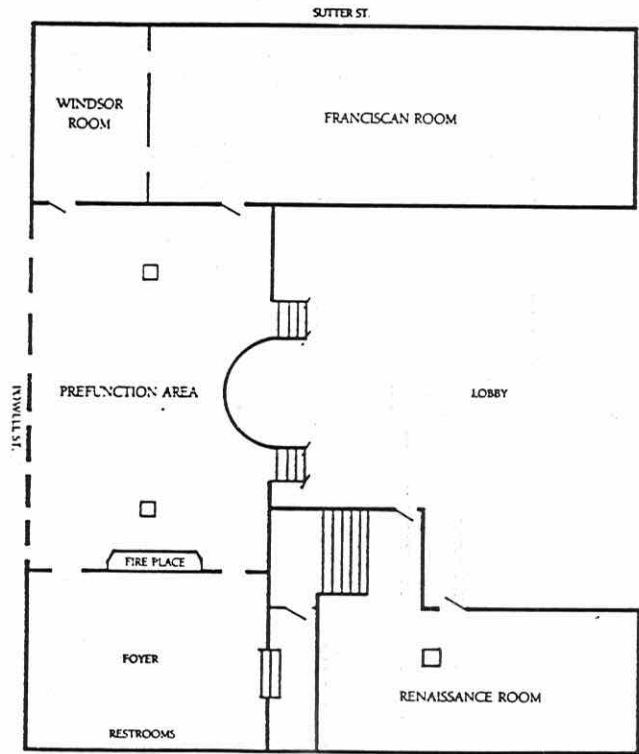
FRIDAY KICKOFF: MEZZANINE, 7 pm
Opening Remarks, followed by Reception and Autograph Roundtable sponsored by WARNER PUBLISHERS and DELACORTE PRESS

SATURDAY:

Auction to benefit Concord Transcribers for the Blind, Franciscan Room, 4:30 pm
Banquet, evening, \$33.95
Sign up at Registration.

SUNDAY:

Dashiell Hammett Brunch, 9 am, \$22.50
Sign up at Registration.
Dashiell Hammett Walk, noon
Sign up at Registration.
No-host drinks and talk, evening, S. Holmes Pub, 30th floor of the Holiday Inn, Sutter St. on Union Square



MEZZANINE

MONDAY:

Coffee and Trivia Contest, morning
Special Interest Groups, afternoon

PROGRAMMING:

Empire Room, 2nd floor
Franciscan Room, Mezzanine
Carmel Room, 2nd floor

BOOK DEALERS:

Monterey Room, 2nd floor

HOSPITALITY SUITE:

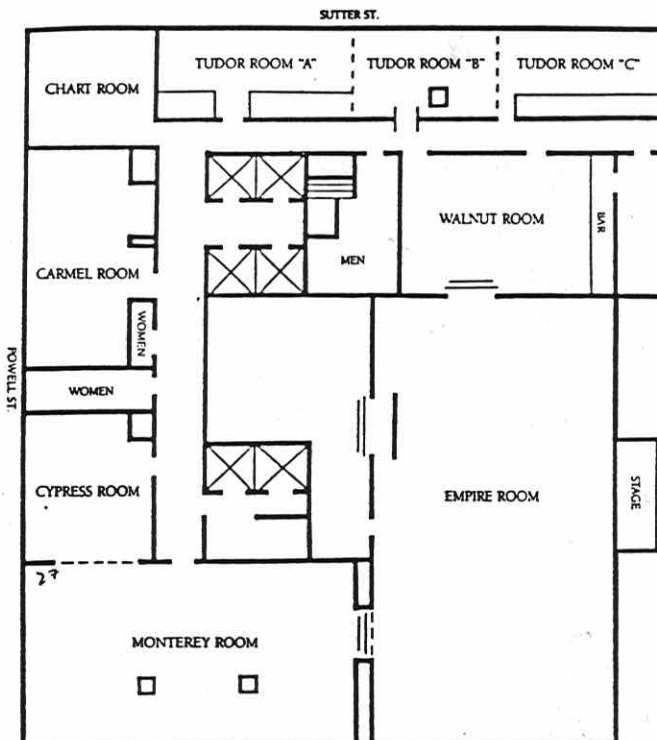
19th floor, all conferees welcome

AUTOGRAPHS:

Mezzanine, Saturday & Sunday

CONVENTION OPERATIONS:

Chart Room 2nd floor,
Lost & Found, Help for the Confused, etc.



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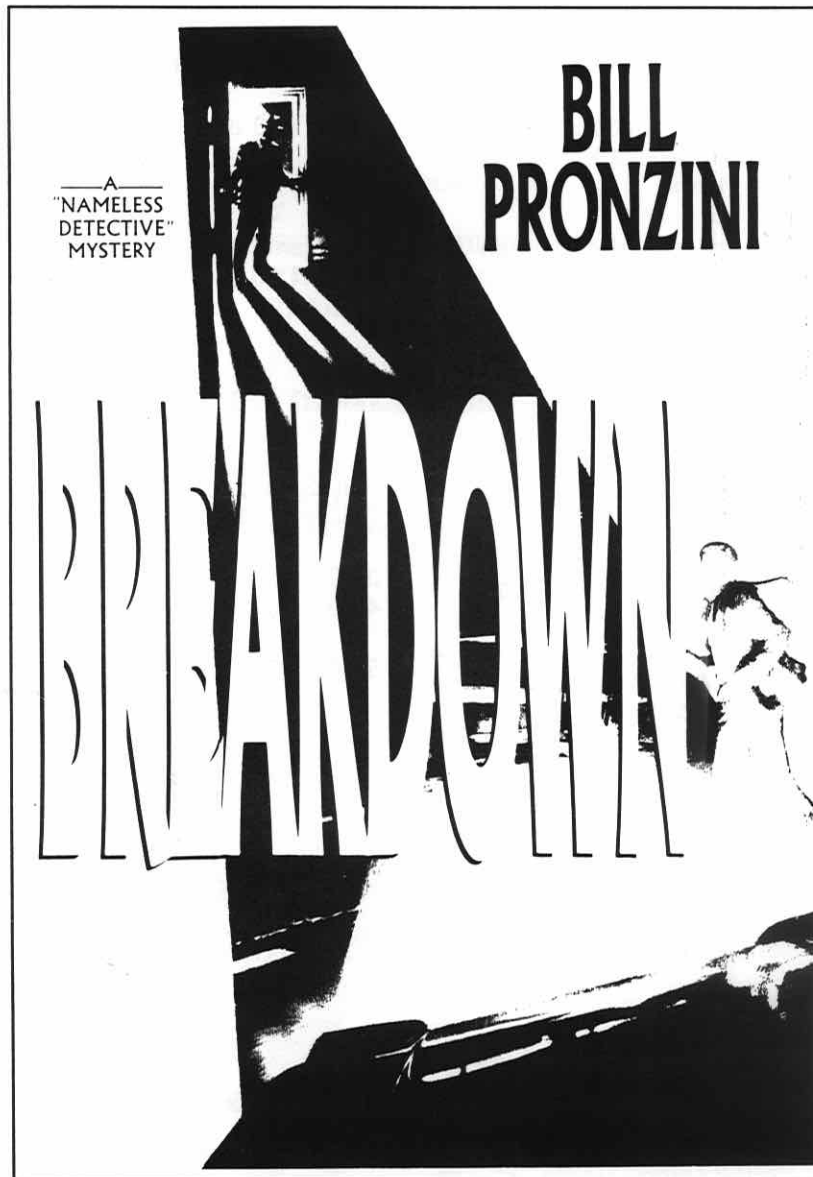
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THE SHAPE OF DREAD
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF
THERE'S SOMETHING IN A SUNDAY
TROPHIES AND DEAD THINGS

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**Delacorte
Press**

Conference Program

Friday, 15 February 1991

2:00-7:00 pm Registration
 2:00-7:00 pm Book Dealers Room open
 4:30 pm-Midnight Hospitality Suite open

6:00-9:00 pm Bar open, Windsor Room
 7:00-7:30 pm Opening Remarks,
 Mezzanine

7:30 pm-9:00 pm Reception and Autograph
 Round Table sponsored
 by Warner Publications
 and Delacorte Press,
 Franciscan Room

Saturday, 16 February 1991

8:30 am-6:30 pm Registration, Mezzanine
 10:00 am-6:00 pm Book Dealers Room open
 11:00 am-Midnight Hospitality Suite open

9:00-10:00 am Programming
 10:00-10:30 am Autographs

10:30-11:30 am Programming
 11:30 am-Noon Autographs

12:00-1:30 pm Break
 12:00-1:00 pm Dashiell Hammett Walk,
 meet Don Herron in hotel
 lobby

1:30-2:30 pm Programming
 2:30-3:00 pm Autographs

3:00-4:00 pm Programming
 4:00-4:30 pm Autographs

4:30-5:30 pm Auction to benefit the
 Concord Transcribers for
 the Blind, Franciscan
 Room

5:30-8:30 pm Bar open, Walnut Room
 6:30-7:30 pm Seating for Banquet,
 Empire Room
 7:30-9:30 pm Banquet, Empire Room

Sunday, 17 February 1991

9:00 am-3:00 pm Registration, Mezzanine
 10:00 am-6:00 pm Book Dealers Room open
 11:00 am-Midnight Hospitality Suite open

9:00-11:00 am Dashiell Hammett Brunch,
 Empire Room
 11:00-11:30 am Autographs

11:30 am-Noon Break
 12:00-1:00 pm Dashiell Hammett Walk,
 meet Don Herron in hotel
 lobby

12:00-1:00 pm Programming
 1:00-1:30 pm Autographs

1:30-2:30 pm Programming
 2:30-3:00 pm Autographs

3:00-4:00 pm Programming
 4:00-4:30 pm Autographs

5:00-7:00 pm No-host drinks and talk,
 S. Holmes Esq. Pub,
 30th floor of the Holiday
 Inn on Sutter Street

Monday, 18 February 1991

9:30 am-Noon Coffee and rolls,
 Hospitality Suite

10:00 am-2:00 pm Book Dealers Room open

9:30-10:30 am Trivia Contest: Test your
 knowledge now that you
 have attended all of the
 events, Franciscan Room

10:30-11:30 am Programming
 11:30-Noon Autographs

1:00-2:00 pm Special Interest Group
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Meet the authors, editors, collectors, and fans taking part in the program--in other words . . .

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

NOTE: Photos of participants have been provided when available; presence or absence of a photo is not an editorial value judgment. We apologize to those whose information arrived too late for inclusion or has been garbled somewhat in the translation.



Jack Albin Anderson

JACK ALBIN ANDERSON's first career was as an executive for big name advertising agencies, initially in his native New York and then in San Francisco, where he now lives. After retirement he began writing; his first book, *The Society Ball Murders* was published last year, a sequel is due later this year. His sleuth is society columnist Patty Nottingham, and his style is high satire.



John L. Apostolou

JOHN. L. APOSTOLOU is an admirer of Raymond Chandler, oriental mysteries, and pulp era mystery fiction. He has written articles for TAD and edited, with Martin Greenberg, the anthologies, *Murder in Japan* (1987) and *The Best Japanese Science Fiction Stories* (1989). He lives and works in L.A.



William Babula

WILLIAM BABULA's "smart-alecky private eye and romantic tough-guy," San Francisco's Jeremiah St. John, has starred in *St. John's Baptism* and *According to St. John*, and will appear again this spring in *St. John and the Seven Veils*. Babula, a prize-winning playwright, lives in Santa Rosa and teaches creative writing at Sonoma State U. His favorite mystery writer is Charles Williford.

JOHN BRODIE has been with the Department of Justice for 20 years, gaining experience in many phases of its work, including homicide, missing and wanted persons, and property recovery.

Currently he's involved in the Serious Habitual Offender program, a pilot project for the Bay Area counties integrating sexual assault investigations of state and local agencies.

MAX BYRD, who lives in Davis, California, is the author of five mysteries; *Fuse Time*, the newest, is scheduled to be published by Bantam this month. An earlier book, *California Thriller*, won a Shamus award for best paperback original.

TRELLA CRESPI's *The Trouble With a Small Raise*, published in January, features ad art buyer Simona Griffio as the sleuth. A sequel, *The Trouble With Montgomery*, is due out in July.

VIRGINIA CROSBY, a retired French professor, divides her time between the L.A. area and Paris, France. Her mystery, *The Fast-Death Factor*, published last year, features the collective sleuthing of a woman college dean, a county sheriff, and a female paraplegic.

DIANE MOTT DAVIDSON of Colorado wrote the "delicious" mystery *Catering to Nobody* (St. Martin's) and hopes to tempt conferees with cookies made from a recipe in the book.

KENN DAVIS is a nationally exhibited fine artist and a published mystery author since 1976. His latest book, *Blood of Poets*, is the eighth of a paperback series about black P.I. Carver Bascombe. Two of the novels were nominated for Edgars, another for a Shamus. Davis, a native Californian, lives in Martinez.

JANET DAWSON lives in Alameda and is the author of the prize-winning *Kindred Crimes*.

JIM DOHERTY, fastest pen in the West, writes for the *Mystery Readers International Journal*. He's been active in Bay Area fandom for many years.

SUSAN DUNLAP lives in Albany, CA and writes yarns about Berkeley cop Jill Smith and Vijay Haskell, who works in the Russian River area. With *Pious Deception*, set in Phoenix, she is launching a new series featuring medical examiner Kiernan O'Shaughnessy.

PATRICIA ELMORE writes mysteries featuring Susannah Higgins, an 11-year-old black Oakland girl, and her two white friends. *Susannah and the Blue House Mystery* and *Susannah and the Poison Green Halloween* have been published in both hardcover and paperback. Elmore's favorite author: John le Carre; her favorite book: Sayers' *Nine Tailors*.



D. C. Fontana

D. C. FONTANA, probably best known for her work as writer, story editor, and producer (at different times) for the various *Star Trek* series, has over 100 credits as a writer on such diverse TV series as *Streets of San Francisco*, *The Waltons*, and *Dallas*. Her scripts have been nominated for Writers Guild, Filmcon, and Hugo awards. She has published three novels. She lives in Studio

City with her husband, four cats, and "several space ships."



Jaqueline Girdner

JAQUELINE GIRDNER practices the same "mellow" Marin life style, tai chi and vegetarianism, as her creation, Kate Jasper. Her first mystery novel, *Adjusted to Death*, involves another Marin institution, the chiropractor. The second Jasper book, *The Last Resort*, is due in June, the third, *Murder Most Mellow*, in the near future. Girdner's favorite mystery is *Compromising Positions* by Susan Isaacs.

LINDA GRANT is the pseudonym of Linda Williams, whose first book, the hi-tech Silicon Valley action whodunit, *Random Access Murder* (1988), was nominated for an Anthony Award. Her second, *Blind Trust*, a hardcover in 1990, will be published in paperback in June.

STEPHEN GREENLEAF of San Francisco is the author of the John Marshall Tanner detective novels. His latest, *Book Case*, was scheduled for publication by Morrow in January 1991.

ORIETTA HARDY-SAYLES has been writing fiction since she could hold a pencil, infrequently interrupted by careers in the Air Force, law enforcement, and the computer electronics industry.

She leads a loosely organized band of fans known as the South Bay Sleuths, an Irregular Chapter of Mystery Readers International. **GAR HAYWOOD's** *Fear of the Dark*, featuring black private eye Aaron Gunner, won the 1987 Best First P.I. Novel award. His second book is *Not Long For This World* (1990). He lives in L.A. where, in his spare time, he's a graphic designer and computer tech.

DON HERRON has led the Dashiell Hammett Tour up and down Frisco's mean streets for 15 years. His guidebook, *The Literary World of San Francisco* (City Lights) covers sites associated with hundreds of this city's writers. Later this year, *City Lights* will issue a new edition of his Hammett tour book.

JANE HORNING has picked out a unique niche for herself: quotations collector. Based on her extensive reading, she compiled *The Mystery Lover's Book of Quotations* (Mysterious Press). Ex-librarian Horning continues to peruse mysteries at her Palo Alto home and . . . collect quotations for a second edition!



Wendy Hornsby

WENDY HORNSBY's two books

featuring California heiress Kate Teague and her lover, police Lt. Rigoberto Tejada, *No Harm and Half a Mind*, received critical acclaim. A third novel in the series, *Telling Lies* is forthcoming. A native of Southern California, the author teaches history at Long Beach CC. Her favorite mystery: *Stranger in My Grave* by Margaret Millar.

JERRY KENNEALY, a native San Franciscan, is a licensed P.I. who lives in the Bay Area, and whose sixth Nick Polo book, *Green With Envy*, is due out from St. Martin's in the spring.

KAREN KIJEWski, a resident of Citrus Heights, CA, has two entries so far in her private eye series, *Katwalk* and *Katapult*, and a third, *Kat's Cradle*, forthcoming, all from different publishers.



Ronnie Klaskin

RONNIE KLASKIN is primarily a short story writer (although at times she's been a teacher, speech therapist, and stand-up comic). Her stories have appeared in *EQMM* and *Detective Story Magazine*; her next one is slated for the first issue of *New Mystery*. She lives on Long Island, and her favorite mystery is *Tourist Season* by Carl Hiassen.



Rochelle Majer Krich

ROCHELLE MAJER KRICH lives in L.A. with her husband and six children, chairs a high school English department, enjoys tennis and crosswords, and, oh yes, plots murder in her spare time. Her happily married LAPD detective Sam Ryker first appeared in *Where's Mommy Now?* along with amateur sleuth Laney Tolbert, a mother of three. Both are scheduled for their own series.



Janet LaPierre

JANET LAPIERRE, although living in Berkeley, sets her mysteries in fictional Port Silva on the California north coast. *Unquiet Grave* (1987), *Children's Games* (1989), and *The Cruel Mother* (1990) all feature Police Chief Vince Gutierrez and schoolteacher Meg Halloran. A fourth book is due in 1992.

MARGARET LUCKE writes

about a woman who's both P.I. and artist in *Blinding the Serpent* (tentative title) to be published by St. Martin's this fall. Lucke and her protagonist live in San Francisco.



Dick Lupoff

DICK LUPOFF's "collectibles" detective, Hobart Lindsey, was introduced in *The Comic Book Killer*. Lindsey and his companion, Berkeley cop Marvia Plum, return in *The Classic Car Killer*, to be published in 1991 by Offspring Press. Dick is the author of some 32 books and hosts a weekly talk show on radio station KPFA-FM. **PHIL McARDLE's** novel, *Fatal Fascination*, was published by Houghton Mifflin. A Berkeley resident, he's currently working on histories of the Oakland Police department and the Oakland Police Officers' Association.

LEN AND JUNE MOFFATT are *fen emeritii* in both the mystery and science-fiction fields; a convention is hardly complete without their active attendance. More than two decades ago, they founded the *JDM Bibliophile*, a long-lived fanmag honoring John D. MacDonald, and cofounded the Bouchercon, now a premiere annual event. They hosted the 1972 and 1976 Bouchercons in L.A. They haven't stopped their activities since, having participated on many con committees and

programs and in many a sci-fi masquerade.



Gerry Maddren

GERRY MADDREN, a native Californian, has published over 50 short stories in a variety of magazines, a play, and numerous articles. She writes about a mother/daughter P.I. team based in Burbank, CA (where Maddren herself now lives). Her mystery, *The Case of the Johannisberg Riesling*, appeared in 1988.



Carla Norton

CARLA NORTON's true crime book about a 1985 "sex-slave" case, *Perfect Victim*, authored with Christine McGuire (the case's prosecutor) hit the best seller lists in both the U.S. and U.K. Much traveled, she currently

lives in Benecia where she's at work on a new true crime treatment of a case involving a Sacramento landlady and nine murdered tenants. Favorite mystery: Lia Matera's *The Good Fight*. **A(NNA) P. PENISTON**, a resident of Fair Oaks, CA, is the author of *Search for Sybil*, a hardcover published by Ashley. Two-year-old Sybil is missing after her mother's murder; her father launches a five-year search.



Meredith Phillips

MEREDITH PHILLIPS is an editor, writer, and founder of Perseverance Press, Menlo Park, CA. She self-published her book, *Death Spiral, Murder at the Winter Olympics*, (1984) and discovered she enjoyed publishing more than writing. So far, Perseverance has published eight books (mostly mysteries). Her favorite mystery: Sayers' *Gaudy Night*.

ROBERT J. RANDISI has authored over 200 books, 10 of which are P.I. novels; he has edited six mystery anthologies; he is the founder of The Private Eye Writers of America and the creator of the Shamus award; he is the mystery reviewer for the *Orlando Sentinel*. His most recent books are *Separate Cases* (1990), featuring N.Y. P.I. Miles

Jacoby, and *Justice for Hire* (1990), the fourth PWA anthology. Favorite book and author: *Undercurrents* by Bill Pronzini. **NANCY ROBERTS** writes juvenile mysteries for several publications and produces mystery parties for children.



Robert Samoian

ROBERT SAMOIAN has been a deputy D.A. for L.A. county for 20 years and an avid mystery collector and reader for a lot longer, amassing a library of over 22,000 books, one of the largest mystery collections in private hands. He writes the "New Releases" column for *Mystery and Detective Monthly*. His favorite writer is John Dickson Carr.



Sarah Shankman

SARAH SHANKMAN recently returned to San Francisco where her series character, Sam (for

Samantha) Adams, also once lived. Her 1990 novel, *Now Let's Talk of Graves*, was set in New Orleans; Sam's next adventure will be in San Francisco. Two earlier Sam books, written as by Alice Storey, will be reissued under the Shankman name this fall.



Bridget Smith

BRIDGET SMITH has lived in Alaska for 23 years and likes everything about the great outdoors except the bugs. Her 1988 mystery, *Death of an Alaskan Princess*, features psychologist Wynne Morgan and Juneau police officer Rita Manzoni. She's currently entranced by the books of Sarah Caudwell.

JULIE SMITH, a Berkeley resident, has written six books, three

of them currently available in paperback reprint from Mysterious Press, and her *New Orleans Mourning* is scheduled for reprint this month by Fawcett. She's a former reporter for the *Chronicle*, and one of her sleuths, Paul McDonald, is an ex-reporter who writes mysteries.

STEVE STILWELL is the proprietor of Muder for Pleasure Mystery Books in Minneapolis MN. He was the sponsor and co-chairperson of Bouchercon XVIII in 1987.



Marilyn Wallace

MARILYN WALLACE edited the

currently appearing 5-volume *Sisters in Crime* anthology and is editing, with Robert J. Randisi, the forthcoming *Deadly Allies*. Her Oakland homicide cops, Jay Goldstein, single and intellectual, and Carlos Cruz, an emotional family man, appeared in *A Case of Loyalties* (a Macavity award winner, 1986) and *Primary Target* (Anthony award nominee, 1989). She lives across the Bridge in San Anselmo.

TERI WHITE's *Triangle*, starring the L.A. cop team of Spaceman Kowalski and Blue Maguire, won the 1982 Edgar for Best Paperback Original. Teri was born in Topeka, lived for some years in L.A., and now resides in Ohio.

DONALD A. YATES knew Cornell Woolrich and the Ellery Queens, lists many mystery authors and fans among his friends, and has been an active collector, scholar, reader, and fan community participant for more years than he'll admit. He's the author of *Latin Blood* and a member of the Baker Street Irregulars. Currently he lives in northern California's wine country.



Trek north by northwest and you'll likely discover . . .

Death in a Downpour

by Harriet Stay

"A body in the woods, half-buried in brush and duff; a sighting of Bigfoot along the Oregon coast; a logging town, sparsely populated, where illegal activities flourish well-hidden from or ignored by law enforcement; a search for a hiker in the Rain Forest of the Olympic Mountains, ending in tragedy; soggy dense forests, ghostly dim, spongy, moss-covered logs with a thousand spidery, scabbling insects."

That's what many readers conjure up when they anticipate a Northwest setting, and, not to disappoint, each of the aforementioned backdrops have been taken from mysteries written by Northwest authors.

But the Northwest has recently become a haven for transplanted authors still continuing to stage their murders in far-off lands or in corners across this country, so it isn't to write about this locale that they have come. What is the draw to this particular environment?

Conrad Haynes, author of the Oregon-based Harry Bishop mystery series and native himself of Idaho, so appropriately states, "It is more than living *above* California. It has something to do with a newness. European-based stock has only been making history out here for a couple of generations. That newness in our culture gives the area several characteristics: a lack of formality (everyone I know goes by his or her first name), a slower pace to living, an appreciation for nature (I for one hate being out in nature, but I surely do appreciate it), and--I like to hope--less entrenched bigotries. We have our share of sexism and racism, but they're not as all encompassing as in other realms, I believe.

"And what is a *Northwest* mystery? I have no idea. I think it has more to do with capturing the feeling for the territory and its people, rather than writing a different form of the beast we call *whodunit*. After all, Northwest mystery writers have to fall back on the same clues, bad guys, nefarious murders, and last-minute saves as our cousins from Tennessee, London, Prague, or wherever."

Synonymous with this rain-drenched land, *The Dark Place*, by Edgar Award-winning author Aaron Elkins, expertly captures the sensations of the region when his protagonist, Gideon Oliver, tracks a killer through the ancient forest. It was a



research trip in 1980 to the Olympic Peninsula that first brought Elkins north, and he knew that this was the place he wanted to live.

But each of his six mysteries has a different setting. While Gideon Oliver's home base is here, his travels transport us from Alaska to the Yucatan to France or some other scenic, delectable, and tax deductible spot. Interesting to note that when his anthropologist-sleuth was transformed from book to a major television series, the background became a bustling metropolis--New York City.

A newcomer to the mystery writing scene, but an experienced former U.S. Forest Service technician and presently an Oregon librarian, is Lee Wallingford. In fact, you won't find her debut *Cold Tracks* until this summer. Lee lives, works, and writes about the Northwest because it's the most beautiful spot in creation, and it gives her a feeling she has never experienced anywhere else.

From the eastern part of these perimeters,

Idaho, **Ridley Pearson** writes about crime but with a variety of settings. *Undercurrents*, through Police Sergeant Lou Boldt, explores Seattle and the Puget Sound in search of a serial killer. Under the pen name of Wendell McCall, Pearson uses the small-town atmosphere from his immediate surroundings for an unusual type of private investigator. As the winner of the Fulbright-Raymond Chandler Fellowship, Pearson is in Oxford for nine months attending workshops and seminars, plus research for a novel at New Scotland Yard.

Before the Pacific Northwest imposed a quota on emigrating Californians, author **Janet L. Smith** made the soggy climate, gray skies, and 68-degree summers her home, and has since made this her setting for her first mystery, *Sea of Troubles*. It is difficult to think of the San Juan Islands as soggy, but try bird or whale watching at the crack of dawn.

This former trial attorney and now administrative law judge notes that "Sometimes I think the only reason I went to law school was because I didn't have a good enough singing voice to make it on Broadway."

Now a true Washingtonian, her main hobby, besides reading and writing mysteries, is ocean kayaking off the west coast of Vancouver Island. She's come within a few feet of whales, capsized in a 7-knot current, and paddled through sparkling phosphorescence at midnight.

The San Juan Islands, a long-battled-over chain near the Strait of Juan De Fuca and stepping stones between the Olympic Peninsula and Vancouver Island, Canada, provide the setting for yet another series of mysteries by **Dolores Weeks**. Her tales offer the sea-faring enthusiasts (and a must for dog lovers) scenes with grisly commercial fishermen, expert sailing and scuba diving adventures plus authentic touches of local history through the eyes of her Seattle surgeon-protagonist, Scott Eason. The accuracy comes natural for this lady who has sailed the islands in her own 30-foot sloop for many years.

A shoreline or coastal setting has long been a favorite of mystery readers and writers alike. Very little of the Washington coastline lends itself to being the sunny-beach-umbrella-type, not with a rainfall of 100 inches per year. But Oregon is another matter. No, the temperatures still don't allow much ocean swimming without a wet suit, but cliffs and sand, fossils and sea shells, or digging for clams still beckon the bravest outdoorsey-types.

Advertising agent turned mystery writer **Bernie Lee** has been watching the sun set along the Oregon coast for 20 years. So it was only natural that his series would include a seaweed covered corpse.

Newspaper reporters make ideal sleuths. After all, that is their job, to fret out trouble and truth. Then there is Eldon Larkin, at the edge of failure, scared and sexually depraved, but who uncovers such outlandish stories on the soggy coast as Bigfoot, UFOs and a murdering elephant--all in the same book. His creator is a real reporter for the Oregonian, **Vince Kohler**.

The imaginary village of Windom, Oregon, is the location chosen by three retired and widowed best friends to live out their remaining years, but what author **Mary Lou Bennett** planned for them was not a quiet routine in *Murder Once Done*.

Ever notice the countless number of booksellers solving crimes lately? **M.K. Wren** developed her cat-loving, bookstore owner Conan Flagg over 15 years ago. To be perfectly honest about Flagg's snooping abilities, he is also a licensed P.I. And Ms. Wren is more than a writer. She is a professional painter as well.

And while we are in the bookstore, have you met Lark Dailey? She owns Larkspur Books, situated in a small town just below the Oregon-California boarder. Her creator, **Sheila Simonson**, admits using California, although a native of this side, because there is more in print about the California law system.

True crime appears to be on the upswing and two masters hail from the Northwest--**Jack Olsen** and **Ann Rule**. Some of their Edgar Award winning stories are centered here because this is where the notorious sociopaths lived and hunted their prey.

Another popular sub-genre is the thriller. And long-time resident of Washington, practicing attorney, and author **James S. Thayer** has, for the last 15 years, been concocting scholarly and provocative thrillers, equated with such works by Follett and Higgins.

One of the most captivating writers to emerge from this area is **L. R. Wright**. The title of her Edgar Award Best Novel is *The Suspect*. This was not originally intended to be a mystery. A parrot was to blame. An incident on the Sunshine Coast

of British Columbia prompted Ms. Wright to explore what might have happened in the life of an 80-year-old man who just killed an 85-year-old man. The first chapter ended on a reference to the victim's pet parrot. This so intrigued her that she continued chronologically. Next she needed a policeman, and all of a sudden she found she was writing a mystery.

Untamed forests and weathered coastlines are not the only scenery. Here too is urban sprawl, crowded freeways, even smog. And Earl Emerson best explores these byways through his ex-cop, private investigator Thomas Black. Black lives and detects and goes a few rounds of belly punching from Tacoma to Bellingham, through Seattle's Chinatown, to industrial-lined warehouses along the Sound.

But Emerson prefers the rural life, and thus emerged his second hero, Mac Fontana, small-town fire chief and sometimes sheriff, who just happens to find more trouble and bodies in his mythical town.

Another Edgar Award winner who enjoys the rural life on her 14 acres outside Granite Falls, WA, is Willo Davis Roberts. If you don't recall reading her books, it's because you're not the right age. She writes mysteries for children.

Part of the more affluent of Seattle is attorney Matt Riordan. Bernstein, his sometimes sidekick, however, is definitely backwoods, gun-carrying Montana stock. In contrast, their author and attorney, Fred Huebner, handles only civil cases, deals with white collar crime, and is the proud papa of a one-year-old baby girl.

A traveler in fiction but born and raised in the Puget Sound area is Gary Alexander. And this is precisely why his books and imagination take you to the placid Kingdom of Luong and more exactly into its excruciatingly politically neutral capitol of Hickorn. Its Superintendent of Police, Bamsan Kiet, generally has difficulty understanding his Americanized sidekick, and has trouble with both his love life and his waistline.

Finding a body in a Volvo could be grim, but for Professor Carstairs it was almost fatal. He immediately became the prime suspect. But K.K. Beck turns this into one of most hilarious scenarios ever staged. And who says crime can't be fun? A serious side to this ambitious author, magazine editor, and mother is her suspense novel about a

young woman haunted by *Unwanted Attentions*. Ms. Beck is a fifth generation Seattlite, and the reason she lives and writes here is because she just doesn't know any better.

The best way to tell you about Mark Schorr is to say he is a stand-up comedian who sometimes puts that in book form, sometimes is more serious. Once a journalist and a P.I., he now teaches writing in Portland.

It was a real-life murder case that started this teacher and mother of five on her way to becoming a mystery writer. It was six years ago that Police Detective J.P. Beaumont was born in Seattle and in the imagination of J.A. (Judith) Jance.

Audrey Peterson admits she's a transplant. From her professorship and retirement from Cal State Long Beach, she has settled in a small community above Seattle to fulfill her lifelong love affair with writing detective fiction. All of her capers are done in classical English-style and take place in England, France, or Italy.

Another recent arrival and professor is Robert Ray. He says he has no intentions of moving Matt Murdock out of Orange County. *Murdock Five* sets the P.I. in Seattle where he does his jogging in Shilshole and his drinking at Hiram's on the Locks; but at the end, Murdock buys a ticket home.

Those *alcoholic*-titled crime stories featuring attorney Jerry Zalman haven't moved from the traffic snarls of L.A., but their author, Gabrielle Kraft, arrived here 10 years ago: "From life in the fast lane at a Hollywood studio to a small town on the Oregon coast that had two stoplights. This was very much like clipping along at 90 miles per and then hitting a brick wall." Kraft is a former story editor at Universal Studios and story analyst for Warner Brothers.

To steal a quote from an interview I had with a Right Coast author, one of the most gracious and innovative ladies I've had the pleasure to meet, Charlotte MacLeod: "The reason the British are so prolific is because of their weather. What better task is there for rainy days but to curl up by a cozy fire and conjure up a mystery."

The same might be said of us.

Harriet Stay, with husband Larry, publishes the fanzine, *Mystery News* in Port Townsend WA.

Cache and Carry

A "Nameless Detective"/Sharon McCone Story
By Marcia Muller & Bill Pronzini

"Hello?"

"Wolf? It's Sharon McCone."

"Well! Been a while, Sharon. How are you?"

"I've been better. Are you busy?"

"No, no. I just got home. What's up?"

"I've got a problem and I thought you might be able to help."

"If I can. Professional problem?"

"The kind you've run into before."

"Oh?"

"One of those things that *seem* impossible but that you know has to have a simple explanation."

". . ."

"Wolf, are you there?"

"I'm here. The poor man's Sir Henry Merrivale."

"Who's Sir Henry Merrivale?"

"Never mind. Tell me your tale of woe."

"Well, one of All Souls' clients is a small outfit in the Outer Mission called Neighborhood Check Cashing. You know, one of those places that cashes third-party or social-security checks for local residents who don't have bank accounts of their own or easy access to a bank. We did some legal work for them a year or so ago, when they

first opened for business."

"Somebody rip them off?"

"Yes. For two thousand dollars."

"Uh-huh. When?"

"Sometime this morning."

"Why did you and All Souls get called in on a police matter?"

"The police were called first but they couldn't come up with any answers. So Jack Harvey, Neighborhood's owner and manager, contacted me. But I haven't come up with any answers either."

"Go ahead, I'm listening."

"There's no way anyone could have gotten the two thousand dollars out of Neighborhood's office. And yet, if the money is still hidden somewhere on the premises, the police couldn't find it and neither could I."

"Mmm."

"Only one of two people could have taken it--unless Jack Harvey himself is responsible, and I don't believe that. If I know which one, I might have an idea of what happened to the money. Or vice versa. But I don't have a clue either way."

"Let's have the details."

"Well, cash is delivered twice a week--Mondays and Thursdays--by armored car at the start of the day's business. It's usually five thousand dollars, unless Jack requests more or less. Today it was exactly five thousand."

"Not a big operation, then."

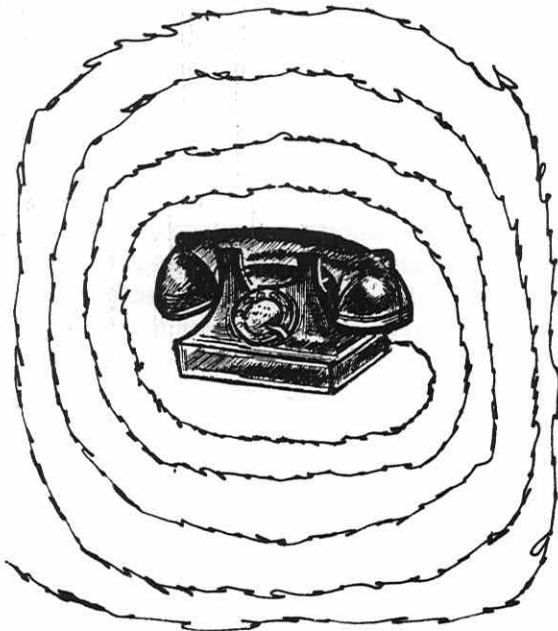
"No. Jack's also an independent insurance broker; the employees help him out in that end of the business too."

"His employees are the two who could have stolen the money?"

"Yes. Art DeWitt, the bookkeeper, and Maria Chavez, the cashier. DeWitt's twenty-five, single, lives in Daly City. He's studying business administration nights at City College. Chavez is nineteen, lives with her family in the Mission. She's planning to get married next summer. They both seem to check out as solid citizens."

"But you say one of them has to be guilty. Why?"

"Opportunity. Let me tell you what happened this morning. The cash was delivered as usual, and Maria Chavez entered the amount in her daily



journal, then put half the money in the till and half in the safe. Business for the first hour and a half was light; only one person came in to cash a small check: Jack Harvey's cousin, whom he vouches for."

"So Chavez couldn't have passed the money to him or another accomplice."

"No. At about ten-thirty a local realtor showed up wanting to cash a fairly large check: thirty-five hundred dollars. Harvey doesn't usually like to do that, because Neighborhood runs short before the next cash delivery. Besides, the fee for cashing a large check is the same as for a small gone: he stands to lose on large transactions. But the realtor is a good friend, so he okayed it. When Chavez went to cash the check, there was only five hundred dollars in the till."

"Did DeWitt also have access to the till?"

"Yes."

"Any way either of them could have slipped out of the office for even a few seconds?"

"No. Harvey's desk is by the back door and he was sitting there the entire time."

"What about through the front?"

"The office is separated from the customer area by one of those double Plexiglas security partitions and a locked security door. The door operates by means of a buzzer at Harvey's desk. He didn't buzz anybody in or out"

"Could the two thousand have been removed between the time the police searched and you were called in?"

"No way. When the police couldn't find it in the office, they body-searched DeWitt and had a matron do the same with Chavez. The money wasn't on either of them. Then, after the cops left, Jack told his employees they couldn't take anything away from the office except Chavez's purse and DeWitt's briefcase, both of which he searched again, personally."

"Do either DeWitt or Chavez have a key to the office?"

"No."

"Which means the missing money is still there."

"Evidently. But *where*, 'Wolf?"

"Describe the office to me."

"One room, with an attached lavatory that doubles as a supply closet. Table, with a desktop copier, postage scale, postage meter. A big Mosler safe; only Harvey has the combination. Three desks: Jack's, next to the back door; DeWitt's in the middle; Chavez's next to the counter behind the partition, where the till is. Desks have standard stuff on them--adding machines, a typewriter on Chavez's, family photos, stack trays, staplers, pen sets. Everything you'd expect to find."

"Anything you *wouldn't* expect to find?"



"Not unless you count some lurid romance novels that Chavez likes to read on her lunch break."

"Did anything unusual happen this morning, before the shortage was discovered?"

"Not really. The toilet backed up and ruined a bunch of supplies, but Jack says that's happened three or four times before. Old plumbing."

"Uh-huh."

"You see why I'm frustrated?" There just doesn't seem to be any clever hidey-hole in that office. And Harvey's already starting to tear his hair. Chavez and DeWitt resent the atmosphere of suspicion; they're nervous, too, and have both threatened to quit. Harvey doesn't want to lose the one that isn't guilty, anymore than he wants to lose his two thousand dollars."

"How extensive was the search you and the police made?"

"About as extensive as you can get."

"Desks gone over top to bottom, drawers taken out?"

"Yes."

"Underside of the legs checked?"

"Yes."

"Same thing with all the chairs?"

"To the point of removing cushions and seat backs."

"The toilet backing up--any chance that could be connected?"

"I don't see how. Harvey and I both looked it over pretty carefully. The sink and the rest of the plumbing, too."

"What about the toilet paper roll?"

"I checked it. Negative."

"The extra supplies?"

"Negative."

"Chavez's romance novels--between the pages?"

"I thought of that. Negative."

"Personal belongings?"

"All negative. Including Jack Harvey's. I went through his on the idea that DeWitt or Chavez might have thought to use him as a carrier."

"The office equipment?"

"Checked and rechecked. Copier, negative. Chavez's typewriter, negative. Postage meter and scale, negative. Four adding machines, negative. Stock trays--"

"Wait a minute, Sharon. *Four* adding machines?"

"That's right."

"Why four, with only three people?"

"DeWitt's office machined jammed and he had to bring his own from home."

"When did that happen?"

"It jammed two days ago. He brought his own yesterday."

"Suspicious coincidence, don't you think?"

"I did at first. But I checked both machines, inside and out. Negative."

"Did either DeWitt or Chavez bring anything else to the office in recent days that they haven't brought before?"

"Jack says no."

"Then we're back to DeWitt's home adding machine."

"Wolf, I told you--"

"What kind is it? Computer type, or the old-fashioned kind that runs a tape?"

"The old-fashioned kind."

"Did you run a tape on it? Or on the office machines that's supposed to be jammed?"

". . . No. No, I didn't."

"Maybe you should. Both machines are still in the office, right?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you have another look at them? Run tapes on both, see if the office model really is jammed--or if maybe it's DeWitt's home model that doesn't work the way it should."

"And if it's the home model, have it taken apart piece by piece."

"Right."

"I'll call Harvey and have him meet me at Neighborhood right away."

"Let me know, huh? Either way?"

"You bet I will."

"Wolf, hi. It's Sharon."

"You sound chipper. Good news?"

"Yes, thanks to you. You were right about the

adding machines. I ran a tape on DeWitt's office model and it worked fine. But the one he brought from home didn't, for a damned good reason."

"Which is?"

"Its tape roll was a dummy. Hollow, made of metal and wound with just enough paper tape to make it look like the real thing. So real neither the police nor I thought to remove and examine it before. The missing money was inside."

"So DeWitt must have been planning the theft for some time."

"That's what he confessed to the police a few minutes ago. He made the dummy roll in his workshop at home; took him a couple of weeks. It was in his home machine when he brought that in yesterday. This morning he slipped the roll out and put it into his pocket. While Maria Chavez was in the lavatory and Jack Harvey was occupied on the phone, he lifted the money from the till and pocketed that too. He went into the john after Maria came out and hid the money in the dummy roll. Then, back at his desk, he put the fake roll into his own machine, which he intended to take home with him this evening. It was his bad luck--and Jack's good luck--that the realtor came in with such a large check to cash."

"I suppose he intended to doctor the books to cover the theft."

"So he said. You know, 'Wolf,' it's too bad DeWitt didn't apply his creative talents to some legitimate enterprise. His cache-and-carry scheme was really pretty clever."

"What kind of scheme?"

"Cache and carry. C-a-c-h-e."

". . ."

"Was that a groan I heard?"

"McCone, if you're turning into a rogue detective, call somebody else next time you come up against an impossible problem. Call Sir Henry Merrivale."

"What do you mean, a rogue detective?"

"The worst kind there is. A punslinger."



Deep in the Heart of . . .

By Mari Hall

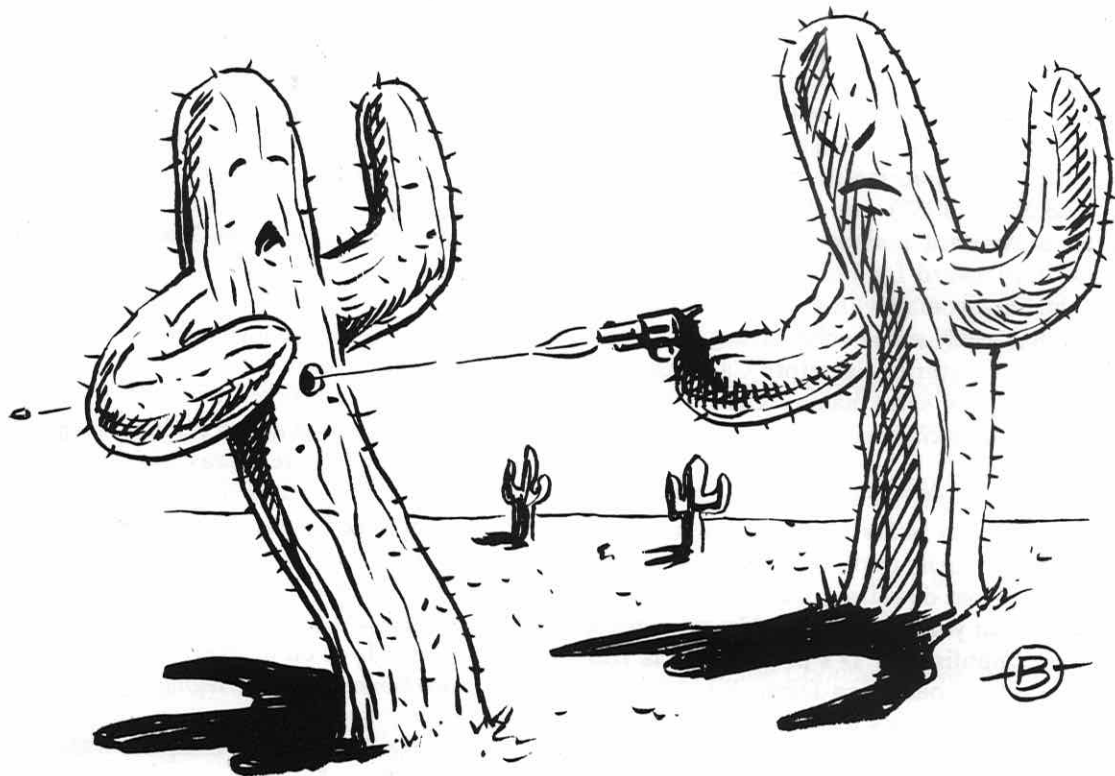
I live in Dallas. Those of you who know me well know that I like to write simple little stories for *Mystery News* about my friends who write mysteries, particularly local authors. So here I am doing what I love best: writing about my friends who write mysteries.

In the space I have I can't include everyone, so I've limited my comments to the recent books of those authors who live in Texas or nearby, and for whom I can provide some personal insight or whose books I have in my own library, and who, especially, will be new finds for my readers.

One of the newest is **Richard Abshire**, a real threat to the growing number of P.I. writers with his creation Jack Kyle. His first mystery is *Dallas Drop* (1989), his second *Turnaround Jack* (1990) is just out. Kyle is a hardboiled (well, maybe a three-minute boil) private detective, based in (where else?) Dallas. Ah, but join Abshire with his real-life, ex-cop partner, **Bill Clare**, and you get a dynamite series with a "ghost" element. In *Gants* (1985, republished 1987) Charlie Gants is a Dallas

cop (what else?) who solves the "East Dallas Slasher" murders and has a nervous breakdown, from being haunted, as the book ends. He comes out of the asylum in *The Shaman Tree* (1989) to visit a ranch in a fictional area near the Texas-Oklahoma-Arkansas corner (Abshire's hometown is Paris, Texas) to discover who is murdering a family, one at time. There's a hint of an Indian legend as the book's basis, and Clare keeps wanting to put in aliens and spacemen, but Abshire has the cooler head.

Carole Nelson Douglas, from Fort Worth, wears more glitter than I do and needs no introduction to romance or sci-fi/fantasy readers. She's possibly unknown to the mystery fan, but certainly not undiscovered. Hurry and get *Good Night, Mr. Holmes* (1990) because, already in its third hard-cover printing, it's sold out in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Don't think this is just another Sherlock Holmes imitation, far from it. It tells "A Scandal in Bohemia" from the point of view of Irene Adler as chronicled by her "Watson," Nell



Huxleigh. A wonderful first mystery. About this book I wrote "does for Holmes what Marion Zimmer Bradley did for King Arthur and Troy." (Now wouldn't that look nice on the cover of the paperback?) The sequel, *Good Morning, Madam Irene*, is due out in July 1991.

Anne Reed Rooth is another Dallas author--well, at least half the year. She spends the other half in Rancho Santa Fe, California, and is a neighbor of Joseph Wambaugh. Quinn Martin, another neighbor, encouraged her writing. He first solo mystery, *Fatal Stranger* (1988), and her second, *Eye of the Beholder* (1990), are both about a woman psychologist who's a San Diego police detective. Her hard-to-find 1978 book, *Ninth Car*, written with James P. White, is, for me at any rate, as good a thriller as you'll find today: Odessa, Israeli Intelligence, the KGB, and international bankers..

Jay Brandon, now with the San Antonio Court of Appeals, has three books to his credit: *Deadbolt* (1985), *Tripwire* (1987), both paperbacks, *Predator's Waltz* (1989), his first hardback, and *Fade the Heat* (1990). Each has a different main character. *Fade the Heat* is my personal favorite, simply because the viewpoint character is extremely strong and criminal law is my area. Brandon knows whereof he writes, having served in the District Attorney's office of Bexar county, Texas.

L. J. Washburn's name hides a lady from Azle, Texas. Her husband, **James Reasoner**, once edited *Mike Shayne Mystery Magazine*. Her protagonist, Lucas Hallam, is an ex-Texas Ranger turned private investigator and parttime stuntman in Western movies in the Hollywood of the 1930's. Evidently others join me in thinking she's great: her *Wild Night* (1987) won both the Private Eye Writers of America Shamus award and the American Mystery award for best paperback original. She's the only woman with a story in *Black Moon* (1989), that lovely round-robin strung together by Bob Randesi featuring Salvatore Carlucci, owner of the bar of the same name. Other Washburn books are *Dead Stick* (1989) and *Dog Heavies* (1990).

D (no period because her mother never embroidered one) **Miller Morgan** lives in Plano (a bedroom community north on the dreaded Central Expressway from downtown Dallas). This is what happens when your publisher folds: you only get two books published. D's protagonist is Daisy Marlow, a 165-pound San Diego P.I. who wears silk underwear. Daisy's friend, Sam Milo, is a Las Vegas policeman and figures in *Money Leads to Murder* (1987) and *A Lovely Night to Kill* (1988).

Wonderfully wise-cracking dialog brings to mind Mr. and Mrs. North or Bertha Cool-Donald Lam.

Paul Coggins is a Dallas lawyer with one book to his credit so far, a paperback original, *The Lady is the Tiger* (1987), featuring ex-DEA agent turned private eye, Steve Dart. A little hokey, but for die-hard P.I. fans a must find.

Gary Clifton, a Federal agent for 20 years, now a P.I. in Dallas (matter of fact, he's the investigator for my law firm), has written *Burn Sugar Burn* (1987).

Bill Sloan was a reporter for the *Dallas Times Herald* at the time of John Kennedy's assassination. He turned a chance remark overheard in a bar into a novel, *The Other Assassin* (1989), an absolute must for the Kennedy killing aficionado and an alternate theory that rings true to me.

John Lee and Barbara Moore live in San Marcos. He writes such thriller/suspense as *Assignment in Algeria*, *Caught in the Act*, *Stalag, Texas*, *The Thirteenth Hour*, and *The Ninth Man*. She is the author of the "Doberman" series, featuring veterinarian Dr. Gordon Christy in *The Doberman Wore Black* (1983) and *The Wolf Whispered Death* (1985).

W. Glenn Duncan, although living in Australia now, was a reporter for the *Dallas Morning News* when he created Rafferty, a private eye based in the Dallas of the early 80's. Beginning with *Rafferty's Rules* (1986), his books are extremely true to the place. Rafferty's office is a former radio station with a glass wall between his and the next-door office. The twist is that for the first three books, he doesn't meet the beautiful neighbor; they pantomime a lot, but he refers to her as "Honeybutt." Then *she* gets her own book in *Wrong Place, Wrong Time*.

Even though **Lee Martin** now lives in Salt Lake City, she's still an honorary Texan in my book. A former Ft. Worth policewoman, she has seven novels, including *Murder at the Blue Owl* and *Hal's Own Murder Case*, to her credit. Her latest Deb Ralston adventure is *The Mensa Murders*. Ralston is, what else, a Ft. Worth cop.

I can't leave Texas without mentioning **Ed Mathis**. Ed was a member of the same writers group as I. He was a hard worker and wrote many books before the first one was published. His series featured West Texas P.I. Dan Roman. Ed passed away a couple of years ago, but Dan Roman lives on in some 18 or 20 books that Ed's wife Bonnie is still bringing out of the old computer.

No list would be complete without some of my other Texas faves:

D. R. (Doris) Meredith from Amarillo, who writes the Panhandle Sheriff series, featuring Charles Matthews, and the John Lloyd Branson series about a Panhandle lawyer who takes on causes.

Carlton Stowers, who authored *Careless Whispers*, an Edgar winner, and *Innocence Lost*, a true crime book. More true crime is *FBI Undercover*, a collaboration with ex-FBI agent, now Dallas Cowboys vp, Larry Wansley,

Three Austin writers should be noted. Dapper **David Lindsey's** first book was *Black Gold, Red Death*, a thriller; then a four-book series starred Houston cop Stuart Haydon; his latest book, *Mercy*, drew a lot of controversy (at least from the MDM'ers). Real-life musician **Jesse Sublett's** two books, *Rock Critic Murders* and *Tough Baby* feature bassman turned collection agent Martin Fender (cute name, huh?) and are written in a very literate style. Another writer-musician, **Kinky**

Friedman, has a cat also named Kinky, and is known to friends as the "Kinkster." He bases his musician amateur detective in New York in *Greenwich Killing Time, A Case of Lone Star, When the Cat's Away, and Frequent Flyer*.

I don't have the space to mention all my other favorites, but don't overlook New Orleans writers **Chris Wiltz** and **Tony Fennally**, who are scheduled to be at the conference. And purely personal: just so you'll know I didn't forget, Julie! **Julie Smith**, a former reporter with the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, has the greatest book to come out of that city this year, *New Orleans Mourning*; she's supposed to be here too.

Mari Hall's roots are deep in Texas and in mysteries. She writes for *Mystery News* and works as a paralegal in Dallas. She'll be here for the con and you'll recognize her by her Texas brogue, which she's been trying to overcome for years.

SOLUTIONS TO MYSTERY TRIVIA QUIZ

(Score yourself: 0 to 2 correct answers, you read but do not perceive; 3-8 right answers, your mystery IQ is above average; 9 to 12 right answers, you're a mystery fan first class; 13-15 right answers, you deserve the Mystery Buff Edgar; all 16 right, you cheated.)

- (1) Long Beach Police Department
- (2) Max Thursday
- (3) The latest, *Brokenclaw*
- (4) *McQ*
- (5) Assistant Inspector (half-credit for just "Inspector")
- (6) Dick Powell played Marlowe in *Murder, My Sweet*, the first film version of *Farewell, My Lovely*, repeated the role in the *Lux Radio Theatre* version of *Murder, My Sweet*, then returned to the role one more time in a TV adaptation of *The Long Goodbye* for the anthology series *Climax*.
- (7) Santa Monica, Santa Barbara, and Half Moon Bay
- (8) *Earth Angels*

- (9) *Dick Tracy vs. Crime Inc.*
- (10) *The Four of Hearts*
- (11) "Who Killed Bob Teal?"
- (12) Effie Perrine
- (13) *Hoodwink* by Bill Pronzini
- (14) Joe Gores won two 1969 Edgars, one for best first mystery novel (*A Time of Predators*), and one for best mystery short story ("Goodbye, Pops"). Six years later he won his third, for Best Mystery Teleplay from a Series ("No Immunity for Murder" from *Kojak*).
- (15) He works as a a movie actor and stunt man in *silent* westerns.
- (16) *The Case of the Counterfeit Eye* (1935), the sixth Perry Mason book

PRONZINI (FROM PAGE 7)

Series-crossovers, stories or novels co-starring two different sleuths, co-written by both of their creators, tickle the imaginations of most mystery fans. What would happen if Sam Spade and Phil Marlowe worked together on a case, or Steve Carella and Martin Beck cooperated on an international investigation? Very few such partnerships have ever actually come to fruition, but, not surprisingly, Pronzini had a hand in more than half of those that did.

In his first series-crossover, *Twospot*, Pronzini's "Nameless Detective" (referred to, for the first and only time, appropriately enough, as "Bill") partners up with Collin Wilcox's SFPD Lieutenant Frank Hastings to foil a political assassination plot.

Pronzini has co-written three series-crossovers with his co-honoree at Left Coast Crime, Marcia Muller. In the novel *Double*, Ms. Muller's pioneering female investigator, Sharon McCone, teams up with "Nameless" to solve a mystery at a private eyes' convention in San Diego. They followed this up with "Cache and Carry," a short-short in which Sharon consults with "Nameless" on a puzzling burglary she's looking into.

Their third collaboration, *Beyond the Grave*, is also their most unusual, crossing centuries as well

as series, as Ms. Muller's amateur sleuth/museum curator, Elena Oliverez, completes an investigation begun nearly a hundred years earlier by Pronzini's 1890s Treasury Agent, John Quincannon.

Many mystery writers gain fame as part of a team rather than on their own. The cousins who hid behind the "Ellery Queen" pseudonym, the boyhood friends who became "Wade Miller," married couples like the Gordons, the Lockridges, the Wahloos, and the Corringtons, all easily spring to mind as marvelously effective partnerships.

Pronzini, however, stands virtually alone as one who succeeds both as a solo act and as an integral member of so many different collaborative ventures. That so many members of the crime fiction fraternity have worked so well with him is evidence, not only of his talent and versatility, but also of his generous nature.

Bill Pronzini has been the recipient of two Shamus awards, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Private Eye Writers of America, and five Edgar nominations. A published author for more than 20 years, he has written numerous mystery novels and short stories, the latest being the 18th "Nameless Detective" novel, *Breakdown*, just published by Delacorte.



MULLER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

contemporary American woman, with day-to-day problems with which the reader can identify, thrust into extraordinary circumstances and, thereby, reaching past her normal capabilities to solve them.

(A list of Marcia's novels appears at the end of this article.)

Elena Oliverez, star of three of the novels, is truly such a woman, employed in work which includes all the day-to-day drudgery of any job and with none of the expectation of "adventure." She rises above these ordinary situations when murder enters her life. Then she has to make choices about her life, choices which she appears to be ill-suited to make. She uses her ethnic heritage and the connections that come with it to solve the crimes she encounters, but she is unable to handle those features of that heritage which conflict with the Anglo world in which she works. Elena may reach past her normal abilities to solve murders, but she hasn't grown up enough to resolve her personal life.

Joanna Start, the central character of three more of Muller's novels, is a little different. Joanna, unlike Elena and Sharon, is not a native Californian (she comes from Tennaflly, NJ). At the age of 19, she "ran away" from home and, in the course of her wanderings around the world, became involved with art thief and broker Anthony Parducci. This involvement is central to all three of her cases--central because Parducci is now insane and wants to kill Joanna. Part of her is in hiding from Parducci; the rest is on an ordered search for him so that he can be captured and put out of circulation. In all three books, which cover a time period of about one year, Joanna is facing up to her extraordinary situation and not necessarily handling it well. Joanna is searching for a way past her ordinary abilities.

I suspect that, by now, Sharon McCone is no longer one of these "ordinary women," if indeed she ever was one. True, department store security is probably pretty humdrum, and she didn't intend to become a private detective. Perhaps investigations into the everyday lives of the clients of All Souls are humdrum too. But Sharon has encountered the extraordinary circumstance now 11 times in the past 13 years and, theoretically, has enough sense to realize that All Souls attracts a class of clientele prone to "problems." Most "ordinary women" would have looked for another job in a safer field after the first dangerous case, certainly after the second! The fact is, she chooses to stay and face these problems. Her strength and inde-

pendence, mentioned as a major feature of her character in *Edwin of the Iron Shoes*, has become honed to a fine tool perfectly adapted for this type of work.

Sharon is the star of 11 mystery novels to date. Perhaps she can claim such a long series because it is easier to find cases for a staff investigator for a legal cooperative than for art security or a museum curator. After all, there are only so many famous paintings, galleries, museums and rich collectors in Sonoma and Santa Barbara counties. At any rate, Sharon is Marcia's best developed character.

Sharon has time, in these 11 cases, to develop and break relationships, to move her place of residence, to grow in the course of her investigations for All Souls. For example, in the first book, *Edwin*, she develops an attraction to Lt. Greg Marcus, SFPD Homicide. This relationship doesn't last much past the fourth book when disc jockey Don Del Boccio enters her life. She and Don have broken up six months prior to the ninth book. In the tenth McCone book, she meets George Kostakos while on a case, but this relationship is ill-fated as well. In the eleventh book, she has just broken up with jazz pianist Jim Addison and is still mourning the failure of her relationship with Kostakos. With the possible exception of Kostakos, Sharon's relationships all fail because she cannot feel as deeply toward the man in her life as he begins to feel about her. Sharon runs from all these liaisons with the excuse that "It's unkind to use someone you care for to get over someone else whom you think you love."

How is it that Marcia can be cited as a "regional" writer. Well, like Joanna, Marcia is not a native Californian (Marcia is from Michigan), but like her heroines, Marcia does *live* there (in San Francisco until sometime in 1986, when she moved across the bay to "Northern California"). She knows her settings. And presents them extremely well.

The San Francisco that both Sharon and Joanna know ranges from the seedy Tenderloin (*There's Nothing*) to Golden Gate Park and its art museums (*Cavalier*); from the windy heights of Potrero Hill (*Games*) to the curio shops of Salem street (*Edwin*), from a Somoan bar on the fringes of Chinatown (*Dark Star*) to the Vernal Heights location of All Souls Legal Cooperative. Sharon even travels as far east as "Appleby Island," located near Walnut Grove on the banks of the north fork of the Mokelumne river and Hermit's Slough in the Sacramento Delta (*Eye*); as far south as "Salmon Bay," a fishing town on the coast (*Games*); and north across the Bridge to the luxury of the Marin hills and the forbidding walls of San

Quentin (*Shape*). All are nine-county Bay Area settings which should be familiar to most residents there and which contribute to the San Francisco feel of Marcia's books.

Joanna lives in the historic town of Sonoma, replete with plaza, historic landmarks and popular stores and cafes which any tourist who visits the Mission and the old town of this former California Republic capital would likely see. Her farmhouse, for example, is near the Buena Vista winery, where the tourist might buy a bottle and then explore the Cheese Factory, the Sausage Company, and the Sonoma French Bakery for the makings of a picnic! The countryside around Sonoma includes Boyes Hot Springs, Fetter's Hot Springs (with Juanita's Gallery, a funky restaurant), and Agua Caliente, all suitable atmosphere for murder and mayhem in the northern California countryside (*Dark Star*).

The description of Elena's Santa Barbara is, in the words of Victoria Nichols and Susan Thompson (*Silk Stalkings: When Women Write of Murder* (1988)), as "fluent and accurate" as are those of San Francisco and Sonoma. In her descriptions of Santa Barbara's old town, the upper class neighborhood where the members of the museum's board of directors live, and the trailer park where Elena's mother resides, Muller captures the look of the land, the history of this old Spanish town, and a taste of the Spanish heritage that makes Santa Barbara so attractive to the Anglos who

come as tourists or as newly rich residents. The Elena Oliverez series acquaints us with the contributions the Spanish have made to the California scene.

In other words, a stranger could almost follow in the footsteps of Muller's fictional sleuths, using only her books as guides. And it isn't just streets and shops and directions--Sharon gets the *taste* of the places. Anyone who has been to her locales (as I have) will recognize them immediately from her few, concise lines of description and, I suspect, at first visit--a sort of literary *deja vu*. I can tell you that she is popular even in the bayous and hill country of Texas, and a goodly portion of that popularity must come from her sense of place, her pure regional California touch which produces settings that seem exotic to those of us who live elsewhere.

To be brief, Marcia is not only an author but a collaborator (with Bill Pronzini), a respected critic and reviewer, and an editor (again with Pronzini) of numerous anthologies. The anthologies indicate that Marcia is an extensive reader as well (she did, after all, take that long-ago class in mystery fiction).

Congratulations, Marcia--you are truly a Guest of Honor worthy of the title!

Carol Harper is a member of MWA, a reviewer for *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*, and a college instructor.

MARCIA MULLER BOOKS

Elena Oliverez Series: *The Tree of Death* (1983), *The Legend of the Slain Soldiers* (1985), *Beyond the Grave* (with Bill Pronzini, 1986),

Joanna Start Series: *The Cavalier in White* (1986), *There Hangs the Knife* (1988), *Dark Star* (1989),

Sharon McCone Series: *Edwin of the Iron Shoes* (1977), *Ask the Cards a Question* (1982), *The Cheshire Cat's Eye* (1983), *Games to Keep the Dark Away* (1984), *Leave a Message for Willie* (1984), *Double* (with Bill Pronzini, 1984), *There's Nothing to Be Afraid Of* (1985), *Eye of the Storm* (1988), *There's Something in a Sunday* (1989), *The Shape of Dread* (1989), *Trophies and Dead Things* (1990).

Two of the co-authored books merge one of Marcia's series characters with one of Bill's: *Double* unites McCone with "Nameless;" *Beyond the Grave* unites Elena with John Quincannon, a difficult trick, as Jon Breen commented in

EQMM, considering the differences in writers' styles, approaches, and, in the Olivera-Quincannon case, timing. A third collaboration, *The Lighthouse* (1987), is a novel of terror and suspense. The anthologies co-edited with Pronzini, include: *The Web She Weaves* (1983), *Child's Pay* (1984), *Dark Lessons* (1984), *Witches' Brew* (1984), *Chapter and Hearse* (1985), *The Deadly Arts* (1985), *Kill or Cure* (1985), *She Won the West* (1985), *The Wickedest Show on Earth* (1985), and *1001 Midnights: The Aficionado's Guide to Mystery and Detective Fiction* (1986).

In some of these collections (e.g., *Web and Witches*) we get a taste of some of Marcia's rare short stories. The choice of anthology titles is wonderfully ironic: *Chapter and Hearse* is about books; *Dark Lessons* collects academic mysteries; *Kill or Cure* includes medical mysteries; *The Wickedest Show on Earth* centers on circus stories.

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