

by Thomas H. Cook (Playboy); PUBLIC MURDERS by Bill Granger (Jove); LOOKING FOR GINGER NORTH by John Dunning (Fawcett).

Critical, Biographical or Autobiographical Study: TWENTIETH CENTURY CRIME AND MYSTERY WRITERS by John Reilly (St. Martin's); WATTEAU'S SHEPHERDS: THE DETECTIVE NOVEL IN BRITAIN, 1914-1940 by Leroy Lad Panek (Bowling Green University Popular Press); A TALENT TO DECEIVE: AN APPRECIATION OF AGATHA CHRISTIE by Robert Barnard (Dodd, Mead).

Book for Young Readers: WHEN NO ONE WAS LOOKING by Rosemary Wells (Dial); THE SEANCE by Joan Lowery Nixon (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich); WE DARE NOT GO A-HUNTING by Charlotte MacLeod (Atheneum); MORE MINDEN CURSES by Willo Davis Roberts (Atheneum); THE DOGGONE MYSTERY by Mary Blount Christian (Albert Whitman).

Well, that's an interesting list. There are 19 novels, including the juvenile works and 6 works of non-fiction. Many of them have been reviewed in THE POISONED PEN or THE MYSTERY FANCIER, as well as in DAPA-EM. I find that I have read three of the novels. Robert Barnard has a book in two categories, The Novel, and Critical. Willo Davis Roberts, with a nomination in the Young Reader category, is a friend of mine and was the first Chairperson of the relatively new Northwest Chapter of the MWA. Jon Breen recently gave some glowing remarks to John Dunning's LOOKING FOR GINGER NORTH in his mystery column in The Wilson Library Bulletin. And, finally, several DAPA-EM members trashed Murray Sinclair's TOUGH LUCK, L.A. in the recent mailing. How's that for a bunch of unconnected remarks.

I'm not sure how the Edgar nominations are made. Unlike the Nebula Awards given by the members of the Science Fiction Writers of America, the members of MWA neither nominate nor vote on the award. I think the selection is made by a jury, but I don't know how it is chosen. This prevents a clique from voting for the work of a friend, as has been known to happen in the SFWA. But it removes the general membership of MWA, the writers themselves, from being involved in the selection. There are arguments on both sides, I suspect. Anyway, I thought you might be interested in the nominations and in comparing your own attitudes toward the titles.

HOW ABOUT A REVIEW OR TWO?

Death and the Good Life by Richard Hugo. New York, St. Martin's Press, c1981.
\$10.95 215pp.

The dust jacket exclaims 'A murder mystery by the acclaimed American poet.' I don't know how 'acclaimed' Richard Hugo is. I've been acclaiming him since about 1965 when I first met the man. At the time I was assistant librarian at Highline College. The Burien Library Guild had asked me to be one of five judges to choose the "Best Northwest Book of the Year." Of some 49 books published by Northwest authors that year, Richard Hugo's book of poetry entitled Death of a Kapowsin Tavern was one I pushed for. Ultimately I convinced the other judges of my wisdom and the book won the award, the first book of poetry to ever do so. Richard Hugo came to the banquet to receive the award, was witty, charming, and intelligent. He left the audience well pleased.

Shortly thereafter Hugo was offered a teaching position at the University of Montana, where he has continued to teach and write poetry. I, in turn, have numbered him among the few poets with whom I try to keep current. (The others are Thomas Kinsella and Seamus Heaney from Ireland and Ted Hughes from England.) Most recently I have read The Right Madness of Skye, poems written during a sabbatical spent on the Isle of Skye, off the coast of Scotland. Hugo is also the editor of the Yale Young Poets series.

Needless to say, it was a surprise to see a mystery from Hugo. I wonder if he was influenced by James Crumley, who, I understand, has taught occasionally at the Univ. of Montana. Or perhaps A.B. Guthrie, Jr. talked him into it. Or just, mayhap, it was his own idea and something he has wanted to do for a long time.

Al Barnes is an ex-Seattle cop who has moved to Montana and hooked on with a county sheriff's department. His territory is around Plains. A murder is committed at a lake near Plains. The victim works for the Hammers, a brother and sister from Portland, who own a mill in Montana. Later Ed Tingley, another Hammer employee, is murdered. Tingley also was a friend of the Hammers stretching back to college days.

Barnes goes to Portland to pick up some pieces and do some questioning. He soon ties into a murder nearly 20 years old which seems to have no connection with the present time, but bothers him a lot. He pursues the older murder, much to the chagrin of his boss. Before he's finished there are more murders, and some very unusual twists to the story.

Hugo's novel is a surprising blend of toughness and tenderness. Barnes and the other characters, major and minor, are entirely believable. The plot thickens with the best of them, twisting and turning. The pacing is excellent, with nary a dull moment. There are many surprises in the story, each one opening up a new line of inquiry.

My opinion is that this is an excellent first novel, one that comes close to being as good as Crumley's The Last Good Kiss. I openly admit to having a great liking for what is happening in Montana with writers, and my critical sense may be slightly clouded. On top of that, I count Richard Hugo as a dear friend, although I only met him one time, a decade and a half ago. He's kept in touch through his poetry, although I daresay he's probably forgotten the circumstances of our meeting long ago.

I just had a great idea. You read the book and tell me what you think of it. I don't think you'll regret is a bit. I hope it's successful enough to encourage Richard Hugo to write another one about Mushheart Barnes.

Denton, will you please decide which style you're going to use for titles?

The Man Who Killed His Brother by Reed Stephens. Ballantine, c1980. \$1.95, 187pp.

The rumor mill has it that the author is Stephen R. Donaldson, the author of the fantasy work which goes under the general title of 'The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, the Unbeliever.' That work has been most successful and four volumes have been published thus far. It seems likely, since the name seems to fit, and the setting for this novel is a southwestern city with an extensive Mexican-American population. Donaldson lives in Albuquerque; the city in this novel is "Puerta del Sol."

Mick Axbrewder is an interesting character, although not particularly captivating. He used to be a private eye but had his license suspended after an incident in which he shot his own brother, a policeman who was pursuing a suspect. Axbrewder simply hit the wrong man. Since then he's been on a fairly extensive drunk.

Ginny Fistoulari is a good woman private eye and Axbrewder sometimes works for her, when he can stay sober. She drags him out of a bar to tell him that his brother's daughter, his niece, is missing. As they begin to investigate her

disappearance they unravel a string of missing daughters, most of whom have later turned up dead with evidence of their involvement in prostitution and drugs.

Axbrewder manages to battle the withdrawal from alcohol until he is capable of being of some assistance. The investigation keeps leading to the school board offices, where someone has access to the records. Each of the girls has disappeared from school, or was last seen there, and each had a reason for being in an isolated situation sometime during the day.

Checking with the dead girls' parents, with the school records and administrators, and ultimately with the powerful head of the Mexican-American community, Ginny and Brew come closer to the responsible person.

I thought it was an interesting case, with a flaw or two, but nothing as major as one reviewer seemed to indicate. He would have it that the whole field of mystery and detection was being dragged down by this book. I found it a pleasant read, wondered what Brew would become if he finally got off the sauce for good, and what his future relationship with Ginny Fistoulari might be. Stephens know the feel of a fairly large southwestern city pretty well, portrays various levels of both the Anglo and Mexican-American society reasonably honestly and provides pretty decent pacing to the story. I'd sure be willing to give another of his mysteries a try, if he happens to do another. The character of "Brew" Axbrewder is somewhat akin to the Thomas Covenant character, having to fight against himself more than anyone else and having a poor opinion of himself. One more bit of evidence that Stephens is Donaldson in pseudonymous disguise.

ESPIONAGE, ANYONE?

The May 15, 1981 issue of Publisher's Weekly brings the news that Ballantine will be bringing out a series of books under the log of the Espionage/Intelligence Library. The series will contain both reprints and originals. It's the brainchild of Owen Locke and Judy-Lynn del Rey, both of whom are addicted to real-life spy cases. The first four titles, all reprints, will see release in September and will be priced at \$2.75 each. Print run will be 150,000 copies.

The first four titles are: THE AMERICAN BLACK CHAMBER by Herbert Yardley; THE PHILBY CONSPIRACY by Bruce Page, David Leitch and Philip Knightley, with a new introduction by John LeCarre; HIGH TREASON by Soviet double-agent Vladimir Sakharov; and WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS by David C. Martin, who explores the 'secret war' between the CIA and KGB.

It seems that the office staff and editors had a lot of fun with notes flying back and forth from "Emerald" and "Godmother" and envelopes marked "Eyes Only" and "Top Secret." So for readers who like this sort of thing, there will be something to look forward to in September. A couple of originals have already been commissioned.

AUTHOR'S FORUM

Last issue I skipped over the Author's Forum which had been featured in the first several issues. Many people wrote to ask me how come. Well, it was more of an oversight than anything else. I had some pretty interesting letters and before I knew it I was out of space. Subconsciously I may also have been thinking that the response wasn't all that great. It has occurred to me, though, that the reason for poor response might not be that the reader doesn't want to or is not interested, but simply has not read the author. This has been driven realistically home recently by a couple of things. Steve Lewis has been running a poll taking

alphabetical groups of authors and briefly using a numbering system for response. Even with as simple a system as Steve uses I have been reluctant to respond because I had perhaps read two or three out of ten or twelve authors mentioned. Jeff Smith has embarked upon a reading program based on the authors listed in Twentieth Century Crime and Mystery Writers. He's been going through the book alphabetically and, as I've read his reviews, I've realized how many authors I have not read. Now it becomes plain why the response to an Author's Forum might not be overwhelming. A couple that I have picked so far have been personal favorites of mine, and a couple were chosen specifically because I had not read anything by the author. This was a way of encouraging me to do so.

Well, so be it. It obviously was of enough interest that people wondered where it was. So, it continues. And the next author for the Author's Forum will be:

NICOLAS FREELING

Surely there are enough of you out there who have read some van der Valk, Castang, or one of the two books about van der Valk's widow. So write me and let me know what you think about Freeling, what you like, what you dislike, how you compare the various protagonists he has used, his political persuasions as perceived through his characters, how you have come to conclude that he is a vegetarian, or any other nonsense. I guarantee that you will have at least until September to get your response to me. Why September? Read on.

I CAN FLY

I guess anyone can, if they can divvy up the cash these days, and don't have a phobia against the big birds. So, having saved pennies, turned in aluminum cans, waged a paper drive under false pretenses, and mortgaged Anna Jo, we will fly off for a visit to England and Ireland for a little over five weeks. We will leave on July 16 and not return..... Until August 25. (A little wishful thinking there froze my fingers.

We have not been back to Ireland since 1973 and there are quite a few things we wish to see there. About ten days there, and, no, I won't be going near Belfast. Back to England to continue hiking along the coast of Devon and Cornwall. Two years ago we embarked on The Coastal Footpath, a 515-mile path across the north of Devon, the entire coast of Cornwall and the south coast of Devon. Last time we hiked about 40 miles from Minehead to Ilfracombe. We will pick up in Ilfracombe and our intent is to hike to Bude. After that we'll pick up a car. We wish to spend some time on Exmoor, my bit of heaven on earth, perhaps travel up to The Lakes for some climbing, visit some fannish friends in North Wales and Cheshire. Then to Henley to visit Keith Roberts, a science fiction writer. Book buying in Oxford, a visit to friends in Ruislip, perhaps one day in London to hit Foyle's and Hatchard's book stores and then home.

Of course, I'll tell you all about the book buying experiences in the next issue. You may have to put up with some of my eclecticism but I suspect that some of you are as eclectic in your reading as I am. Keeps things from getting dull.

HOW ABOUT SOME LETTERS?

Sean Walbeck, 3411 Crestline Place, Bellingham, WA 98225

I did see most of the Rumpole of the Bailey series. Enjoyed them immensely. However, the more recent Sid Halley string has left me cold. A uni-handed former jockey turned detective around a racing establishment is not my cup of tea. Or my idea of a good setting for mysteries. Can someone prove me wrong?

Nero Wolfe is a Friday must with me. Despite the dissimilarities with Stout's

character (I myself noticed and I've only read one book and one short), it is much better than the alternatives on Friday and in fact a good show. I have yet to miss an episode (even with the Dukes of Hazzard lobby in the house who have recently bought axes) and enjoy it. At the same time I'm one of its biggest critics. I agree with the comments of Jud and David and I'll add some of my own. I would have preferred the setting from the books, the 50s. The characters in the books seemed comfortable then, why not keep them there? I also thought everyone was poorly cast. I was also disgruntled when in the first episode, Nero Wolfe, who never leaves his home, leaves it. If this wasn't the first episode (i.e., after the audience accepts his character), it wouldn't seem like Wolfe is just a bluffer and Archie lies for him. However, a recent episode with Darrin McGavin was the best of the lot. A few more like this and Wolfe can be misinterpreted forever.

The only Seattle-based mystery I know of is a tv movie of The Night Stalker. Also The Swing Music Murder by Harlan Reed. Look at the bright side. At least Seattle has been in some. Try finding a Bellingham novel.

// I expect the Dick Francis fans will fire back at you regarding your remarks about Sid Halley. Just how successfully do you folks think the Sid Halley tv episodes have been? Sean, try a Dick Francis book when you get a chance. A lot of folks think he's tops, me included.

Linda Toole, 147 Somershire, Rochester, NY 14617

You asked for comments on Nero Wolfe. Please remember that as you read this letter! Overall I think the casting is quite good (except for Cramer, of course). I always thought that (of those still alive) Conrad would do well as Wolfe. He moves too much, but I think that is a failing of television. I do prefer him to Thayer David. Horsley is "satisfactory" as Archie. Coote is all right as Horstmann, but the writers allow him too many out of character liberties. Woskovec is quite good as Fritz; I only wish they would enlarge his part. In the major encounters between Wolfe and Fritz that I've seen (only two) they seem like enemies - and that bothers me. Saul's character appears well cast, although the writers make him look like a fool in their adaptation of DEATH OF A DOXY. Purley Stebbins also seems well cast (although I've seen too little to be sure). A minor touch of genius was the casting of Johnny Keems in MIGHT AS WELL BE DEAD. I had a suspicion that he was slightly sleazy!

The brownstone is beautiful. Of course, there are many details to quibble with, but all in all they seem to have done a very commendable job. I love Wolfe's bed (complete with curtains that close) and the picture of the waterfall. The globe seems much too small. And where are the yellow chairs? The only thing I've seen so far that could be Archie's desk is a laugh. The kitchen seems quite good. Obviously a lot of attention and care has been taken with this production.

Of the episodes I've seen, two were Stout's and two were fabrications of the writers. The Stout stories were far superior, although there are still many things wrong with them. My two major complaints are that they intermix actions from two or more different stories and that they garble the stories. I wish that there were more Wolfe-Archie interplay. One of the episodes that the writers dreamed up (the gun-running shipping magnate) was quite well done - pretty logical story, fair amount of action, etc. Although why they feel they have to write their own is beyond me. The people I've spoken with here agree that they would love to see a two-hour special made out of TOO MANY COOKS. People who don't read Wolfe have said that the stories are too hard to understand (i.e., you have to pay attention) and too dull (not enough car chases, gun play, titillation) for mass appeal. I do hope the network gives the series a fair chance and that some of the problems can be worked out.

//You've gone a few steps beyond my other correspondents in analyzing what you like and dislike about the show. Good going! That's why printed almost all of your letter. But, alas, the show seems to have disappeared. Maybe we'll see some more of it in the fall. Thanks for the response. //

David H. Doerrler, 4626 Baywood Circle, Pensacola, FL 32504

Vincent Price isn't bad as host of Mystery! At least I don't get the urge to switch off the sound, although some of his attempts at humor seem a bit forced. It really doesn't matter, for the content of the series more than makes up for whatever the announcer does or doesn't do, and anyone (almost) would be an improvement over Gene Shallit.

I'm afraid that I can't give you a favorite program out of what I've seen so far, which is everything except the last episode of Malice Aforethought, which I missed as a result of being tied up with dinner with a candidate for a vacant position at the Library here. I enjoyed what I saw more than you did, and was quite impressed with Hywell Bennet (?if I've got that right) after seeing him as Ricky Tarr in Tinker, Tailor. Someone in the last mailing of Dapa-Em said that they thought he was too lightweight for the role, but my wife and I liked him. We are nearing the end now, with only the Sergeant Cribb episodes left; hope they continue the series next year.

By not thinking too much about the books, I find that I can enjoy Nero Wolfe more than I thought I would when I wrote to you right after the first episode. Cramer does, however, continue to grate. In the books, his antagonistic position vis-a-vis Wolfe is expressed more in his words, chewing of unlighted cigars and a red complexion which gets progressively redder during the course of the verbal exchange. He is also older than the TV character. Since the cigar chewing and/or change of complexion might be difficult to bring off, it might explain why they thought up the bit about Cramer's getting up from the chair without using his hands, which is pure TV. As I remarked to Tom Robinson, my guess is that the producers were trying to strike a balance between what they thought would appeal, or be tolerated, by those who had read the books and what would appeal to those who had not, hence the greater activity of Wolfe, the greater number of action scenes, exploding cars, etc.

Enjoyed the P.M. Hubbard review, and do think I will try him one of these days, as I say, in all honesty, about so many authors I've never read. I don't believe I have any of his works in my collection, so my sampling may have to await a trip to the public library, which is a major effort considering its location and reduced hours.

//I'm going to hold some of your very interesting letter until next time. It will give me some fodder for getting started and will leave some space for parts of letters from other people. Of course, Mystery! is over for the season, but out here they are beginning to repeat last season's offerings./ I didn't get around to reading another book by P.M. Hubbard; perhaps next time. Meantime I've gotten really excited about Andrew Garve. //

Don Herron, 537 Jones St. #9207, San Francisco, CA 94102

I would have responded instantly to Sgt. Chough 5, but to make certain I could make you feel guilty for being such a lazy bum, I had to wait for definite word on one of my projects. What's this "lazy bum" jazz I'm tooting about? Merely a reference to your first remark in SC5, instant apologies "for the dreadful amount of time between the last issue and this." So, you were late. No skin off my back -- or so I thought! Then, on page 3, I spot the letter from Ellen Nehr. She had read in the previous issue that I'm compiling a checklist of mysteries set in San Francisco, a project she has been interested in herself for some time. You add on the remark, "Well, Don, there is a lady who has a huge collection and just may be able to share some information that you do not have." Outrage! Disaster! And all because you are slow!

I got SC5 about March 6th. I read the letter. But it was too late for me to contact Ellen Nehr before the checklist was published. About the middle of February I got a call from Tom Godfrey of MYSTERY magazine. He'd been talking with Bruce Taylor, owner of the San Francisco Mystery Bookstore (the new name of Murder, Inc., the place I took you to during Westercon), possibly about putting together

an "all San Francisco" issue of MYSTERY. Bruce mentioned the checklist that I've been puttering about with for months. Godfrey asked if I could have a 3000 word overview essay and the checklist to him by March 15. Swallowing my sanity, I agreed to the deadline. I was writing and researching furiously, then SC5 leisurely rolls into the mailbox. A collector who might have been able to give me a few more titles, perhaps even a lot more titles, and there's not even time for a pair of letters to go back and forth between here and Ohio...certainly not enough time for me to take time out to systematize the checklist (which I was adding to up until the day I typed it out) and compare it with whatever list Ellen Nehr may have.

I just heard from Godfrey that MYSTERY will be using the essay and the checklist in two or three issues -- this summer, sometime. It undoubtedly won't have every mystery ever set in S.F. listed, but I did get some 222 titles. I'm writing to Ellen Nehr to let her know where the list will appear. With this much done, it should make it easier to add other titles to the list, make any corrections necessary, and otherwise draw closer to a definitive checklist. But I had to get it out, and fast. Just think -- thousands of readers will see the list, and no doubt many of them will write to say, "Say, you moron, you left this one out." But I did my best. If you had gotten SC5 out only a month sooner, what a help it would have been! I imagine you're twitching spasmodically with pangs of guilt even now.

Bad news on the local Hammett site front: the entire block containing 580 McAllister and Redwood Street from the Op story "The Whosis Kid" is scheduled for demolition in about a year, so a new federal building can be erected. I only hope Reagan cuts their funding! In any case, the block is doomed, because it is only two blocks away from the new Davies Symphony Hall -- the entire area is being cleaned up for the opera set. A hard-boiled site or two doesn't stand a chance.

The Hammett tour is getting more and more publicity -- a mention in the L.A. Times, an article in Quantas Airlines IN-FLIGHT magazine. I actually had several Australians turn up for the walk after the Quantas plug.

More newsworthy is the upcoming first meeting of The Maltese Falcon Society at John's Grill, Weds. May 20th at 7p.m. This group will be a fan counterpart of the Dashiell Hammett Society, whose 37 members have all done something "significant" to promote Hammett's memory. We're going to get together for drinks, talk, and lectures. I've lined up E. Hoffmann Price as the first writer speaker -- Ed will knock them dead with his tales of pulp fictioneering. We're trying to get real life detective and Hammett researcher David Fechheimer as our first detective speaker. We figure an hour talk with questions by a writer, then another hour with a detective, then an hour for socializing ought to hit hard-boiled fans where they live. Should be fun. We plan to have meetings every third Weds. of the month from May onward.

I saw a couple of NERO WOLFE episodes, but that's one more episode than actual Nero Wolfe stories I've read, so it would be rash to say much about them in comparison with the Stout original. As TV shows they were so-so -- good for the first 45 minutes, with unbelievably telescoped endings. Just no drama at the final unveiling of the murderer. Still, you take what you can get. I'm surprised the show is as good as it is, and utterly amazed when I see a program like "The Rockford Files." TV, commercial TV, is doomed. Cassettes and cable will bump it off within a few years.

// Remorse! Self-flagellation! I'm sorry that the last issue of SC wasn't a bit earlier, so that you could have contacted Ellen. But I think that's a perennial problem with the bibliographer. The minute you get done, you discover another item. The checklist sounds pretty full, and if you do get additions and corrections you can produce a 2nd edition list and make tons of money. We'll all look forward to it. / I'm really envious of the Maltese Falcon Society. Dale Goble wrote to say that he was going to try to attend. Haven't heard from him since the first gathering. I hope that someday I'll be in San Francisco on the right day and can be a guest for an evening. Let us know how it all came out, how many people you had and what future plans are for the organization. And we'll look forward to the S.F. checklist in MYSTERY sometime this summer. //

Bill Crider, 4206 Ninth Street, Brownwood, TX 76801

My latest discovery is Robert van Gulik, another writer who was left out of 20thCC&MW, to my surprise. He wrote the Judge Dee books, the ones set in China's Tang dynasty. I found that at least four of the books had been printed in paperback Library in a very nice, uniform edition while browsing through a used-book store, so I bought them. I've read THE LACQUER SCREEN, in which the Judge gets involved with the murder of a magistrate's wife and an apparent suicide while traveling incognito through China. He also spends some time in the underworld of the town in which he is visiting. It's a good story, and the setting is very well done -- van Gulik was an expert Orientalist. The characters are well drawn, and the ending of the books goes beyond the usual revelations to deliver an even more complicated study of character than expected. Anyone who likes unusual settings (such as those in the Upfield books mentioned last time) should also enjoy van Gulik. The only complaint I have is that the Chinese characters often speak in a peculiar form of British English -- Dee calls one man an "old stick," for example -- that seems to go beyond the bounds of literal translation, or even idiomatic translation.

// I've read several of van Gulik's book and agree that they are quite enjoyable. There was a real Judge Dee. If I recall correctly, van Gulik started his series of stories after first having translated some real Judge Dee adventures. I seem to recall that you have already discovered that van Gulik is, indeed, in 20thCC&MW. Since he was Dutch, he is included at the very end of the book in the Foreign Authors section. Did you never see the very fine television production of MURDER IN A MONASTERY which many people hoped would be the first of a series? It's something I wish I had a tape of, but didn't own a VCR at the time. ///

Dorothy Nathan, 85-32 143 St., Jamaica, NY 11435

Your review of SKELETONS voiced a minor gripe that I have in terms of the Robert B. Parker "Spenser" books. I have had a bit of a tiff with Steve Stilwell about this, but I think Parker also goes a bit too far in telling us what Spenser eats, wears, and especially, sees other people wear! If I want a clothes report I'll read Women's Wear Daily, but when I want a mystery I don't want to read about people's clothes. You say you would rather read about their drinking habits. I think you were joking, but that can be (and is) overdone, too. Some of our detectives seem to go through life perpetually drunk. If a "real" person drank that much they wouldn't be able to find their apartment door, let alone the killer of whomever is being investigated. Bartholomew Gill struck me especially as letting his detective drink too much and I questioned him about it at Ides of Mohonk two years back. He answered me that, yes, the Irish DO drink that much! I still insist some of these detectives have livers alcohol-soaked enough to cause any surgeon apoplexy when opened up in an operation, but maybe they really do have a greater tolerance for alcohol than I can fathom!?

You didn't like the comic element in CHARLIE CHAN AND THE CURSE OF THE DRAGON QUEEN. I saw it and thought it was wonderful, myself, but I can understand that you feel it is sacrilege to turn it into such a slapstick comedy. I will not advise you to see it, since I suspect that if you think it is a sacrilege now, you won't alter your opinion just because it is a funny comedy. The mystery element isn't great, that I will admit.

// Funny, what things upset us when we read our favorite stuff. There's another thing at work as well. We may not notice it too much until we pick up something where the little quirk becomes a big quirk; it becomes blatant. I first noticed it in a couple of Phillips Lore books, where Leo Roi tells us ever morning how he dresses. After that I noticed it more and more, and Gucci loafers really do me in. Gill was right; they do drink a lot in Ireland. The pub is a social institution. I was thinking more of detectives with a prediliction to a particular

brand of bourbon or scotch or beer. I.W. Harper, Granzquell, Henry Weinhard's Private Reserve. I have that last one reserved for myself. Don't anybody else use that one. If you ever get a chance to visit England or Ireland you'll find out how much the pub enters into the life of the people. They are so much nicer than our taverns; there is no comparison. So Gill uses the Irish pub correctly, while Stephens' Axbrewder is on his way to an alcoholic death if he doesn't pull up. // I suppose that I was foolish not to see the Charlie Chan nor the Fu Manchu movies, but it just goes against my grain somehow. //

Tom Robinson, 6 East 23rd St. -- Box 244, Barnegat Light, NJ 08006

Regarding your comments on the new season programs on MYSTERY, Paul and I have thoroughly enjoyed the series so far, but the treatment of DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, though seemingly more to the way Stevenson wrote it, wasn't as we expected it to be. It was different. We were captivated by MALICE AFORETHOUGHT as well as the jovial series with Rumpole, Sid Halley and Sgt. Cribb. The latter we still aren't sure about yet. Did Lovesey write the mysteries in the Victorian era, or are they recent books with the Victorian era effect?

// The latter. Lovesey lives! And writes! I can't remember the story right now, but it seems he was researching something else Victorian for co-authorship or some such, and decided that it would be a delightful era to have a detective in. He was so right. Cribb and Thackeray play off wonderfully against each other. I suspect that there will be still more as the years go by. Very successful. //

NOTES FROM THE BLOTTER

Lordy, it looks like I have more material than pages this time, and you just might be able to expect another issue before I leave for England and Ireland. I have reviews of such books as GEES' FIRST CASE by Jack Mann, GORKY PARK by Martin Cruz Smith, THE WIDOW by Nicolas Freeling, BOGMAIL by Patrick McGinely, CASE CLOSED by June Thomson and THE PRINCESS STAKES MURDER by Kin Platt. Perhaps if I didn't get carried away with my own verbiage and kept the reviews a bit shorter, I might be able to fit more in. I also have some bits of letters left over which really ought not to be left in languor. // Lots of talk this time about the NERO WOLFE television series, and some about the MYSTERY television series, but no comment as yet about THE SEVEN DIALS MYSTERY and WHY DIDN'T THEY ASK EVANS?, those two Mobil Showcase specials which have appeared recently. Comments, please, just to see if they agree with my own thoughts. // It seems that recently I have seen an article saying that Peter Ustinov would again play Hercule Poirot in another Agatha Christie to be made for the silver screen. That, indeed, is good news. I haven't heard a good word yet about THE MIRROR CRACK'D. // Here's a note for Ellen Nehr. M.K. Wren has her 5th mystery book out, I think from Doubleday (Crime Club?). Autographed copies are available from The Lincoln Book Shop, 1804 N.E. Highway 101, Lincoln City, OR 97367. Cost for book, handling and postage comes to \$11.10. I'm sure that this one is also about Conan Flagg, consultant. // Walker is coming out with some books during the fall which will please me mightily. September will see the publication of CHARLES AND ELIZABETH by W.J. Burley; October brings Elizabeth Lemarchand's NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CASE; and in December, THE SCOTTISH DECISION by Alan Hunter. Arbor House has done a very nice collection entitled the ARBOR HOUSE TREASURY OF SCIENCE FICTION and another, THE ARBOR HOUSE TREASURY OF FANTASY. Word comes now of THE ARBOR HOUSE TREASURY OF HORROR AND THE SUPERNATURAL edited by Bill Pronzini and others. Word also says that it's not the same old stories that we've seen in other collections. If you like this sort of stuff, keep an eye out for it. // Finally, perhaps available already is AGATHA CHRISTIE: THE ART OF HER CRIMES from Everest House. Authored by Julian Symonds, introduced by John Fowles, and illustrated by Tom Adams. The format is 9½ X 12, 144 pp., and a price of (ouch*) \$22.50. // I really have run out of room. See you next issue, perhaps about mid-July. Something for you to read, while I fly away. Til then. 5/31/81