

The Mystery Zine That's Ahead of Its Time...

# THE PERSONVILLE EVENING HERALD-ARGUS

Prepared for EMDAPA  
April 1, 2004  
Issue 5 Revised

Jack Avery  
(707) 577-0522  
email:dfw\_collector@yahoo.com

1130 Fourth Street, #116  
Santa Rosa, CA, 95404

## In This Issue:

### Columns:

Recent Reading ..... 1

### Reviews

Zorro: The Masters Edition Vol. III.....2

Treasures of Tartary.....3

Pulpster #13.....4

The Black Book #1.....5

Compliments of the Domino Lady ..... 6-7

### Flashes From Readers

Edgar Wallace .....8

Robert Carse.....9

E. Hoffmann Price.....9

Frank Del Clarke ..... 10

### Featured Issue

Detective Fiction Weekly .....11-14

## Acknowledgements:

The author biographies from Detective Fiction Weekly for Edgar Wallace, Robert Carse and E. Hoffmann Price were originally posted to the fictionmags newsgroup by Monte Herridge.

## Recent Reading:

### *Novels Read:*

Paratime

Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen

Agent of Byzantium

Schrödinger's Cat: The Universe Next Door

Time Wars: The Dracula Caper

The Difference Engine

The Man in the High Castle

The Guardians of Time

The Shield of Time

Too Many Magicians

The Legion of Time

H. Beam Piper

H. Beam Piper

Harry Turtledove

Robert Anton Wilson

Simon Hawke

William Gibson and Bruce Sterling

P. K. Dick

Poul Anderson

Poul Anderson

Randal Garrett

Jack Williamson

### *Short Stories Read:*

Sideways in Time

The Wheels of If

Brooklyn Project

Murray Leinster

L. Sprague de Camp

William Tenn

### *Graphic Novels Read:*

The Adventures of Luther Arkwright    Brian Talbot



Reviewed by Jack Avery

### **Zorro: The Masters Edition V3 (1946-1947)**

By Johnston McCulley

Cover by Joel F. Naprstek

Pulp Adventures Press

Large format paperbound

128 pages

\$15.00

ISBN #1-891729-22-5

After a long wait, the third volume in Pulp Adventures Press's complete Zorro series is here.

This is a nice thick book filled with short stories of the masked swashbuckler of old California.

The format of this will be familiar to those who have the first two collections with the same perfect binding and in a uniform size and design to the previous collections.

This edition picks up chronologically from where the last left off with all stories reprinted from Zorro's long run in *West*.

This is certainly a nice book, and Zorro fans will want a copy, but I can't help but feel that McCulley is just going through the motions by 1947.

Zorro by this point, more than two decades after his creation, had long since become a household name, and like the later Tarzan efforts by Edgar Rice Burroughs, the original inspiration seems to be missing.

The stories here, starting with "Zorro's Masquerade"

and running in order to "Zorro's Masked Menace" seem to be based on the same template. Gone is the verve of *The Curse of Capistrano*.

However these are still Zorro stories, with plenty of chases, swordfights and daring do. Each story is self-contained, usually featuring Zorro coming to the aid of a victim of injustice or embarrassing Sgt. Garcia in his foolish attempts to capture the outlaw. Still, it's hard to feel that Zorro is ever really in trouble.

One nice feature is the reprinting of the original illustrations that accompanied the stories in *West*. In addition to painting the cover, Joel F. Naprstek provides several new black and white spot illustrations.

There is also a cover gallery showing all of the Zorro covers from *West* that are represented in this volume.

While there is no introduction, there is a complete checklist of Zorro appearances from the pulps.

It certainly is nice to see that somebody remembers that Zorro began in the pulps and is making a systematic effort to reprint the work of the original creator, even if the quality of that work is uneven.

On the official Zorro Productions website, McCulley is barely acknowledged as the creator of Zorro, as opposed to Isabel Allende, author of an upcoming Zorro pastiche. There's a nice big photo of her on the main Zorro Productions website, while McCulley isn't even mentioned except on a page deep inside the site.

On the website, Zorro's pulp origins are glossed over in favor of movies and TV shows.

Hopefully soon this series will continue with the reprinting of the original sequel novel *The Further Adventures of Zorro*. There are also plenty more short stories from *West*, a few

from other magazines and another novel that have yet to be reprinted in this series.



The Personville Evening Herald-Argus is published whenever Jack Avery gets around to it. Contents copyright 2004 by Jack Avery. All rights revert to creators upon publication. The Personville Evening Herald-Argus is prepared for the membership of Elementary My Dear Amateur Press Association. Copies of all issues in Acrobat PDF format can be found on the web at [efanzines.com](http://efanzines.com).



Review by Jack Avery

### **Treasures of Tartary and Other Heroic Tales**

By Robert E. Howard

Edited by Paul Herman

Wildside Press

2004

Hardcover

\$35.00

218 pages

ISBN: 0-8095-1558-X

It's hard to believe that most of the five stories in this collection have been out of print for more than 15 years, particularly since these are all in the public domain.

All five are strong adventure stories showing the Howard touch. But these stories were passed over by the Baen Books "Robert E. Howard Library" because they are non-fantastic.

There is a good variety represented here, two westerns, two middle-eastern stories and a pirate yarn. At first glance it would seem to be a random assortment of stories, but these five stories belong together. Though disparate in time and place, all are strong examples of Howard's major themes: honor, duty and vengeance. There is also a countervailing theme of the way greed plays on men's souls.

Some have questioned whether Howard's characters, rough and dangerous as they are, are really heroes. These stories show his characters in a heroic light, braving danger for principles, taking pity on enemies, upholding a code of honor, seeking redemption, fighting against the lure of greed and sacrificing in the name of duty.

The title story is a Kirby O'Donnell adventure featuring the man known as the False Kurd. On the surface it is the story of an attempt to steal a fantastic treasure. But O'Donnell is more than just a thief or adventurer. He's also on the track of the man who betrayed his companions, leaving him the only one alive to seek ven-

geance. Early in the story his desire for vengeance leads him to join in a fight and aid a stranger. This gives him the means to pursue both his vengeance and the treasure. But once his vengeance is met and the treasure gained, he realizes that for the good of peace, he has to destroy the horde so it does not fall into the wrong hands. Vengeance is gained, self-imposed duty trumps greed.

"Son of the White Wolf" stars El Borak, in my opinion the greatest of Howard's characters, in a thrilling adventure set during World War I. This story hinges on shifting allegiances between enemies who join forces to fight a foe both agree must be stopped. There is treachery repaid, duty fulfilled and honor followed even at peril of death.

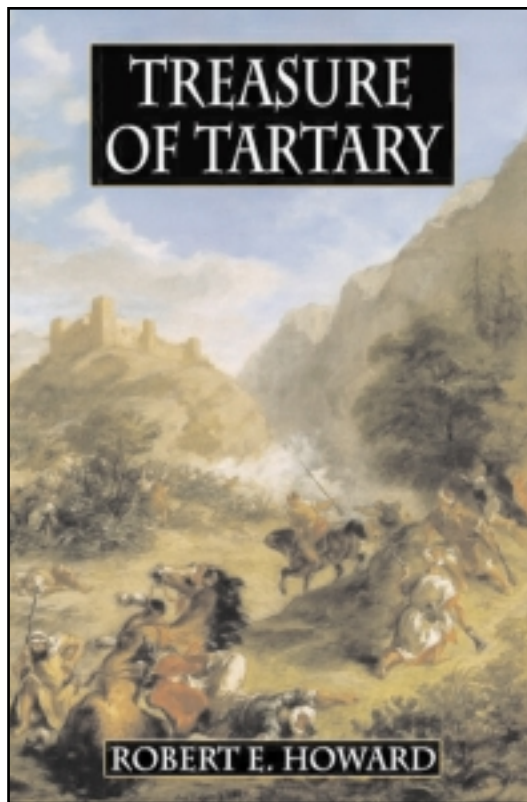
"Black Vulmea's Vengeance" is a terrific pirate story. Vulmea is captured by the same British sea captain who tried to hang him when Vulmea was a boy. Vulmea plays on the captain's greed to give himself a fighting chance at life, and to lead his enemy into death. Yet Vulmea tries to minimize the number of the captain's

men who will also fall into the trap. Once the tables are turned, Vulmea is turned from his vengeance by pity, certainly showing him to be a better man than the captain who was motivated only by greed. Of course there is fighting, adventure and danger aplenty in a hidden ruin deep in the jungle before the end of the story.

"Boot-Hill Payoff" is unusual for Howard, in that the story's character is seeking redemption instead of vengeance. The youngest brother of a family of desperados, he returns to the scene of their depredations determined to pay back the town for the wrongs his family committed. To his surprise he finds a gang impersonating his dead brothers committing a reign of terror against the townsfolk he has come to aid. With almost all hands against him, he

succeeds, with a little too much luck to be believed, in putting an end to the gang, and restoring his good name. He also gets to gun down the man who killed his brother in an unfair duel.

The inverted nature of this story, the hero starts out seeking redemption and only incidentally gains vengeance, may be traced to the origins of the work. This



**Please see Treasures**

**Page 10**



Reviewed by Jack Avery

## Pulpster 13

2003

Free with membership to Pulpcon 2003

36 Pages

For the lucky 13<sup>th</sup> year, editor Tony Davis has put together an impressive collection of new and reprinted articles for the Pulpcon program book, *The Pulpster*.

The cover this year is an excellent oriental menace cover by Canadian Neil Mechem featuring a sinister villain up to no good.

The inside front cover consists of covers for the *Compleat Adventures of Jules DeGrandin* which has an extensive article later in the issue by the set's editor, George A. Vanderburgh. In fact this article, on the genesis of the set, is too extensive. There's really no need to know of every person he shared a meal with in the past five years. But that's another story.

The contents page has a nice Edd Cartier illustration that is artfully faded out where it runs under the text. Davis' editorial is mostly an extension of the contents page, detailing the articles to follow.

The meat of the issue starts with Kurt Brokaw's article about Robert Lesser. While entitled "The Collector in his Lair" we are not treated to any photos of said lair. We do get a good description of Lesser's apartment and his quest to collect original pulp cover paintings.

Wayne Leighton, a pen name for Rex. W. Layton, has a one-page article on musically based science fiction stories from the pulps. I get the feeling this is just a last-minute filler. He doesn't even list "The Music of Erich Zahn."

The real gem of the issue is a reprint from *True West*. This 1967 article by pulp editor and writer J. Edward Leithead is filled with great information, but is not well organized. It is desperately in need of extensive footnoting a la the Steeger papers issue of *Purple Prose*. Leithead has the occasional lapse of memory and gets some details wrong, but almost every paragraph should have been expanded out to a chapter.

Leithead's enthusiasm is certainly evident, he liked Westerns the way many science fiction fans liked science fiction. It would have been nice to see an illustration or two by "Doc" W. Kremer to go with this. Leithead praises him highly.

He jumps about too much and often switches thoughts in the middle of a sentence. I wonder how much of this is Leithead and how much is the scanning of the text. I suspect some errors have been introduced into the text here.

The Pulpcon guests of honor, Joe Hensley and Jim Steranko, each are given one-page biographies by Rusty Hevelin.

The schedule of events is not much use now that Pulpcon is past, but I notice that once again the Pulpcon Players radio show recreation was left out.

Don Hutchison has a solid review of *King of the Pulps*. His critiques, mostly centered around the organization of the bibliography, are well-founded and have been mentioned by other readers of the book.

Nick Car writes a piece on the favored weapons of a number of notable, and not so notable, pulp heroes. He misses at least one: in listing Operator #5's arsenal, he forgets the flexible rapier that was kept hidden in Jimmy Christopher's belt.

In last year's *Pulpster*, Davis reprinted an article from a writer's magazine critical of a science fiction convention. This year, he reprints long-time fan and professional Wilson (Bob) Tucker's response. While the original report was too critical, I can see that Tucker is too far



**Please see Pulpster**

**Page 13**





Reviewed by Jack Avery

## The Black Book #1

2004

Girasol Collectables

32 pages

\$5

With the Black Book, pulp reprint publisher Girasol Collectables enters the pulp fanzine market with an attractive and varied new publication edited by Tony Davis.

Girasol co-publisher Neil Mechem does a very fine pen and ink drawing featuring a sinister villain up to no good for the cover.

The inside front cover consists of covers for the *Compleat Adventures of Jules DeGrandin* which has an extensive article later in the issue by the set's editor, George A. Vanderburgh. In fact this article, on the genesis of the set, is too extensive. There's really no need to know of every person he shared a meal with in the past five years. But that's another story.

The contents page has a nice Edd Cartier illustration that is artfully faded out where it runs under the text. Davis' editorial is mostly an extension of the contents page, detailing the articles to follow.

The meat of the issue starts with Kurt Brokaw's article about Robert Lesser. While entitled "The Collector in his Lair" we are not treated to any photos of said lair.

We do get a good description of Lesser's apartment and his quest to collect original pulp cover paintings.

Wayne Leighton, a pen name for Rex. W. Layton, has a one-page article on musically based science fiction stories from the pulps. I get the feeling this is just a last-minute filler. He doesn't even list "The Music of Erich

Zahn."

The real gem of the issue is a reprint from *True West*. This 1967 article by pulp editor and writer J. Edward Leithead is filled with great information, but is not well organized. It is desperately in need of extensive footnoting a la the Steeger papers issue of *Purple Prose*. Leithead has the occasional lapse of memory and gets some details wrong, but almost every paragraph should have been expanded out to a chapter.

Leithead's enthusiasm is certainly evident, he liked Westerns the way many science fiction fans liked SF. It would have been nice to see an illustration or two by "Doc" W. Kremer to go with this. Leithead praises him highly.

Leithead jumps about too much and often switches thoughts in the middle of a sentence. I wonder how much of this is Leithead and how much is the scanning of the text. I suspect some errors have been introduced into the text here.

Don Hutchison has a solid review of *King of the Pulps*.

His critiques, mostly centered around the organization of the bibliography, are well-founded and have been mentioned by other readers of the book.

Nick Car writes a piece on the favored weapons of a number of notable, and not so notable, pulp heroes. He misses at least one: in listing Operator #5's arsenal, he forgets the flexible rapier that was kept hidden in Jimmy Christopher's belt.

Long time fan and professional science fiction author Bob (Wilson) Tucker has an article responding to a critical article, not published here, about an early science fiction convention. While the original report was too critical,

I can see that Tucker is too far on the other side. His defense of science fiction illustrators goes too far and fails to acknowledge that

there were some really bad illustrations run in some of the pro sf mags.

**Please see Black Book**

**Page 13**





Review by Jack Avery

### Compliments of the Domino Lady

By Lars Anderson

Illustrated by STERANKO

Cover by STERANKO

Bold Venture Press

\$14.95

96 pages

7 by 10 inches

ISBN: 0-9712246-6-8

While some Domino Lady stories have been reprinted over the years, nobody has done it as well as Rich Harvey's Bold Venture Press with a terrific new book that collects not only all of the series in one place, but adds new art by legendary illustrator Jim Steranko.

Steranko was obviously enthusiastic about illustrating the book. Not only did he provide the stunning cover painting, but he also produced double page spreads to introduce each story.

"When I accepted the assignment, I already had most of the image composed on the canvas of my imagination: dangerous, elegant, mysterious—and sexy!" Steranko said. "She's the quintessential '30s pulp vixen, a masked manhunter in a noir deco world, right out of a Warner Bros. Thriller."

Steranko captures that "noir deco world" in the sharp, black and white images that fill the pages from edge to edge. The addition of new art by the leading modern illustrator of pulp fiction, he has illustrated Conan, Doc Savage, The Shadow, G-8 and Norgil the Magician among others, puts this collection into a new high for such projects. More than the cover itself, these black and white interiors are the artistic triumph of the book.

But Bold Venture Press has always tried to present pulp reprints with the original artwork. So for this project publisher Rich Harvey does that as well. Illustrations from the pulps are enlarged to fill the pages to accompany the stories along side those of Steranko's. It's a nice touch, but these illustrations are no competition for those of Steranko.

The cover itself, which was changed somewhat from the one Steranko displayed at Pulpcon in 2003, shows the

Phantom Lady entering into a mysterious lair through a round window. There are many classic Steranko touches—from the art deco architecture to the mummy case to the smoking gun in the Domino Lady's hand. The cover is, perhaps, too dark, with the light focusing on the Domino Lady's legs while leaving much of her in shadow. The cover might have benefited from a brighter color palette.

While there will be people who purchase the book just for the Steranko art, the stories themselves are worth reading. While these were originally printed in the so-called sex pulps, they are better written than many stories that appeared in such publications as *Saucy Romantic Adventures*. Anderson wrote competent adventure/masked detective fiction plots. While these do not rank among the best of pulp fiction, they are far from the worst. For those squeamish about explicit sex, the magazines featuring the Domino Lady were among the tamest of the hot pulps. Anderson teased more than he exposed.

Not that these stories are great literature. They are breezy entertainments at best. The Domino Lady gains an invitation to a party as her alter-ego, socialite Ellen Patrick, then finds a place to change into her working clothes. Using luck, and the author's forbearance, she succeeds in her daring plot to visit justice on the deserving.

In "The Domino Lady Collects" Patrick is trying to recover some indiscrete letters the villain is using to blackmail a friend. Gaining access to a party held in the villain's apartment, she transforms into the Domino Lady and is caught while searching a private office. It all goes too easy on her to turn the tables on the villain who seems to be almost willing to let this slip of a girl best him. If this was the best, or even an average, story in the collection, these stories wouldn't deserve reprinting. Fortunately, the series gets better with each story.

At almost twice the length, "The Domino Lady Doubles Back" has more room for Anderson to maneuver and develop the plot. It is set in San Francisco, where The Domino Lady has sent a warning to a crooked, politically connected, businessman that if he fails to donate a substantial sum to charity, she will rob him of his gem collection. Needless to say, there is a party to be held at the home of the businessman and as Ellen Patrick, the Domino Lady has no problem gaining an invitation. The fact that it is a masquerade only makes it easier for her to hide her costume. Private eye Roge McKane makes the first of two appearances in the series, having been hired to guard the gem collec-



tion. It's easy enough for McKane to recognize Patrick in her masquerade costume and mask, yet others can't identify her in the more revealing garb of The Domino Lady. Perhaps they were distracted by her...charms. Poor McKane, Ellen vamps him for information on the security arrangements and then leaves him with nothing more than a kiss.

"The Domino Lady's Handicap" is a revisit of the plot of the first story, but with more room to develop the plot, Anderson turns in a much better performance with more action than the series had previously seen. Again the Domino Lady is acting on behalf of a friend who is being blackmailed. A minor horse racing subplot gives the story its title and provides flavor. Instead of being invited to a party, The Domino Lady uses her wiles to gain access to the blackmailer's room to search it. She's caught and there is actually a chase and shootout.

"Emeralds Aboard" is a fun adventure, but the Domino Lady's solution is a bit implausible in that she has exactly the luggage she needs for the task at hand.

"Black Legion" is where the series really takes off with some real action, a good villain, dumb henchmen, and the Domino Lady getting rough with the opposition.

Unfortunately, the series ends with "The Domino Lady's Double" which is the best in the batch. It really shows where the series could have gone had it continued. There are some pulp-story implausibilities with the plot, but the action is fine, the quandary facing the Domino Lady a good one and the writing brisk.

Reading the stories in one sitting, it becomes obvious that Anderson is repeating himself. There are stock descriptions of the origin for example, that have only superficial changes from one story to the next. But this

was a common pulp series failing, akin to the recital in every Avenger novel of the Avenger's weapons. While there are implausibilities, they are no worse than in most hero pulp stories.

Anderson spends too much time and attention to lengthy bubble baths and scenes of the Domino Lady dressing and undressing, but these scenes, while tedious, are hardly risqué. Sometimes one wonders if Anderson is writing an adventure story or a high-fashion article.

And only the fact that she seems to genuinely enjoy the company, and passionate embraces, of the men she

vamps for information saves her from being nothing but a heartless tramp.

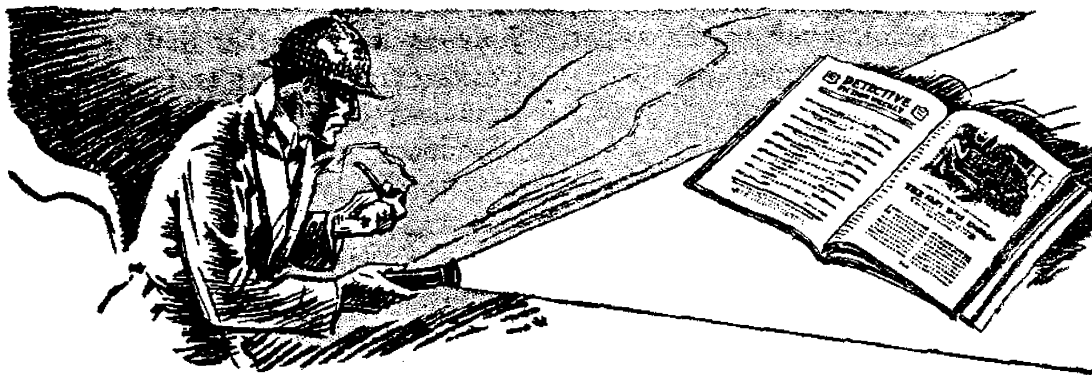
The stories are completely retypeset from their original pulp appearances. Unfortunately, the type is very small. While this reduced the page count, and undoubtedly kept the price in an affordable range, it does make it harder to enjoy reading the stories.

There is a fine and informative introduction by Bernard Drew that provides an overview of the series. Drew places the Domino Lady in perspective, relating her not only to the male pulp heroes of her era, but also placing her in the forefront of the rare female series character. Drew, who edited the seminal *Hardboiled-Dames*, was an excellent choice for this task.

Pulp historian Will Murray provides an afterword tracing what little is known about the mysterious Lars Anderson. Murray tracks down quite a bit of information on Anderson, and provides some informed speculation about the author.

The back cover reprints the original pulp cover art by Norman Saunders from *Mystery Adventure Magazine*. It's nice to be able to compare his interpretation of the character with that of Steranko's.





## FLASHES FROM READERS

### WALLACE, EDGAR

WRAPPED in a silk dressing gown, sitting behind a littered desk, sucking on a ten-inch cigarette holder, a big man with gray hair and a face like a cleric's sits dictating detective stories.

That man has already written one hundred and forty novels, most of them detective, innumerable plays, and short stories and articles beyond count. More than five million of his books are sold every year. At times he has had its many as six thrillers playing in London theaters. And, in addition to all that, he conducts daily columns in a London newspaper on drama and horse racing.

He is Edgar Wallace, the greatest detective story writer living and the author of "The Green Ribbon," the serial now running in DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY.

Edgar Wallace has had a life crowded with adventure. Nowadays he crowds it with the thrilling adventure that he writes.

Left an orphan at nine, he was adopted by a Billingsgate fish porter and his wife. He sold newspapers in London, shipped as a Cabin boy on a fishing trawler, and as soon as he was of age enlisted in the Queen's army.

South Africa was where they sent him. He sweated on the veldt under the blistering sun, cursed the rigors

of a soldier's life, and read Rudyard Kipling for diversion. That was what started him on his literary career. Kipling inspired him to poetry. He became a contributor to the *Cape Times*. When his enlistment was over he went back to London and got a job as a police reporter on the *Evening Mail*.

He enjoyed that, the excitement of working practically with the police on a crime, but he decided at length that he knew enough about crimes to create them himself. So he began writing.

The success that followed is well known.

Edgar Wallace is, besides many other things, a racing enthusiast. Not only does he conduct the column in a London newspaper, but he runs a racing stable as a pastime and spends a great part of his leisure time at the track.

That accounts for the authentic flavor of the great serial running now in DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY. A mystery of the race track, "The Green Ribbon" was written by a man who knows the game.

### CARSE, ROBERT

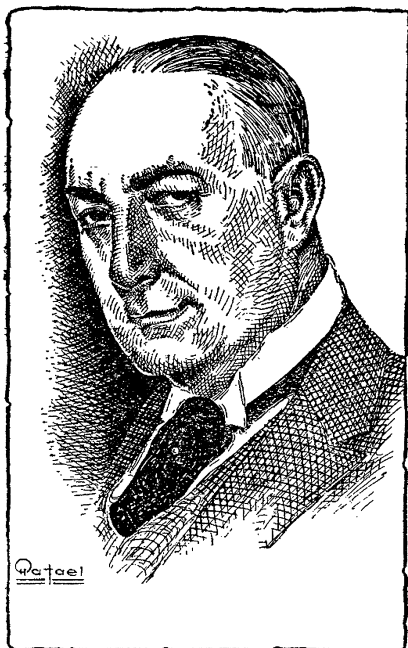
ROBERT CARSE, who wrote that exciting story of murder aboard a transatlantic liner in this week's issue of Detective Fiction Weekly, "The Queen's jewels," has seen plenty of experience at sea.

He was born in 1900 in Riverdale-on-the-Hudson, New York, and went to Hill School, where he served in the R.O.T.C. while the war was being fought, too young to join it.

Instead of going to college, which had been planned for him, he got a job with the Pittsburgh Steamboat Company.

After that, he shipped aboard steamers sailing for England, Italy, France, Spain and Portugal, spent two years roving the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

In the middle of the winter of 1921-1922 while homeward bound from the Golfo di Napoli, the ship he was on ran into the famous New Year's Day gale which lasted for



Edgar Wallace



five days and nights.

After that he shipped for southern points, running the Pacific, Caribbean, and South Atlantic.

A little bored with the sea, by then, he turned to newspaper work. For two years he was a reporter on the *New York Times*.

But that did not satisfy him for long. Florida and the real estate boom beckoned him and he traveled south. The boom left him flat. He turned his face back again to New York. He trod some cold pavements in the great city, and wore a thin topcoat through a bitter cold winter, but at last he landed a job with the City News Association, then *The Newark Ledger*, and finally the *Subway Sun*.

He was all ready to go to sea again when he met the girl, so he turned his back to the call of the deep. Once in a while he satisfies the old thirst with a month or two on deep water, as a master-at-arms or a quartermaster, but he spends most of his time free-lance writing.

## PRICE, E. HOFFMANN

E. HOFFMANN PRICE is a newcomer to DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY. The author of "Death in the Dark-Room," in this week's issue, has written us about some of his feats, from developing films in a mess kit in France (a hobby of his), to subsisting in Louisiana on red beans and rice.

I was born near Fresno, California, July 3, 1898, the day they fought the battle of Santiago de Cuba—check me if my history is all wrong. Anyway, this helped me dodge the Spanish-American war, and my luck held until 1917, when I set out to make the world safe for bankers by serving as an enlisted man in France, in the S.O.S., mainly around Bordeaux and the border of Spain, feeding and convoying mules up to the intermediate sector. I heard artillery fire once, over there—they were having target practice 18 kilometres from Glacière de Merignac.

Military service during the war was rounded out with a bit in the Philippines and on the Mexican Border, and all painless except for the headache following shore leave in Nagasaki, en route to San Francisco. Yes, that



Robert Carse

innocuous stuff the Japanese call *saki* is deceptive!

While in France I was appointed from the ranks (15th Regular Cavalry) to the United States Military Academy, and was graduated in 1923: one second lieutenant, complete, including boots and spurs, delusions of grandeur, a reputation as the best fencer on the pistol team, and the best pistol shot on the fencing squad, to saying nothing of the enduring title of Trooper, in honor of the raggedest horseman who ever entered the Corps of Cadets from a cavalry regiment.

I have for some time neglected fencing and pistol marksmanship, but still nurse the notion that I can get back to old-time form, which had its peak when, despite my bonehead plays, Lieutenant John Pesek and I won the Intercollegiate Duelling Sword Team championship, and I appeared as one of the Army pistol team whose picture graced the *Police Gazette*—the high water mark of fame.

Aside from some seven odd years (very odd indeed, some of them!) in the service, I have turned my hand to soda jerking, delivering newspapers via bicycle, acted as theatre doorkeeper and usher, superintendent of an acetylene plant, and part-time reader for a magazine.

If hobbies mean anything, I'm an amateur photographer and mix my own solutions whenever I'm in one place long enough to set up a laboratory; and I've developed films in a mess kit while in France, which is proof enough of the bug. When an anvil and a few hammers are available, I like to hammer bowls and such-like gadgets out of sheet copper, with results reminiscent of an apple dumpling sawed in half and divested of the apples. I know all about the stock market except how to make money at it, and I tinker with astrology in a mild way. As an amateur chef, I specialize on East Indian curry, turtle stew, and fowl grilled over a charcoal fire, bits of parlor magic that never fail to make a hit.

While profitably employed in the acetylene industry, I collected Oriental rugs as a hobby. Thus far the sheriff hasn't touched the collection, whose star exhibit is an antique Feraghan, ragged as a last year's bird's nest, but as gorgeous as a Chinese dream. Lacking floor space, I hang them on the wall—part of them—because I like the effect, and because it's expected of a freak who lives in the French Quarter, and hangs out at Hesni's Oriental Restaurant, the rendezvous of the Syrian, Arabian, and Armenian colony of New Orleans. Also, they hide the grimy plaster on the walls.

Favorite delusions: that I've not aged a bit in the past ten years; 1,500 new gray hairs to the contrary notwithstanding; that my barroom French, bamboo Spanish, wobbly German, and smattering of Arabic make me an accomplished linguist; that smoking a Turkish pipe and reciting the first chapter of the Koran make me the logical successor of Lawrence of Arabia, and the friend of all good Moslems.

Favorite superstition: that peacocks are good luck. But for strictly eating purposes, I prefer grilled-guinea hen, or roast capon, but have developed a great liking for red beans and rice, the favorite of the Louisiana epicure who wants to endow his nickel with the maximum carrying power.

Favorite vices: gluttony, procrastination, and a firm conviction that there is always some other place more congenial than the present location.

And for the practical, concrete mind, here's the wind-up: height, five feet seven, weight, 145, regardless of gluttony, gray eyes with a slightly Mongolian slant, dark hair and hide, and mother said I was a beautiful child.

## **DEL CLARK, FRANK**

FRANK DEL CLARKE, who wrote "The justice of the Bayou," in this week's DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY, is a native of the bayou country of Louisiana. Here is a short autobiography from him:

"With long red hair, a generous sprinkling of freckles, a black Texas pony, and a temper which kept things from getting dull, I was the youngest of six villainous kids. Home was a sugar plantation in southwest Louisiana—live-oaks and Spanish moss, and out front the chocolate bayou of Longfellow's immortal 'Evangeline.'

"The first big adventure was running away from home

at the age of five, with a couple of stolen sweet potatoes. I got as far as a little tea house in the end of the yard and set up housekeeping.

"Later there was city life in New Orleans, and 'prep' school in the East. But the discipline irked. Suddenly the fact of the war became real.

"At eighteen I enlisted in the U. S. Tank Corps, only to fight the battle of influenza at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Later, at Camp Dix, I proved so adept at stealing coal for my barracks that I was elevated to the rank of corporal, and did not have to peel any more potatoes.

"After the war I went to Yale for a couple of years, but forsook college for travel. I went to sea on a tramp, and had my nose remodeled by a flying table during an active difference of opinion in a Bremerhafen water front café. With a pal I deserted ship in Hamburg and rambled over most of Europe. There is no course in Yale which could compare with it. I returned to New York by steerage and tried to find my way into journalism, but the profession was so cool to my advances that I ended up in the coal mines of Western Pennsylvania and the Pittsburgh steel and coke furnaces.

"Art and architecture absorbed my free moments, and I finally determined to settle down and become a designer. Architecture has tolerated me ever since, but settling down is another matter, and I doubt if I shall ever really do that—not if my typewriter will play fair with me."

---

## **Treasures**

### **From Page 3**

story was a completion of a Chandler Whipple story titled "The Last Ride." Whipple, editor at Argosy in the 1930s, was stuck for an ending and Howard finished it. The story was originally published under Whipple's Robert Enders Allen pen name in *Western Aces*.

In "The Vultures of Whapeton" a Texas gunman is hired to be a deputy for a mining camp that is being victimized by an organized gang. There are many betrayals and double dealing, including by the hero, who becomes part of the plot to loot the town, and another plot to escape with the gang's gold. This is complicated, and the hero has an impossible time balancing his code of honor, as bent as it is, with the needs of the conspiracy. This story, more than any other in the collection, examines the notions of duty and personal honor weighed against gold lust in a way that is surprisingly nuanced and complex.

Herman includes both endings to "The Vultures of Whapeton," considered by some to be one of the greatest western pulp stories ever written. Howard wrote both a "happy" and a "realistic" ending to the story. He left it up to his editor at Smashing Novels Magazine to decide which to use. The editor printed both. Since then, only

the realistic ending has seen mass-market publication and that rarely. It's great to see the "happy" ending rescued and put inside hard covers and not just in hard to obtain fanzines, although the other ending is far better at illuminating Howard's themes.

The original editorial commentary on the two endings is also preserved, reprinted right from the original pulp.

With all of these stories, Herman uses the original pulp appearances as sources, restoring italics, politically incorrect language and removing editorial changes that have occurred over the years. These are the best versions of these stories that have ever seen professional publication.

Unfortunately, the artwork that accompanied these stories in the pulps is not reproduced.

Noted Western author and Howard enthusiast James Reasoner, a Texan like Howard, writes an introduction that focuses on Howard's use of wandering characters, such as those in the five stories in the collection. He examines Howard's use of characters who are outsiders.

As Reasoner says, these are "wonderfully exciting tales filled with action and color and intriguing characters." But there is real depth to these stories as well. Howard's genius at writing action can distract from the deep themes that lay at the heart of these stories.

# Featured Issue: Detective Fiction Weekly

We're taking a look at our favorite pulp this time, with an issue of Detective Fiction Weekly from February 1, 1936.

I hadn't intended to read this, but I was intrigued by the idea of reading a "Lady From Hell" story. I've not run into this series character before, but she sounded intriguing.

But before we get to the notorious Vivian LeGrand, there is the first part of a serial by Richard Wormser.

Part one of "The Racket Smashers" looks excellent, but this is the only issue of DFW I have from 1936. For some reason, my collection skips this year in favor of other years. I don't want to start the serial without knowing how many years it will take me to fill it in, so I skipped it. Too bad, it really looks good.

Old pulp hand Anthony Rud has a tight little mystery next with "The Zebra Hill Mystery." I don't know if detective Joe Gerlach is a series character, but he seems interesting enough to carry more than one story. He is asked to protect a down-on-his-luck financier who has reason to fear theft. While he arrives just too late to stop a murder, he does track down the killer in this classic-style mystery. This is so classic in fact that there is even the scene where the suspects are gathered together in the living room and the detective unmasks him. There is an interesting method of suicide used by the villain when he's uncovered, with a thin leaf of gold foil used to asphyxiate himself.

Then at last we arrive at the Lady From Hell adventure. This is billed as a true story, claiming that author Eugene Thomas researched the legends of the vivacious "La Señorita Del Infierno." It's obvious bunk, this is clearly a fiction story no differently written than any other. This episode is entitled "The Adventure of the Voodoo Moon." The notorious Lady From Hell, Vivian Legrand, is on vacation with her sidekick and is determined not to get into any escapades. Legrand appears to be a thief and adventuress in the Domino Lady mold, but without the crusading bent hero angle. She's a predator who uses her brains to outwit the law and criminals for her own gain.

While visiting a Caribbean island, she and her sidekick are drugged and brought to a remote island ruled by an evil sugar plantation owner. The villain has made a deal with the natives, he'll allow and support their voodoo rituals, including supplying them with white human sacrifices in return for working the plantation. He's made a big mistake when he selects The Lady From Hell as his next victim.

While the story was not spectacular, I really liked the way Legrand is portrayed. While her sidekick is a

guy, it's Legrand who has to rescue him. She's the tough resourceful one, with the skills as a locksmith and the plan to turn the tables on the bad guy. She's also out for more than just an escape, she manages to defeat the villain by taking his plantation away for a nice tidy profit on the adventure. She's less of a hero, than a very predatory businesswoman. There's nothing soft about her. I liked this and will be on the lookout for more issues with this series.

"The Personal Touch" by H.W. Guernsey is a real mess. I can't see how this story got published in a professional magazine. It's not badly written, but the plot doesn't seem to follow from one paragraph to the next. The detective here is a police sergeant who is hermeric—he has perfect vision in the dark, but needs to wear special goggles in the daytime or he's blind. Yeah, I didn't believe it either, until I looked it up in a dictionary and the condition really does exist. However, I doubt any police department would hire an officer who suffered from such a condition. The detective's prey is a jewel robber.

The detective, for no reason, prowls around the house where the robber is targeting. He seems to know the chauffeur, who appears to be an undercover officer, but who plays no part in the story. A maid surprises the cop prowling around, yet blissfully goes on her way. The mansion is burglar proofed, but he security company that set the alarms doesn't notice the entry, an old icebox setup, used by the thief. None of this makes a bit of sense.

MunseyMagazines stalwart Stookie Allen, has



AS told in the Adventure of the Headless Statue, Vivian Legrand suddenly left Europe and switched her activities to Central and South America. The history of her crimes there is based on the fragmentary reports of the police, and the market place gossip of "la Señorita del Infierno."

Mr. Thomas collected these stories on a recent trip to the southern cities and put them together in this new series of amazing adventures.

What is true and what is false? All that is definitely known is that the red-headed siren from Bubbling Well Road, Shanghai, was one of the most astonishing and glamorous figures in criminal history.

a two-page illustrated crime feature, this one tells the story of murderess Mrs. R. L. Peete. I still wonder how accurate these accounts are.

"A Billet for a Bullet" by Captain Havelock Bailie is just not my type of story. It's told from the criminal's point of view. We see the characters try to set up the perfect crime, but we know the convention is that they will fail. In these stories it is always the one detail that is introduced, this time it's the ownership of a dog, that proves the undoing of the criminals. Once you've spotted the anomaly, the rest of the story is just waiting until it's revealed how this is going to spoil things. I don't mind criminal point-of-view stories, but I like it when I think the characters have a chance to succeed, such as in the Parker novels of Richard Stark or in the con-artist stories of Christopher B. Booth, where the victims deserve to be taken so the "villains" are allowed to get away with it.

Like many pulps, DFW has a non-fiction feature that aims at helping their readers. DFW specialized in two features, one to help readers get government jobs, and



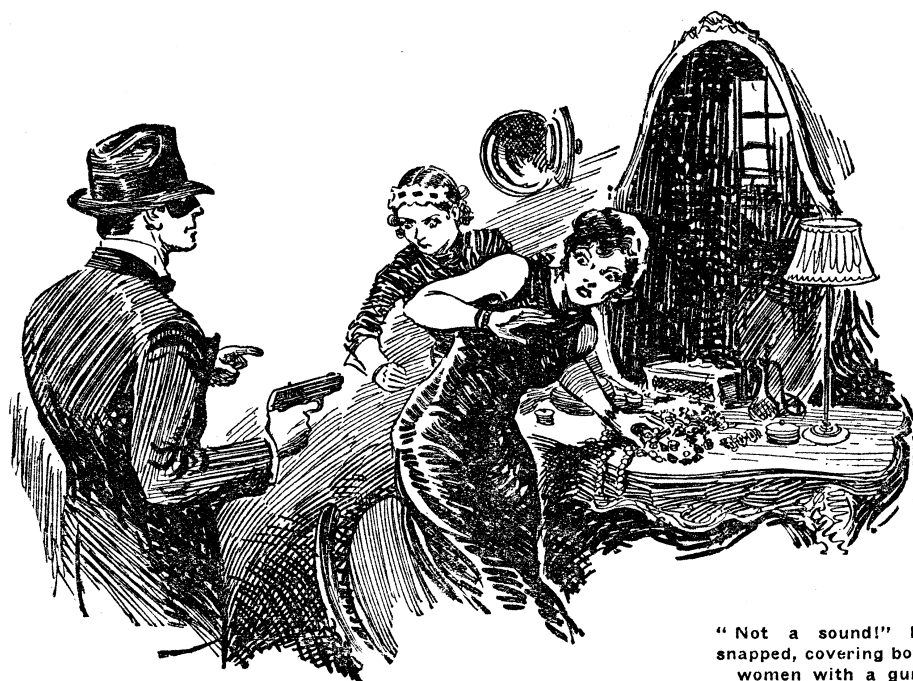
And then she saw Wylie.  
He was tied to a post in  
the clearing

the other to expose fraud. I've often wondered if their anti-fraud campaign hurt their ad revenue; many of the standard pulp ads were the very sorts of frauds DFW was crusading against. This issue features a Civil Service Q and A conducted by "G-2" to aid readers in knowing what kind of questions were being asked on civil service exams. In this issue's "They're Swindling You" feature, Frank Wrenmore looks into real estate swindles.

The second serial in this issue is up to part four. I also skipped "The Island of Fear" by Hulbert Footner until I can get the rest of the serial.

Unlike "The Adventure of the Voodoo Moon," I can believe that some research went into "Mysteries of Paris" the second true story feature in this issue. Robert W. Sneddon tells the story of historical French policeman Louis Canler, who was a contemporary of Vidocq, but who was supposedly more honest. Interesting but a little dry, it is not a fictionalized adventure, but more a retelling of his life history with notable cases mentioned.

Leo Stulnaker gives us a short story "Dark Night" that is



"Not a sound!" he  
snapped, covering both  
women with a gun

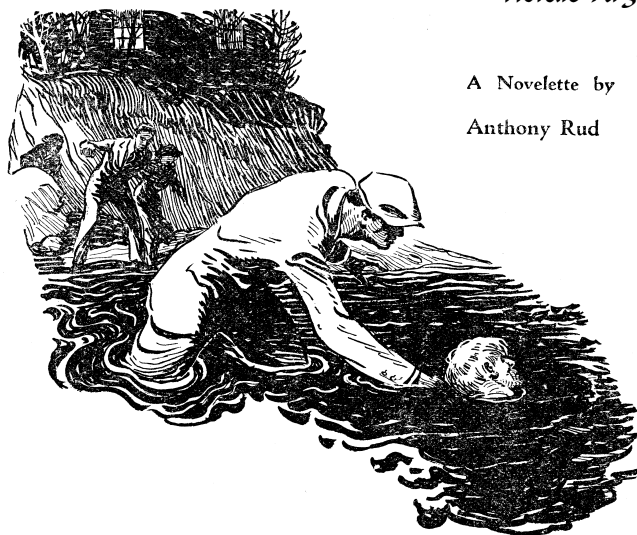


not really notable. It's another one of those perfect crime stories that is foiled by the main character not knowing about local conditions.

"The Crimson Flame" is set in London with an investigator aiding Scotland Yard in solving a convoluted jewel theft and murder case. The whodunit isn't a factor, but the detective has to figure out how the thieves fell out after the theft and where the jewel is. There's some nice atmosphere, and a fair mystery, but I think the author could have done more with this.

The last feature is solving cipher secrets, a regular feature for those interested in cryptography. Apparently it had a following, but I've never been much for this sort of thing.

A satisfying issue of a good, and oft-overlooked pulp.



That gray-white thing  
was a human head

A Novelette by  
Anthony Rud

## Pulpster

From Page 4

on the other side. His defense of sf illustrators goes too far and fails to acknowledge that there were some really bad illustrations run in some of the pro sf mags.

Next is one page featuring a cover each from the first issue of *The Phantom Detective*, *Crime Busters* and *Canadian War Stories*.

Another reprint is "Wouldst Write Wee One?" by John W. Campbell, writing under his Don A. Stuart pen name. It's certainly interesting to see his perspective on writing sf, but I have some doubts about his conclusions. He seems to think that sf should concern itself with the everyday life of the future. I think he misses the point that everyday life, and everyday people, whether in the past, present or future, is not very interesting. Contrary to Campbell, it is the great events and greater than normal characters that make sf enjoyable. Potshards indeed, it is the "Admirals of Space Navies" whom he dismisses that

have filled the pages of sf for the past century.

In a new article, Rex W. Layton takes a look at Anthony Boucher's *Rocket to the Morgue*. In a very helpful list, he reveals which real life writers and editors are behind the characters in the novel. This also serves as a review and Layton provides some good behind-the-scenes information. It's an informative look back at an interesting pulp-related novel.

"A Special Note to Pulp Art Fans" comes a bit too late as the exhibit has long closed, but it would have been timely had the issue been released on schedule.

Neil & Leigh Mechem write one page on the cover variation for *Weird Tales* #1 that they discovered.

Tony Davis closes out the issue with three brief bios on recently deceased pulp writers. The back cover consists of a pulp quiz asking readers to identify four pulpsters by their photos.

## Black Book

From Page 5

Next is one page featuring a cover each from the first issue of *The Phantom Detective*, *Crime Busters* and *Canadian War Stories*.

Another reprint is "Wouldst Write Wee One?" by John W. Campbell, writing under his Don A. Stuart pen name. It's certainly interesting to see his perspective on writing sf, but I have some doubts about his conclusions. He seems to think that sf should concern itself with the everyday life of the future. I think he misses the point that everyday life, and everyday people, whether in the past, present or future, is not very interesting. Contrary to Campbell, it is the great events and greater than normal characters that make sf enjoyable. Potshards indeed, it is the "Admirals of Space Navies" whom he dismisses that have filled the pages of sf for the past century.

In a new article, Rex W. Layton takes a look at Anthony Boucher's *Rocket to the Morgue*. In a very helpful list, he reveals which real life writers and editors are behind the characters in the novel. This also serves as a review and Layton provides some good behind-the-scenes information. It's an informative look back at an interesting pulp-related novel.

Neil & Leigh Mechem write one page on the cover variation for *Weird Tales* #1 that they discovered.

Tony Davis closes out the issue with three brief bios on recently deceased pulp writers. The back cover consists of a pulp quiz asking readers to identify four pulpsters by their photos.

I think they will be hard pressed to come up with a second issue with as much variety and interest as this one.

