



Detective Drama **GEMS...**

Mid-1940s to the Mid-1990s

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Radio and TV Episodes Analyzed ... *for Writers and Editors*

Gem #46 — "[Ancient Madness](#)" — May 9, 1985

From **NIGHT HEAT** (CBS and CTV, 1985 to '89)

Many episodes in this series display Gem sparkle. The real surprise, with this one, is a foreign-policy overlap: Ethnic strife in a distant yet connected location, namely Northern Ireland. Historical facts — see Pages 7 and 8 — offer helpful angles on events and personalities. But it's easier to START with this impressive series...

NIGHT HEAT was a U.S.-Canadian collaboration filmed in Toronto, Ontario. Episodes were unveiled in the same order in both Canada and here. Naturally, the writers and performers avoided names, references and accents specific to either nation.



That's one unusual design feature, and here's another: One of the three lead characters is a newspaper columnist. Though not a beat reporter, he's on the streets routinely, interacting with the Police in ways that are a gold mine for scriptwriters. His role also helps to enlighten viewers about the various tensions between cops and media.

This superb script is the work of [STUART ROSENBERG](#) (1927-2007) and columnist **Tom Kirkwood** is played by [ALLAN ROYAL](#). His employer's database costs a "zillion dollars a microsecond" (remember, this is 40 years ago). In this episode, he'll use it

and his own creativity to help the Police get around a brick wall. He also serves viewers by being the show's sole Narrator, and ending each with a vague moral.

In the jammed halls of the Mid-South Precinct, Kirkwood gets his first look at an unusual expert witness. The foreign visitor is taller than many of his protectors, who can't shield him from the press. "So *that's* Richard Brinsley, the Irish terrorist," Kirkwood muses with suppressed intensity. "He didn't look like a monster. No two days' growth of stubble, no fanatic's gleam in the eye..."

Outside, vans are pulling up. Sharpshooters emerge to take positions. Some are already scanning for anything unusual on rooftops. We're shown a shrouded figure peering through the telescopic lens of a rifle sticking out through a crack. Whoever it is can't get a clean shot at Brinsley as he's escorted out of Mid-South HQ.

Plans include outfoxing cars or trucks that might be tailing the initial transport vehicle; at Minute 4:05, it's swapped for a nondescript station wagon. Not much dialogue in these first scenes, but the crowding and noise convey knife-edginess.

Sensitive ears might notice NIGHT HEAT's one permanent defect: The absence of an orchestra or anyone familiar with analog musical backdrops. Instead, the series held down outlays by relying on the irritating "mood" sounds made with an AKAI "Sampler." From '86, here's [one of those budget-saving audio machines](#).

High-pitched wails, coordinated clunks and thuds, growls from a digital dungeon — they come and go. Yet these musical miracle machines couldn't deliver a simple cymbal! NIGHT HEAT watchers will have to acclimate. (You deduce correctly: I'm not trying hard.) At least the *actors* were spared: The sounds were dubbed in later.

Jeffers versus Delacorte, and Delacorte versus his Client

In this episode, two regulars have critical roles: **Elaine Jeffers** ([DEBORAH GROVER](#)) is the Public Prosecutor, mistakenly left out of the Cast & Crew roster on IMDB dot-com; and Junior Detective **Frank Giambone** ([JEFF WINCOTT](#)), whose tactical agility is offset by his low awareness of world realities.

Presiding over the team is Lieutenant **Jim Hogan** ([SEAN McCANN](#)). He's one of two NIGHT HEAT regulars of Irish lineage. An early comment of his hints at sympathy for the man being ushered into, and then quickly out of, of Police Headquarters.

The other Irish-Canadian is top-cop **Kevin O'Brien** ([SCOTT HYLANDS](#)). On the way to the secret location, upon hearing his last name, Richard Brinsley taps his shoulder from the back seat. "Now where might YOUR people be from?" "Never mind my people," O'Brien replies. He's wearing a bullet-proof vest. So is Brinsley.

Before they left Mid-South, Brinsley said to the press: "I came to testify for **Ned Crocker**, because Ned Crocker isn't the ONLY one on trial here. It's *anyone, anywhere*, who stands up to British oppression..."

Ned Crocker is an industrialist who looks like a drug-store manager. Though Prosecutor Jeffers calls him a "death merchant," the episode provides no firm sense of Crocker ([TOM HARVEY](#)). And maybe that's the point: He has been accommodating a shadowy group of overseas associates, without really grasping their nature.

Crocker's smoothly ruthless defense counsel, played by [KENNETH POGUE](#), is **Robin Delacorte**. From Minute 3:30 right to the end, he and Elaine Jeffers will spar. These three individuals enhance "Madness" by creating a pair of compelling side stories: FIRST, the legal and ideological jousting between Jeffers and Delacorte; and SECOND, seismic differences in perception between Delacorte and Ned Crocker...

CROCKER: [Exasperated sigh, then a pause] You gotta be outta yer mind. Bringing [Richard Brinsley] in as a DEFENSE witness?! *Everybody in this country* knows he's a terrorist, for God's sake.

DELACORTE: [Calmly] What an ugly word, Ned. That *happens* to be why we need him.

CROCKER: Oh, yeah [sarcastically]. You need him. Look — I'll get *hung* if this turns into a political circus.

DELACORTE: It's a "political" *trial*. If we don't scream when they try to nail one of our supporters, the checkbooks will snap shut so *loud* they'll hear it all the way over in Belfast.

Richard Brinsley is played with vigor by [GERARD PARKES](#). He dominates the not-large slice of time allotted to him in the script. And a keen viewer might notice this man limping, briskly, from the station wagon to the house's front door.

Behind that door, with gun drawn, is Detective **Stephanie Brodie** ("[STEVIE](#)" [LOUISE VALLANCE](#)). She's four months from her 27th birthday. "Hi. What took you guys so long? I was beginning to get worried." O'Brien's reply: "Aaaah, he had to make speeches. Everything quiet in here?" Yeah. "Check upstairs?" *Yeah*. O'Brien bounds up the stairs regardless. "I said I — " Too late. Newbies learn to deal with doubts.

Giambone and Brinsley enter. When Brodie asks who wants coffee, Brinsley turns on the charm: "Ahhh, don't you bother... Now yooo let old Brinsley make ya [a] pot of *tea*, the way the OULAWS drink it."

Clueless about the international scene, Frank Giambone says to Kevin O'Brien:

"What's EATIN' you?," followed by "You got something on this guy we don't know about?" O'Brien isn't situated to do a foreign-affairs briefing. Giambone persists. "Come on, Kevin, he's a nice guy." O'Brien replies tersely: "He's a KILLER."

We're up to Minute 6:15. "There's a *lotta* guys on the Force who think he's a *hero*," Giambone counters. "I mean, you're Irish, you know — " O'Brien responds without anger: "And you think he's a hero, hmmm?" After two seconds of silence, the 29-year-old Giambone says sullenly: "I don't know enough about it."

Disaster at the Safe House; Delacorte Scourges the Cops

It's already past 3 a.m. As this unusual group settles in for very little rest, Brinsley sees a path to Giambone. Gingerly, the latter has asked what turned him to violence. It's because he saw his brother "hanged...in the yard of Crumlin Road Jail."

"My brother Tom was a Republican." That means a radical advocate for Irish independence. If not a committer of violence, an enabler of those who carry it out.

Richard Brinsley was 11 when his brother was executed. "The next day I went out and shot at a British soldier." Standing several feet away, O'Brien watches the sad-sounding visitor work on the younger detectives. This is the cop's moment...

O'BRIEN: Make you feel any better?

BRINSLEY: [Nearly slamming his cup of tea on the coffee table as he bolts up from his chair]: It never HAS [pause]. I'm not a *thug*, Mr. O'Brien, whatever *you* think. Are you so *far* from Ireland that you feel no *pain* when you see the bloody foreigners rule the country?

O'BRIEN: It doesn't justify terrorism.

BRINSLEY: And how would *you* suggest we fight [Whitehall](#)?

O'BRIEN: [Evenly] Not by blowing up a *pub* full of people.

BRINSLEY: I'm a soldier, Mr. O'Brien.

O'BRIEN: [Quickly] In an army that's as *bad* as the injustice they're fighting.

GIAMBONE: It's not black and white, Kevin.

Turning first to his associate, O'Brien lets a long breath set up a weary sigh...

There's a whole country full of dying and killing. They use the *machine-guns* over the back fences. And ya know who's gettin' blown away, Frankie? As usual? Innocent bystanders, mainly. KIDS. Right, Brinsley? That's your *idea of being a soldier*? For the *old SOD*, is it? What price, sir.

Brinsley pivots and grabs O'Brien's left arm, yanking the cup away from his mouth. Even in a heated living-room argument, few Americans would try this with a cop. But it's a mild gesture for an Irish "Republican." Instantly, both men stiffen.

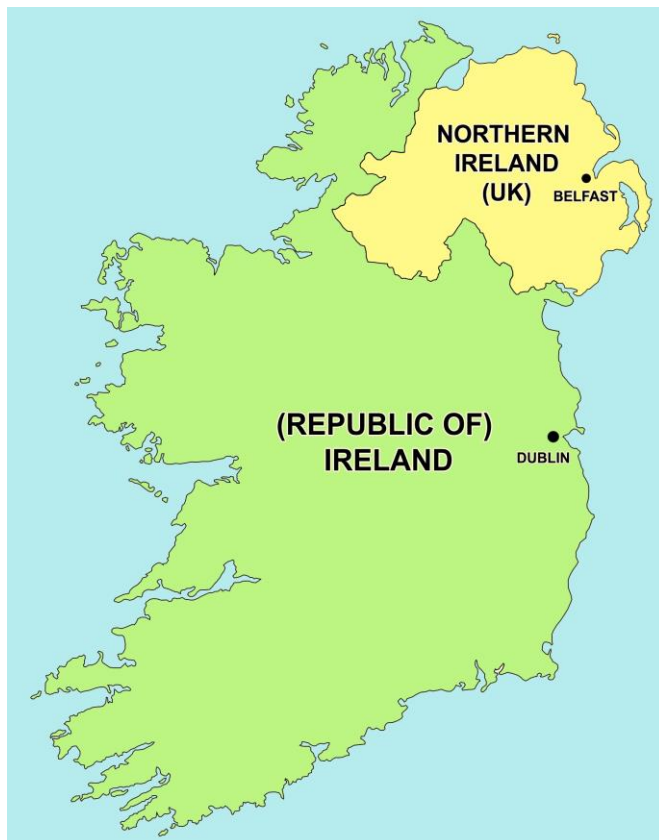
BRINSLEY: Look at me. *LOOK AT ME*. Do ya see a CRIPPLE? [This bad leg is] a "souvenir" of the last time I was Her Majesty's HOUSE-guest.

O'BRIEN: [Quietly] Were ya innocent, Brinsley?

BRINSLEY: [Just as quietly, but not for long] Ha-ho. They didn't give me a *trial*. That's your damned *British justice*. I'll *fight* them till I *die*. And if you weren't so *smug* hiding behind your *sentiments*, and your *fine* morals, you'd be fighting for Ireland *alongside me*.

Brinsley's rage has a certain power. It also shattered his charm offensive. Nice how O'Brien triggered that 180-degree change-in-tone without losing his own cool.

Well-crafted face-offs, of similar clarity and depth, are a NIGHT HEAT staple. This particular skirmish showcases how terrorist atrocities are condemned ... versus rationalized, versus ... far from the places they occur, barely acknowledged.



Brinsley walks off into the kitchen. Giambone seems to feel sorry for the man, and Giambone isn't even Irish: "Gee, Kevin...", implying that O'Brien had been rude. NOW O'Brien can let out his own blast: "You don't know a DAMN *thing* about it, Frankie; didn't you *already say that?*"

Their argument is stopped: A rifle blast through the kitchen window takes Brinsley down, partway into the 11th Minute. Brodie calls for an ambulance. O'Brien races outside.

And the fellow who shed his bullet-proof vest, before genially making tea for Detective Brodie, never regains consciousness.

"Stay with him," O'Brien tells Giambone. Carefully moving around each corner of the house, O'Brien finally sees a shadowy figure running. He gives chase. The figure

makes it to his vehicle and starts it. O'Brien leaps over a divider as a short-cut; is snagged; and falls flat on the grass. The car speeds right by him. He fires a shot that goes wherever. But, a few seconds prior, he caught three digits of the license plate.

Somebody, somewhere, *leaked*. In fury, O'Brien kicks over a trash can. And the embarrassment will traverse the Atlantic. WORSE: During Minute 17, an Internal Affairs probe begins. It will be led by [LEE BROKER](#) as Lieutenant Hearn.

Hearn is a pock-marked stone-face. Dry as dust, he also mumbles. In this episode and others, the iciness between him and the cops goes beyond turf battle. Internal probes and second-guessing — by people *all on the same payroll* — are everyday bureaucracy, true. But these display more [keister](#)-covering and career-jitters.

NOTE: Although not by design, the *next* Gem also has an Internal Affairs probe.

The Virtues of Tension, plus the Big-Figure "Facts of the Case"

Richard Brinsley is dead. It's still dark. Lieutenant Hogan and several other NIGHT HEAT regulars arrive to take apart the murder scene. As Minute 15 commences, Counselor Delacorte materializes. He wants to see Hogan. Media got there ahead of him, Tom Kirkwood included. Delacorte offers them two simple observations...

They've been trying to get rid of people like Richard Brinsley and Ned Crocker for years. They were *railroading* Crocker and Brinsley was my defense witness [pause]. Draw your own conclusions.

NIGHT HEAT's writers and producers were very good at keeping tensions and divergences going — as many as a single crime episode (in any Era) could coherently convey. These are the ones channeling the turbulence in "Ancient Madness"...

(1) Kevin O'Brien being hostile to the essence of Richard Brinsley, and **(2)** also having mild contempt for colleagues who avoid facing the atrocities committed by the Irish independence brigades; **(3)** Robin Delacorte squaring off with Elaine Jeffers; **(4)** Ned Crocker questioning Delacorte's tactics but, in the end, unable to affect a strategy he never came close to understanding; **(5)** Internal Affairs turning its magnifying glass on O'Brien and his team; **(6)** the local business-owner who hands him the rifle that killed Brinsley — in a desperate maneuver to shield the actual assassin; and **(7)** a legitimate emotional struggle between the confessor and the killer.

Sorry if those points sound clinical, but (a) they don't spoil the ending; and (b) they show how editors tend to look at a work, either in-progress or as a finished product. The core premise: **Tensions Compel Attention**, from our audience, as long we don't make 'em scoff or get winded by gimmicks and impossible events.

Assuming the files endure, here's where to absorb "Ancient Madness"...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQSbFzc2NpA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lek5uWRQB5s>

What else? If you know what went on among Northern Ireland, the Republic it shares an island with, the U.S. and Great Britain during the latter third of the 20th Century, you're either well-read, or you have talkative relatives. Otherwise...

APPENDIX — Money, Medical Goods and Munitions

In 1948, the Republic of Ireland — 23 counties governed by Catholics — became totally independent from Britain. The six majority Protestant ones on the northeastern part of the island voted to remain part of the United Kingdom. They eventually faced off against Irish Republican Army forces agitating to add those six holdouts to the 23.

The radicals' most extreme act occurred in Brighton, England, [during the October 1984 Conservative Party Conference](#). Two Members of U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Cabinet were killed. And this second link opens up a [book extract by Patrick MaGee](#), who writes: "I planted the bomb. I did so as a volunteer in an IRA active-service unit committed to the strategy of taking the war to England."

Outnumbered in Northern Ireland, paramilitaries and sympathetic Catholics attracted funds, rhetoric and weapons from Irish-Americans. The U.S. Government, regardless of which Party had the Presidency, sought to choke off the war trade. Without cluttering the main story, NIGHT HEAT conveys that dynamic. Example: Delacorte is trying to get the charges against Ned Crocker dropped. He and Prosecutor Jeffers are before the relevant Judge (played with equanimity by [CEC MILLER](#)), in his chambers, getting a haircut...

ROBIN DELACORTE [to Jeffers]: The fact is, your police put him in that house, and the killer knew where to FIND him before his testimony could demolish their tissue of lies.

ELAINE JEFFERS: That's PREPOSTEROUS, Your Honor...

DELACORTE: I can't defend my client if my star witness is dead.

JEFFERS: You couldn't defend him, period. We're prepared to prove exactly *when, where*, and how many TONS of munitions Crocker sent over to Ireland. The man is a *death* merchant.

DELACORTE: So she decides he doesn't deserve a defense. I move to dismiss the charges, Your Honor.

JEFFERS: Come back to the real world, Robin. Witnesses die all the time, and it's *still* not grounds to dismiss.

DELACORTE: It is when the Police...prevent their appearance. Through

negligence: *Orlando vs. Meyers*, a witness slipped on the ice *outside* the Courthouse... He went into a coma. It should've been *sanded*, Elaine.

Ned Crocker shows how U.S. and Canadian business types became part of the "Madness." Key political figures, including the Speaker of the U.S. House, also slighted the terrorism factor while wanting the Brits out of Northern Ireland. Prime-time script-writers couldn't ignore this distinctive mix of viewers: Between 1972 and the '90s, North American crime shows fashioned episodes around the "The Troubles." Two very good ones are "[Up the Rebels](#)," from HAWAII 5-0 on 9/15/77; and "[The Conspirators](#)," from COLUMBO, airing seven months later. "Ancient Madness" is a mid-'80s view.

The rest comes from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Ireland...

THE TROUBLES "consisted of about 30 years of recurring acts of intense violence during which 3,254 people were killed [as part of] over 50,000 casualties. From 1969 to 2003 there were over 36,900 shooting incidents and over 16,200 bombings or attempted bombings..."

During the late 1960s, "armed campaigns of paramilitary groups began... [T]he Provisional IRA campaign of 1969-1997...aimed at the end of British rule in Northern Ireland and the creation of a United Ireland; and the Ulster Volunteer Force was formed in 1966 in response to the perceived erosion of both the British character and unionist domination of Northern Ireland."

In 1998, "the **Belfast Agreement** (commonly known as the 'Good Friday Agreement')... reiterated the long-held British position, which had never before been fully acknowledged by successive Irish governments, that Northern Ireland will remain within the United Kingdom until a majority of voters in Northern Ireland decides otherwise..."

This peace process "included the declaration of ceasefires by most paramilitary organizations and the complete decommissioning of their weapons, the reform of the police, and the corresponding withdrawal of army troops from the streets and sensitive border areas..."

"At the same time, the UK Government recognised [the] principle that the people of the island of Ireland as a whole have the right, without any outside interference, to solve the issues between North and South by mutual consent. The latter statement was key to winning support for the Agreement from nationalists... On 28 July 2005, the Provisional IRA declared an end to its campaign and has since decommissioned what is thought to be all of its arsenal."

Gem #47 — "[The Kidnapping](#)" — June 11, 1961

From [THE ASPHALT JUNGLE](#) (ABC-TV, April-September '61)

Being six years old in '61, I formed no memory of this series, which did not have a long run. Six decades later, the gap was filled: In 2021, a [rough DVD collection](#) was purchased. In the role of **Matt Gower**, [JACK WARDEN](#) is Police Commissioner of an unnamed midwestern city. Burly and blunt, he was also a thoughtful intervener whenever his subordinates wanted to make lunges by skipping steps.

ASPHALT generated 13 episodes ([detailed](#)) during 1961. "[The Friendly Gesture](#)" was analyzed, and the regulars were profiled, in [GEMS #12](#). "The Kidnapping" is the second Gem from this obscure series. And, with top-cop Gower having been reintroduced in the prior paragraph, we can go straight to its guest characters...

- **Wayne Bradley** — a young man who'll say very little. This script defines Wayne mostly via a future father-in-law who can't stand him. Namely...
- **Alex Meridan** — a blunt cynic sort who contends the Bradleys want to buy their way into Meridan's hard-earned fortune. His daughter is...
- **Karen Meridan**, the fiancée of Wayne. They're both college students.
- **Roy Bradley** is the dignified and velvet-voiced man who insists on doing what the kidnapers want. Had it been up to him, the authorities would have heard nothing about this crisis surrounding his son.
- "**Vera**" has no last name. She'll talk to the media, not the cops. The other individuals behind the kidnapping & extortion are merely plug-in figures.
- And **Sam Harper** is a reporter who knows how to pursue a lead, in the process of looking and sounding weasel-like. With some justification, he'll conclude that Commissioner Gower cheated him out of a scoop.

One point about the person who speaks the least but ends up being pivotal from start to finish: Played by [JAMES BONETT](#), Wayne Bradley he is something of a stoic. This is the case even when his mouth isn't taped shut by the abductors. All in all, a very good group of guest actors, for an unusual story with a believable twist.

Enough Time and Text to Prove an Episode's Depth

The best way to convey the outstanding structure of a Gem is with "evidence." Illuminating dialogue, in healthy portions. I made the space; you're taking the time. This ASPHALT JUNGLE episode, like several of the other 12, excels in articulation. The words are easier to hear due to limits on "mood" music: When there, fine, and used ONLY when dialogue is absent. The principals — their language, looks, reflection and deflection — are the presentation. Voices have a clean shot.

How the Events Flow, and a Reporter Inserts Himself

1. Wayne leaves his father's well-appointed house, driving his Corvette Sting-Ray. Stopping to help a good-looking blonde in dark sunglasses with her car's hood open,

he checks the engine. Two other men appear out of nowhere, and the blonde aims a gun at Wayne. They tape his mouth, put him in her car, and one of the abducters drives the Sting-Ray to a later dumping place.

2. We're back at the young man's house. So are detectives **Gus Honocek** and **Danny Keller**. They responded to a call by the missing man's fiancée Karen ([JENA ENGSTROM](#)). Roy Bradley is returning from a hunting trip. "Wayne wasn't in class yesterday," Karen Meridan tells him, "and he didn't come home last night."

3. All of this is new to Bradley, but at this point it's only a Missing Person matter. No car wrecks have been reported; the son's abducters haven't made contact.

4. Karen Meriden's father ([PAUL STEWART](#)) scoffs at her alarm: "If I had known my daughter was gonna call you, Honocek, I'd have stopped her. This is just a lot of *noise* as far as I can see. He's gone off before." What does THAT mean? "Well, how about that three-day drunk he went on last year?" Wayne's father counters mildly that it was just a little vacation. "Yes, and then he needed *another* vacation to sober up. Come on Bradley, stop pinning roses on him..."

5. Then comes the first call. Very brief: Keep the police out of this; the boy hasn't been harmed; you'll get a call tonight with specific demands. Since two police are already on hand, Roy Bradley's agitation shoots up 10-fold.

6. Because the ransom figure is way beyond Bradley's means, Karen Meriden will want *her* father to LOAN it to this man he disdains. Unlike the urbane Roy Bradley (played by [ALEXANDER SCOURBY](#)), Alex Meridan scraped for every dime. "You've got a velvet collar, Bradley," Meridan says. "But the rest of it is nothing."

7. Locale shifts again: Scrounging for crime tidbits, reporter Sam Harper is looking out the window in Matt Gower's office. When Honocek phones from the Bradley Mansion — *okay, this matter IS serious* — Gower prepares to leave. Departing for the Bradley Mansion, Gower thinks he has kept the destination from Harper. A desk sergeant leaks it, not realizing the life-and-death situation underway there.

8. "You had no right to come here, Mr. Gower," says Roy Bradley. He's more worried than angry. "Suppose they saw you come in here?" "It's an unmarked car out there, Mr. Bradley; it's not a police car." Bradley is firm: "You've got to leave — *at once*." The cops keep calm. But Bradley finally loses it, slamming Karen Meriden when he realizes that *she* made the original call. Karen leaves the living room in tears.

Bradley regains his calm. None of the three detectives lost his. Alex Meridan has gone to be with his daughter. Tensions recede, briefly. Then Sam Harper knocks on the door. Am just here looking for Captain Honocek, he says insidiously.

Except for Harper's intrusion, and how Roy Bradley has to raise \$250,000 to cover the ransom, everything in the numbered paragraphs is set forth before Minute #10 of "The Kidnapping." Efficient, smooth, and no confusion necessary.

Does it sound like a lot of other kidnap-for-ransom episodes? Well, it isn't.

The schisms between and among these family members (who aren't yet a family) are realistic and they define fault lines quickly. That sets the stage for other events, and a baffling controversy, resulting in a highly innovative episode. It isn't a replica of some set of complexities you'll vaguely remember from other shows.

Start with the publicity-risk represented by Sam Harper. Gower tells him: "Now you break this, Sam, you kill the boy." The danger from Harper's intrusion ironically helps Roy Bradley persuade the Police to do nothing until young Wayne is released. "Mr. Bradley asked to be allowed to handle it himself," Gower stresses to Harper. "We've agreed." (That means no recording of the next call.)

Basic decency forces Harper to pledge silence. But, hot news being his cold cash, he agrees to stay silent *only until the release*, after which *he'll* get to break the story. Wayne's father agrees. Gower *seems* to. Crime episodes typically gain realism when a media operative is part of the script. A bigger surprise comes later.

A Wild and Therefore Risky Jungle Built On or Around Asphalt

I doubt many people under the age of 30 could tell you exactly what "Asphalt Jungle" means...unless they're fans of the [late-1970s French rock group](#). Older viewers might have seen the landmark mid-century film. As for that key word...

It shouldn't be pronounced as ASH-FAULT, otherwise it's about a famous tennis champion picking up a demerit. Nor does it relate to the type of **asp** ("a small poisonous African snake") found in the jungle and favored by Scrabble devotees.

Rather, ASPHALT is "a dark substance found in natural beds or obtained as a residue in petroleum-refining and used especially in paving streets" (*Merriam-Webster* 2004, page 41). The same dictionary even lists **asphalt jungle** as a generic term, standing for "a big city or a specified part of a big city."

What came first, the two-word noun, or the 1950 movie? Neither. The source appears to be...THE BOOK, authored by [W. R. Burnett](#) (1899-1982).

And that book, more than a decade ahead of the 1961 TV series, led to...

<< **The Asphalt Jungle** ... a 1950 film *noir* directed by John Huston [about] a group of men planning and executing a jewel robbery. It was nominated for four Academy Awards [and] selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant." >>

Two Bags, Four Kidnappers, in Two Cars = One Scandal

The actors who portray Commissioner Matt Gower, Sergeant Gus Honocek, and relative newbie Danny Keller ([WILLIAN SMITH](#)) were, in real life at the time this episode was broadcast, respectively, 40, 39, and 29.

Disagreement is quick. Keller says "we gave our word" to Bradley about staying out. Do that, Honocek counters, and the kidnappers win. "Your promise to the Old Man was just to quiet him *down*, wasn't it?," he asks Gower. They go back and forth.

Data: In a majority of tracked cases, "the kidnappers got the money [and] all the family got was a funeral." Finally Gower decides: "We'll set up a plan to try and find the place where Bradley pays the ransom money." Plus tap the Bradley phone line.

A tap can't relay the contempt Alex Meriden shows for Bradley while financing the \$250K ransom. (One might almost conclude that Meriden, much like RAY MILLAND as Jarvis Goodland in Columbo's "[Greenhouse Jungle](#)," *wants* the boy killed.) And the wiretap is useless. Instructions for payment are dropped on the front doorstep.

These kidnappers are clever: Bradley and Company are told to deliver identical bags, to different places; only one will contain the money. What turns out to be the empty one is left by Meridan in a public locker downtown; the crooks gave him the key to lock it. We then see him put the key in an envelope and mail it back to them.

Or is he mailing it to himself? Alex Meridan is part of the Bradley Family's stress.

Unmarked cars have been tasked to tail both Meridan and Bradley. Honocek and Keller tracked Meridan. They see him walk away from the locker. They can't see what the viewer sees: An identical bag still in the back of Meridan's car. Honocek and Keller stay downtown, expecting someone to pick up the money any minute.

But Gower and another detective, wisely, stick with Meridan. As for the tail on Roy Bradley, it never started, because he didn't leave the residence.

The viewer also stays with Meridan, who hides the *second* bag in a wooded area. Right away Vera, the female member of the kidnapping gang, emerges to pick it up. Vera gets into a car with Charlie. "Get going," says a third one. "I'll meet you and Charlie at the trailer," where a fourth one is keeping watch on the victim.

The bad guys are actually using two vehicles. Gower and another officer have been watching the action with binoculars. Good thing someone stayed with Meridan after he made the drop (if that's what he in fact did). Meridan goes home.

Gower's companion radios to Honocek to join him and Gower for the arrest. Never mind the downtown locker for now. When the police open it later, they'll find an

empty bag. Yet no police operative saw anyone *open* the locker and take its contents. Looks like the kidnapers told Meriden to place it there, empty, to tie down the police (an objective that would've suited Roy Bradley fine).

And Vera and her driver are so into the logistics they fail to look inside the satchel — the second one, the one that is supposed to pay for the victim's release.

Numbers help show this script's complex design: Two cars, four kidnapers, two bags, two drops, but only one ransom kitty. Don't forget Sam Harper, furious once Wayne Bradley is freed and he never got the scoop promised by the boy's dad.

"The Kidnapping" then turns into Roast Cop. Honocek and Keller are *suspended* by their superior for (a) losing \$250,000 of ransom money even as (b) the kidnap ring is *kaput* and Wayne Bradley safely returned. The problem is Roy Bradley owes Alex Meriden \$250,000 and both are furious about police mistakes or worse.

The fact of the missing money made the cops want no media coverage. That made sense; but Sam Harper was also right about a broken commitment. He now feels free to embarrass the cops for a hugely expensive mishap.

Commissioner Gower missed the risk factor inherent in a reporter feeling burned.

The Cops "Grabbed the Money. We Didn't Even Get a PENNY"

Sam Harper is allowed to interview the most outspoken arrestee, right there in the Interrogation Room. It sounds as if he's trying to stick to fact-finding, until...

POLICEWOMAN: Time's up, Mr. Harper.

SAM HARPER: Now can you remember *anything* else. What *else* happened?

VERA: [Doing a slow seethe] Nothing — except we got *caught*.

HARPER: But you *never* took the money outta the suitcase, you're SURE.

VERA: You want an affidavit?!? I TOLD you the story. *The whole thing*. We didn't even have time to *open* the bag; they were TAILIN' us all the time.

POLICEWOMAN: I'm sorry, Mr. Harper.

VERA: THEY did it.

POLICEWOMAN: Come on, Dear.

VERA: Gower and his cops —

POLICEWOMAN: *Come on*, Dear.

VERA: They grabbed the *money*. You wanna know where the money is...

ASK THEM. Because they TOOK it. Gower and his cops, they grabbed the money. We didn't even get a PENNY; they got the *whole thing* [as she is being led, forcefully, out of Harper's site].

Harper is brought to life with classic journalistic nerviness by [ADAM WILLIAMS](#). And Vera is played to lively effect by [YVETTE VICKERS](#). She truly believes the cops out-swindled her. The result is righteous rage from an un-righteous lowlife.

The story tops Page 1: **KIDNAP RANSOM DISAPPEARS**. Gower tells Harper: "Sam, you're *hanging* Honocek and Keller for somethin' they didn't *do*." Harper right back to Gower, with voice and decibel level low: "I told ya, Matt: I just put down what I hear. Nothing more and nothing less."

Sure. This reporter is merely a diligent transcriber. Nothing *else* at work, naahh.

Unlike the embittered Harper, happy to quote Vera, Bradley is willing to believe "those hoodlums have it hidden away somewhere." Even Gower is skeptical: "It's possible, but I don't see how. We were on their *necks* all the way." The one who escaped had no time to mess with the bag, and police scoured the wooded area.

Even Gaze from Gower, With a Calm Dare, Nicely Timed

Gus Honocek — *Hahn-a-Check*, with a slight accent on the first syllable, or no stress at all — is played by [ARCH JOHNSON](#). After he and Keller are suspended, a feeling of betrayal goes from simmering straight to boil-over...

GUS HONOCHEK [to Keller]: You want a PATSY? Grab yourself a COP.

MATT GOWER: Lay off him, Gus.

HONOCHEK: He's got stars in his eyes! You're his hero. [Turning back to Keller] You wanna be like Gower, huh? You go right ahead, kid. Break your BACK for 20 years. Let every hood in the CITY take a SHOT at ya — then stand back and let the brass CHOP ya down.

GOWER: I said lay off him, we got WORK to do.

KELLER [Calmly, and with no edge]: We were just given a vacation, remember, Commissioner?

HONOCHEK: [Voice dropping to a reasonable level] Yeahhhh, and I think I LIKE the idea. Come on, kid, let's get outta here.

Honocek heads for the door. He expects Keller to follow. Keller looks at Gower for a signal. "Go ahead, Danny," he says without an edge.

Because Gower never handled the satchel with the rescued ransom money, the

suspension does not apply to him. Besides, he's the Commissioner. He takes care of some office work and, hours later, lets himself into Danny Keller's apartment. Keller and Honocek — very late — come back drunk. Keller is smiling but quiet. Honocek's rage has been leavened with giddiness. "Sit down and shut up," Gower tells him. "I wanna TALK to ya." Gus replies: "Aww Matt, three o'clock is TOO EARLY to close a bar." So he starts ripping on Keller's piano. Yes, Arch Johnson handles those ivories for real (and Keller's neighbors have gotta know it).

HONOCHEK: Ya know what [Danny] said to me tonight? He said that maybe they'll come BACK; maybe they'll APOLOGIZE to us, hmmm?

Yeah, APOLOGIZE! Maybe they'll give us a RECPTION, huh? Right down at [City] Hall. With a BIG BAND and all the POLITICIANS lined up, hahhh?

Though a mere 18 months older than Honocek, Gower processed all of these resentments years before. The only anger we've seen from him is kicking a metal wastebasket across the office, with no one else there. Honocek isn't quite spent, the Apartment Manager doesn't knock, and Gower waits for the right moment...

Laughing wildly, Honocek says: "Hey you monkeys with the badges, you're all right — YEAAHHHH. We don't PAY ya a lot, everybody KNOWS that. But yoouuu, you do a JOB! That's all. Simple as that. You do what ya CAN. What MORE can we ask of a man, hah?" Gower replies evenly: "Twenty years [and] you want an answer now?" His gaze is even; his tone is that of a calm dare; and the timing works...

Honocek's tirade suddenly quits. He sighs. Walks over to Danny Keller, who has stopped smiling yet remains silent. Gus tells Danny: "QUIT, kid." Exhaling in exhaustion, he finishes the advisory with a barely audible "you still got a chance..."

Honocek passes out on Keller's couch. Gower goes home. The next segment begins with him pouring cold water on Honocek's face. Coffee soon follows (but it's offered in a cup). They locate Danny at a Gym. The three have a mess to dig out of.

"The Kidnapping" was written by [Alvin Boretz](#). Not on-line mid-2024. But two unofficial collections of THE ASPHALT JUNGLE hit the DVD market in recent years...

From a place whose URLs only work when they're put in a browser window <https://thomasfilmclassics.com/store/ols/products/the-asphalt-jungle-starring-jack-warden>

Or, from Zeus DVDs (where I bought in 2021), 11 of the 13 episodes — <https://www.zeusdvds.com/the-asphalt-jungle-series-dvd>

On the latter, quality veers between okay and good. Black and white (of course!).

Gem #48 — "Genesis of Treason" — April 29, 1960

From 77 SUNSET STRIP (ABC-TV, 1958 to '64)

"Do you always stare at your visitors, Mr. Bailey?" Stuart Bailey (EFREM ZIMBALIST Jr.) didn't mean to stare. He's just "trying to think whether we've met." He recalls her name from...somewhere. She hands him a very recent newspaper, front page. Her name? "You've probably seen it here; it's been there for over a week..."

HOLLISTER GETS 20 YEARS FOR TREASON

Officer Convicted in Closed-Door Court Martial

This attractive and poised professional has been linked, in print, to Francis Holister. Under the latter's uniformed picture, a simple caption: "Convicted Traitor."

Bailey fumbles a bit. "I heard the stories. I believe you, ummm, knew each other." The lady insists on clarity from the start. "Lieutenant Holister was arrested by military authorities when he was leaving my house, with me. Is that what you're trying to say?" "Something like that," replies Bailey lamely.

The viewer already knows what Holister did, thanks to an opening scene meant to hook the viewer. He was called into the office of Brigadier General O.B. Myerson, a master at "CRYPTO" as it existed seven decades ago. Along with his name and rank, the door's sign said: **Cryptographic Section, USAF Intelligence Division.**

Myerson gave Holister two pieces of news: (1) He has recommended this trusted subordinate for a promotion to Captain, and (2) Myerson is about to start a medical leave. "That's not my idea," he said. "Those flight-surgeon types" have found "one little thing wrong" in his cardiogram; and the time off is to have it evaluated.

Three seconds later, Myerson was stricken. Unable to move his arms and barely able to speak, he rasped: "Top drawer" — of the tall file cabinet to the left of Myerson's desk. "Please hurry." Holister rushed over, pulled out two bottles of pills, had some kind of brainstorm, and then...*declined to hand over the pills.*

We saw Myerson try to push the button on his intercom, the same one he used to okay Holister's entry. Holister moved the intercom just out of the stricken man's reach. Myerson fell forward, dead. Thanks to the *inaction* of an Enemy Agent. An agent who also had time to notice the TOP SECRET file folder on the desk.

Holister is a "sleeper" who spent 15+ years perfecting his cover. But we encountered him during a moment of ultra-high-risk improvisation. If Myerson had not expired so rapidly, this agent's cover would be blown. That did not happen.

And so — no one will know he was told about the meds, handled then, and then put them back (unless the bottles are checked for fingerprints). An ultra-dramatic opener? Right. So dramatic I looked for a flaw. It has to do with the folder...

Before buzzing the outer office to report a medical emergency, Holister looked into the TOP SECRET file. He was careful not to put a fingerprint on the folder. Yet he did not take a document or snap a photo; and why risk carrying around a concealed camera (small ones *did* exist back then) in the first place?

The viewer never does see HOW this fully-credentialed spy made off with something critical. We have to assume he pocketed it right afterward, and before the office was filled by operatives. Or perhaps this guy is blessed with Total Recall.

DONALD MAY — <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0561928> — plays Lieutenant Francis B. Holister. Interestingly, the dummy newspaper from the Warner Brothers Prop Department got the last name wrong. The episode's credits at the end, and the IMDB dot-com site, have it right: One "L," not the two in that headline.

Did the scriptwriters avoid the more common spelling — double-L — because any real-life "Hollister" wouldn't want to be linked with this despicable TV version? Either way, more readers will utter it *HOLL-is-ter*. And the episode's opening scene was the type of moment this super-controlled individual was prepared for.

But the Lieutenant doesn't know it was caught on film. Not until his arrest seven hours after Myerson's death. And Stuart Bailey knows little beyond headlines and TV mentions until a controversy-scarred visitor explains why she needs his help.

As Marta Wentworth Goes On, Bailey Regains His Bearings

Despite how her words might rattle your screen, Wentworth is indignant rather than brittle: A trapped woman, in need of an ally to help her fight back against ruin and red tape. She conveys conviction and desperation all at once...

Lieutenant Holister and I were *acquaintances*. I met him about a year ago at a cocktail party. We saw each other *occasionally* but *not* often. Then last Friday he phoned me, to have dinner with him. He arrived about, oh about 8:30. We had drinks in the terrace of my house. I went to get my, my bag and my gloves and he waited for me in the hall. Then *just* as we were getting into his car to *leave*, he was arrested.

She was questioned by "some Air Force personnel...then they let me go." Days later, after a quick court-martial, her name becomes part of melodramatic coverage.

"I can't face my *job* or my friends anymore; the newspapers won't *listen* to me; and the military people say that the Lieutenant Holister Case is closed..."

"It has taken me *four* years of *very* hard work to establish myself as a fashion designer — that [type of press account] has SMASHED it in *just one* week..."

BAILEY: "And you want me to help you prove there was no *connection* between you and Holister's crime." *That's right.* "Any ideas where I might begin to look?" Just one, and it's a whopper. Marta Wentworth asks him to do what no Pentagon operative could let her do (or let her lawyer do, if she had one): Talk with Holister.

Bailey is again thrown. Even if a statement clearing her would be believed, how will he get access? "This is no ordinary police case." Wentworth is insistent: "You're the only one who *might* help me prove that I am NOT a traitor to my *country.*"

In just seven minutes, the core of this superbly designed saga has been rolled out.

Bailey calls on Ben Salway, Editor of *FRONT Weekly*. By the Fall of '62, he'll be "[Mister Drysdale](#)" on *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Future banker, current magazine boss.

Turns out Salway's publication has just wrangled interview time with Holister and the Editor needs a secure interviewer. Bailey lands a Press badge on the spot. His OSS background did much more than journalistic credits — which don't exist — to secure this gig. But no notes will be allowed during his time with Holister.

And why is the Air Force even allowing it? "This is America, Bailey. You can't just jail a political prisoner and forget him. We don't work that way." Whether that's 1960 policy or not, the script has Holister making a similar point with no idealism...

I'm a public-relations problem, the biggest they've got. That's really why they let you in here to interview me — to show the public that I'm not being held *incommunicado.*

We hear very little of their session. Holister says he won't discuss "the crime I'm supposed to have committed" or his "guilt or innocence." He goes on to quote the Bible several times. That's the only book allowed in his cell. And it apparently gave him a title to suggest for Bailey's story: "Genesis of Treason."

The setting is strange. Holister parked on his jail-bed? Okay. Bailey having to leave his wallet, keys, comb and PIPE with the sentry? Fine. But why does he have to lean against the bars of the traitor's cell without so much as a five-dollar chair?

Remember how this started: Bailey's commitment to a client. His question is simple: "How well do you know Marta Wentworth?" Holister disassembles and diverts, but then drops a bomb: "I've known Marta, and been in love with her, for years." He describes her as career-driven while "I was just a junior officer." So, "we were both *perfectly* happy with, shall we say uh, a less formal arrangement."

Marvelous trio of tensions: Bailey is a volunteer journalist, a patriot trying to help the Air Force lighten a PR mess, along with a client who might've been lying to him.

Does he desert that client? No. He tries to call her ahead of publication. He finds out that she left town and her phone is disconnected. Which of course raises more suspicions. What Holister told Bailey mostly contradicted Wentworth. Though never calling her a fellow saboteur, he described an extended emotional connection.

Everyone is shocked by what happens soon after Bailey leaves the Base. It creates a rush to write the story, and publish at least the first half. After it hits the stands, Marta Wentworth decides to return to Los Angeles and confront Bailey.

"He Gave Me Dates, Places... I Left Out More than I Put In"

A meeting is set up at Dino's right next to the 77 offices. Wentworth materializes immediately after — another distinctive part of the "77" menu — two minutes of live music. Yes, a musical break in the middle of a high-tension spy story.

BAILEY: Miss Wentworth!

WENTWORTH: [Coldly] Would you order me a drink, please? Anything will do.

BAILEY: Uh, Larry — another vodka gimlet, please?

He asks why she unplugged the phone and fled L.A. Having hired Bailey, and fed up with media pestering, she went to stay with her mother...

WENTWORTH: Next thing I knew — *clunk* — THIS was on every newsstand. I took the first plane out here and called your office from the Airport. Just tell me one thing, Mr. Bailey: WHY did you do it?

BAILEY: [Slight pause] I'm sorry if you've been hurt. I *took* this assignment because I was trying to help you.

WENTWORTH: And [*this* cover story is] your idea of "help."

BAILEY: I went out there to see Holister — so he could admit to me that you and he were strangers. He *told* me just the opposite. He gave me dates, places, the whole story — I left out more than I put in. Holister never said you were *involved* in what he did. He just said the two of you were in love.

WENTWORTH: And you, Mr. Bailey — you believed him? With your BLIND male ego, you *believed* him.

BAILEY: What else *was* I to believe? Holister had nothing to gain by

lying to me. Besides, my *notes* from the interview [typed up AFTER the session in an adjacent office], and the story itself, were read by Air Force Intelligence in Washington. They didn't deny *one word* Holister said about you being —

WENTWORTH: [Acidly] — Sweethearts.

BAILEY: I didn't *say* that.

WENTWORTH: But you thought it. And you practically said it in the story with your name on it. I'm sorry, Mr. Bailey — but we're both wasting our time.

Her drink had gotten maybe one sip. But Marta is smart to (a) draw a line in the sand while (b) not getting up to say goodbye or good riddance. Instead, she says: "Would you please drive me home?" Something might change during the ride.

She is buying time. Otherwise, time is the one thing she has too much of, as in: Time to contemplate having become a radioactive figure, even in a pre-Internet society. But this *next* small chunk of time could still produce some relief...

As they start the tense drive to her house, in Bailey's 1959 (or maybe it's a '60) Thunderbird convertible, someone is primed to follow them. Could be the military, wondering why their guy Bailey is back helping Wentworth, if in fact they are still tracking her. Or maybe the tail is from well-equipped foreign agents?

Whatever exchanges take place in Bailey's T-Bird are not shared with the viewer. The two pull up in front of her house...

BAILEY: [Mildly] I still haven't cashed the check you gave as a retainer. Do you want it back?

WENTWORTH: [Also mild] No. I'd rather you held on to it for awhile.

BAILEY: Any reason?

WENTWORTH: [Slight pause] Yes, I think you're beginning to *believe* me.

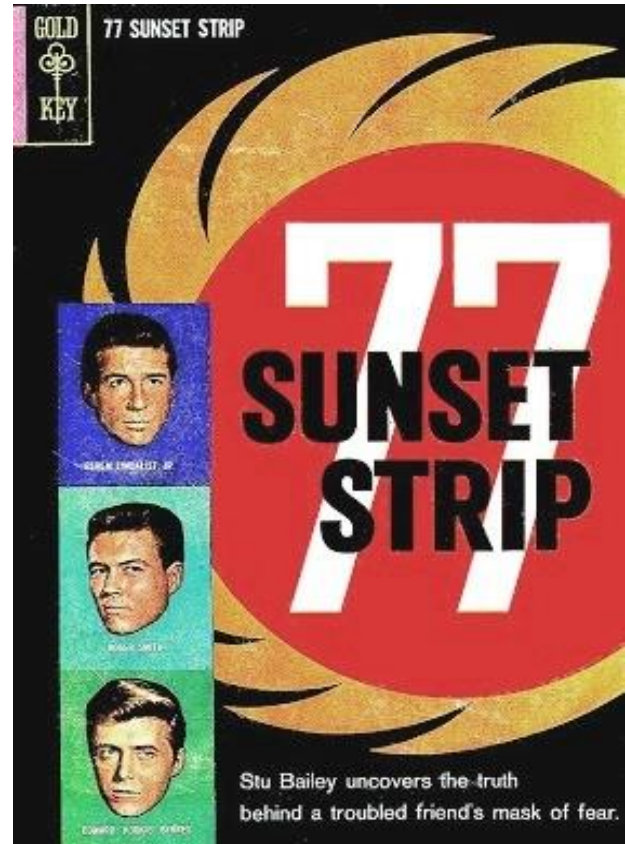
BAILEY: You know of course it's too late to stop publication on the *second* part of the story.

WENTWORTH: [Calmly] Yes, I know that. It was foolish of me to have run away — it looked [mixed laugh and scoff] — well, it didn't look very good. I really can't *blame* you for thinking what you did.

BAILEY: Then you're back to stay?

WENTWORTH: [Smiling] Yes, I'm back to stay.

There are as many phases and tensions between Stu Bailey and Marta Wentworth as in the *international* war of nerves showcased in "Genesis of Treason." Come to think of it, TWO of the three Gems in this issue have a foreign-policy ring (double meaning). But this episode never mentions "the Russians" and/or "Soviet Union." In 1960 dramas, it wasn't necessary to name the #1 foreign foe of the U.S.A.



LEFT: Ukrainian native DIANNE FOSTER (Marta Wentworth) lived to be 90, but her prolific TV and film career abruptly stopped before she turned 39. The Wikipedia article on this actress is [thick with credits](#) but says nothing about her later decades. **RIGHT:** During the 1960s, the top comic-book companies boosted employment for cartoonists (along with their skill-sets) by letting them draw ready-made real-life prime-time personalities.

I saluted "77" in 2020, and this issue will explain why the series folded. For now, if you have read enough, and want to see just this one episode (rather than buy a pile of DVDs), it looks like you can locate "Genesis of Treason" via this service...

<https://trakt.tv/shows/77-sunset-strip/seasons/2/episodes/30>

In Version 1.0 of this issue, "Uncle Solie" was acknowledged for putting some "77" episodes, including "Genesis," on his site at no charge. Those links disappeared and, by May, he was charging fees. To see network-copyrighted video content? (Surely not my idea.) For **more on "77" video viewables**, check the bottom of Page 25.

agency dealing with (mostly) mainstream crimes. But, as a Friday night offering throughout its six-year run, "77" found lots of ways to set aside grimness.



"Most Popular" NEW show during its opening season (1958-59), not quite. But "77" soared into America's Top 10 most-watched during its second season; it was also the ONLY cop or detective series to make the Top 25. [Warren Barker](#) and his Orchestra lent superb [action and backdrop music](#) to the typical episode. But the real leap was moving beyond the detective-show model of one dogged loner with a resilient (or simply alluring) secretary. During its third season, 77 held strong at #14. And the multi-star format led to imitators: [HAWAIIAN EYE](#), SURFSIDE SIX, BOURBON STREET BEAT, 87th PRECINCT, a few others.

Jeff Spencer was played by ROGER SMITH, who does not appear in "Genesis of Treason." Nor does EDD BYRNES ("Kookie"). As a rule Byrnes and Smith, who played folk guitar and sang, handled the less intense episodes while Zimbalist did the heavy lifting on espionage, grand larceny, desert survival, and overseas missions.

[T]he five regulars remained constant and likeable for half a decade. In most other ways, consistency was absent... 77 SUNSET STRIP might be solemn, hip, psychologically rich, eerie, warmhearted, glitzy, or noxiously flaky. The series tried to be different things to millions of viewers.

That's a quote from the [July 2020 issue](#) of GEMS, and so are these two...

Dozens of STRIP scripts dip into parody. Aspects of life in and around Hollywood are lightly ridiculed. An episode from 1961 [is] SELF-parody [and] flat-out comedy: Three absurdly differing versions of how Spencer, Bailey and [junior partner "Kookie"](#) came together are acted out. There NEVER could've been a McGarrett, Mannix, or Marlowe equivalent of "[Once Upon a Caper](#)."

For five straight years, the writers, performers and producers got away with all of this bobbing and weaving, sleuthing and spoofing. This issue lacks space to profile the other regulars — [JACQUELINE BEER](#) [and] [LOUIS QUINN](#) — but ... [Stu Bailey](#) **[photo]** is the only "77" regular that matters in "[Flight 307](#)."

That's also the case in "Genesis of Treason." Only Quinn, as [Pete Roscoe](#), will make a substantive contribution. The next page has more on his character.

Three Interludes Offset the Deadly Theme of Treason

Whoever followed Bailey and Wentworth sticks with Bailey. Only leaving her place does he notice the tail. When he darts and swerves to lose the pursuer, he ends up in the driveway of a 70something character. This woman was a detective-drama devotee more than seven decades before your time with her, which will be right now. First, she has to calm down her small dog, and then...

OLD LADY: Young man! Is that punk trying to rub you out?

STU BAILEY: The Mob?

LADY: Naturally! You're on the *lam* from these gun-sills until the heat's off, aren't you? [Pause] Well it's alright, young man; we wouldn't THINK of *squealing* on you. Not even if they gave us the third degree, WOULD we, Dashiell.

Had to be named after Dashiell Hammett, about whom...ohhh, never mind. The lady just wants a pet who's wise to criminals. The pooch yaps affirmatively.

BAILEY: Grandma, you're a right Doll.

LADY: [Chuckling] Thanks, young man. Nobody ever told me that in *years*.

One look to see if the coast is clear, and Bailey drives off. And then the lady tells the dog: "You know, Dashiell — I think he was only TEASING us. I bet a *nice* young man like [that has] never done a *stretch* up the river in the Big House."

Yes, the credits call her "Old Lady." Actual name (and it's likely not her real one): CHARITY GRACE. Professional life couldn't get any better for this matronly actress, and she contributes to a grim script solely by being a wry fan of the good guys.

Further balancing the severity of the "Treason" story line...

- [The Frankie Ortega Trio](#) provided those two wild minutes of syncopated tango and bluesy bee-bop. These guys were quite good — as live entertainment at the supper club known as Dino's, next to the Sunset Strip offices of **Bailey & Spencer, Private Investigators**.
- Though Pete Roscoe (his first name is never used) can't pronounce *Bon Vivant*, we see him reading a magazine of the same name because he thinks he'll need "better threads" if a long-shot finally pays off. Roscoe is a chronic horse-player. His best line is: "I'm a Publisher: I make book." He also handles sensitive tasks for Bailey and Spencer. These include hanging around dives and pool halls to find suspects or update files.

Ortega's music, Charity Grace, Roscoe's endeavors, and dozens of similar interludes, inserts and incidentals...helped make 77 SUNSET STRIP a multi-generational prime-time favorite. And what will Roscoe do for THIS episode? He'll be the only one who ties together all those Biblical quotes from Lieutenant Francis Holister.

"Holister Was Afraid to Go Directly to ANY Contact..."

Stu Bailey makes it back to his office. It has been torn to pieces. Major Stanley Windham ([JOHN SHAY](#)) is in the doorway. "Noo, we didn't do this. We just got here ourselves." With him is Eric Gregory ([RICHARD SHANNON](#)), presumably FBI. Bailey looks at his card and: "Oh — so now the GOVERNMENT's in on this."

ERIC GREGORY: Mr. Bailey, would you mind telling us why you spent MOST of the evening with Miss Wentworth?

BAILEY: Because she *asked* me. Is that why [to Gregory] *you're* here?

WENTWORTH: Uh, let me ask you a less "personal" question. Do you happen to have a carbon copy of the *second* part of the Holister story?

BAILEY: Yes! I've had it with me all *night*.

GREGORY: You're sure of that?

BAILEY: Of course!

WINDHAM: What Eric *really* wants to know is whether you SHOWED that story to Miss Wentworth or to *anyone else* this evening?

No, he didn't. But Gregory says that tonight's office ransackers wanted it. Bailey is incredulous. He finds it "hard to believe anybody would go to THESE lengths to get a story they could buy at a *newsstand* in a couple of days."

Windham says "that story contains the key to one of this country's more valuable secrets." And "we honestly believe [Holister] killed himself JUST to attract attention to your story." Bailey again has to resituate. His visitors can't be sure the wrecked office isn't bugged. So, can Bailey be at the Base tomorrow morning?

Next day: The military people ladle out more facts and theories about Holister and his long-running operation. Only now is Stu Bailey told that the Government knows exactly how Holister let General Myerson die, and that he was a Sleeper, the most intense yet hard-to-pinpoint enemy agent. Unless something big happens.

Upon his arrest on the evening of that same day, Holister clammed up. But he "wanted contact with the outside world," the military had a PR mess to deal with, and Bailey the former OSS operative became "the answer to our prayers."

Half the interview is out there. Forces loyal to Holister's masters will do anything to obtain the second half early. Therefore, *some term or some set of comments in the interview itself* is what they seek. Not the high-level secret itself — whatever was taken or gleaned from the pages on Myerson's desk — but WHERE Holister PLACED it during those final hours before being nabbed.

BAILEY: You've read the story. You know what to *look* for. Why can't YOU find Holister's message?

WINDHAM: It's not that simple! We've gone over it a *dozen* times. That's why we *asked* you here. We'd like YOU to try.

They're baffled by the source of "two-thirds" of Holister's quotes: The Bible. The *non*-Biblical references have also been checked. Every one was accurate. The spy's recall power was extreme; it was also needed right after letting Meyerson die.

Even though functionally attached to Air Force and FBI investigators, Bailey will tell Marta Wentworth slices of what he has learned, especially after she bristles at his checking out her bookshelf. (Various white-collar operatives today will identify with Bailey's ethical tightrope, even if the average viewer back then didn't need to.)

From the dinnertime zig-zag with Wentworth, a trashed office, and now a federal agent joining Major Windham, Stu Bailey is maxed out. Windham & Co. won't even stop tailing him. But he'll get help from an old associate: A fellow named Roscoe.

I'm a lifelong admirer of Efrem Zimbalist Jr., and the finest actors shine the most with a spectacular episode. This is probably one of the dozen best from "77."

Fall of '63: "The Effect on Our Ratings was *Catastrophic*"

Page 21 said where you *might* find out where to catch "Genesis of Treason" without charge. But I have no experience with "trakt.tv," and that's mostly because, to keep a publication like this going, the wiser course is to buy in bulk.

Also, while opening up [HAWAIIAN EYE for Issue #14](#), I gave up asking for a studio-master collection of that series or "77" from ABC and Warner Brothers. Why let the Perfect be the enemy of the Good Enough? Other enterprises have done well collaborating with cable networks, individual collectors, and analog artifacts...

<https://www.dvdplanetstore.pk/shop/drama/77-sunset-strip/>

More recently, The Reliable Media Store put together all 206 episodes, on 53 DVDs, for 99 bucks. Bare-bones packaging, but you can find episodes info on-line...

http://reliablemediastore.com/77-Sunset-Strip-Complete-Series_p_89.html

Zimbalist's autobiography — *My Dinner of Herbs* — came out in 2004. The book probably offers great photos, but the [AUDIO edition](#) (2007) allows him to use his *vocal* talents (including fluent Russian and French). The results are delightful.

The man shares his flukes, failures and painful lessons. He also gives space to brilliantly eccentric associates and generous break-givers during his theater and movie years plus [16 years on prime-time TV](#). That's why it's proper to conclude this GEMS with why and how "Stu Bailey" became the last man standing...

[Heading into] the last year of *77 Sunset Strip*, [Jack Warner](#) fired the ENTIRE Television Department [of Warner Brothers], including ALL the regulars in our cast except me. He brought in **Jack Webb** to head Television operations and **Bill Conrad** to be our Producer.

Jack Webb, most remembered as Sergeant Joe Friday; and Bill Conrad, etched in analog audio as Marshal Matt Dillon, and during the '70s as TV's Frank Cannon.

Where there had been 50 odd actors under contract, I was now the only one left. The format of our show was COMPLETELY changed, and my character transformed into a civilian Friday, even to the slacks and sport jacket identified with Webb in *Dragnet*.

As might have been expected, the effect on our ratings was CATASTROPHIC. *Some* viewers kept switching channels, searching desperately for the familiar trappings of the old show. Others simply couldn't *understand* what *disaster* had overtaken one of their favorite television programs.

Despite such an ENORMOUS miscalculation on the Front Office's part, thanks to Bill Conrad's creativity, we were able that year to turn out some *memorable* episodes.

Vintage Zimbalist: While covering "Who Killed 77?" in a businesslike manner, he found a way to salute Conrad for making the best of the Fall '63 ratings sinkhole. When the Season Six string of new episodes ended, ABC finished the stretch from May to September of '64 by using *reruns* from *prior* "77" seasons. That turned out to be a fitting Encore for Efrem Zimbalist Jr., Roger Smith, and the other three regulars who, for half-a-decade, made "Sunset Strip" a national hang-out.

The URL for this document ([Issue 15, August 2024](#)) is
www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-15.pdf
Next one: www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-16.pdf