



Detective Drama **GEMS...**

Mid-1940s to the Mid-1990s

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

Gem #49 — "[The Fingers of Henri Tourelle](#)"

From NAKED CITY: October 18, 1961 (ABC-TV, 1958-63)

Henri Tourelle is a classic mid-century business-builder. He is hiding a serious illness from his colleagues. When he finally does take a leave, communication is minimal. His younger brother Ben fills the leadership gap, by all accounts ably.

The presence of a worthy successor ought to comfort Tourelle. But it doesn't. And, on Henri's first morning back, no one *else* will be comforted by this titanic Founder.

His secretary is Carol Flaxman; he hands her a three-word note: "Stop the Factory." That triggers a meeting with Ben, who later quotes Henri this way: "I've been lying in a *small white room* full of *antiseptic* odors and badly dressed females. I've had time to THINK [pause] — I'm closing the doors permanently..."

Ben is aghast. All of his senior associates are, too. But Ben Tourelle has the indignation and sweat equity to push back. He calls his brother "a man who wants to tear it all *apart* because he's tired." Voices rise and fall. "I put this business together," Henri insists. "I don't have to ask ANYONE's permission to take it apart."

After Henri commands him to stop shouting, Ben shifts to quiet provocation...

BEN: Henri, you're afraid [that] we'll run the business *without* you.

HENRI: You're a fool.

BEN: You're afraid we'll find out Henri Tourelle wasn't indispensable.

HENRI: [Also contained] You're a *complete* fool. Do you really think so?

BEN: I know so... I've been running it for *six months*...

HENRI: You'll *never* make it without me, Ben, NEVER. You're too *soft*. If anyone had said to *me* the things I've said to you, day after day, I'd have KILLED them, *long* ago.

Using the birth dates of each of these actors, the age gap between the "brothers" is 12 1/2 years. But it seems even wider. And, although they both share a fierce drive and similar talents, they surely don't LOOK like brothers.

That dialogue is from one of several riveting exchanges recounted for the three NAKED CITY cops. *Their* day is going to be a crash course in the Life and Times of Henri Tourelle. Yet they'll never get to hear anything from the powerhouse himself. Why not? Because they've come to the Factory to solve his murder.

Detective **Frank Arcaro** ([HARRY BELLAVER](#)) got there first. He relays the basics:

The dead man here was out of the plant for about six months — SICK [and at times] in a sanitarium. He comes back and says he's gonna close the plant down. Naturally, the joint starts *smokin'*. *Everybody in the world* wants to see him. In the middle of it all, he shuts off his *telephone* and refuses to answer the Secretary's *buzzer*. He was dead for a little [slight pause] under two hours when they got to him...

Two hours?!? Why such a delay? First of all, no one heard a gun go off. More generally, despite fear and anger about jobs and careers being wiped out, the senior people would not enter. "When this guy [said] don't come in," Arcaro explains, "*everybody* stayed OUT." Even though his door wasn't locked.

So now Arcaro and his colleagues stand behind Henri Tourelle's desk. "When they found him," he was slumped over, "like this" — with "a piece of paper under his left hand, and on it was written BEN, in big, shaky letters." A bullet in the heart killed the leader of this high-end New York City *couture*.

Lieutenant **Mike Parker** ([HORACE McMAHON](#)) is energized by all this drama and mystery about a body discovered *all at once* by *six people*. He tells Arcaro: "I want the movements of everybody in this office — *this* FLOOR — [and] a floor plan."

In a superb opener, the viewer has already seen and heard several, along with what they do. The Executives are Ben Tourelle (who "has perhaps the most power") ... "Miss Maude," the high-class "saleslady" ... Rosebrook, the "production man" ... Carl Terris, the CFO (the '60s term was Comptroller) ... and Designer Peter Merrell.

Several Factors that Make this Episode Exceptional

Arriving with Parker is Detective **Adam Flint**, played by [PAUL BURKE](#). Just 35 here in late 1961, Burke had top billing in this unusual urban police series. Typically, he will pull back from the mechanics to look for the hidden key or some other magic macro. This time, it imposes imperiously — the gigantic bust of Henri Tourelle...

Look at the character in this bust, Mike. Whoever did it was a fine artist [pausing to inhale]. You know, there's an *expression* in this face. I'm trying to figure out what it is.

The bust itself has value today. It's a stunning prop for an episode full of tension, but only one life-threatening reaction. Here are some other plusses...

- Proximity. The dead man, each of the murder suspects, and all three NAKED CITY regulars, navigate the same tight quarters, and without resolution. That's why they'll need to return the following morning.
- Diverse Approaches. The only task Mike Parker gives Flint is to "see if anybody's got a *gun*-permit around here." But Frank Arcaro is tasked with gossip-collection (lower floor, filled with hourlies); mapping the much more compact upper floor; recreating individual movements; and preventing escapes: "I've got every exit posted," Arcaro assures Flint.
- ROBERT DRYDEN is what the credits call the "Police Surgeon." His tendency to hedge clashes with Parker's demands for clarity. Yet it's this very openness to unusual angles that could help the cops — especially Flint — escape a classic crime-drama vice: Namely, "closed room with missing murder weapon and too many suspects."
- Flashbacking. As noted, we never see the dead man alive, EXCEPT in the dreamlike sequences representing his final exchanges. Setting up the scenes this way allows tremendous depth to be conveyed briskly.
- The Central Figure. Henri Tourelle is played by [LUTHER ADLER](#) (1903-84). In his features, this dominator is somewhat common (pun?). He isn't tall, and he does have access to a sense of humor, though the harshness is always waiting to retake the wheel. In any case, most everything about him is likely to make an impression on you.
- Each Guest Actor. There's nobody who doesn't "look and sound the part." Especially the versatile [NINA FOCH](#) (1924-2008) as Maude Hutchinson, saleswoman and seasoned judger of clothing trends.

Finally, what does the title mean by "fingers"? Slowly and subtly, *fingers* will develop a second meaning. But what the Narrator starts us off with is this...

Tourelle the Magnificent saw himself as the Great Hand, and the five fingers were the individuals he relied upon on to coordinate a large enterprise. Each person had *entrée* to Henri. On the morning of his death, it would've been impossible for all of them to watch one another for two hours. Therefore, each is a suspect.

For the cops, the logic is excellent. Since "FIVE people and his Secretary *found* him," Parker tells Frank Arcaro, "I want you to round them *all* up and keep them in the anteroom. Then when I need them, I'll talk to them, one by one." And that's how we viewers get to know this expired bulldog of a man: By each member of the inner circle describing what turned out to be their final conversation with him.

Their accounts are enhanced by images the cops don't even get to see! Due to the miracle of Analog TV, conversations are recalled with spectacular precision.

When Henri's leave of absence started, younger brother Ben ([ROBERT LOGGIA](#)) believed it to be a vacation. "Turned out he was pulling the medical world inside out trying to give him a chance to live," he tells Parker and Flint. "Believe me, if Henri couldn't make it, his life or death was beyond the control of medicine."

PARKER: You're saying that he was *dying*.

BEN TOURELLE: I'm sayin' the doctors told me he was dying [pause].

This *morning* he came to work, and it was like his whole life was a *bath* [pause] and we were the *dirt* and the dirty water and he pulled the *plug*.

"And I Just Gave You the Biggest Season We Ever Had"

"Circulate throughout the factory," Parker told Frank Arcaro. "Find out what the theories are, on the outside, of what happened in here." It should be easy to pick up bits of gossip, and maybe you'll get lucky and locate the gun.

Arcaro's Italian lineage reassures the hourlies, but this is still the scene of a killing.

"Did any of you people go into Mr. Tourelle's office this morning?" [BETTY WALKER](#) is credited as the Forelady, and she tackles it with one sentence: "I talk to Mr. Tourelle for da whole *floor*, and *no one* saw him today."

Arcaro's skepticism invites this from an even more mature male worker:

Please, mister. You are talking to the *wrong* people. Workers don't kill bosses! Maybe they *like* to, maybe every DAY. But this [murder] is for associates, competitors, RELATIVES. And *besides*, in the *middle* of a *season*, is this da time for a MURDER?

We're offered a glimpse of Arcaro smiling, perhaps his way of blessing that plain but compelling logic. Right before Arcaro entered, we heard that same old-timer say: "I knew [Henri when] he first started. He was selling *buttons*. He had a *fancy* case and *INSIDE* a sandwich for lunch! Such a man shouldn't die like dat."

The factory takes up a whole floor. The executive offices have about a quarter of the floor above. Arcaro is able to clock the access times each of the inner circle would need to get from their usual location into and out of the slain man's office.

Meanwhile, Flint studies the face: "Every time I look at that bust, Mike, I see an expression. So far I haven't been able to figure it out." This is getting too mystical for Parker. "Okay, you go your way. I play it by the *book* ... POLICE WORK."



NAKED CITY regulars *Horace McMahon, Paul Burke, and Henry Bellaver*

Something else hooks Flint. Unlike the bust, this item can be carried around. It's a palm-sized micro-activity hub. The Founder picked it up in Japan, Carol tells Flint, and "he played with it all the time." A processor for nervous energy? A kind of Fidget-Focuser? (Current term, yet only in one place on the all-knowing Internet.)

Looks to be made of sturdy plastic, consisting of a several pieces, with one missing. It was near the dead man's right hand. Flint comes to see it as a bizarre clue.

Parker makes a low-volume crack: "What are you, a Policeman or somebody playin' games" — one of those "asks" that lacks the question inflection. "You *hate* puzzles, don't ya Mike" — also a question without the inquiring inflection.

Parker wants clarity: "Is that a *serious* question?" Flint goes along with the dodgeball interlude: "I hate puzzles, too," he says, and that isn't an olive branch. "I suppose it's the *nature* of a policeman — to hate puzzles."

Flint is either saying puzzles are the essence of a Detective's job, or implying that

Parker needs more curiosity while pounding away at his. Half a decade before the term was invented, NAKED CITY was a rolling example of "generation gap."

Later, Design Chief Merrell sees the palm-sized energy-absorber moving around in Flint's hand. And he offers reinforcement: "That puzzle has always fascinated me. Henri would sit there playing with it by the hour. He would take it apart, and put it together, take it apart and put it together — without even *looking* at it."

Extending the Generational View

[MICHAEL TOLAN](#) was Peter Merrell. Like NAKED CITY lead Paul Burke, Tolan was a fairly fresh face on early '60s TV. Burke was born in 1926, and Tolan in 1925. Like Vince Edwards in *Ben Casey* and Richard Chamberlain in *Dr. Kildare* (born in 1928 and 1934 respectively), Burke and Tolan had been kids during the 1930s Depression and too young to serve in World War Two.

Becoming actors as television sets proliferated, those four and many other age peers became characters on a mass medium itself still fresh. They displayed types of idealism different from the Jimmy Stewart mode. As TV Doctors, Casey and Kildare went beyond 1950s premises and protocols. Viewers expect *some* of that spirit in medical shows, regardless of the Era.

Idealism in prime-time CRIME drama was also surging back then. Psychological savants helped defense lawyers reduce prison sentences, especially during 1962-64. Then violent crime began its 25-year climb. By the mid-1990s, only radicals would seek to excuse the George Floyd types.

"Didn't They Tell You Henri and I Were Very Close?"

"I have here a pistol permit," Mike Parker informs his three listeners: "Permit Number 498310, 38-caliber Smith & Wesson revolver, issued 1956 to Miss Maude Hutchinson, 3824 [Reposit Street](#), New York City."

Arcaro asks her: "Do you still have that gun? Can you show it to us now?" She tells him that she gave it to Henri. An awfully convenient answer, observes Arcaro.

But Flint gently asks why she did so. "There was a robbery, and so he needed a gun. He was afraid. I got him a gun because of the robbery."

And why in HER name? "The gun was taken out in my name because, as a *woman*, I could *have* a gun without being accused of being a coward. I got the gun and gave it very quietly to Henri." And where did this weapon go? Not back to her. "The robbery slipped his mind [and] he never mentioned it again."

Another touchy matter: At their lunch yesterday, Henri had handed Maude a check for \$25,000. (We saw the detectives make ready to handle it via a cautious process that tells us something about Search Procedures all those years ago.)

Without saying a word, they hand her that check. "He handed that to me, personally," she replies. After a pause: "Did you look at the endorsement on the back?" "Two weeks severance pay," Parker reads — quite a sum for that purpose, hmmm? Still being very quiet, she says: "That's an *inside joke*, Lieutenant — an inside joke." Even in 1961 dollars, the joke today isn't the amount. It's the word *severance*. Dreamy sound effect. *Shift to Henri and Maude at lunch yesterday*. Video fiction lets us see, hear, and almost feel, those two troubled souls. After they've eaten...

HENRI TOURELLE: Shall I say "leap in" after suffering the mute agony of your patient eyes? [Middling pause] Marry me, Maude.

MAUDE HUTCHINSON: [After six seconds]: Go to Hell.

TOURELLE: [He also waits for six]: It just might work out *that way*.

HUTCHINSON: What shall I say? Shall I say "Henri Dearest, *Mon Amour*"? ... What kind of a *masochist* do you think I am, anyway?

The delays before speaking are vivid. Also expensive, given the inflation-adjusted cost of prime-time broadcasting in 1961. Maude's disgust gains decibels...

It hasn't occurred to me for MINIMUM of five years that you and I would ever get married. I haven't been waiting for marriage, "mutely" or otherwise, PATIENTLY or otherwise, *agonizedly* or otherwise.

TOURELLE: Take it easy.

HUTCHINSON: I HATE you when you *pull* the wings off butterflies, particularly when I'M the butterfly.

TOURELLE: I mean it [calmly]. Do me the honor of becoming my wife.

HUTCHINSON: I'm honoring somebody *else* next Sunday.

Tourelle's face actually shows a trace of hurt. He recovers: "Anyone I know?"

HUTCHINSON: [In a quiet seethe] Nobody I'd *let* you know.

Tourelle is rarely at a loss for words. Right now, his face and head are trembling slightly. He looks away for a split second. What we see on the face of seasoned actor Luther Adler, not yet 60, is masterful. Same for his other encounters.

HUTCHINSON: The *first* year I was working with you, I was lying in bed, night after night, DRUNK with sleeping pills, YOU going around and around in my head — saying to myself "You're a *fool*, Maude. No matter how long you stay with Henri DEAREST...it'll end up with two

weeks *severance* pay."

TOURELLE: [The longest pause yet] Well — I wish you every happiness.

HUTCHINSON: [Quietly but with her edge fading] Thanks.

TOURELLE: I can't find it within myself to send you wedding presents.

HUTCHINSON: Don't bother.

But he had one more rabbit to pull out of the hat. In a way, it's a killer rabbit...

Maude — I want to say something personal and *painful* to me. It seems that I may not be able to *live* much longer. For selfish reasons, I thought I would ask you to *marry* me. This, this wouldn't have been too much of a burden, to you because — it would've been for a *short* period, *only*. [A nervous inhale] I guess my timing was off.

As an actor, though, Adler's timing is perfect. As Henri Tourelle brings their 15 years to a tragic close, the lady's countenance has lost its anger. Didn't she know, unlike his younger brother Ben, about Henri's medically dire situation?

From Henri and Maude, at lunch yesterday...back to today's mystery of how he died, well before his ailment would've become fatal. Her reaction to him at yesterday's lunch, followed by the morning's shocking death, causes Maude Hutchinson to slash one of her wrists in the women's rest room. Flint rescues her just in time.

Under medication, she reveals that yesterday's "news" was spiteful fiction:

There were no marriage plans — Sunday, next Sunday, or any Sunday after that. How could I say "Henri, I wanted you, for 15 years..."?

Maude Hutchinson's voice had been weak. Now it steadies, as she tells the cops: "I see no reason for living." More firmly: "No — I see no reason for *living at all*." A tragic circumstance, yes; but the missing gun keeps her on the suspect list.

At the very end, Maude Hutchinson will reappear: We'll see Ben plead with her to not abandon her legacy, talent, or this shaken enterprise. She likes the younger Tourelle and shares his anguished history with Henry. She'll smile warmly at him (second time during this episode), and agree to think about staying.

I'm leaving out Production Manager Bertrand Rosebrook and Controller Carl Terris. But their part of this Saga is also vital. Tourelle more or less knew what they had been up to, for years. The surprise is what he decided *not* to control or confront.

During his final day, though, the Founder radiated control. One after another, his associates *define* Tourelle for us. Angry, sad or humiliating, each confrontation is

given appropriate "space." Dramatic music is minimal. Nothing gets in the way of the voices — unless it's the reactions conveyed by the faces.

In *his* recap for the cops, as the lofty bust keeps watch, Peter Merrell offers another example of the strange sort of "justice" Adam Flint is deciphering from Tourelle.

Parker starts this session by saying that "all you people" in the inner circle "have one thing in common: A distinct *hatred* of Mr. Henri *Tourelle*." True enough: We saw Merrell raging at a Tourelle decision right before the body was discovered...

MERRELL: Oh yes. I think that was Henri's greatest single talent: He knew how to make people *hate* him — but in a special way. If I hated you, Lieutenant, you wouldn't get any *work* out of me. When I hated Henri, it was a *challenge* — an INDIGNITY, an *affront*. I had to PROVE to him that I was a better man than he was [pause]. That was his method.

Then comes the dash of dream-like sound, and time goes back a few hours...

Sitting across the desk, Tourelle is friendly: "Peter — we've had some *great years* together here, haven't we boy." Soon the view will expand. We'll get to see both of Tourelle's hands. Working that puzzle, they are shaky. And his words seem to blend the puzzle and the business: "I'm taking it all apart, permanently."

Ben Tourelle had taken that news with anger. But Peter Merrell is no confronter, and his reply is: "I've got some money if you need it." Tourelle replies with a smile and words that seem warm: "What a nice fella you really are." Merrell offers a semi-tribute: He'd feel "*sick* working for anyone else — [and] I've had offers."

Tossing down the puzzle, Tourelle's tone changes: "You'll work for no one." He doesn't have *that* much money, Merrell counters genially. "Don't worry," says Tourelle, "you'll be *paid in full* for the full extent of your contract," plus 10 years after that, whether Tourelle is still alive or not.

The Founder is firm, though not abrupt. And the 27-year-old Designer still doesn't get what has been decided. He exhales in appreciation...

MERRELL: Mr. *Tourelle*, you're [pause] too GOOD. But if I *have* to work somewhere else, I *will*.

TOURELLE: Let me make it clear: You will not work for ANYONE, ever again. Without my approval, you can do *nothing* [pause]. Read your contract.

Merrell tries to end his retelling philosophically. But no way can Mike Parker & Co. take this youngest "finger" off the suspect list. Once he's dead, Tourelle's career chokehold on Peter Merrell would cease. Henri's dead, and it's gone.



[Naked City - Season 3, Episode 4 - The Fingers of Henri Tourelle - YouTube](#)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nYVSn3Lz0Y

"The head of a fashion studio is shot to death and all of his underlings have a motive for killing him. With Nina Foch, Robert Loggia."

[Naked City S03E04 The Fingers of Henri Tourelle \(1961\) Colorized](#)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ieh4n9oYRJE

"A business owner is killed by gunshot in his office. The person who fired the shot couldn't have left the premises before the police arrived to investigate..."

FULL CREDITS — <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0656849/fullcredits> — and don't neglect Director [ARTHUR HILLER](#) and Writer [ERNEST PENDRELL](#).

"The Fingers of Henri Tourelle" makes the most of Modulation: The intensity of a bewildering and confined business realm mixes with diverse detective techniques and (mostly) subdued statement-making by fearful and resentful characters.

With resorting to gimmicks or causing viewer incoherency, this episode delivers an hour and a half of compellingly plausible people and events in just 47 minutes...

When Adam Flint exhales in disgust, Parker inquires. "I just don't like being led by the nose, that's all." *What are you talking about?* "I'm talkin' about Tourelle, Mike: Everything this man does contradicts everything else he does... As a matter of fact, the man is *constantly* creating puzzles..." Detective Flint is on to something!

Other [Season Three \(1961-62\)](#) episodes are far inferior to "The Fingers," therefore I can't judge NAKED CITY overall. But this series did feature an array of big stars *before* they were big. Plus, contemporary critics called it innovative. Maybe the biggest innovation was scripts featuring characters that were neither good nor evil, yet they would somehow steer most of the episode.

For those who desire to dig even deeper than the DVDs, check out [this 2008 book](#).

[Issue #17](#) (March 2025) of *Detective Drama Gems* will spotlight...

"[Deal With the Devil](#)" — January 11, 1972 — from [THE MOD SQUAD](#)

"[Round And Round](#)" — October 24, 1985 — from [MAGNUM, P.I.](#)

"[All Expenses Paid](#)" — October 28, 1959 — from [HAWAIIAN EYE](#)

Gem #50 — "[Enter Tami Okada](#)" — November 17, 1974 From **MANNIX** (CBS-TV, 1967 to '75)

Each MANNIX episode lists [BRUCE GELLER](#) as Executive Producer. This man, or the writers he worked with, or both by extending consent, generated episodes that depend on expedient leaps. At the outset, some impossible sequence might be used to define the whole story. Or, near the end, some far-fetched "key" turns up.

Those methods rendered various episodes hard to parse. But, if it's a Gem, "Enter Tami Okada" shouldn't display any of those defects, right? If only that were true! To make space for this one, the GEMS **Plausibility Standard** is being bent. And let's stick with Bruce Geller for a bit. From Wikipedia, three points leap out...

1. Mr. Geller "graduated from Yale University in 1952, where he had studied psychology and sociology..."
2. He conceived and carried out CBS's [Mission: Impossible](#), which made a more lasting impression than any other late-'60s spy/counterspy TV series (enough so that a different network would revive the series 20 years later).
3. He died in a plane crash (May 21st, 1978) before reaching his 48th birthday.



The rest of the Wiki account is writing credits. I found no Web interviews to explain the "how" of Bruce Geller's way to keep and hold television audiences. Spy/counterspy drama is way outside of this publication's focus. But MANNIX logged the same number of prime-time seasons as did *Mission: Impossible*, and it deserved to. [MIKE CONNORS](#) (1925-2017) was a skilled actor and an admirable man. He loved being Joe Mannix and working with a sprawling team that, in his recollection, had little turnover. Co-stars (after Season #1) **Gail Foster** and **Ward Wood** were first-rate.

For reasons that have nothing to do with the defects I detect, the MANNIX series ended 49 1/2 years ago. Therefore, I can't imagine Mr. Geller's descendents or admirers caring about my or anyone else's problems with some of these scripts.

I doubt that you will, either. But I'll need to describe certain difficulties with THIS one. They start with the opening, which comes after, not before, the theme music.

Two Japanese Chauffeurs, and Neither One is Legitimate

- A Japan Air Lines plane is landing at "LAX" (no jokes about weak security, please); and an official limousine motors in. Stately music.
- For 18 seconds, Japan's "rising sun" flag does double duty: You'll see it blowing on one side of the limousine's hood...as the flag's *rectangle* loosely backdrops the main credits: Title, Producers (Goff and Roberts), Writer (see next section), Director (Paul Krasny). *Clever*.
- The incoming dignitary knows the security guard — "Very nice to see you again" — but, a minute earlier, the limousine driver did not know where to park. He was told: "Move on, there's no double parking here."
- The driver kept his cool: "I'm here to meet the diplomatic courier, arriving from Tokyo." His b-card flip settles it. He opens the rear door for the Courier, who also looks calm. And they drive off.
- *Not 10 seconds later*, a man in a cab is raced to the same pick-up spot. This passenger is ALSO dressed as a chauffeur; he's also Japanese; and he is anything but businesslike...

***STOP the CAR! The Courier has been kidnapped!
He forced me off the ROAD. He tied me up. He took the car.***

Viewers are being offered something dramatic enough to make us forget to expect the common responses that such an unusual incident would lead to. Tricks of this sort helped MANNIX scriptwriters make those "expedient leaps."

At Minute 2:45, one of the security guards, having accepted the second driver's story, picks up one of the outdoor phones. *That's it?* This disturbing Airport scene is complete; the abduction will succeed. We are shown no other response...

(1) No police alert or radio/P.A. alert could stop the commandeered limousine before it left the Airport? And **(2)** why couldn't the frantic "real" chauffeur describe his vehicle to where various police cars could watch for it *outside* the Airport?

Even for the looser 1970s, the quick-change abduction is hard to swallow.

But the real surprise isn't the lack of logical stop-this-crime steps; it's the fact that BOTH chauffeurs have been corrupted. The first one (a hired impostor) is part of a cover story that will require a murder. The second is an undercover terrorist.

Much later (Minute #35), we'll see a not-large demonstration outside the Japanese Consulate — and that's the first *hint* of what the real goal is. By contrast, here at Minute #4, as far as any viewer could figure, the frantic Airport scene is mostly an excuse to bring a far more talkative Japanese visitor to L.A.

Mr. Okada has no appointment. His business card has Japanese characters on one side and U.S. hieroglyphics on the other. Secretary Peggy Fair takes it into Joe Mannix's office. With little else pending, he says: "Show him in."

And a stream of cultural contrasts starts to offset this episode's Plausibility Gaps.

"In Japan, Investigator has Small Office [and] No Secretary"

"Tommy" Okada diplomatically gets out of having to accept a cup of coffee; but tea will be most welcome. The American's opening exchange with him is like it is with anyone from almost anywhere: Deliberate, fairly thoughtful, and not wordy.

TAMI OKADA: Perhaps you have read *news* about diplomatic courier who disappeared day before yesterday.

JOE MANNIX: Yes.

OKADA: I've been sent here to find him.

MANNIX: [Cordially, not abruptly] By whom?

OKADA: Courier's father. He suffers *deeply* from this disgrace.

MANNIX: [Pause] "Disgrace"? The man was kidnapped.

OKADA: Oh yes, in Japan, when a man fails in professional duty, it *is* a disgrace to *family*.

MANNIX: Even when it's not his fault?

OKADA: Yes! And, if courier is not found *soon*, his FATHER will have to *atone*.

Mannix is attentive in a calm way. But what does "atonement" mean when someone *else* did the dishonorable thing or defaulted on a critical duty?

OKADA: For those who live by our *customs*, there's only one way.

MANNIX: [Silence, as he does a restrained double-take...]

OKADA: Yes, Mr. Mannix. [Hara-Kiri](#).

MANNIX: In this day and age?

OKADA: In *Japan*, "days" do not *age* as they do *here*.

MANNIX: Well, uh — I'll be glad to do whatever I *can*.

It's Okada's first time in America. The spacious office surprised him; so did the quick shift to business; and (probably) that Mannix committed himself rapidly.

Mannix needed nothing beyond the business card and a gut sense of the visitor's honesty. He doesn't even ask what the courier was delivering. Convenient, because this script needs the courier's briefcase to be a source of bafflement. (What it might've held and/or what was taken out — *good luck* figuring out that part.)

The missing courier is **Akio Anuchi** (played by [BENNETT OHTA](#)). Each time he has business in Los Angeles, he visits the same woman. For now, that's Okada's best lead. She works as a stage performer at The Japanese Village. This becomes the first of four unusual backdrops. The others are a Buddhist Temple, the Kyoto Club, and "Little Tokyo," where Okada rents a room and makes noises to flush out foes.

At the Village, we watch a trio of dolphins. Two are ridden by their trainer, who — with one foot on each dolphin — completes two circles in a pool. The dolphins are given a minute and a half; the announcer says this act required nine months to master; and the entertainment is enough of a distraction that you could miss the fact that not a single *customer* is in the bleachers at the Village's C-Theater.

On a stage adjacent to the dolphin pool, five masked dancers perform their own routine (also to no audience). One of the five, in real life, is [MIKO MAYAMA](#). She greets the two detectives and us viewers as **Midori Nakano**.

This will be the first of her three meetings with them. She admits to being (at least) a friend of Akio Anuchi: "I see him whenever he comes to Los Angeles." At the same time, she rarely knows about his visits in advance.

Okada drills down gently: "Excuse me, Nakano-san. May I ask if he telephoned from the Airport to say he was here?" No, he didn't. Mannix asks where Akio stays while in L.A. "I've already told you I know *nothing*. I'm sorry." She ends the exchange.

Very next scene: Midori Nakano is on the phone with Akio Anuchi: "I TOLD them I didn't know where you *were*." He replies in Japanese. Is this a handy script device to mask what their understanding is? Midori does not look or sound sinister. This is a reserved and sad young woman, and also beautiful in a vulnerable way.

The URL for this trio of GEMS (Issue 16, November 2024) is
www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-16.pdf

The Actors and Factors that Sparkle in this Episode

The IMDB dot-com "Reviews" section has perceptive comments (and no gripes) about "Enter Tami Okada." In August 2023, **T.C. Chelsey** was reassuring:

[1] An original episode, and lots of fun, written by Oscar-winner [ROBERT PIROSH](#), who did many stories for *The Waltons*. He began his career writing two films for the Marx Brothers, perhaps the only cop-show writer associated with a comedy team....

[2] Oscar-nominated Japanese actor MAKO guest-stars as Tami [remember, pronounced as *Tommy*] Okada, a private detective who really needs Mannix. A Japanese diplomat has vanished somewhere in LA and Tami has been assigned to the case. Joe and Tami...learn from each other as they dig deeper into this international mess.

[3] Two super character actors turn up. BILLY BENEDICT (from *The Bowery Boys*) has a small role, a favorite of casting directors. Do not miss [BILL ZUCKERT](#), playing a [taxi] dispatcher. Zuckert was in a ton of TV shows, usually as tough guys or cops...

The title of Chelsey's post? JOE AND HIS JAPANESE BUD. The "bud" is the sagacious yet energetically genial Okada, played by **Makoto Iwamatsu**. That was his birth name, and the year was 1933. Born and raised in Kobe, he was less than 12 years old when the two U.S. atomic bombs ended World War Two.

In the late 1930s, according to Wikipedia, "his parents, who were political dissidents, moved to the United States, leaving [him] in the care of his grandmother. Because his parents lived on the East Coast, they were not [interned](#) during the Second World War; instead they opted to work for the [U.S. Office of War Information](#) and were later granted residency."

Makoto's parents were able to arrange for him to join them in 1949, when he was 15 years old... After serving with the United States Army during the Korean War, he trained in acting at the [Pasadena Playhouse](#) and later co-founded the [East West Players](#). His role as Po-Han (his second credited role on film) in the 1966 film *The Sand Pebbles* saw him nominated for the Academy Award and the Golden Globe Award for Best Supporting Actor.

You can read about his later achievements (all the way to 2006) [here](#). By the time of this MANNIX episode, he was known as MAKO. And, since this publication has a fondness for 1960s TV, here are some fun credits from that era...

Mako appeared on...[McHale's Navy](#) several times, playing Imperial Japanese officers, soldiers and sailors. In 1965, he appeared on *Gidget* as a member of a rival surf group. He later appeared on the television series

*M*A*S*H*, playing multiple roles such as a Chinese doctor, a North Korean soldier, a South Korean medical doctor, and a South Korean lieutenant. He appeared [in] [The Time Tunnel](#) as Lt. Nakamura in 1967 [and in one episode of] [Kung Fu](#) as Wong Ti Lu in 1972.

"NOW We're in My Baseball Park. Must Go Slowly..."

Mannix's office was so tasteful and spacious Okada couldn't get over it. When they return there, they are startled to find an anguished Midori waiting for them.



She confesses to lying to them at the Village: "I DID know where Akio-san was. But "he TOLD me not to *tell* anyone." Okada says to Mannix in a low voice: "Trust is most important." Mannix grunts a semi-affirmation.

Soon after, two men walked into her dressing room and demanded to know Akio's location. They threatened her; but the Stage Manager was coming, and they fled. Was one of them Japanese? Yes, and the other "a most frightening" American — likely the same two Mannix and Okada tangled with at the Japanese Village.

Midori believed Akio had escaped his abductors. And now? "I think, somehow, they FOUND Akio-san... As soon as I could get to the telephone, I called Akio-san to *warn* him. MAN answered. When I asked for Akio-san, he just hung up. *Where* did she call? The Crown Motel on East Avenue. "Hurry *please*, I'm so afraid."

The Manager ([BILL BENEDICT](#)) isn't the suspicious type, even though the guest that Okada describes had no luggage. What about his car's license number? "He came in a cab." Did he *leave* in a cab or was he picked up? "Cab." What kind? "CITY Cab."

Next, the Taxi-Dispatcher, played by Bill Zuckert. Seems he owes Mannix a favor. After some pressing, he repays it by revealing that Akio Anuchi took that City Cab from the Crown Motel to the Kyoto Club. And Tami Okada makes a mental note to start doing favors for taxi-dispatchers.

Okada is an eager receptor. Watching Lieutenant Art Malcolm at the Village, he said to Mannix: "Splendid cooperation from Police!" As for how Malcolm got the word: "Also splendid to have *phone* in car. Will definitely get one — WHEN get *car*."

Once inside the Kyoto Club, Mannix should be the learner. But he doesn't turn to Okada for help on the protocols. He immediately asks the Hostess if she knows Akio Anuchi. She's not familiar with the name. He offers a description. "Sorry, I do not *remember* him." Okada knows this tug of war will get them nowhere.

So he adroitly hands her an envelope. And she quickly reverts to Hostess movements, going elsewhere to check on something...

OKADA: NOW we're in *my* baseball park. *Must go slowly*... First we go to private room for dinner, THEN ask questions.

MANNIX: Uh, what was in the envelope?

OKADA: Twenty-dollar bill. In *Japan*, we put *tips* in papers or put them in *envelopes*. [Lowering his voice] *Tips and bribes*.

MANNIX: [Smiles while pausing] And what makes you think we're getting anything but a private *room* for that 20?

OKADA: Lady's manner reveals she's honorable person. As such, she would not take money *deceitfully*.

Okada's observations don't stop with tips and bribes. "You handle chopsticks like Japanese!" Picked up that skill in Korea, replies the American. The praise is followed by a demerit: "You should never leave chopsticks in rice bowl." It brings bad luck.

And Okada feels a bit of homesickness. "If we were in Orient now, we would have Geisha Girls to entertain us with meal." Mannix counters that his new friend is thinking more about Midori Nakano than Geisha Girls.

The reply comes with a mixed snort and big smile: "Very shrewd observation! But do not think it is just a response to her physical *charm*... People who told me about her say she has *very fine* ancestry. MOST eligible young lady."

Okada's methods are vindicated. The Kyoto Club Hostess brought him valuable information (conveyed in Japanese). "She knows where Akio may have gone," and yes he *was* tailed by a sinister individual, who had finally departed. *Well, where did Akio go?* "He *asked* her how to get to Buddhist Temple."

On to the Japanese Buddhist Temple. At Minute 29:40, they are shocked to find Akio Anuchi, dead, behind a divider. This will be the second time they've pulled Art Malcolm ([WARD WOOD](#)) into this case he told both of them was *his*.

The Lieutenant knows just enough about sharp objects and suicide scenes to assume Hara-Kiri. Here's a tight definition: "[R]itual suicide by disembowelment practiced by the Japanese samurai..." And another MANNIX script lunge...

In such a quiet environment, a suicide might go unnoticed for awhile. By poison, certainly; but by a sharp object plunged into one's own stomach? And what if it *wasn't* suicide? Wouldn't that mean it must've been carried out elsewhere? And by someone (looking at what will be revealed later) with no link to the Temple? Someone, un-detected, could carry in a horrendously bloody body? And do that without alerting the same Holy Man who had just welcomed Tami and Joe?

Once back in the car, Okada recasts the Lieutenant as a "very intelligent man, but not brilliant." What they just encountered was not hara-kiri, it was *murder*. "How can you tell"? The custom requires steps beyond the use of deadly tools. "Must explain to family why he's going to do it. To family, and other loved ones."

But no note was found at the scene, and no call was made to Midori. "What makes you think she was his loved one?" Again comes that Okada grin, setting up the slam-dunk reply: "*Impossible* for friendship with Midori not to ripen into *love*."

During Minute 32, the detectives console the grieving Midori. A memorable scene, no gimmicks needed, as we sample a far more reassuring Japanese tradition.

The Good Guys Finally Have a Bad Actor in Custody

Okada returns to his rented room. A simple tactic reveals that someone has picked the lock and might be poised to ambush. It's the American who assaulted him in an alley, and fired at both detectives as he dodged pursuit at the Japanese Village.

Okada listens for rustling or any sign of presence. Then he steps way back, launches his charge, and kicks down the door. Using either karate or *kung fu* (both of which he told Mannix he is "rather good at"), he flips the thug and jars loose his gun.

It's a spectacular stunt, and it's carried off by Mako himself, against a foe who is at least eight inches taller. No gimmickry here, just a slam-bang break in the case.

"More Brilliant" than Okada Thought ... but Beware the Look

"Well, Mister PIKE," says Mannix's most reliable friend among the L.A. Police: "Seems that your fingerprints match a set of prints we found last night...on a window of a Buddhist Temple, in which a man was found DEAD."

Okada upgrades his view of Art Malcolm: "More brilliant than I thought."

From Malcolm to Okada, and then to Mannix, comes an extended and vaguely irked look. It's one of two dozen delightful scenes from an assembly that has more story gaps than (probably) any other episode you'll see saluted in GEMS...

Cross-cultural exchanges and quirky humor making up for gaps in Clarity and Plausibility? Yep — this time, they've done so. Some rules can handle suspension.

With 15 minutes left in the episode, new vistas invite. Being pressured hard by Lieutenant Malcolm, "Pike" ([BOB HOY](#)) admits to receiving his orders from someone named Takeshi ([DAVID CHOW](#)). It's the same guy who stole the limousine. Then he helped Pike assault Okada (we saw it) in an alley. Soon after that, this *Takeshi* carried out a bizarre long-knife fight with Mannix at the Japanese village. When Pike alludes to a Consulate situation he lacks deeper knowledge of, this doesn't strike Mannix as holding back. Therefore, it moves him to a new angle...

MANNIX: Ya know, Tami, this whole thing coulda been a set-up.

OKADA: "Set-up"?

MANNIX: Yeah, something planned to look like something else.

OKADA: Ahhhh, set-up! By *whom*?

MANNIX: Akio.

OKADA: But WHY?

Mannix is right to look for a wider plot. But he meets resistance from Okada in trying to place Akio Anuchi among the bad guys. Okada's logic depends on what amounts to **Innocence by Association**: Midori Nakano is too fine a woman to fall for a corrupt man.

Instead, the protestors in front of the Consulate — noted during Minute 35 — are the clue to that wider view. Pike's Japanese paymaster, and later one dazzling impostor, are part of a much bigger plot. The goal is to sabotage U.S./Japan economic cooperation by assassinating the U.S. industrialist leading those negotiations.

Closing Takes, Two Viewing Options, and a Connors Q&A

➤ "Enter Tami Okada" is either a case of spending too much time and "mood" on backdrops, especially the Buddhist Temple; or else it's one more example of this series packing 90 minutes of events and reasoning into just 60.

➤ And be prepared for 90 seconds of a swerving Pontiac TransAm to prevent a small plane from taking off. Has such a stunt *ever* happened in real police work?

➤ But T.C. Chelsey's verdict still stands: "**An original episode, and lots of fun.**"

➤ And that briefcase? The back & forth about what Anuchi might have had in it, or what a *third* bad guy took OUT of it — ignore all of that, and you'll lose nothing.

IN SUM: What makes "Enter Tami Okada" a Gem is the interaction between him and Joe; between him and Art Malcolm; and between Midori Nakano and everyone. Which most likely will include you, assuming you are a U.S. male with halfway decent perception and a curiosity about how societies other than ours endure.

VIEWING OPTION (worked on 2/28/25) — <https://ok.ru/video/3107163343575>

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/dvd-mannix-the-final-season/25104034>,

which gets you "Okada" and the rest of the 8th and Final MANNIX Season.

As for Amazon? Prime's "Okada" link doesn't work; all that showed up "in my location" is the list of [Season 8 Episodes](#), rather than a way to pay to view this Gem.

MIKE CONNORS was superb as **Joe Mannix**. So, bypass the Wiki account, and sit yourself across the table, from both. One Web document allows us to do that...

<< Screen and television actor/star **Mike Connors** (born 1925 as Kreker Ohanian, of Armenian descent) gained worldwide fame and recognition [in] a role which gave him screen immortality. Consequently, meeting and talking with Mr. Connors, at a restaurant in North Hollywood [four or five years before he died], was a true delight..." >>

<https://filmtalk.org/2015/12/22/mike-connors-i-didnt-want-to-just-walk-through-the-part-of-mannix-when-it-was-so-successful/>

Now, let's move ahead to 1987, and a script more tightly written. It features an alluringly driven 31-year-old; a Detective a dozen years older who "has no excuse" but wants one; and a hot clothing business that is coming apart at the seams.

Gem #51 — "[The Beaumont Line](#)" — January 15, 1987 From NIGHT HEAT (CTV and CBS, 1985 to '89)

Certain TV dramas have an educational upside. You could offer *this* episode to any twenty-something "creative" who expects to set up his or her own means of production. "The Beaumont Line" might help them avoid a fate even worse than a bad marriage: Getting locked into a poisonous business partnership.

As with the NAKED CITY Gem that leads this issue, we are drawn into a clothing enterprise whose leadership is torn, and the result is another murder probe.

In Gem #49, Henri Tourelle had most of the power; and all of the managers, down to the Forelady, knew his or her role. For this NIGHT HEAT saga, power is neither diffused nor segmented. Despite the script's reference to outside stockholders, only three people have been directing this enterprise for real.

The company is said to be publicly traded. Seriously? Then why does it throb, bob and weave (pun?) like an overstressed warehouse on the outskirts of this city that the NIGHT HEAT series never named "but looks a lot like Toronto"?

In any case, the opening visuals excel. High ceilings; lots of bulky machinery; it's a setting spacious and cramped all at once. *Get a feel for the place*. In just 26 seconds, 11 visuals show us the work: Hundreds of suits are being sewn, pressed, boxed.

Tony is the Foreman. He notices that Vittorio and Paolo have left their stations. They're on the loading dock, taking an early break. The AC is down; the factory is sweltering. More pleadingly than naggingly, Tony asks the two to return; he does so three times. *Move the damn suits yourself*, is the response of Vittorio.

Paolo is the quiet one. [Vittorio](#) is defiant in a "when I'm good and ready" way. He utters no threats, but will end up being grilled at Headquarters this evening.

The [scriptwriter](#) and/or [main producer](#) did great by overlaying a **heat wave** on this factory, the crime, and the police and Lab operatives who will soon spill onto the premises. Only one character, from start to finish, will appear cool. Or, to be precise: She'll remain controlled and proactive right up to the final half-minute.

Having recently become a Partner, **Marvin Theisen** is hyperactive in a subservient way. Older brother **Jeremy Theisen** is overweight and domineering; he is used to making the decisions. For two hours, Marv has been expecting Jeremy. But Jeremy wasn't going to cut his dinner short for another struggle with the company's Star Designer. When he finally arrives? "*Ya drag me in here and she's not even HERE.*"

"She" is the "her" that exasperates Marvin and Jeremy. A half-dozen years ago, right out of college, **Laura Beaumont** gave too much of her future equity and production control to the Brothers Theisen. What's the name of their enterprise? We don't see or hear it — that's kinda odd — but we do see blow-ups of her ads.

In "The Beaumont Line," the two regulars who matter most are [SCOTT HYLANDS](#) and [SUSAN HOGAN](#). The first is Senior Detective **Kevin O'Brien**; the second is his love interest and future wife, Tavern Owner **Nicole Rimbaud**. And, playing **Laura Beaumont**, [JENNIFER DALE](#) is a near-perfect *femme fatale* refashioned for a 1980s business crime story.

"The World's Your Oyster if You Wear a Beaumont Suit"

Designer Beaumont is also a skilled promoter and chief model, appearing in her own ads for men's suits. Like Marvin, she expected a meeting with Jeremy. As the primary cause of the owners' prosperity, AND the one making them crazy, she got tired of hanging around. She also told Marvin she'd return after awhile.

Jeremy is happy to have dodged her. Now he can go back home. Before heading for the parking garage, he tells Marv that he just fired those two "schleps" for their unauthorized break. **"Now you get somebody else in here FAST."**

Those are the final words Marvin hears from his seething brother (who is played by [NEIL MUNRO](#)). Halfway through Minute #5, as he trudges down the stairs, something far more powerful than a handgun puts a bullet in Jeremy's back. Then comes a second shot, to guarantee death. The silencer buys the killer time to escape.

Someone calls the Police. Most of the NIGHT HEAT regulars arrive. Marv Theisen and Laura Beaumont (who has returned as she pledged) try to be informative in radically different ways. "THAT's the murderer," Marvin says to Kevin O'Brien. "*You KILLED him, Laura.*" Even a cop is thrown by this sort of an introduction.

But not the Accused. She holds out her hand. "I'm Laura Beaumont." In slow motion, O'Brien accepts it. Referring to Marvin, she languidly observes: "Somebody oughta give him something. His nerves are shot." Laura Beaumont is the only person we see *not* perspiring. Saying very little, she leads O'Brien toward her office.

The noise from Police operatives and disoriented employees stops when she shuts the door. So begins one of several flawless scenes...

KEVIN O'BRIEN: [Evenly] Why would he accuse you of murder?

LAURA BEAUMONT: And so we begin. Just like the movies.

O'BRIEN: [Evenly] There's a body down the hall, and no popcorn.

Returning to the factory to argue with Jeremy looks to have been the wrong move. Getting on the warm side of Chief Detective O'Brien would be a clever way to limit the damage. But their opening encounter is slow-motion pin-pricking.

O'Brien feigns surprise at a photogenic female being behind the famous brand that carries her name.

BEAUMONT: And you thought "Laura Beaumont" was actually 63 — fat, and bald...

O'BRIEN: Did you hear the shot?

BEAUMONT: I wasn't here.

O'BRIEN: Marvin seems to think you *were*.

BEAUMONT: Well that's the first *imaginative* idea Marvin's had in eight years. Marvin is accusing me of killing his brother because he knows I *hated* his brother.

O'BRIEN: Enough to kill him?

BEAUMONT: Jeremy Theisen was tasteless, grubby, greedy, and *greasy*. Marvin's not much better.

Walking over to her sketching table, Beaumont stays calm and begins her saga.

I *always wanted* to *draw* beautiful designs, for beautiful *suits*. BUT ya gotta have somebody to *make* 'em, right? Real *thread*, real *stitchers*, real delivery schedules. Hello, Jeremy and Marvin. I stay in here, and they run that [micro-pause] *sewer* out there. It's called a "working relationship." And we all get rich. "The Beaumont Line" — I've offered everything I've *ever* made, to pay my way outta this.

O'BRIEN: And No.

BEAUMONT: And No [mixed smile and snort]. I'm their *ticket*.

Now for a minor quibble, because Gem status requires believable scripts...

What's this about trying to "buy" her way out of the business relationship with the Theisens? She's a celebrity now. Why not find a big company — one far more professional than the Theisens' operation appears — to buy HER out of THEM?

But TV is TV, and O'Brien's specialty is crime-solving, not corporate buyouts.

Tactics rotate. Here he seems to reciprocate Beaumont's acid-drenched fatalism...

O'BRIEN: It's a sad story. Girl is beautiful, girl is rich, girl is famous, girl is *unhappy* — *tsk tsk* — breaks your *heart*.

BEAUMONT: Jeremy Theisen is one piece of *ugliness* gone.

O'BRIEN: Would it upset you if I told you you're sayin' all the *wrong things*?

BEAUMONT: Well I suppose an overheated *cop* in off-the-rack *polyester* is going to think whatever he wants — to the limit of his *polyester mind* [as her *snarkiness abruptly stops*]. I didn't kill him.

She can't resist moving to a different sort of clarity. "IF I'd *thought* of it, and if I'd known *how*, maybe I *would've* killed him. Maybe; I don't know. And I don't know why I never *thought* of it. It was *somebody's* damn good idea."

Near a murder scene, this ohhh-so-cool lady is calmly uttering "wrong" things that shout MOTIVE — while O'Brien seems to be handling his role "right." He radiates skepticism with a whiff of hostility. It's good professional behavior.

But he's doing something else: Using low-key, drawn-out sentences: Almost like a munitions specialist determining how much danger exists as he nears the explosive. It's an extremely rare approach for O'Brien during this series. It's also justified...

A truly unsettling relationship is underway; in fact, it defines the whole episode.

The Clear Lines of NIGHT HEAT; Burns & Jeffords; and its Top Cop

In some ways, NIGHT HEAT feels like a throwback to 1960. Back then, TV cops were forceful and their criminal foes were not complex, deprived, or good bets for rehab. Accordingly, psychologists were not handed part of the episode.

That changed during the '70s; and it changed again as murders and street violence increased, to the point where "shrinks" are an endangered species on NIGHT HEAT. Social workers are scarce, too. Even *Hawaii Five-O* had softer edges than this 1980s series. No complaints from me. The point is: Drama fans, if they see good and evil as extremes on a continuum full of zigs and zags, will have problems with this show.

The demographics? Modern enough. The Mid-South Precinct has a senior Detective who is black — [EUGENE CLARK](#) as Colby Burns — and a female Prosecutor to focus the cops on (ahem) Procedure: Elaine Jeffords ([DEBORAH GROVER](#)) tries to make sure she doesn't get stuck with a weak case. Sometimes her requirements end up making success easier, not harder, for her arresting colleagues. And...

If you really want to know the NIGHT HEAT crew, and can overlook a hundred or more typos, turn to **Rick's TV** — <http://rickstv.com/midsouth/actors.html>

Given the risks he'll take in "The Beaumont Line," what will help now is a better sense of **Kevin O'Brien**. Here's just 27% of Comrade Rick's 456-word account...

"Kevin was the veteran cop. His former partner was gunned down. Kevin is dating his former partner's wife, Nicole. The two met for the first time at the bar Nicole worked at. The two go through various ups and downs during the series..."

"Whenever Kevin takes notes from a witness, he uses a note pad that looks like it was bought at The Dollar Store; when he finishes taking notes, he punctuates the note pad with two sharp strikes of the pen..."

"Kevin's father is dead and when he passed away he left the family very little money. His father owned a store and Kevin once stole a pop case from it... Never wished to go to law school. He cannot afford to buy a house. He is use to having bad dreams... Doesn't like heights... He takes a little milk in his tea... He went to college..."

"He wouldn't be caught dead in an art gallery. He owns the board game *Clue*. Wears an off-the-rack polyester suit **[about which Laura Beaumont was dismissive, and later apologizes]**. Has been on the job for 15 years."

"Laura Beaumont is a Spoiled, Greedy, Egotistical, FAKE Artiste"

The key characters are now at Headquarters. Marvin Theisen is *demanding* protection...from Beaumont. And she's in the Interrogation Room with O'Brien. They go through the sequence of events at and around the factory. O'Brien maintains his distance and slow deployment of words. Must be getting hear Midnight.

O'Brien drives to Nicole's (the tavern is named NIKKI's), distracted as ever. He even bangs on the air-conditioner. They adjourn to her car. He says he'd like to skip the ride. What? He just wants to take a walk (and then get home in his own car).

"Kevin, the bar's been closed for an hour [and] I've been waiting for you." Bafflement turns into resentment, and they joust about who *doesn't* want to be with the other. He reminds her of their agreement to go somewhere for the weekend. Don't count on it, Nicole says, and drives off. And Laura Beaumont is parked nearby.

She sees Kevin begin the trudge. She zips around the block to appear to be coming from a different direction, pulls up next to him, right before he'd get into his vehicle, and says, more deadpan than droll: "Need a lift, soldier?"

She drives O'Brien to her apartment. It isn't long until she begins to seduce him. We have no idea how far it gets. But one colleague is surprised to see him in the office "early." Sarcasm? Besides, O'Brien & Co. are supposed to be NIGHT-shifters.

O'Brien is not his usual hard-charging self; and Detective Frank Giambone is worried about his partner and superior. His attempts to get O'Brien to confess his attraction to Beaumont are stonewalled. "There's nothing goin' on that's gonna touch *you*, Frank." A discovery in a dumpster prompts Giambone to try again...

It has to do with the weapon, found just a few feet from the Theisens' factory. The gun is "from the Algerian War [1957 to '72]," Giambone reports: "It belonged to some Colonel. He died. And it was sold in an estate sale about a *month* ago — in Normandy." "Good," replies O'Brien, intent on his original distraction.

GIAMBONE: Where was Laura Beaumont a month ago?

O'BRIEN: You gonna say Normandy?

GIAMBONE: No. I'm just gonna say "France."

He hands O'Brien a piece of paper verifying her whereabouts and the dates.

O'BRIEN: At a fashion show in Paris. She is a *designer*, Frank.

GIAMBONE: Right.

O'BRIEN: [Suddenly irked] Do you have any *evidence*? About Normandy?

GIAMBONE: No, I thought *you* might ask her — next time you see her.

The next time unfolds in what seems like no time. Kevin O'Brien is back in Laura Beaumont's office. She has a suit for him. "Virgin wool," she says alluringly.

"Verrry nice," he replies languidly. "As a bribe?" She snickers out a quick *yesss*. "You should know *better*." "Well, it's nothing to me — I make 'em, there's a thousand more." Just a trifle, then — but isn't the *thought* what counts?

"Welll," says O'Brien, "it'd [pause] smell a little funny." And then: "You, uh — you been to France lately?" Asking it seems more like box-checking than suspicion.

Right as that scene plays out, Giambone shows up at Nikki's. She's behind the bar, as usual: "Frankie, where's your partner?" Still at Headquarters, he guesses. Giambone asks her: "So, uhhh, when are you two leaving?" Nicole has the car packed for their weekend escape. But she expects Kevin to bail.

"Well, it's been a helluva *week*," Giambone says. "I mean he uh — " Not missing a beat, she replies: "I know, he *deserves* it; he really does." Nicole means: Her long-time boyfriend deserves this week of misery.

The viewer is taken back and forth in space, as the events overlap. The aridly detached Beaumont has turned kittenish. No more sparring with O'Brien. "If you think I'm the *murderer*, you better not turn your back — better stay awake. *Stay awake*,"

she commands in a whisper. Having already enfolded him, they kiss and she leans over him and he drops back onto another sketching table.

This nicely-modulated episode never shows more than that. Because NIGHT HEAT as a late-night series had ways to show *much* more than that, we can assume Kevin O'Brien was not unfaithful. Actually, *this* time is unlikely to have been a sexual interlude, because yet *another* rapid scene has him showing up at Nikki's.

It's after Midnight. Closing time. Is it one night, or three, after Jeremy's Theisen's murder? This series is notorious for implying that, miraculously, an entire case can start and end between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. The point here? If you take a liking to NIGHT HEAT, don't waste time trying to process the daze from these nights.

The scripts are fairly consistent in terms of quality, though, and the structure gets some credit — NIGHT HEAT being set up so that both the leading character and his #1 woman work evenings — for the reliability of this unusual series.

"She Could Walk ... Wink ... Buy Her Way, to the Moon"

"Ya ready?," Nicole says. "I just have to get rid of these last few people...and the tank is full." Kevin can't do this weekend. He's evasive, and Nicole seethes, though not surprised. "No explanations, please," and she goes back to closing duties.

Earlier, we saw Nicole gush about Beaumont's \$900 suits (100% wool). Struggling for words, she tells newspaper columnist Tommy Kirkwood: "You can feel them coming two blocks away." When Kirkwood boils that down to "maybe Kevin can get a decent suit out of this case," she is appalled. *This* woman knows the threat from her rival, by fame and looks, as well as by product-quality.

To avoid any more indecisiveness and (maybe) not wanting to hear about a case Kevin is obsessed by, she stays busy. Let someone else save Kevin. The two best candidates are ready to try. Both Giambone and Kirkwood (played by ALLAN ROYAL) are totally on Nicole's side and, this time, they combine forces.

FRANK GIAMBONE: So what does the fancy lady want?

KEVIN O'BRIEN: [No answer]

GIAMBONE: Look — I know ya got the experience. And I know ya got a couple years on me. And I know you got me out of a couple scraps, Kevin [pause]. All I wanna know is: When's it my turn?

"My turn" means when will it be okay to keep his senior partner from risking emotional disaster and maybe even professional ruin.

O'BRIEN: Someday.

GIAMBONE: What about right now? Fifteen years on the job doesn't make you the *Pope*, you know.

O'BRIEN: [Slightly irritated but controlled] I *said* someday.

GIAMBONE: Fine. *Fine*. Ya know — I can't talk to you. I can't! You talk to him, Tommy.

Heading out of Nikki's, Giambone tells the columnist: "Maybe he'll listen to you."

O'BRIEN: [Wearily] Make it sumpum I haven't *heard* yet.

Kirkwood pulls up a chair to face the fellow he has known since they were kids. He is nursing a thick head cold and doesn't try to be original...

I'm gonna say it anyway. You're a cop, Kevin. A 24-hour cop. She's Laura Beaumont. She could walk her way, she could wink her way, she could *buy* her way, to the *Moon*.... Think about it, old pal. See if it makes any sense.

After nearly 3,000 words, you're likely ready for the *second* half of "The Beaumont Line." As you probably know, this publication says little about the episode's second half. Why spoil it? The deeper reason, of course, is that a readership of writers and authors appreciates set-up, structure and character-definition. This applies to non-fiction saga-conveyors as well as novelists and scriptwriters.

And, unlike any episode covered in GEMS so far, for some reason, THIS one exists on the web **in two video files of equal length**. As of February 28, 2025, you can go straight from here to that second half. Marvin Theisen and Tony the Foreman are going through the racks of suits trying to figure out next steps...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YW-nYsicKLM>

What else? NIGHT HEAT isn't on studio-sponsored DVDs. But a respectable public-domain set, with the episodes in helpful chronological order, is available from the FILM COLLECTORS SOCIETY OF AMERICA; the purchase link bottoms out this box...

Two other NIGHT HEAT Gems lead their respective issues...

Gem #31 ([Issue #10](#)) — "[The Cost of Doing Business](#)" — 11/5/1987

Gem #46 ([Issue #15](#)) — "[Ancient Madness](#)" — from 5/9/1985

And here's where I bought the DVDs (no problems at all...)

<https://tv-museum.myshopify.com/products/night-heat-tv-series-21-dvds>

And now – also rare, for this publication, an Appendix...

The NIGHT HEAT Cast, Especially Kirkwood the Philosopher



[Stephen Mendel](#), [Sean McCann](#), Eugene Clark, [Stevie Vallance](#), Scott Hylands, [Jeff Wincott](#), [Allan Royal](#)

The regulars on NIGHT HEAT pretty much stayed constant during four years. I can't think of another vintage series, except 77 SUNSET STRIP during its first five seasons, whose characters are so well-defined, individually and as an interactive group.

Two prior salutes to NIGHT HEAT praised having a newspaper columnist be one of the regulars (in fact, as #2 to Scott Hylands). By putting a writer into each complex story, the series suggests an obligation to offer something like a moral. That's why you'll hear Kirkwood draw all manner of conclusions during and after each case.

His takes differ from the "why they do it" aspects of other detective shows that relied on psychologists and social workers. Kirkwood's outlook is macro, as opposed to micro, and quite often he settles for thoughtfully vague commentary.

At the same time, NIGHT HEAT was smart enough to avoid political propaganda. By the mid-1980s, making excuses for reprobates was out. Same for attempts to guilt-trip TV viewers about "society" or make cops "systematic" about anything beyond risk-reduction and paying attention to laws and protocols.

So, "moral of the story" — does this phrase fit NIGHT HEAT's design? Because I don't trust the newer dictionaries, this boil-down is from the *Merriam-Webster*

2004 paperback: "The practical meaning (as of a story)." This is their first definition of "moral" as a noun. If we go with it, then what Kirkwood says, toward an episode's close, is too sweeping to be practical, but pointed enough to be interesting.

His parting observation can also sound like an overwrought tack-on. Still, he needs to speak. Structure requires it! Besides, if he didn't, we would see/hear *not one word* of what this newspaper guy WRITES. The character would be less than whole.

"Practical" just isn't a Kirkwood trademark. Even so, what he "says" (writes) near the end of "The Beaumont Line," after we've seen O'Brien's disorientation, has worth...

We make our own prisons — all of us. And we sentence ourselves to life. It might take years, it might take months, it might only take a few days, but all of us, sooner or later [pause] want out.

Is he referring to lifelong friend Kevin O'Brien? Or to Laura Beaumont? Seems to me it's both. And Kirkwood's semi-moral is so sweeping that "out" can mean all manner of things. But it's hard to argue with, isn't it? Does that make it profound?

Being a columnist as opposed to a reporter, and with a tendency to philosophize (classically defined as "search for truth"), Tommy Kirkwood aims for sweep rather than precision or rarity. The appropriate red ribbon for Gem #51 is his task.

You've seen its first twist. A minute later, after declaring that "all of us...want out," he spells out a few of the methods and types...

We get tired of pounding at the walls, and shaking at the bars. We try to break out. Some try buying their way out — but they shoot and kill. Most of us, MOST of us, try to dream our way out. For a night. For a couple of nights. TASTED it: Life outside the walls.

There, he *does* mean his old-pal Kevin, the cop. And the episode's final exchange between Kevin and Nicole is brilliant. And much more than merely "plausible."

It Takes Time and Space to Prove an Episode's Depth...

And the only way to convey a Gem's outstanding nature is with "evidence." As in: Illuminating dialogue, in healthy portions, and with an inventory of the **TENSIONS** that keep a viewer calculating, emoting, and riveted.

I made the space; thank you for contributing the time.

Next Issue: www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-17.pdf

FEATURING: *The Mod Squad, Magnum, P.I., and Hawaiian Eye*