



Detective Drama **GEMS...**

No Charge, and Still Arresting

Issue #18 May 2026

Radio and TV Episodes Analyzed...for Writers & Academics

Gem #55 — "[The Compulsion to Confess](#)" — October 31, 1961
From **THE NEW BREED** (ABC-TV, 1961-62)

Fourteen of the original 36 episodes are now available from this reliable provider: www.LovingtheClassics.com. They show Lieutenant Price Adams and his well-trained colleagues taking Cops & Crooks beyond Philip Marlowe and Johnny Dollar.

NEW BREED cases reflected the surging American interest in credentials, psychology, and data. Crime-solving was becoming more systematic and less intuitive. Lone-wolf doggedness is absent. So are bursts of insight out of next to nowhere.

Start with psychology. This Gem's very title was lifted from a 1959 book published by Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, a New York City firm. It was based on lectures delivered by Theodore Riek in 1924. You can verify [that book](#) and/or skim [the abstract](#). Better yet, just keep reading and [TELLY SAVALAS](#) (KOJAK by the mid-1970s, and in real life the holder of a Psychology degree) will explain that "compulsion" angle.

To widen the scope: On January 20th, 1961, the youngest U.S. President took over from the oldest one. Dwight Eisenhower was born in 1890, and John Kennedy in 1917. In his Inaugural Address, JFK said "new" or "anew" nine times. His 1960 convention speech had pitched "[The New Frontier](#)" as a summons to great adventures.

For Secretary of Defense, the new President chose Ford CEO [Robert McNamara](#). His "whiz kids" rolled out counterinsurgency programs, used mainframe computers to evaluate war scenarios, and made sure military briefings stopped being brief.

Crime-detection and *detective depiction* blended into those trends. On CBS from

1960 to '62, *Checkmate!* psychologist Dr. Carl Hyatt ([SEBASTION CABOT](#)) speculated with professorial confidence. The whole *series* was confident — the only one I know of where a trio of private eyes earned high fees by *preventing* a specific murder.

THE NEW BREED specialists weren't heading to Southeast Asia or any other overseas hot spot. But viewers heard them introduced in ways that, had they been real people, would've earned them a nod from Secretary McNamara...

- **Price Adams**, "age 33, BA in Criminology, UCLA Class of '48. His partner, Officer **Joe Huddleston**, age 27, Science Major from Stanford, ex-jet pilot... Adams and Huddleston [are] part of the elite team of 80 policemen set up as the fluid, intelligent, and tough **Metro Squad**, men of the new breed."
- Two colleagues show up about 10 minutes into episode: "Sergeant **Vince Cavalli**, 35, a Marine veteran and *expert* in arms, and Officer **Pete Garcia**, a graduate of the United States Army Language School."

Meanwhile, the lone wolves were being put out to pasture (and it wasn't for mixing metaphors, an offense winked at here). When the '64-65 season opened, not a single private detective would have an office, or a show, on prime-time TV...

We interrupt this Big Picture for an announcement: If you're here *solely* for the featured *script*, skip to the bottom of Page 4. You likely don't need to hear these first few pages explain how a 1961 detective drama jived with sociological, managerial and governmental trends. And why make this case at all? Because parts of this issue, kicking off Year Six, are meant to attract *academics*, in sync with placing Gems on Academia.edu. **We now return you to the analysis...**

Teams! Credentials! Data! In Washington, experts took the wheel, and brainy people created serious messes — from "urban renewal" to Vietnam, and inflation wrought by federal overspending. President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" was shaped by sociologists and ideologues placing their faith in [secular forms](#) of "rehabilitation."

Along with a surge in violent crime — twice as many murders in the USA 1973 versus '63 — junk theories helped restore cops *and* private detectives to prime-time splendor.

An early beneficiary was MIKE CONNORS as Joe Mannix. Late in 1967, he was chafing in a big firm, lofting paper airplanes while founder [Low Wickersham](#) glowered at the video monitor. Mannix put it this way to a shifty bail bondsman: "I work for *wages*, Kelvo, not revenge. [Sam Spade](#) went out when the Great Society came in."

A nifty and in some ways profound quip! It didn't signal job-satisfaction, but it nicely captured a fading era: The Great Society was already showing cracks. And, in September 1968, Joe Mannix would go solo. That change helped [save the series](#).

"A Select Los Angeles Police Squad" — *with Twice the (Prime) Time*

THE NEW BREED was intelligent. Precise narration. Hard to spot a cheap trick. No zaniness. In fact, the *effective* "trick" tended to rely on *tools* that were not cheap.

During 1961, Wall Street was jazzed by Electronics companies and a stock bubble related to President Kennedy's call for a U.S. Moon landing. And one NEW BREED resource, the [Spectrograph](#), featured "a concave speculum metal grating with a 21-foot radius of curvature" — big enough to dominate a middle-class living room.

Cop shows had room for such goodies? They did now. THE NEW BREED arrived as the good guys were getting *twice* the (prime-time) *space* to define and solve each case.

Only one modern-day analyst has floodlighted that change. To do so, *The Rap Sheet* founder [JEFF KINGSTON PIERCE](#) also gave space to an array of video hits & misses from before 1962. "Thirty-minute crime dramas were once a pop-culture phenomenon," reads his teaser. "All but a few have been forgotten. This is their story." Extract plus link, in the shaded box, lower half of Page 4.

THE NEW BREED's executive producer was QUINN MARTIN, a bold thinker delighted to have more than 30 minutes. In 1958, he scored big with *The Untouchables*. Only 36 at the time, Mr. Martin and [his expanding rolodex of talent](#) went on to do well with *The Fugitive*, *The Invaders*, *Barnaby Jones*, *Cannon*, *The Streets of San Francisco*, and other shows. Wikipedia tells us that he "had at least one television series [in] prime time every year for 21 straight years (from 1959 to 1980)."

But THE NEW BREED lasted just one season. As for this episode? "Flat and Boring," says a recent diss at IMDB dot-com. "A man employed by a big company working for the Government is killed. So the investigation begins. Expect no surprise here."

That quote is here in part to lower your expectations, and also so I can argue with it: It'll be *two* men killed, not one, in the same plant, which leads to dead ends for two different L.A. Police units. Dead ends are the seeds of script breakthroughs.

"If you want desperately to sleep," the debunker goes on, "you'll need no pills with such a tepid tale, believe me. The only interesting point is Telly Savalas and Sidney Pollack in some early performances of theirs." He's right about those two.

"Maybe it could be OK for most of you, but certainly not me." (He certainly *sounds* certain.) "I need surprises, not necessarily action and violence, and also powerful performances and sequences. Here, nothing of this..."

Brash take-downs — with no evidence or exhibits — are all over the Web. But they might help you sense why unrepentant editors start analytical publications that aim for (**wink**) the opposite extreme. Fortunately, when it comes to THE NEW BREED, a balanced appraisal is available. Even better, it comes from a Fall 1961 analyst.

Bravo to [BOSTON WHITMORE](#) of THE RETRO TUBE (it's [on Substack](#)) for unearthing perhaps the first published review. A pioneer in various ways, [KAY GARDELLA](#) worked for decades at the New York *Daily News*. Part of her beat was TV. Here she is, at the start of October 1961...

The mold was set back in '51 when Jack Webb launched *Dragnet*. Ever since, a season doesn't pass without at least one series with a realistic approach to the cops-and-robbers drama being rolled off the Hollywood assembly line. The latest is *The New Breed*...

And? Hmmnn — looks like the joke is on me. She ended up not liking it either!

While it shapes up as a carefully produced, thoroughly detailed hour-long look at how a select Los Angeles police squad operates [by displaying] a reliance on brain rather than brawn ... it's [also] a tedious semi-documentary program that struck a boring note with this viewer... Cut out of the same blue cloth, all [the regulars] turned in low-key, unemotional performances... Void of excessive dramatic trappings, the program's attention was placed on the facts of the crime and its solution.

Gems was launched in 2020 to commemorate and celebrate. Yet you have now seen "boring" *twice*. What can I say? For starters: **Yay to Kay** — for avoiding sarcasm back there in '61, and for acknowledging the show's core design principle.

"Rediscovering a Vanished Species: Half-Hour TV Mysteries"

Half-hour crime dramas of the mid-20th century were made on short schedules — sometimes filmed at a pace of one episode every two days, with a commitment to supply more than 30 installments annually. Maintaining a show's vitality...demanded considerable tightness in the scripting... There was scant room for subplots, and screenwriters habitually fell back on voice-over narration to plug storytelling gaps. What made...*Peter Gunn* stand out was that it succeeded, amid such challenges, in delivering tales that were consistently captivating, as well as complete and coherent.

<https://crimereads.com/half-hour-mysteries-tv-crime-dramas/>

On to Gem 55: "The Compulsion to Confess" Only Starts Weak

The opening scene precedes the theme music and has no dialogue. Except for the murder weapon, it has all the creativity of a harum-scarum movie clip from 1944.

We briefly look down upon a plant floor's bygone format for U.S. factory work: Long tables, where maybe 200 workers can sit. And their "assembling" requires no conveyor belt. The parts are mostly small, because transistors were the big thing.

Different hallways are on the higher floors. Someone is up there after 8 p.m., thinking in a distracted way. Security is out of sight. So is the person preparing to kill. Although the machines (the HVAC, too) seem to be silent, he creeps up behind his target...

Really? Without making a sound? And in a *deserted* plant? His colleague is enjoying a cigarette, and not even sitting down. As a murder moment, this is far-fetched.

Dead in seconds: A senior Research executive at the **Sorens Electronics Company**. With so much of the plant's lighting off or dimmed, we couldn't see the weapon.

At Los Angeles Police Headquarters, the Homicide Division, under the direction of Lieutenant Howard Klein [[STAFFORD REPP](#)] conducted a vigorous investigation of Warren Greene's murder. But after a week of intensive work, their investigation had reached a dead end. The case was then turned over to the group of Specialists...known as the Metropolitan Squad...

[JOHN BERADINO](#) is Sergeant Vince Cavelli and [JOHN CLARKE](#) is Officer Joe Huddleston. Their boss, Lieutenant Price Adams, is played by [LESLIE NEILSEN](#). Last time we saw him (and not as a good guy) was the '72 MOD SQUAD episode "[Deal with the Devil](#)."

So Adams & Huddleston head to Sorens. Ahead of these two Metro cops arriving, the founder lays it out for viewers. Production delays are plaguing the top managers...

We purposely *bid* at an absolute *minimum* price to get this Army Contract. Not only are we gonna run over this price and take a heavy loss — but it looks like we won't be able to meet the Army's date... I don't mind losing MONEY, providing we can establish ourselves with the Government as being *able to deliver*. [Voice lowered...] But I certainly *will* mind losing out on both counts.

George Sorens is played by the versatile and often volatile [HAROLD J. STONE](#). Mr. Stone was all over TV for 25+ years, and I don't recall him (for good or for bad) as anything other than decisive. Here, it's Classic G.I. Generation: Gruff but engaged.

Shown to us right after the theme music, and then introduced to Adams and Huddleston, the four men Sorens is addressing will become the main suspects. He wants to help, and he's fine going over the same ground with this second team.

But he *still* can't believe a Sorens higher-up would commit murder. Another executive concedes only the "daily friction of men working together — I'm sure you find that in the Police Department, Lieutenant — but nothing that you'd call antagonism."

If the killer *is* a senior employee, he has already eluded the Homicide guys. But Adams and Huddleston, on the plant floor, happen to see a fierce argument, before lunch.

Year One of GEMS began with [Issue Zero](#). Year Five concluded with [Issue #17](#). And **Year Six** is underway with one of **Quinn Martin's** early ventures as an independent Producer; along with the only time PETER FALK and WILLIAM SHATNER squared off. Looking ahead: The November 2026 issue will begin coverage of [IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT](#) in addition to (yes, for a *detectives* publication, it will be a stretch) the [KRAFT SUSPENSE THEATRE](#).

At the next stop, the brother of Greene's widow gives Adams a hard time. "How many of you guys are gonna question her?" This comes after Adams (gently) asks whether Mr. Greene drank or gambled. The grieving Mrs. Greene loved her husband and he had no major weaknesses. At home, he said little about his work, and she wouldn't have been able to follow any of those business matters if he had.

Showing the cops out, her brother bristles when asked about his own relations with the dead man. "I'm not your enemy, Mr. Adair," Adams counters. "We're just trying to find the one who has harmed the people you love — directly, and indirectly."

Adair calms, and then admits: "I have so much anger in me and nobody to be angry with. I'm sorry. I wish I knew something that could help."

These are Police, and their *Procedures* play out. During the next day or two, all four Metro cops talk with the dead man's bankers, insurance agent, "friends and relatives," even Greene's rabbi. We see fragments of certain sessions. They don't seem rushed or intense. Substantive exchanges...tightly excerpted...in a deliberate sequence.

But — NO LEADS — at least not from any of the non-Sorens contacts.

Credentialed yet "Fluid," Open to Data and the Subconscious

Enter Terry Savalas as the "Consultant Psychiatrist" for the Department...

Dr. BUEL REID: The chances are that you've already made *contact* with the murderer.

PRICE ADAMS: Well, I'd hardly call that a *hit*. It'd be more like an *error* if we passed him by.

REID: If you've made contact, the murderer hasn't necessarily passed *you* by... Guilty parties usually have what we call "a compulsion to confess... The guilt-ridden unconscious demands justice.

ADAMS: Well, I wouldn't say that the GREENE murderer has this "compulsion" going for him.

REID: Ahh — you don't *know* that. Sometimes it happens immediately: You know how many times Homicide gets calls from the scene of the murder — "I just killed" so and so... Other times it's not so *easy*. The criminal's *unconscious* does real battle with the conscious mind. The compulsion is then worked out *very* subtly. But the struggle is usually still going on...

Price Adams is following Dr. Reid's logic, but with no "aha" clicker. Reid offers him a hook: "Perhaps your questioning can serve as a positive *catalyst* — JAR the murderer into some sort of action which would enable you to apprehend him."

ADAMS: Well, I could USE some help from someone — even the murderer. Anyway, Doctor, I feel much better about this thing.

Why? Maybe it's because this case can't get any worse. All four Metro detectives will soon resort to what were not yet called "data-bases" to see whose higher-ed or career paths crossed where. High tech? Not here. *College Yearbooks*, all sprawled about.

The right strategy won't be clear until two-thirds in, when incremental moves bring Adams to a "jarring" gambit so bold that the headstrong CEO agrees to carry it out.

Additional Events from the Episode's First Half

The confrontation the Metro duo saw was senior engineer **Henry Giles** fending off Plant Foreman **Austin Rogers**. Rogers is played by [SYDNEY POLLACK](#) and Giles by [WILLIAM WINDOM](#) (who excelled in both crime-drama and comedy roles).

Giles and two associates had worked all night and "these specifications are letter-perfect" and if that's true "there must be something wrong on the FLOOR, Austin."

The specs ARE the problem, Austin shot back to Giles. So forget making him "the patsy" for a Government delivery date now in jeopardy. Austin further blasted Giles for "sitting around in that plush *executive* suite" and grabbed him by the lapels.

Because this fight remains the only worthwhile lead, the Metro unit's boss tells them to go back to Sorens the next day and "take those executives one by one."

Just hours later, again with the plant nearly empty, Security finds Giles's body "apparently murdered with the same type weapon" that killed Warren Greene.



Like the first time, we saw the murderer. But only poorly: This second killing took place in the so-called Clean Room, where partial face masks are mandatory. And the last thing we heard Giles say is what got him killed: He said he found the source of the production screw-up. He did not realize that the other guy who was working late is the one the sabotage would likely be traced to.

Garcia and Cavelli are sent to pick up Austin Rogers. They bring him to Police HQ at 1:45 a.m. He sounds shocked about Giles's murder. "Where were you last night, Mr. Rogers?"

So begins a back & forth that takes nearly *five* of the 49 minutes. Valuable prime air-time — and well spent, because it adds to this Gem's quirky plausibility: Price Adams ends up *clearing* Austin Roberts, after two murders inside the Sorens Electronics plant.

Later that morning, after not much sleep, he says that "at least we had the *good feeling* of having a *genuine suspect* for a while."

Without spoiling the ending, a GEMS write-up explores each script's design by devoting at least 2,500 words to the episode's *first half*. But maybe you've already learned enough about "The Compulsion to Confess" (the 1961 TV episode, not the 1959 sociology book) to tackle the video? As of late April 2026, this link worked...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrh2g1VTGoM>

Despite fatalism about vanishing videos, I expect that upload to endure. Why? Because it's on a [William Windom](#) TRIBUTE site! Diligent fans can be the media historian's best friend, even if we don't know their name.

But you *should* know Mr. Windom's. He deserves respect for his solid guest roles in MANNIX, McMILLAN & WIFE, and the original FIVE-O. And also for a 1985 MAGNUM episode that was Gem #23 — "[Blood and Honor](#)" — where he recalls Tom Selleck to Naval duty. Viewing options for that one, assembled by YIDIO, display [here](#).

Homicide Searched Greene's Twice. What About Giles' Office?

Most solid detective-drama scripts have a middle phase where (a) answers keep ruling themselves out with nothing good moving into the gaps, and/or (b) some extraneous discovery, event or person *redefines the whole case* in a startling way.

"The Compulsion to Confess" comes out as more (a) than (b). The Metro guys have to use what they know, and who they see and hear from, and those damn yearbooks, to figure out where the overlaps are in the fog, and then...keep on reconfiguring.

Adams's superior, played by [BYRON MORROW](#), asks about sabotage. Price tells him the FBI and the Army have ruled it out, because "Neither Giles nor Greene were indispensable." Then maybe "a psychopathic murderer is loose at Sorens." Their interviews are covering that track too, Adams replies. So far no one has mentioned a chronic complainer, particular crank, or overheard bitterness against the company.

On the *fourth* morning after the first Sorens murder, Adams goes back to Dr. Reid. He is listening to a patient on tape describing her exhibitionism. What Price would like is a deeper sense of "compulsion" as a driver. What about the killer who *doesn't* call from the scene, and instead "tries to work out his compulsion in *subtle* ways"?

"They work it out in many different ways," Reid replies: "PRE-crimes and POST-crimes. It's a *wholly* unconscious activity and the particular pattern depends on the *individual* ..." Go back to the boring facts, Reid says, and apply a psychological lens...

BOTH men were murdered at the plant. WHY? Assuming the motivations for the murders were...*connected* with some plant activity, wouldn't it *seem*...more desirable to kill both men *away* from the plant?

ADAMS: Yeah, but where does that *lead* you?

REID: It leads me to the conclusion to that the murderer is a member of Sorens establishment, AND that he committed both murders THERE because he has a desire to keep coming back to the scene of the crime.

ADAMS: Isn't that a rather worn cliché, Doctor?

REID: Not at all. In the area of compulsion to confess, the criminal is most likely, in his own unconscious, to be apprehended where the crime was committed. [Pause] Do you buy that?

ADAMS: [With a slight smile] My first purchase from the unconscious.

But not in a box with a red ribbon. Adams and his team *already* take the killer to be an insider. And this is where D. Buel Reid, as the old saying went, takes a powder: "That's why we use Police, Price, and not psychiatrists, to catch criminals."

What he offers is "just another tool to use along the way." Cordial, almost serene, with no tactical suggestions. "Let me know what happens..." Adams says thanks.

Circa 1961, and all the way up to Steve McGarrett, psychologists and psychiatrists are getting bigger roles in TV crime-solving. This part's far less apparent: The cops mostly treat them as another form of Lab technician, especially the off-site docs. Only Dr. Carl Hyatt of *Checkmate!* can find himself in dire straits of the type his conventional gun-carrying business partners often face.

Back at the plant, George Sorens remains frazzled. Cash-flow and deadlines demand his energy. Meanwhile, these Police visits don't stop, and so — fine, whatever.

Adams *does* have new energy. But he can't explain it to his partner. In BOTH of the murdered executives' offices, they paw through file cabinets, binders, and items on the desks. "Just what is it we're *looking* for?," says Huddleston. "A MESSAGE, Joe."

Of course they get one, or seem to, from an object that needs interpretation. The item is one that couldn't have been found by Homicide because the second Sorens killing was Metro's assignment, not Homicide's. This episode finally becomes lively.

Housekeeping (including Musical) Notes plus a Transition

[DAVID ZELAG GOODMAN](#) created this illuminating though not flashy script. And the 14 surviving NEW BREED episodes can be owned for a reasonable price from

<https://www.lovingtheclassics.com/new-breed-14-episodes.html>

As for musical cues? Anyone who recalls or has discovered late-'50s mainstream jazz should love THE NEW BREED's: More intimate than M SQUAD and less bouncy than SUNSET STRIP. Except for the *closing* theme, which is, by any standard, zippy.

A two-minute audio clip — www.ExactingEditor.com/the-New-Breed.mp3 — lets you hear that closing theme, plus a fragment of Narrator [ART GILMORE](#) offering a closing salute (it's from a different episode) to Lieutenant Price Adams & Co.

THE NEW BREED's music is credited to [DOMINIC FRONTIERE](#). Just 30 in 1961, did his youth also make him a "New Frontiere"? At age 8½ in September 1963, I was of course ignorant of Mr. Frontiere's name and fame. Didn't matter, given that... His sonic contribution to every episode of *The Outer Limits* was fascinating to the point of physical fright. Along with the mutants and monsters, that show's *music* compelled me to sit as far away from the TV as possible...but miss nothing.

Gem #56 — "[The Wrong Woman](#)" — November 24, 1988 From **NIGHT HEAT** (CBS and CTV, 1985 to '89)

Versatile crime-show actor [FRANK PELLEGRINO](#) guest-stars as Officer **Joe Morata**, and "the wrong woman" is someone that both he and series regular Detective **Frank Giambone** ([JEFF WINCOTT](#)) have known since all three were adolescents.

Trusted friends, these two guys, long before the Police Academy: Back to grade school, in the "Little Italy" part of downtown. Despite working in the same building, it has been a while since they've done anything social. And tonight won't be it...

The office rumor, Joe tells Frank over drinks, is that Internal Affairs is "on my case." Joe naturally denies any misconduct, and naturally Frank believes him. If so, then maybe Frank could seek clarity from their ultimate superior, Lieutenant Jim Hogan, who "must have an 'in' at internal Affairs." "That's not such a good idea," Frank counters. Instead, why not keep doing your job and ignore the rumors?

At the bottom of Minute #5, they part company. How startling to see the pictures being snapped — five, and quickly — by someone in a white van across the street.

Next Scene: In his urban apartment, on the second floor, Joe Morata is thinking hard about his situation. Two or more drinks have not helped. He reluctantly takes a call, and the camera zooms in. But we hear none of the dialogue.

Minute 6:19: The people on the street hear a gunshot. Morata is dead, by a gun that was his; we saw him set it down. The Police arrive; and the premise is suicide.

But could something unusual have taken place *before* the fatal shot? A bizarre clue will soon enliven "Joey" Morata's shocked friend "Frankie" Giambone. He needs something that can suspend the suicide presumption that all of his colleagues (especially Lieutenant Hogan) are going along with.

One feature of this whole series, you might say, "dawns slowly": You can hardly ever tell what TIME is it; the only constant is the near-total absence of sunshine. Does it matter? Now that you won't be disoriented by it, probably not.

Now here's the Upsider: NIGHT HEAT is the only cop show to have, as part of the cast, a newspaper columnist *along with* an "Internal Affairs Department" — **IAD** (not to be confused with the **IED**, even though parallels soon emerge).

A very clever design feature, twice over, and made good use of by scriptwriters to work peer-to-peer — or media vs. police — tensions into this or that case.

The newspaper fellow is big on philosophy. He does not *over-act*, but prefers to *over-write* and *hyper-generalize*. Internal Affairs chief **Lieutenant Hearn** is in far fewer episodes. But he's reliably obnoxious and, during this one, pervasive.

"Morata's Where We Started. We Knows Where We'll End Up"

Back at the Mid-South Precinct building — could be 10:30 p.m., could be 2 a.m. — Detective Christine Meadows ([LAURA ROBINSON](#)) asks: "Did anyone find a ring in Joe's apartment?" No. Why does that matter? "Forensics was just on the line and they say it looked like he'd been wearing a ring recently."

"He WAS," confirms Giambone. Yet no ring was in his pockets, near him, or among his possessions. A stolen ring? Interesting. Along with this: *Nothing else* suggests robbery. No sign of struggle in the apartment, nothing was "messed up" by a frantic searcher, and a few hundred in cash stayed in the drawer.

Captain Kevin O'Brien ([SCOTT HYLANDS](#)) says Forensics should "go through his place again." And O'Brien's patrol-car partner is back in the game: "Joey was wearin' the RING" when they met earlier tonight! He "kept turning it *around* and *around* — so where did it GO?" Giambone even draws a sketch of the ring's pattern.

A second Forensics search takes place: No ring in that apartment. A highly personal item had vanished, in the space of a couple of hours. Odd clue? Lieutenant Hogan ([SEAN McCANN](#)) calls it a "helluva longshot."

But long odds aren't why Giambone can't run with it. The problem is that his emotions are too high; he has flared when anyone assumes suicide. "I'll put Colby and Carson on it," Hogan tells him gently. "IAD would like it better that way, too."

We soon hear Carson muse to Colby, "They say that IAD was closing in on Morata." The reply is a ratify: "Well, they sure got there in a hurry." Boy, did they. "There" means the dead man's apartment: Near the mid-point of Minute #8, not half an hour after the regular cops began their scour, we saw Lieutenant Hearn walk in.

At the funeral home, O'Brien and Giambone speak with Joe's mother. She asks for reassurance, because "now they're saying he was mixed up in something *bad*." Almost in a whisper, Giambone asks: "*Who's sayin' that?*" "The OTHER detectives who came around with *crazy* questions." Such as? "Does the son bring his mother gifts?" Of course he did, she had told them: Flowers, almost every visit.

So Morata's unease was valid. "Other Detectives" were tailing him. Pictures were also snapped of Joe's friend Frank, by those IADers in their plain-clothes van...

NIGHT HEAT packed many tensions and schisms into an episode, usually without bewildering or exhausting the audience. One way they managed it is by *avoiding complexity* regarding the bad guys and gals. Nothing about troubled childhoods and no psychologist on call. No evil masterminds like Wo Fat or Dr. Moriarity.

Why spend words and broadcast minutes to turn the dark forces into a garishly colorful tapestry? Since we're not going to SEE those dreamers and schemers after this one episode, keep them two-dimensional. Especially when the result is the freeing up of space, within the 48-minute box, for key events.

The crime or the racket can be complex, yes. But *not the perpetrators*. Their past can be indicated by skimming the Rap Sheet. UNLESS, of course, that person has no record *and* is friends with one of the NIGHT HEAT *regulars*...



Left Image: The most compelling guest actor is also at the funeral home. She is watching Frank Gambione, but pretends to be surprised — "Frank! *Oh my God*" — when their paths cross. Giambone calls her "Vicky," and Lieutenant Hearn's operatives also have pictures of *her* entering and exiting where *she* works.

Right Image: Gambione and Captain O'Brien, who leave at the same time as Vicky. She gives Frank a slip of paper and says he should call her. "You still at that Club?" "Yes, I manage the place now." "Does Delgado still own that joint?" "Yeah. Rico's been good to me." O'Brien, always alert, goes up a notch at the name *Delgado*.

No dark-sider is part of what happens next, but it's still jarring: When Giambone recognizes either a face in the white van or the van itself, he dashes over and bangs on its rolled-up window. "***You son of a bitch...***" Right: It's the IAD crew.

For different reasons, this shocks Vicky and O'Brien. The van screeches out of there, as O'Brien forcibly restrains Giambone. "Vultures," he seethes. "Damn vultures."

Impatient? It's okay to adjourn to <https://youtu.be/WZoojbyn6Bw>
No Typo — **YOU-TU-dot-BE** — but a weird domain that *does* house the odd Gem.
Also, since it didn't fit anywhere else: [IAN ADAMS](#) wrote this great script.

The hunt for the ring grinds on. "Ya know," Carson says to Colby, "when this is over, we could become [pause] *jewelry* appraisers." Cynicism, with a smile. This other line of his is nicely historical: "There's a million hock shops in the naked city..."

Their more fundamentally stressed colleague Frank Giambone? Turns out he's in for a far more pleasurable afternoon, ahead of clock-in for the evening shift.

Lisa Schrage and Lee Broker; plus Double Duty for Jorge Montesi

[LISA SCHRAGE](#) is memorable as **Victoria**. Years ago, she was the neighborhood girl hanging out with Joey and Frankie. Now the two survivors are in her apartment...

VICKY: When we were kids, we always looked out for each other.

FRANK: Joey would've gone to the *wall* for either one of us.

The musical backdrop — unusually smooth for *this* show — is languid 1980s sax. "We lost *touch* somewhere along the line," she tells Frank. "I hated that ..." She also tells him that she was suppressing, by "playing a part," at the funeral home, verbally stunted because, after all, "Joey's lying there in a *box*."

What she really wanted is to "ask you to be with me — take *care* of me — like when we were *kids*. [Pause] And here you are. You're still takin' care of me." During some intense kissing, he says: "Remember, it's a two-way street."

Detective Giambone is about to be taken care of. Change the middle letter in "sax." They'll both be late for work tonight.

Despite the passion, she seems distant, if not disconnected. When an experienced actress conveys that way, the role calls for it. But the close-up camera work is just as important as the words, and maybe you'll perceive her differently.

Lisa Schrage playing Vicky, as hinted at earlier, is "the wrong woman." The script

gives her no last name. In that pre-Internet time, when national name searches were awkward, writers and/or lawyers might've thought it wise for certain characters to have no last name. Much harder to be sued, or maybe expose someone else to a crackpot's action, when the person on the screen lacks a full name.

Then there's [LEE BROKER](#) as Lieutenant Hearn. This series never gave him a FIRST name. But unofficial monikers suggest themselves: **Dogged. Brooding. Mechanical.**

As head of Internal Affairs, Hearn's *orbit* is elliptical: Now and then, during the four seasons of NIGHT HEAT, he'll track, pressure and infuriate the full-timers.

The perfectly cast "Lieutenant Hearn" has a pockmarked face and always communicates in a mutter. Constricted jaw movements suggest stubborn side-effects from regular stints in a dental chair, or maybe it goes back to jaw surgery that had been entrusted with crossed fingers to a neophyte practitioner nephew.

Playing one of the good guys — as a corruption-fighter — Mr. Broker is trapped. The very design of this series means his character can never be allowed to be *right* about a fellow regular's supposed dishonesty. And still he carries on. The man's mix of vigilance and rampant skepticism is weirdly impressive.

And Lieutenant Hearn running the IAD can also use a form of IED — Improvised Explosive Device. In this episode, it takes only 45 seconds: Hearn and his #2 go into Lieutenant Jim Hogan's office to ask for "all the records." While he's there, Hogan is shown a series of pictures. At Minute 20:37, he comes out and tells Giambone: "I'm sorry, Frankie. You better get a hold of a lawyer."

As the Episode's Halfway Point Nears...

- Lisa Schrage as the alluring "Victoria" is becoming the central figure...
- While Lee Broker as "Hearn," neither a weekly figure nor a guest actor, is driving a corruption probe that unites every part of this drama...
- And Frank Giambone senses a path to clear his deceased friend but will have to depend on skeptical colleagues to shine the light.
- All his officemates agree that Hearn is a pain in the ass. But Giambone's defense of Joe Morata is a different matter, after that set of surreptitious photos causes him to be suspended by Hogan.
- Which makes him look to Vicky for answers on what or who Morata knew and whether he *had* been somehow trapped. Meanwhile, she is nursing some wound or a longing that we can't easily grasp...

And the tensions and cross-currents play out compellingly *and* plausibly.

The people who came together to give us this 1980s crime series — it's *routinely* impressive how much they packed into one (still) coherent story. And this one has an innovation that stands out even though it doesn't change the story itself. Two additional individuals deserve a plug. One is the Director; and the other owns the club that Victoria manages...

Did I say "two"? Yes, but we're looking at just *one* human being. The Director of "The Wrong Woman" — [JORGE MONTESI](#) — also has the part of **Rico Delgado**, the episode's Chief Hood! No rule against that, except perhaps in the Union contract. (These are Canadian actors, and they take private-sector unionization more seriously up there than we do in the United States.)

By the time the Gem count reaches 99, NIGHT HEAT will probably have a greater number of exhibits, within the collection, than any other series. Each time I'll need to say less about the series, which explains why *this* analysis — of Detective Drama Gem #56 — claims the record for shortness: Fewer than 2,100 words.

NIGHT HEATers along the Trail of this Publication...

[A fifth Gem](#) from this 1985-89 show is in [the August issue](#). The series itself was profiled in Issues [#10](#), [#15](#) and [#16](#), which celebrated these three episodes...

["Ancient Madness"](#) (1985)

["The Cost of Doing Business"](#) (1987), and

["The Beaumont Line"](#) (also from '87)

<<<<<< Additional 2026 Attractions >>>>>>

The August 2026 **Gems** has been on the Web since early April. The episodes spotlighted in that [Issue #19](#) are from **The Felony Squad** and **Dragnet** (radio), plus the above-cited fifth exhibit from *Night Heat*.

And by July 1st: A refreshed (valid links!) Issue #6, led by **expanded coverage** of a marvelous episode from **The Name of the Game** —

<http://www.exactingeditor.com/Detective-Gems-6.pdf>

Gem #57 — "[Fade In to Murder](#)" — October 10, 1976 From **COLUMBO** (NBC 1971 to '77 + ABC 1989 to 2003)

PETER FALK and [WILLIAM SHATNER](#) are superb here. And it helps to have a sparkling story in terms of design and dialogue. In fact, we can start by IMAGINING this episode *before* it became flesh and, with this write-up, an enduring treasure...

A feel for "structure" can take hold of a highly perceptive architect. Except that a crime episode's structure needs a different type of "builder." He or she makes a living as **an executive producer**. When a formula or other framework begins to govern this individual's mind, they look for a writer to create crystalline dialogue for characters that can fulfill parameters and balance the swirl of tensions.

The central character? An actor driven to murder the person behind his success. Afterward, the *internal* tension has him being "in the moment" to such an extent that his TV character's crime-solving skills endanger his real-life (guilty) self.

So this highly intuitive producer finds a writer. The assignment will pay well, and the writer is *especially* delighted to have been picked by a COLUMBO insider.

Our duo moves from sketches to blueprint. And, because it's a TV deliverable, there'll be no need for long metal rulers, a T-Square, or a drafting table. All the same, we're looking at an **architecture** — which, to become reality, needs certain specifications. The basic design starts to invite the necessary particulars...

- ❖ TWO television detectives are supposed to slide into an elaborate pair-up on the same murder case. Both go by the title of Lieutenant. One is a public employee, the other is a private-sector operative. The latter is flamboyant, the other anything but.
- ❖ Both Detectives — in this drafting phase, **let's call them A and B** — specialize in Homicide. Lieutenant A tools around in an old British car and wears an even older trench-coat. Lieutenant B nails each episode's (fictional) evildoer on a film set. He does so while wearing a wide-brimmed hat and an ultra-bright suit with a red carnation.
- ❖ Both are the stars of their respective TV series. Except that Detective A actually *has* a show — his cases are fictitious, but the *series* is real — while Detective B is only a character, although a fascinating one, making a one-time appearance on A's series.
- ❖ The only "case" we'll hear B talk about is one of his own episodes that aired a few months back — about a killer who elicits a form of

sympathy by being driven to eliminate his blackmailer. That episode resembles what we viewers will see Detective B carry out for real.

That's the foundation for "Fade In." Near the start of Detective A's real-life show, Detective B will become guilty of a similar murder for the same motive. And then the two Lieutenants — slow-moving good-guy A, and wily self-mesmerizing B — are to drift into a collaboration. With, of course, *totally* different objectives.

Such a definitive but tricky structure will need some of the best multiple-meaning and mixed-signaling scenes in television-crime annals (or is it *channels*?).

Fifty years later, *we still have those scenes*. And here's hoping that [HENRY GARSON](#) — not by carrying out any Producer's brainstorm but through his own insights and skill — was properly rewarded for writing "Fade In to Murder."

One factor belongs in the "dog not barking" category. It's the **sparseness of background music**. Only one patch reaches even a mild tempo. When we see the *crime* being prepared, the music is...lugubrious. Sometimes a tantalizing exchange ends with no more than a calming several seconds of piano-key plinks. Overall, this sort of **sonic restraint** helps us focus *carefully* on two masterful actors interacting.

PETER FALK needs neither an intro nor a bio, and WILLIAM SHATNER's was linked on the first line. Shatner's role here is **Ward Fowler**, and the Internet has so much room that certain *characters* are given their own "bio" —

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0074328/characters/nm0000638>

A married couple, **SID and CLARE DALY**, control the rights to ***Detective Lucerne***, the TV series that Ward Fowler has made so popular. We get little of the details, except that he has become an asset that, with studios and maybe networks, they can bargain *for* and *with*. Why Fowler puts up with them takes a while to see.

"She Stopped Being a Lover and She Became a Mother"

Sid Daly ([ALAN MANSON](#)) is more grounded than anyone else. He reasons rather than intimidates; is persistent though not needy; and cordially keeps production on course. Though not the Director, Mr. Daly moves easily among the actors, the camera crew, and the stage-hands. Even *a day or two* after his wife was killed.

His first real exchange with Columbo *very* nicely defines this episode's two core relationships: Sid and his wife Clare, and Clare and her creation Ward Fowler.

Columbo begins by asking whether "you and your wife are living apart"...

SID DALY: That's true, Lieutenant, we uh — we haven't been close for some time now.

COLUMBO: Uh, Would you know whether she was seeing somebody [that] she might be emotionally involved with?

DALY: Clare was devoted to her *work*, Lieutenant. She wasn't any more interested *in lovers* [slight laugh] than she was in her *husband*. [Pause, little edge, and a half-smile] It made for a pretty miserable marriage.

COLUMBO: Yeh. [Pause] Well...you were partners in business.

DALY: "Partners"? That was on paper, Lieutenant. Clare fought me on everything... All you have to do is take a look at this new Ward Fowler *contract* — paying an actor that kind of money is INSANITY... I think they should have turned him down; I think he would have folded. But Clare argued me right under the table. I was an *idiot* for giving in...

That passage hints at why Fowler killed Sid's wife, which of course Sid can't know until the final segment. For other reasons, Columbo questions the logic: If Daley and his wife were business partners, why was she so extravagant with Fowler's salary? Wouldn't nosebleed salary payments come out of BOTH their pockets?

"In anything involving Ward," Daly replies, "she always took his side." He halts right there. Doesn't seem to want to go further. But Columbo gingerly refers to further-back media accounts of Fowler and Mrs. Daly being "pretty close."

DALY: Yeah, but not the way you *mean* it, Lieutenant. Oh sure, they'd — they had a big romance, but by the time I came into the picture, it was *dead*. But that didn't mean that Clare was finished watching over Ward's career. She stopped being a lover and she became a *mother*. Sent him off to have his teeth capped. Made him drop 10 pounds. Showed him how *to comb his HAIR*.

COLUMBO: It sounds like she was PROUD of him.

DALY: It was ego — *Clare's* ego.

As text, Daly's words look harsh; but he radiates matter-of-fact, not bitterness.

One other guest actor has a key role and his boss, Ward Fowler, maneuvers him into it. [BERT REMSEN](#) is **Mark** (no last name), the go-fer/"gopher" who keeps the star moving, here and there, usually down to the appointed minute. To set up his alibi, Fowler drugs Mark, and then manipulates his sense of time & recall about a live basketball game. He achieves this with a \$3,000 home video recorder.

Sitting atop Fowler's TV at home, that recorder is as large as a medium suitcase. Ahhh, **the analog recording gear** of 50 years ago: Not bad...except for this trick: Rewinding *75 minutes* of videotaped basketball in *three seconds*? Ridiculous.

Speaking of devices, Mark has a platinum watch, to keep on time. It cost him a thousand bucks. Really? Lieutenant Columbo decides to look it over. Good thing, too, for an apparent defect of that timepiece will become an Incriminator.

"I Never Question Good Fortune, Lieutenant"

Because he and Mrs. Columbo are enthusiastic viewers of the *Lucerne* show, the Lieutenant is quite open to Sid Daly being the murderer. Which in turn makes Columbo (Detective A) welcome insights from Lieutenant Lucerne (Detective B).

Getting past the disorientation of his opening exchange with Columbo, Ward Fowler starts exploiting his TV reputation. They go back and forth about credit cards oddly not stolen; whether it was a targeted killing or some garden-variety derelict that panicked; and the types of make-up on the torn-up face mask.

Part of Fowler's "help" reinforces the tactical moves he has made, or still needs to make, to secure Sid Daly as the #1 suspect. Not so hard, either: The latter's situation, remarks and motives already make more sense to Columbo.

Best Example: Daly finds himself heir to a fortune in silver coins. His wife had accumulated them, in secret, for years. Columbo learned about it by interviewing Sid Daly's accountant. And he barges into the topic by *congratulating* Daly.

For what? "I heard you came into a lot of money." It's the rare time Mr. Daly is thrown off balance: "If you think I knew anything about this, you're wrong."

All those "receipts for these silver certificates" — HE only just learned of their existence, from his *lawyer*. Clare's safe-deposit box was "practically *layered*" with them. The certificates piled up "in a *numbered* account in a Canadian bank." And it happened even though Clare Daly, by Sid's reckoning, never went to Canada.

Grudging admiration then takes hold. "I'll be DAMNED if I can figure out how she did it!" We're watching Sid Daly shift *rapidly* from defensiveness to delight. And it's more than the silver's total value. Within that vast mound of coins are "a few lovely IOUs, from Ward Fowler."

Columbo perks up: "That's surprising, considering all the money *he* makes." The usually gruff Daly *beams*: "I never question good fortune, Lieutenant."

Perched on this financially reinforced beam, Sid's dourness is over. As Minute #57 concludes, he just poured himself a drink and is gazing out the window.

Sure, he worries about what how much the IRS will expect. Otherwise, with the *Lucerne* star's debts now owed to him, "getting along with Ward Fowler is going to be a lot easier from now on!" It's the SOLE time you'll see a *buoyant* Sid Daly.

Clare Daly is played by [LOLA ALBRIGHT](#) (1934-2017). She lived to be 92, but in 2014 became debilitated by a spinal fracture, having retired from an extremely productive acting career a full three decades before that.

At the episode's start, we saw Mrs. Daly, during lunch, threaten two studio execs with loss of the *Detective Lucerne* show if Ward Fowler's proposed new contract isn't approved. It's the same agreement Sid Daly will trash to Columbo.

At that table, though, all we saw Mr. Daly say is: "As the other half, and rather silent partner, of this team, I'm afraid I have to go along with my wife."

"Clare Was Into *Taunting* People. She Was a *Born Victim*"

During Minute #35, some ways into Ward Fowler's "collaboration" with Columbo, he'll describe Clare Daly as someone — using the phrase — who was "asking for it." A different one of the opening scenes had shown us this behavior flawlessly. They were strolling not far from his trailer on a busy studio lot...



FOWLER: I know you invented me, and I'm grateful.

CLARE DALY: I get a little *bored* with this kind of talk. You give me what I want because there's nothing you can *do* about it, and that's the *only* reason. Otherwise — *darling* — grateful or not, you wouldn't give me the sweat off your [\[and here Lola Albright does a slow inhale of the type that suggests aiming a knife\]](#) *personality*.

A passing crew member named Joe transforms the lady into a cheerful superior. WONDERFUL "night scenes," she tells him. Her tone quickly reverts to controlled contempt. Not motherly; more like *Mother Superior* plus financial *conspirator*...

CLARE DALY: Now Ward, you just keep remembering that I invented you. All of you. And I only take *half* for my trouble. Just half, off the top [two-second pause]. Buy the silver, the usual way.

FOWLER: You're quite the little dictator. And now you sound like that show we did last August? The one where we tried to make the murderer sympathetic?

CLARE DALY: Oh, dear, that was because the "blackmailer" was so "dictatorial" and vicious. [Pause] Well, I — I wouldn't dwell on it if I were you. You wouldn't make a murderer. Not even a sympathetic one. THAT much personality you don't *have*.

Could any crime drama do much better at conveying a professional relationship made in Hell? More profoundly: No element of "Fade" (apart from that technically impossible three-second videotape rewind) is absurd, gimmicky, or expedient.

Bill Shatner plays a mature person and hardly oblivious (at least not for long) who is juggling two personal realities. One is the TV persona of being The Master who solves homicides. The other is the "rightness" of killing Clare Daly...

FOWLER: She was the kind [abruptly lowering his voice] who *asks* for it in her marriage, in her life [and] quite possibly in her death.

COLUMBO: That's fascinating, Sir. You got *quite* a way of putting things, *especially* about Mrs. Daly... Could you maybe tell me *more* about her?

And he does so, while taking *other* steps to avoid becoming the chief suspect.

Detective Lucerne's high-wire act goes beyond what Columbo experiences from many of his suspects. It's a slow-motion joust, and the struggle functionally has *more than two* contestants, because Lucerne is also the actor Fowler, under the weird influence of a *Detective Lucerne* script from two or three months back.

Intermission <<-->> VIEWING OPTIONS

Many of the '70s NBC COLUMBOs excelled at floodlighting a business or social sector: Novel-publishing, rare wines, hypnosis, think tanks, that oddball hobby group of high-IQers, art treasures, Irish gun-runners, vast construction sites, and more.

With "Fade In to Murder," we find a fictional detective series making the most of a *doubly* fictional show, thanks to the killer's warring identities. It's a set-up so innovative that the Web is offering its own leap (actually, it's more of a lark)...

<https://monstermoviemusic.blogspot.com/2020/02/colombo-fade-in-to-murder-1976.html>

I first took the above to be "an episode laid out as screen shots, with captions for major moments..." Then I realized that the whole thing could be absorbed in a few minutes, which is a curse: Too loose and "larky" to convey this Gem of an episode.

And also a blessing: Those 19 screen shots (including Detective Lucerne in his white and light-blue thin-striped leisure suit) are a colorful spur to track down "Fade In" on-line. I began with hopes for <https://www.walmart.com/ip/Columbo-The-Complete-Sixth-and-Seventh-Seasons-DVD/951228029>

For years, JUST the sixth and seventh seasons of the 1970s COLUMBO series could be obtained cheaply at all major Retailer sites, and *inside* the B&N brick & mortars. But, at least as of Late May 2026, that didn't appear to be true.

On the other hand, sprawling DVD sets of ALL the COLUMBOs from 1968 to 2003 are now available at (after dividing the cost by total viewing hours) value prices.

There's always Amazon Prime, plus this service as some kind of programmable "finder" — <https://www.justwatch.com/us/tv-show/columbo/season-6>

Fans and methodical viewers alike have options, and the energy to use them...

But this publication, as its sixth year begins, isn't for Netflix bingers or cult followers of any one detective or cop series. You'll need to LIKE the genre to get any use out of a GEMS analysis, of course. But, to sit still for 3,000 words *per episode*, suggests you are more likely to be a writer or an academic.

In THAT case? To enjoy the Falk/Shatner swordplay as a *literary* treasure ahead of, or as a substitute for, seeing the sights & sound, **just keep reading...**

The rest of this write-up is mostly **transcript**, using the actors' names, not their characters'. (Call it a gesture of respect for each performer.) The two have already discussed whether this was a random robbery — thief panicked when Mrs. Daly ran and shot her in the back — or a targeted killing disguised as a robbery.

"You Should Be on Salary, Sir, With these Hours"

The topic is the Parka and especially the discovered MASK the robber/killer wore. In visits to Shatner's spacious residence and his trailer, Falk presents Lab findings while Shatner poses as a super-qualified consultant eager to be a good citizen.

PETER FALK (as Columbo): Oh, uhh — did I mention the mask?

WILLIAM SHATNER (as Lucerne): That it was slashed?

FALK: No, that it had make-up on it. Uh the *Lab* turned it up, Sir. Where would he find a mask that had *make-up* on it?

SHATNER: That's a very good question. [Pause, then a widening smile] I believe you know the answer.

FALK: I *believe* I do, Sir. We could be looking for a woman.

SHATNER: Precisely! We've assumed all along it was a MAN, but ...it's possible we were wrong, *particularly* in the light of this.

FALK: Oh I'm relieved to hear you say that, Sir. I, I thought you were gonna say it was impossible because of Tony — Tony, he's the owner of the delicatessen — [reporting] that the voice was a man's. But uh, the below-average height, and the fact that the voice was disguised, and it was muffled by the mask —

SHATNER: All indicate the POSSIBILITY of a doubt as to the gender.

FALK: Our Lab is gonna be running some more *tests* on that make-up, so I'll report tomorrow. You should be on salary, Sir, with these hours.

SHATNER: [Radiantly genial] You know I feel I am! Good working with you.

FALK: Thank you.

Falk is moving onto a wrong track (the killer being female), and taking acclimation from the *actual* killer for that move. In the next phase of their jousting...

FALK: SIR — I got the second Lab report on the mask, so I hurried right over.

SHATNER: [Eagerly] Yes.

FALK: It turns out that it probably isn't a woman, Sir. You see it was actor's make-up, not the kind of that women use on the street.

PANCAKE.

SHATNER: [Wagging his finger and making the correction] Women *very* often use a brand of make-up that's made up for actors, like pancake. *I*, for example, use *precisely* that product myself.

FALK: Uhhh — yessir, I know.

SHATNER: Yes, I'm sure you do by now.

FALK: No, but the point here is something else, Sir. Uhh you see the Lab found traces of *four* different SHADES of make-up on that mask. And women, you know, they don't usually *change* shades that much. So, in the light of that, Sir, I got to thinking.

SHATNER: WHERE did it *lead you to* this time?

FALK: A guess, Sir. [He wants his conflicted collaborator try...]

SHATNER: A professional make-up man?

FALK: RIGHT, Sir.

SHATNER: [Still in good humor] And then to MY make-up table.

FALK: Oh no Sir, no — I only came here [to your trailer] to see you, *honest*. I was fooling around with the [elevator] shoes just to pass the time for somethin' to do until you came in. No, I didn't look at another thing while I was here.

SHATNER: [Thrown off stride by suddenly sensing] That means you didn't *have* to. You already know something. Where DID you look?

FALK: Guess, Sir. I'll give you three guesses.

SHATNER: [Moderate pause] Studio Wardrobe Department.

FALK: Ya got it in one, Sir, that's absolutely amazing, you're RIGHT. The PARKA, and the ski mask — that's where they BOTH came from.

SHATNER: And the gun?

FALK: Ohhh, come on, Sir, you're puttin' me on. You know that guns don't come from the Wardrobe Department.

SHATNER: Of COURSE, how *stupid* of me.

FALK: No, that's the PROP Department, Sir. Not the *Wardrobe* Department. How does a smart man like Lieutenant Lucerne make a mistake like *that*?

SHATNER: Because you're not talkin' to Lieutenant Lucerne at the moment, are you Lieutenant. You're talkin' to Ward FOWLER.

FALK: Well what's the difference, Sir.

SHATNER: The *difference* is Ward Fowler is under suspicion of MURDER — and a man under that kind of threat is [lowering his voice] apt to make mistakes; he's apt to get rattled.

His *tone* right there is one of pointing out the obvious. Even without that, this slice of their exchange is astounding. It takes us back to Telly Savalas in Gem #55: "The criminal's *unconscious* does real battle with the conscious mind. The compulsion is then worked out *very* subtly. But the struggle is usually still going on..."

FALK: Well who ever said anything about Ward Fowler being under suspicion of murder?

SHATNER: Lieutenant *Lucerne* did.

Though he'd hinted at it before, Ward Fowler now *stresses* the split between his actor self and the good-guy TV character. Falk has no choice but to go along. He asks *how and why* Lieutenant *Lucerne* decided to make Ward Fowler a suspect.

SHATNER: [More firmly] He had to face the same fact you did.

FALK: What "fact" is that, Sir?

SHATNER: There're only four people who could have murdered Clare.

FALK: You mean the four people who knew where Clare Daly was going to BE that night.

SHATNER: EXACTLY, and only ONE of those is *instantly* associated with Make-Up and Wardrobe and PROPS.

Falk then reviews the list of four, which includes Clare Daly's secretary, although she never appears and is referred to only in this scene. Mark the "go-fer" also knew Clare Daly was going to Tony's food shop for a late meal. As did Sid Daly, who has already lied about where he was the evening she was killed. And...Ward Fowler?

By implying that Fowler rounds out the foursome, "Inspector *Lucerne*" has moved from playing with fire to juggling bottles of Nitro. He even elevated Ward Fowler, among the logically knowing foursome, to being at or near the top of the roster.

But now it's time — way *past* the time — to halt this high-wire fandango...

SHATNER: I *didn't know* that Clare was going to Tony's.

FALK: You didn't Sir?

SHATNER: [The smile gone] Absolutely not, Lieutenant.

Falk tries one more unraveling tactic, and Shatner aces it, in a way that seems to dampen Falk's suspicion. Then again, it's pretty hard to tell. Is the usually dogged Columbo *still* being swayed, or only slowed, by this TV version of himself?

The smile returns to Shatner's countenance; all trace of defensiveness is gone.

SHATNER: I'd say we make a pretty good team, don't you?

FALK: Yeh, sorta like Sherlock Holmes and *Watson*...

SHATNER: No, no-no-no, more like [pause] Sherlock Holmes [another pause] and Sherlock *Holmes*.

FALK: Well, what I mean, Sir, is the way I see it I'm working with the highest paid detective in the *world*.

SHATNER: [Another utterly candid slip] It's not as high as it *sounds* — not when you have to *pay out* as much as I do.

Now Shatner sounds like someone griping to a friend at the bar! That's the thing about super-fast thinkers who also have excellent articulation. Not only is it hard to keep up with them, but they themselves are yanked this way and that.

On the other hand, Shatner/Lucerne/Fowler has kept the most critical focus...

Right after Columbo left his palatial home, Lucerne took the gun he used to murder Mrs. Daly, put something on it, and then placed it BACK in the Prop Room. What he draped around the trigger was a thread snagged from one of Sid Daly's sweaters.

Because Daly also had access to that gun, the framing of Lucerne's *second* studio nemesis is being facilitated. And, not covered here there's one additional "out."

Why "Put the Gun Back" and Throw Away Everything Else?

On the Universal DVD set, this episode runs 73 1/2 minutes. Twenty minutes from the end, preparing to depart Fowler's trailer, Falk as Columbo says: "Oh, by the way, Sir — did I mention that we *found* the gun in the Prop Department?"

SHATNER: No, what you said was that was where you were going to LOOK for one.

FALK: Ohh that's *right* Sir. RIGHT. And you didn't wanna jump to conclusions.

SHATNER: No good detective should. [Pause] Was there anything *on* the gun?

FALK: [Long pause] Anything like *what*, Sir.

SHATNER: Fingerprints, what else?

FALK: Oh right. No I don't think so Sir [although] the Lab is still running tests. By the way, Sir — why do you think he put the gun *back* and threw away everything else?

SHATNER: [Munching on chopped vegetables] Perhaps because he didn't have time to get rid of the gun *safely*. Guns are pretty easy to *trace*, and the Prop room may have seemed the safest *place* to him.
Chomp chomp chomp chomp...

FALK: I think ya hit it again, Sir.

The killer's escape plan retains *some* protection. Fowler fished for confirmation that the cops noticed the thread. When he didn't get it, he didn't flinch or blink. Spending all this time cogitating with Columbo — a hugely clever diversion, then? Earning plaudits by spilling beans to the L.A. Policeman most likely to blow you out of the water — granted, it makes the most of divided-personality mechanics. But one can't call it healthy or a contributor to career-longevity.

Note to fellow editors (and others who tuned in): You haven't seen/heard/read **even one-third** of *Falk vs. Shatner*. But someone trained in applying limits and posting street signs has to stop somewhere. The "somewhere" for this elaborate text preview is right here, as Bill Shatner's "Inspector Lucerne" overreach is suspended by a knock on the trailer door: "Ready when you are, Mr. Fowler!"

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Just one more thing: If you **QUOTE** from it, please **MAKE a NOTE** of it — the issue number (or its cover date), and the **Gems** publication.

— Frank Gregorsky, Curator and Publisher