



# Detective Drama **GEMS...**

Mid-1940s to the Mid-1980s

Issue #5   October 2021

**Exhibits from Radio and TV** (sorry, no books or movies)

## **DD Gem #16 — A Pair of Late-1983 Episodes from Season Four of HILL STREET BLUES (NBC, 1981 to '87)**

Detective fans are conditioned to expect one “case” and a distinct set of characters, each with part of a coherent story. The creators of “HSB” set aside that rule.

Every week, the viewer got 49 minutes scattered among 15 or 20 individuals. Two or three story lines began; two or three others ended; and one might just fade away for a while. As a result, no single episode of *Hill Street Blues* delivered emphatic completion. One of the side effects: Many of the episode TITLES are useless.

But this isn’t the start of a complaint. Rather, it’s the reason this publication has to set aside one of its OWN rules, by treating two adjacent episodes as one Gem.

Something else can help you understand HSB’s place in media history. It begins at the bottom of Page 26 — a bonus essay spotlighting ALL the ways this acclaimed series turned the standard police & detective framework inside out.

For now, the two episodes: “Midway to What?” from December 1st, 1983, and the following week’s “Honk If You’re a Goose.” Unlike “Goose” and other titles that are goofy, juvenile, or bad puns, “Midway to What?” is both resonant and literal.

Issue #4 magnified Gems from *Hawaii Five-O*, *77 Sunset Strip* and *The Streets of San Francisco* — <http://www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-4.pdf>

The character who brings up Midway is Lieutenant Howard Hunter, played by [JAMES B. SIKKING](#). Hunter is a hardy soul with a jaunty smile; he leads HSB's Emergency Action Team. Here's a [delightful photograph](#) of Sicking's character.

Detective J.D. LaRue is played by [KIEL MARTIN](#) (1944-90). One evening after work, he sits in the locker room next to Hunter. Hunter is in turmoil on his way to despair. He is failing to convey the values of bravery and legacy. LaRue is allergic to abstractions, including the noble ones. But he has an excellent eye for risk-control.

LaRUE: Lieutenant, if you're worried about what was on that tape, don't be. Everybody makes MISTAKES. Hell, ask the man who knows!

HUNTER: As a matter of fact, I was thinking about Midway.

LaRUE: Oh [thrown off]. Midway to what?

HUNTER: [Mixing laugh and sigh] It was a sea battle — WW Two — it changed the course of war in the Pacific. At one point, three squadrons of obsolete American torpedo bombers flew UNPROTECTED, through murderous enemy fire, to press home the attack. They knew they were flying to almost certain death, but they went. Only one plane survived. Do you know what COURAGE that took, John? [Becoming even quieter] To go out and meet that fate.

LaRUE: Yeaahhh! Well ya know I think about those things on Veterans' Day.

Solid cop LaRue isn't one for deep sentiment. But guilt and sorrow are taking a toll on his colleague. He chokes back tears, then tries again to reach LaRue...

HUNTER: Do you have any idea how many generations of Hunters have served King and Country on the field of combat? ALL — all performed with dignity and honor.

LaRUE: Lieutenant — a million years ago you got pinched to run a few bucks for a few low-life flatfoots. Hey, it ain't exactly like sellin' the H-BOMB to the RUSSIANS!

LaRue is tactical and pragmatic. Hunter is a romantic. This man is able to live boldly because he sees himself on a lengthy and deliberate trail that started generations ago. Both men are skilled officers. But Howard Hunter's mind can put a stratospheric spin on a typical week's events. LaRue simply sees him as "tightly wound."

Hunter's talk of Midway's [epic confrontation](#) in early June 1942 — heroism, mass death, a pivot point for saving Western Civilization — isn't the clue for J.D. LaRue. Doesn't matter. LaRue's perceptiveness is what will head off a tragedy. He notices his colleague's service revolver and holster hanging on the locker door...

## Neither LaRue nor Furillo can Reach Him with Conventional Logic

Why this disconnected exchange after work? What plunged Howard Hunter into a cesspool of regret infused with shame? LaRue had described “the mistake” in a supportive yet flippant way. Here it is without any sugar-coating...

A set of tapes was handed to Hill Street’s chief as part of a plea bargain. Hunter, at the time a 28-year-old rookie, is heard picking up a box of “curlers” from a pastry shop. The box contained payoffs for two of his superiors. The first time he made this run, he didn't realize the set-up. A sergeant at the precinct soon explained it.

But Hunter visited the shop a few more times, reporting in by name. Each time, a front-office microphone recorded the visitor and clarified the pick-up.

Earlier that day Hunter's boss, Captain Frank Furillo ([DANIEL J. TRAVANTI](#)), had played this incriminating tape for Hunter. No one is out to get Hunter, and the recordings are a tiny slice of a much bigger story. Still, how will he explain it?

**I, uh — I'd just gotten back from Vietnam. After what I'd seen over there — the corruption in the very fabric of things — [it] seemed no different here. I decided that, uh [jagged inhale], it was beyond ME to address all of that, and others could govern their lives; I would govern mine [six-second pause]. The fact is, I was too much a coward to confront those detectives, Frank, and I put in for a transfer instead.**

Hunter utters these words with no defensiveness or defiance. Just the opposite. Each sentence is weaker, quieter, than the one before. "And when that transfer didn't come for two months — I continued to make the pick-ups."

The transgression is too far back in time to be a punishable crime, Furillo notes; but what happened still has to go into Hunter’s record. Of course it does, replies the Lieutenant; no challenge. But Hunter has no interest in process now. Suddenly he’s in a place neither LaRue nor Furillo can reach with conventional reasoning.

Later this day, as we’ve seen, Hunter will fail to pull LaRue into his sorrowful space with the Midway benchmark. Furillo also fails to “hear” the Hunter crisis due to similar language: "Fifteen years ago I was handed the broken saber, and I have kept it hidden under my tunic all these years. I have failed the people who gave me their trust. I failed you, Frank, and for that I'm sorry. I apologize."

Furillo should’ve ACCEPTED Hunter's anguished apology. He doesn't, and tries other ways to save the situation: "Howard, it's just poor judgment. But, in the context of

what I fully expect to continue to be a HIGHLY distinguished career..."

Worth a try, Captain. But Hunter is in the clouds conceptually and the depths emotionally. Forget "career" and process. Quietly, he says: "May I go?"

Later in this episode, we'll see Howard Hunter methodically prepare to take his own life. In subsequent viewings, these final minutes of "Midway to What?" have lost very little of their first-time power. You might never again see a detective episode conclude the way this one from 12/1/83 does. And...

Maybe you'd like to see it right now? This web upload of "Midway to What?" is a bit weak on resolution. But it's one way to use these pages to begin, or resume, your experience with a startling cop show that did NOT resort to special effects...

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5ve4sk>

The Martin/Hunter/Furillo re-cap can't "end" this analysis because we also have the episode from 12/8/83 (the one with the goofy "Goose" title). Combining both episodes gives viewers 96 minutes to absorb another major relationship...

## Two Intense Fellows, One Combustible Collaboration

A bookmaker raid is planned because the Vice Squad is refusing to act. Furillo is suspicious: Has that part of the Department been compromised? "One step at a time," Furillo says to the equally curious but more risk-oriented Sergeant Belker.

Michael "Mick" Belker is played by [BRUCE WEITZ](#). A short man who shouts **DOG-BREATH** and **DIRT-BAG** at arrestees, Belker is the one HSBer too extreme to be plausible in a regulated and hair-trigger urban role. (Well, maybe not 40 years ago...)

After leading the raid, Sergeant Belker and Co. march the arrestees outside. Everyone's adrenaline is spiking. And Belker sees a wheelchair-bound twenty-something spray-painting the trunk of a patrol car. Why? It's parked in a Handicapped zone.

Belker chases the vandal, who powers off a curb and nearly gets run over. Belker stumblingly helps him back into the wheelchair and makes the arrest as they yell back and forth. The young man is Gerry Gaffney. He demands Belker give HIMSELF a ticket for blocking a Handicapped-parking space. Later Gaffney makes a compelling case to a Judge, who reduces the charged offense to a misdemeanor.

That Judge also tells him to educate — for 20 hours! — this unnamed city's cops on "The Predicaments of the Handicapped" (that'll be the title on his lecture notes).

Gaffney and Belker zig & zag into one of the most fractious TV collaborations ever. Belker is struck by the statistic of “30,000 wheelchairs” in this city. He decides to go undercover. Yet he’s too proud to let his new friend teach him the intricacies of patrolling with no legs. At one point Gaffney calls him a faker with “no soul.”

Belker and Gaffney — played brilliantly by [GARY FRANK](#) — develop respect for each other! The natural chasm between a protestor and a cop keeps narrowing and it’s because of personality: Each man is a hair-trigger loudmouth devoted to, and fearless about, his work. Only at the very end of the 12/8/83 episode are the similarities made plain — by Mick’s girlfriend Daryl Ann ([DEBORAH RICHTER](#)).

In a different way, the Belker/Gaffney interaction is as powerful as what we see Hunter navigating with his boss Furillo and then his colleague LaRue.

These two HSB episodes have several other sparkling exchanges. Character-clarity throughout is SO good in this HSB pair that the Tabasco sauce from the unrelated sub-stories can be — to mix a metaphor, but not a cocktail — swallowed.

## How Do the Various Story Lines Interweave?

The tape that shatters Howard Hunter is part of an audio stash the arrested book-maker assembled in the early days of his pastry shop. Will it allow him to avoid jail?

Ben Seltzer (played by [BARNEY MARTIN](#)) tells the Captain: “I’ve seen a lot of cops come and go and they weren’t all scouts. I ain’t a violent man, Captain — I know how to take care of myself [voice lowering] in other ways.”

“And,” relies Furillo, sternly earnest as usual.

Seltzer places a square container of open-reel recordings on the station-house table. By size it looks to hold at least 40 seven-inch reels, which in turn would preserve a minimum of 100 hours of surreptitiously taped conversation.

SELTZER: My security fund. Been in cold storage 15 years, right next to the Missus’s furs.

FURILLO: Which contains — ?

SELTZER: Lotta voices, lotta conversations. Ahhh, there’s so many, so long ago. Listen [to some tapes], Captain, and then tell me: Can we do business?

“Mr. Seltzer’s in the market for a TRADE,” says his lawyer: “Reduction to a misdemeanor in exchange for his Security Fund.” The lawyer quickly answers the other unasked question: “My client has duplicates, in another location.” With a satisfied grin, Ben Seltzer tells Frank Furillo he’ll say no more.

Furillo tells J.D. LaRue to check out the tapes. Since the NEWEST one is from 1978, he starts there. Whether it took a day or a week of playback, LaRue happens to hear Howard Hunter's voice (more than once). He alerts Furillo, which leads to the dialogues we started with. They're the result of a *totally unrelated* police raid.

Hill Street goes into negotiations with Ben Seltzer. Seltzer sweetens his offer with corruption evidence far more current. That info begins to explain why the Vice Squad declined to make the bust that allowed Mick Belker to meet Gerry Gaffney.

Now for two story lines that would NEVER be in a case-centered cop episode...

- Lieutenant Henry Goldblume deepens an amorous relationship with Fay Furillo. She is Frank Furillo's ex-wife and Goldblume reports to Furillo.
- Officer Bobby Hill has resumed amateur boxing after a 10-year absence from the ring. In each of the episodes, half the station-house ends up rooting and cheering for him. Hill loses one, and wins the other.

These plausible and lively side situations use up good chunks of both episodes. They have nothing to do with the bookmaker, Hunter's emotional crisis, a Judge who is on the take, or Mick Belker's learning to pilot a wheelchair. So why are they here? To illustrate the dynamic chaos of an urban police headquarters.

Believable sequences unrelated to crime-solving, court doings, or punishment — suddenly I wondered: What do such scenes and subplots *get in the way of*?

The two above — and dozens of other “human interest” story lines week by week — crowd out something important: Our chance to see the cops — and sometimes the crooks — plotting strategy, weighing scenarios, working in the crime lab (or cogitating in the hideout), and being rattled as a deadline or threat comes closer.

For *Hill Street Blues* as a series, the dog that does not bark is **Thinking Out Loud**. Where's the space for it after all these psychodramas and spoofs? So many players and tack-on tales make each episode a start-stop, on-off, here-there, etc.

Yep, this made HSB lively entertainment, voyeur-style. But the tradeoff — the classic detective-drama factor being squeezed out — is the opportunity for mental participation on the part of the viewer. We see very few characters *reasoning*.

In these two episodes from 1983, the flakiest flight of fancy is a foot-loose goose taking over vegetable displays in front of stores. The betrayed owner of the goose ends up strangling “Honky” right in the bird's prison cell. (The goose had been jailed due to recalcitrance, and the time needed to locate the owner.)



Almost every HSB script makes space for what amounts to a rough imitation of [Get Smart](#). If police work had this much wackiness and comic relief, you'd think we'd have heard about it from friends or relatives...

## Any Other Serious Crime & Corruption Segments?

In addition to traumatic old news about Hunter, and Belker being robbed at an ATM machine while in a wheelchair, one more major story. I'll use the language of the "Midway" episode summary from the studio-certified DVDs...

**Officers Bates and Coffey do their best to help a vengeful man whose brother was killed in a taxi operated by the seedy Top Hat Cab Company. Although the company is recognized on the Hill for its frequent fatal accidents and catering to prostitution and drug-trafficking, all the cops have to rely on is the shaky testimony of winos and exhibitionists.**

Despite those credibility deficits, the jury finds the driver and the corrupt owner guilty of negligent homicide. Bates and Coffee can't believe their luck, and neither can the viewer. Judge Milton Cole, played by GEORGE D. WALLACE, then "vacates the verdict." If it weren't for the wheelchair scenes and Hunter's guilt-racked evening, the Judge's power grab would be the big startler. But it's still big.

And deservedly so, because Judge Cole's actions weave the Top Hat Cab story line into the busted bookie operation...

As the second of our two episodes nears the end, Detectives LaRue and Neal Washington ([TAUREAN BLACQUE](#)) photograph Judge Cole picking up a bag containing \$10,000. The reason they're able to do that is because the bookmaker has info on CURRENT corruptibles, not just outer-office rookies from 15+ years ago.

A rattled Irwin Bernstein, Hill Street's chief lawyer, is telling Captain Furillo...

**You've got people — OPENLY — making and receiving bribes. That establishes habit AND duration. It establishes a belief of impunity... IF this is in the fabric of things, if you've got a pervasive corruption [here he exhales in exasperation] — driving up, I'm thinking *this could go any place*. This could reach into my own office! [He pauses] I'm a company man, Frank — it SCARES me not knowing who to trust.**

Because it's threatening and vague all at once, Bernstein's statement is a superb set-up for the part of Season Two that plays out during 1984.

If Wikipedia and IMDB dot-com bios aren't your thing, yet you'd like to know the basics of the HSB cast *en masse*, here are two — JUST two — Web displays that

amount to *Hill Street Blues* yearbooks...

[https://hillstreetblues.net/the\\_men\\_cast\\_members.html](https://hillstreetblues.net/the_men_cast_members.html)

[https://hillstreetblues.net/the\\_lady\\_cast\\_members.html](https://hillstreetblues.net/the_lady_cast_members.html)

The episode titles, as noted, are usually too cute or crude to be useful markers; you'll need episode SUMMARIES to keep even halfway-oriented.

Using TV Guide dot-com to track the components of HSB Season Four...

<https://www.tvguide.com/tvshows/hill-street-blues/episodes-season-4/1000260539/>

Finally, to purchase all of Season Four on studio-issued DVDs...

[www.barnesandnoble.com/w/dvd-hill-street-blues-season-four/28451645](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/dvd-hill-street-blues-season-four/28451645)

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## DD Gem #17 — "Solomon" — February 11, 1960 From JOHNNY STACCATO (NBC, then ABC, 1959-60)

This series lasted one season. "Solomon" was Episode #22. It's the first name of a criminal lawyer who has taken leave of his wisdom; his ethics are next on the list.

But — because the episode is hard to swallow without understanding the series — the opening minutes of the very FIRST episode are what we start with here. Mostly by illuminating his Greenwich Village surroundings, they sketch the lead character. We also see the only other regular for what will be a 27-episode run.

NBC-TV launched **STACCATO** on Thursday, September 10, 1959; later they added the lead character's first name. Including two brief bits of theme music — one to show the name of the series, another to display the title of the episode — three minutes and 14 seconds will elapse before we hear anyone speak.

That opening shows us something bad, right? Wrong. It's mostly for live jazz in very good black & white video. Restraint and jumpiness are being blended....

**RESTRAINED:** Nothing like the "scare 'em witless" hoods-at-work opener. In fact, we're shown no harshness or dark passage of any type.

**JUMPY:** Five jazz musicians get going at Waldo's in New York City. The movements of the drummer and string-bassist exactly match what we hear. *Marvelous* editing. The proprietor is on the phone, trying to hear above the din. The caller insists on



meeting with Johnny Staccato. Waldo goes and gets him. Johnny cedes the piano to a colleague and takes the call at a table. All we can hear is the band.

Next to him at the table: A blonde ready for huggy-kissy. She takes the initiative. Because of the caller, Staccato can't partake. He walks over to "Hatcheck Girl" — a job and person defined exactly that way. She hands him his coat and revolver.

Waldo's isn't a 1950s lounge starring women in long tight dresses singing torch songs. In NONE of the episodes will ANYONE sing (not even the crowd). At Waldo's, all the music is instrumental, and mostly live. The clientele is trendy, not square. Neither is it raggedy-ass or beatnik. Occasionally we see traditional dancing.

"Waldo" (no last name) is a crusty Italian played by [EDUARDO CIANNELLI](#) (1888-1969). Ciannelli arrived in the U.S. in 1914 after trading a medical career for musical performances and then Broadway. "His Hollywood career consists of close to 150 film and television appearances," says the [Wikipedia write-up](#)...

**Notable among these are *Marked Woman* (1937) with Bette Davis, *Strange Cargo* (1940) with Joan Crawford and Clark Gable, and perhaps his most famous role, as the fanatical Thuggee guru in *Gunga Din* (1939) with Cary Grant. In the 1940 serial *Mysterious Doctor Satan*, he played an evil scientist with an army of robots.**

When *Staccato* hit prime time, Ciannelli had just turned 71. His character is the closest thing to "family" we'll ever see the much younger Staccato admit to.

With his gun and long wool coat, Staccato hails a cab, and heads for a late-night meeting. Like all narration to follow, the self-introduction is terse...

Why did I leave the Village that night? Because I put my Musician's Union card in mothballs five years ago — when it dawned on me that my talent was an octave lower than my ambition. So, while my heart is still on the bandstand, I pay for the groceries away from the piano. And when I get a business call these days, even at two in the morning I answer it.

So much, and just enough, for the opening minutes of that very first episode.

[JOHN CASSAVETES](#) (1929-89) was only 30 when he starred in — and from all accounts drove — this series. Decades later, the Cassavetes method and its periodic madness would be detailed by John Sutherland...

**Cassavetes' relationship with his industry was famously non-conformist. He was Hollywood's drunken child. He hated the tyranny of "screenplay," "script," "crews," and "star system"... A technician who worked on his early films recalled that Cassavetes didn't give a damn about "equipment." One 16mm camera, one light, and any**

**old set would suffice. All he was interested in was “content.” His intermittent work for the mega-studios that dominated postwar cinema ... invariably ended in tantrums, walk-outs and demands that he be uncredited.**

A relentless innovator? Surely. Point for now is: Cassavetes was never an actor to be “handled.” After making his name on TV and in films, Wikipedia reports,

**Cassavetes...became a pioneer of American independent cinema, writing and directing movies financed in part with income from his acting work. AllMovie called him “an iconoclastic maverick,” while *The New Yorker* suggested that he “may be the most influential American director of the last half-century.”**

He also directed five of the 27 *Staccato* episodes. The one we're about to absorb is a work of spartan brilliance. It only takes one minute — including what by this 22nd episode is amped-up theme music and his gun shattering a window — for Johnny Staccato to find his way up to Solomon Bradshaw’s office.

The audience for GEMS is self-defining; it also has a right to take its time. So? Don’t quit now. Next issue is **FEBRUARY 2022** and you’ll find it via...

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

## **Gentle with Reporters plus “Screaming Fits in Court”**

In “Solomon,” the guest actors — CLORIS LEACHMAN and [ELISHA COOK Jr.](#) (1903-95) don’t feel truly alive unless they radiate passion and declare views.

If you have one real-life friend like that — it’s hard to handle two — they fascinate as well as unnerve you. Same effect on Johnny Staccato. To be a good detective means habitual wariness along with very little interest in Absolutes. The way to make such a person suspicious is with talk so big it resembles a hot-air balloon.

Staccato doesn't look like a '50s detective. His back is slightly hunched; he has a notable overbite; and his smile can be quizzical, or nervous, or scornful. Rarely is it joyous. Often it comes across as tentative; the face is busy monitoring. But this meeting on Wall Street will compel participation and commitment.

Unusually, no night-club music is needed in “Solomon.” The episode is two conversations. In the first, Staccato does 100% of the reacting. In the second, he will end up as the aggressor. Ahead of each, we’re offered bare-bones narration.

Solomon Bradshaw, Staccato tells us as he walks, is “the greatest living criminal

lawyer” and a “wizard of the courtroom.” This 5-foot-5 man is known for “his theatrical bravura, his screaming fits in court” — along with “his gentle manner with the press” and “his childish enthusiasm.” For the viewer, a keen preview.

Staccato had never met Bradshaw before showing up at his office at 8 a.m. on five hours' notice. Bradshaw is seated at his mile-long table. With no rise or handshake, he instructs Staccato to take a seat. “My late son's letter from Korea [pause] spoke very highly of you, Mr. Staccato.” “It was a privilege to know him, sir.”

The pleasantries pass rapidly. Bradshaw pulls out a long screw-type dagger — the part that penetrates has to be 8 inches long — and proceeds to re-enact a murder using a life-sized dummy: NINE thrusts from behind, *shouting with each one*.

This is the crime the lawyer wishes to discuss with the detective. It’s all there for us by Minute 2:48. Quick dose of theme music, to show the episode’s title...

Then Bradshaw goes into briefing mode. He has a miniature model of the crime scene — desk, big chair, lone door, two individuals. The victim sits with his back to the windows. He was slain, sitting at his desk, late one night, “26 floors above Park Avenue.” The dagger was mostly wielded in the neck and shoulder area.

Staccato wonders: No sign of a struggle? “He weighed over 200 pounds,” comes the answer. “There wasn't a paper clip out of place.”

His wife was indicted for the murder. Her fingerprints were on the dagger (the same one Staccato just saw in action). She owned it, meaning those prints would be there in any case. But how would someone ELSE have gotten hold of it?

Staccato’s tentativeness reverts to jitters as Bradshaw announces an experiment. The lawyer approaches him from behind with the dagger and (nearly) acts out the first thrust. “I see you're disturbed,” he tells his rattled guest. “Frankly, I am.”

Though in total control of this meeting, the showman lawyer is diagramming a murder that has him at a dead end. The victim had no reason to suspect danger, until it was too late. And this was his home, all those floors above street level. *Who else but an intimate or resident could have gotten that close?*

Staccato still doesn't know why he's there. Always on guard, his pulse rate has been jacked up — twice — by the dagger that killed a wealthy businessman.

More details. Does the name Thomas Gates ring a bell? His daughter Jessica is Bradshaw's client. Her father died the very day peace was declared in 1945. She became a peace activist in the late 1940s and faced harsh opposition from what

Bradshaw calls "muscle-bound patriots."

In a different way, Bradshaw implies, Jessica was "used" by Communist front groups to "disguise their true purpose. And unfortunately, seeing only the good in people, she made several errors in judgment." She was accused of "one thing after another, until she married her late husband."

Staccato recalls that news item. Peter Winthrop struck him as a socialite and a play-boy. "Why would HE marry a pacifist?" Bradshaw's intensity suspends. Love, he supposes. It couldn't have been for money; her father left Jessica well-endowed.

As Minute 9 commences, this top-tier lawyer is entranced by his client. Jessica is "a woman of uncommon grace," he says with reverence. She's HIGHLY educated. FINE features. HIGH moral principles — and independently wealthy."

Bradshaw must want to engage Staccato in helping her. What case does he have? "We're all capable of murder, but I submit that there's a VAST difference between the kind of murder that people CAN...and cannot commit." Okay. And so?

The murder of Peter Winthrop was a direct personal act of uncommon viciousness. It's the type of close-up, violent, surprise and non-combat killing that would be hard even for pilots who dropped bombs during World War Two. And it's a form of murder that would be IMPOSSIBLE for a true pacifist — *Solomon's logic*.

## Little Choice but to Go See and Hear Jessica Winthrop

Staccato is all business. "If she didn't kill him, who did?" "That's not my concern," says Bradshaw. The District Attorney's office has made its case on two points. One, the weapon. And two, Jessica won't say where she was the night of the murder.

Staccato is again startled. She won't tell the prosecutors. Won't even tell her attorney in the deepest confidence. "The only thing she WILL say is that she's innocent." Maybe Staccato wants to head off the next garish re-enactment. He stands up. "I don't like the feel of this." Bradshaw moves in close to him.

SOLOMON: Any intelligent person knows that, psychologically, this woman could NEVER have committed this crime. You and I know she's innocent.

STACCATO: You said that; I didn't [pause]. Still, I uh — will say I HAVE a reasonable doubt.

For the next 12 seconds, neither man speaks. They go from standing closely to taking seats at the long table's opposite ends. There looks to be 15 feet between

the two faces at this point. From a distance, it's time for the request...

"I don't want to snow you," the lawyer tells the detective, "and I don't want to lie to ya. Jessica Winthrop will be convicted. And she'll be executed. And the reason? It's very simple: Public opinion."

Staccato says nothing. His face indicates intentness. Whatever's going to be proposed must be imminent...

SOLOMON: I brought you here because my late son said you were a man who believed devoutly in human values... I beg of you, Mr. Staccato, since this woman is a VICTIM, not a criminal, you must help me; you must help her [another pause]. I want you to come forward — and say that you were with her the night of the murder.

STACCATO: WHAT?!?

SOLOMON: On November 13th, you were ill at home, with supposed flu.

STACCATO: I wouldn't know!

SOLOMON: I'll guarantee it. In blunt language, I want you to commit perjury.

STACCATO: [Rising from his chair, though not quite incensed] Mr. Bradshaw — if it were anyone else, I'd turn around and walk right out of this room. But I do have to respect your integrity.

SOLOMON: [Earnestly] I can assure you it's my only motive.

STACCATO: All right [exhaling in frustration...]. Of course I'll, I'll have to SEE Mrs. Winthrop — before I can make any decision.

SOLOMON: Tomorrow afternoon. Four o'clock. Randall's Isle.

The above scene is astonishing. A world-class defense attorney has run out of maneuvers. He has moved mountains but can't budge his client. In some weird way, it's the client who has stumped the lawyer. Now he is "suborning" — the technical word for encouraging and in this case paying for — a lie under oath.

Who created this gripping script? [STANFORD WHITMORE](#) (1925-2014), and he did it in his mid-thirties, as part of a professional breakout. According to IMDB dot-com, Whitmore's Filmography credits (46 in all) take off here in 1959-61; they'll continue to 1988 with seven episodes of the TV series *Supercarrier*.

Whitmore, Cassavetes, Director [HERSCHEL DAUGHERTY](#) (1910-93) and the others

produced an IDEAL episode for viewers who can't walk a story line without peering into the objectives and mental states of the characters. People with such expectations (I'm one) see these "parts" — actors and how they **inter-act** — as the best way to craft a plausible whole. The primary dialogues must be believable.

The 27 episodes allowed John Cassavetes to be narrator, protagonist, and (five times, remember) Director. He was a man as tormented as he was talented, and the subject of more than one biography. You can get enough of the feel for how, why, and how long by reading [this lengthy piece](#) from *The Guardian* newspaper; it's John Sutherland's informed speculation, from June 2007.

But, this publication is first and foremost about EPISODES. And it wasn't easy to write about the second half of "Solomon."

### Each Utterance is a Judgment with Thorns and No Hedges

Staccato has no legal training. But, after her lawyer's whole-hearted and hole-filed account, he's obligated to interview Winthrop. At least 30 hours will separate this meeting from the jarring session at Bradshaw's office. During that stretch Staccato becomes "thoroughly disenchanted" with the prospect of lying under oath.

So he tries to get out of seeing her. But Bradshaw won't take his calls; therefore the meeting can't be scrapped. Staccato heads for Randall's Isle.

The three are together in a poorly lit basement cell. All Solomon Bradshaw tells his client is that Staccato is "here to help me in your case" and "I want you to answer" his questions. "Sit down," he tells Jessica gently.

The room is cramped. She's the only one with a chair. Staccato stands in a corner, while Solomon perches on the steps, smoking. All three are having their space.

Winthrop takes a moment to orient. "You're not a reporter..." "No I'm not." "I'm sorry to say reporters haven't always [pause] understood me." "Well, I'll do my very best to understand you." She then offers a lofty rule built for exceptions: "I will answer any question that does not violate the principles by which I live."

This is 1960, several years before such posture-pedic statements became trendy on their way to having the weight of a bumper sticker. For a left-wing radical drawing lines in the sand, [CLORIS LEACHMAN](#) — just 33 at the time of this episode — has a perfect countenance. A screen shot is linked near the top of Page 16.

Staccato says: "Mr. Bradshaw and I are faced with a very serious legal and moral problem." Winthrop is defiant as she counter-oriens Staccato. "At the arraignment

I was expected to [pause] crawl, and cringe, and smile sweetly, in hopes of touching the hearts of my antagonists."

Staccato means to make the most of a session the defense attorney seduced him into leading. "You're a pacifist..." "How long have you been one?" He understands the definition to be "a philosophy of non-violence," right? "It will do," she replies...

To relay any more of what Jessica Winthrop tells Johnny Staccato would start to spoil the ending. I'll stick with the first wave of his inquiries. Now he's the one in charge. While maintaining his distance, the detective inquires...

- "You actually think the State of New York is prejudiced against you?"
- "You are aware that you're on trial for your life...and you're willing to die for your beliefs."
- "You mean you'll not answer ANY questions relative to your whereabouts the night of the murder..."
- "What was your husband's first name?" "And what was his business?" "How many nights a week did you eat out, and how many nights a week did you dine in?" "On these 'several nights' when you dined alone, did you prepare your own meals or did you have help?"
- "How TIME-consuming was" the commitment to pacifism? "Were you in love with your husband?" (She says no.) "Then why did you marry him?"
- Okay, Jessica and Peter "had an understanding." "But you continued living together..." "Did Peter sympathize with your beliefs on pacifism?" "Did he try to change you?"

Solomon Bradshaw resents the relentlessness. "I forbid you to question this woman further," he tells Staccato calmly. "Jessica has a basic honesty that is REVILED in our society. She speaks the truth [and] that very truth will kill her." Apparently, "one cannot expose the deepest truths to judges or juries."

The master attorney's service to a client has gone way beyond professional fidelity. In fact, the reasoning and behavior of Bradshaw is a forerunner of late-1960s ideology running wild: Lawyers are going to take the most cut-and-dried individual cases and inflame them into indictments of American society.

This time, with only two listeners, and no media around, Bradshaw does not yell. He goes on, in a series of shouted whispers — the kind intended to signal that the speaker is aghast at what he's telling you.



Staccato waits for a pause. One comes along. “May I continue?” He does.

The episode is well into its second half. How it ends is worth every step on the path that moves you out. As part of a mild wrap-up, Staccato makes a positive observation: “We’ve got a pretty good system here in the United States...”

Leachman, as Jessica Winthrop in that cell, will remain seated until the final minute. Mostly what we see is [her face, looking up](#), surrounded by darkness.

## Little Left to Say, Except for the Housekeeping

In 2011, NBC Universal released the 27 *Staccato* episodes on three videodiscs.

To buy these episodes as a set of factory-issued DVDs...

Believe it or not, you could [start with TARGET](#), which already has your credit card and plays a vital role in keeping Amazon from dominating even more of the consumer economy.

Target and Amazon both price the single-season *Staccato* series at around 20 bucks, while the [Shout Factory](#) comes in at \$22.

The Product: Considering the bulkiness of late-'50s A/V gear, the black & white clarity, camera work and sound editing are very good. The musicians and patrons are in a cramped and smoky night club (Waldo's). Which means the technical crews — using bulky equipment — had to show us crowded scenes plus random close-ups. The related editing was accomplished with no audible splices in the music.

The Other 26 Episodes: I considered three for Gem status. A few others are compelling. If there's a problem overall, it's more mine than yours: Well over half the episodes don't pass this publication's PLAUSIBILITY test. Why not? Because their scripts assume one or more events/factors that are next to impossible.

Which doesn't mean you wouldn't enjoy the collection! One has to respect the production work that the NBC Network and the [Timeless Media Group](#) put into resurrecting and packaging this series 51 years after it first aired.

One Other Point: In titling this episode, why did the scriptwriters use just the lawyer's FIRST name? "Bradshaw" wouldn't signal depth or drama. But "Solomon" is a Biblical character and "the wisdom of Solomon" is a phrase echoing over the centuries. Wisdom can be wide and philosophical. It can also be a far more down-to-earth struggle to avoid being blind to core realities and decisive facts.

## DD Gem #18 — "[Girl In The Case](#)" — April 30, 1962

### From 87th PRECINCT (NBC-TV, 1961-62)

Most STACCATO episodes were far more violent than the one you just read about. Same for THE UNTOUCHABLES (1959-63) and Lee Marvin's M SQUAD (1957-60).

Then came parental and congressional criticism. Successor shows reduced the slam-bang. The pivot points were subtler. We got to see the "action" of thought.

Like [THE ASPHALT JUNGLE](#) and [CHECKMATE](#) in the early '60s, *87th Precinct* relied on non-frantic exchanges and understated musical backdrops. Regulars were given time to think about the Whether and Why. Certain guest actors did that, too. This encouraged viewers to watch for factors beyond deeds, dangers and deadlines.

"87th Precinct" is far better known as a long string of crime and mystery novels by ED McBAIN (1926-2005). "From 1958 until his death," according to Wikipedia, these "appeared at a rate of approximately one or two novels a year. "McBain" also published as Evan Hunter. "87th" as a TV series was inspired by his vast output.

"Girl In The Case" is (mostly) a quiet episode. Yet many things happen. Some that strike the viewer as pivotal turn out to be random and unrelated. The result is a complex saga. Nearly all of it can be absorbed without your feeling rushed.

The minor characters define themselves well. An underlying theme of **admit who and what you are** extends to all but one. Can't say much about Douglas Masters this early; it'll detract from the two lead characters. But he and the minors matter.

Credit for a first-rate script goes to RICHARD J. COLLINS (1914-2013). Wikipedia casts him as "an American producer, director and screenwriter prominent in Hollywood during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s." Mr. Collins was contributing to detective shows as late as *Matlock*. He has an impressive and diverse list of credits.

In 1951, "Collins admitted to formerly being a member of the Communist Party" and an array of left-wing front groups. "Collins became infamous for naming people he knew to be in the Communist Party, even close friends. In all, he ultimately named 26 of his colleagues." Good for him, and I'd nix that "infamous" knock.

Later that decade, and we're still drawing from [Wikipedia](#), Collins "wrote the treatment for *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, which he said was based on his experience with the Communist Party" and with the congressional committee documenting the security lapses of the 1930s and especially the '40s.

## Subdued Exchanges by Candid Individuals

The primary characters in this episode are series regular [GREGORY WALCOTT](#) (1928-2015) as Detective Roger Havilland, and [JANIS PAIGE](#) as Cheryl Anderson.

Paige's birth name was Donna Mae Tjaden, and Walcott began life as Bernard Wasdon Mattox. Though 11 inches taller, he finds it hard to keep up with her.

They first meet when Havilland joins a couple of officers at Anderson's apartment. Why is he there? An explosion that could've easily killed the tenant. She had just walked in the door, lit a cigarette, and (at Minute 4:26) *ka-boom*.

Havilland has a mild southern accent. A colleague informs him that the door's lock had been jimmied. He runs through a list of inquiries. The notion that Anderson set up a suicide due to emotional anguish is dealt with — as in dismissed. What about the door luck? "I did that myself," she explains, having recently misplaced the key.

Cheryl Anderson — the "girl in the case" — is a Public Stenographer at the Ritz Hotel. She chose that locale for social and financial reasons, not the pay level. And she does not link the gas explosion with her client work. Emphatic without being hostile, Anderson tells Havilland: "There is no reason why anyone would want to break in here. I have NO money, and no enemies."

Well then, says the politely thorough cop, have you made anyone's wife sore enough to cause you violence? "Mister Detective," she responds after a rough exhale, "I have turned down enough men in my life so I know how to do it without leaving them SORE enough to want to kill me. And as for wives, I don't play with married men. I don't have to." "I can believe that," he replies with a faint smile.

Anderson does not feel danger. Not even sitting in a chair just outside a shattered kitchen. Beyond the blast itself, hardly an explosive scene. But it does a good job of introducing the two primary characters to one another.

It also previews a resilient and resourceful Cheryl Anderson in a pre-feminist America. This woman's self-awareness is striking. For many, self-awareness comes with indecisiveness: The individual sees all the angles, then bogs down because of too many options. Not Cheryl Anderson. When she encounters fog or a vexing choice, she processes quickly, and alters course.

Some kind of value system has been formed. It's neither traditional nor cynical. She has resolved not to make any more big mistakes. Not with men, and not with money. Armed with these strengths, she is set up — by the script, I mean — to

navigate a choice between two men.

One is Roger Havilland. Older viewers might recall the other one as “Jerry Helper,” the dentist and neighbor of Dick Van Dyke. In this episode JERRY PARIS is Douglas Masters, a responsibility-evading thirty-something.

Detective Havilland will get to know Stenographer Anderson when he and a female officer are assigned to protect her from an extortion campaign — IF that’s really what’s underway. At a minimum, it’s a calmly targeted case of leverage by bribery.

### **“Sharp As a Tack the Night He Dictated His Will to Me”**

A man walks into Anderson's office at the Ritz. He wants her to type “one short document...right this minute.” Okay, says the Public Stenographer, a bit surprised. A sheet of paper goes into the typewriter; she’ll record his words in shorthand.

To Whom It May Concern: I, Cheryl Anderson, do hereby assert that I took dictation as to the last Will & Testament of Mr. Raymond L. Masters. I further assert that the aforesaid Raymond L. Masters was not in complete possession of his faculties at the time...

Forget the note-taking. Instead, she is staring at him. Your words are not true, she counters. “Is everything you take as dictation true?” the visitor without a name persists. “Well, I don't usually know.” But she did know the late Raymond Masters “very well. He was sharp as a tack the night he dictated his Will to me.”

We saw him toward the end of that process. It’s how this episode started, right before the theme music. They had discussed “my relatives,” slated to get nothing; and the first-born son, Douglas, still in there plugging after four failed marriages. We heard the senior Masters musing to Anderson:

How do I know that \$6 million will make him responsible or happy? I debated giving it all to charity. But I'm FRIGHTENED for him. What would he do without money? ... He never has [worked] in 37 years.... No. I can't penalize him for the fact that I spoiled him. I can only hope that someday, somehow, he'll settle down.

As an otherwise forgettable RNC Chairman will say 42 years later, “Hope is not a strategy.” We watched the elder Masters accept the blame for ruining Douglas; then saw him lock in millions for permanent adult day-care. Anderson had suggested young Masters could still learn to earn a living; the father dismissed it.

No mental fog! William Masters meant to fund his no-account son forever (and

disinherit all the other relatives). Just like us viewers, Anderson was clear on these desires — right up to the moment the old man died. It happened in front of her and his two servants, after they had signed the Will as witnesses.

Now return to the Ritz: This man pushing Anderson to invalidate that Will somehow knows about William Masters and Anderson as his agent. He offers her \$100,000 — "deposited to any bank you name, in any country" — to complete and sign the statement. "I wouldn't lie for a million dollars," she replies.

But absolutist statements don't fit this lady's nature. Self-awareness reasserts itself: "I won't deny that it doesn't sound attractive" — *script or actress glitch there* (because two negatives invert her meaning) — but this stance is personal as opposed to ethical: "I liked Mr. Masters; I won't go against his wishes... He was NICE to me and I don't find that kind very often."

"A chance like this happen only once in a lifetime," says the nicely-dressed fifty-something. "But, for you, twice. I'll phone you in about a week. Think about it." He leaves nothing; it was a walk-in; and few hotels used CCTV in 1962.

NOW what do you think of the gas explosion? It will turn out to be the most violent, and the least indicative, event. Something else happens, a few days later, that makes Cheryl Anderson call on Havilland and his colleagues...



From left to right: RON HARPER, GREGORY WALCOTT, ROBERT LANSING, NORMAN FELL



## “Would You Tell a Little Lie for a Hundred Thousand Dollars?”

The second Anderson-Havilland meeting is her first visit to the 87th Precinct building. It's also where lead cop Steve Carella's joins this expanding case. Carella is played by [ROBERT LANSING](#) (1928-94), and he's keeping his distance from Anderson.

Carella looks for holes in her narrative. By this point it includes the walk-in briber; a speeding car's near-miss; the kitchen blast the lab boys conclude was (probably) accidental; and — at Minute 10:41 — a “mugging.” A '60s term, it means “assault usually with intent to rob.” Anderson screamed; a cab driver came to her aid.

Carella tries to separate the mugging from the \$10,000 visitor. Bribery, yes, but does the visitor's campaign include physical threats? (No second contact yet.) Could the speeding car and mugging be random? After all, this is New York City.

“Look, when he calls again, set up a meeting,” Havilland says. “We'll have a tape recorder. We'll tell you what to say.” The Masters Will is four days from probation. “If there IS any danger, it'll only be for four days.” Anderson is unusually loud: “Four days is long ENOUGH.” That's not the point about four days, says Havilland gently.

But, if she's that scared, “go to the country and hide out.” Not possible; “the Hotel would get somebody else if I left.” She'd like police protection. Lansing, all business, says there's nothing in the 87th's budget for that. But, they could arrest her so that she'll be “put under protective custody.” “Ohhhh, well; there goes my business.”

Havilland then asks if she'd be willing to pay for two hotel rooms for four days. Why? “One for you, one for a policewoman, [and] I'll drop in from time to time.”

A night or two later, the two cops and Anderson are in one of those rooms. The policewoman leaves to go pick up some coffee. Such a setting — shadowy risks, no romantic presumptions, along with shared space and too much time — is ideal for character-definition. Havilland is musing about the odd-lottery of his work...

ANDERSON: Did you always want to be a cop? — excuse me, [a] detective.

HAVILLAND: No. Matter of fact, I was almost a professional football player.

She seems impressed. Havilland is reflectively genial. He's one of the very few mainstream southerners in a prime-time detective role during the 1960s.

HAVILLAND: Played in college. Tackle. Made All-American [grinning] — that is, second string. Yeah, I had quite a FEW Pro offers. Hmm-mmph! Coulda made a lot more money than I do now.

ANDERSON: Didn't you wanna make money?

HAVILLAND: Well, I guess not really. Or I woulda ACCEPTED the job.

ANDERSON: Why didn't you?

HAVILLAND: Well, I wasn't the best tackle in the world.

ANDERSON: [Seeming mischievous if not flirty] Are you the best DETECTIVE in the world?

HAVILLAND: [Grunts in the negative] Far from it. But it's a useful job. And [unlike football] you can stick with it...

ANDERSON: Is it important for you to do something useful?

At this moment background music launches, which makes you realize how LITTLE music of ANY kind adorns MOST of the dialogue in this series. Words handle 100%.

HAVILLAND: Well, I think everybody's been put on Earth to...do their bit.

ANDERSON: You're religious?

HAVILLAND: [Longer pause, then thoughtfully] I guess.

They discuss brawn versus brains in police work. And what about psychology? Also necessary, Havilland says.

ANDERSON: What do you make of me?

HAVILLAND: [Thrown off slightly] I don't know you well enough... I usually deal with crooks — I mean, I can tell when someone is telling me the truth...

ANDERSON: Mr. Havilland — would you tell a little lie for a hundred thousand dollars?

HAVILLAND: No.

ANDERSON: You absolutely sure?

HAVILLAND: Absolutely [he's not grim here, but the geniality and the smile have ceased]. I have all the money I need.

ANDERSON: What about your wife?

HAVILLAND: I'm not married.

At this point, the policewoman returns with the coffees. "Cream and sugar?" Black, says Anderson. The policewoman deduces that she has interrupted something.



"Miss Wilson, this is the first time I have ever been alone with a member of our police force. Are they always such gentlemen?" "Absolutely," she replies.

"That's the official truth, Miss." "UN-officially," presses Anderson. "That all depends," replies Miss Wilson. The coffee doesn't perk anyone up. End of the third exchange between worldly-wise Stenographer and low-key Detective.

Low-key? What makes this a "quiet" episode is that the criminal elements stay fuzzy. No one is killed. The police procedures are separate from the key scenes. And it does not figure that the persistent briber would arrange a gas explosion.

## **"Where Do You Find Rich Men? In Expensive Hotels"**

The fourth conversation is a date. They slow-dance before the meal. Until dinner is over, Havilland will escape having to do *The Twist*. (Remember, this is 1962; more adults are taking up what had started as a teen craze two years earlier.)

When Anderson says she had a "wonderful evening," Havilland suggests it doesn't need to be over. "Well, I still have to be at work at 9 sharp," she replies. "The rent goes on whether I'm there or not." "Big rent?" "Big enough."

HAVILLAND: Couldn't you make more at a [slight pause] regular job?

ANDERSON: Yes, I suppose so, but — that's not the point [long pause]. You see, after I was divorced, I knocked around for a long time. And then a couple of years ago, I took inventory. You know, you take a long hard look yourself in the mirror, and at your bank account. Bank account: Zero. Mirror? Aging brunette — eyes good — figure, fair. Smile? Well, tired.

HAVILLAND: That's not the description I'd give.

ANDERSON: This is a "long hard look," remember. And unprejudiced [smiling]. Anyway, having made this instrument, I asked myself: What do we do with these assets before they fade away?

She really said *instrument*. Maybe the SCRIPT called for "investment"? In any case, the recounting is devoid of female indirection...

ANDERSON: How do we invest the capital left? And I decided: Marry a rich man. Where do you find rich men? In expensive hotels — that's the answer.

The tension is mounting. Cheryl Anderson is a master... I almost said "operator," but the better term (although clumsy) is Options-Creator.

HAVILLAND: Gotta be rich, huh?

ANDERSON: [Quietly] I'm afraid so [five-second pause]. Unless, um, I was suddenly to become rich on my own.

HAVILLAND: Now how would you do that?

ANDERSON: Tell a little lie.

Havilland half-laughs, and more than half of the laugh signals unease.

ANDERSON: Wait, I know how you feel but — look at it this way. I think the best thing in the world would be if Douglas Masters lost all his money. Might be the MAKING of him. So you see, I'd be doing good and I'd be making myself a lot of money too [brief pause]. No?

Here's one time the calm and cool Roger Havilland is just plain out of words.

ANDERSON: Well, I may do it anyway. Disillusioned? Don't be — I haven't made up my mind yet.

HAVILLAND: YOU might be disillusioned. I'd have to arrest you.

ANDERSON: But you wouldn't.

HAVILLAND: But I would — regretfully.

ANDERSON: [Not missing a beat] Well I can always go back to Plan A: Marry a rich man.

HAVILLAND: Suppose you never find one.

ANDERSON: I have already. He's right up there in the Ritz Hotel.

HAVILLAND: Douglas Masters??

ANDERSON: He's interested in me, I know it. If I play my cards "just right," I just may be able to land him.

HAVILLAND: Well, what about — what above love?

ANDERSON: That's a luxury for the very young.

She has articulated all of this with a languid air. No trace of bitterness or resentment at life's course thus far. And then the Twist music resumes — a way to bail Roger Havilland out of this ever more awkward exchange.

Quick on the uptake, Cheryl says: "Rog? Duty or no duty, you're going to learn to Twist." Up to that summons, he'd been doing a different kind of twisting. Had she been attempting to make him try harder? To the point of cashing in his ethics? She

also mentioned going out with Havilland to Douglas Masters, and he's the one looking forward to \$6 million.

Havilland's colleagues at the 87th are tuned in. Detective Bert Kling, played by RON HARPER, has spelled Havilland guarding Anderson at her office; in fact, Kling will be right there when the Mystery Briber phones to repeat his \$100,000 offer.

Speaking to Carella and the fourth 87th regular, played by NORMAN FELL, King says of Anderson: "Yeah, I think [Rog] IS serious. I don't think he KNOWS it yet." What kind of a girl is she? "Oh, she's been around; I think he's WAY over his head."

All four detectives have a part of the Anderson Case. Steve Carella has to go see Anson Masters, Doug's much younger sibling. Anson is a self-righteous painter — "I reject the Acquisitive Society" — in a ragged loft. But wasn't he in one of his father's previous Wills? "I wouldn't have taken the money."

With a half-nude model lounging nearby, Anson declaims: "Mr. Policeman, you're looking at a HAPPY, FULFILLED man. Look hard." Steve Carella certainly does that. ZERO interest in money? Steve Carella later tells his colleagues: "The way he LIVES, I almost believe it." Even so, "I think we ought to put a tail on him."

## Notes on Three of the Six Supporting Characters

- Policewoman Wilson has no first name. She is played by [KATHLEEN FREEMAN](#) (1919-2001): "In a career that spanned more than 50 years, she portrayed acerbic maids, secretaries, teachers, busybodies, nurses, and battle-axe neighbors and relatives, almost invariably to comic effect," reports Wikipedia. She "appeared in 11 Jerry Lewis comedies in the 1950s and '60s." Anyone with vintage DVDs or who liked Nick-At-Nite will know [this face](#) — a pretty good color shot.
- Each time Cheryl Anderson converses, it's memorable. She does that twice with [JERRY PARIS](#) as Doug Masters. Paris had roles in *The Caine Mutiny*, *The Wild One* and *Marty*. He played Martin "Marty" Flaherty, "one of Eliot Ness's men in a recurring role in the first season of... *The Untouchables*." After his years on *The Dick Van Dyke Show*, as both actor and a director, Paris "worked most notably on *Happy Days*, where he directed 237 of the show's 255 episodes. Imitating Hitchcock, he appeared uncredited in at least one episode of every season." These facts and quotes are from Wikipedia.
- Finally, a brief plug for [JOAN STALEY](#) (1940-2019). Her bypasser's role serves up its own unvarnished candor. As "Monica," she is one of Douglas's playmates. Anderson has already dissed him as shallow. He decides to converse seriously with Monica, always dicey with a ditzy blonde 60 years ago...

“Would ya love me if I didn’t have any money?” She says: “Look, I knew ya when you only had a few hundred thousand.” “No, I mean if I had a job [at] say, a hundred a week.” Monica is bothered by the probing. “Well, let me ask you,” she counters: “Would you love me if I wasn’t PRETTY?” He fumbles that one.

Her wrap on Douglas Masters’ stumbling attempt at maturity is stunning: “Look, let’s just face it: I’m very pretty and you’re very rich, and we’re both just very lucky.” Masters is dumbfounded. He ends the date with Monica early.

What can I say? No moment of any exchange is wasted by “Girl In The Case.” Most things fall into place, and the implicit “live and learn” message keeps rolling.

When this episode was filmed, Paige, born in September 1922, was 39 and Walcott just 34. At the episode’s start, the ages seemed the other way around. By the end, the age difference fits. “Knocking around” wised up Cheryl Anderson.

Havilland told Anderson that he knows when someone is lying to him. In a strange way, Havilland’s rising interest in her confirms that she isn’t lying. Not to him, not to his colleagues at the 87th, and not to Douglas Masters, to whom she’ll offer a chance to grow up. Anderson is authentic. She bets on candor. Aware of what she can obtain, she’s also seasoned enough to sidestep youthful illusions.

But who was behind the bribe offer and the two instances of physical danger? Can’t spoil any of that. I’ve already gone too far by drawing from the second half.

You won’t find this episode for free on the Web. But anyone who wants to understand early-’60s detective drama will see its non-frantic side on the studio-issued DVDs of a well-crafted series — <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/dvd-87th-precinct-complete-series/25035111>

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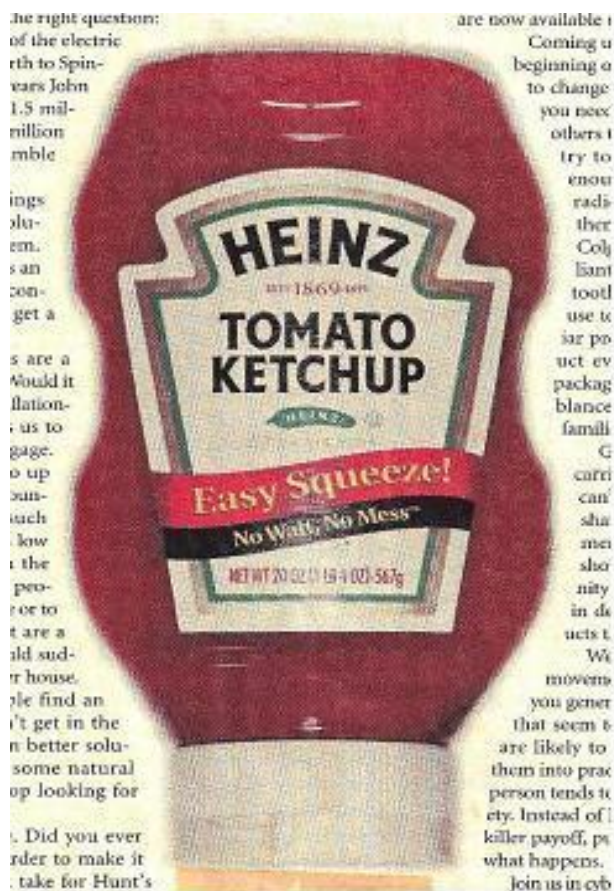
## **BONUS SECTION** – on how to appreciate the many ways *Hill Street Blues* **SCRAMBLED** “detective drama”

As promised on Page 1, an essay on HSB’s place in media history. Best way to underline the various leaps is to position it against all its predecessors.

If you’re still here — as an editor, performer, or media historian — you take detective TV drama seriously. *Bravo for that.* I only wish I could’ve offered more graphics and images this go-round. But the show isn’t over yet.

To enliven this final slice of the issue, let’s start with a split-screen...





Had they noticed what customers DID with their bottles, the innovation on the left would've come decades earlier for Heinz or its competitors. Upside-down ketchup was a combination of "going with the flow" while "going against the grain."

As a "product," *Hill Street Blues* was vastly more complex than a bottle of ketchup. But its designers and directors did the same thing as Heinz: They turned inside out, if not upside down, the rules for prime-time detective drama. The result was an ability to convey the workaday "flow" of cops with an urban populace.

Has anyone outlined all the HSB "flips"? Time for the **Dueling Index Card** method...

**CLASSIC STRUCTURE:** *Sunset Strip* popularized "caper." Johnny Dollar referred to his assignments as a "Matter." Certain Holmes stories were labeled an Adventure. Most everywhere else? It was **The Case**. Each episode "filled out" a whole case.

Because **HILL STREET BLUES** had no Case, it was truer to law-enforcement life: No officer could go for days on end as a monomaniac. Instead each week's HSB piled up the story lines: A couple of majors, the middling ones (sometimes unrelated to crime or law-enforcement), street incidents that came and went as if by magic, money and ego problems among the officers, and soap-opera entanglements. (Somewhere I read that the final two seasons of HSB overdid the latter.)

**CLASSIC STRUCTURE** opened with the report of a murder or other crime, or (especially in the original *Hawaii 5-O*) by showing us the crime being carried out.

For most of its run, **HILL STREET BLUES** opened with the ROLL CALL. This was a delightful design feature that helped viewers anticipate the rest of the episode. Some two dozen officers and staff individually react to this or that; or they just ignore the agenda and contemplate a donut or fret about personal stuff. Had to be cameras point-able anywhere, and (of course) never visible to us at home.

**CLASSIC STRUCTURE**: Barrie Craig and Phillip Marlowe were loners. Duos include Holmes and Watson, Bailey and Spencer, Joe Mannix and Peggy Fair, Commissioner McMillan and Sergeant Enright. In *Burke's Law* and *Checkmate*, three shared the marquis. In *87th Precinct*, FOUR detectives (and one wife) pushed the viewer's limits in terms of what — or make that WHO — to pay the most attention to.

**HILL STREET BLUES** blew away those limits. Week after week led to familiarity with an array of regulars. Some officers might be prominent for months and then quit, crack up, be convicted, or even killed. During Seasons Two and Three, fans were acclimating to the most durable characters. More about those on the next page.

**CLASSIC STRUCTURE** required full orchestras. Not just for the theme, but to accentuate scenes, mood shifts, and stark moments. Until "CSI" replaced authentic instruments with computer-generated drivel, audio buffs took for granted what skilled musicians meant for *M Squad*, *Sunset Strip*, *The FBI*, *Mannix*, *The NBC Mystery Movie*, *A Touch of Frost*, and several other series.

**HILL STREET BLUES** blew that away too. Most of the situations displayed on HSB have no music at all. As for its THEME music? "Mild as milquetoast, composed by Mike Post." Got to #10 on the Billboard Top 100 soon after the series launched.

**CLASSIC STRUCTURE** for a crime series stressed or assumed a specific city. It was rarely as blunt as putting Miami, Hawaii or San Francisco in the title; but references to streets, landmarks and jails made big-name geography part of the scenery.

**HILL STREET BLUES** was the first cop show since *The Asphalt Jungle* to avoid affiliation with a specific city. But, according to the [METV dot-com staff](#) in 2016, "there are definitely some clues. Creator [STEVEN BOCHO](#) intended the fictional city to resemble Chicago, Pittsburgh and Buffalo. Also, the Maxwell Street police station in Chicago was used for the exterior shots of the Hill Street precinct building."

The opening pages saluted JAMES B. SIKKING and BRUCE WEITZ. Others with a long run: Captain Furillo's wife and the city's #1 Public Defender Joyce Davenport

([VERONICA HAMEL](#)), Chief Counsel Irwin Bernstein ([GEORGE WYNER](#)), Sergeant Henry Goldblume ([JOE SPANO](#)), and Lieutenant (later Captain) Ray Calletano ([RENE ENRIQUEZ](#)). Fans also befriended Officers Lucille “Lucy” Bates ([BETTY THOMAS](#)), Bobby Hill ([MICHAEL WARREN](#)), and Andy Renko ([CHARLES HAID](#)).

On April 1, 2018, Executive Producer STEVEN BOCHO died at the age of 74. I’ll close with one other way to salute him and his fellow innovators. Even if you function miles away from writing and acting, what HSB pulled off has value for real life...

- In creative fields or your personal behavior — especially when boredom or failure has got your down — make a list of everything you take to be Standard. Redundancy is okay: List 10, 12 or even 25 (so-called) realities.
  - Process that list until it deepens the boredom with, or aggravates the resentment at, your feelings of roadblock and treadmill. And then...
  - Invert or “flip” half a dozen parts of your list (not all 25!), and begin to IMPLEMENT the OPPOSITE of what the market or your friends expect.
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Having examined a GEM episode here, you can approach it with fairly specific expectations. That’s because every GEMS analysis spotlights **characters**, **dialogue** and **scenes**. Depending on your profession, my analysis clarifies what to look for and why. You walk in prepped. And the episode’s second half — where each loose end gets clipped, tied, or fried — will STILL **surprise**. Because? Despite spending 3,000+ words on every episode, a GEMS write-up doesn’t spoil the ending.

— Frank Gregorsky, Editor and Curator

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