



Detective Drama **GEMS...**

Mid-1940s to the Mid-1990s

Issue #8 August 2022

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

DD Gem #25 — "How to Dial a Murder" — April 5, 1978 **From COLUMBO** (NBC-TV, 1971 to '78)

Older Americans recall with some vividness a television cop who never shared his first name. No long-term colleagues, either: For the original 45 NBC-era episodes, the most detailed reference book lists *no one else* as supporting cast. This character had no secretary, no deputy, no Dr. Watson, no media contacts — and no gun.

But few Americans under the age of 30 are familiar with this polite yet relentless Lieutenant, or with the great PETER FALK (1927-2011) who embodied him. If this publication makes you curious — less about Mr. Falk than about his most enduring character — a single Web exhibit can fill all critical gaps...

<http://chewbakka.com/garmonbozia/columbo>

Hard to find such zippy thoroughness. Especially about a man who never existed. ABC revived COLUMBO in 1989. But our focus here is on just *one* of the NBC episodes. It's from the 7th season. Though bizarre, the crime itself could've taken place the way it's shown to us. The perpetrator labored diligently over his scheme, with a special form of control over the key variables. Of course! **Control** is his trademark as well as marketing pitch. He founded and runs the Institute for Life Control.

Words and Control. The mastermind gives lectures and organizes workshops on that linkage. Society uses "words" to control us from childhood on, he says, and by focusing on words, we can break free, create options, and claim more space.

The Institute for *Life Control*? Perfect for U.S.A. 1970s

A hundred or so people are in an auditorium. Looks to be about the size of a college lecture hall. And why is it half-empty? That's a feature rather than a failing.

The speaker shares the stage with two Doberman Pinchers. He calls them Laurel and Hardy. They behave with perfect decorum, sitting calmly as their owner paces from side to side. The central figure is up there urging an audience to find freedom by living out his method. The rhetoric and m.o. are sooooo 50 years ago.

Each chair has a dial device. Up in the control room, the speaker's staff can quickly evaluate which words motivate, intimidate or confuse the group as a whole. The staff is managed by Dr. Charles Hunter. He is the lead figure's business partner.

Problem: A few in the audience are sitting next to the person they entered with. An unintentional violation! Closeness works against the super-theme...

Now, the woman sitting next to the man in the checked suit, SPREAD OUT, give yourself some living space. If we wanted you NEXT to each other, we'd fill this hall and I'd make another hundred thousand. But you wouldn't get the *point*, and the POINT is: *Take Control...of your own space! Your own lives! Your own responses...*

Except for those chair dials, the set-up seems low-tech, even by 1978 standards. **Dr. Eric Mason** relies on a chalkboard. The only diagram we're shown is a circle trapped in a square box. No slide projector and no banners. Astonishingly, Mason has no microphone, yet his voice seems to reach the back rows...

WORDS! Food money boss wife sex. Mommy and Daddy started setting you up RIGHT from the cradle. Conditioning you, they took control with the CONTROL words. Then the words took control. NOW who's got the control? I'VE got the control. The words LOCK you into your locked-up little lives...

"Now we're gonna teach you how to smash the lock," the decibel level dropping reassuringly. He summons the dogs, by name. "They're not very bright, but they answer to their names. What name do YOU answer to?"

Heading out to lunch, Mason tells the audience THEY can't go to lunch until the Facilitators (Ian and Betty) say it's okay. Plenty of groans.

Dr. Mason has two — another '70s term — Comfort Zones: He's either fixated on his own space, or using his mental depth to articulate a substitute gospel. It comes close to saying each individual can be a micro version of God. To convey such a message persuasively, you have to know how to live that way yourself. He's almost there.

It's hard to imagine an actor better suited to play Dr. Eric Mason: THOMAS NICOL WILLIAMSON (1936-2011) was his birth name. The "Thomas" was dropped before fame. During 40+ years, the brilliant and mercurial Nicol Williamson excelled on stage, in films, and as evocative TV characters. He even released a pop-tunes LP.

Williamson grew up in Scotland. His dad was a factory worker. A great script and his own skills enable him to embody the methodical, contained, aloof and resentful Eric Mason. Because GEMS specializes in EPISODES, the text given to outstanding character actors is often limited. Still, don't neglect [Wikipedia on Nicol Williamson](#).

Back to the story's set-up. Administrative matters beckon. Doctors Mason and Hunter adjourn to their nicely appointed office. The dogs sit contentedly nearby. Hunter sees his friend staring at a photo of the two of them with Mason's late wife. Lorraine Mason perished a year ago when her car ran off the road.

Hunter wonders: *Why do you never talk about the loss?* "It wasn't that good a marriage, if you wanna know," comes the reply. "She was seeing somebody else. Somebody — ohhh, I don't know who — lover." Longer pause. "Well you still want me to talk about it?" Hunter shows regret at opening up the subject.

With Ian and Betty in charge of the workshop, Mason and Hunter are freed up for tennis. Hunter is to meet Mason at the latter's house. Mason MIGHT be late, if his annual physical runs past the allotted time. "Just let yourself in, and make yourself at home..." But Hunter, played by [JOEL FABIANI](#), is not long for this world.

Who kills him? Mason's two dogs. We see the grisly mechanics twice. First, in the form of a dry-run, image by image, while the credits roll out slowly. And soon after, in orderly story-line sequence: Charlie Hunter, mauled to pieces.

This is the same man who had just taken those dogs from the Institute to Mason's house. He knew "Laurel and Hardy" well; they responded to his commands.

Dr. Mason "Hasn't Worked Weekends Since Mrs. Mason Died"

Part of Mason's sprawling estate is a "guest house" made available to students, seminar grads, or random friends. The person using it for over a year pays no rent.

Mr. and Mrs. Mason "said I could LIVE here," she'll explain to Columbo, "if I helped take care of the main house." Then, "after Mrs. Mason died, I had the whole place to myself mostly, and on weekends and all. So it turned out to be a good deal."

Yet Eric Mason's plan — tricking his friend into triggering the dogs — risked having this young woman in or near the kitchen during the mauling. At around 3 p.m., in the pool instead, she heard Hunter's screams and phoned the police.

Like Hunter, she had been with the Dobermans many times and never had a problem or felt fear. Sometimes she'd take care of them; "they were terrific company."

When she notes that "Eric" usually took them for the weekend, Columbo's curiosity is piqued. "He hasn't worked weekends since Mrs. Mason died," she adds.

Who is this houseguest? Joanne Nicholls, played by a very young (21 1/2) KIM CATTRALL. This Liverpool-born star is today known for her [1990s TV persona](#).

In "Dial a Murder," every scene with her is decisive. Even when she is shaky and vulnerable, Cattrall is able to take a stand quickly. That makes her the only other key guest actor in this 70-minute episode. Unless you count Laurel and Hardy.

In a way, two *structures* also "star." The Institute for Life Control is one. The other is the lead figure's palatial residence. Lieutenant Columbo keeps getting into each, sometimes with no one letting him in. Any other critical locale? Yes, a prison cell — for the Dobermans. Everyone assumes that a Judge will order them destroyed.

That's their owner's belief, too. In fact, it's part of the mastermind's design...

But hold on. Quoting from the female houseguest is getting us ahead of the story. Kim Cattrall, as Joanne Nichols, DID see the death scene before anyone else did or could. She'll also end up helping nail Mason without knowing how valuable her answers are. But the *viewer* will first encounter the Lieutenant at Minute 10:39.

After conferring with officers in the blood-spattered kitchen, Columbo commences the first of many "sessions" with the primary guest actor. The time seems to be late afternoon. Hunter had met his gruesome end shortly after 3 p.m.

It takes a couple of minutes before the Lieutenant realizes the name's fame...

COLUMBO: Are you Dr. Eric Mason, the MIND-control doctor?

MASON: Not MIND-control, LIFE control. There's a difference, Lieutenant. I'm not a [Svengali](#).

COLUMBO: Ohhh, I didn't mean to imply, sir. Just last night my WIFE was talking about your Institute. Ohh you're a very famous psychologist, sir. Mrs. Columbo, she's HIGHLY enthusiastic about taking one of your 48-hour sessions. To STUDY control, sir.

MASON: I understand her enthusiasm, Lieutenant. But it seems like I can't even control my own dogs.

Those dogs tore at Charlie Hunter's throat. But Columbo immediately remarks to Mason how "affectionate" they seem. "I hit it off with 'em right away."

"The Only Training They've Had is to Be Affectionate"

Dr. Mason is a psychologist with academic overtones. But the intellectual curiosity of younger days has been replaced by certitudes. Certitudes come from dogma — not a word to toss around lightly, given the actions of Laurel and Hardy.

Point is, *some* kind of riveting worldview is needed if one is to self-star in seminars. And Mason's outlook has been hot-housed in a lavishly escapist environment.

His estate displays dozens of artifacts. One on the OUTSIDE is a wrought-iron gate adornment from *Citizen Kane*. On the inside, a pool cue owned by W.C. Fields becomes part of the slow-motion swordplay between Mason and the Lieutenant.

In this high-resolution screen shot, a classic sled on the wall exactly separates the two antagonists. That sled turns out to be pivotal. In fact, whoever took that picture was a gifted imagist, all the way up to how the sled is tilted in such a way as to let Columbo "see" into the mind of the Mental Maestro...



"It's a remarkable room, Sir. I've never seen anything like it... All these wonderful things." A fanatic film buff, yes? "Ohh we all need our dream worlds, Lieutenant. Even psychologists." Columbo replies: "Oh, there's nothing dreamy about you, sir. Not the way those thousands of people depend upon you for peace of mind."

But he'll finish UN-impressed. This shrewdly indirect cop will actually *insult* the Mastermind: "A very simple case," he'll observe near the episode's climax...

Not that I'm particularly bright, sir, [but] I must say: I found YOU disappointing. I mean your incompetence. You left enough clues to sink a ship. Motive. Opportunity. And for a man of your intelligence, sir, you got caught in a lotta stupid lies. A LOT of 'em.

One thing Dr. Mason said to Columbo — "Charlie must've *done* something to provoke an attack" — was literally correct. Another comment was the most risky type of lie: "The only training they've had is to be affectionate." *Training*, you say?

Also notable is something rare in detective episodes: **A time marker**. As part of the "how you did it" finale, Columbo will reference a verbal slip by Mason that took place "weeks ago." From that moment on, time has to be spent deciphering the murderous training given the Dobermans — and then to UN-train them.

Words and Control. Talk about a unifying theme! What if they gave awards for EPISODES? Don't wait for "they." GEM status is confirmed and magnified here.

Another super-helpful indicator — repeated weekend absences — was offered by Joanne. She had no special reason to think it significant. But the behavior pattern directs Columbo to put another tantalizing inquiry to Mason...

COLUMBO: When you used to take the dogs away on a weekend, what is it you DID with the dogs?

MASON: Oh we walked on the beach, and they played and — I would *think*. Thinking is an old-fashioned habit, Lieutenant, and one *well* worth cultivating.

COLUMBO: Well, I'm gonna hafta TRY that sometime, sir. You were ALWAYS with the dogs?

MASON: [Quietly and calmly] Always.

COLUMBO: [Skeptically] On the beach.

MASON: On *different* beaches.

The dogs remain jailed. After he gets them a stay of execution, Columbo visits a trainer friend to learn how much conditioning it would take to alter a dog's mood and purpose, ultimately, in seconds. These scenes of instruction are marvelous.

So is watching Columbo, next to the Dobermans in their cell, try various words to see if he can incite them! Actually, there isn't a single wasteful or poorly acted scene in this entire episode. Cattrall and Williamson are superb. And the music — often lugubrious, vaguely 1950s, and stately even as it mourns — is perfect.

Who wrote this compellingly rigorous script? ANTHONY LAWRENCE. Most of the IMDB entry on him is a "[Filmography](#)" that comes close to a tour of TV drama from 1959 to 2016. And the teleplay is by [TOM LAZARUS](#), who in addition to creating and directing has also shown us the "how." See [The Last Word: Definitive Answers to All Your Screenwriting Questions](#) (2012, Michael Wiese Productions).

INTERMISSION: *The Who and the How of Peter Falk's Character and Series*

In part because of "Dial a Murder," I bought Season Two. After 15 episodes, the "architecture" of the NBC-1970s COLUMBO looks to be an outlier in striking ways...

1. **The depth of detail given to each crime.** Lieutenant Columbo sometimes doesn't appear until the 20th minute. Then he'll assemble the murderer's methods and mistakes, along with the motive. Despite some over-the-top story lines, the constancy of *precision* compels attention.
2. **The interactions between the Lieutenant and the perpetrator** go on and on. When Columbo springs the final trap, he has no gun. Nor has the culprit. These scripts don't need gunplay, car wrecks, or hostage scenes. And the killers are very accomplished people. Not thugs or syndicate cogs.
3. **Can ANY cop be so autonomous?** No Higgins, no Charlie Enright, no Dr. Watson, no Dan Williams. *Not even a secretary.* Few collaborators at L.A. Police HQ (although a Lieutenant Duffy appears now and then). And, whenever Colombo *reports* to anyone, it's just for that episode.
4. **Also not needed: Media allies, INTERPOL, or computers** (such as they were 50 years ago). I haven't noticed Columbo using a pay phone, and his Peugeot is a jalopy. He's a one-man investigative apparatus whose #1 suspect is clarified with unusual speed. Since we the viewers, and soon the Lieutenant, know WHO did it *and HOW*, the typical episode allows him, and us, to invade that individual's space. Early and often.

"Dial" Wouldn't Be an Ideal '70s Exemplar Without...

A psychiatric evaluation from Dr. Mason? Columbo *requested* it early on. Finally, it happens. Not as crazy as it sounds. In one way or another, the perpetrator wants to draw some kind of bead, if only linguistically, on the detective. Mason can show confidence as master of his craft. Right there, in front of a crackling fireplace.

The result is one of the most sedate 11th-hour mental wrestling matches ever to grace a crime episode. Two men, sipping wine. Their exchange nearly comes across

as relaxing, even though it's a case of solemnly conflicting objectives. Messrs. Mason and Columbo appear to have all the time in the world...

MASON: Do you think [pause] we could find one single word that dominates your life?

COLUMBO: Well, now that you put it that way, sir, I suppose there is one.

MASON: [Calmly businesslike] Then say the word.

COLUMBO: Murder.

MASON: Oh well that's simple enough — your work dominates everything.

COLUMBO: Doesn't everyone, sir?

MASON: [Lowering his voice knowingly] Only a fortunate few.

During the 1970s, "Word Association" was played even by people who had no use for "shrinks." I played it with my aunts in Canada. Here was a parlor game with no board and no way to keep score. This episode wouldn't be complete as a '70s media specimen without it...

MASON: Now I'm gonna say a word — and you tell me the first word that comes into your mind; then I'll say another word, and so on.

COLUMBO: [Maintaining a friendly gaze, he nods without saying anything]

MASON: Murder.

COLUMBO: [Firmly though not loudly] *Dogs.*

MASON: Justice.

COLUMBO: Work.

MASON: Mother.

COLUMBO: Father.

MASON: Father.

COLUMBO: Win.

MASON: Pain.

COLUMBO: Fail.

MASON: Murder.

COLUMBO: [Three-second pause] *Word.*

The word + control maestro snaps out of his danger zone with a (for him) cheerful

wrap: "I'd say you had a wholesome enough childhood. And you're something of an over-achiever, Lieutenant. But how did we get from 'murder' to 'word'?"

COLUMBO: Well, it's those DOGS, sir. I keep coming back to [pause] how maybe there's some kind of a *signal*. Some kind of a special *attack* word that the dogs will RESPOND to.

MASON: But then the dogs would have to be trained.

COLUMBO: The WORST of it is, if someone DID train the dogs, they could dangle that word right in front of me and I wouldn't even recognize it.

MASON: But the dogs would — according to your theory.

COLUMBO: Ohhh yessir — yes, the dogs would certainly react to the word.

MASON: But isn't there an order for the dogs to be put away?

COLUMBO: [More quietly than ever]: In 48 hours. This is terrific wine, sir. Judge Jacob Metzler handed down the order yesterday. I understand he's a friend of yours, sir. May we play the game again?

This request throws Mason. He has to let Columbo try it, this time as the starter...

COLUMBO: Money.

MASON: Uhh, work.

COLUMBO: Work.

MASON: Teach.

COLUMBO: Elephant.

MASON: Tusk.

COLUMBO: Wolf.

MASON: Dog.

COLUMBO: [Dropping his voice and stretching it out...] *Dog*.

MASON: Kill.

COLUMBO: Kill.

MASON: Charlie.

COLUMBO: Wife.

MASON: Love.

COLUMBO: Animal.

MASON: Hunt.

COLUMBO: Trap.

MASON: Word game.

Neither man presses on. "You're right, Lieutenant, it's an *excellent* wine."

Appreciating the characters and skill of an episode's structure is good. Spoiling the ending is bad. Which is why this publication says little about second halves.

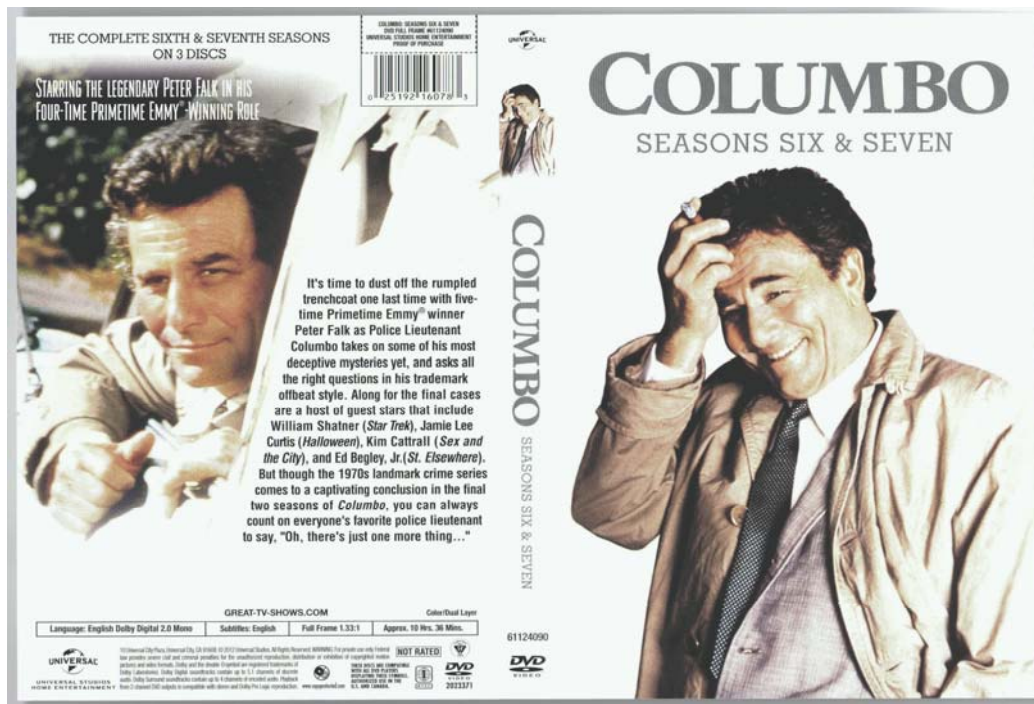
But I made an exception for that 3 1/2-minute extract. It finishes just before the 58th Minute. By this time, Mason is rattled. By *his* standards, anyway. To a viewer who takes in this scene by itself, only a whiff of impatience would show.

Scenes have been YouTubed but you'll need an organizer to see "Dial a Murder."

<https://tv.apple.com/us/episode/how-to-dial-a-murder/umc.cmc.38lx98rylnon96iuq6ipemp55>

<https://trakt.tv/shows/columbo/seasons/7/episodes/4>

Much simpler: For \$25, Seasons 6 and 7 of COLUMBO [in one three-DVD package...](#)



Issue #9 (November 2022) magnifies Gems from *The Felony Squad*, *Rocky Jordan*, and *The Streets of San Francisco*

— <http://www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-9.pdf>

DD Gem #26 — "The Harold Clark Murder Case"

From BROADWAY IS MY BEAT: October 27, 1950 (CBS Radio)

This series was astounding at magnifying dark-side personalities and situations. At least half of them were PLAUSIBLE, as opposed to other-worldly or ridiculous.

Hundreds of episodes are on-line. You can listen at no cost. Any two dozen will enhance your respect for scripts that **articulate** believable substance and suspense.

Consistent sound quality in the BROADWAY archives? Nope. So, when the audio for a given episode sounds like a tin-can phone hook-up, just try another.

Danny Clover's delivery was perfected by [LARRY THOR](#) (1916-76). Nearly all of the BEAT episodes commence with a murder. Just ahead of that come the Inspector's vocal postcards from this New York City avenue of dreams and nightmares...

It's the journey to the end of all the other streets in the world, this Broadway — ya turn a corner, and you're there. You walk slowly. You lean your heart against it. Then something explodes in your face, and you run, and you're one of the crowd.

Inspector Danny Clover was lauded in the February 2022 GEMS. The [Old-Time Radio Researchers Group](#) calls him "a hardened [officer] who worked Homicide 'from Times Square to Columbus Circle — the gaudiest, the most violent, the loneliest mile in the world'." EVERY episode ended with those 11 words.

BROADWAY's language puts to shame the grunts and snorts of one-dimensional characters in other detective shows (which shall remain nameless, because this is a positive publication). In fact, a dependable feature of this radio show's scripting will benefit every writer. Yes, even one working on his or her memoir...

The feature? Thanks to the duo of [DAVID FRIEDKIN](#) (1912-76) and [MORTON FINE](#) (1916-91), Larry Thor as Inspector Clover was light on **I, me, and my**.

You shop for the kicks, the bargains, and the heartbreak — and inevitably you find it, one or the other. Like I did — on the street of the tired apartment houses, a street leased on the premise that both parents should work, so they can come home, smile bravely at each other, beat their children, then snore.

Whether the product is fiction or non-fiction, writers should LIMIT the use of *I and ME and MINE*. In person or in prose, self-centeredness is just plain tiring. You CAN be the main character and still use (mostly) impersonal language.

Without being whiny or playing the victim, Danny Clover conveys contradiction and desolation. Though uttering judgments constantly, this beat-walking officer sounds as if he's PERCEIVING events *objectively*. The reward, for a listener even half-attentive, is the clarity of an intense form of detachment...

Broadway is generous in many ways. It offers you, for free, its own private set of values. For instance — the essence of a man's life, his worth, measure it in terms of darkness and light. Big man? Big masda bulbs shining bright, so many yards of neon hissing his name into the screaming night. Little man? His proper share of DARKNESS, a spectacular with burned-out bulbs sighing into nothing. Harold Clark, the man shot down because he had pounded on a door — that was a little man.

Most episodes features shop talk between Clover and Sergeant Gino Tartaglia. Tartaglia is a family man who prefers detective novels to the City papers and delivers BROADWAY's only comic relief. And he rarely seems to leave the office.

The other regular is Detective Muggavan. I can't recall, or maybe never heard, his first name. But [JACK KRUSCHEN](#) (1922-2002) is consistently good in this role.

Lloyd Ramey "Blasted Mister Clark Right through the Door"

It's 7 p.m. on a weeknight. Muggavan is on the scene — second-floor landing of the El Royale Apartments — when Inspector Clover arrives. "There he is, Danny, on the floor over by the railing." Harold Clark, dead.

They're near the door of Apartment 2A. Mr. Clark had lived in 2C. The script doesn't make it clear whether these apartments are side by side or across from one other. Tried to use some imagination, but — couldn't juggle the references. Radio makes you use your own visuals. Okay, let the "railing" reference and the A versus C go.

The crowd irritates Muggavan. "Hey, why don't you people break it up," he yells at the gawking or legitimately fearful second-story dwellers. *Go on, get back to your apartments. You'll read all about it in the papers.*

Harold Clark was married. No children. "Dead from two 38 slugs in his chest." Who killed him? "A tenant named Lloyd Ramey," Clover is told. "Had the apartment right here, 2A. Blastd Mister Clark right through the door."

Where's this Ramey now? Muggavan says he "took a fire-escape exit from his own room." That makes Mrs. Harold Clark the first of several memorable exchanges as Muggavan and Clover assume different tasks at the El Royale Apartments.

Harold Clark's widow is dazed. She tries to assert control in an odd way. Knowing the police would show up, she directs Clover's eye to her stack of "true-type" detective magazines. "I read 'em all the time; I know ALL about what you've got to do."

She denies shooting her husband. "We know you didn't," says Clover. "Don't be too sure," she replies back breezily. "I was in Lloyd Ramey's apartment when it happened." "Tell me about it" — those are four of Clover's favorite words.

Her husband liked tea, and that's why she went to borrow some teabags from Mr. Ramey. "I must've stayed more than 10 seconds," she explains with a controlled seethe, "because my husband got panicky and came after me... With my husband, *tea-bags* means I'm not being *true-blue*." Her words have a touch of ooze.

Was her husband correct? Had his wife's affections become alienated by a very close neighbor? The freshly minted widow dodges the question.

Clover is trying to nail down a hard-to-believe sequence. Mrs. Clark tells him that Harold knocked at Ramey's door "and yelled to open it or he'd break it down." Ramey did not answer. Instead, "he pulled out a gun and shot."

As the "technical boys" arrive, Clover tells Muggavan they can take over. More audio of Muggavan shouting at the residents. Clover gives us a parting vignette...

They stood there, the tenants of the El Royale Apartments, summoned by the violence, drawn by the clamor of the violent dead; drawn by the cold wind that had touched their throats and led them to the warmth of the spectacle. A child's harsh voice ordered his father to hoist him to his shoulder so he could see, could see *better*. The father slapped him hard across the mouth. The child wailed and scurried down the corridor, and the father looked after him, his eyes filled with pain and confusion; and then EMPTYING of these things, forgetting the child, remembering *death*.

After Mrs. Clark, the listener meets (2) the officious head of the Wilkins Rental Agency on West 58th Street, (3) the all-business female owner of a tattoo parlor, (4) Clover's in-house in-subordinate at the Crime Lab, (5) Henry Gaynor, who'll be in no position to help Clover, (6) the ingratiatingly southern Gaynor roommate who soon learned "not to like him," and (7) Frank Muir, a confederate of Gaynor's.

Every one of those guest actors is distinctive without being admirable. Except for the southerner. A pronounced alien in NYC, he is helpful as well as candid.

Wounded characters — accomplices, finks and fraudsters, defensive avoiders and baffled bystanders alike — populate these episodes without crowding them or us. From one mile of one street, BEAT is a welter-skelter of classes and occupations...

The upper layer features sophisticates, intellectuals and "show people." A strictly commercial layer is made up of swindlers, small shopkeepers and big companies doing "branding" before it became a default setting. Clover also interacts with peaceniks, mystics, nutrition nags and other forerunners of late '60s coastal warp.

In every era, gruff cops have maneuvered among and around those types. Except that Larry Thor gives us a cop able to parry and thrust with the smuggest of the literate. That's what makes BROADWAY stand out — the IQ and poise, and often the poisonous IOUs, of so many suspects. Plus quite a few of the perpetrators.

His most striking exchanges are with individuals proficient in gossip, ridicule, positioning, acquiring, preening, shunning and shaming. They thrive on New York's incestuous and sensational print media, as well as coffeehouse plotting and stage exclamatory. They frequent restaurants from seedy to swank. Some have ritzy apartments that make Clover feel as if he walked into a high-class ice-house.

Second Victim, Same Case, and a Dyspeptic Diagnoser

A "white-coated figure" runs the crime lab. This fellow turns up irregularly in the BROADWAY series and, in a different way, seems to suffer from (what used to be gently called) **Irregularity**. He couldn't be more different from Che Fong, the studious solver of Steve McGarrett's ballistic inquiries and evidentiary conundrums.

Still not sure whether "Gordon" is his first name or his last name. But he's unlike ANY of the "lab boys" you've seen assist TV and radio cops over many decades...

GORDON: This is it, Danny, this is what did it to him — the cliché of poison.

CLOVER: It BORES ya, huh Gordon?

GORDON: Well, if you ask me, I'll tell you — such an un-original poison. Cheap, common — it can be "boring."

CLOVER: How was it administered?

GORDON: I've been waiting for you to ask me —

CLOVER: Get off it, Gordon.

A gunshot is what killed Harold Clark. This second victim is a man who had been spotted at a hotel, a few hours ago. Somehow, he ties in with the Clark Case.

Who provided the tip? Harold Clark's widow. She walked right into Clover's office. He was solicitous (which is unusual). She remained airy and irritated — little different from her mode right after her husband had met his end...

There isn't TIME to be lah-de-dah with me, Mr. Clover. If you want to capture him, you better HURRY. He was just beginning the soup course when I spotted him.

Does she mean the trigger-happy Lloyd Ramey? No! Instead, it's "a man who was often a caller at the apartment of Lloyd Ramey." Mrs. Clark just happened to see him "beginning a meal at the Hotel Adams." So she "ran" to Police Headquarters "with a little clue, clutched tight in my little hands. Do you want it?"

Off they raced, to the Hotel Adams. "There, near the back of the room, the man sitting at the small table against the wall." She left. Clover began his interview...

And, within 60 seconds, the man slumped dead. Heart attack? The bartender and others could offer no background. The man was only a patron.

His death took place at the exact halfway point of this radio episode.

That Hotel Adams sequence was just as startling as what supposedly happened between second-story apartment residents Harold Clark and Lloyd Ramey, while the wife of the former was visiting with the latter, in search of tea-bags.

The hotel set up the Lab scene. Gordon needles Clover for supposed negligence...

GORDON: Well you SURPRISE me, Danny. I should've thought it was normal routine that you ask QUESTIONS at the hotel bar. [The poison] was slipped into his drink; I have proof-positive [followed by a micro-pause]. *You didn't ask questions?*

CLOVER: If it makes you any happier, yeah I did. The bartender couldn't remember him. He couldn't remember anybody; that's why he's worked there so long, because he couldn't remember faces.

GORDON: [Chuckling] Tough — that makes it tough on ya, doesn't it Danny. You think Lloyd Ramey did our fellow in?

CLOVER: [Voice lowered] What else have you got, Gordon.

GORDON: It's all over there in that file; help yourself.

CLOVER: YOU do it, Gordon.

GORDON: Because you're a Lieutenant? STILL? All right. I'll do it for you, *Lieutenant*. His clothes, tailored. His wallet, alligator. His driving license, wrapped in cellophane. It says he had brown eyes, was 5'11", age 36; it says he lived at 2354 East 47th, that his name is Henry Gaynor [pause] — you can stop me ANY time, Lieutenant.

CLOVER: Nothing else?

GORDON: Nothing — except this package of orange life-savers. Have one, Danny. [Smirking to avoid open laughter] Come on, HAVE one. I won't analyze them — they're harmless. ORANG-EE!

CLOVER: Good-BYE Gordon.

GORDON: Not at all. *Lloyd Ramey*, Lieutenant, heh-heh — how ya doing on that one? Ohh, you're very *welcome*, Lieutenant.

Clover walks out. Sound of door shutting, though not forcefully.

Lab Honcho Gordon understood "situational power" before management professors coined the term. He hates his work, has contempt for Clover, probably others in the building, and wraps his findings in quirks and smirks. I've heard him in a half-dozen BROADWAY episodes: *Extreme New Yorker*. He's also the type of colleague McGarrett would've canned after the second such session.

What about this episode's second half? This one is so good I can share a few more details about the structure, and still not rob you, the listener, of its surprises...

- Clover proceeds to 2354 East 47th St. to see Tommy Lawrence. He lived there with Henry Gaynor, now dead. "I read about it in the late editions." In a southern accent, Lawrence tells Clover he "learned not to like" Henry. Why? "He did nothing but dote on girls. He and his buddy ... Frank Muir ... his phone number is around... I'd track him down if I were you. He's the cause of it all." This lively lead is offered mildly and politely.
- Frank Muir is an oily character larded with self-regard. "Henry and me had such snazzy times together, on blind dates," he informs Clover. *When'd you see him last?* It was "when I turned over Mrs. Ellen Clark to him." This is *the first time we hear the first name* of Harold Clark's widow. Muir describes Ellen Clark as "how do ya classify? — a smile filled with hidden meanings — the touch of a knee under a checkered tablecloth."

Marvelous dialogue! Even the low-lifes come up with evocative wording.

The scripts crafted by Messrs. Friedman and Fine veer between clever and brilliant. Only now and then do they fall back on a preposterous twist — after having generated too much tension to resolve during just 24 radio minutes. Tensions keep an audience engaged; but the script shouldn't make 'em choke or scoff.

Every BROADWAY IS MY BEAT is backed by a full orchestra, and the conductor

prefers horns to strings. The musical blasts are somewhat overdone. But they work nicely as a counterpoint to the suppressed, distracted, or eerie vocal encounters Clover has with most suspects. Although he wasn't talking about radio drama, Carl Jung's term — the Tension of the Opposites — comes in handy on BROADWAY.

Of the sites containing "The Harold Clark Murder Case," this one opens up a whole menu. If you don't see **Episode #55** right away, do a little down-strolling...

[https://archive.org/details/OTRR_Broadway_Is_My_Beat_Singles/BIMB+50-10-27+\(051\)+The+Harold+Clark+Murder+Case.mp3](https://archive.org/details/OTRR_Broadway_Is_My_Beat_Singles/BIMB+50-10-27+(051)+The+Harold+Clark+Murder+Case.mp3)

What else? Amazon is an economic and political monster I don't like to nourish. But you probably think differently, and so — here's your Amazon option...

www.amazon.com/Broadway-Beat_50-10-27_-Harold-Clark-Murder/dp/B08JJRX1QW



BROADWAY IS MY BEAT stars Larry Thor as Detective Danny Clover on the CBS network. Larry hails from Manitoba, Canada, ended his formal education after high school. He worked as a farmer, then a rancher, then a construction worker. In 1937, he walked into a radio station, was hired to sing, play piano and write scripts. His career led him through Canada to Hollywood and the CBS studios there. Larry's married and the father of three sons, Ray, Ken, Davie.

GEMS Issue #7 showcased episodes from Lee Marvin's *M Squad*, *Magnum*, *P.I.*, and *The New Adventures of Nero Wolfe*

— <http://www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-7.pdf>

DD Gem #27 — "Who Killed My Girl?" — April 17, 1964 From **BURKE'S LAW** (ABC-TV, 1963 to '65)

Amos Burke led the Homicide Division at Los Angeles Police Headquarters. His home was "SP" (Suburban Palatial). Live-in cook Henry, played by [LEON LONTOC](#), doubled as driver. They traveled, emergency or not, in a Rolls Royce Silver Cloud 2.

Burke would arrive in suit and tie complete with breast-pocket handkerchief. The two fellows who reported to him also logged odd hours. But they never got stuck with stakeout duty. And Season One's viewers never saw Burke in a patrol car.

Season Two still isn't available on reliable DVDs. Season One came out 15 years ago: Two volumes, all 32 episodes, in fine form, thanks to [Blair and Associates Ltd.](#) and VCI Entertainment. They even *saved the commercials* (while keeping them separate from the episodes). Your Prime-Time TV Travel is thereby complete.

I watched BURKE as a 3rd-grader, and those commercials had to be a lot easier to process than the bewildering array of murder suspects. Yet the mix left an imprint, and seeing Captain Amos Burke maneuver, 50 years later, was a belated treat.

A treat yes, but how useful analytically? As this publication took shape during 2019, two dozen cop shows were easier to take seriously than BURKE'S LAW.

One of my favorite terms — *modulation* — remains a yardstick. Technically, "to vary the amplitude or frequency of a carrier wave for the transmission of information." In TV and radio drama, the "carrier wave" is a rolling *this versus that* of scenes and characters, ditches and leaps. Tension, suspension and apprehension are being sequenced in ways that (ideally) adjust pulses even as they facilitate perception.

A sparkling detective script manipulates our central nervous system while deepening linkages, context and humankind, especially the unkind. Clues and revelations arrive, one by one, with viewers taking part vicariously. This VERY rare episode of BURKE'S LAW — "Who Killed My Girl?" — checks all of those boxes.

But BURKE as a series delivered its modulation in a weirdly distinct way. Look past the substance that makes any murder probe "serious," and BURKE'S LAW is modulating between drama *and parody*. Extremes of *both* seem to be the rule.

1960s-type absurdities come from many of the suspects, while criminal motives remain in the '50s. So does the pretentious, at time shrieking, background music.

Writing for *Mystery Scene* magazine about 10 years ago, [MICHAEL MALLORY](#) acknowledged the loopy-lunge nature of BURKE'S LAW. One paragraph nailed the show's addiction to parody. Mr. Mallory is citing a Second Season offering...

The epitome of bizarre spoofery may have been the 1964 episode "Who Killed Supersleuth?" which featured a laundry list of classic detectives: Carl Reiner as the deerstalker-donning Inspector House (get it?), Ed Begley as Belgian detective Bascule Doirot, Thomas Gomez as portly Caligula Fox, and J. Carrol Naish laboring under outrageous Asian makeup as Mr. Toto, all struggling to solve a murder.

In BURKE, Hollywood's big names played characters that cut against their long-standing personas. That includes Gloria Swanson, as a fortune-teller whose hair

looked like a static-electricity experiment; and Wally Cox, a celebrity vampire who parked his Hearse outside all-night theaters and took questions from newbies.

Suspects might be genial fanatics, health nuts, crazed inventors, witches, or Oklahoma bankers buying their way into snooty Riding Clubs. One female archetype you will NOT see is the Feminist: In "Who Killed Wade Walker?," former glam girl [RHONDA FLEMING](#) is a skeet-shooting champion who tells Burke she didn't mind being "slapped around" by the man (Walker) whose plane mysteriously exploded.

Both BROADWAY and BURKE offer sparkling dialogue. Study BURKE for precision plus wit. But — could this whacked-out series contribute to a GEMS collection??

Only One of the Five Suspects Looks and Sounds Ridiculous

For an episode to be a Gem, as one issue explained, "most of the protagonists should sound authentic, and plausibility of the events is a fundamental requirement." Technical or situational impossibility is fantasy, not believable drama.

Eventually, "Who Killed My Girl?" bubbled up as the PLAUSIBLE one among the 32. Rather than looking self-assured about his work, or content with his womanizing, Burke is in agony. From the opening music right up to Minute 49, he is indecisive, guilt-ridden, irritable, or morose. Fun to watch? No. But highly credible.

In this series, half the murder suspects are caricatures. Come to think of it, a lot of the murder *victims* are, too. "Who Killed My Girl?" cut the satire way down: Just ONE of the five suspects looks and sounds ridiculous. The others are well-defined and articulate; they're neither kooks nor bundles of nerves.

Especially the three middle-aged males. Each had a disorienting relationship with **Diana Mercer**, the 30ish woman shot in her bedroom before the 3rd Minute...

- [RICHARD CARLSON](#), age 52 when this episode first aired, is **Dr. Carol Smith**. He's an Astronomer and lifelong introvert whose weakness for Diana led his wife Lonnie to extreme measures to save their marriage.
- [STEPHEN McNALLY](#), also 52 years old during this episode, is **Frank Walsh**. For a dozen years, Walsh was the driver and de facto confidante of the dead girl's father. After the latter's death, she'd phone Walsh to come over and they'd talk into the night about the big man no longer around.
- [GENE RAYMOND](#) is **Arthur Wade**, another 50something. He had the longest experience with Diana Mercer and it enables him to get some disagreeable things across to Amos Burke in a non-hostile way.

As you can see, Diana Mercer was attracted to older men, Burke among them. He never did meet her father. The script implies that he died shortly after Amos and Diana met. Wade will spill many beans, and deliver one big splash of reality...

WADE: Did you ever meet Diana's father?

BURKE: No.

WADE: Big man. Successful. BRIGHT. Best architect in the world. Full of CHARM, *annndd* FLAIR. Diana worshipped him. You're a younger version. *Almost a dead ringer.*

Learning about Mercer Senior is part of a discovery trail both taut and tantalizing. Burke is getting the "bright" side from Wade. Later, from Mercer's blunt sister, he'll hear about the darkness. (That level of realism overshadows one brashly lecherous band leader.) Guest actors are enlightening the viewer about a father and daughter who are gone. Both of them were, in a way, "gone" even before they left.

We watch Amos Burke absorb all of it. As he interacts with Smith, Walsh and Wade, and snaps at his colleagues, Burke the *bon vivant* is nowhere to be found. But the final revelations, from Adrianna Mercer, will reduce some of his guilt and strain.

"Top-Drawer Family Back East. Very Social. VERY Money"

Every other Season One episode begins with the Captain's romantic interlude being cut short by a phone call about a killing. In "Who Killed My Girl?," Diana Mercer is the victim, and the lead character is *completing* a romantic evening.

"The lead character"? Actually, without reading this analysis, you wouldn't know that it is Burke. The script's tricky opening requires eliminating her date's voice.

All the viewer sees are feet walking. All we hear is the girl articulating Lovey-Dovey (an informal U.S. dialect hard to translate, and in 2022 likely to trigger a probe by campus authorities). The girl gets a non-verbal assent to meet this man again, the very next night. He then heads for home. Minutes later, she is shot in her bedroom.

Ahead of the theme music, we see that much. Plus the phone call awakening Burke.

When he hears the victim's address, grogginess turns to dread. Wake up Henry; tell him to fire up the Rolls. As Burke comes through Mercer's front door, we hear Les Hart telling an officer: "Get that body out of here before the Captain sees it."

Les Hart and Tim Tilson are Burke's daily associates. Tilson is the Whiz Kid. That term was popular 70 years ago; it referred mostly to Pentagon geeks helping President John Kennedy try out new methods of fighting a not-quite-war in Vietnam.



In the end, Tilson's research will reveal the murderer. And, here at the start, Hart is the one to explain why the Boss is "bleeding." "It happened a few years back," he tells Tilson. "You were still grinding your nose at the Police Academy."

HART: You shoulda seem 'em together: All pinwheels and firecrackers. But you know the Captain: As soon as a girl mentions marriage, he dives for the old foxhole.

TILSON: What kinda girl was she?

HART: Ahhh, she was right out of a novel. Top-drawer family back East. Very social. VERY money. She was bright, and she was fun. She was CUSTOM-made for the Captain.

TILSON: Until she reached for the golden ring.

HART: Yeah [pause]. Yep, he didn't know how to break it off without hurting her; but she got the message [and] went to Hawaii. I didn't even know she was BACK...

TILSON: So what do we do?

HART: Walk on eggs. Stay away from him.

TILSON: How's THAT gonna help?

HART: Tim, the Captain and I go away back. I KNOW him [and I'm telling you]: Don't get in his WAY or he'll run right over you.

An address book was found in the slain girl's purse: Five names with phone numbers; that's it. You'll meet all five, along with two surprise stand-outs...

- ❑ Diana's aunt Adrianna, played with a sympathetic sort of bluntness by veteran character actress [MABEL ALBERTSON](#).
- ❑ And — a jarring surprise to Burke — the WIFE of one of the suspects. Played by [JANE GREER](#), an actress lauded for her alluring semi-smile, she will admit her own hostile motives. "Lonnie Smith" also made her way to Diana's abode that evil evening. No key to get in, though.

It's hard for a 51-minute crime episode to convey this many suspects in an informative and non-gimmicky way. Yet "Who Killed My Girl?" pulls it off. And, unlike in all the other BURKE episodes, only one suspect is truly Loony-Tuned.

Two Suspects are Warm-Up Acts for Four Purposeful Ones

Burke goes to a boozy jazz club. He means to grill a man known for brassiness as well as a brass instrument. "Scubie" Baker holds up a potential trial exhibit...

This [key] fits the front door of that little house up in the hills — and I didn't steal it. She's a swinger, man! I'm gonna miss her. You can't find that kind no more ... ohhh, the BEST, man: A swinger with money. Good for a touch, always ready to swingggg, no matter what the tempo... She was the wildest. A man could get OLD trying to keep up with THAT tempo...

Baker infuriates Burke. He'll repeat the feat later, when Detective Tilson shows up.

The second suspect — Laura Jean Canarda — comes across as a lush who hopes to become a Society Girl. Then again, 1964 contained the waning days of a pre-feminist era. Insightful women still felt they should pretend to be daffy. She tries it...

"Do you know that if Salvador Dali were a bartender, THIS is the only thing he'd make?" Canarda describes a concoction for which I'd get half the spellings wrong.

Hart tries a confirm-the-obvious question: "Liquor fascinates you, huh?" To which Laura Jean replies: "One is ALWAYS preoccupied with one's profession."

[RUTA LEE](#) (born 1935 in Canada, and still with us) is having fun being Laura Jean Canarda. She pivots again to offer Tilson a sip. He is mildly surprised: The lady is drinking colored water. Her self-intro is either a gag or an exaggeration. If these detectives will buy her another such "drink," then yes, they can discuss Diana.



She's being interviewed, if one can call it that, by Tilson and Hart. All three are at the bar. She looks right at Tilson, then left at Hart. The camera shifts with her gaze: Distinctive conveyance for a three-way conversation. If you include the back and forth, I can't recall a scene like this in any other episode of any other series.

Did Laura Jean date some of the same guys Diana did? "Lots of them." When they saw Diana, most lost interest in Laura Jean. A motive for resentment, if not worse? She laughs this off. Women in L.A. lose men to each other all the time.

Having borrowed some money from Diana last week, "I stopped by the house last night to pay her back." When? Around 8 o'clock. But no one was home. "So I just left the money on her dressing table." How much? Two hundred bucks — the sum and the bills the killer did NOT leave with. All the jewelry was left, too. (None of the officers had viewed robbery as a motive in the first place.)

Laura Jean also has one of those house-keys. "You have to understand Diana; she's a very impetuous girl. If she liked you, she simply gave you a *key*. Ya know — I tried to tell her that that was very dangerous." This lady's flightiness keeps declining.

Laura Jean deduced the things going through the detectives' mind, especially (a) the idea that she left the money to cover up the murder, and (b) that she got tired of losing men to Diana. Having listed these points, and explained the key-giving, she appears devoid of jitters. No luck, guys. "I didn't do it. No motive."

Juice junkie or not, this girl is no dummy. Looking straight at Tilson from a distance of seven inches, she observes: "You're *terribly* tense. So I think that this isn't JUST another CASE, there's another *personal involvement there?*" (Of course — Tilson being determined to do right for his boss while also reducing the man's pain.)

Even though a confident statement, her comment ended with the inflection of a question. And you thought this "inflectionary quirk" was an '80s development?

"Doc Thinks It Coulda Been a Heavy FINGER Ring that Did It"

Halfway through Minute 18, two names in the address book have been checked out, and not quite checked off: Baker and Canarda had no perceived emotional or financial issue that might have led to a murder — not one set up so shrewdly.

Back at Headquarters, Les Hart is amending his own advice about eggshell-walks. He shoves some travel brochures across the desk at Burke...

HART: I hear Acapulco's BIG this time of a year.

BURKE: You've seen one cliff, you've seen 'em all.

HART: Why don't you pack a *bag* and let us nail this?

BURKE: You know better.

HART: I know a walking BOMB when I see one, Amos — I wouldn't want anything to happen to you.

BURKE: Thank YOU [uttered abruptly, if not sarcastically]. I won't do anything foolish.

HART: Yeahhh — that's what the man said just before he went over the Falls in a BARREL.

Burke *slugged* "Scubie" Baker. That's how much the high-strung cool-cat trumpeter enraged the Captain. He doesn't seem to have told his colleagues, and he'd have no reason to fear a complaint to the Mayor from a hedonist musician like Baker.

Tilson enters. Perfect moment for Burke to get the focus off him. "Is that the Lab's final report?" "For what it's worth," Tilson replies, "the gun was definitely a 38. But no fingerprints, no footprints. Sorry, Captain."

Burke is heading out. "Anything we can do?" Burke's response is fast but subdued: "Make everybody stop walking around on tiptoe. I appreciate it but it's depressing." What's truly depressing: If only he had made sure Diana was safe inside the house. If only, if only. But — probably not. The murderer knew Diana's residence very well. Well enough to position the kill from inside the bedroom closet.

Now it's Burke's turn for an inside ambush. In his own house, entering a darkened room, Burke is *slugged* on the back of the head. This occurs near the start of the 19th Minute. The assault is enough to knock him to the ground, dazed.

Whoever did it spends a frantic four seconds searching Burke. Casual singing from Henry the Housekeeper makes him scam. Henry alerts Tim and Les. How did he get into the Burke Mansion? "He cut his way through the patio screen door..."

Next day, back at the office: "Doc thinks it coulda been a heavy FINGER ring that did it." What else? "It's a little hazy, but I seem to remember him SEARCHING me. I had a lotta money in my pocket, but he didn't take a nickel."

Which means, Hart says, that he wanted "something in particular."

BURKE: And *wanted it real bad*. Now who comes hunting in a cop's house unless it were a life-and-death item?

TILSON: That address book.

HART: "Life and death?"

TILSON: Well, if his *name's* in it.

BURKE: Exactly.

HART: Okay, everybody gets a merit badge. Now try this: If he was THAT desperate, he's gonna keep *trying*.

BURKE [in not much more than a mutter]: That'd be nice.

Hart doesn't get to propose a bodyguard. Burke ridicules the notion ahead of time.

BURKE'S LAW as a creation is attributed to AARON SPELLING (1923-2006)...

"It was one of Aaron Spelling's earliest television successes. The iconic TV producer, who would go on to give us *The Mod Squad*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Fantasy Island*, *Melrose Place* and much more, had a few credits under his belt at the time, largely Westerns, including *Johnny Ringo* and *Zane Grey Theater*."

That quote is taken from "[Ten Things You Never Knew About BURKE'S LAW](#)."

And Captain Amos Burke was brought to life — suavely yet with professionalism and duty saving the day — by [GENE BARRY](#) (1919-2009). In February 2022, GEMS analyzed one of his episodes from [THE NAME OF THE GAME](#) (1968-71 on NBC).

Before either of those, Barry was BAT MASTERSON (during 1959-61), a nattily dressed lawman wielding a gold-topped cane. The '79 *Prime-Time Network TV Directory* noted: "Masterson provided quite a contrast to the general run of violent Western heroes." It also expanded the tool-kit: For one of the BURKE cases, Barry ably rode a horse.

The [CBS News obituary](#) made an excellent point about those three lead TV roles:

"Barry essentially played the same character in all three series... Always fashionably dressed, the tall, handsome actor with the commanding voice dominated his scenes as he bested the bad guys in each show."

"I Know WHY You Won. I Saw it the Minute You Walked In"

Now for the exchange with Arthur Wade. His business is stocks and bonds. And he's another individual with a key to Diana Mercer's residence. Wade has known Diana's Aunt Adrianna for decades. He offers Burke a drink. Burke will settle for coffee. (It's a morning visit.) Wade is genial and candid all at once.

Wade says "I know why you're here, so I'll tell ya." He does so with thoughtful mini-pauses between most of his sentences...

Diana and I — we'd known each other all our lives. I can't remember a single day I wasn't in love with her. Seemed so natural. We had *everything* in common — same background, same families, schools. Marriage was inevitable...

It's a nice gentle life — gracious, cloistered [slight laugh]. You don't learn very much about LOSING [longer pause]. I learned it all in one lump. A few years back, Diana came to the coast to visit an aunt — that was the end of US. She met another man. THE man — *YOU*.

Wade decides "it isn't all THAT early," and pours himself a drink. "It's *hard* for a LOSER to admit this, but I know WHY you won. I saw it the minute you walked in."

Right there is where Wade describes Burke as a **dead ringer** for Diana's deceased father. Wade isn't being hostile to him, and Burke, though uptight, doesn't seem to hold anything against Wade. This is a process these two middle-aged men have to go through, each playing his part: One mostly telling, the other handling intake.

But Wade is handling HIS role better than Burke the disoriented receiver. We see the stiff-lipped veteran ladies' man, rattled, wanting to quicken the account...

BURKE: What happened to her? The things I've been hearing.

WADE: The men. The *drinking* [longer pause]. I knew about it. I had myself shifted to the West Coast office — see if I could help. I had a key to her house. But mine was on a *different* basis. I'd SIT with her, sometimes all night. Trying to find out what it was — WHY she would —

BURKE: And?

WADE: Closest I can come is — GRIEF. Tragedy. She had her share. A few years back her mother drowned in a LAKE accident; a YEAR later her father went in a CAR smash-up. That's a lot to take.

BURKE: No sale.

WADE: Pardon?

BURKE: It's not enough. Grief is one thing, stepping all over your *breeding* is another.

WADE: I didn't say I *believed* her.

They are sharing sadness and regrets. Still, what is Amos Burke to make of Arthur Wade? Any other man Diana gave a key to has to be better than Scubie Baker. In fact, Burke shakes hands with Arthur Wade, at the start and at the end of their talk. Wade is someone else who cared about Diana; they have that much in common.

The gaps filled in by Wade make you wonder how oblivious Amos Burke had been regarding the background of this rare woman he had fallen for. A seasoned police captain, right? And he learns about her emotional history *only after* she has been killed? We also never hear exactly how long ago the romance was. Then again...

Even the best script can't relate all the history of key characters. A "great" detective is allowed a gap or two. Besides, I'm not a "critic." This publication is about celebration. Whether you're a performer, a creator — or (God forbid) an EDITOR helping writers trying to create and/or educate — study the best works. When those works are *detective* Gems, you learn about human nature under distinctive stressors.

Hart and Tilson finally tell Burke: They already have three Division operatives looking into the histories of the suspects. And they won't quit monitoring the Boss...

Hart offers Tilson one more pertinent fact about the crime's lead-up. "After all this time, she called him. Wanted to SEE him. Mentioned some problem, something she was worried about... [Amos] said she *started* to tell him a couple of times but seemed to *back away* from it. Never got around to it. Keeps thinking about it [and] it isn't helping him." Tilson's terse reply: "Nobody is."

Subtle suggestion there: Diana Mercer was approaching Amos Burke *as a cop*, more than as an old flame. And the situation she could only hint at is the thing that will become shockingly clear during this episode's second to last interaction.

But that still doesn't crack the case. Regardless of the story line, BURKE'S LAW was superb at rolling out suspects and keeping all but one or two as likelies until the final third of the episode. No surprise, then, that — even after being enlightened and partly exculpated by Diana's aunt — the Captain is grumbling.

HART: Amos, come down off the walls. Let it go for a while. Step away, it'll all settle down into place.

BURKE: No, it won't. You know why? Pick a name, any one of them. Scubie Baker, Laura Jean, Arthur Wade, the Smiths [Carol the star-gazer as well as

disgusted wife Lonnie] — **any one of them had either the motive or the opportunity, in some cases BOTH. I can't just *walk away* from 'em [and] I can't NAIL any of 'em *either* because the MOTIVE just doesn't *show* yet.**

THREE detectives (as opposed to one brainiac) in a cramped office trying to parse the various leads: When their traits and talents are complementary rather than redundant, it makes for the best TV scenes. "Best" in terms of urgency, logic, hunch, and task-list. Give BURKE, as a series, several merit badges there.

As of late July 2022, both of these links called up clean versions of "Who Killed My Girl?" (in black & white, as are all the original BURKEs)...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Mfk6jEz5mM>

<https://youtu.be/5Mfk6jEz5mM>

As a domain name, "youtu.be" is odd; but both links go to the same place.

Closing Notes on *Burke's Law* and its lone plausible episode...

1. As Page 22 noted, JANE GREER (1924-2001) was Lonnie Smith, the Astronomer's wife. From the opening paragraph of her Wikipedia profile, an unforgettable fact. Shows how a failing can become an enticing feature, perhaps even a trademark...



In 1940, at age 15, Greer suffered from a facial palsy, which paralyzed the left side of her face. She recovered, but the condition may have contributed to her "patented look" of "a calm, quizzical gaze and an enigmatic expression that would later lead RKO to promote her as 'The Woman with the Mona Lisa Smile'." She claimed that the facial exercises used to overcome the paralysis taught her the importance of facial expression in conveying human emotion [Direct from [Wikipedia on JANE GREER](#), 7/24/2022].

2. The script for "Who Killed My Girl?" was written by Tony Barrett, and here's the ENTIRETY of the [Wiki bio](#): "**Tony Barrett** (born Martin Lefkowitz; May 24, 1916 – November 16, 1974) was an American actor, writer, and producer. He was born ...in New York City. He worked as radio and screen actor, screenwriter, and television writer and producer." Wiki is spartanly sparse about Barrett.

But IMDB dot-com offers [a long list of the shows](#) Mr. Barrett wrote for and in other ways contributed to. The ones that stand out for crime drama are *The Mod Squad*, *The Felony Squad*, *Honey West*, *77 Sunset Strip*, and *Treasury Men in Action*.

3. Speaking of acknowledgement, let's go back to the man who dreamed up BURKE'S LAW. To see a list of series creator Aaron Spelling's television credits...

<https://www.tvguide.com/celebrities/aaron-spelling/credits/3000200393>

4. In January 1994, the series was actually [brought back as a prime-time remake by CBS](#): "[E]ven more than the original program," according to Wikipedia, this revival "was regarded as being largely [camp](#). In a nostalgic touch, many of the guest stars were Barry's peers in 1960s cop shows and 'spy-fi' programs, including Patrick Mcnee (*The Avengers*) and Peter Graves (*Mission: Impossible*)."

If you are a writer or an editor, mid-century celebrities aren't the reason to watch the original series. Stick with Page 19's point: Except for BROADWAY IS MY BEAT, you won't find livelier dialogues in any detective or police series. Study the BURKE back & forths for precision and wit. And remember that most every scene you marvel at, in a detective-drama episode, first took shape as...the work of a writer.

Issue #5 magnified Gems from HILL STREET BLUES,
JOHNNY STACCATO and 87th PRECINCT —

<http://www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-5.pdf>

TO SEE / HEAR PAST and (a few) FUTURE EPISODES...

The next two pages offer links that allow the curious to partake. Would you like to examine various Gems before, or as an alternative to, seeing the scripts analyzed? All but a few are no-charge.

As of mid-August 2022, what I can tell you is that (a) these episode links worked — during August 2022 — and (b) the [radio](#) links are far more likely to be operative a few years from now...

["Escapade With Paula"](#) — January 9, 1949

From ROCKY JORDAN (CBS Radio, 1948 to '50)

["The Dion Hartley Murder Case"](#) — February 17, 1950

From BROADWAY IS MY BEAT (CBS Radio, 1949 to '55)

*It should open to **Episode #26**, as part of a vast audio menu*

"[Molly Keller](#)" — July 17, 1950 — from
NIGHT BEAT (NBC Radio, 1950 to '52)

"[The Case of the Calculated Risk](#)" — January 19, 1951
From THE NEW ADVENTURES OF NERO WOLFE

"[The Case of the Tell-Tale Ribbon](#)" — March 20, 1951
From THE NEW ADVENTURES OF NERO WOLFE

"[Fog Over Murder](#)" — October 13, 1953
From BARRIE CRAIG, CONFIDENTIAL INVESTIGATOR

"[The Lorcoe Diamonds Matter](#)" — November 7-11, 1955
From YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR (CBS Radio, 1949 to '62)

"[The Fifth Stair](#)" — March 6, 1959
From 77 SUNSET STRIP (ABC-TV, 1958 to '64)

"[The Streets Are Paved With Quicksand](#)" — September 12, 1966
From [THE FELONY SQUAD](#) (ABC-TV, 1966 to '69)

"[The One With the Gun](#)" — January 28, 1970
From the Original HAWAII FIVE-O (CBS-TV, 1968 to '80)

"[With Intent to Kill](#)" — January 23, 1971
From MANNIX (CBS-TV, 1967 to '75)

"[The Greenhouse Jungle](#)" — October 15, 1972
From COLUMBO (NBC-TV, 1971 to '78)

"[Target in the Mirror](#)" — October 3, 1973
From CANNON (CBS-TV, 1971 to '76)

"[The Lady Was a Tiger](#)" — February 5, 1974
From THE CBS RADIO MYSTERY THEATER (1974 to '82)

"[Honor is An Unmarked Grave](#)" — November 21, 1975
From HAWAII FIVE-O (**Paramount+ subscribers only**)

"[Let's Pretend We're Strangers](#)" — May 19, 1977
From THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO (ABC-TV, 1972 to '77)

["Snake Eyes"](#) — February 4, 1977

From QUINCY, MEDICAL EXAMINER (NBC-TV, 1976 to '83)

A pair of late-1983 episodes — ["Midway to What?"](#) is the one you can call up — from HILL STREET BLUES (NBC, 1981 to '87)

["Bought and Paid For"](#) — November 29, 1985

From MIAMI VICE (NBC-TV, 1984 to '90)

["Blood and Honor"](#) — December 5, 1985

From MAGNUM, P.I. (CBS-TV, 1980 to '88)

["The Cost of Doing Business"](#) — November 5, 1987

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

["The Violence of Summer"](#) — February 5, 1991

From LAW & ORDER (NBC-TV, 1990 to 2010)

Understanding how a Gem script coheres and conveys requires the study of scenes and dialogue. Never mind the word "plot" — it covers (meaning masks) too much. An appreciation of *language* unites most writers and editors. Actors, too. Yes, we see them speaking in a film, on TV, or DVD. But their words come from a *script*. To quote just a line here or there while making judgments means you'd be getting opinions without any evidence or examples. That's what most "reviews" are, you know. Instead, this publication delivers **positive analysis** using **lengthy extracts**. No boil-downs and very few "tips." The average issue has run 10,800 words.

The URL for this issue (August 2022) is

www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-8.pdf

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