



Detective Drama **GEMS...**

Mid-1940s to the Mid-1990s

Issue #9 November 2022

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

DD Gem #28 — "The Broken Badge" — September 26, 1966 **From THE FELONY SQUAD** (ABC-TV, 1966 to '69)

This series started off very strong. How strong? Each of the first three episodes qualifies as a Gem. "The Broken Badge" is the third of those three.

And maybe the start **HAD** to be strong. In mid-'60s USA, fantasy sit-coms were flourishing. Spy shows (some sober, some absurd) also surged. The westerns were doing okay. Variety shows, too. Who'd been squeezed out? Cops and Detectives.

Many cop shows reflect social trends, especially when they *resist* elite opinion; and THE FELONY SQUAD's launch coincided with a bone-chilling rise in violent crime.

During 1965 and '66, urban riots had academics and elected officials talking about "root causes" and "social responsibility." Working-class households saw and felt the violence otherwise. Four detective dramas were cleared for prime-time in September '66. Three were new, and FELONY SQUAD resonates best today.

Studying certain series can be of use to media historians and philosophical conservatives. But...let's save that angle for later. At this early stage, GEMS analysis is for writers, editors, and producers. Our focus is overwhelmingly on **The Episode**.

If you'd like some "Broken Badge" prep, spend a few minutes [here](#). Many of the IMDB dot-com "episode pages" lay out performers and characters much like a print program would preview a stage play. This is especially helpful for anyone researching, or seeking to re-experience, a TV series episode by episode.

Why Single Out Ehlers? "Because He's in Trouble Already..."

THE FELONY SQUAD created 73 episodes. In every one, Sergeant Sam Stone is the lead character. In "Broken Badge," he's about to be handed an awkward assignment. In trying to dodge it, he'll express skepticism and indignation. The assignment carries no risk beyond embarrassment and perhaps a vague feeling of guilt.

It grows out of a "discount house" robbery. Before the two thieves entered, the Proprietor, one [Mr. Harmon](#), was the only one in the building. No physical property was taken, just cash. The officer who interrupted the thieves is Bill Ehlers. He's also the one to write the report, although he saw no part of their behavior inside.

"Captain Nye" wanted his own first-hand account from the victim. (Frank Nye is played by the veteran authority figure [FRANK MAXWELL](#).) Harmon is meeting with Stone's boss, Nye, to recreate the behavior of the thieves and clarify the extent of the losses. Before Harmon leaves, Nye calls Stone in and introduces the two.

Two thieves "took all the cash from the safe," Harmon reiterates, and shoved it into a satchel. No alarm alerted anyone. But we saw the confrontation, ahead of the theme music. Office Ehlers wasn't even on duty; so, no partner. Seeing a light move behind the window of a closed building, he pulled over to investigate...

As the thieves burst out of the building, Ehlers fired once, in the air. They fired back twice, shattering the headlight of his '66 Chevrolet Bel Air. His next shot nailed the thief holding the satchel. It flew open as the guy fell; when his arm lurched, money flew everywhere. The scene leads us to believe Ehlers killed this man. The other thief drove off, not stopped by the third and fourth bullets from Bill Ehlers' gun.

What Harmon tells Nye and Stone covers what he saw inside. And we saw quite a bit outside. Harmon leaves. Stone isn't sure why he's part of this meeting.

SAM STONE: I coulda just read the report, right?

FRANK NYE: Wrong. When the squad car arrived about eight minutes later, Ehlers turned the money over to 'em.

STONE: You got a punch line, Frank?

NYE: Of the [missing] \$73,000, we recovered only 51 [thousand].

STONE: So, the other guy could've dipped into the missing 22, right?

NYE: When? You heard Harmon. He heard the shots a second or two after they left [to make their escape].

STONE: Naturally, you had the place searched.

NYE: Last night, and again this morning [pause]. Sam, I want you to check on Bill Ehlers.

STONE: Look, you know I'm, uh, not exactly a big FAN of his. But, uh, that doesn't make him a bad COP.

NYE: [Subdued] I have to be SURE of that.

STONE: Look, you got a whole SQUAD for that kind of rock-lifting: Internal Security, remember?

NYE: The headhunters? Not yet. I don't want to make this Official. Not till we find the missing thief – he COULD have the rest of it.

STONE: So why pick on Ehlers?!?

NYE: Because he's in trouble already. The credit union is holding three unpaid loans. Twice last year, his salary was attached by a FINANCE company. And he's into MOST of his buddies for one or two hundred per...

STONE: [Quietly] You really think he's holding out, huh?

NYE: I don't know — but I can't take the chance of pretending he isn't. I'm handing this to you, Sam [said while Nye turns his head away].

STONE: [Semi-shouting] *I don't like the whole idea.*

NYE: [More firmly] You don't have to!

Sergeant Bill Ehlers, played by [JOHN LARCH](#) (1914-2005), is the critical figure throughout. Born to parents who had emigrated from Poland six years earlier, John (nicknamed "Harry") Larch was in the Army for four years during World War Two. As an actor, he was heavy on Westerns and broadened out after 1959.

Larch appeared two or more times on *Gunsmoke*, *Route 66*, *Naked City*, *The Twilight Zone*, *The Fugitive*, *Mission: Impossible*, and *The Virginian*. As for Power Roles: He played General George Patton in a 1963 film and General Omar Bradley in a '76 movie about the Truman-MacArthur showdown. He was prominent in both of Clint Eastwood's 1971 films. At age 55, leaving almost no role unplayed, Larch was Father Nuncio in *The Amityville Horror*, a late-'70s schlock shocker.

I've seen John Larch in various roles. Whether the script called for him to be malevolent, mixed-up or noble, this actor is reliably looming, assertive, and rugged. In this FELONY SQUAD episode, Larch is a self-sacrificing husband.

He's also a man too resourceful when it comes to digging a familiar hole deeper.

And these are the three FELONY SQUAD regulars. From left to right, [DENNIS COLE](#) as Detective Sergeant Jim Briggs; [HOWARD DUFF](#) as Detective Sergeant Sam Stone; and [BEN ALEXANDER](#) as Detective Sergeant Dan Briggs. Dan is Jim's father.



This write-up lacks the space to do justice to the television and film achievements of Duff (1913-90). Too bad; the man was a powerhouse. But this "Drive-In Theater" Web commemoration is eye-catching, complete and compelling —

<http://www.briansdriveintheater.com/howardduff.html>

And the writer of this powerfully acted script? [GEORGE ECKSTEIN](#) (1928-2009).

When Deductions and Subtleties Fail, Try the Direct Question

In his office, Bill Ehlers is chatting with Stone's partner Jim Briggs: "You NEVER saw anything like it," he says of the robbery's weird aftermath: "Yep, there I was: Me, on my hands and knees, grubbin' around for all that dough!"

The viewers saw it during the opener: Mesmerization coupled with high energy.

In walks Stone. He seems bothered by Ehlers' buoyancy. Might as well commence the distasteful assignment here and now...

STONE: [Quietly] What about, uh, Mr. Harmon — INSIDE the store?

EHLERS: [The laughter gone, but just as quietly] What ABOUT him?

STONE: Well, I just wondered why ya didn't go inside to check on him.

EHLERS: It was LATE. I didn't figure anybody was still around. Besides, I wa –

STONE: Yeah, I know, you were on your hands and knees... Meanwhile, Harmon could've been BLEEDING to death, inside the store.

EHLERS: Well, *he wasn't*.

STONE: No thanks to you.

EHLERS: [After standing up] Hey Stone – you got a beef – take it up with Captain Nye.

He leaves. Briggs wants to know why Stone is leaning on Ehlers. Stone tells his partner that 22,000 dollars are missing and Ehlers "was ALONE with that money for seven or eight minutes!" His voice rising to the occasion, Briggs defends Ehlers as "a straight guy." Stone retorts with "how much does he owe YOU?"

During this and other exchanges, the cameras are going to startling lengths with facial shots, to the extent of cutting off the foreheads. Can't be sure whether this visual tactic was a "leap" insisted on by FELONY SQUAD creator [RICHARD MURPHY](#) (1912-93) or it evolved by the production team. In any case, the super-close-ups boost the intensity of the back & forth.

Using the description made by Ehlers that night, other officers find the getaway car. A parking-lot attendant remembers its driver going into a hotel across the street. The desk clerk tells Stone and Briggs the man settled his bill by turning over his watch (and it's no cheapie). "A thief carrying around \$22,000," Briggs observes on their way out, "doesn't have to take a \$50 loss on his watch."

A search of the room produces a quirky clue – "a rewind sidewinder...off a slot car." Briggs is tasked to make the rounds of slot-car dealers. Eventually they'll find this thief, the one who didn't get killed when Ehlers fired back: Screen name Angie Gilman, played by [WARREN VANDERS](#). (How does he contribute to "Badge"? By displaying fear and desperation, and doing so in a thoroughly gripping way.)

But the most emotional sequence of the first half is when Stone goes to Ehlers' apartment. Ehlers is still at headquarters, but his wife should be home. He just wants to see their place. Clues? Perhaps an in-passing revelation from her?

EILEEN HECKART (1919-2001) is Ruth Ehlers, superbly. This first meeting with Sam Stone could be worse only if he showed up to say her husband had been shot.

She offers him coffee. "No thank you, but you go right ahead." He eyes scan the living room. It's only the afternoon after the robbery. There surely wouldn't be a new TV set in use or a mink coat lying around. Stone spots something else...

While Mrs. Ehlers is getting her coffee, the camera shows us what grabs Sam Stone's eye. It's a table full of horse-racing flyers. We see it for two seconds.

Or did we see it? (Living rooms had no VCRs or instant replay 66 years ago.) Even a keen viewer would see little more than "Racing Tips" and very small horse images.

Stone is examining a sheet or two as Ruth Ehlers comes back from the kitchen. Her politeness vanishes. "What do you WANT, Sergeant?" "I just want to make sure that your husband isn't getting in over his HEAD," he replies in a very low key.

Stone's next comment suggests a conclusion that her husband has a gambling obsession: "How much are you in debt, Mrs. Ehlers?" Her voice keeps rising — but Stone can't return any of the hostility. So he tells her quietly: "A policeman can't afford to make himself vulnerable. He has *too many* enemies."

She pauses. A far different sense takes hold: "Is my husband in trouble?"

"You Like Horror Stories, Stone? Then Pay Attention"

At that moment, Officer Bill Ehlers walks in. No pleasantries. No formalities. He's here "officially," Stone explains in a muted voice. "About the 22,000?," Ehlers says. "WHAT 22,000?," his wife interjects.

Stone's restraint gets nowhere. Bill Ehlers remains evasive: "Then I'm playing it dumb, okay? I'm a DUMB COP." We've reached one of those moments in a detective or mystery script when the audience has been prepped for a hard right turn. But the scriptwriter and the actors swerve the vehicle in a different direction.

Ehlers make a thumb gesture to Stone: A wordless "leave now." Stone moves to depart. Ruth then surprises everyone. "I don't know anything about any \$22,000," she tells Stone, "but I'm the one who put us into debt." RUTH! gasps Bill Ehlers. She's clear: "I have gambled away everything that we ever had, and THEN some."

Bill tries to stop her. They're talking over each other. Technical note: It's a factor so ingrained we listeners and viewers do not even notice it, but: Professional TV and film offerings are structured to *hardly ever* have one actor cutting off another. In this part of "Badge," during the episode's 12th minute, they do, by design.

It couldn't sound more authentic unless...unless it WAS authentic, which of course it can't be, because we're watching fiction performed by seasoned actors.

"Honey, it's our problem; no one else – " Bill says shakily. And his wife nails the pertinent point: "BUT HE SHOULD know – at least it – that it's *not your fault*."

Eileen Heckart is concisely conveyed as "a celebrated character actress of stage, film and TV." Her "disarming laugh, almost gangly frame and large eyes have lent themselves to the portrayal of overbearing mothers, career women, villainous dames, and a host of sympathetic, beloved parts."

Here's a bit more from that same [Rotten Tomatoes write-up](#). Eileen Eckart is...

[p]erhaps best remembered for her Broadway and film portrayal of Mrs. Daigle, the bereaved mother of Patty McCormack's first victim in *The Bad Seed* (1956); her Broadway and film portrayal of Mrs. Baker, the mother with overbearing concern for her blind son in the Broadway and film versions of *Butterflies Are Free* (1973); and her several appearances as Mary's "Aunt Flo" on *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.

Below are two photographs of Heckart in serious roles. The one on the right is from '73, the one on the left from several years earlier. BOTH are close to the simultaneously firm and anguished wife on "Badge." Tremendous performance.



Ruth Ehlers has owned up to her role in their perilous finances, while also trying to reduce the heat on her husband. Sam Stone has a much wider picture. And...

"I'll finish it," Bill tells Ruth. "You like horror stories, Stone? Okay – then pay attention." There follows a nine-second pause – an eternity in TV drama back then, and even rarer were it to occur during today's 24/7/365 babble-fest.

Ehlers needed the pause to summon up strength. He tells Stone about the son – Bill Jr. – he and Ruth lost at the age of three. It happened "before I got transferred to

this Division." Which helps show why Stone and Ehlers never had a chance to forge a relationship. In real life and in their careers, the adjacent birth-years (Duff 1913, Larch 1914) make them peers. Yet they've been colleagues in proximity only.

Shattered by the death of Bill Jr., his mother started going out to the track once a week. Then every day. Then she discovered "she could just *phone* it in."

Stone can only mutter about Bill going to Captain Nye to have Ruth meet with the Division Psychologist. Yeh, right, Ehlers replies: "BIG LAUGH: **Detective's Wife Keeps Bookies in Silk Ties.**" Ehlers just can't bring himself to rely on Stone.

"So now run back to Nye and tell him I had PLENTY of reason to hold out that dough." This snarling dare restores Sam Stone's nerve: "You ARE a dumb cop," he says quietly. "It's better than being a fink artist," Ehlers retorts. He tells Stone to get out "before I really make things rough for both of us."

Ruth Ehlers is in agony. It gets even worse for Bill. Not eight seconds after Stone leaves and the apartment door shuts, Ruth looks at her husband and says, with a weak smile: "Bill." "What?" "About that money – you didn't..."

His look mixes shock with resentment. His wife turns away and weeps.

Left open by the script: Whether Bill Ehlers grabbed, or quickly hid, a portion of robbery loot during the seven or eight minutes when he had the chance. The opportunity was highly unusual. Being off-duty, he arrived alone. No alarm alerted any on-duty cops. He's the only one able to describe what happened outside.

Despite the starkness of the robbery scene, we've still been shown nothing concrete about Ehlers' honesty. All the others in this story are just as unsure as we viewers are. Nothing in Ehlers' jousting with Stone has been a denial. Instead, he has evaded, clammed up, or slammed down that "go tell our boss" dare.

In their apartment, just as he had with Ruth Ehlers, Stone addressed the simple question to Bill Ehlers. The missing robbery money...

EHLERS: You think I took it?

STONE: Did ya?

EHLERS: If you had any proof, you wouldn't be asking.

STONE: That's all you gotta say [meant as a question although it lacks the inflection].

STONE: Yeah, that's all.

Film Collectors Society of America + Pete Rogulo's Music

Four out of five of the original 73 episodes comprise the DVD set from **The Film Collectors Society of America**. Each dealing using the e-mail of the lead figure — Stefan@thefilmcsa.com — had been prompt and responsive. Any classic-TV collector should bookmark www.thefilmcsa.com/info.html. And don't forget...

It takes massive work to FIND so much disparate analog video. For this FELONY SQUAD assembly, picture/sound quality runs from fair to very good. No episode has been unviewable. And the music, by PETE ROGULO and orchestra, is great.

Mr. Rogulo, birth name Pietro Rogulo, lived from 1915 to 2011. He began with the baritone horn, added French Horn and piano, and moved between jazz and popular modes. For our purposes, his credits are all TV. Mr. Rogulo contributed theme and other music to *Leave It To Beaver*, *Thriller*, *The Thin Man*, *Checkmate!*, *The Fugitive*, *Run for Your Life*, *Alias Smith and Jones*, and several more.

Wikipedia also reports: "In 1962, he released an album of themes from popular television series, *TV's Top Themes...*" Even allowing for inflation, a clean copy of that LP is probably worth decent money today. For more about Pete Rogulo...

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/19/arts/music/pete-rugolo-arranger-and-composer-is-dead-at-95.html>

And maybe you wonder: Why was FELONY SQUAD disbanded without finishing its third season? In September 1968, ABC removed this commendable cop series from its Monday night slot. Relegated to Friday nights at 8:30, ahead of the obnoxious *Don Rickles Show*, it lost its audience. Season Three ended on January 31st, 1969.

The Rickles Show also ended that night. So did *Judd for the Defense*, which had held the 10 to 11 p.m. Friday slot since the Fall of '67. In fact, here at the start of 1969, ABC wiped out its entire Friday night line-up. Further experimentation followed. By 1970-71, Friday evening on ABC was a coherently wholesome whole: *The Brady Bunch*, *The Partridge Family*, *Room 222*, and *Love, American Style*.

Fifty years later, whoever controls THE FELONY SQUAD masters should release a graphically appealing set of DVDs. Until then, most of the 73 episodes — thanks to independent packagers working hard with collectors — are in the public domain.

Issue #7 Showcased Gems 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 #29 — "Escapade With Paula" — January 9, 1949

From [ROCKY JORDAN](#) (CBS Radio, 1948 to '51)

This publication celebrates outstanding episodes and scripts. Each write-up floodlights **scenes**, **characters** and **dialogue**. Plausibility of the events is the #1 requirement: Things technically impossible, or logically ridiculous, are disqualifiers.

The elements of an episode receive much more ink than the series itself or any of its performers. But the series — on its first mention — deserves some context. And ROCKY JORDAN was quite ambitious. Wikipedia begins to explain how...

A deliberately Eastern feel was created by careful use of music and sound effects, and the writers Larry Roman and [GOMER COOL](#) took care that the characters used the names of real streets in Cairo. Much of the information the writers used for this came from a book called the *Pocket Guide to Egypt* that the U.S. Army had produced for servicemen sent there during [World War Two]. The Oriental-sounding music composed for the show by Richard Aurandt is considered to be of exceptional quality.

Quite true, re the music. And the locale was audacious: Midway between exotic and surreal, in the world's largest Arab city, with desert hideouts for saboteurs, Nazi die-hards, random riff-raff, sad refugees, wily women, and purposeful thugs.

Being a RADIO rather than a TV offering delivered twice over: (a) The opportunities to stimulate listeners' imagination were boundless while (b) the writers and actors could remain safely in the U.S.A. Diligent casting and sound effects avoided the need to manage a production studio in a churning corner of the world.

One more big plus: The announcer. [LARRY THOR](#) has been celebrated — see Gems #20 and 26 — as the lead cop in BROADWAY IS MY BEAT (1949-54). Opening each JORDAN episode, Thor salutes that week's corporate sponsorship as it "takes you to the Cafe Tambourine in Cairo, gateway to the ancient East, where modern adventure and intrigue unfold against a backdrop of Antiquity."

Only two characters appear in every episode. One is a Muslim police captain who takes heroic risks for his faith; in all other ways, this man is methodical and deductive. The other is Jordan, an American-born restaurant-owner no one would call spiritual or susceptible to sentiment of any type.

Merely by describing local customs, though, Jordan enlightens his U.S. audience. For example, "Desert Betrayal" (May 29, 1949) begins this way...

There are five times in a day when a foreigner like myself tries to stay off the streets of Cairo. That's at dawn, Noon, late afternoon, sunset, and just after dusk

— when the [muezzin](#) [myoo-ez-in] appears in his [minaret](#) to call the Faithful to prayer. At that moment, all activity stops. The devout Moslem kneels on his rug, facing Mecca. Keeping away from them at those times is one respect we can pay their religion, and they appreciate that respect. But I guess I wasn't watching the clock this particular evening...

Far more often, the orientation is handled by Captain Sam Sabaaya...

SABAAYA: [Quietly] Jordan, there are things a man like you would not understand — that my people take their religion most seriously. Quite often, our emotions become strongly involved.

JORDAN: Maybe I do understand, Sam. EVERY man has a religion, whether he knows it or not.

SABAAYA: But there ARE differences.

JORDAN: Sure. I've knocked around enough to learn to respect another man's beliefs...

An American expatriate running a Cairo café is wise to at least START there. But a dozen or more episodes leave me thinking that this character STOPS there...

Rocky Jordan is the kind of meat & potatoes "man of action" who would never grasp how and why organized religion motivates Muslim, Christian or Jew. Nor would he grasp, as a business-owner in 2022, mystical environmentalism: A God-substitute abrim with anxieties, guilt, gloom, and end-of-the-world prophecies.

In the Myers-Briggs framework, he's a [Sensor](#). Sensors are fired up by the tangible and the immediate. To them, the big picture is an array of snapshots. And there's no point putting 'em into a scrapbook, because old images don't help with Now.

The JORDAN scripts rule out most identities and affinities. What are we left with? A biography of the real-life radio actor, which isn't much more help.

Reactive, Resourceful, Multi-Skilled, and One-Dimensional

From late October 1948 into September of 1950, Jordan's voice came from [JACK MOYLES](#) (1913-73). He reached national radio in 1937 (at the West Coast operation of CBS). After wartime service, he changed his base to Hollywood.

"Outside of his radio activities," says Wikipedia, "Moyles developed an impersonation routine, performing at clubs in San Francisco. He also performed in more than 300 camp shows for the military during World War Two." The rest of the Wiki

write-up covers his radio work to 1956, the biggest part being his role "as café-owner/amateur detective" Rocky Jordan, always in Egypt.

In a dozen episodes, I picked up no reference to a military background (Moyles yes, his character no). Likewise, Jordan was never a detective or a cop. And, regardless of his adventurism in Cairo, the guy is just too reactive to be a spy. Like Humphrey Bogart ("Rick") in *Casablanca*, Jordan left the U.S. for reasons only hinted at.

As Jordan, Moyles is handy with quips and retorts that are short on wit and irony. Surrounded by Arabs and other expatriates who aren't American, Jordan gets to be droll in ways the people we hear him interact with would tend to miss.

To be droll is to specialize in comments "having a humorous, whimsical, or odd quality." Jordan uses metaphors and analogies in zippy fashion. Given the setting, even though reacting to locals, he's mostly aiming the quips as U.S.-based listeners. Do they work? With me, most of them haven't.

Despite a discomfort with the speech pattern of Jack Moyles (see bottom half of Page 17), I like this series. Wikipedia's account of the sound effects and music — "careful," "exceptional" — is dead-on. And the fixed-speed rat-a-tat of Moyles is more than offset by the man who brings Sam Sabaaya to life...

[JAY NOVELLO](#) (1904-82) was celebrated in the [July 2020 issue](#). It led with Gem #4, a five-part YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR masterpiece set in Algeria. Novello played Inspector Pierre Marcus. From their first meeting at the Airport to the final crash & burn scene, his sustained back-and-forth with Dollar is marvelous.

The [actor giving voice to Inspector Marcus](#) "specialized in playing ethnic types, sometimes Spanish, Greek or Mexican but usually Italian — not surprising, since his parents were Italian immigrants and he grew up speaking the language before he learned English." The [Chicago-born Novello](#) "got a job acting with various theater companies...and his facility with languages got him work in radio as a dialect specialist." IMDB dot-com's account of his TV and movie credits is vast, although French character roles are rare. "During his film career," [adds Wikipedia](#), "Novello's roles often alternated between pompous or fussy professionals and assorted ethnic characters, such as Italians, Spaniards, or Mexicans." In Algeria, Novello is more scheming than fussy.

From Algeria as a Frenchman in north Africa, to Egypt as a officer riding in a U.S.-built limousine, Jay Novello could be the only American who ever played a Muslim cop OR detective. In that role, Captain Sabaaya is exasperated by Jordan's exploits and risk-taking. Occasionally, Jordan has to be jailed for his own safety.

But those same traits can be triggered to *entice* the *restaurateur*. That's how "Adventure in Zaqaziq" (April 16, 1950) begins. A high-risk situation is being detailed by Sabaaya's colleague. The three men are in the Internal Security Building...

BAHLA DIBAY: What I'm about to say is confidential. If you are interested, excellent. If not, that is your prerogative. But nothing is to be REPEATED after you leave here. You understand?

JORDAN: Only that much, so far.

DIBAY: Very well. Our problem is one of ROBBERY — not of monies, but of valuable medical supplies.

JORDAN: Umm-*hmm*. Somebody must be pretty SICK.

DIBAY: Pleeze realize, Mr. Jordan — while medicines such as penicillin are plentiful in YOUR country, they are EXTREMELY RARE throughout the Middle East! And sorely needed.

JORDAN: [Chastised] Oh sure, I follow. Go on, Bahla Dibay.

"Zah-ka-ZEEK" is [a real city](#), on the Nile River delta north-northeast of Cairo. But the episode set there is no Gem. Too many death-defying events. I quoted from it and one other far-fetched episode to help introduce the series. Now we reach the main event, an episode that *does* have the right ingredients and operatives.

"Chase All Over Cairo for a Dame to Help Her Find a Man"

Jordan lives atop his restaurant, on the second floor. Weariness from this evening's paltry patronage is palpable...

It was a hot night. The desert air had moved in on Cairo, and hung heavily over the city like GARLIC over a chef salad. The FANS were working hard trying to throw a breeze but getting nothing. A couple of people were working on cold beer. A red-headed member of His Majesty's Navy sat in the corner up to his eyeballs in hard liquor; he'd wandered in looking for salt water and got into a mix-up with a bottle of gin...

At closing time, Jordan's assistant Chris is tasked to usher the inebriated Brit out. (No trace of an English accent in his slurred speech — slip-up in casting there.)

Entering his room, Jordan encounters a woman. "She was standing by the window, looking out onto the Cairo street. She was TALL, and a little too THIN... Her face [was] white, accented by a pair of dark eyes and topped off with a flock of black hair. It figured she'd make someone a swell birthday present," he reports with a touch of

leer. So? Don't sound impressed; try abrupt. "What's the matter, lady? Get lost?"

She is French. Sultry voice. Jordan drops lead-pipe hints that she ought to leave. Good for him. Quickly gauging "risk versus reward" in a foreign city goes way beyond anticipating stock-market surprises in a U.S. office. In secluded spaces, set-ups and scandals can come out of nowhere. But this lady is no temptress, and whether some kind of con is underway won't be knowable from this first visit.

"May I have a cigarette, please?" She asks merely to be listened to. "All right, let's have it." Her name is Paula Dupre. She is looking for a specific person. Each bit of info will get a quip or sarcasm, delivered with indifferent timing, from Jordan.

Whom is she trying to find? "He's my husband." "What's the matter," Jordan asks with an audible smirk, "you walk out one day for a loaf of bread..."

"I pay if you help me to find him." How much? Two offers. "No sale." Then she turns desperate, yet retaining a certain firmness. Jordan is also firm. He doesn't ask for details about the missing husband. His main concern is "how real is all this?"

He's unable to draw out why she won't enlist the Cairo Police or the French Consulate. All she can say is "I have to find him THIS way," meaning through Jordan's extensive knowledge of Cairo... Too much fog. Time to wrap up the visit.

Though not buying, he'll be given another chance. "I'm at the Hotel Sinbad," Paula says. "You might change your mind."

As she walks out: "Just a minute, lady. Do you always carry a gun?" He spied the bulge. She tries to deflect. "Next time, don't put it in a cloth bag. It shows."

At this early stage, we have only indicators. No crime, no clash, and no threat.

He walks her to the front door. He watches her move slowly down the street. A black Fiat pulls away from the curve and turns the same corner. The lady and the car both disappear. Only HERE does Jordan begin to think of being drawn in.

"Chapter Two came the next morning... When I saw the flash of sunlight reflecting off a piece of steel, I knew I had company." A "tall Arab" with a pointed black beard does the talking. No name. His assistant has one: Hassim. Hassim carries the knife.

They know about the "very lovely" visitor the night before. They know that she is French. They both would prefer that "Meester Jordan" not assist her in any search. And what if he does help her? Hassim's knife — we hear it thrust into a wooden post — will have a new target. (Actually, his OTHER knife will. This one is stuck.)

Jordan goes back to his restaurant. Waiting for him — "his horn-rimmed glasses..."

slipped down on his perspiring nose" — is Captain Sabaaya. "This is an official visit, Jordan; it concerns this slip of paper. A name and address written in pencil — *look at it.*" "The heat getting you, Sam?" The name and address are Jordan's.

"You came here to show me THAT?" The info was found in the purse of a young woman — "tall, slim, dark hair and eyes." More quips and chuckles.

To get serious, Jordan usually requires some harsh fact. Here it is: The lady was found lying unconscious in an alley by a police officer. It's also a handy opening: By saying nothing, Jordan can let the Captain confirm the name she gave him. He does so. "Paula Dupre" (doo-*pray*) is a much more common name, not just in France but also the U.S., than you might think. Probably was in 1949, too.

"I never SAW her before last night." Jordan is leaving out key points from their exchange. She gave him "some sort of pitch about helping her find somebody" etc. This coyness irritates Sabaaya. But the Captain's radar has been activated.

Actually, it seems common practice for Sabaaya to ask an agent to keep tabs on Jordan. That's about to occur in this case. Jordan "informs" the Cairo Police by his movements; quips take the place of candid replies.

"He's My Husband. One Looks for One's Husband"

As soon as the Captain's limousine leaves, "another car took its place" — another *little black Italian Fiat*. Indicative of something, even though proof of nothing. The driver is a Frenchman, short and fat and wearing a beret. He enters the Café.

Looking for something besides beer, he lets Jordan select the drink. After some polite blather, the patron turns stern. He advises Jordan to concentrate on running his establishment and avoid "the people who stray from the simple ways."

More insinuations. Jordan deduces that THIS fellow, not the tall bearded man with the knife-happy sidekick, is who followed Paula Dupre the other night.

The beret-wearing Frenchman, with a slight laugh, tries to deflect: "Why does *any* man follow a pretty girl?" "Somebody followed her to slug her," Jordan replies, so "say somethin' about THAT." The something is delivered in French. Few listeners will know what the words mean, except they aren't friendly.

The man walks out. He never did volunteer his name or business. Now there's no reason NOT to go to where Sabaaya — after eliciting nothing about why she was assaulted — left Paula. It's the Hotel Sinbad.

This is one of the few episodes where Jordan expresses concern about another

human being; he also slows his speech pace. "Are you all right?" "Yes — thank you for asking." "You shouldn't walk around the Cairo streets alone at night."

Why did she go to the run-down area Sabaaya had mentioned? Using his last known address, she was looking for leads about her missing husband. "Do you know a tall Egyptian with a hook-nosed sidekick who carries a knife?" "No." What about "a porky Frenchman who drives a Fiat?" YES! But she has no idea who he is.

Paula Dupre is ready to mix charm with (finally) some serious information...

- Her missing husband is a deserter from the French Army. This explains why she resists asking for help from local officers or Embassy officials.
- He chose Cairo as a good place to lose anyone from France who might be tasked, or perhaps "incentivized," to find deserters.
- They had a code arranged. He was writing her every two weeks.
- The letters stopped. She came to Cairo to see if he is in trouble.

Now there's enough — just enough — to enlist Jordan. They can talk about fees later, he says. She gives him a picture of Michel (meh-*shell*) — and suggests they have supper. "I'll make some sandwiches and we open a bottle of wine, eh?" She sets a table, including candles, by a good-sized window overlooking the Nile.

The "escapade" with Paula soon feels like a collaboration with romantic overtones. She shares hometown and family memories. (We can assume Jordan does not do the same.) No details about the husband, and Jordan does not press for any. They prepare to part. As she opens a door — apparently they are right outside her hotel room — she expresses a desire for a goodnight kiss...

At that moment, two gunshots "came flying in from out of the hall." A window is shattered. Another warning to Paula, or an attempted murder?

He rolls Paula to the floor and hears someone "running down the hall." Able to see no one, he takes a position by the window. And? Yep: Black Fiat, speeding away.

By the start of the episode's second half, Rocky Jordan has helped Paula Dupre find safer lodgings. He then goes to the address from which her husband's most recent letter was sent. He calls it "an Egyptian flophouse" and tries to buy some info from "Cleopatra's grandmother," namely the manager. She professes no memory of any Michele Dupre, even after seeing his picture.

When asked about the "big Egyptian" whose buddy did the knife trick, she freaks out: *"You want them to find me floating in the Nile with a KNIFE?!?"* Door slams.

Suddenly, Captain Sabaaya appears: "Find out anything, Jordan?" he says in Jay Novello's mellifluously intimate voice. "My car is right around the corner." It's a command ride. They are off to The Morgue, and another stand-out scene...

The acoustics are (excuse the pun) dead-on. We can hear the absence of carpeting as the high ceiling facilitates a slight but metallic echo. "Observe, Jordan. This man is fat, and short, and he is a Frenchman." Drove a Fiat, right? Correct, says Sabaaya. "We found him out in the desert past the ruins of the Third Dynasty" (what a bracing sentence to encounter in a detective drama!). "He had a knife in him."

They go upstairs. With the Fiat link, Jordan assumes the dead man followed Paula — from the Cafe before she was knocked unconscious — and also shot at them outside the Sinbad. Nonsense to the latter, says Sabaaya. A foreigner with this man's credentials would not fire shots without provocation. So who is he?

"His name is Andre Duval. He is a representative of the French Military. He was in Cairo looking for someone — a DESERTER." The question for Jordan: "Do you think that this man, and Miss Dupre, were looking for the same person?" Jordan deflects. Sabaaya asks if Paula killed Duval "so that she alone could find the missing man?"



JACK MOYLES (right) being Rocky Jordan sounded more like a professional broadcaster than a performer with stage training who carried it over to radio.

Broadcaster of ... first thought: News. But wait. That isn't it. Most newspeople (TV or Radio) learn the value of Pause — for EMPHASIS, or other effect.

In contrast, Moyles made Jordan sound like a semi-mechanical SPORTS-caster. The pace is *just too constant*: No matter the scene or topic, and regardless of who he was with, Jack Moyles delivered his lines moderately fast.

He moved "the play" through each hunt, contest, or high-risk situation. Fine: Radio needed that. But he did it without the excitement or dynamic range of a real-time sports reporter.

On the Old-Time Radio website, several fans laud Jack Moyles. Not here. When it comes to rendering his character, he isn't in the same sonic galaxy as Bob Bailey with Johnny Dollar, or Larry Thor being Inspector Danny Clover.

"Rocky Jordan" boils down to adroit perceptions, rapid recalculation, and skill at narrating fist-fights. The voice we're hearing 70+ years later is that of a character reactive, confident, many-skilled, and one-dimensional.

I'll come back to Captain Sabaaya and "Meester Jordan" in 2024. For now, the OTR commenters have nailed a technical point: The **audio quality** of the typical ROCKY JORDAN episode is notably better than you will find on other radio collections. A lengthy menu awaits you [here](#), and this is how to open "Escapade With Paula"...
<https://box01.comicbookplus.com/otrm3/99/996918f83c1b6e7f046f3b7a0ac9ce3f.mp3>

IN CASE YOU MISSED these write-ups from 2021...

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>

Issue #5 showcased Gems from *Hill Street Blues*, *Johnny Staccato* and *87th Precinct* — <http://www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-5.pdf>

DD Gem #30 — "Shield of Honor" — November 15, 1973 **From THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO** (ABC-TV, 1972 to '77)

"Shield" is the third STREETS episode saluted by this publication. It's also the first write-up with [MICHAEL DOUGLAS](#), as Inspector Steve Keller, playing #2 to the great [KARL MALDEN](#). Malden, for all five seasons, was Detective Lieutenant Mike Stone.

At the very end, the two co-stars stand before a large-print plaque, which reads: "In tribute to the police officers of San Francisco who gave their lives in the line of duty." No officer is killed during this episode. But one who took a grossly unethical risk due to a tough family circumstance will go down in flames. We are shown the plaque to reinforce the fact that a police badge is a "shield" meant to be carried honorably.

Some GEMS write-ups floodlight what (for lack of a snappier term) are called **The Sources of Tension**. Without multiple tensions, viewership would cease. This one handles so many, so well, that they're worth laying out, here at the start.

If we use each Gem as a model for film and text productions, and your mission is to roll out knife-edge complexities without baffling the audience, it's important to sketch, EARLY, the Tensions that will underlie personalities and events. Seeing these conflicts before writing the story — or viewing the Gem — enhances appreciation.

- The first three minutes feature two officers and one perspiring civilian. Open a window? No, says the civilian. They are riding in a police van. Mostly, a viewer senses jitters and risk. Our curiosity is engaged.
- They park in a garage underneath Headquarters. At Minute 3:24, the D.A. joins them. He's dealing with his own edginess, which in short order will turn to fury. They have done everything possible, he tells the man being escorted, "to protect your identity as a witness."
- The four men walk down a long hallway. Martin Cahill wipes his hands with a handkerchief. Every detail of his accelerating fear is displayed to perfection. And the viewer has gotten clear on the opening story line.
- At Minute 4:06, Martin Cahill is fatally shot, right near the area where the District Attorney had promised him safety. It happened because of a disastrous leak. Nerves and tension give way to a frantic chase.

That opening sequence sets the stage for a concurrent series of conflicts...

- In order to save his case, the D.A. wants Stone to find the hit man. Stone says it's more important to plug the leak at Police Headquarters.
- Two officers — who themselves are suspects — disagree on whether to watch the Mob kingpin's house (he commissioned the hit) or follow a suspiciously efficient Cable-TV repair truck on its way out.
- Stone has been friends for 25 years with one of the potential leakers. During a stake-out with that person, Keller picks up some family info that might be part of a compromising situation.
- Keller got to know another of the potential leakers during their days as Police Academy trainees. That individual reveals a simmering resentment about discriminatory promotions in the Department.
- Both Stone and Keller are reluctant to doubt their respective friends' loyalty or integrity. THIS source of tension is notable only because the relationship and thinking of the two STREETS co-stars typically differs only on timing and theories, as opposed to trusted associates.

Those are the conflicts bedeviling the good guys. The forces of darkness are dealing with three additional tensions, and these are devoid of subtleties...

- The hired killer brilliantly escaped; his prep work was exquisite, and the cops don't know where he and his nimble driver got to.

- The Problem: He took a bullet in the shoulder just before diving into the getaway car. Even if getting medical help risks the secrecy that has held so far, obtaining that help is suddenly the guy's #1 priority.
- He distrusts the driver, a sniveling Underworld trainee. But the driver is the only one who can tell the Mob organizer what happened. It'll have to be done in person, because the phones are assumed to be tapped.
- The trainee adroitly gets into the Mobster's residence — and is shocked at being told to kill the hit man. The kingpin calls it a promotion to higher status. All coordination between the bad guys has started to crumble.

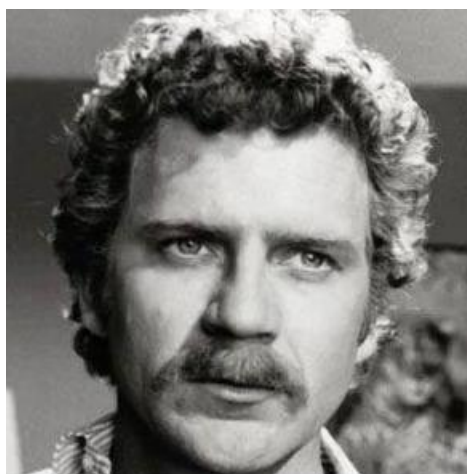
This episode excels in character-definition, polarized intentions, and prosecutorial divides. Four potential "bad cops" have to be sifted and sorted for the source of a disastrous leak. The opening scenes are gripping without being implausible or gimmicky, and the overall level of thoroughness is exceptional. It never lets up.

Cullen Drives the Leak, the Getaway Car, and the Truck

At the opposite extreme from the detail offered by a GEMS write-up is this summary on a well-known website: "Detectives Stone and Keller investigate how a contract killer obtained inside information on the movement of a mob witness."

If that's all you need to call up an episode, you're a devotee of that particular series. If you keep reading here, you're a student of structure and characters...

The "contract killer" is defined by his precision and his immorality. Nothing special there, considering the guy's profession. Just 100% necessary: He had worked with excruciating diligence to put himself into a position where he could make use of a last-minute stroke of luck: A single deadly shot, through an elevator's closing doors.



But it's the getaway car's DRIVER who will make the lasting impression: "Ted Cullen" is the Great Tempter? Protagonist? Chunk of silly putty able to bounce like a vintage [SuperBall](#) when forcefully thrown?

This ambitious sniveler is played with insidious repulsiveness by [ROBERT FOXWORTH](#). The screen shot is from a 1975 episode of CANNON. Unusually, this analysis will quote from HIS character first, ahead of turning to any of the decisive individuals.

The chaotic precision of "Shield of Honor" comes out in hinge-type moments...

- As noted, two cops diverge. Should they maintain the stakeout of the kingpin's residence? Or tail a Cable-TV van whose visit to that same residence seems too brief to be what a non-cop would take it to be?
- The senior officer makes the call: Follow the van. Doing so takes them to the hideout — though they can't be sure it's that — of the "contract killer" who eliminated the District Attorney's supremely valuable witness.
- The driver of the van is the same one who drove the getaway car for the killer. As you've heard, they got away. Both are back at the hideout. A violent squabble between the two leads to a gunshot.
- The cops parked nearby hear the shot. The hit man sees them approach the apartment. He makes a run for it — and gets himself killed.

But the driver — weak but nimble Ted Cullen — escapes to freedom a second time. He is the brother-in-law of a "source" at Police Headquarters. He has corrupted that straight-arrow officer. Listen to how ruthless he can be with that individual. (Even though, with all others, he hems, haws, and then hews.)

CULLEN: What about [the hit man who killed the DA's witness]?

LEAKER: He's dead.

CULLEN: Good [exhaling].

LEAKER: Good? *Good?* I KILLED a man because you LIED to me. You *set me up*.

Cullen got the Leaker to "supply some little tip, some little piece of information." He did so without saying it could facilitate the murder of a prime witness.

CULLEN: "Okay, okay, I knew. I knew but it's all done now. It's OVER with... I have never been arrested. There's no PICTURE of me that's gonna get around. And even with a description you're the only one who can tie me to it."

Hearing all of this and more, the Leaker is revolted yet unable to move. The driver is in fact the man who made possible the whole ghastly enterprise. The only person he can afford to be dominant with is the one who enabled him...

CULLEN: And don't you be so damn self-righteous after what you've done. We all have a price.

LEAKER: Well I thought I was [helping _____] but you USED her.

CULLEN: No [pause]. No, I used you. So now all you have to do is stay cool. And _____ stays happy. And stop actin' like some kinda saint; you KNOW what you are.

Using "Leaker" rather than the character's name helps you look ahead without taking anything from the detective work needed for the narrowing down.

From the start, keep your eye on Cullen. He drives the getaway car, and later the Cable-TV truck. He's also the only one you'll see interact with the kingpin.

"How Did They Know Which Elevator and When?"

[EDWARD KNIGHT](#) is Martin Cahill. His time in the police van and then going up that elevator turned out to be the final moments of his life. A local pimp muscled out of his territory, he meant to get even by testifying against his far more organized rival: Al Lyman, played by [LAURENCE HADDON](#).

We won't meet Lyman until after the phone tap is installed, and then only for a minute and a half. But, like all the other guest actors in this sparkling episode, Haddon's performance as Lyman is first-rate.

Lyman and his underlings are consolidating West Coast prostitution. Their form of "organization" has nothing to do with bargaining rights or TQM. It also leaves no room for autonomous local operators like Cahill. We watched the two taut-nerved detectives escort him to what they thought was Safety.

Cahill had been dealing with the D.A. — Gerald O'Brien ([JOHN KERR](#)) — and O'Brien is livid. How did the killer get into the building? *This place is supposed to be TIGHT*. It's a question most viewers under the age of 40 would also have. (Government buildings were somewhat harder to secure by automated means 50 years ago.)

Steve Keller has a specific answer: "Psychology. Came in as a victim." WHAT? "He just walked in. Told the Officer at the Lobby desk he'd been fleeced in a phony franchise deal and wanted to complain. They sent him up to [Bunko](#)." The D.A. remains incredulous: *But how did he get a GUN in?* "I guess we're gonna have to find him to find out," Mike Stone replies. He isn't interested in reverse-engineering just now.

Because of Cahill's desire for cover, only the District Attorney knows anything about the situations he intended to give testimony on. But RELOCATING such a witness is everywhere and always a group project. With O'Brien's integrity beyond question, who else knew the Cahill transportation specifics? Stone tells O'Brien and Keller:

I keep bumping into one question all the time: How did they know which elevator and when? ... Somebody knew the *exact* time that Cahill was being brought in, and who was that somebody? Somebody inside the Organization. Then? [He pauses]. There's only one answer ... someone in the Department.

At this point urgencies diverge. Nailing down the Leaker isn't O'Brien's imperative: "A security leak in the Department is the Chief's business. My concern is to get that hit man in here ALIVE so he can testify on who hired him to knock off Cahill."

Without contesting O'Brien's stance, Stone soon identifies four people. Naturally, the two who shepherded Cahill from his hideout in Oakland, and two other officers: Lieutenant Vincent Bondini (in real life age 46), and Andrea McCormick (age 33).

Stone has known Bondini for 25 years and any suspicion is pro-forma. At a gut level, he thinks Bondini being the Leaker is preposterous. Steve Keller is just as sure that Officer Andrea McCormick is trustworthy. She is three years out of the Police Academy, and before that served with distinction in the Air Force.

More exposed to doubt: The seasoned detectives who escorted Martin Cahill to his final elevator ride. Ahead of that journey, they'd have burned every detail into their minds. "This Holeck," Stone says — "he's had a lot of funny little lapses along the way." He means Detective John Holeck, played by [GARY VINSON](#). He sat with Cahill in the back seat while Dan Riggs, played by [BING RUSSELL](#), drove.

When it comes to grilling witnesses or his own colleagues — if they've ended up being vital observers or participants — no radio or TV cop radiates more thoroughness than Mike Stone. Listen as he assaults lapses in the post-disaster write-up. In effect, he is playing EDITOR rather than doubting anyone's honesty...

MIKE STONE: You know, this description isn't worth TWO CENTS.

DAN RIGGS: Come on, Lieutenant, whaddya WANT? You're being shot, you don't take time to see what color the guy's EYES are.

STONE: You're supposed to be TRAINED. You're supposed to SEE more than the average guy in the street. *Now what DID ya see?*

JOHN HOLECK: Lieutenant, Dan's right. It was so unexpected. I had my head down trying to light a cigarette. All of a sudden someone's BLASTING through the door with a MAGNUM.

STONE: Magnum? [Takes moment to scan pages] That's not in this report. What CALIBER?

HOLECK: Uh, 357. It HAD to be, it cracked like a WHIP.

STONE: Which hand did he use, right or left?

RIGGS: LEFT — I think [pause]. *Yes, it was his left.*

STONE: Okay what ELSE? When he wore a wig when he made the shot, what was the color of his hair *when he made the ESCAPE?*

HOLECK: Uh, sandy blond. A little bit, uh, longer than average...

STONE: It says here you hit him in the shoulder. WHERE in the shoulder?

RIGGS: Shoulder blade, right side.

STONE: How bad?

RIGGS: It shoulda ripped him up pretty good — he could be losing a lotta blood.

STONE: All right, *I* put out an alert to all the hospitals and the doctors; now that's what YOU shoulda done. Probably won't do any good, but he may get DESPERATE.

Stone slams the door on his way out. Later he will ride with Holeck. The D.A. had worried that Holeck will figure out they have doubts about him. Keller defends his older partner by citing one of the Mike Stone "axioms":

Question subject face to face, he'll clam. Pass the time of day [and] you'll learn a lot more what he thinks about than the weather.

With colleagues too rattled to remember fully, Stone can mix thoroughness with a friendly tone. In the car with Holeck, we don't hear intensity. "What's the matter? Kicking yourself all over the block for fouling up this morning?"

After their ride, Stone tells his colleagues: "Holeck seems like a nice guy who just let his guard down a little too soon... He's mad at himself. Unless he's a better actor than I think, all he's guilty of is a MISTAKE..."

Yes, Stone had been incensed by what Detectives Holeck and Riggs left out of the report. At that point, his main goal was extracting details, rather than trying to trap them letting something slip. As for Riggs, the personnel file shows too many citations for bravery (19 during 17 years) to think he was the Leaker on Cahill.

Detective Lieutenant Mike Stone's tone and intensity vary from person to person. What hardly ever stops is the thoroughness. I don't mean what used to be called "third-degree tactics." Rather, it's his drive for the Truth, as best as it can be reconstructed by whomever is likely to have some slice of it.

Mean anything to you? Could be. Spend time with Karl Malden if you're a cop, a journalist, an analyst of plane crashes, or a prober of shady financial operatives.

McCormick and Bondini Also Knew the Whole Cahill Plan

Officer McCormick and Lieutenant Bondini are helping Stone and Keller on this case even while being theoretical suspects for the catastrophic leak.

Right after the list of four suspects was assembled, Stone pressed Keller about McCormick. Keller had logic on his side: "Mike, she had a rough time when she was a kid. No folks, she had a younger sister to bring up [and] she was looking towards the Department as a HOME." Though "uptight" about slow promotions, "she wouldn't destroy anything that means that much to her, NO."

Steve Keller's history with "Drea" McCormick is both a help and a hindrance. They progressed through the Academy at the same time and, back then, went out a few times. Yet McCormick remains an Officer while Keller, despite being visibly younger, has moved up to Inspector.

Their real-life age difference — [MARIETTE HARTLEY](#) (playing McCormick), born June 1940; and Keller (Douglas) September '44 — is worked into the script: McCormick spent part of her twenties in the Air Force. That chunk of bio fits with Keller's point, to Stone, that McCormick values structure and reliability. She also tells Keller...

The Air Force gave me a commission, right? I was a Captain. You know the only way I'll get any rank in the Department? At a desk: Finger-prints, forgery — hmph, maybe one of the LIVE jobs. It's exciting, huh?

Her smile is rueful, but no wince and no snarl. The tone is neither bitter nor accepting. McCormick seems to convey a real-world bluntness while maintaining professionalism. But one exchange has Keller wondering about the latter.

It takes place right after they interview the dead witness's girlfriend, herself a former call girl: Nita Vaughn (JODEAN LAWRENCE). No one from the Department had phoned to tell her the tragic news. Controlled grief, flashes of bitterness...

"I knew it — I knew it. I TOLD him to let it go." Gruff exhale, followed by edge: "But he insisted on talking to *your D.A.*" Who else knew? "He didn't even tell ME when he was going in... I couldn't let slip what I didn't know. No one knew, I swear."

Back in the car, we'll see Steve Keller being startled. It happens frequently enough, but hardly ever is it triggered by a colleague making observations calmly...

KELLER: So you think she was lying, huh?

MCCORMICK: She sold herself for money. Why not sell him?

KELLER: I don't know [distractedly] — she *said* she loved him.

McCORMICK: [Mild snort] Wonder how many men she said that to. It's no great loss if she talked. They take care of each other that way. Sure saves us a lot of trouble [said with a mild but worldly-wise chuckle].

KELLER: You're getting HARD, you know that? I mean I work with a guy day and night who's been looking at the bottom for 30 years and HE doesn't even come up with things like that.

McCORMICK: You think they're worth saving?

KELLER: I don't think that's your *choice* [pause]. I don't think that badge would be worth anything if people thought they way you do.

Keller doesn't relay the above sensations to Stone. He DOES tell Stone about a sad slice of personal pressure picked up during a ride with Stone's old friend. This next exchange is somewhere between somber and drawn out. It's the closest a STREETS fan will ever see these two cops come to exchanging tentativeness.

Stone has been poking around, asking about Drea McCormick's Academy days.

KELLER: Whaddya doin', Mike? Just passing the time of day?

STONE: [Pause] Ohh I was just gonna try to cover up any blind spots you might have, buddy boy. Something you knew about her once, forgot maybe. [Longer pause, and then, with a sympathetic smile...] I know how ya feel about people you like.

KELLER: Like you do about Bondini?

STONE: Yeh, something like that, I guess.

KELLER: Did you know about his wife?

STONE: What?

KELLER: Cancer. She's gonna make it through, but, uh — the doctor payments have been pretty heavy.

STONE: [Suddenly more animated] Are you tryin' to say that he's so hard up for money he could be on the take?

KELLER: I'm just laying down a fact, but one piece of information would take care of a lot of payments.

STONE: No, no-no-no — he's been a straight cop too long.

KELLER: A lot of straight cops have been bent, Mike.

STONE: I know. I KNOW! Catch a man when he's down and — you can get any of us. [Another pause] Nah, no-no. Not Vince Bondini [aggressive inhale]. He wouldn't let himself get into that kinda predicament.

KELLER: You're sure. [It's a question without the "?" inflection]

STONE: [Six seconds of silence, covering another exhale] No.

"No" means no, Stone can't be sure. He can't even look at Keller when he replies. He looks out the window instead. And Bondini will remain on the suspect list.



PETER MARK RICHMAN (1927-2021) is Stone's friend, Lieutenant Vince Bondini

Recognized for hundreds of television roles dating back to the 1950s, PETER MARK RICHMAN broke into film alongside Gary Cooper in the 1956 Civil-War western *Friendly Persuasion*...

"My father died when I was 16 and my brother was kind of a surrogate father," recalled Richman. "He was a pharmacist and I worked in his store as a teenager... I ended up reluctantly going to pharmacy school [and] became a licensed pharmacist in two states"... However, the attraction of the stage proved more enticing...

Richman continues to be visible as a frequent character on Cable TV through reruns of dozens of shows such as *Matlock*, *Murder She Wrote* and *Three's Company*. "I appeared in [over 500 TV episodes](#)," he said; "I played a lot of doctors, but never did play a pharmacist!"

Source: NICK THOMAS (from 2016), in a life account for [The Spectrum](#)

No Need to Go Scrounging for YouTube Versions

As a series, STREETS was discussed as part of Gem #13, [a 1977 episode](#) called "Let's Pretend We're Strangers." That and one other episode from the final season allowed remarks on the lead characters, theme music, urban setting, and the series overall. Those grounds having being covered before, "Shield of Honor" claimed more room for outstanding dialogues and the three key GUEST actors.

Assuming STREETS as a series has your interest, you can own "Shield of Honor" at a ridiculously low cost. It's low because that Gem of an episode is part of a set that

gets you **72 additional** STREETS episodes, like so...

Full-Screen... Collects all 73 episodes from Seasons One through Three...

When a grizzled veteran cop...teams up with a driven newcomer...this partnership makes for unbeatable crime-fighting... Over 63 hours on 20 DVDs.

Over a year ago I discovered that bulging set of DVDs — STREETS Seasons 1 through 3 — at Big Lots, for just 15 bucks. Since Big Lots is not a regular seller of media, you won't find the collection there now. But three other places have this same three-season 20-disc package at reasonable prices...

From Wal-Mart Stores — <https://www.walmart.com/ip/The-Streets-of-San-Francisco-Seasons-1-3-DVD/296691862>

From the insatiable behemoth (AMZN) that knows no boundaries — <https://www.amazon.com/Streets-San-Francisco-Seasons-1-3/dp/B07611KRNY>

And from a site I haven't used and only stumbled upon last Spring — <https://discounthomevideo.com/product/the-streets-of-san-francisco-seasons-1-3>

"Shield of Honor" is the second episode on the third DVD of the second season.

For those who like History, a weird closing note on social and economic context...

When "Shield" was first shown, gas prices were soaring, the President's popularity had crashed, scandals dogged him, foreign foes were confident, and the U.S. Government had utterly failed at controlling inflation. It was November 15, 1973. Two nights later — [Saturday, November 17, 1973](#) — President Richard Nixon said "I am not a crook" while taking questions from Associated Press executives in Florida.

Strange but true: November 1973 ... replicating eerily ... 49 years later.

Detective Drama Gems is a no-charge quarterly publication. If you decide to quote from it, please mention editor/curator **Frank Gregorsky** or the name of the publication.

The URL for this Ninth issue of *Detective Drama Gems* is www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-9.pdf

NEXT ONE: www.ExactingEditor.com/Detective-Gems-10.pdf