

ened judge: two years in prison or two years in psychoanalysis. After considerable rumination on the part of Ames and the narrator as to which is more fearsome, prison or the exploration of the unconscious, the man naturally chooses analysis as soon as the offer is made. He undertakes therapy with Ames' assurance that " 'Everything you say is confidential. A psychoanalyst is ethically bound not to reveal one word a patient tells him' " (p. 21). These novels all end before the murder trials, so we never learn whether a subpoena changes Ames's notion of confidentiality.

In the course of therapy, a murder from the past is linked to shootings in the present. On the basis of traditional motives, the police suspect a Mafia hit man, a rejected lover, and Ames' patient. Ames interviews the hit man and rejected lover, finds them capable of murder, but lacks evidence. Through clues from the unconscious mind Ames and his patient derive another suspect, one whose motive is less stereotyped. Suspense builds, the pace quickens, and enough evidence accumulates to elicit a confession. The story is a good one, though not equal to its immediate predecessor, *The Psychiatrist Says Murder* (1973, also published by Arbor House).

The Dr. Ames novels are worth the attention of forensic psychiatrists, not only because they offer good entertainment, but also because they highlight (and, I concede, romanticize) the potential role of forensic psychiatrists in criminal investigation. Herein lies one of their shortcomings, however; for despite frequent reflection on the ethical course of action, Ames makes his major breakthroughs only by exceeding his role as a psychoanalytic therapist. In *The Psychiatrist Says Murder*, Ames' unique contribution to solution of the crime is his exploitation of transference phenomena, and, as in *The Case on Cloud Nine*, he gathers vital information by visiting other persons significant in his patients' lives. In addition, Ames tends to make early and unwarranted interpretations that are consistently validated by the subsequent action, an oversimplification that detracts from the realism of these novels.

Annoying problems with these novels are the conventionality of the narrator and the blatant proselytization for psychoanalysis. Ames' wife, for example, is a stereotyped woman of leisure, who browses aimlessly through the Metropolitan Museum of Art, reads best sellers, and finds her reward in new clothing; only her interest in detective stories gives her character. A man's long hair is attributed to an unconscious wish to be feminine (p. 112), and Ames implies that Communism is violent, a result of the thwarted sexual instinct of Chinese leaders (p. 132). Freeman, whose many books on psychoanalysis are well known, never gives any indication that there are approaches other than psychoanalysis. In *The Case on Cloud Nine*, she has her heroine constantly uttering interpretations and referring to the benefits of her own completed analysis. Freeman portrays clear-cut good guys and bad guys, the former enamored of psychoanalysis, the latter frightened of what might lurk in the unconscious.

Despite their shortcomings, the Dr. Ames novels are a welcome addition to the tradition of the physician-detective. The psychiatrist as crime-solver is a figure with whom we must certainly become increasingly familiar.

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THE MADMAN THEORY. By Ellery Queen. Signet. Pp. 191. 1975. Price \$1.25 (paper).

The Madman Theory contains no psychiatrist and less psychiatric insight. It is a California police-procedural novel with outdoor scenes aplenty, ready for filming on location in the Sierras. It boasts three engaging and interrelated murders and plods steadily to a

solution, providing none of the subtle clues that might reward an astute reader with an early solution. It finds its way to these pages because its title and premise make it a conspicuous target for a comment on the misuse of the concept of motive.

The mass-media platitude that "the elements of a crime are motive, means and opportunity" is apparently taken seriously by people other than mystery writers, in spite of authorities like Perkins, for example, who goes to some length to document that save for exceptional instances, motive is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for proof of guilt or innocence.¹ Yet laymen and fictional detectives dwell upon motive as if it were the cornerstone of criminal investigation and prosecution. Consideration of possible motives sometimes provides important leads to suspects in homicide and arson cases, but motive can seldom provide leads to burglars, robbers, rapists, and other offenders whose motives are more universal.² More to the point, motive can seldom provide leads to the kind of homicide occurring most frequently in the United States today—homicides in which spouses, lovers, friends, or acquaintances end an otherwise unremarkable quarrel by discharging a handy firearm. Such a crime has no motive beyond that experienced regularly by everyone who deals with other people.

For Ellery Queen, however, a murder without motive implies the work of a madman: "Who would do a thing like this? . . . He must be some kind of lunatic! . . . But why? I can't understand *why*, . . . It's got to be a madman" (p. 30): "Such a terrible thing; I just can't believe that a sane human being. . . ." (p. 59): "I can't understand it, I simply can't. It must have been a psychopath" (p. 64); and so on until the final page:

"I still can't believe it. . . . Three murders! That's the work of a madman."

And Inspector Collins nodded back just as soberly. "Every murderer," he said, "is a little mad." (p. 191)

I would suggest that the most important feature that differentiates the majority of murderers from the rest of us is their possession of effective weapons at the critical moment. Perhaps that—our tolerance of the facility of such possession—is indeed madness.

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